



MENTAL SALAD

A game for reflection





20m - 3h



1 a 6 players



Moderate



13 +

MATERIAL

- 230 Cards divided into categories
 - 30 Base cards
 - 70 Ingredients cards
 - 50 Seasonings cards
 - 20 Extra Sauces cards
 - 20 Flies and Caterpillars cards
 - 10 Recipes cards
 - 20 Stirrers cards
 - 10 Mystery cards
- 1 Instruction manual
- 1 Regular dice
- 1 Game board
- 6 Game pawns

PRESENTATION

Mental Salad is a game created to talk about mental health in a light, safe and accessible way, especially among young people. It is based on the idea that mental well-being does not depend on a single factor, but on the balance between different dimensions of life, just as a salad needs several ingredients to be complete.

Throughout the game, players are invited to reflect on emotions, habits, relationships, challenges and coping strategies through questions and small activities that promote listening, empathy and sharing, where there are no right or wrong answers.

The game can be adapted to different contexts and groups, always respecting each person's pace and limits. ***Sharing is an invitation, never an obligation.*** Each player decides what they want to say, when they want to say it, and how far they want to go.

Mental Salad is not a test, nor is it therapy. It is a tool for conversation and reflection, designed to create spaces for dialogue where talking about mental health becomes more natural, less heavy, and more human

WHAT THE CARDS REPRESENT

In **Mental Salad**, each type of card represents a different aspect of mental health. Just like in a salad, no ingredient is more important than the others; it is the balance between them all that makes the difference.

The cards help guide conversation, reflection and sharing, allowing us to look at mental health in a broader, more practical way that is closer to everyday life.

Bases

These represent the pillars of well-being: rest, routine, nutrition, and physical activity. They are what sustain mental balance in everyday life.

Ingredients

These relate to emotions, relationships and inner experiences. They add colour and meaning to each player's personal experience.

Seasonings

These relate to emotional skills and positive attitudes, such as communication, resilience, gratitude and a sense of humour. They are small gestures and skills that can transform the way we deal with challenges.

WHAT THE CARDS REPRESENT

Extra Sauces

These represent unexpected situations or external challenges that arise throughout life and can influence our emotional balance.

Flies and Caterpillars

These symbolise obstacles, internal difficulties and social pressures that can affect mental health, such as fear, pressure from others or negative thoughts.

Agitators

These are cards that bring movement, action, and interaction to the game. They help to energize the group and break the reflective rhythm.

Mystery

They introduce unexpected changes in the dynamics of the game, temporarily altering the rules or the way of playing.

Recipes

They invite individual reflection, through different combinations of cards, allowing you to look at your own mental balance in a more personal way.

WAYS TO PLAY

Mental Salad can be played in different ways, depending on the group, the context and the objective at the time. Each group can choose the way that best suits its dynamics and the level of trust between participants.

Regardless of the mode chosen, the spirit of the game remains the same: ***to create a safe space for reflection, listening and sharing, while always respecting each person's boundaries.***

Below, we present the three game modes available:

Collective Salad

In this mode, the group builds a single salad together. The cards are read in turn and each member of the group reflects on them, promoting sharing, listening and the construction of collective meaning.

This mode is suitable for groups that already have some trust between them and feel comfortable talking together.

WAYS TO PLAY

Individual Salad (in a group)

Each player builds their own salad, reflecting individually on the cards they collect. Sharing with the group is optional and only happens if the person feels comfortable.

Board Game

In this mode, the board organises the course of the game, the turns and the pace of participation. It introduces movement, surprise and dynamism through the different squares and types of cards. It is especially useful for groups who do not yet know each other well, who have less confidence in each other or who benefit from more structure during the game



IMPORTANT NOTES

Salada Mental was designed to create spaces for conversation, reflection, and sharing about mental health. To ensure that the experience is safe for everyone, it is important to keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Sharing is always voluntary.
- No one is obliged to respond to a letter or talk about something they do not feel comfortable with.
- Each person decides what to share, when to share it, and how far they want to go.
- Silence is also a valid form of participation.
- During the game, jokes, comments or judgements about other people's sharing are not allowed.
- Respect for each participant's pace, emotions and limits is essential.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- Every experience is valid and deserves to be listened to carefully.

Mental Salad is not a substitute for professional support. It is a tool for dialogue and reflection, designed to bring people together and make conversations about mental health more natural and human.

BOARD GAME

Preparing the game

- Place the board on the table with the game map facing up.
- Each player chooses a pawn and places it on the starting square.
- Shuffle the different types of cards separately and place them in their respective piles.
- Place the dice (regular) within everyone's reach.
- Decide together how long you want to play (for example, until you reach the cup or for a set amount of time).

How to play

- The game begins with the youngest player (or another criterion chosen by the group).
- On their turn, the player rolls the dice and moves forward the number of squares indicated.
- When landing on a square, the player draws a card corresponding to the category of the square.
- The card is read aloud.
- The player answers the question.
 - ***If they do not feel comfortable, they may choose not to answer.***

At the end, the card must be placed next to the final goal cup.

BOARD GAME

The game proceeds clockwise.

Special squares

- Mystery

When a player lands on a Mystery square, they draw a Mystery card.

These cards introduce unexpected changes to the dynamics of the game, temporarily altering rules, turns or forms of participation.

- Flies and Caterpillars

These represent obstacles or challenges. The cards should be read carefully and responded to at each player's own pace.

End of the game

The game can end in different ways, depending on what the group decided at the beginning:

- When a player reaches the salad bowl;
- After an agreed amount of time;
- When the group feels that the experience is complete.

At the end, the group is invited to observe the salad they have created and reflect on it together.

COLLECTIVE SALAD

Preparing the game

- The group decides how many cards they want to use from each category: Bases, Ingredients, Seasonings, Extra Sauces, and Flies and Caterpillars.
- They remove only the agreed number of cards from the decks and put the rest away.
- They place the salad bowl (the back of the board with the bowl) in the centre of the table.

How to play

- One player starts (for example, the youngest or another criterion chosen by the group).
- On their turn, the player draws a card and reads it aloud.
- The group member answers the question or performs the proposed challenge.
- After sharing, the card is placed in the salad bowl.
- Then it passes to the next player.

The game continues until all the chosen cards have been used.

COLLECTIVE SALAD

End of the game

At the end, the group observes the salad they have made and reflects together, for example:

- Which ingredients are most present?
- Is there a balance between the different categories?

Tip for more

If you want to make the game more dynamic, you can mix in some Shaker cards and Mystery cards before you start.

- Shaker cards bring quick actions or challenges that involve movement or interaction.
- Mystery cards introduce small surprises that temporarily alter the dynamics of the game.



INDIVIDUAL SALAD

Preparing the game

- Each player receives or draws cards from different categories:
 - 1 Base
 - 2 to 3 Ingredients
 - 1 Seasoning
 - 1 Extra Sauce and/or 1 Fly or Caterpillar

How to play

- Each player, in turn, reads their cards.
- They answer the questions or perform the challenges, sharing with the group whatever they feel comfortable sharing.

The group listens without comment or judgement.

End of the game

At the end, each player presents their mental salad and shares:

- what made them think the most;
- what made them feel the most.

There are no right answers or comparisons, each salad represents a moment and a personal experience.

RECIPES - INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

How to play

- Choose a Recipe card.
- Follow the instructions on the recipe and take the cards corresponding to the categories indicated.
- Read each card calmly and reflect on the questions or suggestions presented.
- If you want, you can write or draw ideas, thoughts or feelings that arise during reading.

This mode has no set time limit; each person plays at their own pace.

End of reflection

After completing the recipe, observe your mental salad and reflect, for example:

- What do I feel is in balance?
- What could I take better care of?

Sharing with others is optional and only happens if it makes sense to you.

Salada Mental has no winners or right answers. Each game is different, because each group and each person brings with them unique stories, emotions, and moments

Talking about mental health is an ongoing process, made up of small reflections, listening and caring for yourself and others. This game is just a starting point for conversations that can continue beyond the game

May the experience serve to create more space for dialogue, empathy and mutual understanding, always respecting each person's limits and pace.

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