POCKET GUIDE

CONTENT

PREFACE

This pocket guide is an outcome of the training course "Mind Over Media" a Training Course organized by the Association for the promotion of active participation Studio B. The training took place in Nova Gradiška, from 6th to 14th September 2025.

The training course was funded by the Agency for mobility and EU programs from Croatia through Erasmus+ program, under Key Action 1: KA153-YOU – Mobility of Youth Workers.

The pocket guide includes six 1.5-hour workshops for youth workers, providing practical methods and tools to run activities on: Critical Thinking, Critical Thinking & Mental Health and Media Literacy.
These workshops are here to inspire youth workers and help engage young people in reflection and address challenges of the digital age.

The methods were designed and tested during our training course.
With this pocket guide we would like to provide youth workers, multipliers and all non-formal learning practitioners across Europe and beyond with new resources that can be used in providing educational activities.

We would like to thank to the Agency for mobility and EU programs from Croatia that has funded this project through Erasmus+ program. We also express our gratitude to the whole training team that has worked hard in the creation of the program flow and this pocket guide.

Last, but not least, we express our immense gratitude to all of the participants that have worked intensively during the training course and designed novel methods that are using participative approach while providing experiential learning opportunity.

MIND OVER MEDIA BACKGROUND

In today's digital world, young people are constantly surrounded by information that shapes their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. While social media and AI create opportunities for learning and connection, they also bring challenges such as misinformation, comparison, and mental overload. These pressures increasingly affect young people's mental health, making the ability to think critically more important than ever.

Recognizing this need, the TC: Mind over Media was created to empower youth workers, educators, and community leaders with tools to foster critical thinking and mental well-being among young people. By combining psychology, education, and digital literacy, the project supports professionals in helping youth reflect, question, and navigate the online world with awareness and balance.

The training course took place in Nova Gradiška, Croatia, from 6th to 14th September 2025, gathering 28 participants and trainers from Croatia, Spain, Lithuania, Serbia, Romania, Sweden, Moldova, and Italy. Participants included youth workers, educators, and leaders active in non-formal education, all eager to exchange ideas, develop skills, and bring new perspectives back to their communities.

The Mind over Media Pocket Guide was developed as a concrete result of this collaboration - a practical tool to help youth workers integrate critical thinking into everyday practice and promote mental resilience in a media-saturated world.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF ACTIVE PARTICIPATION STUDIO B

The Association for the promotion of active participation Studio B is a non-governmental and non-profit organization based in a rural community. The association was founded in 2017 with the aim of achieving balanced development of the local community as well as the development of civil society. The association strives to promote and improve the rights of young people as well as increase the quality of activities for young people by increasing their level of information. Main goals: 1. Promoting the interests and activities of young people, - promoting active participation of young people, - promoting tolerance and nonviolence, - promoting cultural and artistic content, - encouraging creativity of children and youth, - spreading volunteerism and solidarity among children and youth, - encouraging communication among young people; 2. Promoting awareness of the development of civil society, - promoting human rights and gender equality, - promoting awareness of the development of the information society; 3. Promoting sustainable development, - raising environmental awareness, - encouraging the rational use of nature and its goods; 4. Promoting active citizen participation; 5. Promoting the values of the European Union.
Our target groups are children, youth and women from rural areas.
Our mission is to support young people from the region, especially women; to develop non-formal education, creativity, democracy, human rights and the development of tolerance and solidarity among young people. An important priority of the association is the inclusion of every individual, including young people with fewer opportunities, especially those with geographical obstacles.
Our association currently employs 13 people and annually involves over 40 volunteers.

Mental health, as a wider topic, has been in the focus of our work since our founding, with the following key initiatives:

- Health+ talks (2018, Erasmus+ Youth Exchange) with partners from Denmark, Greece, Lithuania, Sweden, Spain to raise mental health awareness;
- RU:TOPIA (national project, since 2020): launched a free monthly mental health advice center run by two psychologists;
- METAPHOR (since Nov 2023, European Youth Together): we implemented a national survey with 100 participants, hosted one training and joined another in Serbia and designed an ongoing mental health promotion campaign.

When in comes to youth work and nonformal education, we have delievered multiple national and international projects on different topics, from employability to gender equality and produced several guidebooks and manuals in the field.
We also led the process of creating Local youth protgramme of the Municipality of Vrbje and created the proposal of the Regional youth programme of Brod-Posavina county.

We are commited to improving the overall well-being of youth in rural areas with different initiatives and opportunities designed for them and with them.

PARTNERS'PROFILE

ASOCIACIÓN JUVENIL ERASMIAU, SPAIN
ERASMIAU is a youth association based in Puente Genil, Córdoba, founded by three young people passionate about travel, culture, and intercultural learning. Its main goal is to provide young people with opportunities to explore the world, embrace diversity, and connect cultural discovery with the curiosity and creativity of new generations.
The organization works closely with Mesa Local de la Juventud, an established local youth association, through which it gained hands-on experience in youth work, facilitation, and project coordination. One of its key local initiatives, Summer Youth 2022, engaged over 300 young people in leisure and educational activities, using democratic decision-making and non-formal education methods to empower youth participation.
ERASMIAU also collaborates with Europa 2020 and has acted as facilitator and organizer in several Erasmus+ projects, including youth exchanges, study visits, and training courses. Through its work, ERASMIAU aims to foster intercultural learning, active participation, and the adventurous spirit of young people, helping them grow personally and socially within a diverse European context.

ASOCIACIJA "KELIAUK PIRMYN", LITHUANIA
Enterprising Partners is a Lithuanian youth organization dedicated to providing learning opportunities and consultancy for enterprising young people. Founded by social science students, the organization promotes collaboration among youth of different backgrounds to exchange ideas and foster innovation.
Its main activities focus on entrepreneurship, digital literacy, employability, and non-formal education. The organization regularly organizes seminars, discussions, and youth camps on topics such as self-development, creativity, leadership, and social inclusion. It also supports youth mobility, participates in local and international initiatives, and contributes to reducing youth unemployment through skill development and volunteering opportunities.
Through its work, Enterprising Partners aims to promote social entrepreneurship, raise awareness of digitalization opportunities and risks, and create an international community of motivated, socially responsible young people.

ASOCIATIA PENTRU DEZVOLTARE ACTIVA, ROMANIA
Active Development Association (ADA) is an Erasmus+ accredited organization promoting sustainable development and youth empowerment, with a strong focus on rural areas and vulnerable communities. Its mission is to equip young people with the skills and confidence to become active citizens and changemakers in their societies.
ADA coordinates the European Youth Village program, which strengthens rural youth ecosystems through participation, leadership, and innovation. The organization also contributes to youth policy development through initiatives such as the White Charter of Rural Youth and the RITM Network.
With experience in over 70 European projects, ADA works in the fields of entrepreneurship, digital literacy, inclusion, and mental health, organizing events like the European Rural Youth Summit and Rural Youth Awards. Through its work, ADA connects grassroots action with policy advocacy, fostering inclusive, resilient, and empowered rural youth communities across Europe.

PARTNERS' PROFILE

AO „DEFACTO, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

DeFacto is a Moldovan youth-focused organization dedicated to empowering citizens and strengthening civic engagement. Founded by alumni of the Challenger program, DeFacto promotes collaboration between young people and authorities to address community issues and hold elected officials accountable.

Its main activities focus on civic activism, critical thinking, social inclusion, advocacy, and leadership. The organization regularly organizes workshops, discussions, and community initiatives that engage youth in monitoring electoral promises, promoting transparency, and developing problem-solving skills. DeFacto also partners with civic groups across the country, creating opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making processes and contribute to local development.

Through its work, DeFacto aims to foster informed, socially responsible citizens, enhance youth participation in democratic processes, and build stronger, more active communities.

JÖNKÖPINGS KOMMUN, SWEDEN

Department of Culture and Leisure (KFF), Jönköpings kommun is a Swedish municipal organization dedicated to supporting children (9–12 years) and youth (13–25 years) through inclusive recreational and cultural activities. The department operates nine youth centers across the municipality, in cooperation with partners such as Bilda and KFUM, offering free programs that promote social development, democratic values, and active participation.

Regular activities at the youth centers focus on open youth work, social inclusion, cultural engagement, and recreational opportunities, including sports, dance, and community projects. Special programs are offered for vulnerable groups, including youth with functional disabilities and LGBTIQA+ youth. Activities are designed to strengthen community, develop leadership skills, and provide safe, meaningful leisure time.

The department actively works to increase participation of girls and young women, promote equality and cultural diversity, and prevent negative social behaviors. With Erasmus+ Accreditation and the ESC Quality Label, KFF also facilitates youth exchanges, mobility of youth workers, and international volunteering opportunities.

UDRUŽENJE SVETLOST, SERBIA

Udruženje Svetlost is a Serbian youth organization established in 2001, dedicated to empowering young people, including NEETs and youth with fewer opportunities, through education, career guidance, and active participation. The team includes 6 full-time staff, 1 part-time staff, and around 40 volunteers, working across 14 cities and municipalities, in cooperation with over 30 local and national partners.

Svetlost's activities include career counselling, mentoring, non-formal education, research, needs analysis, and development of innovative tools and methodologies. The organization participates actively in Erasmus+ (KA1, KA2, and European Youth Together) and European Solidarity Corps projects, providing mobility, hosting, and learning opportunities for hundreds of young people annually.

Through initiatives such as the Job Info Centre, apprenticeships, vocational training, and experiential learning programs, Svetlost promotes employability, civic engagement, digital wellbeing, and social inclusion. Their work fosters critical thinking, skill development, and long-term community resilience, creating opportunities for young people to reach their full potential locally, nationally, and internationally.

PARTNERS' PROFILE

COOPERATIVA SOCIALE ATYPICA ARL, ITALY

Atypica NGO is an Italian organization working in education, youth projects, migrant reception, and cultural mediation since 1991. Over the years, it has expanded its activities to include co-housing, youth advocacy, and Erasmus+ projects (TC, YE, and Study Visits).

At the local level, Atypica regularly manages youth centers, educational programs, and school-based workshops. Its activities focus on empowering young people through hands-on learning, cultural participation, and social engagement. Youth participate in laboratories, cultural initiatives, and summer camps designed to build teamwork, independence, and community spirit. The NGO emphasizes a bottom-up approach, where young people are central in creating, organizing, and leading activities.
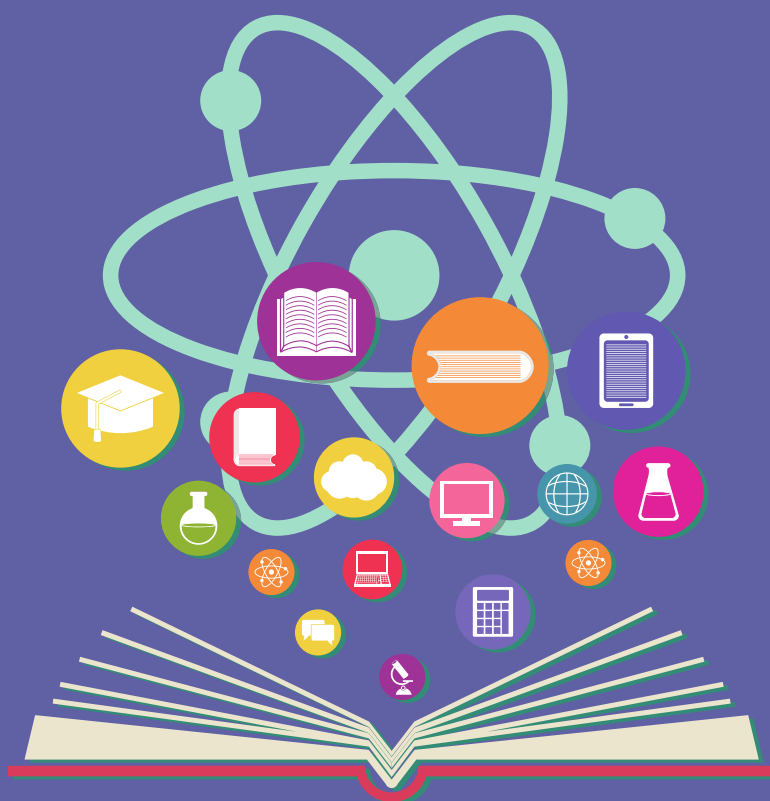
NOVEL NONFORMAL LEARNING METHODS

In the following pages you can find the six 1.5-hour workshops for youth workers, providing practical methods and tools to run activities on: Critical Thinking, Critical Thinking & Mental Health and Media Literacy.
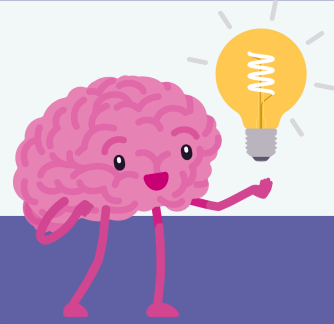
These workshops are here to inspire youth workers and help engage young people in reflection and address challenges of the digital age.

We hope you'll enjoy them as much as we did while creating and testing these methods.

The description contains the objectives of the session, target audience and number of participants, materials needed, step-by-step description, reflection questions shaped by following Kolb's model and expected outcomes.

NAME OF THE SESSION: Think smart, Act now

LENGTH: 1,5h

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:
From 10 to 20 maximum

TARGET AUDIENCE (age):
From 14 to 17 years

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
1. Enhance the youth's ability to recognize and analyze critical thinking in everyday situations

MATERIALS:
Chairs, speaker, music, computer, projector, magazines, newspapers, scissors, tape sheets of paper

Activity 1: Energizer ''Chair game'' (10 min)
Materials: Chairs, speaker, music

Description: We place several chairs in a circle, but always one fewer chair than the number of players. Then we play some music and while music is playing everyone has to walk around the circle. When music stops everyone must go and find a chair and be really fast because the person without chair is eliminated. We quit one chair and continue doing it till there's only one player and that's the winner.

Activity 2: Photo collage (30 min)
Materials: magazines, pieces of papers, newspapers, markers, scissors, tape

Description: Divide the participants into 4 small groups of 5 people.
Each group is given 15 minutes to search through magazines for images, or to write or draw anything **that represents what critical thinking means to them.**
After the time is up, each group shares their choices and explanations with the rest of the participants. Finally, all contributions are discussed together in the large group, creating a collective understanding of critical thinking.

Reflection questions:
- From what we saw what do you think is critical thinking?
- Do you think you're using critical thinking in daily life?

Activity 3: Critical thinking or not (30 min)
Materials: tape or you can also use projector for showing the statements

Description: Divide the participants into two groups, separated by a line in the middle of the space. Show a series of statements to the group (e.g., "Social media does more harm than good"). For each statement: participants who agree move to the middle of the space, participants who disagree stay where they are. Once everyone has chosen a position, participants take turns explaining their reasoning for why they agree or disagree. After hearing each other's arguments, participants are allowed to change their position if they are convinced by someone else's reasoning.

Reflection questions:
- Did you change your mind?
- Did your definition of critical thinking changed?
- How do you feel when someone disagrees with your belief?
- How did listening to different arguments affect your opinion or understanding?

Activity 4: Reflection (10 min)
Materials: no need

Description: We let everyone speak freely in how the feel about the session and any comments they want to make.
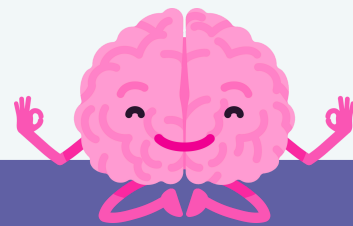
Reflection questions:
- How do you feel about session, anything to share, or any comments to make?

Activity 5: Relax (10 min)
Materials: speaker and calm music

Description: We practise some abdominal breathing just to relax and make some stretch of our body parts to relax them.

NAME OF THE SESSION: Are you listening (active listening)?

LENGTH: 1,5h

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:
From 5 to 10 maximum

TARGET AUDIENCE (age):
From 14 to 18 years

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
1. Understand what active listening is and why it matters
2. Recognize common barriers to communication
3. Develop critical thinking

MATERIALS:
Flipchard, markers, post-it, paper, pens, chairs, timer, speaker, glue, template for role play

Activity 1: Ice- breaker - Name game (10 min)

Description: Participants form a circle. The first person says their name and an animal sound. The next person repeats the previous names and sounds, then adds their own. The sequence continues around the circle until everyone has participated. This activity develops active listening, memory, and helps participants learn each other's names in a fun, low-pressure way.

Activity 2: Storytelling - Best day at school (20 min)

Description: Participants are divided into pairs. Each person takes turns sharing a short story about their best day in school while their partner practices active listening, focusing on understanding, remembering details, and showing engagement. After both have shared, each pair gives brief feedback to each other, noting what made the story clear, interesting, or memorable.

Activity 3: Role playing (30 min)

Description: Fake News in School Scenario

Description of the situation:
There is a group of students in the school hallway. Student 1 receives a rumor via social media claiming that a popular teacher will be fired next week. Believing the message, Student 1 immediately shares it aloud with Student 2 and other nearby students, creating confusion and panic. Student 2 notices that the information might be false and attempts to calm Student 1 and others, asking them to verify the news before spreading it further. The teacher arrives at the scene after hearing the commotion and tries to clarify the facts, but some students remain skeptical. Meanwhile, the principal is informed and steps in to mediate and provide accurate information to everyone.

Roles:
Student 1: Receives and spreads the fake news.
Student 2: Notices the misinformation and tries to calm and rationalize the situation.
Teacher: Arrives to clarify the facts and answer questions.
Principal: Intervenes to provide official clarification and mediate the conflict.

Learning Objectives:
1. Understand how fake news spreads and the impact it can have in a school environment
2. Practice critical thinking and fact-checking before reacting
3. Develop conflict resolution and communication skills in tense situations

Reflection questions:
- What roles did you see at school?
- What did you learn?
- Which critical thinking skills did you use?
- Did you spot any fake news? How did you check it? What skills helped you?
- What caught your attention in the news? What did it teach you? How did you communicate your findings?
- Which roles seemed fake? How did you verify it? What thinking skills did you apply?
- What did you notice in each role? What did you learn from it? Which skills did you use?

Activity 4: The Pizza Evaluation Method (10 min)

Description: This is a simple and visual way to gather feedback from participants about different aspects of an event, workshop, or project.

1. Draw the Pizza: Start by drawing a large circle on a flip chart or board. This circle represents the pizza.
2. Slice the Pizza: Divide the circle into several slices, like a real pizza. Each slice will represent a different category you want to evaluate.
3. Label the Slices: Write the name of each evaluation category in one of the slices:
   - Topic
   - Method
   - Space/Venue
   - Trainers/Facilitators
   - Teamwork
   - (You can add any other categories as needed)
4. Participant Feedback: Each participant gets to place their mark (like a dot, an 'X', or their initials) in every slice. The position where they place their mark indicates their rating.

How to Rate:
   - Excellent (High Score): Placing a mark near the center of the pizza means the participant was very satisfied with that category.
   - Poor (Low Score): Placing a mark near the outer edge (the crust) means the participant was not satisfied with that category.
   - Average Score: A mark placed somewhere in the middle of the slice represents an average or neutral opinion.

At the end, you will have a visual map of the group's collective feedback, making it easy to see which areas were successful and which may need improvement.

NAME OF THE SESSION: Hidden treasure of communication

LENGTH: 1,5h

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:
From 8 to 16 maximum

TARGET AUDIENCE (age):
From 15 to 18 years

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
1. Recognize the importance of nonverbal communication in everyday interactions
2. Practice critical thinking by questioning whether gestures and expressions can have different meanings depending on culture, situation, or relationship
3. Practice expressing emotions and messages without words

MATERIALS:
Prepared, printed and cut situation cards for Expressing emotions and thoughts through situational theatre, projector and laptop, phones (participants can use it during the sessions), papers, pens, Dixit cards or any people photos

Activity 1: Introduction and Name and gesture (10 min)

Description: Each participant says their name and shows a gesture that represents them (a movement, pose, or facial expression). The next person repeats the previous name and gesture, then adds their own. The last participant repeats all before adding their movement.

Activity 2: Self-expression photos (20 min)
Materials: newspapers, photos of people with different expressions

Description: Each participant chooses a photo (taken from internet/newspapers, their own phones...) of a person familiar to them (friend, family member, teacher, influencer, etc.) with strong facial expression.

They share about the photo, facial expression and what it means to them (e.g., "My coach always raises his eyebrows like this when he is not satisfied"). The group discusses if they interpreted the expression the same way.

Reflection questions:
- What expression is hardest to express?
- Was it difficult to find explain the expression on the people's photos? If yes, what are the reasons?

Activity 3: Expressing emotions and thoughts through situational theatre (20 min)
Materials: prepared, printed and cut situation cards

Description: Participants form pairs. Each pair receives a short situation to act out silently. They will have 5 minutes to prepare roles and have max 1 minute to present it to other pairs.

Example situations: (these can be changed according to the creativity of the workshop leader)
- Your mom says "no" to your favorite sweet.
- You are late for an important event, and there's no transport.
- You receive a surprising gift.
- You lost your keys and can't get inside.

After the performance, the group guesses the situation and discusses which nonverbal signals were clear and what not.

Reflection questions:
- Was it easy or difficult to show the situation without words?
- How did you decide which movements or facial expressions to use?
- Could the same gesture mean something completely different in another culture or group?

Activity 3: Silent videos (30 min)
Materials: projector, phones, laptop, papers and pens

Description: Participants are divided into small groups 3-4 people in the group. Each group will create a silent video on the topic "Tell me about your dream" and will have max 20 min to record it. The length of the video should be maximum 60 seconds. Once they finish, videos are going to be shown.

Reflection questions:
- How did your group agree on which gestures to include? Did you all see them the same way?
- Was there any disagreement in your group about how to show the situation? What did you learn from that?
- Could your scene be understood without any background context, or was context important?
- How can we check our assumptions when interpreting other people's body language?

Activity 4: Reflection & Evaluation (15 min)
Materials: Dixit cards or any photos of people

Description:

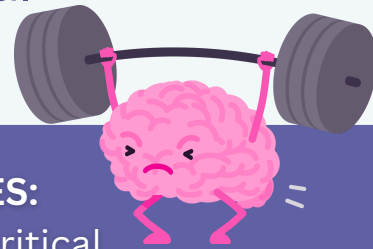Reflection: Participants are sitting in the cycle and reflection question are asked:
- What was the hardest part for you?
- What was easier to communicate non-verbally or verbally?
- What was the biggest challenge in understanding nonverbal communication today?
- How can critical thinking help us avoid misunderstandings in daily communication?
- When is it dangerous to make assumptions based only on nonverbal signals?

After questioning, you can spread the card on the floor and ask each participant to pick one that represents what they are bringing with them.

Evaluation: In circle participant will show do they agree/disagree on the statements with their thumb (like, middle, dislike)

- I feel more confident expressing myself without words.
- I better understand how gestures and facial expressions convey meaning.
- I realize that different people can interpret the same gesture in different ways.
- Working in pairs and groups helped me communicate more clearly.
- I think critically about the meaning behind nonverbal signals in everyday life.

NAME OF THE SESSION: Introduction to Critical Thinking through Questions & Debate

LENGTH: 1,5h

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:
From 8 to 16 maximum

TARGET AUDIENCE (age):
From 15+

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
1. Understand what critical thinking is
2. Recognize the importance of critical thinking in everyday life
3. Experience the importance of asking questions in the context of critical thinking

MATERIALS:
Flipchart & markers, papers & pens, chairs & tables, tape

Activity 1: YES/NO Games (Dark Stories) (15 min)

Description: The trainer tells a short mysterious story from the "Yes/No" or "Dark Stories" game. Participants can only ask yes/no questions to uncover the full story and ending.

Reflection questions:
- What role did asking questions play in finding the solution?
- What role did curiosity and questioning play in reaching the answer?

Activity 2: Input on Critical Thinking (10 min)

Description: Trainer provides a short interactive input: What is critical thinking? Why is it important? How do we apply it in daily life? Real-life examples are shared (e.g., evaluating news, making decisions).

Reflection questions:
- Where in real life do you already apply critical thinking?
- Where could you use it more consciously?

Activity 3: Cross-Questioning Debate (35 min)
Materials: papers and pens

Description: Participants split into two equal groups (For vs. Against). A topic is given (e.g., "Social media does more harm than good"). Groups get preparation time, then present their statements. The debate continues with cross-questioning: each group must challenge the other with questions and defend their arguments.

Reflection questions:
- How did asking questions help you understand or weaken the opponent's position?
- Did you notice moments where answers lacked critical thinking?
- How does questioning improve the quality of reasoning?

Activity 4: Wrap-Up & Reflection (15 min)
Materials: flipchart

Description: Trainer facilitates a group reflection and summarizes learning. Participants share one takeaway about critical thinking and questioning. Key ideas are written on a flipchart.

Reflection questions:
- What did you learn?
- How would you describe critical thinking now?
- Why are questions important?
- How are you going to implement concrete actions from today?

NAME OF THE SESSION: Can we think under stress?

LENGTH: 1,5h

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:
From 8 to 16 maximum

TARGET AUDIENCE (age):
From 12+

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
1. Recognize how stress affects decision-making
2. Enhance critical thinking under pressure
3. Explore how stress can both support and hinder decision-making

MATERIALS:
List of 10 actions, Flipchart & markers, papers & pens, post it

Activity 1: Tiger escaped the ZOO (45 min)
Materials: list of 10 actions, pens

Description: Participants are divided into small teams of 3–6 people. Each group receives a realistic crisis scenario: a tiger has escaped from its enclosure, and visitors are still inside the zoo.
You are the only staff members on site — and you must act fast.
Teams have 10 minutes to decide how to respond. From a list of 10 possible actions *(ex. call the police, inform local media, inform visitors with alarm…)*, they must select and rank the 5 most important (1–5) under time pressure. Every 2 minutes, new information arrives — for example, the tiger is spotted outside the zoo, a child goes missing, social media rumors spread, or journalists start calling. Teams must adapt their priorities, discuss strategy, and assign a spokesperson to communicate their decisions.

Reflection questions:
- What happened?
- How did the **time pressure** affect your team's decisions?
- How did sharing responsibility affect decision-making?
- Did you **reorder priorities** as new information came in?
- What could you apply from this exercise to **real decision-making under stress**?

Activity 2: Exploring Stress and Decision-Making (30 min)
Materials: flipchart, post it, pen

Description: Participants are divided into two groups:
- Group 1 – Stress as a Friend: Discuss situations where stress helped (e.g., boosted focus, motivation, alertness).
- Group 2 – Stress as an Enemy: Discuss situations where stress harmed performance (e.g., caused anxiety, confusion, burnout).

Each group shares real-life examples from personal or professional experience and writes them on post-it notes.
The facilitator introduces the Optimal Performance Curve (OPT) and invites participants to place their post-its on the curve to visualize how different stress levels influence performance.
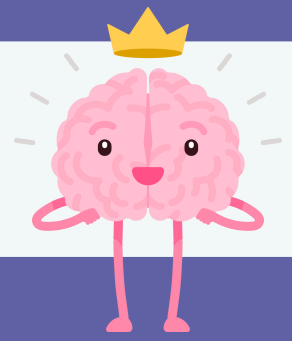
Reflection questions:
- What is the connection between stress and critical thinking?
- Can you identify your personal "optimal stress zone" for thinking clearly?
- What is your "take-out" from this activity?

Activity 3: Relaxation Techniques (15 min)

Description: Participants begin by sharing personal strategies for coping with stress (e.g., movement, breathing, planning, humor, nature). The facilitator gives a brief introduction to mindfulness, highlighting its benefits for decision-making under stress. The session concludes with a 3–5 minute guided mindfulness practice—such as a breathing exercise, body scan, or visualization—to calm the nervous system and enhance focus.

NAME OF THE SESSION: Social Media & Communication

LENGTH: 1,5h

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:
From 8 to 16 maximum

TARGET AUDIENCE (age):
From 12+

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
1. Understand how social media communication differs from real-life interaction
2. Practice identifying goals behind social media posts and their impact using critical thinking

MATERIALS:
Social media goals and their examples, phones

Activity 1: Real Life vs. Social Media Role Play (30 min)

Description: Divide participants in pair. Each person receives a role:
- Person 1 shares a short real-life story (e.g., a weekend trip, a new hobby), with natural gestures and tone.
- Person 2 tries to retell the same story as if posting it on social media (choose a platform, format, description, etc.).

They do the exercise in pairs, and come back to the group to debrief and reflect.

Reflection questions:
- What changed between the real-life version and the social media version?
- What was emphasized or left out?
- What positives and negatives do you see in this shift?

Activity 2: Social Media Goals (15 min)
Materials: puzzle of social media goals prepared for 5 groups
(cut the title of the goal, and the description / example)

Description: Participants are divided in 5 groups. Each group receives a list of social media goal titles and their descriptions/examples, cut out separately. They have to match the goal with the explanation. Example:

- Goal: Persuade
- Description: A campaign encouraging people to vote or adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Reflection questions:
- What is difficult?
- Which goals were easier to match?
- Which goals are missing?

Activity 3: Social Media Analysis (45 min)
Materials: cards with communication goals, phones

Description: Split participants into 5 groups. Each group gets 3 cards with communication goals. Their task is to find real social media posts that reflect each goal. They can be images, videos, or other content. When they find the posts, they have to send them to the facilitator privately. When all groups are done, the whole group watches the posts and tries to guess what the intended goal is behind each post.

Reflection questions:
- How easy or difficult was it to identify the goal?
- Do posts have more than one goal?
- Do you feel differently about the posts once you know their purpose?
- Are the goals mostly positive or negative for viewers?
- How do these posts influence mental health - positively or negatively?
- How can critical thinking help in reducing the negative effects of social media?

This pocket guide was developed during the Erasmus+ training course "Mind over media", 2025-1-HR01-KA153-YOU-000301014.
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Co-funded by the European Union