

Well-Youth!

*Methodology for designing
blended training activities for
unemployed young people*



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Youth workers who work with young people affected by the pandemic context face unique challenges and educational needs. Here are some potential areas of focus for their education and training:

1. Mental health support

Youth workers may need to develop skills in providing mental health support to young people who are experiencing anxiety, depression, or other mental health challenges related to the pandemic. This could include learning about different therapeutic approaches, understanding the signs and symptoms of mental health issues, and developing strategies for supporting young people's mental health.

2. Digital engagement

With many young people spending more time online due to the pandemic, youth workers may need to develop skills in digital engagement and online programming. This could include learning how to use video conferencing tools, developing online activities and resources, and understanding how to create a safe and inclusive online environment.

3. Crisis intervention

Youth workers may need to be prepared to respond to crisis situations that arise as a result of the pandemic, such as instances of domestic violence, child abuse, or mental health crises. This could involve developing skills in crisis intervention and conflict resolution, as well as knowledge of local resources and support services.

4. Trauma-informed practice

Many young people may have experienced trauma or adversity as a result of the pandemic, and youth workers may need to develop a trauma-informed approach to their work. This could include learning about the effects of trauma on young people's development and behavior, developing strategies for creating a safe and supportive environment, and understanding how to respond to challenging behavior.



5. Advocacy and policy

Youth workers may need to be informed about relevant policies and advocacy efforts related to the pandemic, such as policies around school reopening or funding for mental health support. This could involve developing skills in advocacy and community organizing, as well as understanding how to navigate local and national policy systems.

Overall, youth workers who work with young people affected by the pandemic context need to be flexible, adaptable, and responsive to the changing needs of young people and their communities. Continuing education and professional development can help youth workers stay up-to-date on the latest trends and best practices in their field, and provide the tools they need to support young people during these challenging times.

This methodology has been developed for youth workers who are interested in promoting the mental health and well-being of young people. In today's world, young people are facing numerous challenges that can impact their mental health. This methodology aims to equip youth workers with the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to effectively promote mental health and well-being among young people.



Aim

The aim of this methodology developed within the project **WELL_YOUTH! -Mental Wellbeing for Youth Unemployed Affected by the Pandemic Context of Coronavirus**, with the ref. no. **2022-1-RO01-KA220-YOU-000089447**, is to provide youth workers with a comprehensive understanding of the factors that impact mental health and to equip them with practical tools and strategies to promote mental health and well-being among young people.





Objectives

- To provide an overview of mental health and the different factors that impact mental health among young people.
- To identify and explore the different warning signs of mental health problems among young people.
- To equip youth workers with practical tools and strategies to promote mental health and well-being among young people.
- To provide concrete examples of good practices and activities that support the mental health of young people.
- To provide a blended learning approach that combines both online and offline resources to enhance learning outcomes.



Target-group

This methodology is designed for youth workers who work with young people aged between 12 and 35 years old. It is suitable for both experienced and new youth workers who are interested in promoting mental health and well-being among young people.



Well-Youth!

Mental Health



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INTRODUCTION

Mental health refers to a person's **emotional, psychological, and social well-being**. It encompasses our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and influences how we cope with stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is a vital component of overall health and contributes to our ability to lead fulfilling lives. Maintaining good mental health is crucial because it affects various aspects of our lives.

It is important to note at this point that psychological processes which accompany our mental health are put in place for the specific reason of making survival easier for the human being. Our emotions, our drives, our instincts, are put in place to **ensure our survival**. Even the ones which might seem unpleasant, uncomfortable, or difficult to endure, are usually there in order to enhance our survival, to warn, to teach, or to provide information.

Sometimes, these processes become **maladaptive**. This means that emotions might become too strong or weak, or even directed at the wrong target, and become overwhelming. Sometimes, our behaviour becomes erratic or self-harmful, our thoughts get confused and might overwhelm us, and our logic and perception of the natural world might become distorted. These changes can happen to all people, and we have accepted them as part of our daily life. However, when these changes are too big, or if they happen for extended periods of time, and they become a serious hindrance to our daily life, then there might be an indication that a **mental disorder** is there. Before arriving to this point, it is important that we take care of our mental health. As we are very cautious with our physical health, we should be equally cautious when we take care of our mental health. Maintaining a good mental health is important for many reasons.

Emotional well-being

Good mental health allows us to experience and manage a range of emotions in a healthy way. It promotes a sense of contentment, happiness, and inner peace.

Physical health

Mental health and physical health are interconnected. Poor mental health can contribute to physical problems like chronic pain, sleep disturbances, weakened immune system, and increased risk of developing certain illnesses. Psychosomatic issues might manifest when our mental health is not at its best.



☺ **Productivity and functioning**

When our mental health is optimal, we are better able to concentrate, think clearly, and perform effectively in our daily activities, whether at work, school, or home.

☺ **Relationships**

Strong mental health enables us to develop and maintain healthy relationships. It enhances our ability to communicate, empathize, and connect with others on a deeper level. When people maintain a good quality of mental health, they can build more and more meaningful connections with people in their daily lives. This network acts as a protective mechanism for future adversity, enhancing resilience and adaptability.

☺ **Coping with stress**

Life is full of challenges, and good mental health equips us with the resilience and coping mechanisms to handle stress, adversity, and change. It helps us bounce back from setbacks and adapt to new situations.



😊 Overall quality of life

Mental health significantly influences our overall well-being and quality of life. It affects our satisfaction with life, self-esteem, sense of purpose, and fulfillment.

😊 Prevention and early intervention

Prioritizing mental health can help prevent the onset of mental health conditions or detect them early. Timely intervention and treatment can lead to better outcomes and recovery.



It is important to note that mental health is a spectrum, and everyone's experiences and needs vary. Taking care of mental health involves self-care practices, seeking support from loved ones, and, if necessary, reaching out to mental health professionals for guidance and treatment.



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EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Recognizing early warning signs of decreasing mental health can help individuals take proactive steps to address their well-being. According to mental health professionals, before a mental health disorder can be identified and diagnosed, four themes need to be evaluated. These themes are the **4 d's: Deviance, Distress, Dysfunction, and Danger.**

Deviance

Refers to the amount that the behaviour of a person deviates, or, is different, from the behaviour of what is considered a norm in society. For example, if a person with a normal 9-5 job behaves as if the government or some alien gang is stalking them, there might be an indication of a mental disorder.

Distress

Refers to the range and intensity of negative feelings (such as intense, long-lasting sadness) that a person (or a person in their close circle) might feel because of their disorder.

Dysfunction

Refers to the degree that a mental health disorder interferes with the normal functioning of a person in the society. For example, if a person is unable to go to work, or enjoy time with a partner due to negative feelings, this is an indication that a mental disorder is present.

Danger

Refers to behaviour which might put at risk a person's (self or others') safety, health, or even life.

While the specific signs may vary depending on the person and the particular mental health condition, there are some common indicators to be aware of:

☹️ Changes in mood

Persistent feelings of sadness, irritability, anxiety, hopelessness, or mood swings that seem out of character may be an early sign of declining mental health. It is important to note here that mood swings are normal for all people, so it should be a matter of concern only if they are frequent.

☹️ Social withdrawal

Withdrawing from social activities, isolating oneself, or avoiding interactions with friends, family, or colleagues could indicate a decrease in mental well-being.





☹️ **Changes in sleep patterns**

Significant changes in sleep, such as insomnia or oversleeping, disruptions in sleep routines, or difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, can be a red flag for deteriorating mental health.

☹️ **Loss of interest or pleasure**

Losing interest in activities or hobbies that used to bring joy or a general decrease in motivation may indicate a decline in mental well-being.

☹️ **Changes in appetite or weight**

Noticeable changes in appetite, such as significant weight loss or gain, can be associated with mental health issues, particularly conditions like depression or eating disorders.

☹️ **Fatigue or low energy**

Persistent feelings of fatigue, lack of energy, or difficulty completing daily tasks or responsibilities can be an early warning sign of declining mental health.



☹️ **Difficulty concentrating or making decisions**

Problems with concentration, memory, decision-making, or a decline in productivity can be indicators of mental health concerns.

☹️ **Physical symptoms**

Unexplained physical complaints like headaches, stomachaches, frequent aches and pains, or worsening of pre-existing medical conditions may be linked to declining mental health.

☹️ **Increased irritability or agitation**

Feeling easily agitated, restless, or having a shorter temper than usual can be indicative of underlying mental health issues.

☹️ **Thoughts of self-harm or suicide**

Persistent thoughts of self-harm, suicide, or feelings of hopelessness require immediate attention and support. If you or someone you know is experiencing these thoughts, seek help from a mental health professional or a helpline immediately.



Remember that everyone's experiences are unique, and these signs may not apply to everyone or every situation. However, if you notice on yourself, or on one of your loved ones several of these signs lasting for an extended period and interfering with daily life, it's essential to reach out for professional help or support from a trusted person in your life.

Mental health professionals such as psychologists are trained to evaluate and provide appropriate guidance and treatment.



SPECIFIC MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

There are numerous mental health issues that can affect individuals, each with its specific characteristics, symptoms, and treatment approaches. It is difficult to identify a mental disorder, but here we can use the terminology used in the DSM-5, the manual for mental health practitioners:

“A mental disorder is a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual’s cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. Mental disorders are usually associated with significant distress in social, occupational, or other important activities. An expectable or culturally approved response to a common stressor or loss, such as the death of a loved one, is not a mental disorder. Socially deviant behavior (e.g., political, religious, or sexual) and conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society are not mental disorders unless the deviance or conflict results from a dysfunction in the individual, as described above.”

(American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 20).

Of course, the above definition creates some ambiguity, in terms such as “clinically significant disturbance”. For example, what is the degree of disturbance that can be considered significant? However, this definition puts in the foundations in order to start categorizing mental health disorders in order to consequently address them. Here are some common mental health issues:

☹️ **Depressive disorders**

Depressive disorders include major depression and dysthymia (or persistent depressive disorder). Depression is characterized mainly by protracted sadness, frequent self-blame, a sense of being worthless, and anhedonia (absence of pleasure). Other common symptoms include decreased or increased sleep, decreased or increased appetite, and either slowed or agitated motor symptoms. Slowed motor symptoms include slowed speech and slowed body movements. Agitated symptoms, which are less common, include repetitive, aimless movements such as hand gesturing and increased pacing. To arrive to a diagnosis of a depressive disorder,



the symptoms must be either very severe or very prolonged and not tied just to a negative life experience, though they may be triggered or worsened by such an experience.

☺ **Anxiety disorders**

Anxiety disorders encompass a range of conditions such as generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, and specific phobias. These disorders involve excessive and persistent worry, fear, and anxiety that can interfere with daily life. As mentioned earlier, stress and anxiety are functions which usually serve survival, but when they appear in excessive frequency and intensity, they are considered dysfunctional to the daily life of a person.

☺ **Bipolar disorder**

Bipolar disorder involves extreme mood swings, including episodes of mania (elevated mood, increased energy) and depression. People with bipolar disorder may experience periods of increased creativity, impulsive behaviour, and powerful emotions during their manic phase. Bipolar I disorder is the classic category, characterized by at least one manic episode and at least one depressive episode in a period of time. Bipolar II disorder is similar to bipolar I disorder except that its high phase is less extreme and is characterized as hypomania rather than mania.

☺ **Schizophrenia**

Schizophrenia is a chronic and severe mental disorder characterized by distorted thoughts, hallucinations, delusions, disorganized speech and behavior, and reduced emotional expression and motivation. Schizophrenia is a very serious, debilitating disorder that is found in roughly 0.7 percent of people at some time in their lives. The person who suffers from schizophrenia has a serious decline in their ability to work, to connect with other people, and to take care of themselves. The person must also show, for at least 1 month, two or more of the following five categories of symptoms: disorganized thought and speech, delusions, hallucinations, greatly disorganized or catatonic behavior, and negative symptoms. These symptoms are usually not present at all times; the person who suffers from schizophrenia typically goes through episodes of activity of the disorder, which last for weeks or months, and which are separated by periods of relative normal behaviour.





☹️ **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

PTSD can develop after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts, avoidance of triggers, emotional numbness, and hyperarousal.

☹️ **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**

OCD involves recurring intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors (compulsions) performed to alleviate anxiety. Common obsessions include fears of contamination, symmetry, or intrusive thoughts, while compulsions involve rituals or repetitive actions.

☹️ **Eating disorders**

Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder are characterized by problematic eating behaviors and distorted body image. They can have severe physical and psychological consequences.



☺ Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by difficulties with attention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. It often begins in childhood but can persist into adulthood.

☺ Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

BPD is a condition characterized by intense mood swings, unstable self-image, turbulent relationships, impulsive behaviors, and a fear of abandonment.

☺ Substance use disorders

Substance use disorders involve the excessive and problematic use of substances, such as alcohol, drugs, or medications, leading to impaired functioning and negative consequences on physical and mental health.



IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION

Preventing mental health issues is crucial for several reasons:

☺ **Personal well-being**

As mentioned earlier, mental health problems can significantly impact an individual's overall well-being and quality of life. Prevention efforts aim to promote positive mental health and reduce the risk of developing mental health conditions, allowing individuals to lead happier, more fulfilling lives.

☺ **Reduced suffering**

Mental health issues can cause significant distress and suffering for individuals experiencing them and their loved ones. Preventing these conditions reduces the burden of suffering and promotes emotional well-being.

☺ **Improved physical health**

Mental health and physical health are interconnected. Certain mental health conditions, when left untreated, can contribute to physical health problems. Preventing mental health issues can help maintain or improve overall physical well-being.



☺ **Enhanced productivity**

Mental health problems can significantly impact an individual's ability to function effectively in various domains, including work, education, and relationships. Prevention efforts help individuals maintain optimal mental health, promoting productivity, performance, and engagement.

☺ **Social and interpersonal benefits**

Mental health issues can strain relationships and social interactions. By preventing mental health conditions, individuals are more likely to develop and maintain healthy relationships, have stronger social support networks, and experience greater social connectedness.

☺ **Reduced healthcare costs**

Mental health issues have substantial economic implications due to healthcare utilization, productivity losses, and other associated costs. Preventing mental health problems can help reduce the burden on healthcare systems and minimize healthcare costs.



☺ Early intervention

Prevention efforts also involve early identification and intervention for individuals at risk of developing mental health conditions. Early intervention can lead to better treatment outcomes, improved prognosis, and reduced long-term impact of mental health issues.

☺ Breaking the stigma

Focusing on prevention helps break down the stigma surrounding mental health. By promoting awareness, education, and proactive steps towards maintaining mental well-being, we can create a culture that values mental health and encourages open dialogue.

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*Young People Affected
by Covid*



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INTRODUCTION

Mental health refers to a person's overall psychological well-being, including their emotional, social, and cognitive functioning. It encompasses aspects such as how a person thinks, feels, and behaves, as well as how they cope with life's challenges and stressors. Good mental health allows individuals to live fulfilling lives, maintain positive relationships, and contribute to society. Conversely, poor mental health can lead to a range of mental health disorders, such as anxiety, depression, and psychosis, as well as impairments in daily functioning and quality of life. It is important to prioritize and take care of one's mental health as it can significantly impact overall health and well-being.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on young people, especially in terms of their mental health and employment opportunities. The restrictions and lockdowns have led to extended periods of reduced income, job loss, or unemployment, which have negatively affected their financial and emotional well-being. Furthermore, young people may have experienced increased stress and reduced self-esteem due to the loss of the day-to-day structure of work, or the stigma associated with unemployment. In addition, the social security system itself can have a negative impact on mental health through the claims process, work capability testing, and job search conditions. These challenges can increase with duration, impacting not only mental health and life satisfaction but also physical health.

Therefore, initiatives such as the Well Youth project can help young people develop the necessary skills and competencies to effectively manage existential crisis situations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, promote well-being and help them adapt to new learning and working environments, and better prepare them for the labor market with balanced mental health



METHODOLOGY RATIONALE

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health, particularly in young people, was increasingly evident. Social distancing measures have meant a disruption to normal life, leaving individuals feeling isolated and lonely. The worry of contracting the virus and witnessing its impact on others can also be overwhelming for many. Youth workers found themselves in a position where they had to face the challenge of mental health effects caused by the whole pandemic context and its measures. Many are lacking training and skills in order to approach this parallel pandemic phenomenon which are mental health problems.

The pandemic context has had a significant negative impact on the well-being of young people in various ways. Here are some examples:

Social Isolation The pandemic has forced many young people to stay at home and avoid social interactions. This isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression.	Disrupted Education Many young people have had their education disrupted due to school closures and remote learning. This can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and uncertainty about the future.	Economic Impact The pandemic has led to widespread job loss and economic insecurity, which can impact young people who may be entering the workforce or relying on financial support from their families.	Increased Screen Time With more time spent at home, many young people have increased their screen time, which can have negative effects on mental health, including disrupted sleep patterns, increased anxiety, and reduced physical activity.	Fear and Uncertainty The pandemic has created a sense of fear and uncertainty about the future for many young people, including concerns about their health, the health of loved ones, and their ability to achieve their goals and dreams.
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Overall, the pandemic has created a challenging and stressful environment for young people, which can have negative impacts on their well-being.



THE PARALLEL PANDEMIC

The mental health impacts of this pandemic are far reaching and can cause serious mental health problems that may require long term support. The pandemic has had far-reaching consequences for people of all ages, but official European reports report focused their attention on the impact on those aged 15–29. Based on these reports and other research papers we looked into how the crisis has threatened the mental health and mental well-being of young people. In this introduction we will summarize the main findings of the impact of the pandemic on young peoples mental well-being and why youth work can provide an educational framework in which young people can improve their mental-well-being.

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic go beyond the health crisis, as various non-pharmaceutical interventions – such as social distancing and lockdowns – have disrupted the social lives and personal relationships of all people. This has led to a parallel outbreak of mental health issues, particularly among young people, with increased emotional and social damage. In fact, high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, insomnia, depression and stress are among the effects observed by researchers studying Italy, Greece, Germany and other European findings. Many factors contribute to this phenomenon: fear of being infected; financial insecurity; family tensions during quarantine; and a feeling of disempowerment. The long-term repercussions will likely be far greater than those due to the virus itself. What is the reality for young Europeans? How has their mental wellbeing fared during the pandemic?

Symptoms

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the social capital of young people, disrupting their social lives and prohibiting them from participating in community events. As a result of the restrictions on gatherings and the closure of educational institutions, young people have seen their opportunities to develop relationships, networks and skills greatly diminished.

Not only does this pose significant implications for the current generation's productivity and work–life balance; it could have lasting consequences for economic output in years to come. Additionally, with the shift to online learning, youngsters without access to resources such as computers or the internet may become more disadvantaged than those who do.



To make matters worse, many were met with boring routines, stress and compulsive use of smartphones while managing in such restrictive conditions. The psychological consequences this situation has had on them are unquantifiable. A general sense of insecurity, lower emotional well-being, depression, anxiety, and even suicidal thoughts have resulted from this Covid-19 crisis (Wise, 2020).

In addition, the young people expressed a lack of faith in the future and a lack of motivation to start working; they expressed concerns regarding the health of their relatives and reduced time spent on learning activities and socializing. Such negative consequences were especially noticeable among young people already experiencing mental health issues before the pandemic and among disadvantaged groups. Those already deemed most vulnerable became increasingly disconnected from education, youth services, and support, while many remained inside most of the time, often in overcrowded housing.

The effects were also evidenced by declining life satisfaction and related issues. It is likely that job losses and financial burdens, as well as decreased independence, have negatively impacted this trend; however, research findings suggest that lockdown measures were a direct contributor to these reductions. Despite a slight improvement in 2020 when restrictions were eased, mental well-being dropped during 2021's spring lockdown once again and reached an even worse level than the one recorded at the start of the pandemic.

A survey recently conducted by Sentio Solutions among young Greeks in October and November of 2020 revealed that more than 60% reported a decline in their mental health due to the pandemic. Stress, monotony, pessimism and lack of motivation were some of the most common negative emotions associated with these findings. Further, 68% said their social activities had reduced, 10% said nothing had changed, and 57% believed psychological support services were difficult to reach or access. These results are evidence of the significant impact the pandemic is having on their daily lives; from social interactions to career prospects - it seems youth are being deprived of fundamental aspects of their lives.

As educational organizations and institutions and employers closed, social events were cancelled, and in-person meetings limited, it is likely that feelings of social exclusion soared. This was especially true for those who lost work temporarily or permanently, and those needing to move away from their usual environment. These feelings of being left out and falling behind could be seen in the Living, Working and COVID-19 e-survey; respondents were asked to agree with the statement 'I feel excluded from society'. The highest proportion amongst this group was young people without jobs (50% in 2021, rising from 42% in 2020). It was also 29% among students (up from 20%) and 27% among employed young people (up 16%).



YOUTH WORK

The pandemic of 2020 created a challenging environment for youth work, by disrupting social interaction opportunities and hindering young people's participation. No longer able to rely on face-to-face activities to connect with their peers, 81% of youth workers found it difficult to conduct any type of activity. This finding was supported by a survey taken during 2021; for instance, data collected from RAY Network illustrated the abrupt effects of the pandemic on youth work (82 & 83).

Youth work has a large part to play in safeguarding the mental health of young people (77). It offers numerous prospects for socialisation, the sharing of experiences and building a sense of community; it can even help them manage their psychological issues (78). Creative and educational activities provide an opportunity for growing personally and professionally; skills such as working together with others, problem-solving, leadership capabilities and critical thinking are fundamental for strengthening self-esteem and preserving good mental health (79). Furthermore, due to its basis on interaction and trust between youth workers and youths, it gives a vital system of support that can be beneficial to psychological wellbeing (80).

Here are five explanations why youth organisations should put a high value on mental wellbeing:

1.

Young people tend to feel more comfortable with youth agencies than traditional healthcare services.

2.

Youth groups can target those teenagers who might have an elevated chance of facing mental health issues.

3.

Intervening early in the case of mental health struggles among young individuals yields better results in adulthood.

4.

Every interaction and exchange with youngsters provides the possibility to advocate for positive mental wellbeing.

5.

Numerous activities conducted by these agencies inherently aid in raising the level of mental wellbeing.



WARNING SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS FOR YOUTH

As parents, guardians, educators, and community members, it's crucial to be aware of the warning signs of mental health problems in young people. Some of the warning signs to look out for include:

☹ **Changes in Mood or Behavior**

A young person experiencing a mental health problem may exhibit changes in mood or behavior that are unusual for them. They may become more withdrawn, irritable, or aggressive. They may also experience sudden changes in their personality or appear to be more anxious or sad than usual.

☹ **Difficulty Coping**

Mental health problems can make it difficult for young people to cope with everyday stressors. They may become overwhelmed by schoolwork or social situations and may struggle to manage their emotions.

☹ **Changes in Sleep Patterns**

Changes in sleep patterns, including difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, may be a sign of a mental health problem. Young people may also sleep excessively or have difficulty waking up in the morning.

☹ **Changes in Eating Habits**

Changes in eating habits, including loss of appetite or overeating, may be a sign of a mental health problem. Young people may also become preoccupied with their weight or body shape.

☹ **Loss of Interest**

A young person experiencing a mental health problem may lose interest in activities that they once enjoyed. They may become less interested in socializing with friends or participating in extracurricular activities.



Self-Harm

Self-harm, including cutting or burning oneself, may be a sign of a mental health problem in young people. It's important to seek help if you notice any signs of self-harm.

Substance Use

Substance use, including alcohol and drug use, may be a sign of a mental health problem. Young people may turn to drugs or alcohol as a way of coping with their emotions or to self-medicate.

If you notice any of these warning signs in a young person, it's important to seek help from a mental health professional. Early intervention is crucial in preventing more serious mental health problems from developing.



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Mental health and wellness are important aspects of overall health, especially for young people. Adolescence is a time of significant changes and challenges, and it is essential for young people to develop healthy habits and coping strategies to maintain their mental and emotional well-being.

Here are some key points to consider when discussing mental health and wellness for young people:

☺ **Understanding mental health**

It is important to educate young people on what mental health is and why it is essential. Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being, and it affects how we think, feel, and act. Mental health issues can arise from a variety of factors, including genetics, environment, and life experiences.

☺ **Common mental health challenges**

Young people can experience a wide range of mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, and addiction. It is crucial to recognize the signs of mental health challenges and seek support when needed.

☺ **Self-care**

Young people need to prioritize self-care to maintain their mental and emotional well-being. This includes getting enough sleep, exercise, eating a healthy diet, and engaging in activities that bring joy and fulfillment.

☺ **Coping strategies**

Coping strategies are essential tools for managing stress and anxiety. Young people can benefit from learning healthy coping strategies, such as mindfulness, journaling, deep breathing exercises, and talking to a trusted friend or family member.



☺ Seeking support

It is crucial for young people to seek support when they are struggling with their mental health. This can include talking to a mental health professional, reaching out to a support group, or confiding in a trusted friend or family member.

☺ Breaking the stigma

There is still a stigma attached to mental health issues, which can prevent young people from seeking the help they need. It is important to break the stigma and encourage young people to speak openly about their mental health challenges.

☺ Promoting positive mental health

As a society, we can work together to promote positive mental health for young people. This includes creating supportive environments, reducing stressors, and encouraging healthy coping strategies.

In conclusion, mental health and wellness are crucial aspects of overall health for young people. By educating young people about mental health, providing resources and support, and promoting healthy habits and coping strategies, we can help young people maintain their mental and emotional well-being and live fulfilling lives.



SPECIFIC MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

There are many specific mental health problems that can affect young people. Here are some of the most common ones:

☺ **Anxiety Disorders**

Anxiety disorders are characterized by excessive and persistent worry, fear, or panic that interferes with daily activities. Common types of anxiety disorders include generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and social anxiety disorder.

☺ **Depression**

Depression is a mood disorder that causes persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyed. It can interfere with daily activities and may even lead to thoughts of suicide.

☺ **Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that can cause hyperactivity, impulsivity, and difficulty with attention and focus. It can interfere with academic, social, and emotional functioning.

☺ **Eating Disorders**

Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses that involve distorted eating habits and behaviors. Common types include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder.

☺ **Substance Use Disorders**

Substance use disorders involve the excessive and compulsive use of drugs or alcohol, despite negative consequences. It can lead to addiction, physical health problems, and mental health issues.

☺ **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

PTSD is a mental health condition that can develop after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. It can cause flashbacks, nightmares, avoidance, and hypervigilance.



☹️ **Bipolar Disorder**

Bipolar disorder is a mood disorder that involves cycles of mania and depression. It can cause changes in energy, activity, sleep, and behavior.

☹️ **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**

OCD is a mental health condition that causes unwanted and intrusive thoughts, as well as repetitive and compulsive behaviors that interfere with daily activities.

It is important to seek professional help if any of these mental health problems are suspected, as early intervention can lead to better outcomes.

Concrete examples of these mental health problems above:

<p style="text-align: center;">Anxiety</p> <p>Excessive worry, fear, and uneasiness about everyday situations, which can lead to physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, and rapid heartbeat. For example, a young person may experience anxiety before a test or exam, or when facing social situations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Depression</p> <p>Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and disinterest in activities that were once enjoyable. Depression can also cause physical symptoms such as fatigue and changes in appetite. For example, a young person may experience depression after the loss of a loved one or due to a difficult life event.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Bipolar disorder</p> <p>Extreme shifts in mood, energy, and activity levels, from high periods of elation (mania) to low periods of depression. For example, a young person may experience a manic episode where they have heightened energy and euphoria, followed by a depressive episode where they feel hopeless and withdrawn.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Eating disorders</p> <p>Abnormal eating habits and attitudes towards food and weight that can lead to severe physical and mental health problems. Examples include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder</p> <p>Difficulty with focus, impulsivity, and hyperactivity, which can affect academic and social functioning. For example, a young person with ADHD may have trouble paying attention in class and completing tasks, or may interrupt others in social situations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Substance use disorders</p> <p>Problematic use of drugs or alcohol that can lead to physical and mental health problems, as well as social and legal consequences. For example, a young person may engage in binge drinking or drug use to cope with stress or difficult emotions.</p>

It's important to note that these are just a few examples of mental health problems, and there are many other conditions that can impact young people's well-being. It's also important to remember that everyone's experiences with mental health are unique and may vary in severity and duration.



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IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION AND WELLNESS

Prevention and wellness are important for maintaining good mental health and overall well-being. They involve taking steps to promote positive mental health, prevent the onset or worsening of mental health problems, and reduce the impact of existing mental health conditions.

One of the key benefits of prevention and wellness is that they can help individuals build resilience and cope better with life's challenges. By focusing on self-care and developing healthy coping strategies, individuals can reduce their risk of developing mental health problems, or lessen the impact of existing conditions. Prevention and wellness can take many forms, such as:

☺ **Education and awareness-raising**

Providing information about mental health and well-being, and encouraging individuals to seek help when needed.

☺ **Early intervention**

Identifying and addressing mental health problems early, before they become more severe.

☺ **Stress management**

Developing strategies for managing stress, such as exercise, mindfulness, or relaxation techniques.

☺ **Healthy lifestyle**

Encouraging healthy habits, such as regular exercise, a balanced diet, and adequate sleep, can help promote good mental health.

☺ **Social support**

Building and maintaining supportive relationships with friends, family, or mental health professionals can help individuals cope with life's challenges.

By prioritizing prevention and wellness, individuals can take an active role in maintaining their mental health and well-being. This can lead to improved quality of life, increased productivity, and better overall health outcomes.



HOW CAN A TRAINER IN THE COURSE PROMOTE WELL-BEING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE?

A trainer in a course can promote well-being among young people in several ways:

1. Create a safe and supportive learning environment

The trainer can create a safe and supportive learning environment where young people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings. This can include setting ground rules for respectful communication and creating a non-judgmental atmosphere.

2. Encourage self-care practices

The trainer can encourage young people to prioritize self-care practices, such as getting enough sleep, eating healthy, exercising regularly, and taking breaks when needed. The trainer can also provide resources on self-care and stress management.

3. Foster positive relationships

The trainer can promote positive relationships among young people by encouraging teamwork and collaboration in group activities. They can also model positive communication and conflict resolution skills.

4. Provide access to resources

The trainer can provide information on local resources for mental health support, such as counseling services, crisis hotlines, and support groups. They can also create a referral system for students who may need additional support.



5. Incorporate mental health education

The trainer can incorporate mental health education into the course curriculum, such as teaching about common mental health problems, coping strategies, and resources for seeking help. This can help reduce stigma around mental health issues and increase awareness about the importance of seeking support.

The concrete example could be:

Mindfulness exercises

Trainers can lead young people through guided meditations or breathing exercises to help them learn how to stay present in the moment and manage their thoughts and emotions.

Physical activities

Encouraging young people to engage in physical activities, such as sports, dance, or yoga, can help them develop physical fitness, increase their energy levels, and improve their mood.

Creative arts

Engaging in creative activities, such as drawing, painting, or writing, can provide a healthy outlet for self-expression and help young people develop coping skills.

Group discussions

Trainers can facilitate group discussions on topics related to mental health and wellness, such as self-care, stress management, and coping strategies.

Goal-setting exercises

Helping young people set realistic and achievable goals, such as academic or personal goals, can help them build self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

Social activities

Encouraging young people to participate in social activities, such as volunteer work or community events, can help them build positive relationships and a sense of connection with others.

Mind-body exercises

Activities such as yoga, tai chi, or Pilates can help young people connect with their bodies and minds, reduce stress and anxiety, and improve overall well-being.



These are just a few examples of activities that trainers can use to promote well-being among young people. It's important to remember that every young person is unique and may respond differently to different activities, so it's important to offer a range of options and adapt the activities to meet their needs.

When building a course curriculum for young people affected by the pandemic, youth workers should keep in mind the following knowledge:

☺ **Understanding the impact of the pandemic**

Youth workers should have a good understanding of how the pandemic has affected young people in different ways. This includes understanding the economic, social, and psychological impact of the pandemic on young people.

☺ **Knowledge of mental health issues**

The pandemic has led to an increase in mental health issues among young people. Youth workers should have knowledge of common mental health issues and how to identify warning signs.

☺ **Trauma-informed practices**

The pandemic has been a traumatic experience for many young people. Youth workers should have knowledge of trauma-informed practices to help support young people in a sensitive and appropriate way.

☺ **Knowledge of digital tools**

The pandemic has led to an increased use of digital tools for education and communication. Youth workers should have knowledge of digital tools and how to use them effectively in the course curriculum.

☺ **Importance of self-care**

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of self-care for mental health and well-being. Youth workers should promote self-care practices and provide resources to support young people in their self-care routines.

☺ **Flexibility and adaptability**

The pandemic has created a constantly changing environment, and youth workers should be flexible and adaptable in their course curriculum to meet the changing needs of young people.

By incorporating these knowledge areas into their course curriculum, youth workers can help support the well-being and success of young people affected by the pandemic.



Well-Youth!

Blended Learning



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WHAT IS A BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH?

Blended learning combines the use of online learning platforms, digital resources, and virtual interactions with traditional classroom-based or face-to-face instruction. Blended learning is an effective approach for youth workers to engage with young people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It combines learning methods to provide a comprehensive and flexible learning experience. Flexibility and adaptability are key when implementing a blended learning approach, while at the same time it enables us to continuously assess the needs, changing circumstances and culturally relevant strategies during our work with young people.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH:

- ☺ Blended learning combines online and in-person learning activities to create a cohesive learning experience. It incorporates digital technologies and resources alongside traditional face-to-face instruction.
- ☺ It allows learners to have control over their learning experience, providing flexibility in terms of time, pace, and location. It can be adapted to meet individual learning styles, preferences, and needs.
- ☺ Offers a diverse range of learning activities to engage learners. It may include online modules, virtual discussions, interactive simulations, collaborative projects, in-person workshops, group activities, and one-on-one mentoring.
- ☺ Puts learners at the center of the learning process. It encourages active participation, self-directed learning, and collaboration, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning outcomes.
- ☺ It incorporates both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. Synchronous activities involve real-time interactions, such as virtual classes or webinars, while asynchronous activities allow learners to access and engage with learning materials at their own pace, such as online modules or discussion boards.
- ☺ Blended learning heavily relies on technology to deliver and enhance learning experiences. It leverages various digital tools, learning management systems (LMS), multimedia resources, and communication platforms to facilitate learning, collaboration, and assessment.



- ☺ It provides opportunities for ongoing monitoring and assessment of learners' progress. It allows for formative assessments, feedback mechanisms, and data analysis to track learning outcomes and make data-informed instructional decisions.
- ☺ Promotes active learning strategies that encourage learners to actively engage with the content, apply knowledge and skills, and collaborate with peers, fostering a deeper understanding and retention of information.
- ☺ It enables continuous professional development for Youth Workers. Blended learning requires youth workers to have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively design, facilitate, and assess learning in blended environments. It emphasizes ongoing professional development and training for youth workers to adapt to the evolving nature of blended learning.

When applied by youth workers working with young adults facing mental health-related problems, the characteristics of blended learning approach may include:

<p style="text-align: center;">Holistic Approach</p> <p>Addresses both the educational and mental health needs of young adults. It combines elements of mental health support, skill development, and personal growth within the learning process.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Individualized Support</p> <p>Recognizing that young adults facing mental health challenges may have varying needs and learning preferences, it provides opportunities for personalized guidance, mentoring, and tailored resources.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Safe & Supportive Environment</p> <p>Blended learning environments created by youth workers prioritize creating a safe and supportive space for young adults. It fosters a non-judgmental and empathetic atmosphere that encourages open communication, active listening, and respect for confidentiality.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Collaboration & Peer Support</p> <p>Creates opportunities for group activities, peer-to-peer mentoring, and virtual support communities where individuals can share experiences, provide mutual support, and learn from one another.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Flexibility & Self-Paced Learning</p> <p>Allows individuals to engage with learning materials and resources at their own pace, accommodating their unique circumstances and well-being needs.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Integration of Counseling & Coaching</p> <p>Involves virtual counseling sessions, goal-setting exercises, and ongoing check-ins to provide guidance, motivation, and accountability.</p>

Integration of Mental Health Resources

It can incorporate mental health resources and strategies into the learning experience. It may involve introducing mindfulness exercises, stress reduction techniques, self-care practices, and resilience-building activities as integral parts of the blended learning approach.

Integration of Technology for Accessibility

Involves using digital platforms, mobile applications, and online tools that are user-friendly and accessible to young adults with mental health-related challenges..

Continuous Evaluation & Progress Monitoring

Ensures that young adults are benefiting from the learning experience and mental health support. It may involve regular assessments, feedback loops, and adjustments to the learning plan based on individual needs and progress.

Collaboration with Mental Health Professionals

Involves collaboration with mental health professionals or partnerships with mental health organizations. This collaboration ensures that the learning approach aligns with best practices in mental health support and offers a comprehensive support system for young adults.

It's important for youth workers to adapt the characteristics of blended learning to the specific needs and circumstances of the young adults they work with, maintaining a person-centered and trauma-informed approach throughout the process.



SOME METHODS COMMONLY USED IN BLENDED LEARNING

☺ **Flipped Classroom**

In this method, students engage with instructional materials, such as pre-recorded lectures or online modules, before the class session. The in-person class time is then dedicated to discussions, activities, and collaborative work, allowing for deeper understanding and application of concepts.

☺ **Online Discussions and Forums**

Online discussion platforms or forums provide a space for students to engage in asynchronous discussions. They can ask questions, share ideas, and collaborate with peers, fostering critical thinking and social learning.

☺ **Interactive Online Modules**

Online modules or courses can include interactive elements such as multimedia, quizzes, and simulations. Students can progress through the modules at their own pace, accessing additional resources and receiving immediate feedback.

☺ **Collaborative Projects**

Students work together on projects or assignments that require collaboration and communication. They can use online collaboration tools, such as shared documents or video conferencing, to work on tasks collectively, even if they are not physically present in the same location.

☺ **Blended Assessments**

Assessments can be conducted both online and offline to measure student understanding and progress. This may include online quizzes, written assignments, group presentations, or in-person exams.

☺ **Mobile Learning**

Utilizing mobile devices and applications to deliver learning content, provide access to resources, and facilitate communication and collaboration. This allows learners to engage in learning activities anytime and anywhere.



☺ **Virtual Labs and Simulations**

Online simulations and virtual labs provide a safe and cost-effective way for students to engage in hands-on experiments and practice skills in subjects such as science, engineering, or healthcare.

☺ **Personalized Learning Paths**

Using adaptive learning technologies and platforms that tailor the learning experience to each student's needs and learning pace. This may involve providing additional resources or targeted interventions based on individual progress and performance.

☺ **Blended Learning Stations**

Creating physical learning stations within the classroom where students can engage in various activities, including online research, collaborative projects, hands-on experiments, or discussions.

☺ **Synchronous Online Sessions**

Conducting live online sessions, such as virtual lectures or webinars, where students can interact with the instructor and their peers in real-time, ask questions, and participate in discussions.

It's important to note that the specific methods used in blended learning can vary depending on the context, subject matter, and available resources. The goal is to create a balanced and effective learning experience that combines online and offline elements to enhance engagement, collaboration, and understanding.



TYPES OF RESOURCES FOR BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH PROPOSED FOR THE WELL-YOUTH PROJECT

🕒 Online Mental Health Resources

Curated Articles & Blogs

Youth workers curate online articles and blog posts that address mental health topics such as stress management, anxiety, depression, self-care, and building resilience.

Videos & Podcasts

Youth workers share or create video content and podcasts featuring mental health professionals, individuals sharing their experiences, or guided mindfulness exercises.

E-Learning Modules

Online modules or courses specifically designed for mental health education and self-help are made available to young adults. These modules provide interactive learning experiences and may include quizzes or assessments.

NOTE: Each country involved in the project will identify and use country-based and country specific online health resources suitable for the implementation of the project. At LoPe we meet persons that have different national, ethnic, religious, racial, cultural and educational backgrounds. We will use Norwegian language as a common denominator, but we will also use some English language resources.

🕒 Psychoeducational Materials

Fact Sheets & Handouts

Youth workers provide informative fact sheets or handouts that explain mental health conditions, symptoms, treatment options, and self-help strategies.

Workbooks & Worksheets

Young adults are given workbooks or printable worksheets that guide them through exercises related to mental health management, goal-setting, self-reflection, or coping strategies.

Interactive Online Tools

Online tools and interactive resources, such as mood trackers, stress management apps, or self-assessment questionnaires, can be recommended to young adults for self-reflection and self-monitoring.



☺ Personal Development Resources

Personal Growth Books

Youth workers suggest and provide reading recommendations of books focused on personal development, mindfulness, positive psychology, or self-improvement.

Guided Reflection Activities

Youth workers offer guided journaling prompts, reflection exercises, or worksheets that prompt young adults to explore their emotions, identify strengths, set goals, and practice self-care.

Inspirational Quotes & Affirmations

Youth workers share motivational quotes, affirmations, or visual reminders that inspire young adults and promote a positive mindset.

☺ In-person Activities and Materials

Workshop Materials

Youth workers develop or utilize workshop materials, including presentations, handouts, and interactive activities, for in-person group sessions or workshops focused on mental health and personal development.

Art Therapy Supplies

Art supplies such as coloring books, drawing materials, or craft materials may be provided to encourage creative expression and stress relief during in-person sessions.

Interactive Games & Activities

Youth workers employ interactive games, role-playing activities, or icebreaker exercises to promote social interaction, emotional expression, and skill-building during group sessions.

☺ Peer Support and Community Engagement

Online Discussion Forums

Youth workers create virtual platforms or online forums where young adults can connect, share experiences, ask questions, and offer support to their peers.

Peer Mentorship Resources

Youth workers facilitate peer mentorship programs or provide resources to guide young adults in becoming mentors to support each other through their mental health journeys.

Support Group Materials

Handouts, discussion prompts, or structured activities are prepared to guide support group sessions, both online and in-person.

The specific resources used may vary depending on the youth worker's expertise, available materials, and country-specific needs of the young adults. The goal is to provide comprehensive support, educational materials, and opportunities for self-reflection, skill-building, and peer engagement to foster mental health and personal growth.



STRUCTURING A LESSON PLAN

When using a blended learning approach with young adults facing mental health-related problems, youth workers can structure their lesson plans to create a comprehensive and engaging learning experience. Here is a suggested structure for a lesson plan:

☺ Introduction

- Start the lesson by establishing a safe and supportive learning environment.
- State the learning objectives and outcomes for the session.
- Conduct an icebreaker activity or mindfulness exercise to set a positive tone.

☺ Online Pre-learning Activities

- Provide access to online pre-learning activities such as reading articles, watching videos, or completing online modules related to the mental health topic.
- Assign reflective exercises or journaling prompts for young adults to engage with before the session.
- Encourage participants to submit any questions or thoughts they have in advance.

☺ In-person or Virtual Session

- Conduct an interactive in-person or virtual session focused on the mental health topic.
- Facilitate discussions to allow young adults to share their reflections, insights, and questions from the pre-learning activities.
- Deliver a presentation or interactive workshop that explores the topic further, incorporating multimedia resources, case studies, and real-life examples.
- Engage participants in experiential learning activities, role-plays, or group exercises to apply the concepts to their own lives and experiences.
- Facilitate open dialogue, active listening, and provide a safe space for participants to express their thoughts and feelings.



☺ Hands-on Activities and Skill Building

- Introduce hands-on activities or skill-building exercises that promote mental health and well-being.
- Provide step-by-step instructions or demonstrations for techniques such as mindfulness exercises, stress management strategies, self-care practices, or problem-solving skills.
- Allow participants to practice the skills individually or in small groups, and provide feedback and guidance as needed.

☺ Online Post-learning Activities

- Assign post-learning activities to reinforce and extend the learning experience.
- Provide resources for further exploration, such as additional readings, videos, or online tools related to the mental health topic.
- Assign reflection exercises or journaling prompts to encourage participants to integrate the new knowledge and skills into their daily lives.
- Encourage online discussion forums or virtual peer support groups where participants can continue the conversation and share their reflections.

☺ Assessment and Evaluation

- Incorporate formative assessment strategies to evaluate participants' understanding and application of the mental health concepts and skills.
- Use quizzes, polls, or self-assessment tools to measure knowledge gained and identify areas for further support.
- Collect feedback from participants about their learning experience, including the effectiveness of the blended learning approach, and make any necessary adjustments for future sessions.

☺ Follow-up and Support

- Provide follow-up resources and support, such as recommended readings, apps, or community resources for ongoing mental health management.
- Offer one-on-one support or virtual counseling sessions for participants who may need additional assistance.
- Encourage participants to set personal goals related to their mental health and well-being, and provide guidance on tracking progress and seeking support when needed.

Remember to adapt the structure and activities to the specific needs, preferences, and comfort levels of the young adults you are working with. Flexibility, empathy, and individualized support are crucial in promoting a positive and effective blended learning experience for young adults facing mental health-related problems.



TOOLKIT

🕒 Online Resources

Curated Articles & Blogs

Gather a collection of reliable online articles and blog posts related to mental health, coping strategies, self-care, and personal development.

Video & Podcast Recommendations

Compile a list of engaging and informative videos and podcasts featuring mental health professionals, personal stories, and discussions on various mental health topics.

E-Learning Modules

Identify online modules or courses that provide psychoeducation on mental health, stress management, resilience, and other relevant topics.

🕒 Reflective Activities

Journaling Prompts

Prepare a set of journaling prompts to encourage self-reflection, exploration of emotions, and personal growth.

Self-Assessment Tools

Include self-assessment questionnaires or quizzes to help young adults gain insights into their mental well-being and identify areas of focus.

Goal-Setting Worksheets

Provide worksheets or templates to guide young adults in setting meaningful goals related to their mental health and personal development.

🕒 Creative Expression Materials

Art Supplies

Include basic art supplies like coloring materials, sketchbooks, or craft materials to encourage creative expression and promote relaxation.

Music & Playlist Suggestions

Share recommendations for soothing music or curated playlists that promote relaxation, mindfulness, and emotional well-being.

Guided Imagery Scripts

Provide scripts or recorded audio files for guided imagery exercises that help young adults relax, visualize positive outcomes, or manage stress.



☺ Communication and Engagement Tools

Messaging Apps or Online Forums

Use secure messaging apps or online platforms to facilitate ongoing communication, answer questions, and provide support outside of one-to-one sessions.

Discussion Prompts

Prepare a set of discussion prompts to stimulate conversation and peer interaction during virtual or in-person group sessions.

Community Resources Directory

Compile a list of community resources, support groups, helplines, and mental health services available locally and online.

☺ Well-being and Self-Care Activities

Self-Care Toolkit

Create a toolkit that includes self-care resources, such as self-care plan templates, relaxation techniques, mindfulness exercises, and stress management strategies.

Well-being Worksheets

Design worksheets that focus on various dimensions of well-being, including physical health, emotional regulation, social connections, and spiritual well-being.

Breathing Exercises & Guided Meditations

Provide audio or video recordings of breathing exercises and guided meditations to support relaxation and mindfulness practice.

☺ Evaluation and Progress Tracking

Evaluation Surveys

Develop surveys or questionnaires to gather feedback from young adults about their learning experience, satisfaction with the program, and perceived impact on their mental health.

Progress Monitoring Tools

Create tools to help track participants' progress, such as goal checklists, mood trackers, or well-being journals.

Remember to adapt and personalize the toolkit based on the specific needs and preferences of the young adults you are working with. Regularly update and expand the toolkit to incorporate new resources and activities that align with the goals of the blended learning approach and the evolving needs of the participants.



SOME PRACTICAL EXERCISES YOUTH WORKERS CAN INCORPORATE INTO A BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH

☺ Self-Reflection and Goal Setting

Self-Assessment

Guide young workers through self-assessment exercises to help them gain insights into their strengths, areas for growth, and personal well-being.

Goal Setting

Assist young workers in setting realistic and achievable goals related to their mental health, personal development, and career aspirations. Encourage them to create action plans with specific steps to reach their goals.

☺ Stress Management and Coping Strategies

Stress Awareness

Help young workers identify sources of stress in their work and personal lives. Discuss common stressors and their impact on mental health.

Stress Reduction Techniques

Teach stress management techniques such as deep breathing exercises, mindfulness practices, time management strategies, and setting boundaries.

☺ Building Resilience and Positive Mindset

Resilience-Building Activities

Facilitate activities that promote resilience, such as storytelling, role-playing, and problem-solving exercises. Encourage young workers to reflect on their strengths and past successes in overcoming challenges.

Positive Self-Talk

Guide young workers in recognizing negative self-talk patterns and replacing them with positive affirmations and self-encouragement.



🕒 Emotional Intelligence and Communication Skills

Emotional Awareness

Help young workers develop emotional intelligence by identifying and understanding their own emotions and the emotions of others.

Active Listening

Conduct exercises that enhance active listening skills, such as paired discussions or role-plays. Encourage young workers to practice empathy and validate the feelings of others.

🕒 Time Management and Work-Life Balance

Time Audit

Guide young workers in conducting a time audit to assess how they currently spend their time and identify areas for improvement.

Prioritization Techniques

Teach strategies for setting priorities, creating to-do lists, and managing workload effectively. Discuss the importance of work-life balance and self-care.

🕒 Support Networks and Resources

Community Mapping

Assist young workers in identifying support networks and community resources available to them. Encourage them to build connections and seek help when needed.

Peer Support Groups

Facilitate virtual or in-person peer support groups where young workers can share experiences, provide support, and exchange coping strategies.

🕒 Career Development and Professional Growth

Skills Assessment

Help young workers assess their current skills, interests, and career goals. Discuss potential career paths and development opportunities.

Professional Development Planning

Guide young workers in creating professional development plans that align with their career aspirations. Provide resources for online courses, webinars, and workshops.



POSSIBLE TRAINING SESSIONS THAT WELL-YOUTH WORKERS CAN INCORPORATE INTO A BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH

☺ Mental Health Awareness

Introduction to Mental Health

Provide an overview of common mental health disorders, symptoms, and prevalence among young workers.

Reducing Stigma

Discuss the impact of stigma on mental health and strategies to reduce stigma in the workplace.

Recognizing Warning Signs

Train youth workers to identify warning signs of mental health issues in themselves and their peers.

☺ Building Resilience and Coping Skills

Developing Resilience

Teach strategies to enhance resilience, such as stress management, problem-solving, and seeking social support.

Emotional Regulation

Explore techniques to manage and regulate emotions effectively in the workplace.

Self-Care Practices

Educate young workers on the importance of self-care and provide practical self-care strategies they can incorporate into their daily routines.

☺ Communication and Support

Active Listening Skills

Train youth workers in active listening techniques to effectively support their peers and create a safe space for open communication.

Peer Support Training

Teach youth workers how to provide peer support, including active listening, empathy, and referral techniques.

Crisis Intervention

Provide training on recognizing and responding to mental health crises, including suicide prevention and appropriate referrals.



☺ Stress Management and Work-Life Balance

Stress Management Techniques

Introduce various stress management techniques, such as mindfulness, deep breathing, and time management strategies.

Work-Life Balance

Discuss the importance of work-life balance and help youth workers develop strategies to maintain a healthy balance.

☺ Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid Training

Facilitate a certified Mental Health First Aid course that equips youth workers with the skills to provide initial support to individuals experiencing mental health problems or crises.

Crisis De-escalation

Teach techniques to de-escalate crisis situations and provide support until professional help arrives.

☺ Creating a Supportive Work Environment:

Promoting Mental Well-being

Discuss strategies for creating a supportive and inclusive work environment that promotes positive mental health.

Peer Support Networks

Facilitate discussions on the importance of peer support networks and provide guidance on establishing and maintaining such networks.

☺ Self-Advocacy and Accessing Resources

Self-Advocacy Skills

Empower young workers to advocate for their mental health needs and navigate support systems effectively.

Resource Navigation

Provide information on available mental health resources, both within the organization and in the community, and guide young workers on how to access them.

Remember to incorporate a variety of learning methods, such as online modules, virtual discussions, case studies, role-plays, and interactive exercises, to engage participants in the blended learning approach. Encourage active participation, reflection, and ongoing support for young workers throughout the training sessions.



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