

# YouthFlow Guide

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# Introduction

This guide is a result of a training course organized by Na Slunci Association. The course took place in the Czech Republic, Kaprálův Mlýn from 19th to 26th of November 2025. The gathering brought together 30 participants from Germany, Czech Republic, Armenia, Spain, and Poland under the Erasmus+ programme.

The aim of the training was to give youth workers new tools and methods to use in their work with young people, while also creating space for exchange, reflection, and inspiration.

Exploring deeper levels of the natural techniques as an open floor dancing, oxygen advantage breathwork, art journaling and creating intercultural activities was giving a new experiences and challenges to all participants.

The guide is for youth workers, facilitators, educators and anyone curious about using dance, art and mindfulness in their practice. It invites you to experiment, explore and expand your approach by bringing more creativity and awareness into your everyday work with young people.



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# Group reflection method

*This method is useful as a gathering at the end of a day to sum up and share the daily experience. It can be done as easy as a 30minutes group reflection. It can help participants digest the day, notice their learning, and keep the team spirit alive. We suggest starting with national teams, and when the group feels more comfortable with each other, it can be changed to mixed international teams.*

**Instructions for a groups of 3-5 people:**

*Option 1*: Go question by question (everyone answers Q1, then Q2, etc.).

*Option 2*: Free flow conversation, but make sure all questions are touched and invite everyone to speak, but allow the right to pass if someone is tired or shy that day. Keep an eye on time so you reach the last question (often about "wishes for tomorrow" or "what we want to change").

**Examples of a questions:**

What did you learn today about yourself or others?

Did you feel included and active during the activities?

Anything you like to address to your group and to facilitators/trainers?



**Role of the main facilitator:**

Choose 3–5 simple reflection questions for that day (learning, feelings, group process, needs for tomorrow).

Collect all notes/reports from the groups each day.

*Look for patterns:*

- Repeated challenges.
- Activities that participants loved or struggled with.
- Emotional state of the group (tired, super high energy, confused, inspired).

*Use this information to*:

- Slightly adapt next day's programme
- Prepare new reflection questions that go deeper where needed.



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# Dance

## *Dance is not just a movement of one body.*

*Dance is a profound expression of the soul, mind, and emotions, transforming mere physical motion into an art form that releases inner joy, story, and self-discovery. It serves as a healing mechanism for mental health, allowing for emotional release, connection with others, and a deep, harmonious unity between the body and mind.*

Each day of those 6 days with guided dance there was a topic to explore.

**Day 1: The Body**

- Recognizing body parts and pay attention to this parts while moving
- Put you inside your body - coming back from the head to the body.
- Start from feet, then knees, hips and then ask participants to move and connecting some parts together (like elbow and feet).

*The goals*: - scan the body, be aware of the body, introduce people with the space, music and bodies, to dance out of well-known body patterns



**Day 2: Grounding/Roots**

- Exploring in pairs how the body reacts when there is no stability coming from the feet.
- The grounding of the dancer, conscious connection between the dancefloor and the dancer by feeling the feet and the ground and gaining a stability.
- Practising conscious grounding and observing the different reactions of the movements when touching and pressing different parts of dancers bodies by their partners. Exploring the limits.

*The goals*:- to acknowledge which part of the body we are not aware about and improve our consciousness of body and dance, to dance more freely

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**Day 3: The emotions**

- Observing the other dancers and their energy and mood, creating couples naturally and flowing in the observed mood together
- Exploring the movement inside of the circle while having a support in a couple. The supporter is observing the dancer and is ready for supporting by holding the hads towards the dancer who can lean on the hands if feeling uncomfortable in the circle or experiencing strong emotions.

*The goals*:- just vibing and feel like the group, to feel more supported and grounded, feeling trust between people, to recognize the moment when we need support and get to know how to ask for support, feeling accepted who you are

*„During the second day, old memories came up that I thought past and forgotten, surprising me. Some strong feelings towards someone who did me wrong. I was able to reflect and forgive them."*

**Day 4: The Heart/Grattitude/Blessing**

- Connecting to our heart and deeper emotions throughout meeting other dancers when walking and blessing each others eye to eye/ heart to heart.
- *Human mandala*- creating a net of human bodies touching each others on a different part of a body while laying down on a dancefloor and feeling the heart while emotional music is playing.

*The goals*:- deep connection with our heart and others, experiencing many emotions

**Day 5: The Mind**

- Eperiencing in groups of 3 when one is the dancer and others are either moving the dancers hands or being moved by the dancer- the different experience of a body and mind of all 3 in different roles.

**Day 6: The performance**

- Preparing and performing the dance in groups of 3 for a topic: ***What the hell dance changes in me?***

**General insights / Rules for trainers / Guidelines**

What else can we do?

How to create an environment, safe space?

*Ask people to DON'T*:

- TALK BY WORDS
- LEAVE THE SPACE

USE PHONES

*Ask people to DO:*

- BE AWARE OF YOUR BODY
- SWITCH ROLES (if the exercise include working with pairs or more dancers)



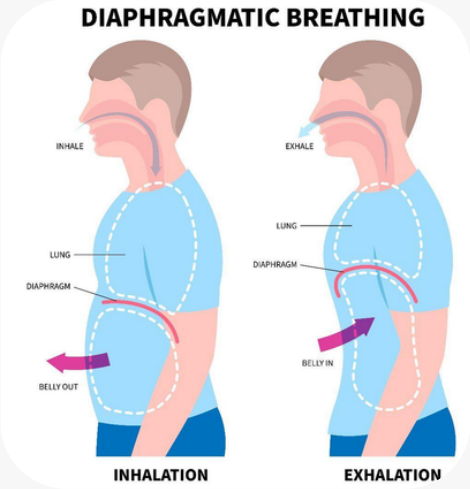
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# Breathwork

*Human beings take about 22,000 breaths per day in an average that highlights the essentiality of our respiratory systems. But do we breathe functionally? Let us introduce you Functional breathing also known as Oxygen Advantage method which was developed by Patrick McKeown and focuses on optimizing oxygen delivery to our body. Functional breathing balances $CO_2$ and $O_2$ so your body uses oxygen more efficiently. Better oxygen delivery calms our nervous system, improves physical performance, strengthens immune and respiratory system and brings mental clarity with better focus.*

**What is Functional Breathing?**

- Breathing through the nose (not mouth)- better oxygen delivery, calmer nervous system
- Using the diaphragm (belly gently expands on inhale) - less tension in shoulders and chest
- Smooth and slow breaths - reduces anxiety and keeps heart rate steady
- Balanced inhale-exhale - exhale slightly longer for calmness




**Simple excersice for optimizing the breathing**

**The Humming:** An exercise that uses gentle sound to calm the nervous system, improve sinus health, and boost nitric oxide levels in the body. It is often practiced after a light nasal inhale and then a long, soft hum on the exhale.
*How to practice:* Sit or stand comfortably. Breathe in gently through the nose. Exhale with a soft hum — like "mmmmmmm." Let it vibrate in the chest, throat, or head. Repeat for 2–5 minutes.
**Anti stress/ Cooling down breathing** : This exercise is meant to reduce anxiety by gently lowering breathing volume and activating the parasympathetic nervous system. It is a wonderful exercise for panic attacks or/and grounding yourself.

- *How to practice*: Sit or stand comfortably. Breathe in gently through the nose. Breathe out and hold your breath for 5 seconds. Give yourself 10 seconds to recover and repeat. Repeat for 2–5 minutes.



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# Art Journaling





*Art journaling is a powerful and personal practice that blends the reflective nature of journaling with the boundless freedom of art. More than just a sketchbook or a diary, it is a dedicated space—often a simple notebook or a collection of loose pages—where you can externalize your inner world of thoughts and emotions through visual means.*

*This practice becomes an incredible tool for:*

- Emotional Release: Expressing difficult or overwhelming emotions without needing to find the perfect words.
- Self-Exploration: Gaining deeper insight into what you are feeling and why.
- Stress Relief: Engaging in a focused, creative activity that calms the mind.
- Memory and Reflection: It serves as a visual record of your life and your days. You can document the mood, atmosphere, and small events of your day, allowing you to look back in the future, relive those memories, and reflect on how your emotional landscape has evolved over time.

**Techniques experienced:**

- *Art journaling:* using an art journal and all kinds of colour pencils,pens, markers, different paints, brushes,stickers, coloured papers, glue, golden flakes, etc.

- Having a personal time with relaxing music expresing ourselves in a journal using different techniques and coloures. Having an option to follow the traine´s instructions of different topic.

- *Natural pigment painting:* an offer to work in a group and experience the beauty of artpiece from the beggining to the end. Grinding the natural coloured pigments in a mortar, sieving the pigment and mixing with egg, water and estimating the right consistency to paint with. Using a large canvas of a papers taped together and improvising painting in turns, creating a beautiful piece of art.
- *Sensory clay journey:* an immersive creative practice that temporarily removes the dominant senses of sight and hearing to elevate the sense of touch (tactility) and proprioception (the body's internal sense of its position and movement)

- Getting a ball of a clay, covering eyes and ears to eliminate the disturbtion of outer environment and starting a journey by touching and modeling any shapes naturally created.



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# Community Building

You as an individual bring your values to the group (for instance compassion, energy for life, courage, responsibility) to be a part of a value's tower which includes all the other values.
It's important to ask yourself:

- What is common between our values?
- Are we willing to reach the same goal of the project?
- Is the project for me?
- What can I bring to the community to make it stronger?

**Common** - comes from community. And how can we use it in reality to work in between us and with youth? How we can work to feel safe and seen?

Don't forget about important part - celebration!
That brings the COMMUNITY TOGETHER!

*„I arrived one day after the start. The questions about how I feel and how my journey was during the reflection group made me feel welcome and accepted almost immediately."*

As a group on the training we are also belonging to higher scale communities - NGO partner organisation cannot be forgotten. It's the connection based on more opportunities, more possibilities, more experience and more knowledge. Open your mind for growing community!

## Methods

- creating a ***Community agreement***

(Raising hands to ask for silence, no judgment, "Bora bora" to switch to English, keep the space safe, quiet hours after 10 PM, be on time.)

- to hold ***Reflection sessions***: Questions for the groups are prepared.

***(***Reflection groups give the team space to feel secure to express themselves through answering the questions or need of participants. The plus is that the problems are voiced anonymously,the focus is on the solution.)

- the creation of a "***Buddy***"- someone you can turn to for help, talk to, and simply know that you're not alone.
- ***Fears, expectations and contributions :*** *Fears* are the concerns or difficulties someone may encounter while working on the project. *Expectations*: what they wanted to discover, encounter, or accomplish. *Contributions*: their abilities, positive energy, or strengths that they may offer the group



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# Participant Activities

**Open Space**

- specific space dedicated to participants activities
- Each country group prepared a voluntary activity based on what they thought would be interesting for the whole group and also related to Youthflow.

***Nature connection***

- a talkative 20-minute walk together to the cave, observing nature and chatting along the way, as it is a nice way to connect with both nature and people
- participants were asked to collect small pieces of nature that caught their attention, when they arrived to the cave, they created a piece of collective land art with them

***Concious Touch***

- type of touch calming the nervous system by stimulating the parasympathetic response, reducing stress hormones, lowering tension, and creating a feeling of safety and groundedness.
- boundaries, present moment, qualities of touch, 4 hands massage



***Concious Relating***

- invite participants to notice what is happening both inside and between them throughout games

***Ecstatic Singing***

- a personal meditation practice that invites you to connect deeply with your own voice and emotions, you are encouraged to sing how you feel—without judgment, pressure, or the need to sound “right.”

***Life Action Role Play***

- a nighttime LARP experience in the forest, using props, characters, and elements of Polish and Slavic mythology to build a magical atmosphere
- participants moved through the woods solving puzzles and completing small challenges that were added into the storyline

***Connect beyond***

- guided introspective exercise designed to help participants release stress, tension, and distractions from the outside world.
- participants experience a deeper sense of connection with one another, allowing them to feel more united and emotionally supported

***Contributions of participants***

- volunteers play an essential role in the success and smooth operation of project activities during the daily programme



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# Learnings, challenges and suggestions

**Wow-moments mentioned by participants**

- Humming is healthy
- Connecting with dance and touch
- Interacting with other cultures
- Not focusing on others opinions and being me
- New communication skills
- Breathing with mouth is not always a good idea
- Breathing relaxes me
- Walking and not talking feels good
- Discovering flexibility in my body

**Suggestions:**

- reflection sessions in a big circle, giving everyone a space to talk
- speed dating, where everyone can talk with everyone
- more focus on getting to know each other (games Bingo, professional mapping)
- 1-2 really free evenings and a few more breaks
- being more open to participants' needs
- more professional guidance and theory (explanations of activities, how to mix what we learned, more tools for youth work and personal development)
- more voluntarily activities because of overwhelming feeling



**Challenges**:

- too many people, no personal space, always being social
- structured/intensive schedule, not having free time
- different energies, different cultures
- emotional effort in every activity
- speaking in English
- dancing with new people on the 1st day
- going out of the comfort zone
- daring to dance
- touching people
- not easy to be vulnerable and opening the heaviness of your problem with another person

**Sources:**

- Alma
- UNESCO
- Sevan Startup Summit (Armenia)
- The red cross
- Church Youth Work (Czech Republic)
- EUROPEERS
- EURODESK
- IRIDA
- VIBRIA Intercultural
- ERASMUSER
- Local Youthcenter Websites
- Salto-Youth.net
- Na Slunci

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