



Toolkit on
Mindfulness and
Resilience for Youth



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Introduction

BENEFIT is a project that empowers youth workers and young individuals to build resilience and strengthen their mental health, improve their wellbeing and support their inclusion in the labour market and society.

BENEFIT puts forward a comprehensive plan to empower youth workers and youth on mental wellbeing and further youth employability. Following a participatory approach, it will develop and make available catered tools for youth to identify and overcome mental strains that derive from challenges in the labour market and resources to educate and empower youth workers to offer mental-health-informed support. All its work will be available via an interactive eLearning environment.

The consortium consists of six partners from five different countries: Germany (Jugendförderverein), Ireland (Future in perspective), Cyprus (Institute of development), Czech Republic (SemWell), Portugal, Mindshift and Cyprus (Cardet).

The main objectives of the project are:

1. Support youth's mental wellbeing, affording them with the capacity to overcome challenges and obstacles
2. Empower youth workers to offer comprehensive support and services to young people
3. Promote mental health-informed youth work to aid young people in overcoming challenges
4. Develop quality resources for youth workers/ youth

The project's four main goals are interconnected and work together in a way that guarantees they will collectively contribute to advancing the established priorities. Specifically, by accomplishing these objectives, the project will enhance the employability of young individuals and equip them with the mindfulness and resilience needed to tackle the evolving demands and changing landscape of digital transformation. Furthermore, by dedicating resources to enhance the skills of youth workers, the project will contribute to elevating the quality, creativity, and acknowledgement of youth work.

According to the 2021 report titled 'European Youth Strategies – A reflection and analysis,' young individuals are currently facing a wide array of challenges and obstacles in their path towards the future. They are facing various uncertainties from socioeconomic shifts, social exclusion, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic, in particular, has worsened their difficulties, with many experiencing significant social isolation that has overburdened their mental wellbeing, resulting in increased levels of anxiety and depression.

Furthermore, the report highlights that the prospects for future employment have likely contracted and become even more uncertain. This uncertainty is particularly concerning because the sectors of the economy hit hardest by the Covid-19 pandemic, such as hospitality, leisure, retail, and recreation, have traditionally been significant employers of young people. Additionally, the report underscores the insecurity caused by the rapidly changing trends and realities in employment due to the digital transformation of the economy.

In response to these formidable challenges, BENEFIT is introducing educational resources and supportive tools aimed at helping young individuals build resilience, strengthen their mental fortitude, and equip themselves with the necessary skills to confront and surmount the obstacles they face.



Source: DALL-E

What Does This Toolkit Offer?

Consisting of valuable materials, this toolkit provides young individuals with clear and straightforward explanations of essential ideas, practical advice, and valuable instructions within the field. Furthermore, it includes a thoughtful list of suggested articles, tools, and books designed to assist them in their journey of self-improvement and empowerment.

Main objectives of this toolkit:

1. Map out existing needs and challenges youth face in the implementing countries and their recommendations for the best way to address them.
2. Identify good practices, effective resources, and tools that can best support youth in furthering their mental wellbeing.
3. Empower young people, via practical tools and guidance, to recognise and deal with mental health challenges.
4. Help youth cultivate useful skills to improve their wellbeing and resilience.

Who Can Benefit from This Toolkit?

This toolkit is intended to serve as a guide for the mental wellbeing of young individuals, equipping you with the resilience and strength needed to confront and surmount the various challenges and obstacles you encounter in life.

At the same time, the toolkit is committed to enriching you with high-quality resources by fostering your personal and professional growth while ensuring you have the necessary tools to navigate your journey.

Understanding the Basics: Mental Health and Youth

The protection and advancement of mental health and wellbeing among young individuals are integral components of the core principles and frameworks within the European Youth Strategy, which is currently being implemented for the period spanning 2019 to 2027. Additionally, this note emphasises its alignment with the EU Joint Action on Mental Health and Wellbeing, as well as its connection to the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals, underscoring the commitment to fostering mental wellbeing as a vital aspect of promoting overall sustainability and youth development.

What is the European Youth Strategy (2019 – 2027)?

[The EU Youth Strategy](#) serves as the overarching framework for collaborative youth policy in the European Union, encompassing the period from 2019 to 2027. It was established based on the Council of the European Union's Resolution adopted on November 26, 2018. The primary objectives of this strategy are to encourage youth participation in democratic processes, support their engagement in social and civic activities, and ensure that all young individuals possess the necessary resources to actively contribute to society.

The European Youth Goals outline specific areas that require attention to enable young people to reach their full potential. While these goals are not legally binding,

the EU Youth Strategy is intended to contribute to the realisation of the vision they represent. This involves mobilising resources and stakeholders at the EU, national, regional, and local levels. Goal 5, which focuses on mental health and wellbeing, along with its associated targets, presents a significant opportunity to enhance the mental wellbeing of young people across Europe.

During the two-year participatory process of the "Youth in Europe," young people from all over the EU identified mental health and wellbeing as a crucial area for action and collaboration. European Youth Goal 5 on Mental Health & Wellbeing seeks to achieve improved mental wellbeing, eliminate the stigma associated with mental health issues, and thereby promote the social inclusion of all young individuals.

Sustainable Development Goals and mental wellbeing

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognised mental health and psychosocial wellbeing as integral elements of overall health as early as 1978 and these aspects have been discussed in many UN resolutions over the years. However, it is noteworthy that mental health has only recently gained prominence on the single global agenda.

[The third Sustainable Development Goal](#) (SDG) focuses on promoting good health and wellbeing and is designed to ensure that people of all ages enjoy healthy lives and wellbeing. This goal includes thirteen specific targets, with target 3.4 explicitly focusing on reducing mortality caused by non-communicable diseases and promoting mental health. This recognition within the SDGs underlines the growing international commitment to addressing mental health as a key component of global health and wellbeing.

Methodology Behind the Toolkit's Creation

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the current reality, the qualitative research method of focus groups was employed as the primary strategy. This approach involved facilitating discussions among diverse groups of individuals, guided by a moderator who raised relevant questions to stimulate the exchange of ideas and opinions. Each country has conducted focus groups, desk research and surveys which their insights were carefully considered in the research process.

MODULE 1: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

What is Mental Health?

Welcome to the chapter on mental health, designed specifically for young individuals like you. In this chapter, we aim to achieve three main objectives. Firstly, we will deepen your understanding of mental health. Secondly, we will work towards reducing any negative perceptions and fostering empathy. Lastly, we will enhance your interpersonal skills by guiding you in discussing mental health with confidence and empathy.

Let's begin by exploring what mental health really means. Mental health is all about how we think, feel, and act in response to life's challenges. When we have good mental health, we can effectively handle stress, maintain balance, build and nurture meaningful relationships, and make thoughtful decisions. It also means being adaptable and resilient when facing tough times.

On the other hand, when mental health is not well-managed, it can lead to various mental health disorders, like depression and anxiety. These disorders can significantly affect our ability to carry out our daily activities. To promote good mental health, we must address the factors contributing to our wellbeing. This includes having access to the right support and treatment, being in a supportive social environment, and developing effective coping skills and resilience.

As we move forward in this toolkit, we will engage in various activities and resources to help us better understand and support mental health. Let's embark on this journey together!

What is Wellbeing?

Let's continue by delving into the concept of wellbeing. Wellbeing means feeling comfortable, healthy, and happy overall. It includes our physical health, emotions, social connections, and how satisfied we are with life. Achieving wellbeing requires a balance between meeting our basic needs, experiencing positive feelings, finding a purpose, and staying connected with others and the world around you.

As we progress through the toolkit, we will engage in activities and resources that encourage critical thinking through online research and reflective writing. Let's work together to understand mental health and wellbeing better!

ACTIVITIES ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

ACTIVITY 1: Exploring mental health perspective (individual activity)

Step 1: *Exploring Depression, Anxiety, and Stigma.* Begin by opening your preferred internet browser. Type in 'what is depression' and 'what is anxiety' in the search bar. Look for reliable sources like health organisations or reputable mental

health websites. Read through the information provided, making notes on key points or definitions.

Step 2: *Understanding Stigma.* Next, search for 'mental health stigma' and explore articles or resources that explain what stigma means in the context of mental health. Look for real-life examples or stories that illustrate how stigma affects individuals with mental health challenges.

Step 3: *Discussion Session.* Now, reach out to a classmate, friend, or family member to have a one-on-one discussion about what you learned. Share your own experiences or observations about mental health, depression, anxiety, and stigma. Listen to their perspectives and experiences too. Discuss how these concepts impact people's lives and how understanding them can help build a more empathetic and supportive community.

Step 4: *Reflection.* Take some time to reflect on the discussion. Write down your thoughts and insights in a journal or a digital document. Include how this activity has influenced your understanding of mental health, stigma, and the importance of open conversations. Consider how you can apply this newfound knowledge in your daily life to support those dealing with mental health challenges.

Reflective questions:

- o What were your most significant takeaways regarding mental health from this activity?
- o In the discussion, did you notice any common misconceptions or stigmas related to mental health?
- o How did the online research and the reflective writing contribute to your understanding of mental health?
- o What steps can you take to apply the critical thinking skills you have developed to make informed judgments about mental health information in the future?

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Create a safe and inclusive environment
- Adapt to diverse learning styles
- Promote practical application

Activity 2: Mindful journaling for self-discovery (individuals or in groups)

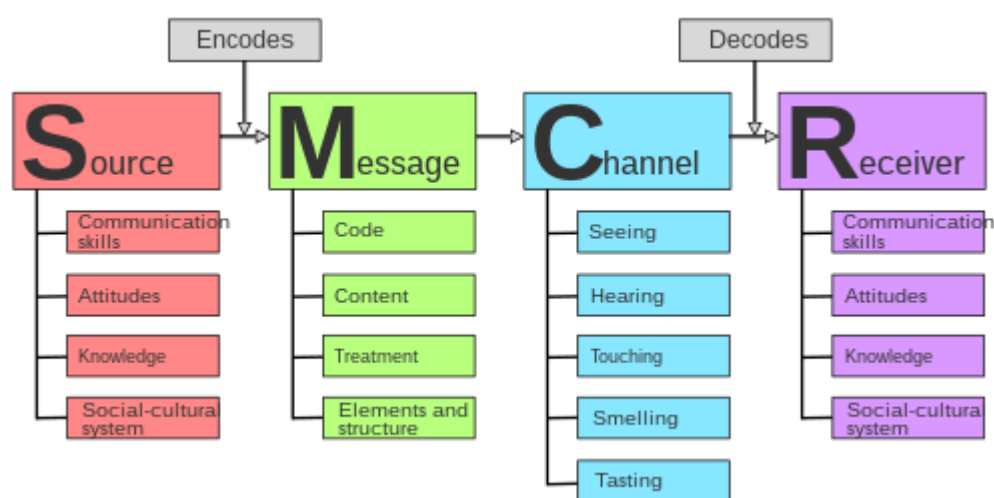
Step 1: *Introduction to Journaling.* Journaling is a way of self-reflection and understanding mental health. Mindfulness and self-awareness connect with journaling.

Step 2: *Guided Journaling and Writing* Some journaling prompts to get you started on your journaling of mental health are: emotions, stress, and self-care. Freely write in your journal, exploring your thoughts and feelings in response to the prompts.

Step 3: *Sharing Insights (optional)* Share insights or reflections from your journaling with at least one person that you feel can listen to you without judging. Sharing is voluntary, respecting each other's feelings and boundaries.

Step 4: *Reviewing Journal Entries (in groups)* Review your journal entries and identify common themes or patterns.

Step 5: *Discussion on Journaling's Impact* Discuss how journaling affected your understanding of mental health and emotions, using the SMCR (source-message-channel-receiver) Communication Model Communication Model as a guide.



Step 6: *Action Planning for Journaling* Brainstorm ways to integrate journaling into our daily routine for ongoing self-reflection and mindfulness. Remember, the key is to set achievable journaling goals (for example 2-5 minutes a day at a specific time). You can even set a reminder or block the time in your calendar.

Reflective questions:

- o What aspects of journaling did you find most beneficial for enhancing your self-awareness and emotional intelligence?
- o Can you share a specific insight or discovery you made about yourself through journaling during this activity?
- o In what ways do you imagine incorporating journaling into your routine as a mindfulness practice moving forward?
- o How did the process of creative expression through journaling impact your ability to reflect on your thoughts and emotions?

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Assure participants that there is no right or wrong way to journal, and their

thoughts and feelings are all valid

- Offer a variety of journaling prompts related to mental health and self-awareness, which can help participants overcome writer's block and guide their reflections
- Suggest setting a specific time each day or week for journaling, as consistency can help participants integrate this practice into their routines and reap its long-term benefits for mental wellbeing

Resources:

- You can read more about mental health here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_health

- You can read more about wellbeing here:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Well-being>

- You can read more about the SMCR (source-message-channel-receiver) Communication Model here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Source%E2%80%93message%E2%80%93channel%E2%80%93receiver_model_of_communication

Activity 3: Empathy in Mental Health Support (group activity)

Step 1: Scenarios Empathy is essential in supporting mental health. Using role-playing is a valuable method of practical learning. Use the printed role-play scenarios provided and have a quick overview of each.

Step 2: Role-playing Form pairs or small groups and choose a scenario. One acts as a young person facing mental health challenges, while the other(s) assume the role of a supportive friend or youth worker. Try to use immersive, realistic conversations. Rotate roles within the groups if time allows, for diverse perspectives.

Step 3: Group Reflection and Discussion Discuss in a group the shared experiences and emotions emerging during the role-plays. Share their insights, challenges, and successes in practising empathy.

Step 4: Action Planning Discuss how to apply role-play lessons in real-life situations. What are some good strategies for providing empathetic support to individuals with mental health challenges? Remember, the key is to listen mindfully, not necessarily respond.

Reflective questions:

- o What were some key insights you gained about the role of empathy in providing mental health support through the role-play scenarios?

- o How did engaging in the role-playing sessions improve your listening and communication skills in the context of mental health discussions?
- o What challenges did you encounter when responding empathetically during the role-play, and how did you overcome them?
- o In what ways has this activity deepened your understanding of the experiences and emotions of individuals facing mental health challenges?
- o How can you apply the lessons learned from the role-play activity to provide more empathetic and effective support to those dealing with mental health issues in your personal or professional life?

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Remind the participants that the goal of this activity is to understand and support, not to diagnose or "fix" mental health issues.
- After each role-play session, facilitate a debriefing discussion where participants can share their thoughts and feelings about the experience.
- Ask participants to consider how they can apply the lessons learned from the role-play in real-life situations.

Activity 4: Infographic creation: Promoting mental health awareness

Step 1: Information Gathering *Visual communication is very important in mental health awareness and through the use of. Using a list of key mental health topics, gather relevant information and statistics online or from provided resources.*

Step 2: Canva Tutorial and Infographic Creation. *See the brief tutorial on using Canva [here](#), or a longer one [here](#) if you are into technology or graphic design or searching for a similar graphic design tool you prefer. Create an infographic on your chosen mental health topic. Let yourself be creative and explore layout, colour selection, and visual elements like icons or images, remembering to keep it simple and clear.*

Step 3: Group Sharing and Reflection. *Share your infographic with a group that matters to them and request their feedback. In a group setting, reflect on the infographic's effectiveness in conveying the intended message.*

Step 4: Action Planning and Dissemination. *Discuss with someone ways you can use your infographics to raise mental health awareness in your communities. Create action plans for sharing, such as posting on social media, sharing with youth organisations, or creating fact sheets. Remember to share mental health information and resources responsibly. For example, you can donate the infographic if you wish for them to use it as an act of kindness or share it on your social media pages to assist in raising awareness.*

Tips for facilitators

- Encourage diverse and inclusive representations in infographics, avoiding stereotypes
- Stress the importance of accurate, evidence-based information and ethical sharing practices

The PERMA model of wellbeing

The PERMA model was developed by Martin Seligman, a renowned psychologist. It was born from his extensive study in positive psychology, aiming to promote wellbeing and happiness. With a keen interest in the welfare of individuals, including youth, Seligman identified key elements vital for a fulfilling life. These elements, encapsulated in the PERMA model as Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishments, serve as a guiding framework for understanding the essentials of a healthy and meaningful life. Through emphasising positive emotions, engaging activities, meaningful connections, a sense of purpose, and personal achievements, the PERMA model seeks to provide a holistic approach to nurturing wellbeing and happiness, particularly among young individuals.

Positive Emotion:

Positive emotions are like superpowers that can significantly shape our wellbeing. Understanding the scientific perks of nurturing positive emotions can make a difference in our lives for young individuals. Let's take a closer look at the science supporting the significance of positive emotions in our daily experiences.

Some examples of positive emotions are feeling happy and joyful, like eating your favourite dessert or spending time with your pet. It's also doing things you love, such as drawing or playing music.

Activity 1: "3 good things"

Step 1: Reflect on your day and write 3 good things that happened, big or small.

Step 2: Write down the three things in a journal or on a piece of paper. Be specific about each event, including what happened, why it was meaningful, and how it made you feel.

Step 3: Take a moment to review what you've written, allowing yourself to savour the positive emotions associated with each event. Consider how these positive experiences contributed to your day and overall wellbeing.

Note: Regularly engaging in the "Three Good Things" exercise can help cultivate a sense of gratitude and promote positive thinking. Do this exercise for 21 days.

Reflection questions:

- o What were the three positive things you wrote down, and why did you choose them?
- o How did reflecting on these positive experiences make you feel?
- o Did any of the three good things remind you of other positive experiences in your life?
- o Did this exercise help you notice positive things that you may have overlooked otherwise?
- o How might you incorporate this practice into your daily routine to cultivate a more positive outlook?
- o Did this activity change how you feel about practising gratitude in general?

Tips for facilitators

- Ask everyone to be clear about why their three good things are important to them.
- Ask them how this activity made them feel and if it changed their view of the day.
- Explain how being thankful can make them feel more positive and happier over time.
- Encourage them to practice this every day.
- Create a friendly space for everyone to talk about what they wrote. Discuss how thinking about good things can make us happier.

Engagement

Engagement is when we are focused and involved in our actions. It's like when you're having so much fun that you forget about time. To help you get engaged, make sure your activities are interesting and not too hard or too easy. This helps get you in a flow. Flow is when you get absorbed in activities that capture your attention, like reading an exciting book or solving challenging puzzles.

Activity 2: Pick a Fun Task

Step 1: Choose something you enjoy doing, like drawing, playing a game, or solving puzzles.

Step 2: Focus Time. Set aside a specific time to do this activity, ensuring you won't be interrupted.

Step 3: Get Started. Start doing the task, and let yourself get so into it that you forget about everything else.

Step 4: Enjoy the Moment. Have fun and enjoy what you're doing. If you finish, take a moment to celebrate your accomplishment!

Reflection questions:

- o What was the most enjoyable part of the activity for you?
- o Did you find it easy to get lost in the activity and forget about everything else?
- o Did you face any challenges during the activity, and how did you handle them?
- o Did you learn something about yourself while engaging in this activity?
- o How might you apply what you experienced during this activity to other tasks or hobbies you enjoy?
- o How could you make the activity even more enjoyable the next time you do it?
- o How can you incorporate more of these enjoyable activities into your daily life?

Tips for facilitators

- Encourage everyone to choose something they really like doing.
- Help them set a specific time for their fun activity without any interruptions.
- Make sure to help if they need anything while doing their activity.
- Celebrate their achievements and encourage them to feel proud of what they've done.
- Encourage them to share what they enjoyed about their activity with everyone else.

Relationships

In the PERMA model, relationships mean the friends and connections we have. It's about having people who care about us and whom we care about. These relationships make us feel happy and supported. They give us someone to share our feelings with and help us grow. When we have good relationships, we feel like we belong and have a purpose in life. Building connections with family, friends, and peers. It's having close friends who support you and sharing experiences with your siblings.

Activity 3: Gratitude Letter

Step 1: Pick someone special in your life (a friend, family member, or teacher), whom you want to thank.

Step 2: Think about a specific nice thing they've done for you and how they've made a difference in your life.

Step 3: Write a letter to them, expressing your gratitude and explaining why you appreciate them.

Step 4: Make sure to mention specific moments or actions that meant a lot to you.

Step 5: Explain how their kindness has made you feel and why it's important to you.

Step 6: You can give them the letter in person and ask them to read it in front of you and discuss how they feel about it, or send it to them, letting them know how much they mean to you.

Reflection questions:

- o How did writing the letter make you feel? Did you remember any special moments?
- o What nice things did you talk about in the letter, and why were they important to you?
- o How do you think the person will feel after reading your letter? What do you want to happen when they read it?
- o Did saying thanks change how you feel about the person you wrote to?
- o How can you say thank you more often daily, based on how you felt when you wrote the letter?

Tips for facilitators

- Encourage everyone to remember specific moments or things that made them happy when writing the gratitude letter.
- Create a comfortable space for everyone to express their feelings honestly in the letter and talk about why they feel grateful.
- Explain the importance of mentioning exactly what they appreciate about the person or the things they've done.

Meaning:

- o In the PERMA model, meaning means finding things that are important to you and that make you feel like you're a part of something bigger. It's about doing things that matter to you and help you understand yourself. Finding meaning in what you do can make you feel happy and strong, even when things are tough. This feeling of purpose can make your life feel complete and meaningful. Finding purpose in your life can be volunteering at an animal shelter or pursuing a fulfilling hobby.

Activity 4: What is important?

Step 1: Take some time to think about the most important things to you and what you really believe in.

Step 2: Decide what you want to do in your life and what excites you.

Step 3: Find ways to help others or do things that make a difference, like helping out, being kind, or sharing what you're good at.

Step 4: Plan and do things that really matter to you and make you feel happy and proud.

Step 5: Think about how your actions make you and others feel and make your life more meaningful and special.

Reflection questions:

- o What did you learn about yourself when you considered what's important to you?
- o How can you help others or do things that make a difference, and how does it make you feel?
- o How did doing things you care about make you feel, and why were they important to you?

Tips for facilitators

- Encourage everyone to think about what's important and talk openly about it.
- Help everyone think about what they really want to do and what makes them happy.
- Talk about helping others and doing things that improve the world, and why it's important.
- Help everyone plan and do things that matter to them and make them feel good.
- Explain how it's important to keep thinking about what makes life meaningful and special, and how to make it a part of everyday life.

Accomplishments

In the PERMA model, accomplishment means setting goals and doing your best. It's about feeling proud when you finish something you worked hard for. Accomplishment is when you use your strengths to overcome challenges and get better at something. It's also about celebrating your successes, which can make you feel good about yourself and motivate you to keep going and do even better. Setting and achieving goals, like completing a challenging project or mastering a new skill, big or small are all parts of Accomplishments.

Activity 5: My Goals Adventure

Step 1: Think about what you want to do, and write down things you can do soon.

Step 2: Write down what you need to do to achieve your goals, and list steps you can take.

Step 3: Note what you've done so far and what's left to do, and celebrate each step you finish.

Step 4: When you've done something you wanted to do, take a moment to feel proud of yourself and happy about what you've achieved.

Step 5: Think about what you've learned, and if you want, set new goals to keep growing and doing more things you like.

Reflection questions:

- What do you want to do, and why is it important to you?
- How will your plan help you, and what was hard for you when you were working on your goals?
- What things did you accomplish until today, and how did you feel when you finished them?
- How did it feel to celebrate what you did, and why is it good to be proud of yourself?
- What did you learn about yourself, and how can you use this to do more things you like in the future?

Tips for facilitators

- Encourage everyone to think about what they really want and to believe they can do it.
- Help them make plans that are easy to follow and not too hard.
- Remind them to celebrate what they achieve and remind them to be proud of themselves.
- Tell them it's okay if things are hard, and that they can learn from it and try again.
- Create a nice and helpful place where everyone can talk, ask for help, and cheer each other on.

Reference

3 good things application ([link](#))



The PERMA model

What is PERMA model?

Developed by psychologist Martin Seligman, it's your guide to a fulfilling life.

Dive into Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishments for a holistic well-being boost.

Elevate your joy with positive vibes, engaging activities, meaningful connections, purposeful living, and personal victories.

#PERMAHappiness

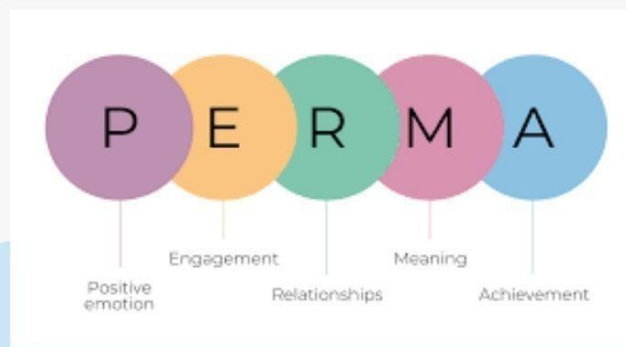


Image: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/perma-model-shapes-psychological-services>

THREE DAILY EXERCISE FOR PERMA MODEL

Step 1: Think about what you want to do, and write down things you can do soon.

Step 2: Write down the things you need to do to achieve your goals, and make a list of steps you can take.

Step 3: Keep a note of what you've done so far and what's left to do, and celebrate each step you finish.



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5 ways to prioritise your mental health

Practice self-care

Take time for self-care activities. It is essential for mental well-being



Connect with others and reach out for support

Reach out to friends, family, or professionals when you need support. You are not alone

Reduce stress

Manage stress through relaxation techniques, time management, and setting boundaries



Educate yourself

Learn about mental health to break down stigma and better understand your own well-being

Foster resilience

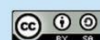
Build resilience by facing challenges with a positive attitude. It will make you stronger



Your mental health matters and taking steps to nurture it is an act of self-compassion. Start today by applying these strategies. Share this document to spread the message of mental health awareness, and let us support each other's well-being



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Module 2: Mindfulness

What is mindfulness?

"Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994)

"Being aware of what is happening while it is happening."
(Kaiser-Greenland, 2006)

"Paying attention to your life here and now with kindness."
(Satzman, 2011)

"Paying attention,
what's going on
right here,
right now
inside of us
or in the environment."
(Debra Burdick, 2013)

Before we start...

How to find the time and how to plan it?

The best way to incorporate mindfulness into your daily life is by making time for the practice in your daily schedule. Practising "when it's time" doesn't usually work very well. You can set a reminder on your calendar. Choose a time that you have all to yourself and when you won't be disturbed. Some people like to practice first thing in the morning because they find the practice a nice start to the day. Others prefer to practice at the end of the day, using mindfulness practice to release tension built up during the day. Mindfulness can be incorporated directly into everyday activities such as eating, brushing teeth, bathing...

Motivation and commitment to practice

As with any new activity, clarifying and understanding your expectations and commitment is important. Look at the questions below and try to answer as many of them as you can.

They will help you clarify the intention with which you are entering the mindfulness practice.

- Why do you want to learn by practising mindfulness?
- What do you want mindfulness to help you with?
- When have you been mindful during this week?

- Where and when will you practice mindfulness?
- Do you have any questions about practising mindfulness? What are they?
- Is there anything about the practice that worries you?
- How important is the practice to you?
- Is there anything you'd do rather than practising mindfulness?
- What are you most looking forward to in your mindfulness practice?

Creating intention - the basis of every mindfulness practice

Intention-making is the foundation of every mindfulness practice. It focuses your attention. In mindfulness, intention is what we choose to focus our attention on. Your intention can be paying attention to your breathing. Or it may be paying attention to the present task or the environment. During mindfulness practice, we keep bringing our attention to our intention. It is normal for our minds to wander away. Whenever we notice our mind going in a different direction, we patiently and lovingly bring our attention back to our intention.

Identification of obstacles and working with resistance

As with any new learning, you may experience resistance and encounter obstacles that get in your way. That's okay. The key to overcoming obstacles is to prepare for the situation and recognise it when it comes.

Some common obstacles are:

- I forgot.
- I didn't have time.
- It's too hard.
- I can't concentrate, so why try?
- I don't know how to do it right.
- It's not working for me.
- I fell asleep while practising.
- Mindfulness is for monks.
- I felt embarrassed.
- It's boring.
- I don't know how it could help.
- My parents don't want me to do it.
- My parents were too busy to help me.

Tips for facilitators

- To encourage teens to embrace mindfulness, it's crucial to help them comprehend its benefits and experience firsthand how it can improve their lives. Gather details about their circumstances to provide concrete examples of how mindfulness can be advantageous. Show them that mindfulness can lead to better academic performance, increased focus (leading to acceptance into desired schools), and cultivating positive relationships, which often piques their interest.
- Find out and reflect on what your teenage clients are going through in their lives. Become aware of the developmental challenges they face during adolescence. Use this information to tailor mindfulness activities which can be useful for teens.
- Prepare that some teens will roll their eyes, look for space, and have difficulty practising at first. These are simply manifestations of adolescence. Help them with feedback and integration of mindfulness practice experiences. Gently work with their resistance. Attend to their objections, listen and discuss with them. Teaching mindfulness to a group of teens can be very helpful in overcoming the resistance of some individuals who are more likely to relax and engage in the process when they see their peers enjoying the experience.
- Remember that research suggests teens may feel uncomfortable when asked to pay attention to themselves. They may experience heightened anxiety during the practice. If the thoughts and sensations they observe are associated with worry and concern, they may feel an increase in anxiety upon becoming aware of them. They may have difficulty relaxing and fear that if they let it go, the anxiety will increase. Be prepared to help teens experiencing this process these feelings and learn to calm and soothe anxiety.

Activity 1: Awareness of surroundings inside the room

Option 1 (brief instructions):

Step 1: Sit comfortably. Find a comfortable position, set a timer for 10 minutes, and sit with your feet on the ground and hands resting on your thighs.

Step 2: Look around. Take note of the lighting, whether you're alone, and the view outside. Observe how the light falls and the weather.

Step 3: See what is in front of you. Identify the objects in the room, including walls, doors, furniture, and any other items. Stay present and redirect your focus if your mind wanders.

Step 4: Notice the ambient temperature. Notice the room's temperature, air movements, and scents, considering whether they are familiar or new.

Step 5: What do you hear? Listen for any sounds, identifying their source and determining their volume and quality. Choose to focus on them or let them fade into the background.

Step 6: Is anything moving in the room? Observe any movements in the room, whether things are stationary or shifting.

Step 7: Notice your body sitting on the chair. Feel your body on the chair, noticing the chair's characteristics and how it supports you.

Step 8: Look around and find what catches your attention. Engage with a specific object in the room, noting its shape, colour, and purpose. Redirect your attention if your thoughts drift away.

Step 9: Become aware of yourself in space. Reflect on your emotions and sense of security in the room, considering any connections to past experiences.

Option 2:

Step 1: Sit comfortably. Set the timer for 10 minutes. Find a comfortable position on the chair, keep your feet loosely on the floor, and lean lightly into the chair's backrest. You can rest your hands lightly on your legs. If you want, connect your thumb and middle finger, and place your hands lightly with your palms facing up on your thighs. Keep your eyes open and look around the room.

Step 2: Look around. Pay attention to what you see. Is it light or dark? Are you alone or with other people? Are there windows in the room? Can you see outside? Can you see the sky? Is it cloudy outside, or is the sun shining? If so, is the light hitting the floor or the wall? Is it dark outside? Do you see the moonlight?

Step 3: See what is in front of you. Is there a wall, door, window, screens, artwork, switch, furniture, bookcase? What's next to you? Can you see behind you? Look around you. Observe. If your mind runs elsewhere, notice it, accept it, and then turn your attention back to the room you are in.

Step 4: Notice the ambient temperature. Is it warm, cool or just right? Can you feel the air moving? Do you smell any smells or odours? Are they comforting or unpleasant? Are they new to you or are you already familiar with them?

Step 5: What do you hear? Is it quiet? If you hear any noises, what are they? Where are they from? Are they loud, muffled, sharp, soothing or annoying? Do you want to listen to them, or do you want them to stop?

Step 6: Is anything moving in the room? What is it? Is it fixed? Are things moving around the room, coming and going?

Step 7: Notice your body sitting on the chair. Notice where your buttocks touch the chair. Is the chair hard, soft, cushioned or firm? Does it provide support for your back? Do your knees bend at the edge of the chair? Can you feel the whole surface of the chair from side to side?

Step 8: Look around and find what catches your attention. Notice the shape of the thing, where it is, what colour it is, what it is used for. Think about what the object has done to attract your attention. Does it remind you of anything? Do you know what it is? Is it something common or unusual? When you notice that you are not thinking about the room around you and the present moment, become aware of these thoughts, accept them and let them go. Tell them, "Not now." Bring your attention back to what is around you.

Step 9: Become aware of yourself in space. How do you feel? Do you feel safe? Do you want to be here? Does this place feel familiar or new to you? Have you ever been to another place that reminds you of the present one? Does it feel good, bad or neutral?

Tip for you: Now that you have spent some time focusing on the present moment, try bringing this skill into your everyday life. Do this exercise whenever possible to keep yourself in the present moment. You'll focus better, get more done faster, and be calmer.

Reflective questions:

- o What happened during the meditation? What did you notice? Did you notice anything new in the room? What were your bodily experiences?
- o What was going on in your mind? Was it hard to pay attention to the room? Were you distracted, and if so, how? How did you bring your attention back to your surroundings?
- o How can I use the learned skill/knowledge in my everyday life? Where can I practice open attention (in what situations)?

Tips for facilitators

- Explain to the youth that this short meditation teaches the skill of staying fully present in the moment. Engage them in a discussion about what the present moment is. Ask them to describe it.
- Explain to the youth that although you will be asking them questions while guiding them through the meditation, you do not want a verbal response. Explain that they should only listen to the questions and answer them in their minds while they take in their surroundings.
- Tell them that it is normal to get distracted or for their thoughts to wander elsewhere. The moment they realise that this has happened, they can move past the distraction and bring their attention back to awareness of their surroundings.
- Read aloud the Step-by-Step Instructions for the practice activity (above). You can use the same procedure in any room. Just change the sentences slightly to reflect what is actually in the room.
- Encourage the youth to practice this awareness in a shortened version

when they come to a new environment – school or a job, a store, a friend's house... It will help them transition more easily from one environment to another and focus their attention on their current surroundings.

Activity 2: Feet on Floor, Bum on Chair

Option 1 (brief instructions)

Step 1: Focus on your feet with your eyes open or closed. Tune into the sensations, noticing which parts touch the floor. Explore these feelings with patience and curiosity.

Step 2: Consider your legs, including the sensations from your feet, socks, and shoes. Feel the weight and texture of your lower and upper legs, exploring their inner sensations.

Step 3: Expand your awareness to your entire lower body. Imagine listening to your lower half, feeling the textures as they change. Acknowledge your feet on the floor and your body on the chair.

Step 4: Shift your attention to your breath. Feel the refreshing sensation of breathing in and the relaxation as you breathe out.

Step 5: Reflect on how this exercise affected your state of mind. Did it bring a sense of calm? When you're ready, gently open your eyes.

Option 2 (full instructions)

Step 1: Bring your attention to your feet. You can close your eyes or leave them open. As you sit here, begin by bringing your attention to your feet. Really tuning into the sensation of your feet as they touch the floor... noticing what that feels like... which parts of the soles of your feet are in contact with the floor and which are not... exploring and investigating these sensations with patience, kindness and curiosity.

Step 2: Explore your legs. Now, including all the sensations of your feet, notice what it's like to be wearing socks and shoes (if you are!). Feeling now the weight and texture of your legs... the lower halves... and the upper halves... letting yourself explore what legs feel like from the inside...

Step 3: Anchor your awareness in the lower half of your body. And now expanding your awareness to include all the sensations of the lower half of the body... it's almost as if you're listening to the lower half of the body... receiving all its textures as they change moment by moment... Feet on the floor, bum on the chair... anchoring your awareness in the lower half of your body...

Step 4: Notice your breath. And then feeling the sensation of breathing in your awareness. Letting yourself be refreshed and nourished by your in-breathing and allowing yourself really to relax as you breathe out.

Step 5: Finally, notice how doing this exercise has affected your mind state...

Do you notice it having any calming effect? And then, when you are ready, gently allow your eyes to open.

Reflective questions:

- o What effect did doing this exercise have on your mind and on your body?
- o What did you notice during the practice? What did you feel?
- o Can you use this practice while being in a stressful situation, before a difficult exam, on the first day in a new job or while dating? Does it help reduce your stress level and make you feel more calm and confident?

Tips for facilitators

- Prior to beginning, ask the youth how stress feels in their bodies. When stressed, energy rises, causing tension and fast, shallow breathing.
- Explain that this exercise helps us observe our internal state just like we observe our surroundings. Encourage giving space to restless, sluggish, or turbulent thoughts, respecting and being curious about them.
- Emphasise that allowing our experiences without suppression is crucial for calming the mind. Lastly, highlight how focusing on the lower body, especially the feet, can help in calming down. Encourage practising FOFBOC whenever they feel stressed, even while walking.

Activity 3: Body Scan Meditation

Step 1: We can start. Breathe in slowly through your nose for four periods: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4. Breathe out through your mouth even more slowly, for eight periods, as if you were blowing up a huge bubble: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8. Now you can breathe naturally.

Step 2: Focus your attention on your left leg. Just notice your left foot - toes, heel, foot, instep. Notice how it feels.

Step 3: Then move to your left ankle. Are you aware of any physical sensations in your left ankle? Is it cold or warm? Does your ankle feel light or heavy, Is there any pain? If you don't feel anything, it's OK.

Step 4: Pay attention to your left leg from the foot to the knee, the thigh, the top of the leg to the hip. Notice if your left leg is tense or relaxed, warm or cold, light or heavy.

Step 5: Now, notice your right leg. Focus on your right foot - the toes, the heel, the sole of the right foot, the instep. Notice how it feels.

Step 6: Then move to your right ankle. Notice how it feels. Pay attention to whether you notice any physical sensations there. Is it cold, or warm? Does the ankle feel light or heavy, do you feel any pain or discomfort? Maybe you don't feel anything there, it's OK.

Step 7: Pay attention to the right leg from the foot to the knee, the thigh, and the top of the leg to the hip. Notice if your right leg is tense or relaxed, warm or cold, light or heavy.

Step 8: Now focus on both feet from the toes up to the hip. Stay still, breathe and send kind and loving thoughts to your feet. Express your gratitude for all the work they do for you.

Step 9: Now move your attention to the abdomen. Notice what you feel there. Do you feel any sensations in your belly? Let it be as it is. Send love and kindness to your belly, and thank your belly for all the work it does for you.

Step 10: Now notice your back, from your hips up to your shoulders. Feel the sensations there. Just sit/lie for a moment and notice your back. If you don't feel any sensations there, it's OK.

Step 11: Now move your attention to your fingers, thumbs, wrists, arms and shoulders. Just notice how your hands feel.

Step 12: Focus on your neck and throat. Swallow and notice what you feel in your throat and neck.

Step 13: Now feel your face: chin, mouth, cheeks, eyes, eyebrows, forehead and finally your ears.

Step 14: Now see if you can sense the whole body resting here. If you want, send love and kindness to the whole body as a gratitude to everything it does for you every day.

Step 15: Now take a big breath into your belly and fill your whole body with air. Gently exhale the air as if you are blowing a huge bubble and getting rid of everything that needs to go away.

Step 16: Slowly at your own pace, open your eyes and bring your attention back to the room.

Reflective questions:

- o How did you feel during the body scan? What did you notice about your body? Were you able to keep your attention on the body? Did your mind wander elsewhere or did you fall asleep? How did it feel to send love and kindness to your body?
- o How did you feel after the activity? Did you feel more relaxed or agitated? (there is no right or wrong way to feel after body-scan)

Tips for facilitators

- Explain to the youth that body scanning involves attentively focusing on

each body part one by one, commonly used in mindfulness programs. Its purpose is to promote relaxation, body acceptance, coping with discomfort, and enhancing mindfulness.

- If possible, have them lie down or sit comfortably during the practice. If they feel uneasy or emotional, offer the option to pause or stop and be ready to discuss any arising issues. Acknowledge that some may confront deep-seated emotions, particularly if they've experienced trauma. Guide them through integrating past memories with their present sense of safety.

Activity 4: Hand Heat Practice

Step 1: Rub your hands together vigorously.

Step 2: Notice the heat building.

Step 3: Stop and allow the hands to rest in your lap or on your desk.

Step 4: Bringing your attention to the sensation in your hands... What do they feel like? Is there any tingling or pulsing?

Step 5: Are the sensations the same in both hands? Maybe there are no sensations and that is okay too. We are just beginning to explore using our Sensing Mode (see infographic to Activity 4).

Step 6: Noticing the sensations in the palms, the fingers. Are they changing or fading?

Reflective questions:

- o What was that like? What did I notice?
- o How often do I find myself still, focusing on just my senses – seeing, tasting, touching, hearing, smelling? Am I comfortable with doing just one thing, or am I multi-tasking most of the time – e.g. drinking coffee and surfing social media, driving a car while eating...
- o How do I understand what mindfulness is? Why can it be useful to be mindful? If you don't know, watch these two videos here and after that try to answer this question:

1. How Mindfulness Empowers Us: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzKryaN44ss>

2. Why Mindfulness Is a Superpower:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02q5hnT4>

Tips for facilitators

- We seldom give youth a reason why they have to learn certain subjects. But when teaching mindfulness to young people we like to provide them with a clear rationale for why they might want to learn this. Through this activity we

explore mindfulness as a skill that can help cultivate overall wellbeing. One way of starting this discussion might be to drop straight into the theme of busyness and mindfulness. There are some great memes you can use that capture the idea that just doing one thing like drinking coffee and not even looking at your phone or computer is psychopathic (see *infographic to Activity 4*). Invariably this will get a few giggles and explore the suggestion that it's "crazy" to just be drinking coffee. *Why would it be weird to just sit there?* This can lead to a discussion about stillness, our inability to be still, our perpetual busyness, and multi-tasking. *Have we lost the capacity to be comfortable with just doing one thing?* This exercise is fundamentally about being present. But *what does being present actually mean?*

- Explain to youth the difference between Thinking and Sensing Mode (see *infographic*).
- It is important to make sure you don't give the impression that thinking is wrong! You are just introducing the idea of using sensing to bring some respite from our overly busy minds.

Activity 5: Mindful Tasting

Step 1: We will pretend to be tasters. They are the people who taste food to see if it tastes the way it should. No rush. You will eat this food mindfully. We will teach our brains to pay attention to what and how we eat.

Step 2: If you don't mind, close your eyes. Take a small piece of food you prepared earlier. First, hold the food in your fingers. Notice if it is soft, hard, smooth, bumpy, wet, dry, hot, or cold.

Step 3: Slowly bring the food to your nose and smell it. Can you smell anything? Now lick it. Notice what you feel on your tongue.

Step 4: Put the food in your mouth, but don't bite yet. Just roll it around in your mouth.

Step 5: Now take a little bite. Notice how it tastes. You're a taster and your job is to really focus on how the food tastes. Notice if it's crunchy, soft, hard, spicy, cold, rough on the surface, moist, or dry. Is it sweet, salty, sour or spicy? Bite slowly and focus on the sensation in your mouth. Notice what you feel on your teeth, your tongue, your upper palate.

Step 6: When you have chewed enough, swallow the food and notice how it slides down your throat and into your stomach. How far did the food travel before you stopped noticing it? What do you feel in your mouth when the food is no longer there? What do you feel in your stomach?

Step 7: Then repeat the process with another piece of food. Try 4-5 different foods with different characteristics such as texture, taste, etc.

Reflective questions:

- o What did I notice in my body when I tasted the food?
What did I notice about the food I tasted – its texture, taste, temperature and smell? Did I guess blindly what the food was? Did I like it or not? Did I notice anything new about a food I was already familiar with? How were the foods different from each other? Which one did I like best?
- o Did I start to get impatient during the exercise? Was I able to move slowly and enjoy the tasting, or did I have the urge to eat faster?

Tips for facilitators

- Mindful tasting is a good way to help youth develop an awareness of the present moment. It is a process of awareness from the outer to the inner. This technique provides a fun matching game to help youth increase mindfulness of taste.
- Use infographics to help youth become aware of how different food tastes.
- Focusing on food is another great way to practice mindfulness daily. We eat 3-5 times each day. Encourage youth to set aside time for at least one meal a day – it can be breakfast, lunch, snack or dinner. The idea is to slow down at the plate, pay attention only to the food, put the phone away, turn off the TV and other distractions, and focus only on the food they are eating.

Activity 6: Finger Tracing Breathing Practice

Step 1: Start by standing or sitting tall with feet planted on the ground or crossed at the ankles (whichever feels most comfortable). Take a few deep breaths through your nose and then exhale out through your mouth.

Step 2: Once you're settled into the rhythm of your breath, use your index finger to trace the outline of each finger on the opposite hand. On the in-breath, trace up the outside of your left thumb with your right index finger. On the out-breath, trace down the other side. The goal is to match the movement with your breath.

Step 3: Keep tracing until you reach your pinky finger before starting over again with your pointer finger; then repeat several times until you feel settled into a relaxed state. Notice how you feel afterwards.

Reflective questions:

- o How do I feel directly after the exercise? Do I feel any different than I did before I started? What physical sensations do I notice in my body now?
- o What happened to the breathing when I focused on it? Did my breathing slow down?
- o When could I use this technique during the day?

Tips for facilitators

- Finger tracing breathing practice is an effective tool for teaching youth mindful awareness in just a few minutes—and it comes with many benefits! Not only does it give young people an opportunity to explore different

sensations within the body (such as touch), but it also helps them cultivate patience and concentration while learning how to stay present in any given moment. In addition, this practice helps youth tune into subtle physical cues such as tension or stress that may arise when they don't feel settled or relaxed. Explain to the youth all the benefits of this exercise before you start.

- You can print and distribute to the youth the infographics and encourage them to practice on their own whenever they feel overwhelmed or stressed.

Activity 7: Hot Chocolate Breath Practice

Step 1: Imagine you have a cup of hot chocolate that smells very good but is too hot to drink.

Step 2: As you hold it in your hands, you can breathe through your nose to smell it, then blow very gently on it to cool it down. Careful no to splash it!

Step 3: Just try that a few times now. Breathe in through your nose to smell it, then blow gently on it to cool it down. Be careful not to splash it!

Step 4: Just try that a few times now. Breathe in through the nose and blow out gently through the mouth.

What many people find with this type of breathing is that it calms their system down a little. You might not have noticed anything right now, but try practising this again sometime when you are already calm and see how it feels. Then you can use this breathing when you feel anxious or upset.

Reflective questions:

- o What did I notice? How did I feel while I was breathing in and out?
- o How did it feel to focus on your breathing? Did my thoughts drift elsewhere?

Tips for facilitators

- For some people, it's an interesting anchor to use because the breath is always changing – from in, to out to in – and we can watch this flow with our awareness by bringing our attention to it. Explain to youth you will try doing this now, but if at any time they don't feel comfortable focusing on the breath, they can choose something else from this toolkit – they can use body or sounds as their anchor instead of breath.
- Silence and breathing exercises can sometimes bring up strong emotions, especially in youth/adults who have experienced some form of trauma. Therefore it is important to make mindfulness in the classroom feel invitational. One way to support youth is by offering a few choice points within any practice and showing them from the beginning that they can find various ways to resource themselves if they experience discomfort. For example, sometimes choosing not to continue with a practice can be a form of self-care. Let youth know they can keep their eyes open if they feel safer or they can use a different anchor if, for example, focusing on the breath provokes any anxiety. They don't always have to follow your guidance! It is

all about making conscious decisions to support themselves.

Activity 8: Stepping Back: Watching the thought traffic of your mind

Notice: Before you start your meditation practice, set the duration on your timer. You can start with 15 minutes and, after some practice, get on 30 minutes.

Step 1: So let's practice bringing our attention to traffic that's coming and going in our minds right now. Beginning by sitting comfortably in the chair – upright but also relaxed... Feeling the sensations of your feet on the floor and the weight of your body on the chair... Allowing your eyes gently to close... Remember you can always open your eyes if you need to.

Step 2: Turning your attention first to the sounds coming and going. You may notice the mind wanting to label, picture, or tell you what they are. Exploring instead what it's like to direct your attention to the **texture** and **qualities** of each sound. Noticing how sounds arise – they fizz, vibrate, flicker – and then pass away. Perhaps noticing their **volume** (whether they are loud or soft).. their pitch (whether they are high or low)... whether they are continuous or intermittent...

Step 3: Let all sounds come and go. Playing with directing your attention to sounds coming from **outside the room**. What sounds can you hear?... Just allowing these sounds to arrive at your ears without going out to find them... receiving them...

Step 4: When you are ready, draw your focus closer... to sounds from **inside this room**. Again, letting these sounds come to you... no need to go and find them... focussing as best as you can on the texture and qualities of each sound rather than any label or picture of what you think might be making it.

Step 5: How about drawing the focus of attention even closer? Can you notice **any sounds inside your own body?** The sound of your normal, quiet breathing? ...your heart beating or pulsing softly in your ears? ... any sense of high-pitched background sound, sometimes called "the sound of silence" that's often in our ears... (If you can't hear any of these sounds, don't worry. You can just practice being open to sounds from inside and outside the room, coming and going.)

Step 6: Something else that comes and goes is thoughts. As you sit here, you may notice that thoughts appear in the mind, stay for a bit, and then go. If this is happening, you can practice just letting them come and go, allowing the traffic of thoughts to flow through your mind.

Step 7: It can really help to imagine yourself sitting at the bus stop and seeing thoughts as buses that are just passing through the mind. Just letting the thought traffic come and go... keeping in contact with the sensation of your feet on

the floor and of your body breathing itself...letting the various thoughts-busses arrive and pass... no need to get on-board.

Step 8: When you notice that thoughts have carried you away, just practice bringing yourself back by feeling your feet on the floor and noticing your breathing. You could also try saying to yourself, "**This is just a thought. Thoughts come, thoughts go.**" Alternatively, if the bus metaphor works for you, you could try simply saying, "**Thought buses... Thought buses.**"

Step 9: This is **NOT** about pushing the thoughts away, but simply recognising them for what they are, and practicing not needing to get or stay on-board. Then when you're ready, feeling your feet on the floor again, and then gradually opening your eyes.

Reflective questions:

- o How was that? What did I notice?
- o How was the thought-traffic in my mind? Did any thought-buses really pull me on board?

Tips for facilitators

- This activity is all about our relationship with our thinking and realising that our thinking can sometimes get us easily into trouble. You can start the lesson by inviting the youth to answer a question: "How is the traffic in your mind today?" One way of beginning to explore this is to experiment with seeing your thinking as traffic – head traffic that's coming and going through your mind. Then ask another question: "How does the thought traffic in your head feel right now? Do the roads of your mind feel quite clear? Is the traffic moving fast? Is it flowing? Or is it jammed up? Busy? Heavy?" And then ask another question: "How are you relating to your thinking at this moment? Are you totally involved in your thoughts and perhaps feeling lost in them? Or are you able to watch your thoughts come and go? Can you step back and observe them arriving and leaving?"
- Notice it is important not to give the impression that thinking is the enemy, that you are encouraging 'no thought'. It's also important not to trivialise the importance of some thoughts. Youth may well be experiencing thoughts that need to be recognised, honored and acted upon. What this activity highlights is that it's RELATIONSHIP with thinking that matters. Instead of freedom FROM thinking, we're practicing freedom WITH thinking.

Resources:

- Debra Budrick: Mindfulness u dětí a dospívajících – 154 technik a aktivit (Grada 2019)
- Kevin Hawkins and Amy Burke: Mindful Teacher's Toolkit (Corwin 2021)
- Mindfulness in Schools Project, 2013
- <https://www.mbodiedwisdom.com/post/finger-tracing-breathing-practice-a-fun-and-engaging-way-to-teach-kids-mindfulness>

- <https://selspace.ca/modules/mindfulness/mindfulness-junior/mindful-moments-junior/>
- Mindfulness series: <https://www.netflix.com/cy/title/81280926>
- Meditation and Sleep Made Simple App <https://www.headspace.com/>
- Body-scan audio recording <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZdw6wm3A3E>
- You can watch the JusTme finger tracing video here <https://selspace.ca/modules/mindfulness/mindfulness-junior/mindful-moments-junior/>

BENEFIT

How to Be Mindful?

Use your 5 senses as an anchor to a present moment

Touch What material am I touching right now?
With my hands and feet.

Taste What taste is on my tongue?

Hearing What sounds and noises can I hear right now?

Sight What can I see? Explore the surroundings, you can name the objects you see.

Smell What can I smell right now?

This anchoring calms us down:

- Slows our heart-rate
- Steadies our breathing
- Calms our thinking

When we feel less stressed, we feel more confident and more able to cope with whatever is happening.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them. Project Number: DE04 - KA220 - YOU - 000085433

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Module 3: Resilience

What is Resilience?

Frequently, people mistake resilience for continuously just getting on with the trials and tribulations of life. However, resilience is not just the ability to 'bounce back' from situations, it is about learning to adapt and grow through adversity. In order to do this we must do the work to create a happy brain. Happy brains are brains that are connected, practise gratitude and compassion, and remain hopeful.

Resilience is not a static thing; everybody can grow their resilience. We can do this by choosing and practising the actions, behaviours and attitudes contributing to a happy brain. I.e., gratitude, compassion, helpfulness and connectedness.

Activity 1: Will it Matter in Five Years?

In order to build resilience a great activity to practise is asking yourself;

Will it Matter in Five Years?

Step 1: Read the series of hypothetical scenarios or real-life case studies, each representing common but minor challenges that young people face every day. For example, social media overwhelm unreliable WIFI, public speaking, fear of looking or feeling silly or uncomfortable.

Step 2: Analyse the case studies and determine one simple answer: Will it Matter in 5 Years Time? Discuss your perspectives with at least one person.

Step 3: Set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound goals (SMART) related to building resilience. For example, commit to practising mindfulness for ten minutes every day, or practise perspective-taking the next time you are faced with an issue you feel stressed out about.

Step 4: Share with at least one person what you felt was important and not so important concerning the case studies and initiate a dialogue to learn from one another's perspectives.

Reflection questions:

- o What was your initial reaction when presented with the concept of "Will it matter in 5 years?" Did your perspective change throughout the activity and if so, how?
- o Thinking of the case study that resonated with you the most, how did you assess its significance in the context of the next 5 years?
- o Were there any challenges you perceived as significant at the beginning of the activity but later realised they may not have any long-lasting impacts on your life? If so, how did that realisation make you feel?
- o What insights, if any, did you gain from the group discussions?
- o What have you learned - what skill / what knowledge
- o How can you use the learned skill/knowledge in everyday life

Tips for facilitators

- Encourage diverse perspectives and advocate for inclusivity by acknowledging and valuing the various perspectives and experiences that participants bring to the activity.
- Explain that within the group discussions if there is something they do not feel comfortable sharing, they should not feel any pressure to do so and to only share what they feel comfortable with.
- Tell them it is normal to feel stressed or anxious about some of the topics included in the case studies and that this activity is not to make them feel bad about being stressed.

Activity 2:

Planting the Seeds to Grow your Resilience

Step 1: Begin the activity with a breathwork exercise. Ask participants to take a deep inhale and a slow exhale, three times. This will centre participants and allow them to immerse themselves in the activity fully.

Step 2: Inform the participants of the importance of remaining hopeful in difficult and troubling situations. Remaining hopeful reminds us that brighter and better days are ahead and that the worries or anxieties that are present at the moment will pass eventually. Remaining hopeful is what fuels our resilience to continue to grow.

Step 3: Distribute seeds to participants. Ask them to write down a specific challenge they may face in the future. Have them write down some positive aspects of growth opportunities that could come from this specific challenge that they are facing.

Step 4: Hand out the pots for participants to plant their seeds in. Ask them to put the paper they have written with their positive thoughts at the bottom of the pot and put the seeds and soil on top. This is to represent growth through adversity and, therefore resilience building.

Step 5: Allow for time at the end of the activity for participants to sit and reflect on their experience of participating in the activity.

Reflection questions:

- o What emotions did you experience while participating in the activity?
- o How did identifying positive aspects of the challenge you are facing change your perspective on it?
- o Were there any unexpected insights or realisations that emerged from the activity?
- o Do you see yourself using the positive thinking techniques discussed in the activity in your day-to-day life and if so, how?
- o Reflective question: what have I learned - what skill / what knowledge have I gained?
- o How can I use the learned skill/knowledge in my everyday life?

Tips for facilitators

- Encourage participants to take their time with both aspects of writing involved in this activity. Let them know there are no wrong answers. Make sure to reassure them that you understand the sensitivity of the topic and that there are no time constraints. This will create an open and safe environment.
- Try and reinforce the narrative that resilience is intrinsically linked to growth. Emphasise that resilience is a continuous journey and continue to encourage participants to view challenges as opportunities for growth and learning. .

Activity 3: Mantra Meditation for practising gratitude

Step 1: Find a quiet and comfortable place where you feel totally relaxed and safe. Sit comfortably on the ground and rest your hands on your lap or knees.

Step 2: Set an intention. It can be very simple. Something like "I am here today to reflect on the things I am grateful for in my life"

Step 3: Focusing on your breath, begin to centre yourself. Pay attention to how you feel when you inhale and when you exhale.

Step 4: Choose your gratitude mantra. Pick one that resonates with you personally, but, for example it could be "I am grateful for the love in my life".

Step 5: Repeat the mantra. Do this without speaking out loud. Let it flow with the rhythm of your breath. As you inhale, silently say the first part of the mantra, and as you exhale, say the second part.

Step 6: As you continue with the mantra, begin to bring more specific aspects to mind that you are grateful for. Like if you said, "I am grateful for the love in my life", reflect on who that love is from or what it is about it that you're grateful for.

Step 7: Visualise the things that you are grateful for. See them clearly as you continue to inhale and exhale.

Step 8: After sometime let go of the mantra and sit in stillness. Reflect on and appreciate the experience no matter how subtle or profound it was for you.

Step 9: When you are ready, open your eyes. Carry the feelings of gratitude that you have just practised with you as you go about the rest of your day.

Reflection questions:

- o Did you notice any shifts in your emotions or overall mindset during the meditation?
- o What did you find the most powerful or meaningful about this meditation?
- o Did any specific moments or images stand out to you during this meditation?
- o What have you learned - what skill / what knowledge
- o How can I use the learned skill/knowledge in everyday life

Tips for facilitators

- Create a safe and supportive environment for youths to practise this mantra meditation. Ensure the space feels quiet comfortable and free from external distractions.
- Encourage youths to practise mantra meditation continuously. The more consistent the gratitude practice is in their daily lives, the more emotional resilience they will build up.
- Provide flexibility in the activity. Offer a selection of mantras or allow participants to choose their own as different participants may resonate with different mantras or forms of gratitude expressions.

Activity 4: Nurturing Resilience

Step 1: Find a quiet and comfortable place where you feel totally relaxed and safe. Sit comfortably on the ground and rest your hands on your lap or knees.

Step 2: Close your eyes and take a deep breath in and a deep breath out, repeat this until you feel calm and relaxed, letting go of any tension that may be in the body.

Step 3: Bringing awareness to the present moment, focus on each of your senses. If you'd like, open your eyes and notice a few things you can see; with your eyes closed, notice what you can hear, smell, touch and taste.

Step 4: Take a moment to reflect on a challenging experience from your past that you overcame. Commend yourself on how well you did to overcome that challenge. Think about your strengths and qualities that you used to navigate through it. Congratulate yourself.

Step 5: Reflect on your core values as an individual. Think about what it is that makes you equipped to get through difficult times.

Step 6: Now take a moment to reflect on aspects of your life that you are grateful for even in the face of adversity. Recognise how much you have to be grateful for despite trying times.

Step 7: When you are ready, open your eyes. Carry the feelings of gratitude and pride in yourself that you have just practised with you as you go about the rest of your day.

Reflection questions

- o What strengths and qualities did you draw upon when recalling a specific challenge you faced in the past?
- o How did reflecting on your core values impact your understanding of yourself?
- o What if any lessons about resilience did you gain from this mindfulness activity?
- o What have you learned - what skill / what knowledge
- o How can I use the learned skill/knowledge in everyday life

Tips for facilitators

- Create a safe and supportive environment for youths to practise this mantra meditation. Ensure the space feels quiet and comfortable and free from external distractions.
- Recognise that everyone will have a unique experience during the activity, encourage participants to reflect on their prompts in their own way and at their own pace.

Activity 5: Caught in a Trap - but you CAN walk out

Step 1: On a sticky note write down a thinking trap that you have experienced before. A thinking trap (TT) is a certain type or pattern of thinking that tends to trap us into anxiety. Thinking traps are especially common amongst youths and some recurring TTs are catastrophising, overgeneralising, assuming the negative outcome, and black and white thinking patterns.

Step 2: On another sticky note write down some of your strengths as an individual. Take your time and allow your brain to praise yourself and think highly of yourself.

Step 3: Take some time to visualise your past self in a thinking trap. Imagine you can go back in time and let yourself know that you will grow through this adversity. When you travel back to your past self, imagine yourself being told about all of your wonderful strengths as an individual.

Step 4: Thank yourself for the reminder of your own resilience. Take a moment to strategise on how you can remind yourself of your strength the next time you experience a thinking trap. Write some of your thoughts down on a piece of paper.

Step 5: Congratulate yourself on how you were able to remind yourself of your own strength and ability to grow.

Reflection questions:

- o What do you think your individual strengths are when faced with thinking traps such as catastrophising, overgeneralising, assuming the negative outcome, and black and white thinking patterns?
- o How do you think you will cope if/when you next fall into a thinking trap? Can you write down any ways you think you can help yourself?

- o What if any lessons about resilience did you gain from this activity?
- o Reflective question: What have you learned - what skill / what knowledge
- o How can I use the learned skill/knowledge in everyday life

Tips for facilitators

- Create a safe and supportive environment for youths to practise this activity. Ensure the space feels quiet and comfortable and free from external distractions.
- Recognise that everyone will have a unique experience during the activity, encourage participants to reflect on their past experiences in their own way and at their own pace.

Activity 7: Gratitude Journal

Step 1: Choose a journal that works best for you. It can be lined or unlined, colourful or plain. As long as it suits you it does not matter.

Step 2: Starting off with a gratitude journal can be overwhelming. Start small but be consistent with it, trying to write in your journal at the same time everyday will make it into habit.

Step 3: Remember to be as specific as possible about what it is that you are grateful for. It does not have to be a huge factor in your life, something you are grateful for could be the playlist of music that you listened to on your commute to work in the morning.

Step 4: Try and turn negative into positive. For example, maybe you just experienced a personal challenge in your life. Try and think about what it taught you, what strengths you used to get through it and what core values you have that made you able to overcome the recent adversity. Always try to practise gratitude in every situation in life.

Step 5: Attempt to write in your gratitude journal everyday for at least a week and think about whether it has had a good effect on you.

Reflection Questions

- o How did reflecting on the things you are grateful for make you feel after writing in your journal?
- o Did you feel any sense of stress relief after you had written in your journal?
- o Did you notice any difference in your perspective on things after you began writing in your gratitude journal?
- o What have you learned - what skill / what knowledge have I gained?
- o How can you use the learned skill/knowledge in everyday life?

Tips for facilitators

- Create a safe and supportive environment for youths to practise gratitude whilst journaling. Ensure the space feels quiet comfortable and free from external distractions.
- Reassure youths that sometimes at the beginning it may feel somewhat strange to write down what you are grateful for every day but let them know that it is a great opportunity to grow their resilience.

Activity 8: Happy Brains are Busy Brains - Get Busy Helping

Step 1: Take some time in a quiet environment that is both comfortable and safe for you to reflect on your strengths as a person. Think about what qualities make you able to deal with challenges.

Step 2: With your own strengths in mind try and tell yourself often that you are able to get yourself through any challenges you are faced with because of these qualities. The more you tell yourself this the quicker it will engrain in your mind and you will subconsciously begin to naturally think these things.

Step 3: With this in mind the next time you are faced with somebody in need of your help, draw upon these qualities and use them in order to help this person. The person in need of help may simply need a shoulder to lean on, and you have just identified that one of your strengths is your compassion. Put it to good use and be that shoulder to lean on.

Reflection Questions

- o What did you learn about yourself through doing this activity of helping another person for nothing in return?
- o What were your strengths?
- o How can you use your strengths to help others in the future, how will you implement them into doing good for others?
- o What have you learned - what skill / what knowledge have I gained?
- o How can you use the learned skill/knowledge in everyday life?

Tips for facilitators

- Ensure to tell the participants that the space in which the activity takes place is that of a safe one where no immediate danger is anticipated.
- Be open-minded. Some people's interpretations of helping are different to others. Encourage an open-minded and non-judgemental environment.
- While it's important to guide the participants throughout the steps of the activity, avoid telling them how to help another person. This is a very personal activity.



Resilience

5 ways to become more resilient

5 by 5 rule

When confronting difficult situations, if it won't matter in 5 years, don't spend more than 5 minutes worrying about it



Inner Growth

Just as a garden requires care and attention, nurturing your emotions can lead to personal growth and increased ability to navigate life's challenges

Mantra Meditation

By repeating positive affirmations or words, you create a focused and serene mental space, building a sense of direction and purpose in your life



Nurturing Resilience

Adopt a holistic approach to self-care, emphasising practices that promote emotional balance, self-awareness, and the ability to adapt positively

Busy, Happy Brains

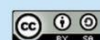
Channel your energy into meaningful and positive activities to boost your mood and contribute to the well-being of others



Emotional resilience is a valuable trait that empowers individuals to navigate life's challenge with grace and strength, building overall well-being and personal growth



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Module 4: Relationships Matter

ACTIVITY 1: Understanding Relationships

Step 1: Read this definition of relationships and the four categories:

<https://assertbh.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Different-Types-of-Relationships.pdf>

Step 2: Take out a piece of paper, at least A4-size. Put yourself in the middle of the paper, with your name or as a drawing. Then add the ten most important persons in your life at random places on the paper, surrounding you and connect them with your name with the help of a line.

Step 3: Under each person, write what kind of relationship you have.

Step 4: Read the following article on components and benefits of healthy relationships:

<https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/5-benefits-of-healthy-relationships>

Step 5: Take out your relationship map. Under each person, write what you like about the relationship – don't forget to define how they make you feel.

Step 6: At the line that connects you with the person, try to define how you make them feel and what you think that they like about your relationship.

Step 7: Take a moment to reflect on and feel grateful about the relationships you have in life.

Reflection questions

- o What is a relationship?
- o What do you think are the most important aspects of a relationship?
- o How do the close relationships that you have in life make you feel? Why?
- o If you feel comfortable, please share about one of the persons that are important in your life – which relationship do you have? How do they make you feel? What do you give in that relationship?
- o Did you learn and reflect on something in particular during this experience that you want to share?
- o What have you learned and reflected about your personal relationships? How can you use it to further improve your role in your relationships from today onwards?
- o What do you feel thankful about when thinking about your closest relationships?

Tips for facilitators

- o The task includes a fair amount of reading and self-reflection. If you think that it is too difficult for your students, you can instead opt to present the content of the two articles in the classroom or insert a common reflection round after reading them, to ensure that everyone understood what they read. For the

group reflection round, you can adjust the questions to an appropriate level for your participants.

- o Walk around during the exercise and see if you can help students in the process of defining their relationships.
- o The exercise is supposed to not only be a traditional learning exercise. It is also thought to invoke a feeling of gratitude and thankfulness. Students should get a feeling that they are surrounded by people who care. That other persons are important for their wellbeing and that they also affect others in a positive way. It is a positive and sensitive topic that needs to be moderated with care. Feel free to add your own personal experiences and helpful thoughts on the topic.

Activity 2: Forming Bonds

Step 1: Having strong bonds with other have positive affects on all aspects of life. They make you stay healthy, physically, and mentally and have an important practical impact on your life, for example when it comes to problem-solving. Read these tips on how to form strong bonds with others. The article [here](#) is focused on romantic relationships, but you can draw inspiration for other relationships too.

Step 2: Think about one relationship where you feel that there is a problem. Maybe you are arguing, you don't talk at the moment, or you just have a bad feeling about it, but you don't know what it is. Write down the person's name and define what you think the problem might be or what your feeling is.

Step 3: Look at the article [here](#): Reflect on each tip in relationship to the person. Try to operationalise it: write it down or create a voice memo for yourself.

- Would spending quality time help? Why/when/how can you initiate that?
- Could you try doing something differently or making your time together more fun? What/when/how?
- Would sharing your feelings and thoughts help? How would you go about it? What would you like to say?

Practice expressing yourself alone or with someone else before approaching the person you have an issue with.

- What questions could you ask to find out more about the situation and help resolve it?
- Can you express your concerns and needs to the person to make them understand your point of view? Start sentences with "I feel..."
- Listen actively to the person when they speak – what are they saying? What do they need from you and what are their concerns?
- How can you give more gratitude and support in that relationship? When?
- Don't let the issues take up too much of your time and effort. Remember to stay healthy, spend time with other people and make things you love.

Reflection questions

- o Use post-its to write down at least three ideas for how to form bonds with others or how you can approach an issue within a relationship. It shouldn't be the headlines that were presented in the article, but one's personal ideas stemming from the exercise in step three. Real-life examples are also welcome.
- o What are the benefits of bonds?
- o What is the impact/how do you feel when a bond is in jeopardy – that is when you feel you have a conflict with someone important?
- o How can you solve a conflict?
- o What can you do to form or deepen a bond with another person?

Tips for facilitators

- o Make sure that every participant has access to the article personally, either over the Internet or through a printed copy.
- o Walk around during the personal work section to see if you can help participants reflect and move forward.
- o During the group portion of the exercise, you have an important function as a facilitator. Make sure you categorise cards, moderate well and set the tone for a good working atmosphere. Invite participants to share and discuss.

Activity 3: Initiating Relationships (group activity)

Step 1: Take some time in a group or individually to reflect on what is important to you in relationships with others. If you don't know what those things are and what you need, there are other activities you can work through in this work program to reflect on that.

Collect questions that you can ask to really get to know another person.

Step 2: Speed dating. You sit directed towards another person in your group. As the bell rings, you have three minutes to get to know that person and they you. Ask questions. You may know some things about them – but there is always more to get to know. Think about what is important for you to feel that you really know a person. Ask follow-up questions on the answers you get. Take notes. After three minutes, you shift and get a new person in front of you and start over. This will be repeated seven times. Try to improve your approach and comfort with the situation each time.

Step 3: Work in groups of four and make a list of things that you can do and ask to get to know others. They don't have to come from the speed dating session.

Step 4: Present them in class and discuss.

Reflection questions:

- o How was the speed dating for you? Why?
- o How can you use this exercise in other areas of your life?
- o Is there any question or answer that you liked in particular and want to remember for the future?

- o What have you learned through the exercise?

Tips for facilitators

- o For step one, you can pick other modules for this workbook to go through before this exercise. Before initiating a friendship, it is good to have done some reflection on who you are, what you need and what values you have. Through activity 1 of this module, for example, participants can reflect on what relationships they already have and in what area they might be lacking.
- o You can collect questions you can ask on the board, together with your participants. Make sure you have some questions in mind before starting.
- o For step two – note that it is not speed dating in a romantic sense. The best way to place participants is in two rows with them facing each other. They can also stand up. After three minutes, one row always stays put and the other takes one step in one direction so that everyone has a new partner.
- o Facilitate step four.

Activity 4: Love and Relationships

Step 1: Learn about Sternberg's 3 Components of Love [here](#) and [here](#)

Step 2: Work in groups of two to four.

Group 1: Research and define (1) intimacy, (2) passion and (3)

commitment. Prepare a presentation for your peers. Make 3-4 examples to make the distinction clear.

Group 2: Research and define infatuation and unrequited love. What steps can you take from infatuation to romantic love? What can you do in a situation of unrequited love? Collect some ideas.

Group 3: Research and define romantic love and consummate love. What are the typical phases of romantic love? Read the article [here](#)

Group 4: Research and define empty and fatuous love. What is the difference between friendships and romantic love? What can be issues with empty or fatuous love?

Step 3: Present - all group present their findings to the class.

Reflection questions

- o **Drama-based exercise:** Team up in teams of two. You can decide who you want to team up with. Take a note from your teacher and have a look. On the note will be a type of love written down. You as partners should now, in front of the class, dramatise this specific love without speaking and without letting them know what topic you have. Have a quick chat with your drama partner before getting on stage on how you want to go about it.

- o What is the Sternberg's three components of the love model? Which are the three components?
- o Which different kinds of love are there?
- o What can be issues with empty or one-sided love?
- o How can you try to go from infatuation to romantic love?
- o What are typical phases of romantic love?

Tips for facilitators

- o Prepare how you want to work with step one with your class. You could hold a presentation, give it as homework or hand it out as personal or group work.
- o For step 2, think about how you want participants to present and do their research. For most content, they can stay at the very well mind webpage. A presentation can be developed in PowerPoint, an online tool like Canva or on a large piece of paper for example. Should they also prepare a handout for their fellow students?
- o Step two could also be given as a homework assignment.
- o For the reflection round, you need to prepare small notes with the seven kinds of love and put them together in a container for students to draw from. The flow of the exercise will need some support from you – make sure it remains at a good pace and respectful whilst staying fun.

Activity 5: Consent and Boundaries

Step 1: Browse through the webpage ([link](#)). Read what you find interesting and important. You can also go to their YouTube channel.

Step 2: Take the quiz [here](#). Even if you are not in a partnership – maybe you were? Or maybe you can make a fair guess based on other personal relationships how you would respond. Be truthful and write down those things that you can improve on.

Step 3: Research the webpage on the topics of consent, boundaries, conflict resolution, power and control. Note down the most important points for you on each topic. Write down some examples of how to ask someone for consent. Research a hotline or another possibility to reach out to someone if you are being abused in a relationship ([link](#)).

Step 4: On an A4 paper, create a fact sheet by hand or over a laptop. As a class, hang out the fact sheets at a designated place in the community, so that others can learn about the topics.

Reflection questions:

- o What is consent and how can you ask for it?
- o What kinds of boundaries are there and what have you learnt about them?
- o How can you solve conflicts?
- o What are signs that you are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship?
- o How can you get help if you are in a bad relationship?
- o Retake the quiz [here](#). Again, reflect on the points where you have tendencies to be unfair in your personal relationships. Set one or two things that you want to

change from now on and continue to work on them. A goal could be "I want to communicate truthfully, but in a respectful manner" or "I will accept when someone doesn't want to spend time with me and will practice not taking it in a bad way."

Tips for facilitators

- o This task can be given at least in part as homework.
- o Put some thought into what you want for the fact sheets. Do they need more guidance than the above described? Where can they be hung in school?
- o Should the fact sheets contain names when they hang in the school? It may be more fitting that you get them with names and can grade them and then have the names removed when they hang out in school.

Activity 6: Ending Relationships

Step 1: Browse through the following articles and videos. For each resource, do a voice memo on your phone of the top three most important points of the article.

The fear of ending a relationship ([link](#))

Reasons to end a relationship ([link](#))

Reasons to end a friendship ([link](#))

How to end a relationship ([link](#))

How to get over heartbreak ([link](#))

Step 2: Do an infographic on the topic of ending relationships with the five different categories above. You can use a tool like Canva. Use symbols and pictures to make it more striking.

Step 3: Have it printed and pinned in a room.

Reflection questions

- o What are good reasons to end a friendship or a relationship?
- o How do you end a relationship properly?
- o What are steps you can take to get over heartache?
- o Did you come to think about a personal experience with someone that you have ended or want to end a relationship with during this exercise?

Write down the situation. It will help you gain more clarity. Write down three things that you learned through this exercise that you want to take with you when dealing with the situation. It can be the way you are thinking about the heartache that already happened. It can be thinking about how to deal with any unhealthy relationships you are in or aspects where you need more courage.

Tips for facilitators

- o The exercise can be done as homework or in class. It would also be possible to have pairs of two working together.
- o Think about how you want to organise the production of the infographics. How can they be printed? If you know another program better than Canva - choose that so that you can support participants on a technical level too.

Activity 7: Relationship with Parents

Step 1: In this activity, look at the links below. Think about which topic speaks to you and have a look at the materials.

How to improve your relationship with your parents ([link](#)).

Find the courage to talk about mental health issues with your parents ([link](#))

Why teenagers need their parents – a parent perspective ([link](#))

Look up online where to turn if someone in your family isn't being treated right. Example for Ireland ([link](#))

Step 2: Write a gratefulness journal daily. Write down one thing daily that you are grateful about when you think about your family.

There is always room for more things to be grateful for. Maybe you can, through having an important conversation with someone, or change your behavior or view on things, increase the amount of gratefulness and joy you feel being a part of your family.

Write the journal for a month. If you find it beneficial, keep on writing.

Note: If you have a challenging relationship with your parents or someone else, remember, that everyone is carrying burdens you know nothing about. The reason why someone gets upset with you may have nothing to do with you personally. Trying to be the best version of yourself possible in your relationship with others is all you can do. Keep on learning and communicating and set boundaries where needed.

Reflection questions

- o After a month, go back and browse through your journal entries. How was the experience for you? Has it changed your view of your family or your contentment in life? Do you want to continue writing?
- o What have you learned about relationships with parents?
- o Which things do you want to act on in your own life?

Tips for facilitators

- o This activity is thought of as a self-reflection exercise. Participants don't need to work on all materials. It should be more about personal reflection. The exercise can be done as a homework assignment.

- o Make sure that you make yourself available, e. g. through a once-a-week open office, where your participants can come and ask questions or to reflect.
- o If you want to make sure, that everyone does the exercise, you can have them flip through the journal when you watch, but so that you're not able to read the content. Let them know that it should be personal and that the content will remain private.

BENEFIT

Tips for
**Forming and Deepening
Strong Bonds**

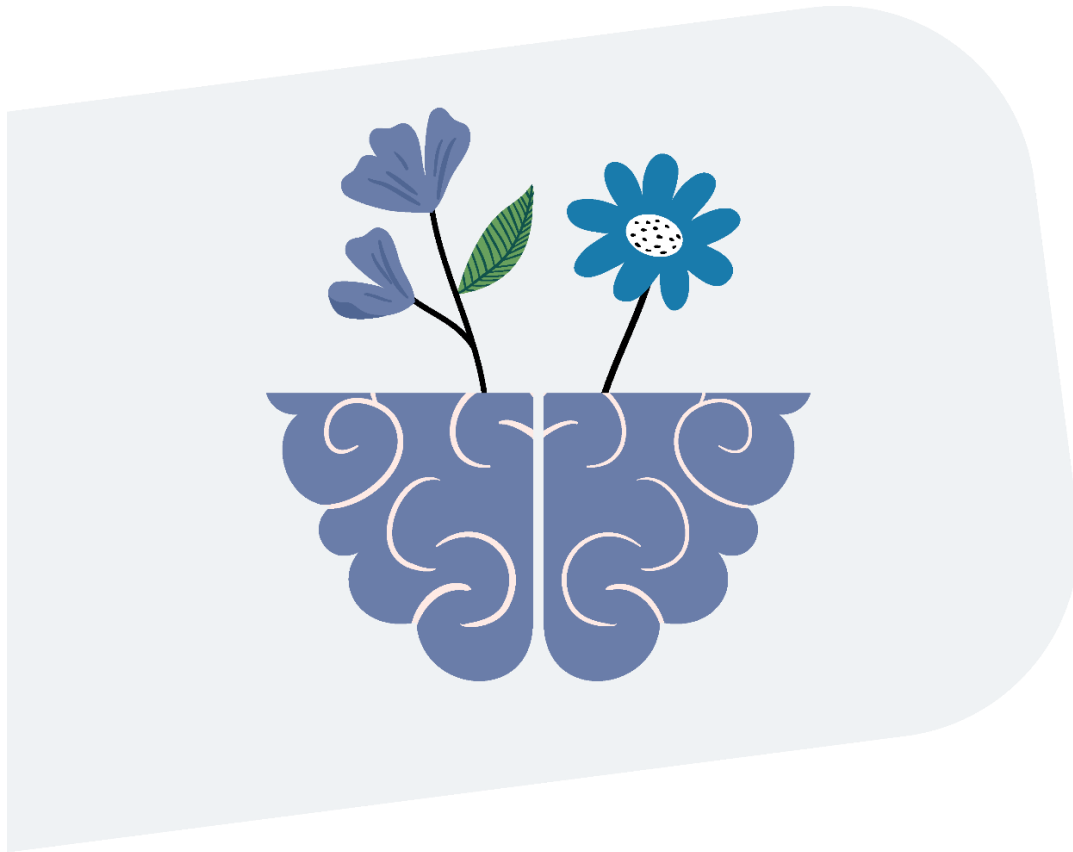
- Truly listen when the other speaks to you
- Ask questions
- Express gratitude often
- Share your thoughts and feelings
- Support the other
- Talk through conflicts respectfully
- Spend quality time together
- Tell the person what you need

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