



DEVELOPING MENTAL HEALTH

THROUGH YOUTH WORK AND
NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Copenhagen **Youth** Network



European
Commission

Dear young professional,

This toolkit provides you with the opportunities to understand and speak about mental health. It also provides youth leaders, teachers, educators, professionals, and volunteers with concrete ideas to support mental health through youth work and non-formal educational activities to involve young people act for their health, stay mindful and resilient in their own way, in their own community.

Copenhagen Youth Network



Erasmus+



European
Commission



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1. Introduction

1.1. Context

In the last few decades, the world has been changing very fast, especially with the invention of faster modes of transport, ease of migration across countries and the revolutionary developments in information technology and that also reflects to youth mental health - the biggest challenge for youth is maintaining states of emotional well-being. The World Health Organization claims that around 20% of the world's children and youth have mental disorders or problems. The situation is even dramatic in the most vulnerable groups of youth, such as: Migrants, Refugees, IDPs, NEETs and minorities.

According to WHO, alarmingly, however, 70% of children and young people who experience a mental health problem have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age even within Europe. The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.

Europe's diversity has never been such diverse than ever, European Union proudly accepts that diversity is our strength and acts to prove it. Because of

this, the role of youth NGOs are crucial to support children & youth living in Europe and beyond including youth with migrants and refugees background who are already living or just reached Europe to become resilient and social-psychologically ready to integrate, share European values and live in a most tolerant way.

Consequently, the role of youth work and youth workers is becoming increasingly important as a key factor to intervene in inclusion and integration of young migrants/refugees. The relevant practices vary from independent and unstructured even spontaneous responses to methodological and structured approaches, each one aiming at facilitating bureaucratic and integrational processes.

Moreover, youth organizations often provide opportunities for young people to get together, build connections and friendships, and provide peer support among themselves. This can help to build tolerance and empathy amongst young people and can be particularly powerful for groups of young people known to be at higher risk of developing mental health problems.

1.2. Toolkit Background

On April 13-21, 2022, the Copenhagen youth Network commenced a nine-day training course "Developing mental Health through youth work and non-formal education". The training course was organized in the frames of the Erasmus plus program implemented by the Copenhagen youth network in partnership with Youth for Society Georgia, with partner organizations from Europe and beyond with the financial support of the European Commission.

The project consisted of a training course dedicated to youth workers and aiming to develop competencies in using non-formal education methods for the promotion of youth mental health, in addition the training course aimed to offer tools and support the competence development of young professionals working with vulnerable youth. The project offered the participants a holistic view of the realities and possible responses and contribute to the capacity building of their organizations.

The first stage of the program delivered training sessions in mental health and youth work to 30 young participants from Denmark, Germany, Italy, Greece, Ukraine, Jordan, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, and Georgia. Throughout the training, participants had the opportunity to participate in very intense sessions that included theoretical, practical, and experimental learning approaches.

Upon completion of the training course, in the second phase of the project, trained

participants were able to turn their ideas into local actions and organize youth-led dissemination activities in their local communities about supporting youth mental health, mindful lifestyle, building resilience, Erasmus plus opportunities for youth.

During the nine days of the training course, participants were involved in exercises, group work, creative workshops, role-play, simulations and other non-formal activities. These activities provided examples on how mental health can be approached by using the principles of learning by experience and created a learning space for participants to design their own methods of non-formal education on mental health related topics.

Youth workers and other professionals who work with young people are the main target of this toolkit. The theoretical framework and practical tools are all directed at equipping youth workers with awareness, knowledge, skills, and methodologies for promoting positive mental health of young people.



1.3. Professionals behind the toolkit

Heresh Halmat Faraidon – Director and Founder of Copenhagen youth Network.



Mr. Faraidon established Copenhagen Youth Network in 2014. Heresh's family has a refugee background, and this makes him the role model for the youth belonging the marginalized groups, minorities etc. Heresh H. Faraidon has been actively working on youth projects, in order to promote youth work and non-formal education, social inclusion and intercultural dialogue in Europe and beyond.



Tamta Khutsishvili has over ten years of working experience in youth projects and programs both in governmental and non-governmental organizations and she has been providing consultations on project writing, youth work, developing the youth social/soft skills and key competences. Tamta received a BA in Social and Political Sciences (2011), and a MA in Public Administration (2015). In 2013 she established NGO "Youth for Society" in Tbilisi, Georgia, and contributes to the process of the recognition of the youth work, and promotion of non-formal education across the country. Currently, she serves as a program manager at United Nations Association of Georgia.

Since 2018 she has been working as a freelance and invited trainer & facilitator of the youth exchanges, training courses and youth international mobility projects within European commission's Erasmus+ program.



Nino Chaladze is a psychologist and psychotherapist, soft skills trainer.

She has MA in Psychological Assessment and Counseling. Since 2017 she is a member of Society of Cognitive-Behavioral therapy of Georgia and student of post graduated training program accredited by the European Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Association. As a psychotherapist she works with different mental issues and disorders. As a trainer her field of work includes psychoeducation and strengthening social skills of target group. Since 2018 as a trainer and facilitator she has been taking part in the projects organized by Copenhagen Youth Network and Youth for Society.



Tamar Jananashvili - psychologist, soft skills trainer. In 2017 she received her MA in Psychological Assessment and Counseling. Since 2016 she has been working as a facilitator and a trainer on a mental health topic and participated in several youth exchanges within Erasmus+ programs.

1.4 Summary of the Activities

The activities were created by the young participants of the training course with the support of the trainers. Each activity includes a brief description of the activity, highlights the overall duration, number of participants, material, and addition comments for the facilitators.

Activities aim to help the beneficiaries be aware about their mental health, take care and reflect on their body, feelings, thought and emotions, practice mindful behaviors and self-care routines. All the activities were adopted and tested within the training course.



2. Dive into the Topic

2.1. Bio-Psycho-Social Model

The biopsychosocial (BPS) approach proposed by Dr. George Engel (1977) is one of the most important developments in medicine and psychiatry. BPS approach posits that biological, psychological, and social factors play a significant role in disease causation and treatment.

According to the biopsychosocial model, interaction between people's genetic makeup (biology) mental health and personality (psychology) and sociocultural environment (social world) contribute to their experience of health or illness.

The biological influences on mental health and mental illness are varies and include genetics infections, physical trauma, nutrition, hormones, and toxins.

The psychological component looks for potential psychological explanations for health problem, such as lack of self-control, emotional turmoil, or negative thinking.

Social and cultural factors are conceptualized as a particular set of stressful events that can differentially impact mental health depending on the individual and his or her social context.

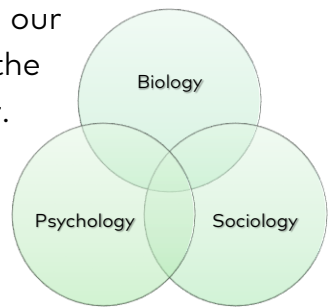
When we talk about mental health care, we have to take into our consideration that this is a complex process. BPS model helps us to analyze which spheres we have to work on. Withing the frame of the project "Developing Mental Health Through Youth Work and Non-formal Education" we concentrated on that project and wanted participants to analyze the complexity of mental health and understand in what directions we have to work to respond all the factors of the BPS model.

What is a Mental Health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Over the course of our life, if we experience mental health problems, our thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including biological factors (genes or brain chemistry), life experiences (trauma or abuse), family history of mental health problems.

All three factors include working in many directions. In frame of our project, the main goal was to give participants a general (not all the details) idea of the subjects, principles, and mechanisms of each factor.

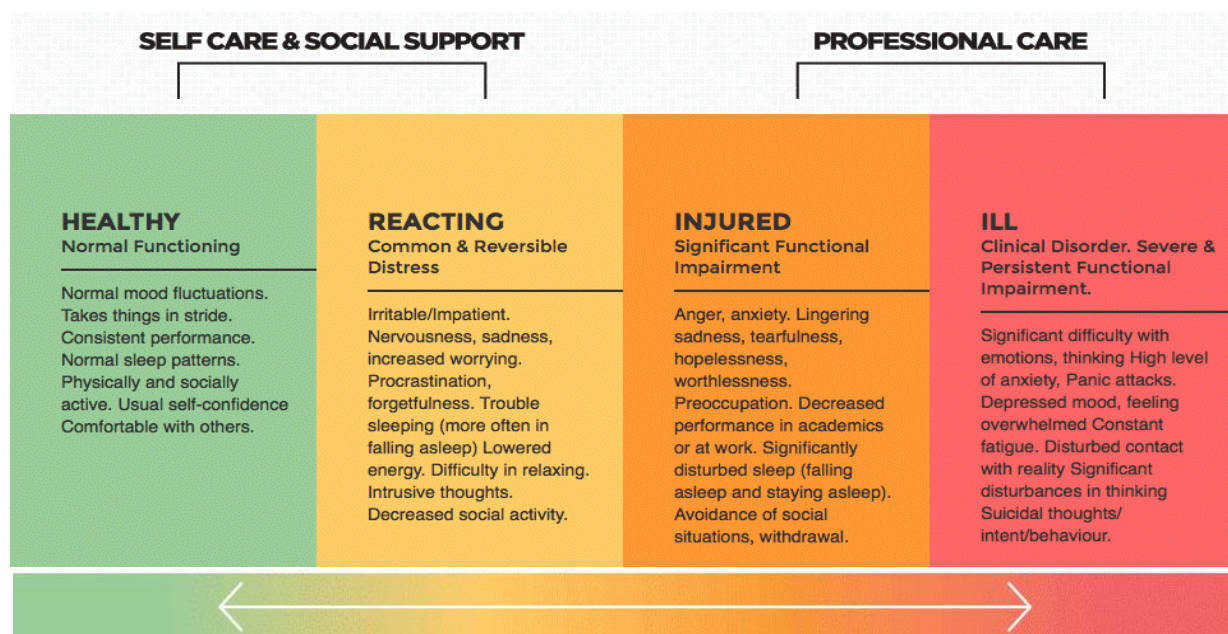


In the part of biological factor, we focused on the importance of hormonal influences on our well-being. In psychological part we discussed the impact of psychological balance and negative irrational assessments on our psychology. The last was social factor in with stigma, stereotypes and public attitudes toward mental issues was the main point.

2.2 Mental Health Continuum

Mental health continuum is a range of well-being having mental health and mental illness at the two extreme ends. Depending on the circumstances of any individual at any time, they may find themselves at one point of the continuum and shift position as their situation improves or deteriorates.

People often make mistake of dividing society into mentally healthy and unhealthy categories. The mental health continuum is that there is a place for everyone on it, regardless the state of mental health or mental illness. This reduces any stigma significantly because everyone fits in. as the diagram indicates, there's back and forth motion that signifying change. This mean that everyone who is "healthy" can have times in their life when they are "reacting" and those who are "injured" have ability to be "healthy".

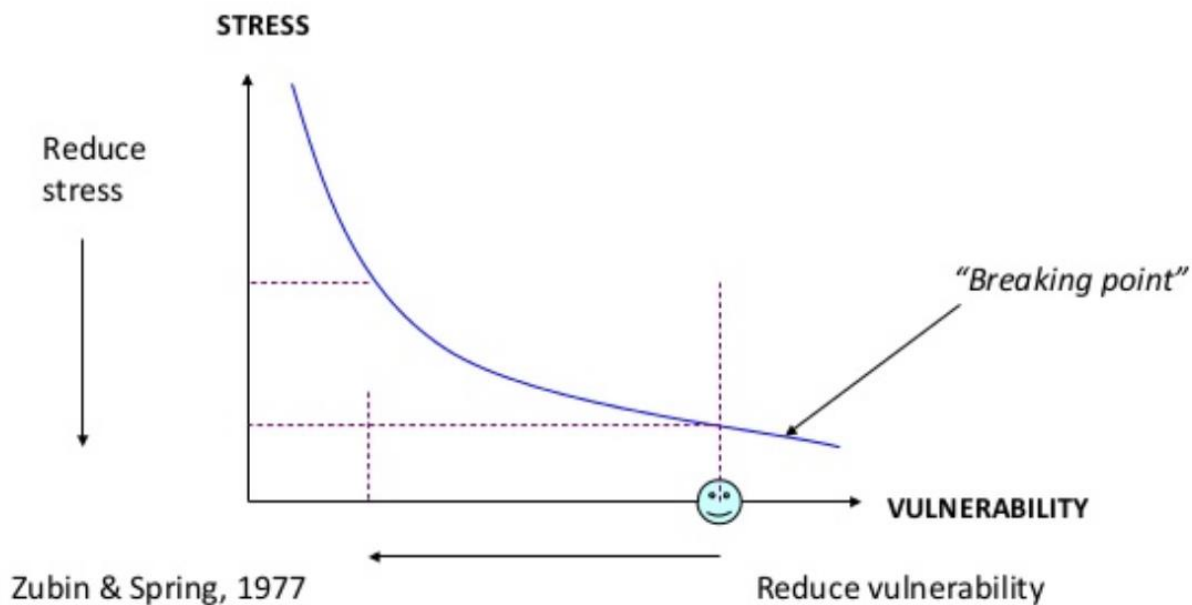


2.3. Stress Vulnerability Model

The stress vulnerability model was created by Zubin and Spring, 1977. The theory suggests a direct relationship between vulnerability (of biological, psychological and/or social origin) and the level of stress experienced. It suggests that our capacity for coping with stress is reduced by underlying vulnerability, and that anyone can become unwell if their level of stress exceeds their capacity for managing it.

The model suggests that people with high levels of vulnerability are more likely to develop mental illness when high stress levels are present. People with low vulnerability need to experience a great deal of stress before they become distressed whereby people with high vulnerability need only a small amount of stress before they move into mental illness.

Stress Vulnerability Model



2.4. NEETs and Mental Health

Participating in education and employment is considered key to the transition to successful adult well-being. Employment and education provide both manifest (e.g., income) and latent (e.g., time structure, social contact, sharing of common goals, status and activity, social and occupational support) benefits to an individual. Individuals with low educational attainment and/or limited employment experience a greater likelihood of social exclusion, disability, and isolation, in addition to the impacts of low income: poorer quality of life, more illness and disease, decreased access to healthcare, increased levels of psychological distress, and maladaptive lifestyle behaviors such as substance misuse and criminal activity. Chronic unemployment is associated with severe levels of disadvantage and carries a significant economic cost to both the individual and society including lost earnings and taxes, as well as the increased burden on welfare and healthcare systems.¹

¹ A cross-sectional exploration of the clinical characteristics of disengaged (NEET) young people in primary mental healthcare - <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/4/12/e006378.full.pdf>

The negative effect of the Covid-19 pandemic has been reflected in all population, but some groups might occur as more vulnerable to experience all the negative effects caused by the state of isolation and uncertainty. Amongst them, we can find the group known as NEET. That refers to the unemployed young people, aged between 15 and 29, who are neither in education, employment, or training. The imposed restrictions significantly limited their possibilities of finding an activity. Reduced opportunities and social isolation markedly increased the risk of mental health problems among these people. NEETs represented 13,2% of total European Union countries population at the end of June 2021². According to "Children & Young People Now"³ Mental health problems affect almost a quarter of NEET young people.

² Eurostat, 2022, Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET), data extracted: January 2022, online at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFSI_NEET_Q_custom_1893742/default/table?lang=en

³ Children & Young People Now is the only dedicated magazine for professionals working with children, young people and families. This essential read for the sector covers childcare and early years, education, health, social care, youth justice, and youth work.

In order to be able to make social contacts or to find or keep a job, they have to hide their mental health problems. That is partly due to the social stigma of mental illness caused by lack of awareness and the self-stigma that these young people and their families develop. NEETs suffering from mental health are often a subject of discrimination because of their age and health condition and unemployment affects many aspects of their lives:

- They experience a lack of career opportunities which leads to low self-esteem
- They want to learn and develop work habits, but they also encounter many obstacles in this process because of the social stigma
- They are financially dependent: they are unable to separate from their families which leads to developmental delays



Lack of confidence: these young people experience many failures which make them believe that they won't be able to succeed in a job interview or with the job itself.

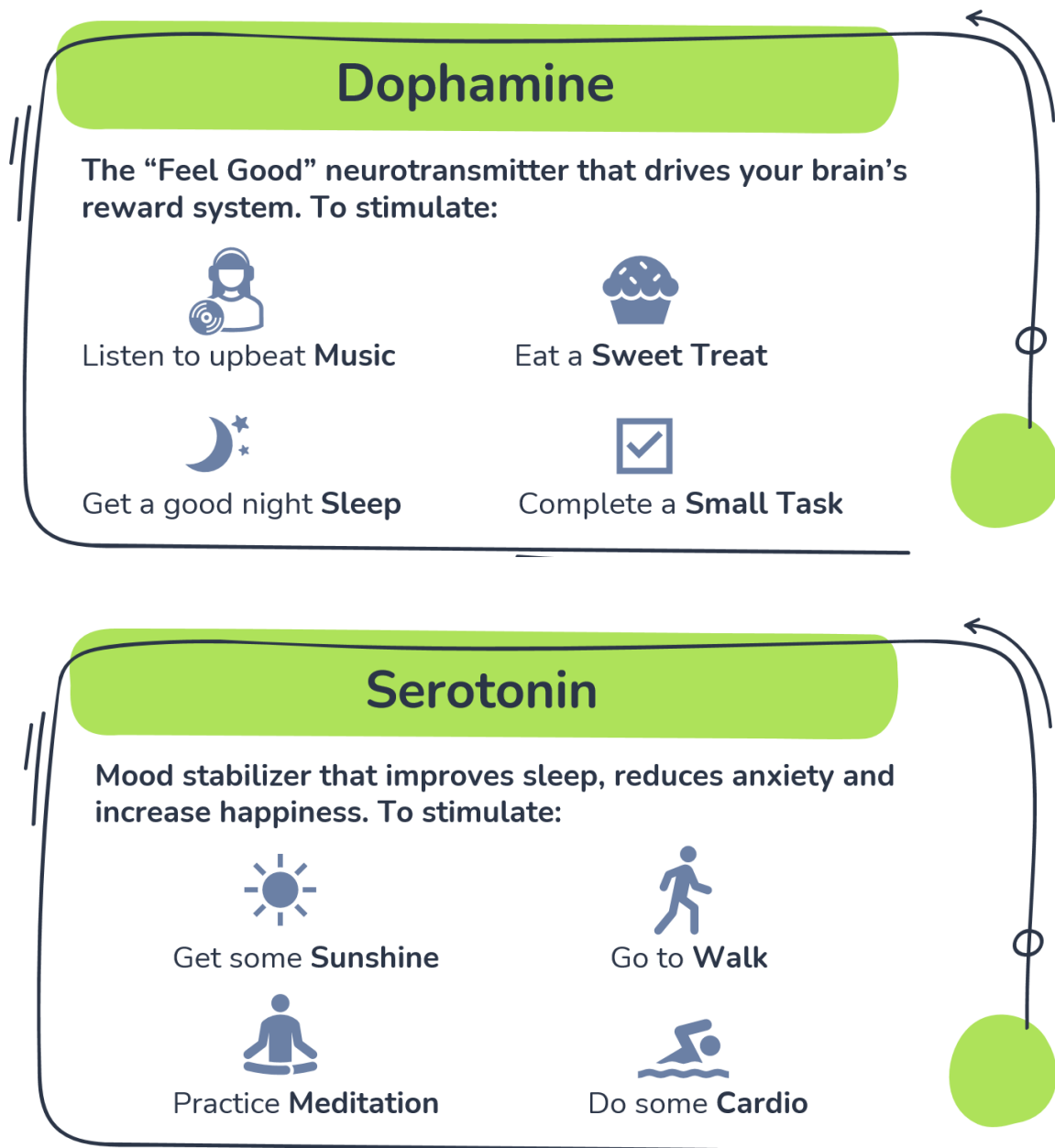
To this end, it is important for individuals and organizations working on youth issues to include mental health support activities in their day-to-day activities when working with NEET Group youth. We hope that some activities from this toolkit will be useful for the youth workers and youth specialist to plan and organize an interactive sessions and workshops for their NEETs beneficiaries.



3. Practice

3.1. Biological Factors

According to bio-psycho-social model, biological factors have important influence on our mental health. In order to take care of our body, it is important to have information about the biological factors that affect our well-being. There are hormones that have positive affect:



Endorphins

The brain's natural painkiller. Reduces stress and increases pleasure. To stimulate:



Do some **Exercise**



Burn essential **Oils**



Eat **Dark Chocolate**



Watch some **Comedy**

Oxytocin

"Bonding Hormone" – released when we feel connected to people. To stimulate:



Pet a **Dog/cat**



Give someone a **Hug**



Cook for a loved one



Hold **Hands**

Practical activity: **Theatre of Hormones**

Activity Title	Theatre of Hormones
Activity purpose / Goal	Participants learn the function of useful hormones and find out how they can produce them in everyday life
Activity duration	30 minutes for preparation Presentation time depends on the number of groups
N of Participants	Min. 8 max. 30 participants
Description of the process	<p>Trainer gives participants theoretical presentation about four main hormones: Dopamine, Serotonin, Endorphins, Oxytocin.</p> <p>After the explanation part, trainer divides participant into small groups, 4-6 participants per group.</p> <p>Groups must think how to hack these hormones in everyday life. They need to create small sketches about these activities and present them.</p> <p>Each group has to show their sketch without naming the hormone. Other participants have to guess the hormone.</p>
Materials	General training materials that participants can use for their sketches
Questions for the reflection	<p>How was the process?</p> <p>What do you think which activity you are going to use in future?</p>

3.2. Psychological Factors

Every event in our life contains three elements: cognition, emotion and behavior. When all these three elements are coherence, we feel balance but if they are not, we lose balance and intrapersonal conflict begins. That kind of processes works against our well-being and according to this has negative influence on our mental health.

Cognitive distortions

In everyday life we are constantly evaluate events. This process works sometimes not consciously, but constantly follows the background of our thinking process. Our thoughts and evaluations are not always rational, but sometimes irrational thoughts and evaluations comes in our mind. There are some types of thinking, which we call cognitive distortions.

Everyone experiences cognitive errors on a day-to-day basis. These negative thought patterns or habits make us exaggerate or inaccurately perceive reality in an unhealthy way. This can be damaging to our mental health, relationships, and well-being.

Cognitive distortions were first understood by Aaron Beck. Cognitive distortions are irrational thought patterns that are exaggerate by negative thinking and feelings. They convince our minds what we are thinking is true. These common thought patterns occur automatically in our normal day-to-day thoughts, and it is difficult to recognize their wired habitual nature.



Our brain tends to take shots cuts. It remembers thing from our past and will tend that same connection when similar thoughts or emotions occur.

Learn about the different types of cognitive distortions helps us first to recognize them and then overcome.



15 COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

15 Common Cognitive Distortions that Influence Your Thinking Patterns



1. POLARIZED THINKING

Having "All-or-Nothing" or "Black and White" thinking pattern. Desire of being perfect. Otherwise, it is a complete failure.



2. MENTAL FILTERING

NEGATIVE MENTAL FILTERING-DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE

Focuses on negative and acknowledges positive but refuses to filter out positives. Negative details are accepted. Finds excuses to turn it into a magnified negative one.



3. OVERGENERALIZATION

Focuses on a single event and makes a conclusion based on a single piece of negative evidence. Incorrectly conclude all similar events going forward will result in the same negative experience.



4. JUMPING INTO CONCLUSIONS

MIND READING. FORTUNE TELLING

Knows what others are thinking. Makes conclusions and predictions with no of their intentions occur with no evidence.



5. CATASTROPHIZING

MAGNIFICATION. MINIMIZATION

Over exaggeration, which leads to worries. Minimizing positive experiences. The escalating to the worst-case scenario. Importance of positive qualities is diminished.



6. PERSONALIZATION

Takes things personally, which causes a direct and personal reaction to what others do or say, even if it is unrelated. Assuming you have been intentionally excluded or targeted.



7. BLAMING

Blaming others, playing a victim role, and holding others responsible for their pain.

Blame is external rather than blaming themselves or taking some responsibility.



8. LABELING

Assign judgment to yourself or others based on one negative incident. Instead of recognizing you or others made a mistake, you attach a label that is exaggerated and solely based on the single incident.



9. ALWAYS BEING RIGHT

Always have the need to be right. Internalize opinions as facts and will put others on trial to prove their opinions or actions are correct. Will go to great lengths to demonstrate their belief.



10. SHOULD STATEMENTS

"Should" do, "must" do, or "shouldn't" do statements are enforced on themselves or others. These rules create a lot of pressure, imposing a set of expectations that is not likely to be met.



11. EMOTIONAL REASONING

Any feeling must be true in their mind. The emotion is accepted as fact because all logical reasoning is blocked out. Incorrectly assumes the negative feeling is the only truth.



12. CONTROL FALLACIES

External control fallacy – internal control fallacy. Life is completely controlled by external factors. Has control of themselves and their factors. Creates a feeling of no control of surroundings. Responsible for the pain & the situation. Happiness of others.



13. FALLACY OF CHANGE

Others should change to suit your interests. Pressure others to change because you feel the change will bring happiness. Convinced the happiness is dependent on the person changing.



14. FALLACY OF FAIRNESS

All things in life should be based on fairness and equality. In fact, not all things work out the way we expect them to, which leads to feelings of anger and resentment towards those things in life.



15. HEAVEN'S REWARD FALLACY

Rewarded based on how hard you work. Will be disappointed because most things are not fair. This leads to feelings of frustration, anger, and resentment.

4. Well-Being

Psychological well-being is a core feature of mental health, and may be defined as including hedonic (enjoyment, pleasure) and eudemonic (meaning, fulfillment) happiness, as well as resilience. Here are some important elements with help you to increase your well-being.

Resilience – process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress-such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. As much as resilience involves “bouncing back” from these difficult experiences, it can also involve profound personal growth.

While these adverse events, much like rough river waters, are certainly painful and difficult, they don't have to determine the outcome of your life. There are many aspects of your life you can control, modify and grow with. That's the role of **Resilience**. Becoming more resilient not only helps you get through difficult circumstances, but it also empowers you to grow and even improve your life along the way.

Source: <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>

While **Mindfulness** is something we all naturally possess, it's more readily available to us when we practice daily.

Whenever you bring awareness to what you're directly experiencing via your senses or to your state of mind via your thoughts and emotions you're being mindful. And there's growing research showing that when you train your brain to be mindful, you're remodeling the physical structure of your brain.

Mindfulness – is the basic ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

Mindfulness is available to us in every moment, whether through meditations and body scans, or mindful moment practices like taking to pause and breathe when the phone rings instead of rushing to answer it.

Source: <https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>

Gratitude – is a positive emotion that involves being thankful and appreciative and is associated with several mental and physical health benefits. When you experience gratitude, you feel grateful for something or someone in your life and respond with feeling of kindness, warmth and other forms of generosity.

Gratitude is both a temporary feeling and a dispositional trait. In both cases, gratitude involves a process of recognizing, first that one has obtained a positive outcome and second that there is an external source for that good outcome.

"In general terms, gratitude stems from the recognition that something good happened to you, accompanied by an appraisal that someone, whether another individual or an impersonal source, such as nature or a divine entity, was responsible for it."

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/gratitude>

Flow is associated with athletes, artists, or scientists who are fully task-absorbed in order to achieve peak performance. Experiencing flow is accompanied with sense of accomplishment, meaningfulness and positive mood states and as such flow also plays a role in well-being.

It has been established that in order to experience flow, a key dimension is the

Flow – flow is a state of full task engagement that is accompanied with low-levels of self-referential thinking. Flow is considering highly relevant for human performance and well-being and has, therefore, been studied extensively

match between a person's skill and the task challenges. A too easy task more likely leads to boredom, rather than flow. A too difficult task often leads to frustration, stress or lack of interest, which are all states that are largely incompatible with flow.

Source: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.645498/full>

5. Practice

Activity Title	Well-Being Menus
Activity purpose / Goal	Participants practically experience activities, that arouses well-being conditions.
Activity duration	1 hour
N of Participants	Is not specified
Description of the process	Trainer creates menus (see below) which contains different kind of short mindful, resilience, gratitude and flow activities. The trainer asks participants to choose the menu they like the most and perform in an hour.
Materials	Menus (see attached forms on a pages 20-21). Music (preferable background ambient music).
Questions for the reflection	How was the process? What did you like the most? How did that activity work? What was your feelings? Which activities are you going to do in future?

Practical activity: **Well-Being Menus**

E+ Training Course

April 13-21, 2022

Mindful Menu

APPETIZER

Breathe in, Breath out – feel the flow of the breath - 5 min

Make yourself a warm drink (green tea)

Listen to your favorite music – 5 min

MAIN COURSE

Take a 5 min organizing

Get some sun – 5 min

Have a short conversation with someone for 10 min and give a compliment (optional)

Think about something that makes you feel uncomfortable/unpleasant and try to translate it into something that gives you new opportunities

DESSERT

Get creative (Paint Draw, play music, etc)

Journal or write your feelings

E+ Training Course

April 13-21, 2022

Mindful Menu

APPETIZER

Drink a glass of Water or warm green tea

Empty the mind – take your moment to be still 5 min

Breathe in, Breath out – feel the flow of the breath - 5

MAIN COURSE

Take a walk and be in Nature – 30 min

Try to smell something that reminds you nature (flower, grass, wood, etc.)- 5 min

Think about some unpleasant moment that later became a "lesson learnt" for you

DESSERT

Do some volunteering – 20 min

Journal our your thoughts

E+ Training Course

April 13-21, 2022

Mindful Menu

APPETIZER

Breathe in, Breathe out – feel the flow of the breath - 5 min

Sketch your body – 5 min

Find a comfortable space and dream – 10 min

Drink a glass of Water

MAIN COURSE

Get some sun – 10 min

Listen to your favorite song - 5 min

Create some art that symbolizes you using a natural materials (grass, wood, flowers...)– 20 min

Think about something that makes you feel uncomfortable/unpleasant and try to translate it into something that gives you new opportunities

DESSERT

Practice any self-care activity -5 min

Find someone who positively contributed in your life and express gratitude

E+ Training Course

April 13-21, 2022

Mindful Menu

APPETIZER

Breathe in, Breathe out – feel the flow of the breath - 5 min

Drink a glass of water or warm green tea

Take a 5 min organizing your bed/belongings

MAIN COURSE

Take a walk and be in Nature – 30 min

Try to smell something that reminds you nature (flower, grass, wood, etc.)- 5 min

Think about some unpleasant moment that later became a "lesson learnt" for you

DESSERT

Help someone in something – 10-20 min

Sit outside, listen to the nature voices &

Think about the most important think that you are thankful to yourself

Practical activity: **World Café**

Upon completion of the activity titled "Mindful Menus", participants are invited to visit world café. The *World Café* methodology is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue.

Activity Title	The <i>World Café</i>
Activity Purpose	Participants analyze what is gratitude, resilience, mindfulness, and flow and start thinking how to use them.
Activity duration	Depends on a number of groups
N of Participants	Min. 8 max. 30 participants. Divide participants into 4 groups.
Description of the process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Setting</i>: Create a "special" environment, most often modeled after a café, i.e., small round tables with a flipchart paper, pens and colorful markers, is possible a vase of flowers. There should be four chairs at each table (optimally) – and no more than seven. 2) <i>Welcome and Introduction</i>: The host begins with a warm welcome and an introduction to the World Café process, setting the context, sharing the Cafe Etiquette, and putting participants at ease. 3) <i>Small-Group Rounds</i>: The process begins with the first twenty-minute round of conversation for small groups seated around a table. There are four tables, and each has a discussion topic: Mindfulness, Resilience, Flow, and gratitude (see the table discussion papers below). 4) <i>Questions</i>: At the end of the 10 minutes, each group moves to a different new table. Each group members should carefully read the table paper, discuss the topic and questions, sum-up their answers and write down on

	<p>the flipchart paper.</p> <p>5) Harvest: rotating teams may choose one person as the "Team Captain", each group should visit all the 4 tables and discuss all the 4 topics, at the end of the activity the captains of the groups will present what the participants wrote on the flipcharts.</p>
Materials	<p>Printed documents, what is mindfulness, resilience, flow and gratitude (see attached forms on a page 24–27).</p> <p>Printed questions (see on a page 28)</p> <p>Flipchart papers</p> <p>Markers</p>
Questions for the reflection	<p>How was the process?</p> <p>What do you like the most?</p> <p>What is that you are going to practice? How?</p>



A decorative border surrounds the central text area, featuring various food and drink illustrations. On the left side, from top to bottom, there is a whole orange, a bunch of purple grapes, a bowl of blue ice cream with a spoon, a green sandwich, a whole orange and a slice, a halved avocado, and a blue fish. On the right side, from top to bottom, there is a coffee cup with a donut, a roasted chicken, a pink salt and pepper shaker set, a green croissant, a bunch of yellow fruit, a slice of cake on a stand, a bunch of red fruit, and a whole orange. The central text area has a pink background with a black border and wavy lines at the top.

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness. It's a pretty straightforward word. It suggests that the mind is fully attending to what's happening, to what you're doing, to the space you're moving through. That might seem trivial, except for the annoying fact that we so often veer from the matter at hand. Our mind takes flight, we lose touch with our body, and pretty soon we're engrossed in obsessive thoughts about something that just happened or fretting about the future. And that makes us anxious.

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us



RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events. Being resilient does not mean that people don't experience stress, emotional upheaval, and suffering. Some people equate resilience with mental toughness, but demonstrating resilience includes working through emotional pain and suffering.

Resilience is not a trampoline, where you're down one moment and up the next. It's more like climbing a mountain without a trail map. It takes time, strength, and help from people around you, and you'll likely experience setbacks along the way. But eventually you reach the top and look back at how far you've come.



FLOW

Imagine for a moment that you are running a race. Your attention is focused on the movements of your body, the power of your muscles, the force of your lungs, and the feel of the street beneath your feet. You are living in the moment, utterly absorbed in the present activity. Time seems to fall away. You are tired, but you barely notice. This is an example of a flow state.

Flow, in the context of psychology, is a state of intense engagement, focus and contentment in the present moment and current activity. Sometimes referred to as being “in the zone,” flow states are known to enhance creativity and performance and spark innovation.

A decorative border surrounds the central text area, featuring various food and drink illustrations. On the left side, from top to bottom, there is a whole orange, a slice of orange, a bunch of purple grapes, a bowl of blue ice cream with a spoon, a green sandwich, a slice of orange, a whole avocado, and a blue fish. On the right side, from top to bottom, there is a blue cup with a donut, a roasted chicken on a yellow platter, a pink salt and pepper shaker set, a green croissant, a bunch of yellow pears, a slice of cake on a stand, a bunch of red apples, and a whole pizza. The central text area is pink with a black border and contains two paragraphs of text, each preceded by a dashed line.

GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a positive emotion that involves being thankful and appreciative and is associated with several mental and physical health benefits. When you experience gratitude, you feel grateful for something or someone in your life and respond with feelings of kindness, warmth, and other forms of generosity.

Gratitude is a warm feeling of thankfulness towards the world, or towards specific individuals. The person who feels gratitude is thankful for what they have, and does not constantly seek more.

Questions for the World Café activity

Questions can be printed out and put on the relevant table.

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- Within which activity did you practice Mindful condition?
 - What kind of practical wisdom did you take from this activity?
 - Is it possible to make it a daily habit in your life (to do it every day?)
 - What would interrupt you in doing so?
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- Within which activity did you practice Resilience?
 - What kind of practical wisdom did you take from this activity?
 - Is it possible to make it a daily habit in your life (to do it every day?)
 - What would interrupt you in doing so?
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- Within which activity did you practice Flow?
 - What kind of practical wisdom did you take from this activity?
 - Is it possible to make it a daily habit in your life (to do it every day?)
 - What would interrupt you in doing so?
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- Within which activity did you practice Gratitude?
 - What kind of practical wisdom did you take from this activity?
 - Is it possible to make it a daily habit in your life (to do it every day?)
 - What would interrupt you in doing so?
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Practical activity **Mindful City Journey**

Activity Title	Mindful City Journey
Activity purpose / Goal	Help participant to be in a full state of presence, surroundings and your body, practice mindfulness and reflect the feelings
Activity duration	4-5 hours
N of Participants	minimum 2, up to 30 participants
Description of the process	<p>The activity is inspired from the well-known game City-game (Scavenger hunt)</p> <p>Drop off point starts at the city center (can be the downtown of any city); The participants are divided into pairs and each pair discovers the city together by walking.</p> <p>Their mission is to be fully present in the streets of one city with no phones & internet. Ending point can be a local park nearby.</p> <p>Activity starts and participants are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draw a map to track where they walk and a name of three streets with three stores, buildings, museums etc. that attracted them; 2. Track back to a green area of the city to meet the rest of the team after 5 hours' maximum; 3. Discuss with the group the difficulties they had; 4. Share with the rest group members their experience and present the streets and places they drew; 5. Draw the same view in the park and exchange drawing and share their perspectives and feelings.
Materials	Sketchbook or notebook, colorful pencils or markers.

Questions for the reflection

At the end of the activity trainer invites participants for the reflection and debriefing.

Questions:

- How do you feel after this activity?
- In your opinion, what was the main idea of this activity? Why did we do this activity? What is a lesson learnt from this activity?
- Did you like the activity? Why?
- What would you have changed if we do this activity again? Why?
- Have you been mindfully involved in the process, in yes, what helped you to do so? If not, why, what was the main challenge?

Practical activity: **Shadow Theatre**

Activity Title	Shadow theatre
Activity purpose / Goal	1. To raise awareness about different social issues of mental health in relation to friends, school, culture, and the society. 2. To watch and discuss how people from different countries approach a social issue. 3. To develop empathy 4. To raise intercultural awareness
Activity duration	2 hours
N of Participants	Up to 30 (recommended to play with diverse groups and participants coming from different countries)

Description of the process	<p>1st stage (3 min): The facilitators divide the participants into six national groups. Every group is given a topic related to social exclusion at schools.</p> <p>2nd stage (30 min): Each group is given 30 minutes to prepare a short play of 3-4 minutes related to one of the topics they were given during stage 1. Participants decide on the script, the roles, the acting by themselves.</p> <p>3rd stage (60 min): Each group plays their part in their own native language. After the first acting of the groups, shadows who are members of other teams are included in the play. Shadows must be the shadows of the actors. In other words, each of them should choose one actor, stand or sit behind this person and repeat every move, gesture and emotions of the actors. Each actor should have a one shadow behind them.</p> <p>4th stage (27 min): The audience is invited to speculate the topic of the act, the main idea and moral of it. Also, the shadows are requested to share their experience, feelings and emotions while shadowing the characters. In the end, the whole audience is engaged in a discussion about the causes, the effects of the problem and possible solutions.</p>
Materials	<p>6 sheets with the topics Any materials that can be as a requisite during the theatre plays</p>
Questions for the reflection	<p>Trainer must explain to participants the guidelines and make sure everyone understands the tasks. Facilitator can choose the concrete topic or the social situation that can be the main subject/topic of the theatre play, e.g., discrimination, exclusion, segregation, unacceptable towards diversity, gender-based violence, etc.</p> <p>The list of topics includes six different cases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A refugee comes into the classroom. 2. A boy comes to school wearing a skirt. 3. A student is an orphan. 4. A group of students has an addiction 5. A shy student in the classroom 6. A student faces learning difficulties

Practical activity: **Theatre play for real life**

Activity Title	<p>Theatre play for real life</p> <p>Activity was inspired from a well-known activity – Forum Theatre</p>
Activity purpose / Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To sensitize people on the ways they could communicate with the others in order to make them feel comfortable - To improve their social skills - To develop their awareness on mental health issues
Activity duration	<p>Up to one hour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 minutes for the instructions and the split in groups • 15 minutes for the preparation of each group to make and improvise on the scene • 10 minutes for each group that does the theatre play twice – so if the participants are many and the groups are 6, it should be 60 minutes for this phase • 20 minutes for discussion and evaluation
N of Participants	Up to 30
Description of the process	<p>The participants are split in 6 groups. The facilitators give to each group a paper with a scenario, and they need to prepare a theatre play based on it. The facilitators say to the participants that they should focus on the mental health of the people in the scene and the social skills they have or have not developed enough. After 15 minutes, the groups start to present their improvised acts. Each time the group plays their scene and then they have to play it one second time and someone from the audience can say 'stop' and enter the scene, in order to make the plot more positive and help</p>

	<p>the person that does not feel good in the situation. The given scenarios are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A refugee tries to find a job and he/she/they get assaulted by someone. 2. A person that is in a relationship puts a lot of pressure on their partner and the partner feels depressed. 3. New students who want to know each other from the University go out for a coffee together and one of them says he/she/they are schizophrenic. 4. An employee tries to work at the office and the employer blames him/her/them that they are not good, so they face burnout. 5. A blind person is out with his/her/their friends and they overprotect him/her/them in an uncomfortable way. 6. A person in a wheelchair wants to go out with their friends, but they need to meet to a cafeteria on the 4th floor of a building that doesn't have an elevator. <p>After this phase is completed, the participants make a circle and the facilitators make these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How was it for you. - What did you observe. - How did you feel. - Would you change something in the way you behave. - What will you remember after this.
Materials	A4 paper with the scenario written for each one of the 6 teams

Practical activity: **Draw Your Mind**

Activity Title	DRAW YOUR MIND
Activity purpose / Goal	The main goal of the activity is to both allow the facilitator to understand how much the project's participants know about given social phenomena and to allow the participants to raise awareness/learn about these social problems.
Activity duration	Around 60 mins in total, divided as: 10 mins for explaining the whole activity + 2 mins of preparation (giving participants the materials); 2 mins to complete the task; 5 mins of discussion per each of the 5 rounds.
N of Participants	A range between 15-25 participants to not go over the set time.
Description of the process	<p>The activity consists of 5 rounds. Each round is characterized by a specific topic from the Bio-Psycho-Social Model.</p> <p>These 5 topics are chosen by the facilitators who have to have the knowledge about the topics. The topics could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism • Bullying • Sexual abuse • Physical disabilities • Autism....and so on <p>Each participant gets a sheet of paper and colorful markers and/or pens on which he/she has to represent in the way they better want (drawing, writing a word, etc.) the first association that comes to their mind about the topic.</p> <p>During the explanation part the facilitators have to underline that the participant can even leave the paper blank in the case they don't have any association regarding the given topic.</p> <p>Each participant has 2 minutes to complete the task</p>

	<p>and after that each of them have shown their paper to the others.</p> <p>If some of participants want to share why they've represented the topic in a specific manner, they are very welcomed to do so because it will allow to talk about the topic and discuss further about ideas, stereotypes, or anything else is the participant minds.</p> <p>The facilitator will be able to see the participant's idea/insight about the given topic based on either their paintings or blank papers if there is any.</p> <p>In that latter case the facilitator will give the participants a brief explanation what the social phenomena is, and which are the best behaviors to adopt in those situations.</p>
Materials	<p>5 paper sheets per participants (a small sized is enough)</p> <p>Colorful markers/pens</p>
	<p>Facilitators should have knowledge about the topics that will be discussed during the activity.</p>



The network is a key word for us and our organization. The main purpose of creating this toolkit is to support young professionals improve the quality of their work and support them to integrate the most practical activities into their work, that supports youth mental health and well-being.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions, comments, or suggestions contact us:



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See literature review

-  <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/4/12/e006378.full.pdf>
-  <https://youthemploymentmag.net/2021/08/17/social-inclusion-of-neets-with-mental-health-issues-and-disorders/>
-  <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/article/major-increase-in-mental-health-problems-among-neet-young-people>
-  <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4789764/>
-  <https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>
-  <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>
-  <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/gratitude>
-  <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.645498/full>