



# WELL-BEING TREASURE BOX

*Body-Mind Balance Through Arts*



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# 1. Introduction to the Treasure Box

## What is EMPOWERmental?

EMPOWERmental Project is focusing on developing our mental and physical balance, using embodied techniques, art tools and creative play. It is based on the research of the Tandem Europe supported Co-Warming project (2019-2020), on the many years of professional experience with adults and young people of our team (Fanny Hajdú, Flóra Eszter Sarlós and Tímea Szőke), as well as our personal experiences as humans and facilitators.

We believe that stress is a natural part of life and as such, our goal cannot be to eliminate it, but to support our well-being on a daily basis. And whenever stress appears in our bodies, learn to notice it and choose the most fitting practice from the variety of our tools to release it at that specific moment.

EMPOWERmental Project is rooted in the belief that facilitators and youth workers, just like the young people they support, deserve tools to cultivate their own mental well-being. Because by caring for ourselves, we're better able to care for others.

Therefore, we designed the 8-day EMPOWERmental Body-Mind Balance Through Arts Retreat Training to guide youth professionals to mental balance and creative expression through arts. This retreat was an invitation to pause, reflect, and connect with yourself and others while learning practical, art-based embodied methods to support both facilitators and the young people they work with.

But our goal is to support not only those who could participate, but all facilitators used to pour into others' cups first. We aim to equip you with creative practices you can use to support both yourself and the people you work with. In this Treasure Box, together with participants of our retreat training, we are sharing some of our favourite practices to support the well-being of groups and individuals.

The tools you will find here are ready to be adapted and applied with your groups as a facilitator, yet we'd like to remind you that you may also use them for your personal well-being. By using the Treasure Box, we invite you to become part of a creative and caring community, supporting our own well-being all the while supporting others.

This is what EMPOWERmental is about: reminding us to move, breathe and create.

## Our approach

In EMPOWERmental Project we believe in the wisdom of our bodies, the authenticity of movement and body-based methods, the power of art and an integrated approach to physical and mental well-being. We work towards connecting both personal and professional growth using art, creative methodologies and embodied techniques. We aim to share tools and experiences that will help us to maintain balance in our daily lives, strengthen our resilience and prevent emotional burnout. For reaching that goal, we focus on stress release, connecting to the wisdom of our bodies, connecting to nature, as well as practising changing perspectives, feeling grounded and gaining self-empowerment. We work with practical tools like dance, theatre, journaling, yoga, breathwork, community rituals, sensorial exercises, TRE® (Tension&Trauma Releasing Exercises) and in a wider collaboration also art therapy, sustainable design principles, mindfulness and the list goes on.

Our aim is to help you make yourself at home in your body and the world. We value the sustaining power of community, bringing a long-term positive change not only individually, but also in groups and in the society. We believe in the value of making communities not only locally, but internationally too, sharing visions without borders. This toolkit is more than a resource: it is an invitation to care for ourselves and each other, to grow together, and to create more healthy, resilient and connected communities.

## Helping ourselves while supporting others

As founding members and facilitators of EMPOWERmental Project, we have a solid experience working in the cultural, educational and social field in Hungary. Therefore, we constantly encounter the challenges of project based time management, unsustainable economic environment, volatile professional communities, and other stressors. Yet, we have also experienced the magic of embodied tools, creativity, art and community through our projects.

Having worked with vulnerable communities, we all have encountered the hardship of prioritizing our own well-being. We know how it is oftentimes hard to notice our own needs, and even harder to meet them. As helpers ourselves, we know the difficulty of not being able to relax and really let go of our responsibilities of care. It may feel selfish, time-consuming, or simply a luxury allowing ourselves to recharge and rest.

However, as a number of research has shown, prioritizing our own well-being is essential to sustain our capacity to effectively support other people. Engaging in self-care practices helps to prevent emotional burnout, allowing us to manage the emotional load inherent to our roles. By maintaining our emotional stability, we cultivate resilience and adaptability, which are crucial for navigating the dynamic challenges we face in our work. This solid foundation enables us to establish deeper connections and be fully present with the people we work with and care for. Incorporating well-being practices into our routines can significantly enhance the sustainability of our body-mind balance, helping us to tackle everyday stress more easily.

In this Treasure Box, we gathered our participants' favourite practices to use for their groups' and their own well-being. You will find these tools, these ingredients for well-being divided into five categories: tools to check in, to find groundedness, to move, to reflect and to enhance collective well-being. You may use them individually for your own wellness, and professionally with the groups you are working with. To support the latter, in the next chapter you will find a workshop template and some inspiring aspects to think through when you are planning a session - perhaps on the topic of well-being.

With the Treasure Box, we invite you to join our journey of the retreat training and become a part of a supportive community. We believe that the practices we gathered foster a balanced and grounded approach, empowering us to continue our work with renewed energy and empathy not only towards others, but to ourselves. Because as our participants have put it: underneath their capes, all superheroes are also humans with basic human needs.



# Approaching facilitation

In this section, you can find a skeleton of a workshop structure that we shared with our participants during the retreat training to support them in their planning. In this template, we gathered all the aspects that are important to think about as a facilitator. The template may not feel complete or fitting to your target group, as all contexts and facilitators are different, but it may serve as a compass to guide your attention during the design process.

By sharing this template with you, our aim is to spare you some precious mental space and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge among professionals. As if our session plans are clear and easy to see over, it's easier to share them with inspiration-seeking peers.

## Creating the framework

### WORKSHOP TEMPLATE

You can copy and use the structure of this template for your own workshop plans. Feel free to add or take away anything and in general, use it your unique way to suit you best.

#### Title of the workshop:

Keep it simple or get creative : )

#### Aim of the workshop: Some inspiring ideas:

creating a safe space and a sense of community, getting to know each other, gaining self-confidence, learning a methodology, having fun, etc.

**Requirements for the facilitator:** Some inspiring ideas: you need to know the group already/you need to be a certified art therapist/you need to have a co-facilitator, etc.

#### THE TIME

##### Length of the workshop:

Eg. 1 hour/3 hours with one 20-minute break

#### One-time or part of a process?:

If the session is part of a process, where is it in the process?

#### THE PEOPLE

**Who is it for?:** Age, background, should they know each other already?

**Group size:** The optimal size of the group (from minimum to maximum)

**Is there any group/person that it is not suitable for?:** Some ideas: it is not suitable for people with epilepsy/disclaimer: the workshop involves touch and closed eyes

**Language of the workshop:** Eg. English/non-verbal

#### THE CONTEXT

**Venue:** Ideal venue (indoor, outdoor, size of the room, empty space, space with chairs, type of floor, etc.)

**Materials needed:** Eg. A4 paper, coloured pencils, yoga mats, pillows, etc.

**Technical requirements:** Eg. projector, laptop, bluetooth speaker, wifi, etc.

#### THE WORKSHOP

**Step by step description** (Feel free to copy this part as many times as needed. Here you can find an example.)

**1. Part of the workshop** (eg. *Check-in, Grounding, Social contract, Break etc.*): Check-in

**Aim of the exercise:** Welcoming the group, introductions and setting personal intentions for the whole process ahead of us

**Description:** The group stands in a circle around the altar in the middle of the room. Participants are invited to reflect on what they contribute to the group in the upcoming week of the retreat training. They are invited to choose an object from nature that will represent them and their contribution to the group. One by one, they step inside the circle, choose one object, then say their name and what they contribute to the group. They add their object to the altar in the way they like.

**Specific wording:** I invite you to...

**Duration: 20 minutes** (1 minute per participant+time from framing)

**Materials needed:** Speaker, playlist (link), flowers and plants from nature, an altar including the four elements (air, fire, water, earth)

**Techniques used** (eg. *art therapy, yoga, theatre etc.*): **Rituals**

**Comment** (something to take extra care of, to prepare with, to read before, etc.): **The facilitator takes part in this exercise as part of the group.**

#### 2. Part of the workshop:

**Aim of the exercise:**

**Description:**

**Specific wording:**

**Duration:**

**Materials needed:**

**Techniques used:**

**Comment:**

#### 3. Part of the workshop:

**Aim of the exercise:**

**Description:**

**Specific wording:**

**Duration:**

**Materials needed:**

**Techniques used:**

**Comment:**

**Personal notes, insights or kind words for the facilitator (including yourself):**

This workshop was created by ..... with inspiration from ..... (can be people, methods, experiences, books and dreams as well).



## Intentional planning

There are many ways to approach facilitation. The tools and practices we share in this toolkit are not rigid steps to follow but an invitation, an open framework based on our experiences and what has worked for us. You are encouraged to adapt, mix, and complement these tools with your own in ways that best suit your group and your intentions. Here are some key aspects we like to consider when designing a meaningful and effective process:

**The Intention** – When planning a workshop session, we like to consider the intention we bring to the table. If we are planning a longer process, just as we did when preparing for our retreat training, it is important

to be aware of our intention with the process. What is the experience like that we wish to offer for our participants? How can we create that intentionally? If the intention is clear, we can pick the tools and practices fitting it, or form new ones (eg. by using specific wording, music or props) to match our intention.

**The Topic** – Our workshop can be planned around a specific theme we would like to explore. If we have a central theme, we can find a variety of exercises working with this topic on a non-verbal level. For instance, if our theme is collaboration, we may use diverse tools (collage, dance, nature exploration, creative reflection), all in a way to reflect on our central topic by practicing collaboration.

**The Issue** – We may work with a difficulty arising in a group. In this toolkit, you can find a number of exercises exploring group dynamics in different ways. These practices will serve you as tools to learn more about a group's current state. Furthermore, you can use them to enhance group members' community awareness and strengthen bonds.

**The Activity** – Maybe you are looking for individual or couple exercises, things you can do with your group in a smaller space or outdoors. Perhaps you are looking for activities of a certain type to explore with your group. Feel free to look for similar formats in this toolkit: you will find practices to check in, which are best to start off a session or a process, grounding exercises to enhance presence and better body awareness. We

included practices that require more movement or physical activity and tools that are building on creation and deeper reflection.

Remember, these are just a couple of aspects you can consider when using the elements of the Treasure Box. Feel free to use it as you like - we are curious to hear how you apply, better and complement our favourite practices!





## Ingredients for well-being

In this section, we introduce a variety of well-being practices divided into different categories. These ingredients for well-being are some of the favourite tools used by the facilitators and participants of the EMPOWERmental retreat training. We have prepared these cards in a way for you to be able to take whatever you find useful and inspiring and bring it directly into your session plans or transform and adapt it to the situation for your group or yourself. Along with the descriptions of these tools, you will find the names and personal notes of those who shared them with you.

Each category contains 5 ingredients and one empty card for you to fill in with your own favourite. Feel free to print and use these cards in your practice and share them with your colleagues.

### Check-in practices

These cards contain practices you can use for beginnings. You may use them to check in with the group in the beginning of a session or a series of workshops, or even by yourself or your co-workers. Perhaps you apply them at the beginning of a season or a project, or when you enter a different phase of life. They may support you and your groups in transitioning to a different mindset, signaling the beginning of collective work. Remember that you may also use an adapted version or reflection on these practices when closing the same process.

May these practices help you to arrive and gently let yourself and your groups transition into a common flow.



# 1

## Check-in practices

**From:** Fanny

**Title:** Gentle arrival

**Part of the workshop:** Beginning, grounding

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 1-100 : )

**Description:** We invite participants to find a comfortable position sitting and to close their eyes. After taking three deep breaths together they will be asked to awaken their senses one by one and find three of the following: 3 different sensations in their bodies, 3 sounds surrounding them, 3 different smells around them (it can be smell of their clothes, their skin...), 3 different textures to discover through their skin, 3 different tastes, then 3 smiles in the room, opening their eyes.

**Ideal venue:** Any, but it's nice to do outdoors.

**Materials needed:** None

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** For some, it can be hard to close their eyes. It is ok, you can invite them to look downwards or soften their gaze.

**Personal note:** I like this exercise a lot, as it draws our attention both inwards and outwards. We are so used to applying our sight to explore the world around us that it can be a mindblowing discovery for some that our other senses work just as well, if not better than our eyes when given the opportunity. It is a powerful and calming mindfulness exercise to arrive in the present, but it's also fun when it comes to discovering the taste of our own skin or the smell of our morning breath. Feel free to encourage participants to be playful with that!

# 2

## Check-in practices

**From:** Flóra

**Title:** Count Me In

**Part of the workshop:** At the beginning or at a time when minds are scattered and need to find their way back to the group

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 3-100

**Description:** The aim of this exercise is to raise the level of community awareness and presence in the group. We are standing in a circle, counting from 1 to 20 with eyes closed, not knowing who is next. If a number is said by two people at the same time, we start again. It's always the facilitator who starts, allowing them to set the pace of speaking, gently signaling when the group should slow down. Participants need to sense each other.

**Ideal venue:** anywhere where participants can hear each other and be safe with the eyes closed

**Materials needed:** none

**Technical requirements:** none

**Note to the facilitator:** It is important that there's no set order (if participants make sure that everyone speaks at least once. If you are with a group of more than 20 people, the goal can be to reach that number so that everyone can evenly participate. But at times, it is hard for a group to pay attention in this way, especially with the eyes closed.

**Personal note:** Sometimes it's hard for participants to believe that this will work without going in a circle - especially with the eyes closed. But every single time, it is possible to create lasting attention and a special group awareness thanks to this exercise. For some groups though, it is hard to go up until 20. In case there is more frustration than joy in this exercise the moment you try it, the time might not be right for this tool.

### 3

## Check-in practices

**From:** Silvia

**Title:** The thread that unites us

**Part of the workshop:** Ice-breaking or closure

**Duration:** It depends on the group size, count 1-2 min per person

**Ideal size of group:** 10-15 people

**Description:** The exercise is designed to introduce participants to each other, while introducing them to the session. Participants are asked to form a circle. The facilitator starts by introducing themselves and answering some questions that they want to ask the group. Once they finish their presentation by holding the end of a ball of yarn, they throw it to a participant. The participants will be invited to introduce themselves and answer some of the questions presented. Once the presentation is finished, they will hold the thread and toss the ball of yarn to another person. The action will be repeated until everyone has introduced themselves. At the end of the exercise, a net will be created.

This network can be interpreted on a metaphorical level, showing the bonds, but also the strength of the group. To emphasise the strength that is created, at the beginning of the workshop one can take a sheet of paper and show that without a support underneath it falls; but once the network is created, the sheet no longer falls. Although we are not connected with all the people but only two: the more relationships we have, the stronger the group becomes.

**Ideal venue:** Any

**Materials needed:** Ball of wool

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** The final message can be adapted to the context and to the needs of the group.

**Personal note:** The exercise allows the group to visualize the connection so it could work as a strong closure. In this case, the participants will not be asked to introduce themselves but only to answer questions (e.g. 'what do you take away from these moments spent together?') and the metaphorical message of the network can be built on the questions (e.g. these are the bonds of friendship that were built during this period and it reminds us that we can count on each other even afterwards).

### 4

## Check-in practices

**From:** Petra

**Title:** Two Truths and a Lie

**Part of the workshop:** Various, depending on the intention

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 6-8 (if there are more participants, I divide them into smaller groups)

**Description:** The task is to think about yourself and come up with 2 true and 1 false sentences that you are comfortable sharing with the group. Then one after the other we share all 3 sentences and everyone guesses/votes which one was the lie. If people can get creative or funny, this becomes a great icebreaker even for shy and reserved people. In other cases, it may help getting to know each other on a deeper level as part of a longer process.

**Ideal venue:** Any (works online and in person as well)

**Materials needed:** None, but you can provide pens+paper for participants to help them remember their sentences. Also, votes and truths can be collected on a flipchart if needed.

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** It's important to monitor the energy in the room and step in if someone is being laughed at or mocked for their sentences, as this can happen with teenagers and children. Depending on the group size and participants' age, this exercise can be used in a longer format as a core activity. In this case, it can take up to one hour or more.

**Personal note:** I've used this exercise several times to introduce group members to each other in a fun way and it worked even for passive and socially awkward teens. At the beginning I encourage them to be creative and try to come up with out-of-the-box sentences. A great one I often use as my lie is 'I once took my medicine in the dark and mistakenly swallowed the batteries from a smart watch instead' (I got this from an old news article and because it happened to someone else in real life, it's more believable).



## 5

## Check-in practices

**From:** Anna Mária

**Title:** What Connects Us?

**Part of the workshop:** Group exercise focusing on shared values, visions, and life goals. I use this exercise in the first sessions with new groups to create a sense of belonging and community, and being heard.

**Duration:** 20-30 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 10 -20 participants

**Description:** The participants will be divided into small groups for 5-10 minutes. During this time, they will share their personal values, future visions, life goals, and the things that truly matter to them. Questions they can ask each other include:  
What values are the most important to you in life?  
What is your vision for your future?  
What kind of legacy would you like to leave?  
On what principles do you want to build your relationships and life?

After the discussion, each group will introduce themselves to the larger group, sharing what connects them in terms of values and visions. Then, each participant will individually explain why a specific value, vision, or goal is personally important to them. They can also mention any inspirations that helped them connect during the discussion.

**Ideal venue:** A quiet, comfortable room with enough space for small group discussions. The venue should allow for easy interaction and group work.

**Materials needed:** None (if the facilitator wants to take notes, they may use a notebook or flip chart)

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** Ensure that the atmosphere remains open and supportive. Encourage active listening and respect for each participant's sharing. Make sure the conversation stays focused on the topic of values and life goals. You may need to guide the group back on track if the discussion veers off-topic.

**Personal note:** This exercise is a great way to encourage participants to reflect on their own values and connect with others on a deeper level. :) It can also foster a sense of community and support among participants. I use this exercise in the group of girls and young women aged 14 - 18 years old.

## 6

## Check-in practices

**From:**

**Title:**

**Part of the workshop:**

**Duration:**

**Ideal size of group:**

**Description:**

**Ideal venue:**

**Materials needed:**

**Technical requirements:**

**Note to the facilitator:**

**Personal note:**

## Grounding practices

These cards contain practices you can use to support presence. You may use them to support group members to acknowledge where and how they are in the group, in space and in their bodies and minds.

May these practices help you to be present and support yourself and your groups in enhancing awareness of their bodily sensations, their feelings and environment.





## 1

### Grounding practices

**From:** Stefan

**Title:** Engagement Space

**Part of the workshop:** Beginning

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 5-15 people

**Description:** This is the classical theater exercise, where people walk freely in the room and practice awareness and playfulness. Participants are instructed to walk naturally in the room - they can have their own natural tempo and style. Within reasonable timeframes, they are instructed to explore different aspects of their needs and preferences (eg. regarding the direction of their walk, their need to slow down or sit down a little). There are questions presented into the space by the facilitator regarding if someone wishes to walk in a different way, releasing some tension regarding the speed, seriousness, or straightforwardness of their walk. They are encouraged to walk in a highly expressive way, walking super slowly or funnily. The exercise can explore embodying different polarities and qualities emerging from the courage, curiosity and self-acceptance of participants and supported by instructions from the facilitator. It is encouraged to stay with the specific aspect for a reasonable time, so one can fully embody and explore it.

**Ideal venue:** Any comfortable space suitable and big enough so each participant has space for movement.

**Materials needed:** None

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** Feel free to prepare the facilitation of the session as you need, especially the guidance through invitation.

**Personal note:**

The session can be complemented with the voice expression of the participants.

## 2

### Grounding practices

**From:** Flóra

**Title:** Become an Iron (Wo)Man!

**Part of the workshop:** Any

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** Any, ideally with an even number of people

**Description:** In a standing position, start to map your body from your toes to the top of your head, and gradually engage all your muscles in tension. Curl your toes and tense your feet. Engage your calves, thighs, and hips. Tighten your stomach and lower back muscles. Clench your fists and flex your arms. Tighten your neck muscles, jaw, and even your forehead. When you reach your head, hold this tension in your body up to the facial muscles and the top of your head for 3 seconds, and then let it all go with a big breath through your mouth. Follow the release of your body by a sound and/or a movement that comes naturally to you.

For this exercise, it's a good idea to make couples so that participants can take turns in supporting each other in the process. They can do this by gently touching or pointing at the body parts that need to be tightened. In case of pairs, ask partners to discuss whether touching is ok for both of them.

**Ideal venue:** Any

**Materials needed:** None, optionally music

**Technical requirements:** None, optionally speakers and phone/laptop

**Note to the facilitator:** This exercise is a simple, but effective way to understand how much unnecessary muscle tension we keep in our body, how tiring it is and how amazing it feels to let it all go. As a nice addition to loosen the mood and make it more fun, you might consider using music - participants tend to like metal while clenching their fists. : )

**Personal note:** It's an exercise that you have to demonstrate on yourself or with a prepared partner first. When tightening our facial muscles, we tend to be a bit less pretty than usual. This may be difficult for some, but can be facilitated by using humour or even practicing grimacing - as this helps to relax the jaw which is also an important stress point.

### 3

## Grounding practices

**From:** Hanna

**Title:** Awareness and shoulder massage exchange

**Part of the workshop:** Warm-up activity (for a non-verbal workshop)

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 3-100 :)

**Description:** Participants will stand in a circle and take part in a shoulder and arm massage exchange. With eyes closed, each participant will use their right hand to massage the shoulder of the person on their right while simultaneously receiving a massage on their left shoulder from the person on their left. The massage should begin gently, focusing on the shoulder area, before moving down the upper arm and to the neck, if comfortable. Participants are encouraged to pay attention to both the physical sensations of giving the massage and receiving it. The goal is to remain present in the moment, tuning into their body's responses to touch, as well as the exchange of energy between themselves and the other person. After about 2-3 minutes, participants will switch roles with the person on their left, repeating the exchange.

**Ideal venue:** Any space with enough room for participants to stand comfortably in a circle

**Materials needed:** None

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** Create a calm atmosphere, ensuring that participants feel comfortable and safe. Remind participants to stay mindful and present, focusing on both the act of giving and receiving. Encourage gentle touch and clear communication during feedback. Give gentle guidance throughout the activity, checking in with participants if they need any adjustments to the intensity of the touch.

**Personal note:** This activity helps participants to cultivate presence and mindfulness in their interactions with others. By exploring both giving and receiving touch, participants can deepen their awareness of their own needs, boundaries, and the importance of mutual respect in physical connections. It's a great way to foster empathy and connection early in the workshop.

### 4

## Grounding practices

**From:** Timi

**Title:** Mindful walking

**Part of the workshop:** Core part, after a meditative arrival

**Duration:** 40 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 10-12 people

**Description:** This is an invitation for a silent walk alone, inspired by the writer Rebecca Solnit. Mindful walking is slow walking in a small area, noticing the breath, and the breath-step connection. It is a practice of slowing down and embracing uncertainty, allowing space for discovery, both external and internal. You can invite participants to explore in different ways during their walk: they can awaken different senses and look for things other than sights: smells, tastes, sounds, textures and feelings. It is a strong invitation to make this walk without taking pictures or using their phones in any way. This is a silent and solitary walk in nature.

This walk is not about reaching a destination—it's about immersing yourself in the present moment and the beauty around you. As your walk comes to an end, find a quiet spot to pause. Take a moment to reflect on your experience. This practice can be followed by a nature journaling activity, using automatic writing, drawing, or other forms of creative reflection.

**Ideal venue:** An outdoor space where there are different plants and sights to explore, ideally without human interactions and urban noises (although it can also work that way).

**Materials needed:** A bell or participants' phones (for the alarm)

**Technical requirements:** You need to make sure that participants have suitable outdoor clothes and shoes for the weather.

**Note to the facilitator:** Be mindful of the time, ask participants to set an alarm or help them with a bell or similar tool to call them back. It is important to try out beforehand. Let them know that the sound of the alarm or bell is the sign for them to start making their way back to your meeting point. Also, you need to have sufficient knowledge of the environment and try the walk yourself first, at the same time of day as your workshop.

**Personal note:** Walking is a simple yet profound way to connect with nature and nurture a sense of well-being, allowing us to rediscover the beauty in the ordinary and find stillness in movement. Whether in a park, a forest, or simply down the street close to your house, this practice invites you to explore how walking and being in nature can nurture a sense of clarity and awe.



**5***Grounding practices***From:** Flóra**Title:** Coherent breathing**Part of the workshop:** Closing or a part to calm down**Duration:** 8 minutes**Ideal size of group:** Any

**Description:** The aim of this exercise is grounding and calming down after a more intense activity. Participants lie down in a circle facing inward. They will breathe in and out through their noses for 5.5 seconds each, following the rhythm of the music. This exercise encourages the focus on breath, body awareness and energy exchange within the group. The timing of the audio-guided breathing meditation helps to synchronize the internal organs and supports participants in synchronizing their breathing rhythm as a group.

**Ideal venue:** Any**Materials needed:** Yoga mats, blankets, music for coherent breathing**Technical requirements:** Speaker and phone/laptop**Note to the facilitator:**

**Personal note:** This exercise not only enhances physical awareness of breath but also emphasizes the deep, often unconscious, connection we have with others. The energy exchange between participants reinforces the idea that we are interconnected at a profound level, influencing and being influenced by each other.

**6***Grounding practices***From:****Title:****Part of the workshop:****Duration:****Ideal size of group:****Description:****Ideal venue:****Materials needed:****Technical requirements:****Note to the facilitator:****Personal note:**

## Collective practices

These cards contain collective practices you can use to enhance collaboration in a group. You may use them to explore the present group dynamics when getting to know a group, or to help participants notice and reflect on their roles and behaviours in a collective setting.

May these practices help you to work with small and larger groups of people and support them in connecting to each other as well as to themselves as members of a group.





## 1

### Collective practices

**From:** Elena

**Title:** Tic-Tac-Toe

**Part of the workshop:** Ice-breaking or warm-up activity (introducing the workshop's topic)

**Duration:** 10-20 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** Any

**Description:** Tic-Tac-Toe can be a fun and engaging icebreaker to help participants get to know each other in a relaxed way. Instead of the traditional Xs and Os, each square on the Tic-Tac-Toe grid contains a word or concept related to the group's or the workshop's theme.

As participants move around, they find partners to discuss the topics with in the squares. If they discover similarities in their responses, they can "erase" (cross out) that word/concept on their paper and continue until they complete a row or as many connections as possible. The first person to erase all the words on their grid wins!

After the game, the group can reflect together on which words were erased most frequently and which ones remained, highlighting common themes as well as unique perspectives.

**Ideal venue:** An open space for the group to walk around, stop in pairs or small groups, and engage in conversation.

**Materials needed:** Blank A5 sheets of paper + one marker per participant

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** This activity promotes active listening, shared understanding, and a dynamic start to any session!

**Personal note:** I have used this exercise with a variety of groups, even large ones, and to explore very different topics - it always works! It's also a fun way for people to get to know each other, especially when the theme is themselves.

## 2

### Collective practices

**From:** Victoria

**Title:** The restful circle

**Part of the workshop:** Collective practices

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 10-30 minutes

**Description:** This collective practice is designed to help participants reconnect with their own bodies and the concept of collective rest. Begin by gathering the group in a circle, either seated or standing. Invite everyone to close their eyes or lower their gaze and take a few deep breaths together. Then, ask participants to imagine they are a part of a large, peaceful community that is collectively resting. One by one, encourage them to soften their body, letting go of tension, and focus on the feeling of being held by the group. As they rest, invite them to notice the energy exchange happening in the circle, allowing each participant to "share" their stillness with one another. End the practice by inviting the group to share any feelings or insights that arose during the exercise.

**Ideal venue:** A calm space where everyone can sit or stand comfortably

**Materials needed:** None

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** This practice works best in a group where participants feel safe and open. Encourage them to let go of the urge to "perform" and focus solely on relaxation and collective energy. If anyone struggles with the idea of rest or relaxation, be gentle in your facilitation, reminding them that this is a space of non-judgment.

**Personal note:** Did you know that there are 7 types of rest? We distinguish physical, mental, sensory, creative, emotional, social and spiritual rest. Personally, I find it important to consider adding to the list one more: sensory rest

**From:** Antonia

**Title:** Exploring without seeing

**Part of the workshop:** Core activity

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 4 to 40.

**Description:** We invite participants to get into pairs. In each pair, one participant is going to be the guide and the other one has to close their eyes. During 10 minutes and in silence, the guide is going to help the blind partner to explore the outdoor venue through other senses, such as touch or smell. Gently, the guide accompanies the blind partner by the hand or by the shoulder, to experience the surrounding nature. They may invite the blind partner to touch a tree bark, to smell a plant, to stop and kneel or sit on the ground and listen to whatever sound is present in the surroundings. The guide has to walk at a gentle pace, giving space and support to the blind partner relying on the guide. Once the 10 minutes have gone by, roles change.

**Ideal venue:** Outdoors, ideally with trees and plants. It can be a city park, a forest, meadow, a field, or even a house garden.

**Materials needed:** None

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** For some, it can be hard to close their eyes. Sometimes it is useful to have a tissue to cover their eyes. First, pairs can practice walking together with eyes open to build trust.

**Personal note:** This activity is a mindfulness experience and also a trusting one. I really love it, because as the sense of sight predominates, we often overlook other ways of experiencing reality.

**From:** Flóra

**Title:** Travellers

**Part of the workshop:** Middle or towards the end, when participants are warmed up and trust is formed

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 6-12 people

**Description:** The aim of this exercise is to experience and understand collaboration, playfulness, trust, attention and awareness on a physical level. Participants are invited to form trios. Together, they will be invited to dance, but in a specific way: the person in the center has their eyes closed., This person is THE TRAVELLER, whose journey is guided by the other two, moving with eyes open. The Traveller holds on to their travel guides, always connecting their hands to them. Their contact point can be the top of the guides' head, or just the hands. The Guides need to move around to make the Traveller dance. Roles change after the end of a song.

**Ideal venue:** A space big enough for all trios to move around freely while staying safe.

**Materials needed:** Music (it works well to play songs of different atmospheres and styles in different rounds)

**Technical requirements:** Speakers, phone/laptop

**Note to the facilitator:** Invite the guides to explore different levels (floor, middle, standing) and different paces during the dance. Ask participants not to exchange reflections between rounds, so that everyone can live their own experience in every role before sharing. In the end, it is important to leave space and time for reflection within the trios as well as in a larger group.

**Personal note:** As a facilitator, you need to make sure that all participants are safe. Remind the participants that the Travellers' eyes are closed and they need to pay attention not only to their Traveller, but also to others in the room. They also need to listen to the non-verbal signals of their Traveller and start their invitations gently and slowly to explore what are the limits of their person.



**5***Collective practices*

**From:** Laura

**Title:** We are on this together

**Part of the workshop:** Beginning (builds trust and connection from the start) or closing (reinforces unity and creates a meaningful closure)

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 10-20 participants

**Description:** Participants engage in synchronized movement exercises, first with shoulder contact, and later without contact, guiding one another through the space. A final trust exercise involves walking with eyes closed.

**Ideal venue:** A spacious room or open area with enough space to move freely, preferably with soft floors or mats.

**Materials needed:** None

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** Focus on connection and synchronization, not speed. Ensure safety when closing eyes.

**Personal note:** This exercise is about fostering trust and deepening the sense of unity within the group. It is essential that participants feel safe and supported at all times.

**6***Collective practices*

**From:**

**Title:**

**Part of the workshop:**

**Duration:**

**Ideal size of group:**

**Description:**

**Ideal venue:**

**Materials needed:**

**Technical requirements:**

**Note to the facilitator:**

**Personal note:**

## Practices for creative reflection

These cards contain practices for creative reflection. You may use them to bring life to something new or support your participants to create individually or as a group. Art is a powerful tool to manage stress, as it involves using our bodies and minds, sharing and connecting with the community, practicing empathy and reflecting on our experiences.

May these practices help you to initiate creation and reflection to support yourself and your groups in applying this efficient device.





## 1

### *Practices for creative reflection*

**From:** Andrea

**Title:** We are there together

**Part of the workshop:** Preparation

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** Any

**Description:** We prepare a place/chair for all the participants, even if they can not attend. They are there with us with their unpresence. This feels a bit weird at the beginning, but gives a safe place and an inclusive atmosphere for participants knowing that each member of the community is equally important and we are all there together.

**Ideal venue:** Any

**Materials needed:** As many chairs/pillows/yoga mats/bean bags as group members

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** It makes sense to do this if you are thinking about a process, not a one-time workshop and the participants are always the same people.

**Personal note:** This comes from my art therapy studies. We did the whole 3 years based on this "rule" and I really liked it. This practice also serves you as the facilitator to be mindful not about numbers and chairs, but the people joining you for the session.

## 2

### *Practices for creative reflection*

**From:** Barbora

**Title:** Stories Lost and Found

**Part of the workshop:** Beginning

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 2-10 people

**Description:** In this exercise participants are invited to remember and share stories with each other. They are invited to bring 1-5 photos they would like to work with. These pictures should have them, their family members and friends as main characters. If they don't wish to bring their photos, they can cut out some memorable pictures from magazines that could become their family photos. They are going to work on a common project with the help of these photos, telling each other the stories behind.

Inclusive practices are always participant-centered. Know your participants, their stories and abilities. It is important to find a unique place where the whole group can feel safe, as safety is essential. With safety comes openness, discussion, healing and relaxation. Depending on your participants, it can be a school, a beach, a living room, or it can be a picnic. Something more or less all participants are familiar with.

**Ideal venue:** Any

**Materials needed:** None

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** Ask your participants before the session about the specifics of the group (eg. if someone has special needs, or prefers to avoid certain topics). Application form is always a great idea.

**Personal note:** The facilitator needs to know what participants are dealing with and set the atmosphere in a specific way. In my pilot workshop, there was a 3 year old participant and an 83 year old participant with dementia. Both family members. We chose the atmosphere of a "school" because both were familiar with this environment and have a positive relationship with such. In general, for elderly people with cognitive disability and memory loss, the "school" environment can be something effective and familiar, therefore effective in a workshop setting.

### 3

#### Practices for creative reflection

**From:** Victoria

**Title:** Creative collage reflection

**Part of the workshop:** Creative reflection

**Duration:** 15-20 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 5-25 people

**Description:** In this exercise, participants are invited to reflect on a theme, feeling, or topic of their choice (examples: "The journey of change," "My current emotional state," or "The future I envision"). Provide each participant with various art supplies: magazines, scissors, glue sticks, colored paper, markers, and any other material that encourage creative expression. Participants will create a collage that visually represents their reflections on the chosen theme. Afterward, everyone shares their collage in small groups, explaining the process and the meanings behind their selections.

**Ideal venue:** Any quiet space with ample table space for materials.

**Materials needed:** Magazines, scissors, glue sticks, colored paper, markers, and other craft materials.

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** Be mindful of participants who may feel uncomfortable with artistic expression. Emphasize that the goal is not perfection, but rather an open and personal reflection of thoughts and emotions. Encourage them to create without judgment and to trust their instincts.

**Personal note:** This practice encourages deep, non-verbal self-reflection and fosters connection with others through shared insights.

### 4

#### Practices for creative reflection

**From:** Timi

**Title:** Nature journaling

**Part of the workshop:** After a walk in nature, eg. the grounding exercise 'Mindful walking'

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** Any

**Description:** After our walk, we are meeting back in the training room. The facilitator explains the framework of the guided nature journaling. The creative reflection starts with a visualization exercise: Close your eyes and try to remember a detail: a fallen leaf, a stone, a piece of sky that captured your attention while walking.

The framework we will use to capture the reflections is the IN IW IRMO model:

IN = I notice...

IW = I wonder

IRMO = It Reminds Me Of

Go beyond sight:

- **Touch:** How does it feel? Smooth, rough, or something else?
- **Smell:** Does it have a scent?
- **Sound:** If you tap it or rub it, does it make a sound?

**Ideal venue:** Any

**Materials needed:** papers, pencils

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** At the end of the journaling, you may offer space for participants to share a detail of their journey.

**Personal note:** You can provide colourful pencils and different writing materials to participants so that they can add layers to their expression.



**5***Practices for creative reflection*

**From:** Anushree

**Title:** A message to contemplate & one to take away

**Part of the workshop:** Closure

**Duration:** 17 minutes (7 minutes to write, 10 minutes to share)

**Ideal size of group:** Any

**Description:** This tool is a way to share reflections with each other as a takeaway at the end of meetings or workshops. Ask participants to write down a question they have based on the previous activity on one piece of paper. Ask them to write down a message they have for others (like a fortune cookie) on another. Fold all these papers and put them in two piles in the middle of the circle. Each person picks one question and shares their answer aloud. As a next step, each person picks a message to take away.

**Ideal venue:** Somewhere where people can sit in a circle or circles

**Materials needed:** Journal, pen/pencil

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** This exercise encourages us to celebrate interconnectedness, shared experience, and synchronicities.

**Personal note:** This practice is ideal for contemplative or reflective working sessions.

**6***Practices for creative reflection*

**From:**

**Title:**

**Part of the workshop:**

**Duration:**

**Ideal size of group:**

**Description:**

**Ideal venue:**

**Materials needed:**

**Technical requirements:**

**Note to the facilitator:**

**Personal note:**

## Movement practices

These cards contain practices you can use for physically moving your body and your groups. You may use them to warm up, to energize or to even out the energy flow of participants. These practices highlight the importance of embodied tools in stress management, as stress, first and foremost, is created in the body, therefore the body is the tool we need to use to work with it.

May these practices help you to move your body and support your participants in being comfortable feeling and knowing their physical boundaries.





## 1

### *Movement practices*

**From:** Kat

**Title:** Space awareness

**Part of the workshop:** Beginning

**Duration:** 10-15 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** Any

**Description:** Walk in the room in a determined way, with clear directions, not in circles, with the upper body released. Observe the room, the colours and shapes. Walk backwards. Watch where you're going. Keep the same determination as walking in front. Change from walking upfront to the back easily, naturally. Fill in the empty spaces in the room. Stop. Melt to the ground. Use rolling, sliding, pushing from the floor as tools to move on the floor level. Then start to explore different levels: the level of warrior is on the floor. If you are on your feet, with your knees bent, in sumo position, you are on the middle level. Experiment with different positions on this level, try out movements of different animals. Then move to the upper level: standing upwards, on your feet. Use jumps, turns, any other movement to displace your body. When you start to move through these levels, you can start to use the music or not. I suggest for sure, to use the music after exploring all the levels and let the participants use all the tools you gave them. From time to time, remind them of the levels, filling the empty spaces, directions, and dynamics. When the song is finished, it's time for participants to come back to their body. They can close their eyes, connect to the breathing, feel the connection of their feet with the floor and with the next inhale, open their eyes.

**Ideal venue:** A big enough space to make a group move

**Materials needed:** Body

**Technical requirements:** Music, speaker, phone/laptop

**Note to the facilitator:** Feel the group, feel the space.

**Personal note:** It feels good doing the exercise with the group as a facilitator. You can gently be the inspiration for the movements or the dynamic.

## 2

### *Movement practices*

**From:** Flóra

**Title:** The muscle of the soul

**Part of the workshop:** Any

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** any

**Description:** You have probably heard about the fight-or-flight response. Our body stores a lot of tension in the psoas muscle, the one responsible for being able to run or to take refuge quickly in case of danger. It does not make a difference whether we are facing a life threatening situation or 'only' a difficult task at work, a deadline or a personal conflict with someone. Therefore, it is very important to stretch it and regularly release the tension of this muscle.

The psoas muscle gets shorter due to stress and sitting, which causes severe lower back pain. Therefore, it is very important to stretch it every day.

Here's how you can do it: Take a standing position facing a chair and put your right leg up with horizontal feet. Start pushing your weight forward until you feel that your left psoas (the muscle connecting the legs to the upper body at the hip) begins to stretch. Do it for 2-3 minutes. Change sides!

**Ideal venue:** a room with clean floor, or even outdoors

**Materials needed:** a chair or a surface of a similar height/in case of using the floor, a yoga mat is useful, but not necessary

**Technical requirements:** none

**Note to the facilitator:** Look up where exactly the psoas muscle is, as you need to be able to show participants. Make sure to try this exercise yourself in different versions (with a chair, on the floor) to know the sensations one needs to look for. Remind the participants that everyone knows their own body best. If something feels uncomfortable in a bad way, they should refrain from this exercise (or any other practice) and consult a professional.

**Personal note:** Fun fact: the psoas muscle is called the muscle of stress in the Western world, while in Eastern cultures it is named the muscle of the soul.

### 3

## Movement practices

**From:** Flóra

**Title:** Power Dynamics

**Part of the workshop:** Middle, after the group has been warmed up

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 6-12 people

**Description:** The aim of this exercise is to understand how tiring it is to work with resistance: both self-resistance or resistance in the group. We work in pairs: one needs to take the other person to the other side of the space, working against increasing levels of resistance: first 5%, then 50% and finally 95% of resistance. They can use their whole body to try to win over the resistance, but both people need to be careful not to hurt their partner or themselves. It is important to take breaks in between turns.

**Ideal venue:** Any, can be outside as well (pay attention to slippery floors, the best way to do this exercise is barefoot)

**Materials needed:** Music that helps to feel the level of resistance (I like to use reggae at 5%, drum and bass at 50% and the song 'I love rock 'n roll' at 95%)

**Technical requirements:** Speaker, phone/laptop

**Note to the facilitator:** Make sure that participants take off their socks if the floor is slippery. It's wise to divide your group into two smaller groups for safety (with observers paying attention, too) as well as to allow people to observe different strategies to push and to resist.

**Personal note:** It is an exercise that can be a lot of fun, but it can also bring up (and hopefully contribute to the resolution of) difficulties and interpersonal conflicts already present in the group. It might be a great tool for team-building, but pay attention to know your group and let participants have a say in choosing their partners for the exercise.

### 4

## Movement practices

**From:** Sára

**Title:** Image Theatre

**Part of the workshop:** Warm-up, introduction to the topic

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Ideal size of group:** 5-20 people

**Description:** The aim of the exercise is to visually express experiences and emotions. The goal of Image Theatre is to translate associations related to different concepts and phenomena into bodily sensations and forms. This prepares participants for the topic and helps to engage emotions and lived experiences, guiding them toward identifying barriers and needs for well-being.

Participants create a still image (a 'sculpture') with their face/body representing different words given by the facilitator. First, everyone in a circle holds the sculpture for 5 seconds at the same time (per word). Then the facilitator asks them to continue holding the image while observing each other's poses. After all sculptures are completed and contemplated, participants reflect on the experience.

**Suggested words:** The words given depend entirely on the group and the topic of the workshop. Anything related to well-being can work, either positively or negatively.

**Suggested reflection questions:**

- Which one was the easiest to express? Why?
- In which one did you feel most comfortable? Why?
- In which one did you feel most uncomfortable? Why?

**Ideal venue:** Any space with enough room for participants to stand comfortably in a circle

**Materials needed:** None

**Technical requirements:** None

**Note to the facilitator:** Give participants enough time to experience what it is like to be in that position, in the "sculpture" both physically and mentally. Encourage them first to observe themselves, their own emotions and sensations and then to observe others. You can also encourage them not to want to represent the concept, but to bodily express the feeling or sensation that the word gives them.

**Personal note:** If you are interested in this method and similar theatrical, dramatic methods, check out the exercises of Augusto Boal or Jacob L. Moreno. :)



**From:** Kat

**Title:** Body Work

**Part of the workshop:** Can be a complete session or a part of regular classes at the beginning or end of a class.

**Duration:** 60 minutes (can be adapted to 10, 20, 30, or 40 minutes)

**Ideal size of group:** Max 18 people (9 pairs)

**Description:** The aim of this exercise is to awaken the body, to connect through touch and release tension. Bodywork happens in pairs: with one as the receiver/observer and the other as the giver. Participants alternate roles without speaking.

The session includes the following:

- Touch awareness & connection: Gentle, intentional touch using the whole hands to create a deeper connection.
- Massage & muscle manipulation: shoulder massage, progressing through arms, hands, legs, and feet.
- Joint mobilization & passive movement: Shaking and liberating joints by manipulating body parts.
- Spinal work & postural alignment: Pulling the head toward the ceiling to elongate the spine, rolling down for relaxation.
- Bodyweight & floor work: Sitting and gently placing the body on the floor for deeper release.
- Non-verbal communication & somatic sensing: Adjusting movements based on partner feedback, using minimal verbal cues.
- Integration & reflection: Closing with 3-5 minutes of sharing experiences in pairs.

**Process:**

1. Starting position: Participants stand or lie down.
2. Initial touch: We begin with a simple touch to establish connection.
3. Massage sequence: We are moving from shoulders to arms, hands, legs, and feet.
4. Spinal focus: Pulling the head upward to lengthen the spine.
5. Weight transfer & floor work: Sitting, gently placing the body on the floor, allowing weight shifts.
6. Joint release: Shaking and mobilizing different body parts.
7. Switching roles: Silent transition between giver and receiver. The process starts again.
8. Closing reflection: 3-5 minutes of sharing between partners.

**Ideal venue:** A warm space with a clean floor

**Materials needed:** None

**Technical requirements:** You need to have experience with bodywork – touch, body manipulation and simple massage to facilitate the above.

**Note to the facilitator:** This exercise is not suitable for people uncomfortable with physical touch. Make sure that participants prepare comfortable, warm clothes.

**Personal note:** This exercise is mostly non-verbal, guided through touch. Therefore, feel free to try it with groups of diverse nationalities or lacking verbal expression - of course always taking care of fully informed consent.

**From:**  
**Title:**  
**Part of the workshop:**

**Duration:**  
**Ideal size of group:**  
**Description:**

**Ideal venue:**

**Materials needed:**

**Technical requirements:**  
**Note to the facilitator:**

**Personal note:**

**From:**  
**Title:**  
**Part of the workshop:**

**Duration:**  
**Ideal size of group:**  
**Description:**

**Ideal venue:**

**Materials needed:**

**Technical requirements:**  
**Note to the facilitator:**

**Personal note:**

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**Title:**  
**Part of the workshop:**

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**Ideal size of group:**  
**Description:**

**Ideal venue:**

**Materials needed:**

**Technical requirements:**  
**Note to the facilitator:**

**Personal note:**

**From:**  
**Title:**  
**Part of the workshop:**

**Duration:**  
**Ideal size of group:**  
**Description:**

**Ideal venue:**

**Materials needed:**

**Technical requirements:**  
**Note to the facilitator:**

**Personal note:**



# Inspiration to carry on

## Words of encouragement

As professional helpers, we know it is difficult to set aside time and energy for our own wellbeing. Yet the experience of creating this toolkit as a community of peers has confirmed how important it is to nourish our souls first. Perhaps your way to recharge before holding space for a group is to be by yourself, perhaps it is to create a ritual for yourself, or maybe it's to hear or read some words of encouragement from peer helpers and friends.

In the previous chapter, you could find practices you can apply for not only your groups, but also for yourself. Now, we'd like to gift you something else: words of appreciation and encouragement on the importance of your work and well-being coming from people in the same boat. If you ever need confirmation or just some kindness for keeping on, you can turn to this page to know that you are not alone. Here are some thoughts from the participants of the EMPOWERmental retreat training, to you:

Trust yourself and the group! (Borka)

Find the courage to be you and be part of the group. (Marie)

Listen to your body, your body knows!  
Be aware that you are not alone, there is a community out there that shares your values. (Lucrezia)

Be authentic with yourself and the group. Authenticity and honesty create trust. If we are honest in a kind way, we can grow together. (Sol)

Challenges help us to grow. We never stop learning. Surround yourself with a community to grow together. (Laura)

Observe your breath and light, to keep your environment alive. (Kat)

Be prepared for everything. Know that you cannot be prepared for everything. Improvisation is a gift we all have. (Fanny)

Just listen to the ancient wisdom of your soul and trust the process. (Iveta)  
Be generous with compliments, they make us all feel better and change our day for the better. (Silvia)

Enjoy the time you share and what you give to others. Enjoy the pleasure of being together. (Ilaria)

Believe in the process and the group and look at things with curious eyes. (Elena)

Be where your feet are and connect with yourself, the people around you and the environment. (Hanna)

Give and get from the process. Just play, keep on playing. (Stefan)

Listen to yourself and go with the flow. (Anicka)

If you, like me, are that kind of person that takes care of others constantly, don't forget to find a time each single day to ask yourself "what do I need?". (Maya)

Embrace both your inner child and your inner ancestor. (Timi)

Your presence is everything. (Flóra)

## Further sources of inspiration

Here you can find some inspiring materials we enjoy and find meaningful in our well-being journey. We appreciate it if you reach out to us to add yours!

## Books

Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle, Sisters Emily Nagoski, PhD, and Amelia Nagoski, DMA

Circe (fiction), Madeline Miller

Donde están las monedas? / Where are the coins? (fiction), Joan Garriga  
Féjl bátran, Al Ghaoui Hesna

Neurociencia del cuerpo: como el organismo esculpe el cerebro, Nazareth Castellanos

Ritual: How seemingly senseless acts make life worth living, Dimitris Xigalatas

Shake It Off Naturally: Reduce Stress, Anxiety, and Tension with [tre], Dr. David Bercei

The 7 types of rest, Dr. Saundra Dalton Smith.

The Body Keeps the Score, Bessel van der Kolk

The Good Ancestor, Roman Krznaric

The Revolutionary Trauma Release Process, Dr. David Bercei

Walking Meditations: To Find a Place of Peace, Wherever You are, Danielle North

Wanderlust, Rebecca Solnit

When the Body Says No - The Cost of Hidden Stress, Dr. Gábor Máté

## Podcasts

Feminist Survival Project  
<https://www.feministsurvivalproject.com/>

Hogyan tegyünk a kiégés ellen aktivistaként? - Közélet Iskolája Podcast  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LoGMKYIH7c>

The Psychology of your 20s  
<https://open.spotify.com/show/2HGcJRYrjGnp-ce6bRp8UXm>

The Wellbeing Podcast  
<https://open.spotify.com/show/0nITuyBDMU3sV1K-8ZSxq42?si=f9a369e62a3a402f>

## Resources

A Guide to Hosting & Harvesting Meaningful Conversations in Virtual Spaces  
Online AoH Manual Co-Creation: Practices for Meaningful Participatory Virtual Engagement  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vAhNd8h-vAK5crCy-5abX5rdYR2-BDQqNMV5jjyBilik/edit?tab=t.0#heading=h.icwmehvyvw8>

CO(mmunity)-Warming Cards:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VN0I42mq7RLPu-mOmLPEjaZO6vS6va1fi/view>

Community Canvas Guidebook  
<https://community-canvas.org/>

Community Weaving Framework  
<https://www.community-weaving.org/>

Liberating Structures for Facilitation  
<https://www.liberatingstructures.com/ls/>

Recipes for Well-being  
<https://www.recipesforwellbeing.org/>

Resources for Change-makers  
<https://changemakerxchange.org/resources/>

Resources of the Work That Reconnects Network  
<https://workthatreconnects.org/directory-landing/>

StressLess Toolkit  
Stressless Journal Digital.pdf

## Playlists

EMPOWERmental playlist by participants  
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0qAgGsnc1rWON-LOaHsMpyP?si=ZGD8rD5bRAGnTeFqN5QLSw>

EMPOWERmental workshop playlist I.  
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7AywzI7NC-nOWqts1aB4uzn?si=2GY9B7FUTx66liRrKB3W3g>

EMPOWERmental workshop playlist II. - A journey through the elements  
[https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1dvbDYUxpOI-k656MJ1fEFD?si=mAP8EW\\_WRyK6KjLnn9bxzw](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1dvbDYUxpOI-k656MJ1fEFD?si=mAP8EW_WRyK6KjLnn9bxzw)



## Last, but not least

This Treasure Box is the manifestation of the shared experiences, inspiration, and creativity of everyone who took part in the EMPOWERmental Retreat Training | Body-Mind Balance through Arts held in Paloznak, Hungary, from January 20–27, 2025.

Each exercise, invitation, and offering within these pages carries the contributions of the trainers and participants who took part in this journey. We hope that these practices continue to inspire and support you in your own work, whether in facilitation, art, movement, or simply in fostering balance and well-being in daily life. May this Treasure Box be a reminder that self-care and collective care go together, and that through creativity and mindful embodiment, we can create empowering physical, mental and virtual spaces.



Impressum

Well-being Treasure Box | Body-Mind Balance through Arts  
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Partner Organizations:

Priestor Súčasného Tanca, Slovakia  
Studio SHIFT, Italy  
Asociación Dinámica, Spain

Facilitators:

Flóra Eszter Sarlós (HU): With over a decade of experience in contemporary dance and body awareness, she is a certified TRE® provider, offering workshops that integrate yoga, dance, and breathing exercises to promote stress relief and balance.

Tímea Szőke (HU): PhD researcher, yoga teacher, and urban practitioner creating spaces for connection and reflection through movement, arts, and grassroots initiatives.

Fanny Hajdú (HU): Socially engaged facilitator creating trust-based safe spaces for creation and development using playful, sensory, and instinct-centred exercises blending creative expression, theatre and movement to support individual and group growth.

Elena Giunta (IT): Art therapist, PhD in Design and Multimedia Communication, professor, and expert in social innovation and co-design practices.

Kat Rampackova (SK): Choreographer, dance activist, and somatic practitioner exploring inclusion and site-specific performance.

Victoria Del Río O'Connor (ES): Art therapist, facilitator, and advocate for neurodivergence and self-determination through creative expression.

Participants: This toolkit would not have been possible without the contributions of the participants, whose openness, curiosity, and insights shaped the retreat into a truly transformative experience.

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