

The Little Booklet of Wellbeing

Created as part of the Let's G.R.O.W. International
Erasmus+ Youth Exchange

let's
grow MOVIT



KLUB ŠTUDENTOV
KRANJ



Erasmus+

CONTENTS

- 4 Introduction
- 5 Nutrition Myths
- 9 Campfire Recipes
- 14 Beauty Tips
- 20 Medicinal Plants
- 24 Meditation
- 29 Mental Health Awareness
- 34 Contact Information

INTRODUCTION

This booklet was created by the participants of the Erasmus+ Youth Exchange "Let's G.R.O.W.". It covers some of the topics that we worked on during the exchange, such as healthy nutrition, cooking in nature, using plants as natural cosmetics, properties of medicinal herbs and meditation. The aim of this booklet is to share some of the knowledge we gained during the exchange, mainly the tips on improving our physical and mental wellbeing. It is free for you to use.

About The Project

Youth Exchange "Let's G.R.O.W." (the abbreviation standing for Gardening, Reflection, Outdoors and Wellbeing) took place in Kranj, Slovenia in September 2019, connecting 34 participants from Slovenia, Denmark, Malta, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Organisations Involved



Klub študentov Kranj



Youth Opportunities DK



Malta UNESCO Youth Association



Youth.Active.ES



Erasmus Student Network UK

The project was co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union
Project identification: 2019-1-SI02-KA105-014994

NUTRITION MYTHS

It is a well-known fact that nutrition affects not only our physical but also our mental wellbeing. Eating well reduces the risk of physical health problems like heart disease and diabetes. It also helps with sleeping patterns, concentration, and can lift your mood along with your energy levels. But what exactly does “eating well” mean? In this era of easy access to information, we come across conflicting statements and even contradictory studies about nutrition. We decided to look into some of the persisting nutrition myths and discussed them with a nutritionist. Here are the results of our myth-busting workshop.

EATING EGGS INCREASES BAD CHOLESTEROL. ✗

- In the 1970's, a study was published, linking eggs to an increase of “bad” blood cholesterol, thus increasing the risk of heart disease. This came from a misunderstanding of how cholesterol is processed in the body and was partly funded by breakfast cereal companies, which were lobbying for a larger market share.
- Recent studies have shown that eggs raise the “good” cholesterol (HDL) and do not increase the risk of heart disease.
- Whole eggs are among the most nutritious foods on the planet as the yolk contains almost all the nutrients that are essential for the human body.

COFFEE IS GOOD FOR YOU. ✓

- Despite sometimes being perceived as unhealthy, coffee is one of the richest sources of antioxidants. Numerous studies show that coffee drinkers live longer and have a lower risk of serious diseases.
- Nonetheless, coffee should not be binged on. If you experience restlessness, anxiety, dizziness, upset stomach, irritability, insomnia, fast heartbeat, or tremors after drinking coffee, you either drank too much over a short period of time or you may be sensitive to caffeine and should therefore consider cutting your intake or avoiding caffeine altogether.

TO LOSE WEIGHT, I SHOULD COUNT MY CALORIES. ✘

- Counting calories is not a sustainable way to maintain a healthy diet. It is good to be aware of the calorie content of different foods, but it is even more important to be aware of their macronutrient composition – the amount of protein, carbohydrates and fat. While 100 calories of vegetables and 100 calories of sweets contain the same amount of energy, they affect your body differently. The vegetables will also give you essential nutrients and their fiber will keep you fuller for much longer than candy.
- Try to keep a balanced diet instead of counting calories. It will make eating healthy a pleasure instead of a full-time job!





A VEGETARIAN DIET IS HEALTHIER THAN OTHER DIETS. ✕

- A vegetarian diet can be either healthy or unhealthy. It can easily become unbalanced if we eat too much vegetarian junk food. Vegetarian diets may also lack in important vitamins, such as Vitamin B12, which is essential for a healthy nervous system and has to be supplemented.
- Overall, whatever diet you eat (vegan, vegetarian, or omnivorous), keep it balanced, eat a variety of foods, stay away from pre-prepared meals, try to cook food yourself, and eat a lot of vegetables.
- It is better for our planet to eat less meat. While you do not have to be exclusively vegetarian, you should try to reduce your intake of meat to around 1–3 times a week.
- A good way to substitute protein is with pulses and grains – beans, lentils, chickpeas, and quinoa.

TO LOSE WEIGHT, IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO EXERCISE THAN TO EAT A HEALTHY DIET. ✘

- Even by doing strenuous exercise daily, we do not burn enough calories to outweigh bad diet! To lose pounds or maintain a healthy weight, it is much more important to eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- However, a healthy diet alone doesn't give us a healthy body – it is very important to exercise. Even moderate physical activity can make your muscles, bones and vital organs stronger.
- Exercise does not only give us a strong and healthy body, it also improves our mental health. If you ever feel down, try to exercise. You don't have to go to the gym – you can dance, rock climb, run, walk, cycle... Find out what suits you and get moving!



DINNER ON FIRE: CAMPFIRE RECIPES

If you like to spend time in nature, you might have noticed its positive impact on your body and mind. A recent UK study, based on an extensive Natural Environment Survey, showed that a dose of nature of just two hours a week is associated with better physical and mental wellbeing. Combine this with friends and good food and your stress levels will plummet. Ours sure did! We tested this out during Campfire Night in Kovk, a calm settlement near the woods in the northern part of Slovene Littoral Region. We had a great time talking, singing and preparing various foods. The results were too good not to share. If you ever go camping in nature, there are a lot more delicious food options to prepare over a campfire than your basic baked sausages and roasted marshmallows. First, you will need to build a campfire. If you haven't done it before, let someone experienced teach you how to do it effectively and safely, in an area where campfires are allowed. Now, when you have your fire up and burning, let's get cooking!



Twist - Campfire Bread

This is a really easy recipe, as you only need a few ingredients.

Ingredients:

- flour
- water
- salt
- pepper
- optional: different spices (oregano, basil, thyme...)
- branches for cooking sticks

LET'S GET COOKING:

Mix the flour, water, salt and spices in a mixing bowl and slowly start adding water. Keep mixing and adding water until all the ingredients are combined and the dough starts to form. Knead the dough as you would when making bread, until it is not too sticky but still somewhat stretchy. Let the dough rest for a few minutes. Meanwhile, you can prepare your sticks. Gather some branches of a non-poisonous tree and take off the leaves. Choose a stick that will be long enough so there will be some distance between you and the fire. Strip the bark off of the end of the stick, where the dough will be wrapped (15–20 cm length). Take a piece of dough and start stretching it while wrapping it in a spiral down the stick. Try not to make the bread spiral thicker than 1 cm. Pinch the end together to secure it on the stick and your twist is ready to bake. Be careful not to hold the stick directly on the flames as you will be left with burned bread with a raw centre. Instead, hold it over embers for about 10 minutes while rotating the stick so the twist cooks evenly. Enjoy!

Baked Moussaka

It takes a long time to bake, but it is worth it.

Ingredients:

- 1,5 kg of boiled potatoes (you can also use raw ones, but then you must bake the moussaka for longer)
- 1 onion
- 500 g of minced meat
- 4 tablespoons of tomato sauce or ketchup
- 500 g of sour cream
- 1 egg
- oil
- salt
- pepper
- aluminum foil

LET'S GET COOKING:

Mince the onion and divide it into two equal parts. Oil the pan, then coat the bottom with a layer of sliced potatoes. Add half of the minced onion, half of the minced meat, two spoons of tomato sauce, some salt and pepper, and repeat once again: a layer of potatoes, ½ onion, ½ minced meat, salt, pepper and tomato sauce. Add another layer of potatoes on top. Mix an egg with sour cream, salt, spice & everything nice. You can also add some more tomato sauce. Pour the mixture on top of the moussaka and cover the pan with aluminum foil. Place the pan over hot coal and put some of the embers on the foil. Make sure not to put it into the flames but on embers directly outside of the fire! Bake for about an hour and a half. Bon appétit!

Pot-roasted Vegetables

Easy and delicious!

Ingredients:

- potatoes
- zucchini
- salt
- pepper
- oil
- aluminum foil

LET'S GET COOKING:

Cut the potatoes and zucchini into small pieces. Oil the pot, add the cut vegetables, season with some salt and pepper; cover with aluminum foil and bake over embers for an hour.

Eggs on a Tuna Can

You will be surprised how long you can cook with just one can of tuna.

Ingredients:

- eggs
- salt
- pepper
- oil
- 1 can of tuna in vegetable or olive oil
- unscented toilet paper

LET'S GET COOKING:

Place a pan on two stones or bricks, leaving space for a can between them. Open a can of tuna and put some pieces of toilet paper on top so they get soaked by oil. Light the paper on fire. Put the can under the pan and you are ready to cook some eggs. The oil from the tuna will feed the flames for a long time, so you can cook more batches with one can. When the eggs are ready, mix in the hot, smoky tuna and you will have delicious scrambled eggs with tuna.



Fish in the Salt

Some participants said the fish was so good it made them want to move to Slovenia.

Ingredients:

- 1 kg of salt
- bigger fish (e.g. gilt-head bream)
- aluminum foil

LET'S GET COOKING:

Step 1: Clean the fish.

Step 2: Put a lot of salt in the pan, place the fish on it and then cover it completely with the remaining salt.

Step 3: Cover the pan with aluminium foil and put it in the embers. You should move the pan a couple of times while baking. The baking time is 40–60 min.

Step 4: Let your tastebuds admire the product of your gourmet-cooking-in-nature skills.

BEAUTY TIPS: NATURAL COSMETICS

A lot of plants have beneficial properties for our skin and hair, which is why they are frequently used in the beauty industry. That being said, you do not have to run and buy the newest cosmetic product – you can make some of them at home, with ingredients that are easy to obtain. Always do a patch test before applying cosmetic preparations to check for allergic reactions. Keep experimenting and stick with ingredients that make you feel and look healthy and beautiful. Get ready to relax and pamper your body and soul!

Fighting Skin Impurities

HONEY AND CINNAMON MASK

Cinnamon is obtained from the inner bark of evergreen aromatic trees from the genus *Cinnamomum*. Both honey and cinnamon are rich sources of antioxidants and have antibacterial properties. They help clear the skin of acne and reduce inflammation.

- *Mix 2 tablespoons of honey and 1 teaspoon of cinnamon together to form a paste.*
- *Clean your face and apply the mask in a thin, even layer, avoiding your eye area. Leave it on for 10–15 min.*
- *Rinse the mask off completely and pat your face dry.*

TEA TREE OIL

Tea tree essential oil is extracted from the leaves of *Melaleuca alternifolia*, a small tree, native to Australia. It is known for its ability to fight bacteria and reduce skin inflammation. It is also very potent, so you should always dilute it before applying it to your skin to prevent irritation and dryness.

- *Mix 1 part tea tree oil with 9 parts water.*
- *Dip a cotton swab into the mixture and apply it to acne spots.*
- *Apply moisturiser if desired.*
- *Repeat this process 1–2 times per day, or as needed.*

GREEN TEA TONER

Drinking green tea is beneficial for your skin and overall health, as it is very high in antioxidants. Applying a 2–3% green tea extract directly to the skin has been shown to help fight acne-causing bacteria and reduce inflammation. This is likely because of flavonoids and tannins. The major antioxidant in green tea (EGCG) also reduces sebum production, fights inflammation and inhibits the growth of *P. acnes* in individuals with acne-prone skin. You can buy creams and lotions that contain green tea, but it is just as easy to make your own mixture at home.

- *Steep green tea in boiling water for 3–4 min.*
- *Allow the tea to cool down to room temperature.*
- *Using a cotton ball, apply tea to skin or pour it into a spray bottle and use it as a facial mist.*

ALOE VERA GEL

Aloe vera is a tropical plant whose leaves produce a clear gel. The gel is often added to lotions, creams, ointments and soaps. It is commonly used to treat abrasions, rashes, burns and other skin conditions. The plant has been used for dermatological and cosmetological purposes for centuries. It contains 75 potentially active agents: vitamins, enzymes, minerals, sugars, lignin, saponins, salicylic acids and amino acids. Among those are salicylic acid and sulphur, which are both used to treat acne.

- *Scrape the gel from the aloe plant out with a spoon.*
- *Apply the gel directly to clean skin as a moisturiser.*
- *You can also buy aloe vera gel from the store, but make sure it is pure aloe without any added ingredients.*

Natural Exfoliants

Exfoliation is the process of removing dead skin cells that accumulate on the topmost layer of skin. It uncovers new cells, improves skin texture and tone, and helps prevent breakouts. It is believed that exfoliation makes acne treatments more effective by allowing them to penetrate deeper once the dead skin cells are removed. Exfoliants can be physical (brushes, scrubs with particles like sugar, jojoba beads...) or chemical (AHAs and BHAs). Physical exfoliants can be easily made at home with simple ingredients.

COCONUT OIL SCRUB

- *Mix equal parts sugar (or salt) and coconut oil. You might have to slightly warm up the coconut oil as it solidifies under 24°C. Use finely ground salt/sugar, especially if you are going to exfoliate the more delicate skin on your face.*
- *Gently scrub your skin with the mixture, using small, circular motions. Avoid the sensitive eye area. Rinse well.*
- *Apply moisturiser.*
- *Don't use more than 2–3 times a week, especially if you have sensitive skin.*

COCONUT SUGAR LIP SCRUB

Coconut sugar is gentle on delicate lip skin but effective at exfoliating dead skin flakes. Coconut oil acts as a moisturiser and additionally softens lips.

- *2 tablespoons of softened coconut oil*
- *2 tablespoons of coconut sugar (found in specialty or Asian markets)*
- *1 tablespoon honey*

Mix the ingredients together and massage a small amount onto clean lips.

Rinse and pat dry.

Puffy Eyes and Dark Circles Remedies

CUCUMBER EYE MASK

In popular culture, putting cucumber slices over the eyes is almost synonymous with relaxation. We tried the cucumber eye mask at our Beauty Tips Workshop and can confirm its refreshing and soothing effects. Cucumbers are rich in vitamin C and folic acid. Vitamin C stimulates new cell growth, while folic acid stimulates antioxidants that help your skin fight off environmental toxins that can make eyes appear puffy or tired. Since cucumber has such a high water content, it also moisturises the area under the eyes.

- *Take a refrigerated cucumber and cut it into thick slices. Clean your face, lie down and put a slice of cucumber over each eye, leaving it on for 15–30 min.*
- *You can also grate the cucumber and apply it under the eyes.*

RAW POTATO EYE MASK

Potatoes have high levels of antioxidant compounds that reduce inflammation and swelling of blood vessels. They are also an effective skin lightening agent and can help combat dark under-eye circles. When raw potatoes are exposed to air, an enzyme in them called catecholase oxidizes and becomes benzoquinone, which has mild bleaching properties.

- *Grate a potato or cut it in extra thin slices.*
- *Place a slice of potato over each eye for 10–15 minutes.*
- *Rinse your face with cold water.*



Silky Hair

ALOE VERA contains proteolytic enzymes, which help clear dead skin cells on the scalp. It also acts as a conditioner and leaves your hair smooth and shiny. It promotes hair growth, alleviates itchy scalp, reduces dandruff and conditions your hair:

- Blend some aloe vera and apply it on your hair and scalp as a mask.

Leave it on for 15 min and wash normally.

- You can also make an aloe vera moisturising hair mist.

Mix 1/4 aloe vera in 3/4 water. Pour the mixture into a spray bottle and spray your hair after you have washed it.

COCONUT OIL contains nourishing fats and alpha-tocopherol that keep the scalp rejuvenated and hydrated. This, in turn, helps to strengthen the hair follicles and stimulate hair growth. Coconut oil is also rich in antioxidants that protect the scalp and hair fibers from damage.

- Warm up 2–3 tablespoons of virgin coconut oil for a couple of seconds and use it to massage the scalp.

• Rinse off the oil after 4–5 hours. You can also keep it on overnight but make sure to use a head wrap (or an old T-shirt) so the oil doesn't clog pores on your face and stains your pillow.

OLIVE OIL inhibits the production of hair loss hormones (DHT) that are produced on the scalp. This can help reduce hair loss and promote healthy hair growth. Olive oil also nourishes the skin on the scalp and helps prevent infections.

- Warm up the oil for a few seconds and apply it on the scalp.

Massage the scalp for 4–5 min.

- Leave it in overnight and rinse your hair in the morning.

If you are running short of time, leave the oil in for at least an hour.

TEA TREE OIL is a wide spectrum antimicrobial agent. It is also rich in antioxidants that can help rejuvenate the hair follicles.

- Dilute 3–4 drops of tea tree oil by mixing it with 2 tablespoons of carrier oil of your choice (olive, coconut or almond).
- Apply the blend on the scalp and leave it in for at least an hour.
- Rinse using a mild shampoo.



MEDICINAL PLANTS AND THEIR BENEFITS

Medicinal plants have been used in traditional medicine practices since prehistoric times. A lot of medical compounds in modern pharmaceutical drugs are still derived from plants. In Kovk, we explored our surroundings and identified local plants during our Know Your Plants Workshop. Here are the properties and usage of some of the herbs we found.

COMMON NAME: RED CLOVER

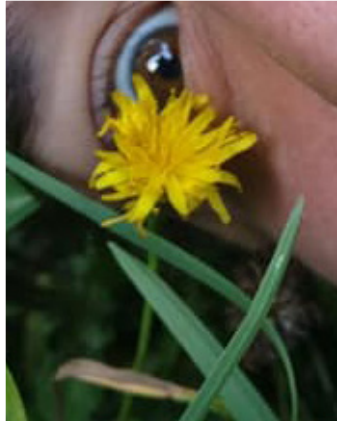
Scientific name: *Trifolium pratense*



Description: Red clover is a perennial herb that commonly grows wild in meadows throughout Europe and Asia, and has been naturalised to grow in North America. It is the national flower of Denmark. The red flowers at the end of the branched stems are usually dried for therapeutic use. Cattle and other animals graze on red clover. It is a source of many nutrients including calcium, chromium, magnesium, niacin, phosphorus, potassium, thiamine, and vitamin C. It is also a rich source of isoflavones (chemicals that act like estrogens and are found in many plants). Isoflavones have shown potential in the treatment of several conditions associated with menopause, such as hot flashes, cardiovascular health, and osteoporosis. Pregnant or breastfeeding women should not take red clover. The plant can be consumed in herbal infusion of the dried herb or in powdered extract form.

COMMON NAME: DANDELION

Scientific name: *Taraxacum officinale*



Description: While many people think of the dandelion as a pesky weed, it is full of vitamins A, B, C, and D, as well as minerals, such as iron, potassium, and zinc. Dandelion leaves are used to add flavour to salads, sandwiches, and teas. The roots are used in some coffee substitutes, and the flowers are used to make wine. In the past, dandelion roots and leaves were used to treat liver problems. Native Americans also boiled dandelion in water and took it to treat kidney disease, swelling, skin problems, heartburn, and upset stomach. In traditional Chinese medicine, dandelion has been used to treat stomach problems, appendicitis, and breast problems, such as inflammation or lack of milk flow. In Europe, dandelion was used in remedies for fever, boils, eye problems, diabetes, and diarrhea. So far, there have not been any quality scientific studies on dandelion. Today, its roots are mainly used to stimulate the appetite, and for liver and gallbladder problems. Dandelion leaves act as a diuretic, increasing the amount of urine your body makes and improving kidney function. They are also used to stimulate the appetite and help digestion. Dandelion flower has antioxidant properties. Some researchers suggest that dandelion may also have antimicrobial and antiviral properties, thus strengthening the immune system.

COMMON NAME: ELDERBERRY

Scientific name: *Sambucus nigra*

Description: Elderberry is native to most of Europe and North America. The only edible parts of the elderberry tree are the berries and flowers – its leaves, twigs, and roots are toxic. The fruit is about 8 mm in diameter and is borne in large clusters in late summer to early autumn. It has a variety of medicinal and culinary uses and can be used fresh or dried, the dried fruit being less bitter. Elderflower is rich in bioflavonoids, mostly flavones and flavonols, that are most commonly known for their antioxidant, anti-viral anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties. While most people consider the fruit too tart and tangy to eat raw, cooked elderberries make delicious jams and preserves, and add flavour to pies, sauces, chutneys etc. The fruit is also used to make wine. Flowers can be eaten raw or cooked. They have an aromatic smell and flavour, and are delicious raw as a refreshing summer snack, although one must look out for insects. The flowers are also used to add a muscatel flavour to stewed fruits, jellies and jams, and to make sparkling wine. Dried flowers are used to make tea that has a naturally sweet flavour.



COMMON NAME:

HORSEMINT

Scientific name: *Mentha longifolia*

Description: Horsemint is native to Europe, Asia and Africa, and introduced in North America. As with other mints, it is widely used as a medicinal and culinary herb. Like other members of the mints, it is best not used by pregnant women because large doses can cause an abortion. The leaves and flowering stems have antiasthmatic, antispasmodic, carminative and stimulant properties. The essential oil in the leaves is antiseptic, although toxic in large doses. The leaves are harvested as the plant comes into flower and can be dried for later use. Tea made from the leaves has traditionally been used to treat fever, headaches, digestive disorders and various minor ailments.



COMMON NAME:

YELLOW SWEET CLOVER

Scientific name: *Melilotus officinalis*

Description: Yellow sweet clover is native to Eurasia and introduced in North America, Africa and Australia. It is used for varicose veins and to relieve symptoms of poor blood circulation, including leg pain and heaviness, night cramps, itchiness, and fluid retention (edema). An infusion of yellow sweet clover can be used in the treatment of sleeplessness, nervous tension, neuralgia, palpitations, painful congestive menstruation, prevention of thrombosis, flatulence and intestinal disorders. Externally, it is used to treat eye inflammations, rheumatic pain, swollen joints and bruising. The leaves can be dried and used as an insect repellent, especially in order to repel moths from clothing. Poorly dried or fermented leaves produce a substance called dicoumarol, a potent anticoagulant, which is extremely poisonous in excess. Dicoumarol is extracted from the plant to make rodenticides. The plant can also be used as a green manure as it enriches the soil with nitrogen.



MEDITATION

Meditation is a mind and body practice that has a long history of use for increasing calmness and physical relaxation, improving psychological balance, coping with illness, and enhancing overall health and wellbeing. In recent years, psychotherapists have turned to mindfulness meditation as an important element in the treatment of a number of mental health problems. Mindfulness practice can help us to increase our ability to regulate emotions, decrease stress, anxiety and depression. It can also help us to focus our attention, as well as to observe our thoughts and feelings without judgment.



Body Scan Meditation

We started our Meditation and Mental Health Workshop with a body scan. This is a form of mindfulness that makes you aware of your surroundings as well as yourself. It enhances your ability to bring your full attention to real-time experiences happening in the present moment, which can be helpful when your emotions or thoughts feel out of control.

Begin by making yourself comfortable. Sit in a chair and allow your back to be straight, but not stiff, with your feet on the ground. You could also do this practice standing or if you prefer, you can lie down and have your head supported. Your hands could be resting gently in your lap or at your side. Allow your eyes to close, or to remain open with a soft gaze.

Take several long, slow, deep breaths. Breathing in fully and exhaling slowly. Breathe in through your nose and out through your nose or mouth. Feel your stomach expand on an inhale and relax and let go as you exhale.

Begin to let go of noises around you. Begin to shift your attention from outside to inside yourself. If you are distracted by sounds in the room, simply notice this and bring your focus back to your breathing.

Now slowly bring your attention down to your feet. Begin observing sensations in your feet. You might want to wiggle your toes a little, feeling your toes against your socks or shoes. Just notice, without judgment. You might imagine sending your breath down to your feet as if the breath is traveling through the nose to the lungs and through the abdomen all the way down to your feet. And then back up again out through your nose and lungs. Perhaps you don't feel anything at all. That is fine, too. Just allow yourself to feel the sensation of not feeling anything.

When you are ready, allow your feet to dissolve in your mind's eye and move your attention up to your ankles, calves, knees, and thighs. Observe the sensations you are experiencing throughout your legs. Breathe into and breathe out of the legs. If your mind begins to wander during this exercise, gently notice this without judgment and bring your mind back to noticing the sensations in your legs.

If you notice any discomfort, pain or stiffness, don't judge this. Just simply notice it. Observe how all sensations rise and fall, shift and change moment to moment. Notice how no sensation is permanent. Just observe and allow the sensations to be in the moment, just as they are. Breathe into and out from the legs.

Then on the next out-breath, allow the legs to dissolve in your mind. And move to the sensations in your lower back and pelvis. Softening and releasing as you breathe in and out. Slowly move your attention up to your mid back and upper back. Become curious about the sensations here. You may become aware of sensations in the muscle, temperature or points of contact with furniture or the bed.

With each out-breath, you may let go of tension you are carrying. And then very gently shift your focus to your stomach and all the internal organs here. Perhaps you notice the feeling of clothing, the process of digestion or the belly rising or falling with each breath. If you notice opinions arising about these areas, gently let these go and return to noticing sensations.

As you continue to breathe, bring your awareness to the chest and heart region and just notice your heartbeat. Observe how the chest rises during the inhale and how the chest falls during the exhale. Let go of any judgments that may arise. On the next out-breath, shift the focus to your hands and fingertips. See if you can channel your breathing into and out of this area as if you are breathing into and out from your hands. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the sensations in your hands.

And then, on the next out-breath, shift the focus and bring your awareness up into your arms. Observe the sensations or lack of sensations that may be occurring there. You might notice some difference between the left arm and the right arm – no need to judge this. As you exhale, you may experience the arm soften and release tensions.

Continue to breathe and shift focus to the neck, shoulder and throat region. This is an area where we often have tension. Be with the sensations here. It could be tightness, rigidity or holding. You may notice the shoulders moving along with the breath. Let go of any thoughts or stories you are telling about this area. As you breathe, you may feel the tension rolling off your shoulders.

On the next out-breath, shift your focus and direct your attention to the scalp, head, and face. Observe all of the sensations occurring there. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe into or out of the nostrils or mouth. As you exhale, you might notice the softening of any tension you may be holding.

And now, let your attention to expand out to include the entire body as a whole. Bring into your awareness the top of your head down to the bottom of your toes. Feel the gentle rhythm of the breath as it moves through the body.

As you come to the end of this practice, take a full, deep breath, taking in all the energy of this practice. Exhale fully. And when you are ready, open your eyes and return your attention to the present moment. As you become fully alert and awake, consider setting the intention that this practice of building awareness will benefit everyone you come in contact with today.

The script was written by Shilagh Mirgain, Ph.D., for UW Cultivating Well-Being: A Neuroscientific Approach

What Makes Me Happy?

We also tried a visual exercise that focused on the theme of happiness.

When you are ready to begin your practice, take a moment to get comfortable on a chair or on the floor, and keep your eyes just slightly open, becoming aware of the space around you. For a few breath counts, inhale deeply through the nose and exhale through the mouth. Close your eyes as you allow your breath to return to its natural rhythm, solely through the nose.

Take a moment to check in with your body and do a head-to-toe scan. How do you feel? Light or heavy? Still or agitated? As you return awareness to the breath, it is time to tap into your imagination. Visualize a speck of sunlight which starts in your chest area. This speck holds a feeling of happiness and fulfillment, and it is expanding in every direction. As it moves through and then beyond your body, it brings about a feeling of ease and allows the body to feel spacious and light. When you can't imagine it getting any bigger, let go of any focus. Opening your eyes, bring your awareness back to the body and become aware of the sights and smells surrounding it. Are you feeling more content? Hold on to that feeling.

Source: [headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com)

Next, we carried out a more hands-on exercise that invited the participants to draw whatever makes them happy. The purpose of this exercise is to focus on something that brings you joy so that in more stressful situations, you could focus on this instead, in order to temporarily alleviate stress.

Take a piece of paper and a pencil. Find a comfortable position and think about things that make you happy. Take a couple of minutes to visualise them and then draw them on your paper.

Useful Applications for Meditation (Not Sponsored)

**HEADSPACE
TEN PERCENT
CALM
THE MINDFULNESS APP**

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS: SHARING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

We used the remaining time of the workshop to share our own personal experiences with mental health and the struggles that we have faced. Mental health is something that affects everybody and whilst it affects some of us more than others, it is important to be aware of it. Everyone copes with their own mental health in their own way. We wanted to respect this and not push people to open up if they were not ready to do so.

It Is OK Not To Be OK Anonymous Board

We came up with the idea of a board where people could anonymously write any concerns or struggles they were facing, both related to the project or to their everyday life. Other participants could then anonymously give advice or share if they had been through something similar. The idea was to create a safe space where people were able to share their own experiences without any pressure. You can do this at your own organisation, school etc.

7 Ways To Practice Emotional First Aid (by clinical psychologist Guy Winch)

I. Pay attention to emotional pain — recognize it when it happens and work to treat it before it feels all-encompassing.

The body evolved the sensation of physical pain to alert us that something is wrong and we need to address it. The same is true for emotional pain. If a rejection, failure or bad mood is not getting better, it means you've sustained a psychological wound and you need to treat it. For example, loneliness can be devastatingly damaging to your psychological and physical health, so when you or your friend or loved one is feeling socially or emotionally isolated, you need to take action.

2. Redirect your gut reaction when you fail.

The nature of psychological wounds makes it easy for one to lead to another. Failure can often drive you to focus on what you can't do instead of focusing on what you can. That can then make you less likely to perform at your best, which will make you even more focused on your shortcomings, and on the cycle goes. To stop this sort of emotional spiral, learn to ignore the post-failure "gut" reaction of feeling helpless and demoralized, and make a list of factors that you can control were you to try again. For instance, think about preparation and planning, and how you might improve each of them. This kind of exercise will reduce feelings of helplessness and improve your chances of future success.

3. Monitor and protect your self-esteem. When you feel like putting yourself down, take a moment to be compassionate to yourself.

Self-esteem is like an emotional immune system that buffers you from emotional pain and strengthens your emotional resilience. As such, it is very important to monitor it and avoid putting yourself down, particularly when you are already hurting. One way to "heal" damaged self-esteem is to practice self-compassion. When you're feeling critical of yourself, do the following exercise: imagine a dear friend is feeling bad about him or herself for similar reasons and write an email expressing compassion and support. Then read the email. Those are the messages you should be giving yourself.

4. When negative thoughts are taking over, disrupt them with positive distraction.

When you replay distressing events in your mind without seeking new insight or trying to solve a problem, you're just brooding, and that, especially when it becomes habitual, can lead to deeper psychological pain. The best way to disrupt unhealthy rumination is to distract yourself by engaging in a task that requires concentration (for example, do a Sudoku, complete a crossword, try to recall the names of the kids in your fifth grade class). Studies show that even two minutes of distraction will reduce the urge to focus on the negative unhealthy.

5. Find meaning in loss.

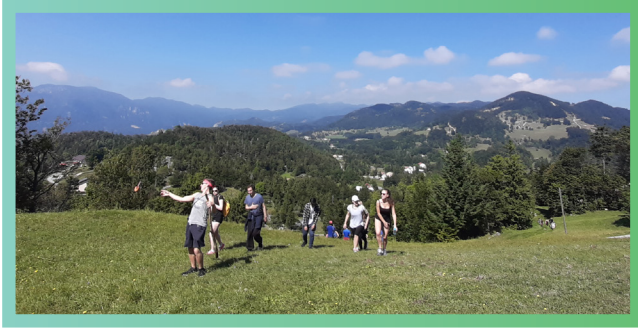
Loss is a part of life, but it can scar us and keep us from moving forward if we don't treat the emotional wounds it creates. If sufficient time has passed and you're still struggling to move forward after a loss, you need to introduce a new way of thinking about it. Specifically, the most important thing you can do to ease your pain and recover is to find meaning in the loss and derive purpose from it. It might be hard, but think of what you might have gained from the loss (for instance, "I lost my spouse but I've become much closer to my kids"). Consider how you might gain or help others gain a new appreciation for life, or imagine the changes you could make that will help you live a life more aligned with your values and purpose.

6. Don't let excessive guilt linger.

Guilt can be useful. In small doses, it alerts you to take action to mend a problem in your relationship with another person. But excessive guilt is toxic, in that it wastes your emotional and intellectual energies, distracts you from other tasks, and prevents you from enjoying life. One of the best ways to resolve lingering guilt is to offer an effective apology. Yes, you might have tried apologizing previously, but apologies are more complex than we tend to realize. The crucial ingredient that every effective apology requires — and most standard apologies lack — is an "empathy statement." In other words, your apology should focus less on explaining why you did what you did and more on how your actions (or inactions) impacted the other person. It is much easier to forgive someone when you feel they truly understand. By apologizing (even if for a second time), the other person is much more likely to convey authentic forgiveness and help your guilt dissolve.

7. Learn what treatments for emotional wounds work for you.

Pay attention to yourself and learn how you, personally, deal with common emotional wounds. For instance, do you shrug them off, get really upset but recover quickly, get upset and recover slowly, squelch your feelings, or ...? Use this analysis to help yourself understand which emotional first aid treatments work best for you in various situations (just as you would identify which of the many pain relievers on the shelves works best for you). The same goes for building emotional resilience. Try out various techniques and figure out which are easiest for you to implement and which tend to be most effective for you. But mostly, get into the habit of taking note of your psychological health on a regular basis — and especially after a stressful, difficult, or emotionally painful situation.





CONTACT INFORMATION

Klub študentov Kranj
Slovenski trg 5
4000 Kranj
Slovenia

W: www.ksk.si

E: info@ksk.si

T: (04) 23 60 630

DISCLAIMER:

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

This booklet lists nutrition tips that may not be suited for people who have certain allergies or health conditions. It also contains recipes and mentions plant remedies that can cause allergic reactions in some individuals. It includes the method of cooking over a campfire, which comes with its own risks as well. Interpretation and use of the information in this booklet is strictly at your own risk. The authors and participating organisations shall not be held accountable for any damages that may result from the use or misuse of information in this booklet.



Erasmus+

