



EMPOWER YOUR NATURE

Tools and Methodologies
on mindfulness & nature-based activities
to support young people with fewer opportunities

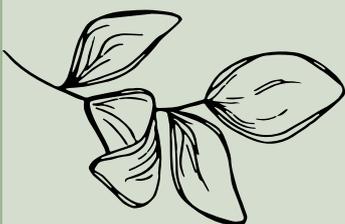


Empower your Nature (Erasmus+ KA1 Mobility of Youth Workers)

This booklet provides youth workers, educators, and youth leaders with tools and methods on how to guide and support young people with fewer opportunities, through non-formal learning based on mindfulness and activities in nature. Through our high-quality training in Tinos, Greece, these tools were developed aiming to improve the ability of youth workers to empower and enhance social inclusion for the young people that are especially affected by the pandemic and experience mental health issues. Consulting a mental health specialist is mandatory before implementing the activities to ensure the health and safety of the participants for the specific circumstances.

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“What is it you plan to do with
your one wild and precious life?”
~ Mary Oliver



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

"Empower your Nature" was a training course organized by Hellenic Youth Participation focused on the needs of youthworkers, youth leaders and educators working with young people with fewer opportunities. The project aimed to improve their ability to empower and enhance their social inclusion through mindfulness and nature-based practices and methodologies like storytelling, poetry, ecological collage, botanical art and embodiment practices.

"Empower your Nature" was designed on the common needs and capabilities of the participating organizations and youthworkers from Serbia (KOM 018), Cyprus (Network for European Citizenship and Identity), Romania (Actions for Change), Spain (Las niñas del tul), Italy (VulcanicaMente APS), Portugal (Animam Viventem), Germany (Naturkultur E.V.) and the Republic of North Macedonia (Go Green). The project offered intensive training in the field of mental health from the trainers, while providing the space for the group to exchange good practices and be part of an international network of active youthworkers.

The impact of the training was the:

- Creation of educational material through the cooperation of the participants at a European level.
- Information and readiness of partner organizations to support young people with fewer opportunities.
- Integration of good practices and new methodologies in their daily lives.
- Innovation of education at local, regional, national and international levels by strengthening their good practices through this collaboration but also addressing their weaknesses in terms of approaching and including young people with fewer opportunities.
- Widening the understanding of the needs of young people with fewer opportunities.

The mobility took place on the island of Tinos in Greece on 15-22/10/2022. Each participant shared the tools at the local level and each organisation implemented a local "transfer of knowledge".

The team of participants is still active and planning new activities in the future.



WHY WAS THIS PROJECT NECESSARY?

In Europe, 20% of youngsters are affected by at least one psychological problem every year. From 2020 till today, the pandemic has introduced new levels of anxiety and stress, affecting the daily life and the future prospects of young people. Those vulnerable before are even more affected now.

In youth work, the main psychological impact is the high rates of stress, anxiety, loneliness, depression, alcohol, drug use, and self-injury or suicidal behavior. Finally, rural areas and especially the islands in Greece have few opportunities for on-the-job training with young people creating even more challenges in their work.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

- The development of professional competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of use of non-formal methods of education, especially activities based on consciousness and contact with nature.
- A better understanding of the conditions and achieving greater social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, through methods based on contact with nature and expanding consciousness.
- A better understanding of the psychological, social, and economic characteristics of young people with fewer opportunities.
- An increase in the motivation to work with young people with fewer opportunities.

THE TRAINERS

Sandra Horea



Sandra is a human development guide and mentor who creatively and heartfully invites people to be in intimate and meaningful conversations with their souls. As a guide she creates purposeful spaces of self-discovery incorporating in her work her experience regarding depth psychology and social basis practices egocentric development embodiment storytelling poetry and deep imagination. she has a wide experience of 10 years in working with youth and adults in facilitating spaces of personal and community transformation. At the moment she is studying at Animas Valley Institute in the USA and has graduated from the wild mind program

Eleni Kardamitsi

She is an experienced trainer and educator with more than 20 years of experience working with teams of young people in Athens. She is a Salto trainer, a ToTtie and a freelance trainer for the British Council, European National Agencies and NGOs. She believes in the power of people coming together towards social change. Since 2012, she has coached 200 local events and 30 youth initiatives. She focuses on supporting actions which will construct a world where everyone cares and acts. Nature-based activities and connection to nature in urban frameworks are part of her usual youth activities. She is co-author of the book "Mindfulness and nature: a tool kit for youth work"



Sara Marzo

She has 10 years of experience in international project management and youth work. A trainer and facilitator, she specialized in mindfulness, green mindfulness, eco-psychology, and nature-based methods. She practices and guides meditation and mindfulness sessions within the organization at local and international level for five years. She is the co-author of the book "Mindfulness and nature: a tool kit for youth work" realized during the project KA2 "Mind your mind: Synergies between mindfulness and nature-based methods". She is a youth worker and volunteering project coordinator dealing mostly with youth from disadvantaged backgrounds.





THE TOOLS



GUIDE TO THE TOOLS

This booklet was created to provide innovative educational material, useful tools and methods on how to guide and support young people with fewer opportunities, through non-formal learning based on awareness and activities in nature. It contains 27 tools divided into 13 methods which can be freely modified according to the needs of your group.

Since the field of mental health requires special care, we strongly recommend that you adapt the intensity or even the whole activity to your group while observing your team at all times. Consulting a mental health specialist is also recommended in order to support the needs of your participants and create a safe space for exploration and non-formal learning.

Invest time in creating a safe space before applying the tools in order for the participants to take advantage of their benefits. Some tools may be triggering for some young people so informing them about the possible triggers and creating a plan about how to act if this happens, is essential. Permission about physical touch or proximity should be given before starting some activities.

Most activities can be implemented indoors and outdoors. It is advised to implement them in the natural environment for the added benefits on mental health. When adapted indoors, pay special attention to creating a “natural” feeling in the space by adding leaves, rocks, flowers, spices, fruits, etc. Background music with sounds of nature or relaxing instruments is also recommended.

Additional resources can be found on our [padlet](#).

We hope you enjoy this booklet as much as we enjoyed creating it!

01 MIRROR YOURSELF

Blanca Zufri & Arsim Abdija

Overview

A tool for teenagers, to help them connect with qualities of themselves and also create tools to be kind to themselves, in order to improve their self-image.

Objectives

- Give teenagers the guidelines to develop a kind language,
- guide them to be comfortable with themselves,
- create a safe space to express themselves and their fears,
- know their bodies and explore them.

Tips for implementation

It is better if participants know each other to some degree. If mirrors are not available for everyone, the front camera of their smartphones can also be used.

Materials	One mirror per participant, a box, paper and pencils.
Duration	1 hour
Ideal venue	Indoors, in a quiet, wide space.



Tool description

Part 1

The group is led by the facilitator for a short meditating session of 8-10 minutes, with activities like breath control, coming down to earth, and feeling yourself. This step is needed to set the mood up for the activity and also prepare them for what is coming.

Part 2

Every participant in the group is invited to take a piece of paper and a pencil, where they write 5 qualities about their best friend or an important person in their life, like a sibling or a cousin. They are advised to give attention to the language and the way of expressing these qualities. Then they put the notes in a box.

Part 3

The facilitator gives the box to the participants, so they randomly choose a paper (preferably not their own). Then each participant takes a mirror to face themselves in it and looks straight into their eyes for a while. The participant read their note while looking in the mirror by saying those words to themselves.

Part 4

The group is separated into pairs and shares how was the activity for them. How did they feel while writing the note to their beloved friend while looking at themselves in the mirror and reading the notes?

Where did they feel a change in their body? Which part of the body felt warmth, pressure and/or tension? Does it reveal something about their self-image? What do they want to do with this information?



02 WALKING THROUGH, FEELING INSIDE, SHARING WHOLEHEARTEDLY

Markos Palamaris (MPATIKI)

Overview

A walking journey through local trails in order to get to know the history and culture of the island, but, above all else, to reconnect with nature and ourselves

Objectives

- Reconnect with nature,
- deepen our thoughts about what has values,
- be sceptic about the “modern” way of life.

Materials	Warm clothes, hiking boots, water
Duration	2 hours
Ideal venue	Outdoor/Nature



Tool description

Part 1

The facilitator invites the group to find their favourite trail/path/route that means something to them and engage with the surroundings (trees, rocks, sounds).

Part 2

The facilitator invites the group to experiment with Mother Nature by hugging/sitting next to/touching the trunks of trees that attract them the most. Then, they are invited to find a rock and feel its texture, composure, and material. Can they reflect on it? The rock may be hard on the outside, but it gets warmer as you keep it in your hand. How do the characteristics of the rock add to its consistency and sturdiness?

Part 3

The facilitator guides the group to close their eyes, be silent and smell, hear and feel the air on their skin. Then the participants open their eyes and savour the magnitude of the simplicity and beauty nature offers.



03 ONE NOTE, ONE VOICE

Noelia Alonso, Ivi Toumasi & Attila Czenite

Overview

Stimulating senses of listening and seeing by singing together, to experience in different ways than the visual overstimulation of social media by connecting with the unconscious level, singing and bringing awareness on emotions. Building connections in real life, not virtual.

Objectives

- Raise the feeling of the power of creativity,
- experience connection,
- stimulate other senses than visual,
- explore alternative ways of expression,
- experience intimacy.



Tips for implementation

This tool can be used in the beginning, to bond.
It is suitable for all levels of languages.

Duration	30-40 minutes
Ideal venue	Indoors

Tool description

The participants stay (standing) in a circle. One of them starts making a sound (on a stable note). Then, one by one, they start tuning to this note by producing the same sound. This process continues by raising/lowering the volume until they all share the same tone and vibration. The group can repeat different notes in different rounds.

04 GAINSTREAM

Dimitrije Nešović & Andrea Barba

Overview

Many people use social media to post glimpses of their lives. But how many of those are worth the people's interest? How do these posts make us feel? In this project, the mainstream way of thinking will be analyzed and these activities will lead the participants to think about ways to differentiate while reflecting on its impact on mental health.

Objectives

- Notice the pattern that has been served by social media mechanisms,
- get the opportunity to express themselves in a creative and free way,
- break standard patterns.

Tips for implementation

Stressing the importance of mindfulness in this tool is crucial as it can raise the awareness of the participants on how they consume as well as its impact on our mental health. Pointing out its importance to daily life can add another important aspect.



Tool description

Part 1

The facilitators put 2 flip charts with drawings of two different Instagram posts. One of them has lots of likes and comments in a short amount of time, while the other has fewer likes and comments in a considerable amount of time. The participants are asked to write on sticky notes what they think each post is about and what they think about the comments. The outcome of the tool leads participants to reflect on social media patterns which build the way for the next tool.

Part 2

The facilitators show a board with many photos that are mostly related to mainstream thinking and just a few that differentiate. The participants look at the board for a while and are asked if they noticed something standing out and why. Then they are invited to reflect on how it impacted their sense of self-confidence and their mental health.

Part 3

Participants, split into groups of 3-5 people, are invited to use their creativity and the environment in which they are, to produce photos and videos that differentiate from the mainstream, based on what they learned before.

Materials	Flipcharts, sticky notes, pens, photos, mobile phones
Duration	1 hour and 30 minutes
Ideal venue	Either indoors or outdoors, but at a quiet place.

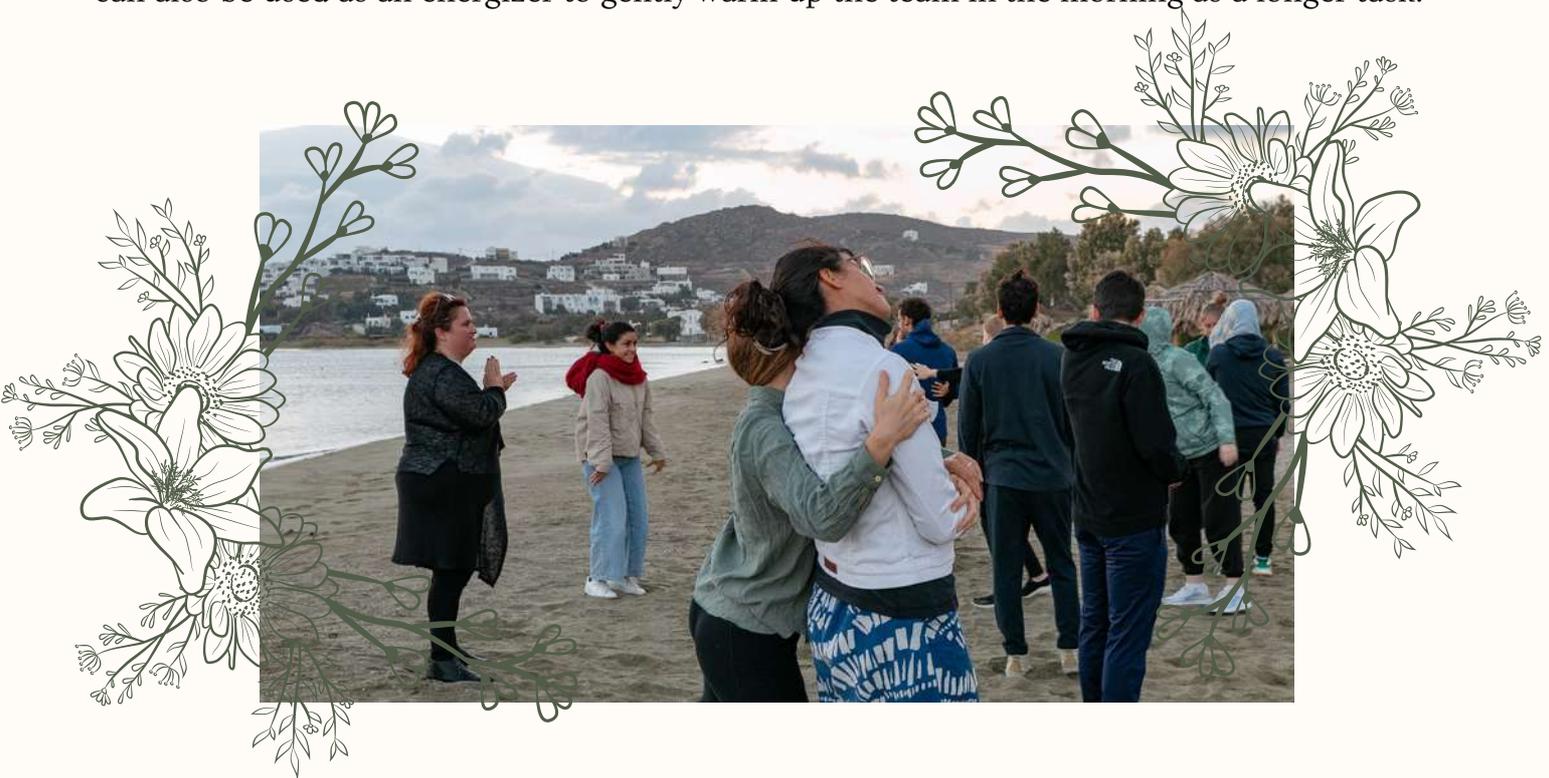


05 EVOLUTION GAME

Kim Kraus & Vasko Vasilov

Overview

The tool provides a playful connection with biology to understand how creatures developed. For the introduction, participants can go into nature and watch animals (birds, fish, cats). The tool can also be used as an energizer to gently warm up the team in the morning as a longer task.



Objectives

- Give participants an example of how to express themselves like an animal so that they can understand their movement.

Tips for implementation

You can actually add some levels and make the game longer, but also harder.

Duration	20 minutes
Ideal venue	Wide space (indoor/outdoor)

Tool description

The participants start visualizing the beginning of life. From the amoebae, life moved to more complex beings very slowly. The participants are invited to also start moving slowly and try to imitate living creatures. How does life feel inside an egg, then a chicken, a snake, a rabbit, a dolphin, a bird, and a monkey? How can the participants experience life like these creatures? What can be the positions, levels of movements, and communications? The group is invited to experiment, move according to the creature and invent their levels and positions.



06 OUR STORIES

Lu Cai & Saša Stanishikj

Overview

This tool attempts to build stories through different tellers, using elements they find.

Objectives

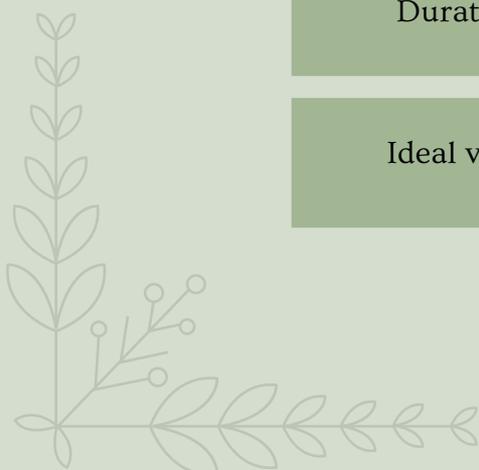
- Encourage participants to observe,
- discover and connect with the environment and nature,
- practice face-to-face interaction,
- focus on active listening, innovation, and teamwork.

Tips for implementation

Some guiding questions once the activity is concluded are:

- How were the elements/stories invented?
- Why did you choose these elements?
- What other inspirations and interpretations could you get from the same elements/choices?
- How does it feel to make a continuous storyline with other people's storylines?

Materials	Pencils, 18 blank cards, voice recorder.
Duration	60 minutes
Ideal venue	Nature



Tool description

Part 1

Participants wander off by themselves and search for 3 elements/objects/inspirations which they will draw on their 3 cards. They don't have to be exact objects, they could be abstract too. Then the participants draw their 3 choices on 3 separate cards. In total 18 cards should be created.

Part 2

Participants return and sit in a circle. All cards are collected and shuffled. One person starts, withdrawing 3 cards, and starts to tell a small story of 2 minutes, which contains the 3 cards. The next person withdraws another 3 cards and continues the story for another 2 minutes, and so on (the story can also be recorded).

Part 3

When everyone has told their part of the story, they are invited to discuss their experiences and reflect on them.



07 DICE GAME/RAINBOW GAME

Petra Mitić & Natasha Oswald

Overview

The activity should be done in groups, in laps of 6 consecutive days.

The objective is to explore the different faces of the dice/colors of the rainbow, where each of them will be associated with a category (physical activity, group work, beings, art, etc.), and every day they will be explored by the group in a personal way or with a team.

Objectives

- Connect with the group and with ourselves,
- challenge ourselves to go out of our comfort zone.

Tips for implementation

Colours cannot be repeated. Choose the moment of the day that fits your group best, we recommend starting with an energizer



Materials	A speaker (music), paper, pens, tape, a dice with color in each face, a yoga mat, a projector.
Duration	30-45 minutes
Ideal venue	Any according to the colours

Tool description

The activity starts when someone rolls the dice. If the side is:

Red: physical.

The group is invited to take a walk with music, have some yoga asanas and move.

E.g.: 30 min of Surya Namaskar

Orange: group work.

The group is separated in pairs. The participants start with their eyes closed and they need to choose three emotions and show it on their faces after a count to 3. When they open their eyes, they check the expressions of their partner and they win the game when both do the same facial expressions, then they change partners.

Yellow: connect with another being.

The participants are invited to find a natural being they relate to (3-4 things you have in common), then go back to the big group and have a common sharing. E.g.: I identify myself with a palm tree because I have strong roots that connect me with my family. I also see similarities because it may look fragile to some but it's really strong. Finally, I see myself as a bit dreamy and cloudy, like the head of the palm tree.

Green: art.

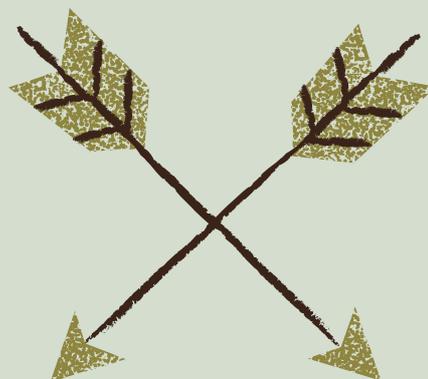
The group is separated into smaller ones of 5 people. Each group has 30 minutes to do a group drawing using the technique of the exquisite corpse. Then they go back to the big group and share the drawings and characteristics that they have chosen to be represented.

Blue: groupwork with movement.

The group is invited to go outside and separate into Travellers (5 participants) and Trees (the rest of the participants). Trees can't move from their place but should touch or interact with Travellers. Then, after 5 minutes, Travellers exchange their places with a tree and repeat, until everybody has been a Traveller.

Purple: technology.

Suggest a no-phone detox day and do this tool to connect with your group.



Tool description

World-café:

Split the big group into smaller groups of 4/5 people and assign each group a topic where all participants need to give their feedback/vision/ideas about the subject.

After 5 minutes, participants rotate until every group has given their input on all of the topics. Afterwards, they share with the big group. Every small group will present all the ideas written on the last topic they visited.

Topics:

- How can I improve my relationship with my peers without the use of technology?
- How much time do I spend per day on the phone and what could I do if I want to reduce that time?
- How can I spend more time with/for myself without using the phone?
- Which kind of feeling do you have after spending time on social media?
- How can you constructively use technology? Could you do without it?



08 EMPOWERING YOUR ANXIETY

Loretta Signore & Alexandros Kunni

Overview

Participants are asked to reflect on how anxiety feels, through different sensory triggers (hearing, touch, vision, smell or taste). Then, they are invited to identify the issue and how to solve it (by using their own power breath) and lastly to ask for help from outside (from the other participants), if needed.

We designed this tool because the majority of young people during the Covid pandemic lost the sense of human touch, they were constantly hearing bad news and spent a lot of their time on social media, thus, anxiety became a very prevalent feeling in their lives. Anxiety can cause people to have panic attacks and by breathing exercises you can deal with these episodes. It also helps to know how to deal with this situation and to whom to ask for help.

Objectives

- Help the participants understand what anxiety and panic attacks feel like and how to get through them,
- empower the participants' strengths,
- raise awareness about what the problem is and find ways to solve it.

Tips for implementation

This activity can trigger considerably the anxiety of the participants. The facilitators should inform the participants about it and be constantly observing them during the activity, in order to provide support when necessary (especially supporting young people with fewer opportunities).

Different music can be used as a background, to either escalate the sense of anxiety during the 1st and 3rd parts or to calm the mood in the 2nd and 4th parts.



Tool description

The group should divide into teams of 5 people (one person will be in the centre and the other ones around) taking turns being in the middle.

Part 1: Feel The Anxiety

One person in the middle will stay still in the centre and experience anxiety. The other four will be acting in 4 different ways every time.

1 minute - Acoustic trigger: the participants start shouting, and saying words which cause stress.

1 minute - Visual trigger: people will start to make angry faces, move abruptly and walk towards the person with negative emotions.

1 minute - Social media trigger: people will use their phones in order to pretend to ignore the person or write negative comments

1 minute - Touching trigger: people will move as in the rush hour and don't care about pushing each other to get through.

5 minutes: The person in the middle expresses how they felt.

Part 2: How do you react to anxiety

The 4 people will use different trigger methods simultaneously, to stress the person in the middle (same person as before in the middle), while this time one

of the five people in the circle, which will be pointed at the beginning of the activity, will come and protect/guide the person in the middle, in two different ways, to deal with their anxiety. One way will be by firmly hugging the person and making them feel secure and protected until they feel good. The other one will guide the person to breathe deeply together (inhale and exhale).

Part 3: How can you act and be more empowered during your anxiety episodes

This time, the people around the person in the middle will, again, simultaneously start stressing in the same way as before, but this time the person will act up and walk towards them and ask them to be silenced.

Part 4: Conclusion and Reflection

The participants reflect on how the experience was according to their role, and how it made them feel during each part. They discuss what they learned from the activity and how they can apply them to real-life situations.

09 RE-SPACE IT

Filipo Battaglia & Antigone Vatylioti

Overview

This tool addresses the debate of social inclusion of teenagers (15-18 years old) who live in rural areas.

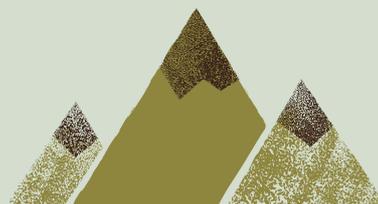
Objectives

- Give the participants the chance to express themselves,
- enhance their creativity,
- promote active citizenship in their own area,
- create a group/local community and reflect (and maybe change their feelings) about their rural area, marking the potential instead of the limits.

Tips for implementation

This can be adapted to any rural area context, where youngsters may not have the space to express themselves, like a local youth or community center.

Materials	Flipcharts, markers, tape, Pc, music, box
Duration	1st session: 4 hours, lunch break, 2nd session: 4 hours
Ideal venue	Outdoors in a spot at their village/community that they will chose



Activity description

Part 1

The facilitators introduce the topic of rural space and invite the participants to discuss the needs, opportunities and challenges they face. From the discussion, the participants are guided to debate about their situation in their rural area.

Part 2

Participants wander in their local area to find a place that they feel is “Their Place” in the area. They think of a message to spread or a common need to express and think of how to express this message in a creative way (photo, video, performance, graffiti, etc.) where everybody has their specific role.

Part 3

The participants decide which social network to use to show the result to the world and share it from their profiles to make it more visible.



10 RECONNECT

Karen Daniela Luppi Lucero & Annalena Croce

Overview

The tool is about reconnection with nature, oneself, and others through group work.

Objectives

- Show methods on how reconnecting with yourself and nature can be a tool for mental issues, interacting in a group and releasing emotions.

Materials	A phone or a camera per team A paper with the instructions per group. A long rope or 4 short ropes per group.
Duration	1,30h (90 minutes)
Ideal venue	Nature



Tool description

Part 1

The participants are invited to a name game in a circle with the concept of "packing suitcase", connected with the movement in a specific topic. E.g.: The first person says "I'm Anna the Apple", then does his/her desired movement. The second person says "This is Anna the Apple" and Anna's movement and "I am Daniela the Date" and their desired movement. The third person says "This is Anna the Apple (+movement), Daniela the Date (+movement) and I am Peter the Pear" (+movement). Then they walk in a circle around looking into each other's eyes, when the bell rings, they form groups of the 4 people closest to them.

Part 2

Every group receives a sheet with the following tasks:

1. Create a name and a symbol to identify your group with materials from nature.
2. Hug a tree for 2 minutes each.
3. Cover 2 people completely with natural material (feet to the throat).
4. Stand still, breathe deeply in and out and scream as loud as you can.
5. Sit on the ground and close your eyes, try to calm your thoughts, and breathe deeply in and out. Now sit still and listen to the sounds of nature.
6. Walk back together, but tie one leg to the leg of another person, so all 5 of you will be tied together.

Part 3

The participants are invited to build a circle and stand close to each other. Everyone closes their eyes and takes 1 minute to think about how they feel. After that, everyone can share 1 or 2 words that describe their feeling or the activity in the circle.



11 RETURN TO SENDER

Theodora Avraam & Ruxandra Berde

Overview

The tool is addressed to groups of teenagers (13 - 20 yrs old) with a tendency to aggressive speech and behaviour amongst each other. In the first part of the activity, they are encouraged to act in their default way while doing a group activity. This change in their perspective will later enable them to experience how it is to be in the shoes of others. Space for reflection will be offered and time for discussion on what they could do differently.

Objectives

- Raise awareness about the impact that our words and actions have on other people,
- discover other ways of interacting in a healthier manner with peers,
- correlate real-life behaviours with social media behaviours.



Tips for implementation

Don't tell the name of the activity to the participants.

Materials	Sticky paper (paper that has glue on one side), Something to write with
Duration	Approximately 1 hour
Ideal venue	At a park in the city/ near their school etc. (but can be adjusted to indoors as well)

Tool description

Part 1

The facilitator invites participants to re-enact in real life a photo of themselves that they would post on social media and say out loud a possible description of that photo. While each person presents their live photo, the rest are asked to write on small pieces of paper comments that they would make to this photo anonymously (both good and bad comments can be expected). The participants are asked to fold the papers and keep them until the presentations are over.

Part 2

Once, the presentations are completed, the participants give the pieces of paper to the presenters. Then, the participants find out that there was an error in the system, so the comments will be posted on their photos instead. So they stick the comments on their body. With the stickers on their body, in a specific time frame, they are asked to perform simple tasks that involve interaction with other people outside their group. For example: ask someone what is the time, ask for directions etc.

Part 3

When they return, everyone sits in a circle and discusses how they felt during the activity. How did the tickers affect their confidence when talking to other people? Which stickers would they remove from themselves and why? Then they are encouraged to remove what they want and replace it with how they would prefer to be perceived by the world.



12 STEP FOR FEELING

Marko Živković & Raquel Lopes

Overview

The tool is about youth connecting with each other in nature and feeling free to express all of their feelings, good or bad ones.



Objectives

- Show young people that they are not alone in their problems,
- see how their peers took the challenge of the pandemic and how that period made them feel,
- give them a chance to talk more openly about their feelings, achievements, and fears while coming in touch with someone who went through the same crisis but had a different experience.

Tips for implementation

Add more statements (feelings) to make the activity longer. Also, if you want, you can have a group discussion at the end of the activity to pair it with the next one.



Materials	One paper with statements (feelings) written on it.
Duration	Around 30 minutes
Ideal venue	Outdoors, nature (beach)

Tool description

Part 1:

The facilitator stays in the circle with the statements leading the activity. The participants stay around that person in the circle with closed eyes. The facilitator reads the statements one by one, while participants move forward or backwards if they agree with the read statement. Examples of the statements:

Move one step backwards, if during the pandemic you felt:

Happy

Motivated

Creative

Empowered

Loved

Or move one step forward
if during the pandemic you:

Felt sad

Felt angry

Felt scared

Felt abandoned

Felt lonely

Cried



Part 2:

After these statements, some of the participants will be close to the centre of the circle, and some of them will be at the very end. Now, the participants should make pairs to discuss their emotions, in a way that people who are inside the circle are choosing their pair from the people who are out of the circle, so they can discuss different feelings during the same period-pandemic. Attention is drawn to active listening. One person talks for 5 minutes without the second person interrupting them and then the other way around. After those 10 minutes, the participants mutually reflect for 5 minutes.

Part 3 (optional):

The facilitator can bring all the participants back to the circle and ask if someone wants to talk about their feelings/needs/challenges openly.

13 TOOLS FOR MENTAL HEALTH: MINDFULNESS, ATTENTION, EMPATHY

Olivia Avila & Dorel Butaciu

Overview

The tool provides the teenagers with simple and concrete tools to work on their mental health, focusing on attention and empathy. During the session, the participants will experience and use several exercises that would be easily used afterwards.

Objectives

- Introduce the concept of mindfulness,
- give the participants useful tools that they can use by themselves,
- make them reflect on attention and empathy.

Tips for implementation

A relaxed, friendly, semi-formal, informal tone will add a significant part to the experience

Materials	One toilet paper roll Guided meditation video and media support (phone, speaker)
Duration	90 minutes
Ideal venue	Preferably indoors, but not necessarily



Tool description

Part 1

The facilitator introduces the tool and provides a short guided meditation of connecting with themselves and grounding.

Part 2

Deep listening is where the participants will either talk or listen for 5 mins about something they love or are passionate about. Then in pairs, they reflect on if it was hard to pay attention, where their attention is, how young people pay attention in general, and how they felt.

Part 3

A participant reflects on their week about what their challenges and worries are while the other participants talk about how they feel when they listen to the other person and the connection they feel with the other person. In the end, the first participant is asked how they feel.





TESTIMONIALS



"This project has been so therapeutic for me that I can already feel the change in my body, mind and soul. Amazing, unique, powerful... The best project I've participated in, definitely."

O.A.



"The wind doesn't stop. Neither do I, neither do we."

V.V.

"The "Empower you Nature" Training Course was a life-changing experience. It helped me empower my nature by valuing the nature that is around us. I feel connected with myself more than ever and I have also learned how to deal in a better way with everything that comes through my life."

A.A.



"My participation in the TC "Empower your Nature" was an amazing transformative experience! I got inspired by 3 powerful trainers and met some lovely people. It was a very well-designed program with complexity, a variety of activities, and thoughtful adaptations to meet the needs of the group."

A.V.



"This training gave me a beautiful map to get closer to myself and a guide to love myself more."

A.C.

"For me, this experience has been significant since I have learned to understand certain things from a vision that I did not have before."

N.A.

"It made me realise how much I needed and how much I missed parts of myself. Also, it reminded me that I have to nurture these facets, because as a flower, they dry out if not watered."

R.B.



"The experience was really rewarding and healing for me. I've learned how to be more confident with myself and I feel more individual security and empowerment than when I came here."

K.L.

"Inspirational.
Can be lifechanging."

S.S.



"It was amazing to be in touch with myself and nature at the same time."

D.N.



"I loved this empowering week. Through this TC, I uplifted my way of feeling and understanding my inner nature! It showed me many ways on how to improve and discuss mental health including being in nature!."

R.L.

"This experience was life changing. We have been guided from exceptional guides to explore our inner self. It was intense and beautiful. I go back to my country with something more to share in my community."

L.S.

"An intense experience, deep, even tiring at times, because it touches very intimate strings and requires a certain level of awareness. I am pleased to have had the opportunity to do so."

F.B.



"Even though I didn't have this kind of connection back in my country the guides here made every new thing welcoming and us feel accepted at every moment. Thanks for everything!"

M.Z.



"Very organized, profesional and artistic."

A.C.



"Through this project, I could understand and connect nature and my body better and get to know myself from a new point of view. The venue was amazing and the trainers were caring and guided through an amazing Journey on the Greek island of Tinos."

K.K.

"In a few days, a group of strangers transform into a small community that got to explore different parts of our emotions and feelings using nature as our guide into this internal/external process."

N.O.



"Empowering experience for me. The title embodies everything that I have been through, connecting with nature, my nature, and feeling its force. I am leaving keeping all the people that have touched me in my heart, being enriched by their way of being, capacity, and drive to change the worlds they live in and others."

D.B.

"This is one of the most amazing and empowering projects I've ever been in. The methodology and the way that the facilitators guided our experience were very healthy and beautiful. Now I feel more confident and at peace with my own skin."

B.Z.K.



"This course enabled me to discover aspects of myself I didn't know existed. I was open to receiving new information, connecting, to explore. Thanks to the gentle mastery of the trainers I got a glimpse of how it is possible to navigate in this world being bold and humble at the same time, playful, authentic, and artistic. To believe that so much is yet to be discovered."

D. A.

"Come and be ready to let go and blown away by this experience and you will be definitely rewarded in every best possible way."

A.K.



"It has been a powerful and empowering journey. There are moments when I laugh, moments when I cry, but more moments when I smile from my heart. It's a journey of discovering, recognizing, connecting, and growing. I hope I can carry the spirit and skills on in my life and pass them along to others."

L.C.



"These experiences are life-changing on many different levels. The knowledge that is shared is gold and the people and cultures you meet are a big touch of colour in one own's life!"

A.B.

"I've met a lot of amazing people and had a good time with them."

P.M.



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