



# Connection project



## Workbook



## **Connection project: Workbook**

© INspire

**Graphic design:** Olha Krotko

**Editorial:** Alisa Liven

**Proofreaders:**

Nina Wilczewska, Ivan Sych, Dana Mitanova, Vika Birkouskaya

**Collaborated:**

Arianna Rodriguez, Justyna Sadczuk, Georgi Krastev, Klaudia Ryś, Aneta Schaffelhoferová, Gianpaolo Laurenzano, Liliia Stepchenko, Nina Wilczewska, Valeria Melillo, Emma Ďuricová, Anhelina Horbatiuk, Kateryna Khoroshko, Thomas Acquistapace, Daryna Nosova, Velizar Grozev, Stoyana Djakova, Zoljargal Ochirbat, Alice Palermi, Lilianna Michniewicz, Merryweather Wierzchowski, Jakub Grajkowski

**Published by:** INspire,

Príkop 843/4, Zábřdovice, 602 00 Brno,

Czech Republic

Electronic book, PDF

First edition, 2026

Pages: 40

ISBN 978-80-909359-6-9

*Co-funded by the European Union. The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the European Union or the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.*

# Foreword:



This workbook was created as a result of collective work during a Youth Exchange programme facilitated by INspire in the Czech Republic.

It serves as a simple guide to exploring emotions, raising awareness of mental health, and building a stronger connection with yourself and others. This is not just a collection of activities, but a collection of shared stories, experiences, and reflections gathered during the exchange.

The workbook was created by young people for young people, youth workers, facilitators, group leaders, and anyone who wishes to feel more connected to themselves and their community.

At its core, this workbook is an invitation:

to **pause**,  
to **feel**,  
to **experience**,  
and to **connect**  
– with yourself and with others.

Approach this book with an open mind and an open heart.  
Allow yourself to try something new.

## **Art and creativity!**

|         |                                  |    |
|---------|----------------------------------|----|
| 5.....  | Art therapy: collage making..... | 9  |
| 9.....  | No brushes, just souls.....      | 11 |
| 12..... | Dance therapy.....               | 14 |
| 15..... | Vocal acting.....                | 16 |

## **Emotional awareness!**

|         |  |    |
|---------|--|----|
| 17..... | The Art of Dialogue. Dialogue with Microphone..... | 20 |
| 21..... | Emotional traffic.....                             | 25 |
| 25..... | Agree/disagree line.....                           | 27 |

## **Body & Soul connection!**

|         |                               |    |
|---------|-------------------------------|----|
| 28..... | Four elements.....            | 30 |
| 31..... | Wholesomeness meditation..... | 33 |
| 34..... | Yoga & aromatherapy.....      | 36 |
| 36..... | Forest bathing.....           | 38 |

## **Afterward**

## **Partners**

# Art & Creativity!

## Art therapy: collage making

### Purpose

Collage-making is a form of art therapy that allows you to express your feelings without relying on words. Sometimes it can be difficult to articulate your emotions and thoughts, so this activity provides an indirect and symbolic way to explore them.

By selecting, cutting, and arranging images, you engage in a creative process that reflects your inner state. Treat your art as a mirror of your soul. There is healing power in the act of creativity. It doesn't have to be perfect or museum-worthy – you just need to enjoy and trust the process.

### The healing aspect lies in

- **Expression without pressure:** There is no need to “explain” yourself.
- **Accessing subconscious material:** You may choose images intuitively before understanding why.
- **Regaining a sense of agency:** You are actively shaping something, which can be empowering.
- **Emotional release and integration:** The process helps you explore and process feelings in a safe, contained way.



## Steps

1. **Find a pile of old magazines** or print images from the internet.
2. **Find a quiet, comfortable place** where you won't be interrupted and lay out your materials.
3. **Set an intention.** Gently decide what your collage will explore:
  - “How I feel right now”
  - “Who I am”
  - “What I need”
  - Or simply go with the flow and see where the creative process takes you.
4. **Browse and select.** Flip through magazines and choose images, colours, words, or textures that resonate with you. Do not analyse your choices – trust your intuition.
5. **Cut out your selected elements** and begin placing them on paper. Move the pieces around before gluing. Let the composition emerge naturally. Don't overthink it. Glue the elements down. You may layer, overlap, or leave empty spaces – everything is valid.
6. **Pause and observe.** Once finished, take a step back and look at your collage as a whole. Notice your immediate reactions.



## Reflection

- What emotions do I notice when I look at my collage?
- Which part of the collage stands out the most to me, and why?
- Did anything surprise me during the process?
- Are there any recurring colours, shapes, or themes?
- What might this collage be trying to express that I haven't put into words?
- If this collage could speak, what would it say?

## Practical information

**Participants:** 1 - 10

**Time required:** 30 - 60 minutes total

**Materials needed:** old magazines, newspapers, or printed images, scissors, glue or tape, paper or cardboard (base). *Optional:* markers, pens, stickers





## Box of ideas

- **Emotion-focused collage:** Create separate collages for different emotions (e.g., anxiety vs. calm).
- **Past-present-future:** Divide the page into sections representing different time perspectives.
- **Abstract only:** Use colours, textures, and shapes — avoid recognisable images.
- **Word-only collage:** Focus purely on words and phrases.
- **Group sharing circle:** Participants can share their collages, but sharing should always be optional.
- **Silent version:** Complete the entire activity without speaking to deepen introspection.
- **Music integration:** Play background music to influence mood and emotional flow.
- **Limitation exercise:** Restrict yourself to a small number of images (e.g., 5) to encourage intentionality.

## Personal story

### Alisa:

I never considered myself a creative person. I always thought it wasn't for me and that I didn't have the skills or imagination to draw, craft, or create. However, this exercise changed my perspective. I stopped trying to make a masterpiece and instead trusted my vision and enjoyed the process. It helped me overcome my limiting beliefs and reconnect with my creative side. Now I feel more confident trying other creative activities.

### Valeria:

This activity became a space for genuine healing — not an escape from reality, but a way of moving deeper into it. Through the act of creating, I was able to explore the core of my identity from a new perspective. Choosing music that resonated with my mood and allowing images to emerge without judgment helped me recognise parts of myself I had long overlooked. It felt like a quiet reconciliation with emotions and thoughts that rarely find a clear or honest outlet.

I would recommend this experience to anyone who feels lost, especially those who don't see themselves as creative. Stepping beyond self-imposed limits can feel uncomfortable at first, but it often leads to something unexpectedly powerful. What you create may not fit traditional ideas of art, but its true value is simple: it is entirely yours.

## No brushes, just souls

### Purpose

The exercise helps you get out of your head and express feelings through colours and shapes. Instead of trying to “figure out” how you feel, you choose the colours that match your current mood.

The key is not to use brushes, but your hands. Embrace direct contact with the paint — it is more physical, immediate, and often more honest. Doing this can help you release tension and express emotions that are hard to put into words.

The second part of the exercise is to choose colours that represent how you want to feel and add them on top of or next to your previous drawing. This is less about analysing and more about gently shifting your state; you introduce something new rather than forcing change.

### What if the colours are the same?

You might already feel close to how you want to feel, or that colour may simply have a strong personal meaning for you. In that case, try changing how you use the colour: use different movements (slow and soft vs. strong and fast), change the pressure of your hands, or spread it out or concentrate it in one place.

The goal isn't to force a difference — it's to notice what's already there and, if needed, gently build on it.

## Steps

1. Choose a calm, safe, and non-judgemental environment.
2. Prepare the necessary materials.
3. Pick one colour that reflects how you feel. Think about your current emotions and how you can represent them through colour.
4. Use your imagination and draw shapes using the colour you have chosen.
5. Pick another colour that represents how you want to feel and draw shapes over or next to your previous painting.

## Reflection

- What did I notice in my body while working with my hands and paint?
- How did it feel to touch the paint directly instead of using tools?
- Which emotions came up during the process? Did they change over time?
- How do the colours I chose reflect how I feel right now?
- What differences do I notice between the first and second layer of colours?



## Practical information

**Number of participants:** 1-20

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials needed:** paper, paint , sponges (*optional*)

## Box of ideas

- Can be done individually, in pairs, or in groups.
- Add music to influence mood (e.g., calm vs. energetic).
- Try different themes (e.g., stress vs. peace, past vs. future).
- Use only one colour at first, then expand gradually.
- Can be adapted for children (simpler questions) or adults (deeper reflection).
- Instead of sharing verbally, participants can write a short description.
- Can be used as an icebreaker or as a deeper emotional exercise.
- Works indoors or outdoors.

## Personal story

### Emma:

I use this activity when I feel overwhelmed or unable to express my emotions with words. Sometimes it's hard to explain what's going on inside, but choosing colours and shapes makes it easier.

For example, when I feel stressed, I often start with dark or chaotic shapes. Then, when I think about how I want to feel, I add lighter colours and smoother forms. It helps me process my emotions and gives me a sense of control and relief. This activity is helpful because it allows emotional release without the pressure to explain everything logically; it turns feelings into something visible and easier to understand.

# Dance therapy

## Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to reconnect with oneself – with both body and soul – and to find a sense of inner harmony. It allows participants to listen to themselves and follow their internal impulses. When practiced with closed eyes, the exercise helps release the fear of being judged. Participants realize that there is only the music, their body, and themselves.

While dancing, people reconnect with their bodies and temporarily let go of constant thinking. Movement becomes a language – a way to express emotions, thoughts, pain, joy, or even aggression. This exercise is best introduced after 3-4 days of group interaction, once a basic level of trust is established. It may be difficult to access authentic movement immediately in a new group.



## Steps

1. **Preparing the space and the group.** The space should feel safe and clear, without sharp objects or obstacles. At the beginning, briefly explain the purpose of the exercise and remind participants to prioritise safety and respect personal boundaries. They can tune into their bodies through breathing or a light warm-up.
2. **Entering the state.** Participants are invited to close their eyes or use a blindfold if they feel comfortable. Give them time to settle – to notice their breath, their weight, and their connection to the ground. At the beginning, movements can be slow and simple.
3. **Exploring movement.** Music can be introduced, or the exercise can take place in silence. Participants are encouraged to move freely, following their inner impulses. Gradually, they may begin to explore the space and sense the presence of other group members.
4. **Interaction (optional).** If appropriate, participants may gently acknowledge each other through movement. This interaction remains non-verbal, and physical contact is either avoided or clearly agreed upon in advance.
5. **Closing.** Movement gradually slows down. Attention returns to the breath. Participants gently open their eyes when they feel ready.

## Reflection

- How easy or difficult was it for you to start dancing?
- When did you feel most uncomfortable?
- Was there a moment when you felt a connection between your body and the music?



## Box of ideas

- Dance can be both a physical activity and a form of meditation. There are no right or wrong movements.
- The most important thing is to listen to your body and allow the music and emotions to pass through you. Try to feel your body deeply and follow its natural impulses.
- This exercise can be adapted depending on the group, the music, or the emotional theme.

## Personal story

I mostly use this exercise when I feel sad or when I notice that I am carrying stress or heavy emotions. Sometimes it is hard to understand what I am feeling, but movement helps everything become clearer. My body begins to express what I cannot explain with words. For me, it is a way to release tension and reconnect with myself. I stop overthinking and start listening to my body. After this practice, I usually feel lighter, calmer, and more present.



# Vocal Acting

## Purpose

This activity is about expressing yourself without words. The idea is to find alternative ways of communicating by limiting speech to just one vowel. You begin to use tone, volume, rhythm, and body language.

This might feel awkward at first, but the goal is to release trapped emotions through the exercise. It can help you express emotions in a simple, physical way (through voice and sound), let go of overthinking and perfectionism, use your imagination and creativity more freely, and connect with others through shared play and collaboration.

## Steps

1. Divide participants into four groups.
2. Each group is assigned one vowel (A, E, I, O).
3. Give the groups 10 minutes to prepare a short play using only their assigned vowel instead of words or typical speech sounds.
4. Each group then performs their play.



## Practical information

**Number of participants:** 16–20 people (an even number; ideally at least 16 participants to form four groups of four)

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials needed:** none



# Emotional awareness!

## Can You Hear Me? Dialogue With a Microphone

### Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate how dialogue works in practice and to highlight the difference between dialogue and discussion. It also helps participants develop key dialogue skills, such as initiating contact, active listening, and asking probing questions.

### Steps

1. Introduce participants to the concept of dialogue — a form of communication in which participants strive for mutual understanding and deeper insight.
2. Then invite participants to choose a topic for the exercise. It can be suggested either by the facilitator or by the participants themselves. The topic should be engaging and meaningful to the group. Once a topic is selected, the activity begins.
3. Divide participants into pairs. Label them as Participant 1 and Participant 2.
4. Participant 1 holds the “microphone” and shares their opinion, while Participant 2 listens attentively.
5. After Participant 1 finishes speaking, both participants briefly hold the “microphone.” Participant 2 then recounts what they have heard. This continues until Participant 1 feels accurately understood, at which point they release the “microphone.”
6. Participant 2 now shares their own views, following the same process. Participant 1 listens and then reflects back what they have heard until Participant 2 feels understood.
7. The exercise concludes once the topic has been thoroughly explored. Participants may then give each other feedback.
8. Proceed to the reflection session.

## Reflection

- How did you perceive your community during this exercise?
- What was your approach to the topic before, during, and after the exercise?
- Did you change your position? If so, why?
- What was your mutual interaction like?
- How do you feel about this issue now as a group?
- Did your group's perspective change in any way?
- When is it better to have a discussion?
- When is it better to use dialogue?
- Are there situations where both can be combined?

## Practical information

**Number of participants:** 10–30 participants

**Duration:** 60–75 minutes

**Materials:** A “microphone” for each pair. This can be a pen, marker, or any other object large enough for two people to hold.

## Box of ideas

### Variation 1: Dialogue Circle

- Groups of 3–4 participants use an object (the “microphone”) to support active listening.
- *Participant 1 speaks:* Briefly shares their opinion while holding the “microphone.”
- *Participant 2 reflects:* Takes hold of the “microphone” (both participants hold it) and paraphrases: “You are saying that...”
- *Participant 1 confirms:* Participant 2 cannot share their own opinion until Participant 1 confirms that the paraphrase is accurate.

- *Participant 2 responds:* After Participant 1 lets go of the “microphone,” Participant 2 may respond by saying: “I agree that...” or “I disagree that...” to express their perspective.
- *The chain:* Participant 2 then repeats the same process with the next person.
- *Reflection:* After a 10-minute round, allow 5 minutes for participants to reflect on their experience.

### **Variation 2: Free Discussion vs. Dialogue**

Start with an unstructured (“free”) discussion on a controversial topic. Then immediately follow it with a structured Dialogue Circle. This contrast helps highlight the shift from competitive debating to collaborative listening.

### **Variation 4: Conflict Resolution**

Use this structure in formal meetings to address long-standing disagreements. It encourages participants to engage with what others truly think, sharpening interpersonal awareness and helping to break deadlocks.

### **Variation 5: The “Emotional Mirror”**

Instead of only repeating the words, Participant 2 also tries to identify the underlying emotion (e.g., “You are saying that... and you seem frustrated because...”).

### **Variation 6: Live Demonstration**

Invite two willing participants to demonstrate the exercise in a “fishbowl” format for the group. Observers should focus on the process of the dialogue rather than judging the content of the discussion.

### **Variation 7: The Silent Observer**

In groups of three, the third person acts as a “Guardian of the Mic,” ensuring that no one speaks out of turn and taking notes on when and where agreement begins to emerge.

## Personal story

We learnt about this activity through the project “School of Dialogue” by the Ukrainian-Danish Youth House. It helped us better understand the tools and the use of dialogue.



# Emotional traffic

## Purpose

This exercise helps participants practise self-awareness and explore their emotions by analysing their triggers, bodily reactions, and experiences.

The first part (passing objects) shows how overwhelming emotions can feel when too many things are happening at once. It creates a sense of pressure and chaos — similar to real life.

The second part slows things down. Participants focus on one emotion at a time, talk it through, and begin to understand it more clearly. It is not about “fixing” emotions; it is about becoming better at noticing and understanding them.

## Steps

### Part 1

The workshop begins with a purposeful energiser. Participants start by standing in a circle.

1. The facilitator prepares multiple items — notebooks, pens, markers, balls, or any other safe physical objects. There should be approximately 1.5 items per participant. The items can vary, but they must not be sharp or dangerous. Larger items tend to make the activity more engaging.
2. The facilitator picks up the first item and gives it to a participant, then chooses a direction of movement — either left or right. Participants begin passing the item from hand to hand in the chosen direction.
3. Gradually, more items are introduced, sometimes moving in different directions. The task becomes more intense, and some items may be dropped.
4. The facilitator stops introducing new items once they notice that items are being dropped more frequently. The group then continues passing the items for about one more minute.
5. The facilitator then slowly begins collecting the items from the participants and sets them aside.

With empty hands, participants listen to the facilitator's explanation and reflect together. The moving items represent emotions and the challenge of managing many emotions throughout our day – and even throughout our lives. Sometimes it becomes difficult to handle everything at once.

This is why it is important to understand what each emotion means and how we express it, so that we can recognise and manage it in a healthy way. Emotions can be seen as signals from the body, informing us about something important. They are not simply “positive” or “negative”; they are all part of us and help us navigate the world.

## Part 2

The workshop continues with a structured activity. Participants begin by walking around the room in random directions, spreading out evenly.

The group will explore **six emotions**: happiness, sadness, fear, disgust, surprise, and anger.

Once the movement feels natural, the facilitator says “stop,” and participants form pairs. They then have 2 minutes to discuss the following questions:

- What triggers this emotion in you?
- Where do you feel this emotion in your body?

When the time is up, participants continue walking around the room. At the next “stop,” they find a new partner and discuss the next emotion. In each round, the facilitator introduces a different emotion from the list above.

After exploring all six emotions, the facilitator invites participants to share (voluntarily) how they usually express these emotions and whether there are healthy and unhealthy ways of expressing them.

This activity works best when participants feel safe, so it is important to remind everyone that sharing is always optional.

## Reflection

- Which emotion was easiest for you to recognise?
- Which one was the hardest? Why?
- Did anything surprise you about your bodily reactions?
- What did you learn about others?

## Practical information

**Number of participants:** 10-30 participants

**Duration:** 45-60 minutes

**Materials needed:** Small, safe objects (e.g., balls, markers, notebooks) – approx. 1-2 per participant. Open space for movement.



## Box of ideas

- **Make it more physical:** Instead of just talking, participants can briefly act out or express the emotion through body language before discussing it.
- **Adjust the intensity:** Use fewer or more objects in Part 1 depending on the group's energy level.
- **Change the emotions:** Include other emotions (e.g., anxiety, calm, jealousy) depending on the group.
- **Write instead of talk:** If the group is quieter, participants can write down their answers before sharing (or choose not to share).
- **Small group version:** Instead of pairs, participants can discuss in groups of 3–4 for a different dynamic.
- **Silent reflection option:** After each round, allow 30 seconds of silence for participants to notice what came up.
- **Focus on expression:** Add a follow-up round where participants discuss how they usually express each emotion (not just triggers and bodily sensations).
- **Online version:** Skip the object-passing part and start directly with movement or pair work in breakout rooms.
- **Gentle version:** Allow participants to choose which emotions they want to explore instead of assigning them.



## Personal story

This activity was part of the beginning of my journey into mental health and learning how to support other young people through non-formal education. The method is based on the idea that, in order to understand others, we first need to understand ourselves. A few months later, this activity became one of the reasons I decided to study psychology.

# Agree/disagree line

## Purpose

This exercise encourages understanding diverse points of view and different perspectives.

## Steps

- Place 2–5 signs on the floor (e.g., Agree, Disagree; optionally: Neutral, Partly Agree, Partly Disagree).
- Read one statement at a time.
- Participants choose their position along the line.
- Allow a moment for participants to look around and notice differences.

## Statements

- A person prefers to stay alone for a few days to recharge instead of going out.
- Someone often posts happy photos on social media but actually feels sad most of the time.
- Pizza with pineapple.

- A person with anxiety avoids social situations because they think it is better.
- Talking about problems with friends is better than going to a psychologist.
- It is okay to 'ghost' your phone (ignore all texts) for an entire weekend.
- Socks with sandals is a valid fashion choice.
- If someone looks fine on the outside, they are probably fine on the inside.
- Asking for help is a sign of strength.
- There is always more than one "right" perspective.

After the exercise, invite participants to share their opinions and perspectives:

- Why did you choose this position and not another?
- Was it a difficult choice? Why or why not?



## Reflection

- Was it easy or difficult for you to decide? Why?
- Did others influence your choice? If yes, how?
- How would you support someone in these situations?
- Did you discover any new tools or strategies during this activity?

## Practical information

**Number of participants:** 4-30

**Duration:** 50 minutes

**Materials:** 2 to 5 papers and one long rope

## Personal story

I learned this activity during an Erasmus+ project focused on mental health, which took place in Lithuania. During the exercise, we explored our choices and different points of view, and some participants even changed their opinions. This experience helped me better understand diverse perspectives and reflect on my own views in comparison to others.



# Body&Soul connection!

## Four Elements

### Purpose

This exercise helps participants deepen their self-understanding and strengthen their connection to themselves and others through the framework of the four elements. It can be used as a general practice to explore and embody different states and qualities within the body, or to focus on specific topics such as emotional awareness, relationships, or work-life balance.

The expected outcome is a deeper sense of alignment and connection between body and mind, as well as between one's needs, actions, personality, and sense of self.

### Steps

#### 1. Introduction to the Four Elements

Introduce the concept of the four elements by describing the basic universal qualities associated with each:

- Earth – stability
- Water – flow
- Fire – energy
- Air – freedom

#### 2. Group Brainstorm

Guide participants through a short brainstorm to explore what each element means to them. This makes the exercise more personal and relatable. Then, invite participants to brainstorm movement qualities connected to each element. For example:

- Earth – slow, grounded
- Water – fluid, continuous
- Fire – energetic, intense
- Air – light, playful

**Ideally, the group generates 5–6 words or associations per element.**

### **3. Movement Exploration**

Play 2–3 songs and guide participants to explore each element through movement.

- Spend about 1–2 minutes per element
- Clearly signal transitions (e.g., “Now let’s switch to the Fire element”)
- It is recommended to begin with Earth, while the order of the other elements can vary

### **4. Silent Reflection Pause**

Pause for 30–60 seconds and invite participants to reflect silently:

- Which element did you feel most drawn to?
- Why? (e.g., what felt most natural or what you might be missing)

### **5. Free Exploration (Integration Phase)**

Play one full song (around 3 minutes) and invite participants to move freely:

- Encourage switching between elements at will
- Allow pauses or stillness
- Emphasize full freedom of expression, without guidance

## **Reflection**

- How did the activity feel for you? Were there any challenges during the process (e.g., movement itself, the presence of others)?
- Which elements felt most comfortable for you? Which felt least comfortable?
- What positive feelings did you notice when engaging with the more comfortable elements?
- What challenging or difficult feelings came up in the less comfortable elements?
- How do your observations relate to the topic explored? Do you feel your body is trying to communicate something to your awareness?
- Do you feel that any elements are missing in your life in relation to the topic? What could you do to bring more balance?

## Practical information

**Number of participants:** individually or in groups of any size

**Duration:** 30+ minutes

**Materials:** music, enough space for expressive movements

**Additional resource:**

<https://embodimentunlimited.com/the-4-elements-mark-walsh/>

## Box of ideas

- Depending on the context, movement can be encouraged to be more theatrical or pantomime-based, dance-oriented, or completely open to any form of body expression.
- Sound and vocal expression can either be encouraged or intentionally restricted, depending on the focus of the session.
- If you want to create stronger contrast, use the following order: Earth → Air → Water → Fire
- If a gradual build-up feels more appropriate, use: Earth → Water → Fire → Air (Fire represents peak intensity, while Air serves as a gentle step-down)
- If the list of reflection questions feels too long, it can be shortened or simplified to match the group's needs and available time.

## Personal story

This methodology comes from the life coaching community and I encountered it during an embodiment coaching program. I use it on a daily basis to check-in and self-reflect, regain balance or switch states by consciously connecting with the element that I feel I need at any given moment.



# Wholesomeness meditation

## Purpose

Emotional exploration and deep self-reflection.

## Steps

### 1. Preparation

- Invite participants to find a comfortable position – sitting or lying down (not standing).
- Ask them to gently close their eyes.
- Position yourself so everyone can hear you clearly.
- Prepare the environment (lighting, sound, atmosphere) to feel calm and safe.
- Remind participants to use the bathroom beforehand if needed.

### 2. Box (Square) Breathing

Guide participants through the following breathing pattern:

- Inhale for 5 seconds
- Hold for 5 seconds
- Exhale for 5 seconds
- Hold for 5 seconds

Repeat for about 2 minutes, then gently invite participants to return to their natural breathing rhythm.

### 3. Awareness of the Environment

With eyes still closed, invite participants to shift their attention outward:

- Notice the sounds around them
- Observe without judgment – simply listening

Continue for 2–3 minutes.

#### **4. Shifting Focus to the Body**

Gradually guide participants to bring their attention inward:

- Become aware of their body
- Notice physical sensations without trying to change anything

#### **5. Shifting Focus to the Body**

Gradually guide participants to bring their attention inward:

- Become aware of their body
- Notice physical sensations without trying to change anything

#### **6. Working with Distractions**

Remind participants that distractions are a natural part of the process – thoughts, feelings, or external noises may arise.

- Encourage them to gently return their focus to the breath, without judgment
- Offer soft reminders every 60–90 seconds

Continue this phase for about 10 minutes.

#### **7. Categorising Thoughts**

Invite participants to deepen their awareness. The next time a distraction arises, ask them to briefly and intuitively label it as:

- “Wholesome” (coming from a positive or supportive place)
- “Unwholesome” (coming from a more difficult or negative place)

After labelling, gently return focus to the breath. This phase can last around 10 minutes, or longer for more experienced groups.

Occasionally remind participants to stay non-judgmental and not overthink the categorisation.

#### **8. Returning to the Senses**

Gradually guide participants back to the present moment. Ask them to shift attention to physical sensations – the body, sounds, smells, and surroundings

#### **9. Closing the Practice**

Invite participants to slowly open their eyes when they feel ready and gently return to a seated position.

## 9. Closing the Practice

Invite participants to slowly open their eyes when they feel ready and gently return to a seated position.

## 10. Reflection

Conclude the session with a reflective discussion.

### Reflection

Invite the participants to sit or stand together for a discussion on the following questions:

- How did they feel? How do they feel now compared to before the meditation?
- Were there any difficulties?
- Were there any new discoveries?

### Practical information

**Number of participants:** depends on the available space in the facility and the abilities of the facilitator. All participants must be able to hear you.

**Duration:** 20-40 minutes

**Materials:** comfortable space or yoga mats

### Personal story

I learned this meditation at a Buddhist retreat in Thailand. I use it when I need to make big life decisions and enter a deep state of contemplation and self-reflection about my life. It helps me recognize what is true, what is important, and what can be let go.



# Yoga & Aromatherapy

## Purpose

This practice helps participants return to the present moment and take care of themselves in a gentle and intentional way. It supports the awakening of both body and mind, creating a sense of inner alignment. Through this process, participants are encouraged to develop gratitude towards their bodies while also boosting their energy and focus. Over time, it can become a simple and grounding personal ritual.

In the second part, aromatherapy contributes to reducing anxiety and further awakening the body and mind. It can help lift the mood and support relaxation, including lowering blood pressure.

## Steps

1. Put healing music on/ background (nature sounds, frequencies...)
2. Find a comfortable position, close your eyes/ find a point to focus your eyes on and start breathing in and out (at your own pace)
3. Think about a word, intention or affirmation for the day (How do you want to feel today? What kind of energy do you want to carry?)
4. Open your eyes/ keep them closed
5. Move your body freely (for example: make circles with your torso, do a seated side stretch, warm up the neck)
6. Start making asanas (yoga positions) whilst focusing on the breath.
  - Cat & cow (you can also modify it to your own needs)
  - Child's pose
  - Extended puppy pose
  - Downward facing dog
  - Pigeon pose (both legs)
  - Camel pose
  - Standing forward bend
7. Take an essential oil (we suggest lavender), drop some and rub it into your hands.

8. Create your field of energy by circling your arms and imagining your own aura and remembering to breathe deeply
9. Corpse pose (Savasana): let your body be heavy, melted into the ground. Breathe in and out.

## Reflection

- How do you feel after the practice?
- What emotions did you notice?
- Do you feel more connected to yourself?
- How did the aroma affect your experience?

## Practical information

**Number of participants:** individually or in groups of any size

**Duration:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials:** yoga mat, towel, grass, essential oil, incense, water (if needed)



## Box of ideas

Listen to your body and don't force yourself. Be kind and patient.

## Personal story

### Alice and Klaudia

We use this practice when we feel out of alignment and need to return to and appreciate the present moment.

# Forest Bathing

## Purpose

This exercise focuses on slowing down and cultivating the ability to notice and feel grounded. It encourages you to use your senses to connect with both nature and yourself. By gently shifting your attention away from daily tasks, thoughts, and worries, you are invited to return to the present moment.

Through engaging your senses – sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste – the activity helps calm the nervous system and supports a deeper connection with your body and the world around you.



## Steps

1. Find a suitable natural location (e.g., a forest or a park). It should be far enough from human-made noise to avoid disrupting the activity.
2. Identify the target group and promote the event.
3. Schedule the date of the activity.
4. Begin the journey to the destination together.
5. Upon arrival, invite participants to immerse themselves in the surroundings and explore them. Encourage them to focus on how they experience the environment through their five senses.
6. Divide the participants into five groups and assign each group one sense: sight, taste, smell, touch, or hearing.
7. Give each group the task of creating a short mini-experience for the others, focused on their assigned sense.
8. After all activities are completed, invite participants to sit quietly for a minute before moving on.

## Reflection

- Which sense helped me connect the most?
- Which activity did I enjoy the most?
- Did anything surprise me?
- What is one moment I'd like to remember from this?

## Practical information

**Participants:** 5-25

**Time required:** 90-120 minutes + the time spent on reaching the destination.

- *Immersion and exploration:* 30 - 45 minutes
- *Designing and facilitating the mini-excursions:* 45 - 60 minutes
- *Reflection session:* 15 minutes

**Materials:** bottles of water, medical kit, bug sprays

## Box of ideas

If you have fewer than five participants, you can still facilitate the session by creating the activities yourself, completing them, and ending with a personal reflection in your journal. This exercise can also be done individually.

## Personal story

### Nina:

I've experienced this activity during an Erasmus+ project, during which I got to spend time in the forest. I greatly appreciate being surrounded by nature, so this activity resonated with me deeply.



If you have completed at least a couple of these activities, you have already achieved something great. You made time to notice how you feel, how you express yourself, and how you connect with others. It matters a lot, especially in our fast-paced, distracting world.

Some exercises may have stayed with you more than others. Some may not have worked at all—and that's completely fine. The goal was never to complete everything perfectly, but to open up small moments of awareness and connection.

If anything from this workbook feels useful, you can always come back to it. These practices can be adapted, simplified, or repeated in your own way.

Lastly, remember this:

You don't need complicated tools to reconnect with yourself.

Sometimes, simple actions are enough.

You are enough.



# Partners



The “**Connection**” project (No. 2025-1-CZ01-KA152-YOU-000300939) was a Youth Exchange co-funded by the European Union that took place at Statek Habří, Moravecké Pavlovice, Czech Republic, from 13 to 21 March 2026. It was co-created by the following partners:



**Terra del Fuoco Mediterranea (Italy)**  
[christel.antonazzo@tdfmediterranea.org](mailto:christel.antonazzo@tdfmediterranea.org)

**StoPro (Poland)**  
[proaktywne@gmail.com](mailto:proaktywne@gmail.com)



**Gergina (Bulgaria)**  
[georgia.efremova@gergina.org](mailto:georgia.efremova@gergina.org)

**Kebetas (Ukraine)**  
[kebetayouthassociation@gmail.com](mailto:kebetayouthassociation@gmail.com)



**INSpire (Czech Republic)**  
[info@czechinspire.eu](mailto:info@czechinspire.eu)



Co-funded by the  
European Union



ISBN 978-80-909359-6-9



9 788090 935969