

YOUTH WORKERS TOOLKIT

EMPOWERING TRAINERS IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION


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Empowering trainers in non-formal education

This toolkit is based on a training for youth workers, funded by the Erasmus+ program.

The project took place in *Varna, Bulgaria* in *June 2025* and included *24 youth workers* from *6 countries*: Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, N. Macedonia, Greece and Poland.

With the implementation of the project,
the youth workers:

- Learned about the non-formal education *methods and how to implement them in practice*
- Improved *their skills in group management, debriefing, public speaking and many more*
- Gained *practical experience and confidence to apply the skills in real life*

DAY 1

Get to know each other Workshop I



1. **Round of names** - Duration: 10min.

In a circle, we shared our names in three ways - loud and clear, in slow motion and very fast.

2. **Sniper of names** - Duration: 10min.

One person stands in the middle and points at someone. They have to “duck”. The participants on both sides “Shoot” each other by saying each other’s names.

3. **Buying letters of your name** - Duration: 15min.

The participants wear a paper tape on their blouse only with the first letter of their name and as many empty spots as the remaining number of missing letters. By introducing themselves to others, they “gain” the next letters until they’ve collected their full name. The game ends when everyone has completed their name.

4. **Human Bingo**

The goal is to fill every box in your chart with different people’s names - no repeats allowed. Walk around, talk to others, and when someone matches a characteristic, write their name in that box (e.g. if “A morning person” fits Maria, you write her name there). When you’ve filled all your boxes, shout BINGO! - then everyone else has two more minutes to finish.

5. **Card Game** - Duration - 30min.

Participants pick a card, then meet somebody and answer the questions on each others’ cards - they switch the cards and meet another person.

DAY 1

Expectations, contributions, fears, values

Workshop 2

1. Energiser: Haven't seen you in ages

One person starts the interaction - they approach someone and pretend they are a dear old friend they haven't seen for a long time. They can be as dramatic as they like. Then they hug, handshake, fist bump, or high-five - depending on the group's comfort and energy and move on to the next person.

2. Balloon of expectations - Duration: 45min. ; Tools: pens/markers

Teams rotate through stations, spending about 7 minutes at each to brainstorm on flipcharts:

- Expectations (basket) - what you want to learn or improve
- Fears (weight) - potential challenges
- Contributions (balloon) - what you can offer (games, curiosities, yoga, running, etc.)
- Project Values (ground/grass) - guiding values (e.g., punctuality, support)

After visiting all stations, each group summarizes their last flipchart and presents in 2 minutes. Teams move to the next station on the given signal.

There are 4 groups with assigned starting stations. Project objectives are highlighted while presenting expectations.

3. Sugar Boxes

Each participant takes a piece of paper and draws the outline of their face. While music plays, they pass papers around randomly. When the music stops, each person adds one feature (for example nose) to the paper they hold plus one fact about that person (like hometown, education, hobby, favorite book). Repeat until the whole face is complete.

The finished drawings go on the wall with an envelope underneath to serve as "Sugar Boxes" - secret mailboxes for participants to exchange messages throughout the project.

DAY 1

Team Building Workshop 3

1. Motion Machines - Duration: 15min.

Participants were divided into smaller groups and asked to create a machine using only their bodies (e.g., toaster, car, lawn mower). Each member had to be part of the machine. After preparing, groups presented their machines while others tried to guess what they were. The goal of this activity was to encourage creativity, teamwork and fun.

2. Swamp Lake - Duration: 30min.

In this activity, participants worked together to cross a “quicksand” swamp by stepping only on designated safe grass clumps. Team members crossed one at a time and rotated turns to discover the safe route. If someone stepped on an unsafe area, they returned to the start. There were 14 mandatory safe steps, and a squeaker toy signaled progress. The activity ended with a discussion on teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.

Goals:

- Encourage cooperative problem-solving
- Promote communication and observation skills
- Emphasize patience and turn-taking in group challenges

Processing Questions:

- How did it feel to rely on others while crossing?
- Was it challenging to find the safe route?
- Did a strategy emerge for discovering the path?
- How did the team respond to mistakes or setbacks?
- Did everyone have an equal chance to participate?

DAY 1

Team Building Workshop 3

3. Building challenge - Duration: 20-30min

In this activity, participants work in small groups of 4 to 9 people, to build the “best tower” using only paper cups. Each group has 15 minutes and their towers will be judged on height, appearance, and sturdiness. A few participants act as judges and select the winner. Towers can also be judged on creativity, cooperation, or speed. The activity ends with a discussion on teamwork and cooperation.

Goals:

- Create non-threatening group interaction
- Provide feedback on teamwork and productivity
- Show the importance of working together cooperatively

Processing Questions:

- Did you enjoy working with people you didn't know well?
- How did you feel as part of the group?
- Was the task easier because you knew the goal from the start?
- Did a leader emerge during the process?
- Did everyone participate? Is that similar to other activities you've done?
- Should everyone be given the chance to participate?



DAY 1

Different Education Types

Workshop 4 (Duration: 60 min)

1. Where did you learn that?

Participants were given various examples of activities like riding a bike, writing a CV, cooking a meal and they had to think of where and how they learned to do that. After that, we explored the different ways of learning.

2. Where do you position yourself? (Debate)

The trainer read statements about formal, non-formal, and informal learning. Participants positioned themselves according to their opinion, then explained why and shared their thoughts.

Example statements include:

- Non-formal learning is the same as informal learning
- Non-formal education is more effective than formal education for practical skills
- Non-formal learning works better for personal development than career advancement

Participants could also propose additional statements or myths. The activity ended with a group discussion to clarify the three types of learning and identify the principles of non-formal learning.

Objective: Clarify the fundamentals of the educational framework and the three types of learning: formal, non-formal, and informal.

3. Energy thermometer

At the end of the session, the trainer drew a thermometer on a flipchart, marked from cold/low (blue, tired) to warm/high (red, energized). Each participant placed a dot on the scale to show their current energy or motivation. This gave the group and trainer a quick picture of the overall mood and helped adjust the flow of future activities.

DAY 2

Me as a trainer

Workshop 1

1. "The ideal trainer" - Duration: 45min.

The group was divided in 5. Each team draws the profile of the ideal trainer: brain for knowledge, hands and legs for skills, heart for attitudes.

- Teams present their posters, then the group discusses and creates a final trainer profile together.
- Introduce the ETS Competence Model for trainers in an international context.

2. Reflection time

Inviting participants to think of a workshop they enjoyed - what did the facilitator do that really worked for them?

After that, they were invited to reflect on their current skills, given the tools they were provided with, leading to clearer self-awareness and priority-setting when it comes to what to focus on when developing competences.

3. Matrix' 15

Distributing papers to everyone in the group. They were asked to draw 4 squares and reflect on them by the following prompts:

- Gratitude: What strengths or skills do I already have that I want to keep?
- Obstacles: What personal habits, fears, or external barriers limit me as a facilitator?
- Desires: What skills, attitudes, or knowledge do I want to develop?
- Fears: What do I fear might happen or go wrong when I facilitate?

DAY 2

Needs, Goals, Evaluation

Workshop 2

1. Needs, Goals, Evaluation circle - Duration: 60min.

The workshop began with an energiser - passing claps, as fast as we can. Next, we discussed how to identify learning needs and how to evaluate outcomes. We also talked about SMART goals and practiced by doing one example together.

After that, the participants were divided in 5 groups. Each group had to identify a need for young people they all care about. They were asked to formulate a SMART goal and to think of the idea of their session. How are they going to evaluate if they reached their goal at the end of the session?

The goals of this exercise were to:

- Identify a common need
- Write at least 3 learning objectives
- Suggest activities and methods to use to achieve objectives
- Finding ways to evaluate reaching the objectives



DAY 2

Needs, Goals, Evaluation Workshop 2

3. 8C'S

We introduced the participants to one of the main roles of a non-formal educator - creating learning environments. Then we brainstormed ideas about components of a good learning environment and what would they be. What does a safe, nice learning environment consist of?

After that, we took a look at Dr. Carol Read's method for effective teaching. We thoroughly analyzed and thought about example of every one of the 8C's (Context, Connections, Coherence, Challenge, Curiosity, Care, Community, Creativity).

We also thought about questions:

- If one of the C's is missing, how does it affect the others?
- Are all of them equal?

4. 8C'S Reflection activity - *Duration: 15min.*

Each participant explores their strengths and areas for growth as a youth worker or learning creator by reflecting on the 8 C's. Each person gets 8 pieces of scrap paper to write the 8C's words on it.

They arrange the papers around them and one by one pick up a word and reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in that area. After reflecting on one, they moved on to the next, until all 8 were done.

DAY 2

Learning cycle Workshop 3

1. Magic Portal - String activity

In this activity, participants worked together to pass the entire group through a “magic portal” (loop of rope) without damaging it. The group planned a strategy for up to 10 minutes without touching or testing the rope. Once ready, the first person began crossing, and the timer started. The goal was to get everyone through as quickly as possible. After the first attempt, participants debriefed, discussed improvements, and tried again. A second timed attempt was made, with a third optional round if energy and interest were high.

Goals:

- Foster creative problem-solving and strategic planning
- Encourage cooperation and communication
- Develop patience, observation, and adaptability

Debriefing Questions:

- What worked well during your attempt?
- Where did the group encounter challenges or delays?
- How did planning help or hinder your strategy?
- Would you adjust your approach next time?
- Did everyone feel included and able to contribute?



DAY 2

Learning cycle Workshop 3



2. KOLB's Cycle theory input - Part 1

We discussed the first part of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle using a simple story:

- Concrete Experience (Doing / Living It):

Three grandmas tried a new pancake recipe one Sunday. The kids had different reactions: some thought the pancakes were too fluffy, some not sweet enough, and some loved them.

- Reflective Observation (Thinking about it):

The grandmas later reflected on the experience without blaming anyone. They shared observations about batter thickness, pan temperature, and flavor, noticing what worked and what didn't.

3. KOLB's Cycle theory input - Part 2

In the second part, we discussed Learning/ Planning and Trying again.

- Abstract Conceptualization (Learning / Planning):

The grandmas brainstormed ways to improve the recipe: letting batter rest longer, balancing sweetness with mashed banana, adjusting pan temperature, and timing cooking better.

- Active Experimentation (Trying again):

The next Sunday, they tested the revised recipe. The pancakes were golden, smooth, and loved by the grandkids.

DAY 2

How people learn

Workshop 4

1. The 4 ways of learning

Participants were introduced to the four learning styles of the VARK model:

- Visual,
- Auditory
- Read/Write
- Kinaesthetic

They completed a short test to identify their predominant style, then formed groups according to their results.

Each group designed a 5-minute workshop to explain the VARK model in a way that matched their learning style (e.g., the Visual group used graphics or images, the Auditory group focused on sound and discussion).

Groups then presented their workshops, followed by a debriefing.

The goal was to increase awareness of different learning styles and give participants hands-on practice in designing activities that match diverse needs.



DAY 3

Public speaking Workshop 1

1. Big fish - small fish - Duration: 10min

We began day three with a talk about mistakes. Through metaphors, videos and stories, participants learned that it is okay to make mistakes and to improvise. Throughout the day, they had more chances to experience this and to see mistakes as something to embrace rather than avoid.

2. Tips and Tricks - Duration: 10min

Later in the day we focused on public speaking. Participants reflected on good and bad speakers they had seen and collected tips for speaking well.

They highlighted the importance of grabbing attention with a hook, showing confidence through smiling, eye contact and voice, and using body language effectively. Other strategies included humour, personal stories, pausing for emphasis, simple language, and showing emotions.

They also discussed stage use - facing the audience, moving around, and keeping eye contact - as well as practical details like outfit, slowing down, and avoiding filler sounds.

3. Jigsaw puzzle - Duration: 15min

Participants worked in 5 groups to complete a “jigsaw puzzle” of a speech. They were given the full text of a speech along with cut-up headline cards and had to match each part of the speech with the correct headline. The speech structure contained a hook, context, key message, support, call to action and conclusion. The activity helped participants understand the structure of an effective speech and how different elements work together to engage the audience.

DAY 3

Public speaking Workshop I

4. 3 Word Practice - Duration: 15min

This short exercise gave participants a chance to practice quick thinking and creativity in storytelling. Each person drew three random words, had 30 seconds to prepare, and then told a 1-minute story using all three words. The challenge was to keep the story logical and engaging, even with unusual words (e.g., "pineapple," "gravity," "compassion").

5. Main Task - Preparing speeches

For the main task, participants had to prepare and deliver a 2-minute speech in front of the group, while keeping in mind the structure and the tips and tricks they learned prior. Topics were drawn randomly, but participants could also choose a personal passion.



DAY 3

Public speaking 2 Workshop 2

4. Feedback model

Participants explored how to both give and receive feedback effectively. The focus was on being constructive, respectful, and practical. Here are some key takeaways learned during the process.

Giving feedback:

- Be specific and focus on behavior, not the person
- Stick to facts and remain kind
- Ask if the person wants feedback first

Receiving feedback:

- Acknowledge valid points and ask for examples
- Avoid being defensive - treat feedback as a gift
- Say thank you and decide what to do with it
- Ask clarifying questions if needed



DAY 4

Challenging behaviours

Workshop 1

1. Types of participants

The workshop was set up as a World Café. Participants were divided into small teams of 2–3 and rotated between tables.

- Each table described a type of challenging participant behavior that trainers often encounter.
- Teams discussed how to handle that type of behavior and wrote down strategies for responding effectively.
- After seven minutes, teams moved to the next table and repeated the process.

At the end of the rotations, each team presented the participant type and behavior discussed on their final table and shared all the strategies that had been collected there.

The workshop was closed with useful tips and tricks for working with challenging participant behaviors.

The goal of this workshop was to practice identifying difficult behaviors and gather a wide range of strategies for managing them during training.

DAY 4

Intercultural Learning

Workshop 2

1. Intercultural Learning

The session was based on a role-play activity where participants represented three fictional cultures: Red, Green, and Blue. Each culture had unique values, etiquette, and communication styles.

- For 25 minutes, participants worked in teams to explore and embody their assigned culture.
- They then attended a simulated international training conference, where the task was to agree on an activity for the free afternoon while staying true to their culture's behaviors and norms.
- The 10-minute interaction led to confusion, misunderstandings, but also many laughs!

In the debriefing, participants reflected on the experience, connected insights to the Cultural Iceberg model, shared similar real-life situations, and discussed strategies for facilitating intercultural learning environments.

The goal of this workshop was to raise awareness of cultural differences and strengthen skills for intercultural facilitation.



DAY 4

Methods' Fair

Workshop 3

1. Methods Fair

The session began with a mind-map of different methods participants had experienced during the training, along with additional methods they already knew.

- Participants were divided into teams, each receiving a different category of methods (e.g., team-bonding, community engagement).
- Teams prepared a creative presentation of their category and demonstrated one method in practice. Examples included speed-friending, storytelling, and improvisational theatre.
- The group discussed experiences with the methods and shared best practices.

The goal of this workshop was to exchange practical methods, inspire creativity and encourage peer learning.



DAY 4

Facilitation strategies

Workshop 4

1. Bad facilitation roleplay - Duration: 20min.

Participants watched a role play of a “bad facilitator” to recognize ineffective behaviors. Afterward, they brainstormed things to avoid and rephrased them into positive facilitation practices.

Here are some of the common Mistakes to Avoid (and Replace with Positive Actions) that the participants learned:

- Standing behind participants → Stay visible and approachable
- Using “Guys” → Choose inclusive language
- Contradicting each other’s instructions → Give clear, unified guidance
- Over-explaining or under-explaining → Adjust explanations to the group’s needs

etc

2. Line up of the session - Duration: 10min.

Participants positioned themselves along a line from strongly agree to strongly disagree in response to statements, followed by discussion. The aim was to raise awareness of common traps in facilitation.

They were given examples of how both good and bad non-formal education can look like. We explained that making these choices doesn’t necessarily ruin a session, but being conscious of them helps improve practice.

DAY 4

Group dynamics

Workshop 4

3. Warm-up Sketch Jam - Duration: 10min.

We asked participants to take a blank sheet and draw six things, spending one minute on each. They were asked to draw an object and were given explanation about what it symbolizes.

The objects and their co-responding symbols are the following: Lightbulb (idea), Heart (emotion), Ladder (growth), Clock (time), Group of three people, Eye (observation). The goal of this exercise was to remove the idea of being unable to draw and to emphasize that this is about clarity, not art.

4. Reflection

The group was asked to share one word that captured their experience of the day. Next, they completed a Learning Postcard individually. They took a blank card or piece of paper and imagined it as a postcard to themselves. They wrote a short message including what they learned, what they wanted to remember, apply, or feel proud of.

They finished with one thing they are still wondering about and optionally could add a small drawing to capture a memory from the day. When finished, they placed their postcards in an envelope on the wall.

Goals:

- Encourage reflection
- Reinforce learning
- Highlight personal insights

DAY 5

Time for practice

1. Past and future

In the morning, participants returned to the workshops they had started planning on Day 2, where they had already set SMART learning objectives. The first two sessions were dedicated to preparation: teams divided tasks, created visuals, and refined their plans.

In the afternoon, the demo-training sessions began. Each team (2–3 members) had 30 minutes to facilitate part of their planned workshop, test it with the group, and receive feedback. Every team member had to take an active role. Some groups chose to practice giving instructions, while others focused on debriefing activities.

After each demo, participants provided written feedback using the “2 Stars + 1 Wish” method (two positive points and one constructive suggestion). The feedback was placed in envelopes for each team, sealed until the end of the day.

The goal was to practice facilitation in a safe environment and receive structured peer feedback.



DAY 5

Time for practice

2. Giving instructions - How to do it clearly?

The topic of giving instructions clearly was introduced. The participants were given 3-5 main tips and tricks for explaining concepts effectively.

We talked about how often we don't explain clearly as we know what the activity looks like and what the outcome should be, but other people do not. This sometimes can cause us to fall into the trap of thinking that what's obvious to us is obvious for other people too. This can lead to trainers skipping important details - a cognitive bias called "the curse of knowledge."

We presented a framework called WWH method (What, Why and How):

- What: Introduce the activity clearly.
- Why: Explain the reason for the exercise and the intended outcome.
- How: Show step by step how it will happen. Provide examples or a short demo. Write down or display instructions, and check understanding by asking participants to summarize the first step.

DAY 6

Time for practice

1. Reflection and Guests

In the morning of day 6, the participants continued with demo-training sessions until all seven teams had the chance to facilitate. After the last demo, the group held a collective debriefing to reflect on emotions, challenges, and the main learning points from the two days. This helped participants consolidate what they had learned about preparation, teamwork, and facilitation skills.

In the afternoon, several guest speakers - experienced public speakers and trainers from partner NGOs in Varna - joined the group. They shared insights from their own practice, offering examples of effective facilitation and challenges they had faced. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions, compare experiences, and collect practical tips from the field.



DAY 6

Time for practice

2. The three P's and Gratitude

The participants were divided in a group of 3, each member from a different team for this task. They were first asked to write individually in their notebooks four things:

- Proud Moment: A moment or aspect of their facilitation they felt most proud of.
- Pitfall: A challenge they faced or something to improve next time.
- Possibility: One thing they would like to try in future facilitation sessions.
- Gratitude: One thing they were grateful for, especially regarding their teammate(s).

After writing individually, participants shared their reflections with their partners, discussing their P's and Gratitude. The goals of this task were to encourage self-reflection, promote peer learning and foster appreciation within the group.



DAY 7

Managing conflict Workshop I

1. Killer Wink

Before the game began, we asked one participant to be the “killer” and keep their identity secret. The killer could “kill” others by winking at them.

Participants walked around the room in different directions, making eye contact with everyone they passed. If someone was winked at, they played dead. The group then tried to guess who the killer was.

2. Conflict resolution

After warming-up with killer wink, we proceeded with another simple exercise. Participants positioned themselves in the room according to their attitude toward conflict: closer if they embraced it, further away if they preferred to avoid it. From their position, each person shared a one-word association with the word “conflict.”

Then they were presented a canvas with the five conflict resolution styles: *avoidant*, *competitive*, *collaborative*, *accommodating*, and *compromising*. Strategies such as “I statements” and Non-violent Communication (NVC) were also introduced.

Participants were divided into teams and given scenarios involving conflicts in training settings (e.g., between two participants, between trainers, or between a trainer and a participant). Each scenario reflected one of the resolution styles. Teams discussed strategies for handling their scenario and later shared alternative solutions in a group discussion.

DAY 7

Erasmus opportunities and toolkit development Workshop 2 and 3

1. Expert tables

Several "expert tables" were set in the room with participants who had experience with different Erasmus+ programs, including:

- Youth exchanges and training courses
- Erasmus for university students
- Erasmus for young entrepreneurs
- Starting an NGO or informal group

At each table, participants shared knowledge and experiences. Youthpass was also presented, with a focus on the eight key competences. Several participants shared personal stories of how Youthpass supported their careers, such as securing internships or strengthening CVs.

2. Toolkit development

Participants described the workshops they had designed, preparing both written descriptions and visuals. This material was collected for inclusion in the project's Toolkit. Testimonials were also recorded to capture participants' experiences.

DAY 7

Evaluation Workshop 4

1. Reflection and feedback

The final workshop invited participants to look back on their experience. They first filled out anonymous feedback forms to share their thoughts on the program and their personal learning.

Afterwards, the group gathered in a circle for a Dixit card exercise. Each participant chose a card that represented their training journey and shared the story behind their choice. This created a space for reflection, listening, and connecting individual experiences with the group's shared learning.

2. Celebration - Youthpass ceremony

The Corridor of Fame was a fun and meaningful way to close the training session and hand out Youthpass certificates. Participants formed two rows facing each other, creating a corridor. One by one, each participant walked through the corridor while the group cheered their name, clapped, and celebrated their unique contributions during the training. At the end of the corridor, the trainer personally presented the Youthpass certificate to each participant.

This method created a festive, supportive atmosphere that highlighted each participant's achievements. It boosted confidence, allowed everyone to feel recognized, and left participants with a strong sense of accomplishment and pride in their learning journey.



Methods Hub

Methods that were adapted or created by the participants during the training

Interview 101

By: Razvan, Natalia and Danai

Topic: Introduction to job interviews, focusing on emotional preparedness and how to respond to challenging or/and uncomfortable interviewer behaviors.

Target group: Young people, NEETs, youngsters with little or no experience

Duration: 30min

Materials: cards with different interviewer characters, chairs, tables, paper

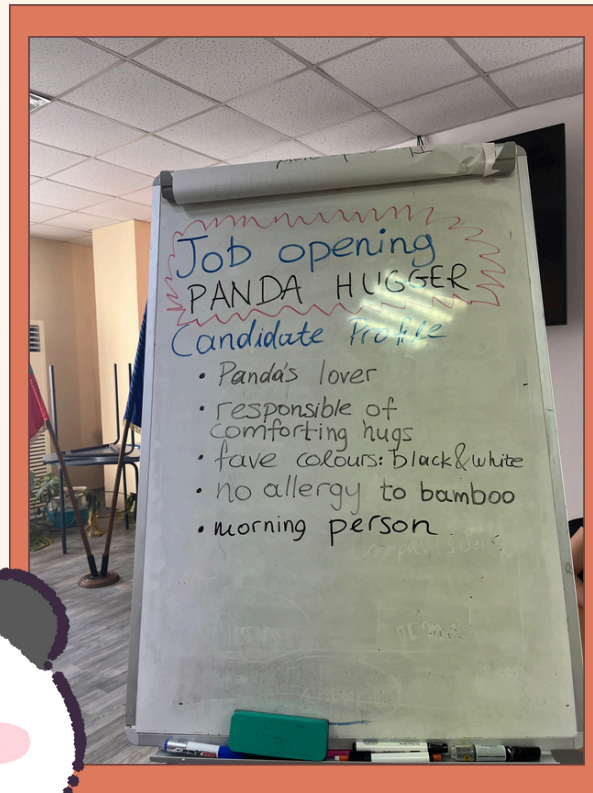
Objective: Practice real-life interviews with interviewers playing unexpected or challenging roles, helping them stay calm, manage emotions, and think on their feet.

The session began with an ice-breaker "Swap seats if it is true". Participants form a circle with one person standing in the middle. That person reads statements connected to job interviews, such as "I have felt nervous before an interview," "I have googled interview questions," or "I once thought my interview went badly." Anyone for whom the statement is true swaps seats.

The activity is introduced with a light-hearted twist: the fictional job opening is for the position of Panda Hugger. This playful detail lowers the pressure and sets a positive, humorous tone.

The group is split into two fixed roles:

- Interviewers
- Interviewees



The room is arranged in a World Café style, with several tables representing different interview stations. At each table, interviewees face a different challenging interviewer behaviour. Interviewers receive short instructions describing their “secret role,” such as:

- Aggressive or confrontational
- Overly friendly or flirty
- Distracted and uninterested
- Asking overly personal questions
- Silent and unresponsive

Interviewees rotate from table to table, experiencing several rounds of 5–6 minutes each. This setup allows them to practice staying calm, professional, and adaptable under pressure, no matter what behaviour they encounter.

Debrief

After the rounds, participants regroup to reflect on:

- What strategies helped them handle the different behaviours?
- How did they feel in each situation?
- Which tactics could they use in real job interviews?

Intercultural stories – Digital Detox edition

By: Myrto, Alex, Natalia, Anna

Topic: Connecting through storytelling, with a focus on intercultural exchange and digital detox.

Target group: Young adults from all around the world doing Erasmus projects.

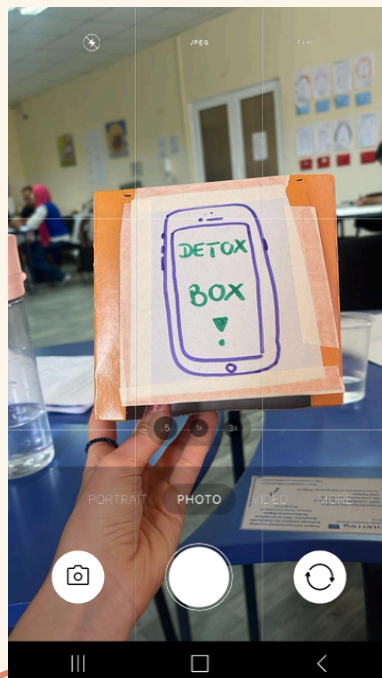
Duration: 45–60min

Materials: Papers, pens, markers, whiteboards, posters, a box for phone collection

Objective: Build intercultural connections, practice digital detoxing, step out of comfort zones, learn to be vulnerable in a social setting, and develop creativity.

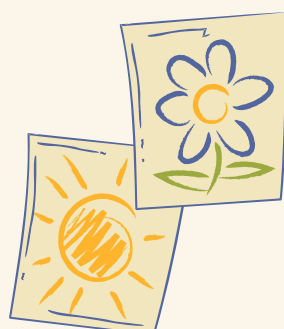
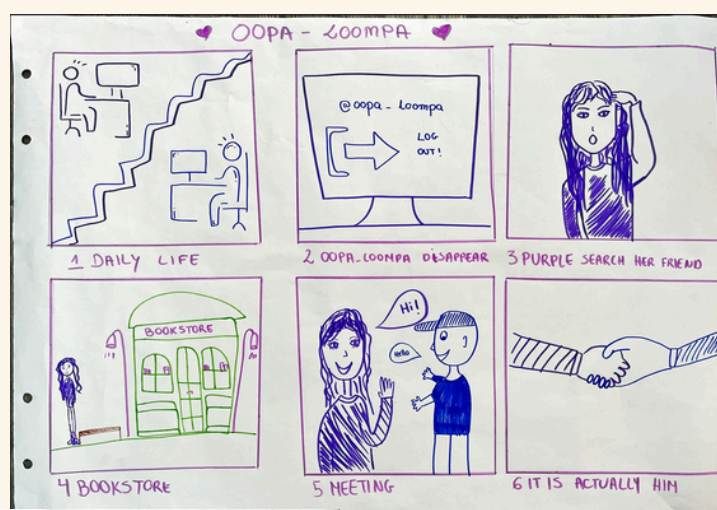
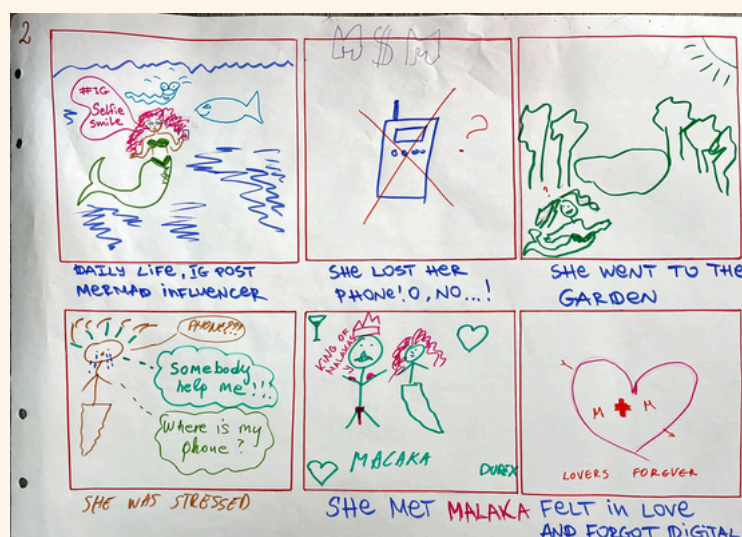
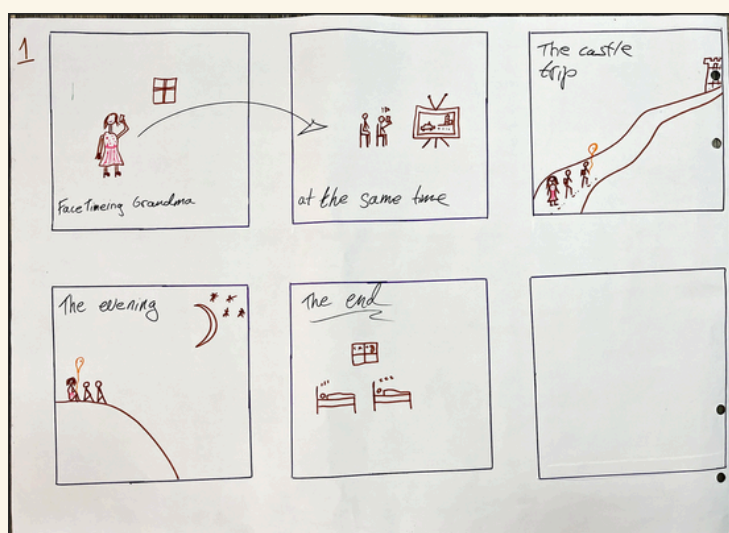
The session begins by inviting participants to put their phones into a box, symbolizing a temporary digital detox. Trainers introduce the topic and outline the objectives of the activity.

The main exercise, “Intercultural Storyboards,” starts with a short presentation on storytelling theory, including an example storyboard. Participants are then divided into international groups and guided to different workstations, where they create their own storyboards using posters with six squares, colorful markers, pens, and a list of words to inspire their stories. Each group develops and presents their storyboard to the others, fostering creativity and collaboration across cultures.



Debriefing brings everyone back into a circle. Each participant shares one word about their experience of the creation process, encouraging reflection and collective closure.

Evaluation: Feedback is collected from both trainers and participants in written form, helping refine the session for future use.



Communication workshop

By: Maria, Betim, Ivan

Topic: Exploring non-verbal and para-verbal communication through role-play.

Target group: Young people (18–30 years old)

Duration: 30–40 min

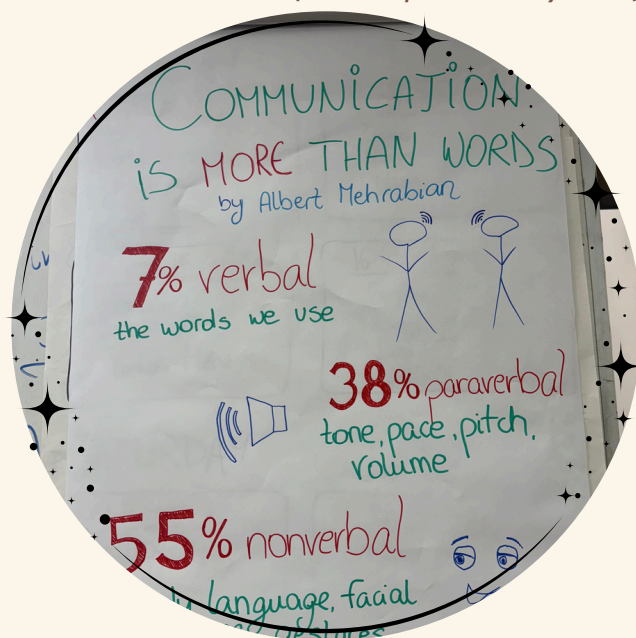
Materials: Notes with phrases and delivery instructions, paper, pens

Objective: Help participants understand the impact of tone, pace, gestures, and body language on communication. Demonstrate how the same message can carry very different meanings depending on delivery.

The session begins with participants forming pairs. Each pair receives a note containing a short phrase along with two distinct sets of instructions on how to deliver it. The instructions specify different tones, paces, and accompanying actions to use during the dialogue.

The main exercise shows how the same message can be interpreted in multiple ways depending on how it is delivered. By focusing on tone of voice, gestures, body language, and rhythm, participants experience firsthand the power of non-verbal and para-verbal communication.

This activity also highlights that spoken words account for only about 7% of communication, while the remaining 93% comes from non-verbal cues (gestures, facial expressions) and para-verbal elements (tone, pace, rhythm)



Example Phrases & Delivery Instructions for the Exercise

Phrase 1: "I can take care of it, no problem."

- Be clear, use confident tone, slight upward inflection, steady posture, steady gaze.
- Be insecure, rushed, look distracted, avoid eye contact, fidget or look bored.

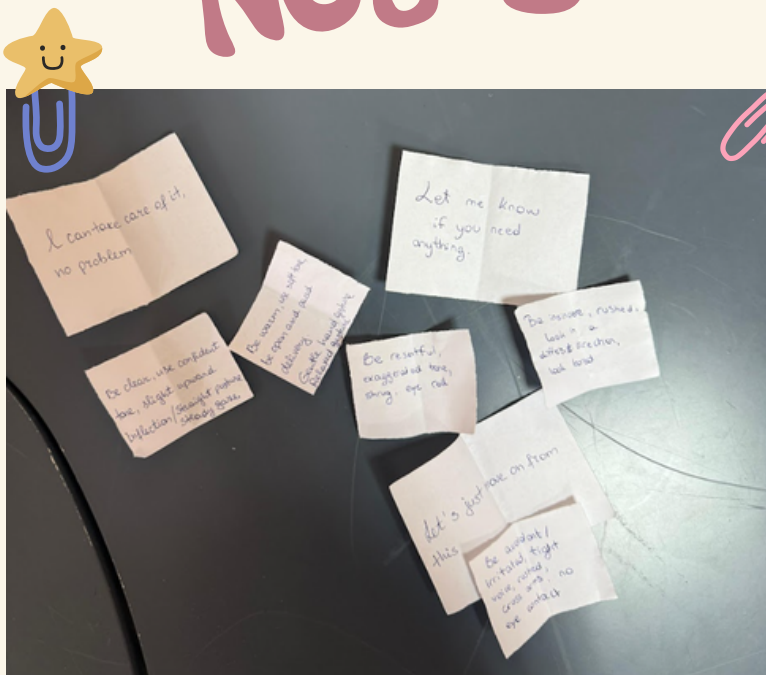
Phrase 2: "Let me know if you need anything."

- Be respectful, exaggerated tone, strong eye contact.
- Be awkward, irritated, tight voice, arms crossed, no smile, no eye contact.

Phrase 3: "Let's just move on from this."

- Be warm, use open gestures, calm and supportive voice.
- Be annoyed, use dismissive gestures, speak quickly, avoid engagement.

Notes



VS



Embracing Change – Mastering Improvisation

By: Maria, Raphaella, Ivana

Topic: Adaptability to change through a proactive approach – improvisation

Duration: 30min

Materials: Paper notes (one per participant), pens, scenario descriptions

Target group: Entry-level trainers, people who want to improve their adaptability

Objective: By the end of the session, participants will improve their improvisation skills through drama, build confidence in decision-making under uncertainty, and show team cohesion when adapting to unexpected situations.

The session begins with an icebreaker where participants introduce themselves and briefly discuss change, focusing on its inevitability and how we react to it. The main exercise, “Static Theatre,” divides participants into teams of 5-8. Each team receives a secret scenario to represent as a frozen image (static theatre) without movement or speech. They have three minutes to prepare. After performing, the audience guesses the scenario.

The trainer then introduces a twist: actors must “unfreeze” and act out the guessed scenario, not the original one. During the scene, the trainer invites audience members to step in and change the situation. Actors must adapt on the spot, practicing improvisation, flexibility, and collaboration.





Debriefing is the core of this session, lasting about 15 minutes. Participants sit in a circle and reflect together:

- *What happened during the activity?*
- *How did it feel working in a group?*
- *What did you learn about yourself in this exercise?*
- *How did it feel when the scene suddenly changed?*
- *How did it feel being an actor, an observer, or the person making changes?*
- *Why might this activity be valuable for trainers?*
- *Can you think of real-life examples where improvisation is crucial?*

To close, participants reflect on their confidence in improvisation compared to the beginning of the session, sharing if their self-assessment has changed. The trainer highlights that many people underestimate their improvisation ability, but when they trust their team and embrace flexibility, they often perform much better than expected.

Evaluation: At the start, participants rate their confidence in improvising when addressing change on a scale from 1 to 10 (written privately on paper). At the end, they repeat the same rating and compare it with their initial score to measure growth.



Cringe therapy

By: Yordan, Nikol, Svetlana

Topic: How improving confidence and self-esteem can help you perform better in front of an audience

Target group: Youth (18–30 years old)

Duration: 30min

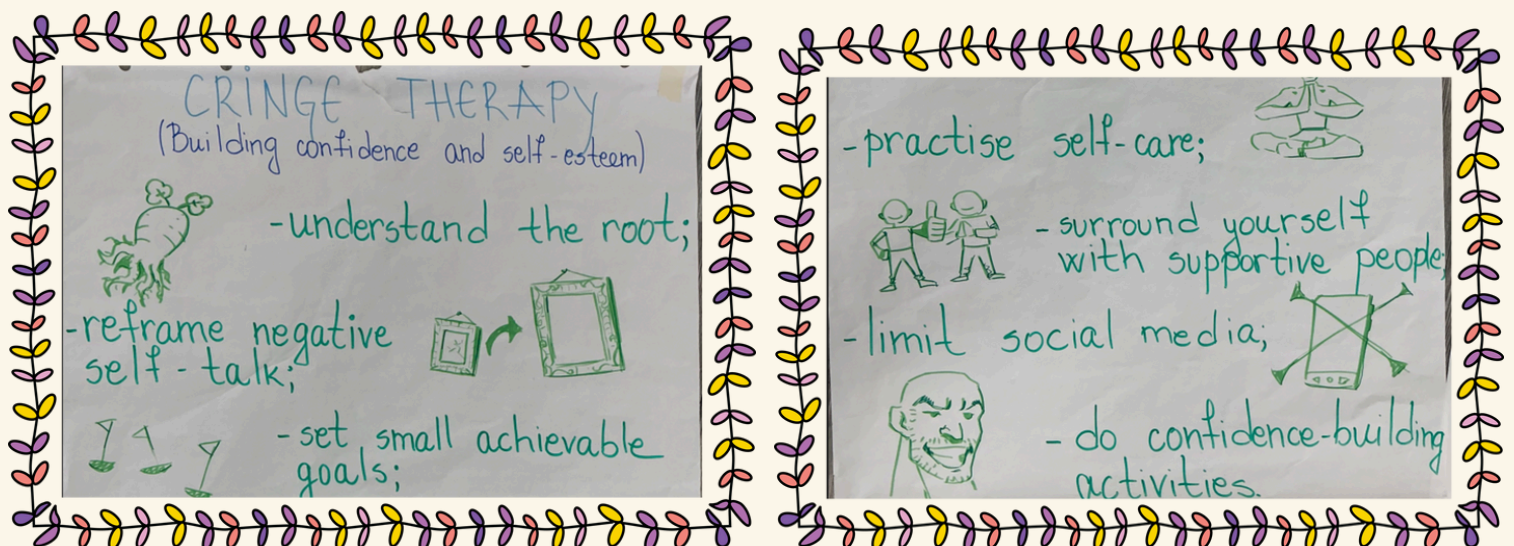
Materials: Whiteboard, flip chart, paper, speakers

Objective: By the end of the session, participants will understand the importance of confidence and self-esteem in personal and professional life, and practice a technique to strengthen these skills.

The session begins with a short introduction where trainers explain the topic on the flipchart to set the tone.

The main exercise, “Cringe Therapy,” introduces a role-play activity to push participants out of their comfort zone. After a trainer explains the rules and co-trainers demonstrate, participants form pairs through a tornado activity. Each pair draws a number from a bowl and, one by one, comes forward to pick up a task and perform it in front of the group. Trainers assign numbers, facilitate the tasks, and keep time.

The exercise encourages participants to face discomfort, embrace vulnerability, and build self-confidence.



The session closes with a group game of tic-tac-toe. Participants split into two teams, and each group can mark the board only by answering a question correctly. This encourages collaboration and quick thinking. Finally, each participant self-assesses how “cringe” they felt on a thermometer scale, reflecting on their emotional growth during the activity.

Evaluation: Participants complete a self-evaluation using the thermometer method, reflecting on their feelings before and after the activity to track confidence growth.



Role-play activities for Cringe Therapy:

- Playing competitive tennis
- Cooking a meal
- Unwrapping a present
- Buying new sunglasses
- Doing the Macarena dance
- Playing chess
- Acting out getting home after a night out
- Swimming in the sea
- Performing surgery (role-play)
- Parachuting (jumping off a plane)
- Doing 10 jumping jacks & inviting others to join
- Performing a ball dance
- Reading a poem aloud to the group

Cringe thermometer

Chill Out – Practical Stress Solutions

By: Philip, Bozan, Aya

Topic: Stress management

Target group: Teenagers
and young people

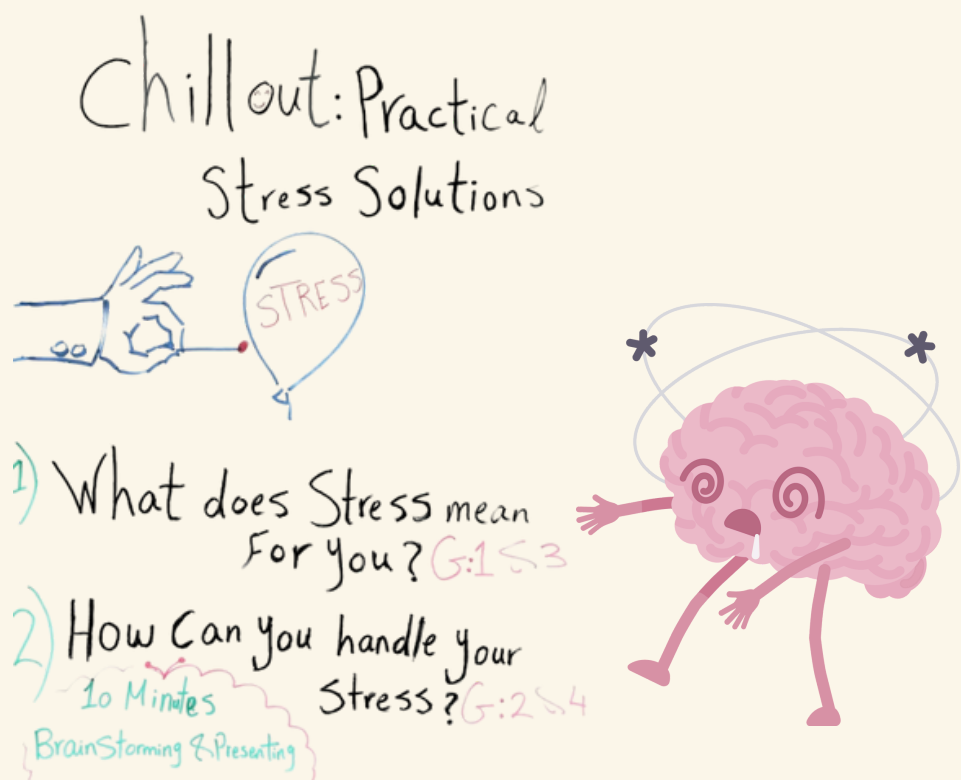
Duration: 30min

Materials: Flip charts, colored pens, speaker, tables

Objective: By the end of the session, participants will learn to handle stress, better understand their emotions, and explore practical coping strategies and techniques.

The session begins with an icebreaker, "Stress Charades." Trainers present seven examples of stressful situations and ask participants how they would react. Three volunteers then act out specific stressful scenarios for the group to guess, sparking discussion and reflection on how stress appears in daily life.

The main exercise uses the "World Café" method. Participants are divided into four groups: Groups 1 and 3 discuss the question, "What does stress mean to you?", while Groups 2 and 4 discuss, "How can you handle stress?" After five minutes, groups switch tables to tackle the other question. At the end, each group presents their ideas using flip charts, encouraging peer learning and creativity.

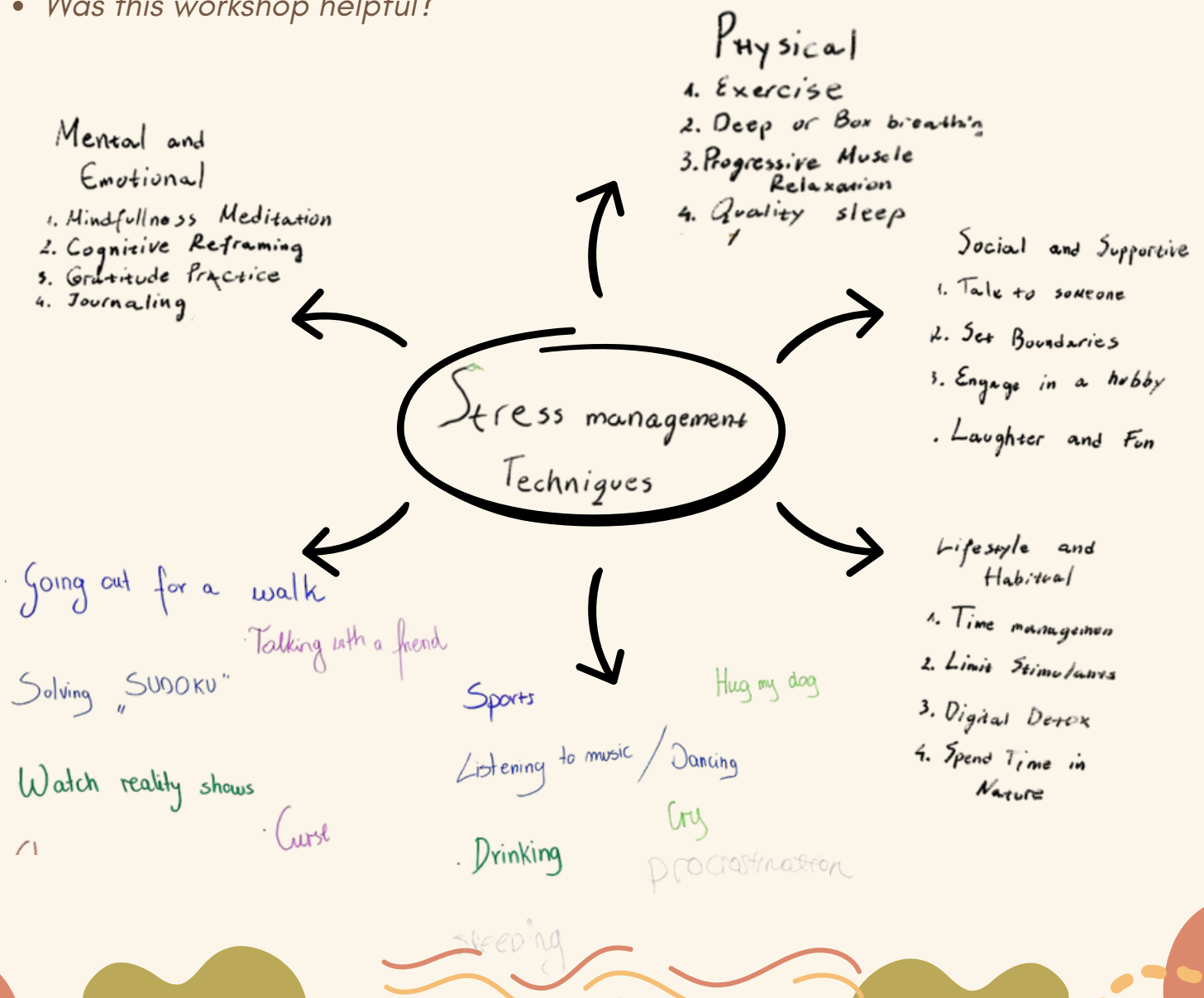




The session closes with a calming exercise, introducing a practical breathing technique. Participants practice deep or box breathing: inhale for 4 seconds, hold, exhale for 4 seconds, hold, all accompanied by calming music. Trainers also share personal examples of using this technique in real life to manage stress.

Evaluation: Participants reflect through short feedback questions:

- How did you feel?
- Can you share examples of how you handle stress?
- Was this workshop helpful?



From Nervous to Noticed

By: Naum G., Meggy A., Yoana S.

Topic: Boosting self-presentation skills & body language communication during an interview

Target group: Young graduates

Duration: 1 day

Materials: Whiteboard, markers, paper

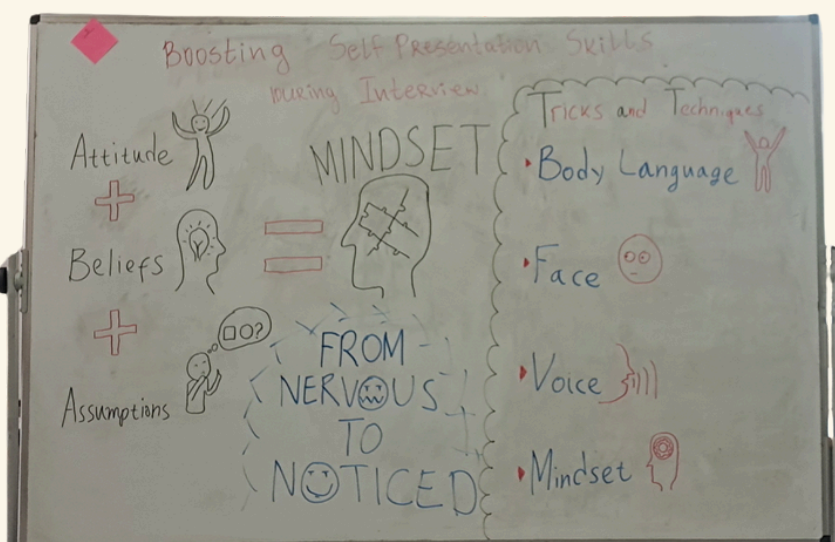
Objective: Help participants understand how mindset and body language influence interview performance, and practice shifting from a nervous to a confident presence.

The session begins with a short introduction where trainers welcome the participants and explain the focus: enhancing self-presentation and body language so graduates can move from nervous to noticed – and hired.

The first activity is a brainstorming exercise. Trainers write the word INTERVIEW on the board and ask participants: “What do you think of when you hear this word?” Participants share their responses, which are written down. Together, trainers circle and group the words into positive and negative associations using colours.

Examples of words collected:

- Negative: super shy, no eye contact, sweating, anxious voice, unprepared, closed posture, awkward hands.
- Positive: confident, eye contact, open posture, relaxed, strong voice, smiling, engaged.

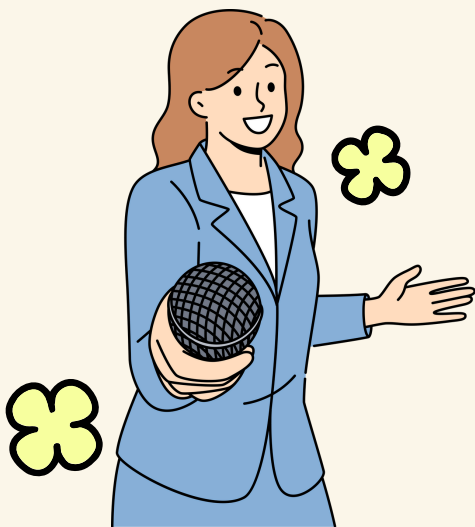


The main exercise continues with a role-play demonstration. One participant is invited to act out a mock interview, showing body language, voice, and reactions that reflect a nervous mindset. A second demonstration follows, this time showing a confident mindset.

Participants then split into two groups to reflect on the two demonstrations. They discuss what went right, what went wrong, and how mindset was expressed in body language, voice, and posture. Each group works for 10 minutes and then presents their findings to the whole group.

The session closes with a short debrief, where trainers guide discussion with key questions: How do our inner thoughts shape our external communication? How can we shift from a nervous mindset to a noticed one? What does it take to own the room, not just survive it?

Evaluation: Participants reflect on their learnings and discuss how they can apply body language and mindset shifts in their next interview to move from nervous to noticed.



Partner Organisations

Orenda (Bulgaria) – Orenda, founded in 2011 in Varna, Bulgaria, is a non-governmental organization focused on youth development, education, and social inclusion. Its mission is to help young people make informed career choices, build personal and professional skills, and support the integration of disadvantaged groups. Orenda runs trainings, seminars, and projects on career readiness, sustainable living, financial literacy, and civic participation, and has coordinated numerous Erasmus+ initiatives. In 2018, it founded Things with Soul Ltd., a social enterprise employing people with disabilities to produce educational toys. Today, Orenda's team of staff and volunteers continues to promote innovation in education and empower youth to actively shape their communities.

 [Orenda Website](#), [Things with Soul](#) & [Facebook](#)

Young Wave (Poland) – Young Wave is a Polish youth association founded in 2022 by motivated youth workers to inspire change and create opportunities for young people. Its mission is to provide safe spaces for learning, self-expression, and personal growth while promoting values of compassion, respect, equality, action, teamwork, and empowerment. The organisation focuses on non-formal education, employability, intercultural learning, sustainability, and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. Locally, it runs workshops on well-being, communication, self-management, and Erasmus+ opportunities, while also mentoring volunteers. Internationally, Young Wave has already built partnerships with Romania, Hungary, Italy, and Croatia, and hosted two youth exchanges in 2023. Its team of young but experienced members bring expertise in youth work, education, healthy lifestyle, media, and intercultural dialogue, driving the organisation's goal of empowering youth to actively shape their communities.

 [Young Wave Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)

Suma Udruga (Croatia) – SUMA – Association for Sustainable Development, founded in 2020 in Podravske Sesvete, Croatia, is a youth-led NGO promoting sustainability, community empowerment, and social inclusion. Its mission is to build a future where communities thrive through environmental responsibility, personal development, and social well-being. The organisation runs over 200 local and regional activities, alongside international youth projects, using non-formal education, coaching, and experiential learning. SUMA focuses on rural youth, disadvantaged groups, and women in rural areas, offering trainings in entrepreneurship, technical skills, mental health, ecology, and intercultural dialogue. With strong partnerships, including the British Embassy in Zagreb and multiple Erasmus+ networks, SUMA combines local action with international collaboration to drive positive change. Its team of experienced trainers and social workers bring expertise in youth work, project management, social policy, and community development.

 [Suma Udruga website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)


Ask Yourself (Romania) – ASK Yourself, founded in 2015 in Romania, is a youth NGO dedicated to non-formal education, equality, interculturality, and civic participation. Its mission is to empower young people through Erasmus+ opportunities, skill development, and active community engagement. The organisation has implemented 17 Erasmus+ projects and partnered in over 30 others, focusing on youth exchanges, training courses, and inclusion initiatives. Locally, it runs workshops in high schools on topics like bullying, mental health, communication, and career guidance, while also training youth workers and educators. ASK Yourself places special emphasis on supporting young people with fewer opportunities by helping them design projects, prepare for employment, and build confidence. With a team of 12 youth workers and 34 volunteers, the organisation combines strong local roots with international collaboration to create long-term impact in youth development.

 [Ask Yourself website](#), [Facebook](#) & [LinkedIn](#)

GOOD WILL Skopje (North Macedonia) - GOOD WILL Skopje, founded in 2021, is a non-profit NGO in North Macedonia focused on youth, volunteering, environment, and sports. The association engages young people in non-formal education, training, research, and international exchanges, while also developing projects that strengthen community involvement. Its mission is to promote youth work, volunteering, environmental awareness, and sports through local, regional, and international initiatives. With founders experienced in fields such as public relations, tourism, design, marketing, and agronomy, GOOD WILL combines diverse expertise to create impactful programs. The organisation's vision is to unite and empower individuals who contribute voluntarily to society, protect the environment, and advance sports and education.

 [GOOD WILL Skopje Facebook](#)

MedArterranean (Greece) - MedArterranean is an informal youth group based in Greece that combines meditation, art, and nature to promote well-being and sustainability. Its activities focus on mental health, mindfulness, and self-awareness through creative practices such as theater, improv, storytelling, music, and dance. At the same time, the group emphasizes a strong connection to nature, encouraging grounding, hiking, and environmentally responsible living. By blending artistic expression with mindful practices, MedArterranean creates inclusive spaces for personal growth, creativity, and community building. Its vision is to inspire young people to live healthier, more sustainable lives while fostering a deeper connection with themselves, others, and the environment.

 [MedArterranean Facebook](#)

Project Results

During our training course, 24 youth workers from 6 organisations came together to strengthen their competences in non-formal education. Over 7 days we combined creativity, collaboration, and reflection to achieve meaningful results:

- *7 different methods, developed by the participants during the training*
- *1 Toolkit with useful methods and session description*
- *we strengthened public speaking skills and learned to design impactful speeches*
- *we learned to embrace mistakes to grow in confidence and resilience*
- *we improved facilitation by learning to give clear, inclusive instructions*
- *we learned how to adapt methods to different learning styles*
- *we built constructive feedback culture and practiced giving & receiving feedback*
- *we created personal growth plans with clear next steps as trainers*
- *and of course, we found friends and made memories for life!*



Testimonials



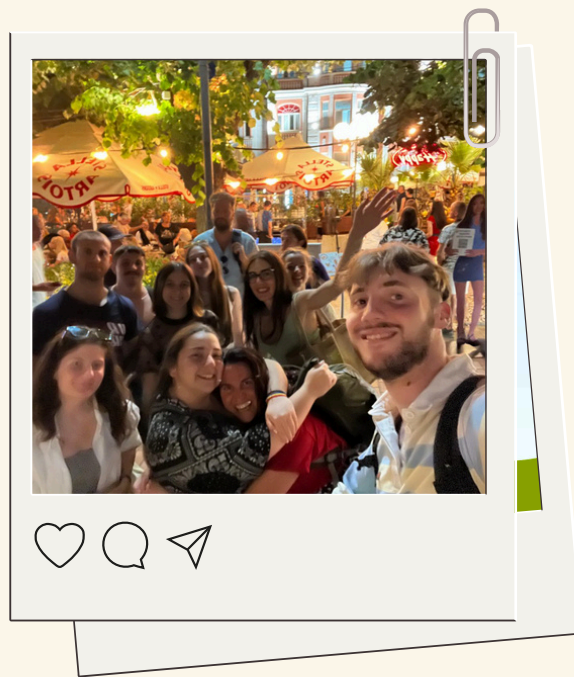
Danai, Greece

On June 22-30 2025, I took part in the Erasmus+ training course "Train the Trainer: Empowering Trainers in Non-Formal Education" in Varna, Bulgaria.

Together with 24 youth workers from Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Croatia, Poland and North Macedonia, we spent a week learning and experimenting with non-formal education methods. We dived into public speaking, group dynamics, conflict management and even tested ourselves by preparing and delivering our own workshops (my favorite part 😊).

As a volunteer in two NGOs, I feel really excited to bring back all the knowledge, tools and creative methods we explored and use them in my future workshops. This training was not just about skills. It was also about connections, sharing experiences and realizing how much you can grow when you step out of your comfort zone.

Huge thanks to Orenda Foundation for hosting us and to our trainers Kunka and Marcelina for creating such a safe and inspiring space. I came back with new skills, new energy and a new family of trainers from all over the Balkans and beyond 🌍✨

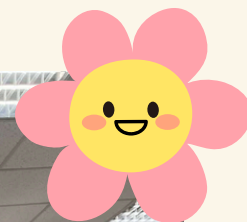


Alexandru Madaras, Romania

It was a great week where I gained precious hands-on experience while learning public speaking and people management skills.

During the week in Varna, the activities were entertaining, challenging, empowering us to implement NFL workshops.

Moreover, the fun was always there, with intercultural breaks, banter and dinners🍷.



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