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TRAINING MANUAL

# CARE



## Promoting Mental Health in Youth Work



Co-funded by  
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# Project Partners



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# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 About the CARE Project

CARE – Promoting Mental Health in Youth Work is an Erasmus+ Small-scale Partnership in Youth (KA210-YOU), implemented between January 2025 and June 2026, and funded by the Romanian National Agency.

The project was developed as a response to the increasing mental health challenges faced by both young people and youth workers across Europe, with a focus on prevention, awareness and practical intervention through non-formal education.

CARE brings together partner organisations from Romania, Spain, Italy and North Macedonia, combining complementary expertise in youth work, mental health support, training, and community engagement. The project promotes transnational cooperation as a key element for innovation, exchange of practices and capacity building. The project is structured as a multi-stage learning and implementation process, including:

- a Kick-off Meeting in Italy, focused on alignment, planning and establishing a common methodological framework,
- a Good Practices Seminar in Spain, dedicated to exploring existing approaches and sharing experiences in the field of mental health and youth work,
- an international Training Course in Romania, representing the core learning experience of the project,
  - local workshops implemented by each partner organisation, aimed at testing and adapting the developed methods in different national contexts,
- final Dissemination Seminar in North Macedonia, focused on sharing project results, including this training manual, and engaging a wider audience.

The project contributes to Erasmus+ priorities related to inclusion, diversity, quality and innovation in youth work, while addressing key topics such as mental health, emotional wellbeing and sustainable professional practice.

CARE emphasizes a holistic approach to mental health, integrating self-awareness, emotional regulation, relational responsibility and community support as essential competences for youth workers. This training manual represents one of the main outputs of the project and is designed to support the transfer, adaptation and replication of the CARE approach in diverse youth work settings across Europe.

## **1.2 Why Mental Health in Youth Work**

Youth workers are often among the first adults young people turn to when facing emotional distress, stress, anxiety or relational conflicts. However, many youth professionals:

- lack structured training in mental health promotion,
- feel insecure when dealing with emotionally challenging situations,
- experience burnout or secondary stress due to prolonged
- exposure to others' difficulties.

Mental health is not only a clinical topic; it is closely connected to:

- self-awareness,
- emotional regulation,
- relational responsibility,
- group safety,
- sustainable engagement in community life.

By strengthening youth workers' personal wellbeing and relational competencies, the CARE approach contributes indirectly to the wellbeing and resilience of the young people they support.

## 1.3 Purpose of This Training Manual

This manual serves as:

- a structured guide for trainers delivering the CARE training programme,
- a practical resource for youth workers implementing wellbeing activities,
- a methodological reference for organisations aiming to replicate the training.

It includes:

- theoretical foundations,
- detailed session descriptions,
- non-formal education methods,
- ready-to-use tools and worksheets,
- evaluation and replication guidelines.

The manual is designed to be adaptable to different cultural, organisational and educational contexts.

## 1.4 How to Use This Manual

The manual is structured into four main parts:

**Part I** – Training Programme Structure Provides the overall logic of the 9-day course, including objectives, participant profile and training flow.

**Part II** – Session Descriptions Offers step-by-step guidance for each training session, including:

- objectives,
- duration,
- materials needed,
- facilitation steps,
- debriefing questions,
- expected outcomes.

**Part III** – Toolkit of Methods Contains practical activities, worksheets and tools that can be used independently from the full training programme.

**Part IV** – Annexes Includes additional materials supporting implementation, replication and adaptation of the training.

Trainers are encouraged to adapt the content and exercises according to:

- group dynamics,
- cultural background,
- emotional safety needs,
- available time and space.

## 1.5 Target Group and Learning Approach

Target Group The training is designed for:

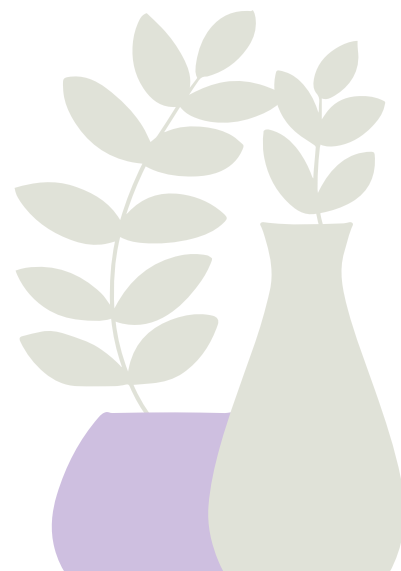
- youth workers,
- youth leaders,
- facilitators,
- NGO staff working directly with young people,
- educators using non-formal education methods.

Participants are expected to have:

- basic experience in youth work,
- openness to experiential learning,
- willingness to engage in self-reflection.

**Learning Approach** The CARE training is based on:

- non-formal education principles,
- experiential learning,
- reflective practice,
- peer learning,
- embodied and relational awareness.



The course balances:

- cognitive understanding (concepts and frameworks),
- emotional exploration,
- practical experimentation,
- structured reflection.

Participants are not passive recipients of knowledge; they are active contributors and co-creators of the learning process.

## 2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Non-formal Education Principles

The CARE training is grounded in non-formal education (NFE), a learner-centered approach widely used in youth work across Europe. Non-formal education is characterized by:

- voluntary participation,
- active involvement,
- experiential learning,
- reflection-based integration,
- horizontal relationships between trainers and participants,
- adaptability to group needs.

In the CARE context, non-formal education is not only a pedagogical choice, but also a mental health-promoting approach. It:

- empowers participants to take ownership of their learning,
- encourages emotional expression,
- strengthens peer support,
- builds relational awareness.

Learning occurs through interaction, experimentation and reflection, rather than through passive transmission of information.



## 2.2 Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb)

The training design follows the experiential learning model developed by David Kolb. Kolb's learning cycle includes four stages:

1. Concrete Experience – participants engage in an activity or simulation.
2. Reflective Observation – participants reflect on what happened and how they experienced it.
3. Abstract Conceptualization – the experience is connected to theory, models or conceptual understanding.
4. Active Experimentation – participants apply the new learning in practice or design future actions.

In CARE training, each session follows this rhythm:  
Activity – Reflection – Conceptualization – Application

This structure ensures that learning is not only understood intellectually, but also embodied and transferable to real youth work contexts.

## 2.3 Creating Safe Learning Spaces

Mental health training requires the intentional creation of psychological safety. A safe learning space means that:

- participants feel respected and heard,
- sharing is voluntary,
- vulnerability is never forced,
- confidentiality is respected,
- diversity of perspectives is welcomed.



Trainers establish safety through:

- clear group agreements,
- transparent structure,
- predictable session flow,
- regulated energy pacing,
- modeling respectful communication.

Psychological safety is not assumed; it is continuously built, monitored and maintained throughout the training process.

## **2.4 Emotional Safety & Ethical Considerations**

This training promotes mental health awareness; it does not replace therapy. Clear boundaries are essential. Ethical principles guiding the CARE training include:

- do no harm,
- respect personal limits,
- avoid re-traumatization,
- encourage referral to professional support when needed,
- distinguish clearly between youth work and clinical intervention.

Trainers must:

- avoid diagnostic language,
- not position themselves as therapists,
- monitor emotional activation levels,
- provide grounding techniques when needed.

When intense emotional reactions occur, the role of the trainer is to:

- stabilize the learning space,
- normalize emotional responses,
- redirect participants toward appropriate professional support when necessary.

Mental health promotion requires responsibility, humility and ethical clarity.

## 2.5 Role of Trainers and Facilitators

In the CARE framework, trainers are:

- facilitators of experience,
- guardians of safety,
- holders of structure,
- models of relational responsibility.

Their role is not to provide answers, but to:

- ask meaningful questions,
- guide reflection,
- observe group dynamics,
- intervene when safety is compromised,
- balance structure with flexibility.

In the CARE framework, trainers are invited to develop and embody the following qualities:

- emotional regulation,
- clarity of boundaries,
- awareness of personal triggers,
- capacity to hold complexity,
- congruence between words and actions.

Facilitation in mental health contexts requires presence more than performance.

## 2.6 Trauma-Informed Approach in Youth Work Training

The CARE training integrates principles inspired by trauma-informed practice. Many young people and youth workers themselves may carry experiences of:

- chronic stress,
- family conflict,
- social exclusion,
- migration-related challenges,
- loss or instability.

A trauma-informed approach does not require participants to disclose personal history. Instead, it assumes that trauma may be present and designs the learning environment accordingly.

Core principles applied in CARE training:

- Safety - physical, emotional and relational safety are prioritized.
- Choice - participation in sharing is always voluntary, and alternative forms of expression are offered.
- Collaboration - power is shared between trainers and participants; learning is co-created.
- Empowerment - participants are encouraged to reconnect with their internal resources and agency.
- Cultural sensitivity - experiences are understood within social and cultural contexts.

Practical implications during the training:

- no forced self-disclosure,
- clear time boundaries for emotionally intense exercises,
- regular grounding and regulation moments,
- availability of one-to-one check-ins when needed,
- encouragement to seek professional support beyond the training if necessary.

The aim is not to process trauma, but to create conditions where learning can occur without causing harm.

## **2.7 Inclusion and Diversity Sensitivity**

Youth workers operate in environments shaped by:

- socio-economic inequalities,
- cultural diversity,
- gender identities,
- migration backgrounds,
- disability,
- minority stress,
- rural–urban disparities.

The CARE training acknowledges that wellbeing is influenced by structural realities.

Inclusion within the training means:

- using accessible language,
- avoiding stigmatizing terminology,
- respecting identities and pronouns,
- adapting activities to different physical abilities,
- recognizing cultural variations in emotional expression.

Trainers are encouraged to:

- avoid assumptions about participants' backgrounds,
- invite multiple perspectives,
- create space for minority voices without placing pressure on them to educate others,
- address discriminatory behavior promptly and constructively.

A safe learning environment is not neutral; it is intentionally inclusive.

## **PART I – TRAINING PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

### **3. Overview of the Training Course**

#### **3.1 Training Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

**Overall Training Objective** The overall objective of the CARE training course is to strengthen the personal, relational and professional competences of youth workers in promoting mental health and wellbeing in youth work contexts, through non-formal, experiential and ethically grounded approaches.

**Specific Objectives** The training aims to:

- increase participants' understanding of mental health and wellbeing concepts relevant to youth work;
- strengthen self-awareness and emotional regulation skills of youth workers;
- develop relational responsibility and ethical sensitivity in working with young people;
- equip participants with practical non-formal methods for stress management and wellbeing promotion;
- support participants in designing, testing and adapting wellbeing-oriented activities for youth work;
- foster sustainable self-care practices to prevent burnout and rust-out in youth professionals;
- encourage intercultural learning and peer exchange among youth workers from different countries.

**Learning Outcomes** By the end of the training, participants will be able to:

### **Knowledge**

- explain key concepts related to mental health, wellbeing, stress, burnout and rust-out;
- understand the role of youth workers in mental health promotion, including ethical boundaries;
- recognize factors influencing mental health at individual, relational and systemic levels.

### **Skills**

- apply non-formal education methods to support emotional wellbeing in youth work;
- facilitate safe and inclusive group processes;
- design and adapt wellbeing activities for different youth contexts;
- use experiential learning and reflection tools effectively;
- identify early signs of stress and burnout in themselves and others.

## Attitudes

- demonstrate increased self-responsibility regarding personal wellbeing;
- show openness towards reflection, feedback and peer learning;
- adopt a trauma-informed and inclusive mindset;
- value wellbeing as a collective and relational process.

## 3.2 Participant Profile

The CARE training course is designed for participants who are actively involved in youth work and education. Typical participants include:

- youth workers and youth leaders;
- facilitators and trainers using non-formal education methods;
- NGO staff working directly with young people;
- educators involved in community-based or informal learning contexts.

Participants are expected to:

- have basic experience in youth work or youth-related activities;
- work directly or indirectly with young people;
- be motivated to explore mental health and wellbeing topics;
- be open to experiential learning, self-reflection and group processes.

No formal background in psychology or mental health is required. The training is designed to be accessible while maintaining professional and ethical standards. The course is suitable for participants from diverse cultural and organizational backgrounds and encourages intercultural learning and exchange of practices.

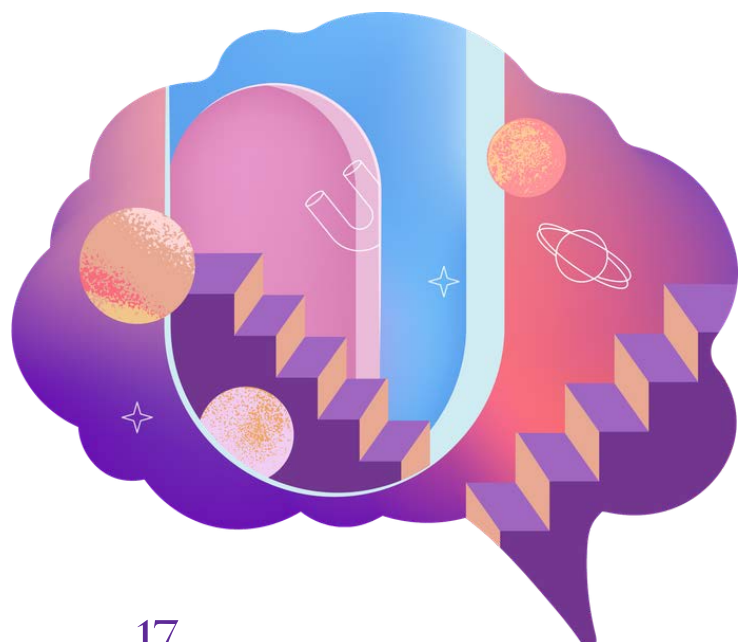
### 3.3 Training Flow Overview (9-Day Structure)

The CARE training course is structured as a 9-day residential programme, designed to gradually guide participants from group formation and contextual understanding towards method creation, testing, evaluation and closure.

The training flow follows a progressive logic, allowing sufficient time for experiential learning, reflection, integration and informal intercultural exchange. Repetition of session titles across the same day reflects the intentional allocation of time for deepening learning processes rather than introducing fragmented content.

#### DAY 1 – Arrival & Group Formation

- **Focus:** Welcoming participants, easing transition into the group, and initiating informal connections.
- **Sessions:**
  1. S1–S4: Welcome & Introduction Activities These sessions are designed to:
    2. create a sense of safety and belonging,
    3. reduce initial anxiety,
    4. support informal getting-to-know-each-other processes.
- **Evening Activity:** Participation in the local cultural event “Balul strugurilor” (Grape Harvest Ball). This activity supports informal bonding, intercultural learning and community connection.



## DAY 2 – Arrival & Group Formation

- **Focus:** Clarifying the training context, building trust, and establishing shared language and group agreements.
- **Sessions:**
  1. S1: Introduction to Erasmus+ and Project Context
  2. S2: Vocabulary – Introduction in the Training Context
  3. S3–S4: Teambuilding Activity – Building Trust and Psychological Safety The second day strengthens group cohesion and provides a common conceptual foundation for the rest of the training.
- **Evening Activity:** “Romanian Spa” – relaxation and informal social time to support emotional integration.

## DAY 3 – Foundations of Personal and Relational Responsibility in Youth Work

- **Focus:** Exploring personal responsibility, self-awareness and relational dynamics in youth work.
- **Sessions:**
  1. S1–S2: “The Little Human” Model
  2. S3–S4: Relational Exchanges These sessions introduce and deepen conceptual
  3. frameworks that support reflective and responsible youth work practice.
- **Evening Activity:** Italian Evening – intercultural exchange and informal group bonding.

## DAY 4 – Self-Care and Stress Management Interventions

- **Focus:** Understanding stress, self-care strategies and practical interventions for youth workers.
- **Sessions:**
  1. S1: Intervention Scheme
  2. S2: Intervention Strategies – Self-Care and Stress Management
  3. S3–S4: Stress Management – Walk and Talk The day combines theory,
- experiential activities and embodied reflection.

- **Evening Activity:** Macedonian Evening – informal intercultural learning and relaxation.

## DAY 5 – Designing Non-Formal Wellbeing Methods for Youth Work

- **Focus:** Translating concepts into practice and introducing method design.
- **Sessions:**
  1. S1: Methods, Techniques and Practices for Wellbeing
  2. S2: Strategies to Support the Wellbeing of Young People
  3. S3–S4: Method Creation Laboratory Participants begin designing their own non-formal wellbeing methods.
- **Evening Activity:** Spanish Evening – social connection and cultural exchange.

## DAY 6 – Method Creation Laboratory

- **Focus:** Deepening method development through experimentation and teamwork.
- **Sessions:**
  1. S1–S2: Method Creation Laboratory
  2. S3–S4: City Escape – “Kidnapped by Dracula” The city escape activity offers an outdoor experiential learning context that supports teamwork, creativity and stress management.
- **Evening Activity:** Romanian Evening – cultural immersion and group celebration.

## DAY 7 – Testing and Experiential Learning

- **Focus:** Testing, performing and experiencing the methods created by participants.
- **Sessions:**
  1. S1–S4: Performance-Testing of Created Methods Participants act both as facilitators and learners, gaining insight into the practical application of wellbeing methods.
- **Evening Activity:** Halloween Party – creative expression and informal closure of the experiential phase.

## DAY 8 – Evaluation, Meaning and Closure

- **Focus:** Reflection, evaluation and emotional integration.
- **Sessions:**
  1. S1–S2: Method Analysis and Feedback
  2. S3: Follow-Up
  3. S4: Light for Souls – A Walk of Remembrance and Honoring the Past This day supports meaning-making and conscious closure of the learning process.
- **Evening Activity:** Continuation of Light for Souls – collective ritual of reflection and honoring.

## DAY 9 – Departure & Final Reflection

- **Focus:** Final evaluation, consolidation of learning and transition back to daily contexts.
- **Sessions:**
  1. S1–S2: Course Evaluation
  2. Departure

Participants leave with:

- clarified learning outcomes,
- personal reflections,
- practical tools ready to be implemented in youth work contexts.



## PART II – SESSION DESCRIPTIONS (BASED ON THE TRAINING AGENDA)

### 4. Session descriptions

The session descriptions in this section reflect both the planned training structure and the adaptive facilitation process shaped by the group's needs and the local context. During the training, several local cultural events coincided naturally with the course schedule. Their voluntary integration into the programme added significant value, contributing to group cohesion, intercultural learning and personal reflection. These moments enriched both the group dynamics and the individual learning experience. Each session is presented with its objectives, methodology, facilitation steps and expected outcomes, offering a practical guide for replication and adaptation.

#### DAY 1 – Arrival & Group Formation

**Day Objectives** By the end of Day 1, participants will:

- feel welcomed and emotionally safe in the training environment
- begin building interpersonal trust
- experience informal intercultural bonding
- develop initial group cohesion

#### S1 – Welcome & Informal Ice-Breaker

- **Duration:** 30–45 minutes
- **Objectives:**
  1. reduce arrival anxiety
  2. initiate name learning
  3. create first informal connections
- **Method:** Short interactive getting-to-know-you exercise, adapted by the trainer based on group size and energy level.
- **Facilitator Notes:** The tone should remain light, warm and inclusive. This is not a moment for deep sharing, but for creating a psychological “soft landing” into the group.

## Evening Activity – Participation in Local Cultural Event

- **“Grape Harvest Ball” (Balul Strugurilor)** Participants were offered the voluntary opportunity to attend a traditional annual community celebration organized by local youth. The event celebrates the grape harvest and wine-making traditions of the region. Although participation was optional, all participants chose to attend.

**Learning Rationale** This informal activity contributed to:

- intercultural immersion in a real community context
- early relational bonding
- shared emotional experience outside the formal training space
- reduction of social barriers

From a methodological perspective, such informal shared experiences can accelerate group cohesion more effectively than structured activities alone.

**Learning Outcomes** Participants:

- experienced local culture directly
- engaged in spontaneous group interaction
- developed early relational trust

Integrating authentic community experiences into Erasmus+ mobility projects strengthens intercultural learning and enhances the European added value of the training.

## DAY 2 – Context Setting & Foundations

**Day Objectives** By the end of Day 2, participants will:

- understand the context of the CARE project
- clarify key mental health vocabulary
- establish group agreements and shared responsibility
- strengthen psychological safety
- engage in structured trust-building

### S1 – Introduction to Course Context & Group Formation

- **Duration:** 120 minutes
- **Objectives:**
  1. clarify expectations and fears
  2. co-create group agreements
  3. introduce the Erasmus+ framework
  4. present project goals
  5. establish reflection partnerships

#### Activity 1 – Passport: Creative Getting-to-Know-Each-Other

Participants engaged in a dynamic getting-to-know activity combining movement, creativity and short personal exchanges. While music was playing, participants moved around the room and exchanged sheets. At each music stop, they interacted with the person whose name appeared on the sheet they were holding, gradually building a creative “passport” through drawing facial features and collecting basic personal information (e.g. age, city, qualities, interests, dreams). At the end of the activity, participants presented the colleague whose passport they held, until everyone had been introduced. The completed passports were displayed in the training room and remained visible throughout the course.

**Methodological link:** Supports group formation, reduces initial anxiety and fosters emotional safety through playful interaction and gradual self-disclosure (non-formal education principle).

**Activity 2 – Carousel: Expectations, Fears, Contributions, Group Rules** Participants rotated in small groups and contributed to flipcharts addressing:

- expectations
- fears
- personal contributions
- group agreements The outputs were discussed and consolidated into visible group agreements that guided the training process.
- **Methodological link:** Promotes ownership, participation and shared responsibility (non-formal education principle).

**Activity 3 – Introduction to Erasmus+ & Project Context** The presentation included:

- Erasmus+ framework
- project partnership
- objectives of the CARE training
- structure of the 9-day course Participants were invited to connect their personal expectations with the project objectives, strengthening relevance and engagement.

**Reflection Pair System** Participants were paired and received identical notebooks, forming reflection partnerships that remained active throughout the training.

- **Purpose:**
  1. deepen learning integration
  2. encourage peer accountability
  3. support emotional processing

**Organisational Engagement Element** Participants were randomly assigned to support the organization of meals.

- **Rationale:** Encourages shared responsibility, active participation and a sense of community ownership.

## **S2 – Vocabulary Clarification: Mental Health & Wellbeing**

- **Duration:** 120 minutes
- **Objectives:**
  1. clarify key concepts
  2. align understanding
  3. connect theory with lived experience
  4. activate experiential learning

**Method: Rotational Concept Stations** Participants were divided into five groups, each working on one concept:

- Well-being
- Mental Health
- Stress
- Burnout
- Rust-out

For each concept, groups:

- generated descriptions
- created symbols
- connected personal experiences
- prepared a creative presentation

Groups rotated between concepts every 10 minutes. At the end, each concept was presented using a non-formal, creative approach. Formal definitions (WHO, APA, ICD-11) were then introduced and displayed in the room.

**Learning Outcomes** Participants:

- distinguished between burnout and rust-out
- understood mental health as a dynamic process
- recognized both positive and negative aspects of stress
- differentiated wellbeing from the absence of illness

**Methodological Strength** The activity followed Kolb's experiential learning cycle: Concrete experience → Reflection → Conceptualization → Application It also reduced cognitive overload by allowing participants to co-construct meaning before being introduced to formal definitions.

### **S3 & S4 – Experiential Simulation: “The Islands”**

**Purpose of the Activity** “The Islands” simulation explored:

- communication barriers
- relational dependency
- trust under pressure
- leadership dynamics
- inclusion and exclusion
- responsibility in youth work contexts
- wellbeing as a collective and relational process

**Structure Overview** Participants were divided into three teams:

- Blind Island
- Mute Island
- Well-being Island Each group had specific rules and constraints, requiring interdependence and cooperation.

**Learning Objectives** Participants:

- experienced frustration and adaptation
- observed personal reactions under stress
- identified leadership patterns
- reflected on inclusion and accessibility
- understood wellbeing as relational and systemic

**Debriefing (70 minutes)** The debrief followed Kolb's experiential learning cycle:

- What happened? (facts)
  - How did you feel?
  - What did you observe about group dynamics?
  - What does this tell us about youth work and mental health?
  - What did you discover about yourself as a youth worker?
- Participants reflected individually in their notebooks and discussed insights in reflection pairs.

### **Observed Impact**

- strong emotional bonding
- increased openness and authenticity
- development of shared language around wellbeing
- increased group comfort and trust During the closing circle, participants expressed a clear sense of psychological safety and group cohesion.

**Evening Informal Programme** The evening included sauna, jacuzzi, campfire and informal discussions.

### **Learning Function:**

1. emotional integration
2. nervous system regulation after an intense simulation
3. informal peer bonding



## **DAY 3 – Foundations of Personal and Relational Responsibility in Youth Work**

### **S1 & S2 – Experiential and Reflective Learning: “The Little Human” Model and the Circles of Control**

**Total Duration:** approx. 3.5 hours (including individual work, pair sharing and group reflection)

**Purpose of the Activity** These sessions were designed to support participants in:

- understanding personal responsibility in relation to mental health and wellbeing,
- increasing awareness of internal dialogue and self-regulation,
- distinguishing between control, influence and acceptance,
- developing reflective capacity relevant to youth work practice,
- strengthening self-care and emotional responsibility.

### **Structure Overview**

**Opening and Group Attunement** The day started with a short energizer (“Gooooood Morning”), followed by a morning check-in, where participants briefly shared:

- how they felt in the present moment,
- how they experienced the previous evening,
- how rested they felt. This opening supported emotional presence, continuity and group connection.

**Inner Dialogue Reflection** Participants were introduced to the concept of inner dialogue through guided reflection on thoughts and self-talk. An individual writing exercise followed:

- one letter written from the Inner Critic,
- one letter written from the Inner Best Friend. Participants first shared their reflections in pairs and later, voluntarily, in plenary, with facilitated discussion.

**Introduction of the “Little Human” Model** The trainer introduced the “Little Human” model, structured around three circles of responsibility:

- Inner Circle – Self (100%), including the five levels of functioning: mental, emotional, behavioral, physical and spiritual;
  - Second Circle – Others (50%), representing shared responsibility in relationships;
  - Third Circle – Systems (limited influence), referring to institutions, organizations and wider social structures.
- Relationships in the second circle were symbolized using a scarf, illustrating supportive (“gift”) messages as well as toxic messages.

At the system level, four possible positions were explored:

- complain,
- try to change (through collective action),
- accept,
- leave the system.

**Learning Objectives** Participants:

- increased awareness of their inner dialogue and self-care patterns,
- differentiated between responsibility and over-responsibility,
- reflected on their positioning in relationships and systems,
- recognized how internal states influence professional behavior,
- connected personal wellbeing with professional sustainability in youth work.



## **S3 & S4 – Experiential Simulation and Group Learning: Relational Exchanges and the Four Types of Self**

- **Total Duration:** approx. 3 hours

**Purpose of the Activity** This experiential session was designed to:

- explore relational patterns and power dynamics,
- increase awareness of reactions to criticism and conflict,
- develop emotional literacy and boundary-setting skills,
- support conscious positioning in youth work relationships,
- connect personal patterns with professional roles.

### **Structure Overview**

**Exploration of Toxic Messages and Criticism** At the request of the group, the session deepened understanding of:

- toxic communication,
- destructive criticism,
- typical emotional and behavioral reactions. This was followed by a facilitated discussion on conflict management in youth work contexts.

**Relational Exchanges Activity** An experiential exercise was facilitated using a physical axis on the floor. Four volunteers embodied the following Types of Self:

- Victim Self,
- Vulnerable Self,
- Balanced (Adult) Self,
- Grandiose Self.

Participants observed and reflected on each position, exploring characteristics across the five levels of functioning (mental, emotional, behavioral, physical and spiritual), as well as relational and systemic positioning. The Balanced (Adult) Self was emphasized as the functional reference point for youth workers, supporting empathy, responsibility and healthy boundaries.

## **Learning Objectives** Participants:

- recognized different relational and emotional functioning modes,
- identified personal default patterns under stress,
- developed awareness of how these patterns affect youth work practice,
- strengthened their capacity for reflective, non-reactive engagement,
- understood the importance of the Balanced (Adult) Self in supporting young people.

## **Applied Reflection and Debrief** Participants engaged in an individual applied exercise involving:

- drawing and personalizing the “Little Human” model,
- identifying repetitive beliefs, emotions, behaviors and defense mechanisms,
- mapping key relationships and responsibility distribution,
- reflecting on their positioning toward major systems,
- identifying the dominant type of Self in daily functioning.

The debrief followed Kolb’s experiential learning cycle:

- What happened?
- What did I feel?
- What did I observe about myself and others?
- What does this mean for my role as a youth worker?
- How can I apply this learning in my practice? Reflections were shared in the group and integrated through facilitated discussion.

## **Observed Impact**

- high level of self-awareness and insight,
- increased clarity around personal responsibility and limits,
- strong engagement and depth of reflection,
- significant perceived personal and professional relevance,
- the day was experienced as transformative in terms of self-knowledge.

**Evening Informal Programme – Intercultural Evening: Italy** The Italian group facilitated an intercultural evening including:

- a synchronized cultural dance,
  - a team-based quiz on Italian culture,
  - tasting of traditional Italian products.
- **Learning Function:**
    1. intercultural learning,
    2. emotional integration after an intensive learning day,
    3. informal bonding and group cohesion.

## **DAY 4 – Self-Care and Stress Management Interventions**

### **S1 & S2 – Intervention Framework and Self-Care Strategy Harvesting**

- **Total Duration:** approx. 3 hours (including group work and plenary reflection)

**Purpose of the Activity** These sessions were designed to:

- introduce a structured intervention framework for self-care and stress management,
- support participants in identifying personal needs and resources across multiple levels of functioning,
- develop a shared pool of practical strategies relevant for youth workers,
- increase awareness of limiting beliefs, emotional patterns and defense mechanisms that influence wellbeing,
- promote sustainable professional functioning and burnout prevention in youth work.



## Structure Overview

**Arrival Blitz and Group Attunement** The day started with a short arrival check-in (“Blitz”), allowing participants to update the group on:

- their current emotional state,
- reflections from the previous evening. Group energy was visibly high, supporting engagement and readiness for deeper work.

**Intervention Scheme – Based on the “Little Human” Levels** The trainer introduced an intervention scheme aligned with the five levels of the “Little Human” model:

- mental,
- emotional,
- actional/behavioral,
- physical,
- spiritual/social. The model was connected to self-care planning and stress regulation.

**World Café-Style Strategy Collection (Five Thematic Tables)** Five tables were prepared, each representing one dimension of wellbeing and self-care. Participants rotated freely, staying as long as needed at each table and contributing ideas, practices and strategies.

- **Table topics:**

1. Needs (Universal Human Needs)
2. Mental level (beliefs and thinking patterns)
3. Emotional level (feelings and emotional literacy)
4. Actional/behavioral level (habits, routines, choices)
5. Physical – Spiritual – Social level (body, meaning, connection)

The process generated a shared collection of strategies later used in personal self-care planning and youth work intervention design.

## Learning Objectives Participants:

- mapped personal needs and resources across multiple wellbeing domains,
- identified self-care and stress-management strategies at different levels of functioning,
- explored the connection between beliefs, emotions, behavior and bodily responses,
- strengthened their ability to design interventions for themselves and for young people,
- increased awareness of coping styles and defense mechanisms that may block wellbeing.

## Materials Used (included for replication in the Annexes)

- **Universal Human Needs Framework:** A structured needs list supporting the identification of unmet needs and corresponding self-care actions.
- **Limiting Beliefs vs. Empowering Beliefs – by Type of Self:** A comparative worksheet supporting cognitive reframing and awareness of default beliefs linked to the Victim, Vulnerable and Grandiose Selves.
- **Feelings, Emotions and Experiences List:** A comprehensive emotional vocabulary resource supporting emotional identification and differentiation.
- **Defense Mechanisms – Awareness and Transformation Table:** A psychoeducational tool supporting awareness of common defense mechanisms, what they protect from, typical behaviors and healthier alternatives.



**Collected Strategy Lists:** Outputs of the café process, later used as resources for personal self-care planning and youth work intervention design. These included:

1. mental self-care (mindfulness, reframing, digital detox, compassionate self-talk),
2. emotional self-care (check-ins, journaling, reaching out, permission for joy),
3. physical self-care (sleep hygiene, hydration, movement, reducing stimulants),
4. social self-care (boundaries, supportive connections, peer support/supervision),
5. spiritual self-care (nature, gratitude, meaning, acceptance/forgiveness).

A complementary overview of methods, techniques and practices for wellbeing was also included.

**Debriefing** The plenary debrief focused on:

- What strategies did you choose first, and why?
  - Which areas feel most neglected (mental / emotional / behavioral / physical / spiritual-social)?
  - What patterns repeat under stress?
  - Which strategies feel realistic and sustainable in everyday life and in youth work practice?
  - What is one small change you can commit to this week?
- Participants reflected on personal relevance and discussed how the intervention framework could be transferred to youth work settings.

**Observed Impact**

- high engagement and active contribution at all tables,
- increased clarity regarding personal needs and self-care priorities,
- rich shared pool of practical strategies transferable to youth work,
- stronger emotional vocabulary and self-regulation awareness,
- increased awareness of defense mechanisms and healthier alternatives.

## **S3 & S4 – Outdoor Experiential Learning: Walk & Talk + Symbolic Bridge Ritual**

- **Total Duration:** approx. 3 hours (walk, ritual, regulation practices and debrief)

**Purpose of the Activity** The outdoor component was designed to:

- integrate learning through movement and nature-based reflection,
- support nervous system regulation and stress release,
- deepen self-care awareness through dialogue and symbolic action,
- facilitate personal commitment and intention-setting,
- strengthen peer connection and psychological safety in pairs.

### Structure Overview

**Walk & Talk in Pairs** Participants walked slowly through the forest in pairs or small groups, using a structured set of reflection questions focused on self-care, stress signals, balance and kindness toward self.

**Symbolic Bridge Ritual** Along the route, participants reached a metal bridge used as a symbolic threshold. They were invited to:

- identify three things to leave behind (e.g. limiting beliefs, unhealthy habits, defense mechanisms),
- choose three natural objects to symbolize them,
- release them near the riverbank while crossing the bridge,
- define a new intention to carry forward.

**Somatic Regulation and Tension Release** After the ritual, the group continued to a peaceful place near a mountain stream, where participants practiced stress-release and regulation techniques, such as:

- breath-based regulation,
- muscle tension amplification and release,
- gentle body-based discharge practices.

**Facilitator note:** More intense forms of release, including vocal release, were offered only as optional elements and adapted to the context and participants' comfort level. The group then returned to the training location for integration and closure.

**Debriefing** The debrief explored:

- What did you notice in your body before and after the walk?
  - What emotions or insights appeared during the ritual?
  - What did you choose to leave behind, and why?
  - What intention do you want to carry into your daily routine?
  - How can a Walk & Talk format be adapted for young people?
- Participants shared key reflections, and the day closed with a short circle.

## **Observed Impact**

- strong sense of grounding and nervous system regulation,
- increased openness and peer connection through pair dialogue,
- meaningful personal insights linked to sustainable self-care,
- both cognitive clarity and emotional relief were reported,
- very positive feedback regarding both the content and the outdoor learning format.

**Evening Informal Programme – Intercultural Evening: North Macedonia** The team from North Macedonia presented their country using a hand-drawn map, offering insights into the capital city of Skopje, key historical aspects and the meaning of the national flag. They shared traditional expressions translated humorously into English, creating an interactive and joyful atmosphere that encouraged participation and laughter. The evening concluded with traditional folk dances and the presentation of typical dishes, some of which were similar to Romanian cuisine.

- **Learning Function:**

1. intercultural learning,
2. emotional integration after an intensive day,
3. informal bonding and strengthening of group cohesion.

## **DAY 5 – Designing Non-Formal Wellbeing Methods for Youth Work**

**Opening: Arrival Blitz and Integration** The day started with an arrival Blitz, allowing participants to share “leftovers” from the previous day—insights, reflections and ongoing personal awareness. This supported continuity of learning and emotional integration.

### **S1 – Methods, Techniques and Practices for Wellbeing**

- **Total Duration:** approx. 3 hours (including self-assessment activity)

**Purpose of the Activity** This session was designed to:

- broaden participants’ repertoire of wellbeing and stress-management practices,
- normalize stress as a human experience and focus on reducing its impact,
- support personal responsibility through concrete daily-life steps,
- strengthen assertive communication and boundary-setting as protective factors,
- increase self-awareness of personal habits and coping strategies.

### **Structure Overview**

**1. Collecting Concrete Stress-Management Steps** Participants completed and expanded an open list of practical steps for stress management, with the shared understanding that stress cannot always be eliminated, but its impact can be reduced through awareness, choice and self-care. Material used: Concrete Steps for Stress Management (open list)

The list included, among others:

- identifying causes and symptoms of stress,
- accepting what cannot be changed,
- taking action on what can be changed,
- eliminating toxic stressors (people, situations, places),
- time management and prioritization,
- cognitive reframing and transforming limiting beliefs,
- relaxation, breathing, mindfulness and journaling,
- healthy lifestyle practices (sleep, nutrition, movement),
- creative activities, nature connection and social support,
- asking for help (e.g. coaching, psychotherapy, supervision),
- gratitude, kindness and volunteering.

Participants were encouraged to add personalized strategies.

**2. Experiential Self-Assessment: “One Step Forward” – Assertiveness Awareness** The group completed a short embodied exercise to raise awareness of their own assertiveness level.

Instruction:

- YES = step forward (desirable / assertive behavior)
- NO = step back (less desirable / non-assertive behavior)

Statements explored participants' ability to:

- express needs clearly,
- say “no” politely,
- ask for help,
- set boundaries and protect time,
- manage conflict respectfully,
- request what they want directly,
- accept feedback and acknowledge strengths,
- leave harmful situations,
- express emotions without attacking,
- own mistakes without harsh self-criticism.

The exercise supported rapid self-recognition of strengths and development areas related to boundaries and respectful communication.

### **Learning Objectives** Participants:

- expanded their toolkit of wellbeing and stress-management strategies,
- strengthened awareness of daily habits that protect mental health,
- reflected on assertiveness as a key wellbeing skill,
- identified personal patterns related to boundaries and self-responsibility,
- connected individual self-care with sustainable youth work practice.

### **Debriefing** The debrief focused on:

- Which stress-management steps feel most realistic for you?
- What do you already do well? What is missing?
- What did you notice during the “One Step Forward” activity?
- Where do you find it hardest to be assertive, and why?
- What is one small boundary you could set this week?

Participants shared brief reflections and extracted practical takeaways.

### **Observed Impact**

- increased realism and clarity, with participants focusing on small, doable steps,
- high engagement through embodied learning,
- better awareness of how boundaries influence stress,
- creation of a shared wellbeing “language” within the group.

The exercise supported rapid self-recognition of strengths and development areas related to boundaries and respectful communication.

### **Learning Objectives** Participants:

- expanded their toolkit of wellbeing and stress-management strategies,
- strengthened awareness of daily habits that protect mental health,
- reflected on assertiveness as a key wellbeing skill,
- identified personal patterns related to boundaries and self-responsibility,
- connected individual self-care with sustainable youth work practice.

### **Debriefing** The debrief focused on:

- Which stress-management steps feel most realistic for you?
- What do you already do well? What is missing?
- What did you notice during the “One Step Forward” activity?
- Where do you find it hardest to be assertive, and why?
- What is one small boundary you could set this week?

Participants shared brief reflections and extracted practical takeaways.

### **Observed Impact**

- increased realism and clarity, with participants focusing on small, doable steps,
- high engagement through embodied learning,
- better awareness of how boundaries influence stress,
- creation of a shared wellbeing “language” within the group.

## S2 – Strategies to Support Young People Through Non-Formal Methods (Kolb + ASK)

- **Total Duration:** approx. 1.5–2 hours

**Purpose of the Activity** This session was designed to:

- support transfer from personal learning to youth work practice,
- introduce a clear non-formal education structure for mental health promotion,
- prepare participants to design and test methods in their national contexts,
- clarify learning objectives and outcomes using the ASK model (Attitudes, Skills, Knowledge),
- ensure participants can create methods aligned with Kolb's experiential learning cycle.

**Structure Overview** Participants were invited to “put on the youth worker hat” and translate previous learning into practical interventions for young people and for supporting other youth workers.

The trainer presented:

- the differences between formal, non-formal and informal learning,
- examples of non-formal methods (short and complex),
- Kolb's experiential learning cycle, emphasizing sequence and coherence:
  1. experience
  2. reflection
  3. conceptualization
  4. experimentation / application

Participants were also introduced to:

- writing learning objectives and intended outcomes,
- the ASK model (Attitudes, Skills, Knowledge) for designing learning processes.

It was agreed that participants would work in national teams in order to facilitate later testing, implementation and multiplication in their home countries.

### **Learning Objectives** Participants:

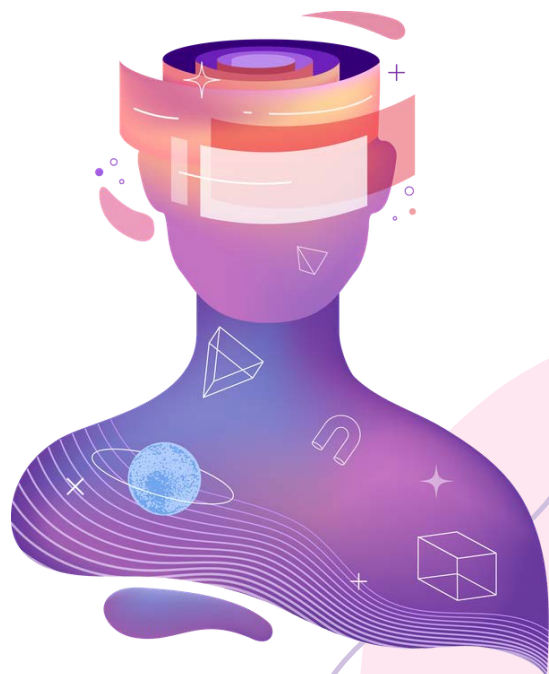
- strengthened their understanding of non-formal education methodology,
- learned to structure activities using Kolb's cycle,
- practiced formulating learning objectives and outcomes using the ASK model,
- prepared to design interventions transferable to youth work realities,
- assumed ownership for the upcoming Method Creation Laboratory.

### **Debriefing** Debrief questions included:

- What makes a method “non-formal” in practice?
- Which step of Kolb's cycle do you tend to skip, and why?
- What attitudes, skills and knowledge do you want your method to develop?
- How will your national context influence the design?

### **Observed Impact**

- clear transfer from self-work to professional application,
- increased confidence in method design and facilitation,
- strong motivation supported by ownership and national-team organization.



## S3 & S4 – Method Creation Laboratory (National Teams)

**Total Duration:** approx. 3 hours

**Purpose of the Activity** The Method Creation Laboratory aimed to:

- enable participants to design new wellbeing methods for youth work,
- apply Kolb + ASK in concrete activity development,
- stimulate creativity while reducing fear of judgment or “wrong ideas,”
- support collaboration and peer learning within national teams.

**Structure Overview** Participants worked in national teams on developing original methods, supported by trainers through coaching and feedback.

A creative facilitation tool was introduced: “The Judgment Suspension Pill.” To unlock creativity and reduce self-censorship, each participant received a symbolic “pill of suspending judgment.” This playful intervention created a temporary group agreement: participants were “unable” to judge others’ ideas—or their own—during the ideation phase. The result was increased spontaneity, innovation and creative risk-taking.

**Learning Objectives** Participants:

- generated draft methods ready for testing and refinement,
- practiced collaboration, facilitation thinking and creative risk-taking,
- increased their ability to give and receive supportive feedback,
- strengthened trust and psychological safety in teamwork.



## **Debriefing** Reflection focused on:

- What supported your creativity today?
- What blocked you, and how did you move through it?
- Which Kolb step is already strong in your method? Which is missing?
- What is your method's intended ASK outcome?

## **Observed Impact**

- high creative flow and participation,
- reduced fear of judgment,
- strong ownership, with teams committed to developing methods suitable for national testing.

**Evening Informal Programme – Intercultural Evening: Spain** The Spanish team delivered a country presentation using a hand-drawn map, highlighting regions and defining cultural elements. Participants were introduced to flamenco dance, learning basic steps and movements, and were invited to actively engage in the artistic moment. The evening continued with the presentation of traditional dishes from various regions of Spain, particularly Andalusia, and the performance of Spanish songs, creating a vibrant and authentic atmosphere.

### • **Learning Function:**

1. intercultural learning,
2. emotional integration after a productive working day,
3. informal bonding and group cohesion.



## DAY 6 – Method Creation Laboratory & Experiential City Learning

**Opening: Continuation of the Creative Process** The day continued the work initiated in the previous sessions, maintaining a strong focus on ownership, creativity and practical application.

### S1 & S2 – Method Creation Laboratory (National Teams)

- **Total Duration:** approx. 3 hours

**Purpose of the Activity** The morning laboratory was designed to:

- support participants in finalizing their own wellbeing methods for youth work,
- strengthen skills in session structuring and facilitation,
- clarify learning objectives and expected outcomes,
- encourage teamwork, role distribution and co-responsibility,
- prepare methods for testing and implementation in national contexts.

**Structure Overview** Participants continued working in national teams on the preparation of their workshops and non-formal methods. Trainers provided continuous support, focusing on:

- structuring the session flow,
- formulating clear learning objectives,
- aligning methods with Kolb's experiential learning cycle,
- clarifying roles within the facilitation team,
- ensuring coherence between purpose, activities and outcomes.

Supporting tool: Participants received a session template guiding them through:

- objectives and target group,
- timing and structure,
- methods and materials,
- debriefing questions,
- expected learning outcomes.

This template served both as a working instrument and as a resource for later replication.

## **Learning Objectives** Participants:

- consolidated their ability to design non-formal wellbeing methods,
- practiced facilitation planning and teamwork,
- refined learning objectives and debriefing structures,
- increased confidence in implementing methods independently,
- strengthened ownership of the learning process.

## **Observed Impact**

- high level of focus and engagement,
- clear progress in method structure and clarity,
- increased confidence in facilitation roles,
- strong collaboration within national teams.

## **S3 – Community Visit: Youth Work and Domestic Violence Prevention**

- **Location:** Pas Alternativ Association, Braşov
- **Total Duration:** approx. 1.5 hours

## **Purpose of the Activity** This activity aimed to:

- expose participants to local youth and social work practices,
- raise awareness of domestic violence and its impact on wellbeing,
- connect mental health promotion with real community needs,
- foster empathy, social responsibility and civic engagement.

## **Structure Overview** Participants visited the headquarters of Pas Alternativ Association, where they were introduced to:

- youth-related activities,
- programmes for the prevention and combating of domestic violence,
- support services for women affected by domestic abuse.

Following the presentation, participants were invited to reflect on the topic and voluntarily write supportive messages for the women's support group facilitated by the organization. This moment created a strong emotional connection and deepened participants' understanding of the social dimensions of wellbeing.

### **Learning Objectives** Participants:

- increased awareness of domestic violence as a mental health issue,
- understood the role of NGOs in youth and community work,
- connected theory with real-life social intervention,
- practiced empathy and supportive communication.

### **Observed Impact**

- high emotional engagement and sensitivity to the topic,
- strong expressions of solidarity and care,
- increased motivation to address social issues in their professional work.

## **S4 – Experiential Learning: Braşov City Escape (Intercultural Challenge)**

**Total Duration:** approx. 3 hours

**Purpose of the Activity** The City Escape was designed to:

- promote intercultural learning through direct interaction,
- encourage teamwork, creativity and initiative,
- develop communication skills in real-life contexts,
- support informal learning and group bonding,
- increase openness toward local culture and community.

**Structure Overview** Participants were divided into four mixed international groups and invited to take part in an experiential city-based challenge in Braşov.

Each group received:

- a set of creative and investigative tasks,
- basic rules emphasizing task-sharing, the use of Romanian words and a playful spirit,
- a time frame of three hours to complete the challenge.

Tasks included:

- interacting with local people,
- discovering cultural stories and symbols,
- exchanging objects with community members,
- exploring prices, landmarks and contemporary Romanian personalities,
- practicing Romanian language expressions,
- taking creative group photos at key locations.

Participants documented their experience through photos and other creative evidence.

**Learning Objectives** Participants:

- practiced intercultural communication in real settings,
- increased confidence in approaching strangers and engaging in public interaction,
- developed teamwork and problem-solving skills,
- learned about Romanian culture through lived experience,
- experienced informal and experiential learning in action.

**Observed Impact**

- high energy, creativity and enthusiasm,
- strong group cohesion across nationalities,
- increased cultural curiosity and openness,
- many participants reported memorable and joyful learning moments.

## Evening Informal Programme – Intercultural Evening: Romania

After returning to the training venue, participants took part in a Romanian Evening, designed and facilitated by the host team. The Romanian team organized a traditional Romanian dinner, offering authentic dishes representative of different regions of the country.

The activity included an interactive quiz about Romania, with prizes awarded to the top three participants, stimulating engagement and group involvement. The evening continued with a presentation of the traditional Romanian blouse (ie) and the folk dance Braşoveanca. Guests from the local community contributed a special moment by performing a traditional Hungarian dance, highlighting cultural diversity and harmonious coexistence within the community.

- **Learning Function:**

1. intercultural learning and cultural appreciation,
2. informal bonding and group cohesion,
3. emotional integration after an intensive experiential day.

## Overall Impact of the Day

- strong integration of formal, non-formal and informal learning,
- clear balance between cognitive, emotional, social and experiential processes,
- increased ownership and readiness for method testing,
- strong sense of connection with the local context and culture.



## DAY 7 – Testing and Experiential Learning

### S1–S4 – Performance Testing of Created Methods

- **Total Duration:** approx. 6 hours (including preparation, delivery and short reflections)

**Purpose of the Activity** This day was designed to:

- test the non-formal wellbeing methods created by participants,
- strengthen facilitation and group management skills,
- provide a concrete learning-by-doing experience,
- increase confidence in delivering mental health-related activities,
- prepare methods for replication in national contexts.

**Structure Overview** Each national team facilitated its own method, previously developed during the Method Creation Laboratory. Each team had 90 minutes to deliver its session. Participants alternated between the roles of facilitators and learners. Trainers observed the sessions, focusing on facilitation style, group dynamics, timing and learning flow.

The facilitators demonstrated:

- strong non-formal education attitudes,
- good session preparation,
- appropriate group facilitation skills,
- flexibility and responsiveness to participants' needs.

All methods presented during this day are described in detail in the Annexes section of this manual.

## **Learning Objectives** Participants:

- practiced facilitation in a safe learning environment,
- applied Kolb's experiential learning cycle in real delivery,
- strengthened confidence in leading wellbeing activities,
- learned through peer observation and direct experience,
- identified strengths and areas for improvement in facilitation.

## **Observed Impact**

- high quality of facilitation across teams,
- strong engagement and participation from the group,
- increased self-confidence and professional identity as youth workers,
- clear readiness to implement methods at national level.

**Evening Informal Programme – Halloween Party** Participants were divided into teams and engaged in a creative activity: Halloween pumpkin carving. For the evening party, participants dressed in Halloween-themed costumes or freely chosen characters. Special guests from the local community—a group of young people—joined the event and remained for the celebration, contributing to a strong sense of intercultural inclusion and community connection.

### **• Learning Function:**

1. creative expression and play,
2. intercultural exchange,
3. informal bonding and emotional release,
4. celebration of group creativity and togetherness.



## DAY 8 – Evaluation, Meaning and Closure

### S1 & S2 – Method Analysis and Feedback

- **Total Duration:** approx. 3 hours

**Purpose of the Activity** These sessions aimed to:

- support reflective evaluation of the tested methods,
- strengthen feedback and self-evaluation skills,
- improve method quality before national implementation,
- encourage responsibility for learning outcomes,
- integrate learning through collective reflection.

**Structure Overview** Each facilitating team analyzed its own performance, focusing on:

- organizational aspects,
- challenges encountered,
- learning objectives achieved or not yet achieved,
- areas for improvement.

This self-analysis was followed by constructive peer feedback from the other participants, facilitated by the trainers. Participants were informed that the created methods would be further tested and implemented in their national communities after the training course.

**Learning Objectives** Participants:

- practiced structured self-evaluation,
- developed skills in giving and receiving constructive feedback,
- increased clarity regarding strengths and improvements,
- strengthened readiness for dissemination and multiplication.

**Observed Impact**

- high level of honesty and responsibility in reflection,
- clear learning points extracted for future implementation,
- strong sense of professional growth and competence.

## S3 – Follow-Up and Dissemination Planning

- **Total Duration:** approx. 1.5 hours

**Purpose of the Activity** This session focused on:

- clarifying next steps after the training course,
- preparing participants for dissemination activities,
- ensuring alignment with Erasmus+ requirements,
- supporting the sustainable impact of the project.

**Structure Overview** Participants discussed:

- dissemination workshop requirements,
- objectives and target groups,
- attendance lists and documentation,
- responsibilities at national level.

This session ensured clarity, accountability and continuity beyond the training course.

**Learning Objectives** Participants

- understood follow-up responsibilities,
- gained clarity regarding dissemination expectations,
- prepared to multiply learning outcomes,
- strengthened ownership of project impact.



## **S4 – Light for Souls: A Walk of Remembrance and Honoring the Past**

- **Total Duration:** approx. 2 hours

**Purpose of the Activity** This symbolic and reflective activity aimed to:

- honor local cultural traditions,
- provide space for remembrance and emotional integration,
- connect grief, meaning and appreciation of life,
- strengthen group cohesion through shared ritual.

**Structure Overview** Participants visited the local cemetery in Dopca, in line with the local tradition of All Saints' Day in the Székely Land (1 November).

Each participant lit candles in remembrance of loved ones who had passed away. The ritual reflected a local tradition in which cemeteries are illuminated by hundreds of candles, transforming grief into collective remembrance and connection. The activity was intentionally followed by a celebration of life, emphasizing the balance between reflection and vitality.

### **Observed Impact**

- deep emotional presence and respect for local culture,
- strong sense of connection and shared humanity,
- participants described the moment as meaningful and grounding.

**Evening Informal Programme – Celebration of Life** The final evening continued with a celebration party, marking:

- the end of the training course,
- the shared journey of the group,
- the deep bonds formed through intensive learning and emotional openness.

- **Learning Function:**

1. emotional closure,
2. celebration of connection and growth,
3. reinforcement of group cohesion.

## **DAY 9 – Departure and Final Reflection**

### **S1 & S2 – Course Evaluation and Departure**

- **Total Duration:** approx. 2 hours

**Purpose of the Activity** The final day was designed to:

- collect structured feedback on the training course,
- support personal and group closure,
- acknowledge learning and shared experience,
- ensure a positive and conscious ending.

**Structure Overview** Participants completed the course evaluation and shared final reflections.

Overall feedback was highly positive, highlighting:

- relevance of content,
- quality of facilitation,
- emotional safety,
- practical applicability in youth work.

Participants then departed.

### **Overall Impact of the Training Course**

- strong development of personal and professional competences,
- increased awareness of mental health and wellbeing in youth work,
- high readiness for dissemination and replication,
- sustainable impact through national follow-up activities.

## PART III – TOOLKIT OF METHODS

The methods included in this toolkit were used or adapted during the CARE training course. They are presented as examples and can be selected, combined or adapted according to the needs of different youth work contexts. The toolkit is not intended to be exhaustive, but to offer a structured and flexible set of resources.

### 5.1 Icebreakers & Energizers

- **Type:** Icebreaker / Energizer / Creative Non-formal Activity
- **Duration:** 45–60 minutes
- **Group Size:** 10–30 participants
- **Energy Level:** Medium–High
- **Main Focus:** Group cohesion, familiarity, positive first contact, emotional safety

**Purpose** The Passport activity is designed to support group formation through creative interaction, movement and playful personal sharing. It allows participants to get to know each other gradually, without pressure for deep self-disclosure, while fostering curiosity, connection and a relaxed group atmosphere.

#### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness toward others
  2. curiosity and playfulness
  3. comfort in group interaction
- **Skills**
  1. active listening
  2. basic self-presentation
  3. creative expression
- **Knowledge**
  4. increased awareness of group diversity
  2. recognition of shared human interests and aspirations
- **Materials**
  1. colored A4 sheets (one per participant)
  2. markers
  3. music player

## Facilitation Steps

- **Preparation**

1. Each participant chooses one colored sheet and one marker.
2. Participants write their name clearly on the sheet.

- **Creative Exchange – Drawing Phase**

1. Music starts playing and participants move/dance freely around the room, exchanging sheets with others.
2. When the music stops, each participant looks for the person whose name appears on the sheet they are holding.
3. At each music stop, participants add one element to the drawing:
  - face shape
  - eyes
  - eyebrows
  - nose
  - mouth
  - ears
  - hair
  - neck and upper body
4. Rule: Only the requested element is drawn at each stop. No additional details are added.

- **Information Exchange – Interview Phase**

1. At the next music stops, participants ask the person whose sheet they hold short questions and write the answers on the sheet:
  - age
  - city of residence
  - three personal qualities
  - one “guilty pleasure”
  - one bold or daring dream

- **Presentation Phase**

- At the end, each participant presents the person whose “passport” they are holding.
- After being presented, that person continues by presenting the next passport, until everyone has been introduced.

- **Closure**

1. Participants receive their own “passport”.
2. All passports are displayed on the walls of the training room and remain visible throughout the course.

## **Debrief (Suggested Questions)**

- How was it to be represented by others?
- What surprised you about your passport?
- What helped you feel comfortable during the activity?
- How does this activity support getting to know a group safely?

## **Emotional Safety Notes**

- Sharing is light and voluntary; no sensitive personal topics are included.
- Humor and imperfection are encouraged.
- Participants can skip any question they do not wish to answer.

## **Adaptations**

- Shorter version: limit drawing to face + 3 questions
- Younger groups: simplify questions (favorite activity, favorite food)
- Low-energy groups: reduce movement and use table exchange
- Online adaptation: use shared digital boards and breakout rooms

## **Outputs / Evidence**

- creative “passports” displayed in the training room
- visual reminder of group diversity
- increased familiarity and group cohesion

## **Observed Impact (from CARE training)**

- quick reduction of initial tension and anxiety
- playful and inclusive atmosphere
- strong engagement and laughter
- participants reported feeling seen and welcomed

## Method 2: Blitz – Short Emotional Check-In (adapted from Psychodrama)

- **Type:** Icebreaker / Energizer / Emotional Check-In
- **Duration:** 10–15 minutes
- **Group Size:** 6–30 participants
- **Energy Level:** Low–Medium
- **Main Focus:** Emotional presence, group attunement, psychological safety

**Purpose** The Blitz method is a short emotional check-in adapted from psychodrama practices. It supports participants in becoming present in the group, naming their current state, and attuning to the collective atmosphere. Used regularly, Blitz helps normalize emotional expression and strengthens group cohesion without entering therapeutic processes.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness toward emotional awareness
  2. respect for self and others' internal states
  3. responsibility for group climate
- **Skills**
  1. naming emotions and internal states concisely
  2. active listening without interruption
  3. emotional self-regulation through awareness
- **Knowledge**
  1. understanding emotions as temporary and contextual
  2. recognizing the importance of emotional attunement in groups
- **Materials**
  1. no materials required
  2. optional talking object (e.g., small ball or stone)

## Method 2: Blitz – Short Emotional Check-In (adapted from Psychodrama)

- **Type:** Icebreaker / Energizer / Emotional Check-In
- **Duration:** 10–15 minutes
- **Group Size:** 6–30 participants
- **Energy Level:** Low–Medium
- **Main Focus:** Emotional presence, group attunement, psychological safety

**Purpose** The Blitz method is a short emotional check-in adapted from psychodrama practices. It supports participants in becoming present in the group, naming their current state, and attuning to the collective atmosphere. Used regularly, Blitz helps normalize emotional expression and strengthens group cohesion without entering therapeutic processes.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness toward emotional awareness
  2. respect for self and others' internal states
  3. responsibility for group climate
- **Skills**
  1. naming emotions and internal states concisely
  2. active listening without interruption
  3. emotional self-regulation through awareness
- **Knowledge**
  1. understanding emotions as temporary and contextual
  2. recognizing the importance of emotional attunement in groups
- **Materials**
  1. no materials required
  2. optional talking object (e.g., small ball or stone)

## Facilitation Steps

- **Framing**

1. Participants stand or sit in a circle.
2. The facilitator explains that the check-in is brief and voluntary.

- **Blitz Round**

1. Each participant is invited to share:
  - one word or short sentence describing how they feel right now,
  - optionally, an energy level on a scale from 1 to 10.
2. Examples:
  - “Tired but curious.”
  - “Calm, energy level 6.”

- **Listening Rule**

1. No comments, questions or reactions during the round.
2. The group listens attentively.

- **Closure**

1. The facilitator thanks the group and briefly acknowledges the collective state (without interpretation).

## Debrief (Optional, Short)

- What did you notice about yourself during the check-in?
- What did you notice about the group today? (Debrief is optional; the method can also stand alone.)

## Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes

- Participation is voluntary; passing is always allowed.
- No explanations or justifications are required.
- The method is not used for processing emotions, only for awareness.
- The facilitator avoids interpretation or analysis.

## Adaptations

- Morning version: focus on “How do I arrive today?”
- End-of-day version: “One word about today.”
- Large groups: split into two circles
- Online version: one word in chat + energy number

## Outputs / Evidence

- increased emotional presence
- clearer group atmosphere
- smoother transitions between sessions

## Observed Impact (from CARE training)

- improved emotional safety and group attunement
- participants felt seen without pressure to explain
- useful as daily ritual supporting continuity and care

## 5.2 Emotional Awareness Exercises

Emotional awareness is a core competence in youth work and a foundation for mental health promotion. The following exercises support participants in recognizing inner dialogue, naming emotions, and understanding how internal states influence behavior and relationships.

### Method 3: Inner Critic & Inner Best Friend (Reflective Writing Exercise)

- **Type:** Emotional Awareness / Self-Reflection
- **Duration:** 45–75 minutes
- **Group Size:** Individual work + pairs / small groups
- **Energy Level:** Low–Medium
- **Main Focus:** Inner dialogue, self-compassion, emotional literacy

**Purpose** This exercise helps participants become aware of their inner dialogue, particularly the contrast between self-critical and supportive internal voices. It supports emotional literacy, self-compassion and responsibility for inner regulation.

## **Learning Objectives (ASK)**

- **Attitudes**

1. increased self-acceptance and kindness toward self
2. openness to reflection and emotional awareness

- **Skills**

1. recognizing and naming inner dialogue patterns
2. expressing emotions through writing
3. reflective listening in pairs

- **Knowledge**

1. understanding the role of inner dialogue in stress and wellbeing
2. recognizing the impact of self-talk on behavior and relationships

## **Materials**

- paper or notebooks
- pens

## **Facilitation Steps**

- **Introduction**

1. The facilitator explains the concept of inner dialogue in a non-clinical way.
2. The exercise is framed as awareness, not therapy.

- **Individual Writing – Inner Critic**

1. Participants write a short letter from their Inner Critic, capturing common self-critical messages.

- **Individual Writing – Inner Best Friend**

1. Participants write a second letter from a supportive, compassionate inner voice responding to the Critic.

- **Pair Sharing**

1. Participants share reflections in pairs (not necessarily reading letters verbatim).

- **Group Reflection**

1. Voluntary sharing of insights and patterns observed.

## **Debrief Questions**

- What differences did you notice between the two voices?
- Which voice do you hear more often in daily life?
- How does inner dialogue influence your wellbeing and work with others?

## **Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes**

- Sharing personal content is voluntary.
- Participants may keep their texts private.
- The facilitator avoids interpretation or analysis.

## **Adaptations**

- Youth groups: use drawing instead of writing
- Short version: focus only on recognizing the two voices
- Online: private writing + breakout room sharing

## **Outputs / Evidence**

- written reflections
- increased awareness of inner dialogue
- group insights on self-compassion



## Method 4: The Little Human and the Circles of Control

(Reflective & Psychoeducational Exercise)

- **Type:** Emotional Awareness / Self-Reflection / Psychoeducation
- **Duration:** 120–165 minutes (adaptable)
- **Group Size:** 12–25 participants
- **Energy Level:** Medium
- **Main Focus:** Emotional awareness, responsibility, boundaries, systemic thinking, resilience

**Purpose** This method supports participants in developing emotional awareness and responsibility by exploring how thoughts, emotions, behaviors, the body and meaning interact, and how personal wellbeing is influenced by relationships and larger systems. The activity builds on the Inner Critic & Inner Best Friend exercise, offering a structured framework for understanding where personal responsibility lies and where it is shared or limited.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. increased sense of personal responsibility and self-compassion
  2. acceptance of limits regarding control over others and systems
  3. openness to systemic and relational perspectives
- **Skills**
  1. distinguishing between control, influence and acceptance
  2. analyzing personal and professional situations systemically
  3. identifying realistic strategies for dealing with challenges
  4. reflecting on boundaries and energy investment
- **Knowledge**
  1. understanding the three circles of control
  2. understanding the five levels of personal functioning
  3. recognizing the impact of misplaced responsibility on stress and burnout

## ● 2. Individual Work – Personal Drawing (15 minutes)

1. Each participant receives an A3 sheet and draws their own Little Human, reflecting on:
  - what they currently do at each of the five levels to support their wellbeing;
  - who is present in their second circle and how responsibility is experienced;
  - which systems are most relevant in their life or work context.
2. This step encourages personal awareness without requiring sharing.

## • 3. Small Group Sharing (15 minutes)

1. Participants form small groups of three and share insights from their drawings, focusing on:
  - which level of functioning is most neglected;
  - where they invest energy outside their personal circle of control;
  - how this affects stress, wellbeing and professional sustainability.
2. Listening and curiosity are emphasized over advice-giving.

## • 4. Plenary Integration (5–10 minutes)

1. A short plenary sharing highlights common patterns and key insights observed across the group.
2. The facilitator links reflections back to emotional awareness, responsibility and youth work practice.

## Debrief Questions

- What did you notice about where you place responsibility?
- Which circle consumes most of your energy?
- How does this model help you relate differently to stress and challenges?
- How can this framework support your work with young people?

## Materials

- flipchart and markers
- printed handouts with the Little Human diagram (one per participant or group)
- A3 sheets and pens
- masking tape or large paper to draw three concentric circles
- printed or projected scenarios (optional, for extension)

## Facilitation Steps

### • 1. Introduction & Concept Presentation (15 minutes)

1. The facilitator introduces the Little Human model as a visual and educational framework, not a therapeutic tool.
2. The model includes three concentric circles:
  - **Inner Circle – Self (100% responsibility)** This circle represents full personal responsibility and includes five levels of functioning:
    - Mental: thoughts, beliefs, interpretations
    - Emotional: feelings and inner experience
    - Actional/Behavioral: habits, choices, routines
    - Physical: body, health, energy
    - Spiritual: meaning, values, purpose, connection
  - **Second Circle – Others (Shared responsibility)** Represents close relationships (family, colleagues, peers). Responsibility is shared; influence exists, but control does not.
  - **Third Circle – Systems (Limited individual control)** Includes institutions, organizations, laws and social systems. Four possible responses are explored:
    - complain,
    - try to change (through collective action),
    - accept,
    - move (leave the system).
3. Participants are invited to briefly reflect on examples from their own lives related to each circle.

## Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes

- Participation and sharing are voluntary.
- The method is psychoeducational, not therapeutic.
- No interpretation or diagnosis is made.
- Participants choose what and how much they share.

## Adaptations

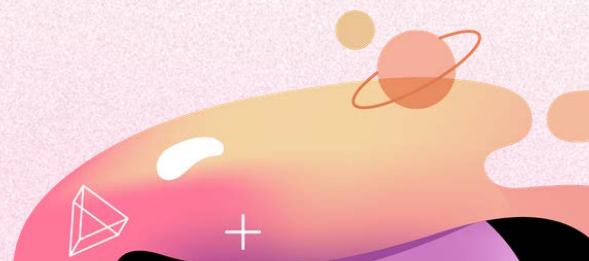
- Shorter version: skip group work and focus on personal drawing
- Youth groups: simplify language and reduce system-level discussion
- Professional teams: use real work scenarios for analysis
- Online: digital drawing and breakout rooms

## Outputs / Evidence

- personalized Little Human drawings
- increased clarity about responsibility and boundaries
- shared language around control, influence and acceptance
- enhanced emotional awareness and resilience

## Observed Impact (from CARE training)

- strong increase in self-awareness and responsibility clarity
- reduced tendency toward over-responsibility and frustration
- participants reported better understanding of stress sources
- high relevance for both personal wellbeing and youth work practice



## Method 5: Relational Exchanges – Working with the Four Types of Selves in Youth Work (Experiential and Psychoeducational Exercise)

- **Type:** Emotional Awareness / Relational Awareness / Experiential Learning
- **Duration:** approx. 120 minutes
- **Group Size:** up to 20 participants
- **Energy Level:** Medium–High
- **Main Focus:** Relational patterns, emotional awareness, boundaries, intervention skills in youth work

**Purpose** This method supports participants in exploring different relational functioning modes—referred to as Types of Selves—that can appear in personal life and professional youth work contexts. Through embodied and experiential learning, participants increase awareness of how these Selves manifest across mental, emotional, behavioral, physical and meaning-related levels, and how conscious positioning supports healthier relationships and interventions with young people.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness toward self-observation and relational reflection
  2. acceptance of vulnerability as part of healthy functioning
  3. responsibility for one's relational positioning
- **Skills**
  1. recognizing relational patterns in self and others
  2. differentiating between reactive and balanced responses
  3. experimenting with embodied expression and role awareness
  4. choosing appropriate interventions in youth work situations
- **Knowledge**
  1. understanding the four Types of Selves: Victim, Vulnerable, Balanced, Grandiose
  2. recognizing how each Self manifests at different levels of functioning
  3. understanding the Balanced Self as a reference point for youth workers

**Key Concepts** Relational patterns, emotional regulation, boundaries, responsibility, projection, balance, experiential learning

## Materials

- scotch tape or rope (to mark an axis on the floor)
- handouts describing the four Types of Selves
- printed case studies (one per group)
- two chairs (for role play / aquarium)
- flipchart and markers

## Facilitation Steps

### • 1. Introduction & Axis Setup (10 minutes)

1. The facilitator introduces the idea that people can function from different relational positions, especially under stress or in challenging interactions.
2. An axis is marked on the floor:
  - Left end: Victim Self
  - Between left and center: Vulnerable Self
  - Center: Balanced (Adult) Self
  - Right end: Grandiose Self

Participants are divided into four groups and each group is assigned one Type of Self. Groups position themselves physically near their place on the axis.

### • 2. Group Statue Creation (20 minutes)

1. Each group receives a short description of their assigned Self.
2. Groups are invited to create a non-verbal group statue (tableau) representing:
  - attitudes,
  - emotions,
  - behaviors associated with that Self.
3. After preparation, each group presents its statue.
4. Following the presentation, the group briefly explains the key characteristics they intended to express.

- **3. Plenary Reflection on the Selves (15 minutes)**

1. The facilitator guides a short reflection, exploring:
  - mental, emotional, behavioral, physical and meaning-related characteristics of each Self;
  - typical reactions under stress;
  - relational impact on others.
2. The Balanced (Adult) Self is highlighted as the functional reference point in youth work.

- **4. Case Study Exploration & Role Play (40 minutes)**

1. Each group receives a short case study related to youth work (e.g. conflict, disengagement, criticism, power struggle).
2. Using the aquarium role play format (two chairs in the center):
  - participants experiment with responding from different Selves;
  - observers note differences in tone, impact and relational quality.
3. This step allows participants to experience how the same situation changes depending on the Self from which one responds.

- **5. Integration & Group Debrief (15–20 minutes)**

1. The group reflects together on insights gained, patterns observed and relevance for professional practice.

## **Debrief Questions**

- How did each Self feel in your body and emotions?
- Which Selves do you recognize most easily in yourself?
- What happens in relationships when we function mainly from Victim or Grandiose positions?
- Why is the Balanced Self essential in youth work?
- How can you shift toward a more balanced position in challenging situations?

## **Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes**

- The exercise focuses on awareness, not labeling or diagnosis.
- Participants are not asked to identify themselves permanently with any Self.
- Participation in role play is voluntary.
- The facilitator avoids interpretation and keeps the focus on learning and choice.

## **Adaptations**

- Shorter version: use only statues and plenary reflection
- Youth groups: simplify language and reduce abstraction
- Professional teams: use real workplace situations
- Online: replace statues with images or posture descriptions

## **Outputs / Evidence**

- increased awareness of relational patterns
- shared language for discussing reactions and boundaries
- improved capacity to choose balanced responses
- enhanced intervention awareness in youth work contexts

## **Observed Impact (from CARE training)**

- strong engagement through embodied learning
- increased clarity regarding reactive vs. balanced responses
- participants reported immediate relevance for work with young people
- improved understanding of emotional responsibility and boundaries

*(Detailed descriptions of the four Types of Selves are provided in Annex G and are used both as facilitator support and participant handouts.)*

## Method 6: Emotion Vocabulary Expansion (From Sensation to Emotion)

- **Type:** Emotional Awareness / Psychoeducational Exercise
- **Duration:** 30–60 minutes
- **Group Size:** 6–25 participants
- **Energy Level:** Medium
- **Main Focus:** Emotional literacy, differentiation of feelings

**Purpose** This exercise supports participants in expanding their emotional vocabulary and recognizing the connection between body sensations, emotions and experiences. It strengthens the capacity to name emotions accurately, an essential skill for self-regulation and youth work facilitation.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness toward emotional expression
  2. curiosity toward internal states
- **Skills**
  1. identifying and naming emotions
  2. linking sensations, emotions and needs
  3. articulating feelings clearly
- **Knowledge**
  1. understanding emotions as signals, not problems
  2. recognizing emotional complexity beyond basic labels

### Materials

- emotions list (basic and nuanced emotions)
- flipchart and markers



## Facilitation Steps

- **Introduction**

1. Facilitator explains emotions as information rather than weaknesses.

- **Individual Reflection**

1. Participants identify 2–3 emotions recently experienced and note body sensations.

- **Small Group Sharing**

1. Participants share observations and compare similarities/differences.

- **Plenary Integration**

1. Group discusses how emotional vocabulary supports regulation and communication.

## Debrief Questions

- Which emotions are easy or difficult to name?
- What happens when emotions remain unnamed?
- How can emotional vocabulary support youth work practice?

## Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes

- No personal stories are required.
- Participants choose the depth of sharing.
- Emotions are normalized, not analyzed.

## Adaptations

- Younger groups: use emotion cards or emojis
- Outdoor version: link emotions to movement or nature metaphors
- Online: shared digital board

## Outputs / Evidence

- expanded emotional vocabulary
- increased clarity in emotional expression
- group awareness of emotional diversity

## Method 7: Concrete Steps for Stress Management (Practical Mapping Exercise)

- **Type:** Stress Management / Self-Care Planning
- **Duration:** 60–90 minutes
- **Group Size:** 8–25 participants
- **Energy Level:** Medium
- **Main Focus:** Awareness, responsibility, realistic self-care strategies

**Purpose** This method supports participants in identifying concrete, actionable steps to reduce the negative impact of stress in daily life and professional contexts. It emphasizes personal responsibility, choice and small sustainable changes.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. acceptance of stress as a human experience
  2. responsibility for personal wellbeing
- **Skills**
  1. identifying stressors and early warning signs
  2. selecting realistic coping strategies
  3. prioritizing self-care actions
- **Knowledge**
  1. understanding the difference between controllable and uncontrollable stressors
  2. recognizing the cumulative effect of small habits

### Materials

- flipcharts and markers
- “Concrete Steps for Stress Management” open list or worksheet

## Facilitation Steps

- **Introduction**

1. Stress is framed as normal and manageable, not as a failure.

- **Individual Mapping**

1. Participants reflect on personal stressors, symptoms and current coping strategies.

- **Collective Resource Building**

1. Participants contribute concrete steps to a shared list (mental, emotional, behavioral, physical, social).

- **Personal Selection**

1. Each participant selects 1–3 steps they commit to testing.

## Debrief Questions

- Which steps feel realistic for you?
- What usually prevents you from applying them?
- How can small changes reduce overall stress?

## Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes

- The method is educational, not therapeutic.
- No personal disclosure is required.
- Participants choose their level of sharing.

## Adaptations

- Short version: focus only on stress symptoms + one step
- Youth groups: use drawings or icons
- Online: shared digital board

## Outputs / Evidence

- personalized stress-management steps
- collective strategy list
- increased sense of agency

## Method 8: Walk & Talk (Movement-Based Stress Regulation)

- **Type:** Stress Management / Outdoor / Reflective
- **Duration:** 45–90 minutes
- **Group Size:** Pairs or small groups
- **Energy Level:** Medium
- **Main Focus:** Stress release, regulation through movement and dialogue

**Purpose** The Walk & Talk method supports stress regulation through gentle movement, nature exposure and reflective dialogue. It allows participants to slow down, regulate their nervous system and gain clarity through conversation.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness to slower pace and self-care
  2. appreciation of nature as a resource
- **Skills**
  1. reflective dialogue
  2. recognizing stress signals in the body
  3. listening without interruption
- **Knowledge**
  1. understanding movement and nature as stress-regulation tools

### Materials

- outdoor walking route
- reflection questions (optional)

## Facilitation Steps

- **Pairing**

1. Participants walk in pairs at a comfortable pace.

- **Guided Reflection**

1. Facilitator offers optional prompts related to stress and balance.

- **Silent Moments**

1. Silence is allowed and encouraged.

- **Return & Integration**

1. Short group sharing of insights.

## Debrief Questions

- What changed in your body during the walk?
- What insights emerged through movement?

## Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes

- Participation and pace are voluntary.
- Silence is respected.

## Adaptations

- Indoor version: slow walk inside building
- Urban version: park or neighborhood
- Youth groups: shorter duration, simpler prompts

## Outputs / Evidence

- visible relaxation
- increased clarity and calm
- peer connection

## Method 9: Symbolic Letting Go Ritual (Stress Release through Symbolic Action)

- **Type:** Stress Management / Symbolic / Reflective
- **Duration:** 30–45 minutes
- **Group Size:** 6–25 participants
- **Energy Level:** Low–Medium
- **Main Focus:** Release, intention-setting, emotional integration

**Purpose** This symbolic activity supports participants in consciously releasing limiting beliefs, habits or stress patterns and setting intentions for healthier alternatives.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness to symbolic learning
  2. willingness to let go of unhelpful patterns
- **Skills**
  1. identifying stress-related patterns
  2. articulating intentions
- **Knowledge**
  1. understanding symbolism as a learning and reflection tool

### Materials

- natural objects (stones, leaves, sticks)
- quiet space



## **Facilitation Steps**

### **Framing**

1. The ritual is introduced as optional and symbolic.

### **Identification**

1. Participants identify what they want to leave behind.

### **Symbolic Action**

1. Objects are released or placed intentionally.

### **Intention Setting**

1. Participants define one intention to carry forward.

### **Debrief Questions**

- What did you choose to release?
- What intention feels supportive right now?

### **Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes**

- Participation is voluntary.
- No sharing is required.
- The activity is not therapeutic.

### **Adaptations**

- Non-symbolic version: writing and discarding notes
- Youth groups: use drawings or metaphors

### **Outputs / Evidence**

- personal intentions
- sense of closure and relief
- emotional integration

## **5.4 Group Reflection Methods**

Group reflection is a central component of non-formal education and experiential learning. The following methods support learning integration, meaning-making and transfer to youth work practice.

## Method 10: Kolb Reflection Circle (Structured Group Debrief)

- **Type:** Group Reflection / Experiential Learning
- **Duration:** 30–60 minutes
- **Group Size:** 6–30 participants
- **Energy Level:** Medium
- **Main Focus:** Meaning-making, learning integration, transfer to practice

**Purpose** This method supports participants in reflecting on experiences in a structured way, ensuring that learning moves beyond the activity itself toward understanding and application.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness to reflection and learning
  2. respect for diverse perspectives
- **Skills**
  1. articulating experiences and emotions
  2. connecting practice with concepts
  3. extracting learning points
- **Knowledge**
  1. understanding experiential learning as a process
  2. recognizing the role of reflection in learning transfer

### Materials

- flipchart with Kolb questions (optional)
- markers

## Method 11: Reflection Pairs (Peer Learning and Integration)

- **Type:** Group Reflection / Peer Learning
- **Duration:** 15–30 minutes
- **Group Size:** Pairs
- **Energy Level:** Low–Medium
- **Main Focus:** Integration, accountability, peer support

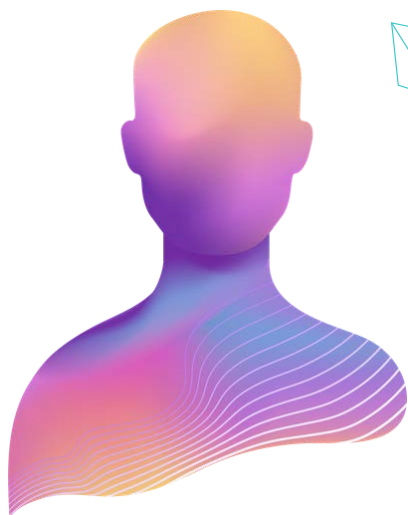
**Purpose** Reflection Pairs support deeper integration of learning through dialogue and listening. They provide a safe and contained space for participants to process experiences and articulate meaning.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness to sharing
  2. respect for confidentiality
- **Skills**
  1. reflective listening
  2. concise articulation of insights
  3. giving and receiving presence
- **Knowledge**
  1. understanding peer reflection as a learning tool

### Materials

- notebooks (optional)



## Facilitation Steps

### Pairing

1. Participants form fixed or rotating pairs.

### Reflection Dialogue

1. Each participant has equal time to share reflections.

### Closure

1. Pairs briefly acknowledge learning.

### Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes

- Confidentiality is emphasized.
- No advice-giving unless requested.

### Adaptations

- Daily use: end-of-day reflection
- Youth groups: shorter sharing time
- Online: breakout rooms

### Outputs / Evidence

- integrated learning
- increased self-awareness
- strengthened peer connection

## 5.5 Outdoor & Experiential Activities

Outdoor and experiential activities play a significant role in mental health promotion by integrating body, emotion, environment and social interaction. The following activities are presented as examples of experiential learning methods used within the CARE training.



## Method 12: The Islands (Experiential Simulation on Wellbeing and Inclusion)

- **Type:** Experiential / Simulation / Group Dynamics
- **Duration:** 2.5–4 hours (including debrief)
- **Group Size:** 12–30 participants
- **Energy Level:** High
- **Main Focus:** Wellbeing, inclusion, communication, relational responsibility

**Purpose** This experiential simulation allows participants to explore wellbeing as a relational and collective state, shaped by communication, inclusion and shared responsibility. Through physical and social constraints, participants experience dependency, frustration and cooperation.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness to cooperation and interdependence
  2. tolerance for frustration and uncertainty
- **Skills**
  1. adaptive communication
  2. teamwork under pressure
  3. emotional self-regulation

### Knowledge

1. understanding wellbeing as relational
2. recognizing inclusion/exclusion dynamics

**Method Overview** Participants are divided into three groups, each with specific constraints and tasks. Successful completion requires interdependence and cooperation between groups. (Note: A detailed description of this method, including rules, setup and debriefing, is provided in Part II – Day 2 (S3 & S4) and in Annex C.)

## Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes

- Participation is voluntary.
- Clear safety rules are established.
- Emotional reactions are normalized.

## Adaptations

- simplified version for younger groups
- indoor or outdoor variations
- shorter debrief for limited time

## Outputs / Evidence

- strong group cohesion
- shared insights on wellbeing and inclusion
- reflective learning outcomes

## Method 13: City Escape (Intercultural Experiential Learning in Urban Space)

- **Type:** Outdoor / Experiential / Intercultural Learning
- **Duration:** 2–4 hours
- **Group Size:** 8–30 participants
- **Energy Level:** High
- **Main Focus:** Intercultural communication, teamwork, initiative

**Purpose** The City Escape method uses the urban environment as a learning space. Participants engage in creative tasks that promote interaction with the local community, intercultural learning and teamwork.

## Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness to cultural diversity
  2. curiosity and initiative
- **Skills**
  1. communication in real-life contexts
  2. collaboration and problem-solving
  3. adaptability and creativity

- **Knowledge**

1. understanding informal learning processes
2. awareness of local culture and community

**Method Overview** Participants work in mixed teams and complete a series of tasks in the city, involving interaction with locals, cultural discovery and creative challenges. *(Note: A detailed description of this activity is provided in Part II – Day 6 (S4).)*

**Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes**

- Participants are informed about respectful interaction with the public.
- Tasks avoid sensitive or intrusive topics.
- Group safety and consent are prioritized.

**Adaptations**

- smaller towns or rural areas
- focus on youth-friendly spaces
- weather-appropriate alternatives

**Outputs / Evidence**

- increased intercultural confidence
- strong group energy and collaboration
- memorable experiential learning moments

Perfect. Închidem Capitolul 13 cu 13.6 Creative & Recreational Activities, într-o formă elegantă, clară și foarte bine văzută de evaluatori (arată grijă pentru proces, nu doar conținut).

**5.6 Creative & Recreational Activities**

Creative and recreational activities support emotional integration, group cohesion and psychological safety. In the CARE training, these methods were used intentionally to balance intensive learning processes and to foster connection, playfulness and creativity.

## Method 14: Judgement Suspension Pill (Creativity and Psychological Safety Tool)

- **Type:** Creative Facilitation Tool / Group Agreement
- **Duration:** 10–15 minutes (introduction) + ongoing use
- **Group Size:** 6–30 participants
- **Energy Level:** Medium
- **Main Focus:** Creativity, psychological safety, collaboration

**Purpose** This symbolic method supports creativity and reduces fear of judgment during group work. By introducing a playful group agreement, participants are encouraged to suspend self-criticism and external judgment, creating space for experimentation and innovation.

### Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**
  1. openness to creativity and experimentation
  2. reduced fear of making mistakes
- **Skills**
  3. idea generation
  4. collaborative creation
  5. supportive feedback
- **Knowledge**
  6. understanding the impact of judgment on creativity and learning

### Materials

- symbolic objects or cards representing the “pill” (e.g., paper pills, cards, small objects)

### Facilitation Steps

- **Introduction**
  1. The facilitator introduces the symbolic “Judgement Suspension Pill” and explains its purpose.

- **Group Agreement**

1. Participants collectively agree that, for a defined period, judgment is “suspended.”

- **Application**

1. The tool is used during creative processes (method design, brainstorming).

- **Closure**

2. The group reflects briefly on how the absence of judgment affected creativity.

## **Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes**

- The tool is symbolic and voluntary.
- It does not suppress critical thinking; it postpones evaluation to a later phase.

## **Adaptations**

- use humor or visuals to enhance engagement
- apply during any creative or planning session

## **Outputs / Evidence**

- increased creative flow
- higher participation and spontaneity
- reduced self-censorship

## **Method 15: Intercultural Evening – Suggested Format (Creative and Recreational Group Activity)**

- **Type:** Creative / Intercultural / Recreational
- **Duration:** 90–180 minutes
- **Group Size:** 10–40 participants
- **Energy Level:** Medium–High
- **Main Focus:** Intercultural learning, group cohesion, informal bonding

**Purpose** Intercultural evenings provide a non-formal space for cultural exchange, creativity and connection. They support learning through experience, storytelling, food, music and shared celebration.

## Learning Objectives (ASK)

- **Attitudes**

1. openness and respect toward cultural diversity
2. curiosity and appreciation

- **Skills**

3. intercultural communication
4. creative presentation
5. group participation

- **Knowledge**

6. awareness of cultural traditions and diversity
7. understanding informal learning dynamics

### **Suggested Structure An intercultural evening may include:**

- creative country presentation (map, symbols, stories)
- music, dance or games
- traditional food tasting
- interactive elements (quiz, teaching a dance or words)

Participation is voluntary and playful.

### **Emotional Safety & Ethics Notes**

- Cultural representation is respectful and non-stereotypical.
- No pressure to perform or disclose personal identity.

### **Adaptations**

- smaller groups: shared cultural storytelling
- youth groups: interactive games and quizzes
- online format: virtual presentations and music sharing

### **Outputs / Evidence**

- strengthened intercultural understanding
- increased group cohesion
- positive emotional atmosphere

## 6. Worksheets and Practical Tools

This chapter includes practical worksheets, reflection tools and psychoeducational materials used during the CARE training course. These resources support participants in developing self-awareness, emotional literacy, stress management and reflective practice in youth work. All worksheets and printable resources can be found in the Annexes section at the end of the manual.

### 6.1 Self-Reflection Templates

These tools support personal reflection, emotional awareness and self-analysis. They were used throughout the training course during individual work, pair reflection and group discussions.

*Tools included:*

- The Little Human Reflection Template (Annex D)
- Relational Exchanges – Mapping the Four Selves on the Little Human Model (Annex H)
- Limiting Beliefs vs. Empowering Beliefs – by Type of Self (Annex I)
- Defense Mechanisms – Awareness and Transformation Table (Annex J)

These worksheets encourage participants to explore their internal dialogue, behavioral patterns and emotional responses in a structured way.

### 6.2 Burnout Self-Assessment Tools

Youth workers often operate in emotionally demanding environments. The following tools help participants identify early warning signs of stress and burnout.

*Tools included:*

- Early Signs of Burnout (Annex K)
- Self-Care and Stress-Management Strategies (Annex L)
- Concrete Steps for Stress Management (Annex M)

These tools support prevention by helping participants recognize stress signals and develop realistic coping strategies.

### **6.3 Wellbeing Checklists and Emotional Literacy Tools**

These resources support emotional awareness and wellbeing planning. They were used particularly during the sessions on self-care and emotional regulation. Tools included:

- Feelings, Emotions and Experiences Table (Annex E)
- Universal Human Needs Table (Annex F)
- Strategies for Relieving Accumulated Tension (Annex N)
- Methods, Techniques and Practices for Wellbeing (Annex O)

These materials help participants name emotions, understand underlying needs and explore practical wellbeing strategies.

### **6.4 Group Debrief Questions**

Reflection questions support experiential learning and help participants extract meaning from activities. Tools included:

- Feedback Questions for Method Evaluation (Annex P)

These questions were used particularly during the method-testing sessions to support structured reflection and peer feedback.

### **6.5 Session Planning Templates**

To support replication and dissemination, participants received a simple planning structure for designing their own non-formal learning sessions. Tools included:

- Session Planning Template for Non-Formal Activities - Annex Q1 and
- CARE Method Description Template – annex Q2

This templates helps youth workers structure activities according to:

- learning objectives
- timing
- materials
- facilitation steps
- reflection questions
- expected outcomes.

## **7. Evaluation and Impact**

Evaluation within the CARE training course is understood as an integral part of the learning process, not only as a final assessment tool. It supports reflection, quality improvement, accountability, and sustainability of learning outcomes. The evaluation framework combines qualitative and quantitative methods and is aligned with the experiential learning approach of the training.

### **7.1 Measuring Learning Outcomes**

Learning outcomes are measured through a multi-layered evaluation process, addressing knowledge, skills and attitudes (ASK).

#### **Evaluation Methods Used**

- **Formative Evaluation**

1. daily check-ins and reflection circles
2. reflection pairs and individual journals
3. trainer observation during sessions
4. short verbal feedback moments

- **Summative Evaluation**

1. final written course evaluation
2. structured self-assessment of learning outcomes
3. group reflection on overall impact

- **Practice-Based Evaluation**

quality and coherence of methods created by participants  
facilitation performance during Day 7 (method testing)  
ability to articulate learning objectives and outcomes

**Key Evaluation** Indicators Indicators used to assess learning outcomes include:

- participants' ability to explain and apply key concepts (mental health, wellbeing, stress, burnout, rust-out);
- correct use of Kolb's experiential learning cycle in designed methods;
- clarity and relevance of learning objectives formulated using the ASK model;
- increased self-awareness regarding self-care, boundaries and stress regulation;
- confidence in facilitating wellbeing-related non-formal activities;
- readiness to transfer learning into youth work practice.

## **7.2 Participant Feedback Tools**

Several feedback tools were used to capture participants' perspectives throughout the training:

- daily emotional check-ins ("weather check", energy scale 1–10);
- reflection notebooks and pair discussions;
- structured mid-course verbal feedback;
- anonymous final evaluation form combining closed and open-ended questions.

Feedback focused on:

- relevance and clarity of content;
- facilitation quality and methodology;
- emotional safety and group atmosphere;
- applicability of learning to professional practice;
- overall satisfaction with the training experience.

## 7.3 Follow-Up Activities and Multiplication

To ensure long-term impact, participants committed to follow-up and dissemination activities in their home countries.

Planned follow-up actions include:

- organizing dissemination workshops at national or local level;
- testing and adapting the created methods with young people or youth workers;
- collecting feedback from local participants;
- sharing outcomes and good practices within partner organizations.

These activities contribute to the multiplication of project results and reinforce the European added value of the CARE project.

**Impact of the Training Course** Based on evaluation data and participant feedback, the CARE training achieved the following impact:

- strengthened personal and professional competences of youth workers;
- increased awareness of mental health and wellbeing in youth work contexts;
- improved confidence in addressing stress, burnout and emotional safety;
- creation of practical, transferable non-formal wellbeing methods;
- strong readiness for replication and dissemination;
- deep intercultural learning and professional networking among participants.



## 8. Sustainability and Replication

Sustainability is a core principle of the CARE project. The training course and this manual are designed to be used beyond the project duration and adapted to various youth work contexts.

### 8.1 How to Replicate the Training

**The CARE training course can be replicated fully or partially by youth organisations, training institutions and NGOs.**

#### Recommended Conditions for Replication

- at least one experienced trainer in non-formal education (two recommended for emotional safety);
- clear ethical boundaries and referral pathways for mental health support;
- use of experiential learning and reflection-based methods;
- emphasis on psychological safety and voluntary participation;
- integration of both formal sessions and informal learning moments.

The full 9-day residential format is recommended for deep group processes, but shorter versions (3–5 days) can be created by selecting core modules.

### 8.2 Adapting to Different Contexts

The CARE training is adaptable to different cultural, organizational and logistical contexts.

#### Possible adaptations include:

- cultural adaptation of examples, symbols and rituals;
- age adaptation (youth groups, young adults, youth workers);
- shorter formats focusing on specific themes (self-care, stress management, facilitation);
- hybrid or online formats for conceptual sessions (with caution regarding emotional safety);
- accessibility adaptations for participants with physical or sensory needs.

## 8.3 Recommendations for Youth Organisations

Based on the CARE training experience, the following recommendations are proposed for youth organisations:

- integrate mental health and wellbeing as ongoing priorities, not isolated activities;
- support youth workers through supervision, peer support and reflection spaces;
- address burnout risk proactively at organizational level;
- build partnerships with mental health professionals for referral and consultation;
- promote a culture of care, responsibility and sustainability in youth work.

**Final Note on Sustainability** The CARE training manual is intended as a living document. Organisations are encouraged to adapt, enrich and further develop the methods presented, while respecting ethical principles and the boundaries of youth work practice. By investing in the wellbeing of youth workers, organisation indirectly strengthen the wellbeing of young people and the resilience of communities.

## PART IV – ANNEXES

### Training Materials and Worksheets

- Annex A – Environmental Wellbeing Messages Supporting Informal Learning
- Annex B – Wellbeing Vocabulary and Definitions
- Annex C – Instructions for “The Islands” Simulation
- Annex D – The Little Human Model (diagram)
- Annex E – Feelings, Emotions and Experiences Table
- Annex F – Universal Human Needs Table
- Annex G – Relational Exchanges: The Four Types of Selves
- Annex H – Relational Exchanges Applied on the Little Human Model
- Annex I – Limiting Beliefs vs Empowering Beliefs
- Annex J – Defense Mechanisms – Awareness and Transformation

- Annex K – Early Signs of Burnout
- Annex L – Self-Care and Stress-Management Strategies
- Annex M – Concrete Steps for Stress Management
- Annex N – Strategies for Relieving Accumulated Tension
- Annex O – Methods, Techniques and Practices for Wellbeing
- Annex P – Feedback Questions for Method Evaluation
- Annex Q1 – Session Planning Template
- Annex Q2 – CARE Method Description Template

## **Experiential Activities Materials**

- Annex R – Walk and Talk – Pair Reflection Instructions
- Annex S – “One Step Forward” Assertiveness Statements
- Annex T – Guided Meditation – Self-Love and Self-Care
- Annex U – Braşov City Escape – Game Instructions

## **Methods Developed During the Training**

- Annex V – Romanian Team Workshop
  1. Annex V1 – Motivational Quotes (HO1)
  2. Annex V2 – Word Analogy Scheme (HO2)
  3. Annex V3 – Feedback Questions (HO3)
- Annex W – Italian Team Workshop
- Annex X – Macedonian Team Workshop
- Annex Y – Spanish Team Workshop

## **Training Implementation and Support Resources**

- Annex Z – Daily Schedule Overview (Narrative)
  1. Annex Z1 – Detailed Training Agenda (Time-Based Schedule)
  2. Annex Z2 – Materials List
  3. Annex Z3 – Recommended Resources

