



# The Non-Formal Road to Mental Health



**Partners:**

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An international project funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ program





*A toolkit of methods from*  
The non-formal road to mental health  
*project*

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# 1. Project Summary



The project consisted of a training course dedicated to youth workers and aiming to develop competencies in using non-formal education methods for the promotion of youth mental health. During the 6 days of the training course, participants were involved in exercises, group work, creative workshops, role-play, simulations and other non-formal activities. These activities provided examples on how mental health can be approached by using the principles of learning by experience and created a learning space for participants to design their own methods of non-formal education on mental health related topics. The project took place between the 3-9 November 2014 in Măguri-Răcățău, Cluj county, Romania and brought together 26 youth workers in the mental health field, from Romania, Italy, Slovenia, Poland and Ireland.



## 2. Objectives of the training course



**To raise awareness** on the importance of non-formal education and its principles.

**To introduce examples** of non-formal education methods that can be used in mental health promotion.

**To develop competencies** in designing and implementing activities which promote mental health, based on non-formal education methods.

**To exchange practices** and experiences between mental health workers from different countries.



# 3. Building the group



# Name games

## *Name-Adjective-Movement*

Participants stand in a circle and each one of them, in turn, says his/her name, an adjective starting with the first letter of his/her name and makes a movement. The group has to repeat what the person has said (the name and the adjective) and also the movement. In the next level, after everyone has said their name, an adjective and has made a movement, the group will have to say the name, the adjective and make the movement for each person in turn, without the person doing them first.

## *Name and stickers*

Each participant receives three strips of tape and writes his/her name on them. Then, they run around and try to stick their name tags on another person's body. At the end, each person has to collect the name stickers on their body and try to find the person to whom these belong and return them.

# Getting to know each other

**Objectives:** To get to know each other (sharing personal information between participants); to create an atmosphere of trust and openness

## *Snow ball fight*

**Materials:** paper, pens.

Every person gets one piece of paper (A4/different colours) and writes down his/her name. Then everyone makes a "snow ball" from that paper and start a "snowball fight". After half a minute they catch one "snowball" (use music in order to 'time' the half minute) and according to the name they see - they have to search that very participant and find out the following about this person:

- 1st round: what the person is doing in her/his life (occupation, studies, what NGO) + write it down on the paper
- 2nd round: find out 3 things the person likes and write them down
- 3rd round: what the person thinks is the most important thing in life

### *Answering questions*

**Materials:** cards with questions.

Each participant received 3 cards, each containing one question. Then they had to mingle and stop in front of a person with which they will exchange one card. The first person will pick a card from the other person's hand, without looking at it, and will answer the question on the card. The other person will do the same thing. Both will keep the card with the question they answered and start mingling again, repeating the process until the facilitator gives the stop signal.

### *Personal time line/Road of life*

**Materials:** Paper, pens/markers

Each participant gets one piece of paper and they start by thinking about their last 10 years, about difficult moments, successes, achievements, big decisions and other significant events. Then they draw a timeline on which they represent graphically all these events, trying to reconstruct their road through life until the present moment and trying to answer the question "What has brought you here, today?". They form groups of three, they share and discuss about their timelines.

### *Professional box*

People sit in a circle and one volunteer stands up, comes in the middle and says something about his/her work. Then other people who feel related in a certain way to what the person has said, also stand up and position themselves at a distance that they feel it approximates how connected they are to that person's work. They can position themselves further if they think they don't do the same thing but they would want to, closer if they think their work is somewhat similar, or very close to the person in the middle if they think their work overlaps almost completely. They discuss about the positions they chose, then they sit down and another volunteer comes in the middle.

# Energizers

## *Clap, Jump, Whistle*

Participants form pairs facing each other and they have to count to three, each of them saying one number. After they do this for a few seconds, the facilitator introduces a clap instead of number one. After another few seconds, a jump is introduced instead of number two, and finally number three is replaced with a whistle. So the sequences are: one, two, three; clap, two, three; clap, jump, three; clap, jump, whistle.

## *Hep, Hep, Boing*

Participants stand in a circle and they are told that they have to send a Hep signal around the circle, from person to person. Someone starts by making a gesture towards the person at their right and saying 'Hep'. The person receiving the Hep sends it forward to the person at their right by doing the same gesture and saying 'Hep'. This continues for a few seconds until the Boing is introduced. Boing is a block executed by lifting up both hands which sends the Hep signal back to the person at the left, reversing the direction of circulation. After a few seconds, the Pchuu is introduced, which allows the person receiving the Hep to send it in the middle of the circle by doing a specific gesture with the hands. Then, a person who wants the Hep can take it by saying 'I take it, it's mine' and doing a grabbing gesture towards the middle of the circle.

## *Sun and Cloud*

Participants stand in a circle and they are told to look at the others and secretly choose someone from the group to be their Sun and another person to be their Cloud. Then they have to try and do their best to hide from the Sun by always keeping a straight line with the Cloud in the middle.

## *Touch and Jump*

Participants make two lines facing each other, forming pairs. The facilitator will say numbers from 1 to 4. For each number each pair should make a specific movement, set by the facilitator. E.g. 1 – touch hands, 2 – jump, 3 – touch the ground, 4 – switch positions.

### *Balloons*

The facilitator plays some music and throws some balloons in the air. The participants have to try to keep the balloons from falling on the ground.

### *Grab the finger*

Participants stand in a circle and bend their hands from the elbows. They close their right palm in a fist and raise only the thumb, while placing the left palm on top of the raised thumb of the person at their left. When the facilitator gives a signal, they have to try to grab with their left hand the thumb beneath their palm, while pulling their right hand so that the person at their right would not catch their thumb. This can be repeated several times.

### *Grab the seat*

Participants sit in a circle and they have 5 seconds to secretly choose another chair by looking at it. When the facilitator gives a signal, they have to run towards the chosen chair and sit on it. The process can be repeated several times.

### *Ha-Hi-Ho*

Participants stand in a circle and one person starts by making a sword with their hands lifted above their head. They choose another person from the circle (who is not standing next to them) and 'hit' that person with the sword while dropping their hands and shouting "Ha!". The person who was hit responds quickly by also making a sword with their hands but this time shouting "Hi!" while raising their hands. The two people standing next to them also respond quickly by making a 'hitting' gesture with the 'sword' towards the person's stomach and shouting "Ho!". The person who was hit starts the process again by shouting "Ha!" and 'hitting' another person in the circle.

### *'Making a pizza' massage*

Participants stand in a circle and turn to their right to face the back of the person in their front. Then they start making a pizza on the back of the other person by first making the dough, then adding the ham, then the mozzarella, then the ketchup, etc. This can be used to release the tension after an intense day.

### *Relaxizer*

The facilitator puts some music while the participants do some warm-up and stretching exercises. This can be used to prepare for an intense day or to recover from one.

# Teambuilding

## *Pizza making in groups*

**Objectives:** to develop group relations, to increase trust within the group, to create a willingness for working and achieving together, to have fun and bound the team

**Materials:** rope or nylon webbing

Participants form three groups and they each stand in a circle. Each of the groups receives a loop-shaped nylon tape or rope (pizza) and they try to make a pizza. At first, they have to spin the pizza. Then, they throw the pizza in the air, clap three times, and catch it when it falls. Third level is to throw the pizza in the air, clap three times, spin once, and catch the pizza. Fourth level is to change pizzas between groups, so at the end, each group has a different pizza.

## *Ring circle*

**Materials:** rope

Participants stand in a circle and hold hands. The facilitator hangs a rope ring on the hands of two of the people in the circle, so that their hands go through the ring. They have to pass the ring around the circle until it arrives back where it started from. Meanwhile they have to hold hands at all times, not letting go. If they let go, they start again from the beginning. The facilitator uses a timer to see how fast the team manages to complete the task and challenges the participants to find a strategy to lower their time.

## *Network of values*

**Materials:** paper notes, thin rope

Each person receives a piece of paper that has written a word representing a topic. Each person will have to say his/her opinion about that topic. The ones who feel the same will raise their hands and the person who spoke will choose one person. That person will have to give a behavioral example on how that belief manifests in his/her life. The transition among people will be made with a thread, so that at the end, a network is formed connecting people with similar values and views.

### *Companion for the road*

Each participant should choose one person among the others, preferably a person from a different country or a person they don't know very well but they would want to. Throughout the course of the week, they should make conscious efforts to interact with that person and get to know them better.

### *Mail boxes*

**Materials:** envelopes, paper/post-its, pens, markers, pencils,

Each participant receives an envelope which they should decorate and stick onto the wall. Throughout the course of the week, they will write messages to other participants expressing thoughts that they have during the day, maybe something they have appreciated about another person, a 'thank you' note, etc.

## *Training practicalities*

### *Non-formal Road to Mental Health Metaphor*

**Materials:** flipchart sheets, tape, post-its, pens, markers

The trainers introduced the training as a journey on the non-formal road to mental health. They drew an actual road on a big sheet of paper and asked the participants to place post-it notes on it as follows: on the non-formal section they had to write their expectations regarding what they will learn about non-formal education; on the road section they had to write their expectations regarding what they will get from the training course in general, not necessarily during the sessions (e.g. friends, language skills, etc.); on the mental health section, participants wrote about what they expect to learn regarding this topic; and on the edges, they wrote their fears regarding obstacles they might encounter during their trip (training course).

### *50 Ways*

The trainers stuck a flipchart sheet onto the wall and encouraged participants to gather, over the course of the training, as many ideas as possible about ways to improve your mental health and write them on the paper.

## *Erasmus +*

**Objectives:** To learn about the competences developed through Erasmus+ programs. To learn about the opportunities offered by Erasmus+ learning programs.

**Materials:** Flipchart

Participants were engaged in a visualization exercise, in which the trainer talked about the Youthpass/ European key competences (communication in mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, math's/science/technology, digital competences, learning to learn, social and civic competences, initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression). The participants were asked to imagine what those competences meant for them and how they are reflected in their own lives. (20 minutes)

Participants learned about the opportunities Erasmus+ offered to young people (learning mobilities: training courses, youth exchanges, EVS; strategic partnerships; and developing policies for young people). They were asked to talk to each other, in groups of 2 or 3 (with the people sitting next to them in the training room), about what kind of learning opportunity they would like to engage in. (25 minutes)

## *Action Plan*

**Objectives:** To set goals for personal or organizational development (make an action plan)

**Materials:** Flipchart, writing paper and pens

Based on what each of the participants felt they had learned during the training course, they were asked to set at least one goal for themselves. They had to work individually and to choose a goal, then specify how they will implement it (make an action plan). The goal could be related to their organization or their personal life. They were instructed to touch on key aspects, that were written on the flipchart: Why (the reason the goal is important to them), Time (when will they do it), Actions (how exactly will they do it), Resources (what will help them do it), Excuses (what could stop them or make it difficult) and Allies (who could help them do it). The participants were given 20 minutes to write their goals. After that, they were asked to talk to the person next to them or with the people from the same organization and share their goals for the future.

### *Final evaluation*

**Materials:** flipchart paper, colored pens, bell to signal time

In order to evaluate the training course, the participants first have to mark a sign on a line ranging from „poor” to „very good” based on how much they felt the training course reached its three objectives (1) learn about principles of non-formal education and using them in mental health promotion, (2) organizing activities based on non-formal education and (3) facilitate cooperation among mental health workers.

**Closing feedback:** As a closing moment, all the participants form a circle with their chairs, including the trainers. One chair is in the middle of the circle. Each participant is asked to sit on the chair in the middle and the others have 45 seconds to first say, in a group: „You can do it (the name of the person in the middle), because...”. After “because”, participants can individually say their positive opinion about the person in the middle. For example, “You can do it, X, because you’re clever”. After 45 seconds, the trainer chimes the bell and another person sits in the middle of the circle and receives feedback.



# 4. Psychology and mental health workshops



### *Brain-storming*

**Objectives:** to clarify the concepts, to establish a common view about mental health promotion.

What is mental health (15 min): Participants were presented with the WHO (world Health Organization) definition of mental health, they discussed it and then they brain-stormed ideas in order to create their own definition of mental health, one that will be used throughout the training course.

### *Photos of my life*

**Objectives:** help participants understand that we view life through different lenses, to understand the role of thoughts, emotions and behaviours in our life by linking them to personal experiences.

**Materials:** Sheets of paper, pens, markers, pencils

Participants were asked to draw a camera of their choice. Afterwards, they showed their work to the others and also looked at what the others had drawn. They discussed about the differences between the drawings and why they chose to include various elements in the camera. Then they were asked to think that they are the camera and indicate on the drawing what elements of the camera would correspond to which characteristics of themselves. They shared this with the group and discussed about the different meanings. Finally they chose one element from the camera that they thought was the most important and explained why.

### *Thinking styles (60 min):*

**Materials:** notes with character descriptions

Participants were divided into small groups and each participant in a group was given a hand-out with the life history of a different character. Each group had the task to create a situation in which all these characters meet and act in it in front of the whole group. After acting, they discussed about how personal factors influence people's different reactions in the same situation and about how difficult it was for them to empathize with their character.

**Debriefing:** Was it easy or difficult to play your character? How did you feel in that role? How do you think your character felt in that situation? Did you see any differences between characters? Why do you think they reacted differently? What do you think influences our reactions in different situations?

### *Mental health continuum (10 min)*

**Objective:** to show how personal factors influence how different persons react differently in the same situation, to strengthen the previous idea that we perceive life through different lenses, encourage empathy, facilitate the understanding of the different shades of mental health and the possibility of each person to change their position on this continuum.

After acting out the scenarios, participants had to position themselves on an imaginary continuum of mental health, according to the psychological profiles illustrated in the previous activity. At the negative end of the continuum there are the severe mental illnesses and at the positive end, there is the optimal mental health. Participants looked around and compared their position on the continuum with the position of other people who played the same character.

**Debriefing:** Where did you sit on the continuum? Why? Were you 100% sure that you were in the right place on the continuum? Could you change your position? Do you think we change our position on the mental health continuum in life too? How does it influence you thinking about mental health as a continuum?

### *Mandala (60 min)*

**Objectives:** to focus on emotions and reflect on them, to express emotions in a creative way, to understand how emotions represent part of who we are.

**Materials:** watercolors, paintbrushes, markers, colored pencils, paper.

The concept and history of mandalas were introduced to the participants. The Mandala (Sanskrit for “circle” or “completion”) has a long history and is recognized for its deep spiritual meaning and representation of wholeness. The “circle with a center” pattern is the basic structure of creation that is reflected from the micro to the macro in the world as we know it. The mandala is widely recognized as a meaningful reflection of its creator.

Participants were told to use the materials they have in front of them and let their emotions guide them to create a mandala. The very nature of creating a mandala is therapeutic and symbolic. It’s not about the final product, it’s about the journey. When you reach your destination, you will have a representation of something meaningful and personal... a snapshot of you for a brief moment in time expressed through your mandala. Your instinct and feeling should inspire

and guide you through the process of creation. So, whatever you are feeling at that time, whatever emotions are coming through, will be represented in your mandala.

The core of mandala designs is the circle. There are no rules or constrictions with regard to mandala designs. You don't have to use only circles, though your art should have some semblance of a circular design. Otherwise, you can do whatever strikes you. In fact, it's encouraged to let your feelings inspire your mandala art and designs.

After everybody finished their mandalas, they were encouraged to take a closer look at the final product, at the colours they used the most/least, at the images, shapes, to take notice of any hard and soft lines, jagged or smooth edges, areas of high contrast. Then they had to write down, in detail, their feelings and/or memories they experienced when they thought about the colors, shapes, images, and designs on their mandala. Are these connected with the feelings and emotions they experienced while creating it? At the end they thought of how their mandala reflects their personality and they gave the mandala a title.

### *Hero's Journey*

**Objectives:** to understand the importance of life meaning for mental health, to understand the Hero's Journey process, to reflect on personal moments in life which correspond to the stages in the Hero's Journey, to reflect on the personal mission/meaning in life.

**Materials:** blind-folds, a sheet of paper, pen

Participants were briefly introduced to Joseph Campbell's pattern of narrative, the hero's journey, and they were presented the main stages and elements that are part of this story: the test, allies and enemies, the approach, the ordeal (the greatest challenge, confrontation with the greatest fear), the reward, the road back, the resurrection, and finally the return with the elixir. The activity itself was a group walk in the nature with several stations where participants experienced the Hero's Journey and reflected on personal moments. They made pairs and shared personal experiences while walking:

- **Ordinary world:** A moment of confusion, a cross-road in life.
- **The call to adventure:** A situation which called the person to act, to do something bigger.
- **Refusal of the call:** A moment when the person refused to take the call and the reasons why.

- **Meeting with the mentor:** Sharing about a mentor we had. Here, one person in the pair was blindfolded and the other had to guide her while walking.
- **Crossing the threshold:** Participants crossed a physical space which represented the threshold.
- **The challenge:** Participants were told that they should find their challenge somewhere around after they cross the threshold. The facilitators placed a piece of paper on a tree with the message “What is your mission?” written on it.
- **The mission:** After they found the paper, they again formed pairs and discussed about their mission in life while returning to the training place.

During the activity, pairs were changed frequently so that participants could interact with as many other people as possible.

### *Interview for life*

**Objectives:** to help participants explore, identify and be more aware of their strengths, focus on the strengths of others, see their strengths as resources in life.

**Materials:** short film about character strengths (<http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/What-Is-Character#nav>), hand-outs with character strengths, pens, paper

Participants watched a short video about character strengths and they were given a sheet of paper with various character strengths that a person could have. They were given 15 minutes of introspection to choose their own character strength and prepare for an interview. During this interview, they had 2 minutes to try to convince the interviewer that their character strength would help them do well at the job of life and fulfill their mission. Also, the interviewer would try to spot new character strengths in the interviewee. In small groups, each participant will play the role of the interviewer and the interviewee.

**Debriefing:** How did you prepare for the interview? Was it easy or hard to find strengths that you have? Did you find any strength that you haven't thought about before? How did you feel when preparing for the interview? How did the interviews go? How did you feel as an interviewer/interviewed? Did you find something new about yourself/the others during this activity?

### *Dealing with emotions – collage method (1h 30min)*

**Objectives:** reflect on coping mechanisms that help participants deal with negative emotions. Share ideas and get inspiration from each other on how to deal with negative emotions. Express themselves in an artistic way. Share

vulnerabilities and normalize them.

**Materials:** magazines, scissors, glue, boards, double sided tape/ sticky gum to stick them on the wall.

**Introduction (5min):** “Emotions are part of our life. We all experience a wide range of emotions that we have to deal with. The most difficulties we encounter are when we have to deal with negative emotions. Through experiences we develop different types of coping mechanisms. Some of them help us overcome difficulties, some of them can become dysfunctional.

Examples of coping mechanisms can be: talking to a friend, taking a walk in nature, watch a good movie or cartoons, practice a sport, or avoiding distressful situations, isolation, screaming and fighting, procrastination, etc.

When dealing with problems we have the tendency to think that our problems are the worst, that no one can understand or has ever dealt with something similar, so it is useful to get out from our head and see how others cope with negative emotions. Sharing brings us a new perspective, we can discover we have more in common with each other than we thought, or we can find in others new and useful strategies to deal with negative emotions.”

**Activity 1 (30 min):** by using the technique of collage with images cut down from magazines, participants had to illustrate how they cope with their own difficulties. The instruction was the following: “Think about what helps you deal with negative emotions and make a collage with images cut down from magazines.”

**Activity 2 (40 min):** group discussion about their presentation boards, and functional versus dysfunctional coping mechanisms – participants were encouraged to mingle and to talk about their boards, naming at least one dysfunctional coping mechanism they have. While doing that, they had to try to find out: How similar are their coping mechanisms with the ones from their peers? What do they have in common? What differentiates them? What new inspirational ideas can apply for themselves? What works and what doesn't work for them?

**Debriefing questions (15 min):** At the end of the activity, participants were encouraged to discuss about the utility of this technique: “What did you find out during the discussions? How did you feel sharing with others? What was the most challenging? How was to talk about vulnerability? How did you feel? How did you feel to find out about other's vulnerabilities? Did you find out any new ideas? What can you use from this activity in the future?”

### *Expressing gratitude (1h 45 min)*

**Objectives:** focus the attention on the valuable moments, experiences, people that we have in our life; experience a positive emotion; learn a tool to increase positive emotions.

**Materials:** paper, pens, envelopes

**Activity 1 (35 min):** participants have been told to write down at least 3 things that went well, and that they are grateful for during their last week, and afterwards having to share one with the whole group. Next, to each positive event, they had to answer the question “Why did this happen?” This could help participants to understand the negative aspects and, especially the ways to cope with them. In the end, participants had to choose one that could share.

**Activity 2 (60 min):** participants had to write a letter of gratitude to a significant person in their lives. With this exercise participants will have the opportunity to experience what it is like to express the gratitude in a thoughtful and meaningful manner.

“Close your eyes. Call up the face of someone still alive who years ago did something or said something that changed your life for the better. Someone who you never properly thanked; someone you could meet face-to-face next week.” The letter should be concrete and about three hundred words: be specific about what she/he did for you and how it affected your life. Let her/him know what you are doing now, and mention how you remember what she/he did. At the end you can choose if you want to send the letter or not. We strongly recommend to read it out loud in front of this person. It will have the best impact on both of you.

**Debriefing (10 min):** How did you feel at the beginning of the activity? How did you feel after the activity? How difficult was to find things that you are thankful for? Why? How difficult was to write the letter? Why? How will you use this activity in the future?

### *Dealing with stress (1h 30 min)*

**Objectives:** create a general understanding of what stress is and what are the causes. Create a space for sharing and experimentation of methods to reduce stress. Create a chart with the content of the session.

**Materials:** flipchart, paper, pens.

**Discussion (10 min):** gather ideas on flipchart on what stress is and what are its causes.

**Preparation (10 min):** every participant prepared their relaxation methods.

**Practice (60 min):** in groups of 6, each participant had to implement their personal stress-relief method, for the other participants in the group. Each participant had 10 minutes. Example: make a cup of tea and talk, listen to a song etc.

**Conclusion and thank you (5 min):** at the end of the session each participant wrote on a post-it the activity/method they choose offer to the small group of participants. The post-its were put on the flipchart and all the ideas were exposed.

### *Contact improvisation (1h 30 min)*

**Objectives:** develop the ability to listen and respond to what is happening in the moment. Create awareness about other persons. Create connections between participants.

**Introduction:** a few words to welcome the participants and introduce them in the session and maybe a short visualisation and relaxation exercise to make the person feel comfortable and eager to get involved in the next activities.

**Body warm-up with rhythmic music:** listening to music, the participants have to warm-up different parts of their body.

**Go-Stop-Jump and Red-Green-Yellow:** the participants have to move according to the commands given by the facilitator. In the first part the commands were Go-Stop-Jump, then the facilitator included new commands: Green (the participants had to walk on this command), Red (they had to stop), Yellow (they had to jump). The first commands were still used by the facilitator but the participants had to move according to the colours they could hear, thus they had to increase attention. At the end, participants had to synchronize their movements (stop and go) depending on the group. They had to stop and go all at the same time, without using verbal cues. They had to `feel` the movement of the group.

**View points:** stop and go at the same time with the other person.

**Walk** like a businessman, a diva, someone found in the centre of attention, Vladimir Putin, Mother Theresa.

**Music and emotion:** there will be different songs and the participants have to walk/dance according to different musical styles.

**Paint the room with your body:** express your emotions, with music accompanying in the background.

**Walk in the forest:** Some people are representing trees of a forest. One or two persons are walking in the forest with their eyes closed. The trees touch the people who are walking next to them, and encourage them to walk in different directions.

**Impulse: sail** – in pairs the participants are giving impulses to the colleagues that are walking. **Triangles in pairs** – an activity that is played in pairs. One person is forming a triangle with his/her body in different parts of the room. The other person has to go through that triangle. **AIKIDO** – dance by holding the palms united.

**Contact improvisation:** two persons dance together on waltz d'Amelie, at the beginning face to face and afterwards they touch with a finger, then with a palm, then with a bigger part of their body, being unite with other pair and in the end with the whole group unite as one.

**Flock of birds:** there are groups of people who are following the movements of the leader. The leader of the flock is changing from time to time.



# 5. Non-formal education workshops



# *Experience non-formal education*

**Objectives:** To understand the process of experiential learning and Kolb cycle, to understand how we learn and the learning styles, to discover connections between theory of learning and practice/daily life experiences, to experience non-formal education methods, to understand the group processes which are happening during an educational activity

## *Chair game*

Progressive and collective team game. Participants sit in a circle and a chair is empty. One of the two people next to that chair have to put their hand on the chair and call a name as fast as they can. The person who was called has to run and occupy the free chair, and now there is another free chair. The process is repeat until the facilitator gives the signal. Next levels: participants have to arrange themselves on gender groups, then alphabetically, and rules can be set by the facilitator along the way, such as nobody is allowed to speak or only three people can speak.

## *Everybody let's go - Learning a rhythm*

The facilitator makes a demonstration of a rhythm tapping on a table and the participants try to learn it and do it together, after the signal: "Everybody let's go!"

## *Group juggling*

**Materials:** juggling balls

The participants make a circle. They have to throw one juggling ball from one to another. Then the facilitator adds another ball and another one. Then the participants have to throw all three balls without speaking, without letting the balls fall on the floor, for 30 seconds.

## *Demonstrations of learning*

**Materials:** sheets of paper, a large and heavy piece of wood, a pill

The facilitator asks for a volunteer for each task and gives the following instructions:

- Cut a paper without scissors
- Release a wood on your feet
- Take a medicine: a pill for sleep

Then the facilitator guides the discussion about what happened, they analyze the sources of learning: did the participants read about the consequences of these actions or did they experience each of them?

Discuss about the process of learning and identify learning styles.

### *Kolb cycle and learning styles (35 min)*

Participants learned the theory about experiential learning, they found out about the Kolb cycle with the four stages (experience, reflection, generalization, application) and they were taught that each person can have a different learning style (activist, reflector, theorist, pragmatist), depending on the stage they spend the most time on. After learning about all these, participants were asked to think about their general tendencies and place themselves in one of the four corners in the room, depending on their learning style, so that at the end they could look around and see the distribution of learning styles within the group.

**Debriefing:** What happened and what have we just done? How did you feel during the activity? How do you feel now? How did you work? What was your strategy? What were the lowest moment and the highest? What helped you achieve your task? What made it more difficult? What have you learned from this activity? What meanings do you find in this exercise? What has changed in you after this exercise?

## *Emotions and non-formal education*

### *Trust fall sequences*

**Objectives:** the activity is meant to create a wide variety of emotions and to put the participants in a situation in which they can reflect on personal emotions, develop self-awareness and increase self-efficacy.

The participants will get involved in a progressive sequence of trust falls.

**Falling in pairs in front (5 min):** Participants form pairs and one of them will fall, the other will stand in front of them and catch them. The persons who fall will cross their hands on their chest, will ask their partner “Are you ready (name)?”, “Can I fall (name)?”, will wait for the partner to answer “Yes” to each of the questions and only then they will fall. After 2 minutes, they will switch roles.

**Falling in groups of three in front and backwards (10 min):** This time, participants form groups of three, with one person in the middle, one in front and the other behind, and they can choose to fall forward or on their backs.

**Falling in circle (15min):** Now, participants form groups of 4-5, one person stands in the middle, eyes closed or not, they ask the group “Are you ready group?”, “Can I fall?” and when they fall, the group has to catch them and pass them around without letting them fall down.

**Big fall (40 min):** A high platform is created by placing two benches one on top of the other. Some participants will stand in two lines facing each other, in front of the platform, holding their arms outstretched and alternated like a zipper. Each person in turn will climb the platform, they will stand with their arms crossed on their chest (preferably grasping their shirt/jacket to prevent the reflex of spreading arms during the fall) and their back turned to the others, they can close their eyes if they want to, they will ask the group “Are you ready group?”, “Can I fall?” and wait for the group to respond. Only after and if the group responded “Yes” to each question, then the person can let herself fall on her back in the arms of the group.

### *Delivering non-formal methods of education (3 hours)*

**Objectives:** To design and implement a non-formal activity for a small group, on mental health topic.

**Materials:** Chart for planning the activity in detail, any other materials the participants required (paper, scissors, pens, chairs, etc.) Participant had access to the materials available in the training course.

Participants were instructed to design a non-formal activity related to mental health, that would be implemented in a group of 6 people. They were reminded about the non-formal activities they engaged in the previous days, on a flipchart (outdoor activities, drawing, dancing, theatre, juggling, photovoice, treasure hunt, collage, painting, film making). They had 1 hour to prepare. They were provided with a chart they could use to plan the activity (title, aim and learning elements/ session objectives, methodology step by step, instructions to participants, issues discussed, materials, hand outs).

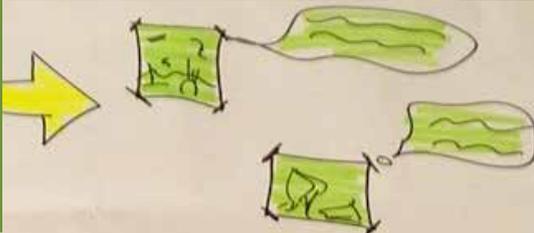
Each participant had 15 minutes to deliver the activity for the group, as a trainer. They had to explain it to group, implement it and then have a debriefing about

the results. They could choose any surrounding location for the activity. Each team had to choose someone for time-keeping, and they should alert the trainer when there were only 5 minutes left. At the end, each team member wrote a short feedback regarding the activity and the trainer's performance on a post-it note and gave it to the trainer.

**Debriefing:** Participants were asked „What was harder for you? Creating and planning the activity or implementing it?”.



# 6. Practical workshops



### *Photovoice (3 hours):*

**Objectives:** to understand the method of photo voice. Then, to create the method, by finding a moment that could promote mental health.

**Materials:** photo camera, smart phones, paper. Each group had a professional photo camera or a smart phone with good quality. For editing the photovoices: personal laptops. For presentations: trainers printed the photovoices.

Participants were briefly introduced (about 30 min) the photovoice concept, as following:

- Showed some picture from different photovoice projects. They had to say what do you think about them?
- Presented the method and discussed with the participants about it.

Photovoice is a ground-breaking approach to participatory action research. With photovoice, different stories are told, different photographs are captured and different outcomes are sought. Despite the many differences, common to each photovoice project is its effectiveness as a method to reveal real life experiences, emphasizing community participation for the purpose of social action.

Participants were free to choose that place where to take the picture. And they were free to find a title or a text for their photovoice.

When participants finished, the trainers printed the photovoices and then was a debriefing about this topic.

### *Treasure hunt in the city (4 hours)*

**Objectives:** Experience mindful walking in Cluj-Napoca City and focus on positive emotions and triggers.

**Materials:** map of the city, paper with the tasks, pens.

Participants were divided in groups and they had to explore the city while completing a series of tasks. The tasks were formulated as follow:

“You have to explore the city in a mindful way, try to be present every moment and take from every moment as much as you can. Explore your experience, your feelings, your senses. Try to remember as many details about every experience as you can. You will have to come back with some treasures:

- Find a way to connect in a positive way with a stranger
- Do an act of kindness

- Get lost –go where your feet will take you, without thinking where you are going
- Do a fun activity together
- Find a relaxing place
- Collect 5 experiences that determined a positive emotion
- Explore the city with all your senses - find something beautiful, find a sound that you like, a smell that you like, taste something delicious, feel a touch that you like. When you do this, try to be fully there, fully enjoy the experience, focus all your attention on it and explore it in detail.
- Find ideas for the 50 way list from strangers on the street

Take notes if you need too, because you will all share the treasures at the end. Take pictures only if you feel like doing so and they don't interfere with your mindful state.”

**Debriefing:** What happened? What treasures did you bring back? Was this experience of exploring a city different in any way? How? What did you like the most? What is the most valuable treasure that you have found for you?

### *Film Making (4 sessions – 6 hours)*

**Objective:** Create a short movie clip (3-5 minutes) on a relevant topic of mental health, for the general public.

**Materials:** Each group had either a professional photo camera that also recorded video/audio or a smart phone with good quality video/audio recording.

**For video editing:** personal laptops, Videopad software (free to download from internet, participants received it on a USB stick).

**For presentations:** laptop and video projector.

**Preparation for script-making and shooting (15 minutes):** Participants viewed 3 movie clips on the topic of mental health: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjnyPTvZmfM> (a movie clip created by the host organization, Minte Forte), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54sDdNa9vek>, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvWT\\_sFNTaA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvWT_sFNTaA)

They had the chance to create a movie clip of their own. The movie will then be presented to the target group of each organization, in the dissemination event that follows the training. Examples of topics: raising awareness about mental

health, improving behaviors that relate to mental health, raising mental health literacy. Participants had to work in their national group, to identify a problem that their target group is facing and then come up with a solution, that would be the starting point of the movie clip (the objective). Participants were trained by the a professional with tips and tricks about script-making and filming (how to logically arrange scenes, how to shoot, how to make the video dynamic, how to alternate scenes, how to fit the characters in the picture). They were instructed to first agree on an objective, then make a script in the form of a storyboard.

**Script-making (1 hour):** Participants brain-stormed ideas for the movie and created the storyboard. The storyboard guided the film-making, specifying each scene that needed to be shot and their order.

**Shooting (3 hours):** Participants shot the scenes they had created in the storyboard, in the surroundings of the pensions, in the training room, in the pension.

**Preparation for editing (15 minutes):** After each group was done with shooting, the cameraman trained the participants in using the video-editing software Videopad. Each team installed the software on their computer and uploaded the videos they shot on that computer. Videopad is a free and intuitive video-editor software that can be learned in minutes.

**Editing (1 hour):** Each team edited the videos they shot according to their storyboard. Editing involved cutting the scene and sequencing the scenes in a logical fashion. They added film effects (for example, black/white), background music and text to the video.

**Presenting the movies (30 minutes):** Each team presented their movie to the whole group, on a video projector. As a reward, each group was applauded and received a print of an Oscar statue.

**Results:** Each team chose a topic they found was relevant to the needs of the public in their own country/ their target group.

