

# POCKET GUIDE ON LIFE BALANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH

## HOW ARE YOU REALLY?



# INTRODUCTION

When was the last time you asked yourself “How are you?”

Do you often lack time for walking?

When was the last time you inhaled fresh air?

Do you easily get irritated over small things?

How often do you work late because of something urgent?

These questions might resonate with you, a youth worker who dedicates themselves to helping others. As a youth worker, you might have a deep understanding of these topics, but what if we told you there's more to explore?

In the captivating journey of the Erasmus+ project "How Are You, Really?", our project team embarked on a two-week exploration across France and Austria. This expedition was driven by a diverse group of individuals, hailing from different corners of the world with unique personal experiences and cultural backgrounds, all converging to seek answers to these very questions.

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# I. LIFE BALANCE

Have you spent enough quality time with your loved ones lately? Have you had a good time with your friends recently? Are you getting enough sleep and eating well? Do you have time to do sports? Have you done anything recently that will contribute to people you don't know?

If your answer is “yes” to all these questions, you are one of the few who have indeed managed to balance their lives.

**Life balance** is a state in which a person harmoniously prioritizes different spheres of life such as career, finances, family, partner relationship, personal growth, recreation, health, and spiritual practices related to life meaning. When we think of life balance, we think of work, family, and life balance. However, we see that the Y generation takes care of themselves and their family and work and tries to spend time on their hobbies, personal care, and development. From this point of view, we can say that life balance is about balancing our work, family, and us.



# TIPS TO HELP YOU FIND LIFE BALANCE



- Take a step back to assess your situation. Know who you are, and what your values are.
- Set priorities and create boundaries.
- Create daily routines including hobbies, work, relationships and health.
- Take care of your health (enough sleep, time for exercising, relaxation, healthy eating).
- Learn to say NO.
- Let things go and try not to overthink.
- Plan activities for your personal time.
- Separate your work life from your personal life (don't use your professional mobile phone or laptop at home, don't answer a phone call on your holiday).
- Receive as well as give to people around you.
- Maintain positive family relationships and friendships.
- Learn to manage stress and time effectively.
- Take action and work on things meaningful to you.
- Find out what makes you happy and set goals.



# TOOLS AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES



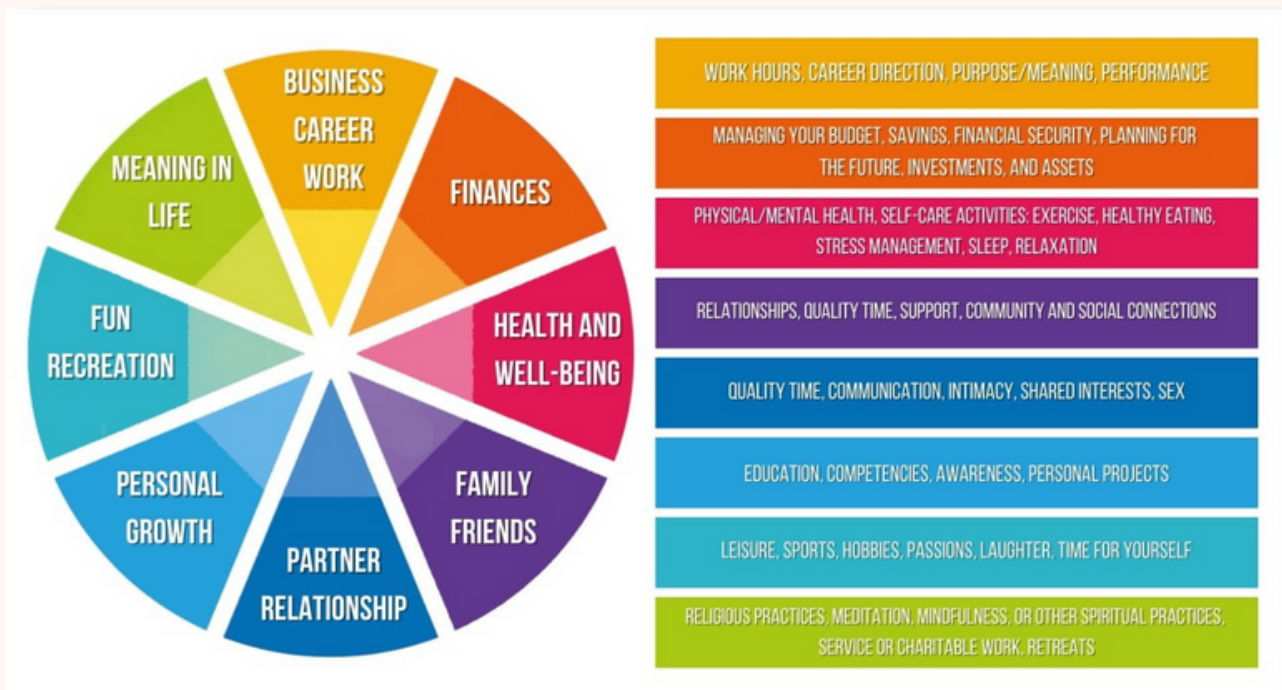
## The Wheel of Life

**Aim:** to understand how balanced or fulfilled participants' lives are at this moment.

**Duration:** 30 min

**Steps:**

1. Make your own wheel following this example:



Graphics by Vitalii Volodchenko

2. Assign each category a mark on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being the least attention and 10 being the highest attention or fulfilled.

3. Different areas of your life require different amounts of attention, specifically in various seasons. In other words, **achieving a balanced life doesn't have to mean that you're giving an equal amount of focus to each category.**

4. Consider what your ideal attention level is for each category and then plot those scores on your wheel of life in a different colour.

**Reflection:** Consider what your ideal attention level is for each category and then plot those scores on your wheel of life in a different colour. Go through each category and assess how much attention you're currently devoting to it.



# Ikigai

**Aim:** to find a better picture of your purpose in life (IKIGAI)

What is “IKIGAI”? The word Ikigai has Japanese origins and means “reason for being” (“IKI”=Life “GAI”= Value or Worth). It’s considered a useful tool to find a better picture of your purpose in life.

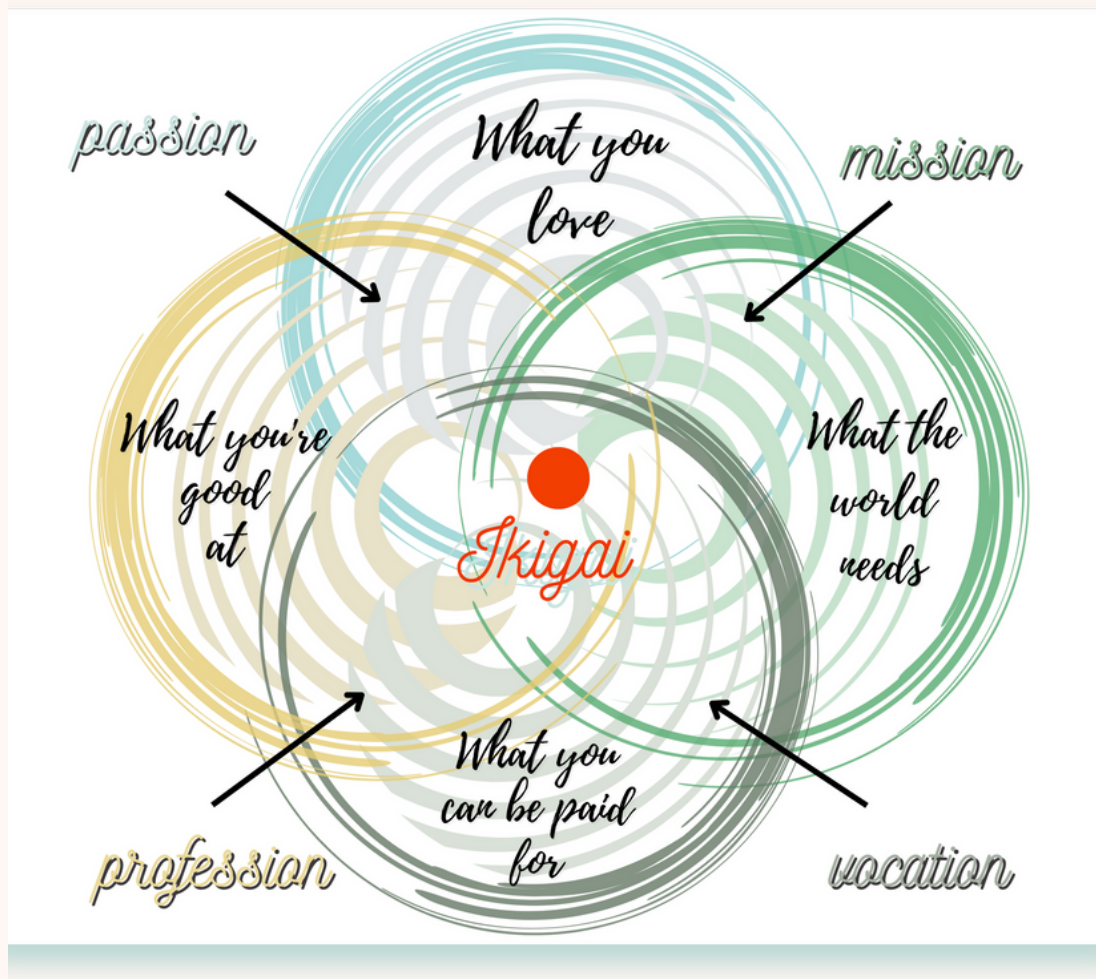
## Steps:

1. Ask yourself the following questions

What do you <b>really love</b> ?	What are you <b>good at</b> ?
- What is the activity you are never bored of?- Are you emotionally connected with your job/hobby?	- What do people seek your help for?- Are you/Do you want to be an expert at what you do?
What does the world <b>need</b> ?	What can you be <b>paid for</b> ?
- Are you solving any social, economic, or environmental issues?- Will your work/hobby still be valuable in 10, 20, 50 years?	- Have other people made a career out of the same activity? - What is the activity that allows you/or could allow you to live well (feed yourself, have a roof over your head, etc.)?



2. Map out your answers on the following diagram



3. Analyse your answers and check if you can find common ground in the 4 main sections. The things that are common to all 4 sections will be your IKIGAI.

4. Finding your Ikigai is a process, you can repeat this exercise as many times as you like also because your Ikigai can change throughout your life.

**Reflections:** What did you discover about yourself while exploring the four elements of IKIGAI (passion, mission, vocation, and profession)? Did any new insights or connections arise? How does having a clear understanding of your IKIGAI impact your overall well-being and satisfaction in life?

# 6 human needs

**Aim:** The 6 human needs help you to understand your priorities in life and it can help you face the areas in which you need to improve in a way.

**Duration:** 30 min

## Steps:

**1. Introduce 6 human needs that** every healthy person needs to live a fulfilled life.

- The need for closeness with others, connections, love, intimacy
- The need for being significant, important, special
- The need for certainty and safety
- The need for freedom, challenges, uncertainty (unknown)
- The need for growth in an intellectual and spiritual way
- The need for contribution, giving, “self-sacrificing”

2. Think about in your current period of life, which needs are the most and least important? Allocate the needs in your order!

3. **Circle the lack of needs** in your **work and studies!** Think about or write down why you think this is so. Can you change anything about the situation?

4. **Underline the needs** that you feel are not being met in your **private life and relationships!** Think about or write down why you think this is so. Can you change anything about the situation?

**Reflection:** Upon reflecting on the 6 human needs, which needs resonate with you the most? How do these needs currently manifest in your life, and what impact do they have on your overall well-being and fulfilment?

# The 7 primary areas in life and our beliefs

**Aim:** To foster self-reflection and promote a healthy and realistic mindset, allowing for personal growth and the cultivation of more empowering beliefs.

Beliefs are thoughts that have been stuck in your mind over the years, through negative experiences. Beliefs can be like "I'm not enough", "I can't trust anyone", or "The world is unfair".

The 7 areas are:

- family
- religion, spirituality
- finances
- mental/emotional
- career
- physical
- social

## Steps:

1. Write down some negative core beliefs that you often repeat to yourself!
2. Make them think through why these beliefs are not true.
3. Guide your beliefs through the 7 basic areas of life, and for each area write an example of why your belief is not true! For example: "I can't trust anyone" - *mental/emotional: It is not true because I can trust my intuition and I give myself a safe presence to feel all my emotions and go through them. I also have friends who have my back and professionals who can help me.*

P.S. We would like to make sure that you understand that **changing perspective is not toxic positivity**. Your ego always wants to protect you so it triggers you with bad experiences or traumas. However every new situation is different and you should always be open to new people, ideas, and work. It can help you set more healthy and realistic boundaries in your personal and working life too.

**Reflection:** Upon challenging these negative beliefs and exploring why they are not true, what insights or realizations did you have? How did this process of questioning and examining your beliefs help you gain a different perspective on yourself and the world around you?

# 8 areas of Self-Care

**Aim:** To guide individuals in cultivating a holistic and balanced approach to Self-Care and personal development and promote overall well-being.

**Duration:** 90 minutes



Source: <https://www.gopivotsolutions.com/the-8-dimensions-of-self-care/>

## Steps:

1. Print this picture and cut it in a circle.
2. Gather in a circle in several teams of at least eight people and place an arrow in the centre of the image.
3. Have all the people spin it in turn, and when it stops, have the ball spinner talk about the area where the ball is resting and give specific and personal examples of how they care about themselves.
4. Present the most unusual, exciting answers and solutions as a presentation paper or spreadsheet. Have a group discussion and share your thoughts on the 8 areas of personal care in order of personal importance and the advice they will try in the future.

## Reflection:

What is your personal order of importance of these eight areas of self-care?  
What pieces of advice/solutions will you try out in the future?

# II. STRESS

**Stress** is a common feeling for everyone on our planet. We can feel it when we are under pressure, overwhelmed, or unable to cope with the situation. But it's fair to say that our body also feels stress when we are happy and surprised. A small amount of temporary stress can motivate us, activate self-potential, and help us. Constant stress leads to dangerous changes in our body, because of the release of hormones, one of which is cortisol. Cortisol affects the cardiovascular system, respiratory system, immune system, reproductive system, and other systems, but it also affects the mental state.



# How does stress affect the body?

## HOW STRESS AFFECTS THE BODY

### BRAIN

Difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression, irritability, mood, mind fog

### CARDIOVASCULAR

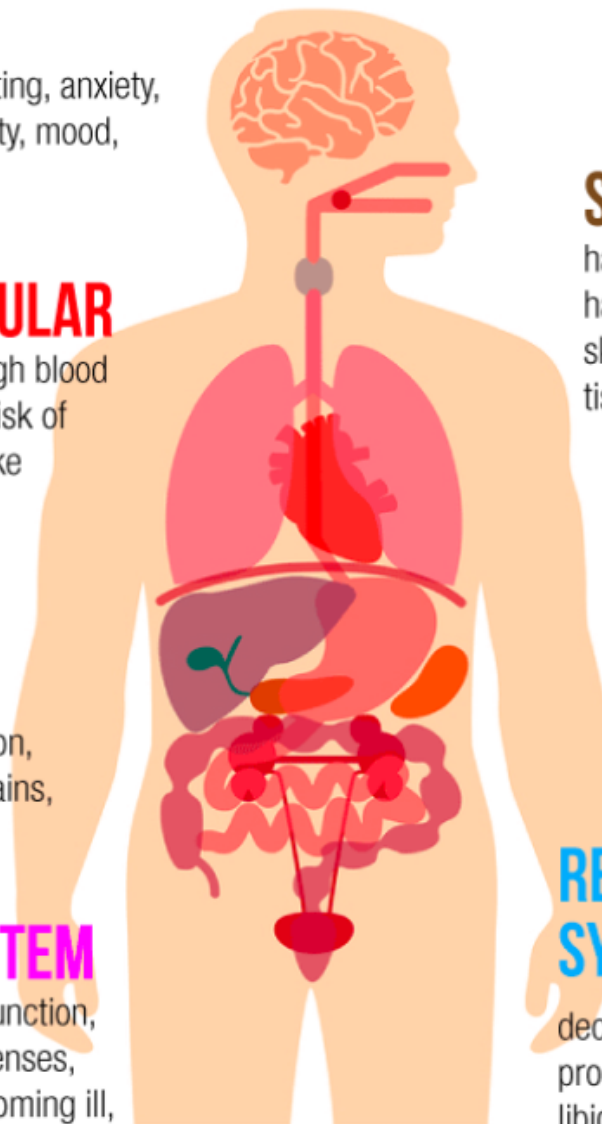
higher cholesterol, high blood pressure, increased risk of heart attack and stroke

### JOINTS AND MUSCLES

increased inflammation, tension, aches and pains, muscle tightness

### IMMUNE SYSTEM

decreased immune function, lowered immune defenses, increased risk of becoming ill, increase in recovery time



### SKIN

hair loss, dull/brittle hair, brittle nails, dry skin, acne, delayed tissue repair

### GUT

nutrient absorption, diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, bloating, pain and discomfort

### REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

decreased hormone production, decrease in libido, increase in PMS symptoms



# How does stress affect other areas?



## Examples of stress sources:

- Time pressure
- Toxic people
- Lack of organisation
- Fear of abandonment
- Injustice
- Performance pressure
- Harsh, attacking comments
- Misunderstanding
- Bad news
- Unpredictable things
- Constant life-threatening situations (war)
- Traumatic experience
- Procrastination
- Overthinking
- Dealing with hard choices
- Big responsibility

## Tips for dealing with stress

- Take a shower
- Practice sports (yoga, swimming, dancing..)
- Connect to nature
- Set intentions
- Develop positive self-talk
- Filter out the content you watch on social media
- Reduce screen time
- Hang out with the people you like
- Have a laugh
- Make your “to do list”/action plan
- Be around animals
- Eat quality food
- Drink water
- Meditate
- Express gratitude
- Focus on breathing
- Get proper sleep
- Take a walk (a sensory walk)
- Make time for leisure
- Get a hug from a loved one
- Try aromatherapy
- Do artwork
- Read a book
- Never compare yourself to others
- Practice journaling
- Watch movies, pictures of family & friends
- Listen to music
- Cry or scream
- Communicate with the loved ones
- Go shopping

# TOOLS AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES



## The 4:6 breathing technique

**Aim:** To decrease the stress level.

**Duration:** 15 min

### Steps:

1. Breathe in very slowly (inhale) to a count of 4 into your belly and breathe out (exhale) to a count of 6.
2. Repeat this for 5 min and you will notice your muscles start to relax and your thoughts start to calm down. You will experience more clarity.
3. By controlling your breathing and your diaphragm you stimulate your phrenic nerve and turn off the fight or flight response in your body.

(source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZLsr64RIJE>)

# III. TIME MANAGEMENT

Time is something that we have as a limited source. Management means planning and taking control of something to make it more effective and productive. When it comes to “**time management**”, it is our own responsibility to take care of it. Work-life balance comes through time management.



# TIPS ON TIME MANAGEMENT



- Make a to-do list
- Divide your time into parts
- Make a list of your priorities
- Plan/Schedule your time
- Calculate your time apart from work and study
- Plan your next day
- Define your time stealers:
  - Social media, overthinking, procrastination, oversleeping, toxic people, being scattered, unhealthy habits, commuting (daily), administrative work, unexpected events/disruptors, chores, etc.
- Set reminders of all your tasks
- Create a daily planner
  - You may use some applications for that:
    - <https://monday.com/>
    - <https://www.notion.so/>
- Give each task a time limit
- Block out distractions
- Establish routines and make a list of them
- Delegate your responsibilities
- Divide a big task into smaller parts (make smaller pieces of a big cake)
- Set goals
- Say No!

# TOOLS AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES



## Eisenhower Matrix or 4Ds method

**Aim:** to prioritize tasks and activities based on their importance and urgency, allowing individuals to effectively manage their time and focus on the most critical and impactful actions.

### Steps:

List all your tasks and activities you need to complete.

Determine the importance and urgency of each task

Categorize tasks into four quadrants based on their importance and urgency

### The Eisenhower Decision Matrix



Source: <https://medium.com/@iqra.amjad128/eisenhower-matrix-da6544ad6788>

# POMODORO method

**Aim:** To manage your time more efficiently by breaking tasks into manageable intervals



## Steps:

1. Decide what you need to complete
2. Set the timer for 25 min
3. Work on your task until the timer rings
4. Take a short break (5 mins)
5. Repeat the steps 4 times and then get a longer break (30 min).

Source: <https://science.howstuffworks.com/life/inside-the-mind/human-brain/pomodoro-technique.htm>



# 24 hours a day: The time of Your Life Exercise

**Aim:** To increase awareness of how individuals allocate their time throughout the day

**Duration:** 15 min

## Steps:

1. How long do you spend doing each activity? Allocate your time to the topics below.



- Bathroom (Self-care): ... min/hours
- Kitchen (cooking/ eating): ... min/hours
- Commuting:
- Screen Time:
- Study:
- Work:

2. Think about it. In the end how much time do you have left in your day? Do you think it is efficient time management? How can you manage it better?

# \$86,400 EXERCISE

**Aim:** to improve time management and organisational skills both at work and in their personal lives.

**Duration:** 15 min

## Steps:

1. Tell participants that they have \$86,400.00 to spend any way they wish. The only restriction is that they cannot bank any money and whatever they do not use, is lost.
2. They need to map out how they will spend the \$86,400.00 and write it down.
3. Invite them plenary to discuss why and how they spent the money the way they did.
4. Explain that 86400 is the number of seconds we have each day and that as often as possible they should consider spending their time on things that are important to them as they did with their money.

# IV. SETTING BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are some invisible lines that define acceptable behaviour for a person. There are different types of boundaries, for example: physical boundaries, emotional boundaries, temporal boundaries, sexual boundaries, intellectual boundaries, material boundaries...

**Setting boundaries** is a form of self-care; prevention of mental health problems; preventing burnout, improving relationships, reducing stress, improving your ability to take care of yourself, etc.



# TIPS FOR SETTING THE BOUNDARIES



- Think about what is acceptable and what isn't for yourself and set your limits.
- Think about what you value and set your values.
- Think about what you want in this life and set your goals.
- Listen to your feelings and take them into consideration.
- Respect yourself first and prioritise your needs.
- Respect others and don't take actions that are self-serving and disadvantageous to others.
- If you don't want to be involved in a decision, say "no" firmly but respectfully.
- Be the detective of your own psychology.
- Start with small steps and build your boundaries slowly.
- Be consistent with your boundaries.
- Communicate with others to highlight your boundaries.
- Appreciate the boundaries of other people.

*Cited by [TherapistAid.com](https://www.therapistaid.com) & [PsychCentral](https://www.psychcentral.com)*

# TOOLS AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES



## Setting Boundaries

**Aim:** to raise awareness about the importance of setting healthy boundaries for mental health and healthy interpersonal relationships. Enhance communication skills used to set boundaries

**Duration:** 60 min

**Materials:** 4 papers, pencils

### Steps:

1. Facilitator shortly defines the term boundaries and explains the connection with mental health
2. Divide participants into 4 groups
3. Explain the tasks:
  - Find one word that describes the importance of setting boundaries
  - Draw an example of healthy and unhealthy boundaries (association)
  - Prepare a short sketch (play) where you show how to use communication skills in setting boundaries
4. Presentation of the outcomes prepared by each group
5. Reflection on the whole session, including the following questions:
  - What do you think about the activity?
  - Why setting boundaries is hard sometimes?
  - How did you feel setting boundaries?

# Nonviolent Communication

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) was developed by clinical psychologist M. Rosenberg. The goal is that during communication we act like a giraffe. The giraffe has the biggest heart of the animals, this represents “giving from the heart”. Doing everything from the heart is a good start to communicating in a healthy way. The opposite is the behaviour of the jackal. Jackals are demanding, they judge, criticize, compare, and make assumptions. A giraffe uses “I” statements and empathy towards others and themselves. They are respectful and kind.

NVC has 4 steps:

1. **Observations** – What I observe (see, hear, remember, imagine)
2. **Feelings** – How I feel (emotions, sensations, not thoughts)
3. **Needs** – What I need or value (rather than a preference or a specific action)
4. **Requests** – Clearly requesting would enrich my life without being demanding.  
The concrete actions I would like to take.

Defining feelings and needs are the most difficult, so there are some examples of them:

- Feelings when your needs are not satisfied: disappointed, shocked, disturbed, numb, furious, panicked, worried, guilty, ashamed, sensitive, anxious, insecure
- The needs can be: affection, closeness, intimacy, acceptance, security, stability, trust, safety, harmony, freedom, space, clarity

For practising Non-Violent Communication you can complete the following steps:

1. Think of a person that behaves disrespectfully towards you or with whom you have had a conflict recently that you still cannot resolve.
2. Make a clear observation. It should always be a fact. For example: When I see/hear you... (doing something)
3. Express what you were feeling in that situation, for example: I feel... (use emotions)
4. State needs based on those feelings, for example: ... because I need/value...
5. Create a clear request for that person. For example: So would you be willing to... (always request action not a feeling) P.S.: you must accept a “no” too as an answer to your request!)

# V. MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a state of “being in the moment”. It means noticing the moment you live through and the things happening to you as they are. Mindfulness is being aware of your body, thoughts, feelings or actions at the present moment and accepting them without any judgment.





# TIPS FOR MINDFULNESS



- Breathe deeply, stay present and conscious
- Focus on one task at a time
- Embrace gratitude daily
- Observe thoughts without judgment
- Engage senses at the moment
- Practice regular meditation (ex. Body scan)
- Prioritize self-care routines (ex. drawing and colouring)
- Cultivate mindful eating habits
- Try out mindful moving, walking or running (ex. sensory walk)
- Disconnect from screens mindfully
- Practice compassion, starting with yourself

# TOOLS AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES



- **Mindful eating**

Let's transform a boring dinner into a journey. Try to pay attention to the food you eat - smells, sounds, and textures. You are a Michelin Guide inspector - truly savour dishes, bit by bit, without any judgment.

- **Journaling your thoughts**

Write down your thoughts and feelings. It's only your book, or, maybe, a poem? Don't choose perfect words and strictly edit every paragraph. Let it go, and pour everything on the white paper. Writing down can help you understand yourself better.

- **Enough 'me' time**

Create a perfect DATE with yourself! Will it be a cake in the favourite cafe or a yoga session? A 2-hour walk around the city or a massage? Think about the things that make you happy, create a plan for the date, wear comfortably as you feel today, etc.

- **Inner child**

We all have that noisy funny open kid inside! What does s/he want? Wearing a pinky furry hat, and sparkling makeup for the evening, karaoke night with friends, or dancing to Shakira songs? Pamper yourself, hug tightly, and love as never before.

# Art therapy: finger-painting

**Aim:** To help reconnect with the childish part, the so-called 'inner child'

**Duration:** 60 min

## Steps:

1. Prepare some paint (acrylic, watercolours, gouache - keep in mind that acrylics may not wash off your clothes), paper, water and tissues.
2. Tell participants to take some time to sit in silence for a minute or two, and close their eyes. Feel sensations in their body, and concentrate on emotions that they are experiencing at the moment.
3. When they feel connected to themselves - it's time to deep paint. Do not overthink it, and do not try to come up with something: you're already good enough at it. Just paint some lines, bubbles, shapes, whatever you feel like. You can paint in silence or play some light background music. Make it fun, enjoy yourself. When you're done painting, take a moment to reflect on the final picture. Exchange with your peers if you've painted in a group.

There is no limit to expression in this activity, you can do it individually or in a group, and no special skills are needed. Our advice is not to waste time and experience the joy of this fun and beneficial activity!

**Reflection:** what were your feelings, thoughts, and insights while doing the activity?

# VAKOG for Mindfulness

**Aim:** To cultivate mindfulness and present-moment awareness through engaging the senses in nature.

## Steps:

1. Go to nature or imagine you are in a specific place in nature.
2. Activate various senses by asking yourself the following questions:

## Visual

- Look around you. What do you see?
- Is it bright or dark?
- What are the shapes that you see? Are they strong or gentle?
- Can you see humans? Or human-made things?
- Is there water nearby? Can you see reflections?
- Where is the light coming from? Is it reflecting? Is it bright or gloomy?

## Auditory

- Listen to the sounds around you! Are they louder or more silent?
- Are they present all the time or just appearing sometimes?
- Which animals can you hear? Listen about you?
- Is the wind affecting the sound in the forest?
- Can you hear your heartbeat? Or is your blood flowing through your ears?
- Can you hear insects? Where are they located?

## Kinesthetic

- Can you feel the ground? Is it soft or stable?
- Can you feel the temperature? Is there sunlight falling on your skin? Can you feel the heat?
- What about the wind? Can you feel it on your face, between your hair, on your clothes? Is it warm or refreshing?
- How does this air feel inside your nose or inside your mouth?
- Can you feel the humidity in the air?
- Do you like it?



## Olfactory

- Try to get your surroundings just by smelling.
- Can you smell plants around you? Are there flowers, trees, grass or moss?
- Can you smell some essential oils you are used to having at home?
- Do you like it?

## Gustatory

- What about your taste? Can you taste the air while breathing? Is it salty? Or rich in humidity? Can you smell the rain? Is it present or did it rain a few hours ago?
- Can you smell the petrichor?
- Can you feel the taste of fruits and flowers around you?
- Do you like it?

3. Welcome to the pace! Choose your three most memorable questions from above and try to think about them in the next 5 minutes in silence!

**Reflection:** How did the activity enhance your ability to be present in the moment? Did it deepen your mindfulness experience? Which sensory area (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, gustatory) resonated with you the most during the activity?

# VI. MENTAL HEALTH

"Being able to be your true self is one of the strongest components of good mental health" Laura Fogel Mersy, n.d.

## "What is mental health?"

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.



# TOOLS AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES



**Name:** Dicebreaker

**Aim:** To help a participant form a new team, connect people from different backgrounds, and create a safe space for new members.

**Duration:** 20-30 minutes

## Steps:

1. Divide the whole group into smaller groups. Give a set of questions to each group.
2. In each group, participants will roll the dice. (you can find an online dice here <https://freeonlinedice.com/> )
3. Read the questions (you can find examples here: <https://blog.tcea.org/dicebreakers-debrief-activity-templates/> <https://boompop.com/template/dicebreakers>) in order, based on which number the person rolls.
4. Remember that participants can always skip the question that they suppose is uncomfortable to answer.

**Reflection:** Think about the questions you found difficult to answer. Why was that so? Share your feelings after the game: was it un/comfortable for you?



**Name:** Below the surface - who is that person...

**Aim:** To allow participants to think about themselves and the people around them - What are their roles in their life?

**Duration:** 15-30 min

**Steps:**

1. Prepare questions about the participants and about people around them based on the role in their life. These questions should be open end ones (not yes/no questions). Examples:
  - Who are you right now?
  - Who inspires you?
  - Who has done harm to you?
2. Divide them into small groups (3-4 people).
3. Give some questions to each group to discuss.
4. Tell them to answer honestly but go as deep as they feel comfortable with the topic (they can skip a question).
5. If you want to make this activity longer, the groups can exchange questions and discuss the new ones.

**Reflection:**

How did you feel about answering these questions? Are there any questions that made you uncomfortable? Did you answer it or skip it?

## Name: Fish Bowl Discussion

**Aim:** To facilitate an open and inclusive conversation where participants can deeply explore a topic of interest

**Duration:** 30-60 min

### Steps:



Source: Fishbowl with method: Discuss with all | C<sup>3</sup>EIMZEIT ([ceimzeit.de](http://ceimzeit.de))

1. **Define a debatable topic** (ex. What is the impact of social media on youth's Mental Health?)
2. **Select** a small group of active participants and a larger group of observers.
3. **Arrange the seating** in a fishbowl formation as shown in the picture.
4. **Explain the rules.** These rules may include guidelines on respectful communication, time limits for speaking, and any specific format you want to follow (e.g., opening statements, rebuttals, etc.).
5. **Start with opening statements** from active participants in the inner circle.
6. **Engage** in a discussion, addressing arguments, counterarguments, and evidence.
7. **Rotate participants:** After a certain amount of time, you can rotate participants between the inner and outer circles so that everybody can be involved in the debate.
8. **Moderate** the debate, ensuring focus and respectful engagement.
9. **Conclude the debate:** Once sufficient time has been allocated for discussion, bring the debate to a close.
10. **Reflect and discuss:** After the debate, facilitate a reflection session where participants can share their thoughts and experiences.

### Reflection:

How has the discussion influenced your understanding of the topic? Did it challenge any preconceived notions or expand your perspective? What were the key insights or arguments presented?

## Name: Financial Literacy and Mental Health

**Aim:** To support managing your money effectively, reduce financial stress, and achieve long-term financial stability.

**Duration:** 90 min

### Steps:

1. Introduce the 3 ways of treating money (personal financial management, budgeting, investing)
2. Divide the participants into groups to discuss the skills they need to master in each area
3. Introduce the 7 levels of wealth (1. Dependence, 2. Survival, 3. Stability, 4. Safety, 5. Independence, 6. Freedom, 7. Abundance). Ask participants to think about which level they are now.
4. Present the basic 50/30/20 budget rule which recommends putting 50% of your money on needs (basic necessities), 30% on flexible spending (hobbies, travel, entertainment) and 20% toward emergencies or long-term expenses.



Source:CPFB | 8 essential budgeting tips for young adults



5. Presents the SMART method. Ask participants to set their financial goals



Source:CPFB | 8 essential budgeting tips for young adults

### Reflection:

What is your personal attitude towards money? Has it changed over time?

How are your finances related to your personal mental health?

What actions would you need to take steps forward in the 7 levels of wealth?

# VII. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

**Emotional intelligence** (EI onwards) is most often defined as the ability to perceive, use, understand, manage, and handle emotions. People with high emotional intelligence can recognize their own emotions and those of others, use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour, discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, and adjust emotions to adapt to environments.



# TOOLS AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES



## Museum of Emotions

**Aim:** To recognize their own emotions and those of others

**Duration:** 30 min

### Steps:

1. Ask participants to write their emotions on a piece of paper and place it face down on the table.
2. When everyone does so, ask them to place a hand on the part of the body where they feel the sensation of this emotion appearing.
3. Take these papers and mix them.
4. Divide them into pairs, one person is the Curator of the museum, who shapes the Exponate according to the emotions received from the facilitator.
5. The rest of the group needs to guess what emotion they see.
6. Debrief how it was for them to recognize their own emotions and those of others, etc.

# Mixed model by Daniel Goleman

The mixed model of EI, developed by Daniel Goleman, is a framework that describes emotional intelligence as a combination of personal and social competencies. The model consists of five main components:

1. Emotional self-awareness
2. Self-regulation
3. Motivation
4. Recognizing emotions in others/Empathy
5. Handling Relationships/Social skills

**Name:** Goleman's model

**Aim:** To increase knowledge about Goleman's mixed model of intelligence and to exchange different methods.

**Duration:** 45 min

**Steps:**

1. Present the components of the model.
2. Divide participants into 5 groups
3. Ask them to develop a short activity which will support young people in developing these 5 areas.
4. Each group present what they developed
5. Try out some of the activities that have been developed
6. Give feedback to them on the activity ideas.

**Reflection:**

How has your understanding of Goleman's mixed model of emotional intelligence (EI) evolved through this activity? What insights or observations did you notice during the presentation of different groups?

# VIII. OTHER

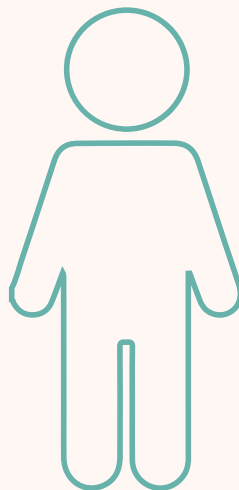
**Name:** The Little Person

**Aim:** to increase introspection and self-knowledge

**Duration:** 15 min

## Steps:

1. Give each participant a sheet of paper with a silhouette drawn on it, they need to imagine that you are this little person.



2. Respond to the following questions:

- [By pointing to the head] What do you think about yourself? (your personality, your qualities, your defaults)
- [By pointing to the heart] What do you feel about yourself? (The feelings you have for you)
- [By pointing to the hand] What do you do for yourself? (The action you do only for you)
- [By pointing to the feet] How far do you want your feet to take you?

**Reflection:** How did this exercise deepen your understanding of yourself? What did you discover about your self-perception, emotions, self-care practices, and aspirations?



## **Name: Gratitude Session**

**Aim:** To express gratitude and spread positive feelings.

**Duration:** 30 min

### **Steps:**

1. Ask participants to think about the people they are grateful for.
2. Ask them to write a letter to express their gratitude to this person.
3. Ask them to call and share their letter with the person they wrote their letter to.
4. Each participant has to say something positive to the person on their left.

### **Reflection:**

How did you feel while writing the letter? Was it easy to express your feelings?

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## **Name: Coffee Conversation**

**Aim:** to discuss mental health in an informal way, with food and mental health-related activities.

CATTP (Centres d'Accueil Thérapeutique à Temps Partiel) uses the method of planning activities to help young people with psychiatric trouble to reconnect with reality during the Coffee Conversation.

**Duration:** 25 min

### **Steps:**

1. Presentation of the CATTP and the Coffee Conversation
2. Use Dixit or a card with colours related to energies to help young people express what they feel at the current moment of their life.

### **Reflection:**

What did you learn through the CATTP program and did it change your vision of hospitalised youngsters? How would you apply the Coffee Conversation session with young people?

## **Name:** Discussion on decluttering

**Aim:** to exchange insights about decluttering

**Duration:** 60 minutes

### **Steps:**

1. Divide participants into 4 to 5 subgroups. Ask them to go for a walk together.
2. Give one card with questions per group, which they need to answer within 15 minutes.
3. When 15 minutes are over, ask the groups to swap cards with questions.

Cards with questions:

A: What is your relationship with your phone? What was the longest time you were without it? How did you feel?

B: What was the last thing that you bought? Did you need or use it? Would you buy this item again?

C: From all the people who are present in your life currently, is there a relationship that you consider toxic or wasting your time? Do you want this person in your life going forward?

D: What is your most valuable item? What value does it add to your life? What item do you possess you would be able to get rid of right now?

**Reflection:** What insights or perspectives did you gain from the answers to the questions? How did hearing others' experiences and perspectives influence your own thoughts and attitudes towards decluttering?

**Bonus:** some tips to declutter your life:

- *The 6 months rule.* If I have not used it in 6 months and have not even thought about it in 6 months, you are probably never going to use it. Hence, let it go.
- *Does it spark joy?* Mari Kondo, a famous cleaning guru, proposed the following method. Take the item in your hands and ask yourself if it sparks joy. Usually, you feel it immediately. If it doesn't, thank it for everything and let it go - donate it or sell it.
- *Setting boundaries is key.* There are likely some relationships in your life that don't need to be abandoned - but you'd benefit from creating a little healthy distance.
- *Let the toxicity go.* This category of relationship can absolutely go - not only they don't serve us, but they also consume our energy and cause unnecessary stress. You may need to simply inform them of your new boundaries and then move on.

## **Name:** Turkish Storytelling

**Aim:** To convey information through story

**Duration:** 45 min

This story is about a man who lost balance and how the people around him were affected by it.

### **Steps:**

#### 1. Read the STORY OF DELİ (CRAZY) DUMRUL

Long ago, in the land of the Oghuz, there lived a man named Deli Dumrul. This Deli Dumrul was not only bold and robust, but he was sometimes quite mad.

One day he built a bridge over a small creek and began to demand thirty akches from each person who crossed on it. If someone didn't want to use his bridge, Deli Dumrul pursued him, beat him badly, and charged forty akches.

Not far from this bridge, there was a large Oba (nomad camp). One day the most courageous and admired young man in that camp died, causing the rest of the nomads to weep and tear their hair in grief.

Deli Dumrul, busy collecting akces, heard the sound of mourning and became angry because of the noise. Leaving his bridge, he strode to the camp and shouted, "Hey, you! You are disturbing my business with all this crying. Are you trying to flood the creek with your tears and thus destroy my business? Tell me!"

The Oba people told the story with deep sadness: "The best-loved and most courageous youth in our camp, died today."

Deli Dumrul became even angrier. Looking from one nomad to another, he said, "Which one of you killed this brave young man? Show me!" The mother of the youth answered, "Oh, sir, who would dare to take his life but Azrael (angel of death)? It was Azrael who took my brave young son's soul." "Azrail! Azrail!" raged Deli Dumrul. "Who is Azrael to take the life of a noble young man? Bring him here to me. I shall punish him so severely that he will never take another life!"

On top of this, Deli Dumrul decided to show Azrael what the world was like. God was bothered to hear the crazy words of Deli Dumrul. He sent Azrael to the house of Deli Dumrul to give him a lesson.

Deli Dumrul, while fighting Azrail, started begging Azrail when he saw his enormous power. God also informed Deli Dumrul that he could forgive himself if he delivered another soul to Azrail instead of his own soul. Deli Dumrul first begged his old father, then his old mother. Neither of them was willing to give their lives in place of their son. Deli Dumrul came to his wife for a last chance. He told her the situation. He said: "After I fell into the hole of the Azrail, you remarry, take care of our two children that I will leave behind. " The poor woman!, she was already very willing to surrender to the Azrail instead. She said: What are you talking about? What are you saying? I opened my eyes of love with you and gave you my whole love. Oh, my king! The mountains of those black mountains that lie against me, what will I have them for without you after you? If I happen to appear anywhere there, let it be my graveyard. If I happen to drink the cool and cold water of it, let them be my blood. If I spend your gold coins, let them be my shroud (grave clothes), and if I happen to ride your talented horse, let it be my coffin. Your parents' lives are sweet and have not given you their lives. I wish I could be your sacrifice!

When Deli Dumrul heard this, he had once again begged God. God felt mercy for Deli Dumrul this time. God was also angry at the parents who could not sacrifice their souls for their children. Azrail left Deli Dumrul and his beloved wife alive and extended their lives. Deli Dumrul and his wife lived happily for many years afterwards.

2. Discuss it with the participants in the light of life balance

**Reflection:** Who lost life balance in this story? How? What do you think about these people? Do you agree with them? What would you do if you were in their place?

# ABOUT THE POCKET GUIDE

This Pocket Guide is the tangible outcome of the "How Are You, Really?" project (2022-1-AT01-KA153-YOU-000064601), co-funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ programme.

The project was actively undertaken from 2022 to 2023, led by Arbeitskreis Noah. Verein für Sozialpädagogik und Jugendtherapie (Austria) <https://noah.at/>, in collaboration with partner organisations from France, Hungary, Russian Federation, Turkey, and Ukraine.

The Pocket Guide contains tips, tools and practical strategies on Life Balance, Stress, Time Management, Setting Boundaries, Mindfulness, Emotional Intelligence and other methods that youth workers can seamlessly integrate into their day-to-day work with young people.

Our partner consortium envisions this Pocket Guide as a wellspring of inspiration, intended to enhance the quality of youth work across Europe and beyond.



Arbeitskreis  
**NOAH**



Co-funded by  
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A great journey to your own self awaits you.

На тебе чекає захоплива мандрівка до пізнання самого себе.

Eine liebevolle Reise zu deinem inneren Selbst erwartet dich.

Тебя ожидает путешествие к познанию самого себя.

Un beau voyage avec toi-même t'attend.

Vár rád egy szuper utazás magad felé.

Kendi içinize yapacağınız harika bir yolculuk sizi bekliyor.

