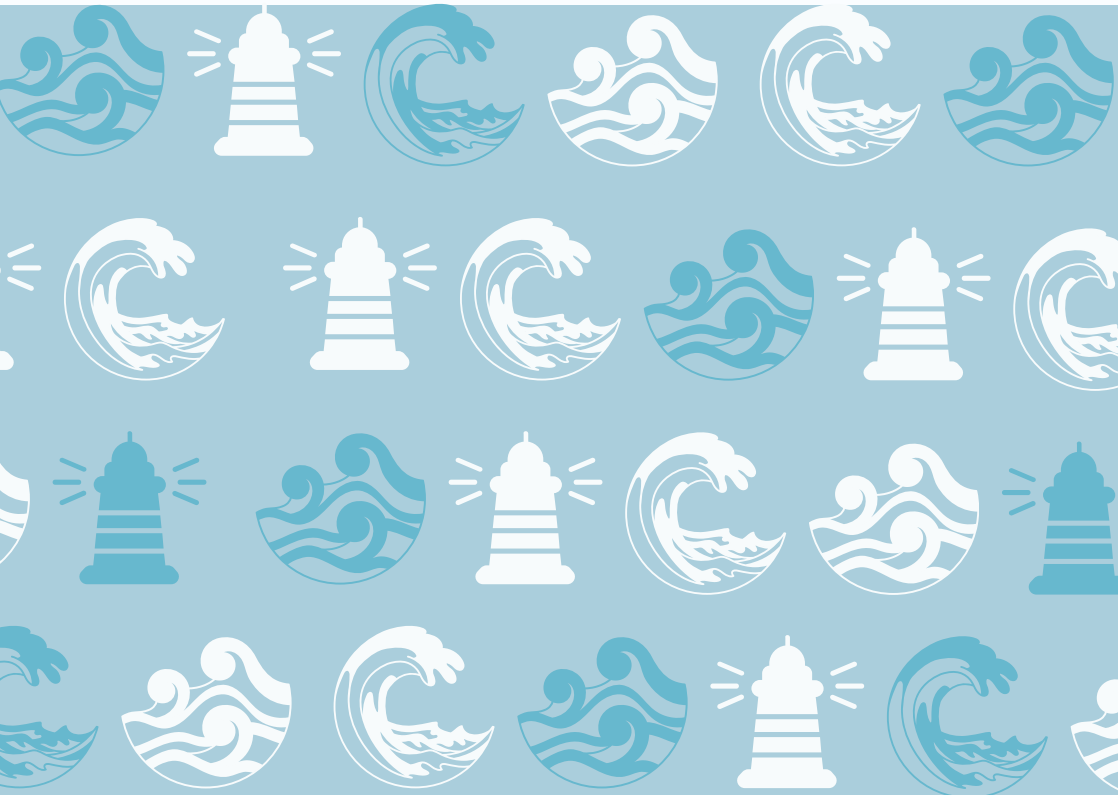




MANUAL

YOUTH MENTOR'S GUIDE



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Chapter 1. PROJECT DETAILS

1.1 Project description 5
 1.2 Partner’s description & target group 6
 1.3 Why this project? - aim & objectives 8

Chapter 2. LIFE ABILITIES FOR YOUTH

2.1. Healthy lifestyle 10
 2.1.1. Definition & basic concepts 10
 2.1.2. Elements of a healthy lifestyle: nutrition, sport, time & resources management, mental and emotional health, healthy relationships 12
 2.1.3. Specificity of these elements on young people 16
 2.1.4. How to help young people to develop a healthy lifestyle - recommendations for mentors 17
 2.1.5. Tips for building a healthy lifestyle 22
 2.1.6. Conclusions and recommendations 29
 2.2. Critical thinking & problem solving 31
 2.2.1. Definitions and basic concepts 31
 2.2.2. Specificity of these skills on young people 36
 2.2.3. How to help young people to develop their critical thinking 38
 2.2.4. How to help young people to develop their problem solving skills 42
 2.2.5. Conclusions and recommendations 50
 2.3. Career planning 52
 2.3.1. Definition & basic concepts 52
 2.3.2. Factors that determine vocational choice and career planning 54
 2.3.3. Career planning programs for youth 57
 2.3.4. How to help young people to develop their own career planning 59
 2.3.5. Conclusions and recommendations 62

Chapter 3. THE PROCESS OF MENTORING YOUTH

3.1. Mentoring youth methodology 65
 3.1.1. Definitions & basic concepts 65
 3.1.2. Mentoring principles and types 67
 3.1.3. Specificity of mentoring youth 70
 3.1.4. Innovative methods on mentoring 73
 3.1.5. Conclusions 76
 3.2. Group dynamic in working with youth 78
 3.2.1. Definitions & basic concepts 78
 3.2.2. Principles and types of groups dynamic 79
 3.2.3 Specificity of groups dynamics with youth 82
 3.2.4. Innovative methods 84
 3.2.5. Conclusions and recommendations 86

Table of Contents

3.3. Communication & visual facilitation	87
3.3.1. Communication	87
3.3.2. Communication process in working with young people	88
3.3.3. Graphic facilitation	92
3.3.4. Visual facilitation in practice	94
3.3.5. How to improve mentoring process through an appropriate communication and visual facilitation	99
3.3.6. Conclusions	100
3.4. Motivation methods in youth work	
3.4.1. Definitions & basic concepts	101
3.4.2. Innovative methods for motivating young people	103
3.4.3. How to improve the motivation of young people for active involvement - recommendations for mentors	105
3.4.5. Conclusions	107
Bibliography	111



1. PROJECT DETAILS

1.1. Project Description

The need from which this project started was initially that of youth workers, who, following discussions and a Swot analysis, found that they need to be guided in the changes that motivate young people and especially, they need to be offered an intervention strategy very focused on the current needs of young people. From here, we set out to study the needs of young people during the Covid-19 pandemic, discovering an issue that has already begun to be discussed at European level - namely that, in addition to the health crisis and the economic crisis, we are on the verge of a crisis of mental health (according to WHO reports, the percentage of panic attacks, anxiety disorders and depression has increased significantly, only from last year until now, only among young people, and existing illnesses have become urgent - with depressive states and suicidal thoughts). Other WHO statistics identify depression as one of the leading causes of disability or difficulty among adolescents and young people, limiting their ability to reach their full potential as adults. The same study also explains that most psychological and social problems remain undiagnosed, worsening over time, and the time distance between the onset of adolescent difficulty and access to specific treatment is about 11 years (during which discrimination, exclusion, unemployment, difficulties relational deepen). At the level of youth, we can respond to solving this problem through a strategic approach, which focuses young people on what they can control and on reducing uncertainty as much as possible. The life skills that help the most to regain a sense of control are primarily those of planning (and the professional part plays a very important role), maintaining a state of balance (nutritional, sports, mental, emotional and relational) and by developing critical thinking, so that young people are as little influenced as possible by the "bombardment" of information (not exactly true) on all online channels. The project also responds to the need of young people to learn how to identify a problem at the social level and how to intervene, with initiatives that can be easily implemented.

1.2. Partners and Target group

GAMMA INSTITUTE

The aim of the Institute for Research and Study of Quantic Consciousness - Gamma Institute, is promotion, development, research, and initiative for activities in the field of psychology, psychotherapy and mental health. Gamma targets trainees, kids, and international specialists through training programs, workshops, psychological services, counseling, and international cooperation.



CEIPES

CEIPES – International Centre for the Promotion of Education and Development is a non-profit organisation founded in 2007 and based in Palermo, Italy. CEIPES has expertise on Education, Transfer of innovation and Project management in different European programmes tackling the Education and the capacity building of different target groups, from young people to adults, from women to unemployed, migrants and disadvantaged groups.



IAiRS

IAiRS - "Institute of animation and social development“, the Lublin ngo working since 2012. Through actions, we are trying to initiate and support activities aimed towards the harmonious development of groups and individuals, based on values and citizenship and prosocial. To this end, we aim to identify challenges emerging with the changes and needs of society. We respond to them using methods of non-formal education, shaping the competencies needed to participate actively and responsibly fulfill its potential in the field of personal and professional.



1.2. Partners and Target group

ASPAYM Castilla y León Foundation

ASPAYM Castilla y León Foundation started working in 2004 in Castilla y León. Its main aims are to promote autonomy, equal rights, and opportunities and to increase the quality of life of people with physical disabilities, allowing them significant social integration. ASPAYM CyL has a youth department focused on activities with young people. This department is an active member of the Regional Youth Council of Castilla and Leon, and also part of the Permanent Youth Council of the Province of Valladolid, where ASPAYM is a member of the board.



COMPACTING

Compacting is an empowerment platform for those seeking to acquire or improve personal and/or professional skills to develop as citizens, people, and human beings. The focus is on promoting and supporting the development of personal and professional skills through consulting and training services in areas such as: education, culture, sport, integral health, and well-being at national and international level. Compacting's target group are institutions, organizations and companies, public and private, national and international, and individuals groups.



The **target group** addressed by this project consists of:

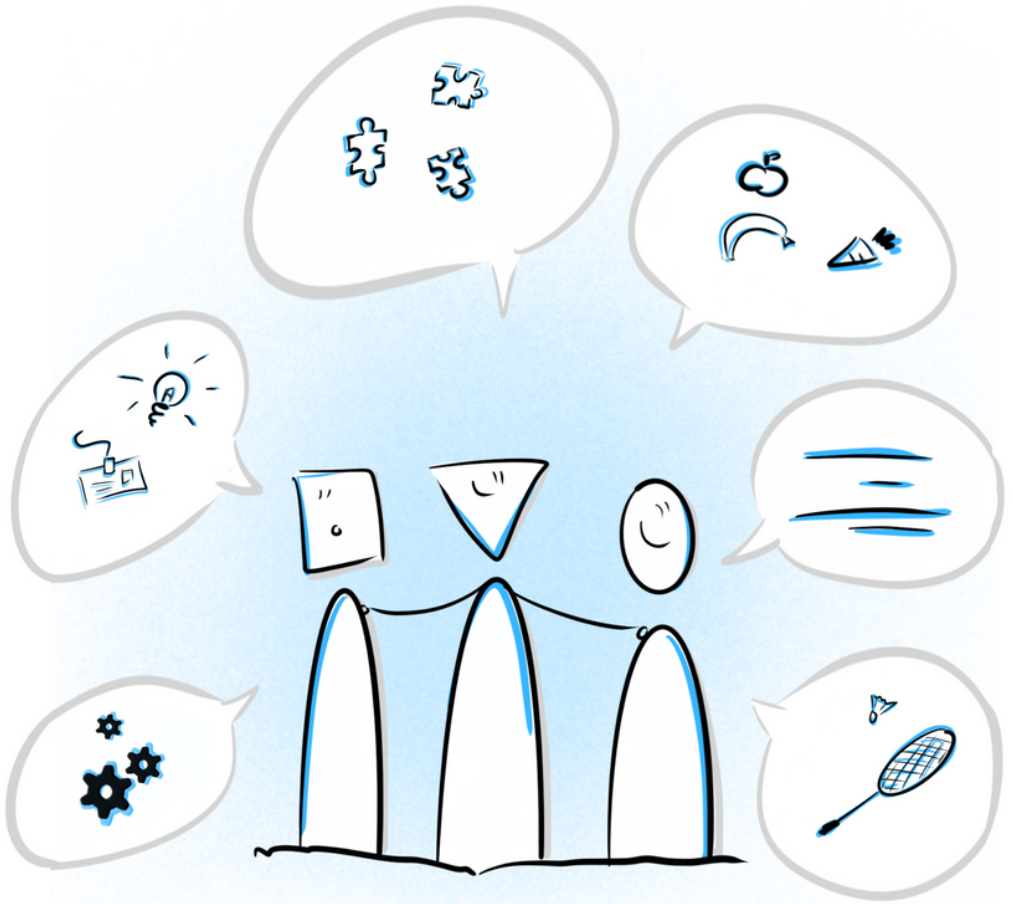
- **Young people** who need to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills on a personal and community level, who want to learn what a healthy lifestyle means.
- **Youth organisations** who need in this period (when uncertainty about how to implement activities is very high) to find ways to motivate young people to be actively involved in rebuilding their community.

1.3. Why this Project? Aim and Objectives

The **main aim** of the "Mentoring Life: Small waves in the big ocean of change" project is to **increase the rate of active involvement of young people in sustainable change**, which concern both independence and decision-making in independent living, as well as solving problems at the level of the community in which they live. This main goal will be achieved through **3 specific objectives**:

- **O1. Increasing the capacity to involve 1000 young people from 5 European countries** (Romania, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Poland) in sustainable changes at personal and social level, by developing critical thinking and problem solving skills, by implementing and maintaining a style healthy living (physical, mental, emotional and relational) and by planning the educational and professional route, during a mentoring process that lasts 6 months.
- **O2. Increasing the quality of mentoring and guidance activities for young people**, by training 50 youth workers from 5 European countries in implementing sustainable change programs and by developing an innovative methodology for changing and developing critical thinking skills, healthy lifestyle and career planning for young people. This objective will be achieved by two means:
 1. Training young workers to become mentors for young people and creating the context in which they implement for 6 months a change program for young people and
 2. Creating a collection of tutorials to facilitate the work of youth workers and to convey the message of young people, in a way that they can receive, understand and integrate into daily life.

O3. Increasing the capacity of 5 European organizations (Gamma Institute, from Romania; CheckIn Association, from Portugal; CEIPES, from Italy; Aspaym Castilla y Leon, from Spain; and IAiRS, from Poland) in offering activities with a high level of quality, addressed to youth workers (by methodology innovative mentoring) and young people (through the program of sustainable change), in the context of changing the way of organizing activities for young people. This objective will also lead to the strengthening of the strategic partnership of the 5 partner organizations in the field of youth and to the elaboration of a longitudinal strategy at organizational level.



2. LIFE ABILITIES FOR YOUTH

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

2.1.1. Definition & basic concepts

Firstly, it is worth defining what we mean by a healthy lifestyle, according to Del Águila (2017) this refers to a set of daily behaviors or attitudes that people carry out to maintain their body and mind in an adequate manner. In turn, according to Sanitas (2017), the **World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, which implies that this concept goes beyond the existence or not of one disease or another.** Therefore, rather than a healthy life, we should speak of a healthy lifestyle, which includes a series of dimensions such as diet, physical exercise, health prevention, work, relationship with the environment and social activity.

Therefore, a distribution of healthy lifestyles can be made by dividing the following dimensions:

- **Eating healthy:** Eating, in addition to being a necessity, is a pleasure that needs to be adapted to our tastes and characteristics. The decisions we make when it comes to eating are based on our knowledge, our emotions and our abilities, and all of this is highly influenced by the environment in which we live. The young population most likely to suffer from diseases related to poor diet are students due to the frequent lifestyle changes to which they are exposed (Cortés, 2021): some of the main causes of poor nutrition in them are the lack of time and the scarce economic resources available.
- **Physical activity:** A healthy mind starts with a healthy body; a healthy body promotes a healthy mind. An important part of achieving fitness goals is to have a good state of mental health. However, partaking in exercise sessions and having health aspirations doesn't just require good mental health. The whole process develops mental health in a positive way, and I feel that fitness and health plans are widely underrated and overlooked when it comes to their effectiveness in remedying mental health issues (Atkinson, 2017). Physical activity associates multiple health benefits in all people. However, more and more people are not moving enough, and this is due, in large part, to the fact that we have changed our lifestyle towards a more sedentary model. Being a physically active person is very important to maintain and improve health, it prevents many of the most frequent chronic diseases, and improves their evolution when they already have them. In addition, physical activity has been linked to happiness. In a cross-cultural study of 15 European countries, the association between physical activity and happiness was analyzed: the conclusion reached was that, the greater the volume of physical activity, higher levels of happiness (Richards et al., 2015).
- **Emotional well-being and to change in psychological, including mental and emotional:** state of emotional and psychological well-being, necessary to maintain and develop cognitive abilities, social relations and coping with the personal and professional challenges of daily life. Stress, tiredness, irascibility, anxiety are, among others, some of the signs that indicate that the mental state is not entirely healthy.

- **Social activity:**
 - **Relations with friends/peer group or new groups:** Social relations are a fundamental aspect for the health of the human being and, consequently, for healthy ageing. Social isolation can lead to a gradual and irreversible decline in physical and mental abilities, including physical disability and dementia.
 - **Relations with family:** The family is the group of persons linked by consensual, legal or blood ties, responsible for training its members, in particular, for the formation of children, providing emotional stability that will impact throughout their life. Good family functioning is a protective factor against risk factors, particularly in youth, helping adolescents before developing problems that could compromise their health (Esteves et al., 2020).
 - **Relationships:** When talking about relationships and love in adolescence, we should not forget that it is a stage of life in which a large number of discoveries and changes occur, on a personal and social level. An important characteristic of love in adolescents is that they have a very high social conditioning (Morales & Díaz, 2013), due to the social norms of the stage, as well as the educational model received at home.

During youth, most adolescents start romantic relationships and these gradually increase with age: specifically, it is considered that the normative romantic development begins in early adolescence, that is, between 11 and 13 years (González & Molina, 2018), although this romantic involvement is earlier in girls than in boys.

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

2.1.2. Elements of a healthy lifestyle: nutrition, sport, time & resources management, mental and emotional health, healthy relationships

Having defined all those elements that have to do with a healthy lifestyle, in this section we will delve into all the aspects that make up and influence each of them from a holistic and integrative perspective since, as stated by Mazas et al. (2015), the desired well-being is obtained through healthy habits that result from an adequate adaptation and integration of the physical, mental, social, spiritual and emotional dimensions at any level of health or illness.

According to Ojani (2021) *Healthy nutrition* requires the intake of adequate amounts of essential nutrients and avoiding or reducing the intake of all toxic substances that harm our bodies and constitute a risk factor for a number of disorders and diseases. The **World Health Organisation** (2018) *indicates that eating a healthy diet helps protect us from non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and certain types of cancer; it also protects us from eating-related disorders such as anorexia and bulimia and prevents the risk of obesity, cholesterol, high blood pressure and regulates glucose levels.* These eating habits should accompany us throughout our life cycle.

A series of **factors** should be taken into account in order to ensure proper nutrition:

- Reducing the consumption of processed foods.
- The inclusion of protein at breakfast to promote stable blood glucose levels throughout the day. It should also be noted that foods with a low glycaemic index such as protein and complex carbohydrates are recommended to promote stable blood glucose levels.
- Drinking plenty of pure water and eating plenty of fruit and vegetables, legumes, whole grains, fish and, if meat and dairy products are eaten, try to eat locally grown organic products whenever possible.
- Avoid sweetened drinks, fatty foods, fried and junk foods and processed foods (Kemper & Shannon, 2007).

Proper nutrition through adequate intake of essential nutrients promotes a healthy mood, as nutrients are essential for the optimal production of mood-altering neurotransmitters such as serotonin.

- *Physical exercise* causes changes in both the mind and the body. García and Vanesa (2013) allude to the fact that multiple studies suggest that exercise increases the levels of certain brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) related to mood. This physical activity reduces muscle tension, relaxing, helps to improve sleep hygiene and cortisol levels, the hormone produced by stress, since, as Pedersen and Salina (2015) state, physical exercise produces the release of endorphins (beta-endorphins) that reduce anxiety, depression and stress, producing a feeling of well-being and relaxation. Likewise, as the same authors point out, the nerve fibres that transmit pain are inhibited, with physical

activity acting as a "natural analgesic". Furthermore, physical-sports practice, provided it is regular and appropriate to our physical condition, also has an effect on cognitive performance, improving aspects of such an essential nature as attention and memory (Pertusa et al., 2018).

Finally, studies in children and young people (Ekeland et al., 2004) show that regular medium-intensity physical activity improves mood, self-esteem, self-image and positively affects feelings of malaise and apathy.

Sleep is an essential component when we talk about health, since according to authors such as Miró et al. (2002), there is a close interrelation between sleep processes and the general state of physical and mental health of a person. Too little sleep or poor sleep quality negatively affects health and increases the risk of depression, anxiety or problems related to drug abuse. However, thanks to sleep, the brain produces important neuronal activity that makes the processes of memory consolidation and full performance upon awakening possible.

Therefore, improving sleep hygiene through positive activities and habits will have a great impact on a person's health, improving mood and setting the tone for restful sleep (Kemper and Shannon, 2007). Some of the habits that improve sleep hygiene are:

- Using the bed only for sleeping or relaxing activities.
- Ensuring that the bedroom is kept dark and cool.
- Taking a warm bath before going to bed.
- Listening to relaxing music.
- Reading positive or stimulating books or writing in a journal before bedtime.
- Avoid large dinners and alcohol consumption before bedtime.
- Establish a positive sleep routine such as trying to go to sleep at the same time.
- Avoid strenuous exercise before bedtime.
- Turn off or put your mobile devices on aeroplane mode when you go to bed (Bucay, 2017).

When it comes to sleep hygiene, we must take food into account, as there are substances that affect the central nervous system and have a direct effect on sleep, such as caffeine. On the other hand, there are foods that facilitate sleep, as they promote the synthesis of serotonin and melatonin. These foods include carbohydrates, vitamin B6 and magnesium in general and specifically:

- Cereals and derivatives: rice, pasta, bread, cereals, sweet corn, wheat germ, oats, rye, couscous.
- Pulses: beans, lentils, chickpeas, soya beans.
- Vegetables: peas, green beans, tomato, potato, garlic, lettuce, onion, aubergine, celery, sweet potato.
- Fruits: hazelnut, banana, plum, walnuts, passion fruit, figs, melon, dates, avocado.
- Drinks: milk, beer, valerian, lime blossom, lemon balm or camomile tea.

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

- Others: honey, sugar, aniseed, walnuts and chocolate.

The **prevention of habits that are harmful to health** such as tobacco, alcohol and drugs is essential for several reasons. As the Spanish Scientific Society for the Study of Alcohol, Alcoholism and Other Drug Addictions (2014) warns, the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs has a very negative impact at the following levels:

- Biological: changes in brain functioning.
- Psychological: cognitive, behavioral and emotional changes.
- Social: family, economic, occupational and legal.

As we have detailed, all these dimensions have a strong influence on emotional and psychological well-being. Emotional well-being is understood as a state of mental health that contributes to people's feelings of optimism, confidence, engagement, happiness and a sense of self-satisfaction. Therefore, emotional well-being itself contributes to improving our health and when we feel good we are more motivated to adopt healthier lifestyles.

But what do we know about emotions and emotional well-being? We experience emotions when we react to something that happens around or within us. It is worth noting that all emotions are necessary, so it is important to feel and express them. Some emotions are part of our well-being, they help us to establish bonds, to make projects, to manage stress and to improve social relations and health. These emotions should be encouraged, as they increase our creativity and help us to move forward. Other emotions help us to re-establish balance, to accept loss and change, to react, to protect ourselves, to seek solutions to certain problems or life situations. These emotions are important to accept and express, but it is important not to hold on to them for longer than is useful.

It is now known that emotional well-being is related to positive adaptation and coping with adversity, as well as being associated with a reduction in risk factors related to mental health problems (Dienel & Tay, 2015; Weare, 2015), which will depend on many variables, including the balance established between adaptive capacities and the stressors that people face.

To cope with all these factors, positive coping and caring resources must be provided, since, it is the way we manage our emotions that will influence the way we think, act and relate to others. In addition, it proposes a series of tips and measures to obtain and maintain well-being:

- **Connect with yourself:** be aware of what you are experiencing, what is happening at any given moment, what your emotions are and how you feel. This will help you to get to know yourself better and enjoy your surroundings more. Spend some time at the end of the day thinking about everything that has happened to you and try to take the positive out of the situation.

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

- **Connect with others:** interacting with those around you is positive when it comes to changing emotions, feelings and experiences, as well as expressing positive emotions, which will help you to foster them. Sharing how you feel also helps you to cope better with problems, so it is important to ask for help from people you trust and to rely on the people around you. Being kind or making small gestures such as smiling or saying thank you also contributes to emotional well-being. Finally, helping, supporting and working with others with a common goal is good for improving our emotional wellbeing, as well as helping to strengthen or build social relationships.
- **Connect with the environment:** enjoy the environment by stopping to look at what you have around you and learn to value it. Green spaces and nature improve our mood and doing outdoor activities has a number of benefits for emotional wellbeing. There may also be many resources in your own neighborhood, so find the resources and activities that are close to you and that can help you feel better: parks, day centers, cultural centers, libraries, associations, sports facilities.

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

2.1.3. Specificity of these elements on young people

Although youth is generally considered a time of good general health and good mental health and a majority of young people do not suffer from any type of mental disorder, it is also the period of life in which the most serious mental disorders begin (Casañas & Lalucat, 2018). According to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2018), most adolescent-onset mental disorders are neither detected nor treated, and the consequences of not addressing them at this stage extend to adulthood. For this reason, the WHO recognizes mental health as one of the main health problems currently affecting young people. A.F. Jorm introduced the concept of Mental Health Literacy (Jorm et al., 1997), defining it as the set of “knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders that help their recognition, management or prevention”: recent studies have shown that applying mental health literacy interventions in adolescents increases their mental health and improves their emotional well-being and resilience (Chisholm et al., 2016; Corrigan et al., 2012). Regarding physical health, youth is a period that largely determines health in the middle-aged population and old age; therefore, acquiring good physical activity habits between 15 and 24 years is an indication of enjoying good health in later stages, while sedentary young people are more likely to suffer from diabetes and hypertension as they grow (Álvarez, 2022). Thus, the World Health Organisation (2020) recommends that people from 5 to 17 years old perform at least 1 hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity 3 days a week. Adults between 19 and 64 years old should perform 2,5 and 5 hours of aerobic physical activity with moderate intensity or between 75 minutes and 150 minutes with vigorous intensity.

Maintaining a healthy life is not only achieved through physical activity, but also the influence of many other variables, including eating habits. Regarding healthy eating, it should be noted that eating habits are acquired in childhood (largely determined by the family and environment of each person) and are entrenched in adolescence and youth. The diet of young people poses a special challenge, since they are in a vital stage with numerous emotional, physiological and even environmental changes: all this will determine dietary patterns that, in many cases, will be maintained throughout life (Sicart, 2009).

Regarding toxic habits in the youth, the use of legal and illegal psychoactive substances is an almost universal problem, increasingly showing initial contact at an early age (Pérez, 2019) and, therefore, posing major challenges in public functions: for example, generating programmes and projects that allow the prevention and mitigation of these substances. The phenomenon of alcohol, tobacco and other psychoactive substances poses a real challenge to progress based on the paradigm of human development, human rights, and health. The use of psychoactive substances in young people is influenced by the main support network, that is the family, so it is necessary to work and strengthen the principles and values of this, allowing communication to be the right way to resolve any conflict within it. Regarding Pérez (2019), in this family environment, it is also important to reinforce basic coping skills, in order to discover the strengths and skills of the young person, and to enhance a high level of self-esteem.

2.1.4. How to help young people to develop a healthy lifestyle - recommendations for mentors

To address these recommendations on how the young people can have a healthy lifestyle we will focus on different areas that may be indicative. These areas would include physical activity, food, mental health and bad habits in the daily life of adolescents.

Regarding physical activity, the World Health Organization (2022) makes a series of **recommendations for young people**: in general, it is considered that they should perform a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activities a day. When you do more than 60 minutes of physical activity, there are additional health benefits for the adolescent (Richards et al., 2015; Sicart, 2009): in particular, it is advisable that the activity carried out is mostly aerobic because the benefits it provides are higher (WHO, 2022).

With regard to healthy alimentation of the youth, some of the **overall recommendations** are the following:

- Make a schedule to meet a meal schedule: in this sense, one important fact is try to avoid foods that contain many calories and few nutrients (Sicart, 2009).
- Consuming dairy products (which are very beneficial for the calcium that the bones require) and foods rich in carbohydrates (which are our main source of energy: in particular, cereals and legumes).
- Have a calm environment (Sicart, 2009), trying to avoid possible distractions when eating, as well as take into account the importance of eating slowly to achieve a good digestive process.
- Eat a variety of foods: it is recommendable to eat a little of all kinds of food and do not abuse any.
- In addition, sharing good eating habits with someone around, whether family, friend or partner, may probably help to be more persevering (WHO, 2022).

Another issue that has great relevance in this vital stage is **mental health**. The World Health Organisation (2021) warned of the significant influence that mental disorders have in the stage of adolescence: specifically, it highlights that one in seven adolescents between 10 and 19 years old suffers from some type of mental disorder. Adolescence is a stage in which many changes are suffered at the physical, emotional and social levels, which generates that it becomes a vulnerable stage to end up suffering some problem associated with mental health (Muñoz, 2020; Sicart, 2009). It would be advisable to educate adolescents in socio-emotional learning and psychological well-being to reduce this alarming probability. For this reason, it is necessary to develop and implement programmes, projects and interventions in this area that encourage young people to increase their knowledge of good habits and healthy lifestyle in general, and mental health in particular.

Some **useful recommendations**, cited by the Hospital Clínic of Barcelona, to prevent mental health problems during adolescence would be:

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

- Perform physical activity and maintain a balanced diet (following previous recommendations).
- Have a proper sleep schedule: in the case of young people, 8 to 9 hours a day are recommended.
- Do not consume toxic substances that can affect the cognitive development of the adolescent.
- Belong to a group of equals in which relationships are healthy: it is important to be able to share experiences with friends to achieve adequate emotional well-being
- Have a schedule of tasks and fulfill it: this is very beneficial to avoid stressful situations caused by unforeseen or overlapping tasks.
- Dedicate time to yourself to practice those leisure activities that you like most and to relax.

Adolescence is a stage in which many substances that are harmful to the health of young people are discovered and used (Pérez, 2019): these substances can be either legal or, conversely, illegal, but both are harmful in the short, medium and especially long term in adolescents.

The Valencian Society of Psychiatry (2019) highlights that alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and cocaine are the most consumed drugs by adolescents between 14 and 18 years. In addition, it warned of the risk that adolescents do not have a real idea of what the use of these substances can mean in the short and long term. Considering the current probability of addiction to this type of substances by young people, it is important to have a good prevention plan (Muñoz, 2020; Pérez, 2019) to avoid starting in the consumption of any of these substances or similar substances not mentioned.

Some preventive guidelines for the use of toxic substances, developed by the Valencian Psychiatric Society (2019), are the following:

- Inform young people about the drawbacks of drug use.
- Encourage adolescents to engage in extracurricular activities that motivate them and bring about a state of well-being with themselves.
- Provide psychological support to adolescents and inform them of its usefulness and need.
- It is important for families to know the group of peers in which the adolescent unfolds to have a more objective view of his or her actual consumption possibilities (Pérez, 2019).
- Practice positive reinforcement with adolescents.
- Develop critical thinking in the adolescent so that he or she has greater awareness in decision-making related to this issue: that is, that he or she will be able to escape from social pressure.
- Try not to overprotect adolescents so that they do not act impulsively, provoked by “tantrums” or “revenge”.

- Be aware that adolescents are very moldable and they take adults around them as referring (Pérez, 2019): therefore, it is very important that these substances are not consumed at home.
- Be able to observe the warning signs that adolescents transmit to us.

The importance of change in terms of lifestyle - arriving to healthy lifestyle

A healthy lifestyle is important because it also gives the context of a balanced life and longer one. Eric Plasker in his book “The 100 Year Lifestyle” (2007) is talking about longevity and how the changes in the lifestyle (in all the dimensions described above) can contribute to a fulfilled life, without major diseases during lifespan. The lifestyle starts in the childhood, being set by family and having a transgenerational transmission, but in adolescence and launching stage of life, becomes a decision that everyone is taking - to continue intuitively the lifestyle imprinted in childhood or engage in a changing process, a conscious one, with some objectives related with health. Plasker developed in this sense an intervention for changing the lifestyle, according to some studies related with longevity and health. In this intervention plan is describing some general principles to follow in order to have a 100 years life, in a healthy and fulfilling way:

Change Principle #1: Change is easy. Thinking about change is hard.

While someone is in the process of thinking about what he/she wants to change, the life may look and feel difficult. In fact, vacillating between crisis and quality-of-life motivation mode can keep the person on an emotional roller coaster. But, once the commitment to change is done, the person will find that many of the things that they have been struggling with will fall easily into place. Activities and choices that aren't in alignment with creating the best life will lose their appeal.

Change Principle #2: Change happens one choice at a time. Think of progress, not perfection.

As we, as people, learn how to make the changes that will support our best life today and in the future, one important thing to remember is that we may not see results right away. Many of the people make toxic choices that limit their life. In fact, they often come disguised as rewards. For instance, having a cigarette as a reward at the end of a hard day or downed another dessert as an emotional pick-me-up; were the five minutes of enjoyment worth the three days of guilt and two weeks of trying to get back on track? The true reward comes from the self-esteem and self-love when you honor yourself with each choice.

Change Principle #3: Approach change with ideal 100-Year Lifestyle in mind.

A person can measure the day-to-day connection with their true potential by the intensity of energy level. Having sustained high energy throughout the day is usually a pretty good indicator that the person is operating at the highest level of human potential and the daily

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

patterns probably supports this. It means success in keeping the drama out of each day, avoiding second-guessing themselves, and interacting with others from a place of personal integrity. This fuels each hour with purpose. A person can, through the three life-changing principles, permanently re-create DEP to fuel the rest of the life (Plasker, 2007).

There are three levels to the Health Care Hierarchy, as follows:

1. Self-Care: What you must do for yourself to keep your mind, body, and spirit healthy and functioning at your highest level, which nobody else can do for you.

Self-care is about taking care of yourself, your mind, body, and spirit. It's about you being responsible for you and doing the things that you know are good for you. Good self-care works with your body's natural ability to be healthy, adapt to stress, maintain strong resistance to disease, and stay in balance. Be good to yourself and make self-care your lifestyle.

This includes eating the foods that you know are right for you, drinking clean water, and breathing clean air. Good self-care includes managing your physique, your energy, and your stress level, and participating in activities that are healthy. Have fun doing things that make you feel strong and vibrant every day.

Many people think that self-care is hard. But this isn't true. Self-care isn't hard—it's actually easy. What can be hard is changing your pattern from a destructive or complacent one to a human potential pattern.

Self-care is about the choices you make every day—thinking healthy thoughts, cultivating high-quality relationships, meditating, and maintaining an exercise routine. If taking care of yourself has not been your norm, its time to start now before a crisis occurs. This may mean making some positive changes that impact your life one choice at a time. One healthy food choice will lead to another. A good workout will inspire you to have another one. Be consistent and eventually you'll feel that you've found your path and your results will motivate you to get to the next level. Do the right things and eventually they will become your new human potential pattern.

2. Health Care: What you must do for yourself to keep your mind, body, and spirit healthy and functioning at your highest level—utilizing the skills of a trained health care professional.

Health care is a proactive way to keep your body and mind as healthy as possible. Health care is the care you cannot provide for yourself. It is necessary to keep your body balanced, aligned, stress free, and better able to resist the challenges of your environment.

Health care is about health and wellness, and keeping your body strong. First of all, you need to understand that your body is designed to be healthy. Disease is not a normal part of everyday life. When it happens, it is unfortunate, but we need to stop thinking of sickness as natural.

Excellent health care, combined with great self-care, keeps your entire body functioning at its optimum level.

3. Crisis Care: What you must do for yourself to recover from an injury or illness that requires the support of a crisis care or health care specialist.

At some time or another we will all have a crisis. Being prepared will ensure that our bodies recover as quickly as possible and our pocketbooks recover quickly as well. Having a crisis care team of health care specialists with a primary doctor you can trust is certainly an important part of the process. Most importantly, accept responsibility for your own health care. You are ultimately responsible for your own health. This means staying informed and educating yourself, especially in times of a crisis. You want the best doctors and the best health care providers on your team.

Maintaining your health—day to day—will strengthen your inner guidance system. And your own inner guidance will be your best ally in your quest to remain healthy as you age and postpone any crisis for as long as possible.

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

2.1.5. TIPS for building a HEALTHY LIFESTYLE:

Self-Care: Making Your Quality of Life a Priority. Self-care is about taking care of yourself, your mind, body, and spirit. It's about you being responsible for you and doing the things that you know are good for you. Good self-care works with your body's natural ability to be healthy, adapt to stress, maintain strong resistance to disease, and stay in balance. Be good to yourself and make self-care your lifestyle. This includes eating the foods that you know are right for you, drinking clean water, and breathing clean air. Good self-care includes managing your physique, your energy, and your stress level, and participating in activities that are healthy. Have fun doing things that make you feel strong and vibrant every day. Self-care is about the choices you make every day—thinking healthy thoughts, cultivating high-quality relationships, meditating, and maintaining an exercise routine. There are some activities that you can do for Self-Care:

a. **Exercise** and build endurance, strength and structure:

Endurance: Do at least 30 minutes of cardiovascular training three to four times a week. Exercise with a heart monitor and monitor your baseline. Get a personal trainer or other health professional to monitor your progress and get you started on the right track.

Strength: Evaluate the strength of your major muscle groups, including your chest muscles, back muscles, arms, and legs. Set goals for building your strength in each of these areas and get a personal trainer or other health professional to get you started on the right track.

Structure: Measure your neck, chest, waist, hips, and thighs. Evaluate your posture and your weight balance. Set goals for your shape in each of these areas and get a personal trainer, chiropractor, or other health professional to start you on the right track.

b. Provide your body with **extra protection from harmful substances:**

- use air and water filters
- drink purified water
- avoid toxic chemicals

c. **Manage stress.** Your body is adaptable, with remarkable capacities to heal. Empower it as much as you can through your lifestyle. Nurture and cultivate your health reserves, much like your savings account. This way, you'll be prepared to handle everything the future brings—which you can count on as being a mixture of good and bad—joyous times and challenging ones. Use the following methods for managing stress:

- meditation
- try yoga
- retreats

Make your health a priority and keep yourself healthy for a lifetime. Understand the potential risks of your family history, but instead of worrying about them make lifestyle choices today, and every day, to support the quality of your longevity. Trust your body's ability to adapt to your environment and nurture its adaptability through your 100-Year Lifestyle choices. It will improve your life today and tomorrow. Educate yourself. Eat healthy foods, stay physically active, keep your spine and nervous system aligned and balanced, stay away from cigarettes, get regular checkups, and guard against accidents every day.

Here are some additional tips to help you switch into and sustain high energy to fuel your 100-Year Lifestyle. I'm not talking about hyperactive energy. What I'm talking about is a focused, calm, naturally high state of energy that comes from an inner awareness of your own human potential. **You can power your 100-Year Lifestyle:**

a. By eating high-energy foods:

- Whole grains
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Lean meats, fish, and poultry
- Vegetable proteins
- Tofu, edamame, flaxseeds, and flaxseed oil
- High-quality vitamin and mineral supplements

b. By engaging in high-energy activities:

- Fun exercise
- Getting six to eight hours of restful sleep each night
- Meaningful work
- Quality time with family and friends
- Volunteerism and community service
- Yoga, PowerCentering, and Pilates
- Getting a new pet
- Change-of-pace activities like holding a staff meeting outside, going on a walk with neighbors, taking up a new sport like skiing, cycling, swimming, or boating

c. By maintaining high-energy thoughts and attitudes:

- I accept my current situation and circumstances
- I have faith that everything will work out
- I have what it takes to reach my goals
- I am making a fresh start every day
- I can choose my pattern at any time
- I can get off track and get back on track with my next choice

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

- I am learning every day
- I am grateful for all my experiences
- My challenges teach me the lessons I need to learn

Of course, it's not enough to choose high-energy food, activities, and thoughts. You must also avoid energy drainers such as:

a. Eating low-energy foods:

- Processed foods
- Fast foods
- Junk foods
- Sugary desserts
- Foods made with white flour or sugar
- Fried foods

b. Engaging in low-energy activities:

- Channel surfing or mindless Web surfing
- Difficult, dull, or stressful work
- Investing time in meaningless relationships
- Overspending
- Falling into a boring routine and losing touch with the fun of life
- Arguing

c. Getting caught up on low-energy thoughts and actions:

- I don't accept my current situation and circumstances.
- I don't have faith.
- I don't have what it takes to reach my goals.
- I can't make a fresh start every day.
- I can't choose my pattern at any time.
- I can't get off track and get back on track with my next choice.
- I am not learning every day.
- I am not grateful for all my experiences.
- My challenges don't teach me the lessons I need to learn.
- Why bother?
- I am a victim.

Change the Way You Think

You can change your life by changing the way you think. By using different pathways and asking new questions, you can find exciting solutions.

The types of questions on the facing page open you up to greater possibilities that will invite exciting opportunities into your extended life. By acting on one or two of these at a time you will begin to attract the clarity that helps you create the environment you will enjoy for a lifetime.

Start lighting up new lobules of your brain to create a life without limits by asking these core questions:

- How can I be more effective in my life?
- What are the core values that I want to base my life on?
- Who can be my mentor and help me achieve my goals?
- How can I be a better professional?
- What would make me a better listener?
- Who do I need to learn from to do my job better?
- How can I make myself heard in a positive way?
- What habit can I commit to that will change my life for the better?
- What commitments will make me a healthier person?
- What can I accept about my past that will enable me to move forward?
- Who can I forgive today so that I can let go and live my life?
- What resources are available to me?
- What do I really want?
- Where do I want to live?
- What colors make me feel happy inside and would improve my environment?
- What changes can I make to my home to make it more enjoyable?
- What do I want my finances to be like in a year?
- What choices do I need to make to achieve that goal?
- What do I want from my life partner that I am not getting right now?
- How can I ask for it so that I am more likely to receive it?
- What do I need to give in order to have my partner feel secure?
- How can I use my talents and passions to earn extra money?

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

Action Plan for Lasting Change

1. Stop killing yourself.

If you are in a destructive energy pattern, stop now, and stay stopped with every choice from this moment on.

2. Trust your body.

As you begin to turn things around with your choices, your body and mind will strengthen. You will feel yourself getting sharper and younger in mind and body. This will give you the confidence to continue.

3. Take care of your original parts.

Strengthen your weaknesses and adapt your activities to accommodate any areas of your body that are having challenges. Better to change your activities than drive your body parts into submission.

4. Don't just treat your crisis.

Make self-care and health care a priority. Meet with the appropriate health care providers and develop a game plan to maximize your 100-Year Lifestyle while taking into consideration your personal history. Get a second or even a third opinion until the recommendations feel right in your gut, because once again, deep down, you know what is best for you.

5. Also, learn your family history and become proactive with your health.

Make self-care and health care a priority specifically as it relates to your family history.

6. Remember the three Life-Changing Principles.

Change is easy; thinking about change is hard. It is much easier to make the changes for your quality of life, with every choice that supports your ideal 100-Year Lifestyle, than it is to continue on a destructive path and be forced to change by serious disease.

7. Get excited about what is possible from your current starting point.

Look to make progress every day and be careful not to compare yourself to when you were 18 or 35. Get better and feel younger every day through your choices.

8. Have gratitude and appreciate your current environment.

Look for the good and make the most of your current environment. If you are not willing to take the time to begin constructing your future in your current environment, you will probably recreate the past in your new one if you move.

9. Begin to develop your vision for your ideal 100-Year Lifestyle. Verbalize your dreams

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

with people who are close to you, who you trust to support you in creating it. Keep a journal of the things that are important to you for your internal and external environment. Continue to define and redefine, with more and more clarity, your ideal 100-Year Lifestyle.

10. Complete the attitudes that attract exercise.

Begin to train yourself to think outside the box and magnetically attract what you want. Catch yourself when your thoughts move into destructive patterns and immediately shift yourself back to your ideal mindset.

11. Let go of trying to control the things that are out of your control.

Focus on the things that you can change. Through this acceptance and letting go process you will begin to formulate a transition strategy that will help you change your environment.

12. Describe your ideal home and work environments.

Identify any changes that you can immediately make to improve your environment and make it more enjoyable.

13. Start having more fun and enjoying the journey now.

Look for the good in every situation. Appreciate your progress and the lessons you have learned. They have set the stage for you to maximize the rest of your 100 years.

14. Be good to the planet.

Become environmentally conscious and encourage your family and friends to do the same. We are all in this together.

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

There are three aspects of your environment that are important to consider in relation to creating your ideal 100-Year Lifestyle:

1. *Your inner environment.* Create a compelling vision for the rest of your life and develop the mindset to make it happen. It's got to come from you. Your internal environment is the one between your two ears, and the one within your skin. It is your mind, body, and spirit. You are going to be the one that has to develop the vision for your life.
2. *Your external environment.* Live, work, and play in the ideal environment that resonates with your innate intelligence. Once you have the clarity, you can create and manifest your ideal environment. Sometimes this will happen quickly and sometimes slowly. The key is to move in the right direction, toward what you really want, one choice at a time. This will align your internal and external environments. Also, place yourself in external environments that feed your internal creativity. It is a cycle that continues to build your ideal 100-Year Lifestyle.
3. *Congruence between your internal and external environments,* which keeps conflicts away. Congruence between your words and your actions is powerful. Many people call it walking the talk. People who walk the talk have an inner strength regardless of their size, strength, or age. Their integrity shines through. They have a presence about them that is appealing and attractive.

2.1.6. Conclusions and recommendations

Developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is important to ensure that young people's physical and psychosocial development is adequate. Adolescents are at a stage where curiosity to discover certain sensations can endanger their health and well-being (Fernández, 2016): for this reason, it is important to promote these healthy lifestyle habits during adolescence in order to prevent possible risk factors associated with their age.

With regard to healthy eating, we must keep in mind that each person is different and therefore the way in which we grow up is also different: this is the reason why it is most appropriate that diets to be adjusted to adolescents and not the other way around (Casañas & Lalucat, 2018). If a balanced diet is achieved in adolescence, the first step towards a healthy adult life is being taken.

Another aspect closely related to the healthy lifestyle of adolescents and, in particular, with healthy eating, is the practice of physical activity. Physical activity gives young people many physical and mental benefits such as an improvement in the development of the locomotor system, the cardiovascular system, the neuromuscular system, and it also helps them maintain a healthy body weight, encourages self-confidence and social integration and interaction (Álvarez, 2022; Sicart, 2009; WHO, 2022). In addition, it is important to highlight that adolescents who practice physical activity in their free time generally maintain optimal school performance (Gobierno Vasco, 2019).

Some examples of physical activities teens can do to maintain a healthy habit and comply with the above recommendations are:

- Moderate aerobic activity: cycling, dancing, skating, walking, etc.
- Intense aerobic activity: running, practising martial arts, climbing, practising sports such as football, swimming, tennis, basketball and athletics (height and length jumps).

In addition, it is recommended to supplement physical activity with exercises that strengthen muscles and bones at least 3 times a week (WHO, 2022).

Regarding mental health of the youth, it has been shown that a good knowledge of mental health and mental disorders among the young population can lead to better conditions for those who experience a mental disorder: on the one hand, facilitating their understanding and recognition, and on the other, favoring behaviors of seeking professional help or self-help (Casañas & Lalucat, 2018). To work on mental health and make it not such an alarming risk factor in adolescence it is important to teach young people to control their own emotions, train them to develop critical thinking, build resilience and foster a supportive social environment and networks (WHO, 2021). It is very important that the prevention system used to achieve the proposed goals reaches various levels of work and is disseminated in an appropriate manner to attract the interest of adolescents: for example, in schools, social networks or in the health system.

Considering the toxic habits during adolescence, it is important to have a good prevention plan (Muñoz, 2020) to avoid young people starting in the consumption of any of these

2.1. Healthy Lifestyle

substances or similar substances not mentioned. Adolescence is a stage of change and any kind of toxic substance is seriously detrimental to both physical and psychological development (Pérez, 2019). When we talk about toxic substances or drugs, the classification is usually treated according to whether they are considered soft drugs (alcohol, tobacco...) or hard drugs (cannabis, cocaine...); however, this distinction should not be made, since it can make the teenager think that soft drugs are not so harmful to them (Sociedad Valenciana de Pediatría, 2019).

It is important to offer guidelines to young people to encourage and make them develop a healthy lifestyle, but it is also important to be consistent with our discourse as parents, teachers or mentors: we should act as a mirror where adolescents can look at and recognise themselves in the future.

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

2.2.1. Definitions and basic concepts

The 21st century has brought with it great challenges, problems and obstacles, but equally a great number of opportunities for anyone who wishes to take an active part in the age of knowledge (Flores, 2016). Therefore, to overcome the demands, challenges and problems of today, it is vital to promote and develop the skills required to achieve it: specifically, we will address critical thinking and problem solving.

Before talking about critical thinking and problem solving in general, and how to develop these skills in the youth field, in particular, we will define these 2 topics.

With regard to critical thinking, this ability is defined as the way in which human beings evaluate and reflect on their environment based on their life experience and social contexts (Fernández, 2020), which allows from their own capacity to judge actions from their acquired knowledge. Regarding Godoy and Calero (2018), critical thinking presupposes skills and attitudes that develop according to four categories: the conceptualization or organization of information, reasoning, translation and research. Instead of accepting ideas, concepts or beliefs passively, people with critical thinking make questions to themselves, look for interesting problems and challenges, and, in turn, try to find arguments and solutions to them (Flores, 2016).

In this sense, **critical thinking skills are related to curiosity to explore, mental acuity, passionate dedication to reason and desires for reliable information** (Alquichire & Arrieta, 2018). A person who manages to use his ability to think critically, can put the facts in context, interpret them, give them meaning and transcendence, in short, the critical thinker can see how they are connected with each other (Flores, 2016).

Critical thinking not only includes the development of cognitive abilities, but also the ability of individuals to reflect on their actions and what allows them to lead a more purposeful life from their own ways of thinking (Facione, 2007; Fernández, 2020): this is why we must focus on this thought process and the human abilities that it entails, and to direct them to a daily reflection on the problems that it faces and to which it must seek a solution from the reflection and select the most assertive solution, among a range of alternatives (Facione, 2007).

In this regard, it is important to note that the thought process evolves in three important levels:

- In the first level, **automatic thinking**: it is generated when humans act immediately to an external stimulus without stopping in order to think.
- In the second level, **systematic thinking**: it refers to our knowledge to solve a situation from the concepts, dexterity and skills; that is, in this, there is a greater ability to think before acting.
- In the third level, considered the highest, **critical thinking**: it generates a process of self-reflection about our thinking and actions that are applied in the contexts where we develop. Therefore, it can be said that there is an analysis and evaluation of what we think and how we use these in our daily acts.

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

At present, thinking and reflecting on the world around us should be an important element during the teaching learning processes in youth, but in reality this is in a place that resists and is inactive, and does not give the importance to critical thinking that is required today: it could be said that, precisely, the discourses around critical thinking have remained in a simple speech that does not materialize (Fernández, 2020).

With regard to problem solving, in general, it can be said that problems or conflicts are inevitable to the condition and natural state of the human being. As Fuquen (2003) says, a problem or conflict can be defined as a tension between opposing and contradictory desires that causes contradictions (which can be interpersonal and social), and where resistance and interaction are often reflected in stress or frustration: as a consequence, the person involved in a problem or conflict can be in a painful emotional state.

Problem solving has been defined as the set of skills and techniques that allow to exploit the potential of beneficial opportunities inherent in the same conflict (Camps, Selvam & Sheymardanov, 2019): thus, the competence to resolve conflicts or problems peacefully is framed in emotional intelligence and, in particular, in empathic capacity (that is, feeling what the other feels). The preventive purpose of problem solving is to improve the people's abilities to deal with everyday problem situations. It is considered a fundamental skill in the adolescent stage, as it allows one to make responsible decisions, providing greater autonomy and helping to prevent problems (Hernández-Serrano, Espada & Guillén-Riquelme, 2016).

People who solve their problems properly usually manage their emotional life effectively, since this can facilitate or inhibit the problem-solving process (Pena, Extremera & Rey, 2011); emotions can help to identify the problem and evaluate the different alternatives available as well as the feasibility of its implementation.

1. Critical thinking

Critical thinking is a cognitive activity, associated with using the mind. Learning to think in critically analytical and evaluative ways means using mental processes such as attention, categorisation, selection, and judgment. Likewise, critical thinking is a reflective activity because it analyzes the results of its own reflection and those of the reflection of others. It is a totally action-oriented thought that always appears in a context of problem solving and interaction with other people, more to understand the root and nature of problems than to propose solutions (López, 2012).

Listening and reading critically—that is, reacting with systematic evaluation to what you have heard and read—requires a set of skills and attitudes. These skills and attitudes are built around a series of related critical questions. While we will learn them one by one, our goal is to be able to use them together to identify the best decision available.

We could have expressed them as a list of things you should do, but a system of questions is more consistent with the spirit of curiosity, wonder, and intellectual adventure essential to critical thinking. Thinking carefully is always an unfinished project, a story looking for an ending that will never arrive. Critical questions provide a stimulus and direction for critical thinking; they move us forward toward a continual, ongoing search for better opinions, decisions, or judgments.

Consequently, critical thinking, as we will use the term, refers to the following:

1. awareness of a set of interrelated critical questions;
2. ability to ask and answer critical questions at appropriate times; and the
3. desire to actively use the critical questions.

Stella Cottrell (2023) underlines that Critical thinking is a complex process of deliberation which involves a wide range of skills and attitudes. These include:

- identifying your own and other people's positions, arguments and conclusions;
- evaluating the evidence for alternative points of view;
- weighing up opposing arguments and evidence fairly;
- selecting judiciously from sources, evidence and examples to support your case;
- being able to read between the lines, seeing behind surfaces, and identifying false or unfair assumptions;
- recognising techniques used to make certain positions more appealing than others, such as false logic and persuasive devices;
- reflecting on issues in a structured way, bringing logic and insight to bear;
- drawing conclusions (including decisions, judgements or recommendations) based on logically acceptable reasons and evidence, and valid inference;
- synthesizing information: drawing together your judgements of the evidence, synthesizing these to form your own new position;
- presenting a point of view in a structured, clear, well-reasoned way that convinces others.

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

Benefits of critical thinking skills

Good critical thinking skills bring numerous benefits such as:

- improved attention and observation
- more focused reading
- improved ability to identify the key points in a text or other message rather than becoming distracted by less important material
- improved ability to respond to the appropriate points in a message
- skills of analysis that you can choose to apply in a variety of situations.

(Stella Cottrell, 2023)

2. Problem solving

How we resolve a heated discussion, how we successfully deal with moments of stress, how we serve as emotional support to our loved ones in the face of misfortune or the ability to understand and provide solutions to others' problems, encompass a series of affective skills and competences that must be worked and developed from the earliest possible vital stages (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2013).

Problem solving is an intervention strategy aimed at helping the person to make available a variety of response alternatives to deal with a problematic situation and, in this way, the likelihood of selecting the most appropriate response from among possible alternatives (Hernández-Serrano, Espada & Guillén-Riquelme, 2016). In general, there is a correlation between competence to resolve conflicts and a greater self-concept, with a high assessment of prosocial behaviors and the capacity for emotional self-regulation (Camps, Selvam & Sheymardanov, 2019).

As a traditional conception, “problem” or “conflict” are synonymous with misfortune and/or bad luck, because they are considered as something aberrant, as dysfunction, as violence in general, as an unfortunate mood for people involved in it (Fuquen, 2003). The conflict may also appear as a result of the incompatibility between behaviors, objectives, perceptions and/or affections between individuals and groups that propose dissimilar goals (de Armas, 2003). The conflict is also defined as a painful emotional state, generated by a tension between opposing and contradictory desires that causes interpersonal and social contradictions, and where resistance and interaction are often reflected in stress or frustration (Fuquen, 2003). In general, conflict is inevitable to the condition and natural state of the human being; however, reality has shown that coexistence is increasingly complex, therefore it is necessary to face conflicts from a positive perspective as a learning opportunity, as a challenge and an intellectual and emotional challenge (Fuquen, 2003).

One of the keys to learning to solve problems is to identify the nature of the problem: in this sense, at the root of much of the conflicts we can find bad communication (de Armas, 2003). When one person misinterprets what the other has meant and reacts by defending himself against what he or she considers to be an offense, the tension of the conflict increases and

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

the people are further from resolving it; on the contrary, when the people in conflict can establish an effective and clear communication (that is, both understand each other), they can discover that there really was no problem or that it was small and easy to solve. Even if the problem is significant, quality communication can help parties work together to find solutions that satisfy both (de Armas, 2003).

But, how is it possible to solve problems or conflicts? There are a lot of alternative forms of conflict resolution (this means without violence), in which can be highlighted the negotiation and the mediation:

- Negotiation is the process through which the actors or parties involved reach an agreement. It is a peaceful mode of resolution, managed through communication, that facilitates exchange to satisfy objectives without using violence (Fuquen, 2003, Martin et al., 2019). The objective of the negotiation is not to win, but to achieve satisfactory results for the parties (Mirabal, 2003): to achieve this, we must begin by modifying patterns of deeply rooted behavior and distributive perception according to which, if the other wins, it means that we lose or at best, we stop winning.
- Mediation can be placed between engagement and collaboration: the purpose of mediation is to move from more individualistic styles of problem solving to more evolved modes, such as collaboration and engagement (Martin et al., 2019). When a person is involved in a conflict, there are different coping styles: avoidance, accommodation, etc. That person should not blame himself or herself for the way he/she deals with problems, because managing within a style of collaboration requires conditions of time and context that do not always occur. It can also happen that, to create a real context of collaboration, the person has to go through previous moments in which he or she is handled in styles such as avoidance or accommodation, since they may be necessary to generate a level of trust between the parties, essential to reach the collaboration (de Armas, 2003).

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

2.2.2. Specificity of these skills (critical thinking and problem solving) on young people

Adolescence as a life cycle defines much of what a human being will be in the future and consequently requires constant criticism of its context and action in that immediate reality (Fernández, 2020): therein lies the need to strengthen the critical thinking towards the world that surrounds them in the lives of adolescents, allowing them to understand their active role and their role in transformation from their actions. When children enter adolescence, they change their outlook on the world around them and begin to question and criticize their environment. When you are still a child, you consider as true everything that your referents teach, but when you are a teenager, you are aware that adults are not always right and that they can also be confused (Fernández, 2020; Gutiérrez, 2021): for this reason, teenagers begin to create their own perception of everything they already knew. The consequence of this is that adolescents become more aware of themselves, while seeking to differentiate themselves from the rest: in order to show the world their autonomy, they distance themselves from all the authority around them and consider that it should be criticized because it underestimates their ability to evolve as individuals (Gutiérrez, 2021; Ruiz, 2014). In addition, they begin to want to show their new cognitive ability based on abstract thinking and, therefore, this stage is ideal to train their critical thinking, since the field of possibilities and realities that they observe is much broader.

At present, there are numerous changes at the social, cultural, scientific and technological levels, which makes it increasingly necessary to educate young people in developing critical thinking, so that they can solve the challenges that are presented to them. Regarding Romero-Martin and Chávez-Angulo (2021), adolescents need to be trained in a way that is committed to individual but also social development: it is for this reason that the school has a very important role in promoting critical thinking to make young people capable of making decisions for themselves through strategies, processes or mental representations.

Regarding problem solving in adolescence, it is important to highlight that the way a person solves his or her problems is intimately linked to the good or bad management of his/her emotional life (Júdex-Orcasitas, Borjas & Torres, 2019). In this sense, people with great emotional abilities try to face the problem and find a solution instead of looking the other way: this is because such people, they conceive that the solution does not depend on external causes but rather that it is they themselves who must seek it (Pena, Extremera & Rey, 2011); this means that if you develop a high level of emotional intelligence, you will also get positive reinterpretation strategies, greater active coping and action planning.

Conflict resolution has been the subject of study in different areas. The differences between men and women in the resolution of conflicts has always been one of the areas of study that cause most interest: in this sense, it can be affirmed that adolescent women have greater score and skills to resolve conflicts, since they are more precise in their perception, use more

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

cooperative strategies, are more empathic, committed and transient (Garaigordobil & Maganto, 2011); on the other hand, teenage men use a much more aggressive method to resolve their problems and also some strategies for distance themselves from the problem (Coppari et al., 2018).

Regarding the age range, there are some data indicating that younger adolescents tend to use more avoidance strategies for problem solving, and present a smaller repertoire of strategies compared to older adolescents, among other reasons, because they already have more experiences that have allowed them to try more actions and see the result (Barcelata et al., 2016; Coppari et al., 2018). In addition, it has been demonstrated thanks to the theory of cognitive development that, as the age increases, the ability to see more perceptions of the same situation increases (Garaigordobil & Maganto, 2011): this implies that problem-solving skills in adolescence grow as well.

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

2.2.3. How to help young people to develop their critical thinking

Creating Mindsets for Critical thinking and Problem solving

First, for developing any skill, a person needs to have a mindset that can let that person to change a perspective or to have access to any kind of knowledge. Especially on young people, the mindset is under development and adolescence and youth is the most prolific period from the lifespan in which a person can change an old mindset or can build a healthy mindset.

According to McCuen (2023), a **mindset** is the *sum of conscious and unconscious processes of the brain, including the generation of imaginative ideas or concepts for use in making decisions and direct-ing actions with the objective of solving problems, in a way that enables these processes to be integrated with other important dimensions.*

The components of a mindset vary from person to person and for any one person from day to day. For example, some people are very moody, with the mood varying over short periods of time; other people are much less moody and subject to less frequent changes in mood. A moody disposition may be evident in the decisions and actions of the person. Even a person's beliefs can change, but generally over a longer time frame than changes in the person's mood. Beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and moods are all components of a person's mindset dimension of critical problem-solving.

A person's mindset largely controls his or her decisions and actions. For example, a person who is in a procrastinating mood is difficult to motivate to act on his or her assigned responsibilities.

Mindset states range from the positive, such as an optimistic attitude, to the negative, such as making decisions when in a pessimistic mood. Some individuals have considerable control over their moods and can adjust the mood to fit the conditions and the demands on their time. Other individuals do not seem to have control over their moods, which can adversely affect their productivity and happiness. Not having the ability to control one's mood can limit a person's ability to solve problems. A critical thinker will generally have excellent control of his or her moods. As a person advances to become a critical thinker, he or she improves in the control of his or her mindset. (McCuen, 2023).

The following definitions characterize the mindset components as the definitions apply to critical problem-solving:

- **Belief:** A sympathetic conviction that is generally accepted as true, but often reflects societal conventions declared by a person's culture.
- **Principle:** A relatively fixed attitude that serves as a mode of action or thought that remains constant over long periods of time but can be changed following significant experiences.
- **Disposition:** A person's usual manner of emotional response providing an inclination toward an action, with the inclination being somewhat ingrained. A person's disposition can influence his or her behavior, i.e., actions.
- **Mood:** A temporary state of mind usually held for a short period of time.

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

- **Attitude:** A prevailing state of mind toward an idea, person, or group— a state with a tendency toward a belief. A state of mind with cognitive and affective components that are based on an accumulation of knowledge.

The ability to control the mindset components to produce an effective and efficient state of mind at the appropriate time is a positive attribute. Being able to consistently control one's state of mind is usually necessary to make unbiased decisions. If a person has not had sufficient experience with complex problems to adequately understand and develop his or her mindset, then regardless of the person's state of mind at the time when a decision needs to be made, the person may not make a good decision.

Self-discipline: a mindset characteristic

Self-discipline is the ability to control one's own actions where a desired activity must be sacrificed in order to perform a less desirable responsibility. (McCuen, 2023). A self-disciplined person is more likely to approach his or her problem-solving responsibilities in a timely, respectful manner. A person who is willing to forego a desirable activity in order to fulfill a less desirable activity must have good control of his or her state of mind. Therefore, the person is likely less sensitive to mood changes and, therefore, more successful at fulfilling responsibilities. Conversely, a person who lacks self-discipline will appear to lack commitment to the endeavor, which will suppress the likelihood of high-quality effort and output, which decreases his or her chances of success at completing the responsibilities. Any lack of self-discipline reflects a lack of mindset control. A person who has to force himself or herself to complete a responsibility lacks self-discipline even though they may complete the responsibility on time. It is the need to compel oneself to act as opposed to enthusiastically acting that reflects the mindset deficiency (McCuen, 2023).

Young people's capacity for critical thinking and self-awareness can be increased through ongoing conversations on meaningful topics with their mentors. Conversations where mentors listen to, attempt to understand, and show respect for what adolescents have to say, even if the mentors do not always agree, can provide adolescents with opportunities to think more clearly and critically about the world, to stay in touch with feelings and thoughts, and to express themselves more fully. In doing so, mentors can help adolescents test their ideas and sharpen cognitive skills that they would not use on their own, or in day-to-day conversation with their peers. Young people can then incorporate what they have learned from these conversations into their existing base of knowledge and competence.

Opportunities for authentic conversation are particularly important for youth, who often hide their true feelings from their parents, teachers, friends, and others out of a fear of disapproval or rejection. Given the complicated transitions that other close relationships undergo in youth, mentors are uniquely positioned to engage their protégés in the sorts of deep, reflective conversations that can advance their critical thinking and self-awareness.

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

The emotional, social, cognitive, and role-modeling processes work in concert with one another over time. A youth's selection of a mentor as a role model or source of emotional support often coincides with a growing ability to make comparisons across relationships and to recognize parental imperfections—an outgrowth of the youth's increased capacity for logical and abstract reasoning.

Young people who have enjoyed good relationships with their parents may be drawn to adults as role models and confidants.

The relationship with a mentor may center more on the acquisition of skills and the advancement of critical thinking than on emotional problems.

Some of the abilities and skills associated with the development of Critical Thinking:

- Group awareness
 - Understanding the vision of others.
 - Appropriation of events linked to the reality of the environment.
 - Use of a correct level of communicative pragmatics.
 - Search for positive changes for their context .
 - Openness towards working for the well-being of the group
- Discursive skills:
 - Analysis of the beginnings, arguments and conclusions of a line of reasoning.
 - Identification of argumentative shortcomings in a discourse.
 - Ability to detect flaws in the logic of the ideas that support a reasoning.Precision of fallacies or unfounded relationships.
 - Evaluation of a discourse to take possession of its credibility and validity.
 - Assessment of the solidity of conclusions
- Originality
 - Challenge of general beliefs with own arguments.
 - Motivation for the original expression.
 - Construction of new thought
- Speculative depth
 - Integration of ideas with elements of art and philosophy.
 - Substantiated statements.
 - Need for better and more information.
 - Complexity and richness of language
- Personal freedom
 - Inquisitive attitude.
 - Openness to diverse ideas with flexibility.
 - Vocation for freedom.

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

- Values
 - Fair, empathetic and prudent conduct.
 - Demonstration of honesty in the face of own mistakes.
 - Willingness to rectify with the ability to retract.
 - Temperance and moderation in the face of conflicts
- Conscious attitude
 - Inclination for discipline, research and reason.
 - Persistent disposition.
 - Inclination to search for solutions to problems through argumentation

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

2.2.4. How to help young people to develop their problem solving skills

THE 11 STEPS TO HANDLING ANY PROBLEM QUICKLY & EFFECTIVELY

1. **Change the meaning you associate to “problems”:** first and foremost, you need to change your whole attitude towards “problems”!

Change what meaning you attach to them, turn them into an opportunity to expand, grow, and to discover a lesson that’s begging to be learned!

DON’T get all upset and start ranting and raving... “How come this ALWAYS happens to me!?”

When you are angry, chances are, you are not operating at the peak of your resourcefulness... When you are upset, what you’re actually doing is focusing on the problem, instead of working on the SOLUTION.

ALWAYS SPEND 80% OF YOUR TIME ON THE SOLUTION, AND ONLY 20% OF YOUR TIME ON THE CHALLENGE!

PROBLEM... OR OPPORTUNITY?

We need to learn how to find something that we can take advantage of in ANY negative situation. Something that we can utilize, to create even greater results and success.

How do you turn a ‘problem’ into something that really empowers you?

Let me explain what a “problem” really is, and why human beings ABSOLUTELY NEED ‘problems’ and challenges in their lives.

Yes, that’s right. We NEED problems.

Most people see ‘problems’ as something that gets in their way, something that prevents them from achieving what they want. ‘Obstacles’, ‘stumbling blocks’...

Although short-term they may look like stumbling blocks, in the long-run most of these things we call ‘problems’ are actually stepping stones.

GET EXCITED WHEN YOU COME FACE TO FACE WITH A PROBLEM!

YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEARN A MONUMENTALLY USEFUL LESSON! YOU ARE ABOUT TO GROW AND EXPAND AS A PERSON, AND BREAK THROUGH YOUR COMFORT ZONES!

YOU ARE ABOUT TO SCULPT YOUR CHARACTER, AND IN THE PROCESS, BECOME ‘BIGGER’ THAN THAT PROBLEM, THEREFORE ABLE TO HANDLE BIGGER CHALLENGES AND GET MORE OUT OF LIFE!!!

I know it doesn’t look like it at the time.

And I’m not talking about ‘positive thinking’, here.

KEEP IN MIND THAT WE ARE ALWAYS GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS WHETHER WE WANT TO OR NOT.

It’s simply how the Game of Life is set up.

In reality, HOW WELL YOU DEAL WITH PROBLEMS WILL PROBABLY

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

DETERMINE THE QUALITY IN YOUR LIFE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE YOU COULD EVER DO IN YOUR LIFETIME.

Can you still remain positive even when facing major challenges? When you've given it your all and then things STILL don't work out?

Do you have the guts to get up and start again, try something new?

THAT'S when we get to find out what we are really made of.

PROBLEMS ARE HERE TO SERVE US

A lot of people want to ELIMINATE ALL PROBLEMS

WHAT DETERMINES THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES IS OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROBLEMS

Norman once asked Gene Tunney, the World Heavyweight Champion of boxing, "Gene, how do I get a body like that?"

He said, "It's very simple; every single day I push against tremendous resistance and this has sculpted my body into what you see in front of you today, that made me a champion".

Maybe that's how we develop spiritual muscle, and emotional muscle...

It's by pushing against tremendous resistance.

By the way, "problems" = RESISTANCE.

People have to deal with problems every single day of their lives, but very few people do so with much vigour.

If you go to the gym and work out, do you get angry that the weights are heavy as you push against them, or do you think to yourself, 'I'm utilizing this weight to sculpt myself, to create even more strength, even more power, the ability to look, feel and behave in a way that enhances my life in every way'?

Problems are the gymnasium of life!

"Problems" allow us to get a 'work-out', so that we get better, stronger, and so that we become MORE.

While lifting the weight there might be some pain, but the only way you can 'grow' your muscle is by pushing beyond the pain, by pushing yourself beyond that process over and over again.

After a while, what used to be 'painful' becomes easy to deal with.

Pretty soon you have the pride of knowing you have mastered the weights.

And maybe that's all that problems are, a bunch of weights that we can utilize effectively.

Some people, though, leave those weights lying around, ignoring them, pretending that this 'gymnasium' doesn't exist, pretending that they don't NEED the work-out...

Unfortunately, if you don't use your decision-making muscle it gets weaker. If you don't expand and push against the problems of life then you don't get to develop the muscle of courage, of passion, of emotion, of sensitivity, of caring.

We've got to change our entire perspective when it comes to problems, and realize they

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

actually BENEFIT us.

Haven't YOU had a major problem, something that you thought was completely OVERWHELMING, but that one day you finally handled it?

And hasn't it enhanced your life now that you look back on it? Hasn't it given you greater self-esteem, greater power, hasn't it made you more confident that you can deal with almost everything else that comes up?

I now it has certainly been the case for ME!

Now, when a situation pops up, I immediately think, "Okay, what do I need to do to turn this 'problem' into an advantage? How can I use it? How can we make this thing work?"



PROBLEMS ARE A LESSON BEGGING TO BE LEARNT

Problems often show up simply because there's a life lesson we haven't learnt yet! Problems are a lesson begging to be learnt, so that we may grow and expand ourselves!

When everything is going really well in your life, you tend to lose your focus.

You might say to yourself, "Heck, I don't need to grow, or work hard, or risk anything..."

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

after all, things are going great!”

But when you come up against a challenge, you are forced to examine your life, to ponder, and come up with new understandings and distinctions that allow you to grow and break through your comfort zones.

If at a time when you come across a tough situation – a ‘problem’ – you retreat instead of breaking through your comfort zone and handling that problem, pretty soon.... another problem shows up.

2. Know what you want – Know your outcome

Clarity is POWER. What do you REALLY want to happen now?

Write down clearly how you want things to turn out. For example, you could say, “By the 4th of October I have solved all my financial worries and have become a master of money, earning over \$20,000 a month. I am laughing at the thought of how worried I was over things that never actually happened. I am buying my dream home and moving in with the woman of my dreams.”

Your brain is constantly screening out and deleting 99.9% of everything you perceive. Your Reticular Activating System (RAS) will bring to your attention that 0.01% that your brain feels is important.

The way you can get your RAS to work for you in an empowering way... is by setting GOALS.

When you write down a goal, you are in fact sending a clear order to your brain that THIS IS WHAT I WANT – NOW GET IT FOR ME!

3. Change the questions you ask yourself about ‘problems’.

When you ask yourself questions like: “Why does this always happen to me?!”, “How come I can’t turn this around?!”, “Why did this person do this to me?!”...

Well, you feel like you are no longer in control, and this just drives you crazy – you are NOT in a state to utilize all your mental resources rationally and with clarity.

Instead, you could ask yourself: “How can I turn this situation around quickly and effectively and have fun in the process?”, “What’s actually funny about this?”, “How can I learn from this situation? What is the lesson for me here?”, “What’s the potential opportunity for me here?”, “Will this even matter 10 years from now?”

The questions we ask ourselves determine the way we feel and the quality of solutions we come up with.

Your brain is an incredibly powerful, effective, and imaginative supercomputer that will come up with a myriad solutions TO ANY PROBLEM... if you simply ask it an effective question.

IF YOU HAVEN’T SOLVED A PROBLEM YET YOU SIMPLY HAVEN’T ASKED THE RIGHT QUESTION YET!

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

4. Change the language you use when it comes to ‘problems’.

Firstly, STOP using the word ‘problem’. If your house is on fire, you’re stuck on a desert island, or your doctor has told you “The good news is we’re going to be naming this disease after you!”... THEN you’ve got a problem.

Everything else is just an ‘inconvenience’ or a ‘character-building challenge’!

The language you use affects the emotions you experience.

Imagine driving through the desert with a rental car, 2 other people in the back, and suddenly your car breaks down. You’re stuck, miles away from anything resembling civilization. It’s the car rental’s fault.

One says, “I’m enraged!”

The other says, “I’m really angry!”

And you say, “I’m annoyed. I’m peeved off.”

You will experience the same aggravation, but you won’t incapacitate yourself and your reasoning by putting yourself in an un-resourceful state of anger and fear.

“Problems” are a drag... but “challenges” are an “opportunity”! It’s “exciting”! See how that works?

Remember: every convenience we benefit from today comes from people taking “problems” (say, in the 18th century, “We can’t trade with far-away countries because of limited means of transportation...”), seeing them as a challenge, solving it, and thus creating an opportunity for themselves and massive value for everyone else.

Trains, steamboats, planes, container ships...

5. Change the way you are using your Body / Physiology

The quickest way to change the way you feel is by changing your physiology.

By “physiology” I mean the way you breathe, whether you’re standing tall or not (how you hold your body, how you’re moving, and even your tone of voice.

In order to solve problems... sorry, “challenges”... quickly and effectively, you need to put yourself in a resourceful mental state, and nothing does that faster than by changing your physiology.

When we feel tired, worn out, exhausted, problems often seem more of a hurdle.

What you need to do immediately is get up and START MOVING! GO FOR A RUN! GO TO THE GYM! GO FOR A WALK IN THE PARK! BREATHE DEEPLY! SHOUT “YES! WHILST CLAPPING YOUR HANDS WITH CONFIDENCE!”

Get that oxygen flowing through your body! Feel that surge of energy pulse through you!

6. Radical self-honesty regarding the ‘problem’

The first step to solving a problem... is admitting you have one!

Be completely honest with yourself. Don’t pretend like the problem is not there.

I told you before... This is NOT about positive thinking (although it certainly helps as well to have positive expectations about how things are going to turn out).

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

If there's a 'problem'.... Just face it straight on! Get it handled! And move on. Be honest, see it as it is – but don't blow it out of proportion either, and feel overwhelmed. Then visualize your desired outcome, and take action to make it thus. Create an action plan (a list of actions you need to take to resolve this – then start with the first one).

7. Take responsibility

A central tenet of all personal development philosophies – and I have studied most of them – is that in order to have a wonderful life one must take complete responsibility for it and everything that happens therein.

You see, all that exists in your life, good or bad, is there because of YOUR attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, choices, and actions.

You and you alone have 'manifested' these situations. You have attracted these situations and people into your life, through your way of 'being' and your thoughts.

I know this is a really tough thing to accept, but it is fact.

The flip side to this, and really inspiring thought, is that since YOU manifested it into your life, you can equally manifest it away or manifest all the positive things you've ever wanted.

Until you have taken responsibility for the problem – no matter WHAT other people have done 'to' you – you will not be able to move on until you accept that you and you alone are responsible.

After all, who chose to go with or accept that business partner, wife, venture, investment, friend, holiday location, having kids, etc?

If you feel like, "I am not the source of the problem, so how come I have to solve it??"...

...then that will just make you angry and keep you from dealing with the situation at hand ("It's not my responsibility!")

Remember, problems don't go away until we take responsibility for them.

8. Control your mind's focus

Your brain is NOT designed to make you 'happy': it is actually a machine designed to ensure your SURVIVAL. That is why your brain will do whatever it can TO MAKE SURE YOU IDENTIFY AND SEE PROBLEMS, POTENTIAL PROBLEMS, POTENTIAL WORRIES, INSIGNIFICANT EVENTS, etc.

In fact, it will blow the most minor considerations completely out of proportion TO MAKE SURE that it has brought it to your attention... in order for you to SURVIVE.

I always advise people to live more in their hearts, where their PASSION and PURPOSE lie, instead of in that FEAR-BASED MECHANISM that is our brain.

The first way to control what your mind focuses on is this: SPEND 80% OF YOUR TIME ON THE SOLUTION! Focus all your energy, your thoughts, and your time on the solution!

Secondly, make sure you ask yourself quality, empowering questions: "How can I turn this situation around quickly and enjoy the process?"

People who seem overwhelmed by their problem are in a lousy physiology (drooped

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

shoulders, little movement, etc.), they have a terrible attitude about it and are asking themselves disempowering questions (“How come this always happens to ME?”), they are not being honest with themselves and they are angry with everyone else (not taking responsibility for their situation), and are spending most of their time complaining about or focusing on the problem!

9. Don't be afraid to ask for help

In February 2004, I was really at the end of my rope. I hadn't earned any income in 3 months, couldn't find a job, and had been kicked out of my place.

I moved to London, where I would sleep a couple of nights on some friend's place floor, another 2-3 nights at another friend's, etc.

I was so overwhelmed by my debts that they were all I could focus on. I had completely lost my appetite, and had lost over 15 pounds (I wasn't that big to start off with...)

That was it. I needed help. I took the un-imaginable step of ASKING for help. I side-stepped my pride – (“Pride never helps. It only hurts.” – Pulp Fiction... what a cool movie) – and sent an email out to my 300 contacts in England, explaining my situation. Within a week I had a fantastic job offer, from a person I now am privileged to call a mentor and a friend.

Who can YOU talk to?

Who can you ask for help from?

Who do you know has gone through a similar situation?

Have you got an extended database of contacts you could email, write to, or call?

You see, there aren't THAT many challenges a human being can face. In fact, they are all very, very common.

A health challenge, a money challenge, a job or study challenge, depression, heartbreak, bereavement...

There's ALWAYS someone out there who's been through the same things. You are never alone when in a tough situation.

10. Brainstorm 100 solutions

Now this is my favorite step in the process, for I am the 'creative' type.

Take a white sheet of paper, or write in your journal, 100 different things you could do to solve your challenge.

From the sublime to the ridiculous, write down whatever comes into your mind. Don't stop to analyze it. In fact, don't let your pen stop for 20 minutes. Be in total creativity overdrive!

Go after this challenge like it's a prey and you are the hunter! When you adopt that behavior, YOU are in control – not the problem.

In fact, get a group of people together and brainstorm 100 solutions together!

Come up with 100 ways to completely eradicate this challenge.

Once you've taught your brain the pleasure of creative problem-solving, you never go back!

Your brain will forever be open to coming up with solutions.

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

11. Take massive, intelligent action

Ok, now's the time. You've got to JUST DO IT.

You know what you've got to do. You've ALWAYS known it. Just...Do... It.

Write out your action plan, put yourself in a peak physiology, and just take that first step.

Complete that first item on the list. Then the next. And the next. Until it's done.

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

2.2.5. Conclusions and recommendations

Evidence suggests that the use of strategies aimed at adolescents both to solve problems (for example, active coping and planning) and to achieve a more positive vision of the same (such as positive reevaluation or acceptance) are positively associated with their emotional well-being (Hernández-Serrano, Espada & Guillén-Riquelme, 2016; Fernández, 2020; Pena, Extremera & Rey, 2011; SanJuan, Guillén & Pérez-García, 2018).

Being able to develop critical thinking properly equips the individual to create his own point of view in the face of the information he receives. When this capacity is developed, there are many benefits in terms of assessing and analysing different situations and developing personal autonomy (Romeral & Rísquez, 2023): these capacities, which must be provided to the person from childhood, begin to sprout and become visible from adolescence. It is important to promote this critical vision in adolescents, since thanks to this we can offer them numerous tools that help them justify, argue and contrast ideas (Fernández, 2020; Ruiz, 2014). Developing critical thinking during childhood and/or adolescence is of paramount importance for them to be able to solve problems in the future. It is a way of training them to deal with conflicts and knowing how to deal with them from rational and emotional intelligence (Romeral & Rísquez, 2023). Educo (2020), an NGO associated with ChildFund Alliance, says that one of the most useful ways to get young people to develop adequate critical thinking is active listening: listening to other people is very important to understand them and be able to reflect on what they are telling you. Active listening and critical thinking are intimately related since the ability to listen to others gives us the opportunity to recognize the positive, face the negative and make the best decisions based on the conflict. Encouraging active listening and critical thinking in adolescents helps them create their own personality, become more independent and make the right decisions by working with empathy and respect (Fernández, 2020). Getting adolescents to develop their critical thinking properly gives them numerous advantages at the academic level, but also at the personal level and in their role as citizens of today's society (Fernández, 2020; Gutiérrez, 2021).

Adolescence is a stage in which many changes are suffered and there is much uncertainty and emotional instability. In addition, it also begins to build one's identity according to the social environment in which the individual moves and adults are questioned as they consider them different and alien to themselves (Educo, 2020; Gutiérrez, 2021): it is for this reason that when we talk about adolescence, it is important to emphasize the conflicts that arise at this stage whether with the peer group, the family or others.

When young people are building their adult identity, that is, in the process of maturation that occurs during adolescence, they are very exposed to personal, social or family problems or conflicts. These problems are based on various factors such as discomfort, lack of understanding, different points of view, opposing interests and/or possible risk behaviors common in adolescence (Educo, 2020; Fernández, 2020). It should not be given too much importance to whether the conflicts that arise are good or bad since they are part of life itself

2.2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

and cannot be avoided: where more attention needs to be paid is to the way in which these problems are solved and if it has not been managed, to find the right solutions to the conflict or to prepare the adolescent so that he or she can solve them without problems in the future (Garaigordobil & Maganto, 2011; Júdez-Orcasitas, Borjas & Torres, 2019).

Constructive negotiation is a very useful tool to achieve satisfactory results in the resolution of any conflict or problem (Educo, 2020; Gutiérrez, 2021). In this way, it will enable the parties to the conflict to obtain to a greater or lesser extent what they were seeking and strengthen the relationships and personal growth of the individual (Mirabal, 2003). To achieve an optimal result it is important to get the teenager to be able to (Romeral & Rísquez, 2023):

- Maintain calm to manage conflicts properly and be able to observe them from a distance with a more objective and realistic point of view.
- Be able to use active listening to find a reasonable solution to the conflict.
- Encourage assertive communication.
- Analyze all the solutions presented to find out which is the most beneficial.
- Stay firm with the commitment to the chosen solution.

2.3. Career Planning

2.3.1. Definition & basic concepts

One of the most important decisions in a person's life is the choice and planning of his or her professional career to the extent that it will define the life he/she will lead upon completing professional training (Bravo & Vergara, 2018). This career planning can be influenced by factors such as family, economy, personal interests and mass media.

To understand what career planning is, it is fundamental to make a difference between some concepts:

- **Job and career:** A job is an occupation that people have at any given point in time. A career refers to the pattern or form of work-related experiences that a person experiences in the course of his or her life, and it could include a single job that they stay in for many years, or a series of successive jobs within the same field.

Going deeper, career refers to a person's journey in one or more organizations, a process of development that takes on different trajectories over time that give a typical shape to the person's work history. A career, unlike work, includes different dimensions and meanings, depending on the environment in question (García, 2003): the time (because plans and experiences are placed in a temporal perspective), the direction (orientation towards which we move through tasks, activities, and assignments), the expertise developed in the profession, the subjective aspects that activate responses on the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural level aimed at controlling new situations so that they are compatible with their expectations, etc.

- **Career management:** According to Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (1995) career management is a process of design and implementation of objectives, plans and strategies that enable human resources' professionals and managers to meet workforce needs and also that enable people to achieve their professional goals.
- **Professional guidance:** Understood as a continuous process of accompaniment that facilitates the making of meaningful decisions, according to the potential and life project of each person, consistent with the training, work and social offer of the moment (Sánchez-Martín et al., 2017), occupies a role of special relevance in this vital stage, in a constantly evolving labor market, where it is essential to accompany the decision-making and planning of the Professional and Life Project.
- **Career planning:** Mathis (2006) defines career planning as focusing on work and identifying career paths that provide logical progress for people between jobs in the organization. The purpose of career planning is that students have a positive attitude towards careers in the future. Based on the previous definition, it can be concluded that career planning can be defined as a process used by a person to choose career goals and career paths to achieve these goals. As a process that aims to match individual career goals and abilities with opportunities to fill them systematically, career planning is a continuous process of discovery (Pascariati & Ali, 2022).

Career planning is an effort made by individuals to understand better and be aware of the skills, interests, values, opportunities, obstacles, choices, and consequences that seek to

identify career-related goals and establish plans to achieve a goal (Pascariati & Ali, 2022). In human resource management, career planning aims to identify needs, aspirations and opportunities for individuals' careers and the implementation of developing human resources programs to support that career (Antoniou, 2010).

It is observed in all the definitions related to career planning that there are a number of common elements that help to delimit the concept; thus, a concern to establish relations between education and the world of work is manifested, providing students with an experiential knowledge of the same through a multitude of apprenticeships (García, 2003); thus the collection of information, simulation activities and direct contact with the world of work are proposed, through internship concerts with companies; they presuppose their applicability to all persons in all educational environments, the applicability of educational and guidance programs and intervention to all individuals who are part of the school and especially to those who may have special difficulty in their inclusion in the world of work (García, 2003; Rosales, 2012). To do this, there must be close collaboration between people directly related to the educational environment, material and organizational resources, and community involvement through public and private institutions.

It is important to highlight that the choice of career affects both academic life and working life of the human being (Barrero, 2006). When a person chooses studies that prepare him or her for a profession, he/she is defining his/her path to follow and his/her objectives, although this path and objectives may vary during the journey). In this sense, the school context has been a fundamental part of career guidance processes throughout history (Alonso, 2010).

Family history also has an impact on career choice. Leppel, Williams and Waldauer (2001) analyzed the influence of the socioeconomic and labor situation of parents on the choice of a career: they concluded that, regardless of gender, adolescents with parents with managerial positions are more likely to choose Engineering and Science careers.

Career planning is a strategy that gives the adolescent a direction to follow in order to achieve professional goals: this strategy begins with the definition of objectives, which are based on our personal and occupational interests and competences (Pérez, 2011).

2.3. Career Planning

2.3.2. Factors that determine vocational choice and career planning

Adolescence is a time of change and crisis, in which each person begins to make his or her own decisions, that can be positive or negative, but will eventually make him or her grow as a person in the course of this stage (Rosales, 2012): one of these decisions is the choice of a career, a decision that can mark the individual for his or her whole life.

There are a variety of factors that determine which career to choose, being the most frequent gender, family, school, peer group and friends.

1. **Gender:** Before analysing the influence of gender on career choice, it is necessary to differentiate the concepts of sex and gender, which have often been used interchangeably: sex refers to the biological and anatomical differences associated with each sexual category (López Sáez, 1994), while gender has a markedly sociological character and serves to designate a scheme used for the social categorization of individuals (Rosales, 2012).

When talking about career choice, gender becomes a conditioning factor in vocational development (Rosales, 2012), since the choice is based on the social implications that still exist today and the incidence of them on the personal factors of vocational choice.

At present, although men and women are in similar decision-making situations, there are still large gender-related differences in career choices. It is shown that, in the choice of studies and professions, the prevailing social stereotypes about what is considered proper or improper for women still persist; the influence of these perceptual schemes directly affects women who have to choose one or the other possibility and also determines that the world of work continues to discriminate against women (Mosteiro, 1997).

2. **Family:** Undoubtedly in the formation of a mature person, the most decisive factors are family relations and school education. A child who has been able to communicate with his or her parents, who has been able to take responsibility for his/her actions, first small and then increasingly large, who has been heard by his or her parents when needed, have made decisions and have learned to interpret their successes and failures (Rosales, 2012). That is why the family is decisive in the career choice because it is there where a series of experiences are lived that the adolescent is taking as a reference.

In many cases, it is the fathers and mothers who pressure their child to enroll in a certain career (Rosales, 2012), either because they exercise it, because they wanted to study it and could not, because they consider it the most suitable for their child, etc.; in this way, parents minimize the opinion and skills of their child.

Another key point to consider in terms of career choice and family is the financial resources available of the family. Family financial resources can limit career choice by the cost, although it can sometimes be achieved if the individual or family looks for alternatives to help finance their choice.

3. **School:** As Álvarez, López and Pérez-Jorge (2015) point out, the educational system

has to take on the challenge of promoting the academic and professional orientation and planning of young people, so that they achieve an adequate knowledge of themselves, improve their decision-making skills and be able to carry out rational planning of the different training pathways that lead them to achieve their career goals.

The school is the institution where knowledge is provided, where the person is educated in different aspects, from academics to individual and social values (Rosales, 2012). Teaching exerts an influence and marks the trend towards the achievement of specific goals, which will then determine the whole career path and even vital of a person. If the passage through the educational system is addressed from improvisation and without a clear awareness of the influence that the lack of professional planning has on future progress, it is possible that many of the young people, not only do they leave the education system with a lack of training and knowledge, but they will have fewer possibilities and greater difficulties to integrate into active socio-working life and the world of work (Álvarez, López & Pérez-Jorge, 2015).

From the Preschool level, the person is formed, passing through the basic levels such as Primary and Secondary, but upon reaching a higher level, the person is in a stage of change, as mentioned above. Both authority figures and academic staff will have to keep in mind these changes in adolescence to be able to get the student educated without problems, according to their time, culture and the society that surrounds them (Rosales, 2012).

In the adolescence stage, feelings of incomprehension towards parents and the search for emotional separation are often harbored, and the identification with teachers gains strength because it can facilitate the construction of autonomy, as they may offer alternative adult role models to those of the family (Rosales, 2012); that is why one of the areas that should be strengthened from the academic mentoring space is that of information and help to achieve a good adaptation and planning of young people's personal projects (Álvarez, López & Pérez-Jorge, 2015), so that students can take responsibility and plan their learning and teaching process.

4. Peer groups and friends: Friends and peers groups play, in general, an especially important role in the development of the adolescent, because they are the ones with whom they identify and feel accepted (Rosales, 2012), because many times in the family they feel misunderstood or do not have the confidence to express their own values or ideas.

For this reason, friends and peer groups play an important role in the career choice, because if the family does not support them with this decision, they will seek support from friends, because it is with them that they feel important and accepted.

5. Age: Career choice is a significant issue in the developmental lives of young people because it is reported to be associated with positive as well as harmful psychological, physical and socio-economic inequalities that persist well beyond the youthful age into an individual's adult life (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018). The complexity of career decision-

2.3. Career Planning

making increases as age increases: younger children are more likely to offer answers about their ideal career which may represent their envisioned utopia and phenomenal perceptions about what they want to do when they grow up (Howard & Walsh, 2011). As children get older, they are more likely to describe their career choice as a dynamic interplay of their developmental stages and the prevailing environmental circumstances.

6. Culture: Studies have shown that cultural values have an impact on the factors that influence the career choices of young people (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018; Hui and Lent, 2018; Rosales, 2012). Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes one group of people from another.

As young people plan and make career decisions, in the face of both expected and unexpected interests, goals, expectations, personal experiences as well as obligations and responsibilities, cultural undercurrents underpin what adolescents can do, and how they are required to think (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018).

Regarding Akosah-Twumasi et al. (2018), basing cultures on individualistic versus collectivist dimensions may explain the classical differences in career decision-making among youths: the normative practice in individualistic societies is for young people to be encouraged to choose their own careers and develop competency in establishing a career path for themselves, while adolescents from collectivist societies may be required to conform to familial and societal standards and they are often expected to follow a predetermined career track.

2.3.3. Career planning programs for youth

From the mid 1970s to the 1980s, the career education movement began, which is now being continued by the impetus given by Western countries to the “transition to working life” (García, 2003), occupying the career guidance and education programmes, a preferred place in this transition from school to work. Countries such as the United States and Canada are pioneers in career education; in the European Union, for their part, the development and implementation of career guidance and education programmes in secondary education is increasingly being encouraged (García, 2003).

The **Holland’s Self-Directed Search** (SDS) is a career-planning guide that works similarly to a vocational and professional interests inventory. Holland presents a theory on vocational choice that aims to explain why people make certain vocational choices, what makes them change vocation or employment and what personal and environmental factors can facilitate vocational achievement (Martínez y Valls, 2006).

Specifically, the SDS Form R allows people to discover the professions, careers and fields of study that best match their skills and interests. The use of SDS in professional and vocational guidance has led to numerous investigations related to the effect it produces on people, their usefulness, their relationship with personal variables, adaptations made, validation of Holland’s theory, relationship with other inventories of interests and personality and their own validity and structure. The SDS has been implemented and adapted in different countries: New Zealand, Canada, Nigeria, Guyana, Australia, Pakistan, France, China, Singapore and Germany.

Another career-planning guide is the **Differential Skills Test (DST)**, designed in 1.947 by George K. Bennett, Harold G. Seashore and Alexander G. Wesman, which is a tool to detect dominant skills or aptitudes (Rosales, 2012); thus, the results in each of the subpresses will predict the success of the student in activities or professions where these skills are fundamental.

Regarding the Differential Skills Test, it is advisable to consider not only the high skills, but also to make a comparison with the low ones (Ruiz, 2019), in order to know the student’s aptitudes differently. The high score indicates that their skill in this aspect is more outstanding than in others; the normal score indicates that their skill here is the same as anyone could have; when the score is low, it refers to poor and below-normal ability (Rosales, 2012). This test detects skills in six aspects, and allows to know the areas of greatest development in the student’s intelligence. The student can excel in:

- Attention: it is defined as the acceptance of information in a passive way (Rosales, 2012), it has to do with the speed of perception, the ability to retain data in momentary memory, the speed of reaction, visual acuity and ability to discriminate fine details

2.3. Career Planning

(Ruiz, 2019).

- Verbal reasoning: measures the ability to understand, use and define concepts expressed in words (Rosales, 2012), abstraction, generalization, rather than simply measuring the fluency or recognition of vocabulary, and to some extent the ability to reason (Ruiz, 2019).
- Numerical ability: ability to reason with numbers, to manipulate numerical relations and to operate with quantitative materials (Ruiz, 2019), and to understand numerical relations (Rosales, 2012), ease of handling such concepts and concentration as voluntary effort to accept information.
- Abstract reasoning: ability to reason in non-verbal form; perceiving relationships of figures, deduction of principles, capacity for analysis, synthesis and thought in organized form (Rosales, 2012; Ruiz, 2019).
- Spatial reasoning: ability to analyze and synthesize, visual acuity, organization and ability to manipulate objects in their three dimensions (Rosales, 2012; Ruiz, 2019).
- Mechanical reasoning: ability to understand mechanical and physical principles logically in known situations (Rosales, 2012); ability to operate and repair complex devices or artifacts and manual occupations (Ruiz, 2019).

2.3.4. How to help young people to develop their own career planning

Career planning is based on the evaluation of individual skills, interests and motivation, on the analysis of organizational opportunities, setting goals for their careers and developing a strategy to achieve those goals (Antoniou, 2010). Career planning has to serve as a reference for the different decision-making that young people must face throughout the university career, but many adolescents face their learning process without a clear idea of the goals they want to achieve (Álvarez, López & Pérez-Jorge, 2015). Therefore, and regarding Romero (2004), to achieve proper professional planning, career planning must be understood as an intentional process in which young people must have a constant attitude of questioning and an exercise in anticipation of the future. This process involves: valuing the present wait (is it worth the effort to make? what can I do while waiting?), questioning the means necessary to achieve the objectives (are they available to me? are they in accordance with my values?) and assess the future validity of present intentions (will they remain important in the future?).

It is important to highlight that the individual perspective on a professional career is determined by the status of the individual, professional and personal life, age, family circumstances, financial expectations, desired lifestyle... In order to develop an adequate individual career planning, Antoniu (2010) propose browse it through five steps:

1. **Self assessment:** it is the collection of information about yourself (values, interests, skills...), continuous assessment and reporting to others.

Following Romero (2014), the values of a person are the consequence of the conjunction of personal variables (for example, sex, age, disability, origin...) and situational variables (for example, general socio-labor situation of the country where you live, family situation, cultural values...). Personal identity is constituted as the guiding thread of the professional and vital trajectory in situations of change, chaos, mobility, instability and uncertainty (Romero, 2004); it facilitates facing the complexity of the world, but also of oneself. In this sense, it is not enough to collect enough information about yourself and your environment, but also to give a personal meaning to that information (Hansen, 2006).

Analyze your likes and dislikes: what kinds of activities do you enjoy, both at work and at free time? What kind of activities do you avoid? It can be helpful to make a list of both types of activities. Then, reflect on the times and situations in which you feel most passionate, most energetic, most engaged, and see if you can develop a common profile of these situations (Hansen, 2006).

Regarding dreams and aspirations, both act as generators of representations of new realities and, therefore, also as elements of overcoming stereotypes and determinisms.

2.3. Career Planning

2. Exploring opportunities: it involves gathering information about existing opportunities within but also outside organizations (training and other development methods).

In this regard, it is important to learn how to search, critically assess information and translate it into useful knowledge; in this way, the person can have a critical awareness of the socio-laboral paradoxes (Romero, 2004).

3. Making decisions and setting goals on short and long term for training requirements, change of job, department...

Regarding Romero (2004), learning to make decisions involves: contrasting the desirable with the probable (for example, I want to be an astronaut, but I suffer dizziness), identifying the motivations underlying one's own behaviors (why do I do this or why do not?), to critically assess the information held and give it personal meaning, to become aware of oneself and of one's environment (with the contradictions, possibilities and conflicts that may exist) and face the feelings that accompany any decision-making situation (for example, uncertainty, fear).

Setting goals entails charting the steps to follow to achieve them and analyzing the meaning and possible consequences of the decisions taken. In this sense, it is important to prepare the adolescent to face difficulties and overcome obstacles (Romero, 2004; Sánchez-Martín, 2020).

4. Planning: this key point is related to the previous one. Career pathing requires a person to take an honest look at his or her career goals, skills, needed knowledge, experience, and personal characteristics (Hansen, 2006). In this sense, planning consists of determining ways and means of achieving goals, ordering their actions to achieve them, considering its consequences, setting deadlines and resource requirements. It also involves learning to seek balance (regarding quality rather than quantity) between working and training time, and free time (Romero, 2004).

You can make a list of the types of qualifications you need to enhance your standing for the next move in your career pathway, such as receiving additional training, certification or experience (Hansen, 2006): thanks to that list, it will be possible for you to develop a timeline and action plans for achieving each type, being sure to set (and achieve) specific goals.

To develop proper planning, it is important that, after setting goals and actions to achieve them, you look for information that helps you become aware of the consequences that your decisions and goals can have. To achieve this, the risks and chances of success must be

analyzed, in relation to the goals and tools available to achieve them (Romero, 2004; Sánchez-Martín, 2020).

5. Pursuit of achievement goals: the action by the individual accounts for his or her successes and failures, and makes decisions to retain or change his or her career course.

Attaining your desired goal will also require that you develop skills, pursue development opportunities and obtain certain experiences as you progress along your career (Hansen, 2006). One of the best ways to prepare yourself for future career changes, successes and failures is to stay active in short-term career planning: by regularly scanning the environment and conducting research on careers, you will quickly become an expert on the career paths that interest you and you will be better prepared for your next move.

2.3. Career Planning

2.3.5. Conclusions and recommendations

The ongoing changes taking place in the global economy have created a highly competitive, complex and turbulent environment, which is changing the career planning and the management of career development. However, in the middle of these changes, career planning can be seen as building bridges from your present (maybe from your current job) to your future; without the bridge, you may easily stumble or lose your way, but with the bridge there is safety and direction (Hansen, 2006).

Before talking about career planning in adolescence, it is important to firstly teach young people to control their own emotions, train them to develop critical thinking, strengthen their resilience and encourage the social environment and support networks are favorable: this will help adolescents to feel more self-confident about the goals they want to reach and about what they can and will achieve, not just in their professional sphere, but also in the other human being's spheres: social, familiar...

The career planning has to serve as a reference for the different decision-making that young people must face throughout their training and university career. However, the reality shows that many students face their learning process without a clear idea of the goals they want to achieve, and without adequate information about the profile and professional projection of the studies they are studying (Álvarez, López & Pérez-Jorge, 2015): that is, they do not know clearly what and for what they do, and they neither know clearly where the training they are receiving will lead them, since they have not identified the goals that will make them commit to its realization. Therefore, and regarding Romero (2004), to achieve proper professional planning we must understand career planning as an intentional process in which young people must have a constant attitude of questioning and an exercise in anticipation of the future (intention), which will be reflected in an action plan.

In this sense, it is shown that career planning is a process, not a point bet (Alonso, 2010), and it does not just mean training or looking for work; career planning and development is part of a well-thought-out, yet flexible and regularly updated plan. In addition, recent studies have shown that career planning is one of the main keys to get a healthier lifestyle (Álvarez, López & Pérez-Jorge, 2015; Antoniu, 2010; Bravo & Vergara, 2018; Pascariati & Ali, 2022): this is closely related to the fact that work accompanies us throughout our life, and what happens in this area influences all the others of our lives.

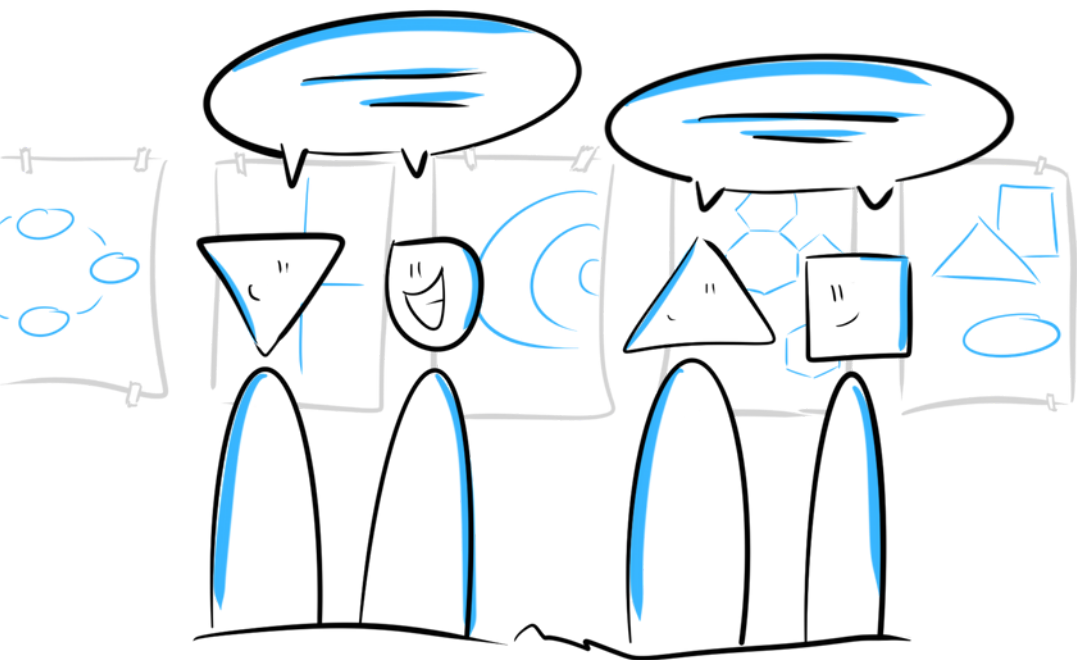
In this sense, it is important to highlight that, as it has been shown, the choice and planning of the career affects all spheres of people's life (Barrero, 2006). When a person chooses studies that prepare him/her for a profession, he or she is defining his/her path to follow and his/her objectives, although the person is not fully aware of it (and although this path and objectives may vary during the journey).

The school context has been a fundamental part of career planning and guidance processes throughout history (Alonso, 2010). Although there is currently parity of access for men and women to professional careers, sexist biases still exist at the time of election. Numerous studies highlight that women opt for caring professions (medicine, dentistry and physiotherapy, among others), while men have a great tendency for engineering and architecture (Alonso, 2010; Ruiz-Gutiérrez y Santana-Vega, 2018).

Family also has an impact on career choice. Leppel, Williams and Waldauer (2001) analyzed the influence of the socioeconomic and labor situation of parents on the choice of career, differentiated by gender: they concluded that, regardless of gender, students with parents with managerial positions are more likely to choose Engineering and Science careers.

As has been shown, there are a great number and variety of factors that influence and determine the career planning and choice of young people, being the most frequent: gender, family, school and peer group and friends. On the other hand, there are other factors that are less visible but also affect the career planning of adolescents such as age, culture or professional opportunities.

Career planning is a strategy that gives us a direction to follow in order to achieve professional goals. This strategy begins with the definition of objectives, which are based on our personal and occupational interests and competences (Antoniou, 2010; Pérez, 2011). In the current context, it may seem that setting professional goals is a waste of time, as the situation may make it difficult to achieve them, but nothing could be further from the truth: the career planning should be reinforced and maintained during the youth, although adding flexibility as a key competence.



3. THE PROCESS OF MENTORING YOUTH

3.1.1. Definitions & basic concepts

The meaning of mentoring

The concept of mentoring dates back a long way: it is, in fact, a very ancient learning path, in which the younger and less experienced subjects (students, juniors or mentees) were joined by an older or more experienced one (senior or mentor) with the aim of promoting their growth in the training, personal, work and social fields.

It is starting from these spontaneous relationships, which voluntarily connect the generations leading to maturation through the resources present in the community, that Mentoring develops.

Mentoring is therefore a type of formal relationship, which does not arise by chance but develops with the aim of personal growth and improvement. The main tool is the "mentor-mentee" relationship.

Youth mentoring is the process of matching mentors with young people who need or want a caring, responsible adult in their lives. Adult mentors are usually unrelated to the child or teen and work as volunteers through a community-, school-, or church-based social service program. The goal of youth mentoring programs is to improve the well-being of the child by providing a role model that can support the child academically, socially and/or personally. This goal can be accomplished through school work, communication, and/or activities. Goals and settings within a mentoring program vary by country because of cultural values. Although informal mentoring relationships exist, formal, high-quality mentoring matches made through local or state mentoring organizations are often the most effective.

Characteristics of mentoring relationships

When we refer to youth mentoring, we can identify a number of key characteristics that can ensure successful relationships. Among them, we can mention the following:

A) Medium-long term relationships between mentor and mentee

The time commitment of mentors and mentees varies along with the frequency and type of interaction. For example, some mentoring relationships are designed for interaction to occur once or twice a week, with phone calls or online interaction between meetings. Other mentoring relationships are held occasionally on an "as needed" basis. While time commitment can vary, research suggests that long-term relationships are more beneficial than short-term mentorship relationships (lasting more than a year).

According to some recent research, relationships that end prematurely can be harmful to the mentee (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

Duration is therefore one of the keys to use to achieve a successful, productive relationship capable of bringing benefits to all the authors involved.

3.1. Mentoring youth methodology

B) Empathy between mentor and mentee

In order to be able to develop a successful relationship, in addition to a long time frame and a well-defined program, a third key aspect is also that of the empathy that must occur between the mentor and the mentee. If the relationship is based on mutual commitment, constant openness and flexibility, willingness to listen and acquire new skills, very important conditions can be established.

C) Planning

Meetings between mentors and mentees can be scheduled in several ways. Many mentoring programs have fixed times for meetings with mentors and mentees; however, some allow for flexibility so that mentors and mentees can identify dates and times that work well for their schedules. Regardless of the program's flexibility, research has found greater benefits for relationships where there is frequent, consistent, and reliable contact between mentor and mentee, especially for youth who have not had reliable adult figures in their lives. These relationships help promote trust and ensure more active engagement (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009). The mentoring agenda is set by the mentee. The mentor supports that agenda (e.g. by answering the mentee's questions).

Which are the benefits of mentoring for young people?

Mentoring is often one component of a program that involves other elements, such as tutoring or life skills training and coaching. The supportive, healthy relationships formed between mentors and mentees are both immediate and long-term and contribute to a host of benefits for mentors and mentees.

Benefits for youth:

- Increased high school graduation rates
- Lower high school dropout rates
- Healthier relationships and lifestyle choices
- Better attitude about school
- Higher college enrollment rates and higher educational aspirations
- Enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence
- Improved behavior, both at home and at school
- Stronger relationships with parents, teachers, and peers
- Improved interpersonal skills
- Decreased likelihood of initiating drug and alcohol use

3.1.2. Mentoring principles and types

Principles of Mentoring

When it comes to mentoring youth, we have to take into consideration several principles that underlie it. These principles are applicable in various mentoring contexts and can help ensure that the benefits of mentoring extend to individuals, units and the institution.

Among these principles, we can consider as most relevant the following ones:

A) Voluntary relationship

At the basis of a successful mentoring, there must above all be the voluntariness of each actor involved in it. Being a relationship that involves strong emotional involvement, it is essential to have solid foundations. Based on this voluntariness, it will then be possible to develop an agreed set of goals and activities that will help both mentor and mentee to cultivate a meaningful relationship and achieve the defined goals. Therefore, mentoring involves a clearly demarcated, close and unforced relationship that ends when the mentee is able to operate independently.

B) Inclusion

In addition to being a voluntary relationship, surely time and energy must be devoted to creating an inclusive space where the parties can bring their best and most authentic selves. In this context, it is important to underline the key role of flexibility and adaptability in the relationship.

C) Connection

Mentoring requires a trusting and confidential relationship based on mutual respect. Based on these guidelines, it becomes possible to develop a sincere relationship, based on empathy and the desire to learn continuously and constantly on the part of both, in order to improve and strengthen their knowledge in various fields. In fact, the purpose, objectives and activities then defined must be established by mutual agreement between the mentor and the mentee.

D) Relationship between mentor and mentee

Effective mentoring arises from a mutual relationship between mentor and mentee, where each actively contributes to the success of the relationship.

In this relationship, the two actors are the mentors and the mentees. Mentors have to build the relationship on the basis of the mentee's needs, what she wants to learn: the mentor acts as a resource and guide for the mentee learning process, offering useful information, warning of dangers, sharing own experiences on the road. Likewise, learners play an active role in the relationship, not being passive recipients to be filled by a mentor, but active partners in the learning process. They initiate discussions, bring their questions, contribute their knowledge and set the direction and duration of their mentoring relationships.

3.1. Mentoring youth methodology

E) Create a roadmap

Another fundamental principle at the basis of mentoring youth is the principle according to which all the journeys that will be carried out together must be traced and scheduled. Objectives, activities, tables, attention to detail: every aspect counts and needs to be defined in the best possible way, to develop the fluid process of mentoring.

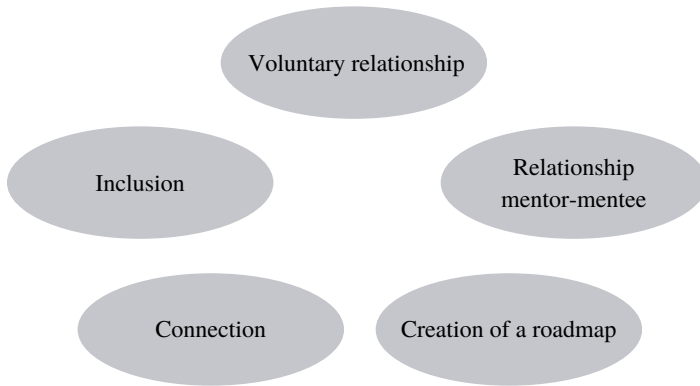


Fig. 1: Principles of mentoring

Types of Mentoring

When referring to the types of mentoring, we could notice that there are three types: the traditional one-on-one, the distance mentoring and the group mentoring.

We analyze each of them below.

A) Virtual/Distance Mentoring

Especially following the occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic, one type of tutoring is that which occurs remotely. The most important thing is to establish a relationship of trust, empathy and good communication between the mentor and the mentee. This type of mentorship allows people from all four corners of the world to pursue a meaningful mentorship relationship, thus increasing the chances (especially for those who are in rural/distant areas).

B) Group mentoring

A single mentor is matched with a cohort of mentees. Initial program structure is provided while allowing mentors to direct progress, pace and activities. Through this, regular mentoring meetings are organized to discuss some topics that are relevant to the mentees in the group. In particular, group mentoring can enable mentors and mentees to understand

3.1. Mentoring youth methodology

each other's struggles and concerns, to share experiences, ideas and suggestions that can be useful to all involved.

C) Traditional One-on-one Mentoring

It is the traditional model of mentoring, where a mentor and mentee agree to join a mentoring partnership to help the mentee develop, improve and achieve their goals. Mentee-mentor partners participate in a mentoring relationship with structure and timeframe of their making or as established by a formal mentoring program. While the focus is primarily on the mentee, the mentor will also benefit from developing leadership skills, learning from the mentee, and a sense of satisfaction from supporting someone in their own career.

D) Reverse Mentoring

Reverse mentoring is when a younger person mentors an older person in an organization. Essentially, traditional tutoring in reverse.

You can use reverse mentoring to upskill senior employees in digital technology, for example, or as part of a diversity and inclusion initiative.

Regardless of the type of mentoring, one-on-one mentoring has the potential to use reverse mentoring, as there is always a lot we can learn from each other.

E) Peer Mentoring

Similar to one-on-one mentorship, peer mentorship is when two people join in a mentorship but both parties are from a similar job level, age range, or situation.

In this typology, the actors involved can act in turn as "mentor" and "pupil", sharing experiences and skills, learning together and holding each other accountable.

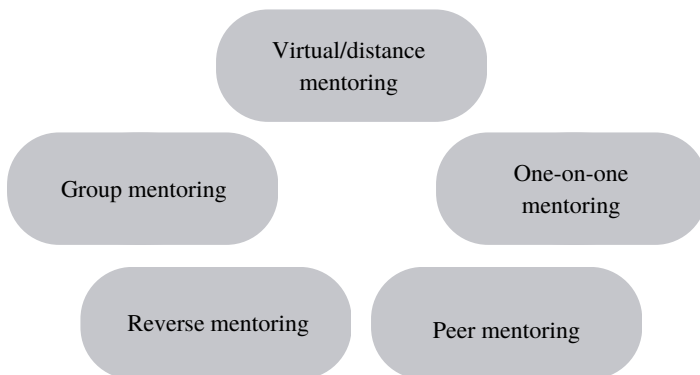


Fig. 2: Types of mentoring

3.1. Mentoring youth methodology

3.1.3. Specificity of mentoring youth

Youth mentoring can take on various roles and is directed at addressing aspects related to young people's development and functioning.

Youth mentoring can be seen as a means of influencing the lives of young people, in the most varied fields (educational, social, etc). Some types of mentoring focus primarily on youth development, others may focus specifically on reducing particular risk behaviors (e.g. substance use, group activities).

When we talk about mentoring youth, we must take into consideration the fact that in the young age group, the target group can be very different, in relation to their own experiences, the social context in which young people grew up).

Common objectives of youth mentoring

Each type of mentoring has different objectives. Although these differ greatly according to the different context, we can identify 3 main objectives that can be defined as common to all types:

A) Prevention

Youth mentoring often targets youth who are considered at risk of poor health, academic and other conditions. Therefore, through mentoring we want to try to prevent any possible dangerous situation in the immediate future, in which the student may find himself.

B) Positive youth development

In the same way, another objective that can be said to be common to many mentoring programs is aimed at guaranteeing a positive youth, accompanying the student in order to promote full self-knowledge, providing him with suggestions and advice. The aim is therefore to help young people to know and reach their potential through the personal promotion of skills and improve their psychological and consequently also physical well-being.

C) Integration

Another common goal of youth mentoring is to create the conditions to favor the integration of young people with their community, offering different resources and continuous support to manage personal and social situations and pressures.



Fig. 2: Objectives of mentoring

Training for the mentors

In order to play a fundamental role in the mentorship relationship, the mentor himself must receive adequate training. This training is not exhausted only in the initial period, but needs to be constantly fed and updated.

Becoming a mentor of young people requires considerable skills that can only be acquired through a clever combination of theory and a lot of practice, in order to develop the mentoring skills themselves through the most varied learning activities.

- Pre-Training

Mentors must be able to acquire certain skills in order to be able to define, within the mentorship relationship, which types of programs can be favored in relation to the specific target group. In the same way, it is possible to analyze what are the procedures to follow, in order not to be unprepared for the myriad of cases that he will have to face. When we talk about empathy, trust, collaboration between the two parts of the relationship, this, although not always planable, can be built following certain directions.

These are key competencies, which play a crucial role throughout the duration of the mentorship relationship.

How to provide assistance and support? How to allow the mentee to discover himself in an atmosphere of happiness and lightheartedness?

- Ongoing Training

As anticipated, a mentoring relationship needs time to be successful. Over time it is possible to see the evolution of the relationship, understand when it is necessary to change unrealistic expectations, try to obtain constant feedback in order to continuously improve this flow that seeks to make the mentee grow, under various contexts.

3.1. Mentoring youth methodology

How to fully understand the world of young people without entering it directly? A continuous comparison with the reference target group is necessary, as well as keeping up to date on trends, on the different situations and contexts in which young people find themselves (taking into consideration cultural diversity, gender, economic issues and issues relating to diversity and disability issues).

What does a training for mentor include?

We have seen how training (before, during, after) plays a key role in allowing the mentor to be able to create a successful mentoring relationship.

What are the aspects that come to be treated in the formation of a mentor?

- The ability to listen to mentees
- Learn communication strategies
- How to help mentees identify and work towards their goals
- Topics, ideas and facts that mentors and mentees should discuss during their session
- Key features and tips for building an effective mentoring relationship

3.1.4. Innovative methods on mentoring

Over time, mentoring has undergone constant evolution.

In this vision, for example, the classic rigid univocal senior-junior relationship has also been overcome towards a more fluid relationship of mutual learning and exchange of skills which will also provide the mentor with the opportunity to test himself, deepen and increase his own knowledge.

Especially following the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been significant references to digital mentoring. Even if the figure has started to become popular some years ago, in the digital mentoring relationship the mentor is asked to have more digital skills, such as:

- Digital Literacy, meaning the ability to use the Internet and different IT tools to find, evaluate and communicate available information to others;
- Digital team working, referring to the ability to work in a team in a productive and stimulating way, even remotely;
- Digital Privacy, definable as knowing how to correctly use technological tools in order to protect confidential data;
- Virtual communication, i.e. knowing how to communicate effectively through different digital touch points

Different and innovative methods of mentoring

Mentoring techniques and methodologies have evolved over the years. Today we can see that the different mentoring sessions refer to many methods, such as:

A) Analysis of skills, competencies and abilities

Analyzing the mentee's skills and abilities could be a productive method of mentoring. Many times mentees don't realize all their abilities and how they can exploit them, mainly due to a lack of self-confidence. Focusing mentoring sessions on this topic can help the mentee feel more confident and self-reliant, being able to develop a clearer sense of what they want in their career and personal life.

B) Role playing

It is a learning structure that allows mentees to apply the contents immediately as they are placed in the role of a decision maker who has to make an important decision on a given political, economic, social issue. This technique is a great tool to engage mentees and allow them to interact with other mentees (for example, in group mentoring), as they try to accomplish their assigned task in their specific role. By participating in many role plays, one can build remarkable skills that can help in everyday life.

C) Case studies

A case study involves a detailed examination of a defined situation (the case), as well as the

3.1. Mentoring youth methodology

circumstances related to it. Case studies are an excellent method as they provide lessons from the projects, in order to evaluate how we proceeded in a given context and what were the lessons deriving from that specific situation. The mentees can treasure these situations to accumulate experience, whatever the field (work, family, social, economic, etc.) and enrich their knowledge and experience.

D) Storytelling

It involves an interaction between a storyteller (the mentor) and one or more listeners (the mentees), where the listeners' responses can influence the story. Indeed, the narrative emerges from the interaction and cooperative and coordinated efforts of the narrator and the audience. Storytelling can be seen as a great tool, able to connect the storyteller and her audience: in this way it becomes easier to convey different messages and sensations.

Which are the advantages of the storytelling method?

- Allow mentees to empathize with different people, places and situations;
- Encourage the active participation, creativity and listening skills of mentees

E) Participation in networking events

Mentoring and networking activities can serve multiple purposes simultaneously:

- Career development support. One of the main purposes, regardless of the career stage of the participants, is to support mentees as they seek to develop productive careers. Mentoring and networking activities often support this overall goal by providing opportunities for participants to refine their leadership and career-related decision-making skills, imagine career options, and interact with other mentors who can serve as role models
- Assistance in problem-solving. Sometimes networking and mentoring activities are organized to support mentees in identifying appropriate measures or options to solve some challenges or situations that may be encountered in different fields.

3.1. Mentoring youth methodology

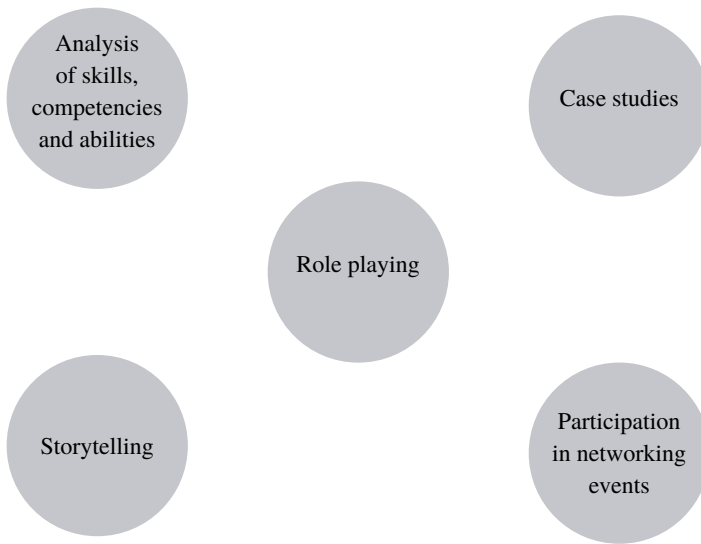


Fig. 3: Innovative methods of mentoring

3.1. Mentoring youth methodology

3.1.5. Conclusions

As we have analyzed in previous subchapters, the importance of having a mentor for maximum development of one's potential has also been recognized by very successful personalities.

An effective mentoring process certainly requires a medium-long time horizon, equipped with a clear and decisive structure, designed and constantly monitored in a path that must be focused on the final goal, i.e. increasing the skills of all participants. Because mentoring can undoubtedly be seen as a win-win relationship, where both actors can earn something and benefit from it in different contexts.

At the end of the mentoring period, all the actors involved will be able to count on a very important and varied set of skills, the result of considerable dedication and constant commitment. At the end of this process, the relationship between mentor and mentee turns into a special friendship.

Mentoring has evolved steadily over the last few years. Today there are several non-formal tools and activities that can be an integral part of a mentoring process, at a personal, professional level.

A mentoring process allows you to clarify what an individual wants to become, in line with their values. Especially for the younger ones, who are starting to face the various challenges of adult reality, mentoring represents an added value that can greatly help them in their process of growth, development and self-discovery. The mentoring relationship is an opportunity to reflect on one's strategic areas, underline one's strengths, analyze weaknesses, and receive constant support from mentors.

In the mentoring relationship, the mentor makes his life and work experience available to the mentee, helps the mentee to develop his own network, shares a whole series of information relating to his context of experience regarding the culture, the world of work, social relationships. Through a mentoring relationship, both the mentee and the mentor can feel inspired, finding many innovative solutions that best match the reference context.

Therefore, what clearly emerges is the fact that mentoring creates synergies, given that both the mentor and the mentee can develop new knowledge, new understandings, new motivations and grow personally.

3.1. Mentoring youth methodology

Which are the secrets of a good mentoring program? Here are a few aspects that need to be considered:

- **Find the Right Match:** The driving force behind any successful mentorship is the quality of the relationship between the mentor and mentee. And just like in any other type of relationship, compatibility is the key to success;
- **Make expectations clear:** It is essential to make expectations clear from the first moment. Both the mentor and each mentee should specifically define the goals to be achieved through this relationship. Mentoring is a two-way relationship, so it's important for both parties to contribute and think carefully about what their expectations are;
- **Be authentic:** This characteristic must belong to each member of the mentoring relationship: honesty, authenticity and open communication are essential for the success of the mentoring program;
- **Offer sufficient training and support:** Once the objectives and the connection between mentor and mentee have been defined, it becomes important for the mentor to be able to count on a set of varied and specific resources;
- **Empathy:** Both when defining objectives and in the various phases of the mentoring programme, it is essential to leverage empathy as a fundamental resource, which can contribute to the success of the programme.

3.2. Group dynamic in working with youth

3.2.1. Definitions & basic concepts

The term group dynamics (GD) was born only in the '40 of the past century. It is an intersectoral subject involving sociology, communication, leadership studies and many other fields. It involves as well different types of people in different social contexts at professional and non-professional levels. GD guidelines can be applied in many scenarios, from office jobs to non-formal education environments which we will focus on. It is essential to define what is a group dynamic first and focus on the main target of this publication: youth.

What does group dynamics mean? Who is youth?

Group dynamics refers to the behaviors and processes occurring in a group of people. It is studied to understand human behavior in a social context and can be particularly helpful in working with many categories of people, including youth. It is the social psychologist Kurt Lewin who first coined the term to indicate forces that can be positive or negative within a group of people. The dynamics in a group can start only after a group is formed by people sharing the same social category. A social group defines people as not necessarily emotionally involved with each other. That's the reason why it is important to work on the cohesiveness of the group concerns, attraction, solidarity, and morale, all aspects linked to performance, conflict, and positive change.

According to the EU, there is no clear definition of youth, the policies for child benefits, civic rights, or end of education are different. Can be considered young people the age group between 15-24. The age group that covers the 15-29 years demographic, is also considered a reference in the European Year of Youth 2022 context. When we address the target group, do not forget that there are minorities within this group, for example, young migrants, youth with disabilities and people with lower opportunities.

One category of young people subjected to a higher risk of dispersion within school and society is refugees. The mentor's work with them is fundamental to adjusting. Young refugees are vulnerable and might have experienced violence, exploitation, or trauma according to COE, adding that the risk of violation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms continues. In 2019, the Council of Europe adopted guidelines that it recommends to the governments of the member states to support young refugees in their transition to adulthood. That's why this chapter has a special focus on this category of young people.

The next paragraph outlines the phases of group formation to better plan activities with youth.

3.2. Group dynamic in working with youth

3.2.2. Principles and types of groups dynamic

In this paragraph, we provide a concrete list of steps to take when you have to work with Group mentoring. These are general rules adapted to any genre of group mentoring but It's thought specifically with one adult mentor with a group of young mentees in mind.

Let's see together the phases of Group Mentoring in Group dynamics:

Before any planning phase it's important to decide who is the **target group**. Usually, the first differentiation is between **youth** and **adults**.

Youth involving young people still attending school and young adults. Adults it's a wider categorization involving many sub-groups like working adults, under-skilled adults, and old aged people.

Once we identify the target, we move on with the needs analysis. This is when we start with the **planning phase**.

This phase is usually divided into procedures and planning, needs identification, and a plan of learning experience patterns. To have a better understanding of the group's needs we have to ask if the group is constituted of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, refugees, and reduced mobility. What can be their specific needs and what to tackle first as a priority?

Then we can move on to organizing the group goals during and after the program.

Once identified the possible needs (that can always be adjusted when starting working with the group of people), it's helpful to outline a possible work pattern accordingly: What are the goals of this mentoring work? What are the phases of the activities I'm going to implement? What topic should I tackle first, which one is second, or last? Let these questions guide you in the drafting of the work.

The steps that follow concern **Group formation**:

- Define roles, norms and responsibilities within the group. This aspect will define how members of the group behave and relate to others. Roles can be assigned or defined through role differentiation, meaning depending on members' expertise. The main role can be considered the leader but we also have task roles, relationship roles, and any role considered to be important in the execution of activities and organizational tasks.
- Norms are the set of rules that function as the base judgment value of the group. Can be discussed or written down, for example, being punctual, communicating delays, absences, etc.
- Set communication typology. How do you want to communicate with each other Verbally when in presence, using platforms and social media when written, who's leading the communication?
- Establish Time management and Risk management. Set the activities in a calendar in case of many meetings or in an agenda. Think of the possible risks associated and how to outcome those. For example, if a member decides to leave, how to manage the new tasks? What if there is a delay in the implementation of activities? How to solve

3.2. Group dynamic in working with youth

conflicts between members of the group? Make a chart and put all the possible solutions next to the risks to always have guidelines in case of issues in the conduction of the work.

The second phase is **implementation**, which includes the approach, Outbound, Practice, and Discussion methods.

- Define methods on how to solve Conflicts resolution and help social facilitation.
- Define a Safe space for everybody (verbally and physically). Help yourself with these guiding questions: How can you focus when you face problems in your environment? How do you feel when your ideas are dismissed and you are not heard? Did you have any bad experiences when you made a mistake?
- Determining the approach it's important to understand the environmental conditions, the background of the target groups, and the external factors variables (habits, beliefs, social layers, values, norms, nature, and cultures).
- Develop group cohesion through exercises like Team-building exercises, and icebreakers.

Even if group cohesion has been linked to many positive outcomes, there are also negative consequences. It influences motivation, performance, member satisfaction, and member emotional adjustment, but also encourages pressure.

The motivation of group members is an important factor that contributes to group performance. The team can progress when members feel motivated, confident, and self-worth. In a cohesive group is also harder for one of the members let the others do all the work, a phenomenon called social loafing.

The performance of the team is connected not only to cohesiveness but also to task assignments. It's important to have a greater goal in mind to motivate the group.

Satisfaction is a significant factor that is higher in cohesive groups as higher is optimism.

Plus, cohesion improves decision-making under stressful circumstances.

When it comes to **emotional adjustment** cohesiveness plays a key role, when feeling part of and protected by the group, people experience less anxiety and stress.

One negative outcome though is a higher pressure to conform since ones would like to please the group. The same group logic might as well influence negatively the capacity for critical thinking.

- **Build Trust.** This is the base of any group dynamics where the members can collaborate as a group rather than as individuals.
- **Respect and Open Communication** let everyone express their idea and self-value among members meaning added value to the group.
- **Feedback and Encouragement** are necessary to let members know they have done a good job and make them feel appreciated.
- **Growth Opportunities** - believe in your members and they will grow even when they fail.

3.2. Group dynamic in working with youth

- Connect the Team with Why.
- Give sense of purpose and value to what people do.

Here are some of the most common activities to enhance group cohesiveness:

- Each participant writes 2 lies and 1 truth about themselves. The object is to figure out which of the 3 “facts” are true by discussing it in a circle. This activity gives the chance to know each member of the group and what is most significant to them in terms of their personality.
- Split up your mentees into pairs. One of the partners has to describe an image placed in front of him or her; the other must draw what they hear described (without seeing the image, of course). This activity enhances trust and bonding.
- Obstacle course as a team-building exercise. Pair up your mentees and blindfold one of the two partners. The non-blindfolded partner will be guiding the blindfolded one through the course. This activity also enhances trust and bonding between members.

Briefly, remember: Don’t Blame; Encourage Ideas; Team Rules / Ways of Working; Make Time For Each Other; Give Praise, Coach and Mentor; Communicate Why; and Lead by Example.

Blended approach occurs when participants are meeting partly online and partly in person at the same time or when participants are together online or together in-person at different times.

At the end **evaluation phase** - ongoing evaluation and ex-post evaluation (debriefing session) is the process of evaluating the work done together and re-design the learning needs. The evaluation seeks to determine the extent of the objectives achieved. (compared to the planning) and to verify the appropriateness of program implementation to carry out new planning.

An example of a Group Work Assessment can be that of evaluating skills in Contributions & Attitude; Cooperation with Others; Focus, Commitments; Team Role Fulfillment; Ability to Communicate; and Accuracy on a scale from “Doesn’t meet the expectations” to “exceeds the expectations”.

3.2. Group dynamic in working with youth

3.2.3 Specificity of groups dynamics with youth

There are several activities that can be carried out with a young group of people. It's important first to **motivate** the group of young people through specific activities. Sometimes teenagers are less willing to participate in initiatives than adults: questionnaires and activities where you can **listen** to youngsters' ideas are a good way to start a connection with youth, understand them and motivate them.

It's also important to create a good climate through **bonding activities** like physical activities. It's important to state that violence can't be used especially in physical activities. It's always fundamental to have a board where the group can **note** hopes and fears for the activity and then recheck it at the end of it.

Exercises exploring the **individuality** of the people in the group are also important, especially through exercises focusing on opinions on main subjects.

Improve **communication** and conflict through activities that make young people aware of other's opinions, present many points of view and widen their horizons.

Encourage group and individual **reflection**, for example through exercises tackling critical thinking.

Emotional intelligence is an important source for youngsters and can be as well tackled in group dynamics with youth workers. Make young connect with their emotions with exercises addressing those.

Leadership skills can be transmitted to any individual, not necessarily to those that are in charge of an activity. Everyone on turn can experience how is to lead a group, an important skill that can be helpful on several occasions.

These are just general guidelines to develop activities with youth, they can be kept in mind when creating the structure of a group work addressed in the previous paragraph.

Group mentoring can be a solution when it comes to young refugees across Europe looking to fulfill their social needs while having a figure to look up to. Group Dynamics can work in conjunction with one to one model and it's also a more available model than this last one. Young refugees find many barriers along the way in their path. Group Dynamics can be used in conjunction with other mentoring forms to assess the effectiveness of the program (Griffiths, 2016, pag.43).

Young refugees might experience the lack of a family or coethnic group network and the disruption of their educational path (DuBois, 2014). From one hand they can experience more psychological and behavioral problems including anxiety disorders, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. On the other hand, they are more resilient than local residents. For young migrants who might struggle at the beginning with a new language and social norms mentoring can be fundamental but only when the basic needs are met. DuBois gives us the best practice according to the most recent studies: Know Your Local Community, Take the Process of Acculturation Into Account When Designing Programs and Services,

3.2. Group dynamic in working with youth

Use Co- or Mutual Mentoring, Engage the Family as a Whole.

The more the process of acculturation has taken place, the more young migrants can lose a sense of identity connected to their country of origin, that's why it is important to pair them with an adult mentor who shares the same ethnic background, to help them re-connect with their roots. It's helpful to develop site based problem and take into consideration the context where the mentoring process is taking place. Cross-aged mentoring with older peers can help the young person integrate better than with just the adult mentor. Another way to ensure a successful journey is to give leadership roles to the youngsters, even leading task is an empowering activity and improve sense of self-efficiency. Field-based programs oriented toward "mentoring as a family strengthening strategy", showing that the involvement of the family of the young migrant or refugee, when possible, can be decisive in the process of adjustment to the new life, changing the idea of an adult mentor as substitute of a parental figure.

Mentoring and group mentoring dynamics can facilitate the adjustment of young refugees in the short and in the long term. Early intervention can in fact reduce the chances of young refugees facing later problems such as homelessness, family breakdown, poor health, crime, drug and alcohol use, and other social problems. To conclude we can say that mentoring facilitates full social and economic inclusion of the young.

3.2. Group dynamic in working with youth

3.2.4. Innovative methods

- **E-mentoring** (also known as telementoring): one adult connected with one young mentee via the internet.

During the pandemic in 2020, it became clear that we had to adapt and carry out our daily activities requiring meeting face-to-face through our devices. It's been particularly challenging for youth.

<https://youthassistingyouth.com/activities2/virtual-programs/>

- The **Skill IT for Youth** project (2018-2020) aims to increase the quality of youth work, combining higher levels of excellence and attractiveness in services, obtained through the digitalisation of youth work, with increased opportunities for young people. The main objective of the project is to equip youth workers with skills and digital tools to enhance young people's futures in the 21st Century. Workshop scenarios for Collaboration & Teamwork and Online collaboration tools.

<https://digipathways.io/resources/training-toolkit/>

- **Youth-REC**, Erasmus+ programme. Project number 2022-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000085031

"Youth-REC - Youth Recordings for Educational Campaigns" address the need to engage youth, utilising a creative and stimulating method, giving youth a voice, training them in useful skills, and providing them with a constructive outlet for their frustrations. This project is innovative in its use of creative non-formal methods to engage youth in civic society and encourage their participation, and in its bottom-up approach through three main innovative tools: filmmaking, story-telling and graphic design.

<https://ceipes.org/project/youth-rec-youth-recordings-for-educational-campaigns/>

- **Europe@Home**: European Civic Education through the Mobile: Resource Manual.

This manual presents 21 activities on European Civic Education, specifically designed for online implementation. It comprises a comprehensive explanation of the online learning process and critical aspects you may face while conducting online sessions.

<https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/tool/europe-home-european-civic-education-through-the-mobile-resource-manual.3209/>

3.2. Group dynamic in working with youth

- **Acting Together #WithRefugees** is a project that believes art and culture can be central to the empowerment of the individual, and that they can encourage the creation of less fragmented and more connected and supportive societies with a greater focus on each person's rights. Carried out together with the fundamental and indispensable partnership of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), this project focuses on the inclusion and integration of asylum seekers and refugees, in particular adolescents and young people of 15 to 25 years old.

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/acting-together-withrefugees-guidelines>

- **BEING YOUR HOST. Better INclusion of YOung Refugees in Hosting.** SocieTies TOOLBOX Non-formal education and learning tools in the field of community work with and for young refugees.

<https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4318/Toolbox+non-formal+education+and+learning+tools+in+the+field+of+community+work+with+and+for+young+refugees.pdf>

- **Guide for Mentors of Young Migrants.** A guide for mentors engaged in the professional inclusion of young Third Country Nationals in Europe.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1j6SDh5GrecbF48T5wWtoLfzp5O-4gdnP>

3.2. Group dynamic in working with youth

3.2.5. Conclusions and recommendations

In this chapter, we have given the basic guidelines to start planning, implementing and evaluating Group Dynamics, providing theoretical aspects first, and more practical aspects second. In the paragraphs, we provided conceptual guidelines when working with a specific category of young people, migrants and refugees, according to research reported in the bibliography.

The first part focuses on concepts such as “What’s group dynamics” and “Who is the target group”. The second part focuses instead on the theoretical framework of group dynamics, stressing the importance of planning, forming the group, implementing the activities and evaluating. The third part gives more practical tips on how to work with youth, specifically with young refugees, with the support of scientific literature. The last paragraph collects a series of good practices and tools that can be used when working with youth and young refugees.

To conclude we can say that Group dynamics for youth reflect the general group dynamics practice but it’s also linked to mentoring. It’s always important to analyze context and needs before starting any activity with youngsters.

3.3.1. Communication

Communication represents interaction that occurs in a social context. It usually involves the presence of both a sender (source) and a receiver who take part in the exchange of signals. These signals can take many forms, from verbal and graphic to gestural or visual, as in the case of photography. Essentially, communication involves the use of codes, which may manifest themselves through eye contact, body movements, or sounds.

Why does efficient communication play a key role in working with young people?

Efficient sharing and exchange of information, thoughts and ideas is the desire of every team striving to achieve its goals. However, each group contains people with different temperaments, personalities and communication skills, which means that the communication process can be quite a challenge for both youth workers and the group members themselves. Communication also means educating, building a worldview and transmitting values, as well as building relationships that are key to including and encouraging participation and active action for the organization and the local community. Youth workers also have the opportunity to support young people in developing communication skills, which is of great importance both for creating healthy interpersonal relationships and for preparing for their future careers. Youth often face a variety of problems and challenges, such as identity issues, stress, and peer pressure. Effective communication enables youth workers to understand these challenges and provide appropriate support to young people.

3.3. Communication & visual facilitation

3.3.2. Communication process in working with young people

In the context of working with youth, it is important to understand Communication Theory and its key elements. Additionally, communication barriers pose a challenge, as they may affect the quality of the message between the sender and the recipient. Feedback and awareness of body language are key aspects of effective communication. It is also extremely important to adapt to the digital environment, using new technologies as tools to build relationships with young people. Online communication can be supported by a variety of platforms and tools that facilitate interaction and information exchange. In this chapter you will learn how to improve the mentoring process through appropriate communication.

COMMUNICATION THEORY

One of the most popular models of linguistic communication was proposed by Roman Jakobson. To fully understand the essence of communicating using language, it is worth taking a look at its 6 elements. These are:

- the sender of the message,
- message recipient,
- context,
- announcement,
- contact, i.e. communication channel,
- code - common language of the sender and recipient

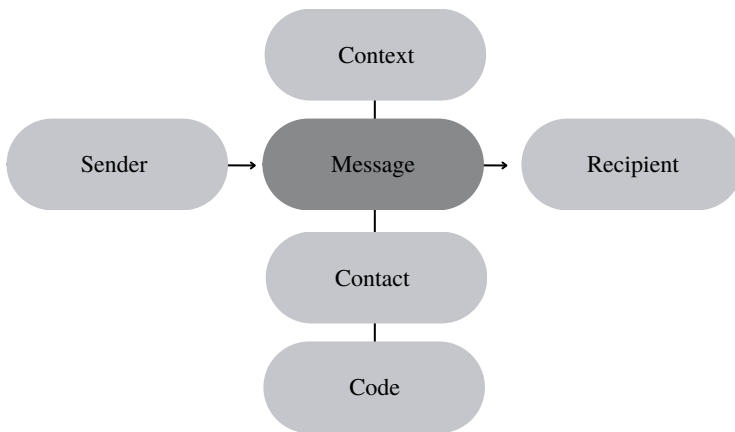


Fig. 4: Jakobson's communication model

3.3. Communication & visual facilitation

Communication barriers are all factors that make it difficult for the recipient of a message to understand the message contained in the sender's statement. These factors cause the so-called communication noise. Communication barriers may include, for example (K. Kroc, 2021):

- Cultural differences: different meanings of words, behaviors, gestures, which may be a source of ambiguity and misinterpretation.
- Stereotypes: Prejudices based on stereotypes can cause people to create false assumptions and filter information in a way that confirms those beliefs, rather than listening and understanding what the sender is actually trying to convey. People who are afraid or burdened with stereotypes may maintain distance in contacts with other people, which makes it difficult to build trust and real relationships.
- Inability to take another person's perspective.
- Perceptual difficulties, which include: hearing problems, speaking too fast, stuttering, accent.
- Selective attention: focusing only on fragments of the statement, and not on the general context of the message, may lead to distortion of its meaning.
- Well-being: fatigue, stress, frustration can also affect the quality of sending and receiving a message.

FEEDBACK

Regardless of whether you work as a mentor, teacher or youth worker, you will certainly need some tips on providing feedback to build relationships even more effectively and support youth development:

- Provide feedback face-to-face. The presence of other people can turn your message into a negative judgment, even if that was not your intention.
- Remember that the purpose of feedback is to help the other person improve and develop. Choosing the right time will help you with this. Don't wait too long to keep the events you are talking about fresh, but at the same time avoid giving feedback immediately after the event. This may also result in a negative perception of your intentions.
- Also use positive feedback, i.e. praise.
- Use an "I" statement that allows you to focus on your experience and opinion of the situation, rather than the person you are talking to. This statement also makes the feedback less accusatory.
- Be specific. The details will help you visualize, diagnose and better understand the other person's areas for improvement.

BODY LANGUAGE

We often forget that communication is also body language. Awareness and understanding of your posture, gestures and facial expressions are the first step to effective communication. Below you will find some tips on this topic that you can use in your work:

3.3. Communication & visual facilitation

- Avoid crossing your arms and clenching your fists, which may suggest to your audience that you are uncertain and distant. Remember that an open body posture is always pleasant.
- Use gestures carefully. Excessive gestures can be distracting and overwhelming. Natural hand movements can work to your advantage enriching your message and highlighting important points of your statement.
- Try to maintain eye contact with each participant. This way you will show them your attention and interest.
- Remember that different gestures may have different meanings in different cultures. Be aware of this and try to understand cultural differences.
- Observe the nonverbal signals of the youth in your group. From these small gestures you can read their feelings and needs and respond when necessary.
- Be authentic and natural. Children and teenagers can quickly recognize falsehood and pretense in adults' behavior. Thanks to your honesty, they will be more willing to trust you, which will translate into building lasting and valuable relationships.
- Improve your skills in this area. This is a process that takes time. Work on your awareness!

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

One of the key elements of effective communication with young people is adapting to their digital environment. Nowadays, social media, instant messaging and other online platforms are an integral part of young people's lives. Understanding this world and the ability to use new technologies in the communication process can significantly increase the effectiveness of an organization's activities. Changes in the ways of transmitting information and in communication preferences create new challenges, but also bring with them enormous opportunities. Young people want to be listened to. Therefore, it is important that we open ourselves to various communication channels. In addition to traditional meetings and conversations, it is worth using modern tools, such as instant messengers, mobile applications and social media platforms, which can ensure quick and informal exchange of information. We can also use multimedia technologies, such as video or podcasts, to convey our message in an attractive and accessible way. However, let us also remember about the need to maintain balance. While new technologies are extremely useful, they cannot replace face-to-face, personal interactions. Here are some tips you can use in your work with young people:

- Be available online: Ensure regular online availability and activity so that young people feel supported if they have questions, concerns or need to talk. Respond to messages and questions as quickly as possible to build trust and maintain active communication.
- Create visually appealing content: Use multimedia such as photos, graphics, videos and infographics to convey information in an accessible and visually attractive way. Create interesting content that will attract young people's attention and encourage them to

3.3. Communication & visual facilitation

interact.

- Remember that you can also organize interactive online sessions, such as webinars, video conferences or online chats, to allow young people to participate in discussions, ask questions and share their opinions. Make these sessions engaging and inspiring.
- Let young people choose the means of communication that is most convenient for them (communications, social media, e-mails or video conferencing applications). At the same time, consider the needs of the organization. Here are some suggestions for tools that may be useful in internal communication:
 - Social media: The use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can help you communicate with young people and provide information about events, programs and projects.
 - Instant messengers: Online communication applications such as Slack, Microsoft Teams or Discord can be an alternative to applications such as Messenger, Whatsapp, Telegram because they allow for quick exchange of messages, files and organization of thematic chats.
 - Document management systems: Document management tools such as Google Drive, Dropbox, and SharePoint allow you to store, share, and collaborate on documents.
 - Project management: Project management tools like Trello, Asana, or Jira can help you track project progress, assign tasks, and monitor schedules.
 - Online polls and surveys: Using tools to create online polls and surveys, such as Google Forms or SurveyMonkey, can help you collect opinions and feedback from youth.
 - Online calendars: Using calendar management tools like Google Calendar or Microsoft Outlook makes it easier to schedule meetings and events.
 - Bulletin Boards: Physical bulletin boards in a central location in the organization may contain announcements, schedules, and other important information.

3.3.3. Graphic facilitation

Graphic facilitation is supporting group work by visualizing content. It is constantly gaining popularity in education and business, during workshops, training, lessons, webinars, brainstorming, presentations, but also in private life. It simplifies and makes the message more attractive, attracts attention, engages and helps recipients organize, understand and better remember even complex content, which translates into increased group involvement, increases its effectiveness and allows the achievement of goals (G. Borowczyk, Flipowanie.pl).

There are many different visualization techniques. So how can we distinguish graphic facilitation from sketchnoting or graphic recording?

- Sketchnoting (visual notes) is a technique of combining images and text, i.e. slogans and icons. Sketchnoting consists of, among others: title, arrows, colors, bullets, icons and slogans (keywords), i.e. the most important information. Visual notes are usually made on small paper (A4, A5) and are used for quick notes. For example, a meeting/workshop participant or a student creates a note for themselves in a graphical way to learn and remember the most important information more efficiently.
- Mind maps are notes based on a radial structure. Starting with the most important keyword in the center, subsequent associations are added on the basis of associations and are linked in a logical way.
- Graphic recording is taking notes in real time on large formats, e.g. during conferences. A graphic recorder is not a speaker - he only creates a note that the audience can follow during the speech to make it easier to focus, better understand and remember the message.
- Graphic facilitation is a process in which the person responsible for creating visual notes engages in interaction with the group. This means that he conducts a conversation that he presents visually on a flipchart, transferring onto paper/screen all the elements that the group worked on, for example during a workshop. Graphic Facilitator uses visual notes to speed up the discussion process, e.g. when communication difficulties arise.

The concept of visual thinking was first introduced by Rudolf Arnheim in 1969. Why is this method effective? 80% of our brain is designed to absorb and process images, which means it is less demanding than reading text. This is why visual thinking has been becoming more and more successful and widely used in recent years (pl.economy-pedia.com).

Graphic facilitation also supports the communication process. Organizing and emphasizing the most important information and visualizing it make it more visible to recipients, and the universal language of icons supports their diversity. It facilitates understanding among group members who do not normally use the language in which the discussion is held (it is not their native language or the language contains specialized words and phrases). It also supports the flow of discussions and increases the involvement of participants whose ideas

3.3. Communication & visual facilitation

are included on the board. In addition, this method is very simple: it is not about talent, but about effective communication through simple shapes. Therefore, you don't need to be able to draw for graphic facilitation to work (A. Maciejewska).

3.3.4. Visual facilitation in practice

When we want to start our adventure with graphic facilitation, we are often held back by the belief or fear "I would like to, but I have no talent." First of all, you need to understand that talent has nothing to do with it. Look at the shapes below:

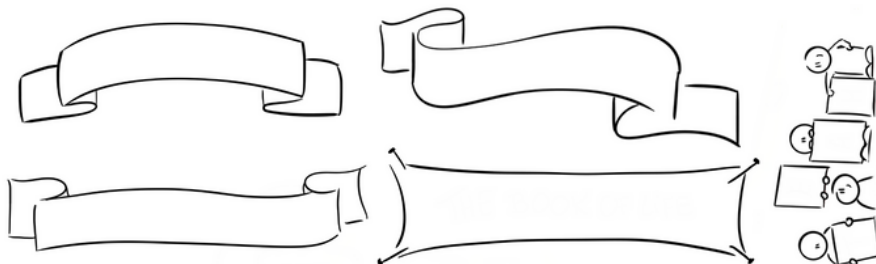


Dot, line, circle, triangle and square - these are the basis for all icons and graphic elements. With these 5 shapes you are able to create more complex shapes. Remember that you can also modify letters and numbers if it is easier for you at first (A. Jakuszko-Sobocka, M. Olszowy, 2019).

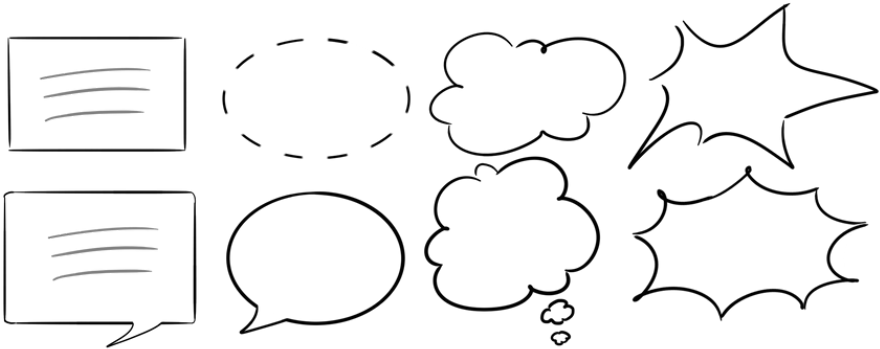
Now we will look at individual elements: titles, frames, figures, colors, text containers, arrows and space. When combined with each other, you will be able to create an amazing effect.

TEXT CONTAINERS

The purpose of frames and banners is to provide clarity and order to the message. They organize space in a clear, logical, orderly and understandable way for the recipient, because they can be used to group information and highlight the most important statements, thus allowing them to understand which information is important and which is less important. Containers and banners are also used to extract the title or main idea from a note.



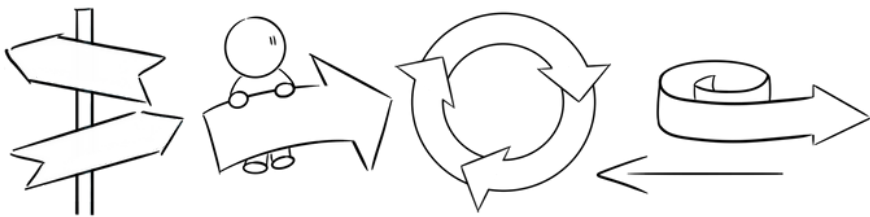
3.3. Communication & visual facilitation



We can easily transform containers into clouds or speech bubbles, i.e. thoughts or statements of characters - just add a tail to a regular container. They can have various forms, e.g. flexible, static, dynamic. Marked with a dashed line, they may suggest less important information. We embed texts in speech bubbles to make it easier to understand abstract concepts, and they also help convey emotions.

ARROWS

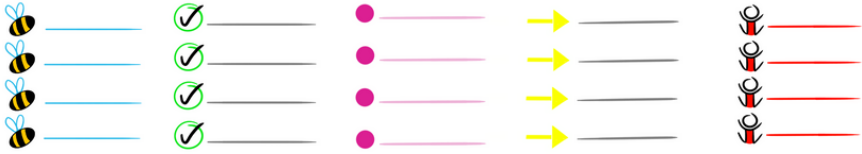
The arrows give the reading direction: the order of events, effects and show the relationships between individual elements.



BULLETS

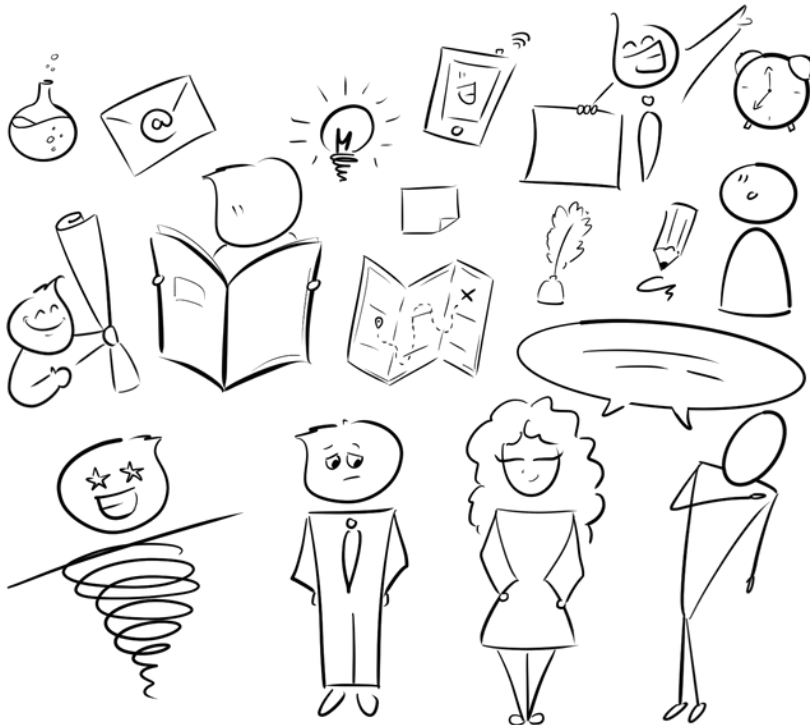
Bullet points (dots, numbers or other symbols) can be used to create lists or express the essence of a statement. You can create your own bullet points that will be related to the topic of your workshop. If you discuss ecological topics at the meeting, you can use e.g. bee icons for bullets, which are very easy to draw.

3.3. Communication & visual facilitation



ICONS

Icons are nothing more than graphic symbols. They are a universal language - they can be understood by people from different cultures, environments or countries, and their examples surround us everywhere (bell button - an icon with a bell, toilet - an icon with a drawing of a man or woman on the door, emergency exit, etc.). Weaving icons into your message is particularly important when working with young people - pupils and students who are bombarded with huge amounts of information every day. Icons are easier to remember than “walls of text.” Thanks to them, our brain is able to better understand complex messages and remember more key content (M. Prohazka 2023).



3.3. Communication & visual facilitation

COLORS

Colors play a very important role in our lives. Marketing specialists have long been consciously using knowledge of color psychology to increase their sales results. Colors can influence our decisions, emotions and well-being. In graphic facilitation and visual notes, colors support remembering and selecting information.

When choosing colors for a graphic note or flipchart, first consider who it will be addressed to. If you work with younger people, colorful notes will be perfect. If you are conducting a workshop with an older group - focus on one or two main colors and add some gray, which is perfect for shading, and black as a base.

Avoid bright and neon colors that may distract and strain the eyes of your meeting participants. On the other hand, pastel colors are subdued and perceived by our brain as calming. Now pay attention to the symbolism and influence of a few selected colors:

blue - a color used in business, suggests professionalism and trust, improves productivity,
red - it is dynamic, attracts attention, suggests a threat or something urgent, the color of love and hate,

yellow - optimistic, eye-catching, arousing creativity, fatigues the eyes quite quickly,

green - the color of harmony, peace and nature, promotes relaxation,

orange - helps remember, reflects warmth and promotes positive emotions, symbolizes striving to achieve a goal,

Now we will focus on the secrets of combining colors. To understand how the relationships between colors work, it is worth using the color wheel.

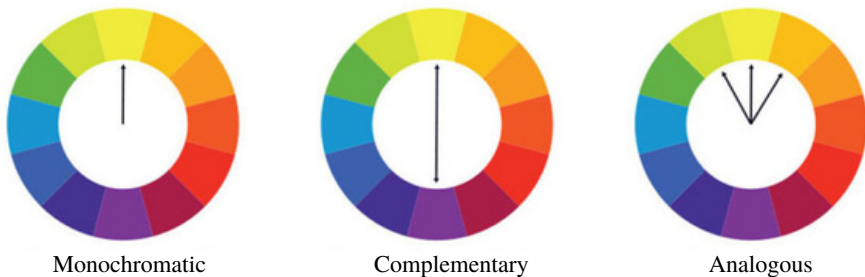
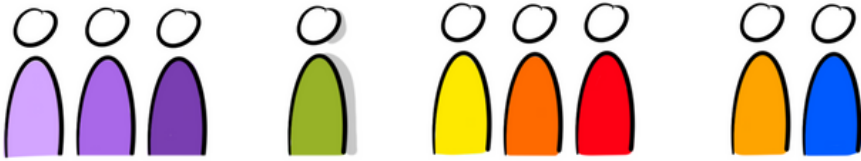


Fig. 5: Color wheel

<https://stonemountainfabric.com/how-to-select-fabrics-for-quilting/>

Choose a color, then look at the color wheel. The color opposite will contrast perfectly with it (complementary colors). If you want a harmonious, calm or elegant effect, use colors next to each other.



LETTERING

Lettering is a key element in the effective presentation of information on a flipchart. The correct use of fonts and writing styles can significantly affect the readability of the content and the understanding of the message. When creating notes on a flipchart, it is important to follow several rules that will make it easier for recipients to read the written content quickly and effectively:

- Write titles in a larger font so that they take up 10%-20% of the space. Extract them from the note so that recipients can easily understand the topic of the meeting.
- Decorative lettering will not help recipients read the text quickly and easily.
- Avoid using too many different fonts to avoid confusion and increase the visual consistency of your notes.
- By keeping the space between the letters small, the words will be more legible.
- The recommended minimum height of a lowercase letter on a flipchart that will be visible to recipients from a greater distance is 1.5 cm.
- Give up long texts and sentences. Instead, focus on presenting the issues verbally.



3.3. Communication & visual facilitation

3.3.5. How to improve mentoring process through an appropriate communication and visual facilitation

Youth mentoring is an extremely important process that requires a special approach that takes into account both the educational and emotional needs of young people. Appropriate communication and visual facilitation can significantly enhance this process, enabling mentors to engage more effectively in their mentees' development. Appropriate communication and graphic facilitation can help improve the mentoring process.

A key element of successful mentoring is creating a friendly and accepting environment. It is important that young people feel at ease and comfortable. This will allow them to communicate openly with the person in their mentor role. Try to create a space where young people feel accepted and supported, which will help them cope with stress and their emotions. In addition, it is worth using graphic facilitation to visually present the rules and expectations regarding the mentor-mentee relationship. This may include, for example, using illustrations that present the behaviors and values we want to develop in the group. Also remember to use colors, which have a huge impact on the way young people receive the information provided. Different colors will attract their attention and interest. You can use colored markers to draw, create mind maps, and other visual tools that can reinforce the knowledge being taught. Try to use patterns that are visually attractive and at the same time conducive to the learning process. In order for young people to better understand difficult topics and remember important content better, it is necessary to simplify them. Use simple drawings and keywords to visually represent complex concepts. It is also worth using visual action plans that show the path to achieving youth aspirations. This will help them visualize their dreams and may motivate them to work towards achieving their goals. To further diversify mentoring sessions and make them more interactive and interesting, use virtual tools. Young people today are very involved in technology, so it is worth using it as an educational tool. You can use tablets, smartphones or computers to create visual presentations and educational materials that can interest and engage them. Be flexible and adapt visual tools for your group to suit their diverse interests and learning styles. Use topics that fascinate them to keep them engaged and paying attention during the session. Also try to create interactive meetings. Encourage young people to actively participate in the learning process and develop skills by visualizing and sharing their ideas on a flipchart or virtual screen, and engaging in interactive games and exercises.

Also remember to actively listen to your group. Visually respond to youth's expressed thoughts and feelings. Use pictures to summarize their opinions and comments, showing that they are being listened to and understood. Remember that empathetic presence and support are key to building trust and a strong relationship between the mentor and the youth.

3.3.6. Conclusions

To become a more effective mentor, it is worth focusing on developing communication skills and expanding knowledge in the field of graphic facilitation.

Graphic facilitation is an extremely effective tool that enables better group collaboration by presenting content visually. The use of various techniques, such as sketchnoting, mind maps and graphic recording, can significantly enrich your communication possibilities and have a positive impact on interactions with young people.

Cooperation with young people requires special attention to communication aspects. This is an important element of education, building relationships and supporting skills development. Various elements such as body language, feedback and the use of modern technologies play an important role in this process.

The mentoring process requires appropriate communication and graphic facilitation support. This can help build lasting relationships and support the development of young people. It is worth noting that all these elements are an integral part of the effective communication process and group development. Their efficient use may be crucial to achieving success in group work and in the educational process. Therefore, graphic facilitation and communication skills are important points in the area of personal and professional development.

3.4. Motivation methods in youth work

3.4.1. Definitions & basic concepts

The concept of motivation, so familiar to most of us, is widely used in both everyday and scientific language. Let's take a closer look at what motivation actually is. Let's start with the fact that motivation is sometimes understood both as a mental state and as one of personality traits. In the first case, motivation is identified with the state of internal tension that causes behaviors aimed at its reduction. In the second sense, motivation refers to some relatively constant property that gives behavior a relatively constant direction. This direction is the main feature of motivated behavior. This means that motivation directs the effort to achieve certain goals. Thus, it can be said that a highly motivated person is also strongly focused on the subject of his motivation. Motivation is also associated with concepts such as: mobilization, selective perception, concentration of attention, integration of activities and perseverance. Let's take a closer look at their relationship with the concept of motivation. Motivated behavior is characterized by a high level of mobilization, and motivation itself is a kind of energy in action. When a person is highly motivated for a specific action, he becomes particularly sensitive to finding and recognizing stimuli related to this action in his environment. This is related to the so-called selective perception and attention span. Another important aspect of motivated behavior is organization, which involves integrating individual actions into a complex sequence. Motivated behavior is also characterized by perseverance, because motivation ensures a permanent continuation of undertaken activities until the conditions that initiated it change. For example, let's imagine a person who is strongly motivated to work. Such a person applies himself to his duties by devoting adequate energy, time and attention (focus on the subject, direction). Unlike an unmotivated person, they do not avoid being overworked by work, but act with a very large dose of mobilization, sometimes even despite signs of fatigue (mobilization). He also sees various premises that could allow him to work more efficiently (selective perception and concentration of attention). In addition, it is organized in its activities (integrating activities) and persistent in its pursuits. Therefore, collecting all the information quoted above, it can be briefly said that motivation is characterized by: arousing energy, directing effort towards a specific goal, selective concentration of attention, organization and perseverance in continuing the initiated action.

Let us now look at a few selected psychological theories related to motivation. There is no doubt that a person who cannot satisfy some of his basic needs, such as hunger, will not strive to satisfy higher-order needs, such as self-realization. According to the theory of Abraham Maslow, the creators of the so-called pyramid of needs, human needs are met gradually. So if we meet our basic needs, we will be able to set bigger goals for ourselves. These needs are: physiological, security, belongingness, recognition and, at the highest level, self-actualization needs. Another theory, called The "motivational factor theory" assumes the existence of two categories of factors. The first of them are factors of potential dissatisfaction, which, if they evoke negative feelings in a person, reduce their involvement. These include working conditions, supervision, position, relations with peers or issues

3.4. Motivation methods in youth work

related to remuneration. The second category of factors is motivators, i.e. those factors that cause satisfaction of a person. They include e.g. achievement, work, responsibility and development. You should pay attention to which factors there are more and what impact they have on our and others' motivation. Another motivational theory is the so-called "expectation theory". Its fundamental thesis assumes that the positive effect is multiplied the greater the chance of achieving the goal. This means that if a person faces a goal that is unrealistic or too demanding for him to achieve, he will most likely not make any effort to achieve it. If, on the other hand, the goal is achievable and attractive, then the probability of its implementation increases. There is also the so-called "Theory X and Y" that captures human behavior in two extremes. Theory X assumes that humans are inherently lazy and uninterested in taking responsibility and working. Theory Y, on the other hand, points to a different view, according to which people are inherently inclined to gain positive experiences, feel satisfaction from responsibility, show willingness to work and enjoy their achievements. Although some extremes are presented here, it cannot be denied that each of them contains a grain of truth. It seems clear that people from the second group are clearly easier to motivate. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that appropriate motivational activities can change the behavior of even the person who initially presented the attitude described by Theory X.

3.4. Motivation methods in youth work

3.4.2. Innovative methods for motivating young people

Motivation refers to human nature and is understood as readiness to take specific actions. Motivating, on the other hand, means conscious and purposeful influence on human behavior in his activity. There are several models of motivation in psychology. This proves that the issue of motivation is not as simple and unambiguous as it might seem. This becomes clearly visible when we learn about the already mentioned existing psychological theories pointing to various sources of motivation. Therefore, it is difficult to create one universal system of motivating people that will work in all conditions and for every person. Let's take a look at the existing models of motivating to work/action. We will focus here in particular on non-wage models. The first model of this type to be considered is the so-called model of cooperation relations. It points out that not only money motivates people to act, but factors such as boredom, monotony and repetition of tasks reduce their motivation. What turns out to be important, however, are informal social contacts between people during work. In this model, attention is also paid to treating people by superiors with respect and recognizing their needs and ensuring a sense of usefulness and importance for the institution. This can be summarized by saying that this model shows that people's social needs are taken into account as an important factor in their motivation to act. Another model, the so-called The human resource model shows that work motivation consists of several complex factors. Again, it's not just financial gain or a desire to please, but also a need for achievement and meaning in work. If a person has the right scope of responsibility, he will also get job satisfaction. According to this assumption, superiors should share responsibility for achieving both organizational and individual goals, with everyone involved contributing to their implementation in accordance with their skills and interests. Simply put, this model proposes increasing the scope of responsibility as an element of effective motivation. Speaking of a modern motivational system, we should take into account four fundamental conditions of motivation. The first is to appreciate the importance of the individual goals, aspirations and value system of people associated with a given organization in order to bring them into line with the goals of the organization as a whole. The second condition takes into account an individual approach in the selection of means and methods of influence, selecting them appropriately to personal characteristics, experiences and the value system of people in the process of motivating them. The third condition is diversity in the ways of inspiring people and a wider use of their internal motivation mechanisms. The fourth and last condition assumes co-responsibility for the organization, i.e. ensuring the functioning of people operating in the organization as its co-owners. As we already know from the models presented above, it is not only pay that motivates people to act. Currently, more and more importance in the process of motivating a person to work/action is attached to the so-called cafeteria systems. These are forms of remuneration that allow a person to independently choose an attractive remuneration from among the offers offered. They may include, among others: flexible working hours, free training, free integration outings, specialist advice, talent management, creating a career path, etc. The diversity of the proposed benefits is important.

3.4. Motivation methods in youth work

One of the important motivational factors, which is also often overlooked in everyday functioning, is recognition. Appreciating the effort and contribution of a person to the organization is often enough to make him want to continue his activities. Thanks to this, he gets feedback that he and his work are significant. Appreciation can be expressed in a variety of ways, and the simplest of them (and equally meaningful) is simple praise. Speaking of motivating through expressing praise, it is also worth moving to communication issues. It seems obvious that good communication within the team also plays a huge role, as it is related to the efficient flow of information. This also translates into transparency of activities and a better understanding of the goals of the entire organization. Without proper communication, it is almost impossible to maintain both a good atmosphere and a high level of motivation. It is also worth regularly examining and checking all the factors affecting the level of people's involvement in their activities. Collecting all the above information, it can be said that in order to effectively influence the level of motivating people to act, they should be fairly rewarded, stimulated to develop, strengthen their sense of attachment to action and organization and be fully informed in an appropriate way. It is also important to shape the content, relations, conditions and organization of work so that they are conducive to the development of personal characteristics of a person, as well as achieving satisfaction, contentment and effective use of his abilities, strengths and interests. In order for motivation to bring the desired results, it must be a continuous process. It is not an easy process. In addition, it requires consistency and transparency, but also getting to know your superiors and their expectations and needs. Finally, let's also mention that in order for a person to be motivated, his mentor should also be motivated in the first place.

3.4. Motivation methods in youth work

3.4.3. How to improve the motivation of young people for active involvement - recommendations for mentors

As we already know, motivation is associated with setting specific goals by a person. If our goal isn't clear enough, then it's hard to maintain perseverance because we don't know exactly what we're aiming for. Determining the tasks and activities of a person should always take place with his participation. These tasks should be specific, moderately difficult and, very importantly, accepted by the person who is to perform them. Only then will she be able to demonstrate independence and commitment to their implementation. Methods of setting and formulating goals can be helpful in the process of defining tasks. One of them is the so-called SMART method. Each of the letters of this word tells us what the goal should be. S - comes from the word specific, according to which the goal should be simple and specific. The more clearly defined the goal, the better we know what exactly we are striving for. M - comes from the word measurable. Our goal should be measurable to clearly see progress. If we are unable to see the progress of our actions, then our motivation to keep going and perseverance decrease. A - achievable or attractive assumes that our goal should be both ambitious and attractive to us. People often don't want to pursue goals that are too simple or simply uninteresting for them. In addition, this goal should be within our reach, i.e. achievable. R - comes from the word relevant, according to which it is important and, as mentioned earlier, real. The last letter in this method - T refers to the word time-bound. This means that we should allocate some reasonable time to reach our goal. This is an important factor in tracking our progress. A person is motivated when they understand and accept a given goal. Having clearly defined goals, it is much easier to understand them, consider them realistic and thus implement them. In addition, people analyze their environment under the influence of which they act. Mentors are able to shape the behavior of these people by responding to them appropriately. According to the reinforcement theory, if a person reacts in a certain way in a certain situation and his behavior is positively perceived, then as a result of this reinforcement, the likelihood of him repeating this way of reacting in the same or similar circumstances increases. If, on the other hand, the behavior is not rewarded or punished, the likelihood of its repetition decreases. In this way, even initially accidental reactions can become habitual and intentional under the influence of appropriate reinforcement. Undoubtedly, expectations play an important role in the motivation process. One of the things that positively influence the willingness to continue to engage is the results we get, i.e. some kind of rewards. They can be both internal (e.g. self-esteem, satisfaction with one's achievements and new skills, etc.) and external (e.g. praise from mentors, recognition and respect from colleagues, etc.). The reward is all the more empowering and valuable the more it can meet a person's needs. It seems obvious to say that a satisfied person is always more and better involved in their activities than a dissatisfied person. Satisfaction is the resultant of satisfaction with what a person has (met needs) and dissatisfaction with what he still lacks (unsatisfied expectations). Therefore, in order to properly construct a motivational system, you must first know and establish a hierarchy of people's expectations

3.4. Motivation methods in youth work

and aspirations. Also noteworthy in the process of motivation is the so-called the Japanese approach, which is distinguished by creating partnership relations between a man and his mentor (superior and subordinate). An important feature that this approach draws attention to is that the management style and related incentives should be adapted to the needs of individual subordinates and their national culture, i.e. customs, social norms, traditions, etc. It is a tradition in Japanese culture to that the superior and the subordinate see themselves as an integrated task-production team. The result is both strong motivation and a large, or even emotional involvement of each party in the production process. In other words, it is a well-organized teamwork in which everyone has their own specific tasks and the implementation of each of them brings value to the team and the organization. As already mentioned, there is no one universal motivational system. What works in one case will not necessarily work in another. When trying to arouse or strengthen motivation in another person, various factors should be taken into account. The first step to this will be getting to know him, his expectations, needs and aspirations, in which a simple conversation will be helpful.

3.4. Motivation methods in youth work

3.4.5. Conclusions

As we can see, the term "motivation", so familiar to us from everyday life, is not such a simple construct as it might seem at first glance. It's hard to talk about the motivation itself in isolation from what it is aroused to. Examples include, for example, motivation to study, motivation to practice sports, etc. In the above considerations, psychological concepts related to work motivation were used, as it seems to be the closest to motivation to act. As it turns out, even in this matter there are discrepancies regarding the views and observations of specialists on what actually motivates people to act. For this reason, the text briefly presents various concepts, thus giving the broadest possible view of the issues raised. It seems clear, therefore, that none of the existing incentive systems is perfect or universal. Each of them refers to certain theoretical foundations, which it takes as the starting point in understanding what motivation is. It's hard to say which one is the best or the worst. They are different, respond to different needs and work differently in different organizations and for different people. It may be that one person will be motivated to act thanks to the wide range of his development path. Others, on the other hand, will persistently and willingly strive to implement actions because they feel a bond with the organization and its other members, having a sense of shared responsibility and consistency of goals. It therefore seems beneficial to offer different incentive schemes in response to the individual needs of the persons concerned. The very conversation with people and getting to know their expectations, goals, needs and aspirations is a certain starting point that allows us to compare them with our goals, needs and opportunities that we can offer them. It seems obvious that the more divergent the goals of the organization or mentors are from those of other people co-creating the organization, the less willing these people become to engage in action. However, the more coherent these goals are, the more they unify and positively affect the increase in the level of commitment. Let's not forget that being a mentor, it's hard to require motivation from other people while being burnt out and unmotivated to act. It is not possible everywhere to motivate people with money. In such a situation, it is all the more important to remember about other forms of positive reinforcement of behavior and desired reactions, e.g. through praise, positive feedback, appreciation, showing the value that this person brings to the organization. It also strengthens her sense of co-responsibility and belonging, which also have a positive impact on her commitment to further action. Motivating is not just requiring someone to engage in action. Empathy and understanding are also an important factor. Although each of us has certain strengths and more developed abilities, we also experience some difficulties in some areas. Nobody is perfect at everything. Awareness of people's strengths and weaknesses can help motivate them so that they can spread their wings. For example, by requiring an artistically talented person to conduct dance games during an integration evening, we can cause them to withdraw. On the other hand, it could be great when preparing the decor of the room where the integration will take place or by conducting art classes for other participants as part of this event. In this way, she can use her strengths in action. It's hard to stay motivated when we have a task to complete that

3.4. Motivation methods in youth work

somehow overwhelms us. The same is true of tasks that are too simple. If they are not a challenge in any way, then their implementation will not give us a feeling of satisfaction. Accordingly, the motivation to perform such tasks also decreases. It is worth checking the level of motivation in people on an ongoing basis and examining whether the motivational system we have used so far is still up to date. People's needs and expectations change over time. It may be that what worked at one stage may not work at another. For example, for a volunteer, a great motivator can be the sense of belonging to a group and the feeling that what he does is important to him and others. However, if the same volunteer becomes a leader of a group of volunteers, these needs may change to the needs of developing leadership competences. If this need is not met with the possibility of satisfying it, e.g. by offering additional training, his enthusiasm and motivation may decrease. Motivating is not an easy process, therefore it requires constant commitment to best influence the naturally changing level of motivation in people.

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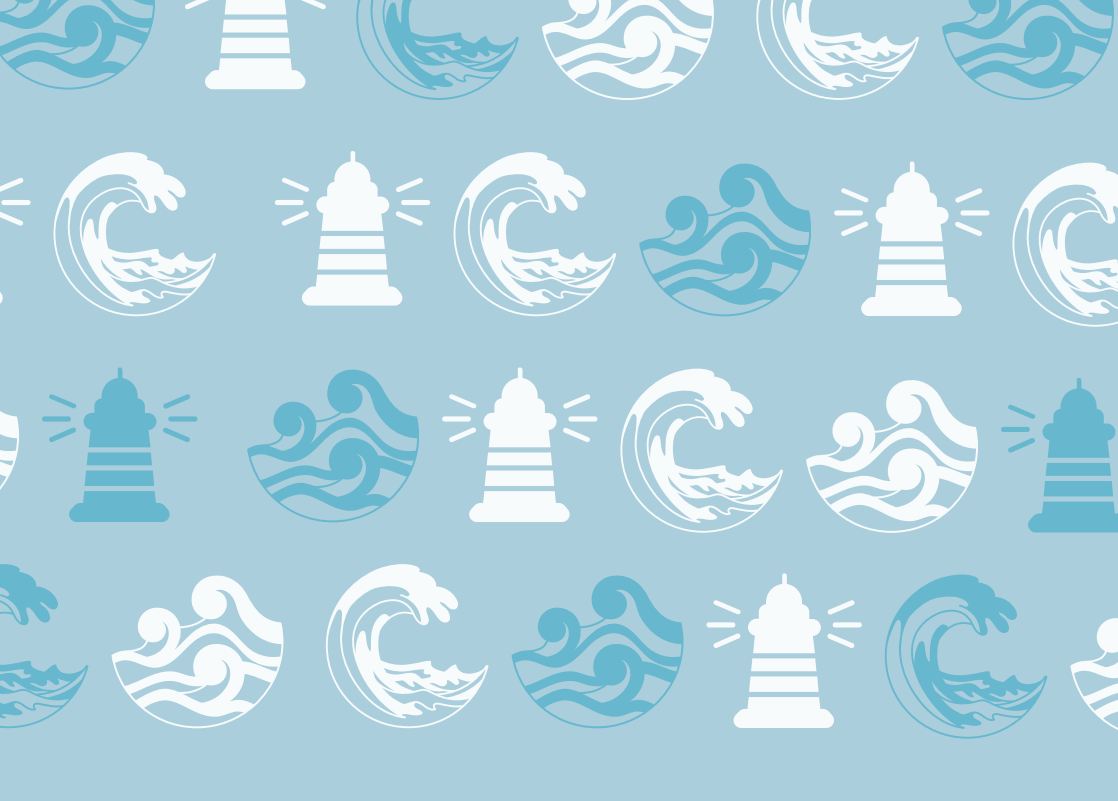
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