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Erasmus+



FROM BURNOUT TO BALANCE

A Training Course for ESC Tutors



Toolkit for Youth Workers



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project explored **mental health** and **wellbeing** in youth work, recognising the **emotional and relational labour** of tutors, supervisors, mentors and youth workers supporting young people through **European Solidarity Corps (ESC)** and **Erasmus+** programmes, and overall in **youth work**.

it created a space for participants to **reflect on challenges**, **exchange experiences** and develop **practical approaches** that strengthen both **individual and collective wellbeing** and **care in this profession**.

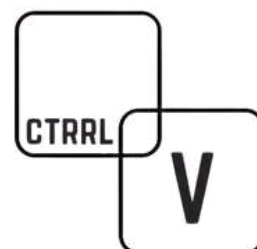
The training encouraged moving beyond purely **individual self-care** towards **group-based strategies** that can be integrated into **everyday youth work practice** and **organisational culture**. Participants actively contributed their own **ideas, activities** and **good practices**, with the programme built on **peer-to-peer learning** and **mutual support**.

It also facilitated **partnership building**, laying the groundwork for **future collaborations** among youth workers and organisations.





PROJECT PARTNERS





DISCLAIMER



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Project number:
2025-1-ES02-KA151-YOU-
000298606

Approved by:





ACTIVITIES BY SER JOVEN

1. MY ORGANISATION AND ME AS A YOUTH WORKER

About the activity

This introductory activity combined speed dating, creativity and group presentations to help participants get to know one another and their organisations.

Participants worked in pairs, changing partners after each round. During every conversation, they answered a different question related to their work and gradually completed a portrait:

- ***How and why did you start working in youth work?*** - draw the head and eyes.
- ***What do you like most about your job?*** - draw the ears and nose.
- ***What is a funny or memorable situation you have experienced in your work?*** - draw the mouth, ears and final details.

By the end of the activity, each participant had created a unique drawing representing themselves and also had the chance to present their organisation. The portraits were displayed on the wall and everyone introduced themselves, shared key aspects of their organisation and their role as a youth worker.



Objective of the activity

The activity aimed at ice-breaking, self-reflection and group cohesion, while giving participants the opportunity to learn about the diverse organisations and experiences present in the training.

2. POSITIONING EXERCISE: DISCUSSION ABOUT YOUTH WORK AND WELLBEING AND CARE

About the activity

The objective of the activity was to introduce the topic of **mental health, wellbeing and burnout** by exploring participants' opinions about youth work, care and working culture. The activity highlights common patterns related to **gender, workplace culture** and **social expectations** that shape how we perceive ourselves as youth workers.

Participants physically positioned themselves along a spectrum yes/no according to whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements.



After each statement, they could share their opinions. The statements included:

- *I think my youth work has the power to positively influence society.*
- *Being a youth worker is a strong part of my identity.*
- *Saying you are exhausted at work is a sign of weakness.*
- *Responding to work messages outside working hours is normal.*
- *Women are believed to have a greater gift for caregiving, which is valued in roles such as tutoring.*
- *Tutoring is a form of emotional labour.*
- *I regularly practice self-care in my work.*
- *Self-care is mainly an individual responsibility.*

The debrief focused on how **gender roles and neoliberal work culture** influence our professional identities and contribute to the risk of burnout.



Although research on European youth work sector is still limited, existing studies suggest that youth work is feminised and that the emotional demands associated with care work, as well as administrative demands can increase the risk of burnout over time. At the same time, there are positive aspects of youth work, such as passion, purpose, the importance of interpersonal

relations, resistance to dehumanisation of the workplace, which goes to show the importance of creating healthy organisational cultures through better cooperation, communication and mutual care.



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3. PSYCHODRAMA

About the activity

In small groups, participants reflected on a real or challenging situation from their **ESC tutoring/ youth work experience**, such as:

- **A situation they found difficult to manage**
- **A moment where they were unsure how to respond**
- **A case that still raises doubts or emotional discomfort**





Building on the previous session in which participants discussed differences in their organisations and countries, tasks that involve emotional labour, putting limits, expectation, the activity for the reflection on the importance of setting healthy boundaries.

Participants enacted a scenario where a volunteer approaches a tutor with a problem, and then experimented with different responses. This allowed them to make visible the emotional and practical challenges of youth work, activate participants' experiential memory and create a climate of trust, empathy and mutual support among youth workers, as well as discuss about what to do in situations that are challenging and that require much of the time and energy of the youth workers.





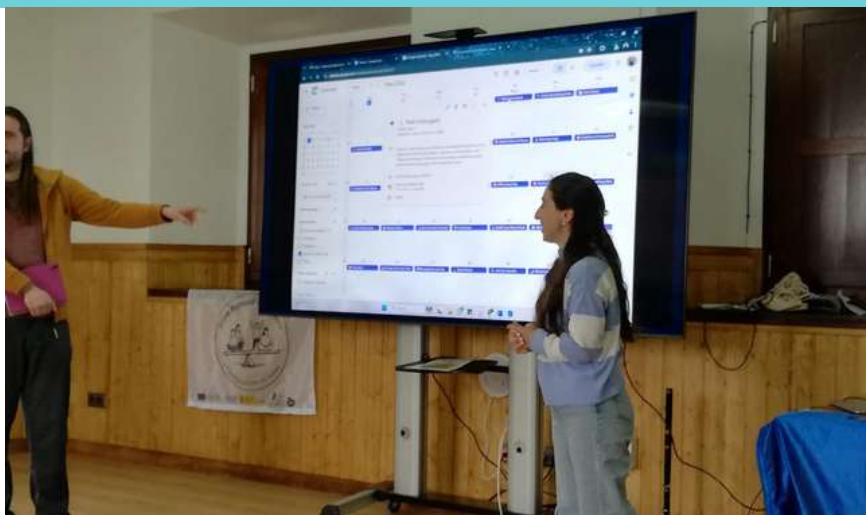
ACTIVITIES BY PARTICIPANTS

1. FROM BURNOUT TO BLOOM: SMALL DAILY RITUALS FOR YOUTH WORKERS

BY LIA, MILOS AND THEO

About the activity

These activities are simple, practical and designed to support individual and organisational well-being without creating extra work. Youth workers and volunteers can make a list of activities for each day and save it in their calendar.





The activities:

- ***Can be done individually or with colleagues***
- ***Can be adapted to your own needs, interests and schedule***
- ***Should focus on doing it consistently rather than perfect***

Some examples

CONNECT WITH NATURE

Take an unplugged walk, picnic in nature; Just go outside; Green your space; Buy yourself a flower

DIGITAL WELLBEING

Two-hour digital detox;

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Morning yoga or stretching; Try a new sport or physical activity. Take a different route.

MENTAL WELLBEING

Task reset; Learn something new; Memory Jar, Congratulate yourself.



CREATIVE AND PERSONAL GROWTH

*Cook something new; Bake and share;
Door hunting; Cultural recharge.*

COMFORT AND RELAXATION

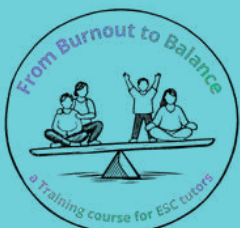
*Treat yourself; Office spa day; Refresh
your workspace; Room reset; Fresh
look.*

RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS

*Family day; Bake and share with
colleagues, friends or family.*

2. IMPORTANCE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION CULTURE: DOs AND DON'Ts

BY NUNA, MYLENE AND ZOE





About the activity

Conflicts are a natural part of life and possible in every environment. What is important is how we handle the conflict, as it has an impact on the well-being of the youth workers, especially in the long run. Therefore, it is important to cultivate a culture of conflict prevention resolution and continuously learn and train about this topic, in order to prevent future issues and burnout.



Conflict Prevention Dos and Don'ts

Conflict Prevention

Do's

- ★ Patience
- ★ Active listening: do not interrupt
- ★ Emotional Intelligence
- ★ Ask yourself: "Do I want to take the risk of letting the situation escalate?"
- ★ Regularly train yourself and read about the topic: one time is usually not enough

Email
Reminder

- 'GAME' FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION
theory! people like role!

Don't's

- ★ Don't expect to change the other person
- ★ Don't forget Culture
 - ★ Cultural Differences
 - ★ misunderstanding



Conflict Resolution Dos and Don'ts

Conflict Resolution

— GAME FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION
"safe word" and then say what
hurt~~ed~~ you / what you think hurt~~ed~~
the other person feelings about
what you did / said
when you're more calm, say the
"safe-word" again and keep on w/
the conversation before

Do's

- ★ Non-violent communication
- ★ Time
- ★ Patience
- ★ Active listening
- ★ Re-play the situation to detach
- ★ Emotional Intelligence

Don't's

- ★ don't avoid the conflict hoping it will go away on it's own
- ★ don't allow emotions to lead the conversation
- ★ don't impose your own personal values or beliefs

3. WALK AND TALK

BY MAID, ARBNOR, STEFAN AND IBRAHIM



About the activity

WALK AND TALK

WHY?

- FREE
- IT CAN BE APPLIED EVERYWHERE
- ANY TIME
- ITS HEALTHY
- ECO FRIENDLY

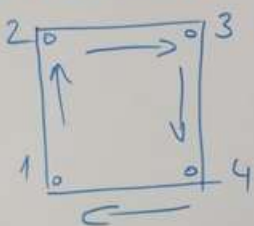
FIRST THING WE LEARN FROM PARENTS
LAST THING WE FORGET.

HOW TO DO IT?

EVERYONE KNOWS HOW TO WALK!
EVERYONE KNOWS HOW TO TALK!
SO? COMBINE = PROFIT

IT LOWERS STRESS, ITS A BIT HARD
TO ARGUE WHEN YOU WALK A LOT,
MORE NATURAL POSITION (SIDE BY
SIDE) INSPIRING BECAUSE YOU CAN
SEE STUFF AROUND, CONNECTS YOU TO
NATURE, CAN MAKE LESS CLIMATE CHANGE
(PEOPLE MORE LIKELY TO WALK WHEN USED
TO)

GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO MEET NEW PEOPLE
MAKES CONSUMING WATER MORE LIKELY
LOSE BELLY JELLY - STAY IN SHAPE
NO AGE BARRIER



1. WIND - SMELL
GRANDPARENTS
PETS
2. GRASS - TOUCH
FAMILY EVENT
FIRST MEMORY OF SPORT
3. ROCK - WALL - TOUCH
STORY ABOUT CARS,
ROCK, WINDOW, RIVER
CLIMBING
4. TREES - TOUCH
HOUSE TREES, FRUIT STEW
CLIMBING, SWING



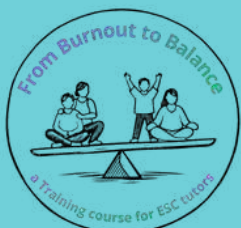


CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GOOD CARE PRACTICES FOR YOUTH WORKERS

EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING

- **MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID**
- **AUTOMATIC WRITING**
- **CHECK-IN EMOTIONALLY WITH COLLEAGUES**
- **LISTENING TO EACH OTHER, DEBATING, SHARING EXPERIENCES**
- **MAKING JOKES**
- **GIVING ADVICE**
- **DEALING WITH CONFLICTS**
- **PRIORITISE REALISTICALLY: LIMIT SENSE OF URGENCY**

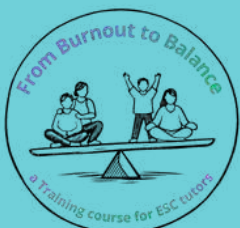


PHYSICAL HEALTH AND SELF-CARE

- *FREEZING SEA BATHS*
- *WALKING*
- *BIKING*
- *GETTING MY HANDS DIRTY (CERAMICS)*
- *TAKE CARE OF YOUR PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH (SPORTS, MEDITATION, YOGA, WALKS, THERAPISTS, TAKING A BREAK)*

HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND BOUNDARIES

- *LIMIT PHONE TIME*
- *HEALTHY BOUNDARIES*
- *KNOW WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT DO (SCOPE)*
- *PRIVATE LIFE (FRIENDS, FAMILY, HOBBIES, GARDENING)*
- *TWO PHONES, ONE FOR WORK AND OUTSIDE OF WORK JUST FOR EMERGENCY CALLS, ONE FOR PRIVATE LIFE*

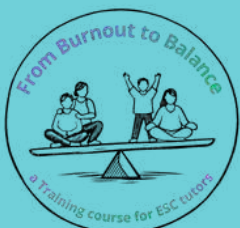


TEAMWORK AND ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

- **MONTHLY TEAM-BUILDING**
- **ANONYMOUS QUESTION BOX**
- **ORGANISE IN ORDER TO ANTICIPATE**
- **LEARN HOW TO DELEGATE**
- **GOOD STABLE ORGANISATION OF WORK OF ALL TEAM MEMBERS, GOOD RULES AND CLEAR TASKS**
- **GOOD MANAGER OR LEADER WITH GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS - AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM (LISTENING SKILLS)**
- **SUPERVISION, OR MEETING PEOPLE WHO HAVE SIMILAR WORK POSITIONS AND CHALLENGES AT WORK. WE ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS**

CREATIVITY, RECREATION AND JOY

- **MUSIC IN THE OFFICE**
- **MUSIC**
- **SINGING**

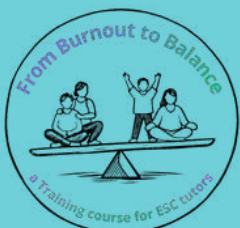


COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

- **ACTIVISM (MAKES ME FEEL A SENSE OF AGENCY IN A LARGER STRUCTURE + LIKE I HAVE A COMMUNITY)**
- **ACTIVISM (FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGE, TACKLE PATRIARCHY, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION HEALTH CRISIS). SENSE OF AGENCY AND BEING PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER**

SUPPORTIVE WORKING CONDITIONS

- **PROPER CONTRACT (TASKS DEFINED)**
- **FINANCIAL SUPPORT (GRANTS AND RESOURCES)**





SER JOVEN

About the organisation

Ser Joven is a non-profit entity formed by a multidisciplinary team of educators, monitors and animators that, from different professional and volunteer experiences come together with a common goal: quality non-formal education, on the national and transnational level. We hold an Erasmus+ accreditation and a quality label for the ESC program.

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