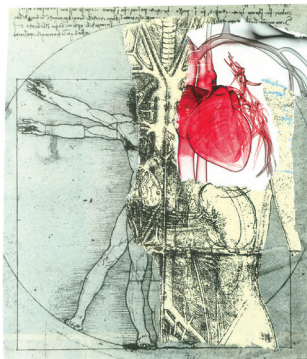
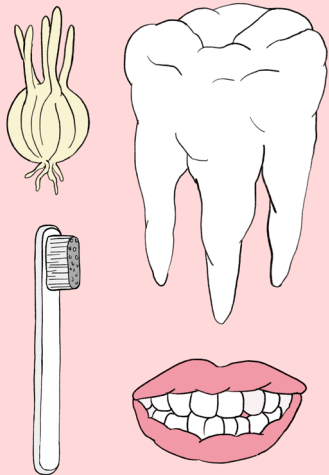


EMBODIED CHANGE

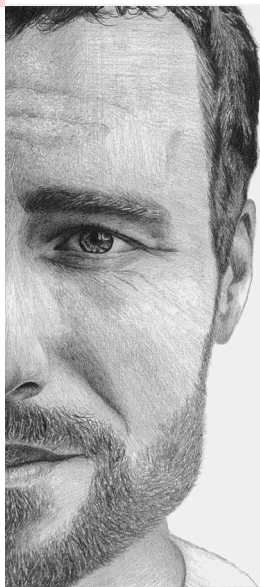
toolkit for educators





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about this toolkit

Western culture has a long tradition of privileging mind over the body. In the typical classroom, the focus is on the invisible mind, while the visible body is ignored or requested to be still, or even condemned. Since an early age, we are taught that our physical needs do not matter. Thus, we are not taught how to use our bodies effectively, and we have few chances to learn how movement, sensing, thinking, and feeling are interrelated. The cost of ignoring body in the realm of education is high. When you are alienated from your own body, you become a stranger to yourself. You are not aware of your resources and true range of your potential. To connect to our bodies is to learn to trust ourselves, and from that comes the power to make a difference in our lives and our communities.

Susan Bauer, somatic movement educator, writes that young people know little about their bodies, but ironically, they are intensively focused on their bodies, often in unhealthy ways. They think about their appearance, weight, physical skills, and how they are perceived by their peers. With all this focus on their bodies, the actual study of the body is mostly omitted from the school curricula. The silence that exists around the body is of concern for young people, since the body is a major source of self-esteem, both positive and negative.

It's only recently that our notions of the body and learning are being re-examined, and at least in the area

of non-formal education, more and more body-based and movement-based learning programs are offered.

This toolkit was created within a strategic partnership project called **Embodied Change**, basing on ideas and experience of the participants and trainers in different project activities. The toolkit has been designed for all kind of educators, including facilitators of non-formal and experiential learning, teachers, youth workers, coaches and mentors, who would like to focus more on the body in the educational process, using the body as a tool, both for learning and for creative expression.

The exercises in this toolkit have been tested in international, residential, non-formal learning programs, engaging young people from ages 18 to 30, and lasting for around one week. You might use these exercises also with younger target groups, if you know your learners, their backgrounds and the relationships among them well. You can use this toolkit also for your own personal and professional development, exploring how improving connection to and awareness of your body can help you to master various professional challenges better.

The methods offered in this toolkit are related to different competence areas. Some are designed to boost imagination and creative expression, and some can be integrated in entrepreneurship or social and emotional skills training. Some of the activities aim to increase body awareness, others are simple ice breakers or team builders, while some can be transformed into a series of events. What connects all these exercises is our intention to offer

you ideas how the six different decks of text and image cards included in this toolkit can be used for educational, personal development or creative work. We hope that these ideas will stimulate you to create your own methods and body-based and movement-based sessions, in order to best meet the needs and goals of the learners involved. Although most of the exercises are related to the body, only a few of them include moving and sensing, meaning that to create an embodied learning process, which would connect mind, body and soul, it is advisable to integrate these activities in the different movement exercises that exist in the disciplines with which you are familiar.

In this toolkit, you will find also a brief introduction to embodied learning and its main principles, advantages and related risks.

There are definitely many more ways how the decks of cards included in this toolkit can be used. If you are willing to become a part of the next edition of the toolkit, share your ideas and practices of how you are using the cards. You can do it by adding hashtag #embodiedchange to your social media posts or by writing to our Facebook page - **Embodied Change**.

The project **Embodied Change** was financed with the support of European Commission's **Erasmus+: Youth in Action** administered in Latvia by the Agency for International Programs for Youth. This publication reflects only the author's views, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

introduction to embodied learning

Embodied learning constitutes a contemporary pedagogical theory of learning, which emphasizes the use of the body in educational practice. It views the physical body as a domain of learning and change. In the embodied learning process, one's body becomes a lab through which one learns - through movement and stillness, touch, drawing, journal writing, discussion and other activities.

Embodied learning approaches are based on the idea that the body and mind act together to support learning. When designing embodied learning activities, we might ask ourselves questions such as: how can we learn more about ourselves through movement? How are we affected by our surroundings and the natural world, including the biological aspects of our own being? How can we use our bodies and therefore ourselves creatively? How may movement help us to integrate what we know and think, with how we act?

Many studies have found that involving the body in learning increases awareness, deepens relaxation and improves learning skills. For instance, British educator, Michael Gelb, discovered the importance of postural awareness in the classroom. He observed that when young students were solving difficult tasks, they would tighten up their posture - clench shoulders and tense muscles. Once they were made aware of that pattern and were taught how to relax, expand their body and breathe fully, students found the answers to difficult tasks much easier and with less effort.

Embodied learning, however, is much more than learning to become more productive. Our behaviour is stored and framed physically - in our bodies. Sometimes, we act faster than we can think. Our physical responses precede and influence our thinking. To be able to make real changes in behaviour, we need direct physical experience. Working with the body is effective because the body is tangible and observable. Thus, embodied learning is an exemplary approach to create real and sustainable behavioral change.

principles of embodied learning

There are hundreds of movement disciplines, including sports and performing arts that might provide inspiration and activities for body-based and movement-based learning processes. Designing embodied learning activities is much about discovering and understanding the relationship between the body and many aspects of oneself.

Within an embodied model of learning, we learn by doing. It has a lot in common with experiential learning and non-formal education. To understand embodied learning better, we may examine its three important principles:

THE BODY AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION

In the embodied learning process, the body serves as a means of accessing people, their potential and limitations. Directing attention to certain areas of our

bodies before, during and after educational activities is an important element of embodied learning. We learn when we pay attention to what we are doing. Movement is seen as an expression of a certain state of mind or being. For embodied learning to be efficient, one of the facilitator's first tasks is to bring learners into contact with their bodies and help them to become more aware of what is happening in their physical life - to notice their sensations, emotions and movements in the present moment and without judgmental thoughts. It is much about building the skill of observing oneself and others through the life of the body and not only the content of what is being said or thought.

In the embodied learning process, we explore how our body reacts in different situations and we can use these explorations to better understand our capacities and challenges. It means that in order to boost learning, it is not enough to offer a movement exercise. We also need to offer ample opportunity for reflection. Just imagine how much the traditional sports classes would change if more attention, observation and reflection was given space, exploring how what we do during different sports activities tells us about our traits, patterns and skills! This is applicable to other areas of our lives - the team and individual sports we practice influence who we are and how we treat work and life challenges.

THE BODY AS A PLACE OF CHANGE

Movement is also a powerful intervention to help yourself or others. Starting a new body practice may help you transform not only how you move but also how you feel and think. Our bodies provide us with an accessible

tool to cultivate different qualities in our life that we feel we are missing right now. If it is difficult for you to accept ambiguity or be spontaneous, you might choose to practice contact improvisation. If peace is missing in your life, explore meditation, and if you are bad at teamwork, you might join a local basketball team. In embodied work we encourage learners to undertake new physical practices that will show them other ways of moving and thus, being. Often, this new practice is enough to overcome old and disturbing patterns.

When you are aware of your reactions in different situations, it is also easier to make a conscious choice. Richard Strozzi-Heckler described somatic work with conditioned tendencies - the ways of responding in situations when something is wrong, for example, when we experience stress or fear. This tendency may have been shaped by some event, usually in the context of family, school, religious institutions. When our conditioned tendency emerges, our muscles set in a particular way, we assume a specific posture, and may breathe in a certain way. For instance, in a difficult moment, some of us become defensive, others shrink and become small. Knowing how our body reacts in certain situations, and learning to change these physical reactions, can help to transform the conditioned tendencies that are no longer relevant or helpful. This is another aspect that can be explored within embodied learning process.

THE BODY AS A VEHICLE OF CONNECTION

We learn best when we are respected and approached with love and compassion, and therefore educators keep on facing the challenge of how to create an

atmosphere of mutual respect and kindness as a foundation for effective learning; also how to create a group environment in which diversity is seen as a resource and not an obstacle. Body-based activities have a huge potential to help us to develop, at first, self-compassion and appreciation and then, later, more emphatic relationships within the group - as learners gain more understanding of their own bodies, they also come to respect individual differences and recognize their commonalities as human beings. Such profound yet simple realizations add to a growing sense of caring for themselves and others.

As the body is often ignored or restricted in educational institutions, also the importance and benefits of touch are often neglected. If we can find a way to help young people to learn a respectful, supportive and kind touch that respects boundaries of others, different group activities which include touch will help create a trustful and compassionate learning environment, contributing to the learning process and the achievement of learning outcomes, regardless of the subject and objectives of the learning area.

three bodies

Three Bodies is a useful framework to generate ideas for body-based work in educational, research, social or arts' context. It is based on the idea that each of us has three bodies - that all natural bodies are perceived and constrained by social bodies and political domination:

THE PHYSICAL BODY

The physical body refers to the part of us that has been created by nature. It consists of chemical elements present in our bodies, cells, water, fat, connective tissue, muscles, bones, organs, reproductive, digestive, cardiovascular, respiratory, lymphatic and nervous systems, etc. Through our senses, we collect the information used to construct knowledge. Our knowledge is stored in our bodies - like in the hard disc of a computer.

As educators, we might teach young people about their physical bodies, increase our own and their understanding about the body's biological processes and aspects that underlie learning, learn to sit, stand, move and live healthier lives, and experiment with using different senses in learning and creative work. Knowing what's happening in our physical bodies is a part of knowing who we are.

It is also essential to reflect on what extent the learning spaces that we offer young people support their health and physical wellbeing. Is there enough natural light and fresh air in the classroom or training room? Do learners have access to water and healthy meals? Are there live plants in the room that would serve as natural air filters? Is the learning space comfortable? Are learners encouraged to wear comfortable clothing? Are the teaching or training methods diverse, involving multiple senses and many opportunities to move? Is there a time and space for expressing and valuing emotions? Does the educational program include sufficient time for rest? What kind of lifestyle are you as the teacher or trainer role modelling? Are young people urged to meet

certain cultural standards of strength and beauty? These and more questions should be asked in order to ensure that what's happening in the physical body of a young person helps his or her learning.

THE SOCIAL BODY

The social body is a part of us that has been created by culture. The social body can be understood as an instrument of symbolic representation, connecting, communicating and collaborating with others. It relates also to the practice of using our body to present ourselves to the people around us, to express ourselves and our values, to shape roles and build relationships. It is interesting to compare these practices across different cultures, and thus deconstructing our own culture and understanding better how it has shaped the perception of who we are, what we are able to do, what our relationships with other people and the environment are, and what our opportunities we have to shape and influence the world around us. Activities about body image, ideals and standards, gender identity, roles and relationships may also be of great interest for young people.

When you are working with body and movement to develop empathy, communication and cooperation skills of young people, you will be addressing both their physical and social bodies. You might also care to reflect on what kind of body practices would you like to encourage in the groups with which you are working in order to support their learning. Would encouraging more hugs or offering active games be helpful? What changes would occur if we sit in a circle or in rows behind one another other? How would wearing a

uniform influence relationships among young people? What changes would be prompted if an educator dances together with learners or shares touch or is physical contact among educators and learners strictly prohibited?

THE POLITICAL BODY

The political body is a part of us that has been shaped by different ideologies. Each political system is aiming to reproduce and shape bodies that would help to sustain its system - for example, nationalism tends to promote traditional gender roles and spread homophobia - researcher Jacklyn Cock pointed out that notions of masculinity are a powerful tool in the process of making men into soldiers. Young boys are encouraged to repress empathy, to be tough, fearless, not to cry and to value winning or dominating over others. Many boys learn that heroes are soldiers and conquerors.

The political body refers to how our bodies are disciplined by society, in order to shape our knowledge, behaviour and compliance. Fashion magazines show us what clothing to wear and what to think of our bodies, our schooling system teaches us obedience and denial of our immediate needs. Our culture teaches us certain kinds of behaviors and attitudes that often deny our very nature - to sustain different systems, regardless of their ideological character, often silent and obedient bodies are the most useful.

In this age, there are many discussions on how much a state may own your body and can limit what you do with it based on religious norms or political dogmas, especially in case of euthanasia or abortion. This all has an

impact on how we relate to our bodies and how powerful we can be in confrontation with authority. If you are interested in this aspect of our bodies, it is worth reading the work of philosopher Michel Foucault who has researched how bodies have been disciplined in different eras.

Entire ideologies are encoded and preserved in bodily norms. Usually these norms are taken for granted and thus escape critical reflection. The observation that ideologies are also embodied leads to an idea that alternative body practices can provide an opportunity to challenge any system and lead to a bigger political and social transformation. As educators, we might try to identify which body-related practices in our communities should be changed in order to promote the wellbeing of individuals, peace, environmental care, justice and freedom. The same examination might be transferred also to a smaller system - like schools - inviting young people to critically examine bodily practices that are encouraged, or discouraged, in their schools, through different rules, norms and physical learning environments.

benefits of embodied learning

Embodied learning boosts the development of many intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, including awareness, accurate self-perception, identifying emotions, recognising strengths, self-confidence, stress management, impulse control, social awareness, empathy, effective communication, relationship building and responsible, ethical decision-

making. Learning results are unique for each learner, and there are also several other, quite common, general benefits:

- Embodied learning helps to create respectful communities of learners, in which they may learn and interact, develop greater compassion and appreciation for diversity.

- Learners develop appreciation for their bodies and learn to be kinder and more caring towards themselves and others, and also establish healthier body image.

- By becoming more aware of their unconscious patterns and assumptions, learners gain more choices and the possibility of consciously directing their development.

- When based in the scientific study of anatomy and physiology, embodied learning also provides a dynamic, personalized, and body-based complement to science curricula, such as biology and life sciences.

- Learners might become more aware of their cultural conditioning of their bodies, their sense of self, and their expression in the world.

- Learners experience more sensitivity, flexibility, gracefulness, friendlier relations and increased connectedness with self and others.

- Learners may enhance their health, prevent injuries, improve posture, balance and coordination, and relieve pain.

To sum up - embodied learning provides learners a chance to practice a wide range of skills and attitudes, that otherwise they may just talk or think about. It helps each person to gain more authority and empowerment.

When we are touching someone's body we are touching also their soul. This makes embodied learning so powerful and so challenging, requiring awareness and responsibility, and therefore in the next chapter also some of the main risks related to embodied learning are reviewed.

risks to consider

If the embodied learning process is not designed and facilitated well participants can experience emotional or mental outbreaks that can be hard to handle if the facilitator is not also a therapist. You must take care not to mix learning with healing - it can be difficult, as healing often happens when we work with the body and also with other intimate forms of expression, such as writing, storytelling and drawing. But the purpose of training is learning, not therapy, and most of the facilitators are not certified therapists.

It is important to work with a group step by step, starting with simple, even superficial, activities, to know learners' backgrounds and histories of mental disease and trauma. Before choosing a method, the facilitator must have the competences and capabilities to support participants in their individual processes, which may be difficult and

challenging, depending on their previous life experiences and mental states. Embodied learning activities are often not suitable for people suffering from past or present abuse and violence or mental health issues. An individual must not be forced to go beyond where they or you are prepared to be. Be sure there are enough inner and outer resources available to each learner to process emotions and memories that might come up while working with the body.

You might meet a lot of resistance and distrust if you will offer body and movement related exercises in a learning environment that is not respectful, safe and free from physical, sexual or emotional abuse - and that's the right reaction! Choose other working methods if you feel that the overall group environment is not safe.

Embodied learning processes might be based on simple activities, such as walking, and also on exciting activities, such as acrobatics. When choosing methods, be sure that you have gained enough practice in order to be able to handle the physical safety of the participants. It can be tempting and fun to share practices that you have seen and participated in, but make sure you are not putting learners at risk by engaging them in physical challenges, without knowing the safety procedures to prevent injuries.

If working with people from different cultures, research, in advance, their cultural norms that relate to their personal space, body expression, posture and touch. Keep in mind that representatives of the same nation may also come from different subcultures. It might be quite a challenge to engage in embodied learning activities with some groups,

for example young men coming from traditionally masculine social environments. It doesn't mean that embodied learning is not beneficial to them but be prepared to face some resistance. They may experience difficulties in knowing how to participate in activities that require unstructured, free movement or deeper personal connection and trust.

Bauer also notes that most somatic disciplines have been developed for adults and adapting them for work with young people can present some significant challenges. Open ended and improvisational exercises, and having too much freedom to explore movement and their bodies can be scary to young people. Some activities might be seen as too childish, there might be difficulties to build trust in the group and also a lack of the familiar modes of assessing success might cause confusion. She also emphasizes that young people are particularly sensitive to the opinions of their peers and adults around them, so getting them to relax and enjoy these activities in a group of their peers takes skilful facilitation. Other issues, such as negative body image and self-perception, may need to be overcome in order to enable young people to enjoy and benefit from the body-based and movement-based learning process.

In order to create a safe learning environment, an effort must be made to empower learners to say NO and YES clearly to every single invitation that they receive. Many people lack confidence to refuse to participate in something offered to them, and therefore it is crucial to create a space where individual differences and learners' abilities to set and respect their own boundaries and the boundaries of others are valued. When demonstrating activities that require touch

HOW EASY IS YOUR BREATHING?

PHYSICAL FEELINGS

HOW STRONG DO YOU FEEL?

EMOTIONS

WHAT CAN FREAK YOU OUT?

HABITS

HOW WELL ARE YOU EATING?

**HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND
IN NATURE?**

**WHAT DOES YOUR INNER
CRITIC TELL YOU?**

BODY IMAGE

**WHAT IS ONE WAY YOU CAN
CELEBRATE YOUR BODY EVERY DAY?**

BODY HISTORY

**WHAT DID YOUR SCHOOL TEACH
YOU ABOUT THE BODY?**



questions

body journal

If you wish to use embodied learning methods, a good first step is to regain connection with your own body. A body journal is a simple, but powerful tool with which to start. Once you are well aware of your own sensations and emotions, and once you have tried out various bodily practices and understood how these help to learn and grow as a person and professionally, you are ready to explore a more embodied approach to teaching and training.

The main purpose of working with the body journal is to increase awareness of our bodies, practice regular observation and explore the influences shaping us. The questions offered in the question cards can be used as guidelines for reflection - select questions that are the most important to you and write about each of them on a regular basis, in order to track your progress. It is also worthwhile, at least once, to answer all the questions provided - that will help you to better understand your personal history, and helpful, and less helpful, ways of thinking and being.

You might add to your body journal poems, stories, photos, drawings, collages and different habit trackers, thus creating a portfolio of your own body that can serve for learning about yourself and also as a source of ideas for artistic work, community projects, campaigns and research. If you work with the same group of young people for a longer period, you might ask them to create their own body portfolios and use them regularly by offering questions, exercises and a space for sharing.

more than a small talk

The question cards can be used in various ice-breaking exercises or as discussion starters in the educational programs that are connected with body and movement, body image, health and similar topics. The purpose of the next exercise and its variations is to increase empathy and foster connections among people within the group, as well as to facilitate learning and discussion about body related topics.

Invite each participant to find a partner, and offer each pair a random question. Give them 4 minutes to share their answers to the question. Then ask participants to find a new partner and offer a new question again. Repeat several times depending on the time available and as long as it is interesting.

Note, that the questions in the deck are divided accordingly to five main topics: physical feelings and energy, emotions, habits, body history and body image. The different colors of cards indicate different topics, so therefore you can easily use the questions provided as an aid to design and run workshops related to these topics.

Before the activity, remember to remove irrelevant cards because not all the questions in the deck of cards are suitable for ice-breaking, and it is also important to choose the questions in accordance with the profile of your target group, group dynamics and context in which this activity is happening.

metamorphosis

In this exercise, we invite participants to explore the influences and changes in their lives and to reflect about their personal development. It also offers participants opportunities to practice creative expression, improve their interpersonal connection and inspire each other. Besides cards with questions, you will need some clay, water and sculpting tools. Plan at least 2 hours for this exercise.

Pick 3 questions that are related to body history. Ask participants to split into pairs. Give the pairs about 20 minutes time to speak about these questions. Then suggest to them that they thank each other for the conversation and invite each person to make five small sculptures that would represent how they have transformed through life. There is no wrong or right way to do it. Each person can choose their own milestones and most important changes that have happened within them. The sculptures might be metaphoric or literal.

When the sculptures are done, ask the participants to form smaller groups and tell each other about their sculptures.

To conclude the session, you can ask everyone to join you in the circle and offer a space for sharing some of the insights and interesting stories heard. You can also develop a discussion about learning, change, ambiguity, or explore ideas that young people have about their future.

the power of habit

When we speak with young people about setting and reaching their goals or transforming their ideas and dreams into action, it can be helpful to invite them to think about their different habits and increase their awareness of their own habits that help them to reach their goals or habits that block or harm them. The question cards will help to explore those habits that are related to treating our bodies. The purpose of this exercise is to develop knowledge about the habits that help to support our bodies in order that our bodies support us in reaching our goals.

Remove irrelevant cards from the deck - the questions about habits are marked with a green color. Ask each person to browse through the questions and try to identify 3 helpful and 3 harmful habits that influence their abilities and potential to reach their goals. Afterwards, ask participants to share their habits and note them down on a flipchart sheet in two columns - helpful and not so helpful habits. Encourage them to discuss and share their tips on how to overcome their bad habits and establish new habits that serve them better. A great ending to the exercise can be the facilitator sharing some research data and tips about habits that help people learn easier and be more energetic, focused, motivated and productive.

needs cards



SUPPORT

REST

NURTURING

SAFETY

BALANCE

SPACE

EASE

knowing needs

Our well-being is closely tied to having our needs met. Obviously we're going to be happier if we're getting enough water, food, and sleep versus being thirsty, hungry, and tired. Research studies have shown that the same is true for our psychological needs. When needs are not met, we may have a vague sense of dissatisfaction or craving, and may try to fill that craving with things like snacks or excessive social media consumption. But these things can't fulfill the need that we've yet to identify. Once we recognize what our needs are, we are in a much better position to address them. Thus the main aim of this exercise and its variations is to increase our needs awareness.

Do you know what your needs are, especially in challenging situations, such as conflict, feeling depressed, experiencing burnout or just working with a group of young people? Whenever you are not sure, take a look at the deck of the needs cards. Identify the most relevant needs which are important for you at that present moment. Think what could be the best way to meet these needs, and take action. If identifying needs is difficult, different mindfulness exercises might be used as a supportive method.

Identifying and expressing needs also can be helpful if you are starting to work in a new team. Offer each team member a pick of three cards that would best describe their needs in relation to teamwork and being in this particular team. This can be a bit of a more playful way of how to share our cooperation preferences, get to know each other at a

deeper level and learn about attitudes and behaviors that are the most supportive to each team member.

Train also young people to become more aware of their needs, and the needs of others. A valuable exercise is to practice finding one's own and others' feelings and needs as a sort of summing up or closure to the day's activities. Each person should write down key incidents from the day. Ask them to identify the feelings and needs of each involved person. Encourage them to consider if there is anything they want to say to the other people involved in the situation.

building a group culture

When a new group meets, it is definitely worth investing some time and effort to establish ground rules or guidelines for being together. Among all the other approaches on how to do this, one effective way is to start with a conversation about the needs of each group member. Thus, the purpose of this exercise is to support the group's building process and assist the group in formulating ground rules that would guide the interaction within the group. It also offers an opportunity to explore the group as a resource and the potential of the group to support each of its members.

Place the needs cards with their face up around the learning space. Ask each participant to pick one most important need that must be met so the person could feel well and be able to learn in the group. The list of the needs

provided is compiled from different sources, mainly from non-violent communication, and there might be some areas not covered, so also offer the possibility to express other needs. Invite each person to share which need he or she selected. Encourage each person to tell what kind of behaviour from the group members would be most supportive for them and note down these needs and requests on a flipchart sheet.

Then ask the participants what guidelines of communication and cooperation should be established so that the needs of each person in the group will be met. Discuss and agree on main principles guiding the work of the group. Note them down, display them in some visible place and refer to them whenever something goes wrong in the interaction of the group members. Revise and rewrite the guidelines if they turn out not to be helpful.

Plan around 2 minutes per person for sharing their needs, as well as around 30 minutes for the introduction of the exercise, discussion, and formulating the guidelines.

learning to meet the needs

This is a playful and creative exercise that helps individuals to learn how to meet different needs. Invite one participant to draw a needs card from the face down pack and hold it up so that the others can see it but this participant can't. Without using the word on the card, the other participants in turn give examples of how they might meet the need, in other words

what strategies they might use. The player has maximum 5 goes to guess the need. If he or she doesn't succeed, ask him or her to turn the card around to see the answer. At the end, take a few minutes talking about strategies of meeting the needs of ourselves and other people.

dance it out

As mentioned, body-based work allows us to practice certain ways of being, or invite certain qualities into our lives, easier and sooner. The purpose of this exercise is to bring about an awareness of the people's needs at the present moment and support them in finding strategies how these needs might be met.

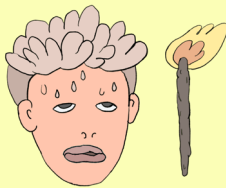
Invite each participant to choose one needs card - a need that is not met right now in their life and that they would consider to be very important for it to be met. Invite them to imagine how this need might be embodied, and then express it in movement or dance - all of the group moving at the same time. You might ask them - if this need was a movement or dance what kind of movement or dance would it be?

After around 5 minutes of movement, invite participants to divide into pairs or trios and share which need they picked and encourage each other to find different strategies that may meet that particular need.

sensations

CRAMPED

BLOATED



CONGESTED

CONSTRICTED

the body vocabulary

How did you experience it in your body? What sensations did you notice? What changed in your body? These are the kind of questions we often ask after different body and movement activities. These are useful questions, but not always easy to answer, especially when participants are not used to attending to body sensations, and most of us aren't!

Our bodies constantly communicate with us. Sometimes the signals are obvious, and sometimes they are more subtle. Learning to notice and name sensations enables us to use our bodies as efficient tools for learning and change. The sensation cards are designed to make it easier to put language to our sensations - physical feelings and responses in the body - and not confuse them with emotions.

Display these cards in the training room when you are facilitating different body-based and movement-based activities. Just having these keywords around might better help young people to describe their physical experiences during different exercises.

In order to develop an awareness of sensations, you might also include in your training programs regular moments when you ask each person to pick three cards that would describe their physical sensations right at that moment. During longer residential courses or exchanges, it can be done as a part of daily reflection and evaluation activities.

what are you feeling?

The aim of this exercise is to increase body awareness and also to develop learners' abilities to notice and name physical sensations in their bodies. You will need around 60 minutes, a lot of space, one set of sensations cards for each person, large sheets of paper and markers or an environment where it is possible to draw on the ground - such as sandy beach.

Ask participants to help each other to draw contours of their bodies - one person lying down on the sheet of paper, and the other drawing around. Then invite them to tune in with themselves at that present moment, and add on the respective areas of their bodies the different sensations they are feeling at that present moment. You can also provide them with painting brushes and paints and ask them to use colors, patterns and drawings to illustrate the sensations they experience in the different areas of their bodies. A more environmentally friendly option of the exercise would be to add sensations cards to the actual body of each person.

A great introduction to this exercise is a body scan meditation, during which you ask participants to bring attention to their bodies, noticing different sensations, as they mentally scan down, from head to toe. It can be done while participants are sitting or lying down. A more dynamic option is to do a body scan while dancing and exploring how different parts of their bodies can be moved. Start with the focus on the feet while the rest of the body is relatively still, then focus on knees, the entire leg, hips, belly, chest, shoulders, hands, palms, neck and head.

emotions embodied

The main aim of this exercise is to explore manifestations of different basic emotions in our bodies and build an understanding how changing the state of the body might help to transform our emotions and thoughts. The exercise takes approximately 30 minutes.

Invite participants to stand in a circle facing each other. Put sensations cards in the middle of the circle so everyone may see them and use them as an aid. Ask participants to experience different emotional states. Name one emotion, such as happiness, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, surprise or joy, and then ask participants to bring themselves to a state of feeling that emotion. You can ask them to remember some life situation in which they felt that emotion. Give them around one minute time to get into the given emotion and then also to look around and observe others. Afterwards, ask the participants to share what they are noticing in others and what physical sensation that they are feeling in this emotional state.

Then propose that they shake their bodies for a short while to get back to more neutral state and offer a new emotion. Explore four to five different emotions - always end with a positive one.

After this exercise, introduce the idea that sometimes it is enough to change the state of our bodies, to change our emotional and mental state. You might propose

to embody again some of the negative emotions, for instance anger. Ask them to pay attention again to the dominant sensations and then try to do the opposite - for example, if something is tense, relax it, and observe if something changes. We do not experience emotions in our bodies in identical ways, therefore, there are no correct techniques of transforming emotions through transforming our posture or breathing, but finding out what works for each person might provide useful insights and they may learn to manage themselves better in stressful and challenging moments.

choreographies of sensations

This task can be used with dancers, but also with other learners, as a tool to boost their imagination, body awareness, creative expression and vocabulary related to feelings.

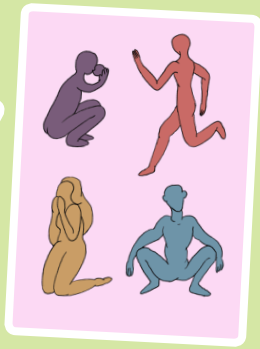
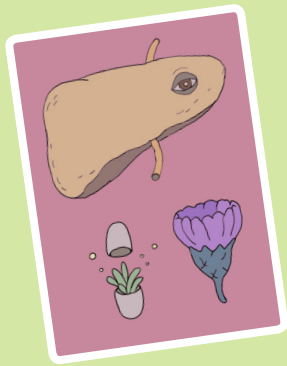
Ask one person from the group to pick one sensation. It doesn't matter if a person sees the cards or not. Ask the person to tell aloud the sensation selected, and then give the group around 3 minutes time to create and practice a short movement sequence that would be based on that sensation or express the sensation at hand through a dance. Creating these movements can be individual work, but if you'd like to foster communication and cooperation, you might also ask participants to work in pairs or small teams.

Repeat the same process two more times: ask another person to pick one more sensation, and then one

more. As a result, each participant should have created three different movement sequences - one representing each sensation.

Then invite participants to create a short dance performance, when at the beginning of each minute facilitator says aloud the sensation selected, and then the second sensation, and then the third one. In each minute, participants should perform the movement sequence that each person developed inspired by the sensation named. You can experiment with different music or do it in silence. Sensation cards might also be easily used to write stories and poems. Thus, you can develop this exercise and mix movements with short stories or poems and create simple but touching performances using sensations as a source of creativity.

images



Associative or metaphoric image cards are flexible tools that can be used in work with groups and individuals to help them to discover different themes, learn from their peers, speak about their experiences, articulate issues, explore own reactions and thoughts, create stories, assess and develop competences, and find ideas and solutions. Exercises and games with pictures in a card format create the conditions for opening the imagination and creating something that previously did not exist.

Associative cards invite young people to create and tell their own untold stories in a safe and distant way. It can be easier to talk in a playful manner about characters, scenes, or symbols than to talk about themselves directly. Sometimes, randomly chosen images can take us to unknown places and give us a chance to discover more about ourselves.

There are hundreds of methods on how to work with image cards. In the following chapter, you will find a few for inspiration. Remember to remove unsuitable and unimportant cards for your activity in advance. Note, that the images aren't associated with the text which is on the other side of the card, although sometimes you might notice connections. There are no correct and incorrect interpretations of the images and you should not impose your interpretation.



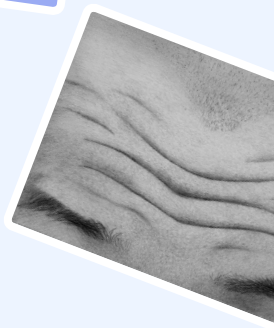
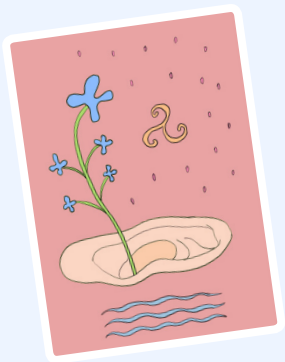
history of the body

The purpose of this activity is to explore our personal histories and the events that have shaped us. Sharing stories of our bodies can also be a great way to build empathy and connection within the group of learners.

You can use this activity as an ice-breaker or devote more time for it and invite longer stories, transforming this exercise into a storytelling workshop. The short version would require around 2 minutes per person, while the perfect length for the longer one is between 60 to 90 minutes.

Ask each person to take a random card depicting one body part, and ask them to tell one fact in an ice-breaker version or a story in longer version from the history of that particular body part. It can be a story of their hair, of a scar, or story about their relationship with that body part. It might be also some life event told from the perspective of that particular body part. Usually young people choose to tell funny stories, often about different accidents, but much depends also on how you will set the mood for the session and what other activities participants have experienced before.

If you find exploring histories of our bodies interesting, you might write your own history, telling your life through stories of different parts of your body. Devote time for writing, pick a random card and write a short story. Repeat another day. These stories will be a beautiful addition to your body portfolio.



body sculptures

This simple exercise breaks the ice and helps to build the group with the help of touch. You will need about 10 minutes for it. Ask each person to take two random cards showing different body parts. Then one volunteer goes in the middle, and others join one by one, together creating a human sculpture - each person must connect her or his own body part to a body part of anyone else who is already a part of the sculpture according to the two body parts that are shown in the cards person selected, for example, ear to leg - and then freeze in that position.

When the sculpture is completed, you might take a creative group photo and then invite participants to leave their positions and relax.

random choreographies

This exercise can be used as a teambuilding activity, or as a warm-up exercise before introducing various creative thinking strategies. The aim is to develop the teamwork and creative skills of the participants through exploring random connections as one of the main principles of creative thinking.

Divide participants in groups of 6 to 10 people. Each person should take two random cards representing different body parts. Ask each person in the group to create and

memorize a short movement in which those two body parts from the cards would be involved. The movements should then be demonstrated and taught to other members of the smaller group. In the next step each group should combine all the proposed movements from the group members in a short dance, choose music and make a short performance for other groups.

After the performances, ask participants questions about their cooperation - what went well and what could be improved, which elements helped them to work together better, how each person found their role in the team, where the leadership was shared and all ideas heard and so on.

In addition to the cards, you will need speakers, some source of music, large enough space for groups in which to work and at least 40 minutes of time.

our favorites

Body image and body acceptance is quite a challenge to most young people. Thus, this task invites young people to examine what they like in themselves. Ask each person to pick 10 cards from the image deck that represents 10 different features they like about themselves.

If suitable, you might invite them then to draw a self-portrait, emphasizing only these 10 features, or work with photography in a similar way. Encourage young people

to share with each other what they like about themselves, even if such a talk can be difficult to some.

random image

The random image is a popular creative thinking technique which allows an individual to approach a question or challenge from a different angle. It is all about looking for connections between a random image and the challenge or question.

Start with formulating a challenge or question. Write it down. The method would work with all kinds of questions, starting from how to design a new type of chair or how to become a good leader, and ending with specific personal questions, like what should I do after I finish school?

Select a random image. All kinds of images are good for this task. Describe the image and then connect its different properties or elements to your challenge or question.

In case of product development, integrate elements of the image into a design, for instance, you might design a new type of chair based on the properties of the human hand.

A similar method is often used also for reflection and evaluation - to find out how participants felt and what have they learnt during some exercise, workshop or entire training course.

past, present and future

The aim of the exercise is to assist young people in exploring their future visions, dreams and how to reach them. The best setting for this exercise is a one-to-one conversation but you can do the same exercise in a bigger group. In that case, invite participants to divide into pairs or trios and tell each other which cards they selected and what they represent.

Offer an individual or the group a deck of image cards with their faces up. Ask participants to choose an image that would represent themselves in the past, an image that would represent themselves in the present, and an image that would represent how the person wants to be in the future - depending on the learning objective, you might offer a certain time frame or narrow down the topic of the exercise.

Invite a person to tell you or another participant about each card selected. Then offer that the person choose one more card that would represent the participant's answer to the question - what can you do today to become the person you want to be in the future? If the participant has difficulties in choosing the card, use the random image method. Ask him or her to take a random image without seeing it and then develop a connection among the image and question.

From this card set, the most suitable for this exercise might be the collage cards, however, you could also experiment with other cards and see how the body can serve as a metaphor of different experiences.

let's do some business

This exercise is another variation of working with random images and random connections, and the purpose of it is to help young people create different business or project ideas that would respond to a concrete human need. Put the cards with needs in one pile and a mix of suitable image cards in another pile. Participants should not be able to see the words or images they are selecting. Ask them to take one need and one image and create an idea of a product, service or project that would meet that need. Participants can choose any element from the image card to develop an idea. Two images and one need can be also combined.

What works best is to do this task in trios. Give participants at least 20 minutes time and ask them to create at least 2 ideas for each image and word combination and explore as many combinations as possible. Encourage them to avoid judging their own and others' ideas and remind that all ideas are good ideas, including the ones which seem to be impossible. End the exercise with inviting participants to share their best ideas with the rest of the group.

exploring relationship

This exercise was inspired by a Naikan reflection, developed by Japanese Buddhist Yoshimoto Ishin. Its purpose is to



DISCOVERY

EQUALITY

TO MATTER

encourage reflection about the person's relationship with other people and the interaction with environment, thus becoming more aware of a person's role and contribution in some relationship or group.

At the end of a day full of activities, offer learners a mix of needs and image cards and ask them to pick one card for each of the following questions in relation to the day's events. What did you receive from others today? What did you give to others today? What troubles and difficulties did you cause others today? Encourage learners to think not only about their interaction with other people, but also about their interaction with the natural environment, including animals. Ask them to write down their thoughts. Depending on the size of the group, invite people to share their reflection or part of it in the entire group or smaller groups.

finding your strengths

This exercise invites young people to identify and speak about their strengths. Offer them a deck of image cards, face up, and ask them to pick five cards in which they see their most important strengths, inner resources and sources of power. Invite learners to share the images and stories about their strengths with you or each other.

The exercise might develop into a follow-up exercise that aims to boost young people's creativity, initiative and entrepreneurship. Ask each person to choose 3 out of 5

cards representing their strengths and inner resources, and create as much business or social project ideas as possible, combining these three qualities. To make idea generation easier, you might split your learners into pairs or trios and encourage them to brainstorm together. To conclude the exercise, ask participants to share their best ideas.

feedback that empowers

This exercise might be included in your learning activities if you wish to boost young people's awareness of their strengths, as well as to encourage positive feedback among members of the group, in order to boost their confidence and sense of belonging and being appreciated in the group.

Divide participants into groups of 4 and provide each group at least 30 images with which to work. Ask participants to decide who's going to be the first to receive the feedback. When the receiver is known, each of the other members in the group should pick two cards that represent good qualities and strengths that they have noticed in the person who is receiving the feedback.

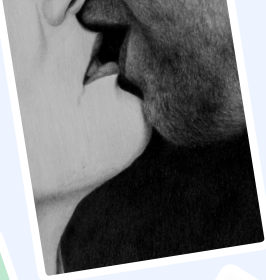
Give them 8 minutes to share the cards selected and the stories that are associated them, and then give a signal that it is time for another person to receive feedback. Repeat the process until each participant has had a chance to receive feedback. If possible, offer chances for each participant to keep the cards that others have selected for them.

telling stories

This exercise boosts creativity, fun and creative collaboration. Participants are invited to tell a story in pairs. Each pair should have a deck of at least 10 cards with their face down. The first person takes a random card, looks at it and starts a story. Some element in the image or the participant's association with the image should be reflected in the story. The second person then takes a random card and continues the story, and then the first person takes a card again, and so on, until the story is finished.

Prepare a mixed deck of cards with images and also words for this exercise. Because of the variety and diversity of word and picture combinations, the imagination expands beyond our expectations and we can create more unexpected and creative stories than we might on our own.





HEAVY

COOPERATION



body poetry

This is a creativity booster that might bring in some insights about participants' realities, however its main purpose is to invite fun and creative expression in the learning environment and support young people's confidence to use their voice.

A certain structure of a poem is used in this exercise. It starts with the main word, which is a noun, then two adjectives follow, then three verbs, a phrase and a noun. Explain participants this structure - write it on flipchart and give an example.

Each participant should choose a card blindly, and spontaneously says a word, according to the explained rules of versification. A new card must be selected for every word or phrase from the rules. This task can be done as an improvisation or you can give participants a chance at first to write down their poem and then read it for others.

hero's journey

This is another writing exercise that can be used to develop creativity and imagination and to explore what helps us to cope with difficulties. Ask each person to pick 7 random image cards. Explain that each card should inspire a part of the story

[NOUN] PALMS



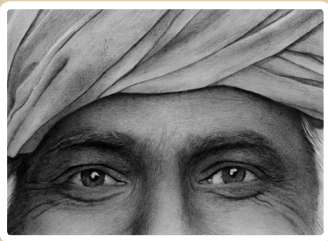
[2 ADJECTIVES] SUNBURNT, WRINKLED



[3 VERBS] NURTURE, SUPPORT, EMBRACE



[PHRASE] I NEED YOU NEXT TO ME



[NOUN] FRIEND

that participants are going to write - the visual and content elements from the cards should somehow be reflected in the story. Write on the flipchart what each of the cards will represent and then ask each person to put the cards in the sequence of their choice.

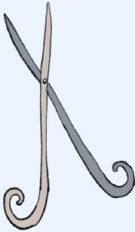
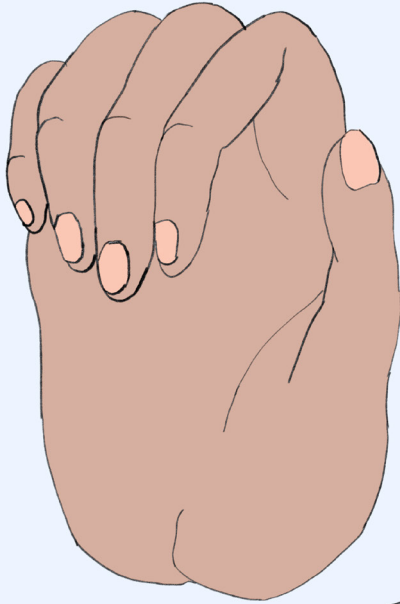
The first card represents the main hero of the story, while the second card represents the mission of this hero. Ask the participants to start to write their story by introducing and describing briefly the main character and what this character wants to achieve.

The third card represents what will help the hero to achieve her or his dreams, goals or mission, while the fourth card represents the difficulties that the hero will face. The fifth card represents how these difficulties will be overcome. Ask the participants to continue their stories, inspiring from what is visible on the cards.

The sixth card represents how the story ends, while the seventh card represents a message of the story - what can we learn from this story, what does the author of the story want to convey us. Ask participants to find an ending of their story and write it down.

When the stories are finished, give space for those who want to read their stories to the rest of the group. Conclude the activity by asking the young people to share what helps them to overcome different challenges and obstacles in their life.

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union