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HOW NOT TO BE

BURN OUT LAB

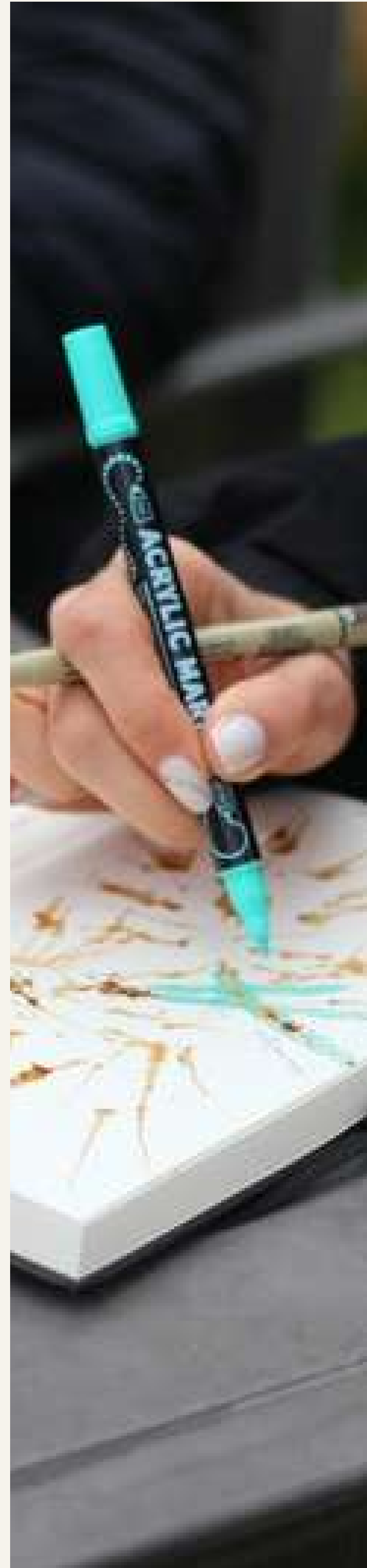


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*IN THIS E-BOOK, WE SHARE THE
NON-BURNOUT PRACTICES WE
CREATED AND EXPLAIN HOW TO
DESIGN AND ORGANIZE
WORKSHOPS THAT COMBINE
PSYCHOLOGY AND ART THERAPY
FOR BURNOUT PREVENTION*



WHY WE CHOOSE BURN OUT CONCEPT ?

- Research shows that over half of teachers (≈52%) report experiencing burnout, based on a pooled analysis from multiple countries.
- Other surveys report high work-related stress affecting 84% or more of teachers, with 86% saying their job negatively impacts their mental health
- A meta-analysis of mental health professionals (including psychologists, therapists, counselors) found that about 40% reported high levels of emotional exhaustion, one of the core burnout symptoms.



This year, we focused the training on Non-Burnout techniques, combining psychology, theory, and art therapy into one integrated learning process.

The program was divided into three parts. The first part introduced participants to the psychological foundations of burnout prevention, emotional regulation, resilience, and the role of creativity in restoring balance, while creating a safe and supportive group space.

The second part centered on practical work. Through art therapy, body-based practices, and reflective exercises, participants explored their own stress patterns and internal resources. They also designed their own Non-Burnout workshops aimed at supporting sustainable professional engagement.

The final part was dedicated to testing these workshops, reflecting on challenges, and consolidating learning. The training was not only about theory, but about lived experience. By the end, participants left with practical, ready-to-use tools for burnout prevention grounded in psychology and creative practice.

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WORKSHOPS



THE STRUCTURE

The structure of the Non-Burnout workshops focuses on designing effective sessions that integrate psychological principles and art therapy tools for burnout prevention. In particular, it includes:

- **Target group:** Identifying the audience for the workshop.
- **Main objective:** Defining the primary goal of the workshop.
- **Materials and space:** Selecting appropriate resources and creating a suitable environment.
- **Therapeutic elements:** Incorporating components that support the participants' emotional and psychological needs.
- **Step-by-step instructions:** Providing clear guidelines for conducting the workshop.
- **Reflection:** Facilitating a discussion to process and analyze the experience.

LET'S GET STARTED!



SEED BALLS (TSUCHI DANGO) PRACTICE

The Seed Balls method (also known as Tsuchi Dango in Japanese natural farming and associated with Masanobu Fukuoka) is an ecological planting and soil-regeneration technique adapted here as a Non-Burnout practice.

By combining manual work, symbolic action, ecological awareness, and reflective dialogue, this method supports emotional regulation, grounding, and sustainable engagement — key elements in burnout prevention.

The method is inclusive, low-cost, and adaptable to different age groups and cultural contexts.



Instructions: Materials ratio

- Seeds : Clay =
- · 1:30 (if using dug/block clay)
- · 1:10 (if using powdered clay)
- Approximately 1 kg of clay per participant is recommended for a reforestation activity.

Step-by-Step Technique

Prepare the clay

- Gradually add small amounts of water to the clay until it becomes moldable (not too wet).
- Add seeds
- Mix small seeds directly into the clay. Ensure even distribution.
- Knead the mixture
- Spread the mixture on a sheet and knead thoroughly (traditionally by foot) until seeds are fully incorporated.
- Shape the balls
- Form balls approximately the size of a hazelnut (2–3 cm diameter).
- All seeds must be completely covered by clay.
- For large seeds (tree seeds)
- Instead of balls, shape clay cylinders about twice the size of the seed.



SEED BALLS (TSUCHI DANGO) PRACTICE

Instructions:

Drying

- Allow the seed balls to dry slightly before dispersal.

Dispersal

- Randomly throw the balls onto the target land area.
- Mulching (optional but recommended)
- Cover the area with about 5 cm of organic material (hay or straw).

Timing

- Best period: Before the autumn rainy season (September–November, climate dependent).
- Germination begins after rainfall (usually within about two weeks).



Instructions:

Aftercare

- Avoid stepping on the area immediately after dispersal.
- Minimal intervention approach.
- Mowing tall grasses may be done later to support sprouts.
- Repeat annually if needed.
- This is the core technical method

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GRAIN DOLL

CRAFTING TRADITIONAL DOLLS

Grain Doll is a traditional Slavic protective doll filled with grain. She gets her name from the fact that she is stuffed with whole grains. The doll should be round and plump.

Traditionally, a grain doll symbolized prosperity, abundance, and success. After harvest, families would place the best grain into a small bag, dress it as a doll, and keep it in a special corner of the home until spring planting. Buckwheat was especially valued. In spring, the saved grain was ceremonially sown in the fields with wishes for a rich harvest.

The doll can also be filled with wheat, peas, or millet. When given as a gift, she represents wishes of wealth and well-being. Filling her with different grains symbolizes abundance.



Rules for Making the Doll

- Make the doll in a good mood and with kind thoughts. Include at least one small piece of fabric from your own worn clothing.
- While making her, speak kindly to the doll and treat her as a friend.
- Traditionally, it is best to make the doll during the waxing moon.
- Use scissors and needles as little as possible while forming the doll. You may sew clothing details, but never stick needles into the doll itself.
- Keep the grain doll in a visible place where the family gathers.
- Do not let strangers handle the doll; they may admire her from a distance.
- Use only whole grains — no crushed grains or flakes.



GRAIN DOLL

Materials

Fabric pieces are usually provided with extra allowance. Cut according to your desired size.

- Light-colored square for the body – 20 × 20 cm
- Fabric for lower shirt – 10 × 17 cm
- Fabric for upper shirts – 9 × 15 cm
- Fabric for vest – 5 × 17 cm
- Fabric pieces for aprons
- Fabric for headscarf
- Fabric for under-head wrap
- Lace or decorative trim
- Thread for tying and belt

Grain for filling (buckwheat, wheat, peas, millet, etc.)



Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Make the Grain Bag

Sew a small linen bag. Use a long thread, leave a tail, and stitch the side seam using a backstitch. Pull the bottom tightly closed with the remaining thread tail.



GRAIN DOLL

2. Fill with Grain

Turn the bag right side out. Fill it with grain, tapping it firmly on the table so the grains settle tightly. Continue filling and tapping until very firm. The doll must be tightly packed so it keeps its shape.



3. Close the Top

Gather the top edge with a running stitch ("forward needle" stitch). Pull tight and tuck the ends inside to form a smooth rounded top.



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WORKSHOPS

GRAIN DOLL

4. Shape the Body

Using linen thread, mark the neck and waist by tying thread around the bag. Tie knots at the back seam (this seam represents the “spine”). Always tie an odd number of knots.

5. Make the Protective Cross

With red thread, create a protective cross. Start at the back (“spine”), wrap around the waist, bring the thread diagonally up from left to right around the neck, then down on the opposite side. Tie knots at the back.

6. Add the Lower Shirt

Wrap the light fabric around the body from neck to bottom and tie it at the back with linen thread.



GRAIN DOLL

7. Add Upper Shirts

Choose one, two, or three layers.

Cut each strip slightly shorter than the previous one so the layers show. Leave space in front for aprons. Each upper layer should be about 5 mm smaller than the previous.



8. Make the Vest or Jacket

Cut a long strip of thicker fabric, slightly shorter than the top shirt. The strip should be long enough to roll small “arms” at both ends, insert “hands” from a grey/ beige fabric piece. Roll each end into a tube, place around the doll, and tie securely at the back.



GRAIN DOLL

9. Add Aprons

Make one, two, or three aprons. Each one should be slightly smaller than the previous so all layers are visible. Tie them in place.



10. Tie the Belt

Tie a belt around the waist, fastening it on the left side. The belt is an important protective element.



11. Dress the Head

First tie the under-cap neatly at the back of the head.

Then tie the headscarf in the traditional style, knot at the back. Pull the scarf tightly so it lies smoothly around the face.



GRAIN DOLL

12. Final Touch

Smooth all folds and adjust the clothing. Make sure the doll's "face" is open and neat.



SPOKEN WORD POETRY TOOL

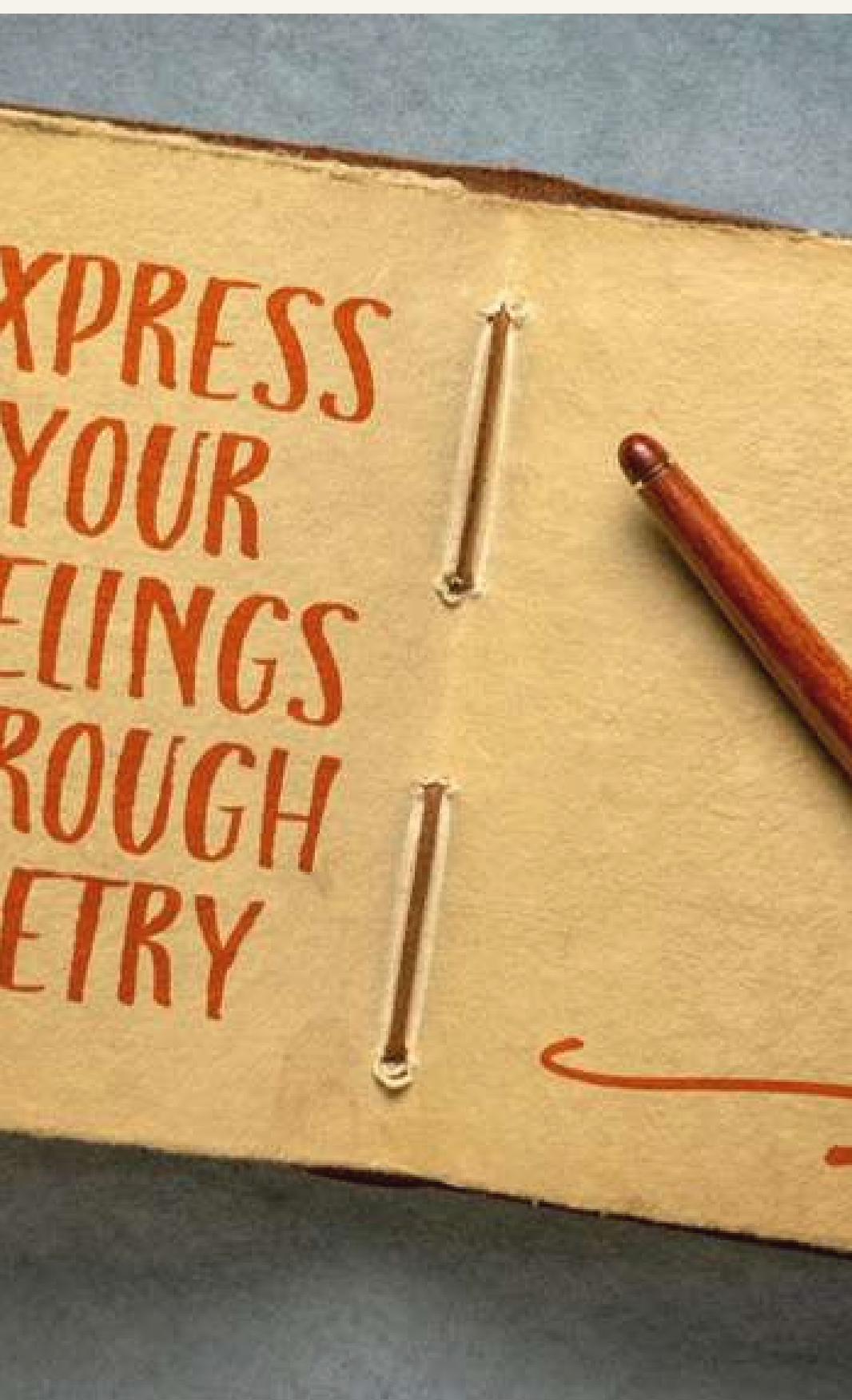
THE PROBLEM AS A CHARACTER

This method uses Spoken Word Poetry as a reflective and transformative tool. Participants personify a social problem and explore it creatively through characterization and dialogue.

The exercise helps to:

- Develop critical thinking
- Build empathy and perspective
- Transform emotional tension into creative expression
- Encourage social awareness and voice

The method is inspired by performative spoken word structures (e.g., TEDx spoken word formats such as “Wake Up!” by Jesse Oliver), where personal narrative meets social commentary.



Instructions:

Step 1 – Identify the Problem

Write down the chosen social problem.

Step 2 – Create the Character

Imagine the problem as a living being:

- Who is it?
- Age, gender, origin?
- Where does it live?

Step 3 – Appearance

Describe how it looks:

- Clothing, posture, scars, details
- First impression it gives

Step 4 – Personality

- Explore:
- Emotional traits
- Inner fears or motivations
- What triggers it
- Does it want change?

Step 5 – Relationship

- Reflect:
- What is your relationship with this character?
- What do you feel when you meet it?



SPOKEN WORD POETRY

THE PROBLEM AS A CHARACTER

6. Final Phase – Spoken Word Creation

Participants transform their notes into a short spoken word poem (1–3 minutes).

Structure suggestion:

- 1.Strong opening line
- 2.Description of the character
- 3.Emotional confrontation
- 4.Turning point
- 5.Clear message

Encourage rhythm, repetition, strong imagery, and emotional authenticity.



7. Reflection

Discuss:

- Did your perception of the problem change?
- Was it easier to talk about it through a character?
- What did you discover about yourself?

Why This Method Works

By turning a problem into a character, participants create psychological distance. This reduces defensiveness and allows deeper analysis. Spoken word adds voice, embodiment, and empowerment — transforming reflection into expression.





THE ART OF DOING NOTHING

The **Art of Doing Nothing** is a structured experiential practice designed to expose automatic productivity reflexes and habitual stress responses.

The purpose is not relaxation. The goal is to observe what happens when we remove stimulation, tasks, and coping tools — and to analyze the impact on attention, impulse, and discomfort.

It is a burnout-prevention and work-culture awareness tool.

Main Objective

- To make invisible stress patterns visible
- To observe “task mode” activation
- To understand personal and collective productivity myths

To design healthier work rhythms

Space:

- A calm, ventilated and warm space.

Group Agreements - During the practice:

- No phones
- No speaking
- Stay in the space
- No structured task

. Format (60 minutes total)

- Arrival & instructions – 5 min
- Explain that this is an observation experiment, not meditation.
- Silent practice – 40–45 min
- Participants sit in the space with no task and no interaction.
- Structured debrief – 10–30 min
- Length depends on group size.



THE ART OF DOING NOTHING

Structural Debrief Framework

A) Facts (Observable Data)

- What happened in the first 10 minutes?
- What replacement behaviors appeared (fidgeting, planning, scanning, controlling breath, sleeping)?
- When did the group dynamic shift?

B) Feelings

- What was dominant: boredom, irritation, relief, anxiety, calm?
- Was discomfort about being alone with your thoughts — or being seen doing nothing?
- What felt hardest to tolerate?

C) Findings

- What invisible work rule was exposed? (e.g., “busy = valuable”)
- What default stress response appeared (speed up, control, distract, withdraw)?
- What is the long-term cost of this pattern for teams?

D) Future Model

- Where can 2–3 minute buffers be inserted into workflows?
- What might sabotage this practice?

What guardrails could protect it during high-pressure periods?



Reflection

Discuss how silence affects:

- Productivity perception
- Self-worth
- Team dynamics
- Burnout risk

YOUR INNER CLOCK & SILENT WALK



This exercise helps participants become more aware of their perception of time, inner rhythm, and attention to the present moment. In everyday life, time is often structured by external signals such as notifications, schedules, or clocks. This activity encourages participants to rely on their internal sense of time and to observe how the absence of digital distractions affects their feelings, thoughts, and awareness of their surroundings. It can be used in workshops related to well-being, mindfulness, stress management, or digital detox.



STEP 1: FEEL YOUR INNER CLOCK

Participants sit comfortably and close their eyes. Their task is to open their eyes when they believe exactly one minute has passed, without using any external tools such as phones, watches, or timers. The facilitator measures the real time and later compares results with participants.



Objective: To develop awareness of internal time perception and understand how focus, stress, or wandering thoughts influence our sense of time.

STEP 2: SILENT WALK

Participants leave their phones, watches, and any time-tracking devices behind and go for a silent walk. They walk individually or as a group for what they believe to be 20 minutes. Participants return when they feel that approximately twenty minutes have passed. During the walk, participants focus on observing their surroundings, breathing, body sensations, and thoughts. After returning, the facilitator reveals the actual time spent and invites group reflection.



YOUR INNER CLOCK & SILENT WALK



STEP 3: REFLECTION

- 1. How did you feel during the activity? Were you stressed by the time frame or relaxed without digital triggers?
- 2. What were you focusing on during the walk?
- 3. How did the time limit affect you emotionally or mentally?
- 4. Did time feel faster or slower than expected? Why?
- 5. Did you notice anything in your surroundings that you usually overlook?
- 6. How was this experience different from walking while checking your phone?
- 7. What does this activity reveal about our dependence on clocks and digital devices?



STEP 4: DEBRIEF / CLOSING DISCUSSION

The facilitator concludes by discussing how constant connectivity and digital notifications shape our perception of time and attention. Participants reflect on whether occasionally disconnecting from



INNER RESOURCE MARKETPLACE



The Inner Resource Marketplace is a creative, reflective group activity designed to help educators reconnect with their inner strengths, recognize what sustains them, and explore what they need when facing stress or burnout.

THIS METHOD

- Supports burnout prevention and recovery
- Encourages self-awareness and emotional reflection
- Builds appreciation for diverse coping resources
- Uses creative expression to deepen learning
- Introduces a playful “auction” metaphor to explore personal values



DURATION

90–120 minutes (flexible)

- Introduction: 10–15 min
- Creative process: 45–60 min
- Marketplace & auction: 20–30 min
- Reflection: 20–30 min

Can be shortened to 60–75 minutes if needed.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paper or cardstock (postcard size recommended)
- Markers, pens, colored pencils
- Old magazines (for collage)
- Glue, scissors
- Natural materials (optional: leaves, small stones, twigs, etc.)
- Post-it notes
- Pre-written “resource keywords” (optional support)
- Fake “resource money” (Post-its labeled 150€, 100€, 50€ or similar)



INNER RESOURCE MARKETPLACE



STEP 1: – INTRODUCTION (10–15 MIN)

Explain the intention:

“Today we will explore our inner resources — the strengths, qualities, and internal capacities that help us stay grounded, avoid burnout, or return to ourselves when we feel exhausted.”

STEP 2: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION (5–10 MIN)

Invite participants to quietly reflect:

- What helps me stay strong in difficult times?
- What brings me back to myself when I feel overwhelmed?
- What inner quality protects me from burnout?

Each participant chooses three inner resources.

They write each one separately (one per card/art piece).



STEP 3: – CREATIVE EXPRESSION (45–60 MIN)

Participants create three small art pieces (like postcards), each representing one inner resource.

“They may:

- Draw
- Make a collage
- Use natural materials
- Write symbolic words or metaphors
- Create abstract representations

Encourage symbolic thinking:

- If “boundaries” → maybe a shield
- If “hope” → sunrise
- If “calm” → water, forest, sky

This stage is about expression, not artistic skill.



INNER RESOURCE MARKETPLACE



STEP 4: – CREATING THE MARKETPLACE (5 MIN)

When finished:

All artworks are placed on a central table.

Each participant receives:

- 150€
- 100€
- 50 €

(written on Post-its, with their name on each)



Explain the rules:

They can “invest” their money in any resource.

They may:

- Put all money on one resource
- Split it between several
- Invest in their own resource

They should choose resources they feel they need most right now.

STEP 5: – SILENT AUCTION (15–20 MIN)

Participants walk around silently.

They:

- Observe others’ creations
- Reflect internally:
 - What do I need right now?
 - What would strengthen me?
- Place their money Post-its next to chosen resources.

Important:

This is not about popularity — it is about personal need.

INNER RESOURCE MARKETPLACE



STEP 6: – DISTRIBUTION (5–10 MIN)

Facilitator counts the “investments.”

For each resource:

- The highest total “wins” and that participant receives the artwork.

Unchosen resources:

- May remain with creators
- May be freely taken afterward
- Or simply appreciated as part of the collective space



STEP 7: – GUIDED REFLECTION (20–30 MIN)

This is the most important part.

Invite open sharing. Possible reflection questions:

About Creation

- How was it to identify your inner resources?
- Was it easy or difficult?
- Did you doubt your choices?
-

About Voting / Investing

- How did you decide where to put your money?
- Did you invest immediately or hesitate?

Did you distribute carefully or commit fully to one

If Nobody Chose Your Resource

- How did you feel?
- Did it change how you see that resource?
- Do you value it less — or even more?

If Others Chose Your Resource

- How did that feel?
- Were you proud? Surprised?
- Did you want to keep it for yourself?

INNER RESOURCE MARKETPLACE



About Unchosen Resources

- Why didn't you invest in them?
 - Do you already have them?
 - Do they feel “free” or natural to you?
 - Do you simply need something else right now?



Meta-Reflection

- What does this activity show about your current inner state?
- What resource do you need to strengthen in real life?
- What does “investment” mean in your daily practice?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants:

- Recognize and name personal inner strengths
- Discover what they currently lack or long for
- Understand emotional reactions to value and validation
- Reflect on decision-making patterns

Strengthen self-awareness around burnout





STONE OF STRENGTH – LEAVING A TRACE

This workshop combines nature immersion, creative expression, and symbolic ritual. Participants collect stones from natural landscapes and transform them into small carriers of emotions, intentions, and messages.

The act of leaving the stone behind for someone else to discover introduces an element of anonymous kindness and shared humanity, reminding participants that even small gestures can create meaningful connections.

Historically, stones have often symbolised memory, endurance, and the connection between the human soul and the natural world. In many cultures, stones were believed to hold stories, prayers, or emotional energy. In contemporary practice, similar ideas appear in the Kindness Rocks Project, where painted stones are left in public spaces to inspire others.

STEP 7: – ARRIVAL AND GROUNDING (10–15 MIN)

Participants walk together to a natural environment — ideally a seaside, forest, or mountain area.

Facilitator invites participants to slow down and observe:

- the sound of waves or wind
- textures of the landscape
- colours and shapes of stones

Short breathing exercise helps participants shift from mental activity to sensory awareness.



STONE OF STRENGTH – LEAVING A TRACE

STEP 2: – CHOOSING THE STONE (10 MIN)

Participants search for a stone that “calls” them.

Facilitator suggests:

- Choose a stone that feels comfortable in your hand
- Notice its texture, weight, and shape
- Ask yourself: What emotion does this stone reflect today?

The stone becomes a temporary mirror of the participant's inner state.

STEP 3: – EMOTIONAL REFLECTION (10 MIN)

Participants reflect on their current emotional state.

Prompt questions:

- What emotion do I feel today?
- What energy would I like to keep?
- What do I want to release?

For burnout-prevention sessions, participants are encouraged to focus on positive or supportive emotions such as:

- calm
- resilience
- hope
- courage
- curiosity

STONE OF STRENGTH – LEAVING A TRACE



STEP 4: PAINTING THE STONE (20–30 MIN)

Using simple materials (markers or acrylic paint), participants draw symbols, colours, or words on the stone.

There are no artistic expectations.



STEP 5: THE RITUAL OF LEAVING THE STONE (10 MIN)

Participants choose a location to leave the stone:

- under a tree
- near a path
- among other rocks
- in a quiet place in nature
- They are invited to imagine:
- Someone will find this stone one day.
- This moment creates a symbolic act of sharing energy with the world.
- Participants may silently express an intention such as:
- “May this bring strength to whoever finds it.”



STEP 6: REFLECTION AND GROUP SHARING (15 MIN)

Back in the group, participants discuss:

- What did you feel during the process?
- Did the stone change meaning while you worked on it?
- How did it feel to leave it behind?

This reflection connects the activity to burnout prevention, highlighting the importance of:

- slowing down
- reconnecting with nature
- expressing emotions creatively
- letting go.





INSPIRING VOICES

Inspiring Voices is a gentle, nature-based sound practice that supports mental wellbeing through presence, breathing, and co-regulation. Participants gather by a river, lake, or the sea and create a simple, non-verbal soundscape (humming, sustained vowels, soft tones) that blends with the natural rhythm of water.

Inspired by the “singing to the water” movement often shared around World Water Day, the workshop is accessible to everyone - no singing experience required. Participants can contribute with voice, or participate fully through listening.

What participants do:

Arrive & settle: a short guided pause to notice breath, body, and the sound of water.

Sound practice:

Simple tones and humming, gradually layered into a shared soundscape. Eyes closed is optional.

Silence:

A quiet ending to let the nervous system settle.

Debrief:

Structured reflection connecting the experience to mental health and everyday coping.



INSPIRING VOICES

Debrief questions:

Body & nervous system

- What did you notice in your body before vs after (breath, jaw/shoulders, heart rate, energy level)?
- At what point did you shift from “doing” to “being”—if it happened at all?

Attention & presence

- What was easier: making sound, or simply listening? Why?
- Did your mind try to “perform” or “evaluate”? What helped you let that go?

Connection & safety

- Did you feel more connected to the group through sound than through talking? What made the difference?
- What conditions made it feel safe (or not safe) to participate?

Transfer to daily life

- Where in your workday could a 60–90 second version of this help (before a meeting, after conflict, after a heavy session)?

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