



CREATE THE MOMENT

**A HANDBOOK FOR
IMPROVISATION AND
CREATIVE METHODS
IN YOUTH WORK**

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FOUNDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been developed as a practical resource for youth workers, educators and facilitators who aim to integrate improvisation, creative expression and embodiment-based methods into their professional practice. It brings together a series of exercises implemented during the project “Create the Moment”, each designed to strengthen essential competencies such as communication, adaptability, emotional intelligence, teamwork and reflective practice.

Many of the exercises are designed to facilitate a state of flow, a psychological condition described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, where individuals become fully immersed, focused, and intrinsically motivated in an activity. By engaging participants in creative challenges that balance skill and challenge, these activities help youth workers experience flow themselves and create opportunities for young people to experience similar states, enhancing enjoyment, engagement, and personal growth.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide youth workers with accessible tools that support both their professional development and their mental well-being. Through creative and experiential activities – including movement, physical theatre, voice exploration and visual arts – participants are encouraged to engage with their own emotions, build resilience and cultivate a deeper sense of self-awareness. These methods also serve as effective strategies for fostering inclusion, participation and well-being among the young people they work with.

By offering clear instructions, objectives and outcomes for each exercise, this handbook facilitates the transfer of project methodologies into daily youth work practice. It is intended to support youth workers in expanding their toolkit, improving the quality of their engagement with young people, and incorporating improvisation as a meaningful approach to learning, communication and psychosocial support.

Ultimately, this handbook seeks to contribute to a stronger, more resilient and more creatively empowered youth work sector.

FLOW THEORY

Flow theory, also known as the “optimal experience theory,” is a psychological theory proposed by **Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi** in the 1970s. The theory suggests that individuals experience a state of “flow” when they are fully engaged in an activity that matches their skill level and presents a clear set of goals and immediate feedback. The state of flow is characterized by feelings of heightened focus, concentration, and enjoyment, as well as a sense of control and mastery over the task at hand.

Flow theory has been applied in a wide range of settings, including education, sports, and the workplace. For example, in education, the theory can be used to understand how to create optimal learning experiences for students. In sports, the theory can be used to understand how athletes achieve peak performance. And in the workplace, the theory can be used to understand how to create optimal working conditions for employees.

One of the key strengths of flow theory is its ability to explain the psychological mechanisms underlying optimal experiences. The theory suggests that flow can be achieved when the balance is struck between the individual's skill level and the level of challenge presented by the task. When the task is too easy, individuals may become bored and disengaged, while when the task is too difficult, individuals may become anxious and stressed.



The Flow Channel is a conceptual space where the conditions for achieving flow are most likely to occur. It represents the balance between skill level and challenge, providing a useful framework for understanding the dynamics that lead to optimal experiences. The channel serves as a guide for designers creating environments conducive to flow. Keeping users in flow involves offering appropriate challenges. Too much difficulty results in stress and anxiety, while a lack of challenge leads to boredom. Both states can lead to disengagement, disrupting the rewarding flow experience. In essence, maintaining users within this channel is about balancing challenge to avoid inducing anxiety or boredom.

The **four phases** of the flow state are **struggle**, **release**, **flow**, and **recovery**. Struggle involves active effort and facing challenges; release is when you let go of conscious control and allow automatic processing; flow is the peak state of effortless action and peak performance; and recovery is the crucial period for rest and replenishing energy after the flow state has passed.



How does maintaining user flow affect long-term user engagement? **Long-term engagement benefits** include:

- Building loyalty. Positive flow experiences increase the likelihood of users returning to the product.
- Skill development. As users develop skills within the product, they become more invested and likely to continue using it.
- Community building. Features that encourage social interaction and shared challenges can enhance engagement and sustain flow experiences over time.

CREATIVE METHODS IN PRACTICE

MOVEMENT AND DANCE ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE ONE

Emotional improvisation

Duration: 50 minutes

Aim: Develop emotional expression, body awareness, and empathy through movement and creative improvisation.

Objectives

1. Emotional expressiveness: During the exercise, 80% of participants demonstrate noticeable changes in facial expressions/movements when switching between images.
2. Concentration: Participants maintain attention on the task for at least 2 minutes during each image.
3. Empathy and understanding: At the end of the exercise, each participant briefly describes (30–60 seconds) the feelings that arose during the roles.
4. Physical safety: All movements shall be performed without injuries - the facilitator provides a safe space. in the workplace, the theory can be used to understand how to create optimal working conditions for employees.

MOVEMENT AND DANCE ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE TWO



Body speed and improvisation

Duration: 20-30 minutes

Aim: To develop body awareness, reaction speed and creative movement through improvisation with different rhythms and signals.

Objectives

1. Participants respond to sound signals within 1–2 seconds.
2. Participants demonstrate 5–7 levels of movement speed change.
3. Participants maintain control over the body and movements regardless of the tempo.
4. Participants improvise movements without stopping for at least 30 seconds in different speed modes.

MOVEMENT AND DANCE ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE THREE



Movement Performance

Duration: 60-75 minutes

Aim: To develop group creativity, non-verbal communication and collective expression through movement-based storytelling.

Objectives

1. To encourage collaboration and idea generation within small groups.
2. To explore movement, body language and space as tools for creating meaning.
3. To enhance participants' confidence in physical expression and improvisation.
4. To practice translating a concept or theme into a short performance.

MUSIC-BASED ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE ONE



Sounds and the body

Duration: 30-40 minutes

Aim: To develop body awareness, vocal abilities, and creativity in group improvisation through the combination of movement and sound.

Objectives

1. Participants perform breathing and sound exercises with control of timbre and intensity.
2. Participants experiment with body movements, synchronizing them with sounds.
3. Participants create their own sound «greetings» and movement improvisations.
4. The group learns to maintain rhythm together and interact in pairs and circles.
5. Awareness of breathing and vocal abilities improves.

MUSIC-BASED ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE TWO



Sounds of objects

Duration: 25 minutes

Aim: To develop auditory attention, creativity and group synchronization through sound and movement.

Objectives

1. Reproduce the sound of an object individually and in a group.
2. Improve auditory coordination and interaction.
3. Create a collective sound composition.
4. Become aware of the process and result through reflection.

MUSIC-BASED ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE THREE



Music impro performance

Duration: 45-60 minutes

Aim: To develop creativity, teamwork and expressive communication through improvised sound- and music-based performance.

Objectives

1. Encouragement of participants to explore sound, voice and rhythm as storytelling tools.
2. To strengthen collaboration and co-creation within small groups and enhance listening skills and group coordination.
3. Practice of transforming an idea or theme into a short sound-based performance.

VISUAL ART ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE ONE



Collage yourself

Duration: 60 minutes

Aim: To promote self-expression, emotional awareness, and creativity through visual representation of oneself and one's state.

Objectives

1. Participants explore their own emotions and state through creativity.
2. The ability to express themselves without words is developed.
3. Concentration and attentiveness to internal experiences are improved.
4. The skill of reflection and discussion of one's own work is formed.

VISUAL ART ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE TWO



Land Art

Duration: 60 minutes

Aim: To promote creative self-expression and interaction with nature through the collective creation of art objects from natural materials.

Objectives

1. Develop creativity and spatial thinking through working with natural materials.
2. Increase team interaction and collaboration skills.
3. Deepen awareness of nature and its elements.
4. Promote emotional release and focus on the process, be on the flow.

VISUAL ART ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE THREE



Drawing with eyes closed

Duration: 60 minutes

Aim: To promote self-expression, development of sensory sensitivity and awareness of inner feelings through creativity without visual control.

Objectives

1. Develop the ability to express emotions through drawing without using vision.
2. Deepen sensory awareness and interaction through tactile contact.
3. Improve concentration and attentiveness to inner feelings.
4. Promote reflection on the creative process and one's own emotions.

THEATRE AND IMPROVISATION ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE ONE



Who killed the King?

Duration: 30 minutes

Aim: To develop vocal flexibility, acting expressiveness and voice skills in various emotional and technical variations.

Objectives

1. To work on the timbre, speed, tonality and volume of the voice.
2. To develop acting technique in a short dialogue.
3. To learn to adapt the voice to various emotional and stage tasks.
4. To promote partner interaction through a pair dialogue.

THEATRE AND IMPROVISATION ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE TWO



Physical Theatre Performance

Duration: 80 minutes

Aim: To develop physical expression, team creativity, and nonverbal theatre performance skills.

Objectives

1. To introduce participants to the principles of physical theatre.
2. To teach how to convey emotions, actions, and stories through movement and the body.
3. To develop team interaction when creating a theatre act.
4. To create and present a group performance lasting up to 10 minutes.

THEATRE AND IMPROVISATION ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE THREE



Impro theatre workshop

Duration: 60-75 minutes

Aim: To develop spontaneity, creativity and collaborative storytelling skills through improvised theatrical performance.

Objectives

1. To introduce participants to improvisational theatre techniques.
2. To enhance quick thinking and adaptability in a creative context.
3. To strengthen verbal and non-verbal communication and support teamwork and co-creation within small groups.

**PROJECT
EXPERIENCE**

CREATE THE MOMENT PROJECT

The Create the Moment project was implemented as a training course designed to equip youth workers with creative, improvisation-based tools that enhance emotional awareness, communication, and resilience. The training brought together participants from different countries to experience a selection of the activities now presented in this handbook. By testing these exercises in a real learning environment, the project demonstrated how movement, theatre, music, and visual expression can strengthen youth workers' personal well-being and enrich their professional practice. The following overview summarises the project's pedagogical approach and the impact these methods had during the training.

This project aimed to develop youth workers by integrating improvisation, physical theatre, and creative practices into their professional activities. Through a series of structured exercises – vocal, physical, artistic, and group – participants explored their own creativity, learned to better regulate their emotional state, improved communication, and developed teamwork skills.

The project combined non-verbal expression practices, body awareness exercises, artistic techniques, and collective performance creation, which helps to strengthen psychological resilience and personal well-being.

The project's exercises – from movement improvisations and vocal variations to land art, collage, and blindfolded drawing – revealed different aspects of creative expression and helped participants develop flexibility of thinking, emotional literacy, and the ability to work in unpredictable situations. Physical theater and group work enhanced team interaction, creating space for collaboration, empathy, and support.

Throughout the nine days, participants

- Explored the concept of flow and how to apply it in youth work and everyday life.
- Engaged in creative practices that enhance self-expression and emotional resilience.
- Developed teamwork, communication, and empathy through performing arts and movement.
- Exchanged experiences, best practices, and innovative approaches to youth work.
- Reflected on personal learning outcomes and set future development goals.

The project aims were:

- To enhance and upgrade the quality of youth workers' practice, resilience and mental well-being, by incorporating improvisation and its core values.
- To equip youth workers with the skills and knowledge needed to use improvisation as a tool for communication,, active participation, problem-solving and team-building.
- To raise awareness of the importance of self-care and well-being for youth workers, and to provide them with practical strategies for using improvisation to support the mental well-being, inclusion and active participation of young people in their care.
- To promote the integration of improvisation into youth work practice, to the benefit of both youth workers and the young people they work with.
- To provide methods and tools that can upgrade the quality of youth work as well as personal, professional development and mental well-being of individuals that are actively involved in youth work.

Dates: 6–15 September 2025

Location: Fonyód, Hungary

Participants: The project brought together 24 youth workers from Finland, Greece, Austria, France, Hungary, Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine.

Participants profile: youth workers, peer educators, volunteers, trainers, NGO staff, and educators—all motivated to foster their personal and professional growth by integrating creative and expressive methods into their everyday work and life.

Methodology: The training course was grounded in the principles of non-formal education and the learning-by-doing approach. The program incorporated a wide variety of interactive, reflective, and creative methods designed to promote personal and professional development as well as mental well-being.

Key methodologies and approaches included

- Flow Theory
- Positive Psychology
- Team-Building Activities
- Informational and Experiential Learning Activities
- Art Therapy
- Dance Improvisation Sessions
- Theatre Improvisation Workshops
- Creative Writing Sessions
- Daily reflection sessions and evaluation activities ensure continuous learning, feedback, and personal insight.

Create the Moment

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2025 | EMINA Career Guidance Foundation

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