



# THE HANDBOOK





## Strong Young Minds

This publication was created by 6 partner Associations during the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 project:

## Strong Young Minds

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## Strong Young Minds

I. Introduction	3
II. Mental Health	8
III. Competences in adolescence and beyond	9
IV. Non-formal education	14
V. Facilitation tips for working with teenagers	19
VI. Identity	32
1. <i>Teach an alien</i>	33
2. <i>Strengths and weaknesses</i>	35
3. <i>Johari window</i>	38
4. <i>Most authentic person</i>	41
5. <i>Development paths</i>	43
6. <i>Ikigai</i>	50
7. <i>Wheel of Health</i>	54
8. <i>Detectives</i>	57
9. <i>Who wants to be healthier?</i>	59
10. <i>Highway to health</i>	69
11. <i>Eisenhower box - time management</i>	72
VII. Emotions	75
1. <i>What are emotions</i>	76
2. <i>Emotional taxi</i>	78
3. <i>Emotions in court</i>	84
4. <i>Courage street</i>	87
5. <i>Apps for a bad day</i>	93
6. <i>Battle of voices</i>	100
7. <i>Compassionate mind</i>	104
VIII. Relations	109
1. <i>Speed friending</i>	110
2. <i>Languages of affection</i>	114
3. <i>Marble jar of trust</i>	125
4. <i>GPS of empathy</i>	128
5. <i>Non-violent communication</i>	132
6. <i>Conflict management</i>	138
7. <i>Wise breakup</i>	142
8. <i>Actors in my movie</i>	144
9. <i>The chair</i>	147
10. <i>Pick the peer pressure</i>	149
11. <i>Popular John Doe</i>	
IX. When you deal with a difficult case	153
X. Testimonials	155
XI. The project partners	156
XII. Acknowledgments	161



**Strong Young Minds**

# I. Introduction

## A. Information about the project

### *What is Strong Young Minds?*

Strong young minds was a strategic partnership project focused on innovation in education, proposed and designed by five organisations from Iceland, Spain, Portugal and Romania, from the fields of mental health and education, supported by the Erasmus+ program of the European Commission.

The main purpose of the project was to create tools and resources for mental health education for teenagers from the participant countries and to multiply the results among youth workers and educators at local, national and European level.

### *What are the objectives of the project?*

1. To increase the capacity of partner organisations to address the mental health educational needs of young people in their communities;
2. To develop a training curriculum and a board game based on mental health, aimed to relate competencies for young people aged 14-18 with different social-economic backgrounds.
3. To facilitate the use of the mental health education tools by youth workers around Europe.

In Iceland, Portugal, Spain and Romania, there were few initiatives directed to promote mental health among teenagers, being implemented in mental health organisations or in high schools. They usually took the form of public campaigns in the media, lectures for young people in high schools, online resources, occasional events on specific topics, or leaflets and brochures. They differed from the initiative of this project by the fact that their aim was mostly to raise awareness, not to build skills.

To our knowledge, the tools that this project have developed (training curriculum and board game) are innovative in Europe, due to some of their unique features:

Comprehensiveness, flexibility, non-formal methodology and accessibility. Compared to most educational projects that are fragmented in their thematic reach, the approach of these tools have a more comprehensive one, by addressing a set of essential mental health competencies, such as building a personal identity, management of emotions, maintaining a healthy lifestyle and building meaningful relationships.

It was designed in a way that will allow to be used in three ways:

1. as a compact 3-days training;
2. as a module of weekly or bi-weekly sessions;
3. as individual sessions.



## Strong Young Minds

Non-formal methodology has little been used before in mental health education. Board games have been developed on different topics, such as financial education or conflict management, but not on the topic of mental health management skills. So this project brings non-formal learning and board games into the field of mental health education, relying on what has been previously achieved in other fields with these type of methods and coming up with an unique and creative approach.

Also, due to the fact that these tools have been produced in 5 languages of which one is English and the training curriculum is included on a webpage specially created to this purpose, with the help of instructional videos. The handbook describing the curriculum have been widely spread online on open source platforms, they have become much more accessible than any other similar tools and are being able to reach a bigger number of youth workers and educators.

The project have produced 4 Intellectual Outputs:

- a training curriculum
- a handbook
- a board game
- a series of instructional videos

### ***O1 – Training Curriculum***

The training curriculum have focused on developing essential mental health competences for teenagers, such as: building a balanced personal identity, emotional management, maintaining meaningful relationships, living a healthy lifestyle. The underlying theoretical concepts have been taken from the latest scientific research in psychology, education and lifestyle.

The curriculum has a coherent but flexible structure that will allow it to be used in at least three ways:

- 1) as a three days compact training;
- 2) as a module of weekly or bi-weekly learning sessions;
- 3) as separate autonomous sessions.

The methodology used in the curriculum's activities rely on the principles of non-formal education, and following a learning cycle based on experience. The most suitable methods for the specific topics addressed in each session have been chosen and widely tested. Diverse methods have been included in order to respond to the various learning styles of the young people. The methods range from work in groups, role plays, to methods using arts, simulations, open space etc, the limit of the possibilities being given only by the creativity of the project team members. We believe any activity can become a non-formal education activity, as long as it has clear learning objectives behind it, relevant for the topic and it's followed by an efficient debriefing.

The development of the training curriculum began from the data collected in the needs analysis, through the focus groups with teenagers and youth workers.



## Strong Young Minds

According to the specific needs identified, the project team created a first version of the training, which was revised many times, after each following testing activity: two local tests with teenagers and one international test training with youth workers. Two transnational meetings of the project team and local team work were used to evaluate, define and refine all the components of the curriculum.

### ***O2. Handbook about the training curriculum***

The handbook describes the activities of the training curriculum, the learning objectives behind each activity, methods for guiding the reflection and debriefing of learning and a few theoretical concepts that set the ground for the activities. It is available in pdf format. After the final version of the training course was defined, partners wrote together different parts of the handbook and translated them into their languages.

### ***O3. Board game***

The board game works around the same topics as the training curriculum. It is a dynamic game, with a lot of informational content. It is designed for multiple players. The instructions of the game are available in the five languages of the project.

A first prototype of the game was designed and produced after the first transnational meeting and it was tested and adapted several times, after each following testing activity: two local tests with teenagers and one international test training with youth workers. The remaining two transnational meetings of the project team and local team work were used to evaluate, define and refine all the components of the boardgame.

Each partner provided the translation of the game's instructions and elements (cards, traits definitions and instructions in their language.)

We outsourced the production of the game to Produções Fixe, a social company in Portugal that has already produced quality boardgames in the past: Plan B - see youth workers magazine Coyote no 10 - and the games of another KA2 Borderline Boardgames: Mission Z and Real Ideal.

### ***O4- Instructional videos***

Videos have been made for many activities from the training curriculum, illustrating how the method has to be introduced, the development of the activity and the most important debriefing steps. The videos are posted on the project's webpage and on the youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/StrongYoungMinds> and complement the written descriptions of activities.



## Strong Young Minds

During the first transnational meeting, a plan was made for the way filming would be organised, types of shots to be taken, moments that need to be filmed.

Most of the filming were done at the Training Course that took place in Romania for 8 days during the testing phase of the curriculum with participants from all the partner countries involved .This was filmed at the middle of the project, therefore some activities present slight changes in the last versions in the handbook, but both versions works the same and got same amount of satisfaction from testers and participants but we included this changes in order to make it more clear for facilitators not used to non formal methods.

### *Who is this project for?*

Nowadays there's a lack of mental health education among society, specially between young people, where they have to face multiple challenges everyday for whom they might not be prepared and the educators around them (teachers, family, youth workers, tutors..) might not have an easy and affordable approach of resources to enable them to face those situations.

So this project is meant for anybody interested in helping others in their understanding of mental health issues and in empowering young people to go safer through life at very different levels that affect mental health.

### *Who has developed this project?*

In order to addressed properly the purpose of the project the selection of partners was mandatory. The intention was to balance the team between psychologist, educators, non formal educators and experts on Mental Health so the final result has a high quality standard and impact on the receivers.



## II. Mental Health

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When we talk about mental health we often use that phrase to describe mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. That is not what mental health is. Mental health is „a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” (according to World Health Organization)

Research shows that high levels of mental health are associated with increased learning, creativity and productivity, more pro-social behaviour and positive social relationships, and with improved physical health and life expectancy. It is important to bear in mind that what ever we can do to enhance the skills needed to have good mental health is as vital to our wellbeing as the things we do to improve and maintain good physical health. Mental health is about being cognitively, emotionally and socially healthy – the way we think, feel and develop relationships - and not merely the absence of a mental health condition.

### **Why mental health of teenagers is important**

Adolescence is a crucial period in every person’s life. The transformations happening in the brain during 13 and 20 years of age support significant changes in the cognitive, emotional and social areas of the teenager’s life.

These transformations render the teenager more emotionally active, more socially engaged, especially with their peers, looking for autonomy, questioning the status quo and seeking novelty. All of these aspects of the teenager experience carry within them the potential both for balance, growth and health, as well as for turmoil, crisis, unbalance.

In terms of emotional functioning, the downsides are emotional storms and moodiness; the upside is a powerful passion to live life fully, to capture life being on fire.

Social Engagement emerges as teens turn more toward peers than parents, the downside being falling prey to peer pressure simply to gain membership in a group, the upside being the central importance of supportive relationships in our lives. Relationships are the key factor associated with medical and mental health, longevity, and even happiness.

Most adolescents experience positive mental health, but one in five has had a serious mental health disorder at some point in their life. Adolescence is a period for the onset of behaviors and conditions that not only affect health at that time but also lead to adulthood disorders. In fact, half of all mental health problems begin by age 14. When left untreated, mental health disorders can lead to serious—even life-threatening—consequences. Depression, other mental health disorders, and substance abuse are major risk factors for suicide

The good news is that promoting positive mental health can prevent some problems from starting. Important mental health habits—including coping, resilience, and good judgement—help adolescents to achieve overall well being and set the stage for positive mental health in adulthood.



### III. Competences in adolescents and beyond

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Much of our capacity as human beings to adapt and function optimally rests on our competences. Also, the main goal of Erasmus Plus projects is to strengthen 'key competences' - knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by all for personal fulfillment and development, employability, social inclusion and active citizenship. Of the key competences outlined by the European Commission, this curricula and board game targets personal, social and learning competences – under the umbrella-term of social and civic competences.

Socio-emotional competences refer to the ability of people to manage developmental tasks in an appropriate way. Whenever a problem or a demand arises in the environment (e.g. teenager is asked to do homework; teenager witnesses bullying or is bullied; teenager separates from a friend; teenager experiences frustration over a failure, etc.), there is a certain societal expectation that he or she will meet that demand or face that problem in an adaptive, timely and reasonable competent way (e.g. teenager does homework on time and reasonably well, teenager stands up for the bullied friend or defends assertively, teenager suffers the separation from a friend, but finds new sources of comfort; teenager handles intense negative emotions and tries again or reevaluates goal, etc.). This desired outcome depends on the competence of the teenager – the degree of knowledge, skills and abilities that he can summon in face of life demands and day to day problems. Therefore, negative outcomes arise whenever these demands and problems stretch or overwhelm the competences of teenagers; that is when teenagers might experience intense negative emotions (e.g. paralyzing fear, isolated sadness, rage and tantrums, dissociation, etc.) and dysfunctional inter- and intra-personal behaviors (e.g. violence, self-harm, withdrawal, substance abuse, other forms of self-sabotage, etc.). On the other hand, successful adaptation and functioning in face of life demands means there has been an adequate overlap between the situation and the competences needed.

For this reason, there is a high need to develop socio-emotional competences in the years of adolescence, since the strategies of adaptation and problem-solving formed in this period of time might become habitual patterns of reacting and functioning and might stretch well beyond adolescence, affecting and influencing further adult development. The following section outlines and describes the main competences targeted by the Strong Young Minds curricula and board game. Note that the research part of the project investigated the specific needs adolescence these days have in regard to the main areas of human development: emotional (with specific reference to lifestyle), social and identity. Therefore, our presentation here is also inspired from what we have found through focus groups. The focus groups picked up on the main struggles, demands and problems the adolescents face and also on the negative outcomes that arise whenever these struggles, demands and problems cannot be adequately met via internal existing competences. From this analysis, we derived the needs/ learning goals to be addressed by our intellectual outputs.

#### **1. Emotional competences**

Described in some sources as emotional intelligence (see Daniel Goleman), emotional competences are internal knowledge, skills and attitudes that allows the person to navigate all the different sorts of emotions, both in day to day life and when facing major struggles in life; both positive, pleasant emotions and negative, unpleasant emotions.



## Strong Young Minds

Emotions are our organism’s way of telling us how we are doing in the world: Are we safe or not? Are we connected to others or not? Do we have access to needed resources or not? Can we meet our needs or not? Is the outcome of events as expected or hoped for or not? Depending on the answer to these questions, we might feel positive emotions, informing us we are doing well – happiness, joy, enthusiasm, calm, comfort, affection, soothing, proud, etc. – or we might feel negative emotions, informing us there is something missing or going wrong, inside or outside - fear, anger, disgust, sadness, grief, shame, embarrassment, guilt, etc. Based on the questions “Is this event relevant for me or not?”, the emotion we feel can be more or less intense. Thus, emotions are not good or bad per se – mostly, their expression and manifestation in behavior can sometimes appear problematic (e.g. when fear turns to chronic avoidance; anger to violence or interpersonal conflict; shame to social anxiety, etc.). Also, our lack of competences regarding emotions might have us try to suppress or inhibit some ‘unwanted’ emotions, leading to our inability to process experience and to an incoherent sense of self (since self-awareness is intimately tied to the emotional experience). This is especially problematic in early adolescence (12-16), when there is a high propensity to intense emotions, both positive and negative, and a low capacity to regulate their expression (figure out the consequences of one’s actions, inhibit some behaviors in order to manifest others, take on the perspective of others, etc.). Our hope is that exposure to group process might catalyze the development of needed competences.

The main competences in this area are outlined below, with corresponding skills, knowledge and attitudes. We have also integrated here the activities targeting the competence.

Competence	Skills, Knowledge, Attitude	Activity in curricula
Understanding and validating emotions	Positive attitude towards emotions; General and specific knowledge about emotions, explanation for emotions, adaptive function of emotions, effect of emotions, link with behavior, link with specific triggers (‘what makes me feel..’); Skill in recognizing emotions in themselves and others, in validating emotions	What are emotions? Emotional Taxi Emotions in court
Expressing emotions adequately	Positive attitude towards emotional vulnerability with trustworthy individuals (adequately express emotions towards people they trust, it is not ok to hide, avoid or act in opposition to emotion) Knowledge about different alternatives to emotional expression (not just one, automatic response), different alternatives to emotional expression, how to take into account other people’s needs and situational demand; about the vicious cycle of expressing emotion in a dysfunctional way Skill in communicating emotions efficiently	Emotional taxi Emotions in court
Regulating emotions	Empowerment to change and regulate emotions; Knowledge about strategies in emotional regulation (functional and dysfunctional), triggers. Knowledge on the way thoughts influence emotions	Apps for a bad day Courage street Battle of voices Compassionate mind



## Strong Young Minds

### 2. Lifestyle competences

Lifestyle comprises of all the variety of behavioral choices and habits that routinely make up our day to day schedule: what, how and when we eat, how well we sleep, how much and how well we exercise, how we manage our time, how we kick bad habits. There is a strong connection between lifestyle and mental health, since mental health depends a lot on the biochemical balance inside the whole organism (e.g. not sleeping enough can lead to a bad mood, irrespective of external circumstances; not eating properly can lead to irritability, etc.). Thus, the competences needed are outlined below:

Competence	Skills, Knowledge, Attitude	Activity in curricula
Habit awareness	Knowledge on healthy lifestyle and its impact on mental health (eating, sleeping, exercise, hobbies); how to recognize bad habits (ex. screen time)	Wheel of health Who wants to be healthier?
Habit regulation	How to change habits according to needs	Detectives Highway to health
Time management	Solving problems, prioritizing and organizing tasks	Eisenhower box

### 3. Social competences

Adolescence is a lot about interaction with others – at school, in the family, doing sports, practicing hobbies, out with friends, at parties, etc. Social competences come into play whenever there is a social demand placed on the individual and an expectation that he or she will behave in an adequate, pro-social and harmonious way. For teenagers, there are a lot of new demands that come with age: involvement in romantic relationships, being part of groups, managing differences and conflicts in the presence of intense emotional reactions, etc.

Therefore, new competences are needed in order to face up to these demands of life. Social strategies for adaptation and functioning are mostly learned via watching and imitating a 'model' – either from within the family, group of friends, peers or even social/mass-media. A possible drawback might be when the needed healthy, adaptive competences are lacking from the environment – poor parenting, lack of intimate friendships, antisocial peers, low quality social/mass-media. Therefore, new experiences are sometimes needed in order to expose the teenager to different knowledge, skills and attitudes, hoping that he or she will see the relative advantages of pro-social action. Also, emerging positive competences need to be strengthened and encouraged, so as, in time, they become norms of behavior within groups.

We have dedicated a fair amount of the curricula and some elements of the board game (mostly in the ideas of cooperation and some tasks that involve negotiation, empathy, perspective-taking, etc.) to developing social competences. Bellow you will find them listed:



## Strong Young Minds

Competence	Skills, Knowledge, Attitude	Activity in curricula
Effectiveness in achieving interpersonal objectives	Balancing own needs with the needs of others Assertive communication Communicating needs Taking responsibility for behavior, understand how it affects others.	Non-violent communication Assertiveness Wise breakup GPS of empathy
Building relations	What makes a true friendship (similar values, trust, intimacy) Develop courage, curiosity, a friendly attitude, be open-minded A positive attitude towards and learn how to have a proactive behavior towards meeting new people (search for events, opportunities, find common grounds, know one's limits)	Non-violent communication Assertiveness Conflict management Languages of affection Marble jar of trust GPS of empathy Actors in my movie
Maintaining and improving relationships	Attitudes to develop in relationships: trust, patients, forgiveness, empathy, compassion, respect; Understand that self-knowledge is important in relationships	Eisenhower box Languages of affection
Ending relationships	Understand that it is normal for relationships to end, that some people can be incompatible (and we can identify who we are actually compatible with). Identify signs that a relationship is ending. How to break up with friends or romantic partners in a respectful, empathic way. How to cope with break-up	The chair Actors in my movie Wise break-up

### 4. Identity-related competences

According to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, adolescence (12-18 years of age) is the fifth stage of ego, revolving around identity vs. role confusion, meaning that this is the time for exploring independence and developing a sense of self ('Who am I?'). Understandably, a major source of identity development in this stage comes through the form of social relationships. It is normal for teenagers to feel some degree of insecurity and confusion regarding their own characteristics and place in society. Thus, the way people handle this stage (sometimes seen as a 'crisis') has a great impact on the future development of their internal and external worlds. Not being successful at forming a sense of self may lead to role confusion, which can be seen as a sort of 'drifting' later in life: being discontent with relationships or jobs, not knowing what you actually want, disappointment, resentment, etc.

Much value is placed here on the process of exploring the self – What am I good at? What do I like? What's unfit for me? What is most important for me? How am I the same and what makes me different from those around me? How do people see me? How do I feel with myself? What do I want to do in the future? How can I make a life and a living out of what I'm good at and/or what I like? Basically, answering these questions leads to a coherent 'story about self'. Experience tends to be the best guide, if it is properly reflected on – for example, much can be learned



## Strong Young Minds

from failures and mistakes, but this learning may be inhibited if teenagers react with paralyzing negative emotions to these kinds of events.

The board game has been designed as such to raise awareness of how our personal traits influence the way we react and respond to life demands: the challenges that can be stepping stones to new experiences, the opportunities that you decide to take or not take, the things that happen without you having control over them and urging you to take action. Through playful and engaging interaction with others in the game, teenagers learn to reflect on choices and events that happen through the lens of changeable attributes – for example, being selfish means you choose not help someone, which in turn means you lose some benefits. This experimenting and reflection then allows them to perceive themselves a little more objectively and understand the degree of choice that they have over their identity.

The competences needed in this area are described below:

Competence	Skills, Knowledge, Attitude	Activity in curricula
Self-knowledge and self-acceptance	Knowledge about the complexity of human identity (strengths and weaknesses and how it shapes their identity). Trust to ask for feedback Acceptance attitude towards imperfection	Johari window Teach an alien Strengths and weaknesses
Self-expression	What is peer-pressure and how they can hold on to their unique talents, characteristics, inclinations, abilities (identify, value them, put them into practice, get feedback on them, find peer support, etc.)	Pick the peer pressure Popular John Doe
Living a life worth living (according to values)	How self-development is a life-long process; how to follow values How to choose a career based on interests, abilities and values	Most authentic person Developmental paths Ikigai



Strong Young Minds

## IV. Non-formal education

### Basic concepts and methods

Our learning is composed by 3 different ways which were first introduced by Coombs with Prosser & Ahmed in 1973 and later know as Coombs Typology.

Definition (1) Informal Education: ‘...the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment-from family and neighbors, from work and play, from the marketplace, the library and the mass media...’

Definition (2) Formal Education: ‘...the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded “educational system”, running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training.’

Definition (3) Non-Formal Education: ‘...any organized educational activity outside the established formal system-whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity-that is intended to serve identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives.’ in Coombs et al 1973

Source: <http://infed.org/mobi/what-is-non-formal-education/>

Formal education is linked with schools and training institutions; non-formal with community groups and other organizations; and informal covers what is left, e.g. interactions with friends, family and work colleagues.

The main differences between these methods are:

Informal Education 	Formal Education 	Non-Formal Education 
Free path	Plan to follow	Needs of participants centered
Non-Measurable	Grades / Evaluation	Self-evaluation
No structure	Structured	Flexible structure
Self-directed	One Direction (teacher to student)	Participative
Free	With costs (most of the times)	Depends on the cases
Free flow	Time conditioned	Adaptative
Self-motivated	Mandatory	Active participation
Non-recognizable	Certified/ Diploma	Participation certified



## Strong Young Minds

All have good points and weak points. Many times they are combined and bring benefits to the learner. It's up to each person to find their method (even that in many countries the formal education is mandatory until a certain level), and also to each teacher, trainer or educator, to use the different approaches. A teacher in a classroom can use non-formal education methods and ask the students to read a book or talk with someone, more experienced in a certain topic, on their free-time.

### **The importance of non-formal education**

Education is a part of one's life and it's constant. Sometimes we don't even see all the things from which we educate ourselves and learn new things, but this helps us to increase, develop new skills and to handle everyday situations.

Non-formal education is an education apart from formal institutions. It's an education that is mostly provided in different seminars, workshops, exchanges, trainings, courses and in which you are learning by doing, by observing and by working with different methods. This variety of approaches in non-formal education ensures participants to acquire cognitive, emotional and specific competences and skills, helps to identify and trust their instincts as well as develops confidence in their unique learning process. The most often methods are: ice breakers, energizers, group work, discussions, presentations, role plays, brainstorming, simulation games, warm up activities, indoor and outdoor activities, interactive lectures...

Defining non-formal education it's not easy, and it is usually described in different ways. In my opinion, it is a learning movement which contains a lot of values and importance for everyone carried out, from the formal education system. It helps us to acquire and maintain skills and abilities in a new and fun way. It provides you an completely new experience which you will never forget.

Nowadays, this education gets more and more importance since it's benefits are recognized and valid across the world. It is especially worth for youth workers who are working with young people during different projects. In my association, me and my colleagues are working with non formal education during our trainings, workshops and especially during the youth exchanges. It is an approach that young people are willing to work with, and in the same time, it gives to us - youth workers a connection and innovative approach, and to youth - it helps them to learn new things and to believe in themselves, their values and possibilities.

It's hard to reach out and find young people interested in additional education since they are already learning in schools and in college. They find their formal learning enough for them, and everything else very boring but with non-formal education everything changes and becomes challenging, exciting and fun - something that young people like, to have fun, to actively participate and to benefit from it.

Involve yourself in youth association programs, go to different seminars, trainings, workshops, exchanges and experience something new - the power of non-formal education, it will for sure change and enrich your life.



## Strong Young Minds

### Facilitation techniques

Facilitation techniques in NFE are characterized by promoting interactive experiences as vehicle for the learning process. In a NFE method the main rule is delivering the educational content in the most effective way possible therefore, facilitation techniques should foster participation, equality and reflection, should be open for different levels of involvement while assuring the whole group participation.

In this way it is common to have in NFE activities as bonding warm-ups, concentration exercises, role-playing, different kind of games, presentation of theory using challenging ways, stimulus for individual and group work and feedback, group reflection and evaluation.

During activities it is common to use a circle of chairs where all participants and facilitator find a equally participative position to address the group. It is also common in expositive situations the use of flipchart stationary item to present information on the topics and also distribution of hand-outs for added support. Some techniques like paraphrasing (using own words to say what one think somebody else said), clarifying (trying to get deeper understanding of one's opinion) or encouraging (try to look for alternative opinions) can be used to stimulate group discussion.

From *Facilitation Skills and Methods of Adult Education - A guide for Civic Education*: What is Facilitation? Facilitation means working with people with the aim of enabling and empowering them. Effective facilitation is about assisting individuals or groups with their interactions and discussions in order to perform a certain task or achieve certain objectives. It is a method that encourages people to share ideas, resources and opinions and to be critical and constructive at the same time. In adult education, training facilitators are responsible for guiding participants through the content and stimulate the learning process. More than just providing expertise, the facilitator draws on the existing knowledge of the participants and assists them in building on that knowledge by providing input and training to fill identified gaps. The training and learning process shall be based on active participation, group interaction and discussion. Thus, the facilitator will be equally concerned about WHAT is being learnt and HOW it is being learnt.

**Communication Skills:** Communication is essential for every interaction between people. It is a two-way process of sending and receiving signals and information. For communication to work effectively, both sender and receiver need to be aware of and understand the method of communication. However, communication can be both intended and unintended. Communication can fail if sender and receiver interpret messages in different ways, leading to misunderstanding or even conflict.

Good communication skills are essential to effective facilitation. They are necessary for establishing a fruitful interaction between the group and the facilitator and ensure that people's needs, concerns and interests are being heard and addressed. Communication can be both verbal and nonverbal. Verbal interaction involves the actual words spoken as well as the tone of voice, volume and intonation, choice of language and rhetorical styles. Nonverbal communication can for example include facial expressions, body language, sitting postures, gestures or eye contact. These often play a significant role in indicating the underlying feelings or emotions behind the



## Strong Young Minds

words. Non-verbal messages can also be related to the person's identity and background, for example in terms of assumptions or perception with regard to gender, ethnicity or social class.

**Listening Skills:** Effective listening is fundamental to good communication and, therefore, good facilitation. Effective listening is “active” listening. This means that the facilitator should not only listen well to what is being said but also be sensitive towards the tone and gestures that training participants use to express themselves. It also requires the facilitator to always ensure that what is being said is understood correctly by all and that participants are confident that they are being heard. Active listening will make participants feel involved and make them more open and participative. It helps creating a spirit of open interaction in which participants feel that they are an important part of the group. In order to minimise barriers to active listening, the facilitator needs to ensure a good environment (comfortable surroundings, privacy, minimize noise and distractions), avoid judgmental attitudes and critical comments, and be open for what comes from the participants instead of being permanently preoccupied with what should be the outcome of the session.

**Enhancing Participation:** As seen above, one of the main tasks of the facilitator is to ensure effective participation of all individuals in the training. The learning objectives can best be achieved if all learners are encouraged to be actively involved. It is not the mandate of the facilitator to force people to participate and he/she is also not responsible for what a participant decides to say or withhold in the training session. However, it is the facilitator's responsibility to provide an environment and atmosphere that enables and encourages people to get actively involved. This also includes minimizing negative interference and challenging behavior that inhibits effective participation by all.

### **Facilitation Methods**

In order to ensure an effective and participatory learning process, the facilitator should apply a mix of appropriate methods. The training sessions should be designed in a way that they cater for the needs of the different types of adult learners through a diversity of methods. The content of each session often determines which methods are applicable. Some topics and areas need a more active role of the facilitator and a lot of central input, while others are best conducted by involving all participants more actively. The sequencing of the session should take into consideration which methods can be applied at what point in time, so that participants can enjoy an interesting mix of methods and exercises and long times without active involvement are avoided.

**Lecture:** The lecture method is the most commonly used teaching approach for working with groups of learners. The facilitator presents and explains the relevant information that shall be passed on to the participants. The lecture method is an efficient tool to present a bulk of facts, information and concepts in a relatively short time. It can be applied regardless of the size of the group of learners and works well even with a very large group. It also allows for external experts to come in without taking over a facilitator's role. However, the lecture method should not dominate the training since it is much less participatory than other methods and does not



## Strong Young Minds

promote interaction in most cases. The facilitator/lecturer dominates the training session and there is a risk that he/ she imposes a certain worldview or perspective on the topic on the participants. The pace of learning is determined by the facilitator/lecturer instead of the learners themselves and individual learning needs are not catered for.

**Brainstorming:** Brainstorming is a quick way of collecting participants' ideas, views and suggestions in an open way. It is used to encourage the participants to freely share what comes to their mind when thinking of a certain topic, challenge or problem. The most important principle of the brainstorming method – which always needs to be emphasized by the facilitator - is that there is no right or wrong contributions. At the initial stage of the brainstorming all contributions are collected, regardless of whether they makes sense or add value. It is possible to have a second round of input from the participants in which the ideas brought forward are further discussed or expanded. Brainstorming is a useful method to enhance participation as it gives everyone an opportunity to contribute and it allows many ideas to be expressed in a short time. It helps stimulate quick thinking, creativity and imagination among the participants. It is important for the facilitator to not let the brainstorming exercise be dominated by certain individuals and to encourage every participant to contribute. The contributions should ideally be captured, for example by writing them on a flipchart. It is important for the facilitator to ensure that contributions are treated equally. Contributions should not be criticized, evaluated or censored at the stage of brainstorming.

**Plenary:** In a plenary discussion all training participants come together to discuss a certain topic and share their ideas and opinions. The method enables participants to openly interact and to not only express their views but also respond and react to each other's contributions. It helps the facilitator to better understand the participants and to get their opinions and perceptions. The challenge is that such a discussion in a large group can be very time consuming and may easily lose its focus. Certain participants may dominate the discussion while others remain passive and get bored. It is therefore important for the facilitator to establish clear ground rules (e.g. regarding time management and mutual respect during the discussions) and to provide direction and re-direct the discussion if it goes off-topic.

**Small Group:** Discussion Particularly if the group is very big, it can make sense to break into smaller groups for discussion. This gives each participant better chances and more time to contribute. Discussions in smaller groups can be more intense, focused and results-oriented. It is important to ensure that the group discussions are well organized and structured, for example by advising the group to pick a chairperson or moderator, a timekeeper and a secretary.

**Panel Discussion / Debate:** Another format of a discussion is a panel. Here, some selected participants – or even external experts – form a panel which discusses a certain topic. Each panelist gets the chance to make his/her contribution in a certain time and to react and respond to the contributions from the other panelists. The panel discussion can then be opened for interaction with the rest of the group so that participants can give feedback or pose questions to the panelists. The panelist may be given time to prepare their contributions on the topic in advance.



## Strong Young Minds

**Group Assignment:** The formation of smaller groups to work on a certain task or topic is a popular method that forms part of most training activities. It enhances participation and interaction, helps the participant to get to know each other better, build relationships and learn to cooperate and practice their skills. The groups may either work on the same task or topic simultaneously or they may each get a different assignment. The latter approach is particularly useful if many different subtopics shall be covered in a short time. The assignment/instructions may be clearly defined so that group has to work in a pre-defined format. Alternatively, the assignment can be left more open to give the group a chance to work on the topic in their own way, exploiting their own creativity. In order for the groups to work in an organized and coordinated manner it may be advisable for the groups to assign certain roles, e.g. a chairperson and a secretary. After the group work, each group may present (and discuss) the results in the plenary. It is advisable to have a balanced mix of participants in the groups and it should be avoided that participants simply form groups based on existing relationships. The facilitator may therefore use methods for random group formation, for example by simply counting through in order to assign group numbers to participants.

**Role Play:** In a role play participants are asked to act out a specific real life situation as a way to address a certain challenge or problem and suggesting ways of how to handle it. Participants are assigned certain roles and are given information about the person/ character they are representing. A role play can help to trigger a discussion or reflection and allows for a change of perspectives. It is an effective tool for practicing skills, changing roles, trying other options, being confronted with stereotypes and developing a broader understanding of other perspectives. Role playing can be done as a demonstration in front of the whole group or, if it is a large group, it can be done simultaneously by small groups. It is important that participants involved in the role play are properly briefed in advance and that after the role play a debriefing and reflection with the group takes place so that the impressions and lessons from the role play can be discussed. The participants should be given an opportunity to talk about how they feel, what they observed, what they learned, and what they would do differently the next time. It is also important that after the role play the actors are not being associated anymore with the roles they had taken in the play. The role play exercise can potentially be sensitive since it may for example lead to misinterpretations or trigger emotions. Therefore the facilitator should clearly explain the exercise and moderate the subsequent reflection in a sensitive manner. Participation in the role play should be made voluntary.

**Case Study:** In a case study the facilitator presents a real life situation (or invented scenario) to the group, e.g. by telling a story or showing pictures. The participants will then be asked to address the challenges, problems or dilemmas outlined in the case study. This is a useful method to relate the topic of the training session to a real life situation which encourages participants to develop more concrete ideas.

**Skills Practice:** Skills practice means that participants are given the opportunity to apply their newly acquired skills in practice and to get feedback from another participant, the group or the facilitator on their performance.

**Games:** Games can fulfill multiple purposes in a training program and can therefore take various forms. They can be entertaining in order to make the learning more enjoyable and can sometimes



## Strong Young Minds

simply be used to break the monotony of a learning process or to energize participants through physical activity. They can also help participants to get to know and trust each other and develop a better team spirit. A competitive element in games can also stimulate interest and alertness among the participants. If the games can be linked to the training content they can help to recall information and skills and to enhance the learning effect through practical elements.

**Images / Codes:** Pictures, photographs or short stories can be used as a code in order to present a challenge or problem that needs to be solved. A code is a way of communicating a problem briefly and clearly to a group, which allows them to reflect and examine it in order to gain new information or skills. The participants may for example be confronted with a picture or short story and then be asked what they see in the picture or what they heard in the story, what it means to them, and what their ideas are regarding the problem or challenge described. The facilitator will initially not provide further details or additional information and rather let the participants “explore” what they get out of the code.

### **2. Process of a group**

*In order to apply the methods you should better understand the Group process*

#### WHAT IS A GROUP?

In the social sciences, group has been defined as two or more people who interact with one another, share similar characteristics, and collectively have a sense of unity. However there is plenty of different definitions of a group that mention different elements deciding if a collection of people can be called a group.

It is important to check if people called a group do:

- Spend time together
- Interact with each other
- Have a common history
- Have open and hidden norms
- Create a structure, you can distinguish group roles that change over time
- Have a common goal that evolves and is transformed into new tasks
- Coordinate their efforts to achieve a common goal
- Decided on their level of involvement in the group's activities
- Communicate with each other according to the common model
- Have a distinct sense of belonging to other people, groups
- Create a phenomenon called group dynamics

In a context of trainings and workshops people that just met are connected to each other with a common goal a learning. This fact brings different people together and makes them being a group. For trainers and facilitators it is important to acknowledge that this group is a brand new body that needs attention and environment that will allow each individual to feel safe and ready for learning.



## Strong Young Minds

### WHAT IS A GROUP PROCESS?

Group process is a whole of the actions, behaviors and emotions experienced by participants that affect the interactions between them and the productivity of the group. Dynamics of the group results from the psychological consequences of belonging to the group.  
(definition of a PPS meeting, Poznan Poland)

Group process = Life of a group = Dynamics of a group

The group process is affected by:

1. Norms - formal and informal
2. Context of a training/workshop
3. Sociometric structure
4. Group goals
5. Individual goals
6. Quality of communication
7. Pace of development, learning
8. Attitude towards changes
9. Development phases and crisis
10. Group roles

### CONTEXT

Before starting work with a group we should pay attention to the context in which this work will take place. The professional, institutional, past group experience of the participants, the place and time, or the way people are selected, have in many cases an enormous, though underestimated influence on what is going on within the group.

The trainer should take into account

1. Composition of groups
  - Amount, age, sex of participants
  - Needs and motives of participants
2. Physical environment
  - Place
  - way of sitting during workshop/ training
  - Physical conditions
  - duration and hours of workshop/training
3. Individual context
  - previous group work experience
  - family situation
  - developmental moment in their life
4. Institutional context
  - who is the client of this training
  - the needs of the client and the needs of the group
  - training in the workplace



## Strong Young Minds

### GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Each group develops at its own pace, and during its existence various processes take place among its participants. Each group is a unique entity and there are no two same groups. However, the development of the group is most likely to follow some general pattern. That pattern can be classified into larger categories by distinguishing the four phases of the group's development:

1. Forming
  - Orientation
  - Getting to know each other
  - Affirmation
  - Integration
  - Research
  - Group's childhood
  
2. Storming
  - Rebellion
  - Conflict
  - Relationship
  - Differentiation
  - Confrontations
  - Crisis
  - Group's maturation
  
3. Performing
  - Cooperation
  - Constructive work
  - Teamwork
  - Group's adulthood
  
4. Adjourning
  - Terminal phase
  - Aging
  - Group's goodbye

### GROUP ROLES

A group role is defined as a set of rules that define how a person in a particular position should behave, or a set of duties and privileges related to that position.

Roles are universal, that is to say, they arise in every group regardless of their character. Delegating and taking individual roles is an important part of group dynamics. It runs simultaneously in two directions - the group recognizes the characteristics and qualities of the person as a predisposed to a specific role and at the same time the person 'finds his or her role' because it enables realization of the conscious and unconscious desires and needs. This is a two-way process. It is also worth noting that this process begins with the beginning of the group, when an active leader is usually emerging, who leads the task, but gains momentum in the storming phase, in which we can



## Strong Young Minds

observe the most dynamic and dramatic changes in the roles. In turn, the phase of performing phase is usually characterized by greater stability in roles, which, among other things, enables effective collaboration with its members, as each of them knows what is expected of them.

According to Benne and Sheats' Group Roles, we can observe:

### Task Roles

These are the roles that relate to getting the work done. They represent the different roles needed to take a project step-by-step from initial conception through to action. (Individuals may fulfill many of these roles during the life of a project.)

**Initiator/Contributor** – Proposes original ideas or different ways of approaching group problems or goals. This role initiates discussions and move groups into new areas of exploration.

**Information Seeker** – Requests clarification of comments in terms of their factual adequacy. Seeks expert information or facts relevant to the problem. Determines what information is missing and needs to be found before moving forward.

**Information Giver** – Provides factual information to the group. Is seen as an authority on the subject and relates own experience when relevant.

**Opinion Seeker** – Asks for clarification of the values, attitudes, and opinions of group members. Checks to make sure different perspectives are given.

**Opinion Giver** – Expresses his or her own opinions and beliefs about the subject being discussed. Often states opinions in terms of what the group “should” do.

**Elaborator** – Takes other people’s initial ideas and builds on them with examples, relevant facts and data. Also looks at the consequences of proposed ideas and actions.

**Co-ordinator** – Identifies and explains the relationships between ideas. May pull together a few different ideas and make them cohesive.

**Orienter** – Reviews and clarifies the group’s position. Provides a summary of what has been accomplished, notes where the group has veered off course, and suggests how to get back on target.

**Evaluator/Critic** – Evaluates proposals against a predetermined or objective standard. Assesses the reasonableness of a proposal and looks at whether it is fact-based and manageable as a solution.

**Energizer** – Concentrates the group’s energy on forward movement. Challenges and stimulates the group to take further action.

**Procedural Technician** – Facilitates group discussion by taking care of logistical concerns like where meetings are to take place and what supplies are needed for each meeting.

**Recorder** – Acts as the secretary or minute-keeper. Records ideas and keeps track of what goes on at each meeting.

### Personal and/or Social Roles

These roles contribute to the positive functioning of the group.

**Encourager** – Affirms, supports, and praises the efforts of fellow group members. Demonstrates warmth and provides a positive attitude in meetings.

**Harmonizer** – Conciliates differences between individuals. Seeks ways to reduce tension and diffuse a situation by providing further explanations or using humor.



## Strong Young Minds

**Compromiser** – Offers to change his or her position for the good of the group. Willing to yield position or meet others half way.

**Gatekeeper/Expediter** – Regulates the flow of communication. Makes sure all members have a chance to express themselves by encouraging the shy and quiet members to contribute their ideas. Limits those who dominate the conversation and may suggest group rules or standards that ensure everyone gets a chance to speak up.

**Observer/Commentator** – Provides feedback to the group about how it is functioning. Often seen when a group wants to set, evaluate, or change its standards and processes.

**Follower** – Accepts what others say and decide even though he or she has not contributed to the decision or expressed own thoughts. Seen as a listener not a contributor.

### Dysfunctional and/or Individualistic Roles

These roles disrupt group progress and weaken its cohesion.

**Aggressor** – Makes personal attacks using belittling and insulting comments, for example, “That’s the most ridiculous idea I’ve ever heard.” Actions are usually an attempt to decrease another member’s status.

**Blocker** – Opposes every idea or opinion that is put forward and yet refuses to make own suggestions, for example, “That’s not a good idea.” The result is that the group stalls because it can’t get past the resistance.

**Recognition Seeker** – Uses group meetings to draw personal attention to him or herself. May brag about past accomplishments or relay irrelevant stories that paint him or her in a positive light. Sometimes pulls crazy stunts to attract attention like acting silly, making excess noise, or otherwise directing members away from the task at hand.

**Self-Confessor** – Uses the group meetings as an avenue to disclose personal feelings and issues. Tries to slip these comments in under the guise of relevance, such as “That reminds me of a time when.” May relate group actions to his or her personal life. For example, if two others are disagreeing about something, the Self-confessor may say, “You guys fight just like me and my wife.”

**Disrupter/Playboy or Playgirl** – Uses group meetings as fun time and a way to get out of real work. Distracts other people by telling jokes, playing pranks, or even reading unrelated material.

**Dominator** – Tries to control the conversation and dictate what people should be doing. Often exaggerates his or her knowledge and will monopolize any conversation claiming to know more about the situation and have better solutions than anybody else.

**Help Seeker** – Actively looks for sympathy by expressing feelings of inadequacy. Acts helpless, self deprecating and unable to contribute. For example, “I can’t help you, I’m too confused and useless with this stuff.”

**Special Interest Pleader** – Makes suggestions based on what others would think or feel. Avoids revealing his or her own biases or opinions by using a stereotypical position instead, for example, “The people over in Admin sure wouldn’t like that idea.” or “You know how cheap our suppliers are, they won’t go for that.”

Sources:

*Functional Roles of Group Members, Authors: Kenneth D. Benne, Paul Sheats  
Group processes. Intragroup and intergroup dynamics Brown R,  
Groups Oyster C.K,*



## Strong Young Minds

### **3. Debriefing and reflection**

In non-formal education the learning is focused on the learner, and it depends on himself to raise his awareness and learning achievements. To support that process it is common to have specific sessions or time slots with individual and group reflection and debriefing.

#### ***Debriefing:***

Debriefing is the conclusion of an activity where the group of learners reflect on what happen during the activity and what they learn with that. It is conducted by a trainer or facilitator which supports the process making specific questions and leading the group to reach the desirable conclusions and beyond. This is crucial due to the fact that in many activities, specially in simulation exercises, the participants are not aware of the learning itself until they take the time to think about it and debate it with other participants. Normally during this part it's when occurs the Aha moments, when the learner becomes aware of the learning process and their achievements. Debriefing is what makes the difference between a Non-formal method and a simple game. No method is complete without this important part.

In order to better understand the debriefing you can use this resources:

<https://facilitatorsurvivalkit2.webnode.es/training-course/debriefing/>

<http://experience.jumpfoundation.org/what-is-debriefing-and-why-should-we-debrief/>

#### ***Reflection:***

It is common in non-formal education trainings to give time and space to the learners to make individual or group reflections on their own learning process. It is a moment to assess what was done, the activities that were implemented and what they bring to the learner itself. It's in this moment that the learner assesses his own learning curve and where he has the opportunity to change its learning objectives. The learner becomes aware of the self-competences (knowledge, attitudes and skills) developed already and the ones still to develop further. It's all about the learner and the awareness of its learning achievements. Since that in Non-Formal Education there's no evaluation towards the participants, but instead it's up to them to have their own evaluation, and that's why the reflection moments are extremely important.



## Strong Young Minds

### How to divide the group

Some of the methods require group division. There are many ways in which you can divide a group in different teams. Here are some methods:

#### ***Playing Cards***

Decide how many groups you want and what size. For example, if you would like to have 5 groups of 5 and you wanted to randomly put them into groups then get 5 Kings, 5 Aces, 5 2's, 5 Jacks, and 5 Queens (of course you will need more than one deck of cards) and shuffle them up. Pass them out and match up the five who get the Kings, Queens, etc.

#### ***Animal farm***

Participants are each given a piece of paper with the name of an animal (cow, cat, chicken, horse, etc.). The number of different animals used depends on how many groups you want to form.

When you give the signal, participants should begin to move around and produce that animal sound. Participants listen for anyone of the same animal category and team up with them. They should continue moving until all "animals" found their siblings. Do not allow "human" communication for this activity.

#### ***Puzzles***

Cut pictures from a magazine so that there are as many pictures as number of groups you want to have. If you have a theme try to find pictures related to the theme. Cut each picture in more pieces (as many pieces as people you want in each group) and mix them up in a hat. Each person takes one piece and partners are those whose pieces form a complete picture.

#### ***Counting***

The most classical way of dividing groups is to put participants to count. If you want 5 groups they will count to 5. After each person said a number from 1-5, ask them to find people with the same number as the number they initially said.

In order to make things more interesting, you can count in different languages or put them make different sounds. The first persons will decide the sound and then the other will repeat it in the same order. You can also use fruits, animals, colours, etc.

#### ***My object***

Ask participants to give you one object that they have with them (it can be a bracelet, a phone, a shoe, etc) and put them all in a bag. Once you gathered all objects, you can divide them according to how many teams you want to form. Arrange the objects in different piles making sure you have both feminine and masculine objects (ensuring the gender balance)



## Strong Young Minds

### Energizers

Here you can find a list with a few energizers that you can use at the beginning of your sessions in order to catch the participant's attention.

#### ***Who is the leader?***

Participants sit in a circle. One person volunteers to leave the room. After they leave, the rest of the group chooses a 'leader'. The leader must perform a series of actions, such as clapping, tapping a foot, etc., that are copied by the whole group. The volunteer comes back into the room, stands in the middle and tries to guess who is leading the actions.

The group protects the leader by not looking at him/her. The leader must change the actions at regular intervals, without getting caught. When the volunteer spots the leader, they join the circle, and the person who was the leader leaves the room to allow the group to choose a new leader.

#### ***Dragons and Shields***

Start by asking everyone to choose silently someone in the room that is their 'dragon' person and another person who is their 'shield' person. There are no particular criteria on which to base their choices – selections are entirely up to individuals.

Once everyone has made their choices, tell them to move around while making sure that they always have their "Shield person" between themselves and their "Dragon person". People can move quickly but should not grab or hold anyone.

After a few minutes, participants stop and realize who was their Dragon and Shield. You can ask them to put their hand on their Dragon. After that they should put their hand on their Shield. You can see who were the "biggest dragon" and the "strongest shield" by counting the number of hands. You can also ask them how do they feel in their new role.

#### ***Simon says***

The facilitator tells the group that they should follow instructions when the facilitator starts the instruction by saying "Simon says..." If the facilitator does not begin the instructions with the words "Simon says", then the group should not follow the instructions! The facilitator begins by saying something like "Simon says clap your hands" while clapping their hands. The participants follow. The facilitator speeds up the actions, always saying "Simon says" first. After a short while, the "Simon says" is omitted. Those participants who do follow the instructions anyway made a mistake and they have to jump 3 times. The energizer can be continued for as long as it remains fun.

#### ***This is not a bottle***

Put an empty bottle of water in the middle of the room. You present the bottle to them by saying "This is not a bottle". One by one, participants should come in front and do something with that bottle that will make it seem like something else. The group has to guess what is that object. For example they can sing at the bottle like it is a microphone, they can use it as a basketball bat, they can use it as a shower, etc.



## Strong Young Minds

### *Colours*

The facilitator calls a part of the body and a colour that can be found in the room. Participants must then rush and place that part of their body on that colour. For example: noses on blue. Everyone must stay in that position until another colour and part of the body has been called. You can also let participants suggest body parts and colours.

### *Hello John*

Divide participants in groups of maximum 8 people. Invite them to greet each other in their circle of 8 people, one by one. Person A starts and talks to person B. Person B responds. Person A makes him acquainted to person C. The dialogue should always be:

Person A: Hello John.

Person B: Hello John.

Person A: Nice to meet you John.

Person B: Nice to meet you too John.

Person A: Say hello to John, John. – will introduce person C

- The dialogue continues with person B addressing to person C.

Each time a person makes a mistake, he will change his name with any other name. From that point, people should address him/ her by that new name.

The energizer continues until most names have been changed.

### *Connecting eyes*

Participants stand in a circle. Each person makes eye contact with another person across the circle. The two walk across the circle and exchange positions, while maintaining eye contact.

Many pairs can exchange at the same time, and the group should try to make sure that everyone in the circle is included in the exchange. Begin by trying this in silence and then exchange greetings in the middle of the circle.

### *I like...*

Ask participants to sit in a circle, on chairs. One participant stands in the middle, without a chair and says what she/she likes. All the people that like the same thing should change places. That will give the person in the middle a chance to find a seat. The rule is that people can't exchange places with the person next to it.

The person that remains without a chair will be the next who says what she/he likes.

### *My Mirror*

Participants sort themselves into pairs. Each pair decides which one of them will be the 'mirror'. The "mirror" will have to copy the actions of their partner. Encourage participants to move very slowly so that the mirror can copy them exactly. From an outside it shouldn't be obvious who is the mirror and who is the initiator.

After some time, ask the pair to swap roles so that the other person can be the 'mirror'.

\*You can find many other energizers and methods by using the below links.

### *Resources:*

<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/100-ways-energise-groups-games-use-workshops-meetings-and-community>  
<https://www.tdminternationallibrary.org/library/games-activities/>



## Strong Young Minds

### Facilitation tips for working with teenagers

Adolescent age is one of great change on all levels: physical, cognitive, social, and emotional. Because of this, adolescents can appear paradoxical in behavior and attitude, and therefore difficult to deal with. Teenagers seek to define their identities as individuals and at the same time fit in and be accepted by their peers. They like to challenge and test the limits of authority figures and they can sometimes act like know-it-alls, even though they still lack a lot of experience and often feel the need for guidance. They may feel invincible at times, like nothing bad can happen to them, while at other times they are insecure and some of them may even be self-destructive.

Because they seem so self-contradictory, teenagers can pose challenges to adults around them. An approach that we find essential, especially when working with teenagers, is to meet them where they are. As one youth worker put it: “Adolescence is like gravity - It is much easier to work with it than against it.”

We give here some guidelines for working with teenagers. Because not all of them may apply to particular situations, we encourage you to select and use what works for your group.

\* ***Hold onto your power.*** Teenagers frequently attempt to push your buttons and make you react negatively, especially if you are just starting to work with them and you haven’t established a relationship yet. They can do things such as teasing, disobeying, not listening, rule breaking, provoking, and many others. Expect this to happen, as teens always seek to test the extent of their power. Try to stay calm as much as possible and do not take it personally. The more visible is your reaction and the more upset you become, the more the teenager will use this in the future and your work will become much more difficult.

\* ***Establish clear, fair, but reasonable boundaries.*** Boundaries are important in order to maintain a workable and constructive relationship. But make sure to apply them in all situations, with all the people, including yourself. Teens will often challenge your boundaries to see if you mean what you say, and test how much they can get away with. They will also test the ground to see how much they can express themselves without you abusing your authority. Avoid rules that are not absolutely necessary in order to establish a safe and flexible ground. If they want to sit on the ground while talking to you, let them sit on the ground.

\* ***Maintain humor and show empathy.*** In mild situations, respond with a smile rather than a frown. Say to yourself: “there he goes again”, and continue the activity. Show empathy by not over-reacting in situations in which they do not greatly disrupt the activity. Understand that attempting to assert themselves and to get the attention of their peers is a normal and necessary part of teens’ development in this stage of life.

\* ***Remind yourself of their struggles.*** When a teenager upsets you, give yourself some distance, take a deep breath, and try to imagine what kind of struggles would lead him to behave like this. Of course, showing empathy does not mean accepting inappropriate behavior. However, it can help you relate to them with more detachment and composure.



## Strong Young Minds

\* ***Give them space.*** Allow space for them to express themselves without judging them, even if you often don't agree. If you see them upset or under distress, offer the option to talk with you, but don't insist on it and let them come to you when they are ready. When they do come to you, listen without comment at least for a while, just as you would do with a friend. Allow them to feel at ease disclosing with you. Avoid lecturing them on what they should or should not do. They will do what they want anyway and you will only manage to increase the distance between you and them.

\* ***Stay at the same level.*** Teens are extremely sensitive to displays of authority and tend to reject it right away. Avoid preaching or giving the well-known reasoning "Because I say so" and always explain why it would help THEM to do something, then let them decide if they will do it or not. If they say the popular "You don't know what it's like", give them the benefit of the doubt and be curious about their particular situation. Avoid comparing their experience with your teenage years, or they will already become suspicious of what you have to say.

\* ***Build trust.*** When working with teenagers, trust is essential. However, teenagers will often not give it to you or let you into their lives right away. Keep in mind that they might have had bad experiences with authority figures or adults in their lives letting them down. Establish what makes you different and show it through concrete actions. Make sure to always keep your word or explain when this is not possible.

\* ***Ask how they are going.*** Show interest in how their week went before starting with your activities. Many teens behave as they do and refuse to engage because they believe adults do not care about. Don't underestimate the power of connecting with teenagers - for them, relationship is everything and for you, it is the key to any successful outcome. If they feel you are interested in them, respect them, and have heard what is happening for them they will be much more willing to hear from you.

\* ***Be yourself.*** You don't need to be hip and trendy. Teenagers look for authenticity and are highly sensitive to people who try too hard. Act genuinely and be honest, but don't take yourself too seriously. Also, don't be afraid to show your feelings or be at least a little bit silly at times. Beside creating rapport, this is a great way to help teens practice their empathy.

\* ***Give a vote of confidence.*** Avoid assuming that teenagers are too young, inexperienced or superficial to achieve something, to understand, feel or even suffer. If you box them into a stereotype, you are likely to get a similar reaction. Teenagers are often insecure and having an adult trust them can go a long way. Even when they appear destructive or defiant, give a little praise for something as little as their shoelaces, to show that you don't completely disapprove of them.

\* ***Focus on the outlier.*** Often times, teenagers become disruptive as a means to get your or their peers' attention. Ignoring this need will not make it go away, but there is a high chance it will make it worse and, especially if the teen is a leader in the group, the rest of the group might follow. When a teen is disruptive, offer him the opportunity to get attention by giving him roles or tasks that provide some control and responsibility.



## Strong Young Minds

\* ***Give them options.*** Teenagers seek to develop a sense of individuality and independence and prefer to have control over their decisions, rather than complying with adult instructions. Whenever possible, allow them to brainstorm or give them a range of suitable options to select from and they will be more willing to get involved in the task.

\* ***Use pop culture.*** Most teenagers identify with certain music, fashion, celebrity, or other cultural icon and they use these to explore and express their identity, their sense of who they are. Be open to discussing about these, even if you don't have an opinion or appreciate them. Acknowledge that these are an integral part of teenage life and use them to meet the teens where they are.

\* ***Avoid exposing them too much.*** Teenagers are very sensitive about how they appear in front of their peers - they don't want to stand out negatively or to be ridiculed, as this would decrease their chances of being accepted in the peer group. Avoid separating them too much from the group or having them in situations in which they can be evaluated. When using role-plays or theater, it can be safer to work in small groups, rather than individually.

\* ***Acknowledge the existence of technology.*** Technology and cellphones are an everyday part of life for 21st century teenagers and even though it looks like cellphones are glued to them, it doesn't mean they cannot be productive. Don't take it as your enemy and engage the teens by incorporating some technology into your plans.

\* ***Be prepared to let go.*** If they have something going on, you will not get them to take part in your activities. However, this can be a great chance for you to show them that you are there for them, and not just to follow your interests. Teenagers often feel that something is being done to them, rather than for them. Inquire about their situation, offer to listen, discuss it with them, and, very importantly, validate their experience by saying something like: "It looks like you feel very upset by what happened, so I can understand why you don't feel like doing anything today." Keep in mind that teenagers reveal the most important things in situations that are not focusing on a certain problem and be open to whatever comes.



Strong Young Minds

# IDENTITY



## Teach an Alien

### Strong Young Minds

Duration	15 min
Group size	8-30
Type of activity	energizer, simulation



- small pieces of paper with numbers from 7 to x (x is the age of the youngest participant)
- a flip-chart paper or a whiteboard and markers

### Learning Objectives

To allow participants to think about something they can teach others, becoming aware of strengths they already have.

To learn that we already have a valuable set of skills and knowledge.

To become aware of the others as sources of knowledge or skills.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

A) At the beginning of the session sitting on chairs, in a semi-circle, facing the facilitator.

B) At the beginning of the activity itself, two rows, shoulder to shoulder, facing another person with a distance of about 1 m between the two (see Instructions for the exact moment of change).

### 2. Introduction:

This (next) activity is about skills, about things that we are good at and that we could share with other people. We all have different sets of abilities, some that others also practice and some that only we know and are good at.

Can you give me some examples of things you are good at, but that others might not know/practice? (small brainstorming – we want to go through abilities in the domains of sports, school, hobbies, science, interpersonal relations, housework etc. Include in the discussion simple examples, that might even sound silly, such as playing Mario, saying a very difficult phrase very fast or knowing a lesser known scientific fact). All the examples will be written on the flipchart or whiteboard.

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** The facilitator asks the participants to arrange into two parallel rows facing each other. People in a row will be arranged shoulder to shoulder, while facing someone from the opposite row. (1-2 min.)

**Step 2:** The group on the left of the facilitator will be people from Earth. The ones on the right will be Aliens (Martians, Jupiterians, Plutonians, whatever planet you wish).



## Teach an Alien

### Strong Young Minds

**Step 3:** Each of the Earthlings will extract one piece of paper without looking at the number on the back when taking it. Once they got a piece of paper, each person on Earth will have 1 min. to think of a skill, an ability or a piece of knowledge that he/she had at the age written on the paper and that would be useful to know for someone visiting Earth for the first time. After everyone on Earth has thought about something they knew at the age on their piece of paper, they will have 1 min. to teach the alien they are facing the skill/ability/knowledge they have thought of.

**Step 4:** After the minute passes the roles change (the Aliens become Earthlings and vice versa) by saying 'Now you will switch roles – Aliens become Earth people and vice versa. The task is the same – each person gets one piece of paper with a number on it and will have 1 minute to think of a skill/ability/piece of knowledge they had at that age and that could be useful for someone visiting Earth for the first time. After everybody has the idea, they will have 1 minute to teach their pair the thing they have chosen'.



### 4. Debriefing:

- What kind of skills have you taught the aliens?
- What interesting or surprising skills have you learned?
- How was it to identify an ability that you can teach to somebody? Easy, difficult?

### Tips and Tricks

This short method can be used as good introduction for the next method: Strengths and weaknesses.

*Small space* – participants can find pairs and spread around the room to follow the teaching process

*Many participants* – four parallel rows can be formed, two by two, facing each other.



## Strengths and Weaknesses

### Strong Young Minds

Duration	30 min
Group size	8-25
Type of activity	discussion, individual work



- paper for all participants
- felts
- whiteboard/ flipchart and marker
- post-its

### Learning Objectives

To explore personal strengths, weaknesses and decide which traits to develop.  
 To identify their strengths and the personal points that are not very developed  
 To understand that their abilities/ competencies can be developed



### Instructions

#### 1. Space arrangement:

Participants will be seated in a circle.

#### 2. Introduction:

As we could see previously, each of us has a set of abilities, some of them more developed, that we can also teach to somebody, some less developed, that we can learn from somebody else. We will talk today about our skills and we can start by imagining them on a line:

Less good at	Average at	Very good at
Basketball	Cooking	Listening to others

In the line, there are no distinct categories, the areas are flexible and one ability can move from negative to positive as you practice and develop it or from positive to negative, if you don't practice it anymore.

In which areas of life do we use abilities? (small brainstorming, in which we want to get to the areas of school, family, relations, hobbies, sports).

You can use the template provided in the resources.



## Strengths and Weaknesses

### Strong Young Minds

#### 3. Task:

Tell to participants:

“You will have to do your own line of abilities. In each of the 5 areas of life identified, choose 3 skills that fit on the continuum, one for less good at, one for average, one for good at. The skills in the “less good at” area should be relevant to you, something that you are not good at but you would like to improve. In the end you should have 15 skills distributed equally in the continuum. You have 10 minutes to do this.”

If you have enough time, you can divide participants into small groups and encourage them to share what they wrote on the paper.

If you are pressured by time, you can ask for volunteers to share some of their skills they wrote.



#### 4. Debriefing:

- How did you feel reflecting on your abilities?
- What area of the continuum was the most difficult to fill in?
- Did you find anything new about yourself?
- Where and how have you learned the skills that you have developed the most?
- What could you do in order to improve the abilities that are less developed? (Here, if they don't suggest the idea of learning from others, you can remind them of the first activity, with the aliens, and ask them what happened there, how did they learn the new skill?)

#### Tips and Tricks:

You can use post-its to write the abilities and place them on the continuum so that they are movable.

You can encourage participants to do a brainstorming about ways in which they can improve their skills. You can also divide them in teams of 2 and they can give suggestions to each other about ways to improve their skills.

#### Work for home:

Encourage participants to make a bigger list at home. In the next meeting you could ask who found the biggest number of strengths. Emphasize on the fact that knowing yourself takes time and dedication.



## Strengths and Weaknesses

Strong Young Minds

Strengths and Weaknesses Template:

Life areas/Skill level	Less good at	Average	Good at
School			
Family			
Relations			
Hobbies			
Sport			



## Johari Window

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	8-24
Type of activity	group discussion, team work, individual work



- flipchart example of the Johari window
- post-its (cut into three pieces)
- pens

### Learning Objectives

To explore their identity based on what they know about themselves, but also on the feedback received from others.

To reflect on the identity of others and to give feedback.

To motivate to practice self-disclosure and feedback as ways to develop one's identity.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Big circle and after the instructions, chairs will be arranged in small circles.

### 2. Introduction:

Now I invite you to look at yourself through a window. This window has four areas, containing different information about a person:

- OPEN AREA - what is known to self and known to others,
- BLIND AREA - unknown to self and known to others
- HIDDEN AREA - known to self and unknown to others
- UNKNOWN AREA - unknown to self and unknown to others

Brainstorming on whiteboard/ flipchart:

What kind of information about oneself can the Johari Window include? (Note for facilitator: the list can include: traits, passions, fears, interests, abilities, values etc.)

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Please divide the participants into groups of 4-6 people.

**Step 2:** Draw your own Johari window and write on the pieces of post-its 10 personal attributes for the Open Area and 10 attributes for the Hidden Area. Write the Hidden information on the sticky side of the post-its, so that you can put it on your window face down.

Tip: If your group is not used to self-reflection, you can use the list of attributes provided in the Resources.



## Johari Window

### Strong Young Minds

**Step 3:** Share with your group some of the information you put in your Open Area. And only if you want, disclose one piece of information from the Hidden area.

**Step 4:** On the differently colored post-its, write at least one thing about each person in your small group, something that you assume they might not know about themselves.

**Step 5:** Look at the post-its you received from the others and place them in the Open area if it was information that you already knew about yourself and in the Blind area if it surprised you to receive it.

### 4. Debriefing:

- How was the whole process of creating this window?
- In which area do you have the most information?
- Were you surprised by something?
- What is the impression or feeling you have when you look at each area? (Take them in turn and wait for their answers) Open area? Blind area? Hidden area? Unknown area?
- How can it help you to explore the Johari window?
- Would you like to move some traits from one area to another? If yes, from where to where, and why would you or someone else want to do this?
- In which area do you want to have the most traits? Why?
- How do we move traits between areas? (Take each area in turn) How do we move traits to the Open area from the other areas? How do traits move to the Hidden area? How about the Blind area? Or the Unknown area? How do traits get to be in these areas?

### Optional Work for Home:

Fun for home: make a list of min 40 adjectives that describe you (you can also search on the internet). Try to place them in the Johari Window. Make a list with adjectives that you would like to show others more often.

### Resources

<http://www.storyboardthat.com/articles/b/johari-window>



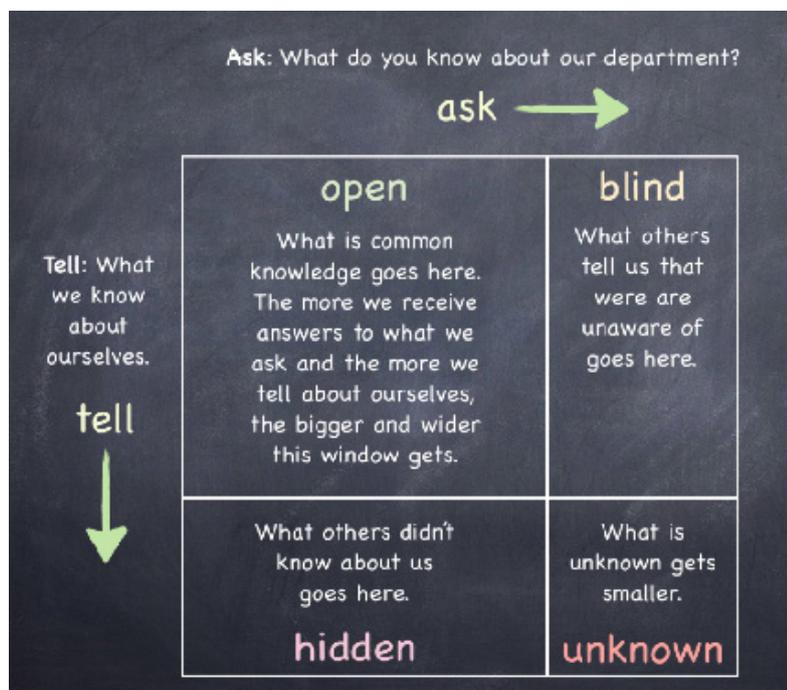
## Johari Window

### Strong Young Minds

#### Attributes list:

Johari adjectives - A Johari Window consists of 55 adjectives used to describe the participant, in alphabetical order:

able	dependable	intelligent	patient	sensible
accepting	dignified	introverted	powerful	sentimental
adaptable	energetic	kind	proud	shy
bold	extroverted	knowledgeable	quiet	silly
brave	friendly	logical	reflective	spontaneous
calm	giving	loving	relaxed	sympathetic
caring	happy	mature	religious	tense
cheerful	helpful	modest	responsive	trustworthy
clever	idealistic	nervous	searching	warm
complex	independent	observant	self-assertive	wise
confident	ingenious	organized	self-conscious	witty





## Most authentic person

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	8-25
Type of activity	discussion, individual work



- questions on flipchart/whiteboard
- template for magazine
- pens, felts, pencils
- handouts with examples of quotes

### Learning Objectives

To identify personal values.

To find ways in which personal values can be manifested in daily behaviors.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Participants will preferably be seated in a big circle.

### 2. Introduction:

You are 25 years old and you are on the cover of a magazine called “The most authentic people in the world”. You were included in this top because you have been living the way you wanted to. What does this mean? People who live as they want to, live a life in accordance to their personal values. Personal values manifest into their behaviors and ways of thinking.

For example, how does a person behave like if he/she values perseverance? (can be a value of people who don't give up easily and keep trying even after a few failures).

People are more fulfilled if they manage to act accordingly with their personal values.

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** The editor interviews you to talk about the way you lived and how you managed to reach the most authentic person top.

Participants receive the newspaper template (you can use a A4 paper or the template provided) and they have to fill it with their answer to the following questions, which are presented to them on the flipchart/ whiteboard:

- a) What kind of people did you have significant relations with? (categories of people, main qualities)
- b) Talk about the activities to which you dedicate most of your time. What you do, how these activities make you feel, what you like most about doing them, etc.



## *Most authentic person*

### **Strong Young Minds**

c) In which situations or places have you felt most fulfilled, satisfied or alive? Describe them with relevant details: surroundings, people involved, etc.

**Step 2:** Drawing from your answers in the interview, you will have to make up three personal mottos or slogans of maximum 5 words each, that could guide a life such as the one you described in the interview. When doing this, focus on the most important elements that you expressed in each answer. (For example, if I dedicate most of my time to fishing or walking by the river, and I talked about how these give me peace of mind and help me calm down, I can draw a motto such as “Nature is harmony”, if nature is the important thing here. If peace of mind is the most important part, then my motto can be exactly about that: “Peace is first in the mind.”)

**Step 3:** Share with your group some of the information you put in your Open Area. And only if you want, disclose one piece of information from the Hidden area.

**Step 4:** Your last task is to create the cover of the magazine and give this edition dedicated to you a representative title, of no more than 4 words.



### **4. Debriefing:**

- How was it to answer the questions in the interview? How about to write the mottos? How about to create the cover of the magazine?
- Does anyone want to share their cover and/or mottos? Let's take some examples?
- Take a moment to look at your cover, the title, and re-read the mottos. What words stand out as powerful? What values do you think they indicate?
- Which activities or behaviors in the interview correspond to the mottos? These are the ways in which your personal values translate into concrete actions.
- How is the way you live your life as you presented it in the interview different from the way you live your life in the present? Do you find any similarities? Can you find some behaviors that you do in the present which are related to the values you identified or yourself?
- What could you do in order to live more in accordance with your values?



## Development paths

### Strong Young Minds

Duration	10 min
Group size	8-25
Type of activity	discussion, team work, individual work



- 10 different scenarios
- A4 paper, pen
- Markers, flipchart/whiteboard

### Learning objectives

To reflect on the skills, knowledge and attitudes (ASK) that they can develop when getting involved in various activities.

To explore various types of activities that can help young people develop personally and professionally (including volunteering).

To be able to extract the learning/development (ASK model) outcomes from a particular activity that the participants do.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Participants will be arranged in a circle for the introduction and then divided into 5 small groups for the task.

### 2. Introduction:

Short discussion gathering some opinions from the participants using questions like:

“What does competence mean?”

“How do we know if somebody is competent?”

A competence usually has three main components:

- attitudes - understanding of life, ways of thinking;
- skills - things that we are able to do;
- knowledge – information that somebody has;

In order to help participants better understand the difference, you can draw a man on the flipchart. You can write attitudes near the heart, skills near the hands+legs and knowledge near the head. Is good to also give a clear exemple (you say that a person is competent in english- it has to have: knowledge about grammer, words; skills- listening, writing; attitude: willingnes to speak, to improve, to try)

Why is this model important? It is important because it can guide our development. The first step is to identify what aspects we wish to develop about ourselves. Then we can decompose these abilities or competencies in the three components we talked about. Next, we find activities or contexts that can help us build that aspect of the competency.



## Development paths

### Strong Young Minds

In life it is difficult to separate the three components and only focus on one - so an activity meant to increase knowledge will most likely affect attitudes as well.

We can also go the other way around - we can start from the activities we are doing, identify components of competencies that they help us develop and start from there. It will be surprising how many competences we cultivate in apparently simple activities.

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Divide the participants into 5 groups. Each group will receive a different scenarios of young people being involved in various activities (e.g. volunteering, band member, reading club, etc.). Each group will have 10 minutes to discuss the scenarios and to identify what skills, attitudes and knowledge the characters in the scenarios developed as a result of the experiences described.

**Step 2:** Each group will choose a representative and a scenario to present to the entire group, together with the results of their discussion.

**Step 3:** After each presentation there will be a short discussion focusing on questions like:  
How did you reach your conclusions?  
Were you expecting these results?

**Step 4:** The participants are given 10 minutes to consider one extra-school activity that they are involved in at the moment and identify the ASK that they are developing while doing this activity.



### 4. Debriefing:

- Have you discovered today any activities that you haven't thought of before as being useful for self-development (from the examples on paper and the ones given by your colleagues)?
- What are the abilities that you would like to develop? Why?
- Which of the previously discussed activities could help you develop these competences?
- Which other activities/ experiences could you get involved to develop the desired skills/ knowledge/ attitudes?"
- What stops you to get involved in more activities? Why? What can you do about it?
- Can you give some examples of other activities that could help you develop your competences?



## Development paths

### Strong Young Minds

#### 5. Resources:

#### Scenarios:

1. **Cameron** is a 17 year-old high school student. He spends every Friday afternoon and Saturday volunteering in a non-profit organization that provides meals with love to critically ill neighbors and seniors.

On Friday afternoon, their group of volunteers meet to make the menu for Saturday. Over the week, Cameron, like all team members, did his research regarding accessible recipes that they can cook in large quantities and using vegetables which are in season. After they discuss their options and choose one, they make the shopping list and go shopping for groceries. Cameron usually takes care of buying the processed products, as he enjoys comparing prices and reading the labels of products in order to decide on the best quality for the money they have available. On Friday they also assign roles to the team members for Saturday: some of them will clean and prepare the ingredients, others will cut the vegetables, others will cook, while others will serve the food to the people. Usually they rotate, so that each of the team members has the chance to experience different roles.

On Saturday morning they meet to start the cooking and around noon they can already serve it. After lunch, if there is any food left, they gather everything and distribute it to either homeless people or animal shelters.

2. **Joan** is 16. She's in high school and she's attending a foreign languages conversation club every Thursday evening at a local cultural center. There are various conversation groups and Joan is attending the German one. In her group, there are currently people with ages ranging from 14 to 33 and with varying levels of German.

Each week they choose a topic of conversation based on the members' preferences and they each commit to preparing something they want to share on that topic: opinions, personal experiences, goals. The general rule of the group is that during the meeting, only German language is used, so when somebody doesn't understand a word or idea, the others try to express it in various ways: explaining it with other words, pointing at the object, using gestures to illustrate the idea, and so on. Joan is usually using her body language a lot during her everyday life, so especially in the conversation club people can understand very easily the message she is trying to convey.

Lately, Joan has befriended the oldest woman in her group, who is new and has one of the lowest levels of German among the group members. Joan is helping her sometimes by providing materials or encouraging her during the conversations and sometimes they meet in the rest of the week to do things together and practice German at the same time.



## Development paths

Strong Young Minds

### 5. Resources:

#### Scenarios:

3. **Alex** is 18 and he's been part of a contemporary dance crew for two years. They are around 10 people in the group at the moment. Some of them come, others go, but he stayed because he enjoys it a lot. As he is a 'veteran' now, the new members often come to ask him for directions or help. He supports them gladly.

Alex and the crew have rehearsals two times a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, for about three hours. They have a group leader, but usually each one of them proposes dance moves to build the choreography. What Alex likes the most is the 'free moments' during the choreography in which each member performs spontaneous movements. This makes each performance unique. Their crew already has an identity with a name, specific clothing style and funky make-up. They often perform in local festivals or school events so many people know about them. Sometimes they participate in festivals or competitions in other cities and some time ago they even went to Austria for a dance competition.

4. **Andrea** is a 17-year-old high school student who has always enjoyed literature. Since she was little, she was really fond of reading children books with her grandparents and later she started gathering tales and novels on her own, slowly expanding the collection on the shelves of her room. Luckily, she has a good literature teacher, the kind of teacher that pays attention to students' unique talents and tries to make them aware of their gifts. Andrea was praised in class for her essays and short homework compositions and at one point she gave her teacher one of her poems. She wasn't really sure about it, but she risked it anyways. The teacher encouraged her to write more and even to join the poetry club that she was organizing in the school. From then on, Andrea met every two weeks with a group of talented writers her age and made many friends who shared her love of literature and poetry. At the club, she heard and commented what others wrote, she shared her own work and the group discussed ideas and themes related to their interests, their readings and their own literary imagination.

At one point, Andrea proposed to the club they should organize an event, to show other colleagues their creative writings. The poetry club, with the help of their teacher, made a lot of efforts for this event to come true, but it was a true success and they felt really appreciated by the other students.



## Development paths

### Strong Young Minds

#### 5. Resources:

#### Scenarios:

5. **Andy** is 16 and has always been fascinated with nature. He was always asking his parents to go on nature trips. He liked to explore surroundings, to observe nature and he always felt very relaxed and at ease when he was in any kind of natural environment. Not long ago, though, he went with his class on a camping trip in the mountains, in a more touristic area that he hadn't been before. He was very disappointed and sad to see a lot of garbage left behind by other campers and hikers. He felt deeply sorry, complained for a while, but in the second morning he woke up before the others and started gathering the garbage in big bags. Two other girls woke up and, after Andy explained how he thought 'you have to be the change you want to see', they started helping him. Soon, almost all of the class followed Andy and by noon, the whole camping area was clean and garbage free.

This trip gave Andy the idea of starting a little 'ecology group' at his school. He thought this way he would gather other nature-loving students and they would go to camping trips specifically to clean certain tourist areas, but also to have fun and bond, since they had something very important in common. With the help of his class teacher, this idea came true. Andy now runs this group and organizes regular trips. The group already has 10 members and they all became good friends.

6. **Anna** is a 18-year old high school student. She was a long-standing passion for movies and cinema. She always felt the need to share her passion, because she felt that movies can have a big impact on the way we see things, can make us more empathic and open-minded and can help us see reality from different perspectives. She always had an interest for this 'psychological' side of movies and recently she has talked to her psychology teacher to organize 'movie nights' at school, where participants (students from the school but not only) could watch a movie and then talk about the main themes, characters and ideas in it, with the help of the psychology teacher.

Now, Anna has sought the help of two friends who were also excited about this project and they advertise for movie nights in the whole neighborhood. They put up posters and send invitation on social media. Each week, Anna chooses a different movie and first discusses it with her psychology teacher.



## Development paths

### Strong Young Minds

#### 5. Resources:

#### Scenarios:

7. **Dan** is 16. He had tried various sports, but he could never stay motivated enough to practice them regularly, even though he had a lot of energy that needed to be released. During the summer holidays, an older cousin convinced him to participate in a climbing camp in some gorges close to his town.

He was surprised by how afraid he felt of climbing up the rock, but he managed to reach the top every time. A few of the participants wanted to continue practicing, so they were meeting the coach at the indoor climbing panel from the town. He decided to join and soon he made a subscription to the climbing panel. Two times a week, after school, he meets his friends there and they try new routes and techniques on the panel.

But he likes mostly the weekends, when they hitchhike to the gorges and climb on the rock. The thrills he gets when he is up on that high rock cannot compare with anything else. Recently, his coach taught him to secure other people when they are climbing, so sometimes he does this for his friends.

8. **Maria** is 15 and is very passionate about music. She would have liked to study a musical instrument, but her parents couldn't afford the costs.

However, she loved to "dig" after different kinds of music, some of them really unknown, she teaches herself about different styles and she put together a huge collection of songs. Sometimes she invites over to her place some friends who share this passion. They listen to different artists, they discuss about their backgrounds, imagine how the lives of those artists could be, what they felt or experienced when they made those songs.

Recently they joined a group that does music improvisation and even though neither Maria or her friends had studied music, they started to learn how to create spontaneous rhythms, using African drums. The biggest challenges are to find the place of the rhythm she makes among the other beats and to stay in harmony with the rest of the group when jamming. Sometimes they make music out of ordinary objects: cups, ladles, boxes etc.



## Development paths

Strong Young Minds

### 5. Resources:

#### Scenarios:

9. **Laura** is 18 and started to volunteer at the local theatre, as usher. Before the plays start, she has to guide people at their seats, give directions to the wardrobe and other places in the building. She also is in charge of distributing programs. A few times a year, the Theatre organizes some big events, like the Night of the Open Doors and the Theatre Gala.

She likes to volunteer in these events, because she believes in that more people should go to theatre and experience its beauty. So she puts a lot of effort in advertising them, by distributing flyers, assisting the actors in their street representations and promote them on social media. In the day of the event, she helps to prepare the stage, so she meets many artists before their representations.

10. **Paul** is 17 and he loves science. He has always been fascinated by discovering the rules that govern the natural world, how various phenomena appear, how atoms form molecules and how molecules make up substances.

A few months ago he became a volunteer in the Museum of Natural Sciences. His job is to make small science experiments for the children who visit the museum, to show them various phenomena, like volcanoes, mixing chemical substances, gravity tricks. He learned some of these experiments from the museum employees, but he also researched the internet and found many others. He suggested them to the museum staff and some of them got approved, so in a couple of weeks, he received the needed materials to prepare them himself.

Every Sunday, the museum organizes meetings where children can play science-themed board games. As Paul loves board games, he was attracted by the idea and he sometimes helps organizing these game meetings. He has to set the environment for playing, give an introduction on the topic of the game, present the rules and respond to the children's questions.



## Ikigai

### Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	5-30
Type of activity	brainstorming, individual work



- visual aid to show the ikigai mind map
- handouts with ikigai circles (A4)
- paper, pens

### Learning Objectives

To help participants find the balance between what they love, what they are good at, what the world needs, and what they can get paid for.

Help participants choose their future steps.

Understanding the way in which different areas of life are interconnected.

Developing the skills to identify their passions, mission, profession, vocation by answering questions about themselves.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Participants will be seated in a circle if possible, with the possibility to write in their notebooks or use the templates provided.

### 2. Introduction:

Show participants the Ikigai diagram (give them handouts with the 4 circles - see attachment) and also show it in front of the group on a flipchart or blackboard. Explain that IKIGAI is 'the reason to get up in the morning', the way to find a path to follow in life, the way to use your abilities, interests and talents to the fullest. If life were an orange, Ikigai is the way to get the most orange juice out of it. (2-3 minutes).

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Find what you love, what you are good at.

Tell participants that you are going to work on filling the mind map. Ask them to remember from the previous activities what they love (activities: Values and Developmental paths) and what they are good at (activity: Strengths and weaknesses), what they are competent in, or ask the participants to take some time to think and come up with the answers. In case they did not do that activities, you can try to do a small brainstorming. Tell them they will need to write all these onto little pieces of paper (post-its), with as few words as possible, for example: 'writing stories' / 'listening to people' / 'taking care of plants' / 'doing hair' / 'football' etc. (Allow for 10 minutes)



## Ikigai

### Strong Young Minds

**Step 2:** What the world needs.

Next, facilitate a discussion on how to find what the world needs (see the template in Resources): where to look for the problems (e.g. the news, documentaries, personal experiences, experiences of your friends and family, etc.) and how to find the possible solutions. After this, ask them to write on pieces of paper some things that they think the world needs, according to their values, in as few words as possible (ex. computer engineers, social media influencers, etc.) (5 minutes)

**Step 3:** What can you get paid for?

Next, ask them to brainstorm in pairs of two some things they have seen that gets people paid and is appealing to them - doesn't have to be a full list, just some ideas to start with, then ask them to write some job titles on pieces of paper (ex. teacher, lawyer, writer, etc.) (5 minutes)

**Step 4:** Fill in the Ikigai template:

Ask participants to start placing post its in the circles on the IKIGAI handout that they have received. The idea is to try to 'advance' post-its from thinking they only belong to one circle - LEVEL 1 (ex. it's something that I love doing, but I'm not good at it, the world doesn't need it, and I can't get paid for it) to LEVEL 2 - belonging to 2 circles (ex. it's something that I love doing, I'm good at it, but the world doesn't need it, and I can't get paid for it) - and also defining it (ex. passions, vocations, profession, etc.), maybe to LEVEL 3 - belonging to 3 circles (ex. it's something that I love doing, I'm good at it, the world needs it, but I can't get paid for it) maybe to LEVEL 4 - the IKIGAI. So ask them to start placing all the post its on the Ikigai handout, beginning with whatever circle and deciding if it would make sense to 'upgrade' the post-it (ex. at first they think 'football' is just something that they love and are good at, but then they realize they can be paid for it also, so it's a LEVEL 3 thing and they stick it at the intersection of the 3 circles (love, good at, can get paid for). (10 minutes)

**Step 5:** Encourage participants to share some of the things they found for their intersections: passion, mission, vocation, profession. Ask them what would need to happen to have their passion become a profession, their mission a passion, etc.



## 4. Debriefing:

- How did you feel during the exercise? Why
- Which was the most difficult part in this process? How about the easiest?
- Could you 'upgrade' your post its? Did you get any new ideas from hearing other people?
- Did you get any new ideas about a future career/job?
- How can you develop the competences (ASK) that you will need for a future job?

More information: <http://theviewinside.me/what-is-your-ikigai/>



## *Ikigai*

Strong Young Minds

### Resources

What does the world need? How can we find out?

Look for the problems. Where can you find out about them? E.g. See the news, documentaries, personal experiences, experiences of your friends and family, etc.

Choose the problem(s) that you consider most important and define it. What is a problem? It might be something that is lacking or, on the contrary, something which exists in excess. It can be something that leads to negative consequences for the planet and/or humanity.

What should we do next?

Break the problem into little pieces and find possible causes. There will probably not be one or two, but many. See how they are interconnected. See the fields from which the causes of the problems spring (e.g. education, transportation, environment, culture, etc.).

What next?

Imagine possible solutions. What is the current state of the art? What are people currently trying to do to solve the issue? What things work so far? Is there anything that can be used to solve this problem from what already exists? What things don't work? What can be improved and how? What kind of people do you need for that?

!The purpose is not for the teens to really discover right now the solutions to the world's problems, but rather to learn a thinking process that would help them identify the problems and solutions in the future.



Strong Young Minds

# *Ikigai*





## Wheel of Health

### Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	5-30
Type of activity	brainstorming, discussion, individual work



- Wheel of health - printed template for each participant, example on flipchart
- A4 paper, pens, markers

### Learning objective

- To understand the need for balance in different areas of lifestyle.
- To identify habits that compose the lifestyle.
- To differentiate between healthy and unhealthy habits.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Participants will be seated, preferably in a circle so they can all see the facilitator and flipchart/whiteboard/black board.

### 2. Introduction:

Our health depends on our lifestyle and how the different areas of our lifestyle are balanced. We can visualize these different areas on a wheel (facilitator shows the flipchart with the wheel).

What are the areas of our life which contribute to a healthy lifestyle? (Note for facilitator: the list should include nutrition, sleep, sports, leisure time, social relationships, plus other suggestions from participants). At each moment in our life, we can be more or less satisfied with how the different areas of life work for us.

(While doing this, facilitator fills the Wheel of Health on the flipchart with examples, also rating its different areas.)

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Now you will work on your own Wheel of Health, on the template provided. Next to each section of the wheel, write the names of the relevant areas of your life.

**Step 2:** Rate your satisfaction with each area of the wheel, using 1 to 10 scores (1 low, 10 high satisfaction). In order to decide how satisfied you are with each area, compare your current situation, with the ideal one. For example, if having the weekends for leisure is an ideal situation for you and it would mean a 10 score, if you find yourself doing homework all day long each Saturday, you might rate Leisure time with 6.



## Wheel of Health

### Strong Young Minds

*Step 3:* To have a visual representation of your rating, draw a line connecting the different areas as shown in the example. The final goal is to have a shape that represents your wheel of health.



#### 4. Debriefing:

- How did you feel during this activity?
- What parts did you find difficult? What parts were easy for you?
- Which sections of the wheel are rated higher and which are lowest?
- How even are the different areas?
- If this wheel were the wheel of a bicycle that had to carry us forward through life, how well would it support us and carry us?
- What can we do to increase our satisfaction about the different areas of our lifestyle?
- What will you do in order to increase your score in some areas?

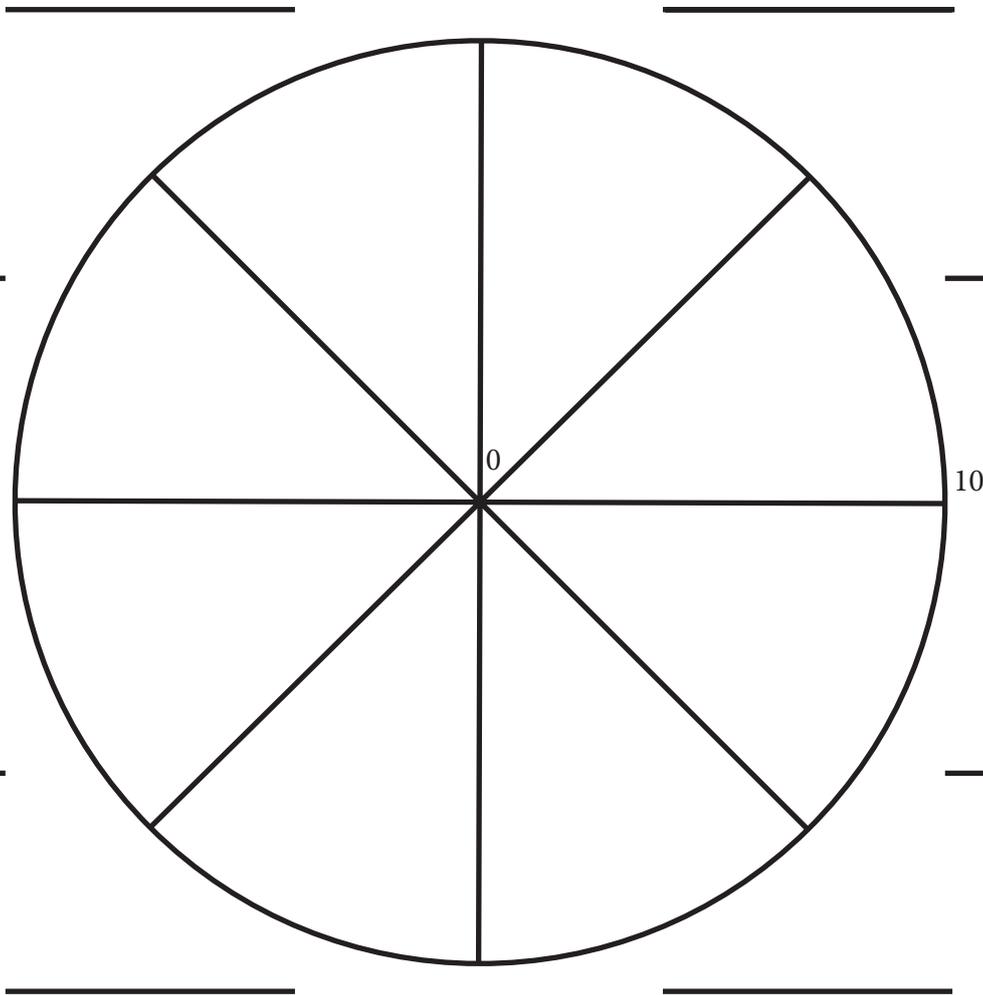


# Wheel of Health - resources

Strong Young Minds

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_





## Detectives

### Strong Young Minds

Duration	20 min
Group size	8-26
Type of activity	discussion, working in pairs



- paper, pens
- markers

### Learning Objectives

The help the participants realize the connection between habits and their lifestyle.  
To connect lifestyle balance with habits.  
To provide the behavioral and cognitive tools to reduce/eliminate unhealthy habits.  
To build confidence in the ability to change habits by acting upon cues and rewards.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Participants will be seated, preferably in a circle.

### 2. Introduction:

Our lifestyle consists of many habits, some good (e.g. exercise, reading) and some bad (e.g. smoking, sleeping at irregular hours) . They determine to a great extent the balance in our Wheel of Health.

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Looking at your wheel of health, choose one area that is important for you and that has one of the lowest scores.

**Step 2:** Think of where would you like to be in this area. Write down how the ideal situation would look like, with specific examples (e.g. I would like to do sports regularly).

**Step 3:** Think of how can you go from where you are in this area now to where you want to be. What bad habits do you need to stop and what kind of good habits do you need to introduce in your life? Write them down.

**Step 4:** Now choose an unhealthy habit that you want to eliminate in order to improve your score in a specific area.



## Detectives

### Strong Young Minds

**Step 5:** Make pairs with another participant, in which one is a detective and the other one is the questioned person. The detective asks the other one questions that will help him dissect his/her bad habit:

“When do you do the habit?”

“Where do you do it?”

“Who is usually with you when you do the habit?”

“Where did you learn how to do it?”

“How do you know you can do the habit?”

“What does it do for you? What do you get from it?”

Then the pairs switch roles and repeat the questioning.

**IMPORTANT:** The facilitators must insist on the fact that the detective should be as non-judgmental as possible



### 4. Debriefing:

- How was this activity for you?
- How was it to work in pairs and to share/listen?
- How was it to focus on a specific habit? Could you do the same process for more?
- Did you manage to answer all the questions?
- What can you learn that can help with the habit?
- What could be your next steps?



## Who wants to be healthier?

### Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	8-30
Type of activity	brainstorming, team work individual work



- informative materials
- flipchart paper or whiteboard to keep score
- markers

### Learning Objectives

Understanding the basic concepts of nutrition, exercise and sleep hygiene.  
Understanding the relationship between nutrition, exercise and sleep on one side, and mental health on the other side.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Preferably a circle with enough space to form smaller groups as well.

### 2. Introduction:

We will explore a set of guidelines that will help us establish healthy sleep, exercise and nutrition habits.

### 3. Task:

*Step 1:* Split the participants into three groups.

*Step 2:* Each group will get a set of materials with information, one about nutrition, another one about sleep and one about exercise, all related with mental health. Each group will have 10 minutes to study the materials.

*Step 3:* Now you will participate in a contest where you answer to questions based on what you just read. Each right answer will get 1 up to 3 points, depending how complete they are. The three teams are the jury and they assign the points according to how complete and correct the answers are, but they cannot give points to their own team.

We will have 9 questions(Refer to resources section). Each team will designate a representative to give their answer. You can stay together as a group, you don't need to get in front of the room. You can have different spokespersons for each question.

*Step 4:* Congratulate all the teams for their effort and acknowledge the winners.



## Who wants to be healthier?

Strong Young Minds



### 4. Debriefing:

How was it to find out all this information? How much of it did you already know? What was new?  
Where do you normally get this kind of information? How do you know if it is correct?  
How many of these concepts do you use in your life?  
What is the most important thing you've learned from this activity?

### Work for home:

1. Record your daily habits for one week:

-Sleeping(how many hours of sleep, the time you go to sleep, when you wake up, the way you feel)

-Eating(what do you eat each day and at what time)

-Exercise(How much do you exercise each day, how)

2. Find a specific app for your phone or computer to help you manage these habits(calorie intake, sleeping, exercise) and use it for one week.

Facilitator can get back into discussion about this topics by will repeating the debriefing questions in the next session and encourage the participants to share their results and insights that they found.

### Resources:

Information for facilitators:

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsanddisorders/eatingwellandmentalhealth.aspx>

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfo/treatments/physicalactivity.aspx>

<https://www.neurocorecenters.com/10-facts-might-not-know-sleep-mental-health#4eBuSQsfwOz6ghgo.97>



## Who wants to be healthier?

Strong Young Minds

### Resources:

#### Healthy habits contest questions:

1. Taking naps is healthy and helps you recover.
2. Exercise takes a lot of time and makes you tired for the rest of the day.
3. High sugar snacks help me think.
4. 8 hours of sleep it's 8 hours of sleep, no matter the time you go to sleep.
5. The best way to exercise is going to the gym.
6. How can nutrition affect my brain?
7. Watching TV in bed helps you sleep better.
8. How does exercising affect mental health?
9. If it is healthy I can eat a lot of it.



## Who wants to be healthier?

### Strong Young Minds

#### Nutrition

Eating a healthy diet can be quite challenging in today's world. Also, once you make a commitment to getting and staying healthy, there are numerous resources you can turn to in order to help you make conscious, healthy decisions regarding food.

- When in doubt, turn to an adult that has an idea about this kind of things.
- Keep in mind that **someone else's diet might not be suitable for you.**
- **Never try to lose weight by drastically reducing food intake or replacing food** with pills, protein bars or other things that weren't recommended to you specifically. You could harm your body and actually **end up putting on more weight (the yo-yo effect).**
- Unless advised by your treating physician (since some health conditions do require specific dietary changes), a healthy diet and maintaining an adequate weight for your sex, age, height and health doesn't have to mean following strict diet. It does mean however following some **general guidelines that you can customize based on your lifestyle** – and thus incorporating this kind of diet in your lifestyle.
- Eating and mental health are strongly correlated. Any change in your diet (ex. not eating anymore or eating much more than before) could signal a change in your mental health (ex. More stress, sadness/ depression, etc.). We often use food not for nutrition, but for emotional regulation, because it is distracting and comforting in a way – but that is a dangerous trap! We don't learn adequate emotional regulation strategies and we have negative consequences (gain weight, eating 'junk food', etc.)
- Since there is this strong link that your brain already knows, you can use food to improve your mental health – in a positive, responsible and conscious way. That is, feeding your body with food that proves you care for yourself, attend to your own basic needs and respect yourself.

#### Guidelines

- It all starts with **becoming aware of major food groups** and recognizing how much of each you need: proteins (eggs, meat, beans, dairy, nuts), carbohydrates (fruits, veggies, grains, sugar, honey, beans, legumes), fats (oils, fat from dairy products or meat, nuts), vitamins, minerals (found in certain quantity in all natural foods) and water.
- **A basic plate of healthy food could mean half vegetables/ fruit, a quarter protein and a quarter carbohydrates**
- Always try to **come as close to nature as possible**: try to eat 'the real deal', not processed food (and limit industrial-processed food ex. Candy bars). That could mean eating real cherries, not cherry ice cream or cherry-flavored candy; boiled rice as a side dish, not pre-packed sugared rice dessert, etc. The more you process natural food, the fewer vitamins it has. Also, industrial processed food contains a lot of added chemicals and is not nutritious for your body. They might taste good for a minute or two, but your body has to 'clean up' after such messy meals. **Always choose clean food over junk food.**



## Who wants to be healthier?

### Strong Young Minds

- Have a **regular eating pattern**. Get used to eating at certain hours and try to limit snacks. This way you can control your hunger and keep **your energy levels constant throughout the day**: your body won't panic by lack of food or by overwhelmed by too much food, so your mood won't fluctuate because of this.
- Try to **listen to your body and be mindful** about how it reacts to certain foods. Then try to make changes – for example, eliminate certain processed foods if eating them in the morning makes you feel sleepy.
- Breakfast! **Skipping breakfast or substituting it for coffee can turn into a bad habit**, since you are 'running on empty', which also impacts your mood – one reason to hate mornings.
- **Eat a light dinner before bed and try to not eat 2 hours before going to bed**, so as to not interfere with sleeping.
- Understand that our **brain is programmed by evolution to eat unhealthy food: sugar, fat and salt** are important for our survival, but once upon a time they were really hard to obtain, so whenever our ancestors got their hands on such rare precious gifts from nature (ex. Very sweet fruit, fatty meat, nuts, etc.), their brain sent them reward signals saying something like 'this is good, eat till full, remember this, get more in the future!' - But the problem is that in today's world, this kind of food is not rare anymore – you can get it whenever you want, is relatively cheap and the food industry know very well about our natural inclinations. So we keep in mind that we react as we did in the past, but there's actually no need to panic anymore: we can **use reason to plan for meals and bypass our 'sugar-fat-salt' craziness**.



## Who wants to be healthier?

### Strong Young Minds

#### Exercise

Everyone knows that regular exercise is good for the body. But exercise is also one of the most effective ways to improve your mental health. Regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact on the way we feel. **It also relieves stress**, improves memory, helps you sleep better, and boosts overall mood. And you don't have to be a fitness fanatic to reap the benefits. Research indicates that **modest amounts of exercise can make a difference**. No matter your age or fitness level, you can learn to use exercise as a powerful tool to feel better.

What are the mental health benefits of exercise?

People who exercise regularly tend to do so because it gives them an enormous **sense of well-being**. They **feel more energetic throughout the day, sleep better at night, have sharper memories, and feel more relaxed and positive about themselves and their lives**.

It also releases endorphins, powerful chemicals in your brain that energize your spirits and make you feel good. Finally, exercise can also serve as a distraction, allowing you to find some quiet time to break out of the cycle of day to day thoughts.

Physical activity helps to relax the muscles and relieve tension in the body. Since the body and mind are so closely linked, when your body feels better so, too, will your mind.

Exercising regularly is one of the easiest and most effective ways to **improve concentration**, motivation, memory, and mood. Physical activity immediately boosts the brain's dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin levels—all of which affect focus and attention.

Other mental and emotional benefits of exercise

**Sharper memory and thinking.** The same endorphins that make you feel better also help you concentrate and feel mentally sharp for tasks at hand. Exercise also stimulates the **growth of new brain cells and helps prevent age-related decline**.

**Higher self-esteem.** Regular activity is an investment in your mind, body, and soul. When it becomes habit, it can foster your **sense of self-worth** and make you **feel strong and powerful**. You'll feel better about your appearance and, by meeting even small exercise goals, you'll feel a sense of achievement.

**Better sleep.** Even short bursts of exercise in the morning or afternoon can help regulate your sleep patterns. If you prefer to exercise at night, relaxing exercises such as yoga or gentle stretching can help promote sleep.



## Who wants to be healthier?

### Strong Young Minds

**More energy.** Increasing your heart rate several times a week will give you more get-up-and-go. Start off with just a few minutes of exercise a day, and increase your workout as you feel more energized.

**Stronger resilience.** When faced with mental or emotional challenges in life, exercise can help you cope in a healthy way, instead of resorting to alcohol, drugs, or other negative behaviors that ultimately only make your symptoms worse. Regular exercise can also help **boost your immune system** and reduce the impact of stress.

You don't need to devote hours out of your busy day, train at the gym, sweat buckets, or run mile after monotonous mile. You can reap all the physical and mental health benefits of exercise with **30-minutes of moderate exercise five times a week.** Two 15-minute or even three 10-minute exercise sessions can also work just as well.

Even a little bit of activity is better than nothing

If that still seems intimidating, don't despair. Even just a few minutes of physical activity are better than none at all. If you don't have time for 15 or 30 minutes of exercise, or if your body tells you to take a break after 5 or 10 minutes, for example, that's okay, too. **Start with 5- or 10-minute sessions and slowly increase your time.** The more you exercise, the more energy you'll have, so eventually you'll feel ready for a little more. The key is to **commit to do some moderate physical activity—however little—on most days.** As exercising becomes habit, you can slowly add extra minutes or try different types of activities. If you keep at it, the benefits of exercise will begin to pay off.

You don't have to suffer to get results

Research shows that moderate levels of exercise are best for most people. Moderate means:

1. That you breathe a little heavier than normal, but are not out of breath. For example, you should be able to chat with your walking partner, but not easily sing a song.
2. That your body feels warmer as you move, but not overheated or very sweaty.

Overcoming obstacles to exercise

**Feeling exhausted.** When you're tired or stressed, it feels like working out will just make it worse. But the truth is that physical activity is a powerful energizer. Studies show that regular exercise can dramatically **reduce fatigue and increase your energy levels.** **If you are really feeling tired, promise yourself a 5-minute walk.** Chances are you'll be able to go five more minutes.

**Feeling hopeless.** If you have no experience exercising, **start slow with low-impact movement a few minutes each day.**



## Who wants to be healthier?

### Strong Young Minds

**Feeling pain.** If you have a disability, severe weight problem, arthritis, or any injury or illness that limits your mobility, talk to your healthcare provider about **ways to safely exercise**. You shouldn't ignore pain, but rather do what you can, when you can. Divide your exercise into shorter, more frequent chunks of time if that helps, or try exercising in water to reduce joint or muscle discomfort.

**Feeling bad about yourself.** Are you your own worst critic? It's time to try a new way of thinking about your body. **No matter what your weight, age or fitness level, there are others like you with the goals of getting fit.** Try surrounding yourself with people in your shoes. Take a class with people at a variety of fitness levels. Accomplishing even the smallest fitness goals will help you gain body confidence.

Schedule your workout at the time of day when your energy is highest

That may be first thing in the morning before work or school, or at lunchtime before the mid-afternoon lull hits, or in longer sessions at the weekend. If depression or anxiety has you feeling tired and unmotivated all day long, try dancing to some music or simply going for a walk. Even a short, 15-minute walk can help clear your mind, improve your mood, and boost your energy level. As you move and start to feel a little better, you'll experience a greater sense of control over your well-being. You may even feel energized enough to exercise more vigorously—by walking further, breaking into a run, or adding a bike ride, for example.

Other tips for staying motivated

**Focus on activities you enjoy.** Any activity that gets you moving counts. That could include throwing a Frisbee with a dog or friend, walking laps of a mall window shopping, or cycling to the grocery store.

**Be comfortable.** Whatever time of day you decide to exercise, wear clothing that's comfortable and choose a setting that you find calming or energizing. That may be a quiet corner of your home, a scenic path, or your favorite city park.

**Reward yourself.** Part of the reward of completing an activity is how much better you'll feel afterwards, but it always helps your motivation to promise yourself an extra treat for exercising. Reward yourself with a delicious smoothie, or with an extra episode of your favorite TV show.

**Make exercise a social activity.** Exercising with a friend or loved one will not only make exercising **more fun and enjoyable**, it can also help to **motivate** you to stick to a workout routine. You'll also feel better than exercising alone. In fact, when you're suffering from a mood disorder such as depression, the companionship can be just as important as the exercise.



## Who wants to be healthier?

### Strong Young Minds

Easy ways to move more that don't involve the gym

Don't have 30 minutes to dedicate to yoga or a bike ride? Don't worry. **Think about physical activity as a lifestyle rather than just a single task to check off.** Look at your daily routine and consider ways to sneak in activity here, there, and everywhere. Need ideas? We've got them.

**At work and on the go.** Bike or walk to an appointment rather than taking the bus, banish all elevators and get to know every staircase possible, briskly walk to the bus stop then get off one stop early, take a vigorous walk during your breaks.

**Just for fun.** Pick fruit at an orchard, boogie to music, go to the beach or take a hike, gently stretch while watching television, organize a school football team, take a class in martial arts, dance, or yoga.



## Who wants to be healthier?

### Strong Young Minds

#### Sleep

What is sleep hygiene?

Sleep hygiene is a variety of practices and habits necessary to have good nighttime sleep quality and full daytime alertness.

Why is it important to practice good sleep hygiene?

Obtaining healthy sleep is important for both physical and mental health. It improves productivity and overall quality of life.

How can I improve my sleep hygiene?

One of the most important sleep hygiene practices is to spend an appropriate amount of time asleep in bed, not too little or too excessive. Good sleep hygiene practices include:

- **Daytime naps no longer than 30 minutes** . Napping does not make up for inadequate nighttime sleep. However, a short nap of 20-30 minutes can help to improve mood, alertness and performance.
- **Avoid stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine close to bedtime. Also, alcohol consumption in the evening affects sleep in the second half of the night**
- **10 minutes of aerobic exercise, such as walking or cycling, improves nighttime sleep quality. Avoid strenuous workouts close to bedtime.**
- **Avoid heavy or rich foods, right before sleep, fatty or fried meals, spicy dishes, citrus fruits, and carbonated drinks.** When this occurs close to bedtime, it can lead to painful heartburn that disrupts sleep.
- **Ensure adequate exposure to natural light.** Exposure to sunlight during the day, as well as darkness at night, helps to maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle.
- **Establish a regular relaxing bedtime routine** that helps the body recognize that it is bedtime. This could include taking warm showers or baths, reading a book, or light stretches. When possible, try to avoid emotionally upsetting conversations and activities before attempting to sleep.
- **Make sure that the sleep environment is pleasant.** Comfortable mattress and pillows. The bedroom shouldn't be very hot. Turn off bright light from lamps, cell phone and TV. Consider using blackout curtains, eye shades, ear plugs, "white noise" machines, humidifiers, fans and other devices that can make the bedroom more relaxing.



## Highway to health

Strong Young Minds

Duration	30 min
Group size	8-25
Type of activity	discussion, individual work



- paper, pens
- markers
- template

### Learning Objectives

- To help participants take control of their habits and improve their lifestyle.
- To learn to identify cues and rewards that build good habits.
- To build confidence in the ability to build habits by acting upon cues and rewards.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Participants will be seated in a circle having the possibility to write.

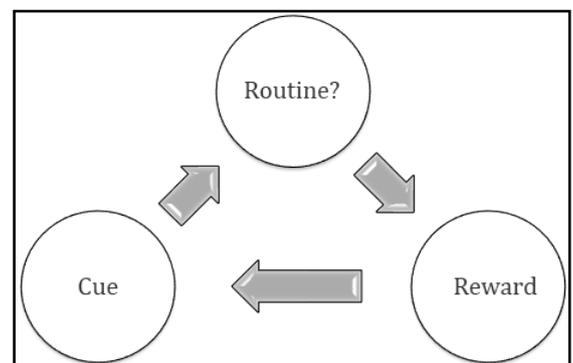
### 2. Introduction:

The facilitator introduces the idea that when a habit is practiced, the neuronal circuit supporting that habit becomes stronger and quicker. Analogy with pathways that are walked on very often, compared to the abandoned ones. The path in our brain can even become a highway if we practice the habit for a long time in a consistent manner, which is a goal, if we want to be very good at something, like a sport or a subject.

To establish a new habit that you want, you have some allies:

- Information about how the habit is done.
- Motive/ need to do the habit (to connect, to relax, to be energized).
- Sources of self-efficacy (the confidence that you can do the habit). It can come from feedback from others, previous outcomes etc.
- Setting the environment - Cues in the environment that remind the person about the habit (e.g. coming home, seeing the laptop etc.)
- Action plan: when, how, with whom am I going to do the habit.
- Rewards (e.g. feeling relaxed, feeling activated)

To change a habit, you must keep the old cue and deliver the old reward, but insert a new routine.





## Highway to health

### Strong Young Minds

Participants are guided through gradually sharing the desired habit, sources of info, cues, rewards, obstacles.

#### 3. Task:

Participants receive a template with an action plan. (see resources)

They choose a habit that they want to establish and they write it in the template. Then they have to add (writing and/ or drawing) the elements that they need in order to be able to drive on the highway to health.



#### 4. Debriefing:

- How did you feel during the exercise?
- How was it to plan the habit that you want to build?
- What was the most difficult? What was the easiest?
- What will help you in building this new habit?
- Have you ever analyzed your habits in this way? How can this tool help you?
- Have you found anything new about your old habit?
- How can you use this in your daily life?

#### **Optional Work for home:**

Choose a buddy that can help you monitor doing what you planned. Help each other to respect the plan. During the next session you can discuss how it was.



## Highway to health - resources

### Strong Young Minds

#### ACTION PLAN

1. What is the habit that you want to build?

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2. Where from will you get the information about how to do it?

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3. When will you do it? Be specific: how often/ day of the week/ time of the day.

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4. Where will you do it? Give details about the place.

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5. With whom will you do the habit?

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6. What reward will you get from making the habit?

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7. What are the possible obstacles in making this habit?

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8. Who can help you monitor your new habit? Choose a buddy and let him know about your plan.

---



## Time management - Eisenhower box

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	8-25
Type of activity	individual work, team work, discussions



- A4 paper, post-its
- Signs for each table indicating the quadrants from Eisenhower's box
- Noise maker for switching signal

### Learning Objectives

- To teach participants to prioritize tasks according to their importance and urgency.
- To identify the main life tasks that occupy time.
- To learn to use a tool for prioritizing tasks.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Four tables with chairs.

### 2. Introduction:

How many of you find yourselves in one of the following situations:

- at the end of the day, you cannot really say what you occupied your time with;
- you cannot find time for things that you want to do;
- you have a pile of projects and tasks and you cannot seem to finish in time?
- 

President Eisenhower lived one of the most productive lives you can imagine. He managed to accomplish various leading and intellectual tasks, as well as to pursue personal hobbies. His most famous productivity strategy is known as the Eisenhower Box and it's a simple decision-making tool that you can use right now.

Using the decision matrix below, you will separate your actions based on four possibilities:

- Urgent and important (tasks you will do immediately).
- Important, but not urgent (tasks you will schedule to do later).
- Urgent, but not important (tasks you will delegate to someone else).
- Neither urgent nor important (tasks that you will eliminate).

Urgent tasks are things that you feel like you need to react to: emails, phone calls, texts, news stories. Meanwhile, important tasks are things that contribute to our long-term mission, values, and goals.



## Time management - Eisenhower box

### Strong Young Minds

#### 3. Task:

*Step 1:* Ask participants to make a list of the activities they have to do this week, including school tasks, hobbies, socializing etc.

*Step 2:* Ask them to draw an Eisenhower box on their paper (or take use the template provided).

*Step 3:* Divide participants into 4 groups.

*Step 4:* As they are divided into groups, at each table they will find a quadrant of Eisenhower's box.

Their task is to fill in the quadrant in their paper accordingly and discuss it with their colleagues. They should argue their decisions (this is urgent because...). Every 8 minutes, you give the signal so that each group move (clockwise) to the next table, to fill in a new quadrant of the Eisenhower Box.

After 4 rotations, the participants should have all quadrants filled in. We go to debriefing.



#### 4. Debriefing:

- How was it to organize your activities in the four quadrants? Easy/difficult?
- How did it help you to prioritize your activities?
- How do you feel about your results? Anything that surprises you?
- How can you use this tool in your day to day life?
- Why is time management important?
- What other tools do you know that can help in time management.



## Time management - Eisenhower box

Strong Young Minds

*Eisenhower Box template*

Eisenhower Box	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	DO IT NOW	PLAN IT(Schedule a time to do it)
Not Important	DELEGATE IT (Who can do it for you?)	DROP IT (Eliminate it)



Strong Young Minds

# EMOTIONS



## What are emotions?

### Strong Young Minds

Duration	10-15 min
Group size	5-30
Type of activity	brainstorming



- flipchart paper
- markers
- colored pens

### Learning objective

To encourage participants to start thinking about their emotions. Reflecting on how emotions appear and how we can recognize and understand them more easily. To learn about emotions: what are emotions, how do they appear, how we can deal with them? Learn about yourself and your needs.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Preferably participants will be seated in a circle.

### 2. Introduction:

Ask the participants: “How do you feel right now?”. Wait for some answers. You can continue with other questions such as: “How did you feel this morning”, “How did you feel yesterday afternoon?”. If they are not mentioning many or any emotions, guide them in this direction: “Let’s try some emotions! Can you identify some emotions that you are having at the moment? Maybe you feel angry, sad, curious, bored, hopeful, happy, anxious, scared, and so on.” Wait for their answers.

Continue to talk about emotions and how we usually relate to them: “We don’t talk much about emotions. Actually, we talk so little about them that we have a hard time identifying them when they come. Today we will discuss a bit about emotions and why we need to talk about them.”

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Write the word “EMOTIONS” in the middle of a flipchart paper and put it on the floor.

\*If the group is bigger than 10 people, use more flipcharts. You should have approximately 10 people/flip chart.

**Step 2:** Ask the participants to think about this word, about emotions themselves. “What are emotions?”



## *What are emotions?*

### *Strong Young Minds*

**Step 3:** Give them colored pencils and ask them to write words that come to their minds or to draw how they understand emotions in their mind, if it is easier for them. Give them 5 minutes to write everything that comes to their minds when they think about emotions.

**Step 4:** Take the paper/papers from the floor and read some ideas that were put there. Give time to observe the complexity or similitude of what they wrote down. Formulate a conclusion: “As you can see, when we think about emotions there are so many things that come to our mind. What you wrote here shows us the complexity of this subject. Emotions are formed during complex subjective experiences, which is why it is difficult to define them. But we can find a simple definition of emotions: they express what we feel.”

#### ***Tips and tricks:***

Use this method as an introduction for the next methods that are focused on emotions. “During the next methods we will focus on better understanding emotions and how to deal with them.”



## Emotional Taxi

Strong Young Minds

Duration	40-50 min
Group size	10-30
Type of activity	role play, simulation



- flipchart paper
- markers

### Learning objective

To learn about emotions: what are emotions, how they appear, how we can deal with them?  
To help participants understand their emotions.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Preferably participants will be seated in a circle.

Set up one chair for the “taxi-cab driver” in front of the room. Arrange four other chairs: 3 behind him and one next to him, for the passenger seats. The rest of the participants could be seated in a semicircle so they can easily observe the role play.

While you are explaining the rules, you can also write the main ideas on the whiteboard or you can print the rules and give them to the 5 volunteers.

### 2. Introduction:

“We will do a method called Emotional Taxi. This is an interactive method that will help us better understand emotions. I will first need 5 volunteers and then I will explain all the rules and the roles.”

“We will also need a list with emotions. What emotions do you know?” Make a list with min 10 emotions suggested by the participants. Select the best known ones and write them on individual post-its.

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Explain the roles: there will be 1 cab driver and 4 passengers. Each passenger will represent an emotion. They will have to act according to that specific emotion. The driver does not receive an emotion.



## Emotional Taxi

### Strong Young Minds

#### *Step 2: Explain the rules:*

There are some simple rules: each passenger enters the cab one by one. Each passenger enters after 2 minutes. Immediately after they enter, the driver tries to imitate their emotion (without knowing what is that specific emotion). Any of them can initiate a conversation, making sure they act according to that specific emotion.

Once the second passenger enters, the cab driver and the previous passenger adopt the emotion of the passenger and they talk and act as if they were all feeling that “new” emotion. The new passenger can choose to show his/her emotion (that is written on the note) to the previous passenger, but has to keep it secret from the driver. This continues until all passengers enter the cab.

Once the last passenger has entered the cab and had her/his “2 minutes of talking”, the previous passengers can announce that they want to exit the cab. Starting from the first passenger, the taxi driver says goodbye to them. Both the taxi driver and the other have to say goodbye in a manner of that person specific feeling. The taxi driver also has to try to guess the feeling- for ex: if the emotion on the note was “sad” he/she could say: “I am sad to tell you goodbye”.

*Step 5:* Once you make sure that the 5 volunteers understood their roles and the rules, you can give them 2 minutes to prepare their roles: what they will say in the cab, how will day act, move, etc.

*Step 6:* Make sure you also give tasks to the big group: ask them to pay attention and to also guess the emotions and write them down on their notebooks. Other things that they could observe and write down: the gestures they observe, the things that made them feel/think something.

*Step 7:* After each person extracted one emotion, you can start the method implementation with a story such as:

“The cab driver is on a regular day of work, driving around the town. After a few moments of driving, a customer which looks a bit emotional, appears at the side of the road and waves his/her hand to stop the taxi. The driver stops and the passenger enters the cab. The moment this happens, the cab driver adopts the emotion of the passenger and they talk and act as they were both feeling that emotion.”

*Step 8:* Once the role-play has started, the facilitator will keep the time. You may want to use a timer to make sure each passenger has the 2 minutes. Make sure you pay attention to what the participants need and how is the flow of the method is. If the participants are on a roll, you can let it continue longer. If they look confused or aren’t acting much with a character, you can encourage the next passenger to enter the cab, in order to keep the game lively.

*Step 9:* Ask the participants to try to speak and express themselves on by one, in order for the others to be able to understand each emotional expression and avoid chaos(especially with stronger emotions such as anger).



## Emotional Taxi

### Strong Young Minds

#### *Tips & tricks:*

\* Have an extra participant in the role of a human radio in the car. This role is to announce when the next passenger is about to enter the taxi and also, from time to time (but not too often), to maybe sing a song or give news that correspond to each emotion.

At the end of the debriefing you can offer participants the following resources in order for them to better understand emotions.



### 4. Debriefing:

- How did you feel during the method?
- How easy or difficult was it to impersonate the emotion you were assigned? How about the emotions of the other passengers?
- How easy or difficult was it to switch between the emotions?
- Which emotion was the easiest to impersonate? How about the most difficult? Why do you think it was like this?
- Encourage the observers to speak: did they guess the emotion? What helped them to do that?
- Let's take each emotion in turn, from the easiest to the most difficult, and see how you thought about impersonating it. Let's see (first emotion), what did you do or say in order to show you were feeling that? Ask observers to contribute. (Write on a flipchart paper or a board the characteristics that they mention for each emotion)
- What are the common elements that we identified for all emotions? (Wait for some answers or guide them to the answers, then introduce them to the general components of emotions and provide examples for better understanding - see attachment)
- How do you think that knowing these (the components of emotions) can help you in your daily life? (See attachment for input in the end)

### **More information**

<http://teenshealth.org/en/teens/understand-emotions.html?WT.ac=ctg>

<https://www.cognitivehealing.com/depression/learn-how-to-identify-and-express-your-feelings/>



## *Emotional Taxi - resources*

### **Strong Young Minds**

#### *1. Prompting event*

Emotions can be either reactions to events in the environment or to things inside a person. These events and things are called PROMPTING EVENTS. They prompt, or call forth the emotion. A person's thoughts, behaviors and physical reactions prompt emotions. (Recently someone put his hand on the back of my neck, and I felt fear and anger.) You might have an automatic feeling, without thinking about it, like "I feel love when I see my cat."

What triggers it or gets it going? Prompting events can be events happening in the present (an interaction with someone, losing something, physical illness, financial worries). A prompting event might also be a memory, a thought, or even another feeling (we feel ashamed, and then feel angry about feeling ashamed, for example). In managing our emotions, it is important to be able to recognize prompting events.

#### *2. Interpretation of an event or experience*

Most events outside ourselves don't prompt emotions. It is the interpretation of the event that prompts the emotion.

Event: It starts to thunder and lightning.

Interpretation: I have heard of people being killed by lightning.

Emotion: Fear

Event: I see Mary at the concert with Betty after she promised to go with me.

Interpretation: Mary doesn't care about me.

Emotion: Sadness

Event: I see Mary at the concert with Betty after she promised to go with me.

Interpretation: Mary is trying to get back at me.

Emotion: Anger

Can you see that the emotion comes after the interpretation is made, after you have the thought about the reason something is happening?

#### *3. Body changes and sensations*

Emotions involve body changes such as tensing and relaxing muscles, changes in heart rate, breathing rate, skin temperature, rises and falls in blood pressure, etc. You can notice, for example, that when you are afraid or anxious, your body feels very tense and your heart starts to beat faster. Also, your mouth may be dry, you might have tingling or shaky hands. When we feel sad, for example, we notice that our bodies are sinking, like we are losing energy, we have increased or decreased appetite or sleep.

Sometimes people have trouble sensing their body changes. To regulate our emotions we have to be pretty good at sensing what is going on in our bodies. If we have practiced shutting off our body sensations, this can be difficult. However it is a learned response and we can unlearn it by practicing awareness.

Also there are facial and posture changes which are noticeable also from the outside. For example,



## *Emotional Taxi - resources*

### **Strong Young Minds**

with anger we have: clenched jaw, tightened cheek and forehead muscles, grinding or clenching teeth, clenched fists, spread legs or “attack position”. When we are sad, we may have lowered shoulders and a crouching position. Researchers now believe that changes in the face muscles play an important part in causing emotions. Be aware of the changes in your facial muscles when you are experiencing emotions.

### **5. Action Urges**

Emotions involve what we call action urges. An important function of emotions is to prompt behaviors. For example if we feel angry, we may be prompted to fight or attack verbally. Or if we feel fear, we may be prompted to run or hide.

The action itself, the fighting, or running, or hugging is not part of the emotion, but the urge to do the action, the feeling that prompts you to do the action, is considered part of the feeling. If we feel angry at someone, we may feel an urge to start yelling at them. That urge is part of the angry feeling, but the yelling is not. Yelling is a behavior itself and does not necessarily appear, even though the feeling of anger is there.

### ***HOW DOES IT HELP US to understand our emotions?***

1. One of the most important functions of emotions is to COMMUNICATE that something we (don't) need is (not) happening. They are trying to communicate important information to us and in order to receive the message, we need to understand the emotion. For example, if nobody comes to our birthday party, we may feel sad, which tells us that having people around for our birthday is important. Paying attention to the thoughts that are in our mind might help us clarify the details of this situation and identify the circumstances in which it is important for us to have people around.

2. To communicate something to the others, an emotion has to be expressed. If we do not know or understand what we are feeling, we cannot express it accurately and the others might not know that something is important for us. For example, if nobody came to our birthday party, we can communicate this in different ways and people can understand different things: “Nobody came to my birthday party.” vs. “I was quite angry when nobody came to my birthday party.” vs. “I was really angry when nobody came to my birthday party. How dare they call themselves my friends?!” vs. “I was so sad when nobody came to my birthday party that I didn't even want to touch the cake.” Each of these sentences sends a very different message. Sometimes, if we have not learned to express our emotions, we may think we are communicating but the other person isn't getting it. This can cause misunderstanding.

3. Understanding when and how our emotions appear can help us anticipate and prepare our responses. For example, if you know that you usually get angry when someone is shouting, you



## *Emotional Taxi - resources*

### **Strong Young Minds**

also know that your blood pressure will start to rise and you'll have the urge to yell back. If you know that yelling back will only bring you bad consequences, you can plan to get out of the room or run to the bathroom for 5 minutes to cool down. If you know how emotions go, you know where to step in and regulate them.

4. Emotions have after effects on our thoughts, our physical function and our behavior. Sometimes these effects can last quite a while. One after effect is that an emotion can keep triggering the same emotion over and over. If we detect the components of our emotional experiences, we can know that what comes next is still part of what we are feeling, not part of reality. For example, if have a fight with a friend and we feel sad, we might start having all sorts of sad thoughts like "Nobody likes me.", but we can remember "I'm only thinking like this because I'm feeling sad right now, it doesn't mean it's actually true."

5. Sometimes people have emotions about emotions - for example, you might feel angry, and then you might feel shame for feeling angry - or they have more than one emotion at the same time, like both anger and sadness when someone dies or goes away. This makes it harder to figure out what to do and which emotion to deal with. It also creates a lot of confusion, which can prompt another emotion and then another one, until the experience feels overwhelming.



## Emotions in court

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	9-30
Type of activity	role play, team work, group discussion



- flipchart paper with guiding questions
- hand-out for the facilitator (in the attachment)

### Learning objective

To help participants understand the benefits of listening to your emotions and accepting both positive and negative emotions. Encourage participants to work as a group, respect each other and listen to other people opinion.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Preferably participants will be seated in a circle.

### 2. Introduction:

Introduce the topic of emotion by making a reminder about previous methods (in case you implemented other methods about emotions). If this is the first method you implement, try to have an open discussion about what emotions are and give some examples.

Then start a discussion to prompt their ideas:

1. Why do we have emotions in our lives? They seem to cause us so much trouble. Wouldn't we be better without them?
2. Is there any way in which emotions can help us?

After the discussion, you can introduce the story, using words such as:

“You have many interesting ideas about emotions, which I'm sure will make your great lawyers in the Court of Emotions. In the next activity, we will imagine that we are in a futuristic society in which emotions are endangered, someone is threatening to eliminate them completely and make people purely rational. However, emotions have been with us for so long that we know it would not be wise to let them go. A court was set up and we were given a chance to defend them, making a plea/case for each emotion, bringing arguments for our need for it and its role in our life. So we will be the lawyers in this Court and we will split in groups to tackle each emotion and find proof to defend it.”

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Split the participants into groups of minimum 3 participants. Choose from the following emotions: fear, anger, sadness, joy, pride, guilt, shame; and give them one emotion per group.



## Emotions in court

### Strong Young Minds

**Step 2:** Tell them what they will have to do: “Each group is responsible for one emotion. You will have to think about the emotion that you have assigned and bring arguments for why and how this emotion is useful in our lives. But remember that you are lawyers, which means that you need to bring up real evidence in terms of actual events and experiences to defend the case. Therefore, you are searching your lives and the lives of people around you to illustrate your arguments”. Encourage participants to think about concrete situations in which they or someone they know has felt the emotion. They should write them on paper. Gather examples from all members of the group

Tell them: “Think about concrete situations in which you or someone you know has felt the emotion, gather examples from all members of the group, discuss them in the group and try to answer the two questions about each example. Put the answers on paper as proof for the utility of the emotion in people’s lives.”

**Step 3:** Give them 15 minutes to discuss and write some arguments on paper.

**Step 4:** After the 15 minutes, ask each group to choose a representative who will read the arguments and make the plea for the emotion.



### 4. Debriefing:

- How was it to find the arguments? Was it easy or difficult to see how emotions helped in a certain situation?
- Which was the easiest emotion to defend? Which one got the most arguments? How about the most difficult, with the least arguments? Why do you think it was like this?
- How does it help us in our daily life to know these things about emotions?
- What can we keep in mind from this exercise?

### **Tips & tricks:**

\* Make the group division depending on the size of the whole group, the time available and the number of emotions you want to discuss. You can have more groups with less people each, if you want to cover more emotions, or less groups with more people each. But take into consideration that more groups means more time, as each group has to make the plea for their emotion in the end. At the same time, if the whole group is small, and you can only form 2 or 3 subgroups, you can assign more than one emotion to one group.

\* Preferably, you should choose both positive (joy and pride) and negative emotions (sadness, anger).

\* At the end of the debriefing you can offer participants the following resources.



## Emotions in court - resources

Strong Young Minds

### Functions of emotions in our lives

There are reasons why humans (and other mammals) have emotions. We can't (and don't want to) get rid of them. We need them for survival. They happen in our mind and body and they prepare us for action – they feel like an urge, an impulse to do something, because they activate us in a specific way. Evolution has found the most helpful for us to solve certain problems humans (and other beings) have faced over and over again.

Emotion	What does it make us do?	What do we focus on?
Fear	Respond to threats to our life, health or well-being	Escape from danger
Anger	Respond when our important goals are blocked, when we are attacked (or someone important to us).	Self-defense, control
Disgust	Respond to situations or things that are offensive and may contaminate us.	Rejecting and distancing ourselves from some object, event, situation
Sadness	Respond to losses of someone or something important, and to goals lost or not attained	What we value and the pursuit of goals; communicate to others that we need help
Guilt	Respond to specific actions of ours that have led us to step over our values	Actions and behaviors that are likely to repair the violation
Shame	Respond to personal characteristics that are dishonoring or sanctioned by our community	Hide transgression; if it is already public, try to 'correct' it
Jealousy	Respond to others who threaten to take away relationships or things very important to us	Protect what we have
Envy	Response to getting or having things we do not have but want or need	Work hard to obtain what others have
Love	Response to reproduction and survival	Union with others and attachment to other people
Happiness	Respond to good things happening to us, to others we care about and the social group we are part of	Continue activities that enhance pleasure and bring personal and social value

However, the problem is that we don't really react to the objective reality, but to the reality in our heads. We may exaggerate threats, perceive offense when none is intended, anticipate some loss in the future that never actually comes, etc. Our mind is not a mirror of reality – we can train it to be as accurate as possible, but it usually distorts in some way.



## Courage Street

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	5-30
Type of activity	role play, simulation



- Cards with characters
- Cards with situations (for facilitator)

### Learning objective

To recognize dysfunctional coping mechanisms that usually make us avoid emotions (taking substances, blaming others, complaining about it etc.).  
To understand that courage helps you confront emotions that are unpleasant.  
To engage yourself in functional coping mechanisms and confront your emotions (analyze the situation, speak about it with a friend, work harder etc.).



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

This method needs enough space for participants to be able to line up (their back to a wall) facing the same direction. It can easily be implemented in an outdoor space.

Adaptation to a smaller space: if the space at your disposal doesn't allow you to have the participants line up, invite them to take a paper and a pen and write down numbers from 1 to 10 and circle the number of the situations where they would make a step forward.

### 2. Task:

**Step 1:** Ask the participants to line up with their backs to a wall.

**Step 2:** Give each of them, at random, a piece of paper with the information for one of the characters on the list. Make sure you have printed enough characters for the number of participants. If you have more than 15 participants, you can print the same characters two or three times.

**Step 3:** Ask them to read the text and try to connect with their character. "You have in your hands a short text with information about a concrete person. Do not show it to the others, but read it carefully and imagine for a few moments that you are that person. Imagine what kinds of thoughts you would have, what kinds of feelings you would experience, what you like or you don't like, what habits you have. Try to put yourself in the shoes of this person as much as you can because you will impersonate him/her for the rest of the exercise."



## Courage Street

Strong Young Minds

**Step 4:** After 2-3 minutes of thinking about their characters, tell them the rules of the method: “I will read a series of situations which your character will confront. Each time, you will have to decide whether or not your character needs courage to confront this situation. If your answer is YES (your character needs courage), you will make one step forward. If your answer is NO, you will stay where you are.” Example: if you are afraid of darkness, you need courage to wait for your friends alone in a tent during the night.

**Step 5:** Read the 10 situations (written on the facilitator handout) one by one and after each one, allow the participants a few seconds to decide about their character and make a step forward if needed.

**Step 4:** In the end, after going through the 10 situations, encourage the participants to take a look around them and see where they stand compared to the others.



### 3. Debriefing:

- How did you feel throughout the activity?
- In the situation of.....(facilitator chooses a few examples of situations), what characters needed courage? Explain why.
- Was it easy to decide whether to take a step or not? How did you make the decision?
- Across the situations, you had to decide whether or not your character needs courage. How did you think about courage in those moments? What is courage? Can we think of some examples from your daily life?
- Taking into consideration what we have discussed, would you change any of your moves (e.g. make some extra steps forward or, on the contrary, go backwards)?
- How does it help us to courageously confront situations or emotions that are unpleasant for us?
- Think about the situations in your life that you are afraid of. What benefits could you have from courageously confronting them?

#### **Tips & tricks:**

Make sure that during the exercise participants remain silent and they take the activity seriously. Encourage them to remain in their character roles until the end of the method. In case the participants ask you questions during the method, encourage them to find their own answers, act (take a step or not) as their character would do it.

If you have extra time, you can add more situations. Try to create situations that could be real and according to participant's daily life.

You could also invent new characters according to what are the fears that you think the participants could face in their life.



## Courage Street

Strong Young Minds

### **Resources:**

#### *More about courage*

There are different types of courage. Below are some ways in which courage can emerge.

1. Taking action despite feeling afraid. Courage does not exist without fear, you cannot fight a monster if there is no monster.
2. Persevering in the face of adversity, standing up after you have fallen, going on after you have failed. When you experience difficult times, you become more aware of the fact that life will sometimes get tough. Courage means going on and not being intimidated by this reality.
3. Taking the difficult path, choosing challenge and growth, rather than the easy way out. 'No pain, no gain', the saying goes. Courage involves risking to face difficult times in order to get something bigger and better in the end.
4. Standing up for what you know is right or doing what you think is right, even when you are not sure you will win. The greatest heroes entered battles because they believed in something, not because they thought they could walk away with their lives.
5. Getting out of your comfort zone, letting go of the familiar in order to expand your horizons. 'Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore.' - Lord Chesterfield
6. Facing harsh times with dignity and honesty. "There is no need to be ashamed of tears, for tears bear witness that a man has the greatest of courage, the courage to suffer." -Viktor Frankl

#### **Characters and Situation resources**

1. The characters that participants receive have various types of fears, such as fear of conflicts, fear of feeling sad, fear of being vulnerable, and so on, or dislike being in certain situations.
2. The situations that the facilitator reads about are specific contexts which would elicit a certain level of discomfort, depending on the personality of the character.



## Courage Street - resources

Strong Young Minds

### Courage Street Characters

**1. Fear to disappoint parents.** You have very demanding parents who expect you to have high marks and many friends. Lately you have started to please people you don't really like, in order to be popular. You also gave up your passion, playing the flute, because your parents didn't think this is an activity for your future and you should concentrate more on studying.

**2. Afraid that the popular students would laugh at you / reject you.** You always try to impress your classmates in any way you can. You spend a lot of time in the morning getting dressed, doing your hair and you sometimes skip classes just to show that you are cool, which gets you in trouble most of the times. You spend money on expensive gadgets you don't truly need and you almost always spend the break smoking with the popular kids.

**3. Fear of negative feelings and discomfort.** You avoid remaining alone or with nothing to do, because you start getting bored and it feels very uncomfortable. So when you are alone, you spend hours texting, scrolling on Facebook or playing computer games. Recently you started to smoke because many people say it makes you feel relaxed and it's still better than doing nothing.

**4. Fear of darkness.** You really don't like to be alone in the dark. If the night comes and your family is not at home, you turn on all the lights and the TV for noise. Sometimes you even call your friends and try to stay on the phone until someone is home, which might take one or two hours in some cases.

**5. Fear of speaking in front of a crowd.** You usually don't answer teachers' questions even though you know the answer, because if you raised your hand you would be in the spotlight and you might risk sounding silly. Your heart pounds like crazy and you get very red whenever you have to speak in front of the class so you avoid it as much as possible.

**6. Fear of talking to a person with authority.** You have a teacher who is more strict and when he miscalculated your points in a test, you didn't dare tell him, even though your classmates encouraged you to do so. Whenever you know you need to talk to an adult in an office or someone in a higher position and make a request to them, you ask someone else to do it or you find excuses for not doing it.

**7. Fear of tests.** The night before every test you feel very nervous, you don't sleep well and you try to anticipate what possible questions you will get on the test. You also spend each break before the test revising the material. You are often afraid of situations in which you have to prove your knowledge. You skipped tests a few times because they were difficult subjects, but in the end you still had to take them.

**8. Fear of rejection / breakup with the romantic partner.** Your partner makes fun of you in front of your friends and does not stand up for you when other people insult you. Even though this bothers you, you don't tell him/her, because you think he/she will get upset and maybe even leave you for another person. You did try to suggest it once, but he just said you don't have a good sense of humour.



## Courage Street - resources

### Strong Young Minds

**9. Fear of saying something contradictory to your friends' opinions.** Your friends gossip a lot, and sometimes you really do not agree with their comments on some colleagues you find nice. Still, you gossip along with them so that they don't exclude you from the group or even start gossiping about you. This bothers you, because you would like to get along with those classmates as well.

**10. Fear of wearing a swimsuit in public.** Your friends often go the public pool. You enjoy swimming as well and would like to join, but you usually don't, because one time when you went there somebody made a remark about one mole you have on your back. Since then, you cannot stop thinking that everyone stares at it when you are wearing a swimsuit.

**11. Fear of making the wrong choice when choosing the career.** You are in the last year of highschool and everybody keeps asking you what college you want to go to. You see colleagues around you preparing for their college admission. You tell everyone it will be a surprise, but actually you have no idea what to choose. Your parents are very successful professionals (doctor and lawyer) and you feel you have to measure up to their accomplishments, but you feel you have no inclination towards these kinds of high-status professions.

**12. Fear of conflict.** You have a hard time saying no to requests, even when they are unreasonable and you feel taken advantage of. You don't want to upset other people and start fights, because then others will think badly of you and you can't stand that.

**13. Fear of putting on extra weight.** You check and count calories in most things you eat. You check yourself in the mirror very often, to see if the clothes make you look fat. You also weigh yourself everyday. Your group of friends constantly pick on students who don't fit their standards of appearance so you try to stay out of their attention.

**14. Fear of not performing well.** In sports class, when your colleagues play volleyball, you usually sit on the bench, because one time when you tried to play, you missed a few shots. Your colleagues seem to be better at it and you don't want to make a fool of yourself by playing badly. You usually don't take risks if you are not sure you will succeed in an activity.

**15. Fear of appearing sad in public.** Your parents fight very often. Sometimes you come to school very sad because of that, but you don't tell anyone what happens and you don't show how you feel. Instead, you make jokes, you laugh with the others, you make fun of other students and you struggle to pretend you are in a very good mood.



## Courage Street - resources

### Strong Young Minds

#### Situations

1. You see an announcement on the school corridor for tryouts for the folk dancing team and you decide to apply. Dancing was your passion when you were a child but it's something that would take time from your studies and it's also considered uncool by your friends.
2. Your best friend is telling you about her parents' divorce and starts to cry on the school corridor. Some of your popular classmates start pointing fingers at your friend and laughing at her. You hug her and tell them to stop.
3. You have gained a little weight after the holidays and your girl/boyfriend just invited you at a pool party with his cool friends. You accept the invitation and put on the nicest swimsuit you have.
4. You go on a trip in the woods with your friends and the night comes. One of them disappears and the others go to look for him. They ask you to remain alone at the tent, in case he comes back. You accept.
5. Your friends ask you to go to a quiz night in a coffee shop. You have never been to a quizz night before but your friends go there all the time. They say it's fun so you decide to go.
6. Your math teacher tries to convince you to take part in the school's math contest. He insists that this will help you in your future career but you don't really like math and you don't feel that this is a direction you would like to take in the future so you refuse.
7. You recently came to the conclusion that ecology is very important to you. You have found an opportunity to volunteer in an NGO that plants trees and cleans the forests. Your parents say it's a waste of time because it's not a real career path but you do it anyway.
8. Your grandfather is very sick and whenever you visit him you get very sad. It's difficult for you to see him like this. Some of your friends say they would spare themselves of this discomfort, but you still go visit him weekly.
9. You really like writing poetry and you joined a literature club in your school. They have poetry nights every week where the members read aloud poems written by them. You have decided to present your most recent poem next week.
10. The new classmate who just joined your school is really unpopular, doesn't have any friends and even worse, the other kids often make fun of her. She finds you nice and would like to be your friend so she invites you to her home for her birthday. She says her mom cooks really good and usually makes a lot of food. You accept the invitation.



## Apps for a bad day

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	6-30
Type of activity	discussion, group work, brainstorming



- hand-outs
- flipchart paper
- colored markers

### Learning objective

To understand the long term effects of dysfunctional coping strategies and alternatives (functional).  
To help participants to find and reflect on different strategies that they can use to cope with a bad day.  
To teach youth how to use different coping strategies for difficult situations.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

After the introduction of the method, you will have to split them in 3 groups and arrange them in 3 different corners of the room. It is preferable to have a table for each group, but they can also sit on the floor.

### 2. Introduction:

Introduce this activity by talking to the participants about what is coping mechanism and how it can help us in our daily life. Try to give them concrete examples that they can relate to and to emphasize the importance of knowing how to overcome the obstacles we face. Here is a model of how you could introduce the method:

“All of us will definitely encounter struggles, problems, and difficulties all through our lives. That is an inevitable part of life. Therefore we need to learn what to do in those times and how to stay sane until we regain our balance. Also, a lot of what will happen to us is out of our control, driven by chance. Some things we can influence (e.g. how much effort you put into soccer practice/ studying for a test), but some we cannot (e.g. if it rains on the day of the match/if you have a bike accident on the way to school on test day and can't make it on time). The trick is not to always try to control what happens to us, but to control what we do with what happens to us – how we react once something has happened to us. This can help us feel more in control of our lives, because bit by bit we learn that, although life may be harsh and unfair at times, we have deep inner resources that we can rely upon – so come what may!”

“Today we will talk about exactly this: having some degree of control on our own reaction in various situations. We call this COPING. And what can we control? We can try to focus on the problem and have a healthy attitude towards it and control the way it turns out, or we can try to focus on our thoughts, emotions and behavior, and adapt to the problem in an intelligent, healthy way. There's no right or wrong way – and usually we will have to do both. That is why it is best to learn various coping methods, so that we are flexible and feel ready to handle various struggles.



## *Apps for a bad day*

### **Strong Young Minds**

In today's activity we will search for and analyze different methods for coping with a bad day."

### **3. Task:**

**Step 1:** Split the participants in three groups and give each group a flipchart paper and three markers (preferably each group will have the same 3 colors, for example black, green and blue).

**Step 2:** Introduce the concept of mobile apps: "We are all using smartphones a lot these days and they seem to offer many functions through their apps. So let's imagine that there's a section of the App Store called Apps for a Bad Day, which contains some special apps that can tell us what to do when we have a bad day. The flipchart paper is the screen of our smartphone and as you can see, it is blank, so we will have to propose some apps for the Store."

**Step 3:** Clearly explain the rules of the method: "Imagine that you are having a bad day (for whatever reason) and discuss in your group what kind of things would help you to deal with it (e.g. drawing, listening to music, smoking, talking to a friend, etc.). Each option you think could be useful, you can propose as an app for your Store. You will discuss the apps in the group before you add them on the flipchart, although in the end, you don't all have to agree in order for an app to be proposed - maybe something helps us but not the others in our group, which is fine. To propose it, you draw a simple icon for it, write the name and a short description of what it implies and how it can help you (e.g. painting helps express your strong emotions when you cannot put them into words). You want to be as clear as possible, so that the utility your app will be understood. Make sure to leave some empty space between the apps because there will be other parts to this activity. You have 15 minutes for this."

\* make sure that the group is not fighting over different ideas, remind them that each idea has to be put on the paper, as long as one member of the group says it helps him/her to overcome a bad day.

\* encourage participants not to focus or waste too much time on drawings or names, the idea and the short explanation are the important parts

**Step 4:** After the 15 minutes are over, give a signal to stop and tell them what will happen next: "If you have all your proposals in the Store, you will leave the paper there and we will rotate the groups, so that you get to see the apps proposed by other groups as well." All groups rotate in the same direction of your choice (left or right).

**Step 5:** Make sure that each group arrives to the paper next to them: "Now you have new apps in front of you. You will have to review or comment on them, just like you would do with regular apps that you want to get and use. If you've used this app (coping method) in the past, write about your experience with it, if it works, how, under which conditions, what are the advantages/disadvantages on short/long term, what to pay attention to and so on. You can also rate it on a scale from 1-5. If you never used this coping method, you can still comment it according to how much you think it could help you (use a different color for this). You have 10 minutes for this."

\* make sure that each member of the group is rating the apps- each opinion is valid so there is no need for the group to agree with a review.



## *Apps for a bad day*

### Strong Young Minds

**Step 6:** After the 10 minutes are over, give a signal to stop and tell them to rotate again in the same direction as before. This way they will arrive to a new paper.

“Again, you have a new list with apps proposals in front of you, but these times there are already reviewed so you will not have to do that. You will read the reviews of others and, taking into consideration your own experience as well, you will have to rate each app, that is give it stars from 0 to 5 for its utility, in your opinion. You have 5 minutes for this.”

\*offer them different colored markers: one color for the ones that “used that app” and one color for the ones that did not use it, but they would want to or they have an opinion about it.

**Step 7:** After the 5 minutes are over, give a signal to stop and tell them to rotate again in the same direction as before, so that they get to their own paper.

“Now you are at your own app list. You will read all the reviews and check the ratings, discuss the situation in your group and formulate a summary/conclusion which can be presented in 2 minutes, regarding which apps were considered most useful, which were better rated versus rated with fewer stars. At this step you can also choose to give up some apps if you are convinced by the reviews that they are not useful or find arguments to keep them. Again, you have 5 minutes to discuss in your group.”

**Step 8:** When the 5 minutes are over, ask each group to choose a representative who will present the summary/conclusion. Give two minutes to each group in turn to share their ideas.



### 4. Debriefing:

- How was it to work on this activity? To find coping methods, propose them, write reviews for them, and rate them.
- Did you discover/learn anything new? Have you found out about healthy coping methods that you didn't know before? Or maybe you found out that other coping methods are not as helpful as you thought? Did you find a coping method that could harm you on the long term? (for ex. smoking)
- Can you transfer any ideas from these apps to your daily life? What coping strategies would you like to use more often?

### **Tips & tricks:**

\*As a last step, you can ask participants to come up with suggestions of real mobile apps that they use as a coping strategy. If they don't know any, they can search it in their mobile app store. Some examples are: meditation apps, clear your mind apps, apps that can help you organize better (stop procrastinating), etc. You should encourage them to download min 2 and share in the next session what they think about these apps.

\*If you have more time, you can let each group to present their apps and explain them in front of others. Also, the rating system can be done by voting on how many people use or they would like to use that coping strategy.



## *Apps for a bad day - resources*

### **Strong Young Minds**

Give them the hand-outs with coping methods and their evaluation, as a support and guidance for how they could choose their coping methods in the future. Next time you meet, you can have a discussion about these hand-outs and what did they learn from them.

### *Coping methods and short/long term consequences*

<b>Focusing on emotions</b>		
<b>Coping method</b>	<b>Short term consequence</b>	<b>Long term consequence</b>
Relaxation strategies and physical exercise (decrease intensity of emotion e.g. fear, anger, stress, pressure, etc.)	Relaxation, relief, release of burden in the body and mind Prepares the mind for healthy coping (if possible, problem solving) – it comes with more ease Can change the way you look at things	You learn to not fear possible situations, because you know you can handle distress that comes (you apply relaxation) You feel less helpless You give others a sense of calm and security and de-tense relationships
Change the way you think about the problem	Also changes how you feel about the problem Makes you feel in control Allows you to perceive the situation objectively and find adequate solutions (or accept that there are no solutions and you have to tolerate it)	You adapt to objective, rational reality and stop reacting to the world in your head (where small problems and can turn to unbearable catastrophes) Gives you a good internal method of controlling your emotions
Accept and tolerate negative emotions and commit to 'doing what is right'	You still feel bad (afraid, sad, angry, etc.), but you stop struggling with it and wait for the emotion to pass (it will) You keep control by controlling your actions and allowing the emotion to be: you ride the wave, you're not drowned by it	Gives you a sense of safety, control Allows you to adapt to a wide variety of difficulties in life ('come what may...') Build trust from others because you do what is right, not what is easy Promotes a positive self-image both for you, and for others
Distract with positive activities/ other goals (e.g. talk to friends, take a bath, go for a walk, work on something else)	Gives you space and time to build confidence, relax your mind/body, get comfort/ soothing, and 'gather forces' to help you deal with the problem/ come to accept and tolerate the situation The problem is still there, but you de-focus from it and acknowledge that your life is much more than that	Builds self-confidence Builds social relationships Decrease helplessness and hopelessness for future problems You start to treat yourself like a good friend
Express and process through art (writing, drawing, dancing, singing, painting, crafts, etc.)	Gives you a good language for emotions Allows for processing of emotions – so the emotions will pass away in a healthy manner. Gives a sense of control.	Builds self-confidence and self-knowledge Expands your world



## *Apps for a bad day - resources*

**Strong Young Minds**

<p>Avoid emotions or distract by smoking, drinking, doing drugs, gambling and other addictive behaviors (e.g. excess shopping, computer games, eating)</p>	<p>Gives you some relief, allows you to forget for some time about the problem          Negative consequences of addictive behavior: you cannot do normal routines and activities, you can be impulsive and take hasty decisions or matters worse, biological outcomes: hangovers, comedowns, sickness, money loss, etc.</p>	<p>You don't come to learn to actually deal with the problem, so you will have to confront it later; later you might be feeling even more hopeless or helpless or the problem might have gotten worse          You feel ashamed and think less of yourself          You can affect some relationships</p>
<p>Worry/ Ruminare</p>	<p>Give the impression that you are actually 'solving' the problem – in your head          You come up with scenarios and think you are 'in control' because you are 'prepared' (except that you cannot control all outcomes. Possible does not mean probable. Thinking is not the same as acting)          Creates tension, anxiety, irritability          Deepens negative emotions (sadness, fear, anger, shame) because you 'stick' the situation to your mind</p>	<p>Eventually makes you feel out of control with your thoughts and emotions          Does not actually solve problems          Creates more imaginary problems (what ifs)          Makes you feel paralyzed, unable to make decisions, sometimes passive and fearful</p>
<p>Blame/ criticize self</p>	<p>Gives some relief because now you have 'found' the guilty one          Creates anxiety, sadness, guilt, shame          You feel inferior, worthless          You act in ways that bring more trouble (since you think you are bad, you do things that bad people do)          You focus on defects in you, instead of focusing on uncontrollable circumstances or behaviors that can be improved in the future</p>	<p>Does not offer opportunity for change          Makes you think less of yourself and be afraid of challenges          You come to avoid other situations in the past and don't learn that you can actually deal with them</p>
<p>Blame/ criticize others</p>	<p>Gives some relief because now you have 'found' the guilty one          Affects relationships          You do not express your needs or wants in an assertive way          You keep feeling hurt, resentful, angry, anxious, not safe with others</p>	<p>You don't take responsibility for your part of the problem, so you might be facing the same problem in the future, since you haven't learned from the past          This habit drives people away          Builds resentment that does not allow you to fully trust people and get fully involved in relationships</p>



## *Apps for a bad day - resources*

Strong Young Minds

<b>Focusing on problems</b>		
<b>Coping method</b>	<b>Short term consequence</b>	<b>Long term consequence</b>
Analyze situation objectively (what would a video camera record?)	Have a clear picture of what is happening Get ready to solve the problem (cannot solve what you don't understand) Understand all the elements involved (reduce blaming on self/ others, understand complexity)	Learn from difficulties Learn about yourself (self-knowledge) Learn how not to get in the same mess again because you understand the elements that caused it
Think of multiple, alternative ways to solve the problem	Gives you a sense of control, of being able to do something to help yourself/ others You don't feel trapped in a situation You can come up with creative solutions	Learn about what you can do (solutions that fit your capabilities) and what you cannot do (e.g. you cannot wish a problem will magically disappear) – focus on what you can do. Reduce your sense of hopelessness and helplessness when anticipating problems and difficulties, because you know you are not stuck
Ask for help in finding a way out/ solution or in implementing change	You feel less alone in something You give yourself a chance to be comforted and soothed	Build stronger social bonds Build trust in others Test relationships for future – who is to be trusted and who is not a source of support?
Talk to a person who has direct impact on the situation	Allows you to communicate needs, assert yourself, feel empowered	Learn how to be assertive with various people and to negotiate so that you get what you want
Try to do everything perfect	May get you praise and recognition from others Makes you feel anxious, tense, overly focused on results, so that you do not enjoy the process You cannot achieve perfection – so you will be unhappy anyways	Makes you doubt yourself and criticize yourself for errors You focus on other's approval instead of your own self-development Anxiety can build up, you become more and more frightened of challenges (see them as threats to your self-worth)
Procrastinate or avoid the situation altogether	May give you a short-lived sense of relief You focus on something that is more pleasant (ex. Play computer games, play on smartphone) and 'forget' for some time	The problem will come back, you haven't learned to face it When it does come back, you feel even more helpless and anxiety will increase



## *Apps for a bad day - resources*

Strong Young Minds

Decide that it is not actually a problem and reduce significance	May give you relief and ease some burden	If it is avoidance or suppression, the problem will come back, maybe in another form!
Be aggressive, make threats, use coercion, bully your way out of it	May make you feel powerful May make you feel you have released anger and frustration Drives others away (including people who could actually help) Hard for others to be empathic and give support when you act aggressive	You lose social connections You haven't actually dealt with the problem You might feel out of control because you don't learn to control emotions You feel guilty/ ashamed for causing others pain and start to think less of yourself
Be passive, let others do everything/ expect them to solve situations for you	May give you a sense of safety (short-lived) The problem might be solved (according to what others think it is 'the solution') You get relief from difficulty	Other people's solutions might not be right for you You don't learn to face problems yourself, so you might start to feel tense and be afraid of challenges in life You think less of yourself (feel inferior to others) Become dependent on others and too afraid to lose connection, so the relationship becomes tense
Lie, cheat, hide the problem from others	Allows you to avoid confronting with the consequences of the problems, so you feel some relief Makes you tense and anxious ('what if they find out?') Might need to lie further to hide the lie	You don't confront the situation, you don't take responsibility, so you don't learn how to deal with it in reality You risk losing the trust of others Hiding something makes you feel more and more ashamed of that thing – and you start feeling bad about yourself.



## Battle of voices

Strong Young Minds

Duration	40 - 50 min
Group size	6-30
Type of activity	simulation



- Printed resources (1 page)
- A labyrinth, a puzzle or a set of playing cards

### Learning objective

To understand how irrational self-talk affects our emotions and our performance.  
To realize the benefits of rational self-talk.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Participants will be divided in 3 different groups. They should all be able to see the table and 2 chairs that will be positioned in front of the class.

### 2. Introduction:

Tell participants that you will implement a method that will test their skills in completing a simple task. You can choose what task to give them: solving a puzzle, find the right path in a maze or building a cards castle. Make sure that the task can be repeated without affecting their performance: for example if you choose to give the first participant a maze, the next one should not see the solution (in case the first one managed to solve it). In the case of the castle with cards, their performance will not be affected if they see the others building it (it is a matter of coordination, not having strategy).

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Divide participants in 3 equal groups. You can divide them randomly by using number or you can use a creative way or dividing them (you can find examples in the group division section).

Group 1 will be the Performers

Group 2 will be the Rational Voice

Group 3 will represent the Irrational Voice



## *Battle of voices*

### **Strong Young Minds**

**Step 2:** Ask one member from each team to come in front of the class. The other participants will be Observers for this round and will pay attention to how the 3 people are feeling during the task (what are their gestures, how is their tone of voice, etc.) and how they perform their task (especially the member of the performance team- does he manage to complete the task). You can encourage them to write down what they see and think so it will help them during the debriefing.

**Step 3:** You will distribute the list with functional thoughts to the Rational voice member and cards with dysfunctional thoughts to the Irrational voice. Give very clear instructions: 'Now you have become thoughts in the performer's mind while he is doing the task. We want to see how you can help or not help him. Therefore, it is extremely important to only say what is written there and nothing more. You can repeat the words and choose your own way of saying them. You can only talk when I make a sign'.

**Step 4:** The Performer seats at the table, in front, with the Rational Voice on one side and the Irrational Voice on the other side. Facilitator tells him he has maximum 2 minutes to solve the maze/puzzle/ construct the card castle (you can adapt the time according to the complexity of the task). Set the time and give him the start.

**Step 5:** As soon as he starts you can make a sign for the Rational voice to start saying the thoughts, inviting that person to read what is written on his/her paper. You must be very careful that teens don't say anything extra or hurtful. After 4-5 messages, you can make a sign for the Irrational voice to start saying the thoughts. After 4-5 messages, make a sign again for the Rational voices. You can play with this division of voices: you can let them both talk in the same time, give preference to one over the other, etc. Keep going until the time for the task is over. In the meantime, make sure that the observers are also engaged and watching the performance.

**Step 6:** After the time has passed, you tell participants to go back to their teams and invite other members of the 3 groups to come in front. You can ask more people from Rational or Irrational group to come in front and "offer thoughts" to the performer. This way the observers can see how the voices can affect you when one is stronger: does the performer finish the task faster if he/she has more Rational voices? How about when there are only Irrational voices?

Continue with this step until all members of the 3 groups (or most of them according to your time limit) have been in front.

**Step 7:** Exchange roles between the 3 groups. Performers become Rational voices, Rational voices become Irrational voices, Irrational voices become performers. The process restarts.

**Step 8:** Make one last exchange of roles in the 3 groups, making sure all groups had all the 3 roles.



## Battle of voices

Strong Young Minds



### 4. Debriefing:

- How was it to perform when the rational voice was speaking to you?
- How about when the irrational voice was speaking?
- What did the observers see during other people performance?
- How did it feel to be in each of the three groups? Which one was your favorite? Why do you think you felt more comfortable in that role?
- Have any of these messages seemed familiar to you? Have you heard them anywhere before? Where?
- What voice affected you the most? Why?
- What voice should we follow more? Why?
- Can we change this voices around us or the ones that are always in our had? How?

#### *Tips & tricks:*

You can make this method longer or shorter according to the task you choose for the Performers. If you choose to build a card castle, it will be good to show them a model in the beginning (for ex 2 floors castle) that they should fallow. If you choose to give them puzzle solving, make sure you have more puzzles. The same situation with the maze- print as many as participants.

You can make the time longer or shorter for the task, according to their performances. It shouldn't be too easy or too hard for them to solve.

The method **COMPASSIONATE MIND** is connected with this method. It can teach youth how to follow the Rational voice.

#### *Optional Work for home:*

Write down the thoughts that come into your mind during the next few days. Focus on the thoughts that come to you when you have to complete a task (like your homework, study for an exam, do house chores). Are they rational or irrational ones? After you identify them, try to change the irrational ones in rational ones.

Start today, it will be easier and easier to “catch” them and to write them down. If you manage to do that, it will for sure improve your performance.



## *Battle of voices -resources*

**Strong Young Minds**

### *Functional thoughts:*

1. Come on, give it a try!
2. Everybody struggles with new tasks
3. It doesn't matter if others are looking – concentrate on what you are doing.
4. Don't worry so much about the results, enjoy the process!
5. You can tolerate a mistake if it happens
6. It's better to try and fail than to not try at all
7. It's all right if it's difficult
8. Everyone gets a bit nervous if they're stuck, just persist!
9. Find the element of fun in it!
10. Focus on the present, don't think too much on what other people will think in the future
11. Focus on your experience, don't worry about other people's judgements

### *Dysfunctional thoughts:*

1. It's not even worth to try
2. Someone else would have done by now
3. Other people are looking at you and think you're failing
4. Are you sure you're going to do it? What will people think if you fail?
5. Failure will be unacceptable! Unbearable!
6. You shouldn't have gotten yourself into this
7. If you find it difficult, it's a sign of weakness
8. This is only hard for you – you should give up.
9. This should have been over by now!
10. Imagine what will people think afterwards. How they will look at you!
11. I wonder what others think!



## Compassionate mind

Strong Young Minds

Duration	40 - 50 min
Group size	6-30
Type of activity	Simulation



• Pen and papers

### Learning objective

To develop participants capacity for compassionate self-talk. Encourage participants to becoming aware of their critical voice. Creating a compassionate image and voice for difficult times.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Preferably participants will be seated in a circle.

### 2. Introduction:

In case you already done the Battle of Voices method, you can make a reminder about the conclusions participants drew from it. You can also point out:

“We all have our own critical voice. Our minds can act like our enemies and make us feel bad or even affect how well we can perform. Sometimes when we make a mistake or mess something up, there is a critical voice in our head which rolls like a tape, making us even more upset. ‘How could you mess it up? Didn’t you know better? Stupid, stupid, stupid!’ Let’s try to remember such a voice and see what happens.”

### 2. Task:

**Step 1:** Ask participants to close their eyes and try to relax. Ask them to remember a specific moment in their lives when the critical voice was in control of their minds. In order to help them, you can read the following text:

“Remember a time in which things did not go the way you expected, a time in which you made a mistake, maybe you got a low grade or had a fight with someone... And remember the tape that started playing in your mind, the speech.

Remember what were the words used, what was the tone of voice, the attitude and so on. Write it down on paper like a monologue, exactly as it played in your mind. Use a separate paper, don’t write your name on it and try to write as legibly as possible. You will have 10 minutes for this.”



## Compassionate mind

### Strong Young Minds

**Step 2:** Gather all the papers and put them on a table and ask volunteers to come in front and to read them out loud. The same volunteer can read more notes or you can exchange volunteers. While the volunteer is reading a text, ask the participants to close their eyes and listen carefully to the message, imagining it is their mind speaking. While the volunteer is reading, ask him/ her to try to impersonate the voice as good as possible.

**Step 3:** After each long paper, or a block of shorter papers start a small discussion about how that voice made them feel. What were their thoughts about that “voice” and how they would react if someone on the outside would actually say that to them. Does it help us to roll this tape in our heads whenever something unpleasant happens? You can also choose to have a longer discussion once all the papers have been read. Make sure that the volunteers read the papers in random order and that you have enough time (you can choose to read just half or less papers).

**Step 4:** Put the papers aside and introduce the second part of the activity: the compassionate voice. Ask participants to close their eyes again and to think about the same mistake as they were thinking before. Give them a few seconds and then read this text:

*“After you remember your mistake, imagine a very good friend, one that has known you for a long time and one who knows everything about you, he recognizes and appreciates your qualities and he cares about you a lot. He knows you are a human being who sometimes makes mistakes, but he is very wise and understanding and kind so he accepts you just as you are. He knows that you don’t always have control over the things that happen to you and that your behavior in each moment is influenced by many things. Imagine this friend and try to picture his face in your mind. What would he look like, what would be his facial expressions? And now imagine that he witnessed the mistake you made or the bad situation that you thought about earlier. How would he react, what would be his attitude, his tone of voice? Write on paper what he would say to you about this event. You have 10 minutes for this”*

**Step 5:** Once the participants finished writing on the paper, ask them to pair up by preference (it is good to have pairs of teens who get along). Once they are in teams of 2, one by one they will have to ‘impersonate’ the ideal friend of their pair, while reading the text of his/her partner. Encourage them to first describe the tone of voice of that friend and their feelings towards them.

When they start working in pairs of 2, they will first switch the papers with their partner. In the pairs, participants will take turns in reading each other’s message in the following way:

- person A closes his/her eyes and imagines they are in the bad situation that they thought about before;
- person B reads person A’s message, slowly, by taking the appropriate intonation. A has to listen and imagine that the voice is talking in their mind.

**Step 6:** Once you see participants finished this task, ask them to switch roles in their team. Person B closes they eyes and person A is reading.

Continue with this step until all members of the 3 groups (or most of them according to your time limit) will be in front.

**Step 7:** Gather participants for debriefing



## Compassionate mind

Strong Young Minds



### 3. Debriefing:

- Start the discussion by asking them how they felt listening to the compassionate voice, what they thought about this voice and how helpful it is compared to the previous voice.
- How was it to be the compassionate voice for your pair? How did you feel in that role? Why do you think it made you feel that way?
- How was it to hear nice thoughts from your pair? What did you feel?
- What voice do you like more? The critical or the compassionate one? Why?
- What can we do in order to hear the compassionate voice more often?
- Do you use to talk like this to yourself? Do you use compassionate, encouraging messages or critical, fearful messages?
- How difficult would it be to talk in a kind, rational and compassionate manner towards yourself?
- What are you taking from this exercise?

#### *Tips & tricks:*

- If there is time, you can ask participants to match 2-3 dysfunctional messages to a rational, functional, compassionate thought as an alternative. In pairs, they can take messages from the first part of the method and try to transform those negative thoughts.
- At the end of the debriefing you can do a brainstorm about messages you can remember for your own compassionate voice. Make a list with their suggestions and encourage participants to use it, each time they face a problem or their critical voice starts appearing.
- You can also encourage participants to take the negative messages from the first part of the method and throw them in the garbage. Each person can take a message and throw it away, no matter if it is theirs or not.
- If you have time you can use Ted Talks. There are many interesting talks about self compassion.

#### *More information:*

<http://www.cognitivehealing.com/personal-growth/reduce-anxiety-and-depression-by-countering-automatic-self-talk/>



## *Compassionate mind - resources*

### *Strong Young Minds*

Additional information:

We might say at first that the critical voice helps us more because it shows us the mistakes we have made and motivates us to not do it again. But actually, when we are self-critical, we usually feel very bad, we become withdrawn and defensive, it is more difficult to see the reality as it is and to learn from our mistakes. Our motivation decreases because we think the worst about ourselves generally and we think that it is useless to try to change anything - this is who we are and we can't change. Instead, when we use the more compassionate voice, we understand that not everything is under our control, that people make mistakes all the time and that's okay because mistakes can make you a better person when you learn from them. So we comfort ourselves when we feel bad and we become more motivated to try again next time, with our lesson learned.

In order to train ourselves to use the compassionate voice, we have to start noticing when the critical voice is rolling in our minds, acknowledge that it is there and consciously call to mind the compassionate voice. You can start by picturing the face of the good friend in your mind and what he would say. It will not be easy in the beginning because most of us have used the critical voice for a long time, which made it more automatic and our first call when it comes to our inner speech. So the critical voice will come to mind more frequently. However, the important thing is to practice switching from the critical to the compassionate voice. You can think of these two voices like muscles: the more you use one of them (the compassionate voice), the stronger it gets. It's all a matter of practice and change doesn't come immediately.



Strong Young Minds

# RELATIONS



## Speed friending

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	10-26
Type of activity	get to know each other



- sheets of paper, pens, markers
- cards with tasks
- tables, chairs
- chronometer

### Learning Objectives

- To help participants develop their interpersonal skills.
- To learn different ways you can start/build friendships.
- To experiment with different strategies for building friendships.



**TIP:** Activity which will be needing some time organizing tables and chairs - it is good to do it after a break/ in the morning so that facilitators can prepare the room.

## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Arrange the room before the activity: put tables in a circle, with two chairs at each table - one chair in the center of the circle, one on the outside (see attachment). The purpose of this arrangement is to have participants sitting in pairs, facing each other.

### 2. Introduction:

Before starting, invite everyone for a brainstorming asking:  
“What things can we do, what places can we go to in order to meet new people?”

When participants answer, write the possible meeting places on separate cardboard papers and put them face-down on the different tables. Use examples from the attachment if you don't have enough meeting places.

After this, put cards with different tasks (see attachment) on each table.

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Ask the participants to take a seat at the tables, two by two, facing each other, but without looking at the tasks yet.

**Step 2:** Give them the instructions for the activity: “Each table you are sitting at is a place where you can possibly meet people. In each place, you have something to do with the other person, as you will read on the cards. You will have 5 minutes to do this, after which I will give a signal and you will have to move to another table.”



## Speed friending

### Strong Young Minds

*Step 3:* “When I give the signal, everybody moves to their right. This means that the person who is in front of you, will move in the direction opposite to you. We want everybody to be able to meet as many different people and do as many different things as possible.”

*Step 4:* They can uncover the card with their first task and start the activity.

*Step 5:* Time 5 minutes and give the signal when over. Do the same for five rounds.



### 4. Debriefing:

After the activity is over, move the tables aside and gather in a circle. Ask the following questions and give space for the participants to share their answers:

- How did you feel in this activity?
- What tasks did we have? Let's remember. (Ask the participants to remember the tasks they had at the tables)
- How were the tasks? Were they easy to do, or difficult?
- Which task did you find the easiest and which was the most difficult? (Maybe it is easier for them to do things together with another person, but not so easy to make eye contact - while asking do not suggest it though, wait for the answer)
- Have you done these before?
- How do you usually make friends in real life?
- Do you think you can use any of these approaches (the tasks on the cards) to make friends in real life? And if so, which one would you like to use in the future?

### Tips & tricks for the activity:

\* If you have more time, you can discuss with the participants about entering a new group of people.

How do we normally enter a new group of people? Where do we start from?

The group doesn't exist in itself, there are only the people who make the group, so in order to become part of the group, you have to befriend the people, starting with one person. And we already know how to do that, right? (Remind them about the tasks at each table)

\* Prepare a flipchart like in the attachment to explain the dynamics of the activity.

\* Use an instrument (e.g. bell, flute, etc.) to give the signal for the change, so that it is distinct from the voice and it is easier to notice when everybody is talking.



## *Speed friending*

**Strong Young Minds**

\* Depending on the space available and number of participants, adjust the tables and time of the activity. You can have three or four people sitting at one table, but then you need to extend the time for each task. Also, the tables can be arranged in two or three parallel lines, instead of a circle, which takes more space. If tables are not available, the method can work with the participants standing.

\* If you have many tables, you can repeat the tasks, just arrange them so that there is a distance of a few tables between similar tasks and participants would not go through the same task too many times. It is also okay if someone finds a task they have done before, as long as they do it with a different person.

### **Optional Work fo home:**

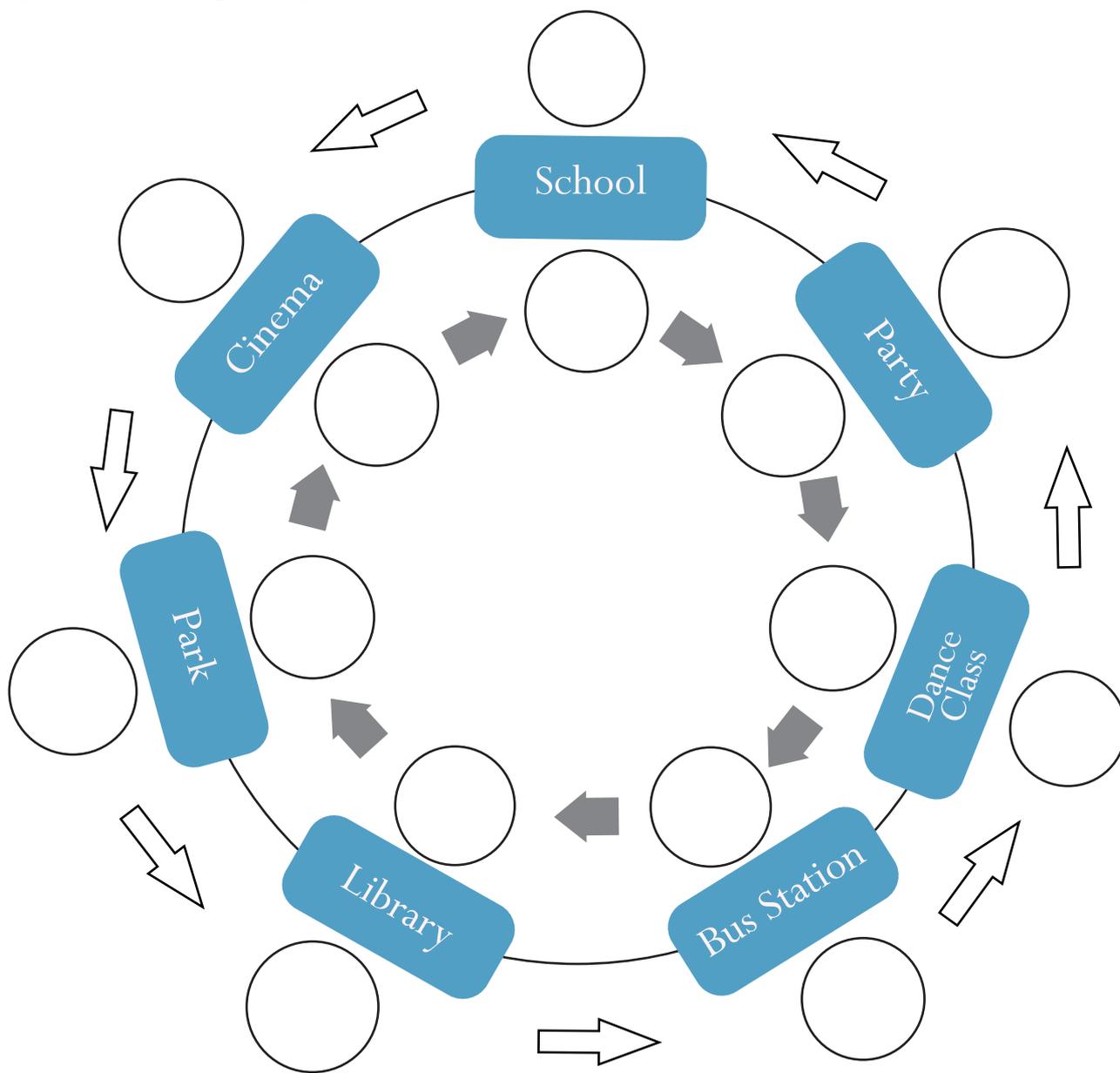
- get to know one new person
- have a discussion about love languages with your friends/ partners explaining to them which is yours and asking them to reflect about theirs.
- watch a video about love languages <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IijKBFmAZes>



# Speed friending

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Speed Friending Setup:





## Speed friending

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Ways people can build friendships - Cards:

### Share personal things about yourself:

“If you had 24 hours left to live, what would you do during this time?”

“If you could talk to everyone in the world, what would you say?”

“What advice would you give to yourself five years ago?”

“What matters to you and why?”

“What do you wish more people knew about you?”

“What is one of the kindest things someone has ever done for you?”

“What do you value most in a friendship?”

“What do you dream about?”

### Expressing your personality:

Share with each other about the things you like, for example:

- hobbies
- books
- movies
- music
- art
- sports
- food

### Spending time together:

Make list of activities you can make together as friends (e.g. going to the movies, going for a coffee, cooking, etc) take into account what each of you likes to do.

### Notice similarities and differences:

Find things you have in common - make list of them and things that make you different. Examples areas you can discuss about:

- family, siblings
- favorite school classes
- hobbies you have
- your future plans



## Languages of affection

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	10-25
Type of activity	team work, discussion, role play



- paper, pens
- flipchart - example in attach
- templates
- posters

### Learning Objectives

To understand the different ways people express and receive affection.

To become acquainted with the idea that people express their feelings in a relationship through different ways, that can be understood as different languages.

To discuss about the role of knowing the language of each partners in a relationship for the well-functioning of that relationship



### Instructions

#### 1. Space arrangement:

Preferably a circle with the possibility of writing.

#### 2. Introduction:

Facilitator can ask participants if they heard about languages of love (probability of it can be very low and it's ok!).

Facilitator begins by an introduction meant to put the exercise into context and raise interest: 'I know you might be aware if someone likes you or not when they hit that LIKE bottom on facebook or other social media messages. But how can you know that in real life, when there's no Like button? And has it ever happened to you that you wanted to show someone you appreciate him/her but that person didn't seem to get the message? Today we're going to talk about a special kind of language, and although it is called the language of affection, that is the way we show our friends/ family/ partners that we care about them.'

Facilitator presents on a flipchart or cards all the languages and gives examples from day to day life (maybe with reference to self, e.g. 'I always hug my daughter when I see her, so that is one important way we communicate love when we meet at the end of the school day'). If you have a small group of young people, ask them for examples.



## Languages of affection

Strong Young Minds

### 3. Task:

#### A. Individual reflection activity

*Step 1:* After the introduction, facilitator says the group will be involved in an exercise meant to show how this works in their own lives. Participants will have the flipchart or cards previously introduced.

Facilitator invites participants for the individual reflection, saying:

- a. Think about your past and/or current relationships (with friends, family, romantic partners). Choose three or four of the most important relationships.
- b. How do these persons that you chose tend to demonstrate affection towards you? What expectations do they have from you? Try to identify the language that they use the most.

*Step 2:* Facilitator distributes the first page of the handout (see resources) and explains to participants how to complete them, focusing on behavior. Although this is an individual activity the facilitator can circle around the room and help participants if they have problems especially defining the behavior.

\*There could be a sharing round after this individual work, just checking how it was to think about others and their love languages.

*Step 3:* Facilitator then asks: “How do you tend to demonstrate affection towards others? What expectations do you have from others? What is the language of affection that you use most?”

*Step 4:* Facilitator distributes second page of handout (see resources) and asks participants to complete, this time thinking about their own language (this would be already a preparation for the next activity).

#### B. Action activity

Facilitator introduces this exercise by saying “our next activity will help you see your vocabulary in action.”

*Step 1:* The facilitator asks for a number of volunteers out of the entire group (less than half of the group). These participants will be asked to play the roles of doors and will have to take a position of their choice and also establish a code which can open them.

The code will be in line with each of their languages, identified earlier in the previous activity. The others will have to approach the doors and try to open them by guessing the code. The doors



## Languages of affection

Strong Young Minds

cannot speak, but they can use subtle clues to guide the humans towards finding the code.

Once a participant found the code and opened a door, he will take the place of that door, again, choosing a position and code for itself, while the door will become a human, going around, trying to open other doors.

EXAMPLE:

Someone can choose their password to be a hug. The others have to try different things, they will probably try words, sounds, movements, etc. The “door” has to give them subtle clues when the others are approaching with their guesses. E.g. When someone makes a movement, the door can smile or nod to approve, then the other person will know that they have to make a movement and so on.



### 4. Debriefing:

- How did you feel during this activity?
- What kinds of passwords did people have?
- How easy/difficult was it for you to guess the passwords? Which ones were easier and which ones were more difficult? What was your strategy for finding the passwords?
- How easy/difficult is it in real life, with your real relationships? Did you have moments in which you had difficulties to understand the language of the other person?
- What did you learn about yourself that is new and perhaps surprising? What about others? Did you figure out something new?
- How might have all this helped you sometimes in the past, when you had maybe some difficulties with expressing your feelings towards someone or maybe difficulties `getting the message`?
- Do you think you will ever use what you have learned today? How?

### Resources:

Reading recommendation: **The five love languages by Gary Chapman**

online version: <https://www.parable.com/assets/pcom/files/Excerpt/9780802412713.pdf>



## Languages of affection

Strong Young Minds

*Love languages work sheet:*

*Love language others use*

Think about your past and/or current relationships (with friends, family, romantic partners), how do they tend to demonstrate affection towards you and what expectations do they have from you? Try to identify the language that they use the most.

<b>Who?</b>	<b>Which language?</b>	<b>How? Identify behaviour</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
E.g.:my little sister	Physical touch	My sister often hugs me and kisses me when she sees me back home after school	She wants me to express my affection the same as she does by being close to her.





## Languages of affection

Strong Young Minds

Example of possible handouts to print and put on the wall for more understanding

### LOVE LANGUAGE

WHICH LOVE LANGUAGE?	HOW TO COMMUNICATE	ACTIONS TO TAKE	THINGS TO AVOID
WORDS OF AFFIRMATION	Encourage, affirm, appreciate, empathize. Listen actively.	Send an unexpected note, text or card. encourage genuinely and often.	Non-constructive criticism, not recognizing or appreciating effort.
PHYSICAL TOUCH	Non-verbal - use body language and touch to emphasize love.	Hug, kiss, hold hands, show physical affection regularly. Make intimacy a thoughtful priority.	Physical neglect, long stints without intimacy, receiving affection coldly.
RECEIVING GIFTS	Thoughtfulness, make your spouse a priority, speak purposefully.	Give thoughtful gifts and gestures. Small things matter in a big way. Express gratitude when receiving a gift.	Forgetting special occasions, unenthusiastic gift receiving.
QUALITY TIME	Uninterrupted and focused conversations. One-on-one time is critical.	Create special moments together, take walks and do small things with your spouse. Weekend getaways are huge.	Distractions when spending time together. Long stints without one-on-one time.
ACTS OF SERVICE	Use action phrases like "I'll help." They want to know you're with them, partnered with them.	Do chores together or make them breakfast in bed. Go out of your way to help alleviate their daily workload.	Making the requests of others a higher priority, lacking follow-through on tasks big or small.



## THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES

"Love is a choice you make everyday."  
- Gary Chapman

# WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

I LOVE YOU!

## EXAMPLES:

- Saying "I love you"
- Telling them the reasons you love them
- Encouraging your spouse
- Tell others how great your spouse is
- Notes of appreciation and love
- Send loving text messages
- Compliments
- Acknowledge them when they do good

Expressing your love in sincere words and explaining the reasons why. Saying the words "I LOVE YOU" is important but sharing the reason behind why you love them is most important!

"I can live for two months on a good compliment!"  
- Mark Twain



## ACTIONS TO AVOID:

- Insults
- Criticism

**SAY what you MEAN and MEAN what you SAY!**



Best selling author, Gary Chapman, came up with concept of the 5 Love Languages and explains them in his best selling book, **THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES: THE SECRET TO LOVE THAT LASTS!**

Created by Tamara Nelder. Information paraphrased from Gary Chapman's website <http://www.5lovelanguages.com>



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- Gary Chapman

## THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES

# PHYSICAL TOUCH

## EXAMPLES:

- Cuddling
- Holding hands
- Kissing
- Sexual Intimacy
- Touch them as you walk by
- Playing with their hair
- Rubbing their feet or back
- Massage
- Sitting close on the couch
- Any reassuring touch



Physical presence and accessibility are important. They love to receive hugs, pats on the back, hold hands and just be near others.

## ACTIONS TO AVOID:

- Neglect
- Abuse of any kind

Touching with love can be an "emotional life-line" to reach your spouse.



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## THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES



### EXAMPLES:

- Engagement ring
- Flowers
- Trinket with their favorite TV show, animal or band on it
- Memento from a meaningful date
- Bring home their favorite treat
- A trip to a place they've always wanted to go
- Anything they have ever talked about wanting
- The gift of yourself

**The best gifts are the ones that are the most meaningful. If you struggle to know what gift to get then just ask! Ask their friends, ask their family members, ask them!**

"Love is a choice you make everyday."  
- Gary Chapman

## RECEIVING GIFTS

Gifts and gestures show that you are known, loved and cared for. They thrive on the thoughtfulness and effort behind a visual representation of love.

**It's the thought that counts!**



### ACTIONS TO AVOID:

- Missing birthdays or anniversaries
- Thoughtless Gifts



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Created by Tamara Bolder. Information paraphrased from Gary Chapman's website <http://www.5lovelanguages.com>



## THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES

"Love is a choice you make everyday."  
- Gary Chapman

# QUALITY TIME

## EXAMPLES:

- Going for a walk and talking about your day
- Meeting for lunch
- Taking a weekend trip away
- Spending time with the children
- Preplanned thoughtful date
- Family vacation
- Quality conversation
- Gardening together
- Working out together
- Cooking together

Spending time together while being present and giving your full undivided attention. Turn off the televisions and put the phones away and be present.

Love really is spelt T-I-M-E!



## A SUCCESSFUL QUALITY TIME ACTIVITY:

- 1 One or both of you WANT to do it
- 2 The other person is WILLING
- 3 You both know that you are EXPRESSING your LOVE to each other through this activity

## ACTIONS TO AVOID:

- Distractions
- Postponed Dates
- Not Listening



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## THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES

"Love is a choice you make everyday."  
- Gary Chapman

# ACTS OF SERVICE

## EXAMPLES:

- Doing the dishes or laundry
- Washing their car
- Running Errands for them
- Fixing things around the house
- Helping them with a project
- Doing things without being asked
- Sacrificing what you want to do for them



The things you do to ease the responsibilities and burdens of others. It means a lot when someone goes out of their way to do something for someone else especially when it's a sacrifice.

## Actions speak louder than words!

Acts of Service can be misinterpreted. Communication is Key; ask them how they would like to be shown love!

## ACTIONS TO AVOID:

- Laziness
- Broken Commitments
- Making more work for them



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## Marble jar of trust

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	8-30
Type of activity	discussion, individual work



- paper, markers
- flipchart paper
- colored paper notes/post-its
- paper/plastic cups

### Learning Objectives

Reflecting on the process of building trust and the things that are important for this.  
Understanding the importance of trust in relationships.  
Identifying important behaviors that can build trust.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Circle with the possibility of writing.

### 2. Introduction:

Before starting the activity, introduce the topic and establish a common ground, defining the term “trust” and identifying some needs that people have in relationships.

1. ‘Today we are going to talk about something that we always say is essential in relationships - TRUST. We use this word a lot, saying that we can or cannot trust someone and trust seems to be an element which decides the fate of a relationship. However, what exactly is trust? What do you think it is? Or when can you say that you trust someone?’

Allow the participants to express some ideas (many will probably sound like ‘When you know that the other person will...’, ‘When you can expect the other person to...’). Then he/she asks: ‘How can we KNOW that the person will do these things?’ (some will probably say that they have seen the other person doing this in the past). Support their ideas when introducing the definition of trust: ‘You are all right, because trust is actually that feeling of KNOWING, the certainty that the other person will do something that you need. And we get this certainty, this feeling of knowing, when the other person has demonstrated in the past that they can do this and when they are doing that thing repeatedly. Remember this idea!’

2. Invite everyone for a brainstorming asking: ‘What are the things that we need in a relationship? You can think of relationships in general or your relationships with people around you.’

Write the answers on a flipchart or board. Tell the participants: ‘These are the needs that people can have in their relationships.’



## Marble jar of trust

Strong Young Minds

### 3. Task:

*Step 1:* Give the participants paper and pens.

*Step 2:* Ask the participants to take 5 minutes individually to think about one relationship that is important to them (it can be the relationship with their brother, father, classmate, best friend, etc.) and choose from the flipchart or board, the needs that apply to them in that relationship. Ask them to write them down on the paper.

*Step 3:* Introduce the next part by relating it with the introduction: 'Do you remember how we talked about trust, that it happens when the other person is doing things that fulfill our needs? Now I want you to imagine trust being like a marble jar in which we put one marble for each time the other person is doing something that fulfills one of our needs.'

*Step 4:* Give the instructions for the activity: 'We will now try to build our marble jars of trust, but using more handy materials. I will give you each a cup and some colored paper notes. Each of you think of that relationship that you chose earlier and the needs that you wrote on the paper. Then, on paper notes write examples of things, examples of clear behaviors that the other person can do in order to respond to your needs. It can be something that the person is already doing or something that you would like them to do in the future (e.g. listening without judging - 'I did a very embarrassing thing and I told my friend about it. He listened to my story without laughing at me.'). Please write one behavior per paper note. After you've written it, turn the note into a paper ball and put it in the cup, then write another one and do the same. Write as many as you can in 15 minutes.'

*Step 5:* Give the materials (cups, colored paper) and make sure everybody has everything they need.

Make sure to remain in the circle in case anybody has difficulties with the activity.

After the 15 minutes are over, invite the participants to return to the circle for a short discussion.



## Marble jar of trust

Strong Young Minds



### 4. Debriefing:

In this debriefing, you can share some input about gaining/building/losing trust after each question, but remember: first get the ideas from the participants and only after that share the input!

1. How did you feel working on your cups of trust?
2. Does anybody want to share one or two examples of behaviors that would fulfill their needs and build the trust in their relationship?

INPUT: So every time the other person does this (give some examples from what they shared), we put one marble in our jar of trust or one paper ball in our cup. The more balls we add, the fuller the cup, which means that the more behaviors the other person is doing, the stronger the trust becomes.

3. How does it happen when we lose trust? Does it happen suddenly or gradually?

INPUT: Usually trust is lost in a similar way as the one in which it is built - gradually, when the other person gradually stops doing some of the behaviors that are important to us. Sometimes we can feel that all trust is lost suddenly, especially when something extremely important to us is missing or when the other person not only stops doing something, but is doing the exact opposite. This affects that sense of knowing, because the memory of something that broke the chain will be in our minds to make us feel uncertain.

4. How do we regain trust? What do we do?

INPUT: The sense of certainty is difficult to regain. However, it is useful to see that even if one marble falls out, there are still others remaining to support trust. It is useful to remember that nobody is perfect and we all make mistakes in relationships, but the important thing is to do the right thing more often than the mistake. If the other person starts again to do the things you need, new marbles can be added to the jar, which can counterbalance the ones that were lost. When we see that we are starting to lose marbles, that is the moment when we need to start doing something, such as communicating openly, and not letting everything be lost.

5. What ideas are you taking from this session to your daily life?



## GPS of empathy

Strong Young Minds

Duration	45 min
Group size	8-25
Type of activity	discussion, working in pairs



- flip charts, prepared in advance (see resources)
- markers

### Learning Objectives

To experience active listening and to try to identify other's needs and feelings without blocking or intruding. Practice ways of dealing with conflict in an efficient way.

To learn to pay attention to the other person in an objective, non-judgmental way

Acquire and develop awareness skills focused on the emotions in the message of others

Learn active listening skills

Learn to deepen trust and connection by appropriate and timely self-disclosure



### Instructions

#### 1. Space arrangement:

Preferably in a circle, for the introduction.

For the task, participants will work in pairs.

#### 2. Introduction:

Facilitator begins by introducing the GPS of empathy:

„One of the best way to build healthy relationships with your family, friends, colleagues and romantic partners is to learn how to be empathetic when the other person talks to you and shares something. This is how people get to feel more and more connected. So today we are going to learn the major destinations on our way to empathy. There are four stations and in our activity we will reach all of them.”

Facilitator shows the nonverbal signs of empathy by modelling on himself, saying: `But first, if we are to get to our destination, we have to calibrate our GPS. That means to be careful of the settings. What are these settings? Well, first, an open posture (do as you tell): look at the storyteller; don't be distracted by other things, like smartphones; gaze with curiosity and openness; relax your hands, orient your body towards the storyteller; nod, say mhm, give signs you are interested and alert. Speak softly and gently.`



## GPS of empathy

Strong Young Minds

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Facilitator asks participants to split into pairs, based on preferences (e.g. can be the desk mate). One is storyteller, one is empathy person.

**Step 2:** Facilitator describes first station by first drawing a road starting on one side of the flipchart/classroom blackboard and making a box in which he writes „paraphrase”. Then he describes: „First stop on our way is what we do when someone shares something with us - we encourage him to talk by allowing time for his story and then proving to him that we listened and understood. How do we do that? Well, we paraphrase: that means we tell back the major points in their story and ask if we got it and if there was anything else relevant that we didn't get. For example: A says 'I had a shitty weekend. I had an argument with my parents and now they won't allow me to go to basketball practice because they say I need to study more to get better grades'. B says: 'So you fought with your parents about something and they want you to learn instead of going to basketball'. Person A corrects and adds if he/she feels B has left anything out. B can ask: 'Is there something I've missed? Have I captured everything that was important in what you have said?'

**Step 3:** Facilitator asks the storyteller in each pair to share with his/her partner a story that made them have strong feelings, can be recent or very relevant in their history, and empathy person to 'paraphrase' (to take the first step towards empathy). Allow for 5 minutes.

**Step 4:** Facilitator then draws the next box on the road, on the flipchart/blackboard and writes in 'mirroring'. He begins to describe mirroring: 'The next step is when you try to understand the feelings in the situation the other has described, by putting yourselves in the other person's shoes and imagining what it would be like to be him/her in those life circumstances, given all you know about the other. You should use clear feeling words like angry, sad, scared, happy, discouraged, glad, ashamed, guilty, etc. Example: A says: 'Now I'm angry at them and I don't want to talk to them anymore cause they should know how important that is for me'. B says: 'So the fact that your parents forbid you to go to practice makes you angry because basketball is important for you. I imagine you think that they don't understand you very well, if they have punished you like that. B can ask again if he is correct and can ask for feedback and correction.





## GPS of empathy

Strong Young Minds

A is encouraged to try to see if the mirroring fits, if B is an objective, accurate mirror, or if B has rushed to saying how he/she would feel in the same situation (example: 'I'd be sad if I were you' is not an empathetic mirroring in this case).'

**Step 5:** Facilitator asks the pairs to put this into practice: asks the empathy person to 'mirror' and the storyteller to check for accuracy, give feedback / correct the feelings. Allow for 3 minutes.

**Step 6:** Facilitator draws the third box on the road to empathy and writes in 'sharing'. He then goes on to describe Sharing: 'After station 1 and 2 you can reach station Empathy, or 'Me too' - that is, sharing a common experience, a time in the past or present that this kind of thing has also happened to you. Example: Now B shares something that is as intimate as the story A shared (trying not to be more intimate or more superficial, because that would cause awkwardness). Example: B says: 'I know how that feels, because at one point my father got angry at me for not taking the trash out and forbid me to go to a birthday party that evening. I felt that the punishment was kind of unfair and, like you, I didn't want to talk to him that night'

**Step 7:** Facilitator asks the empathy person to share a similar story with the storyteller, and the storyteller to 'calibrate his nonverbal GPS', the guidelines from the beginning. Allow for 3 minutes.

**Step 8:** Facilitator draws the fourth box on the road to empathy and writes in 'reflection'. He then explains: 'Sometimes it is really helpful to step back and reflect on what happens in a trust relationship. This way, you can point specifically to the others what you need from them, in order to feel empathy and connection. It helps if we respond to these questions: a. How was it for me? b. How did I feel? Also, the other can share how he felt as an empathy person' Example: A says: 'I felt it was awesome to have someone first focus on what I was saying before sharing a common experience' B says: 'Yes, I think I don't usually do that, because I tend to interpret too quickly and not pay full attention. I will try to do that more.'

**Step 9:** Facilitator asks storytellers and empathy persons to tell each other how it was for them to go through these 3 station. Allow for 3 minutes.

**Step 10:** Facilitator asks each pair to exchange roles: empathy person becomes storyteller and shares a story, and storyteller becomes empathy person, calibrates non-verbal empathy GPS and starts going through each stage (paraphrases, mirrors, shares). Then they again reflect. This time, allow for 14 minutes for the entire process. Remind participants to check the 'map' on the flipchart or blackboard.

**\*Alternate version:** Introduce all instructions from the beginning, so as to not interrupt the process.



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## *GPS of empathy*



### 4. Debriefing:

- Reunite the whole group and ask:
- How did you feel during the exercise?
- How was the experience as storyteller? As empathy person?
- What station did you find most difficult to arrive to? Why?
- What skill do you feel you need to improve more?
- Why do you think is important to reflect and give feedback to others about ways to show you empathy?
- How do you plan to use this in the future?
- What new things have you learned from this experience?



## Non-violent communication

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	6-30
Type of activity	individual work, team work



- list of feeling and needs - see resources
- paper with the giraffe - see resources
- markers, pens, paper

### Learning objective

Teach participants the principles of communicating personal needs in a non-violent manner. Help them understand the importance of non-violent communication.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Participants can be seated in a circle.

### 2. Introduction:

Introduce the topic of communication:

‘Today we are going to talk a bit about communication. We are always talking about the importance of communication in relationships, for example, saying that we need to communicate better or more effectively. But what exactly does “good communication” mean?’

### 2. Task:

**Step 1:** Write in the middle of the flipchart ‘good communication’ and ask participants to tell you what comes to their mind when they hear this expression. Write their answers on the flipchart.

**Step 2:** After writing some answers on the flipchart, introduce the idea of non-violent communication:

‘Now we are going to talk about a communication style which tries to take into consideration all that you have said. It is called non-violent communication and in this type of communication, we use a type of language called giraffe language. Why giraffe? Because the giraffe is the land animal with the biggest heart (true fact). With her long neck she has a good overview and clear vision. The giraffe stands for compassionate communication, which is the core of non-violent communication. The opposite of giraffe is jackal language,



## Non-violent communication

### Strong Young Minds

which is about judging, criticizing, moralizing and accusing. Let's see exactly what giraffe language looks like and what the difference between the two is."

**Step 3:** Introduce the flipchart with the 4 steps of NVC. You can prepare the flipchart in advance, using the giraffe attachment. You can also print it and give it to participants. Explain in detail all the 4 steps (you can find the explanation in the resources part of this method). Make sure that participants understand the steps. You can give more examples if needed.

**Step 4:** Give the participants pens and paper and explain what will happen next: 'Now that we have learned the "grammar" of giraffe language, let's practice it to see how it works! I will ask you to think about a recent conflict that you have been involved in or something that someone said and it still bothers you (e.g. your parents are frequently telling you that you should clean your room; or a classmate made a mean joke about you, etc.).

Write down this situation briefly at the top of the paper and then try to describe it according to the four steps: write what you observed, how you felt and what need you had wasn't met. Then, formulate a request that you could have made or can make in the future to that person, regarding something that they could do to help you meet your needs, and write it down as well.

You have 10 minutes for this."

**Step 5:** After the 10 minutes, split them into groups of three and ask them to share. You can also let them choose their own group of 3.

'In your groups, each of you will share with the others how you described the situation and the request you have formulated. The others will have the opportunity to briefly share how they felt when they heard your request. At this point, we do not want to go into debates about what you have written, but simply to see how we feel when we hear a request being made in giraffe language. There will be maximum 5 minutes per person for sharing and receiving reactions from the others, that is 15 minutes in total for all three of you.'

**Step 6:** After the time has passed, ask the participants to return in the big circle. Ask for 2 or 3 examples of messages in giraffe, to check if they understood them and help them reformulate them if they didn't get the steps quite right.



## Non-violent communication

Strong Young Minds



### 3. Debriefing:

- How did you feel when you used the giraffe language?
  - How was it to use giraffe language to describe a situation and make a request? What was easy/difficult?
  - What do you think you can do in order to get familiar with this type of communication?
  - In what situations in your life do you think you can use the giraffe language?
  - Why do you think it's important to use the giraffe language/NVC? What benefits can it bring?
- Conclude: 'Remember that using NVC can increase the probability of the needs being fulfilled, more than using a passive or aggressive type of communication, but it is not a guarantee that it will happen, as it is a process which depends on two people and you cannot control how the other responds. See the graph in the attachment.'

#### ***More information:***

Movie with short summarizing:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tpqsjt-913M&feature=related>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LuPCAh9FCc&t=2s>

The center for non-violent communication:

<http://www.cnvc.org/>

<https://www.slideshare.net/hajnali3/nonviolent-communicationalanguageoflifemarshallbrose nberg>



## Non-violent communication - resources

Strong Young Minds



Here are the 4 steps of Non-Violent Communication:

- **OBSERVING** without evaluating, judging or interpreting. Observing is all about describing the situation in a way that a video camera would see it.  
E.g. When I said “hello” to my colleague, he looked in the other direction. (Giraffe)  
My colleague is very rude; he ignored my hello. (Jackal)
- Expressing the **FEELINGS** that your observations evoke. Feelings are different from thoughts, opinions or interpretations of others’ actions.  
\* Give participants the handout with the list of feelings and needs  
E.g. When my colleague looked in the other direction, I felt annoyed. (Giraffe)  
When he looked in the other direction, I felt disrespected. (Jackal) - Disrespect is not a feeling but an action that you label in your mind. You may feel sad, angry, or hurt as a result of disrespect or just at the thought that you have been disrespected.
- Expressing **NEEDS**. Feelings show us whether or not our needs have been fulfilled. When we have negative feelings, it means that our needs are not being met. Rosenberg identifies human needs such as safety, understanding, respect, warmth, autonomy, etc. Identification of needs is crucial because it gives us an idea of what to do exactly.  
\* Offer participants the needs handout.  
E.g. I need to feel respected. (Giraffe)  
You are being so disrespectful! (Jackal) - When needs are expressed indirectly through judgments, people are likely to hear criticism and behave defensively or start talking back.



## *Non-violent communication - resources*

### *Strong Young Minds*

- Making a specific **REQUEST** to another person to help meet an unmet need. Specificity is important because if you want the other person to help you meet your need, they should know exactly what to do. Also, don't confuse a request with a demand. Requests mean that you are open to accepting "no" as a response, while demands imply certain consequences for saying "no", like punishments. If your request gets a "no" for an answer, you do not have to give up. Instead, you can empathize with what is preventing the other person from saying "yes" and find together something that works for both of you.

E.g. It would help me if you'd say "hello" back when I say it. Do you think you could do that? (Giraffe)

Next time I'm not even talking to you until I don't hear a "hello" back. (Jackal)



## Non-violent communication - resources

Strong Young Minds

### Some Basic Feelings We All Have



#### Feelings when needs are fulfilled

- Amazed
- Comfortable
- Confident
- Eager
- Energetic
- Fulfilled
- Glad
- Hopeful
- Inspired
- Intrigued
- Joyous
- Moved
- Optimistic
- Proud
- Relieved
- Stimulated
- Surprised
- Thankful
- Touched
- Trustful

#### Feelings when needs are not fulfilled

- Angry
- Annoyed
- Concerned
- Confused
- Disappointed
- Discouraged
- Distressed
- Embarrassed
- Frustrated
- Helpless
- Hopeless
- Impatient
- Irritated
- Lonely
- Nervous
- Overwhelmed
- Puzzled
- Reluctant
- Sad
- Uncomfortable

### Some Basic Needs We All Have



#### Autonomy

- Choosing dreams/goals/values
- Choosing plans for fulfilling one's dreams, goals, values

#### Celebration

- Celebrating the creation of life and dreams fulfilled
- Celebrating losses: loved ones, dreams, etc. (mourning)

#### Integrity

- Authenticity
- Creativity
- Meaning
- Self-worth

#### Interdependence

- Acceptance
- Appreciation
- Closeness
- Community
- Consideration
- Contribution to the enrichment of life
- Emotional Safety
- Empathy

#### Physical Nurturance

- Air
- Food
- Movement, exercise
- Protection from life-threatening forms of life: viruses, bacteria, insects, predatory animals
- Rest
- Sexual expression
- Shelter
- Touch
- Water

#### Play

- Fun
- Laughter

#### Spiritual Communion

- Beauty
- Harmony
- Inspiration
- Order
- Peace
- Honesty (the empowering honesty that enables us to learn from our limitations)
- Love
- Reassurance
- Respect
- Support
- Trust
- Understanding

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## Conflict Management

Strong Young Minds

Duration	25 min
Group size	8-25
Type of activity	discussion, role play



- pens, paper
- flipchart, markers
- conflict scenarios template

### Learning Objectives

Practice ways of dealing with conflict in an efficient way.  
Teens learn how to deal efficiently with conflicts  
Teens see and experience different ways to respond to conflicts



### Instructions

#### 1. Space arrangement:

Participants will begin in a circle. After the introduction they will form smaller circles to work in teams.

A space in front of the classroom will be prepared for the role play.

#### 2. Introduction:

Begin by introducing the topic of the day: Conflicts and how to deal with them in an efficient way. Ask teens:

*“How do we know when we dealt with a conflict in an efficient way? What could be the examples of the efficiency?”* (brainstorm responses, lead them towards: being proud of the way you acted, taking other people’s feelings into consideration, but not blaming yourself, getting towards solving problems/ finding solutions, etc.)

#### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Tell participants they are going to learn from each other how to manage conflicts. Give the following instructions:

You are going to create a few theater scenes following a description you will receive. Some of you will start playing the scene, and then the scene will freeze. It can freeze either because I say `freeze` or it freezes by itself, because the actors are stuck in the action and don’t know how to continue or change.

When the theater play freezes, a volunteer from the `audience` comes into the scene, replaces an actor and acts differently, in order to overcome the challenge, direct the situation on a different



## Conflict Management

Strong Young Minds

route

**Step 2:** Divide participants in groups of 5 people and then distribute the scenarios randomly.

**Step 3:** Each group will have 10 minutes to prepare a 5 minute role play involving all the participants, in which they enact the conflict.

**Step 4:** Allow the first group to start the 'conflict'. At one point, either you see that the scene gets out of hand (participants talking about something else, swearing, etc.), or they get stuck, or someone offers to change the role. Then ask the participants to stop, not say anything, and replace either one of the participants. The one who replaces cannot change the situation, but can only find a way to end it efficiently. Always guide participants to figure out what 'efficient' means in each situation.



### 4. Debriefing:

- How did it feel to watch the scenarios? How did you feel participating?
- How would you define the conflict in each scenario? (take each played out conflict in a row)
- What was the resolution that got worked out?
- What would be some other possible resolutions to a similar conflict?
- What did 'efficient' mean in each case?
- How would you approach conflicts in your daily given this experience today?

### Proposed scenes for the forum theater:

Following are proposed scenes, that you can modify regarding the characteristics of each group and needs of participants:

**Scene One:** A group of friends keep arguing because some of them really like hanging out at home while they play and others like to go out and party. (Role 1 - leading person for remaining at home; role 2 – person defending partying; role 3 – random friend).

**Scene Two:** Two friends have started smoking, and they make fun of a third friend because he or she is not interested in giving it a try. (role 1 to replace is one of the smokers, role 2 is non-smoker, role 3 in random friend).

**Scene Three:** A family keeps fighting because the parents feel that their son or daughter is not trying his or her best to achieve good grades. (role 1 – parental A; role 2 – parental B; role 3 – son or daughter).

**Scene Four:** Three friends accuse one of their classmates of stealing money, candy, and school supplies from them. (role 1 – accused person; role 2 – person accusing).

**Scene Five:** A child in a class feels that his teacher is always yelling at him and does not like him as much as others in the class. (role 1 – teacher; role 2– student; role 3- random student).



## Conflict Management -resources

Strong Young Minds

### Forum theater

#### *Common Use*

Forum theater is a tool for exploring and rehearsing possible actions that people can take to transform their world. It's often used both in preparation to taking action and in anti-oppression workshops.

Forum theater is one of the more commonly used tools from Theater of the Oppressed. It begins with the crafting and performance of a short play that dramatizes real situations faced by the participants and that ends with the protagonist(s) being oppressed. After the first performance, the play or scene is repeated with one crucial difference: the spectators become "spect-actors" and can at any point yell "freeze" and take the place of an actor to attempt to transform the outcome. Forum theater is an exercise in democracy in which anyone can speak and anyone can act.

*The point is not to show what we think other people should do — it is not theater of advice. The point is to discover what we can do.*

One of the first things that spect-actors realize is that, as in life, if they don't intervene, nothing will change. The next thing spect-actors find is that doing "something" is not enough, it must be a strategic something. The people acting as oppressors on stage will maintain their oppression until they are authentically stopped — and just like in life, stopping them isn't easy. Forum theater thus becomes a laboratory to experiment with different courses of action.

The protagonists should be characters that all or most of the people in the room can identify with, so that when they intervene, they are rehearsing their own action. The point is not to show what we think other people should do — it is not theater of advice. The point is to discover what we can do.

Forum theater is facilitated by someone called a Joker, who engages the spect-actors both on and off stage in dialogue throughout the process. After an intervention, the Joker may ask, "Did this work?", "Was this realistic?", "Can you do this in real life?"

Forum theater was developed in a context in which it was very clear what the oppression was, who was oppressed and who the oppressors were: its originator, Augusto Boal, was living in exile from the Brazilian military dictatorship, and social movements across the continent were struggling against harsh military repression. Since then, the technique has been adapted to countless other contexts around the world, as practitioners seek to grapple with the complicated power relationships of more diverse groups of people. Often interventions will uncover multiple layers of power, dramatizing characters who are simultaneously oppressed and oppressing others.

Forum theater is an effective tool of creative activism, useful for generating interventions, as an intervention itself, and for building common strategic frameworks for movements.



## Conflict Management -resources

### Strong Young Minds

#### *Potential Pitfalls*

The role of the Joker is a tricky one. It is easy to leave the group with false optimism about what can work, or to run out of time before everyone is satisfied with what has been attempted. The Joker must make many small decisions in every moment, such as whether or not to allow the introduction of additional characters, whether or not to add interventions upon other interventions, how many interventions to allow, when to stop an intervention when it's not going anywhere, and so on.

Another pitfall is to use forum theater to generate solutions and then fail to act on them: forum theater “works” to the extent that it prepares participants to intervene critically in their own lives.

**Source:** <http://beautifultrouble.org/tactic/forum-theater/>



## Wise Break up

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	8-25
Type of activity	discussion, team work, role-play, brainstorming



- Whiteboard/blackboard/flipchart
- Markers
- A4 paper, pens

### Learning Objectives

- To practice ending an important relationship in a respectful and non-hurtful way.
- To learn how to express themselves in an assertive manner.
- To identify the right way and the wrong way to behave when breaking up.



### Instructions

#### 1. Space arrangement:

Preferably a circle, with space for the role plays.

#### 2. Introduction:

Facilitator will ask participants “What is a break-up?” and “Why does it happen?”.

#### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Ask teens to brainstorm scenarios and motives about:

- 1) a friendship ending (ex. moving to another country, a betrayal, important conflict, etc.)
- 2) a couple ending.

Pool all the answers on a flipchart/blackboard. Ask all the teens how often that scenario has happened to them and make a top common 5 (preferably couple and friendship scenarios).

**Step 2:** Have a short discussion on what to have in mind when breaking up with someone. Ask teens about following:

- a) tone of voice, body language
- b) adequate expression of emotion (ex. say ‘I’m angry’, but don’t shout in anger and don’t hit);
- c) avoidance of blaming, criticizing, judgement (‘you are stupid’), black-and-white thinking (‘you never do anything right’)
- d) acceptance of shared responsibility and imperfection/ incompatibility. As soon as you reach some keywords, write them on the flipchart and keep the flipchart in plain sight while they are doing the next activity.



## Wise Break up

Strong Young Minds

**Step 3:** Write the 5 scenarios from the brainstorming on 5 pieces of paper and then ask for 5 pairs of volunteers. Distribute scenarios and ask them to think of a role play/ fictive conversation on a "Right" way (HOW-TO) end a relationship and a 'Wrong way (HOW NOT TO)' end a relationship, and to act it in front of others, around the given scenario (ex. when the girlfriend moves to another country and the boyfriend doesn't want a long-distance relationship).

**Step 4:** Present the role plays. After each one, ask the participants to identify the good/not so good behavior presented.



### 4. Debriefing:

- How did you feel while playing the role-plays? If you were watching, how do you think the actors were feeling?
- What is the difference between the 'how-to' and the 'how not to' scenarios in regard to emotion? How did you feel/ How do you think the actors were feeling in the positive as compared to the negative way of ending a relationship?
- What worked in the 'how-to' / positive scenarios? What did the actors do to make it easier, less hurtful, more honest?
- What were the elements that made the 'how not-to' /negative scenarios hurtful, harder or less honest?
- Would you apply this in your life? What kind of obstacles do you think you would encounter?



## Actors in my Movie

Strong Young Minds

Duration	40 min
Group size	8-25
Type of activity	discussion, brainstorming, individual work



- pens, paper
- template
- flipchart, markers

### Learning Objectives

To identify the personal needs that their relationship fulfill. To become aware of the fact that different people can fulfill the same needs.

To learn how to reassign different roles to different persons in their lives.



### Instructions

#### 1. Space arrangement:

Preferably in a circle, with a possibility to write.

#### 2. Introduction:

Tell participants “Next we are going to make a casting for a very special movie... your life movie! You know how at the end of the movie, there’s the listing of actors? Well, I am going to ask you to do them same for the movie of your life, identify who plays what in your movie. Who does what, who meets what need.”

For example (you can suggest an example in reference to your own life; these are just a few examples, encourage teens to come up with their own roles.)

The body guard (the need for safety) - X

Santa’s helper (the need for practical support) - Z

#### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** Ask participants to use the template provided to identify specific persons in their lives that fulfill the given roles. (5-7 minutes)

**Step 2:** Ask them to think of important people in their life and assign ‘roles’ in the blank areas of the template. Also, tell them they can invent creative names for the characters in the story, just as long as the character name is connected to a specific need. Also, ask them to write the need in brackets). (5-7 minutes)



## *Actors in my Movie*

### *Strong Young Minds*

Step 3: At the end, ask the group if anyone wants to share their listing of characters. Complete with saying: All relations have the role of fulfilling certain needs we have: affection, appreciation, security, care, understanding, entertainment etc. Despite the uniqueness of each person we'll meet, our needs can be responded to by more than one person, so ending a relation does not mean that one important need is being left unmet.



### 4. Debriefing:

- How did you feel during the method?
- How was it to think about this topic?
- Have you find more than one person in your life fulfilling the same need?
- What did find about the roles of other people in you life?
- When is the right moment to replace a person?
- What are you taking from this exercise?



## Actors in my Movie -resources

Strong Young Minds

Character type	Role - requirements	The person in your life(Name)	Why is he/she good for the role?
The Listener	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- good communicator</li> <li>- always available</li> <li>- doesn't judge</li> </ul>		
The role model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- authentic</li> <li>- motivates you to improve</li> </ul>		
The adventurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- always active</li> <li>- full of new ideas</li> <li>- challenges you</li> </ul>		
The wise man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- experienced</li> <li>- offering good advice</li> <li>- available when you need him</li> </ul>		
The funny guy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- makes you laugh</li> <li>- optimistic</li> <li>- creative</li> </ul>		



## The Chair

Strong Young Minds

Duration	10 min
Group size	8-25
Type of activity	discussion, individual work



- table , chair
- something heavy like books or backpacks
- paper, pens

### Learning Objectives

To introduce a metaphor for the need for balance after a breakup.

To help participants identify what is important for them to keep balanced after a breakup.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Preferably in a circle.

### 2. Introduction:

#### *The Chair Metaphor*

Before starting the session, you prepare a chair with four legs and raises the chair onto a table, with one leg of the chair outside and a few heavy books placed on the chair and pressing down on the legs that are sitting on the table (see photo). The chair could be placed in the middle of the circle or somewhere in the plain sight of participants.

You tell participants you are going to first show them an experiment. You try to lift the stack of books so as to affect the chair's balance. The chair will tilt towards the leg that is hanging in the air. You ask the group what would happen if you placed all the books on the side of the chair that is hanging in the air ('the chair would most definitely fall') - and what would happen if you placed all the books back on the side of the chair that is sitting firmly on the table ('the chair will be back in balance')



After the group understands how to balance the chair, you explain the metaphor: 'When a relationship is ending, we lose the support under one foot of our chair. But just as the chair has other three feet that can help it stay balanced, we have other domains of our life, other sides of our identity, that we can rely on and we can develop, in order to keep our mental balance.'



## The Chair

Strong Young Minds

### 3. Task:

*Step 1:* You tell participants to think of examples of what these three feet could consist of, in terms of life areas that they can invest in and also activities that they could engage in.

*Step 2:* Then ask them to actually write those activities/goals/life areas/etc. on post-its.

*Step 3:* Ask participants to take turns reading them out loud and then then sticking them on the feet of the chair.

Possible examples of areas: other relationships (already existing or new ones), hobbies, family, studies/ self development etc. Possible examples of activities: going out for tea with a friend, football, engaging in a new hobby, learning a new skill, etc.



### 4. Debriefing:

After all participants stick post-its to the chair, ask them to gather around in circle again for debriefing.

Ask:

- How did you feel during the exercise?
- How was it to find components of your life or your identity that can be developed / invested in?
- What can we do to prevent the chair to lose balance when it loses one foot?
- How can relate this activity with your daily life?
- What did you learn in this activity that you think would help you in the future?

#### ***Desirable conclusions:***

A person's identity and life are very complex and there are many components of it that can be developed / invested in, that could help us keep in balance after loosing a relationship.



## Pick the Peer Pressure

Strong Young Minds

Duration	50 min
Group size	8-30
Type of activity	role plays with different examples of peer pressure.



- paper, markers, pens
- flipchart paper

### Learning Objectives

To learn about peer pressure and the negative consequences of fully giving in.  
To see examples of how peer pressure manifests itself.



## Instructions

### 1. Space arrangement:

Participants will be seated in a circle.

### 2. Introduction(5min):

Ask participants to tell you what peer pressure is. Ask them to give you examples from their lives or from other peoples' lives. Try to make a short definition of peer pressure together with the participants (see resources for ideas of what to expect and extract; e.g. Pressure is the feeling that you are being pushed toward making a certain choice—good or bad. A peer is someone in your own age group. Peer pressure is—you guessed it—the feeling that someone your own age is pushing you toward making a certain choice, good or bad)

### 3. Task:

**Step 1:** In the whole group, brainstorm situations of peer pressure from their own day to day life - at school, free time with friends, on the internet, etc. Either a co-facilitator or you write the situation twice, on two separate pieces of paper, in 2-3 sentences. Continue brainstorming until you have as many pieces of paper (each situation is written two times) as the number of groups (3-4 people per group). If the group is stuck in generating ideas, use the situations provided in the annex (have some situations already written on pieces of paper - two times each situation).

**Step 2:** Divide participants into groups of 3-4 people. Give one situation to two different groups. One will have to come up with an ending in which the character accepts the peer pressure and the other will come up with an ending in which the character rejects the peer pressure.

**Step 3:** Invite each group in front of the class to shortly role play their situation - 2mins/ group. After each scene, ask the rest of the groups to identify the means by which peer pressure was manifested. Find an advantage and a disadvantage for the way the main character responded to peer pressure.



## Pick the Peer Pressure

Strong Young Minds



### 4. Debriefing:

- How did you feel during the exercise? Why?
- How difficult/easy was for you to come up with peer pressure examples for the given situations?
- Can you name 5 negative consequences in case the people in the given examples would follow the peer pressure?
- How was it to observe the cases from the outside? How often do you see them in real life?
- Did it happen to you to be part of the pressuring group?
- What did you learn from this exercise
- Can you give examples of how peer pressure influenced your/a friend of yours choices and actions?
- What feelings can result from peer pressure? How can you deal with those feelings?
- Why do people give into peer pressure?
- Can peer pressure be positive?
- What can you apply from this exercise in your daily life?

### Tips and tricks

Emphasize on the fact that many times we don't even realize when we pressure others or when someone is pressuring us. Make it clear that the first step is to identify it and after that to stop it. Encourage acknowledgement of the fact that peer pressure happens because we want to be liked and be part of a group, which is a normal human need. It's not because we are weak.

### Resources

<http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/peer-pressure.html#>

<https://www.thecoolspot.gov/>



## Popular John Doe

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Duration  
Group size  
Type of activity

35 min  
8-30  
discussion, team work,  
brainstorming



- post-its, pens, paper
- two flipchart papers with blank shapes, one of a girl and one of a boy.
- two flipchart papers with the shapes of a girl and a boy, with elements of their personality added

### Learning Objectives

To give an image about popularity standards and how they are transmitted through peer pressure and social media.

To understand the different sources of peer pressure, of standards they have to live by in their social environment.

To understand the link between popularity and peer pressure.

To understand the particular effect of social media as a tool for social pressure.



### Instructions

#### 1. Space arrangement:

Prepare four flipchart papers, two with the shape of a boy and two with the shape of a girl. Two should have details (eyes, mouth, nose) added to their faces, while the other two shouldn't, representing the backs of the people.

On the flipcharts with the face figures, write or stick post-its with characteristics or traits of those people. Try to create less common characters, with some counterintuitive traits or interests in order to make them different from a potentially popular teenager. Also give them not so common names and write them on the flipchart.

Stick the flipcharts back to back.

#### 2. Introduction:

'Today we are going to talk about being popular. I will introduce you to two teenagers, a boy and a girl who are new to this school.'

Put the two flipcharts on the floor and tell the participants: 'Being new to the school, these two teenagers really want to fit in. But more than that, they want to become popular. We will try to help them with that.'



## Popular John Doe

### Strong Young Minds

#### 3. Task:

*Step 1:* Give the participants post-its and pens. Ask them to imagine a popular person and the things which make this person popular: music preferences, dressing and makeup style, gadgets they use, social media channels they follow, people they hang up with, ways of speaking, personality traits (extrovert/introvert), places they spend their vacation, hobbies and interests they have, role models, movies/series they watch, etc. These are probably different for boys and girls.

*Step 2:* Ask them to write on post-its very specific things that a popular person would have or do (e.g. listens to reggae music, is an extrovert, they watch Game of Thrones, etc.) and stick the post-its to the blank shapes on the floor in order to make the teenagers popular in this high school

*Step 3:* After everybody has finished sticking the post-its, read (or have one of the participants read) what was written for each person, to see what it means to be popular. They can even agree on a cool name for the boy and a girl.

*Step 4:* Read or have one of the participants read what is written on the new flipcharts. Ask them to imagine, while listening, how these people would behave like in real life.



#### 4. Debriefing:

- How easy/difficult was it to identify the standards of popularity?
- How did you decide on the characteristics to be assigned to the popular people? Where did you take them from, how do you know about them, where do you see them?
- Do you notice any differences between the popular teens and the real ones?
- How do you think the two teens feel having so many post-its stuck on their backs?
- Do you think popularity comes with any kind of costs? Disadvantages? Does it come with any kind of pressures in day to day life?
- What happens when the standards imposed through social pressure are different from the true personality of the person?
- What can someone do in that situation?
- What learning points do we take from this activity?



## Strong Young Minds

# IX. When you deal with a difficult case

The curriculum we designed here serves as a universal intervention, that is, a program meant to respond to the needs of the majority of teenagers, aiming to help them develop some of the skills that are necessary for them to cope efficiently with stress and to define their identities.

However, there may be instances in which a teen is confronted with an unexpected or unpredictable event, in which their capacity to cope is affected or even compromised and their usual strategies do not work anymore. This can lead to a state of discomfort and disorganization in which more targeted support, at a higher level of care, is needed.

### **How to know?**

With teenagers, knowing whether they are displaying “normal teenage behavior” or signs of psychological distress can be a challenging task. The stage of adolescence is one of tumultuous transitions, with great hormonal and physical change due to puberty, and accompanied by many new social, sexual, intellectual, and personal experiences, which can easily feel overwhelming. Therefore, it is not uncommon for teenagers to experience mood swings, sadness, anxiety, or anger.

However, it might be that a teenager is experiencing psychological distress that goes beyond the normal adolescent angst, that can be identified with some of this behaviors:

- \* show anxiety, anger, sadness or other strong emotions for a longer period of time (e.g. more than two weeks);
- \* do not engage in activities with other peers and seem chronically disconnected;
- \* show less enjoyment or interest in everyday activities;
- \* their school performance has decreased significantly;
- \* skip school often;
- \* have difficulties focusing during class or remembering assignments;
- \* appear significantly less energetic;
- \* show frequent physical or verbal aggression or act defiantly;
- \* neglect their personal appearance or hygiene.

### **What to do?**

If you detect any of the above signs, it is important to first have a private conversation with the teenager about it and express your concerns specifically. For example, you might say “I can’t help but notice that you’ve been missing on school a lot lately.” They will likely not want to talk about it, but asking lets them know you care and that you are available and open if they need it. You can also offer your support for finding further assistance with their difficulties.

At the same time, in these situations, there is a need to intervene in order to develop the teenager’s capacity to cope with the stressful event. The objective is to stabilize the teen, to evaluate their needs, and to provide the appropriate care for them to be able to function properly.



## Strong Young Minds

At this point, you can direct the teenager to more specific care. That is, support groups or programs that focus on specific topics, relevant for their difficulties (e.g. therapy groups for social anxiety or depression, programs aimed at developing conflict-management skills, etc.). Sometimes, more intensive care is necessary, at which point you can contact the school counselor or a social worker. Depending on your options and the resources of your institution, these services can come from the school or from the community.

There are many cases in which you will not have the competence or the authority to direct the teen to an appropriate care service. In these instances, consider involving the parent, the school counselor, or other specialist who can take this role in your institution and evaluate the needs of the teenager.

### *Where to go from here, if you need to contact specialist?*

If the situation comes up when participant is facing challenging emotions that needs help with, its important to follow these instructions;

- To be aware of that if someone is left behind with difficult emotions that needs to be discussed
- If the participant shows discomfort due to the topic being discussed or anything else happening during the session it's important to have a conversation after the session.
- It's important to take the participant a side, and have a conversation somewhere its safe and where you can be in private.
- During the conversation it's important to use active listening and that the participant feels secure, place yourself so you can sit eye to eye, and have the conversation from the heart.
- We recommend you use the following questions;

#### ***1. What was it that made you feel this way? What was it in the session specifically?***

- It is very important here to listen actively, without answering or correcting the answers

#### ***2. What would you like to do? Do you think you need further support with this?***

- If the participant is not ready to have this conversation it's important to still ask the next question, remember to differentiate between the seriousness of the situation

#### ***3. Who do you trust to have this conversation with and to support you further?***

- If the participant doesn't find anyone they trust, it's good to give examples; guidance counselor, parents or legal guardian, older siblings, older cousins, teacher or someone that can help the participant with the issue and carry the responsibility with them.

- For bigger issues you need to be aware of laws regarding child protection in your country.
- If the emotions are severe or if it leads to serious thoughts such as wanting to hurt yourself or suicidal thoughts the teacher must always report that to the person who is going to continue working with the participant. That person then has the obligation to report this to a professional.
- It is important to always be in cooperation with the participant throughout the conversation and when making decisions.
- The teacher/facilitator/trainer must always follow and support the participant to the one that will do the further support and takes responsibility.



Strong Young Minds

## X. Testimonials about the project

*“I have been like a tiny part of this project now for some time. And I have seen the material grow and improve over time. And I’m really proud of the materials and activities that have been made and I think they will do a great job in teaching young people about emotional awareness, learning in a group, respecting other people’s opinions and everything like that. I’m very happy with the materials we have been given here.”*

Bórður, Iceland

*“I was involved in this project from day one. I took part in all of the transnational meetings and the training in Romania. For me it was a great learning experience. I could feel both during the training and also during testings in schools that the curriculum is working. The non formal method of teaching works really well for the activities and fits perfectly for the age group that we were focusing on.”*

Kristinn Heiðar, Hugarafll, Iceland

*“I have been training to be able to train others with some very good materials that I think will really change some lives. And I think it gets implemented really fast in a lot of places, because we really need prevention, instead of just going around putting out fires. And these are very good tools and they can really help.”*

Bruno, Portugal

*“In society nowadays we are definitely not taught how to talk about emotions. We have zero emotional education and therefore, a high lack of emotional intelligence. So what happens many times, is that we don’t have the vocabulary. We don’t know how to talk about emotions. And we don’t know how to recognize them. We just don’t know. They will tell us - “disappointment”. Just the word. And you understand the word. You could say the definition in your language. But you can not relate it to anything you felt. It’s very hard.*

*The emotional education will need to be taught first.”*

Belen, Spain



Strong Young Minds

## XI. The project partners



Hugarafll/Mindpower (Iceland) is an independent association of people dealing with mental problems. The organisation is built on ideas on empowerment, recovery, equality and cooperation between users and professionals. Members/users in Hugarafll count around 350-400 people but active users about 100-150 in any time. Daily around 50-70 people visit Hugarafll and 100-120 on a weekly basis.

The goals of Hugarafll are various, they include:

- To change the mental health system in Iceland by using empowerment and recovery model. To talk about empowerment and recovery in a positive way, not by being negative regarding the government and those who are in control of the healthcare system.
- Create a venue where professionals and users can work together on equality basis and share experience and methods.
- Eliminate prejudices against mental illness by being visible in the community and write articles and being outspoken in the subject.
- To work by equality of all members, no one has more power than the other. All decisions regarding the work are taken in meetings where everybody has an equal vote.

Members of Hugarafll are engaged in all kinds of work such as reviewing law bills on mental health issues from parliament, go to schools and talk about mental health, working on a project called „Safe House“ (used in USA, the Netherlands and Italy) and many other projects. Members do a lot of volunteer work concerning the house and schedule, welcoming guests and speaking at seminars.

Hugarafll has a daily schedule where people can come and work on their recovery, by for example doing yoga, group meetings, volunteer work and much more. Every member controls when they come and which groups they attend. People are encouraged to take responsibility of their own attendance and by undertaking responsibility of projects people are required to follow it through.

The team from Hugarafll has worked in the field of mental health for a extended period of time on various projects, such as the educational program, publishing, organising conferences and events. Also they are qualified trainers in eCPR practices (emotional cpr) and have trained internationally along with Daniel Fisher MD. Phd.

*Einar Björnsson's* experience include: Publishing, layout, web designing, graphic design and management.

*Fjóla Kristín Ólafardóttir's* experience include: expert by experience, project managing and facilitating non- formal educational programs for youth, managing international projects.



## Strong Young Minds



Ha Moment, CRL is a cooperative whose mission is to provide opportunities for personal and professional development of young people, youth workers and adults throughout the world, through training, consulting and organizing events, based on informal and non-formal learning. We seek to create training activities in education for youth workers, adults and the general public, focusing on development of competences in the areas of conflict transformation, social inclusion, communication, empathy, gamification and ICT tools. Main methods we use are Lego Serious Play, Non Violent Communication, Storytelling, Theatre of the Oppressed.

Established at May 2015, our staff has extensive experience in non-formal education, which acquired working for other organizations, companies and as free-lancers. We have 7 active members from which 3 are working in International Youth Work Field. Our staff has experience in the different areas we work: trainings, consulting and events. We developed among our team competences and gained experience in planning, coordinating, implementing, evaluating, disseminating trainings events.

Our main goal is to work for the recognition of non-formal education and to ensure that skills are acquired through it, related to personal and professional development. We are currently dedicated to certain topics and projects around:

- Innovation in Youth Work Field
- Creation of educational board-game experiences
- Recognition of gained competences through informal and non formal learning using system of Open Badges
- Development of 360° review system to support the (self-)assessment of trainer competences and performance.
- Creation of video tutorials for non-formal education activities
- Development of trainings on conflict transformation and peace building through educational board games and empathy practises
- Fight hate speech and hateful behaviour through training of trainers from minorities backgrounds
- Promote mental health awareness and emotional expression through non formal edu. activities.

Ha Moment is more than just our members. We base our work on idea of cooperation with similar to us educators, trainers and institutions that believe in the same principles of life long learning. We have partnerships with Team Mais and Other Signs, with whom we develop a project for getting certificated in the method Lego Serious Play. We work with Municipality of Cascais, ACM-High Commission for Migration, we are closely connected with Produções Fixe that are our main board game producer, we are part of European Badge Alliance and work in Badgecraft from Lithuania using their platform of Open Badges. On the area of conflict and peace building we cooperate with Narviksenteret- museum of Peace and War from Norway and Peace Education Centre RKI from Finland. We are connected with International Youth Work Trainers Guild that promotes quality in trainings and advocates trainers rights world-widely.

Our active members are: Olga Kuczynska, Sérgio Gonçalves, José Branco' international trainers with experience in non-formal education, Olga coming from background in sociology and communication, Sérgio from personal development and José from theatre. We work closely with Marco Politano that is our main designer and responsible for visual identity of many projects and board games.



## Strong Young Minds



ASK Yourself (Romania) is a non-profit organization created by a group of youth workers that wanted to share their passion for non-formal education and Erasmus+.

We want to encourage young people to try new and exciting learning opportunities, to discover themselves, to improve their competences, and to give back to society. We offer support in finding the right project/challenge for each individual and we are also implementing

projects based on young people needs.

Our activity is focusing both on local and international level.

We do projects with young people, for young people. We work a lot with young students and we organize projects based on their needs and interest.

Since 2015, we organized 12 Erasmus+ projects. The projects were implemented in Bucharest, Busteni, 2 Mai, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Sighisoara and Cluj. These projects gathered over 300 young people and youth workers from all over Europe. We were happy to meet them and to play a part in their lives, while trying to make a small change in each community. Our activities combined education with community involvement: we had workshops in 20 high schools, we talked with hundreds of students and we encouraged teachers to use non-formal education.

All these activities were based on non-formal education methods. The main subjects were personal development, storytelling, team development, career development, healthy lifestyle and culture. We are also involved in sending young people and youth workers in Erasmus+ projects. We have been partners in more than 30 projects, all over Europe.

On the local level, we organize:

- High school workshops for students. Some of the subjects we work with are: self-development, career counseling, increasing employment opportunities (design CV, letter of intent, the strengths of the interview), entrepreneurship and communication.
- Project writing seminars dedicated to youth workers and teachers who want to apply for an Erasmus+ project.
- Orphanage activities: we are implementing non-formal education methods in two orphanages from Bucharest. Our volunteers are going there to help the young people to do their homework, to engage in team work activities and most importantly to believe in brighter future.
- We are teaching non-formal education to youth workers by implementing non-formal activities in the city. Some examples are: flash mobs, Human Library, Living Exhibition, and Treasure Hunt.
- Our youth workers attended different international projects and organized workshops for our volunteers in order to share their knowledge.

During this project our main responsibility was to propose, test and refine non-formal education methods. We were responsible of gathering information from all partners and giving a final form to this Manual.

In this project, the association was represented by Rizescu Oana and Arhire Alexandru.



## Strong Young Minds



is a non-profit organisation from Cluj-Napoca. Founded in 2010, it promotes mental health through:

- Education
- Support for maintaining or enhancing mental health
- Psychological development

They envision a society where every individual takes care of their mental well-being on a daily basis and where those who encounter difficulties receive support instead of being discriminated. Their target group includes any person who is interested in maintaining or improving their mental health. The focus is on young people, because early psychological education can help build a balanced self and prevent mental health problems.

The main activities ran by Minte Forte are:

- Counselling and psychotherapy services;
- Educational events on mental health and personal development topics, for the general public;
- Workshops in schools and high schools, for the social and emotional development of children and teenagers, using non-formal education and arts;
- Rock-climbing camps for social and emotional development;
- International projects such as trainings, seminars and strategic partnerships meant to improve the mental health methodologies and exchange good practices with organizations in the field;

Minte Forte was the initiator of mental health education projects in Cluj-Napoca and they generated a visible shift in people's mentality with regard to mental health. They are working towards their main educational goal, which is to free the mental health field of the stigma attached to it, to make it less of a taboo and more of a natural topic for constructive conversations, with the final aim of helping people reach a personal balance and live a healthy mental life. Their activities offer valuable knowledge and support on how to maintain one's mental health and to overcome psychological difficulties.



## Strong Young Minds



Scouts Valencians belongs to the World Organization of the Scout Movement, the biggest youth organization in the world and their main role, through its 110 years of

existence, is to educate children.

They work by guiding them since they are 6 through out all the steps of a project and they also provide educational opportunities for them in topics such as environment, education in values, health, employability, self-development, citizenship...It's a project based learning and learning by doing is their methodology.

The main representative of this organization on this project, Javier Quilez, brought his competences in designing and implementing training programmes, gamification, video-making, participation in a KA2 project (same one as the Portuguese) and the planning of international events since 2005. Due to these skills, the Spanish partner was also in charge of the production of the instructional videos.

They've been working on non formal education for more than 100 years and they have developed a lot of resources, materials, training programs and more than 200 publications in Spain, in this way they had detected a need on Mental Health resources when working with their older sections (teenagers and youngsters), educators are not well trained and they need specific tools to be able to provide rich learning opportunities on that topic and also to contribute with the outcomes . There were more than 20 educators and teachers involved in this project collaborating with Scouts Valencians by testing the tools, the pilot versions of the game and providing useful information through the whole project.

Javi Quilez directed and coordinated their work and this 20 educators involved more than 300 young people on the project, from the regions of Valencian Community, Madrid and Castilla y León.

Javi Quilez has been involved in more than 40 youth exchanges for scouts and been part of 6 international planning teams involving more than 200.000 young people in different educational activities and events since 2005.

He's been a member of his organization since 1987 and actively involved in international projects, communication and the creation of several methodological tools and books at national and international level.

He's a primary school teacher, a waldorf pedagogue and a non formal trainer. He owns the certificate for trainer of trainers in Spain.

Most of the educators have been volunteer leaders and/or youth workers for more than 10 years and they have all done the 3 official national training courses. So beside from being teachers, educators or youth workers they have all been trained in different educational fields and all this organizations will benefit from the results of the project.



## Strong Young Minds

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## Strong Young Minds

### Spain:

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## Strong Young Minds

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