



To HEAR & be HEARD

4-DAY CURRICULUM

TRAINING FOR YOUTH WORKERS & VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN DISTRESS

4-day curriculum *To hear & be heard* is one of the intellectual outcomes of strategic partnership project "Can you hear me? I hear you.", funded by the Erasmus+ program. The purpose of the project is to develop and explore support mechanisms to work with young people with fewer opportunities experiencing distress and to create a system of education for volunteers and youth workers within the day centers.

Partners in this project are: Mladinski center Zagorje (Slovenia), Daj mi ruku (Serbia) and Aseman Lapset ry (Finland).

Purpose: to empower youth workers, help them set boundaries and understand their role when it comes to working with youth in distress.

Aim: that youth workers feel confident working with youth in distress and are provided with tools and methods that support them at their work.

You can find descriptions of activities below and if you find it interesting or want to know more about it, feel free to contact Youth center Zagorje ob Savi via email: info@mczos.si [MAIL](#)

This 4 day training includes the Four fold practice [LINK](#), for each day one practice. The Four fold practice is the base of Art of Hosting [LINK](#). It is simply an observation that great conversations happen when people are present, when they participate, when they are hosted well and when they co-create something.

We use Four fold practice to establish a safe and creative environment for the participants, to enhance their learning process. It is also an opportunity for participants, youth workers and volunteers, to experience and recognize the importance of creating a safe space for young people in daily centers. The Four fold practice is offered as an approach to establish an appropriate environment for working with youth.

1ST DAY - HOSTING YOURSELF

Intro & getting to know each other (speed dating game)

We present the first part of the Four fold practice - Host yourself and emphasize the importance of first supporting yourself and the practice of being present if you wish to support young people in distress. Invite a collective slowing down so that all participants can be present together. This might be as simple as taking a moment of silence to rest into the present. You can also invite the group to answer one question like "How do you host yourself?" or "How do you experience life when you are fully present?" to open a debate.

Speed dating game*: We exchange pairs in multiple rounds, each pair has 5min to share and they get one question per round.

Questions:

- What sparks your eyes, what is your passion?
- What are you most grateful for?
- If you could have dinner with anyone in the world, who would it be and why?
- If you could have any superpower, which one would you choose and why?
- What are your dreams for the future?
- If you could eat only one dish for the rest of your life, what would you choose?

*you can also use any other getting-to-know-each-other-game you know

Team building activity* (building safe space from Legos)

We divide participants in small groups and give them legos. The task is that they create the best daily center for youth that is based on safe space. Each of them has a role in this dreamy center and space to create. They have 30min to build and then 30min for all the groups to present their centers. In the last 30min the whole group makes a poster with key elements of safe space.

*you can also use any other team-building activity you know

My role as a youth worker (my presence & my boundaries)

Each participant gets a blank paper (A3) where they draw a superhero, super youth worker.

They are also invited to write down the qualities, super powers, tools that a super youth worker should have. After 20min of individual drawing we invite participants to share in pairs what they draw and talk about how they feel as youth workers.

Afterwards we have a group discussion on the topic of the role of youth workers and boundaries.

Every young person is in need of a trusting and supportive adult. When young people face challenges, they seldom seek professional help, but look for support and advice in a non-formal context. Youth workers are often a part of this context, in which they provide a safe space for young people to share their problems, they listen actively and without judgment, and demonstrate honesty, openness, and empathy.

Youth workers' role is to:

- Provide a safe space for young people's self-exploration and self-awareness;
- Create an environment where failure is a natural part of learning;
- Engage young people in communication about personal strengths, values and self-acceptance;
- Encourage young people to explore various possibilities to be active, solve problems or experience life;
- Encourage young people to take care of each other and learn about self-care.

Reflection (pictures)

Have a set of pictures (it can be Dixit cards or a set of different photos) and invite participants to choose a card that visually represents how they feel about the day. They can share reflection in trios.

2ND DAY - HOSTING OTHERS

We present the second part of the Four fold practice - Hosting others. The basics of hosting others are to determine the need and the purpose, to create a powerful question, to encourage contributions and to harvest the outcomes.

It is about being courageous, inviting and willing to initiate conversations that matter.

Youth in distress (theory + building characters activity)

Theory part

Introduction: Presentation of the topic: What is distress?

We ask the participants to define distress from their experience. They write it on paper and those who want to share can.

For us it was really difficult to define it, we mostly found topics about mental health, but in this project, it is defined more broadly.

We describe the topic and its importance and define distress:

Distress can be described as "emotional, social, spiritual, or physical pain or suffering that may cause a person to feel sad, afraid, depressed, anxious, or lonely" (National cancer institute). Distress may affect how people think, feel, act and make decisions. People in distress can feel unable to manage or cope with changes in their life (National cancer institute; American Cancer Society). Therefore, distress may cause changes in youths' behavior, from showing their dissatisfaction loudly, and disobeying social and institutional norms to becoming very quiet, withdrawn, and socially alienated. In every scenario, those changes can be disturbing and stressful both for youth and others close to them (Harris, 2011).

We ask if the definition we give is different from theirs. In which way?

The significance of the topic:

These are key facts about mental health issues in the youth population found in multiple studies provided by WHO :

- One in seven adolescence between 15 and 19 years old have experienced mental difficulties or problems;

- Emotional disorders are most common in adolescence: 4,6% of young people have experienced anxiety and 2,8% had a depressive episode. Both anxiety and depression share some of the same symptoms and they affect school attendance and school work. Also, emotional disorders can lead to social isolation or loneliness;

- Behavioral disorders, like ADHD and conduct disorder, are more common in younger adolescence;

- Eating disorders, suicidal thoughts and self-harm can significantly affect the mental health of youth (WHO, 2017)

- Young people are particularly at risk of the effects of drunkenness, including accidents and violence; alcohol-related deaths account for around 25% of all fatalities in young men aged 15-29 (Health and Well-Being | European Youth Portal, n.d.).

Building characters - activity

Participants are divided into groups (2-3 people). They are given Dixit cards from which they can choose one card. They will choose the card which they associate with distress. The task is to imagine a story about the person from the card: Who is this person (age, what they do in life, interests, family context...)? How do they feel? Why are they feeling this way (different factors)? We give an example using one card. If somebody finishes early they can pick another card. They have 15-20 minutes. Each group or pair can present the story in any way they choose (drawing, acting...) and they have 3 minutes to do so.

Discussion

Based on the presented stories we lead a discussion with the following questions?

Did you base your story on something you experienced while working with youth in distress?

Do you recognize some similarities between stories? Which?

Can you tell us about some other problem that young people face which wasn't mentioned in the stories?

Once again we return to the picture to compare with the stories.

Also present and discuss this:

INDIVIDUAL ATTRIBUTES	SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES	ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS
LOW SELF-ESTEEM	LOW INCOME AND POVERTY	INJUSTICE AND DISCRIMINATION
SELF-ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE	ECONOMIC SECURITY	SOCIAL JUSTICE, TOLERANCE, INTEGRATION

Daily center structure (what is it, how it works)

We make 3 islands and 3 groups. Islands are what a youth workers' role is in Daily center? What are 3 needs in Daily centers? What is a youth worker's role in Daily center?

Each group goes around the papers and adds their answers. We check together all the 3 papers afterwards and have a discussion about it.

The aim of this activity is to write down and agree on the main key elements of what Daily center is, what we offer there to young people and what is our role as youth workers in Daily center.

Some of our theory for your is to: Be a part of a daily center for young people to spend quality free time in the company of their peers. The space is based on time in socializing, young people themselves choose what and how they will do. In the daily center, young people try out different roles, learn social skills, discover their desires, interests, get to know their strong areas, deepen their knowledge of their selves and mutual relationships, expand their social network, set goals for the future and gain positive experiences in life.

We ask if the definition we give is different from theirs. In which way?

The significance of the topic:

These are key facts about mental health issues in the youth population found in multiple studies provided by WHO :

- One in seven adolescence between 15 and 19 years old have experienced mental difficulties or problems;

- Emotional disorders are most common in adolescence: 4,6% of young people have experienced anxiety and 2,8% had a depressive episode. Both anxiety and depression share some of the same symptoms and they affect school attendance and school work. Also, emotional disorders can lead to social isolation or loneliness;

- Behavioral disorders, like ADHD and conduct disorder, are more common in younger adolescence;

- Eating disorders, suicidal thoughts and self-harm can significantly affect the mental health of youth (WHO, 2017)

- Young people are particularly at risk of the effects of drunkenness, including accidents and violence; alcohol-related deaths account for around 25% of all fatalities in young men aged 15-29 (Health and Well-Being | European Youth Portal, n.d.).

Reflection (cards)

Use some sets of cards for reflection or print them out on separate papers that participants can use in trios to reflect on the day.

3RD DAY - PARTICIPATE IN CONVERSATIONS

We present the second part of the Four fold practice - Be Hosted. This part means that you are willing to listen fully, respectfully, without judgment and thinking you already know the answers.

It is about practicing conversation mindfully.

Theory part

Introduction: Presentation of the topic: What is distress?

We ask the participants to define distress from their experience. They write it on paper and those who want to share can.

For us it was really difficult to define it, we mostly found topics about mental health, but in this project, it is defined more broadly.

We describe the topic and its importance and define distress:

Distress can be described as "emotional, social, spiritual, or physical pain or suffering that may cause a person to feel sad, afraid, depressed, anxious, or lonely" (National cancer institute). Distress may affect how people think, feel, act and make decisions. People in distress can feel unable to manage or cope with changes in their life (National cancer institute; American Cancer Society). Therefore, distress may cause changes in youths' behavior, from showing their dissatisfaction loudly, and disobeying social and institutional norms to becoming very quiet, withdrawn, and socially alienated. In every scenario, those changes can be disturbing and stressful both for youth and others close to them (Harris, 2011).

We ask if the definition we give is different from theirs. In which way?

The significance of the topic:

These are key facts about mental health issues in the youth population found in multiple studies provided by WHO :

- One in seven adolescence between 15 and 19 years old have experienced mental difficulties or problems;

- Emotional disorders are most common in adolescence: 4,6% of young people have experienced anxiety and 2,8% had a depressive episode. Both anxiety and depression share some of the same symptoms and they affect school attendance and school work. Also, emotional disorders can lead to social isolation or loneliness;

- Behavioral disorders, like ADHD and conduct disorder, are more common in younger adolescence;

- Eating disorders, suicidal thoughts and self-harm can significantly affect the mental health of youth (WHO, 2017)

- Young people are particularly at risk of the effects of drunkenness, including accidents and violence; alcohol-related deaths account for around 25% of all fatalities in young men aged 15-29 (Health and Well-Being | European Youth Portal, n.d.).

Protocol card & DC agreements

Present the protocol card "FIRST AID, 5 steps protocol for youth workers working with youth in distress" and its content and applicative use.

Setting a list of agreements for daily centers and talk about what is important for them.

Reporting system (how, why)

We learn that the reporting system can really help us to keep track of young people coming in, what is happening and how we can support them. This is important for the daily center.

Each group goes around the papers and adds their answers. We check together all the 3 papers afterwards and have a discussion about it.

The aim of this activity is to write down and agree on the main key elements of what Daily center is, what we offer there to young people and what is our role as youth workers in Daily center.

Some of our theory for your is to: Be a part of a daily center for young people to spend quality free time in the company of their peers. The space is based on time in socializing, young people themselves choose what and how they will do. In the daily center, young people try out different roles, learn social skills, discover their desires, interests, get to know their strong areas, deepen their knowledge of their selves and mutual relationships, expand their social network, set goals for the future and gain positive experiences in life.

We ask if the definition we give is different from theirs. In which way?

The significance of the topic:

These are key facts about mental health issues in the youth population found in multiple studies provided by WHO :

- One in seven adolescence between 15 and 19 years old have experienced mental difficulties or problems;

- Emotional disorders are most common in adolescence: 4,6% of young people have experienced anxiety and 2,8% had a depressive episode. Both anxiety and depression share some of the same symptoms and they affect school attendance and school work. Also, emotional disorders can lead to social isolation or loneliness;

- Behavioral disorders, like ADHD and conduct disorder, are more common in younger adolescence;

- Eating disorders, suicidal thoughts and self-harm can significantly affect the mental health of youth (WHO, 2017)

- Young people are particularly at risk of the effects of drunkenness, including accidents and violence; alcohol-related deaths account for around 25% of all fatalities in young men aged 15-29 (Health and Well-Being | European Youth Portal, n.d.).

Reflection (cards)

Have cards with powerful questions (or print them out on separate papers) that participants can use in trios to reflect on the day.

4TH DAY - CO-CREATE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

We present the second part of the Four fold practice - Be a part of a hosting community. Be willing to co-create and co-host with others, blending your practices and experiences with theirs, working in partnership.

It is about being courageous, inviting and willing to initiate conversations that matter.