

# Spikey's Clinic for Professional Dreamers: The Methodology



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# Foreword

This methodology is one of the results of the project Spikey's Clinic for Professional Dreamers (ref. no. 2021-1-HR01-KA220-YOU-000030341), co-funded by the Croatian Agencija za mobilnost i programe Europske unije in the framework of the Erasmus + Programme – Cooperation Partnerships in the Youth sector.

From November 2021 to May 2024, the project has seen the participation of 5 organisations active in the fields of youth work: Subjekt d.o.o. (Croatia, lead partner), Cooperativa Sociale Immaginaria A R.L. Onlus (Italy), Fundacja Edukacyjna Nausika (Poland), Larpifiers MAKE (Greece), and Nansen Dijalog Centar (Croatia).

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# Introduction

One of the main objectives of the Spikey's Clinic for Professional Dreamers project has been the creation of tools and methods to promote the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing and prevent the burnout in the key target-group of "professional dreamers" – youth and community workers who, out of personal commitment, educational background and professional expertise, have devoted themselves to practice "community gardening": planting seeds for social cohesion, applying innovative and creative tools for bringing the community together, facilitating the participatory processes in which the community nurtures those planted seeds and willingly taking responsibility to make them grow, thus becoming more resilient to current and future challenges.

The project was ideated and designed in the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, when youth workers, social workers, educators and community animators were among the first to offer help to their communities, supporting especially the most vulnerable groups in challenging circumstances that required an extremely high level of flexibility and creativity in order to achieve the very implementation of their activities.

While the pandemic highlighted the importance of these professional dreamers' role in nurturing healthy, resilient communities, it also put under the spotlight the challenges that affect their work – from the long-lasting issues of professional and financial recognition to previously underestimated issues of mental health, due to the renewed burden of stress and the increased risk of burnout.

With the aim to raise awareness on these issues and offer practical guidance to the target-group, the partnership has thus developed a methodology based on the best practices of the partner organisations in the fields of wellbeing, peer coaching and stress management. Coordinated by Immaginaria, the partners have designed and tested with their local target groups of youth and community workers different methods (for a total of 50) rooted in their expertise, and specifically: for Subjekt, techniques of stress relief, reflection and meditation; for Nausika, art-based techniques and methods of intercultural learning; for Nansen, methods based on singing, active listening and emotional evocation; for Larpifiers, techniques based on cooperative storytelling, gamification and creative win-win solutions; for Immaginaria, techniques developed from performing arts for enhancing the group dynamic and sensorial activities. Differently from the tools included in the "Spikey's Deck of Remedies", conceived for an individual usage, the activities proposed in this Methodology have been in fact designed to be implemented in a group framework.

After sharing their activities, using the method of consensus the partner organisations have been able to agree on a taxonomy that has allowed them to classify each activity according to the theme(s) that it aims to address. These are: Mindfulness; Relaxation; Self-Care; Personal Growth; Peer Support; Group Bonding; Creativity; Embodiment; Fun. (See below for more information about each theme).

Beside local tests implemented by each organization with a target-group of youth and community workers, the Methodology was tested by international groups during the two LTTAs of the project, that took place respectively in April 2022 in Zlatna Greda/Osijek (Croatia) and in April 2023 in Rabka-Zdròj (Poland). The feedback received by the participants during



the tests was used to modify the activities, further clarifying their aims, instructions, scope and implementation.

Finally, for the whole duration of the project the partner organisations experienced online peer coaching sessions took place, involving professional dreamers active in the partners organisations and in other entities part of their local networks. This practice has enabled the partnership to develop the peer coaching scenarios here proposed.

## Definitions of the categories used in the Methodology

- **GROUP BONDING**

The set of activities and facilitation processes aimed to develop and/or strengthen the relationships within a group. While a part of the wider family of the team-building activities, group bonding should not be confused with team-building tout court: in fact, while the latter's main focus is on the group's performance and its effectiveness, group bonding highlights the relational dimension of the group dynamics (e.g. trust, loyalty, communication etc.)

- **CREATIVITY**

A broad concept with a millennium-long history, whose workings have been studied by psychology and cognitive according to a wide array of approaches, creative is a process that leads to the formation of something new and original – may the outcome be tangible or intangible.

For our project's purposes, we'll refer to the category of creativity every time a tool focuses on the development of problem-solving skills and/or artistic expression (eg. through writing, drawing, word games, improvisation etc.)

- **PERSONAL GROWTH**

Together with its cognate expressions such as "self-growth" and "personal development", personal growth refers to the process of developing new skills and attitudes that can have a positive impact in an individual's well-being in the mental, physical and emotional domains. For our project's purposes, we'll refer to the category of personal growth every time a tool focuses on the development of attitudes such as empathy, tolerance, resilience, self-esteem etc., and skills in the areas of active listening, communication, problem-solving etc.

- **EMBODIMENT**

With "embodiment" we refer to the act of giving concrete form and representation to abstract ideas.

For our project's purposes, we'll refer to the category of embodiment every time a tool stresses the importance of bodily/physical expression (e.g. through dancing, mimicry etc.)

- **RELAXATION**

The term "relaxation" denotes a state of absence of tension, especially one provoked by negative sources such as anger, anxiety, fear, stress etc.

For our project's purposes, we can consider it as an umbrella-term, embracing a wide range

of techniques aimed to enhance the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of the individual(s) involved by counter-balancing the negative impact of the sources of stress.

- **SELF-CARE**

According to the definition stated by the World Health Organization, “Self-care is the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider.”

Although this definition clearly highlights the medical dimension of self-care, for our project’s purposes we can find useful its theoretical framework (so-called “people-centred approach”), whose key features are “a holistic approach to the health and well-being of each person, taking account of their circumstances, needs and desires across a lifetime, as well as the environment in which they live” and the fact of being “grounded in human rights and gender equality”.

Thus, we refer to the category of self-care every time that a tool empowers the individual(s) involved to prevent the negative impact of the sources of illness and/or their ability to positively affect their enabling environment.

- **PEER SUPPORT**

Together with cognate expressions such as “self-help” and “mutual aid”, peer support can be defined as the process through which people sharing common experiences/facing similar challenges come together as equals to give and receive help based on the knowledge that they build together.

A “peer” is an equal, someone with whom one shares similar features (age, background, profession etc); “support” expresses the kind of empathy, encouragement, and assistance that people with shared experiences can mutually offer one another.

While an extremely important tool in psychiatric practice, for our project’s purposes we can refer to peer support every time a tool aims to bring together individuals with shared experiences to support each other, by providing a space where they can feel accepted and understood and enabling them to both give and receive support, on the basis of treating everyone’s experiences as equally important.

- **MINDFULNESS**

According to the Oxford University Press dictionary, mindfulness is “a mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations”.

A concept whose historical roots can be traced back to more than 2500 years ago in different strands of Buddhism (Indian, Zen, Tibetan), popularised in the Western world only from the ‘70s through the decisive blending with American countercultural movements, mindfulness can be considered an umbrella-term including several so-called “mindfulness-based interventions” (MBIs) aimed to produce health benefits such as decreasing stress levels, insomnia, anxiety etc., along with enhancing personal well-being, empathy, concentration, cognitive performance etc.

For our project’s purposes we can refer to mindfulness every time a tool aims to achieve these effects through the use of techniques such as meditation, concentration, breathing control etc.

- **FUN**

Fun and leisure are key components of non-formal educational processes. Learning by experience, personalised workshops and intercultural plays all have one thing in common: playing. Playing allows the participants involved to access a state of freedom, creativity and exploration that is associated with the natural learning of childhood. Role-plays, structured experiments, simulation, and drama activities are examples of games with experiential learning opportunities. Games thus create a play frame which makes the act of learning a dynamic and enjoyable process, recalling the carefree playing time of childhood. Learning in this way is an emotional, physical as well as a cognitive experience.

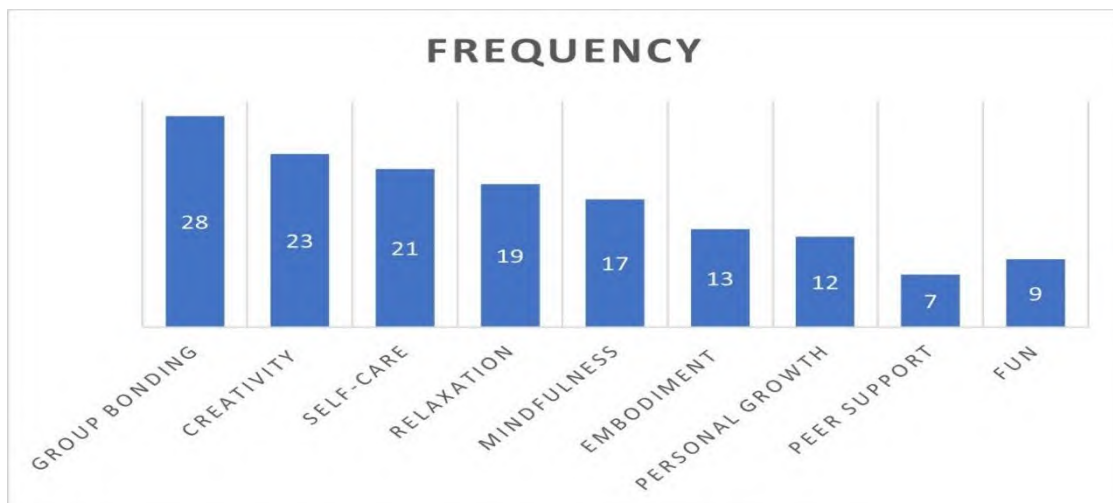


Table 1. Frequency of the categories used in the activities included in the Methodology





# Activities per Organisation



# Subjekt (Croatia)



Subjekt is an enterprise devoted to the development and application of cultural actions and models for the growth and diversification of communities. Subjekt helps challenged communities through cultural growth led by principles of participation and inclusiveness. For these purposes, Subjekt works with a wide range of entities (governmental institutions, academia, NGOs, SMEs) and directly with the citizens, trying to build well-rooted solutions with wide support in the community.

The main area of interest and a means of engaging the community is culture, organising different cultural activities that help build social capital and enhance inclusion and solidarity. While working with the small communities, Subjekt follows 3 basic principles for community and civic engagement: recognition for the expertise and knowledge within the community; respect for individuals, communities and their resources; equitable partnership focused on reciprocal relationships, transparency and accountability.

Subjekt is a partner on various local, regional and international projects, covering a wide range of the aforementioned topics.

## **Activities**

1. Introduction – Me, Youth Work and Well-being (Group Bonding)
2. Tell Me A Bit More (Group bonding, Self-care)
3. Box Breathing (Mindfulness, Relaxation, Self-care)
4. Embrace the Silence (Relaxation, Self-care)
5. Mindful Breathing (Mindfulness, Self-care, Relaxation)
6. Self-Massage (Mindfulness, Self-care, Embodiment, Relaxation)
7. Dragon Body (Relaxation, Group bonding, Self-care)
8. Lessons Learnt (Personal growth, Self-care)
9. Dragon's Egg (Creativity, Relaxation, Mindfulness)
10. Setting a Self-Care Goal (Self-care, Personal growth)

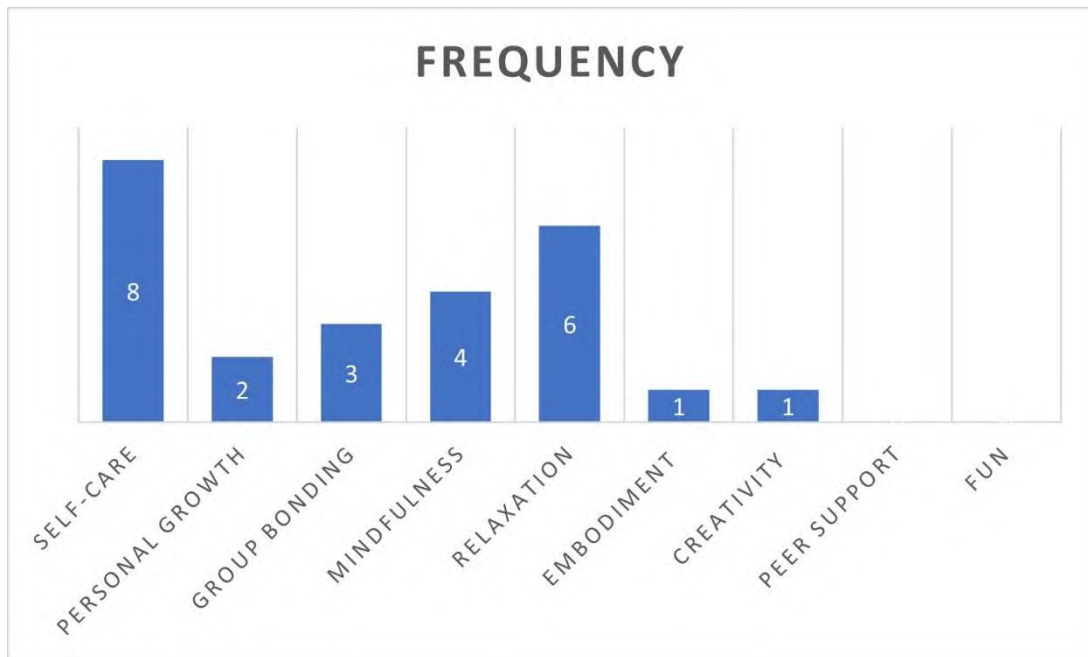


Table 2. Frequency of the categories in the activities proposed by Subjekt

# 1. Introduction – Me, Youth Work and Well-being

## **Overview**

During this activity, the participants get to know each other better and share their experience about youth work and mental health.

## **Objective(s)**

- To get to know each other
- To reflect and share one's experience in youth work
- To reflect and share where one stands in relation to well-being and mental health
- To memorise the names

## **Categories**

Group bonding

## **Background Information**

This is a get to know each other activity, which is recommended to be used during the first day of the training, preferably as the first activity while the participants still do not know each other. In a group of 20 people, it will take approximately 1 hour for everyone to introduce themselves.

## **Number of Participants**

No minimum limit, not recommended for groups with more than 30 participants as it may take too long

**Duration** 60 min (depending on the group size)

## **Setting and Materials**

One chair and one blanket or scarf

## **Preparation**

Put the chairs in a semi-circle. Put one additional chair in the middle of the circle opening and a blanket or a scarf next to it.

If doing the exercise outdoors, make sure to have comfortable surroundings– for example, that it is not too hot or cold, sunny, windy, etc. and most important – that it is quiet enough.

It would be good to have either a watch or a clock to help you keep track of time.

## **Instructions**

During the introduction, the facilitator informs the participants that in this activity, each person will be given the opportunity to share information on personal involvement in youth

work and where they stand regarding the topic of mental health and well-being.

The facilitator explains that the chair in the middle of the open semi-circle represents youth work while the blanket/scarf represents mental health and well-being.

The participants will come in front of everyone one person at a time. They will then choose a position relative to the chair that symbolizes their level of engagement in youth work. This could involve sitting on the chair with their entire body, standing behind it, hiding underneath it, or adopting any other posture that they believe effectively represents their involvement in youth work.

They also need to decide what to do with the blanket/scarf to show how they view their mental health and well-being. The facilitator demonstrates some of the possibilities so that the participants can have a visual idea of the task and tells them each person will have around 2 min for sharing their story.

After this, each participant comes to the chair and blanket/scarf. Once they have found a position they are satisfied with, they share in 1-2 min about their experience.

They first say their name, where they are from and then why they decided to take a certain position in relation to the chair and the blanket/scarf.

The exercises finishes when everyone shared their story, including the facilitator.

### **Closure (5 min)**

The facilitator thanks the participants for sharing their stories and draws a conclusion to summarise the introduction.

Additionally, as a transition to the next activity, the facilitator can ask everyone to walk around the room and find 4 participants whose names they can't remember. They need to approach this person, ask what their name is and say it 3 times before moving to the next person.

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ In order to break the ice and demonstrate what to do, the facilitator can be the first person to share in front of the group.
- ✓ Make sure that everyone says their name and country. If someone forgets, you can ask them when they finish talking.
- ✓ If there is a participant whose name you did not understand, feel free to ask them again after they shared their story.
- ✓ Sometimes it will take some time before a person decides to come in front of everyone and share their story. When planning to do this exercise, leave extra 10-15 min so that the participants don't feel pressured.
- ✓ If someone significantly exceeds their talking time (e.g. talking for more than 5 min), you can thank them and say that there will be more opportunities to get to know each other during the training course / workshop

## 2. Tell Me a Bit More

### Overview

During the activity, the participants will get a chance to discuss different topics in small groups.

### Objective(s)

- To get to know each other better
- To share about personal experience in youth work
- To share about coping mechanisms

### Categories

Group bonding, Self-care

### Background Information

This activity is often used in non-formal education for exchanging experiences and opinions. It is a great way of getting to know each other and starting conversation.

### Number of Participants 10 - 30

### Duration 60 min

### Setting and Materials

- Room with as much empty space as possible
- Papers with positioning keywords
- Device for playing music and speakers

### Preparation

- Copy the positioning keywords from the Appendix 1 on the paper and put them on the wall next to each corner of the room.
- Make a lot of room in the centre so that the participants can move freely between 4 corners.
- Test your audio device and speakers and prepare music you will play.
- Have either a watch or a clock to help you keep track of time.

### Instructions

The facilitator tells the participants that they will do an exercise during which they will talk with other participants and exchange their opinions and experiences. The facilitator explains the process:

In each corner of the room, there is a paper with certain words written on it. The participants will choose their corner according to what feels the most truthful for them at the moment. When they choose their corner, they go there and start the conversation with other participants who arrived at the same corner. The facilitator will tell everyone what the topic of the discussion is.



There are four rounds, meaning that there will be 4 topics to discuss. Each round lasts for 8 minutes. The facilitator will keep track of time and tell the participants when there is only 1 minute left. When they hear music, it is a sign that the round has finished. The participants need to leave their corner and move around the room. Music is playing for 1 min. While walking around the room, the participants are invited to look at each other without verbal interaction. When the music stops, everyone stops moving and waits until the facilitator asks the next question. After this, they go to a corner and the next round starts.

Highlight at the beginning, that during each round the participants will need to choose only 1 corner, even if they can position themselves in more than 1. No one can stand in the middle of the room during the discussions. The facilitator checks if everyone understood the instructions and clarifies if necessary.

The activity starts and finishes with the music and walking around the room.

### First round instructions

When the music stops, the facilitator tells the participants to choose the corner that describes how long they have been a youth worker. "Have you been a youth worker 0-1 year, 1-3 years, 3-7 years, more than 7 years?"

When the participants position themselves, the facilitator tells them they have 8 min to share WHAT THEY LIKE BEST ABOUT WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE?

After 8 min, remind them that they have 1 min left. At the end of round, start playing music and invite the participants to walk around the room and observe others. The new round starts when the music stops.

The instructions for the next rounds are the same as for the 1st round, while the topics are different. **If a person can position themselves in more than 1 corner, tell them to choose the one that currently resonates the most with them.**

### Second round

**Positioning:** How old are young people you work with: 13-15; 15-19; 19-25; 25-30 years old? (If someone still doesn't have experience in youth work, they can choose the corner they like. If they work with all age groups, they need to choose 1 corner.)

**Discussion topic:** What do you find most challenging in youth work lately?

### Third round

**Positioning:** How do you usually handle dissatisfaction at work: complain a lot; ignore it; seek solution; procrastinate or avoid responsibilities?

**Discussion topic:** Talk about one thing that currently causes dissatisfaction at work and that you would like to handle better

### Fourth round

**Positioning:** What usually recharges you: doing physical activities; doing nothing; socialising; doing something creative

**Discussion topic:** What helps you deal with job-related stress?

**Reflection (10 min)**

The facilitator invites the participants to sit.

**Possible questions:**

- How was this activity for you?
- What was the topic that you found easiest to talk about and why?
- What was the topic that you found most challenging to talk about and why?
- Was there anything you heard in the small groups that resonated with your own experience?
- Did you have any aha moments you would like to share with the group?

**Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Feel free to modify the positioning keywords and discussion topics
- ✓ Highlight that each round is only 8 minutes long and that each group needs to make sure everyone gets enough time to speak
- ✓ You can adjust the time frame. For example, give 5 min per round for a small number of participants or extend up to 10 min when working with a larger group
- ✓ Although this activity is excellent at the beginning of the workshop/training course, because it is a way of getting to know each other better, you can also modify it and use it later when you want the participants to exchange their opinions
- ✓ If doing this activity outdoors, find 4 trees or pillars that form a rectangle/square.
- ✓ Pay attention to the music you select as it will influence the atmosphere

**Appendix 1 – Positioning keywords for each corner**

0-1 year 13-15 years old complain a lot doing physical activities	1.CORNER
--	----------

1-3 years 15-19 years old ignore it doing nothing	2.CORNER
--	----------

3-7 years 19-25years old seek solution socialising	3.CORNER
---	----------

more than 7 years 25-30 years old procrastinate/avoid responsibilities doing something creative	4.CORNER
--	----------

# 3. Box Breathing

## Overview

This short and simple breathing activity helps the participants to relax, sleep better and to improve their concentration.

## Objective(s)

- To relieve stress and improve concentration
- To help with anxiety and insomnia
- To improve lung function

## Categories

Mindfulness, relaxation, self-care

## Background Information

The name of this activity comes from the fact that a box has four sides, and this exercise involves participants breathing while slowly counting to four for four times – inhaling, holding breath, exhaling, holding breath.

## Number of Participants No limit

**Duration** 15-20 minutes

## Setting and Materials

This activity can be done while sitting, standing or even lying down. It is preferable to do it in nature, but it can be done almost anywhere.

## Preparation

The beauty of this activity is that it can be done anywhere at any time. Make sure that there is no other noise around you, e.g., heavy traffic, people talking.

## Instructions (6 minutes)

This is a guided breathing activity, so feel free to give the following instructions or adjust accordingly:

1. Before we begin, make sure that you are in a comfortable position. For this exercise you can stand, sit or lie down, whichever you prefer. This activity can be done with both, closed and open eyes. For this activity, we are going to breathe through the nose. Make sure to breathe gently, without straining. During this activity, you will breathe in for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds and repeat this process a few times. It is fine if you can't do all 4 stages for 4 seconds. The most important thing is that you breathe gently, without straining - if you continue doing this exercise frequently, you will increase your lung capacity and reach that point. When I say "In", I will count to four while you are inhaling. During this stage, be mindful of the air

entering your lungs. When I say “Hold”, I will count to four and you will hold your breath during that time. When I say “Out”, I will count to four while you are exhaling. During this stage, be mindful of the air exiting your lungs. After exhaling, I’m going to say “Hold” one more time and count to four while you hold your breath. After that, we are going to repeat this whole process a few times. Now find a comfortable position and let us begin.

2. **In** (slowly) (One)... two... three... four.
3. **Hold** (slowly)(One)... two... three... four.
4. **Out** (slowly) (One)... two... three... four.
5. **Hold** (slowly) (One)... two... three... four.
6. – repeat this process at least 3 more times –
7. We are done.

### **Reflection (5-10 minutes)**

Possible questions for the facilitator:

- What happened during the activity? Were you able to focus on your breath?
- Were you able to do all the stages for 4 seconds? How was this process for you?
- How did you feel during the activity?
- How do you feel after the activity?
- Did anyone feel resistance because they didn’t like breathing exercises? Can you share your experience with the group?
- Can you imagine doing this activity outside this workshop/training? In which situations would you do it again? If not, can you explain why?
- If done daily, here are some questions for the last day of the training:
- Have you noticed that we have been increasing the number of rounds every day?
- After doing this activity daily during this training, has it affected you in any other way?
- Do you think that you will continue doing this activity after the training?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ This activity can be repeated as many times as needed and it’s a great choice if you don’t have much time.
- ✓ If some of the participants choose to lie down, it would be better if they do this exercise with their eyes open, since they might get sleepy.
- ✓ Breathing during this activity should be gentle, without straining.
- ✓ This activity is quite short so it can be done daily, during the whole training. If you choose to do it daily, you can greatly shorten the first step of the instructions by just reminding the participants of the 4 steps of the process. Also, you can increase the number of “rounds” by one or two every day without telling it to the participants, and you can organise the reflection just on the first and last day.

## 4. Embrace the Silence

### Overview

This short and simple meditation helps the participants to relax and improve their focus.

### Objective(s)

- To relieve stress and calm down overworked brain
- To practice stillness

### Categories

Mindfulness, Relaxation, Self-care

### Background Information

In contemporary society, people have forgotten how it feels and what it means to sit down and be alone with their own thoughts. Our brains are constantly working; they are strained with myriad thoughts. If we don't release these thoughts, they linger throughout the day, escalating stress levels and making it challenging for us to relax. With fast-paced lifestyle that became the norm of today, it is important to remember that sometimes we have to let go and stay still. Participants can use this simple meditation to relax and let go of stressful and unnecessary thoughts they might be having during or after an exhausting day. Sitting down in silence, without any digital devices (such as smartphones) around, enables the participants to be alone with their thoughts, to observe them and to let them go, leading to stress-relief and state of relaxation.

### Number of Participants No limit

**Duration** 15-25 minutes

### Setting and Materials

This exercise is done while sitting, either on the ground or in a chair. If the participant is not sitting on the ground, their feet should be touching the ground (if possible).

### Preparation

1. If performed inside, the light in the room should be either dimmed or turned off (latter is preferable). If performed outside, a place in nature is preferable, ideally in shade.
2. This exercise should be done in silence, so the participants should turn off or mute their phones and other devices that can produce sound or vibration. Try to find a room or a place in nature away from traffic and other sounds created by humans.

### Instructions (10-15 minutes)

The facilitator gives the following instructions to the group: The goal of this exercise is to clear your busy mind, and you are going to do this by focusing on your breath. The more often you do this exercise, the easier it will be for you to reach the state of relaxation and keep your

mind calm. As thoughts come to you, acknowledge them, give each of them a short time in the “spotlight”, and try to let them go by returning the focus on your breathing. In this exercise, we use our breath as a tool, or a “beacon”, on which we focus our attention, while letting our thoughts slowly fade away.

1. Sit down in a position that is comfortable for you. You will have to stay in this position for the next 10-15 minutes, so find a position that will not make you uncomfortable during the process.
2. Now that everyone is in a comfortable position, let's close our eyes and take 3 deep breaths through the nose. The tip of your tongue should be touching your palate and back of your teeth. We will inhale for 3 seconds and exhale for 3 seconds, repeating this 3 times.
3. Sit still and breathe deeply, focusing on your breath. While you're inhaling, you can think to yourself “I am inhaling.”, and while exhaling, you can think “I am exhaling.” When other thoughts come to you, take a note of them and try to gently let them go.
4. Every 2-3 minutes, tell the participants the following (or something similar): “If your mind is wandering, bring the focus back to your breath. Let all those unnecessary thoughts fade away.”
5. After 10 - 15 minutes of meditation: Try to gently bring attention to your fingers and your toes and then your legs and your arms - move them a bit and when you are ready, open your eyes. And we are done.

### **Reflection (5-10 minutes)**

Possible questions for facilitators:

- What happened during this activity? How was it to stay for 10 min in silence, just sitting and breathing? Were you able to focus on your breath?
- What was happening with your thoughts? Were you able to let them go? Was there a thought that was reoccurring?
- How do you feel after the meditation?
- How much silence do we have in everyday lives and in youth work?
- Can you imagine including this type of activity into your daily/weekly self-care practice? When and where would you do it and how often?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Don't rush when giving instructions and try to give them in a calming voice.
- ✓ This activity is most effective when done regularly. Consistency is more important than duration. The participants will get more benefit if they do it for 10 minutes every day in a week than once a week for 2 hours.
- ✓ It is important to understand that it is not easy to clear the mind, and it will probably not happen for the participants the first time they do this activity (or maybe the first few times). It is important to convey this to the participants.
- ✓ You can also start with 10 or less minutes for the activity and increase time gradually.



# 5. Mindful Breathing

## Overview

A short, guided breathing exercise that helps to relax and be in the present moment.

## Objective(s)

- To become mindful of one's breath
- To relax mentally and physically
- To deepen the connection with oneself
- To be in the present moment

## Categories

Mindfulness, Self-care, Relaxation

## Background Information

Mindful breathing does wonders after the participants had an intense experience during the training. It helps to bring them back to the present and to calm down the group atmosphere. For those participants who are not used to doing breathing exercises, nose-mouth breathing might be a bit too intense, which is why it is important to keep this activity short.

**Number of Participants** No limit

**Duration** 20 min

## Setting and Materials

- Room with chairs put in a circle (you can also use yoga mats or cushions if someone wants to sit on the floor).
- This exercise can be done outside. Make sure to provide comfortable sitting area and that everyone can hear you. Also, pay attention to the weather conditions.

## Preparation

- Prepare the chairs (or mats/cushions) for everyone. Put them in a circle.
- Print out the instructions if you don't know them by heart.

## Instructions

For the facilitator: The following are the instructions you can print out and use if you are doing this activity for the first time. Feel free to adjust it to the group and your own facilitation style. There is no need to read everything word by word. Be playful but keep the essence of the activity present.

"We will begin this short breathing exercise by finding a comfortable seating position. Feel how your feet are touching the ground, keep your legs uncrossed. Take a moment to find balance in your seat. Let your spine strengthen and lengthen, imagine as if someone is slightly pulling your hair on top of

the head. Shoulders roll back slightly to open up your chest and let your palms rest comfortably in your lap. And when you are ready, gently close your eyes. (1 min)

Turn the attention to your body and become aware of your breath. What sensations do you notice? What can you feel on top of your nose when you breathe in? Is the air cool or warm? And how about when you breathe out – is it cool or warm then? What muscles are you using for breathing? Can you feel their contractions? (2 min)

As you become aware of your breath, you also become aware of your body as a whole. Notice the points of contact between you and the surface that your body is touching. Can you feel the clothes on your skin? And as you let yourself be more present in your body and more connected with your breath, we will become breathing with intention, following what is happening with the body as we breathe. (1 min)

With your next breath, let your belly expand as you breathe in, while your upper chest remains relatively still. Breathe in through your nose, hold the breath a bit and then breathe out through your mouth and make a sound of relief, a long aaaaaaaaaaaaaa, while you are releasing the tension. Let's repeat that one more time. Breathe in, hold and release with a sound of aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa. (1 min)

We will continue breathing in through the nose and exhaling through the mouth, not making more sound. Stomach expands as you breathe in, your upper chest does not move much. When you are ready - exhale through your mouth, stomach contracting, and your chest not moving much. Continue doing this at the pace that feels good for you.

And with your next exhale, take your time with it. Let your exhale be twice as long as your inhale. Breathing in through your nose, belly expands...breathing out through your mouth, belly contracts. Every exhale is twice as long as every inhale. This helps you slow down.

If any thought or feeling come up to you, just let them be, without a need to analyse. Don't judge yourself, don't judge whatever is in your mind or in your heart, but consciously bring your attention back to breathing. Feel the sensations of the breath going from your nose, down to your chest, making your belly grow and then observe how you slowly exhale, while your belly contracts.

Let your body know that you are safe – belly expands with each inhale and contracts with every exhale, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Remember to keep your upper chest relatively neutral and calm, without moving much. Continue breathing at your own speed and rhythm for a few more moments. (4 min)

Take a deeper breath, let your chest expand, and while exhaling, make another aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa and release all the remaining tension. Let your chest rise on every inhale and fall on every exhale. Continue breathing in and out through your nose with your eyes still closed.

Now feel the gratitude for allowing yourself to take a few moments to just breathe, say thank you in your mind. Take this peaceful feeling with you as you begin to gently roll your shoulders, slightly move your fingers and toes and when you feel ready – slowly open your eyes. (2 min)

## **Reflection**

The participants reflect on their experience. Possible questions:

- What was happening with you during this activity? How was it to put all your attention to breathing?
- Can you share if you experienced any constraints while breathing, whether physical or mental?
- How did you deal with your thoughts and feelings?
- How do you feel after doing this exercise?
- To what extent could practicing this exercise help you deal with job-related stress?

## **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ When giving instructions, try to speak as softly and pleasantly as you can.
- ✓ Feel free to change the script and do this activity your own way, as long as you are guiding the process of mindful breathing.
- ✓ Adjust the tempo of instructions to the group energy.
- ✓ Demonstrate what you are asking the participants to do (sit properly, making “a” sound, breathing with belly, inhaling nose – exhaling mouth, etc.), guiding and monitoring the process with your eyes open. Remember that you are facilitating this activity and not doing it as a participant.
- ✓ If you want, you can play relaxing instrumental background music.
- ✓ Don't do this exercise after a meal as the participants might fall asleep.

# 6. Self-Massage

## Overview

This short bodywork activity helps the participants to get more in touch with their bodies, detect and relieve tension and put focus on the present moment.

## Objective(s)

- To relieve tension from the body and activate the muscles
- To practice being present

## Categories

Mindfulness, Self-Care, Embodiment, Relaxation

## Background Information

Self-massage offers direct intimacy between the participants and their bodies. It enables them to enter into conversation with their bodies, detect the parts which are tense and release the tension. At the same time, the touch itself and the focus on the movements brings the participants to the present moment. This exercise is sometimes used for singing practice to awaken the body before releasing the sound. It is great to do when the group energy is low to awaken the body.

**Number of Participants** No limit

**Duration** 15-20 min

## Setting and Materials

This exercise is done while standing. If there are participants who can't stand, they can do it from a seated position. No materials needed.

## Preparation

Arrange the room so that the distance between the participants is around arm's length. If doing the exercise outdoors, make sure to have comfortable surroundings– for example, that it is not too hot or cold, sunny, windy, etc.

Have chairs or exercise mats nearby so that the participants can have reflection in a sitting position.

**IMPORTANT:** If any of the participants has intense pain (e.g., in their neck) or a condition such as fractures, wounds, burns, bleeding disorder, skin allergy, thrombosis or severe osteoporosis, it is better not to risk making their condition worse. They need to counsel with a healthcare professional before trying self-massage.

## Instructions (10 min)

The facilitator gives the following instructions to the group and guides the process while demonstrating the movements:

1. Stand up. Let's take 3 deep breaths through the nose. Start by rubbing your fingers – knead your knuckles and do similar movements as if you are washing your hands. Do it energetically but apply only as much pressure as feels comfortable. Pay attention to your breath while inhaling and exhaling through your nose. Make sure both of your hands get the massage.
2. Massage both of your wrists and slowly move up along your arms. Go at your own speed until you reach the shoulders. If there is an area that aches or you feel tension, you can rub it a bit longer.
3. Massage your shoulders.
4. After the shoulders, move to your neck. Gently make movements upwards, as if you want to elongate it. Also, do a gentle circular massage to the back of your neck where it connects with the spine.
5. Switch to your jaw. Open your mouth and yawn. If it doesn't come naturally, yawn on purpose. Make gentle circular movements around the jaw joints and along your jaw.
6. Continue to make circular movements around your ears, then cheeks, eyes, forehead, and your scalp. Gently pull your hair up in order to elongate yourself and have a better posture. Do this a few times.
7. Move down to your chest and push your shoulders a bit backwards. Continue with circular movements and move down from chest to your belly and then to your lower back and bottom.
8. Massage your legs, from your thighs to your feet. While doing it, have your head relaxed and let it hang. You can either rub your legs, or knead them, depending on what feels more comfortable.
9. Finish this self-massage by gently hitting the body with our fists or open palms. Start from your shin and calf, move up to your thighs, bottom, lower back, stomach, chest, and finish with arms.
10. With your feet firmly on the ground, shake your body for a few moments.
11. Lastly, let's stretch.

### **Reflection (5-10 min)**

Possible questions for facilitators:

- How was it to give yourself a massage? Was there any spot that felt very tense?
- Were you able to focus on your body or did your thoughts wander around?
- How do you feel after the exercise?
- How do you think this activity could help you deal with stress?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Feel free to adjust the instructions while keeping the essence of the activity.
- ✓ Don't rush when giving the instructions.
- ✓ During the activity, make sure to tell the participants to apply only as much pressure as feels comfortable. If the tension or pain gets worse because of self-massage, check its cause with a healthcare professional.

- ✓ Bear in mind that these instructions are not suitable for people with certain mobility impairment and other conditions described in Preparation. Before deciding to do the activity, check the participants' physical ability and adjust the instructions so that everyone feels included.
- ✓ This activity can also be done as an introduction to a more complex workshop or as a sort of an energiser when you notice that the group energy is low.



# 7. Dragon Body - A Guided Meditation

## Overview

This guided meditation helps the participants to connect with their “dragon body” and release their stress and worries.

## Objective(s)

- To relieve stress
- To calm down
- To energize

**Categories** Relaxation, Selfcare

## Background Information

This guided meditation/visualization is inspired by meditative practices that can be found in shamanism and some of the world religions, as well as by a stoic concept of living/being in accordance with nature. The goal of the activity is to support the participants to visualize their stress, fears and worries and to try to let them go. The idea is that it is easier to get rid of something if we give it form and make it less abstract. Using the metaphor of cleansing foggy scales with smoke to release negativity and then reflecting the world around and within, participants will learn how to employ this stress-relief technique in their everyday lives.

**Number of Participants** No limit

**Duration** 20-25 minutes

## Setting and Materials

This exercise should be done while sitting, either on the ground or in a chair. If the participants are not sitting on the ground, their feet should be touching the ground (if possible).

## Preparation

If performed inside, the light in the room should be either dimmed or turned off (latter is preferable). If performed outside, a place in nature is preferable, ideally in a shade.

This exercise should be done in silence, so that the participants can focus on the voice of the facilitator. A room or a place in nature that is away from traffic and other sounds created by humans is ideal. Participants should mute or turn off their phones.

It is also recommended to have a stopwatch, for periods of silence during this exercise.

## Instructions

The facilitator gives the following instructions to the group:

1. The goal of this exercise is to give form to your stress, fears and worries and to release them, becoming free of their influence. You are going to achieve this by forming a dragon body and clearing your scales. During this exercise, focus on my voice and try to follow

the meditation as best as you can. Don't worry if your mind wanders or if you can't visualize things – the ability to do that comes with practice. Sit down in a position that is comfortable for you. You will have to stay in this position for 20-25 minutes.

2. When you are ready, close your eyes. Begin breathing slowly through your nose. Deep inhales and exhales. While you are breathing, your tongue should be touching your palate and the back of your teeth. As you do so, you become more relaxed. The muscles in your body start to relax, slowly but surely. Your feet and ankles, your calves and knees and your thighs are losing their tension. Your pelvis and your lower back. A toughness in your neck and shoulders loosens as you relax. Your arms, tension held in your hands and in your fingers unwinds as your body begins to relax. The back of your head, your jaw, your facial muscles, your scalp, all lose that tension, and the breathing becomes more relaxing and enjoyable. The more relaxed you feel, the easier the breathing becomes. The easier the breathing becomes, the more relaxed you feel (give approximately 30 seconds of silence).
3. With your eyes still closed, turn your attention to the spot 2 cm below your belly button. Start imagining that white energy is slowly coming out from that spot. It is slowly taking shape. With every breath you take, the more energy comes out (give approximately 30 seconds of silence). With your next breath, it will completely come out. This is your spiritual body. It is now standing in front of you. Slowly observe your physical body through its eyes (give approximately 10 seconds of silence).
4. With every breath, your spiritual body is starting to take shape. It is looking more and more like a dragon. As you breath in, more and more scales appear on your body. As you breath out, spikes start appearing along your dragon body's spine (give approximately 10 seconds of silence).
5. With your next breath, your dragon body is going to be completely formed. Take some time and observe it. Observe your scales. At this moment, they are cloudy and dirty. They are holding all of your worries and your stress (give approximately 10 seconds of silence).
6. With your next deep breath, you are going to start cleaning your scales. As you breathe in, you gather some of that cloudiness, and as you breathe out, you push out that cloudiness in the form of smoke that starts coming out from your spikes. This smoke contains all of your worries, and now you are releasing them from your body and your mind. You are freeing yourself from their influence. Every time you breathe out, more and more smoke is coming out of your spikes and your scales are becoming shinier and shinier (give approximately 20 seconds of silence).
7. After next 3 breaths, your scales will be so clean that they will reflect your surroundings. You will release all of your stress. Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out...
8. You are now in accord with nature. You are free. Stay in this shape for a while. Try to feel the connection to your surroundings without the fog of stress restraining you. If you want to fly, you can fly. If you want to run, you can run. If you want to breathe fire, you can breathe fire. Try to connect with your dragon body (give approximately 20 seconds of silence).
9. With your next breath, your spiritual body will slowly start turning back into the shapeless energy. In your next 5 breaths, your dragon body will become completely shapeless and it will enter your physical body through the spot 2 cm below your belly button. Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out...

10. As your spiritual and physical bodies join, you feel a wave of fresh energy washing over you. You have released your stresses and worries. You have freed yourself from them. At least for a little while. Remember that you can always come back to your dragon body, whenever you need it. Try to gently bring attention to your fingers and your toes and then your legs and your arms. Move them a bit, and when you are ready, slowly open your eyes.

### **Reflection**

- How was this process of guided meditation for you? Were you able to follow the guided meditation or did your mind drift away?
- Were you able to release your worries and stress through your dragon body? What happened there?
- Was there someone who was not able to visualise the dragon? How was this process for you?
- How do you feel after this guided meditation?
- Would anyone like to describe their dragon? Which colour were the scales of your dragon?
- How do you think guided meditations such as this one could help support your mental health?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ This is a guided meditation, so it is important to speak clearly and slowly while also giving time to the participants to visualize what they hear.
- ✓ There is no need to follow the script word by word. Feel free to adjust it accordingly but keep its essence – the dragon that is a part of ourselves and whose scales we clean in order to get the stress out of the body.
- ✓ Do not forget to mention to the participants that it is completely fine if they cannot focus on your voice or visualize what you are telling them. Focus and ability to visualize come and improve with regular practice.

# 8. Lessons Learnt

## Overview

During the activity, the participants will reflect on their past stressful experience at work and analyse what they learnt from it.

## Objective(s)

- To practise reflection as a form of self-care and personal growth
- To practice journaling

## Categories

Personal growth, Self-care

**Number of Participants** 1 - 30

**Duration** 45 min

## Setting and Materials

- Room with chairs or outdoors with a comfortable seating area
- Paper, scissors, pens, crayons / colouring pens or pencils

## Preparation

- Learn how to make a small notebook:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDdTdyzueDU&ab\\_channel=simpleArtandcrafts](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDdTdyzueDU&ab_channel=simpleArtandcrafts) so that you can instruct the participants (alternative: play a video)
- Prepare the materials

## Instructions

1. During the introduction, explain that the topic of this activity is to reflect on past experiences and that for this we need silence, pen and paper.
2. Spread out A4 paper and instruct the participants to make their notebooks. Once they are done, ask them to write: "Lessons learned" on the cover, together with their names
3. Ask everyone to close their eyes and take a few deep breaths. Guide them through self-reflection by inviting them to think of one situation that happened to them at work that caused a lot of stress and frustration. Perhaps then they had thoughts such as: 'Why is this happening to me?' or 'Why is this happening again?' or 'I'm tired of this happening' or 'I don't want to go through this now' or 'I don't have time or capacity to handle this'. Once everyone has found the situation that was stressful, they can open their eyes.
4. The facilitator asks the participants to open their notebooks, and on the first page write the title: SITUATION. Then, they should describe this situation, first by stating all the facts (what happened, when, who was involved), but also emotions (how did I feel back then) and what the consequences were.
5. When they are done, they can turn the page and write: LESSONS LEARNT. Then ask them

to reflect again on the situation and write down the lessons they had learnt from it. Maybe that situation can tell them what to do and what not to do, who to cooperate with, etc.

6. Lastly, ask them to turn the page and write: ADVICE. Ask the participant to write a message to their future self and give advice in case a situation like this happens again.
7. Ask everyone to take a deep breath through the nose and release a loud AAAAAA sound through the mouth. Demonstrate and then guide them to do it a few times.

### **Reflection (10 min) Possible questions:**

- How was it to do this activity (guided journaling) and write down about something unpleasant?
- How easy/difficult was it to think of one stressful situation at work or to choose only one?
- What did you feel when writing down the description of the situation?
- How was it to look for lessons learnt from it and writing a message to your future self?
- How are you now?
- Would anyone like to share their message to the future self with the group?
- Can you imagine applying 'Lessons learnt' principles in the future? Are there other areas of your life where this activity would be useful?

As a conclusion, you can explain that journaling is a written form of thoughts and feelings and that there is no right or wrong way to do it. It can look like a diary, it can be a list, have guided questions or take different forms, for example, be accompanied with sketches. Some people prefer handwriting, others to write on their laptop. Developing a journaling habit can support us in accepting our emotions and becoming more self-aware. It also helps us keep track of what is happening with our thoughts and feelings, and we can always go back to what was written and gain important insights.

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ If there are participants who do not have work experience, they can think of a stressful situation that is not work-related (e.g. something that happened at school or with their friends)
- ✓ Be observant and give enough time for everyone to write down their thoughts

# 9. Dragon's Egg

## Overview

The participants learn how to crochet a dragon's egg.

## Objective(s)

- Cultivate mindfulness through the practice of crocheting
- Explore creativity by using basic crocheting techniques to craft a unique, personalized crocheted egg.

## Categories

Creativity, Relaxation, Mindfulness

**Number of Participants** 1 - 30

**Duration** 60 min

## Setting and Materials

- Yarn, hooks, needles, stitch markers, fibrefill stuffing

## Preparation

- Print the instructions
- Prepare the materials
- It is good to set some tables with the materials. You can create smaller groups, e.g., 6 participants per 1 table
- In case the participants don't have the experience in crocheting, first teach them how to:
  1. Make a magic ring and single crochet in circle:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fclSzSl-M1E&ab\\_channel=KayKrochets](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fclSzSl-M1E&ab_channel=KayKrochets)
  2. Invisible decrease:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3elWOU2-2s&ab\\_channel=BerceauKnits](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3elWOU2-2s&ab_channel=BerceauKnits)

## Instructions

Abbreviations used:

**R** – round

**SC** – single crochet

**DEC** – decrease (2 SC together)

Make a magic ring.

R1: 6 x SC into the magic ring. Close circle by pulling the short tail. (6)

R2: 2 SC into every stitch (12). Mark the first stitch (and continue marking it in each round). R3: 1 SC into every stitch. (12)

R4: 1 SC into the first stitch, 2xSC into the next stitch. Repeat (1 SC, 2xSC). (18)

R5: 1 SC into every stitch. (18)

R6: 1SC, 1SC, 2xSC into the next stitch. Repeat (1 SC, 1 SC, 2xSC). (24) R7-R12: 1 SC into every



stitch. (24)

R13: 1SC, 1SC, 1 DEC into the next stitch. Repeat (1 SC, 1 SC, 1 DEC). (18) R14: 1SC, 1 DEC. Repeat (1SC, 1 DEC). (12) Stuff.

R15: 6xDEC (6)

Use a needle for closing.

The participants can decorate the eggs by crocheting tiny appliques or embroidering them.

### **Reflection (10 min)**

You can ask the participants how they liked the workshop and take a group photo.

### **Tips for facilitators**

- ✓ In case the participants don't have previous experience in crocheting, we recommend having 1 facilitator per maximum 6 participants
- ✓ Buy colourful yarn.
- ✓ If you have a group with little or no experience in crocheting, make sure you first teach them the basics.
- ✓ It is faster to finish the product if you use thick yarn.

# 10. Setting a Self-Care Goal

## Overview

The participants learn how to set realistic self-care goals during a guided process.

## Objective(s)

- To self-assess current state of self-care
- To set a realistic goal for improving self-care
- To reflect upon the past and present situation regarding the goal
- To make an action plan for achieving the goal

## Categories

Self-care, Personal Growth

## Background Information

In the context of a training course on self-care and burnout prevention, this activity should be done on the last day, as a way of closing the training and committing oneself to a daily self-care practice. Although this activity is rather long and intense, it is designed in a way that the participants will be motivated to try to change their daily habits and do more of what contributes to their well-being. The inspiration for its design comes from the Dragon Dreaming and its 4 stages – dreaming, planning, doing, and celebrating.

**Number of Participants** No limit

**Duration** 1,5 hours

## Setting and Materials

Self-care Assessment Worksheet Questions for Setting Goals Paper and pens Watch or timer  
Optional: Computer and projector

## Preparation

Print out the Self-care Assessment Worksheet and the Questions for Setting Goals Optional: Make PowerPoint Presentation and check your projector.

## Instructions

During the introduction, the facilitator tells the participants that they will do an activity that will help them assess their current state of self-care and set goals to improve it.

The facilitator hands out the Self-care Assessment Worksheets and tells the participants they have 10 minutes to fill it in. Once they are done with it, they need to choose maximum 3 items they would like to improve. The participants are asked to find 1 person they feel

comfortable with and to form the pairs. Within their pairs, they share how it was to assess their self-care and which 3 items they would like to improve (10 min).

Then, the facilitator gives them another 5 minutes to choose only 1 goal out of those 3 and share with their pair.

When everyone is done sharing in pairs, the facilitator asks the participants to take something to write on and tells them they will now make a plan for achieving 1 self-care goal. The process might be intense, and they will have around 6 minutes for answering each set of questions. The goal is not to overanalyse but instead to write down the first thing that comes to their mind. It is important to highlight to the participants that there is no need to answer these questions in full sentences.

The facilitator starts reading the questions related to goals and can add some sub-questions if needed to support the process. The questions can also be projected on the wall/screen.

1. Take a moment to think about the area of your life which could use more self-care. **What** would you like to improve and **why** do you want to achieve it? Write it down! (6 min)
2. Next, imagine that you have achieved your goal. How would you feel if it came true? What would that look like? Add as much detail as you can and write it down. (6 min)
3. Identify any possible obstacles that might stand in the way of achieving your goal. Think about your own mindset, skills, habits. How busy are you? What is happening in your environment? Make a list. (7 min)
4. Read the list of obstacles. How can you remove them? Is there anyone who could help you? Write it down. (10 min)
5. When can you start working on achieving your goal? What are the first steps you are going to do and when? List the immediate steps and create an action plan for the first few days. Continue listing the steps and making a timeline. (10 min)
6. Read your goal and the steps you will make to achieve it. Define ways to celebrate the steps. Celebration is about doing the things that make you happy and taking time to appreciate your results and how far you have come. (6 min)

### **Reflection (20 min)**

- How was this process for you? How was it to focus and write in silence for 45 min?
- To what extent did self-care assessment help you detect which areas you would like to improve?
- How hard was it to focus on only one goal and did anyone change their goal during the process?
- How did reality check make you feel, naming all the obstacles that could stand between you and the goal?
- What about celebration? How easy was it for you to find ways to celebrate your journey?
- How do you feel now? Do you have everything ready for going towards your goal?
- Is there any way this group can support you?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ If you see that the group answered a set of questions for less than 6 min, move on to the next set. Also, if you see that some people are still writing, give 1 min extra.
- ✓ Be careful about time management and notify the participants when only 1 minute is left to answer the set of questions.
- ✓ After this activity is done, it would be good to do a short relaxation / meditation exercise, as this process can be quite intense. Optionally, you can do some movements, such as dancing, to celebrate self-care plan.

# Self-Care Assessment Worksheet

## Instructions:

This tool outlines helpful ways to take care of yourself. Once you finish the entire assessment, select one thing from each category that you would actively focus on improving. It doesn't have to be what you rated lowest. Choose something you think is really important for taking care of yourself.

Use this scale to rate how often you do these activities:

**5 = As often as I need to** - I consistently practice this aspect of self-care as needed without hesitation or delay.

**4 = Sometimes** - I practice this aspect of self-care occasionally, but not consistently or as frequently as I might need.

**3 = Rarely** - I seldom engage in this aspect of self-care, only doing so infrequently or in specific circumstances.

**2 = Never** - I have never engaged in this aspect of self-care at any point.

**1 = I haven't even thought about it** - I have not considered or thought about implementing this aspect of self-care into my routine or life.

## Physical Self-Care

Exercise: \_\_\_\_\_

Healthy eating habits (regular and balanced meals): \_\_\_\_\_

Adequate sleep: \_\_\_\_\_

Regular medical check-ups: \_\_\_\_\_

Hydration: \_\_\_\_\_

Regular stretching/physical activity breaks: \_\_\_\_\_

## Psychological and Emotional Self-Care

Stress management (breathing exercises, relaxation techniques): \_\_\_\_\_

Time for hobbies/interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Setting boundaries (saying no, prioritizing): \_\_\_\_\_

Positive affirmations or self-talk: \_\_\_\_\_

Creative expression (art, music, dance, writing): \_\_\_\_\_

Mindful technology use (limiting screen time): \_\_\_\_\_

Seeking support (friends, family, therapist): \_\_\_\_\_

Practising self-compassion: \_\_\_\_\_

Practicing gratitude: \_\_\_\_\_

Allowing yourself to feel and express emotions: \_\_\_\_\_

Mindful disengagement (taking a step back in stressful situations): \_\_\_\_\_

Emotional boundaries (recognizing and respecting emotional limits): \_\_\_\_\_

Processing and reflecting on emotional experiences: \_\_\_\_\_

Engaging in activities that bring joy: \_\_\_\_\_

Journaling/expressive writing: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Workplace Self-Care**

Taking breaks (regular short breaks throughout the day): \_\_\_\_\_

Setting realistic goals: \_\_\_\_\_

Asking for help/delegating when overwhelmed: \_\_\_\_\_

Maintaining work-life balance: \_\_\_\_\_

Avoiding overcommitment: \_\_\_\_\_

Creating a supportive work environment: \_\_\_\_\_

Constructive communication with colleagues: \_\_\_\_\_

Planning and prioritizing tasks: \_\_\_\_\_

Take vacations when needed: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Social Self-Care**

Nurturing relationships (quality time with loved ones): \_\_\_\_\_

Saying no when necessary (respecting personal time and space): \_\_\_\_\_

Joining social groups/communities (online/offline): \_\_\_\_\_

Balancing social time and alone time: \_\_\_\_\_

Expressing feelings openly in relationships: \_\_\_\_\_

Cultivating new friendships: \_\_\_\_\_

Attending social events/functions: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Spiritual Self-Care**

Prayer/spiritual practice: \_\_\_\_\_

Connecting with nature: \_\_\_\_\_

Exploring personal values: \_\_\_\_\_

Engaging in acts of kindness/service: \_\_\_\_\_

Reflecting on life's purpose/meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading or watching inspirational/motivational material: \_\_\_\_\_

Mindful reflection or meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

Letting go of perfectionism and the need to control: \_\_\_\_\_

# Nansen Dijalog Centar (Croatia)



The Nansen Dialogue Center has been implementing community-based dialogue projects for more than 20 years in the communities of Eastern Croatia.

We work with youth, teachers, primary and secondary schools in the implementation of intercultural content and programs related to sustainable development, peace, civic education and mentoring.

The communities we work in are multi-ethnic and multicultural, facing demographic deprivation and poverty, together with still strong legacy of the war in the 1990s, so still distinctly and deeply divided along ethnic lines.

## Activities

11. What is meaningful to me? (Mindfulness, Group bonding)
12. Circle singing improvisation (Group bonding, Creativity)
13. Which song brings you calmness? (Mindfulness, Group bonding, Relaxation)
14. Sing It Out! (Creativity, Self-care)
15. Ha-ha-ha (Group bonding, Relaxation, Fun)
16. Hello Kitty! (Group bonding, Relaxation, Fun)
17. Soundscapes (Group bonding, Creativity)
18. Order in Disorder (Creativity, Self-care, Relaxation, Personal growth)
19. Do You Get Me? (Creativity, Self-care, Fun)
20. How It Looks? (Creativity, Self-care, Group bonding)

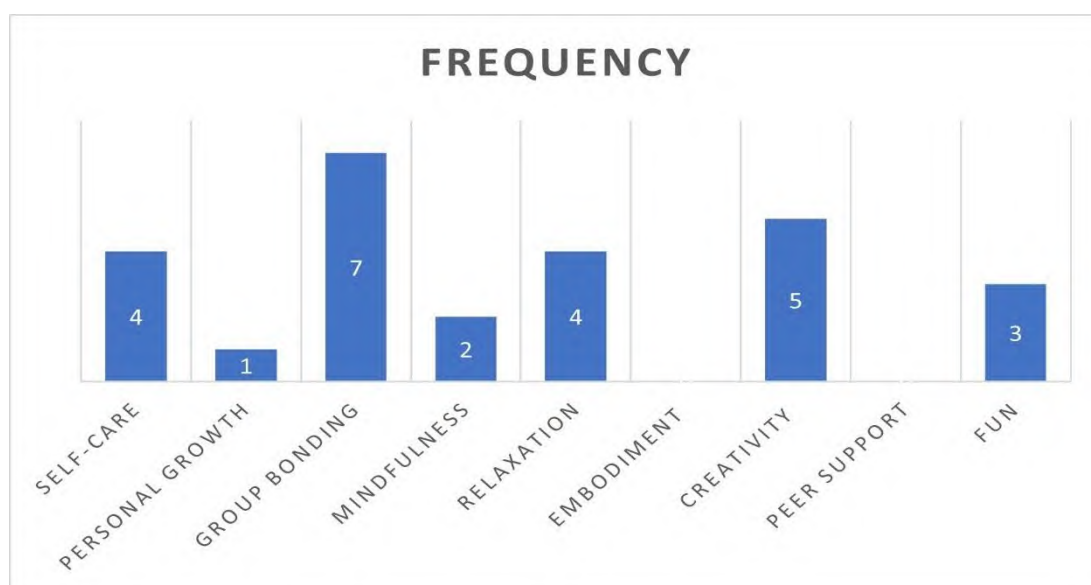


Table 3. Frequency of the categories in the activities proposed by Nansen Dijalog Centar



# 11. What is meaningful to me?

## Overview

Exploring the meaningful activities in life

**Objective(s)** Explore meaningful activities  
Connect with others through shared experience

## Categories

Mindfulness, Group bonding

## Background Information

This activity is used in workshops with the topic of mindfulness. The purpose is to evoke feelings of calmness and introspection.

**Number of Participants** 15 or less (preferably even number)

**Duration** 30 minutes

## Setting and Materials

Quiet indoor/outdoor space suitable for free motion of all participants at the same time

## Preparation

Check the activity space, ensuring especially that there are no obstacles for the free motion of the participants. Put papers with written statements on the floor around the room. Each statement goes on one piece of paper. The statements are:

Being comfortable with sharing silence with someone.

Watching sunset at the beach.

Sitting on a picnic blanket under a tree.

Looking at the old photo album.

Being introduced to new music by someone.

Putting together a puzzle.

Discovering new music.

Playing group games with close ones.

Taking care of a plant.

Petting a pet.

Taking a long walk.

Watching children play.

Being spontaneous.

Going for a trip with close ones.

Meeting new and interesting people.

Giving a massage.

Receiving a massage.

Smelling nature in the spring.

Spending time in nature.  
Having a deep conversation with someone.  
Engaging in new activity.  
Receiving help from a stranger.  
Listening to the sound of the rain.  
Listening to the sound of waves.  
Reading a book of choice.  
Observing the sensation of the water falling onto your skin while showering.  
Reminiscing about the past.  
Receiving a smile by a passer-by.  
Receiving the right of way in traffic.  
Watching a plant grow.

### **Instructions**

Gather the participants in a circle and explain that they will close their eyes and think for themselves what do they consider a meaningful life is (5min). After that, instruct them that on the floor are different statements that they will explore in silence by moving freely around the room with the tempo that suits them the most (5 min). After that, give the instruction to pick one statement they find the most meaningful for them (5 min). When they are done, they can in silence come back in a circle. In the end, they will share their choice (5 min) in pairs, explaining why they find a chosen statement the most meaningful.

### **Reflection (10 min)**

After the activity participants answer in group to the next questions:

- How do you feel?
- How did you feel while reading all the statements on the floor?
- How easy/difficult was to choose a statement?
- Did you more prefer activities that can be done alone or that include others?
- How did you feel sharing your choice in a pair?
- How can we transfer this in our everyday life?
- AHA moments

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ In order to induce calm and introspective atmosphere, facilitator should lead the activity with a calm, soft voice and provide enough time for each phase so that participants do not feel pressured.

# 12. Circle singing improvisation

## Overview

Activities for creating group connection and sense of harmony and belongingness

**Objective(s)** Creating group connection  
Emotional expression through voice and body

## Categories

Group bonding, Creativity

## Background Information

As a form of group singing, circle singing is connected with ancestral ways of music making, where everyone is able to participate and contribute regardless of their vocal skills. From the evolutionary perspective, people have been singing together to bond, send message to others and mark different events. This activity is useful for beginners as well as advanced singers.

**Number of Participants** 5-20

**Duration** 40 min

## Setting and Materials

Quiet indoor/outdoor space.

## Preparation

Check the activity space, ensuring especially that there are no obstacles and there is enough space for participants to form a circle

## Instructions

Gather the participants in the circle and explain that activity constitutes of three different but connected exercises in which they will discover their vocal and singing possibilities in a group setting. At the beginning, everyone in the circle takes a deep breath in and out.

1. Singing with the leader (10 min)– Leader stands in the middle of the circle and he/she gives elements to each group that they have to repeat afterwards. The leader forms groups spontaneously by showing with hands who has to repeat next. Once a group is given an element, they have to continuously repeat it until the leader shows a sign to stop or changes an element. An element can be a sound, snap, clap, mouth or body percussion etc. Afterwards, another person can be a leader and compose.
2. Round the circle (10 min)– First person in a circle starts by creating one element, and person on his/her left adds another one until everyone in a circle participates in composition.
3. Emotion radio (5 min)– The leader says one word (emotion, state) and everyone express themselves freely while making sounds that remind them of that word. Make sure it is compilation of both wanted and unwanted emotions (sadness/ happiness) Different words have different emotional/physiological intensity and by using different pitch and volume participants can portray it. The examples of given words are:

fatigue, energized, resignation, forgiveness, pessimism, optimism, procrastination ...

## **Reflection**

Group discussion:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- How that feeling influenced your actions?
- What did you notice within the group?
- When have it been the easiest to improvise?
- When have it been the hardest to improvise?
- What did you find out about yourself during the activity?
- How can you use these findings in your personal/professional life?

## **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ This activity can be uncomfortable for participants and its aim possibly could not be reached if they do not already have some level of group connection. It is not advised to do this activity before a group is formed and comfortable with each other. Also, before starting the activity, it is recommended to do group energizer which will raise their level of energy by using sounds and movement, for instance UH-LE-LE ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXdmpO9CRLQ&ab\\_channel=TheEnergizerPeople](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXdmpO9CRLQ&ab_channel=TheEnergizerPeople))

# 13. Which song brings you calmness?

## Overview

Activities for creating group connection and sense of understanding and calmness

**Objective(s)** Creating group connection  
Emotional expression through songs

## Categories

Mindfulness, Group bonding, Relaxation

## Background Information

Each person has at least one song which brings him/her a sense of calmness. By sharing the experience of listening to that song with others, people tend to connect and create a better understanding of others.

**Number of Participants** minimum 2

**Duration** 30-45 min

## Setting and Materials

Quiet indoor/outdoor space, cellphone with internet access

## Preparation

Check the activity space, ensuring especially that there is enough space for everyone to form an intimate atmosphere without noise.

## Instructions

Depending on the group size, form several small groups of maximum 4 people. Groups have to be at the proper distance so there is no noise which disturbs the work. Each participant needs to think of a song which is significant to them and usually calm them and bring a sense of peace. When everyone is done, each participant has to give a short presentation of a song within a group, after which everyone closes their eyes and listens to that song. The activity is over when everyone listens to each song.

## Reflection

Group discussion:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- How was it for you to share this experience with a group?
- What did you learn about yourself and/or others during the activity?
- How can you use these findings in your personal/professional life?

## Tips for Facilitators

- ✓ This activity is useful for a group that has a low level of acquaintance, as well as those who are already connected.

# 14. Sing it out!

## Overview

Activity for expressing emotions through singing popular songs

## Objective(s)

Emotional expression and evocation through songs

## Categories

Creativity, Self-care

## Background Information

It is well known that music can, at the same time, be both an expression of emotion and generate emotion. We use words to express our cognition, but while singing we also express our emotions. The benefit of singing is that it engages parts of our brain that speaking alone does not, which is why it's suitable both for expressing emotion and processing the emotional dimensions of cognition. Moreover, we can slightly shift emotions by changing the pitch, rhythm and volume while singing, thus enabling us to release suppressed emotions.

**Number of Participants** minimum 4

**Duration** 45 min

## Setting and Materials

Quiet indoor/outdoor space, cell phone with internet access

## Preparation

Check the activity space, ensuring especially that there is enough space for everyone to form an intimate atmosphere without noise.

## Instructions

Depending on the group size, form 4 small groups of maximum 4 people. If there are more people, more groups should be formed. Groups have to be at the proper distance so there is no noise which disturbs the work. Participants of each group have to think of a job-related stressful situation that happened to them. Instead of sharing those experiences by talking, the task is they express it through singing to the melody of one of the following popular songs:

Group 1: Ben E. King - Stand by me;

Group 2: The Pointer Sisters - I'm so excited;

Group 3: Creedence Clearwater Revival - I put a spell on you;

Group 4: Sinead O'Connor - Nothing compares to you.

Each participant should take a different melody. Before singing, participants should take time to listen to the song, and then try to sing out their own experience with an instrumental song version. After everyone in the group shares their story by singing, participants choose if they

are willing to sing in front of other groups or not.

### **Reflection**

Group discussion:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- How was it for you to share your experience in the form of a song?
- To what extent did the emotional tone of the song influence your emotionality while sharing the experience and if so, how?
- What conclusion do you derive from this exercise?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Each of the four proposed songs differ in emotional tone: calmness/joy (Stand by me), excitement (I'm so excited), anger/desperation (I put a spell on you), sadness/sorrow (Nothing compares to you). Beside these songs, or instead of them one can use also different songs. It's important that chosen one reflect different emotions. During the group discussion, it is important for participants to reflect on how they felt during and after singing their stressful experience depending on the song. The conclusion of the activity should be that different people react differently depending on the emotionality of the song, stressfulness of the experience which is shared, and their own preferences. Music is an important tool for evoking emotions.



# 15. Ha-ha-ha

## Overview

Activity for evoking positive emotions and laughter

## Objective(s)

Emotional evocation

## Categories

Group bonding, Relaxation, Fun

## Background Information

Science has proven that we can actively influence our emotions and generate positivity while laughing. The benefits of laughter are numerous, since it triggers healthy physical and emotional changes. The valuable thing about laughter is that it's contagious, which will be shown in this exercise.

**Number of Participants** 2 and more

**Duration** 5 min

**Setting and Materials** Indoor/outdoor space

## Preparation

Check the activity space, ensuring that there is enough space for everyone to form a circle

## Instructions

The facilitator invites everyone to form a circle (sitting or standing) and informs the participants that they will do a short breathing exercise in which everyone will take a deep breath and say the word HA while breathing out. Participants should do the activity simultaneously with the facilitator. The facilitator begins the activity by taking deep and long breaths and slowly pronouncing the word HA, and speeds up with each further breath. In the end, the breathing in and out should be exchanged so quickly that it sounds like laughter and not breathing exercise anymore. Participants will realise during the activity what its real purpose is and laugh at it.

## Reflection

Group discussion:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- What was in your opinion the purpose of the activity?
- What conclusion do you derive from this exercise?

## Tips for Facilitators

Participants might feel awkward while doing the activity, so it's important for the facilitator to remain focused on the activity and not rush. The awkwardness should be switched to laughter as the activity develops. With more participants it's more fun.

# 16. Hello Kitty!

## Overview

Activity for evoking positive emotions and laughter

## Objective(s)

Emotional evocation

## Categories

Group bonding, Relaxation, Fun

## Background Information

Energizers and activities that use improvisation come in many shapes and sizes but almost always contain the elements of laughter and fun. When first introducing improvisation to a group, simple games that centre on having fun and evoking positivity can serve as a stress-relief and motivate participants for further activities.

**Number of Participants** minimum 4

**Duration** 5 min

**Setting and Materials** Indoor/outdoor space

## Preparation

Check the activity space, ensuring that there is enough space for everyone to fit

## Instructions

Separate participants into two groups: puppies and kittens. Puppies must produce a sound(s) in a way that makes kittens laugh or smile while kittens must try and keep a straight face. When a kitten laughs or smiles, they become a puppy. Keep going until all of the kittens have laughed and joined the puppy team.

## Reflection

Group discussion:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- What was in your opinion the purpose of the activity?
- What conclusion do you derive from this exercise?

## Tips for Facilitators

- ✓ The more people participating, more fun it will be.

# 17. Soundscapes

## Overview

Group activity for creating sound collage

## Objective(s)

sound production and listening

## Categories

Group bonding, Creativity

## Background Information

This activity motivates participants to use their voices and bodies to create a sound collage. It can be an exercise in creating the sounds, as well as listening to the sounds. It doesn't require singing competence.

**Number of Participants** minimum 10

**Duration** 30 min

**Setting and Materials** Indoor/outdoor space

## Preparation

Check the activity space, ensuring that there is enough space for everyone to fit

## Instructions

Separate participants into several groups of 5-7. Each group has paper with 2 environments/ settings written which they have to present by using their voices and body percussion. In order to imitate the dynamics of the setting/environment, groups have to vary in volume and pitch of the sounds. Every group has 5 min for preparation and 45 seconds to present each setting/environment.

Settings/environments:

GROUP 1: Shopping centre during Black Friday / Rainstorm followed by sunny weather

GROUP 2: An office during project application / One day in a meadow (from morning to night)

GROUP 3: Busy city streets / Waterfall from the winter to spring

Presentation: the audience close their eyes and focus on the listening. After the presentation, they have to guess what the group tried to portray.

## Reflection

Group discussion:

- How was the preparation process in your group?
- How did you feel during the activity as a presenter?
- How did you feel as a listener during each setting/environment that was presented?

- What was, in your opinion, the purpose of the activity?
- What conclusion do you derive from this exercise?

**Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ If activity is done with smaller number of participants, some variations should be made. It's preferable that at least three participants present the setting, to be able to produce it with quality and meaningfully.

# 18. Order in Disorder

## Overview

Group/pair activity for bringing to consciousness pleasurable feelings by expressing the problem creatively

## Objective(s)

- To step away from logical thinking and encourage creativity
- To raise awareness about our own feelings connected to the problem
- To raise awareness on the strength of pleasurable feelings

## Categories

Creativity, Self – care, Relaxation, Personal growth

## Background Information

Encouraging creativity in dealing with problems can contribute to problem solving thus lowering feeling of frustration. Putting problem in some shape and colour helps in opening individuals' subconscious processes related to the problem. Becoming aware of those subconscious processes, especially feelings that have control on both conscious and subconscious activities, may help in focusing on the good thing related to the stressful situation. Raising awareness about pleasant feelings that are subconsciously triggered may lower the effect of the ones that are not as pleasant.

**Number of Participants** at least 2

**Duration** 45 min

## Setting and Materials

various coloured pencils/markers, 1 writing pad and at least 2 A4 papers per individual

## Preparation

Check the activity space, ensuring that there is enough space for each individual sense of privacy. Light and slow music is preferable.

## Instructions

1. The facilitator hands out writing pads and one A4 paper to each participant and puts coloured pencils/coloured marker in the middle making sure everyone can get the one they need at the moment. The facilitator instructs everyone to draw on paper each emotion separately as he reads them in whatever colour or shape/s (circle, line, wave, etc.) they imagine that emotion to be for them. Emotions that need to be read/drawn:

- courage
- tension
- love
- power and strength

- independence
- restfulness
- happiness
- anger
- fear
- relaxation
- hate
- weakness and helplessness
- dependency
- tiredness
- sadness
- Calmness

After reading each emotion facilitator puts list of all the read emotions somewhere in the room so it is visible to everyone. (15 minutes)

2. Facilitator instructs participants to put the „emotion dictionary“ that they just made aside and seemingly proceeds on the next activity.
3. Facilitator now ensures everyone has enough space to be without distractions. Then, instructs everyone to think about some current or upcoming work-related problem and then draw it in whatever shape and colour they want. (10 minutes)
4. When done, facilitator instructs everyone to form pairs and exchange their drawings and dictionaries. One should analyse his/her pairs' drawing by writing down emotions which derived from other persons "emotion dictionary". Analyse has two steps:
  - by colours: writing down all emotions from "emotion dictionary" that contain same colour as the one in the drawing of the problem
  - by shapes: writing down all emotions from "emotion dictionary" that contain same shape as the one in the drawing of the problem. (5 minutes)
5. Instruct participants that they will analyse it to the other person by saying: „In this picture I see (emotion) and (emotion)...“. In instructions for analysis, it is important to emphasise that there can be conflicted emotions present in picture (tiredness- restfulness). (5 minutes)
6. Instruct the participants to return drawing and "emotion dictionary" to its owner.

## Reflection

Group discussion (10 minutes):

- How did you feel at the beginning of the exercise and now?
- Do you see the benefit in looking at problems through creativity?
- If any, what are the pleasant feelings mentioned in the analysis of your drawing?
- In what way can these pleasant feelings ease the problem or reduce the impact of unwanted feelings?

## Tips for Facilitators

- ✓ At the end of the first part of the activity, finishing the „emotion dictionary“, it is preferable to seemingly move on in the other activity not related to the dictionary to prevent drawing with intent, with conscious and connecting emotions with problem on purpose. Also, at

the beginning of the „problem drawing“it would be good to emphasize reflecting on the problem. With the aim of assuring privacy and objective analysis, it would be preferable if individuals that exchange drawing for analysis are not from the same organisation. It is recommended to instruct participants that during analysis they do not need to connect shapes with any emotion if that shape is not on the „emotion dictionary “, but to try connecting every colour.

# 19. Do you get me?

## Overview

Activities for becoming aware of the importance of clear communication that may prevent frustration during collaborating with someone

## Objective(s)

- Becoming aware of the importance of clear communication
- Solving communication error through entertainment

## Categories

Creativity, Self-care, Fun

## Background Information

Becoming aware of frustration that comes from misunderstanding the other person is a step to prevent it and make collaborations easier.

Through the discussion of differences in perception and communication errors, a parallel should be drawn to their relationships. Also, the purpose is to raise awareness on how often participants have experienced that while talking about something, they had some idea in their head, which other party understood in a completely different way.

**Number of Participants** min 4

**Duration** 20 min

## Setting and Materials

Two A4 papers, markers, solid surface

## Preparation

Check the activity space, ensure needed materials and some private space for pairs to get instructions

## Instructions

1. Selected two pairs separate from the rest of the group. Explain to them how one in the pair will draw a picture on the paper (person A) according to the instructions given by the other (Person B).
2. At the same time, it is emphasized to persons B that when giving instructions, they have complete freedom to use the words they want. They must not say in advance what person A is drawing, but indicate it step by step, using simple shapes (circle, triangle, square, etc.).
3. Other persons in the group are observers: instruct them to observe the behaviour (gesticulation, mimics...) and the communication of the pair 1 and 2.
4. Ask pair 2 to leave the room.
5. Give instructions that the person A in pair 1 may not ask any questions.
6. After finishing the drawing, both persons look at the result, but without comments.



7. Instruct pair 1 to leave the room, and pair 2 to enter and repeats the whole exercise, with the same drawing.
8. Give instructions that the person A in pair 2 may ask the person B about the location and size of individual shapes, without revealing what the drawing shows.
9. When done, ask pair 1 to re-enter the room.
10. Compare both drawings.

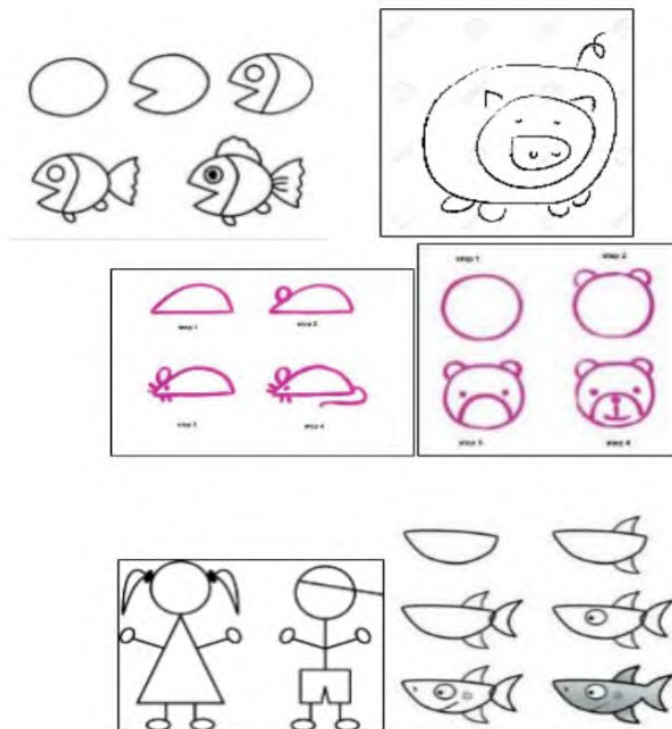
**Reflection**

Group discussion:

1. How did you feel drawing without asking questions?
2. How was it to draw with permission to ask questions?
3. How was it to see the wanted drawing and the picture that is drawn?
4. What did observers conclude: how was the communication and emotional expression of each pair?
5. In general, how do you feel doing something without clear instructions?
6. What do you think, how do you communicate, comparing these two approaches?
7. How can communication of our needs be improved in a workplace?

**Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Example of instructions: Draw a big circle. Inside that circle, draw a half smaller circle. Within a smaller circle put two dots near the edge as if marking where the position is for 2h and 10h...
- ✓ Examples of drawings you can use for this exercise:



## 20. How it looks?

### Overview

Becoming more aware of the person's perception of burnout and distinction between what a person feels and how he/she looks/shows

### Objective(s)

- Becoming aware of your own perception of burnout
- Becoming aware of distinction on what you feel and what you show/see is

### Categories

Creativity, Self-care, Group bonding

### Background Information

Activity is created like a variation on the activity for preventing addiction that had for its aim to show what a person in struggle can look like to a different person, what perception each of the participants has toward that life situation and to become aware of the battles persons fight inside themselves – even though they don't show them.

**Number of Participants** 5-8 in each group

**Duration** 30 min

### Setting and Materials

A3 papers, colored pencils/markers, solid surface

### Preparation

Making sure everybody has enough space to draw/express themselves

### Instructions

1. Divide participants into 2 groups with up to 8 persons in each. If needed make more groups with smaller number of people, but not less than 5 people in each group
2. Each group gets 2 A3 papers and colored pencils/ markers.
3. Instruct group 1 to draw representation of how people in burnout looks for them on the outside (physical appearance, surroundings) and group 2 to draw a representation of the inner state of a person in burnout (emotions, thoughts).
4. Each member of the group has 30 seconds to draw.
5. In that time other members have to close their eyes and in silence think about how burnout looks to them.
6. A sign to open eyes and start drawing could be a gentle touch on the shoulder of the following person in circle/line.
7. When both groups are done, they change assignments (group 1 draws inner state, group 2 outside looks) with the same instructions but in reverse order (person who drew first, now draws last).

## **Reflection**

- How did you feel while waiting your turn/ the end of the activity?
- How have you felt while drawing?
- To what extent did your mental representation of a burnout match with the representation you saw on a paper when opening the eyes?
- How did the drawing of persons before you influence your drawing?
- What do you think on representations that your group made?
- Do the representations between groups have any differences and if so, what are they?
- To what extent you think people around notice your inner state while in burnout?
- In what way you think people change their behaviour around you while you are in burnout?
- What would make it easier for you to acknowledge your own burnout?
- What is the best way for you to communicate burnout to others (family, co-workers)?

# LARPifiers (Greece)



The LARPifiers have been legally established as a non-profit organization in 2020. The main objective of our organisation is to use game-based and theatrical methodologies, primarily Live Action Role-Playing (LARP), to promote various educational and personal development initiatives. Our members have for years been participating in LARPs (live action role playing games) recreationally, but after having participated in an Erasmus+ training course about eduLARP in Berlin, we realised that our favorite game could be used as a very powerful tool. An eduLARP game can simulate real-world situations in a fun and safe environment and the participants can experience a big range of emotions and discover themselves in ways they could never imagine.

Our main base of operation is Athens, Greece, where we have been designing and testing LARPs with specific educational and personal development goals for both youth and youth workers.

## Activities

21. Everyday Superheroes (Mindfulness, Group Bonding, Creativity)
22. Self-Care Alphabet (Self-care, Creativity, Group bonding)
23. Try Not to Laugh! (Group Bonding, Relaxation, Fun)
24. Collaborative Storytelling (Mindfulness, Creativity, Group Bonding, Personal Growth)
25. Tell Me Where It Hurts (Mindfulness, Self-care, Personal Growth)
26. Stretch It Out! (Mindfulness, Self-care, Embodiment, Relaxation)
27. Circle of Appreciation (Mindfulness, Group bonding, Peer Support, Personal Growth)
28. Let It Go! (Mindfulness, Self-care, Relaxation, Fun)
29. Fail – Applaud – Repeat (Group bonding, Personal growth, Fun)
30. Burnout Bernie (Personal growth, Creativity, Peer support, Embodiment)

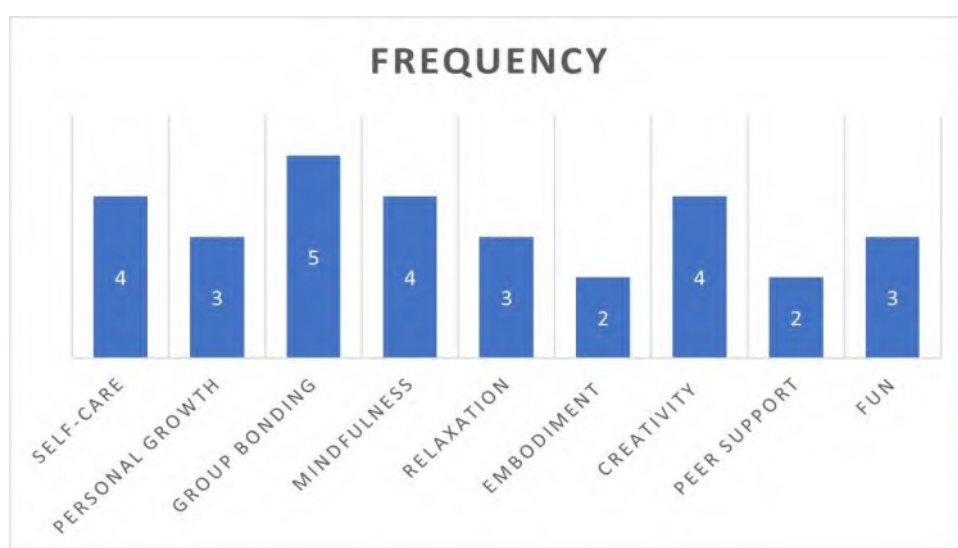


Table 4. Frequency of the categories in the activities proposed by LARPifiers

# 21. Everyday Superheroes

## Overview

During this activity, participants will create in groups of 4-5 people, their own Superhero Youth Worker. Through this activity, they will realize their own strengths and abilities as youth workers, and at the same time, the difficulties that they are facing, giving them food for thought and reflection.

## Objective(s)

- To help the participants identify their strengths as Youth Workers.
- To help the participants identify the difficulties and possible sources of their burnout.
- To give to the participants a creative way to identify their and reflect

## Categories

Mindfulness, Group Bonding, Creativity

## Background Information

This activity was inspired by a quote we stumbled upon, by Maya Angelou: 'I think a hero is any person really intent on making this a better place for all people.' This quote really resonated with us and made us reflect on the reality of youth workers' everyday lives. Youth workers are professional dreamers, trying to change the world, one step at a time.

**Number of Participants** At least 2 teams of 4-5 people

**Duration** 90 minutes (70 for the activity, 20 for reflection)

## Setting and Materials

Flip chart paper, Colorful Markers, A4 papers.

## Preparation

Print the prompt questions, one paper per group. One flip chart per team with the outline of a human drawn on it. (see example on the end of the instructions)

## Instructions

- All participants sit in a circle. You can now give them basic information on the activity that is going to follow: We are going to work in groups of 4-5 people and we are going to create and draw our youth worker superheroes. We have 50 minutes to finish the activity and after that, we will meet all together here and each team will present their super hero. After that, use a method of your choice to randomly split the group into teams of 4-5 people. -5 mins
- Each team receives a flip chart paper, colorful markers and the A4 paper with the prompts. -3 mins
- After the teams are formed, advise them to find a space that feels comfortable for them, so they can proceed with the activity. Agree in advance that you will all meet again in 50 minutes in the common space,

- so each team can present their super hero. Make sure that you are easy to be found in case there are questions during the activity. -50 mins
- After 5 minutes, make a round to see the progress of each team and check if there are any questions.
- After 25 minutes, make a second round notifying each team that they have 25 minutes left to finish the activity.
- After 40 minutes, make a final round, to notify them that they have 10 minutes left.
- After 50 minutes, all teams should be finished, and in the common space. Give each team a few minutes to present their Super Hero and post each team's creation to the walls of the common space, so they can
- revisit them throughout the project. -20 mins

### **Prompts A4 paper**

Imagine that Youth Work is a SuperHero profession! In front of you you have a blank canvas and you will design and draw as a team your own, ideal Super Youth Worker, from your perspective!

1. What are your Super Youth Worker's super powers? Add at least one superpower per team member and justify why they have each one of them!
2. What are your Super Youth Worker's weaknesses? Add as many as you see fit, and justify why they have them!
3. What is your hero's origin story? Why did they become a super youth worker? Use the top left corner of your paper to write their story!
4. Give your super hero a fitting name!!
5. Who is your hero's nemesis? Use the bottom right corner of your paper to describe them, their villain power(s) and name, and how they mess with your hero!

### **Reflection**

- When all teams have presented their superhero, give them a final question, so they can reflect on it individually. **'How much of yourself do you see in these superheroes? How do you fight your nemesis on a daily basis?'** Give them **5 minutes** to reflect on the question.
- Use the final 15 minutes for anyone that would like to share their thoughts. If no one is volunteering to start, start yourself, and pass the turn to the person to your right or left. If someone does not feel comfortable to share their thoughts, move along and do not pressure them.

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Be mindful of the time. Have a clock with you, and if necessary, use alarm notifications to keep track.
- ✓ Be aware of where each team is sitting. If the facility is very big, you can either give them specific spots they can use or ask them to remain within logical distance.
- ✓ Do not criticize any shared thought or feeling and do not comment on the drawing skills of each team.
- ✓ It is not recommended to share your own perspective during the creation of the superheroes, but if a team is having an inspirational block, be prepared to share some ideas to jumpstart their creativity.

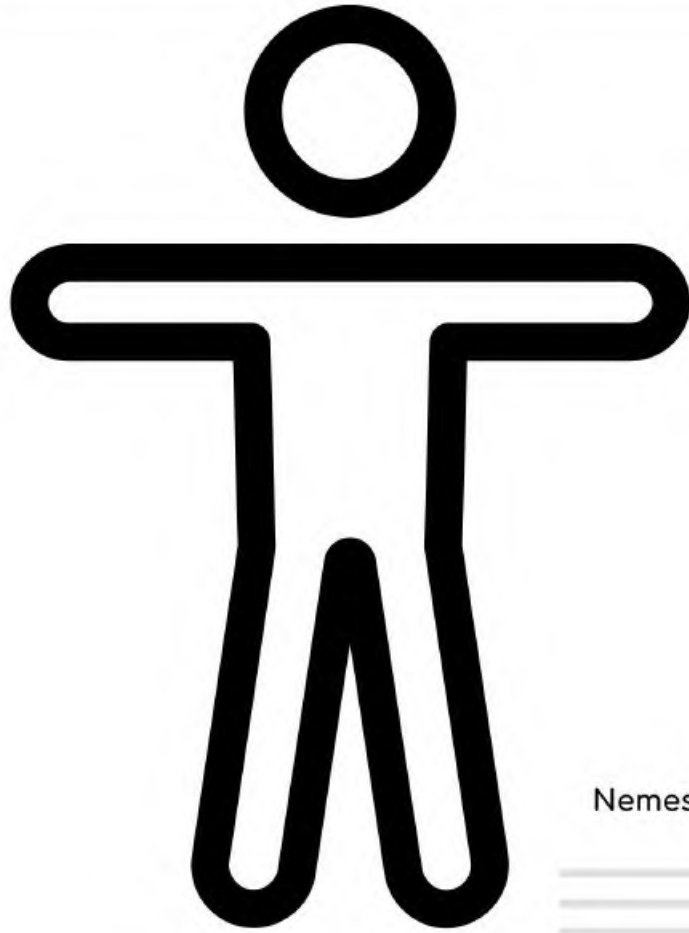


Origin Story

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Nemesis

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# 22. Self-Care Alphabet

## Overview

During this activity, the participants will create (individually and in groups) a list of 26 (one for each letter of the english alphabet) self-care activities, which can later be used as a personal self-care plan.

## Objective(s)

1. To enrich the participants' concept of what self-care is or can be.
2. To create a space where participants can inspire each other and share ideas about self-care.
3. To help participants create a personal self-care plan.

## Categories

Self-care, Creativity, Group bonding

## Background Information

This activity was inspired by an image we came across online, which we have added at the end of this document. Although the image did not have a title, it is clearly some sort of self-care or wellness alphabet. Although the ideas depicted on the image are already meaningful, we thought it would be even more meaningful for participants to come up with their own and create their own personal a-z self-care list.

## Number of Participants

Any

## Duration

50'-80' for the activity, and 30' for the reflection

## Setting and Materials

Blank A4 paper sheets, Blank flip chart / A3 / A2 paper sheets, a colorful variety of pens / markers / pencils / pastels.

## Preparation

Prepare the space and place the materials in the middle or where they are accessible by everyone.

## Instructions

1. Give each participant a blank A4 paper sheet. Ask them to individually create an A-Z list, with each letter corresponding to a self-care idea or activity that they feel resonates with them. Emphasize that these should be ideas or activities that are suitable for them personally, things that they are already doing and enjoying, or things that they would consider trying. If they cannot fill out the whole A-Z list in the given time, assure them they will have time to come back to it later. – 10 minutes
2. Ask the participants to randomly form groups. The size and number of the groups will vary according to the total number of participants, but make sure the groups consist of minimum 3 and maximum 5 people each, to ensure enough time and space for everyone. Once in their groups, ask participants to share with the other members the ideas and

activities they came up with so far, encouraging them to not only share the ideas as titles, but to also elaborate why these ideas/activities are meaningful to them. – 15-20 minutes (depending on the size of the groups)

3. Give each group a blank flipchart / A3 / A4 paper sheet, and ask them to combine their ideas to create a Self-Care Alphabet for their group. Encourage them to be creative and make use of the available materials. – 15-20 minutes (depending on the size of the groups)
  4. Ask participants to return to the big circle, and then ask each group to present their Alphabet to the rest of the participants. – 5 minutes per group
  5. Ask participants to now return to their initial individual lists and fill in gaps or modify/enrich them, after the inspiration they gathered from other participants and groups.
- Tell them these lists can from now on serve as their personalized self-care plans. – 5 minutes

### **Reflection**

After the activity is done, facilitate a reflection within the big circle by asking some of the following questions, and encouraging at least 1-3 people to engage by answering each question (total 30 minutes):

- Was it the first time you engaged in a similar activity, of creating a self-care ideas list? If you have done something similar before, would you like to share the context and story?
- Was it easy or difficult for you to come up with self-care ideas? What made it easy or difficult for you?
- When you formed the groups and shared your lists with the other group members, did you find out you had similarities or differences in your individual lists? How did you come up with the final group combined Self-Care Alphabet?
- After having heard the ideas and activities from other participants and groups, did you get inspired by some of them? Did you modify and enrich your initial list in the end? Or did you mostly stick to the ideas you already had?
- Did this activity change or enrich your concept of what self-care is or can be?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Be mindful of the time, but also try to adjust it to the needs and the size of the group.
- ✓ Do not participate in the activity, in order to be able to facilitate it.
- ✓ Do not evaluate any idea or activity the participants come up with, and encourage the participants to also be open and leave any judgmental thoughts outside of the activity.
- ✓ Sharing your own ideas or images of already existing lists like the one in the end of this document, especially if shared early in the activity, will most likely limit the imagination, creativity and individuality of the participants; so it is best to avoid it.

However, in case a participant is experiencing a great difficulty coming up with ideas at the first stage of the activity, you may try to share a few ideas with them individually to jumpstart their creative thinking process.



APPRECIATE  
 BUILD SOMETHING  
 CONNECT  
 DO WHAT IS DIFFICULT  
 EXPLORE  
 FORGIVE  
 GATHER  
 HONOR  
 IGNORE THE SKEPTICS  
 JUST BE  
 KNOW YOU ARE LOVED  
 LISTEN  
 MAKE  
 NOURISH BODY AND SOUL  
 OBSERVE  
 PLANT A SEED  
 QUESTION  
 READ  
 STRETCH  
 TRY SOMETHING NEW  
 UNPLUG  
 VOTE  
 WONDER  
 EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE  
 SAY YES TO ADVENTURE  
 GET ENOUGH ZZZZ

## 23. Try not to laugh!

### **Overview**

During this activity, participants will just relax, act silly and laugh!

### **Objective(s)**

The only objective of this activity is to have fun!

### **Categories**

Group Bonding, Relaxation, Fun

### **Background Information**

It is well known that laughter is one of the best medicines! Laughter has several health benefits including lowering stress hormones and reducing physical tension throughout the body. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, dopamine and serotonin (the body's feel-good hormones). These hormones help with pain relief, stress reduction and give us a sense of well being and happiness! You'll be surprised by how much your mood can improve by doing something as effortless as laughing.

**Number of Participants** 2-30

**Duration** 10-15 minutes

### **Setting and Materials**

Inside or outside, in a relatively small space. No materials needed

### **Preparation**

No preparation needed

### **Instructions**

The whole team stands in a circle. They are ghostbusters, trying to find out information about the ghost that is haunting this space. The facilitator is going to be a ghost, therefore the ghostbusters must act as if the facilitator is invisible.

The ghostbusters will start interacting with the space normally, while the ghost will try with whatever means possible to make the ghostbusters laugh! Whoever laughs, instantly becomes a ghost, and now has the objective to make the ghostbusters laugh.

The game ends when all the ghostbusters have become ghosts!

The only rule that must be followed is that no touching is allowed when trying to make the ghostbusters laugh. After all, ghosts are incorporeal, so they cannot touch anyone!

### **Reflection**

When all the participants are ghosts, gather around in a circle. Ask them to rate by the thumb meter (thumbs up=less stressed, thumbs down=no impact) the level of stress and tension in their bodies.

**Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Be mindful of touching the participants when you are trying to make them laugh, especially if you do this activity with a group of people that do not know each other.

# 24. Collaborative Storytelling

## Overview

During this activity, the participants will use their writing and interpretation skills to create stories by answering specific questions. The key of this exercise is that they will not write a story from start to end, but after every question, the paper will rotate to the person to the left.

## Objective(s)

- Experience metaphorically the struggles of a character and “lead” them to a solution of your choice.
- Learn how to let go of what you have created and surrender to the collective creation of something.
- Team bonding and connection
- Emotional Expression
- Reflection and Inspiration

## Categories

Mindfulness, Creativity, Group Bonding, Personal Growth

## Background Information

This activity was developed inspired by one of the principles of Dragon Dreaming: the moment you share your dream with the team, you need to let it die. Even though it sounds dark, it means that we need to release control and let the team take our dream to places we probably wouldn't even imagine. On a deeper level, it is meant to help the participants explore personal struggles/symptoms of burnout safely, through the eyes of a fictional character they have created, and to help them think of possible solutions that they could apply in their real life. The questions - both the storytelling and the reflection - can be altered to cover any topic we want to explore.

**Number of Participants** Any, in groups of 5-7 people

**Duration** 120 minutes (90 minutes for the activity and 30 minutes for reflection)

## Setting and Materials

Dixit Cards or any kind of cards with images open to interpretation, pens, A4 papers

## Preparation

Write the questions on cards with big letters so everyone can see them when it's time, but don't reveal all of them at once.

## Instructions - Activity (90 mins)

- If the group is big, divide them into smaller groups of 5-7 people with a method of your choice. Give each person a pen and a few white papers.
- Reveal the 1st question, let everyone read it and give each person randomly 3 dixit cards. Instruct them to choose one and give you back the rest. Have them answer the 1st

question, inspired by the image they chose.

- After they have all finished, reveal that they need to pass their paper and the card to the person to the left
- Instruct the participants to observe the card and read the story they received, and then proceed to revealing the 2nd question and give them 3 cards, from which they need to choose one, and give you back the rest.
- Do the same with every question, until all the questions are answered. For all questions, you will randomly give them 3 cards and let them choose 1 and give you back the rest, with the exception of question 7: As they are answering question 6, spread the remaining cards on the floor or on a table. When everyone is finished with 6, reveal question 7 and instruct the participants to choose whichever card they like from the pile. This is symbolic: they need to choose for themselves how the protagonist will deal with a tough situation. Solutions need to be choices and cannot be left to coincidence or luck.

## QUESTIONS

1. Who is the protagonist of your story? 5 mins
2. What makes them unique? 5 mins
3. What troubles them? 6 mins
4. A new opportunity appears! What is it? 6 mins
5. How did their trouble stop them from making the best of their opportunity? 7 mins
6. How did their trouble affect the people around them? 7 mins
7. How did they decide to deal with the situation? 10 mins
8. What were the results? Did they succeed? 7 mins
9. Where is the protagonist now? How is their life? 7 mins

After all 9 questions are answered, ask the participants to find their original story and take it back, with the cards. Tell them to look at the cards and read the story that was created by the group.

## Reflection

After all participants have read their stories, have all people sit back in a circle. Ask them the following questions as reflection. Ask them if anyone wants to share, but don't force them to.

- Did the story end up as you expected? If not, how would you like it to end?
- How did you feel that you were not in control of the development or ending of your story? Can you compare that to how sometimes unexpected things happen in our lives that are out of our control? Has something like that ever happened to you and how did you deal with it?
- Did the hero of your story deal successfully with their troubles/symptoms of their burnout? If not, what could they have done better? Is there anything you could take from their story and apply it to your life?

## Tips for Facilitators

- ✓ The reflection questions are very important and necessary to the activity. They can be modified to address any topic that we want, but always keep in mind the emotional wellbeing of the participants.
- ✓ Keep in mind the time. Before doing the activity for the first time, you can try it with a

- group of friends to get a grasp of how much time each question might take to answer.
- ✓ Give them a few more minutes each time they need to read the story, because the text will become bigger and bigger as time passes.
  - ✓ Don't push the participants to share their reflections if they don't want to.
  - ✓ Do not participate as a writer in the activity, you need to be able to help anyone as needed.
  - ✓ Do not share your opinions about any story or approach and encourage the participants to also be open and leave any judgmental thoughts outside of the activity. Creative writing is very personal and has the potential to be therapeutic.



# 25. Tell me where it hurts

## Overview

During this activity, participants will become aware of how their stress is affecting their body.

## Objective(s)

- To help the participants identify the physical manifestation of their stress.
- To help the participants feel less alone and realize how common it is for prolonged periods of stress and/or burnout to affect not only their mental capacities but also their body.
- To brainstorm or share short methods of stress relief.

## Categories

Mindfulness, Self-Care, Personal Growth

## Background Information

This activity was inspired by the body scan meditation. It is a type of meditation that intends to turn the focus and awareness towards the body, with the aim of recognising and acknowledging pain and discomfort in different parts of the body.

**Number of Participants** 10 -30

**Duration** 35 to 45 minutes (Activity 20 mins, Reflection 15-25 mins)

## Setting and Materials

Flip chart paper, Colorful Markers, Post-its

## Preparation

- One flip chart with the outline of a human drawn on it.
- One flip chart with the types of stress written on it, for the reflection.

## Instructions

- Have your participants sit comfortably however they like and tell them to follow your instructions:  
"Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Focus on the air going in and out of your body. 1 min  
Try to start breathing from your belly instead of your chest. Take a few deep breaths. 1 min  
Slowly move your attention towards your feet and begin observing the sensations. If you notice any kind of pain and discomfort, acknowledge it, take a mental note and slowly move to the next body part. 40 seconds  
Gradually move up, spending no more than 40 seconds per body part: knees, thighs, hips, lower back, lower abdomen, stomach, back, chest, shoulders, chest, neck, head. Tell the participants that anywhere they feel any kind of discomfort or pain, to acknowledge it and take a mental note. 5 minutes  
Return your attention to your breathing. Take a few breaths and slowly open your eyes." 1 min

- Give the participants a few minutes to recover. In that time, bring the flip chart with the human outline and put it in the middle. Next to it place the colorful markers. 2 mins
- Ask the participants to get up, take a marker and put a dot in the places where they felt pain, pressure or discomfort. 5 mins
- When everyone has finished, give them a few minutes to observe the points with the most dots and allow them to realize how some of their physical symptoms are common for many of them. 3 mins

### **Reflection**

- This is the time to take a few minutes to talk about the ways stress and burnout can affect our everyday lives. There are 4 different categories of stress/ burnout symptoms:
  1. **Cognitive** (Memory issues, struggling to pay attention, loss of interest and more)
  2. **Behavioral** (Procrastination, Excessive consumption of coffee/alcohol, isolation and more)
  3. **Emotional** (Irritability, mood swings, guilt, anxiety and more)
  4. **Physical** (Headaches, digestive issues, fatigue, lack of energy, muscle tensions especially around the shoulders, neck and head, and more). 5 mins
- Time to move to brainstorming! Give each participant a post-it and a pen, and ask them to write one activity or idea that they believe could help them reduce their stress levels, and that they will commit to try in the very near future! 5 mins
- Ask them to get up and place the post-it on the flip chart paper with the person outline, covering all the dots of pain and discomfort that they drew before. 3 mins
- Post the flipchart somewhere that is visible by everybody. At any given moment, the participants can go and read the post-its written by others, and either get motivated, or inspired for their own self care/stress relief plan! 1 min

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Try to learn the meditation sequence by heart, rather than reading it from your notes. Keep a calm and low voice as you are leading the meditation. Alternatively, you could pre-record the sequence in a voice recording on your phone and play it during the activity.

# 26. Stretch it out

## Overview

It is known that stress oftentimes affects our body too, not only our minds. The tension tends to build up, causing all sorts of different aches in our body. During this activity, we will stretch our bodies, to relieve some of this tension.

## Objective(s)

- To safely stretch our bodies, in an attempt to release the accumulated stress in areas like our face, neck, shoulders, head and upper back.

## Categories

Mindfulness, Self care, Embodiment, Relaxation

## Background Information

Stress, even if it is work related, can affect our everyday lives in more ways than we can imagine. The obvious side effects are mental, but stress also has many physical symptoms too, one of the most common being muscle aches in different parts of our body.

**Number of Participants** 1-30

**Duration** 15 minutes

## Setting and Materials

A room that comfortably accommodate your team

## Preparation

None

## Instructions

Start the activity by telling the participants to close their eyes and take a few deep breaths. Tell them to notice how their body feels right now. Then you can start with the activity. First we will focus on the face: stretch your face muscles as much as you can. Open your mouth wide as you can, raise your eyebrows as high as you can, open your eyes as wide as possible. Then scrunch your face as much as possible. Interchange the two faces for a minute. Then move to your neck. You will probably have a lot of tension around that area. Slowly tilt your chin towards the sky, while covering your upper lip with your lower lip. Then slowly lower your chin so you will look at the ground and repeat a few times. Then, look to your left and hold that position for a few seconds. Slowly move to your right, and hold. Repeat a few times. The next step is the shoulders. Scrunch your shoulders trying to touch your ears and hold for a few seconds. Release and repeat a few times. Finally, the upper back stretches. We will start with slow shoulder rolls. After a few seconds, stretch both your arms over your head, as if you are trying to reach the sky. Lean your body to the left, always keeping your arms stretched. Slowly come to an upright position and start moving to your right, with your arms always stretched. Repeat a few times and return to the starting position.

**Reflection**

Ask the participants to try to remember how their body was feeling before the stretches. With a thumbs up or down, ask them if now they are feeling a little bit better.

**Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Try to learn the stretch sequence by heart, it is going to be easier if you participate and show the exercises to the team instead of reading the instructions!

# 27. Circle of Appreciation

## Overview

During this activity, participants will give the sometimes challenging task of self self-praise and appreciation to the people sitting next to them, in an attempt to jumpstart a more positive inner dialogue!

## Objective(s)

- For the participants to see themselves through other people's eyes.
- To raise the participants' sense of self worth and confidence.
- To attempt to slowly change the participant's inner voice to a kinder one.

## Categories

Mindfulness, Group Bonding, Peer Support, Personal Growth

## Background Information

Our inner voice is a very powerful tool, and as any other tool, it can cause damage if not used properly. With work-related stress and burnout, this voice can become distorted and toxic. A critical inner voice can affect us in many ways, eating away our self-esteem and confidence, negatively influencing our relationships and our performance, fostering self-criticism, inwardness, distrust and feelings of worthlessness. After talking with many people going through burnout, we realized that many of them are having a hard time pointing out positive things about themselves, recognising their worth and their abilities. At the same time, it is infinitely easier to praise someone else for their good work, for their attributes and capabilities! Why not use this fact to our benefit then?

**Number of Participants** 3-30

**Duration** 90 minutes (60 mins for activity 30 mins for reflection)

## Setting and Materials

A room that can comfortably accommodate your team in groups of three, one piece of paper per participant and one pen per participant.

## Preparation

None

## Instructions

Activity 60 mins

1. Ask the participants to split themselves in groups of three, grouping with the people that are sitting right and left of them. -1 min
2. After all the groups are made, tell them to sit and ask them the following questions, one by one, giving them 10 minutes to answer each question.
  - a) What is something that you are really passionate about and why? 10 mins
  - b) What is your favorite part of your work as a youth worker? 10 mins

- c) If you could change one thing about youth work, what would it be and why? 10 mins  
 d) What is something that you have done that you are really proud of? 10 mins
3. Each question needs to be answered verbally, within the group of 3, by all members.
  4. You will need to be the time manager, so let them know when 10 minutes pass and tell them their next question!
  5. When all questions are answered, give each participant a piece of paper and a pen. 1 min
  6. Tell them to sit with their group, and write their name on the top of the paper. 1 min
  7. Then, tell them to pass their paper to the person on their left. Tell them to answer the following question, for the person whose paper they have in front of them: **Name 3 (or more) good qualities about this person.** 5 mins
  8. After 5 minutes, tell them to pass the paper to the left again. Now they will have 5 minutes to answer the following question: **Name 3 (or more) things you find inspiring about this person.** 5 mins
  9. After 5 minutes, pass the paper to the left again. Now everyone should have their own paper in front of them. Give them a little time to read their paper and reflect. When everyone is ready, have them answer the following question about themselves: **Name 3 (or more) things you love about yourself.** Give them 10 minutes to answer.
  10. When everyone is finished, bring all the group together.

## Reflection

20-30 mins

During the reflection ask the following questions. Answering out loud is optional. If no one wants to verbally answer, use the thumb method to get a general idea of how the group is feeling.

- How did you feel sharing your experience as a youth worker with fellow colleagues? Was it hard to share something that you were proud of? 10 mins
- Was it easier to write 3 things you love about yourself after reading the positive things other people saw in you? Feel free to share what you wrote. 10 mins

## Tips for Facilitators

- ✓ It is better to do this activity with a group of people that are slightly familiar with each other. If not, make sure that the activities before this are icebreakers and getting to know each other!

**Disclaimer:** It is possible that a participant won't be able to name positive things about themselves during the first or second part of the activity, sometimes the voice of our inner critic is too loud. Especially if you are working with a group that has or is experiencing burnout, that possibility can be even bigger. Make sure to foster a safe environment, by informing your participants that they are allowed to stop participating in the activity at any time, if they feel overwhelmed. Additionally, make sure to tell them that it is not necessary to name big or groundbreaking things that they are proud of or that they love about themselves.

They can be as small or as big as they want. If anyone decides to withdraw from the activity, make sure to check in on them in private.

# 28. Let it Go!

## Overview

During this activity, participants will let off some steam, have fun and laugh, while letting go -symbolically - of their stress and problems!

## Objective(s)

- To identify and write down the things that are stressing them out.
- To lighten their mood by doing something funny and cheerful
- To symbolically let go of their burdens

## Categories

Mindfulness, Self Care, Relaxation, Fun

## Background Information

Self-care doesn't always need to be well thought out and strictly intentional. Sometimes, a good laugh is enough to reset our mood and make us genuinely smile for the rest of the day! Laughter triggers our body's feel-good hormones and helps reduce mental and physical tension. At the same time, symbolic actions can potentially have a healing effect, signifying a new start, a change of mentality, or even give us closure..

**Number of Participants** As many as the room can comfortably accommodate

**Duration** 15 to 20 minutes

## Setting and Materials

- Thin strips of paper (approximately 5 per participant)
- Pens
- Big Balloons, one per participant

The activity can take place either indoors or outdoors.

## Preparation

Cut A4 paper sheets into thin strips

## Instructions

1. Place all the strips of paper you cut in the middle of the room and next to them place the pens and their balloons.
2. Tell the participants to take a pen, a balloon and as many strips of paper they want.
3. When everyone has collected the materials, tell them to sit anywhere they like within the room and write on the strips anything that is burdening them, stressing them out, making them sad or causing them burnout.
4. After each paper strip is filled, they should fold it and place it in the balloon.
5. Allow them enough time to write as much as they want, 10-15 minutes should be more than enough.
6. When everyone is finished, tell them to stand anywhere in the room, and blow up their

balloon as much as they can without tying it!

7. Tell them to hold the balloon above their head, and all together start a countdown from 10 to 0.
8. On 0 everyone will let their balloon go and watch it make a crazy flight!

### **Reflection**

Ask them to reflect on how they felt when they let their burdens fly away!

### **Tips for Facilitators**

None



# 29. Fail - Applaud - Repeat

## Overview

During this activity, the participants will be introduced to a fun way to cope with fear of failure and performance anxiety, that they can continue using during the duration of the training.

## Objective(s)

1. To help the participants cope with fear of failure
2. To reflect on positive ways to see failure
3. To help the participants cope with performance anxiety
4. To facilitate group bonding

## Categories

Group bonding, Personal growth, Fun

## Background Information

This activity comes from improvisation theater, and is very often used at the very first lesson of an improv training course, as a way to overcome fear of failure and performance anxiety, and thus unblock flow, creativity and spontaneity.

## Number of Participants

Any

**Duration** 15'-90' for the exercise (minimum 15' and adding another 3' per participant) and 20'-30' for the reflection.

## Setting and Materials

No materials needed

## Preparation

No preparation needed

## Instructions

1. Ask the participants to stand up and form a circle.
2. Start by explaining the purpose of the exercise to them. Tell them that it will be an exercise that will hopefully help them overcome any fear of failure or performance anxiety they are experiencing, while having fun and bonding as a group. Explain also that, in order for the exercise to work, they will be put in situations where they will most probably make mistakes, and that those mistakes are very welcome and actually, needed for the exercise to be successful.
3. Explain the procedure: One person at a time will be the 'challenger' who will think of something that they believe to be very challenging for people to do. For example a tongue twister, a phrase in their native language that is hard for foreigners to pronounce, a choreography that is hard to imitate, a mathematical calculation that is difficult without using a calculator, etc. Once the challenger has their idea, they will ask the circle "Who is ready to fail?" and people that haven't already failed during this exercise need to raise their

hands. The person chooses one of these people at random (the 'challenged') and presents them with the challenge. If the challenged person successfully completes the challenge, the other people need to react in a way that shows they found this success boring, uneventful and unimpressive. If the person fails the challenge, then the person needs to shout out loud "Your attention please!", bow down with finesse while saying "I have failed!" and the other people need to start enthusiastically applauding and cheering, as if this failure was the best thing they have experienced in a very long time. After the success/challenge, the challenged person becomes the challenger, and the circle continues until all people have failed once.

4. Start by being the challenger in order to give the participants an example. Continue until everyone has failed once.
5. After the exercise, tell the participants that this challenge can continue as long as they want to: anytime someone feels they have made a mistake or failed something, they can shout out loud "Your attention please". Everyone needs to immediately stop whatever they are doing and give this person their full attention. Then the person bows down and says "I have failed" and the people applaud and cheer.

### **Reflection**

After the activity is done, facilitate a reflection within the big circle by asking some of the following questions, and encouraging at least 1-3 people to engage by answering each question:

- Have you ever struggled with fear of failure and performance anxiety? Do you feel comfortable giving some examples of how you have experienced it?
- How does fear of failure and performance anxiety affect our personal and professional lives?
- What would change in your life if the fear of failure and/or performance anxiety were miraculously erased from your mind?
- How did the exercise make you feel? How did you feel when you succeeded and how did you feel when you failed?
- Was there something in the exercise that made it difficult for you?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Be mindful of the time, but also try to adjust it to the needs and the size of the group.
- ✓ Unlike other exercises, in this one it is essential for the facilitator to also participate in order to model the learning objectives.
- ✓ Try to be as enthusiastic, expressive and loud as possible when applauding and cheering, in order to give the example to the participants.
- ✓ The facilitator doesn't necessarily have to overcome any relevant difficulties that they may be experiencing, but it is essential to have a good level of awareness of their own fear of failure and performance anxiety in order to better facilitate the exercise.

# 30. Burnout Bernie

## Overview

During this activity, participants will use simple improvisational and psychodramatic techniques to conceptualize burnout, its causes, and factors that can help prevent it and cope with it.

## Objective(s)

1. To expressively and creatively conceptualize the burnout experience
2. To reflect on the possible causes of burnout
3. To share ideas and practices on ways to prevent and deal with burnout

## Categories

Personal Growth, Creativity, Peer Support, Embodiment

## Background Information

This exercise was designed with elements of improv and psychodramatic techniques that are simple enough to be facilitated by people who do not have a complete training in either psychodrama or improv. It should not be considered a group psychotherapy exercise, though.

**Number of Participants** 15-35 people

**Duration** 90' for the exercise and 30' for the reflection

## Setting and Materials

A flipchart with a few coloured markers, and a spacious room that allows for free movement

## Preparation

Clear any tables or chairs out of the way to allow for a large space where participants can move freely. Place the flipchart somewhere where it can be easily seen by everyone without blocking the space

## Instructions

1. Tell the participants that, in order to conceptualize burnout for this exercise, the group will work collectively to create a fictional character that personifies burnout. Suggest the name 'Burnout Bernie' for this fictional persona - of course, any other name suggested by the group is also ok! - 1'
2. Go to the flipchart and make a simple drawing of a person, then write the 'Burnout Bernie' on top of the page. - 1'
3. First ask the participants to spontaneously come up with some basic information about Burnout Bernie. What is his gender, age, occupation, for example? How is his body language and facial expressions? Add all these to the drawing or list them on the flipchart. - 5'
4. Tell the participants that now the group needs to draw elements from their own experiences with burnout in order to give Bernie the more specific characteristics that will grant him the name of 'Burnout Bernie'. - 1'

5. Start with asking the group for things that can be seen on Bernie's appearance that indicate he has burnout, or are results of his burnout. If necessary, give examples or ask questions to stimulate the brainstorming (e.g. bad posture, dark circles under the eyes, untidy clothes). Add them to the drawing, or list them on the flipchart with a different color marker. - 5'
6. Move on to things that cannot be observed on Bernie's appearance, but that Bernie can experience internally (feelings, bodily sensations, thoughts). Again, stimulate the brainstorming with examples or questions if necessary (e.g. mood swings, back ache, pessimism). Add them to the flipchart. - 5'
7. Following the same process, move on to the causes of Bernie's burnout, as well as the elements/ situations/people that make his burnout worse, or the elements that are not helpful in his struggle against burnout. Again, use a different color marker to add them to the flipchart. - 5'
8. Tell the participants that now you will as a group attempt to reenact the things collected on the flipchart using theater and embodiment. Tell them that any touch during this embodiment can only happen with the expressed consent of the person we intend to touch. - 2'
9. Start by collectively choosing a person to embody Bernie. Give the group liberty to decide on which criteria they will choose the person (by specific characteristics or randomly). Ask that person to position themselves at the center of the space. Let the group give them instructions on how to better embody Bernie, based on things written on the flipchart (e.g. body language and position, facial expression etc). - 5'
10. Move on to other elements written on the flipchart and ask the group to find a person to embody each of them. For example, if the group has said that Bernie has upper back pain as a result of his burnout, a person will need to embody the upper back pain, possibly by positioning themselves behind Bernie and (if the Bernie actor gives their consent for being touched) applying pressure on the upper back, or any other way they see fit. Follow the same process to gradually embody all the elements (internal experiences, causes, unhelpful factors / people etc). Try to assign different roles to different people, and do not worry if not all participants get an assigned role. - 15'
11. Ask the participants to shortly improvise in these roles, portraying a typical day in the life of Bernie, and demonstrating how all these elements come into play. - 10'
12. Tell the group that now is the time to come together to help Bernie out. While the participants with assigned roles remain at their positions, ask the whole group to brainstorm about ways that can help Bernie to prevent or deal with his burnout. Go back to the flipchart and list the ideas with a different color marker. - 10'
13. Now ask the group, starting from the participants who do not already have an assigned role, to embody the helpful elements. E.g. to take on the roles of Bernie's self-care routine, or his therapist, or the peer coaching group at his workplace etc. - 15'
14. Lastly, ask the group again to improvise a day in Bernie's life, with the helpful elements now in play. Observe the results of this improvised interaction. End the exercise with a big applause for all the participants. - 10'

## **Reflection**

After the activity is done, facilitate a reflection within the big circle by asking some of the following questions, and encouraging at least 1-3 people to engage by answering each

question:

- How was the exercise for you? What feelings did it bring about?
- Was there something in the exercise that made it difficult for you? Was there something you really enjoyed?
- What were your feelings for Bernie throughout the exercise? Did they remain the same from the start till the end, or did they change?
- Can you find any similarities and differences between Bernie and yourself?
- How did you feel about the role you were assigned? Was it difficult for you to embody it?
- What did you observe during the first improvisation of Bernie's life? Was there anything you found interesting or noteworthy?
- How about the second improvisation, with the helpful elements added? What did you observe? What was the interaction between the helpful and the unhelpful elements?
- Do you feel you have learned something from this exercise? Is there something you want to take away from it?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Because the exercise is lengthy, it is important to have careful yet flexible time management.
- ✓ Do not participate in the activity, in order to be able to facilitate it.
- ✓ Although the exercise employs simple psychodramatic techniques, it is not psychodrama and should not be considered a group therapy exercise. It is important to be clear about that with the participants, and perhaps avoid using the term 'psychodrama' if you think it will complicate things.
- ✓ Brainstorming is an important part of this exercise, and facilitators should be familiar with it, in order to better stimulate the creative thinking process. Some tips to consider here is to keep the pace fast and spontaneous, to use a "yes-and" approach (adding to what has already been said instead of trying to correct or change what has already been said), and to not evaluate the ideas as they are being expressed.  
Encourage the participants to have the same approach.
- ✓ During the improvisations, the facilitator can potentially serve as a "director" if they feel the group needs it, but not overstep in order not to block the spontaneity of the improvisation.

# Cooperativa Sociale Immaginaria (Italy)



Founded in 2012, Cooperativa Sociale Immaginaria is a not-for-profit social enterprise based in Sant'Angelo a Cupolo, a rural town in the South of Italy. Our team includes cultural workers, professional artists and performers, project designers, educators, facilitators, communication and PR workers, supported in the co-creation and management of our activities by local young and adult volunteers.

Innovation in the field of cultural action is the pillar of our mission. Our vision in this regard is twofold: in one direction, we provide cultural and socio-educational animation to our local community, with the aim to empower especially the most vulnerable and voiceless groups in our community – such as children and teenagers, elders, disabled, migrants and refugees – and promote attitudes of open-mindedness and active citizenship by exploring alternative ways of socializing and participating; in the other, we work internationally, especially within the Erasmus+ framework, providing training contents for capacity-building in community leadership and exchanging best practices with organizations, youth workers, cultural animators and social educators - “professional dreamers” from all over Europe.

## Activities

31. Brownian Motion (Mindfulness, Group bonding)
32. I Am... Creative! (Creativity, Personal growth, Group bonding)
33. The Hot Seat (Creativity, Personal growth, Group bonding)
34. Mirror (Group bonding, Creativity, Embodiment, Mindfulness)
35. Breathing in Motion (Mindfulness, Relaxation, Embodiment, Group bonding, Self-care)
36. Laughter Yoga (Mindfulness, Group bonding, Self-Care, Relaxation, Fun)
37. Reborn... With A Red Nose (Creativity, Embodiment, Personal growth)
38. Mindful Walk (Mindfulness, Self-care, Creativity, Embodiment)
39. Photovoice (Peer support, Self-care, Creativity, Personal growth, Group bonding)
40. The Feedback Ceremony (Group bonding, Personal growth, Peer support; Fun)

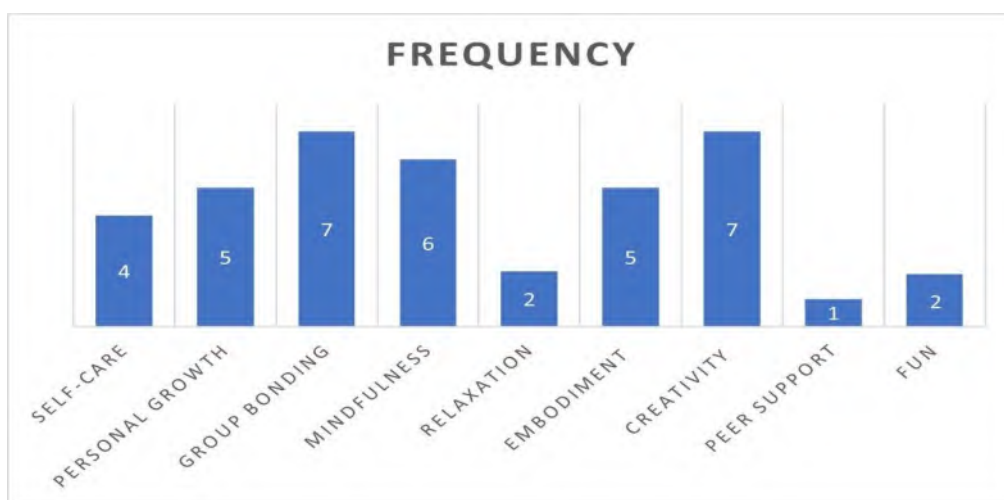


Table 5. Frequency of the categories in the activities proposed by Cooperativa Sociale Immaginaria

# 31. Brownian Motion

## Overview

Touch takes the front stage in a sensorial exploration aimed to develop mindful connections among the participants

## Objective(s)

Explore spatial awareness  
Enhance sensory awareness (touch)  
Create mindful connections

## Categories

Mindfulness; Group Bonding

## Background Information

With slight variations in setting, tone and atmosphere, this activity has been proposed by Immaginaria in several training courses (both local and international) during the introductory phases, as part of the preparation for storytelling workshops involving body movement and physical contact. In physics, the notion of Brownian motion refers to the random movement of particles within a specific environment.

**Number of Participants** 10-no limit

**Duration** 50 minutes approx. (closing sharing included)

## Setting and Materials

An indoor space, wide enough to permit comfortable motion for all the participants  
Switches, curtain, blinds etc. to modify the intensity of lighting (if available, otherwise blindfolds/scarves)  
Speakers for background music

## Preparation

Check the activity space, ensuring especially that there are no obstacles for the free motion of the participants

If available, check that the lighting system/the tools used for varying the intensity of the lighting work correctly (if they're not available, prepare a blindfold per participant)

Prepare background music, choosing tracks with different tempo (slower/faster) and genre

## Instructions

Gather the participants in a circle and explain that, during the activity, they will go through different phases.

In the first phase (5 minutes approx.) they will move freely around the room, randomly and feeling comfortable with their own tempo. After they start to move, invite them to take mental note of the details of the space and of the others.

For the second phase (30 minutes approx.), while they keep on randomly moving around the



room, they will explore their curiosity about the others by approaching them and respectfully touching elements that are part of them (e.g. skin, clothing textures, accessories, hair).

Make clear that in this second phase they will go through 3 different levels of contact, and that the transition between each level will be accompanied by a shift in the intensity of lighting and in the tempo of the background music.

1st level: touching and natural verbal expression (10 mins. approx.) In a full light setting, invite the participants to approach one another, start to establish a mindful physical contact, make observations on another's features and give and receive compliments

2nd level: exploring by touch in total silence (10 mins. approx.) In a dim light setting, invite the participants to continue their sensorial exploration through touch - but make clear that verbal expression is no longer allowed.

3rd level: exploring by touch in darkness (gradually; 10 mins. approx.) In the dark, invite the participants to establish through touch a deeper level of connection with the others. Stress the importance of safety, both in moving randomly around the space and in touching the others.

Closing the activity (5 minutes): in total darkness, invite all the participants to stop in the place where they currently are and to get aware of the feelings that are going through their spirits and bodies. Allow them the time to connect with themselves then, after counting 3 deep breaths, switch off the background music and gradually lighten the room again.

### **Reflection (10 minutes)**

Group sharing: after the music stops and the lighting returns normal, allow the participants a few moments to regain awareness of where they are and get back to themselves, then invite them to gather in a circle. When everyone has joined it, encourage them to share their thoughts, feelings and insights regarding the activity. The goals of this session are to check in with participants' wellbeing and stimulate the discussion around the creation of mindful connections within the group, so you may want to use questions such as:

- How do you feel?
- How was your spatial awareness affected when the lights went out?
- Did you prefer verbal expression or silence? Why?
- Did you prefer contact in full light or in the dark? Why?
- Any aha moments you want to share?
- Any awkward moments you want to share?

And so on...

### **Tips for Facilitators**

Whenever possible, run the activity in coordination with a co-facilitator, so one could be in charge of its practical details (music, lighting, timekeeping) while the other can focus on overview and observation of the dynamics.

Choose the indoor setting according to the size of your group: wide enough to allow participants a smooth, comfortable motion flow without impeding the random meeting with the others.

Unless participants already know each other, this activity shouldn't be proposed for the beginning of a learning event: better to plan it for when they have already developed some kind of group bond and feel more comfortable, with each other and within the group.



When giving the instructions, and again during the closing sharing, emphasize the importance of respectful and consensual touching. Physical contact is extremely sensitive, and for some religious/cultural groups it may even amount to taboo: if a participant may feel threatened in their safety, allow them to step back, temporarily or until the end of the process. If required, let the participants agree among themselves a non-verbal method to grant/receive consent in the dark.

If possible, mark the transition between one phase and the following one with a shift in lighting intensity and music tempo, in order to enhance the wider sensorial experience.

When creating a dark atmosphere, the transition should be gradual, so that participants are able to adjust themselves to it. If it's not possible to regulate the intensity of the lighting, before introducing the last level of contact, invite the participants to wear a blindfold/scarf on their eyes in order to allow themselves the experience of darkness.

Keep track of the group dynamics: if you notice that the participants are mingling freely, on their initiative, feel free to take a back seat and limit your verbal instructions down to the minimum; on the contrary, if they keep sticking on their own, always trying to use a soft tone of voice, repeat the instructions and the invitation to connect with the others.

Lastly, don't consider the timing suggested for each phase as a binding frame: if required, allow more time for the exploration in the introductory phase - alternatively, if the participants show curiosity towards each other, consider moving more swiftly to the contact in the dark. In case of particularly big groups (30+), consider extending the overall timing in order to give participants the opportunity to experience mindful connections with more of their peers.

## 32. I Am... Creative!

### Overview

Writing exercise designed as a group bonding process aimed to break down the walls of prejudice, both internally and within the group

### Objectives

- enhance self-awareness
- boost self-esteem
- foster creativity
- get to know each other

### Categories

Creativity, Personal growth, Group bonding

### Background Information

This activity proposes a revised version of a creative writing workshop developed by Laura Curino, Italian dramaturgist and theatre educator

### Number of Participants

no limit (if the group is bigger than 15 participants, in the last phase it can be divided in two/three smaller groups)

**Duration** 45-60 min. including reflection

### Setting and Materials

An indoor space wide enough to host comfortably the group; papers and pen for each participant

### Preparation

The facilitator oversees the energy of the whole group, practicing small introductory exercises as icebreakers (stretching, self-massage, etc.). Afterwards, papers and pens are distributed to the participants

### Instructions

The facilitator informs the participants that they will be given the beginning of a sentence, as an input that they will need to follow writing down the thoughts inspired by that sentence. The activity takes place in silence, in rounds without interruption: the facilitator gives the input, the participants write down on their papers, and when everyone has finished to write, a new input is provided, and so on, until a certain number of rounds has taken place (see below, "Tips for facilitators"). 3 minutes per round

After this first part, the facilitator informs the participants that they have time to re-read and, if necessary, edit what they wrote, still in silence and individually. 5 minutes

When everyone has completed the process, the facilitator invites the participants to sit together in a circle and to share, one by one, what they wrote down by reading out loud: the

participants will share what written during the first round and then, when everyone has read their thoughts, they will move to what written during the second round, and so on. However, before they start to read, the facilitator informs them of a specific twist: on a count of three, every third participant will have to say "I am" before starting to read what they wrote. With the end of the last reading round, the activity is completed. 10 minutes

## **Reflection**

The goal of this session is to learn what the participants experienced during the activity. The facilitator thus invites them to share verbally their thoughts and feelings by focusing on questions such as:

- How did I feel while writing? And while reading?
- Did I listen to the others?
- Now that I know that "I am... creative!", would I change anything?

## **Tips for Facilitators**

According to the size of the group and the objectives you want to reach with this activity, you can go from a minimum of five to a maximum of ten writing rounds. As a general approach to timekeeping, try to be flexible and patient, allowing everyone enough time to write down their sentences; however, if you see that the group is reacting fast and/or is in for a challenge, you can choose to shorten the timing, even introducing a countdown.

The main goal "I Am... Creative!" is to help the participants involved bond as a group, by getting rid of prejudices and self-judgements; for this reason, it can be used in different contexts and with diverse groups.

Clearly, the shift to "I am" is the core of the self-expression process: towards this goal, try and propose sentences as open as possible, that can inspire participants in meeting their own true selves. Possible examples are:

*The moment of the day I love the most is...*

*The place that makes me feel good is...*

Finally, it's extremely important to create a safe space where everyone feels free to express themselves: while encouraging with a positive attitude the active participation of all, don't push the participants to share and read out loud their writings, if they don't want to.

## 33. The Hot Seat

### Overview

A well-known tool designed to foster creativity and boost self-awareness and self-esteem, while improving one's own performance of speaking in public

### Objectives

Self-recognition; development of a new personal dramaturgy; breaking down the walls of internal prejudice within the group.

### Categories

Creativity, Personal growth, Group bonding

### Background Information

Immaginaria has used this tool for more than 10 years, with thousands of participants in local and international training and performing contexts

### Number of Participants

From three to a maximum of seven participants per session (recommended). The exercise will be done one by one, for a duration of 30 seconds or 60 seconds

**Duration** 40 min.

### Setting and Materials

Indoor setting, no natural light from outside. One chair; a spotlight placed upon the chair (if available); a timer

### Preparation

Kick off the process by practicing beforehand theatrical exercises on trust, on the group dynamics and on the motivational drive to take risks

### Instructions

All participants sit in a semicircle. A chair facing the semicircle. Light on (if available). One person sits down and the facilitator will say a word and start the stopwatch. 30 "or 60" to answer. The only rule, there is no stop, no interruption. If you run out of words, you keep talking. When the time is over, another sits down, and so on

### Reflection

The reflection will focus on several questions:

- How did you feel when you were in the hot seat?
- Which word, thought, reasoning struck you the most?
- When did the other(s) look true to you?

## **Tips for Facilitators**

This exercise can be used when:

- ✓ The group needs to go deeper and/or there are internal dynamics or common issues that need to be discussed
- ✓ You want to give everyone the opportunity to tell their stories
- ✓ You need to strengthen responsibilities and stimulate the active participation of all

Give proper importance and time to the preparation. In this exercise, you want to have the group ready to listen, and each person ready to enter the game.

## **IMPORTANT**

The choice of words, to be said to each participant: choose words able to inspire and resonate with their souls (E.g. Mother Travel Dreams Life Love etc.) The answers are gates to open visions, sensations, memories.

Finally, while you are free to use this exercise with a group >7 pax, the time flow may become extremely diluted, representing a challenge for some participants' focus and commitment.

## 34. Mirror

### Overview

This activity helps participants get in contact by creating creative non-verbal relations

### Objective(s)

- Inspire creativity
- Create new connections
- Improve active listening and concentration
- Experience leadership

### Categories

Group bonding, Creativity, Embodiment, Mindfulness

### Background Information

This drama activity is used for helping groups work together, getting rid of judgments and thus creating the atmosphere for open creativity, especially thanks to the use of non-verbal communication

**Number of Participants** no limit (as many as the space can comfortably contain)

**Duration** 20-30 minutes

### Setting and Materials

This exercise needs a blank space. It can be done outdoors or indoors. You can use either live or recorded music – in this second case, consider using a sound system/speakers

### Preparation

The activity will certainly be more comfortable if shown, beforehand, with a practical example. After providing the example, the facilitator will remark a few important points: to work on a slow rhythm, that strengthens the possibility of the partners following each other, and to try nonetheless, even if embarrassed or in discomfort

### Instructions

1. Divide the group into pairs, each taking a space where they can work comfortably. The pair face each other, like a mirror. They look into each other's eyes. One of the two will be the leader, the other the follower copying every single movement. When the music begins, the leader starts to move slowly while the other follows. The round lasts until the end of the music.
2. The facilitator asks to change roles: now the leader follows and the follower becomes the leader. The round lasts until the end of the music.
3. The facilitator now arranges all the pairs in two rows, thus creating one larger mirror. The activity remains the same, with a leader and a follower – but now the mirror has become one, and everyone can be conditioned and inspired by the others. The activity is over when everyone has experienced both roles in the wider mirror at least once.

**Reflection**

Possible questions: How did you feel during the process? Was it different when you were the leader compared to when you were the follower? How?

**Tips for Facilitators**

Check the venue and see that there's enough space for the participants to feel comfortable. Don't rush to give directions, and take time to show the example: for this reason, and for support with the music, consider to involve a co-facilitator.

# 35. Breathing in Motion

## Overview

Activity designed to start exploring the embodiment of one's breathing patterns, within the safe space of the group

## Objectives

To use breathing to get rid of tensions and anxiety; to explore corporal expression

## Categories mindfulness

Relaxation; embodiment; group bonding; self-care

## Background Information

First practiced during outdoor escapades at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, this activity has been subsequently tested by Immaginaria in diverse local and international group contexts (workshops, meetings, etc.)

**Number of Participants** No limit (as many as the space can comfortably contain)

**Duration** 10-15 mins.

## Setting and Materials

Indoor (recommended: comfortable flooring, natural light, absence of artificial obstacles)/ outdoor (recommended: grassy surface, shade/absence of strong direct sunlight); soothing background instrumental music, either live or reproduced by speakers/mobile/etc.

## Preparation

The facilitator invites each participant to enter the activity space barefoot, removing their shoes and, if comfortable, socks/stockings. Once barefoot, each participant is invited to feel at ease in the space and explore it by moving around as they please. Once the facilitator feels that the time has come, invites the participants to gather in a circle. The beginning of the music will mark the beginning of the activity.

## Instructions

1. Everybody starts from the neutral position: standing tall, feet parallel, shoulder-width apart. Feet are strong, they push into the flooring, trying to make roots. Knees are relaxed, ready for action. The pelvis is gently pushed forward. The body is straight and the shoulders relaxed, the chest is open, the hands fall close to the hips. The head is straight
2. The facilitator invites the participants to close their eyes and focus on their breath: the way air enters and fills the belly, the way it goes out and empties the belly. They will inhale slowly, letting the air enter and pass through the body until it descends into the belly, hold for a second and slowly empty the belly, letting go of the breath. Once completed a cycle, let them wait a few seconds, then repeat
3. While the participants keep their breathing rhythm, the facilitator reminds them to feel their feet firmly on the floor, knees relaxed and ready, straight back and the air flowing. After



a while, and as they keep breathing, the facilitator invites them to focus their attention on the little fingers of their hands and imagine putting all their power into them

4. The facilitator can invite the participants to start making small moves, if they want to: when they inhale the body stays still, while when they exhale the body moves. The moves can be random, but they need to be precise and focused. It's important to remind them to keep paying attention to the whole of their bodies and not to take the power away from the little fingers of their hands
5. At this point, the facilitator invites the participants to open their eyes, if they want to. They can establish eye contact with the others, if they so wish, but always keeping their calm breathing and moving rhythm, without either increasing or decreasing their speed
6. The facilitator invites the participant to thank their bodies by accomplishing gentle movements, surprising themselves in simple, small ways, without repeating the same patterns of motion. They can leave the circle for a while, if they so wish, and establish deeper connection in pairs, trios etc., keeping pace of their own and the others' breathing rhythms. If necessary, the facilitator reminds everyone the importance of keeping the motions simple and smooth, without going for the extreme
7. When the facilitator feels that time has come, invites everyone to gather back into the circle and return to the neutral position. The music stops, the participants close their eyes and focus only on their own breathing. Finally, with a vigorous brush of their bodies with their hands, they open their eyes and close the exercise.

### **Reflection**

If this activity is used as intro, no reflection is needed; if used as outro, a quick sharing round on participants' feelings during the activity will suffice (see the following item for more details)

### **Tips for Facilitators**

Due to its lightness, this activity can be easily used either as introductory or as closing moment of a whole, intensive session devoted to practicing embodiment, corporal expression etc.

The support of a co-facilitator, in charge of the reproduction of the music and supporting the timekeeping, can help give a smoother flow to the activity.

# 36. Laughter Yoga

## Overview

Breathing techniques, combined with the power of laughing, create a style of yoga that everyone can practice

## Objective(s)

To get rid of stress and keep oneself fit

## Categories

Mindfulness, Group bonding, Self-Care, Relaxation, Fun

## Background Information

Developed in 1990s out of previous therapeutic practices, laughter yoga is nowadays spread worldwide and used in diverse contexts – e.g., in corporations as a tool for facilitating team bonding and enhancing employees' performance

**Number of Participants** no limit (as many as the venue can comfortably accommodate)

**Duration** 15-30 mins.

## Setting and Materials

A cosy space (preferably, but not necessarily, indoor), with comfortable flooring, soothing colours, and soft props (pillows, fabrics etc.) available

## Preparation

Make sure that the space is tidy, for participants in the session to comfortably sit on the floor

## Instructions

In circle, participants start in a seated position, with folded legs and eyes open

They place their hands in front of the chest with palms outward, then push them forward and say 'ho, ho, ho' forcefully

After they twice push their palms down, they will repeat 'ho, ho, ho,' and take deep breaths

The sequence will be repeated for 4-5 rounds, with one minute of silence between each round

After one minute, the facilitator starts the laughter, at first softly but gradually growing with intensity

The facilitator lies down on the floor and invites the participants to do the same and to close their eyes, thus allowing the laughter to build up over 5–10 minutes.

## Reflection

No reflection needed

## Tips for Facilitators

Laughing is well known to be energizing and contagious, thus laughter yoga will perfectly

work as an energizer before entering an intense workshop or training session. If extra stamina is needed, consider starting the session with some easy warm-up activities for the body and the breathing (e.g., Breathing in Motion). Alternatively, you may want to use this exercise at the end of the working session, to reduce tiredness and tensions; in this case, consider including at the end 5 minutes devoted to yoga nidra relaxation: flat on the back, hands by the sides with palms facing upward, trying not to move, everybody take deep breaths, inhaling and then relaxing the muscles as they exhale, gradually taking slower, longer, and deeper breaths.

## 37. Reborn... With A Red Nose

### Overview

The provocative power of the clown is evoked to enable looking at the world with different eyes

### Objectives

Foster creativity; get rid of prejudice; go beyond judgement

### Categories

Creativity, Embodiment, Personal growth

### Background Information

Immaginaria proposes frequently this process in both local and international training contexts for youth workers ("trainings for trainers") as a threshold connecting theory and practice within the learning process, or whenever there's the need to break the patterns and learn to contemplate different perspectives

**Number of Participants** no limit (as many as the venue can comfortably accommodate)

**Duration** 90 mins. approx.

### Setting and Materials

An indoor space with comfortable flooring; mirrors (as many as they're available); lively background music; for the clown's apparel: 1 red nose per participant; 3 pairs of long socks per participant; plenty of newspaper sheets; face make-up kits; stage costumes (if available); old clothes and coats; bedsheets or rags; random props (hats, bags, scarves, goggles, umbrellas etc.)

### Preparation

Make sure that the space is tidy, for participants in the session to comfortably sit on the floor. Place on the floor a stack per each participant with a red nose, 3 pairs of socks and newspaper sheets. Put the mirrors at some distance from each other, and on the floor in front of each of them place a make-up kit and a bedsheet with on top an array of costumes, clothing and props

### Instructions

The groups gathers outside the training room, where the facilitator is waiting for them. Before letting them in, the facilitator will firstly ask them to take off their shoes and socks, in order to enter the space barefoot, and tell them that during the process:

- Everyone will work on their own, without talking to the others
- Everyone is responsible for the choices they will make and what is involved in them
- Everyone will experience on themselves their own transformation

Once the group is allowed in the training room, each participant will be invited to approach one of the stacks on the floor and sit beside it. When everybody has taken their place, the facilitator will inform them that they have been called to explore a new world and walk on new paths – but to be able and do this, they will firstly need to build for themselves new

feet. Sitting on the floor, they will wear the first pair of socks; then, they will fill in the second pair of socks, as much as they can, with strips of newspaper, before wearing them; repeat the operation with the third pair of socks

When everyone has finished, the facilitator will tell them to remain seated, then bring their knees up to their chests and turn around three times. Then, they're invited to lie on their backs and close their eyes. With closed eyes, they will put on their red noses. Whenever they feel comfortable, they can open again their eyes. One by one, the facilitator will welcome them in the new world and invite them to approach the mirrors, where they will find make-ups and clothes to create their new characters

After all participants have approached the mirrors, the facilitator steps aside... and the exploration of the new world begins

### **Reflection**

The reflection will be guided by the facilitator and will focus on several questions, e.g.:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- Did you get a chance to create new meanings?
- When did the other look true to you?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

This activity can be used when:

- ✓ The group is at the beginning of its journey
- ✓ You want to open discussions on diversity
- ✓ You want to work on the creativity of the group
- ✓ You need to give everyone the chance to be different

If the group is big, consider involving a co-facilitator

Try as much as possible to adopt an "invisible" facilitation style and follow the flow of the process in terms of time-keeping, group dynamics and interactions; however, intervene if any participant needs encouragement at the beginning of their transformation, or if the group feel satisfied of their exploration and have exhausted their creative potential.

## 38. Mindful Walk

### **Overview**

A kinaesthetic experience that allows to focus on senses and develop harmony with the world around us

### **Objectives**

To amplify sensorial awareness and develop creativity

### **Categories**

Mindfulness, Self-care, Creativity, Embodiment

### **Background Information**

Apart from giving educational purpose to the act of moving from one venue to another, Immaginaria often proposes this process in both local and international training contexts for youthworkers (“trainings for trainers”) in the preparation sessions before the creation of a public event

**Number of Participants** no limit

**Duration** 1 hour approx

### **Setting and Materials**

A cosy indoor space, with tables/desks, seats, comfortable flooring, and soft props (mats, rugs, pillows, blankets, fabrics etc.) available; paper/drawing paper, colours (e.g. crayons, markers, watercolours etc.); water/soft drinks/juices, tea/coffee, cookies, fruit etc; a flipchart (if available)

### **Preparation**

Make sure to prepare in advance the indoor space that will be reached by the group and where they will have their reflection: tidy it up; make mats, rugs, blankets, pillows etc. available, for participants in the session to comfortably sit on the floor if they so wish; arrange the refreshments; prepare and make available all the drawing equipment

### **Instructions**

When the group is all gathered, the facilitator communicates that they will reach the target-venue with a “mindful walk”. During it, participants are asked to open up their senses as much as they can, and not to talk to each other

During the walk, the facilitator will observe the group dynamics in silence

As soon as the group reach the venue, the co-facilitator welcomes them and invite everyone to make themselves comfortable. Once all the group have refreshed themselves and comfortably found their place, the facilitator invites them to find some time to devote to the reflection of what they have just experienced during the walk; in the meantime, the co-facilitator will spread to each participant the drawing materials: when the distribution is over, the facilitator invites them to start

## **Reflection**

The reflection aims to stimulate participants' ability to relive their experience in a creative way. At the beginning, the facilitator shares (verbally or writing on the flipchart) a few focus-questions that will help orienteer each personal quest, e.g.:

- **synaesthetic**: which colour/sound/smell/tactile sensation you liked the most/the least?
- **introspective**: which feeling(s)/condition(s) did you go through?

The facilitator invites the group to share their experiences in non-verbal way, suggesting the use of drawing.

After all the group have finished to draw, each person one by one will be called to present their drawing to the others. They are free to describe their drawing or remain silent, while the group observe without either judging or commenting.

## **Tips for Facilitators**

Involve a co-facilitator for cosily arranging the venue where the group will be welcomed after their walk.

During the walk just observe, don't intervene, even if anyone in the group breaks the rules.

Use the focus-questions if the group need direction or inspiration, otherwise feel free to omit them.

Drawing is recommended as a form of non-verbal sharing as it allows to have a tangible product, at the end of the activity; however, if the group are especially creative, feel free to allow them to using different creative techniques (e.g. poem, song, music, portrait, dance/living sculpture etc.)

# 39. Photovoice

## Overview

Power to the people through the power of the image!

## Objectives

To empower the disenfranchised by enabling them to craft their own narrative, and create visual products to raise awareness in the public opinion

## Categories

Peer support, Self-care, Creativity, Personal growth, Group bonding

## Background Information

Photovoice was created in the '90s as a participative ethnographic technique by Caroline Wang, scholar and feminist activist. Immaginaria has used it primarily as a tool for the empowerment of migrant women, within our work animation involving one or more migrant communities

**Number of Participants** no limit (usually, however, no more than 50)

**Duration** At least 3 group sessions, each of 2 hours approx., plus the time for research and taking pictures (up to each participant)

## Setting and Materials

An indoor space wide enough to host comfortably the group and the potential guests of their photo exhibition

## Preparation

Make sure that each member of the group has at least their own mobile phone for taking pictures

## Instructions

The method of Photovoice is often adapted to different formats in order to fit specific contexts. However, the basic components generally included in a photovoice project are:

- During the first group session, the facilitator explains the meaning of the action – that is, that the group will have the opportunity to raise, through the pictures that they will take ('photo'), the awareness of the community ('voice') on an issue (or more, if it's a large group) that they find relevant (hence, 'photovoice').  
The facilitator ensures that a cooperative and horizontal discussion, involving all the members of the group, takes place, and that decisions are taken according to the method of consensus; afterwards, after the relevant issue(s) have been chosen, there can be a focus on photographic methodology, focusing on ethical and safety aspects, more than on technical ones (especially if the group work with mobile phones). Finally, the facilitator confirms that each participant will work individually and autonomously.
- After the pictures have been taken, there's a second group session where the participants



show each other the pictures, share their meanings and together select which ones will be exhibited during the community event. In this phase, the facilitator needs to ensure that the discussion takes place in a respectful and non-judgemental way.

- In the closing session, the pictures are presented to the public in a community exhibition. At the event, guests from the community and relevant stakeholders are invited to take part, in order to start and promote a dialogue that may address the community needs and issues. After the exhibition and the departure of the guests, there will be a sharing moment, focusing on the group's degree of satisfaction with the visual outputs of the process, and a closing debriefing session, where the facilitator helps the group brainstorm about the next steps of the project (may they include a "social action plan" or not).

## **Reflection**

It is an integral part of the process, in each stage of it.

## **Tips for Facilitators**

If needed, involve in the project team one or more co-facilitators, according to the size of the group, and a professional photographer, if a technical focus is required (for example, in order to grant high-quality visual products).

Always show respect and gratitude for the participants that have chosen, out of their own will, to take part in the process.

To facilitate the dialogue that will lead to the choice of the photos for the exhibition, feel free to refer to the five questions-method designated by the acronym "SHOWeD":

- ✓ What do you See here?
- ✓ What is really Happening here?
- ✓ How does this relate to Our lives?
- ✓ Why does this problem, concern, or strength exist?
- ✓ What can we Do about it?

# 40. The Feedback Ceremony

## Overview

An inspiring celebration to close in style a long-term process, providing space for giving feedback and sharing care with the other participants

## Objective(s)

To give and receive appreciative feedback; to celebrate the closing of a learning process; to have fun!

## Categories

Group bonding, Personal growth, Peer support, Fun

## Background Information

With many different variations, related to the kind of process and the specificities of the group involved, this activity is frequently used by Immaginaria as a closing ceremony for our international projects

**Number of Participants** no limit (as many as the venue can comfortably accommodate)

**Duration** no limit (usually from 1 hour on, according to the size of the group)

## Setting and Materials

If implemented indoor, it's recommended to use the training room/venue where the project activities have taken place. It can also be staged outdoor, if weather allows participants to remain comfortably outside (usually for longer than one hour): no rain, no chill, no scorching heat; the ideal outdoor setting would be late afternoon/early evening with dim natural light (no pitch dark), in green surroundings. Materials include candles/lanterns, paper decorations (especially for indoor setting), speakers for playing music. If needed, a music playlist to be created beforehand (see "Tips for facilitators").

## Preparation

Make sure that the space is tidy, then use the decorations to create a cosy setting and connect the speakers to play a soothing, instrumental background music.

## Instructions

While the co-facilitator is already in the activity space, taking care that everything is in order, the facilitator invites the group to gather outside the door (in case of indoor setting)/inside (in case of outdoor setting) When everyone has arrived, the facilitator explains that the topics of the closing activity of the project will be appreciation and care, that its main goal is to celebrate, and that the participants will have the chance to give and receive them individually, sharing verbal and non-verbal feedback. Then, the facilitator asks the participants whether they prefer to first give or receive the feedback: after everyone has replied and their answers have been noted, the facilitator invites the group to enter the activity space. Once everyone is in, the group is invited to position themselves in two opposite rows,

standing opposite each other at the approximate distance of 1.5 metres, and leaving 0.5 metres between each of the opposite pairs: the ones who replied that they would firstly prefer give the feedback are invited to position themselves in the front of any of the two rows, while the ones who said they'd rather first receive the feedback are invited to position themselves at the bottom

When everyone has taken their place, the facilitator explains the process: one by one, starting from the bottom, the participants will walk in between the rows, at the pace and tempo that they feel comfortable with, and they will stop in proximity of each of the opposing pairs; the participants in the opposing pair will move towards the one standing between them, and will discreetly share a feedback, either verbal or non-verbal; when they have finished, they will return to their place in the lines and the participant will walk on to the next pair, and so on until reaching the front of the row; when the participant has reached the front of the row they remain there, taking the first position, and another participant will start from the bottom. Before starting the process, the facilitator highlights a few important points: the feedback – especially if verbal – should be as silent as possible, being a sensitive, private matter between its giver and its receiver; furthermore, the feedback is meant to be as caring as possible – thus, participants are invited not to make anything uncomfortable for the other (such as seeking physical contact when this is not wanted), and to better remain silent and neutral if they don't have anything positive to share with the other

When the facilitator has concluded this part, and any potential question has been answered, the process starts: one by one, each participant walks in between the rows, receiving their feedback from the others and reaching the front position

When everyone has completed the walk, the music stops and the facilitator invites everyone to gather in circle, in silence. Everyone, if they want, can keep eye contact with any of the other participants. When the tension has reached its climax, with a loud "Thank you!" the facilitator breaks the silence, and the party music starts... Time to celebrate!

## **Reflection**

No reflection needed

## **Tips for Facilitators**

The main point of this activity is that it's a moment for the participants to enjoy with each other, have fun and celebrate, a memory that they'll be happy to treasure when they return home. It usually gets very emotional, with plenty of tears shed, strokes and group hugs... It's totally ok if, after a few rounds, participants start to bend or break the rules, not waiting for their turn to give or receive the feedback: the most important thing is that everyone may feel comfortable and safe, so harsh and aggressive talk, verbal violence or unwanted physical contact are absolute no-go. Also, allow as far as possible the participant to walk the way they want (e.g., with closed eyes/blindfolded, dancing, etc.)

The activity may have plenty of variations according to the size of the group, the intensity of the process they went through, and the specificities of the participants involved: it can be as intense as a ritual, with instrumental background music (or even better, live music), or as exuberant as a carnival, with each participant walking/dancing at the rhythm of a song they have chosen. However, this activity is not recommended if the group have gone through a traumatic process and you foresee the possibility of mostly negative feedback and/or the lack of interest towards such a kind of closing ceremony.

# Fundacja Edukacyjna Nausika (Poland)



Fundacja Edukacyjna Nausika was established in 2018 to develop a high-quality learning agenda in non-formal education by designing ready-to-use materials and guidebooks for the educators active in the field and experimenting with innovative methodologies – from edu-LARP to board games, storytelling cards and impro theatre. The aims of education, as we see it, are: raising creativity among the youth and maintaining it among the adults; empowering people by conscious work on personal development; preventing radicalization and prejudices by critical thinking; promoting climate education and sustainable development; strengthening resilient lifestyle on local, national and European level.

On the local level, we are networking and cooperating with many NGO's active in Krakow and national organizations, while on the European level we are designing and leading various training courses tackling the topics of migration, sustainable development, deep ecology and soft skills.

## Activities

41. Renga (Creativity, Group bonding)
42. Yoruba – Speak with the Deity of Nature (Embodiment, Group bonding, Creativity)
43. Inside Out (Group bonding, Peer support)
44. Mandala of Safe Space (Group bonding, Creativity, Relaxation)
45. Winnie Guessing Game (Group bonding, Personal growth, Fun)
46. One-Hand Juggle (Mindfulness, Embodiment, Relaxation, Fun)
47. A Blink of a Sword! (Embodiment, Relaxation, Fun)
48. Laban Lexicon (Creativity, Embodiment)
49. Collective Collage (Creativity, Relaxation, Group bonding)
50. Re-Quote (Personal growth, Creativity)

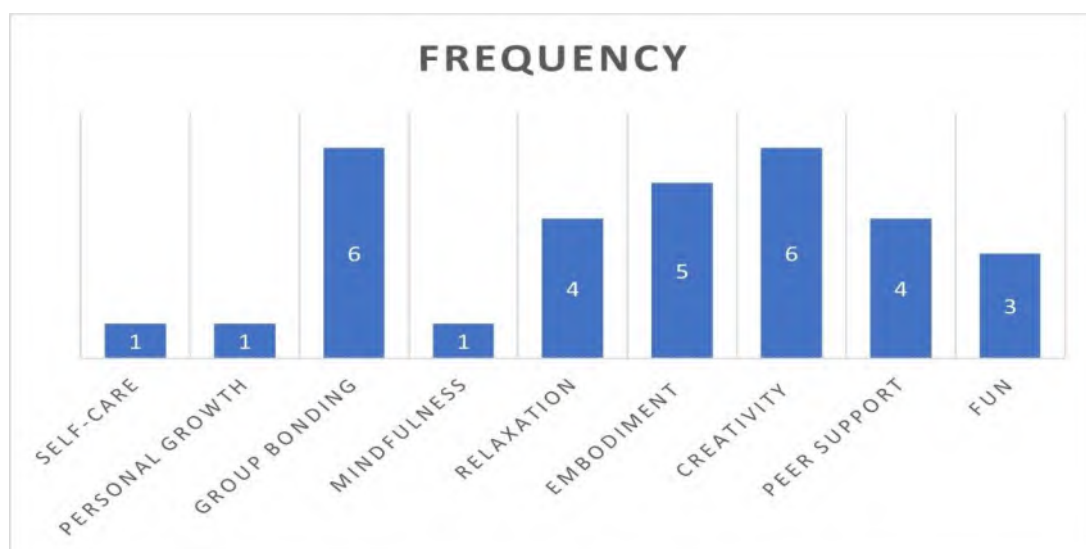


Table 6. Frequency of the categories in the activities proposed by Fundacja Edukacyjna Nausika

# 41. Renga

## Overview

Japanese poetical storytelling or collaborative poetry. Throughout cooperative writing participants learn to share ideas and how to lead the creative process together.

## Objectives

- boosting creativity
- improving public speaking
- enhancing focus and self-reflection
- improving active listening and teamwork

## Categories

Creativity, group bonding

## Background Information

Renga poetry is a Japanese collaborative art form where multiple renga poets contribute alternating stanzas of a poem. Each renga poet contributes one stanza and alternates with their peers. Typically, at least three poets will create a single work, and different formats of the poem dictate its length. It is an exercise for working together, which teaches how to make a collaborative art form.

**Number of Participants** from 2 up to 30

**Duration** 1h30

## Setting and Materials

A4 paper for notes, pens or pencils - one for each participant. Exemplary haiku and classical poems (Check Tips for Facilitators)

## Preparation

Clean the space of unnecessary items to minimize overstimulation. You may create some minimalist decor, but it is not necessary. Another extra thing that will settle participants into the right mood is to prepare a cup of green tea for every participant

Check if you have enough materials: paper and something to write for every participant

Prepare the instruction. Chose a metre for poems or find an already existing line as a start (for inspiration look below)

## Instructions

1. Warm up - Word association game

Participants sit in the circle. First person say one word, then next gives association to it, and the third one tries to connect two last words. The fourth person gives association to 2 previous words and the rest is following that pattern

2. Tan renga in couples [10 minutes]

["Tan" means "short," so "tan renga" refers to a shorter renga poem, consisting of just two verses.

Even with only two verses, tan renga still exemplifies linked verse where the first poet set up a scene and the second would respond to it with something more abstract or emotional that builds on the imagery depicted in the first stanza]

Divide participants into pairs, you may give them exemplary poems for inspiration and encourage to create two versed tan renga. They can create a couple of them or try to make one longer by switching after every two verses.

Use topic that is relevant for your event/workshop eg. support, balance, well-being, nature

3. Renga [50 minutes]

Create a circle, put papers and pens in the middle (they are for the participants if they wish to make notes, write down good ideas for the verse). Give broad topic like a season (winter, spring) or feeling (happiness, sadness, well-being, burn out). Connect it with your workshop/event theme and adjust to your group

Start by giving three lines on the topic (it can be from another poem or their own creation), which will also give others the rhythm. There is no need to create rhymes, but participants can play with it if they want. Write it and pass the main poem paper to the next person who reads it aloud, then if wishes, then can add next verse. If doesn't want, then just gives the paper to the next person who reads aloud the verse written by the last person. Again they can add something from themselves and pass to another who will read it aloud. And in this manner the paper goes around and the last person in the circle is not reading just the last verse but the whole poem

Encourage everybody to active listening and focus on your own reflections and emotions but also on what their colleagues wrote to create a coherent text

Hang your poem on the wall and admire. Congratulations! You collaboratively created a poem! It doesn't have to be a masterpiece but it is already piece of art

### **Reflection**

How was for you to find the proper words for the poems?

Did you like what others added to your verses? How was the collaboration?

Did you use any metaphors? Do you have your favourites?

Do you have your favourite poets or poems? Share it if you want

### **Tips for Facilitators**

If there are more than 20 participants then you can divide them into two groups and place in such manner that they won't disturb each other while reading aloud

Prepare different types of haiku or western classical poems to have them as a backup for your workshop

Some examples for the start line: "At midnight, in the month of June, I stand beneath the mystic moon." (Edgar Allan Poe, The Sleeper)

More material about Haiku:

[Haiku in a nutshell](#)

[10 vivid haiku](#)

[Haiku traditional and modern](#)

More material about classical poems:

[Society of Classical Poets](#)

[31 short classic poems](#)

[32 poems in English](#)

# 42. Yoruba - Speak with the Deity of Nature

## Overview

Dancing exercises with some theatrical elements that encourage groups towards collective problem solving

## Objectives

- encouraging self-expression and self-awareness through the embodiment
- dealing with emotions
- reconnecting with one's own body
- enhancing non-verbal communication

## Categories

Embodiment, Group bonding, Creativity

## Background Information

Dancing therapy is useful in the development of self-esteem, confidence, and awareness, furthermore, it might be a great strategy for stress relief and the unconscious search for solutions to current problems one can have.

When Yoruba people dance, their steps are always in unison with the beats, especially of the talking drum (Ganga). The limbs (arms and legs) are moved in an emphatic fashion while they dance.

The 7 main deities of the Yoruba pantheon play a key part in the activity. Here is a short description of their roles, with the moves assigned to them.

7 Main Deities (orishas):

Elegba - the Trickster, the Deity of Roads, Message and Chance

Suggestions of moves: fast, wibbly, a lot of sneaking and twirling

Yemoja - a mother goddess; patron deity of women and of the Ogun river

Suggestions of moves: serious, slow, a lot of walking around and making circles with arms

Osun - orisha who presides over love, intimacy, beauty, wealth, diplomacy and of the Osun river

Suggestions of moves: wavy, walking around others, happy moves but with dignity

Sàngó - orisha of the thunders and lightning

Suggestions of moves: heavy, rapid moves; the one dancing can imagine themselves as a warrior

Obàtálá - creator of human bodies; orisha of light, spiritual purity, and moral uprightness

Suggestion of moves: slow and powerful; XIX century aristocrats dances might be an inspiration

Oya - orisha of the Niger River; associated with wind, lightning, fertility, fire, and magic

Suggestions of moves: light, fast, energetic; movement of birds or kits might be an inspiration

Osoosì - orisha of the hunt, forest, strategy and of knowledge

Suggestions of moves: careful but confident, a lot of looking around, stealthy steps



**Number of Participants** up to 35 (number must be divided by 5, 6 or 7)

**Duration** around 1 h

### **Setting and Materials**

You will need: a (bluetooth) speaker, cheatsheets of different dancing moves (examples below in **Example of moves**)

For this scenario, the facilitator should prepare a space in which the chosen number of participants will have enough space to walk freely. The activity can be facilitated either indoor or outdoor (in a park or a garden), but remember that it should be free of other people who are not part of a this exercise (some participants might feel uncomfortable if others observe them)

### **Preparation**

Ask participants to prepare themselves before the session by wearing comfortable clothes and shoes

Prepare background music (the best-beat focused). It doesn't need to be any particular type of music, but remember not to choose a music that will turn participants attention from the exercise

### **Instructions**

Gather the participants in a circle and explain that, during the activity, they will go through different phases

The first phase - let everybody move freely around the room. Give them easy instructions like: "move faster", "move happily", "move heavily" etc. [5 min]

The second phase - all the participants stand in a circle and all of them repeat an easy set of moves, for example, everybody is going around; jumping in a place; kicking gently into the air, etc. After that, one person from the participants shows a move and everybody followed that. At the end of the phase teach participants a few (max 5) moves of Yoruba dancing (described below in **Example of moves**). [around 10 min]

The third phase - tell them a little about the people of Yoruba, what they believe, and what they use dance for. Explain that they will use similar moves but with different intentions - they are going to collectively, without words, only by the movement of their body respond to obstacles. While explaining participants can gently self-massage to feel their bodies. [5 min]

The fourth phase - divide people into groups of 5-7 people. In groups, assign everybody the role of one deity that they will impersonate. They will dance together to the music, using the type of movement described next to the name of the deity they were assigned to. [10 min]

The fifth phase - one person of the whole group plays the role of the deity and the rest is giving responses. The deity shows a situation for example a big fire (it can be shown like this - hands together are going straight into the sky and then they rapidly go into opposite directions), earthquake, thunderstorm, drought, flood, an eruption of a volcano, etc. The rest of the group moves in a certain way that will stop the event (the way to respond to a big fire might be creating a powerful rain - everybody stands together and moves arms from self to the deity - either building walls around the fire letting it react and be, but not harming anyone - everyone stands around the deity in a circle, becoming a wall - or pouring the deity with a little bit of water, improvising the drops by fingers or watering fire, drawing water



by hands in the direction of the deity). Deity needs to react to those who respond and get calmer and calmer. After a few minutes, the role of the deity goes to another person and the whole exercise begins again but with a different obstacle. [around 20 min, depending on the number of participants who want to impersonate the deities]

### **Reflection (around 10 min)**

- How your body felt during this exercise?
- How does your body react when you are happy, sad, angry, irritated, overwhelmed, tired, or cheerful? Which positions does it take? Does it expand, tense, shrink...?
- What was the most important and helpful for you in this activity?
- What are your ways of relaxing your body? Are they similar to the practices of relaxing your mind? Do you combine them?
- How meaningful non-verbal communication is to you? Do you use it often? Unintentionally or on purpose?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Help participants to feel less awkward with embodiment by escalating with exercises from simple physical warm-ups, walking freely and simple movements, to more demanding choreography

### **Appendix: Example of moves**

Thunder - leg and arm on one side of the body go into the air, next land both simultaneously; repeat once on the left, once on the right side

Earthquake - hands on the laps and moving in a straight line heavily

Frogs - hands in front (t-rex style), while jumping with both legs

Sweeping the sand - hands on hips, while gently sweeping with the inner part of feet

Reaching for the stars - jump with both legs, while in the air use one hand to "grab" something really high, then while landing "pull" that hand to yourself

Sowing - act like you have seeds in your hands, carefully drop them one with your left hand, and once with the right, while slowly moving around

Scooping up water - with both hands act like you want to move water from one place to another

Big wave - use your whole body to go up and down. Arms should make powerful circles

### **Helpful/inspirational links**

[Teach yourself Yoruba simple cultural dance](#)

[Nigerian Yoruba Cultural Bata Dance Performance by Dream Catchers Academy Girls](#)

# 43. Inside Out

## Overview

This activity teaches how to focus on personal and others' emotions

## Objectives

- Learn to communicate more clearly about emotion
- Develop active listening
- Create a feeling of understanding

## Categories

Group bonding, Peer support

## Background Information

Active listening involves restating a paraphrased version of the speaker's message, asking questions when appropriate, and maintaining moderate to high nonverbal conversational involvement. It is a social skill that can help people not only to communicate in a clearer way but also to better understand each other. Active listening builds and improves relationships, helps to show support, and it's good for personal growth. Participants who have received active responses in conversations feel more understood than the ones who have received only advice and/or simple acknowledgments

Good listening skills are also helpful in a work environment: it helps to resolve conflicts, minimize misunderstandings, work in a team, understand assignments and expectations towards workers

**Number of Participants** min 6 (aim for an even number)

**Duration** 1h 15 min

## Setting and Materials

A set of stories, and examples (for the third step):

A

Joy - You received an unexpected gift

Sadness - Your friend is leaving the city for a while

Anger - You can't find your keys

B

Surprise - You saw a flying car

Fear - You hear a big dog barking

Disgust - You ate rotten food

## Preparation

Write down and print the stories. Ensure that there will be enough space for each pair and that nobody outside the workshop will disturb it - people might be sharing intimate stories and information

## Instructions

1. Introduce the activity by informing the participants that its aim is to experience active listening and focus on emotions - their own and others' ones. They can tell their partner at any moment that they don't want to take part in this activity any further. An important rule is to build a safe place to share the stories, without fear that they can be retold.
2. Make the group gather in a circle. The facilitator stands in the circle, and asks the first question with the phrase: "Who..., just like me?" - For example: "Who has a cat, just like me?" "Who likes skiing, just like me?" "Who likes drawing, just like me?" The participants that answer yes to the question have to step inside the circle and need quickly come up with a pose related to the question. After everyone inside has found a pose, the next person who wants to, asks a new question. Repeat the exercise a few times - for approx. 10 minutes

3. Create pairs - each pair should get one short script prepared by the host. The story has one sentence and the leading emotion - you can find examples in the **Setting and Materials** part above.

One of them has to pantomime the scene without using any words - focusing on the presentation of the emotions. The other one then has to try and guess the emotion and then they switch roles. They are doing that until there are emotions on their card. One person in pair should get three emotions with the letter "A" on the top and the second person with a "B".(approx. 15 mins)

4. Inform the participants about the next exercise, before they set pairs, and remind them about the boundaries: they should check if their partner is ready to receive certain sensitive topics and information before mentioning heavy topics. Discuss triggers if needed. Remind the pairs that they are there to listen: focus on the stories and emotions instead of thinking of advice or your reflection on it.

Make new pairs after the instructions for the next exercise are clear. It would be preferable, that the pairs don't know each other closely: the best results for group bonding can be achieved with two people who don't know each other well. If someone feels anxious about the idea of sharing emotions with a stranger, they are free to choose to be with somebody they know.

The participants take roles: One of them shares and the other one listens. The sharing partner will share one positive and one negative event that happened to them this week. The story can also be made up if needed. The listener has to listen to them carefully and silently, without making any comments - let the sharer think, and talk. After the stories, the listener mirrors the sharing partner, making a short summary of what they heard and saying which emotions they heard in the stories of the other person.

After that, the sharing partner can choose, if they don't want to talk, or if the sharing partner gives permission to the listener to give advice and/or reflect on their stories, the pair can discuss it. (Be careful to remind the participants that reflecting does not equal giving advice - if it is not asked for, don't give it.)

Change in roles - the listener shares, the sharing partner listens, and later, if agreed, they discuss (around 35 minutes).

## Reflection

- Was it hard/easy to share?
- Was it hard to convey (your) emotions?

- Was it hard to only listen - and not give advice?
- How do you feel after discussing all this? (vulnerable? relieved? etc)
- What part did you like the most?
- How did you feel during the activity?
- What will you remember from this activity?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

- ✓ Manage the time in a way that won't leave people tired or bored. You can make the steps longer or shorter
- ✓ The goal of this activity is to communicate emotions. The participants' stories don't have to be 100% real, they can be made up on the spot - they just need to convey emotions. If somebody is not feeling comfortable in sharing hurtful or private stuff, they are free to tell a less intimate story, or a made-up one

# 44. Mandala of Safe Space

## Overview

This activity helps express inner feelings throughout art

## Objectives

- To express oneself artistically
- To focus on a creative task
- To build a safe space through an enjoyable process

## Categories

Group bonding, Creativity, Relaxation

## Background Information

This method is used in art therapy and, with the help of a professional, can be a really useful tool to help with mental health. Art therapy is not specific in its practices, making it customizable to the ever-changing life: in this case, it is used as a way to feel expressive in a non-judgmental environment. (Not official therapy!)

Other benefits associated with art therapy include: the development of relationships with other group members, understanding the self and the future, gaining perspective, personal achievements, relaxation and empowerment.

**Number of Participants** from 6 to 30

**Duration** approx. 1 h

## Setting and Materials

Several A4 sheets than participants; watercolours, cups, brushes; straws; crayons, markers, pencils and pens (the more materials, the better). Modelling clay or beads can also be useful

## Preparation

Find a place with plenty of space - tables and chairs are the best for this activity, but if you don't have enough for the whole group, prepare a space on the floor.

Distribute the paper and materials evenly and in a way that everybody can reach them easily

## Instructions

Divide participants into even groups

Give each participant a straw and 1 to 5 sheets of A4 paper depending on the size of the group:

<10 - one sheet

10-15 - two sheets

15-20 - three sheets

20-25 - four sheets

25-30 - five sheets

1. Put the sheets together on the table or floor. One by one, each participant will take a

brush, pick one colour, put a dot of watercolour on paper and then use a straw blow at it. This shouldn't take a long time. This process finishes when everybody in a group does their turn (approx. 15 min)

2. Give each participant a sheet of paper. Tell them to draw a circle (you can use paper plates for that). Tell them that this circle is their safe space, they can transform it however they want. Encourage them to use all the materials you brought for them. They can create a figurine of modelling clay, and put it in the middle, they can get out of the circle etc. Let their creativity guide them (approx. 30 min)
3. After that, create a circle of sharing, depending on the amount of people you can divide them again in the same groups or make a big circle. If somebody doesn't want to share, it is okay for them not to

Examples of questions: What do you think about your artistic expression? Were you passionate about the process? Did you surprise yourself? What does the finished artwork tell you about yourself? (Why did they include certain things/colours)

If the person feels safe, others can also make some comments about the mandala. Repeat the whole process in a circle (approx. 20 min).

### **Reflection**

After the end of the process:

- Which materials were the most fun for you to use?
- Were you comfortable sharing your thoughts with others?
- Did you find the process calming?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

This tool comes from art therapy, but if you are not a trained professional you shouldn't try to use it according to a therapist's approach: do not analyse people, just give them free time to express themselves how they feel is best for them in a given moment

If they want to share, hear others' opinions - they can, but it is their choice to do so

Remember that time had been written as a suggestion: if you see that your group is doing the exercises slower or faster, change the time accordingly. Maybe they create their mandala in 10 minutes but discussing them will take them more than 20 minutes - this only depends on the group you are working with

You can use metaphorical cards (for example Dixit) to give participants inspiration in the second step: let everybody draw one card, give them a minute to think about it and tell them that they may incorporate this card - its meaning or visuals into the mandala

# 45. Winnie Guessing Game

## Overview

A short character game using the Winnie-The-Pooh archetypes to elaborate the question: "Do others perceive me as I perceive myself"?

## Objectives

- Reflect upon perception and self-perception of our characters and personalities
- Deepen and personalize the relations between the group of people who already know each other a bit

## Categories

Group bonding, Personal growth, Fun

## Background Information

The game came out in a creative process and has been tested a few times in Gdańsk and Kraków (Poland), with over 40 participants altogether, with a result of people who have known each other for years filling the cards about each other differently and still being surprised about it.

**Number of Participants** 2-20

**Duration** 5-10 minutes

## Setting and Materials

You need printed [WINNIE CARDS](#) (download printable version; see also at the bottom), in colour, preferably on hard paper, 3 cards per participant

The cards already contain the instruction: "Describe a person you know by distributing 5 points between Winnie-The-Pooh characters."

## Preparation

You can play it anywhere. Decide if you want to sit at a table or on the ground

Uncover the playful aspects of your character hidden behind the "grown-up" environment

## Instructions

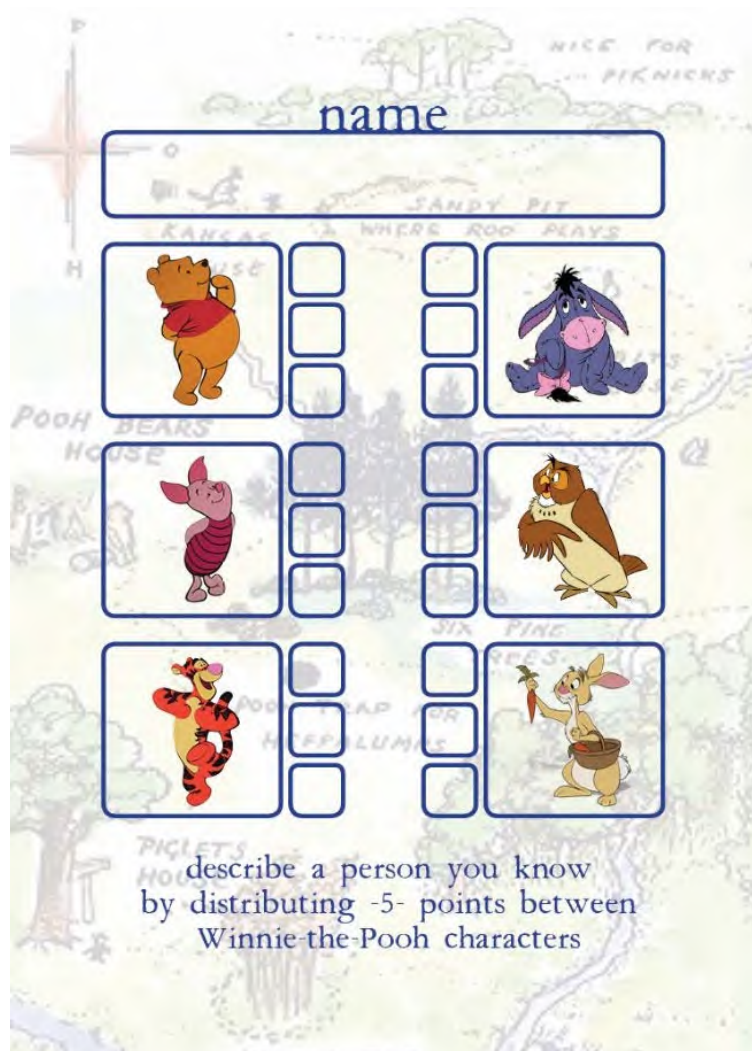
1. Invite the participants to sit in a circle
2. Distribute 3 cards and a pen or pencil to each participant (in 2-player mode, 2 cards per player)
3. Everyone should fill the card for themselves, for the person on their left, and for the person on their right. They should fill the cards according to the instruction on the card: "**Describe a person you know by distributing 5 points between Winnie-The-Pooh characters.**" [2 minutes]
4. Then, tell the participants to connect cards describing each of the participants. Tell them to check what is similar and what is different. Invite them to discuss without changing their sitting positions (everyone speaking to their neighbours). Tell them to give everyone time to speak and to focus on everyone's cards

## Reflection

- Do you agree with your game partners about your description?
- Are their answers same or different than yours? In which parts?
- How do you feel with the results?
- Was it hard to describe your partners?
- What do you think is more precise our self-portrait and how others perceive us?

## Tips for Facilitators

- ✓ The game looks easy and light-hearted but can also be treated with psychological gravity by the players (just as the Winnie-The-Pooh book itself). If you are afraid of that, tell the participants at the start that it is just a warm-up guessing game
- ✓ The game is targeted to persons who already know themselves, for example, it's better to run it at the end of a few days' project than at the start of it.





# 46. One-Hand Juggle

## Overview

A simplified way of juggling with two balls, which most can learn by themselves or with a facilitator from this instruction and practice during 1-10 minute breaks from office work with one hand, eventually even while talking on a phone.

## Objectives

- Reconnect body and mind during work hours
- Strengthen the spine and protect the eyes from looking at a screen for long hours
- Improve hand-eye coordination
- Improve reflexes, focus and concentration skills
- Stress management

## Categories

Mindfulness, Embodiment, Relaxation, Fun

## Background Information

Transient changes (changes in the gray matter of the brain) are shown in the brain structure, induced while learning to juggle as per the article shown in the Nature magazine, Volume 427 Issue 6972, 22 January 2004. This change due to juggling shows the development in brain areas that are associated with the processing and storage of complex visual motion. (Link: <https://www.nature.com/articles/427311a>)

Physical activity immediately boosts the brain's dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin levels—all of which affect focus and attention

It may look silly, it's juggling - what clowns and jesters do; yet, it brings health benefits if you take a 1-10 minute break in your office!

**Number of Participants** any number (1 in solo work life, more if taught in a group)

**Duration** In the beginning 10 minutes or longer will be needed. Later it can be reduced down to one minute. Can be repeated few times a day

## Setting and Materials

You can be anywhere as long as you feel you won't break anything, you need 2-4 juggling balls. Alternatively a different ball of a size you can hold both in one hand, preferably of a soft material so they are easier to catch and so they don't roll away.

## Preparation

Acquire a set of 2-4 juggling balls you like the look of, leave the balls on a desk or a shelf in your place of work, somewhere on the top, so your eyes find them when they stray away from the computer. Alternatively have the juggling balls in a small pouch so you can easily bring them with you on your commute, travels, etc.

## Instructions

1. Give your brain a break, take 10 minutes off from your job activities
2. Make sure you have enough space around you so you don't break anything
3. Stand up and take a comfortable standing position - your knees slightly balanced, your spine loosened up
4. Take one of the balls into one hand. Leave the second hand empty, you can put it behind your back making it easier to focus on the juggling hand
5. Throw one of the balls straight up into the air, so it goes around 50-70 cm up in the air and then falls down into your hand again. (Repeat this until you feel comfortable with it or feel you are in control)
6. Put the second ball in your hand and repeat the previous step (5) but this time before you catch the ball throw the second ball straight up into the air and catch the first ball and thereafter the second too. You have done one repetition now
7. When you feel comfortable with a repetition, keep raising the amount of repetitions until it becomes fluent
8. Your goal is to keep both balls juggling in the air, none of them staying in your hand for longer than 1 second and none of them falling on the ground

## Reflection

May take some time to get it right and feel comfortable juggling 2 balls but may be expanded on to 3-4 ball juggling if the participants like it

Recording the progress on video and showing it, participants may raise self confidence and motivation to keep on practicing

Find a moment of simple joy during long gray fussy office days

Green and eco - gravity instead of electricity

You can make the balls yourself out of recycled materials (put sand or rice inside)

When you learn how to juggle with 2 balls you can start juggling while on the phone and in your daily life, you may even choose to juggle instead of being on the phone

## Tips for Facilitators

- ✓ Be patient at the beginning
- ✓ Deconstruct the process if participants lose faith
- ✓ When a participant starts losing concentration, recommend changing to their other hand, this can be motivated by explaining that 4 ball juggling is 2 ball juggling but with two hands at the same time, thus it's worth trying to learn with their other hand too
- ✓ Show the participant how you do it by letting them see the juggling from your perspective by asking them to stand beside you (assure participant that there is no hurry and that you can repeat as many times as they need)
- ✓ Make a short video of the participants at the start when they are learning, in the middle of the process and finally at the end, it may help the participants' motivation to see that they are making progress and that it actually looks like they are juggling from the outside
- ✓ The videos can be shown at the end or as a tool in the middle of teaching as motivation
- ✓ You may show yourself practicing one hand juggling with your left hand so the participants can feel more on the same level as the facilitator
- ✓ After the participants have been shown the theoretical information and practiced a little, they can be told to buy a set of juggling balls to continue their practice or be shown how

to make their own juggling ball

- ✓ You can encourage the participants that once you learn One Hand Juggling, it would be much easier to learn juggling with more objects (if you like to) or raise the amount of juggling balls to 4 if they learned one hand juggling with both their left and right hand
- ✓ This juggling can be used in conjunction with the Pomodoro technique ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomodoro\\_Technique](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomodoro_Technique))

Tool for the Pomodoro technique: <https://pomofocus.io>

# 47. A Blink Of A Sword

## Overview

Two people moving around in space while keeping one constant physical contact point between each other. Simple but deceptively challenging, this exercise puts your coordination, communication and agility to the test. It may even bring you back to a childhood dream in the blink of a sword

## Objectives

- Take a break from work and reconnect to your body
- Improve focus, concentration and balance
- Communicate non-verbally, deepen the connection with the partner of this exercise and get to know them better
- Give your inner child space to play
- Raise flexibility and resilience

## Categories

Embodiment, Relaxation, Fun

## Background Information

This game emerged by combining expressionist dance, contact improvisation and two other exercises. One created by Augusto Boal called "Columbian hypnosis" and the second one being "Boffering" a common combat-larp exercise "LARP" live action role playing. Some of the main points of interest gathered and implemented from these disciplines and exercises are their usefulness at engaging the participants abilities to communicate, balance, breathe, tense and relax muscles they may not be aware of, to improvise and adapt to name a few

In practice this exercise is inspired by Peter Pan's adventures in Neverland, mimicking the games of the Lost Boys and the philosophy of finding your inner child

**Number of Participants** A minimum of 2 participants in a pair but it can be expanded to as many you see fit (others who see you, may like to join or alternate places with you later)

**Duration** 5 minutes per pair or more depending on the amount of participants and variations done, check the "Tips for facilitators" further down

## Setting and Materials

You need 2 safe stick like items which will be a substitute for swords, it might be even pens or markers. The space should be wide and free enough so you feel you can move around freely without risking injury or breaking something

The swords can be literal like buying the cheapest foam swords from your nearest toy store

You may try finding these items around you right now which may be more fun

With some childlike fantasy is it really a pen on your desk or a carrot in your lunchbox? or is it in fact a rapier? If I roll up the paper in my hand to a tube is it not a telescope or a longsword? What about a shoe held up high with pride like the sword in the stone?

## **Preparation**

Set up the location where the participants can move around freely, have the right amount of swords ready

**Let's imagine you are in an office. Your colleagues are around you, working on their computers as you are working on yours. Observe this territory closely. Keep an eye on your colleagues. Wait for the right time and when it comes, challenge one of them to a 5-minute sword dance**

## **Instructions**

Bring the swords up. Each of you takes a sword to their hands. Stand facing each other. Then, instead of hitting each other, connect the blades of your swords to each other, as if they were glued. Pretend that they are glued for good!

Select a leader. The other one will be the follower

The goal of the follower is to keep the connection between their swords

The goal of the leader is to move around and move their sword, forcing the follower to move around them accordingly

Remember: it is a dance, not a game, the main goal is not to win, but to move nicely

After the activity, switch the leader and follower roles.

## **Reflection**

Most of us move too little during their work. This exercise allows you to balance and feel your body, make it more dancy, more reconnected than during a standard gym workout

Most of us venture into the childhood dreams not often enough. This exercise allows you to catch it in 5 minutes. The metaphor of the inner child goes as deep as you want to follow it

## **Tips for Facilitators**

✓ You may use some music if you like, but be mindful of other colleagues at work!

# 48. Laban Lexicon

## Overview

Embodiment activity based on Laban's theory of movement.

## Objectives

- To reconnect with our body
- To relax and relief tension from our body
- To master non-verbal way of communication, understand better the power of gesture and movement

## Categories

Creativity, Embodiment

## Background Information

Laban's theory plays a role in arts that use human bodies and later was found useful in physical therapy. It is breaking human movement into the simplest parts, which can help come back to the body itself. It is really helpful for an overworked mind. Rudolf Laban was a dance artist, choreographer, and dance theorist. In his work, he created a vocabulary to describe movement in dance. Till 1980 it was used mostly in dance theory, but after that, it was found useful also in an actor's practice

**Number of Participants** from 5 to 30

**Duration** 1,5 h

## Setting and Materials

Materials: 1) flipchart with a Laban Movements chart 2) a speaker, 3) connection to wi-fi, or downloaded music

The facilitator needs to prepare different type of music: 1) for warm-up "chocolate exercise" it should be smooth, jazzy tunes, or any playlist for expressional dancing or contact improvisation; 2) for "Laban Dialogue" & "Laban Fishbowl" playlist should be full of short songs from different genres, with various tempo (some of them should be peaceful, other fast)

Setting: check out for a spacious place in which participants will move comfortably. If it's possible, it is better to have a place with mirrors, it allows participants to observe themselves while dancing, but the exercise is fully operational without them.

## Preparation

Hang the flipchart in a visible place

Check out the connection between a speaker and a music source

## Instructions

1. Warmup - "chocolate exercise": "you move as if you were sunk in liquid chocolate". There is a need for enough space between participants so that they won't bump into each other. Explain to participants the concept of the exercise - they can dance only with the parts of their

body which are the focused ones. Body parts will change when the facilitator will announce them. Remember that each body part should last around 1 minute, a maximum of 2 minutes. Instructions for participants: Find a stable position, and make sure that your feet are touching the ground all the time (you can imagine that they are glued to a floor).

Now the facilitator needs to turn on the music, and while the music is playing start to explain the movement

Next part of the instruction: while your feet are stuck to the ground start to move your weight to a different section of them, to do so you need to use the rest of the body, but try not to move the higher parts too much. After that move your focus to the movement of your knees. Next are your hips, then belly, then elbows, then hands, then whole arms, then head. After that, while still glued to the floor you can start to move your whole body

The last part of the chocolate exercise lasts around 5 minutes and it is more or else free dance time, the facilitator can explain it like this you are no longer glued to the floor, now you can move around, but remember that you are still in a room full of liquid chocolate, so your movement is more smooth than usual. If you feel like it, you can start an improvised dance with other participants

2. "Superhero signature move": the facilitator tells participants to stand in a circle. It can be led in two versions: a) shorter, in which every participant is coming out with a move that shows their personality; b) longer, in which everybody repeats the gestures

a) In this version, each participant needs to think of a move or a gesture that shows their personality. They should think of something that is their signature move, the way they walk, sit, how they correct their glasses, etc. (Do not mistake this exercise with an energizer. The move shouldn't be only something fun) [time: 5 minutes]

b) The longer version is similar to the short one, only that after everybody presents their signs but this time with a name of a person and one adjective for example "Magnificent Mark", "Victorious Vicky" etc. The rest of the group is showing, saying those back. It ends when the whole circle is finished. [time: 15 minutes]

3. Learning 8 types of movements described by Laban (in **Tips for Facilitators** look for useful links) [time: 20 minutes to practice each type of movement]. The facilitator shows moves and participants repeat them

4. "Laban Dialogue" – the facilitators put music on and ask participants to move freely around the space and start to improvise with Laban movements. Then on the clap they need to pick up the nearest person and start a nonverbal conversation with Laban movements. On the next clap they change a pairs. Repeat few times. [time: 10 minutes]

5. "Laban Fish Bowl" participants create a circle, the music is still on. Two people go in the middle and improvise nonverbal conversation inspired by Laban movements reflecting the feelings and situations given by the people from the circle. For example they can say "love" or 'fear' and performers can embody it with glide, dab or any other Laban movement, each can pick up a different one as they create their conversation. It also can be a situation like – "you are siblings quarrelling" or "a couple having a date" etc.

6. The activity ends up with a freestyle movement which can turn into short non-verbal conversations with anybody or just moving freely. Lively music is recommended

## Reflection

- How does your body feel after using Laban movements?
- Are any of them reflecting your personality? Or perhaps few of them combined?

- How is it for you to communicate your thoughts with your body?
- Do you feel a connection with your body?
- Do your attitude and feelings have an impact on your body? (e.g. tense while stressed or soft and warm while relaxed)
- Do you have a favourite way to connect body and mind?

### **Tips for Facilitators**

Laban Movements chart:

<https://www.suchavoice.com/blog/2020/08/20/labán-for-the-booth/>

Link to videos explaining Laban movements:

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=OK-7QhORB9k&feature=share>

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=y-rnK2pT9VU&feature=share>

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=cafivJpiYUE&feature=share>

<https://www.theatrefolk.com/blog/the-eight-efforts-labán-movement/>



# 49. Collective Collage

## Overview

Participants in this exercise will express their feelings through cutting, gluing and coloring in their own way their collage art piece. Collage creation also allows participants to engage in visual thinking rather than linguistic thinking.

## Objectives

- stress management
- Improve focus and concentration skills
- encourage self-expression
- boost creativity
- Categories Creativity, Relaxation, Group bonding

## Background Information

The term "collage" derives from the French term *papiers collés* (or *découpage*), used to describe techniques of pasting [paper](#) cut-outs onto various surfaces. It was first used as an artists' technique in the early 20th century

Collage can also include other media such as [painting](#) and [drawing](#), and contain three-dimensional elements

(cf. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/collage>)

Collages help in structuring, developing, analyzing and presenting visual issues that are difficult to express

The collage process can also be a great way to spark new ideas and stimulate thought expressed in words.

**Number of Participants** preferably up to 24 people (6 groups of 1-4 participants)

**Duration** approx. 1 hour, depending on the art piece size

## Setting and Materials

paper, fabric, or feathers, scissors, glue stick, backing material such as journal or other heavyweight paper or cardboard to serve as the canvas. For color: rubber stamp ink pads, acrylics, watercolors, oil pastels

pens: waterproof Sharpies, copic markers or sharpie poster paint pens (oil). Rubber stamps, images/letters, numbers are nice too

## Preparation

You need a comfortable place, large tables for the materials and chairs, you can put calming background music on, it helps while creating art

## Instructions

The facilitator divides the people into smaller groups and distribute the materials

The facilitator reminds the groups that if they are planning on using paint or other liquid materials in their collage, they should consider using canvas or wood panel

Also, the facilitator should propose a topic – for example, tips for well-being or burn-out prevention – and then give instruction to the group:

1. Create A Sturdy “surface”

Use thick paper, cardboard, wood panel or any other material that will stand up to the weight of the images and the mediums you use

2. Choose Your Images

Go through magazines and cut or tear out images that catch your eye by their shape, color or the emotion transfer.

Don't think too hard – just pull, cut or tear out the images!

Don't limit yourself on what you might use in a collage! Think ribbons, lace, coffee filters, old letters, envelopes, dried flowers –it's endless!

3. Map Out the Arrangement and Look of the Collage

Carefully cut out the items you are most interested in. Or tear images or pages into strips and use the strips as a background

4. Color The Background

You can use colored pencils, ink, crayons, paint basically any coloring material

5. Glue Down Images & Text

Spread the images out again to see if you want to change anything. When ready use a glue stick and glue down your images. Finally, add text that has been cut out from magazines, handwritten, stenciled or even stamped

Afterwards, the collages can be presented and discussed in the big group

## Reflection

Possible questions:

- Have you discussed the theme in your group? Any conclusions?
- How was it being a part of a group making art?
- How was the communication in your team?
- How did you feel when someone changed or didn't like your art move?
- How do you feel after doing this piece of art?
- Did it bring any kind of past memories?

## Tips for Facilitators

- ✓ Collage is the easiest way to make art that does not require drawing or painting. You can advise them to keep those instructions in mind:
- ✓ *“Contrast, repetition, and layering are three principles of collage that can lead to creative art.”*  
They should feel free to make whatever they want

# 50. Re-Quote

## Overview

Through interpretation of texts of culture and creative cooperation, participants are invited into exploring together universal wisdom and personal values

## Objectives

- Reflect on universal wisdom, personal values and perspectives on life
- Understand better each other's perspectives
- Encourage self-expression and self-awareness
- Boost creativity
- Practice active listening and meaningful dialogue

## Categories

Personal growth, Creativity

## Background Information

Culture and Literature Studies curricula often use exercises involving intertextuality and postmodern approach in interpretation of texts of culture, often focusing on subjectivity and fragments instead of the big narration. This approach supports locating, processing and analyzing information from a variety of sources. It also engages critical discourse, abstract and analytical thinking and the synthesis of ideas.

**Number of Participants** maximum 30 people (groups of 3-5 participants)

**Duration** 1,5 h

## Setting and materials

Flipchart papers, markers, double-sided tape or magnetic board, scissors, internet and phones

## Preparation

Create a comfortable place with large tables for the materials. In a less formal environment the activity is also possible on the floor. Cut flipchart paper into long stripes

## Instructions

1. Warm up with "word association"

Start with one word that pops into your head. The next person sitting to your right continues with adding association to your word. After that, the next person already needs to find association to both previous ones, and then next to three etc. And they go around the circle. For example: Person 1: "book", Person 2 "writer", Person 3 "autograph" (association to both 'book' and 'writer'), Person 4 "screenplay" (book, writer, autograph)...

2. "Re-quotation"

Divide the participants into groups of three to five people

Each of them gets 2 big long strips of paper and a marker

Tell the participants to think of 2 quotes that are meaningful for them, and write them down,

each on a big strip of paper (can be from literature, poems, song lyrics, movies, proverbs etc.). You may ask them to pick up quotes that relate to mental health, well-being and burn-out. When the participants are done, tell them to exchange their quotes - one goes to the neighbour on their right side and the other to the one on the left side.

Now, each participant has 2 quotes from their neighbours and can start interpreting them aloud. Interpretation can go into two directions - one toward themselves or the owner of the quote. Then the owners can be asked if the interpreter was close to their intention or the quotes mean something else for them. Encourage participants to lead real dialogue about their values, preferences, experiences and feelings and continue the discussion on forum.

Participants take turns till they finish all the quotes.

In the second part of the activity, ask participants to cut each quote into words (even commas) and shuffle them.

Then, each group should create 3 new quotes with essential meaning (e.g. with some universal wisdom or connected to well-being and burn-out). Hang it on the wall, the groups present the quotes to each other and discuss the ideas standing behind them.

## **Reflection**

Possible questions:

- Was it hard to find the quote that is meaningful to you?
- What text/culture were you considering? (e.g. literature, song lyrics, quotes from movies...)  
Why?
- Were you surprised by the quotes chosen by your groupmates? Could you sign under some of them?
- Does the other person broaden your perspective on a quote you wrote? Have they presented you with a different interpretation?

## **Tips for facilitators**

The participants might have a tendency to go too deep into looking for their favourite quotes, therefore it's good to give a time limit for choosing them.

# APPENDIX.

## Spikey's Activity Evaluation Survey\*

Hello dear participant of Spikey's Clinic for Professional Dreamers!

We kindly ask you to use this survey in order to evaluate each of the tools and activities of our Clinic!

Thank you very much for your contribution!

1. Which activity are you evaluating?

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2. How easy was it to participate in this activity?

Very difficult  1  2  3  4  5 Very easy

3. How useful do you consider this activity for preventing / dealing with burnout?

Not  1  2  3  4  5 Very euseful

4. How much do you personally feel this activity impacted you?

Not  1  2  3  4  5 Very much

5. How likely are you to implement / use this activity in your life / line of work?

Not  1  2  3  4  5 Very likely

6. Do you have any additional comments about this activity?

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\* This survey was developed for use during the two LTTAs implemented during the project, respectively in April 2022 in Zlatna Greda/Osijek (Croatia) and in April 2023 in Rabka-Zdròj (Poland). The feedback received by the participants during the tests was used to modify the activities, further clarifying their aims, instructions, scope and implementation, thus leading to the structure that they have assumed in this Methodology.

# Peer Coaching

## A. Introduction

You may be familiar with the concept of supervision, which is a process that aims at helping workers improve professionally and providing them with the necessary support and guidance. Supervision is guided by a supervisor. However, such support can also be provided between peers, and in this case be called intervision, peer supervision, or peer coaching.

Peer coaching and supervision are thus both forms of work-related learning, aiming at improving the (quality of) work of professionals. They have a number of shared/common characteristics:

- Both can be conducted on a one-to-one basis, or in a group.
- Both focus on the development of staff, on increasing their knowledge and improving their skills.
- Both aim at increasing self-reflection and insight in personal functioning and on learning how to deal with emotions related to work situations.
- Both intend to improve teamwork, encourage interdisciplinary work, as well as learning from other teams.

However, peer coaching can offer some additional advantages, compared to supervision:

- It can help to use all the potential of expertise, experience and skill available in a team or in a group of experts.
- It is effective and cost-effective.
- It fosters mutuality and equality among peers.
- Anyone can do it!

Here are some more specific examples of what peer coaching can contribute to:

- Learning different behavior alternatives
- Dealing with problematic issues and situations and – by this – contributing to burnout prevention
- Insight in personal 'habits and patterns' which influence work
- Clarifying the personal motivation of staff
- Clarifying strong and weak points of staff
- (Mutual) Support and recognition for the work done
- Enhancing the quality and efficiency of work
- Training of staff to deal more effectively with problematic issues, situations or cases
- Enhancing consensus and cooperation
- Contributing to team cohesion through a shared understanding

## B. Rules and guidelines

Some general guidelines that the members of a peer coaching group need to keep in mind are the following:

- In peer coaching there are no hierarchical relationships, even when there is a chairperson (more on this a bit later)
- Openness and sincerity are essential for the process to be effective
- Trust and confidentiality are needed for this openness to be possible

- Transparency of the scope and the structure of the peer coaching group are important
- Support can be best given and received in a climate of empathy, authenticity and positive regard
- It is important that the members of the group agree upon and accept a set of behavioral rules for the meetings

Each peer coaching group can, of course, reach a different agreement on the rules they want to follow during their meetings. However, there are some rules that have been empirically proved essential in making peer coaching groups a helpful and safe place:

- Don't be judgmental
- Avoid "why" questions, focus on clarifying "what" and "how"
- Don't patronize
- Don't take over the responsibility of others
- Listen carefully and actively
- Pay attention to emotions
- Focus on the here-and-now
- Show your interest, understanding and caring
- Treat people with respect
- Don't play the therapist
- Give suggestions, not orders
- Suggestions only after the emotions have been shared
- Connect input to experience
- Focus on reaching a consensus / mutual understanding

Regarding the group size, the time frame, and the frequency of the meetings:

- There is no minimum group size for peer coaching, as it can function even on a one-to-one basis.
- However, it is advised not to create a very large peer coaching group, because that will limit the time each member has to speak and will make the facilitation difficult.
- Although there is typically no specific maximum group size, 6-8 people would be a good limit depending on the length of the meetings.
- The length of the meetings is again something that can vary, but a good recommendation would be meetings of 1 hour for one-to-one sessions and 1,5-2 hours for group sessions.
- The frequency of the meetings is something very subjective as it mostly depends on the needs of the group members. A general recommendation would be somewhere between 2 and 4 weeks; weekly meetings may be too tiring and members may run out of things to say, while meetings that happen less frequently than once every month may result in the group finding it difficult to bond and form a secure climate.

Lastly, a few notes on the potential existence of a chairperson in peer coaching group sessions:

- Important only in groups, but not necessary in one-to-one sessions
- The chairperson is not a supervisor, they just chair the meeting of the group while remaining an equal peer
- Can be selected beforehand or at the beginning of the session
- Can be different in each session; perhaps the group can agree on a rotation
- Can be the person with more experience on the matter at hand, but is not there to

supervise or offer expert solutions

- Can be a “neutral” person (not engaged in the matter at hand)
- Needs to be equal to all others, and remain this way
- Needs to have (or develop) skills in group facilitation

### **C. Peer coaching in action – A basic scenario**

When a team does not have prior experience in peer coaching, they are advised to start with a basic scenario of peer coaching, and later enhance it with additional or more “advanced” coaching techniques.

Here is a step-by-step guide to the basic peer coaching process:

1. If it is the first peer coaching session or there are new members in the group, start by introducing the concept of peer coaching to the team. Also, give time and space for the members to shortly introduce themselves if they do not already know each other, and to share a little bit about their expectations from the group and process.
2. Next step is identifying needs and gathering items for the agenda, by asking the members who would like to present an issue or a discussion topic at the meeting.
3. After the discussion topics have been identified, the chairperson is selected accordingly (either by rotation or related to the meeting agenda).
4. Before starting the session, the chairperson may need some preparation time, especially if they are new to the role.
5. The session starts with presenting the case(s) / issue(s) / problem(s) to be discussed.
6. The chairperson facilitates the presenting member to present their issue, without any interruptions.
7. After the presenting member has finished, the chairperson gives space to others for questions and clarifications. It is essential that the questions are aimed at clarification and better understanding of the issue, and not at suggesting solutions (e.g. “have you discussed this with your boss?” is not the same as “how about discussing this with your boss?”).
8. After the presenting member answers all the questions, the chairperson gives them the opportunity to add any additional details about the issue that they haven’t already.
9. Next, the chairperson asks the presenting member to specify what exactly it is that they are looking for from the team and the session. For example, they may want to hear advice from the rest of the team, they may want to listen to other members’ similar experiences, or they may have just wanted to vent and require nothing further from the team. The team must accept and respect the wishes of the presenting member at this point.
10. In case the presenting member has requested something further from the team (e.g. advice, experiences, ideas) then a discussion is facilitated by the chairperson where all members share and suggest, following the rules and guidelines. (In case the member has not requested anything further from the team, move to step #12)
11. When all members that wanted to share something have spoken, the chairperson asks the presenting member if their request has been adequately addressed by the group, and if they have any further requests. If they require something more from the group, then steps 9-11 are repeated, until they feel that their needs have been fully met.
12. If there is more time available, the process can be repeated for issues of more team members. The chairperson can remain the same or change.
13. Before ending the peer coaching session, it is important for the chairperson(s) to round



up and review the meeting outcomes, and to prompt the members to reflect on the learning that occurred through it.

14. (Optional) There can be some form of mutually agreed assessment of the session by the members. There are many ways to conduct this, from more “formal” ways (like an anonymous short survey), to more experiential ways (like a round where each member used one word to describe how they are feeling or what they got out of the meeting), or anything in between, in any combination.

#### **D. Peer coaching in action – Some more advanced techniques**

After the peer coaching group has gained some experience with the basic peer coaching scenario, they may want to enhance the process by adding some more “advanced” techniques. This can be done by exploring some of the countless existing coaching tools and techniques (which can be easily found online or in coaching books and manuals) and trying to implement them in their group sessions.

Following the basic scenario steps of the previous section, the place to implement any additional techniques would probably be steps 9-10. When asked at step 9 about their needs and wishes, the member may ask/allow the team to use any coaching techniques they think would be helpful for the particular issue that is being discussed. In that case, at step 10 another member (or the chairperson) may use such a technique. Moreover, at the phase where the team is starting to experiment with techniques additional to the basic scenario, there can potentially be a mutual agreement from the beginning of the session that the group will try using a specific technique, and this could potentially be a criterion by which to choose the topics for the agenda.

As mentioned above, there are countless coaching techniques available for a group to choose from according to their needs and preferences. We will here present three suggestions, without insinuating that these techniques are better than others:

##### 1. What I have and what I want

This is a technique that can help the member map out four important elements regarding the issue they have raised: What they want and already have, what they have and don't want, what they don't have and want, and what they don't have and don't want. This gives them the opportunity to clarify and become more aware of the situation and their needs within it. One by one, we ask the member to place things in each of those four categories, either as part of the discussion or by using pen and paper. We then prompt the member to reflect on the things they added to each category, each of which has its own importance. “What I want and already have” can indicate the strengths, achievements and advantages, as well as be a source of gratitude for the member (e.g. a job description that fits my background, a supportive team, plenty annual vacation days). “What I have and don't want” can include external elements (e.g. a strict boss, an overloaded schedule, a lack of funds) as well as internal elements (e.g. low self-esteem, poor time management skills, lack of motivation) which can contribute to better understanding the issue at hand and its causes. “What I don't have and want” essentially indicates the goals of the members, and can also help them identify what they require to meet their needs – especially if combined with the previous category to form a direction or a way out of the problem (e.g. I have and don't want an overloaded schedule,

so what I don't have and want is the ability to take on fewer tasks). Lastly, "what I don't have and don't want" can serve the same function as the first category, indicating advantages and fostering gratitude and relief (e.g. tasks outside my job description, a poor insurance plan, a bad climate between colleagues).

## 2. My limiting beliefs

To some extent, we all have some beliefs that function in a limiting way in our lives. When we believe something strongly, our mind has the tendency to actively search for evidence to back up this belief. This can lead to negative feelings about ourselves (disappointment, anger, frustration etc.) but it can also prevent us from trying to act contrary to that belief. To give a simple example, imagine a person that believes they are a bad driver. They will have the tendency to back up this belief with evidence that supports it, they will feel bad about it, and will act accordingly to it by perhaps avoiding driving, most probably not even trying to improve their driving because the belief has "decided" it is not possible. This coaching technique aims to break this cycle. First, we ask the member to identify a limiting belief that is related to the issue they have brought up. Then, we ask them to identify evidence that backs up this belief. In the example of the "bad driver", this could be "it took me 3 attempts to pass my test", "I hit the curb last week", or "my partner tells me I can't drive". The next step is to actively prompt the member to question and challenge the evidence that backs up the limiting belief, by looking for absolute statements and generalizations, and by checking to see what details may be missing – essentially to create doubt in the belief. For example, challenging the "I hit the curb last week" evidence may include "how many times have you drove and not hit a curb?" or "were there any other influences that caused you to hit the curb?". Or, challenging the "my partner tells me I can't drive" evidence may include "does your partner know what makes a good driver?" or "what else does your partner tell you that is incorrect?". The next step is to ask the member to come up with questions of their own to challenge their belief. After the member cannot think of more challenging questions, we can ask them a final question: "What is your limiting belief stopping you from doing?".

## 3. The miracle question

The miracle question is a widely known coaching technique, used in many forms of coaching as well as in some psychotherapeutic modalities. It essentially involves asking the member to imagine a miracle has happened that has fixed the issue they were dealing with. The goal of this technique is to bring more clarity into the issue discussed, to explore possibilities and outcomes of the situation, but most importantly to introduce potential for growth into the conversation. The miracle question may be introduced to the member in a way similar to this: "Imagine that after our meeting you go about your day as normal and go to sleep at the usual time. Unknown to you, during the night while you are sleeping, something happens – a miracle. When you wake up the following day, something exciting has happened: The issue that you brought up in today's meeting is no longer there. What would be the very first difference you would notice in your life?". After giving the member enough time to process their thoughts and express them, we can continue with some follow-up questions, like the following: "How will you know that the miracle has happened? What will others (colleagues, partner, children, etc.) notice about you that makes them aware things are different or better?".

What would their reaction be to this change? What would you do next? What differences would we see in you (feelings, thoughts, and behavior) if we compared a before and after picture? Have you ever seen elements of this happen before?”. While this technique is initiated by a single question, it may open a lot of doors for the member and prompt a broader process of creating a vision of what life could be like. Follow-up questions can be very essential in this process and help build more detail and meaning through elaboration.

### **E. Epilogue**

If you have not been familiar with the concept of peer coaching before reading this text, all this information may seem overwhelming to take in. However, if there is one thing that we recommend taking away from all this, it is that one of the most important advantages of peer coaching is that anyone can do it! Therefore, we hope that you will give it a try with your peers. Even if at first you do not feel 100% confident about the procedure, practicing will help you get there sooner than you think!



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