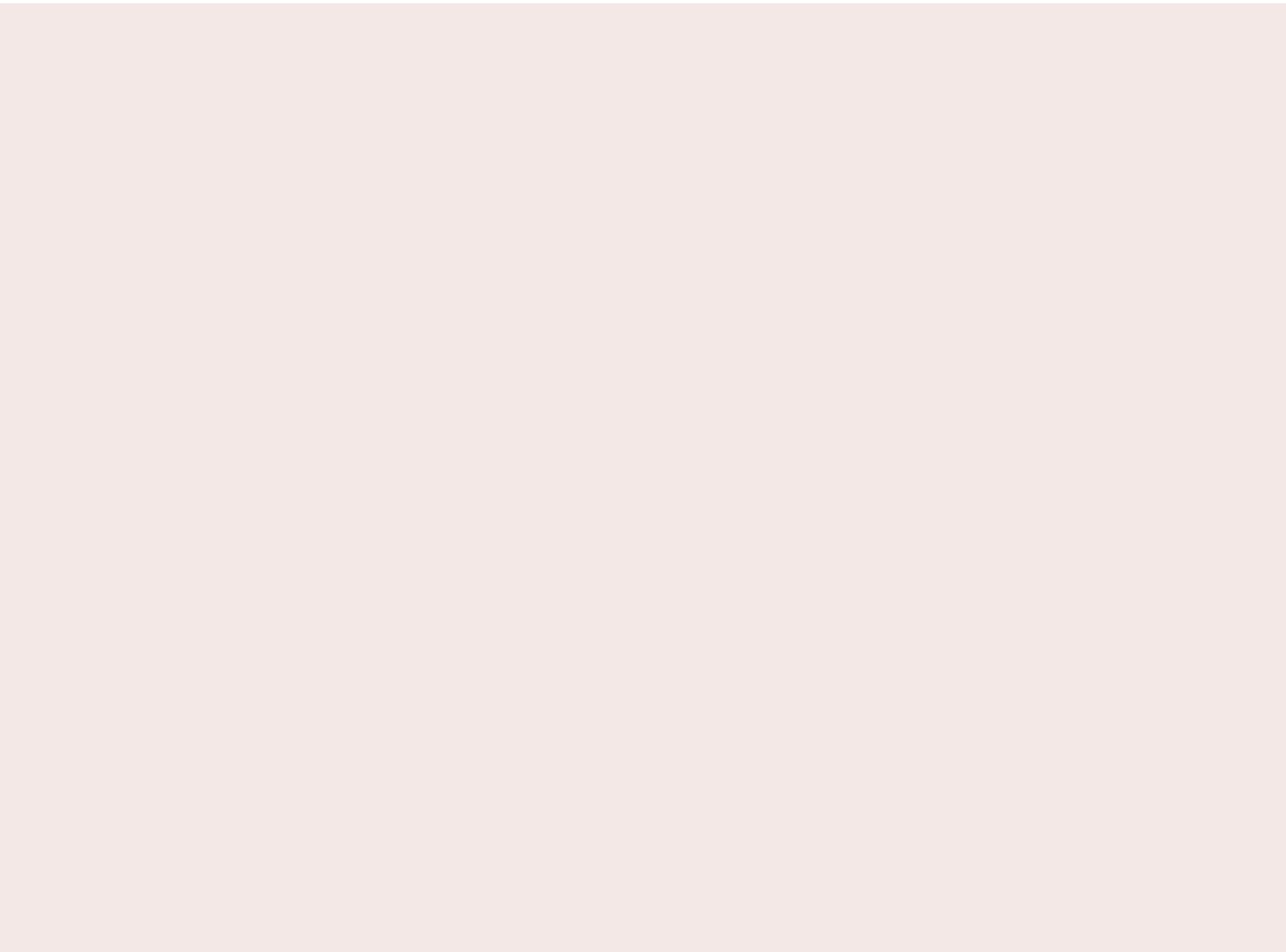




THE NON-FORMAL ROAD TO MENTAL HEALTH

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





A toolkit of methods from the **Non-Formal Road to Mental Health** training course

Iceland, 3 - 9 September 2017



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 www.minteforte.ro

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About the project

The **Non-Formal Road to Mental Health** consisted of a training course dedicated to mental health workers and aiming to bring together the fields of non-formal education and mental health.

Objectives:

- ▶ to raise awareness on principles of non-formal education and the way they can be used in mental health promotion,
- ▶ to develop competencies in designing and implementing activities based on non-formal education methods,
- ▶ to facilitate networking and cooperation among youth mental health workers from different countries: **Iceland, Romania, Spain, Albania, Italy and Poland.**

Non-formal Road to Mental Health Metaphor

Objective:

have a visual representation of the training's learning goals

Materials:

flipchart sheets, tape, post-its, pens, markers

The trainers introduce the project as a journey on the non-formal road to mental health, with some guideposts to lead the way (the objectives of the training: experience non-formal methods, personal development, professional networking, knowledge about non-formal education, design and implement non-formal methods). Participants had to write on post its (blue, green and yellow) their fears, expectations and contributions (anonymously) and then they are laid on the road as clouds, grass and rocks on the road. The trainer makes a point that the fears are like clouds: they can be cast away; expectations are the grass we expect to grow and the contributions are the rock that pave the way, because participants have an active role in the outcome of the training and in their learning. Participants are then encouraged to read everybody else's post-its.



... (how you feel about
(and relate to)
things)

**PANIC
ZONE**

13:00 - lunch
15:00-18:00 - activities
+ coffee break
18:00-18:30 - reflection
19:00 - dinner
... - evening



Outer journey

Name and stickers

Objective:

learn each others' names

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.

Big talk questions

Objective:

get to know each other at different levels of depth

Participants mingle in the room on music (they are also encouraged to dance, if they want). When the music stops, they make pairs of two and face each other. The trainer asks a question from the Big Talk set of questions (e.g.: If money was not an issue, how would you spend your time?, Who are your heroes?, What is something new that you have tried recently?, What can you do now that you couldn't do a year ago?, What do you spend too much time doing?). Pairs have 3 minutes (1,5 minute each) to respond to the question, then the music starts again and people mingle. Music stops, they choose another partner.

Shared and unique

Objective:

learn about the commonalities and the differences in the group

Materials:

paper, pen

People make groups of four (preferably not with people they know well) and receive two pieces of paper and a pen. They choose a spokesman. The trainer first asks them to find as many things that they share or have in common, in 4 minutes. They are instructed to `dig deep` for information and not settle for superficial aspects. After 4 minutes, trainer asks them to find as many features, interest, history facts, etc. that make each of them unique to the group they are in, `digging deep` for information and writing the name of the person in parenthesis. They again have 4 minutes. At the end, the spokesman in each group reads aloud the findings.

Identity bags

Objective:

to express one's identity through painting

Participants are given white canvas bags that they have to paint with symbols, stories, or other imagery of their choice, which represent pieces of their personality, their style, their passions and interests. Afterwards, each participant presents their bag to the rest of the group.



Open the door

Objective:

become more aware of the way they open up to people around them, their comfort zone regarding intimacy; increase the sensitivity to individual differences regarding these aspects.

The facilitator asks for five (or more) volunteers out of the entire group. These will play the roles of doors, will have to take a position of their choice and also establish a password (e.g. word, sound, movement, touch, etc.) which can open them. The others will have to approach the doors and try to open them by guessing the password. The doors cannot speak, but they can use subtle clues to guide the humans towards finding the password. Once a human found the password and opened a door, he will take the place of that door, again, choosing a position and password for itself, while the door will become a human, going around, trying to open other doors.

Debriefing:

How was it for you to be a door? How about to open doors? The doors, how did you choose your password? The humans, how difficult was it to guess the passwords? Did you have any strategy? How did you feel after guessing a password? Were there any moments in which you felt frustrated? What did you do then? How can we relate this to real life? Are you comfortable with opening up or do you make it difficult for the others to get to you? How do you feel when it's too difficult to get to know a person in depth? How do you manage these situations? What do you take with you from this activity? How can you use this activity in your work? (Optional: discuss about people's willingness to open up during the training course)

Share your music

Objective:

use music to create connection between the participants, to share feelings, passions, and important experiences of one's life.

Materials:

music device, headphones, audio splitters.

In pairs, participants will each share with their partner three songs that are important for them. They both listen to each song in turn, from the beginning to the end, and after each song they talk about its personal significance.

Debriefing:

How did you feel in this activity? How was it to listen to your partner's song compared to having them listen to yours? What did you get from this activity, how did it help you? How can you use it in your work?

Human Library Rules

openly and don't give
your organization, or
is about the shared stories
try to change the person
to views, actions or feelings.
+ a book's need to
read certain parts of its
story that you are
the book, not to share
stories
examining the book
don't keep it from
the allotted time.

13:00-15:00 - coffee break

13:00-lunch

15:00-18:00-activities
+ coffee break

18:00-18:30-reflection

19:00-dinner

20:00+ - evening fun





Mirroring

Objective:

make the person more aware of the presence of the other; learn how to constantly pay attention to them; lead and let oneself be led; communicate non-verbally.

Materials:

Music player and speakers.

In pairs, participants make different moves on music, while mirroring each other. Three songs are played. During the first one, the pair assigns a leader and a follower, they switch roles in the second song and for the third one, there is no assigned roles and mirroring has to happen more spontaneously.

Debriefing:

How was it to be a leader? How did it feel to be a follower? Which role was most difficult? Why? How was it to not have clear roles assigned? What helped you communicate with your partner?

Network of values

Objective:

find connection points with the others at the deeper level of values; explore ways in which different values are manifesting in one's life.

Materials:

paper notes, thin rope

Each person receives a piece of paper that has written a word representing a topic (e.g. friendship, compassion, spirituality, nature, friendship, etc.). Each person will have to say his/her belief about that topic and a behavioral example as to how that belief manifests in their daily life. 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.

The pendulum/ Trust fall sequences

Objective:

explore the element of trust within relationships, what helps us and what keeps us from trusting the others; to create a process for fostering trust within the group.





The participants will get involved in a progressive sequence of trust falls. They are given safety instructions for both how to fall and how to catch and they are encouraged to close their eyes while falling.

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. The person who will fall has to bring their feet together, ground them in one spot and stand rigid, not bending their body or moving their feet. The one who is catching will find a stable position and prepare their hands in a catching pose.

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 (15 min): Now, participants form groups of 5-6, 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. The person who is falling will give up any control regarding where they are going, and the group catching them will be the one who decides.

Debriefing:

How did you feel when falling? How about when you were catching? Which role was more difficult and why? What helped you to feel more comfortable when falling? How about when catching? How can you relate this exercise with real life? What helps you trust people in real life? What helps you to offer trust? What do you take with you from this exercise? How can you use it in your work?

Ancestral Walk

Objective:

foster empathy and connection within the group.

Materials:

script to be read by trainer.
See appendix.

The participants are told to start by walking randomly around the room (if you carry this activity outdoor, make a circle and instruct the participants to stay within the area of this circle and not spread out too much) while listening to the instructions of the facilitator and adjusting their behaviour as a response to these. The facilitator reads a script (see Appendix) which guides participants in a journey through different states of mind and different timelines of history, in order to create the context for connection between the participants and their shared humanity. From time to time, the participants are encouraged to interact in different ways, make eye contact, or express their feelings towards one another.

Debriefing:

How did you feel during this journey through time? Which was the easiest and which was the most difficult part for you? Did you discover or learn anything new during the process? How can you use this activity in your work?

The Human Library

Objective:

experience the therapeutic value of sharing a personal experience; learn how to share your story for others to learn from it; learn how to receive one's story with an open and accepting attitude; have contact with different life experiences and confront some personal prejudices.

Materials:

Book synopsis,
flipchart with
book schedule

Participants are invited to the Human Library, where books are persons who are willing to share their personal stories about overcoming a challenging life situation, so that others can learn from them. The library is open for two hours. There is a reading schedule, where each book has three available time slots of 30 minutes and a 30 minutes break. The reader can reserve a book by writing their name in the available slots of the book. A synopsis of each book can be found on an improvised front-desk of the library, so that readers can have a glimpse into the storyline and choose the books they want to read.

The emotional safety of the books it's very important, so they should be well informed beforehand about the structure of the activity, but more importantly, about their right to open up just as much as they feel comfortable, to refuse questions they don't feel at ease to answer, to end

discussions that are intrusive or overwhelming. Readers on the other hand are instructed to respect the limits set by the book, to listen openly without intervening in the story, while still asking questions respectfully.

Participants are warned that they may not get all the books they wanted, because others might have reserved them already, but it's important to keep in mind that each story is unique and it can offer the reader a rich experience.

Books are spread into different rooms of the training location (e.g.: lounge area, dining area, training room etc.), in order to ensure the privacy of the discussions. At the reserved times, the reader joins the book they choose in the assigned place for the discussion.

Debriefing:

How did you feel to be a reader or a book? What are you taking from this experience? What are the benefits of this method? How can you use it in your work?



The enchanted forest

Objective:

care and allow to be cared for; let yourself in the hands of someone else while being in a vulnerable position; pay attention to the others' needs; find non-verbal ways of interaction with others.

Materials:

music player and speakers.

Participants are told that they will take a walk in an enchanted forest. They will take turns of 2-3 of them being blindfolded and travelling through the rest of the participants, who embody the trees. The trees are spread around the room with maximum 2 meters distance between them. They have their roots into the ground, so they remain fixed in their spots, but they can move their arms-branches. While the travelers walk into the forest, the trees are asked to put their best efforts into protecting them and offering them a most pleasant experience. Music is played in the background and travelers are also encouraged to dance and to be let themselves be danced by the trees.

Debriefing:

How did you feel as a traveler and as a tree? Which role was more difficult and why? How can you connect this experience with other experiences in your life? How can you use this activity in your work?

The soulful coffee place

Objective:

learn about the mechanisms and effects of fears; explore different solutions for overcoming fears; capitalize on the different personal experiences as sources for understanding a certain topic; contribute to a learning process by sharing own experience, knowledge and opinions.

Materials:

tables and chairs for each station of discussion, topics of discussion written on paper on each table.

Participants will be introduced to the world cafe method: they form three groups and each group will spend 25 minutes at a table discussing a topic with a moderator. In this case, topics are common thematic fears people have: loneliness, intimacy, failure and unknown. The tables are far enough from each other, so people have privacy. One of the moderators is always disengaged, so he/she can keep the time. Also, he announces the group, showing a card, when they have 5 more minutes and 1 more minute. Moderators encourage people at the table to give their beliefs, examples in their own life, but to be mindful of other people, so as not to invalidate their experience.

Debriefing:

How did you feel? What was most difficult to discuss? What did you learn new? (ASK)
What elements of the activity helped you to learn? (example) How can you use this in your work? (topics, target groups, objectives).



Inner journey

Art therapy

Objective:

become more aware of their body by connecting with their breath.

Materials:

A3 or A2 sketching paper, carbon pencils, colored chalks

The facilitator guides the participants through a short, 5 minutes process of mindful breathing, closing their eyes and in silence, focusing on the rhythm and the sensations of their breath. After this, the participants open their eyes and take a carbon pencil and they close their eyes again. In silence, they stay connected with the rhythm of their breath while drawing first circles, then squares, and in the end triangles. They draw just one line for each segment of breathing (inhale, exhale) and stop in between, following the rhythm of the breath and allowing it to guide the hand. The facilitator gives a signal for when the participants should switch from circles to squares, and then triangles and encourages the participants to not open

their eyes to check their or other people's drawing. The purpose is not to create a work of art, but to connect with your breath and go with it. After they are finished, the participants open their eyes and, using the colored chalks, they are asked to color the drawing illustrating their current mood, the feelings they have at the moment. Again, they are reminded that the purpose of the exercise is not to create a work of art, but to connect with their body and be mindful of the present moment.

Debriefing:

How was it to draw with your eyes closed, following the breath? How did you feel throughout this process? How difficult was it to connect your hand to the rhythm of the breath? Were you surprised by anything? Did you discover or learn anything new during the process? How can you use this activity in your work?



Letter to your fear

Objective:

introduce literature and expressive writing as means of expressing and working on one's emotion; explore the ways fear manifests itself and how it can be overcome.

Materials:

paper, pens.

After listening to an excerpt about fear and its manifestation, from a novel (see Appendix: Book excerpt "Life of Pi"), participants have to think about one of their biggest fear and to write a letter addressed to that fear.

Debriefing:

How did you feel to personify the fear and write a letter to it? What helped you confront the fear? What was the tone of the letter (compassionate, humorous, aggressive etc.)? How can you use this experience in your daily life?

Befriending your kryptonite

Objective:

foster an accepting and constructive perspective towards one's flaws, mistakes or failures; learn to look at them as opportunities for development.

The facilitator introduces the idea of the kryptonite, the element that will take a superhero's powers and destroy them when used. We use this concept to represent a flaw or a mistake which can bring us down or make us feel weak at any point. Participants are given two minutes to think about their kryptonite and keep it in mind. Then, the facilitator reads a short story (see Appendix) which will provide them with a model example for the following part. After listening to the story, the participants have 20-30 minutes to think about and make a collage representing the "flowers" that grew because of this crack, or the things that their kryptonite has taught them throughout, the ways in which they developed because of this flaw or mistake.

Debriefing:

How did you feel when thinking about your kryptonite? How about when listening to the story? How was it to make the collage? Did this process help you in any way? What did you learn from it? How can you use this activity in your work?

Gratitude letter to yourself

Objective:

develop an attitude of appreciation towards ourselves, for the courage that we show in dealing with difficulties and for the strength that we have to continue every day.

Participants are asked to think about everything they've been through during the training course and write a letter to themselves in which they should express their gratitude and appreciation towards their own person for having the strength to go through all these experiences. They should express their gratitude for taking the opportunity and choosing to take part in the experience, for making the effort to actively participate during each day, for having the courage to show their vulnerabilities and open up to themselves and to others, for learning everything that they've learned and so on.

After writing the letter, they will go outside, choose an element of nature which can symbolize something that they are taking home, and read the letter out loud to that element.

Debriefing:

How do you feel now, after having written and read the letter? What is the feeling that you take home with you?

Photo-voice

Objective:

learn principles and ways of using photo-voice; identify images and metaphors that have a therapeutic effect and help people explore possibilities of facing negative emotions and find emotional balance; learn from others' photo-voice outcomes about the different perspectives on the same topic.

Materials:

projector for the slideshow or color printer for the photo exhibition.

Participants are introduced to the method and are presented examples of photo-voice projects. Photo-voice was created originally as a participatory research method, meant to give a voice to communities that are isolated, oppressed or discriminated against, through pictures, usually accompanied by a caption. Participatory research means that the people from that community are the ones exploring and presenting through photos the reality of that community. They can present certain problems, or their view on something, community assets, supports or barriers for



health, or solutions they propose to a problem. Photo voice has been used successfully in the fields of education, disability studies, public health, addictions, with people facing poverty etc. There is also a lighter way of using this method, when the participants are not part of an oppressed group and in this case, photo-voice is used as a means of expressing the personal views on a certain topic.

Participants are instructed to go around the training location and take pictures suggestive for the theme "Metaphors for emotional resilience". They will send the picture to the trainer, together with a short text describing or completing the idea of the photo. All photos are reunited either in a slideshow or printed and exhibited in the training room, so that everyone can see them.

Debriefing:

How did you feel during the activity? What was the most difficult part? Have you learned anything new about yourself? What are you taking from this activity? How do you think you can use it in your work? Do you see any obstacles in using the method?

Safe Place imagery

Objective:

reach a state of mental calm and relaxation through the use of imagery; find an image of a safe place to use in times of stress; learn how to use relaxation methods.

Trainer explains that the mental imagery works because our mind reacts to mental objects as it does to real objects, since any real object is perceived mentally as in input (e.g. imagine a lemon and your mouth will water). Trainer then asks participants to choose a comfortable position (can be lying down, meditation posture or simply sitting in chair, back supported).

Steps to delivering the method

- ▶ Close your eyes, find a soothing rhythm for your breath; focus on the breathing, air coming in/out (**3 minutes**)
- ▶ Feel your body as it is anchored on the ground or the chair/ points of contact, weight being supported (**3 minutes**)
- ▶ Enter your safe place – can be nature or somewhere inside. Start exploring it with your eyes: look ahead, up, left, right. What colors, textures? Anything moves? (keep asking questions focused on eyesight – **2 minutes**)
Explore now with hearing. Where are sounds coming from? Are they

repeating sounds? (more questions – **2 minutes**). Explore with smell. Locate smells (give some examples, e.g. salty water, musty forest floor, etc – **2 minutes**). Explore with touch. Take a few steps, touch something. Play with something between fingers (**2 minutes**).

▶ Integrate sensory information and keep exploring, feeling your whole body in the space (give suggestions focused on the feeling of calmness, soothing, safety, repeat them (**3 - 4 minutes**))

▶ Slowly come back to your senses in the room. Move your fingers, arm, legs, stretch, breathe hard a few times. Life is beautiful!

Debriefing:

How did you feel? Did you manage to come up with an image? Was it easy/hard? Was there a particular sense that made the experience more intense? How do you feel now, after the exercise, as compared to before? What is it from the experience that helps you feel (that way)? What would you take from this exercise? How would you use it in your work?

Nature quest

Objective:

find a way to sit with difficult questions/ themes in their life, in a natural environment; learn to listen to their thoughts; organize their feelings and come up with a conclusion/solution to their struggles; understand the value of being mindful to nature; connect to the natural environment.

Trainer asks participants to come to the session ready dressed to go outside, also having a way to check the time. Participants are asked to think for 2 minutes about a question that they struggle with in that moment. Can be something recurrent, intense or very recent, but it has to have some meaning in the present moment. They are asked to write it down on a piece of paper. Trainer first asks them to tune into the present moment by focusing for 2 minutes on their breath, standing up, focusing on their bodily sensations. Then they are asked to keep that mindful attitude and go outside, find an element of nature with which to connect and ask the question written on the piece of paper. Then they have to listen to the answer that element of nature has to offer. They are instructed at all times to keep an open mind and be aware of the present – not to search for the answer in the past, but in the moment they are currently experiencing. They have 20 minutes for this.

Debriefing:

How was it to find a question to focus on? How did you feel outside? How was the process of asking a question to nature? What helped you? What hindered you in the process/ made it difficult? How could you use this exercise in your day to day life? How could you use it in your work?



Pandora's box

Objective:

identify and be aware of sources of resilience in day to day life; build and strengthen support in difficult times; raise hopefulness and develop healthy coping methods.

Materials:

paper/carton, felt pens, pens

Trainer starts by telling the story of Pandora (can be found on the internet), emphasizing the fact that even if we understand that the `evil` is out in the world, we still have hope on the bottom of the box and we are able to hold onto that hope to survive the evils. Trainer asks participants to build an imaginary box in which to put objects symbolizing their hope sources (e.g. songs, movies, activities, places, people, etc.). They are asked to draw their box on a piece of paper and then to draw the things inside it. They have 20 minutes for the drawing part.

Debriefing:

Was it hard to think of resources? Are there any feelings that came up during the exercise? Were you surprised of any items that came up? How can you tell if something gives you hope? How would you use your findings in your day to day life? Are there any items that might have made a difference in the past? How can you use this exercise in your work?

Integrating experience and fostering self-compassion

Objective:

facilitate an integration of the experience with emotional non-formal methods from the past days; learn a process of viewing struggles with self-compassion by meditation practices.

Materials:

flipchart and pens; pillows, blankets for meditation.

Trainer starts by reminding participants on a flipchart of all the activities they have experienced in the previous days and then introduces the metaphor of `fossil feelings`: when people are experiencing methods for self-awareness, self-discovery and reflection, this causes `waves and tribulation` in the consciousness and memory, so sometimes `fossils` might become dislocated and emerge to the surface of the mind. Fossils are memories and feelings that were deeply uncomfortable at one point in our lives and we didn't know what to do with and how to process, so we pushed to the bottom of our mind, in an attempt to not suffer. Any uncomfortable experience the participants might have during the past days, while doing the activities, might have been a `fossil feeling`.

Trainer tells participants they now have access to the `fossils`, because they have come up to the surface of the mind, but now they are able to look at it differently, through the lens of self-compassion. For that, they are asked

to follow trainer's instructions in a guided meditation:

- ▶ Find a comfortable position, start breathing in a soothing rhythm, feel your body anchored and grounded, feel how the weight is sustained by the floor, pillow, chair (keep giving anchors for breathing and body sensations – **5 minutes**)
- ▶ Bring to mind the difficult emotions, sensations or experiences that you have been through the last few days. Identify the feeling: was it fear, sadness, grief, anger, shame, guilt, envy, jealousy?
- ▶ Bring to mind a moment in the past when you felt the opposite of that feeling (keep giving anchors for people to imagine the situation (**2 minutes**))
- ▶ Now ask yourself: What do I need? What can I do to help myself get what I need? To whom can I turn to get my need met? (repeat the last 2 steps, allow time for answers – 5 minutes). Feelings are guides to what we miss, we lack or need to change.
- ▶ Now explore the desire to be at peace with yourself, developing loving kindness toward your struggles and difficult feelings: make a half smile and open your hands on your knees or in your lap. Feel your heart area opening up and getting warm
- ▶ Say to yourself, silently, in the mind: ` May I be well. May I be happy. May I be free from suffering ` (repeat 3 times, allow time – **5 minutes**)
- ▶ Acknowledge that you have been created in the flow of life. You have just found yourself here. Think of your deep and true desire to be at peace with yourself and have a kind and contented mind. Focus on the desire to be free from suffering and experience full well-being. Focus on how that feels

like, to know that there is a part that understands the struggles in the flow of life and really wants peaceful contentment. The part of you that is wise, caring and recognizes sadness, anxiety, anger, shame, wanting to understand and alleviate the suffering.

▶ (repeat the previous step, then:) imagine waves of warmth, kindness and love stemming from the heart area to everyone in the room, everyone in this city/area, country, the whole earth, saying to yourself: `may you be well. May you be happy. May you be free from suffering`) (repeat 3 times, allow time – **5 minutes**)

▶ (don't hurry this part:) Slowly return your awareness to your breath, keeping the soothing rhythm. Slowly return your awareness to your body, feeling your toes, moving a little, drawing harder breaths; slowly return to the room. ***Life is beautiful!***

Debriefing:

How was that for you? How did you feel? How was it to follow instructions and focus on the breath? The body? The feelings? The loving-kindness? How do you feel this helped with the experience that you had previously? Would you use this in your work in any form? If yes, how?

Connecting visions

NGO fair

Objective:

learn about the work each organization does in the mental health field.

Materials:

flipchart paper, felt pens, markers; tables for each NGO `stand`

Each organization gets a stand and they are asked to make a presentation poster on a flipchart paper of their NGO in 10 minutes, very briefly, writing Name, Logo, country, objectives, target groups, main projects. At the stand they can present any other materials they have brought (flyers, leaflets, stickers etc.). Participants arrange themselves like in a fair, with each NGO and members at one table. At the start, each NGO has 2 minutes to read aloud the poster. After that, one member of the NGO stays at the table and others can mingle, walk around, to the other NGO tables and ask about the NGO's activity. They have 30 minutes for this part.

Open space for partnerships

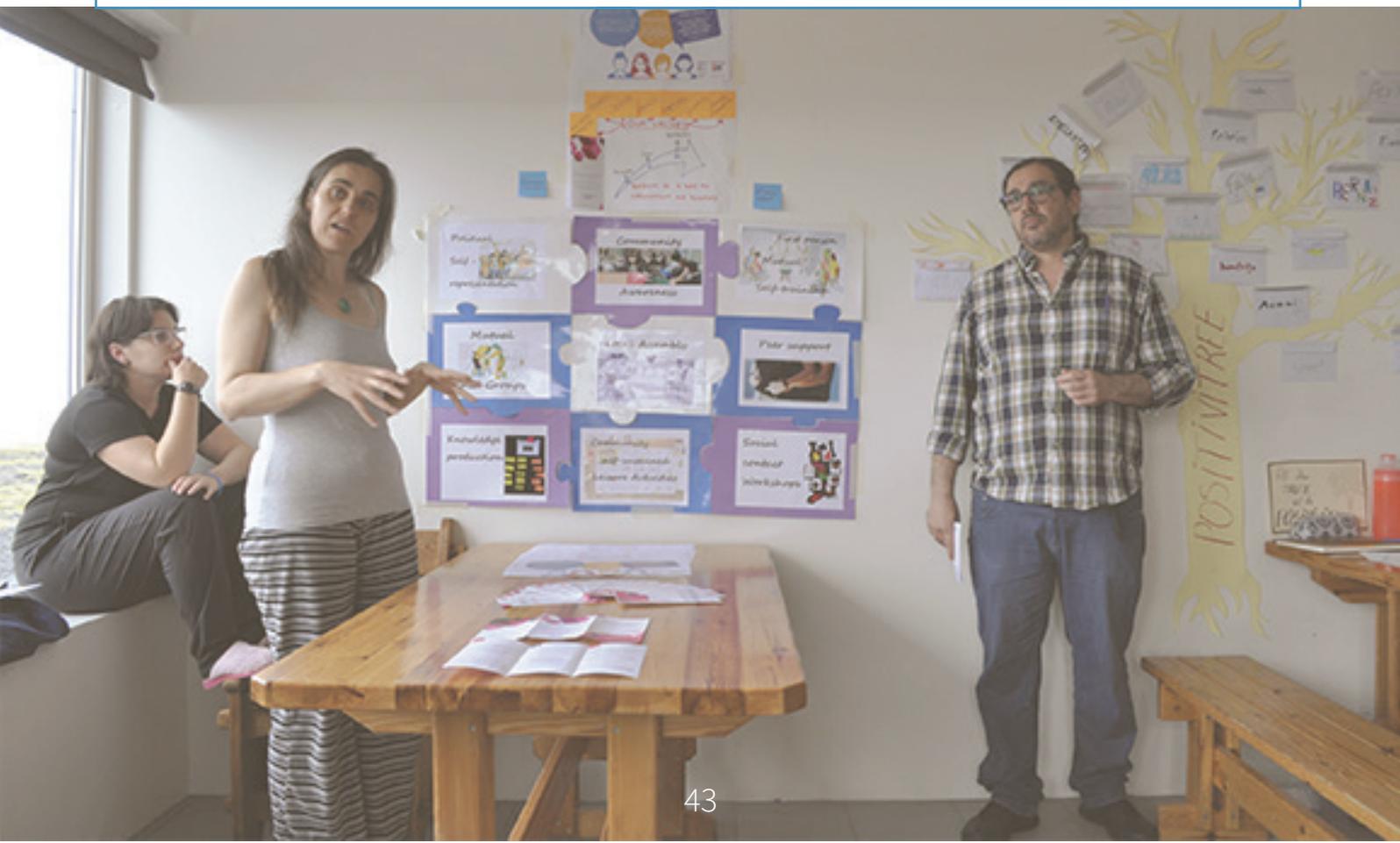
Objective:

explore the common ground between organizations; generate ideas for joint future projects.

Materials:

flipchart paper, felt pens, markers; tables for each NGO `stand`

Participants reorganize the `NGO fair`, showing their posters and materials at their stand. This time they have 40 minutes to mingle and talk about projects they can do together. They write their ideas on a piece of paper entitled `We were thinking of...` which has a summary of Keys of Action possible in the Erasmus Plus programs written at the top. After the 40 minutes, one member from each NGO presents the ideas written on their piece of paper.



Non-formal education

Learning zones

Objective:

learn about the different states in which a certain experience can introduce you: comfort, learning, panic; learn what makes the difference between these states and how to design activities in the learning zone.

Materials:

long rope

The facilitator uses the rope to make three concentric circles and asks the participants to position themselves first around the smallest circle, in the center. They introduce this circle as the comfort zone and discuss about the meaning of comfort zone, they give examples of when they have found themselves in comfort zone. Then they take a few steps backwards to position themselves around the middle circle, which the facilitator introduces

as the learning zone. They again discuss about what it means and give examples of when they have found themselves in this zone. Lastly, they take again a few steps backwards to the outer circle, which represents the panic zone. They discuss what it means and again they give examples of situations in which they were in the panic zone. In the end participants discuss about what makes the difference between these states, specifically about having or lacking the attitude, the knowledge, or the skill necessary in a certain situation: We are in the comfort zone when we have all three of them, in the learning zone when we are missing one or two of them, and in the panic zone when we are missing everything and do not know how to get them.



Kolb cycle of learning

Objective:

learn about experiential learning through Kolb's theory and the way to design methods based on the cycle of learning from experience.

Materials:

flipcharts showing the Kolb learning theory, some guidelines for activity implementation and debriefing and the learning pyramid.

Participants learn the theory about experiential learning, they found out about the Kolb cycle with the four stages (experience, reflection, generalization, application). Trainer gives examples of knowledge we derive from day to day life experience (e.g. how do you know how many hours of sleep you need?). As an example, trainer uses an activity proposed by the participants in order to show the cycle of learning. Then, he explains how different methods are more or less efficient (the learning pyramid), emphasizing that teaching to others is the most efficient and will be used in order for them to understand the basic principles of non-formal education. Some guidelines for implementation and debriefing activities are presented, and the flipcharts are left on the walls so that participants have access to information when they work on the activities.

Appendix

Ancestral Walk

(Read the script slowly, allowing some quiet time in between the ideas when they need to sink in or when the participants need to act on the script. Use the script flexibly, repeat some ideas if you feel it is necessary)

Its Thursday afternoon, rush hour. You're a very important person with very important things to do. You've come out of the house and you're walking down the street to get to work, or for an appointment... or to get the kids to school, or to meet your friend. The bus hasn't come. The pavement is full of people. These people are getting in your way, slowing you down. You've got a meeting to get to, a very important discussion about very important environmental issues to get to,.. The kids will be late again... Your friend will be annoyed... If you're late for this, the whole of your schedule is going to be thrown out!

And what you're doing is So Important!! These people are In Your Way!! Don't they know what a rush you're in?? Sometimes they just change direction or stop without any indication. Feel how it is in your body to be in



this state of rushing. Keep focusing on moving as fast as possible... Think of your schedule, your hurry! Notice the lack of eye contact, there's no time for that. And these people! Still getting in your way! What kind of things are you thinking? Does this feel familiar? Are you breathing? What would it do to you to be in this state all the time?

And now slow down a little. Notice what happens in your body, and slow down a little more.

Allow a little eye contact... Notice these are people you are pushing past. Are they like you or different? Allow some curiosity about them to arise. What are they thinking? Where are they going? What is their list of tasks, of appointments?

Slow down some more, all the way into first gear. How is this? What thoughts are you having now?

And gently come to a standstill, finding yourself facing one other person. Let yourself take in this person, making eye contact as much as it feels comfortable.

If your mind feels busy take a moment or two to slow down. Are you breathing? Feel your feet on the grass, feel the earth beneath you, let your attention and your weight drop.

This person also has made the choice to be here now. This person also cares enough about what is happening on our earth to want to make a difference, to play their part in turning around our world. Just take a moment to let that sink in. Feel how it is to be with this person right now. Like you, this person wants to build a healthy future for generations to come. Like you, they are willing to be awake at this time of great change,

and possible crisis. They are not turning away or refusing to respond. They want their place and their community to find a way to live sustainably on this earth.

And know that this person sees the same willingness to meet the challenge, the quality of caring, of wanting to be part of something positive and good that you see in them.

Staying without words as much as possible find a way to let them know your appreciation of their presence here.

Moving slowly again... Allowing curiosity about these people you are moving between – what is happening in their lives? What have they seen? What do they care about?

Come to rest in front of another person. Once again, just make as much eye contact as feels comfortable.

Just letting yourself be aware of how much you share with the person in front of you. And you might imagine you can see this person's ancestors behind them, stretching back in time. How many generations of people came together to create and pass on life, to find food and shelter, to pass on wisdom and knowledge so that this person could be born into their family and be here today? And imagine the huge changes that this person's ancestors have seen – how much hardship they have endured, how much they have learnt over the centuries and even millennia of evolution, the agricultural and industrial revolutions.

Perhaps they have children, or will pass on life. Perhaps they will pass on their gifts and wisdom through their relationships and work in the world. Something of this person will go on to future generations.

You share the certainty that your time for living on the planet is limited. Perhaps this person won't live to see the changes we are working for brought into being. Yet they are still willing to give their time, their wisdom, their energy to creating that change, so that future generations may live well.

And know that the person in front of you sees these things about you.

Once again, just see if there is something you want to express to your partner, just do so in silence.

Start to move around again...

Again, we go back to our wandering, letting ourselves move slowly, touching lightly as we pass. And again we find ourselves in front of somebody and we take their right hand in ours. Close your eyes so that all your attention can go into the sensation of touch. Now we can begin to appreciate the gifts of our animal ancestors. Can you feel the pulse in your partner's wrist?

Open your awareness to this hand's journey through time. It was a fin once in the primordial seas where life began, just as it was again in its mother's womb in this lifetime. Countless adventures since then have shaped it. This hand connected with tree and wind as it refined its intelligence. This hand: the ancestors are in it, ancestors who learned to push up on dry land, to climb, to reach, to grasp, to chip rocks, to gather berries and greens, to straighten arrows and pull bowstrings, to cut into flesh, to bring food to mouths, to gather plants and weave them into baskets, to gather seeds and harvest them and plant them again; to make fire and to carry this fire from place to place. It's all in that hand from an unbroken succession of adventures.

Similarly, open your awareness to this hand's journey through this particular lifetime, ever since it opened like a flower as it came out of its mother's womb. Clever hand that has learned so much: learned to reach for the sustaining breast, learned to wipe tears, learned to give pleasure. You know there are people living now who believe they are worthwhile and lovable, because of what that hand has told them. There are people living now whose last touch in life will come from this hand, and they will be able to go into their dying knowing they are not abandoned. You know there are people living now who will be healed in mind or body by the power that this hand allows to flow through it. So experience how much you want that hand to be strong and whole for this time, to serve its fellow beings and the planet of which it is a part. Experience how much you want it to be strong and play its part in the building of a culture of sanity and decency and beauty.

Now open your eyes, and in your own way, express gratitude to the other person.

Share a few words with your partner about how the experience was for you.

Befriending your kryptonite – Short story

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water.

At the end of the long walks from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. 'I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house.'

The old woman smiled, 'Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them.'

For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house.'

Each of us has our own unique flaw. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding.

Excerpt from the book “*Life of Pi*” by Yann Martel

CHAPTER 56

I must say a word about fear. It is life's only true opponent. Only fear can defeat life. It is a clever, treacherous adversary, how well I know. It has no decency, respects no law or convention, shows no mercy. It goes for your weakest spot, which it finds with unerring ease. It begins in your mind, always. One moment you are feeling calm, self-possessed, happy. Then fear, disguised in the garb of mild-mannered doubt, slips into your mind like a spy. Doubt meets disbelief and disbelief tries to push it out. But disbelief is a poorly armed foot soldier. Doubt does away with it with little trouble. You become anxious. Reason comes to do battle for you. You are reassured. Reason is fully equipped with the latest weapons technology. But, to your amazement, despite superior tactics and a number of undeniable victories, reason is laid low. You feel yourself weakening, wavering. Your anxiety becomes dread.

Fear next turns fully to your body, which is already aware that something terribly wrong is going on. Already your lungs have flown away like a bird and your guts have slithered away like a snake. Now your tongue drops dead like an opossum, while your jaw begins to gallop on the spot. Your ears go deaf. Your muscles begin to shiver as if they had malaria and your knees to shake as though they were dancing. Your heart strains too hard, while your sphincter relaxes too much. And so with the rest of your body. Every part of you, in the manner most suited to it, falls apart. Only your eyes work well. They always pay proper attention to fear.

Quickly you make rash decisions. You dismiss your last allies: hope and trust. There, you've defeated yourself. Fear, which is but an impression, has triumphed over you. The matter is difficult to put into words. For fear, real fear, such as shakes you to your foundation, such as you feel when you are brought face to face with your mortal end, nestles in your memory like a gangrene: it seeks to rot everything, even the words with which to speak of it. So you must fight hard to express it. You must fight hard to shine the light of words upon it. Because if you don't, if your fear becomes a wordless darkness that you avoid, perhaps even manage to forget, you open yourself to further attacks of fear because you never truly fought the opponent who defeated you.

Participating organizations:

- ▶ Hugarafll
- ▶ Minte Forte
- ▶ Psicologi per i popoli nel mondo
- ▶ Activament
- ▶ Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation Albania
- ▶ Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Zdrowia Psychicznego Dziecka i Rodziny

