



# LET'S TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

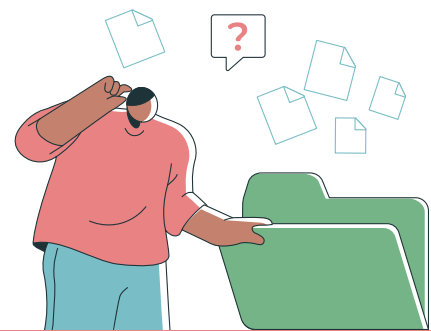
## UNDERSTANDING AND TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 3  | TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS                              |
| 5  | INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?                  |
| 10 | MODULE 1: TALKING OPENLY ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH          |
| 21 | MODULE 2: DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES       |
| 31 | MODULE 3: GETTING TO KNOW YOUR EMOTION                |
| 43 | MODULE 4: BUILDING RESILIENCE TO COPE WITH CHALLENGES |
| 53 | CONCLUSION  |
| 55 | EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING                            |
| 56 | BIBLIOGRAPHY  |



### WARNING

#### Handling emotional responses during the training

Mental health is a deeply personal and sensitive subject, and participants may have strong emotional reactions to the content. To ensure a safe and supportive environment for all:

- ⇒ **Start with compassion:** let the participants know that it's okay to have emotions and that they are in a safe, supportive environment
- ⇒ **Respect confidentiality:** everything shared during the training should be confidential
- ⇒ **Encourage mutual respect** between the participants
- ⇒ Remind participants it is okay to feel triggered by the training and **they should not feel pressured to continue**. If they need a break, they can go outside and come back when they are ready
- ⇒ **Be observant to body language and behaviour**, check with the participants regularly
- ⇒ **Respond to distress by remaining calm and supportive**, offer empathy and reassurance that feelings are valid, offering a break and encouraging peer support
- ⇒ Empower participants by emphasizing that **this is not mandatory to share personal experience** unless they want to
- ⇒ Offer the option for participants to **speak with you privately after the session** if they feel the need
- ⇒ Encourage participants to reflect on their own resilience, strengths and coping skills
- ⇒ Make it clear that the **well-being of participants is the priority**

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



### Pedagogical objectives of the training

- Understand mental health, recognizing key concepts attached to it, including well-being, psychological distress and mental disorders.
- Investigate and challenge common myths, stereotypes, and stigmas related to mental health.
- Apply effective coping strategies to manage stress, anxiety, and emotional difficulties in real-life situations.
- Develop and integrate self-care routines and resilience-building strategies into daily life.

### Pedagogical process

- The pedagogical manual is meant to provide the necessary information and knowledge to the trainers to enable the preparation of the training.
- The training outline provides the trainers with detailed step-by-step instructions to enable the implementation of the training.
- The materials that accompany the pedagogical manual (PowerPoint and annexes) are provided to the professionals to implement the training.

### Key messages for the training

- Mental health is a part of overall health
- Talking about mental health is essential
- Resilience can be built
- Well-being is a lifelong journey

### Training structure and duration

This training program is designed to engage young people to develop emotional well-being practices and fight against the stigmatization of mental health. It consists of 4 modules designed to enhance participants' understanding of mental health, break stigma, and promote the development of resilience and coping strategies. The total duration of the training is **14 hours** and it's structured to be conducted over **two full days**, with each day lasting **7 hours**.

Trainers are encouraged to customize both the content and duration of the training sessions **based on their audience, the available time, and specific training objectives**. They have flexibility to select and adjust sessions to meet the specific needs of participants.

The training encompasses **24 activities**, such as reflection exercises, role-playing, discussions, and more. In addition to these activities, facilitators may integrate discussions, case studies, and interactive exchanges to reinforce key concepts. The overall duration of the training will thus vary depending on the level of interaction and engagement during these flexible segments. Facilitators are advised to consider these factors when structuring sessions to ensure a dynamic and effective learning experience.

Each facilitator is encouraged to tailor the training by choosing the most relevant activities and organizing sessions in a manner that best suits their audience, whether delivered intensively in a single session or spread across multiple shorter sessions. The primary goal remains ensuring that participants gain a comprehensive understanding of mental health and its management.

## Constraints

- **Emotional responses:** participants might experience emotional reactions during training. Trainers must ensure a safe environment by encouraging openness and respecting confidentiality.
- **Interactive components:** some activities may require more time than expected, so flexibility is needed in managing the schedule.
- **Material availability:** ensure all necessary materials (e.g., handouts, slides, and resources) are prepared in advance.
- **Physical environment:** ensure the training space is conducive to group discussions and activities, especially for collaborative workshops or role-playing exercises.

## Required resources

- PowerPoint slides
- Handouts for activities (e.g., “mental health myths and facts” cards, pre-training quizzes, etc)
- Flipcharts, markers, and pens for group activities
- Printed case studies for group discussions
- Dices for role-playing activities
- A comfortable training room that accommodates all participants
- Space for group work and activities (breakout areas or tables for collaborative discussions)
- Laptop, projector and screen for presenting slides

## Evaluation methods

### ➤ 1. Pre-training test

Conduct an initial quiz to assess participants' existing knowledge of mental health and related topics. This will help guide the content focus during training.

### ➤ 2. Activity-based reflection

After completing various activities, engage participants in reflective discussions to evaluate the effectiveness of the training and reinforce learning.

### ➤ 3. Group discussions & feedback

- Facilitators should observe and assess participants' engagement and understanding during group discussions and activities.
- Encourage peer feedback where participants share insights or struggles during exercises.

### ➤ 4. Post-training evaluation

- At the end of the training, distribute a feedback form to gather participants' thoughts on the training content, structure.
- Include open-ended questions to identify areas of improvement and what they found most beneficial.



SLIDE 1

# INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?



## Objectives of the introduction

- ✓ Identify the key dimensions of mental health, including well-being, emotional health, and psychological distress.
- ✓ Identify and distinguish mental health resources and obstacles.

## Objectives of the training

- ✓ Understand mental health, recognizing key concepts attached to it, including well-being, psychological distress and mental disorders.
- ✓ Investigate and challenge common myths, stereotypes, and stigmas related to mental health.
- ✓ Apply effective coping strategies to manage stress, anxiety, and emotional difficulties in real-life situations.
- ✓ Develop and integrate self-care routines and resilience-building strategies into daily life.

SLIDE 2

## Training outline

- ✓ Introduction

- ✓ Module 1: Talking openly about mental health
- ✓ Module 2: Dealing with mental health challenges
- ✓ Module 3: Getting to know your emotions
- ✓ Module 4: Building Resilience to cope with challenges
- ✓ Conclusion

SLIDE 3



## Setting a safe space charter

Set a framework for respect between the participants:

- ✓ Getting rid of prejudices
- ✓ Open-mindedness
- ✓ Honesty in communication
- ✓ Active listening
- ✓ Respect everyone's sharing
- ✓ Zero tolerance of bullying or harassment

The framework can be set directly, or the participants can propose the rules themselves.

This is where trainers can add some information on solutions offered in case of strong emotional responses by the participants.

SLIDE 4



## Let's get to know each other

Before diving into the core of the training, it's important to take a moment for everyone to get to know each other. This helps create a comfortable and trusting environment, making it easier to exchange ideas throughout the session. Each person will have a few minutes to introduce themselves and answer a fun ice-breaking question. The goal is to break the ice and help everyone feel more at ease.



## SLIDE 5



Duration: 5-10 minutes

### Ice-breaker Activity “The name game”

Each person says their name along with an adjective that starts with the same letter as their name and describes them in some way (example “Joyful John”). This helps members remember names and describe who they are in the process.

After everyone gave their name and adjective, ask each of them to now say the name and adjective of the person next to them on the right or on the left.

## SLIDE 6



### Beginning test

Before starting the session, the **trainer must inform participants that they need to complete the pre-test evaluation.** This test will help assess their initial knowledge and expectations regarding the training. It should be completed before the training begins to ensure an effective learning experience. (Annex 1)

### Send the pre-test in advance

At least **one week before the training**, send an email to participants with:

- ✓ A **brief explanation** of the test’s purpose (to tailor the training to their needs).
- ✓ A **link to the online questionnaire** (or attach a document for those who prefer a paper version).
- ✓ A **deadline for completion** (ideally 2-3 days before the session).

### Monitor responses

A few days before the training, **review the responses** to identify knowledge gaps and adjust the training focus if needed.

### Check completion on the day of training

- ✓ Before starting the session, ask if all participants have completed the pre-test.
- ✓ If some haven’t, allow them 5 minutes to do so at the beginning of the session (if time permits).

## SLIDE 7

### What is mental health?

Before diving into more detailed subjects, you need to understand the different concepts around mental health.

## SLIDE 8

**There are several ways to talk about mental health and there are several key concepts that are sometimes difficult to differentiate.**

### Ask participants:

- ✓ Have you ever heard of these concepts?
- ✓ Do you know what they mean?
- ✓ How would you define them?
- ✓ What is the difference or similarities between them?

Allow them to share their thoughts.



## SLIDE 9



### Definition of mental health

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which an individual can realise their own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their community.

## SLIDE 10

### Mental health continuum

Everyone has mental health and we are all in this continuum. A few people are at both ends of the continuum, we are always moving on this continuum.

The objective is to be able to maintain a positive mental health at all times, but sometimes we are in mental distress. Experiencing several symptoms of mental health, weakening our state of well-being. And sometimes, we are affected by a mental health disorder which means that we need support and care. Hence, mental health is always on a continuum with several dimensions:

- ✓ **Positive mental health** (postulating personal fulfilment and well-being).
- ✓ **Psychological distress** (induced by stressful situations and existential difficulties). It may be transient – occasional feelings of anxiety or the "blues" – or **persistent**.
- ✓ **Mental health disorders** of varying duration and severity, disabling and requiring medical attention<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup>[https://www.mcommemutuelle.com/magazine/votre-bien-etre-passe-aussi-par-votre-sante-mentale/#:-:text=Le nouveau dispositif gouvernemental "Mon,et la mutuelle à 100%25.](https://www.mcommemutuelle.com/magazine/votre-bien-etre-passe-aussi-par-votre-sante-mentale/#:-:text=Le nouveau dispositif gouvernemental \)

## SLIDE 11

### Distinction between mental health and well-being

Both mental health and well-being are essential for a fulfilling life because they aid in coping with challenges, achieving goals, and enjoying life. Well-being is part of mental health as it includes factors as having good relationships, feeling satisfied with life, and having a sense of purpose.

The main difference between the two are that:

- ✓ **Mental health** refers to your psychological state – how you think, feel, and manage daily life. Good mental health has clear indicators, such as effectively coping with stress, maintaining healthy relationships, and functioning well in daily tasks. When these indicators aren't present, mental health issues may occur.
- ✓ **Well-being** is broader, covering mental health but also physical health, social connections, and overall life satisfaction. Well-being doesn't rely on specific indicators; it reflects personal feelings of happiness, comfort, and satisfaction.

## SLIDE 12

### Mental health vs mental well-being

In summary:

- ✓ **Mental health** = overall psychological health (can be good or poor).
- ✓ **Mental well-being** = personal feeling of inner peace and balance (even in the face of challenges).

Example:

**Sarah** has been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder (**mental health** issue). She sometimes experiences panic attacks and needs to manage her symptoms with therapy and medication.

However, thanks to a strong support system, meaningful work, regular exercise, and coping strategies she has learned, Sarah feels **generally calm, fulfilled, and optimistic about life**. She enjoys time with friends, feels connected to her values, and has tools to handle stress.

That means Sarah has **good mental well-being**, even though she has a **mental health condition**.

## SLIDE 13

### Mental health concept: Emotional health

**Emotional health** is about how well we understand, express, and manage our emotions. It's not about always feeling happy, but about recognizing what we feel – like sadness, joy, anger, or stress – and knowing how to respond in healthy ways.

When our emotional health is strong, we can:

- ✓ Cope with life's ups and downs
- ✓ Build positive relationships
- ✓ Make balanced decisions
- ✓ Take care of ourselves and others

Just like physical health, emotional health needs attention and care. Talking about our emotions, practicing self-reflection, and using coping strategies are all ways to support it.

## SLIDE 14

### Distress and Mental illness = Psychological disorders

Mental health is often associated with psychological disorders that affect well-being, but it is also the search for a balance between all dimensions of life in order to maintain this state of permanent well-being.

**Distress** is a state of emotional suffering. It's when someone feels overwhelmed, anxious, sad, or unable to cope. Distress refers to intense emotional discomfort that affects a person's ability to function normally.

It can include feelings such as fear, sadness, frustration, or being out of control.

Unlike mental illness, distress is usually temporary – but it can become serious if not addressed.

Distress is like an internal alarm going off – it signals that something is wrong, and we may need support or rest.

**Mental illness** is a medical condition that affects how a person thinks, feels, behaves, or interacts with others.

It's more than just feeling sad or stressed – it's a serious condition that may need support or treatment.

Mental illness is like a storm in the mind – it makes it hard to

think clearly, feel stable, or interact easily with others.

Like physical illnesses, it can improve with care, support, and sometimes treatment.

## SLIDE 15

### Mental distress vs Mental illness

Distinction between mental distress and mental illness:

- ✓ **Mental distress is a normal reaction** to difficult situations – like feeling anxious before an exam, sad after a loss, or stressed during a conflict. It can be intense but usually **goes away on its own** or with simple coping strategies.
- ✓ **Mental illness**, on the other hand, involves **more serious and long-lasting symptoms** that affect a person's daily life, relationships, and functioning. It often requires **professional support or treatment**, like therapy or medication.

Example:

Feeling nervous before a presentation = mental distress.

Feeling constant anxiety that makes it hard to leave the house = possible mental illness.

## SLIDE 16

### Influence of mental health

**Ask participants:**

- ✓ What makes you feel good and healthy?
- ✓ What makes you feel down sometimes?

Ask participants to write on pieces of paper or post-it notes all the factors that influence their mental health and stick them on a whiteboard



or wall. Once they have given all their ideas, ask them to regroup the factors in different categories.

### SLIDE 17

## The different factors that influence mental health

Three types of factors influence our mental health:

- ✓ **Individual** factors: specific to the individual (physical health, emotional intelligence, genetics).
- ✓ **Economic and social** factors: related to the **standard of living and social relationships** (education, income, employment and working conditions, family, friends, community).
- ✓ **Societal** factors: encompassing **living environments** (infrastructures, spaces, environments), **politics** (economy, health, rights), **culture** and **living conditions** (housing, services, security).

As these factors are unique to each individual and variable, mental health is fluctuating as well. Some days, we might feel great, and other days we might struggle more. This is normal, mental health can drift from one place to another.

Factors are either resources or obstacles.

### SLIDE 18

## The resources

On the one hand, there are resources that have positive influence on mental health as:

- ✓ **Internal resources** (emotional management, ability to ask for help, stress management, etc.)
- ✓ **External resources** (supportive family, stable employment, leisure activities, etc.)

### SLIDE 19

## The obstacles

On the other hand, there are obstacles that have a negative influence on mental health:

- ✓ **Individual obstacles** (devaluation, denial, withdrawal, etc.)
- ✓ **Collective obstacles** (exclusion, precariousness, etc.)

Some major events, happening throughout all life, will also have negative impact on the search for good mental health, such as illnesses, losing someone, dismissal, or sometimes even a positive event. These events can have an impact in both the short and long term. If a person faces more obstacles than have resources to help them cope with these events, it can be difficult to maintain good mental health. However, resilience may be strengthened over time, transforming these experiences into sources of strength. Positive events will also strengthen mental health over time.

Factors and events are unique to each individual and variable, which is why mental health is fluctuating as well.



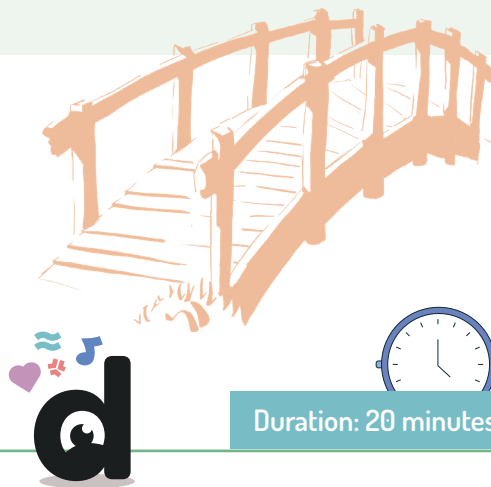
SLIDE 20



## MODULE 1: TALKING OPENLY ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

### OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- Identify the impact of mental health on daily life and understand the importance of taking care of it.
- Evaluate the influence of stigma.
- Develop strategies to reduce stigma in personal and community settings.



SLIDE 21

Duration: 20 minutes

### Activity “How am I feeling today?” (individual reflection exercise)

**Objective:** reflect on personal mental health and identify factors influencing current mood

**Required material:** Dixit card, draw cards, pictures or stickers

#### Step by step

Ask participants to either:

- Choose a colour that represents their mood today
- Choose the weather that represents their mood today

Ask them to reflect on why their mood is like this today. It is not necessary for them to share their reflections. Did they sleep well? Did they have good/bad news? What events could have led to the choice.

Allow participants who want to, to share their feelings with the group and discuss the different moods that are present around the room.

SLIDE 22

### Why is it important to talk about mental health?

Ask the participants why according to them it is important to talk about mental health. Sometimes we can be fine and sometimes we are not. Talking about it can help us to go through what is happening. It can also help **understand** our inner processes better when we express what's in our hearts and minds out loud.

SLIDE 23

### It is important to talk about mental health because...

Understanding and addressing mental health is essential. It builds resilience, helps break down the stigma around mental health issues, and allows for early intervention when needed.

This is also important when young people participate in international mobility, and they are removed from their usual daily life. New factors and major events are going to take place during international mobility, and they need to be considered. By openly addressing these issues, we create a supportive environment where learning, growth, and emotional well-being are valued.

SLIDE 24



### The power of self-reflection

To understand and improve our mental health, regular self-reflection is essential. It

helps us recognize our emotional state, identify patterns, and make positive changes.

Self-reflection contributes to developing a **self-concept**, which is a crucial part of our identity. It includes our thoughts about our traits, abilities, beliefs, values, roles, and relationships. This self-concept influences our mood, judgment, and behavior, shaping how we interact with the world.

By practicing self-reflection regularly, we gain several benefits:

- **Increased self-awareness:** understanding our thoughts and emotions better.
- **Greater sense of control:** feeling more empowered to manage our mental health.
- **Improved communication skills:** being able to express our emotions and needs more clearly.
- **Better decision-making:** making thoughtful, well-informed choices.
- **Greater accountability:** taking responsibility for our actions and growth.

In short, self-reflection helps us build a stronger, healthier relationship with ourselves, which is essential for good mental health.

To practice **self-reflection**, begin by asking yourself open-ended questions. Pay attention to the emotions that arise as you explore your answers and stay curious about why you feel this way.

Keeping a journal is a useful tool. It helps you track past events, your emotional reactions, and how you might handle similar situations differently in the future.

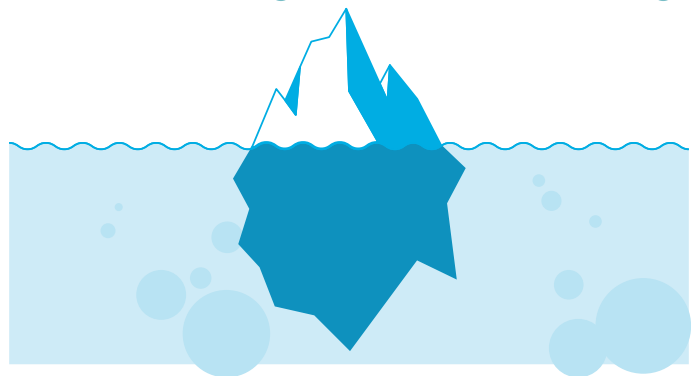
Give yourself enough time and space to process experiences and emotions. Be patient, gentle, and understanding towards yourself as you "digest" what has happened.

Creating a self-reflection board can also enhance your reflection practice. It helps you visualize and celebrate your authentic self by regularly adding new insights, qualities, and experiences.

Self-reflection helps us uncover what lies beneath the surface of our thoughts and emotions – much like an iceberg, where only a small part is visible above the water while the majority remains hidden below. Understanding our mental health requires us to look deeper, beyond what is immediately noticeable. This is where the **mental health iceberg** model becomes essential.

## SLIDE 25

### Mental health iceberg: above and below the iceberg



The iceberg metaphor represents how much of mental health struggles are hidden from sight.

Mental health iceberg is a metaphor used to represent the complexity of mental health issues, with different layers symbolising the visibility or invisibility of various symptoms, experiences, or challenges. It's an illustration that highlights how much of a person's mental health struggles may be hidden beneath the surface.

Only a small portion of mental health issues are visible to others, just like only 10% of an iceberg is above water.

Above the surface: there are mental health symptoms or behaviours that others can easily observe, that we can see when we meet the person.

Just below the surface: there are the symptoms that may not be as obvious to others but are still somewhat visible to those who are close to us. There is a need for attention.

Deep below the surface: are the most hidden aspects of mental health struggles. They are often internalised and may not be visible to others at all unless someone chooses to share them with us.

It's important to understand that the visible behaviors and emotions are just the tip of the iceberg; deeper, often hidden struggles require attention and support.



SLIDE 26-28

Duration: 30-40 minutes

### Activity "Dice go around" (feedback experience, group)

#### Objective:

- Analyze how different situations and habits affect emotional well-being.
- Reflect on personal experiences and identify factors that positively or negatively impact mental health.

**Required material:** two dices

#### Step by step

To reflect on all areas of life's mental health can impact and to open the conversation about it, let's start an activity. The activity can be done in small or big groups.

Each participant rolls the dice in turn. Depending on the number, the participant answers the corresponding question. There are two sets of questions, one easy and one with more in-depth questions. The trainer can choose to do just the easy set of questions, or they can let the participant choose which set they want to do. For the second set, the participants need to use two dice.

#### Easy set:

1. Think of a time you felt happy. What were the factors contributed to that moment?
2. What makes you angry?
3. Tell us a time you were proud of yourself and why?
4. What situation/habit will make you exhausted?
5. Who/What are you turning to if you are facing challenges?
6. What in your daily routine helps you feel good emotionally?

#### More in-depth set:

7. Share 2 decisions you made that made a big change in your life
8. What is a behaviour or habit that you know is not good for your mental health?
9. What are the most common negative thoughts you have, and how do you challenge them?
10. What values are most important to you, and how do they influence your mental health?
11. How do you respond when someone disagrees with you or criticizes you?
12. What situation or habit will make you feel exhausted?

Be sure each person has the floor when speaking and there is no interrupting or side conversation. You can do one, two or three tours depending on the number of participants.

#### Possibility to debrief with participants at the end of the activity:

- Was it easy to answer the different questions?
- How did you feel answering the questions?
- Did you learn anything about your own mental health habits through this activity?
- Did it help you understand mental health in your daily life?

## SLIDE 29

### How does mental health influence our daily life?

Now that we've explored various aspects of our experiences and emotions through self-reflection, it's important to understand **why** this matters. **Mental health isn't just about how we feel - it's about how we live.** It influences how we think, react, make decisions, build relationships, and even how we take care of ourselves. Let's dive into how mental health impacts our daily life in different areas.

## SLIDE 30

### Mental health affects many aspects of our life

Mental health is deeply connected to all areas of our lives. Whether we are aware of it or not, it shapes our thoughts, feelings, actions, and interactions with the world. According to the **MIND Transnational study on mental health needs**, mental health impacts various aspects of our daily life. Understanding these areas helps us identify how our mental health influences our overall well-being and day-to-day functioning.

#### The most affected areas

- 1. Learning and concentration (73%)**  
Mental health has the greatest impact on our ability to focus, absorb new information, and stay attentive. Difficulty concentrating or retaining information can affect work, studies, and daily tasks.
- 2. Relationships with family and friends (71%)**  
Mental health strongly influences how we interact, communicate, and connect with others. Challenges in these areas can strain personal and professional relationships, leading to isolation or conflict.

#### Highly impacted areas

- 3. Confidence and self-esteem (66%)**  
Poor mental health can lower our self-worth, make us doubt our abilities, and cause us to feel inadequate or unworthy.
- 4. Sleeping patterns (65%)**  
Mental health issues often disrupt sleep, causing insomnia, restlessness, or irregular sleep schedules. Poor sleep, in turn, can worsen mental health.
- 5. Decision-making abilities (64%)**  
Struggling with mental health can affect our ability to make clear, rational decisions, increasing indecisiveness or impulsivity.

#### Moderately impacted areas

- 6. Handling challenges and setbacks (52%)**  
Mental health influences how resilient we feel when facing difficulties. Reduced resilience can make setbacks feel overwhelming and harder to overcome.
- 7. Nutritional habits (44%)**  
Anxiety, stress, or depressive states can lead to overeating, undereating, or unhealthy food choices, impacting physical health.
- 8. Participation in activities and hobbies (41%)**  
Reduced motivation or lack of energy can limit engagement in enjoyable or meaningful activities.

#### Less affected but still relevant

- 9. Physical activities (37%)**  
While not the most impacted area, mental health can reduce motivation for exercise, which is essential for overall well-being.
- 10. Financial management (28%)**  
Managing finances requires focus, decision-making, and resilience. Poor mental health can impact these abilities, leading to stress and poor financial decisions.

## SLIDE 31

### Think about the triggers!

Ask the participant what kind of situations affect our mental health? What are the triggers?



## SLIDE 32

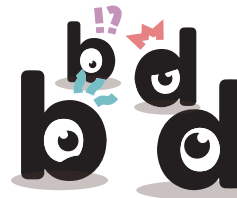
### The different triggers

MIND's transnational study explored factors most likely to contribute to poor mental health among respondents. While respondents acknowledged a range of situations that could potentially lead to mental health challenges, certain stressors emerged as particularly significant:

- **Loss or grief** (84%) evokes strong emotional responses and is often associated with profound psychological distress and adjustment difficulties.
- **Trauma or abuse** (82%) which is deeply distressing and can lead to lasting psychological consequences, such as post-traumatic stress disorder.
- **Relationships problems or family issues** (82%) as interpersonal conflicts and familial discord can disrupt emotional stability and contribute to feelings of anxiety, depression, and isolation.
- **Health issues** (78%) coincide with mental health challenges, with chronic illnesses and disabilities exacerbating psychological distress.
- Moderately triggering were pointed factors such as **discrimination or bias** (71%) and **housing problems** (63%).
- On the contrary, factors such as **screen time** (10%) and **global situations** (28%) were perceived as less triggering, indicating that respondents may prioritise personal over external stressors.

The analysis highlights the critical need for interventions addressing personal stressors, while also raising awareness about the role of external stressors in shaping mental health outcomes. Cultural, socioeconomic, and educational contexts influence perceptions of stressors, underscoring the importance of tailored interventions that address individual and contextual factors to promote well-being effectively.

So if mental health is so important, why are we not talking about it?



Duration: 40 minutes

## SLIDE 33

### Activity "The treasure hunt" (role-playing, group)

**Objective:** identify how biases, assumptions, and preconceptions influence decision-making and perceptions of mental health.

**Required material:** Annex 2 – The treasure hunt

#### Step by step

##### Step 1: Introduction and presentation of the game (5 min)

Brief: "An expedition must be put together to go search for a treasure on an island. 12 participants volunteer to be part of this expedition. However, there is room for only 6 people to go on this treasure hunt. Once the group is on the island, they will have to take care of themselves on their own. They will only have medical supplies, fresh water and food. You have to decide who can be part of the expedition to be sure that the mission is a success"  
(The trainer can adapt the number of characters according to the number of participants during the training).

Each participant will have a character card to represent during the activity. For example, participant 1 will have the "Tom" card, so he'll have to embody "Tom" during the game. The facilitator will hand out the first set of character details (one card per person).





### Step 2: First decision (15 min),

The group has now 15 minutes to decide amongst themselves who is to come and who is not coming on the expedition to find the treasure.

After the group has made its decision, the facilitator gives each person the second character description. This second card gives new information about the character.

### Step 3: Second decision (10 min)

The group has now 10 more minutes to decide if they want to keep the group as it is or if they want to change the crew part of the expedition.

### Step 4: Review (10 min)

- Now ask the group to discuss how they came to the final decision. Did they change their choices? Yes/No – Why?
- How does this scenario reflect real life situations? – Stigma/discrimination/stereotyping/making assumptions based upon what people look like, how they speak, where they come from and what they do.
- Is there anything else you can learn/take away from this activity?

### SLIDE 34

### What is stigma?

Now that you've made decisions about who should join the expedition, let's take a step back and reflect on the process. **The choices you made were based on the information you had and your own perceptions, biases, and assumptions.** This activity helps us see how quickly we form judgments about others, sometimes without even realizing it.

But what if those judgments were influenced by **stigma**?

What is **stigma** for you?

### SLIDE 35



### Stigma of mental illness

Our society often assigns various labels to mental illness, which perpetuate stigma. First, it's important to understand that it is more appropriate to use terms like "person with mental illness".

Remind the participant that everyone holds some stigmatizing or discriminatory thoughts or attitudes at times. The key is to recognize these thoughts and attitudes, reflect on their origins, and actively work to change the harmful behaviors they may lead to.

### SLIDE 36

### The different kind of stigma

This stigma can manifest in several ways:

- **Public stigma:** negative attitudes and beliefs from individuals or larger groups towards people with mental health conditions. This can lead to discrimination and social exclusion.
- **Self-stigma:** when individuals with mental health conditions internalize these negative beliefs, leading to feelings of shame and reduced self-esteem.
- **Structural stigma:** systemic policies and practices that limit opportunities for people with mental health conditions, such as inadequate funding for mental health services or discriminatory laws.

### SLIDE 37



### Young people experience stigma through different settings

**Labelling:** categorising someone by their mental health condition, which influences how others perceive and treat them. People may internalise those labels and start identifying with them. It is important to prioritise the individual over their mental health condition. For example, "a person with a mental illness" instead of "a mentally ill person".

**Negative attitude:** a negative feeling or opinion about someone, or a way of behaving that is caused consequently. For example, if someone holds a negative view of people with mental illness, they might avoid them or treat them unfairly.

**Stereotyping:** when set ideas, often incorrect, are applied to people. In the case of mental health problems, it could mean assuming that people with certain conditions are violent, which is a harmful and false generalisation.

**Prejudice:** an unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling, especially when formed without enough thought or knowledge. Having prejudices against someone can lead to excluding, avoiding or biased treatment of this person. For example, assuming that people with mental health issues are incapable of leaving independently.

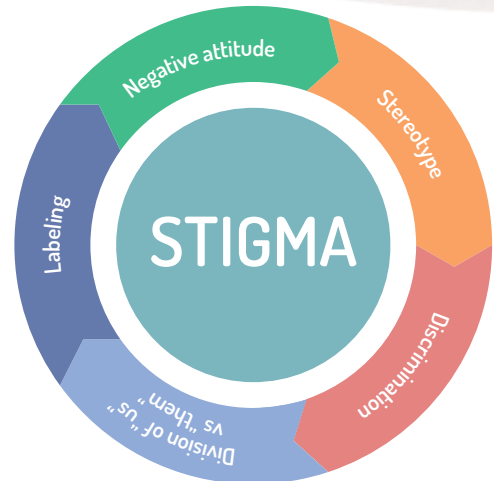
**Discrimination:** occurs when someone is treated unfairly because of their mental health condition. It can be direct (treating someone worse because of their condition) or indirect (having policies that unfairly disadvantage people with mental health issues).

**Division of “us” versus “them”:** people tend to divide others into groups, such as those with or without mental health conditions. This creates a sense of division, where those without mental health issues see themselves as “better” or more accepted, leading to exclusion of those with mental health concerns.



## The impact of stigma

Stigma has a powerful impact on individuals experiencing mental health challenges. When someone faces stigma, they may be treated unfairly or excluded from opportunities that others take for granted. In some cases, the pain of facing stigma and discrimination can feel even more overwhelming than the mental health condition itself.



Stigmatization can damage a person's **self-esteem**, leading to feelings of **shame or embarrassment**. This emotional burden may prevent individuals from seeking the help they need, cause them to withdraw from social interactions, or even turn to harmful coping mechanisms like substance abuse. The effects of stigma are real and can deeply affect a person's well-being and quality of life.

Examples of mental health stigma occur when people use harmful language or make unfair assumptions. Phrases like **"You're crazy," "She's schizophrenic," or "You can't be depressed; you're so happy"** are common expressions of stigma. It also appears when someone is ridiculed or labeled as weak for seeking help.

Stigma often stems from **false stereotypes and misconceptions**. People with mental health conditions are sometimes unfairly viewed as **"dangerous," "incompetent," or "a joke."** Such labels are not only inaccurate but can also cause harm, prevent people from seeking help, and contribute to feelings of isolation and shame. According to the **MIND Transnational study on mental health needs**, 41% of the respondents explain that the stigma around mental health can prevent them to seek help.



## SLIDE 39

Duration:  
30-40 minutes

### Activity “Mental health and facts” (collaborative workshops, group)

**Objective:** identify false from true information and break down the mental health myths existing.

**Required material:** Annex 3 - Mental health myths and facts, papers with mental facts and myths, envelopes. More myths and facts: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/medical-myths-mental-health-misconceptions>, <https://www.nami.org/stigma/six-myths-and-facts-about-mental-illness/>

#### Step by step

Place the mental health facts and mental health myths into envelopes. Remember to hide which are the myths and which are the facts. Pair the participants and give one envelope per pair.

Invite the participants to go over the pieces of paper together, working together to separate the myths from the reality and find which myths and facts goes together.

Give the group around 10-15 minutes for the activity, instructing them to rearrange the papers into two columns.

Using the table provided, discuss the answers as a group:

- Did you learn new facts about mental health?
- How can you tell a myth from a fact?
- Why does this difference matter?

How do you believe mental illness myths impact anyone who has been diagnosed with a mental illness?

## SLIDE 40

### Why do myth exist and persist?

We saw in the activity that myths about mental health exist and it's important to understand why.

**Historically:** mental illnesses were often misunderstood and associated with moral failings or supernatural forces. These early misconceptions have left a legacy of stigma that continues to influence modern perceptions of mental health.

**Cultural beliefs:** in many cultures, mental health issues are surrounded by superstitions and are often seen as a source of shame. These cultural beliefs discourage open discussion and perpetuate myths about mental illnesses. For example, in countries like China, Japan, and South Korea, acknowledging mental health struggles can be seen as a sign of dishonor or weakness, not just for the individual but for their entire family. As a result, many people avoid seeking professional help, fearing judgment or social exclusion.

**Media:** the media also depicts individuals with mental illnesses as violent or unpredictable, reinforcing negative stereotypes. These portrayals shape public perception and contribute to the persistence of myths.

**Lack of knowledge:** a general lack of understanding about mental health leads to the spread of misinformation. Without proper education, people may rely on myths and misconceptions to fill the knowledge gap.

## SLIDE 41

### How can we differentiate myths from facts about mental health?

There are myths and facts about mental health that are important to distinguish, but how?

To distinguish myths from facts, it is important to rely on credible sources and scientific evidence. Research and data from reputable organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) are reliable references.

Critical thinking also plays a role-questioning information, assessing the credibility of the source, and understanding the context help in identifying misconceptions.

#### SLIDE 42

### Why it's important to consult experts and listen to personal stories?

Consulting **mental health professionals or experts** ensures that the information is accurate and evidence based. Myths often spread due to lack of professional insight.

Listening to **personal stories** from individuals with lived experiences provides a real-world perspective. Such stories can humanize mental health issues and break down stigmas through relatable narratives.

#### SLIDE 43

### What educational resources can help debunk mental health myths?

**Books, articles, videos, and reputable websites** provide educational resources that explain mental health conditions accurately. Reviewing these materials helps clarify misconceptions and provides a broader understanding of mental health topics.

It's essential to choose resources from well-established health organizations, academic institutions, or advocacy groups.

#### SLIDE 44

### How do myths impact mental health?

**Self-stigma:** internalizing myths can lead to self-stigma, where individuals feel ashamed or guilty about their condition.

**Barriers to help:** myths can create barriers to seeking help, as individuals might fear judgment or believe that treatment won't help.

**Social isolation:** myths can lead to social isolation, as individuals might withdraw from social interactions to avoid stigma.

**Mental health outcomes:** myths can negatively impact mental health outcomes by discouraging individuals from following through with treatment or support.

#### SLIDE 45

### Stigma and international mobility

Myths about mental health create stigma, and this stigma can be intensified during international mobility, where cultural differences, isolation, and lack of understanding can further reinforce negative perceptions.

When young people move to a new country, they face various intercultural challenges that can **exacerbate mental health stigma**:

- **Cultural differences:** different cultures have varying attitudes towards mental health. In some cultures, mental health issues might be seen as a sign of weakness or something to be hidden, which can increase stigma for those seeking help abroad.
- **Language barriers:** difficulty in communicating can lead to misunderstandings and isolation, making it harder for individuals to express their mental health needs and seek support.
- **Social integration:** adjusting to a new social environment can be stressful. If individuals feel excluded or misunderstood, it can worsen feelings of stigma and hinder their ability to seek help.
- **Lack of familiar support systems:** being away from family and friends can leave individuals without their usual support networks, making it harder to cope with mental health challenges and increasing the impact of stigma.







Duration:  
20 minutes

#### SLIDE 46

### Activity “Group discussion on stigmatization” (structures debate, group)

**Objective:** propose effective techniques for discussing mental health in a way that reduces stigma and promotes understanding.

**Required material:** Annex 4 - Scenarios “Group discussion on stigmatisation”

#### Step by step

##### Discussion:

- Explain to participants that they will be working with fictional scenarios designed to help them understand the impact of stigma and how to address it.

##### For each situation, ask:

- Would they react to the stigmatization? What was the reaction?
- If they don't react, which solutions could they bring to fight against stigmatization?
- What could they do to include people around them that could be stigmatized because of their mental health?

Share some answers they might not have thought of.

#### SLIDE 47

### How to reduce stigma?

Stigma is one of the major barriers to addressing mental health openly. By recognizing stigma, we can start addressing it and create a supportive environment.

Reducing stigma around mental health is essential because it encourages individuals to seek help without fear of judgment, promotes open dialogue, and improves access to support services. It fosters a culture of empathy, enhances emotional well-being, and helps individuals build resilience. Reducing stigma also reduces social isolation, creates more inclusive environments, and breaks harmful stereotypes, leading to better mental health outcomes for all.

#### SLIDE 48

### The various ways to do it


The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) also offers some suggestions about what we can do as individuals to help reduce the stigma of mental illness:

**+ Speak positively:** mental health is often discussed in a negative way, which contributes to stigmatisation. It's important to talk about it with a positive vision, focusing more on people's abilities and less on the limitations their mental condition may cause. Do not use words like “crazy”, “broken”, or “weak”, instead opt for non-judgemental and inclusive language.

**J Speak naturally:** keep it casual, talking about mental health doesn't always need to be a serious or formal conversation. Bringing it up naturally in everyday discussions makes the topic less intimidating.


**! Educate yourself and others:** by educating yourself about mental health, you become equipped with accurate information that can help dispel myths and challenge stereotypes. It's important to actively share this knowledge with others, whether in personal conversations or through public platforms, to raise awareness and create a more informed community.


**! Be conscious of language:** remind people that words matter.

 **Encourage equality between physical and mental illness:** draw comparisons to how they would treat someone with cancer or diabetes.

 **Show compassion** for those with mental illness.

 **Be honest about treatment:** normalize mental health treatment, just like other health care treatment.

 **Choose empowerment over shame:** "I fight stigma by choosing to live an empowered life. To me, that means owning my life and my story and refusing to allow others to dictate how I view myself or how I feel about myself." – Val Fletcher.

 It is also very important **not to avoid getting treatment:** nobody should let fear of being labelled or discriminated against stop from seeking help and treatment.



### Reflecting on mental health awareness and stigma

Throughout this module, we explored the importance of talking openly about mental health, recognizing its impact on daily life, and understanding how stigma can shape perceptions and experiences. We learned that mental health affects various aspects of our lives, including **learning, relationships, decision-making, and overall well-being**. Acknowledging this influence is essential to create supportive environments where mental health can be discussed without fear or judgment.

We also examined the concept of **stigma**, breaking down its different forms: **public stigma, self-stigma, and structural stigma**. Understanding these distinctions allows us to identify harmful attitudes and practices and actively work to reduce their impact. By addressing stigma, we foster inclusivity, empathy, and a healthier approach to mental health for everyone.

Additionally, we discussed how **self-reflection** is a key tool for improving mental health awareness. Reflecting on our thoughts, emotions, and experiences helps us understand ourselves better and strengthens our ability to address challenges effectively.

### SLIDE 50

### Next step : dealing with mental health challenges

Now that we have a deeper understanding of the importance of discussing mental health and breaking down stigma, we will focus on how to **recognize, address, and manage mental health challenges**. In the next module, we will explore various coping mechanisms, identify potential stressors, and develop strategies for building resilience. Developing these skills is essential for maintaining mental well-being and facing difficulties with confidence and strength.



SLIDE 51

## MODULE 2: DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

### OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- Identify the different types of mental health disorders and the symptoms associated with each.
- Recognize available support resources and assess their relevance to mental health recovery.

We don't talk much about mental health, but mental health issues exist and sometimes they become mental health disorders.



SLIDE 52



Duration:  
10 minutes

### Energizer "Which famous people live with a mental illness?"

**Objective:** understand that mental health conditions do not prevent individuals from achieving success and making meaningful contributions.

**Required material:** Annex 5 - Which famous people live with a mental illness

#### Step by step

Give participants some information/clues about a celebrity without giving the name of the celebrity. Participants have to find the celebrity according to the clues given.

Example:

- He's a former prime minister
  - He's English
  - The person called his depression "his black dog".
- = Answer "Winston Churchill"

It's a game of speed. The aim is to introduce the subject of the module.



SLIDE 53

### Everyone can face mental health challenges

This energizer has shown us that mental health conditions do not stop anyone from achieving greatness or contributing meaningfully to society. Just like the famous individuals we've discussed, anyone can experience mental health challenges. It's important to recognize that mental health issues come in many forms, but they do not define a person's potential. In the next part of our module, we will explore not only the various mental health conditions but also the challenges that people face in managing them. Let's break the stigma and approach mental health with understanding, empathy, and openness.

SLIDE 54

### The various challenges that exist

Everyday life presents numerous challenges that, if not properly managed, can weaken mental health over time. When various stressors accumulate, they can contribute to anxiety, depression, or other mental health conditions.

### 1. Work or school-related stress

Challenges such as **heavy workloads, tight deadlines, lack of control, poor work-life or study-life balance, and bullying or harassment** can cause significant emotional strain. Chronic stress from work or school can lead to burnout, anxiety or depression.

- ✦ **Over-reacting in different situations:** emotional hypersensitivity caused by accumulated stress or feeling misunderstood by colleagues, supervisors, teachers, or peers. This heightened emotional state can strain social interactions and increase stress.
- ✦ **Negative stress:** persistent, uncontrollable stress from assignments, exams, projects, workplace expectations, or interpersonal conflicts can cause anxiety, frustration, and harmful emotions affecting both mental and physical health.
- ✦ **Mental and physical fatigue:** managing excessive responsibilities, whether professional or academic, can drain energy, reduce focus, and worsen stress.

### 2. Financial pressures

Economic difficulties, such as **debt, unemployment, low income, or a high cost of living**, can trigger or worsen mental health issues. Financial stress is closely linked to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.

- ✦ **Feelings of incompetence:** financial struggles can make individuals feel inadequate or incapable, reducing confidence and motivation.
- ✦ **Loss of self-confidence:** repeated financial failures or setbacks can erode self-esteem, leading to social withdrawal and avoidance of growth opportunities.

### 3. Relationship issues

Problems in personal relationships, such as **family conflict, breakups, divorce, social isolation, or loneliness**, can significantly impact mental health. Persistent loneliness or unresolved conflict can contribute to depression, anxiety, PTSD, or low self-esteem.

- ✦ **Isolation or withdrawal:** avoiding social interactions to escape discomfort can lead to loneliness and worsen mental health.
- ✦ **Decreased concentration and motivation:** emotional fatigue resulting from ongoing conflicts or relationship issues can hinder productivity and personal or professional goal achievement.

### 4. Physical health problems

Mental health is closely linked to physical health. Conditions like **chronic illness, pain, poor nutrition, or lack of exercise** can contribute to **depressive symptoms, anxiety, fatigue, and cognitive difficulties**.

- ✦ **Appetite problems:** stress or discomfort may cause under-eating, overeating, or emotional eating, which can develop into eating disorders.
- ✦ **Sleep disorders:** anxiety and difficulty relaxing can lead to insomnia or disrupted sleep, negatively affecting mood, concentration, and overall mental health.
- ✦ **Mental and physical fatigue:** ongoing fatigue can reduce focus, increase irritability, and contribute to a cycle of exhaustion and stress.



SLIDE 55

### The challenges in international mobility

In addition to the day-to-day challenges, when people go on an international mobility, there are other challenges that can arise and have an impact on mental health.

**Language barriers / linguistic assimilation:** difficulty communicating due to inadequate language skills can slow integration, cause mental fatigue, and make everyday interactions stressful and exhausting.

**Integration into a new environment:** adapting to new norms, customs, and behaviors can be overwhelming. Establishing relationships and navigating practical issues like transportation can add to stress and complicate integration.

**Acceptance and understanding of cultural differences and values:** accepting and respecting different cultural norms without judgment is essential. It requires observation, active listening, and dialogue to overcome stereotypes and prejudices.

**Homesickness:** feeling disconnected from familiar people, places, and routines can cause loneliness and nostalgia. This feeling is often intensified by cultural shock and the absence of loved ones, leading to disappointment and withdrawal.

**Self-discovery:** encountering new environments often leads to introspection. Successes and failures can bring self-awareness but may also trigger self-doubt and questioning of one's life goals.

**Carrying out activities:** adjusting to a different work or study environment with unfamiliar responsibilities can cause stress and anxiety. Language barriers and perceived inadequacy can amplify feelings of failure or frustration.



Duration:  
30-40 minutes

SLIDE 56

### Activity "Mental load in international mobility" (learning by experimenting, group)

**Objective:** identify the impact of accumulating challenges on mental well-being during international mobility.

**Required material:** Annex 6 – List of challenges that can arise during international mobility, a backpack or a large bag, small objects,

#### Step by step

Ask a participant to volunteer to carry the empty bag.

Ask the other participants to name challenges that can arise during international mobility.

If they don't have any idea, give them the handout that lists different challenges.

Every time a participant gives an answer that is on the list, ask them to choose an object and put it in the bag.

Gradually, the backpack becomes heavier.

After everyone participated and suggested several challenges, ask the participant how they feel carrying the load.

Relate it to how accumulated stress impacts mental well-being over time.

Ask the participants these questions:

- How does the stress accumulate?
- What warning signs indicate that the backpack is too heavy?





## SLIDE 57

### Recognizing the signs: symptoms of fragile mental health

Symptoms of fragile mental health can manifest in various ways and often include emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physical signs.

#### Emotional symptoms

- Persistent sadness or low mood.
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt.
- Irritability or mood swings.
- Anxiety, excessive worry, or panic attacks.

#### Cognitive symptoms

- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
- Memory problems or forgetfulness.
- Negative or critical thoughts about oneself.
- Obsessive thoughts or ruminations.

#### Behavioral symptoms

- Withdrawal from social interactions or activities.
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits (e.g., insomnia, oversleeping, binge eating, loss of appetite).
- Increased use of substances like alcohol or drugs.
- Impulsivity or risky behaviors.

#### Physical symptoms

- Fatigue or lack of energy.
- Headaches, muscle tension, or unexplained aches and pains.
- Digestive issues (e.g., upset stomach, nausea).
- Changes in weight or appetite.

#### Social symptoms

- Isolation from friends or family.
- Difficulty maintaining relationships.
- Feeling disconnected from others or misunderstood.

#### Work/School symptoms

- Reduced productivity or performance.
- Difficulty focusing on tasks or meeting deadlines.
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities.

It's important to understand that when these symptoms persist or intensify, they can contribute to the development of more serious mental health disorders.

## SLIDE 58

### Recognizing the signs: the different disorders

There are **various mental health disorders**, each with its own set of symptoms and challenges. These disorders can affect mood, thinking, behavior, and overall well-being, and may range from anxiety and mood disorders to psychotic, addiction, eating, and attention-related disorders.



**Mood disorders:** Mood disorders involve extreme mood changes that impact emotional well-being. Depression and bipolar disorder are the most prevalent forms. Depression is marked by persistent sadness, loss of interest, fatigue, and feelings of hopelessness.

Bipolar disorder is characterized by alternating periods of depression and mania, where individuals may experience heightened energy, impulsivity, and euphoria. These disorders can disrupt daily functioning, relationships, and overall mental stability.



**Addiction disorders:** addiction disorders encompass both substances use disorders and behavioral addictions. Substance use disorders include dependency on alcohol, drugs, or other harmful substances, while behavioral addictions may involve gambling or compulsive internet use. Addiction often involves loss of control, compulsive behavior, withdrawal symptoms, and negative impacts on personal and professional life.



### **Psychotic disorders (e.g., Schizophrenia):**

Psychotic disorders involve distorted thinking and a compromised perception of reality. Schizophrenia is one of the most well-known psychotic disorders and is characterized by symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions, disorganized speech, and erratic behavior. These symptoms can make daily functioning and social interactions extremely challenging. Individuals may have difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is not, impacting their ability to communicate and interact with others effectively.



**Eating disorders:** eating disorders are unhealthy patterns related to food and body image. They include Anorexia (restricting food), Bulimia (bingeing and purging), and Binge-Eating Disorder (uncontrolled eating). These conditions affect physical health and emotional well-being



**Attention deficit disorder (ADD/ADHD):** Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Individuals with these conditions often struggle with focus, organization, restlessness, and forgetfulness. These symptoms can affect academic performance, work efficiency, and social relationships.

Now that we have explored various mental health disorders, we are going to talk one of the most common and impactful mental health disorder: **Anxiety**.



### **Anxiety disorder**

Anxiety disorders is the main mental health disorder in Europe. It affected an estimated 25 million people (5.4% of the total EU population), followed by depressive disorders (21 million people, 4.5%), and drug and alcohol disorders (11 million people, 2.4%).

Anxiety is a normal emotional response to stress or to a situation perceived as threatening. It is characterised by a feeling of unease, nervousness or fear. When anxiety becomes excessive, persistent and interferes with daily life, it can be classified as anxiety disorder.

There are several different types of anxiety disorders, depending on the type of situation or object that causes the anxiety, and the type of belief that exacerbates the anxiety (post-traumatic stress disorder, social phobia, agoraphobia, generalised anxiety disorder, panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder).

#### SLIDE 60



#### Effects of anxiety

In the event of a panic attack, the symptoms resemble a heart attack but last only 10 or 15 minutes. If the person has never had a panic attack, it may be best to call emergency services.

#### SLIDE 61



Duration: 30 minutes

#### Activity "Anxiety debate" (structure debate, group)

**Objective:** detect the misconceptions about anxiety to identify the real facts.

**Required material:** Annex 7 - Anxiety debate, sheets or two-sided signs YES/NO

#### Step by step

Give participants sheets or two-sided signs with YES/NO written on them. You are going to ask different questions, and they have to decide if they agree with the statement or not by showing the sheet/sign side "Yes" or "No".

#### SLIDE 62

#### Beyond challenges: learning to cope and seek support

Mental health is complex. While disorders like anxiety can feel overwhelming, there are ways to get better. Mental health challenges are real, but so are the resources, skills, and strategies that help us cope and support those around us.

In the previous activity, we explored common misconceptions about anxiety. Now, let's move forward:

- ✦ What resources exist to help us?
- ✦ How can we prioritize them based on our needs?
- ✦ What steps can we take to support ourselves and others?

Let's discover these answers together in the next activity: **The Resources Auction!**

If they don't know, they can keep their sheet/sign down.

Read each statement from the anxiety quiz (you can put all the questions in the PPT, one slide for each question).

Ask students to choose a side and to explain why they chose it. Have a discussion with the participants on their point of view.

Give the right answer and the explanation of the quiz.

At the end, debrief with participants to know if they have a more complete understanding of anxiety.

SLIDE 63



### Activity “The resources auction” (work in subgroups, groups)

**Objective:** recognize different resources and prioritize them based on their relevance and importance for mental health support.

**Required material:** Annex 8 – Resources auction list

#### Step by step

Divide participants in groups of 2 to 4.

Give each group a handout of the “Resources auction”.

Start the exercise by presenting the challenge to the participants: they have 100 points to choose different resources from the list. They awarded the number of points they want for each resources, and the points are awarded in order of importance and must be chosen by the whole group.

They have to prioritise the resources according to their importance and which ones they would turn to when they need support and why.

Give the teams enough time to assign a value to each item and briefly justify it.

When the matrix is complete, ask the players to explain their decisions and reasoning. By selecting and prioritising important elements, the matrix can then be used as a reference for future project decision-making.

SLIDE 64

### Pathways to mental health support: resources and professionals you can turn to

Various resources are available to support mental health, however, it's essential to remember that **the first step should always begin with CARES**. The **CARES Formula** provides a compassionate framework for offering initial support. Before guiding someone to professionals or resources, it's important to ensure they feel heard, validated, and supported.

**C Connect with the individual, assess and assist during a crisis:** establish contact with the person, assess their needs, and provide immediate assistance if they are in crisis. This step focuses on building trust and understanding.

**A Actively listen without judgment:** offer a safe, non-judgmental space for the person to express their thoughts and feelings. Listen attentively and validate their emotions without interrupting or making assumptions.

**R Reassure and provide information:** offer comfort and provide reliable information about mental health issues. Provide hope and encourage the person by assuring them that help is available.

**E Encourage seeking professional help:** suggest professional resources, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, or social workers. Explain the benefits of professional support and guide them towards appropriate resources.

**S Share information about other available resources:** provide details about self-help tools, support groups, hotlines, apps, or community resources that can offer further assistance.

Once a safe and supportive environment is established through **CARES**, individuals can be encouraged to explore other resources available to them.

## SLIDE 65

### Mental health professionals

**General practitioner (GPs):** patient's first point of contact. They can recognise the symptoms of an emerging mental disorder and refer the patient to local support structures or to another healthcare professional.

**Psychologists:** can provide support for people suffering from psychological disorders. They do not have a medical degree, so they cannot prescribe medication.

**Psychiatrists:** a medical doctor specialising in the treatment of mental disorders (mainly severe or chronic). You can consult a psychiatrist with a letter from your general practitioner.

**Social workers:** professionals working in mental health services. They provide support and assistance to people affected by mental health problems and help them to interact more effectively with their immediate and social environment.

**Community mental health centers:** entity that provides the following services: Outpatient services, including specialized outpatient services for children, the elderly, individuals who are chronically mentally ill.

## SLIDE 66

### Other available resources

**National mental health organisations:** these organizations provide general support, guidance, and information about mental health. They may offer helplines, counselling services, advocacy, and educational materials. They also often collaborate with health authorities to improve mental health policies and awareness.

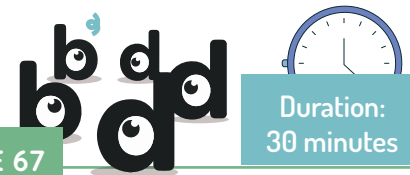
**Helplines and crisis support:** hotlines and crisis services offer immediate, confidential support for individuals experiencing distress or mental health crises. These services are often available 24/7 to provide emotional support and connect individuals to appropriate care.

**Specialized services:** these services address specific mental health issues such as addiction, eating disorders, psychotic disorders, and other conditions. They often involve professionals

trained in particular areas of mental health and may include rehabilitation centers, therapy, or targeted counseling.

**Online resources and mobile apps:** digital platforms offer accessible resources for mental health support. They include educational websites, apps for managing mental health symptoms, meditation tools, and online counseling services.

**Educational materials and self-help resources:** self-help resources include guides, booklets, articles, and training programs designed to educate and empower individuals to manage their mental health. They can be used independently or as part of a broader support system.



## SLIDE 67

### Activity "The Listening circle" (experience feedback, group)

**Objective:** develop active listening is a supportive and stigma-free environment for mental health discussions.

**Required material:** Annex 9 - Scenarios - "The Listening Circle"

#### Step by step

Arrange participants in a circle.

Offer participants the possibility to share experiences of themselves or others where they had friends and family who did not feel good mentally. If they don't want to share, you can invite them to come up with a scenario (or come up with a scenario yourself) introducing a story of someone having a mental health issue and they would need help.



- > Encourage active listening, where participants focus on understanding and empathizing with the speaker without interrupting or judging. Ask the participants what they would have done to help the person. If they would have ideas on how to handle different situations. Highlight the importance of empathy and active listening in supporting mental health.

SLIDE 68



### How to support mental health: empathy

Mental health stigma is one of the biggest barriers preventing individuals from seeking support and openly discussing their struggles. Stigma creates **fear, shame, and misinformation**, which can lead to isolation and worsening mental health conditions.

But to break the cycle of stigma, we must **increase understanding, foster empathy, and develop social-emotional skills** to respond appropriately when someone is struggling.

**Empathy:** it's the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation.

Empathy is essential in reducing stigma and helping individuals with mental illness because it fosters understanding, acceptance, and support. It helps combat isolation, encourages people to seek help, and promotes a more inclusive society where mental health is seen as a legitimate concern, not a personal flaw. Empathy also builds trust, which is crucial for effective care and treatment.

SLIDE 69

### Social-emotional learning

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which individuals, particularly students, learn to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. SEL programs typically focus on developing five core competencies:

1. **Self-awareness:** recognizing and understanding one's emotions and thoughts.
2. **Self-management:** effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself.
3. **Social awareness:** understanding and empathizing with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
4. **Relationship skills:** building healthy, positive relationships and communicating effectively.
5. **Responsible decision-making:** making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is important for mental health as it helps individuals develop skills like self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, and relationship-building. These skills improve emotional well-being, reduce stress, and promote healthier interactions, which are crucial for managing mental illness and building resilience.

SLIDE 70

### Examples of positive and inclusive language

Present to the participant some examples of sentences to use when they have to help someone.

## SLIDE 71



### Bringing it all together: understanding mental health challenges and moving forward

Throughout this module, we have explored various aspects of mental health challenges, from the common symptoms of fragile mental health to the most prevalent mental health disorders. We have discussed how everyday stressors, whether related to **work, school, finances, relationships, or physical health**, can accumulate and lead to serious mental health concerns. Additionally, we acknowledged the unique challenges faced during **international mobility**, including language barriers, cultural differences, homesickness, and difficulties in adjusting to new environments.

We emphasized that when symptoms persist or worsen, they can develop into disorders such as **anxiety, mood disorders, addiction disorders, psychotic disorders, eating disorders, and attention deficit disorders**. While various resources are available to help address these challenges, it is essential to begin with a compassionate approach through the **CARES Formula**, which emphasizes **Connecting, Actively Listening, Reassuring, Encouraging Professional Help, and Sharing Additional Resources**. This formula serves as a practical and supportive framework to ensure that individuals feel heard, validated, and empowered to seek help.

Ultimately, addressing mental health challenges requires empathy, understanding, and appropriate guidance. Providing **medical professionals, community resources, online tools, and educational materials** plays a significant role in promoting mental well-being.

## SLIDE 72

### Next step: understanding and navigating your emotions

Having identified the various challenges and disorders related to mental health, it's important to recognize that **understanding and managing emotions** is a key part of mental health care. Developing emotional awareness and resilience can help individuals better cope with stressors, improve their mental health, and prevent disorders from developing or worsening.

In the next module, "**Getting to know your emotions**," we will explore how emotions affect mental health, learn strategies to identify and understand our emotions, and practice skills that can enhance emotional resilience and well-being. Let's move forward and discover how emotional awareness can be a powerful tool for maintaining mental health.



SLIDE 73

## MODULE 3: GETTING TO KNOW YOUR EMOTIONS

### OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- Recognize and label different emotions, understanding their impact on personal well-being.
- Apply emotional regulation techniques to manage intense emotions and reduce their negative impact.
- Understand the thought process and explore their own needs.



SLIDE 74



Duration:  
15 minutes

### Activity “Statues” (energizer)

**Objective:** explore how different emotions can be communicated through physical gestures and postures.

#### Step by step

First, one participant leaves the room, and the rest will have to express an emotion with their body. All but one of them will express the same emotion. The last one has to express a different emotion.

Once all the statues are ready, the participant who left the room can come back. He or she will have to find who is expressing a different emotion from the others, they can name the emotion if they can. The statues should not move or make any noise.

Once the participant finds the different emotions represented, then can choose another person to leave the room and you can start the activity over from the start, choosing different emotions.

Finish the activity with a debriefing, asking the participant how the activity was, how they felt representing different emotions, which one was easy, and which one was hard to represent.

SLIDE 75

### Difference between emotions and feelings

Before explaining the importance of understanding your emotions and everything connected with them. You need to be able to tell the difference between emotions and feelings.

**Emotions are automatic responses** our bodies have to certain situations. They happen quickly and involve physical reactions. For example, if you hear a loud noise, you might jump because you feel **fear** immediately. This is your body's natural reaction to something surprising or potentially dangerous.

**Feelings are the personal experiences** that come after emotions. They are shaped by our thoughts and past experiences. After the initial fear from the loud noise, you might feel **annoyed or relieved** once you realize what caused it. These feelings depend on how you interpret the situation.

In simple terms: **emotions happen first** – they're fast and automatic. **Feelings come after** – they're what you consciously think about and experience based on those emotions.

#### SLIDE 76

### Why is it important to know your emotions? How can it help your mental health?

It is an important skill for both children and adults to have. People who recognise how they feel and calm themselves down or adjust their behaviour accordingly are more likely to do well in life, have healthy relationships and manage difficult situations more effectively.

Our emotions are internal triggers that can help us to know if other people or situations will have a positive or negative impact on our wellbeing. Being able to control our emotions also gives us more control over our lives.

Negative emotions can also lead to negative thoughts which can affect our wellbeing. If we learn how to control these thoughts early on, this will help us take better care of our wellbeing and lead more fulfilling lives.

Knowing our emotions will also show us when we need to ask for help. This can be help from friends or family or, in more serious cases, from mental health professionals.

Learning to manage our emotions also improves our relationships with others and helps us to understand other people's emotions.



#### SLIDE 77

### Primary and secondary emotions

Emotions are natural reactions triggered by both external and

internal events. Each emotion serves a purpose by addressing a specific need.

First, we will talk about the primary emotions. They are universal and experienced by everyone. However, the way people express these emotions can differ widely due to various factors.

There are secondary emotions, which are more nuanced and often shaped by the environment and social interactions.

#### SLIDE 78

### The Wheel of Emotions

In the Wheel of Emotions, we can see the primary emotions in the inner circle and secondary emotions related to these primary emotions in the outer circles. This is a useful tool that can help us to identify our emotional responses and those of others.

The Wheel of Emotions also demonstrates how language shapes our understanding of emotions. It provides a vocabulary that helps us accurately identify and describe what we feel. The colors on the wheel visually represent different emotional families. They help group related emotions, making it easier to recognize patterns or connections. For example, shades of blue often relate to sadness, while shades of yellow are linked to happiness.

Having a larger emotional vocabulary allows individuals to better understand and express their emotional states. This is especially valuable when interacting with others, as it helps to communicate emotions more accurately and prevent misinterpretation. One important thing to consider is that you need to avoid interpreting or judging emotions, you need to focus on identifying and understanding them instead.



SLIDE 79



When we speak about self-awareness, there are two different levels to consider: internal and external.

Whereas external self-awareness is our ability to perceive how others view us based on our thoughts, feelings, behaviours and reactions.



For example, after shouting, what will those around us think of us? Perhaps they will think we're irrational or threatening and they may avoid us.

#### SLIDE 80-81

### Do you know the name of the technique to recognize, process and manage emotions?

Ask the question to the participants and then explain what Emotional regulation is.

Emotional regulation refers to the processes individuals use to manage and respond to their emotional experiences in appropriate and adaptive ways.

It allows individuals to navigate complex situations with greater clarity and balance. It is important since emotions are closely connected to how everyone thinks and feels. All emotions are useful and deserve to be experienced; there are no "good" or "bad" emotions. Effective emotion regulation has been linked to a range of positive outcomes, including improved well-being, and enhanced resilience.

#### SLIDE 82

### Improving emotional regulation will allow to improve your resilience

Cultivating resilience is crucial, particularly for young people preparing to face new experiences.

Imagine mental health as a wheel travelling on a road. Resilience can be thought of as the strength of that wheel. When the road is smooth, everything is good, but when it gets rough, resilience is tested. The stronger the wheel, the easier it is to cope. Mental resilience is all about building a stronger wheel.

Emotional Regulation and Resilience are essential to maintaining mental well-being.



#### SLIDE 83

Duration:  
20 minutes

### Activity "Mood meter and ruler approach" (reflexion, individual)

**Objective:** identify the current emotional status and investigate the causes and consequences.

**Required material:** Annex 10 - Mood Meter, printed for all participants

#### Step by step

This activity can be done individually or in a group. It's also possible to do it 2 times to see if participants' mood changes during the day. Participants can do it together to see that not everyone is at the same place emotionally.

Introduction: give everyone a paper with the Mood Meter on it.

It is a graph divided into 4 different coloured quadrants that each represent a different set of emotions. It measures the energy and pleasantness of a feeling to provide you with the "coordinates" of where you are emotionally. Each quadrant represents a different level of energy and pleasantness. The y-axis represents the level of physical energy while the x-axis represents the level of positive or negative energy.

Ask participants to mark where they consider themselves right now. They don't have to share their reflection.

Then the RULER approach is presented to the participants:

- Recognise where you are on the Mood Meter
- Understand the causes and consequences of this emotion

- > Label the emotion with words to describe what you are feeling
- Express emotions
- Regulate emotions with helpful strategies

Have the participants think about the causes and consequences of this emotion that they identified on the mood meter. They can write things down if they'd like, though the activity is individual. Then, participants are asked to label the emotion with words.

Think about the consequences of this emotion. How does this emotion make you feel? How does it affect you? How could it affect those around you? Could it affect your relationship with your peers, family, friends, loved ones? Take a minute to think about this as well. As we did before, you can also write it down on a piece of paper.

Finish the activity with a debriefing exercise. It can be done individually or in groups.

Take notes of where the participants are, if they are feeling good, or tired. They can go back to it throughout the day if they want.

#### SLIDE 84

### Variety of intensity of emotions

All events will lead to a range of emotions experienced. In this case, emotional reactions may vary in intensity:

- In some instances, emotions can be overwhelming. An **emotional wave** can come through the body, making it difficult to keep one's head above water.
- At times, it may also feel like a **fire of emotions** that lasts indefinitely and never goes away. In this situation, while the emotion is at its peak, negative thoughts about one-self, others, or the world may trigger another emotional wave.

- And sometimes, emotions are avoided but come back stronger, an **emotional boomerang**, an unpleasant emotion might be set aside by distracting oneself.

All of this can happen and challenge your well-being, but emotional regulation can be learned.



Duration: 20 minutes

#### SLIDE 85

### Activity "Emotional identification" (experience feedback, group)

**Objective:** identify different experiences of strong emotions.

**Required material:** large sheets of paper

#### Step by step

On a board or large sheets of papers, write the three experiences of emotions. Ask participants to identify three situations where they felt these three situations and with which emotions.

Ask questions as:

- Before today, did you notice that this is what you were experiencing?
- What was it like to feel this way?
- How did you react?

#### SLIDE 86

### What to do when emotions are too strong?

No emotion is inherently positive or negative, though individuals may prefer experiencing certain emotions over others. All emotions have value and are essential to human experience:

- Validating emotions** by accepting their presence without self-judgement: emotions do not need to be justified to exist.
- Let the emotion take its course** and remember that it won't last.

Everyone can use general or specific strategies when emotions need to be regulated.

Emotional regulation helps individuals maintain a sense of control, allowing them to respond to situations thoughtfully rather than react impulsively. Emotional regulation can also promote healthier relationships with others.

#### SLIDE 87

### General strategies to use for self-regulation

Identifying emotions being experienced and focusing on how they affect the individual.

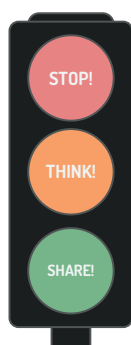
**Identifying triggers:** understanding personal triggers and what contributes to emotional well-being or distress.

**Talking through emotions:** engaging in conversation about emotions can help with processing them.

**Using meditation, mindfulness or relaxation** for supporting mental health due to their ability to provide a sense of calm and peace, promote emotional balance and enhance overall well-being.

**Journaling** which encourages self-reflection and emotional release, helping individuals clarify complex emotions and return to the present moment.

**Noticing when to take breaks:** recognizing when to rest is necessary, particularly to avoid emotional intensity.



#### SLIDE 88

### Stress-management traffic light tool

The stress-management traffic light is a helpful tool for self-regulation in stressful situations.

This tool can help you learn how to self-regulate and remain calm in stressful situations. When you are in a stressful situa-

tion, or one that makes you angry, imagine a traffic light in your head. If the light is “red”, that means you feel this more intensely, so you should stop, take deep breaths, and try to calm down. Once you feel calmer, the light will turn “yellow”.

Then, you should continue taking deep breaths and start thinking about the situation and its causes and consequences. This will help you to rationalise the situation and put things into perspective, thus bringing you close to a “green” light. When the light is “green”, you can move forward with the situation and perhaps share it with a person who you trust.

#### SLIDE 89



### Self-regulation of anger

**Deep breathing:** take deep, slow breaths to calm your body and mind. Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, and exhale for 4 seconds.

**Count to 10:** counting slowly to 10 gives you a brief pause to cool down before reacting impulsively.

**Physical release:** if possible, engage in physical activity like squeezing a stress ball or doing push-ups to release tension.

#### SLIDE 90



### Self-regulation of sadness

**Listen to uplifting music:** engaging with music that elevates mood can help shift emotional states.

**Self-compassion:** talk to yourself kindly, as if you were comforting a friend. Remind yourself that it's okay to feel sad.

**Engage in a comforting activity:** do something small that brings comfort, like listening to a favorite song, watching a feel-good movie, or drinking a warm beverage.

**Stretch or move:** gentle stretching or walking can help release emotional tension in your body.



### Self-regulation of fear

**Focus on breathing:** slow, steady breathing can activate the body's relaxation response, helping to reduce fear.

**Use affirmations:** reassure yourself with positive statements like, "i am safe," or "i have handled challenges before, and i can handle this."

**Progressive muscle relaxation:** tense and relax your muscles, starting from your toes and working up to your head, to release the physical tension that accompanies fear.

**Visualize a safe place:** mentally imagining a comforting environment can reduce feelings of fear.



### Self-regulation of disgust

**Change the environment:** if the source of disgust is external (like an unpleasant smell or sight), try moving away from it or taking a break in a different environment.

**Grounding:** use grounding techniques such as the 5-4-3-2-1 method to bring your focus away from the feeling of disgust.

**Deep breathing:** breathe deeply and slowly to calm your body's physical reaction to disgust.



### Self-regulation of surprise

**Pause and breathe:** take slow, deep breaths to calm the sudden rush of adrenaline. Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4, and exhale for 4.

**Give yourself space:** take a moment to process the surprise before reacting, allowing yourself time to regain composure.

**Move:** gently shake your body or take a short walk to release the tension from the sudden shock.

**Positive self-talk:** reassure yourself that you can manage the situation with positive affirmations like, "i can handle this."



### Self-regulation of happiness

**Savor the moment:** take a moment to fully enjoy your happiness. Reflect on what's making you feel good and embrace the positive emotions.

**Share your joy:** spread your happiness by sharing a compliment, telling someone what made you happy, or simply smiling at others.

**Gratitude practice:** take a few seconds to mentally list things you're grateful for, which can deepen your sense of happiness and fulfillment.

**Be present:** focus on the present moment and appreciate the good feelings without worrying about what might come next.

SLIDE 95



## Getting to know your emotions helps you to learn more about yourself

Understanding your emotions, as well as recognising specific triggers, can help you to learn more about yourself. It will help you to learn what you like and what you don't like, as well as which activities could positively or negatively impact your own personal wellbeing. Each individual person has different triggers and emotional reactions to stimuli, that's what makes us unique. Learning about your own emotions and how to self-regulate, will teach you more about yourself as a person. Being able to successfully identify things that you like or don't like, as well as activities that could positively or negatively impact you, can help you to improve your overall wellbeing.

SLIDE 96



Duration: 20 minutes

### Activity "Quizz to know yourself" (individual reflection exercise, individual)

**Objective:** identify personal motivation factors and their impact on emotional well-being.

**Required material:** Annex 11 – Quiz to know yourself

#### Step by step

Give the participants the test. They can answer it online or on a paper. Then ask them to reflect on the result and what it means for them to know now what are their motivations and what contributes to their emotional well-being.

SLIDE 97



## Negative thoughts and cognitive distortions

Sometimes, it can feel like our brain is working against us, like it will process information and make us feel emotions that are not justified. And indeed, everyone has around 60-80 thoughts a day. To make sense of it all, our brains simplify and interpret all of them, enabling us to understand our surroundings.

Most of our thoughts are going to be negative and it is called cognitive distortions. These distortions are ways of processing information that lead to errors of thought, transform reality and provoke emotional reactions that are often negative. They occur every day and it is a common and normal experience. They often begin or are developed during childhood and are influenced by our experiences through family, school, community or culture. Statements that we receive from trusted role models, such as teachers or friends, as well as through social media, can also have an effect.

Some examples are:

- 🔊 **Overgeneralisation:** nothing good ever happens to me.
- 🔊 **All-or-nothing thinking:** I'm not perfect and I made a mistake, so I failed (one extreme or the other).
- 🔊 **Negative filtering:** only noticing the negative things that happened to you and eliminating the positive.
- 🔊 **Discounting the positive:** that doesn't count because I had help.



- 🔊 **“Mind reading” and fortune telling:** I’m going to fail the test, so why study?
- 🔊 **Magnification or minimization:** this small mistake I made was a huge failure.
- 🔊 **Emotional reasoning:** I feel guilty that the event didn’t go well, so it must be my fault.
- 🔊 **Should must or ought statements:** I should be further along professionally in my life and I’m never going to achieve that I should have by this age.
- 🔊 **Labeling:** I forgot my best friend’s birthday. I’m the worst person in the world.
- 🔊 **Personalisation and blame:** my friend cancelled our dinner plans last minute. She must be angry at me.

By learning to identify these thought patterns, one can become aware of how they influence emotions and perspectives. This awareness allows us to address and adjust any inaccuracies in thinking, leading to more balanced emotional responses, such as experiencing more positive emotions or reducing the intensity of negative ones.



SLIDE 98

Duration: 20 minutes

### Activity “The bus driver” (role-playing, group)

**Objective:** enhance self-awareness and communication skills through handling both positive and negative comments.

**Required material:** Annex 12 – The bus driver sentences cards (sentences cards for “the nice passengers”, “the neutral passengers”, and “the mean passengers”).

#### Step by step

All the participants seat in a circle, and one participant volunteers to be the bus driver, they seat not facing the group.

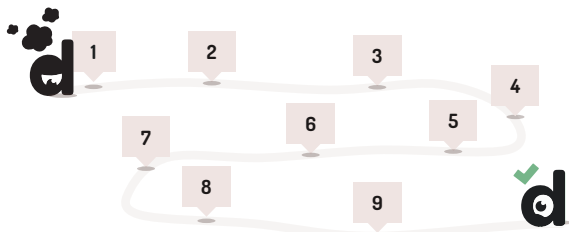
The bus driver’s objective is to go from point A and B and all the people around him are the passengers. Divide the passengers into 3 groups:

- 🔊 The one that says nice things “the driver is driving really well” etc.
- 🔊 The one that says neutral things “It’s sunny today”
- 🔊 The one that says mean things “This driver is really a bad driver”

Hand the participant the line cards depending on their group.

The passengers have to randomly says the lines according to their group and the bus driver needs to either respond or not, as he pleased. After a few exchanges, you debrief and ask the driver how he felt about all of this and the passengers (especially the ones saying mean things) how they felt about what they were saying.

Goal of the bus driver: you are the harshest critic, and the bus driver is yourself and in your life, you have good thoughts, bad thoughts and neutral thoughts. You have to also be compassionate with yourself when you are doing something and not be too harsh on yourself.



SLIDE 99

### Conclusion on cognitive distortions

We have a lot of thoughts during the day but most of them are cognitive distortions and we need to help our brain to practice a positive mindset.

The first step is to identify these negative thoughts for what they are. This will help you realise what affects you, in more cases than not it will be the negative thoughts about the situation rather than the situation itself that upset you. You can effectively change your thoughts and opinions to help make these situations affect you even less.

It may be challenging to identify these negative thoughts at first, since they may seem like logical, normal thoughts to you. Here are some ways to start:

**1 Read yourself:** see if you are feeling anxiety by looking at the following:

1. Am I focused on this task, or is my mind somewhere else?
2. Is my body tense?
3. Do I have any unusual physical symptoms like a stomachache or racing heart?
4. When did I start having these signs?

Turn to your thoughts and see which ones are causing you to feel this anxiety.

**2 Identify the type of distortion:** using the distortions presented previously, identify the ones that you are experiencing in your thoughts. It may be helpful to keep track of them in an emotions diary or something similar.

**3 Change roles:** consider how you would react to somebody close, like a friend or family member, saying these same things. Sometimes it helps to step away from your own personal experience and relive it as if someone else were going through it. What would you say to this person? What advice would you give them?

**4 Examine the evidence:** typically, negative thought patterns are not based on facts. Step back and think about the situation coldly. If you're having negative thoughts about your abilities, think about all of your positive attributes. If you feel like a failure, for example, because you turned in an assignment late, think about all of the other assignments that you turned in on time, consider the reaction of others when you turned it in late. It probably wasn't as bad as we thought. Oftentimes, these negative thoughts make us exaggerate the real situation in our heads.

**5 Sum of its parts:** as you identify these negative thoughts and distortions, you'll see that they often come with labels. "I'm so boring" or "I'm a failure" are examples of labels. However, these labels don't apply to us as a whole person.

**6 Skip generalizations:** cognitive distortions often cause us to overgeneralise. For example, if one bad thing happened, we often overgeneralise and think that everything is bad. Just because you made one mistake, doesn't mean that you are a failure. The "opposite threes" technique could be helpful here, for example think of 3 opposites to the negative situation.

**7 Avoid speculations:** avoid trying to guess how other people think or feel about a situation. If the situation allows, ask them directly how they feel. This will help to clear any doubts and avoid escalating the situation even further by assuming someone feels a certain way.

**8 No more "shoulds":** no more shoulds, could have or ought to. Instead of thinking, "I should have a Master's degree by now", replace that with, "It's be nice to..." or "I'd like to..."

**9 Cost-benefit analysis:** consider these negative thoughts. How does this thought help me and how does it hurt me? If you discover that it could actually hurt you more than it could help you, this may help you to eliminate it easier.

These tips can help you to successfully deal with negative thoughts and cognitive distortions. However, if the situation persists and you cannot cope on your own, you may want to consider seeking help from a mental health professional.

After that I would like to suggest a calming activity that can be used for self-awareness and stress. As we are always worrying and thinking about the past and the future, it is good to do this to ground yourself in the present which can also help a lot with anxiety. Now it's time to move to the last activity of this module, an activity to help you ground yourself in the present instead of worrying and thinking about the past and the future.

SLIDE 100



Duration:  
20 minutes

### Activity "5 senses" (individual reflection exercise, group)

**Objective:** focus on the present moment by engaging the five senses to promote relaxation and grounding.

#### Step by step

Ask participants to seat in a circle in a comfortable position. Ask them to pay attention to their breathing. It is better to use a calm voice for this exercise.

Once they are focused on their breath, go

through the following steps to help ground themselves:

- 👂 Acknowledge three things you can see around you and recognize what is their purpose, just three objects without judging them, their appearance or purpose
- 👂 Acknowledge three things that you can touch (the feet on the ground, the back on the chair)
- 👂 Acknowledge three things you hear around you (the sound of breathing, of the ventilation, of the cars outside)
- 👂 Acknowledge three things you can smell (a good perfume, soap, nature)
- 👂 Acknowledge three things you can taste (a coffee, a sandwich, a gum)

#### Conclude with participants asking them:

How did that make you feel?

Is there a difference between how you felt before and how you are feeling now?

OR

SLIDE 101



Duration: 20 minutes

### Activity "Breathing techniques" (individual reflection exercise, group)

**Objective:** practice mindful breathing to enhance focus and emotional regulation.

#### Step by step

Ask participants to seat in a circle in a comfortable position. Ask them to pay attention to their breathing and close their eyes. It is better to use a calm voice for this exercise.

Once they are focused on their breath, you can introduce one of the breathing techniques:

- 👂 The 4-7-8 Breathing Technique: Inhale for 4 counts / Hold for 7 counts / Exhale for 8 counts
- 👂 The Box Breathing Technique: Inhale for 4 counts / Hold for 4 counts / Exhale for 4 counts / Hold for 4 counts

For either technique, do three to five round each with the participants.



#### SLIDE 102

### Reflecting on emotional intelligence and self-awareness

It is important to know our emotions, recognise our triggers and learn how to successfully self-regulate. This helps us to excel in life, have healthy relationships and manage difficult situations effectively. It also contributes to us having a positive wellbeing.

As humans, we can feel both primary and secondary emotions. They are natural reactions triggered by both internal and external events. The wheel of emotions is a great tool for identifying these emotions and no emotion is inherently positive or negative, they are all part of the human experience.

Knowing our emotions leads to self-awareness. This refers to both internal and external awareness. Internal being how our own thoughts, feelings, behaviours and reactions impact others. External referring to our ability to perceive how others view us based on our thoughts, feelings behaviours and reactions.

The technique we use to recognise, process and manage emotions is called "emotional regulation". It helps us to cultivate our resilience, or ability to adapt, recover from stress, adversity and life's inevitable challenges.

Emotions can be felt in a variety of different intensities. We discussed the emotional wave, fire of emotions and emotional boomerang. When emotions are too strong, it's important to validate them and let them take their course and also use different strategies for self-regulation. We discussed general strategies for self-regulation, such as identifying emotions or triggers, talking through them with a trusted person, using meditation or mindfulness as well as journaling. We also discussed the stress-management traffic light for dealing with situations that are stressful or could induce anger, and we also discussed specific strategies for self-regulation of anger, sadness, fear, disgust, surprise, and happiness.

We learned that getting to know our emotions can help us learn more about ourselves. It can help us to identify what we like and don't like, and also take care of our wellbeing.

We discussed negative thoughts and cognitive distortions, or ways of processing information that lead to errors of thought, transformation of reality, and emotional reactions that are often negative. We talked about different examples of cognitive distortions and ways to help our brains practice a more positive mindset.

We are never too old to learn how to identify and regulate our emotions, but if it gets to be too much, we can consult a mental health professional.

#### SLIDE 103

### Next step: building resilience to overcome challenges

Now that you have developed a deeper understanding of your emotions, we will focus on how to **strengthen your resilience**. In Module 4, "Building resilience to cope with challenges," we will explore what resilience means, why it is important, and how you can enhance your ability to **adapt, recover, and thrive** even in difficult situations. Let's continue this journey towards building a stronger, more resilient self.



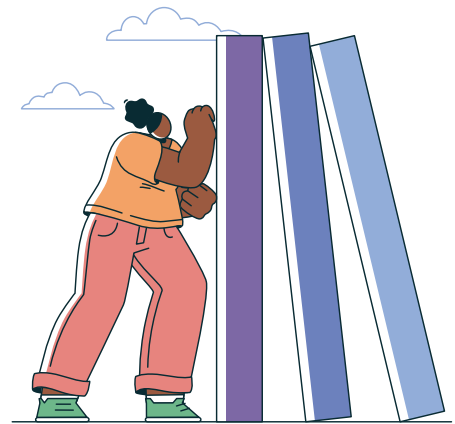
SLIDE 104



## MODULE 4: BUILDING RESILIENCE TO COPE WITH CHALLENGES

### OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- Recognize and apply coping strategies to strengthen resilience.
- Create a personalized resilience plan to manage stress, both in everyday life and during international mobility.
- Apply resilience-building strategies to enhance mental well-being.



SLIDE 105

### What is resilience?

Resilience is not about avoiding stress or hardship, but about how we respond to it. It helps us deal with life's inevitable challenges, such as personal loss, work stress, health problems, or major life changes. Resilience is a skill that can be built and strengthened over time, allowing us to face difficulties with greater confidence and emotional strength.

It is the **ability to adapt and recover from stress, adversity, and setbacks**, enabling us to navigate complex situations with clarity and balance. When we build resilience, we strengthen our emotional "wheel" – the tool that helps us keep moving forward even when the road is rough. Just like a wheel needs to be sturdy and balanced to roll over bumps and obstacles, mental resilience helps us cope with various stressors and emotional struggles.

SLIDE 106

### How resilience works

**Emotional regulation:** resilience involves effectively managing emotions so that they don't become overwhelming or disruptive. Emotional regulation techniques such as mindfulness, relaxation, journaling, or cognitive reframing help maintain a sense of control and balance.

**Building internal resources:** developing skills like self-awareness, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence strengthens resilience. These skills help you process your emotions, learn from challenges, and use experiences to grow.

**Utilizing external resources:** support systems, such as friends, family, mentors, and professional resources, provide guidance, encouragement, and relief when facing difficulties.

**Learning from experiences:** resilience is not about avoiding stress or discomfort. It involves facing challenges, learning from them, and using those experiences to become stronger and more adaptable in the future.



## SLIDE 107



Duration: 40 minutes

### Activity “Strength in you” (group work, group)

**Objective:** identify personal stressors and strengths to enhance self-awareness and resilience.

**Required material:** flip chart paper or whiteboard, markers, sticky notes, large pieces of paper or canvas labelled with questions.

#### Step by step

In this interactive activity, participants explore personal stressors, brainstorm healthy coping strategies, and build resilience together.

Ask participants different questions:

- What positive thing happened to you this week?
- What is your favorite coping mechanism?
- What motivates you during difficult times?
- What personal strengths have helped you overcome past challenges?
- Who or what supports you when you feel stressed?
- What lifestyle habits contribute to your mental and physical well-being?
- Can you share a moment when you overcame a significant obstacle in your life? How did you do it?
- What activities make you feel the most confident or empowered?

You can ask the questions one by one orally or put large sheets of paper on the wall and ask participants to write answers in the order they prefer. It will create a “Wall of strength” by adding affirmations and personal strengths on sticky notes to represent their collective resilience.

The session closes with a circle reflection, reinforcing that resilience grows through support, self-care, and shared strength.

## SLIDE 108

### Coping mechanisms

**Coping mechanisms** are the strategies people often use in the face of stress and/or trauma to help manage painful or difficult emotions. Coping mechanisms can help people adjust to stressful events while helping them maintain their emotional well-being.

## SLIDE 109

### Why are coping mechanism important?

Coping mechanisms are **conscious strategies** individuals employ to manage stress and navigate challenging situations. They play a crucial role in maintaining emotional well-being and ensuring effective functioning in daily life.

**Stress management:** life events – whether positive, like marriage or childbirth, or negative, such as job loss or bereavement – can induce significant stress. Coping mechanisms help individuals **adjust to these stressors**, mitigating their impact on mental and physical health.

**Emotional regulation:** by employing coping strategies, people can **process and express their emotions** healthily, preventing feelings from becoming overwhelming or leading to maladaptive behaviors.

**Problem-solving:** certain coping mechanisms focus on addressing the root causes of stress, enabling individuals to **identify solutions and take proactive steps** to resolve issues.

**Enhanced resilience:** regular use of effective coping strategies fosters resilience, equipping individuals to **bounce back more quickly** from adversity and reducing the long-term impact of stress.

**Prevention of maladaptive behaviors:** without healthy coping mechanisms, individuals may resort to harmful behaviors, such as substance abuse or avoidance. Developing adaptive strategies helps prevent these **negative outcomes**.

#### SLIDE 110

### Stress

Ask participants what jumps in their head when they hear the word STRESS.

After they name a few situations that stress them out ask them how would they define stress.

#### SLIDE 111

### Definition of stress

According to WHO, stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way we respond to stress, however, makes a big difference to our overall well-being.



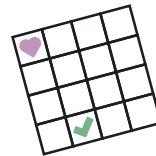
#### SLIDE 112

### Link between stress and coping mechanisms

Stress is a natural part of life, but **how we respond to stress** is what makes the difference. Coping mechanisms are the tools we use to **navigate through stressful situations**. They help us process emotions, solve problems, and adapt to difficult circumstances.

Effective coping mechanisms can:

- ☁ **Reduce the intensity** of stress by providing emotional relief (e.g., talking to a friend, journaling, exercising).
  - ☁ **Help us address the source of stress** through problem-solving or seeking practical solutions.
  - ☁ **Prevent negative outcomes** such as anxiety, depression, or burnout by providing healthier ways to respond to challenges.
- Using positive coping mechanisms regularly helps build **resilience**, making it easier to handle future stressors more effectively.



Duration: 20-30 minutes

#### SLIDE 113

### Activity "BINGO" (interactive game, group)

**Objective:** identify effective coping strategies to manage stress and improve mental health resilience.

**Required material:** Annex 13 - BINGO to print, pens

### Step by step

1. Before playing, hand out a copy of "Coping with stress Bingo worksheets" to each participant. Ask the group to look at their bingo sheets.
2. To begin, read through each square at a time.
3. Ask each participant to identify coping strategies they find most useful when they are stressed. Tell them to keep these hidden from other participants, for now.
4. Next, invite the group to walk around with their sheets. They should ask the other participants for their favourite coping strategy, as well as a few questions about it. If a participant has chosen e.g., "Paint, draw, or write something," their peer might ask "How does it help?" "What do you paint?" "How does it make you feel?". Then they add names to the given strategy.
5. The first participant to complete all of the checkboxes wins. Tell them to call out 'Bingo!'
6. After the session closes, explain why each coping strategy might be helpful for someone who has a mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety, or stress.

#### SLIDE 114

### Type of coping strategies

We are going to focus on different types of coping strategies.

#### SLIDE 115

### Problem-focused coping

There are many different coping mechanisms, each person may find certain coping methods more effective than others depending on their preferences, experiences, and the specific challenges they face.

This approach involves actively and practically tackling the source of your stress. For example, if you feel overwhelmed by a large workload, you might break it down into smaller, manageable tasks or ask for guidance on prioritizing them. Problem-focused coping works best in situations where you have some control over the outcome.

- ☁ **Planning and problem-solving:** develop an action plan to resolve the stressful situation.
- ☁ **Seeking practical support:** ask for help from friends, family, or professionals.
- ☁ **Time management:** organize your schedule to better manage responsibilities and tasks.

#### SLIDE 116

### Emotion-focused coping

When it's not possible to change a stressful situation, you can focus on managing your emotional response to it. Emotion-focused coping involves regulating your feelings to maintain emotional balance, which is especially helpful when you have little or no control over the circumstances. For instance, if you're facing an ongoing family conflict that can't be resolved right away, you might engage in calming activities like yoga or meditation to help you relax and maintain inner peace.

- ☁ **Positive reappraisal:** look for positive aspects of the stressful situation.

- ☁ **Acceptance:** acknowledge and accept the reality of the situation without judgment.
- ☁ **Relaxation practices:** meditation, yoga, deep breathing, etc.
- ☁ **Journaling:** write down thoughts and emotions to better understand them.

#### SLIDE 117

### Meaning-focus coping (the meaning given to events)

Meaning-focused coping is about finding purpose or a positive perspective in difficult situations by changing how you interpret the stressor. For example, if you're dealing with job loss, you might view it as an opportunity for personal growth or a chance to explore new career directions. This mindset can help build emotional strength and resilience.

- ☁ **Seeking emotional support:** talk to close ones to express feelings and receive comfort.
- ☁ **Creative expression:** use art, music, writing, or other creative forms to express emotions.
- ☁ **Spirituality or religious practice:** engage in spiritual activities to find meaning and support.



## SLIDE 118

### Avoidance coping (when it is healthy)

Avoidance coping refers to the strategy of temporarily distancing oneself from a stressor or delaying direct action to protect emotional well-being. When used intentionally and sparingly, it can be a healthy coping mechanism that allows individuals to regroup, regain emotional balance, and prevent feeling overwhelmed before addressing the problem.

- ☘ **Taking temporary distance:** take a break to relax and regain strength before returning to the stressful situation.
- ☘ **Engaging in enjoyable activities:** participate in hobbies to distract oneself and recharge.

## SLIDE 119

### Proactive coping

Proactive coping refers to a positive, forward-thinking strategy where individuals take deliberate actions to prevent or minimize future stressors before they occur. Instead of merely reacting to stress, proactive coping involves anticipating potential challenges, planning ahead, and developing skills or resources to handle difficulties effectively.

- ☘ **Preparation and planning:** anticipate future challenges and prepare potential solutions.
- ☘ **Strengthening personal skills:** improve stress management abilities, such as assertive communication or conflict resolution.
- ☘ **Self-care:** maintain a personal routine, including a balanced diet, regular exercise, and adequate sleep.



## SLIDE 120-121

### General coping

General coping refers to the broad range of strategies and techniques individuals use to manage stress, emotional distress, or challenging situations. It includes any effort, whether conscious or unconscious, aimed at reducing, tolerating, or overcoming stress.

- ☘ **Regular physical exercise:** releases endorphins and reduces stress.
- ☘ **Maintaining healthy social relationships:** provides emotional support.
- ☘ **Mindfulness practices:** help stay present and reduce stress.
- ☘ **Limiting harmful substances:** avoid alcohol and drugs, which can worsen stress.

Effective coping strategies are essential for maintaining mental health and resilience, as they help individuals adapt to various life challenges and reduces the impact of stress on their well-being. By using problem-focused strategies when we can change the situation and emotion-focused strategies when managing our emotions, we can better navigate challenges. The key is to find what works for you, practice it, and seek help when needed.

SLIDE 122



Duration: 30 minutes

### Activity “What if”

(individual reflection exercise, individual)

**Objective:** apply healthy coping techniques to respond to both every day and mobility-related challenges.

**Required material:** paper and pen or a notebook, Annex 14 – Scenarios “What if”

#### Step by step

##### 1. Give several challenges situation

Explain to the participants that they are going to work on 5 fictional scenarios about challenges that people can face in their everyday life and worries them.

##### 2. Plan your response

Ask participants to think about how they are usually responding to this challenge and which healthy coping strategies they can use for each challenge, such as:

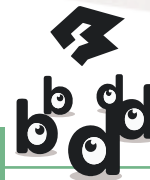
- Deep breathing
- Positive self-talk
- Asking for help
- Exercise, etc.

##### 3. Do the same for challenges that might arise during international mobility

Invite participants to share their reflections. See for the same challenge if the response would be the same or not. It is not mandatory for participants to share their reflections.

OR

SLIDE 123



Duration: 40 minutes

### Activity “Resilience quest: a volunteering adventure” (role-playing, group)

**Objective:** evaluate and apply resilience-building techniques to real-life volunteering experiences.

**Required material:** Annex 15 – Scenarios “Volunteering adventure”

#### Step by step

1. Arrange participants in a circle or semicircle where everyone can see and hear each other.
2. Explain the purpose of the game: to embark on a collaborative adventure that explores resilience and coping strategies in the context of volunteering. Each participant will contribute to the story and share their ideas.
3. Begin with a scenario related to volunteering: Imagine you are a team of volunteers at a local community centre, preparing for a big community event. However, you encounter several challenges.
4. Go around the circle, with the new participant adding a personal challenge in the story and the one after that has to find a coping mechanism for the challenge relevant to the volunteering scenario.
5. Continue the story, introducing new challenges and allowing participants to suggest solutions and coping strategies. Encourage creativity, humour, and teamwork as the story unfolds. For instance, participants might face conflicts, challenges, participant engagement issues, or last-minute changes to the event schedule.







After concluding the story, discuss the strategies that were shared. Ask participants which strategies resonated with them and how they might use them in their own life.

#### SLIDE 124

### Why it's important to have your own coping skills

Having your own coping skills is essential because everyone experiences stress and challenges differently. Coping skills are personal tools and strategies that help you **manage emotions, adapt to difficulties, and maintain mental well-being**. They are crucial for improving emotional regulation, allowing you to process feelings like anxiety, anger, and sadness in healthier ways, which prevents these emotions from becoming overwhelming.

Practicing coping skills regularly also helps to **build resilience**, enhancing your ability to bounce back from setbacks and adapt to change. This resilience makes it easier to face future challenges with confidence and emotional strength. Moreover, having effective coping strategies provides a sense of **empowerment and control**, making you feel more capable of handling stressful situations.

Using these skills consistently contributes to **better mental health**, reducing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress, and promoting emotional balance and life satisfaction. Developing your own coping skills is a valuable process that strengthens your resilience, improves your well-being, and helps you face challenges with confidence.

#### SLIDE 125

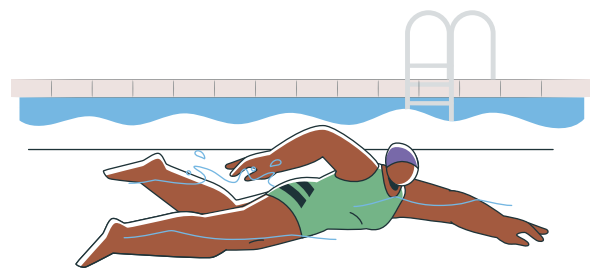
### Coping strategies in action: physical activities

Physical activities are one of the most effective ways to reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance overall mental well-being. According to MIND's Transnational study on mental health needs, physical activity is considered at 69% effective.

Exercise triggers the release of endorphins, which are chemicals in the brain that act as natural painkillers and mood enhancers. Regular physical activity also improves sleep, boosts self-esteem, and provides a constructive outlet for releasing tension.

#### Common physical coping strategies include:

- 🌿 **Cardiovascular exercises:** activities such as running, swimming, cycling, and dancing, which improve cardiovascular health and elevate mood.
- 🌿 **Yoga and pilates:** mind-body practices that enhance flexibility, strength, relaxation, and mindfulness.
- 🌿 **Sports and recreational activities:** engaging in team sports or individual physical activities that promote social interaction and provide enjoyment.



#### SLIDE 126

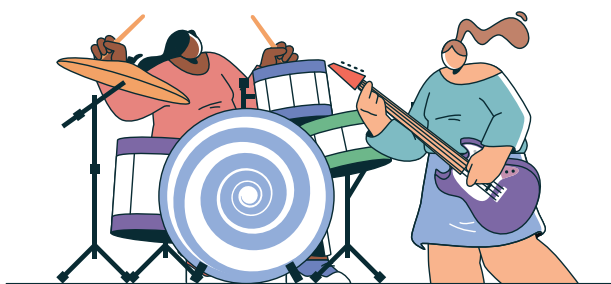
### Coping strategies in action: creative outlets

Creative expression offers a powerful way to **process emotions, reduce stress, and enhance well-being**. Engaging in artistic activities can serve as a distraction from negative thoughts and promote positive emotional experiences. Creativity also provides a means of exploring difficult emotions and communicating feelings that may be hard to express verbally.

According to MIND's Transnational study creative outlets is considered at 57% effective.

Common creative coping strategies include:

- **Artistic expression:** drawing, painting, sculpting, or other visual arts that allow for personal exploration and self-reflection.
- **Music and dance:** playing musical instruments, singing, composing music, or dancing as a form of emotional release.
- **Writing and journaling:** expressing thoughts and emotions through storytelling, poetry, or personal reflection.
- **Crafting and DIY projects:** engaging in activities like knitting, woodworking, or creating handmade items that promote focus and relaxation.



SLIDE 127

### Coping strategies in action: relaxation techniques

Relaxation techniques are designed to **calm the mind, reduce muscle tension, and promote a state of physical and emotional relaxation**. These techniques are particularly useful for managing anxiety, stress, and feelings of being overwhelmed. 55% of the people who participated in the MIND's transnational study think that relaxation techniques are good coping strategies.

Common relaxation strategies include:

- **Mindfulness meditation:** focusing on the present moment without judgment to promote emotional clarity and reduce anxiety.
- **Deep breathing exercises:** practicing slow, deep breathing to reduce physical tension and promote relaxation.
- **Progressive muscle relaxation:** systematically tensing and relaxing different muscle groups to release stress.
- **Guided imagery:** using visualization to evoke calming mental images that create a sense of peace and relaxation.

SLIDE 128

### Coping strategies in action: social support

Connecting with others provides essential emotional and practical support during stressful times. Social support can help individuals **feel understood, valued, and less isolated**, making it a crucial coping resource. In the MIND's study, seeking support from family and friends emerged as the most beneficial coping strategy (73%).

Common forms of social support include:

- **Talking to friends and family:** sharing experiences and receiving comfort and guidance from trusted individuals.
- **Participating in support groups:** joining groups where people with similar challenges come together to offer encouragement and share coping strategies.
- **Building relationships:** developing strong, positive connections that provide ongoing support and motivation.
- **Seeking professional help:** consulting with therapists, counselors, or other mental health professionals for guidance and treatment.

SLIDE 129-130

### Coping strategies in action: structured activities and routines

Creating a structured routine provides **predictability and stability**, which can be comforting during times of stress. Structured activities offer a sense of purpose and achievement, helping to build resilience and self-efficacy. This strategy is considered helpful by 55% of the respondents of the Transnational study on mental health needs.

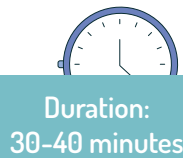
### Common strategies include:

- **Establishing daily schedules:** creating a consistent routine that includes time for work, relaxation, exercise, and social interactions.
- **Setting achievable goals:** breaking down tasks into manageable steps to reduce overwhelm and promote progress.

- **Engaging in meaningful activities:** pursuing hobbies, volunteering, or learning new skills that provide satisfaction and personal growth.



SLIDE 131



### Activity “Personal resilience toolkit” (individual reflection exercises, individual)

**Objective:** create a personalized toolkit of resilience strategies that can be applied to manage everyday stress.

**Required material:** Annex 16 – List of coping strategies, papers, pens, colored pencils, markers.

#### Step by step

1. Provide each participant with a list of coping strategies.
2. Explain that this activity will help them create a personalised toolkit of strategies they can draw upon when facing challenges.
3. Ask participants to take a moment to think about a time when they faced a challenge or felt stressed. What helped them cope during that time?
4. Encourage to put the different strategies into three different categories:
  - Strategies they use and enjoy

- Strategies they would like to try
  - Strategies they don't like
5. Encourage them to write down any additional strategies that come to mind. This could include:
    - a. Physical activities (e.g., yoga, dancing)
    - b. Creative outlets (e.g., drawing, writing)
    - c. Relaxation techniques (e.g., deep breathing, meditation)
    - d. Social support (e.g., reaching out to friends, joining a group)
  6. Ask participants to create their "Personal Resilience Toolkit" by writing down their identified strategies on the paper. They can use bullet points, drawings, or symbols to represent each strategy.
  7. Encourage them to decorate their toolkit with colours, doodles, or designs that inspire them, making it visually appealing and personal.
  8. If comfortable, invite participants to share one or two strategies from their toolkit with the group. This can help foster a sense of community and provide others with new ideas.

Conclude the activity by discussing the importance of having a personal toolkit to draw from when faced with challenges. Remind participants that resilience is not about avoiding stress but about having the right tools to cope with it.



### Strengthening resilience for future challenges

Throughout this module, we have explored the concept of **resilience** – the ability to adapt, recover, and grow stronger in the face of stress and adversity. Resilience is not about avoiding challenges, but rather about developing the tools and strategies needed to navigate them effectively.

We discussed a variety of **coping mechanisms**, ranging from **physical activities and creative outlets to relaxation techniques, social support, structured routines, educational resources, and healthy avoidance strategies**. These approaches are all essential components of resilience-building and can be tailored to fit individual needs and preferences.

Developing your own coping skills helps you **regulate emotions, build resilience, and enhance overall mental well-being**. It provides a sense of empowerment, making you feel more capable of handling stressful situations and overcoming obstacles. Practicing these strategies consistently can reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress, while promoting a balanced and fulfilling life.

Building resilience is a lifelong journey that evolves as you grow and face new challenges. By continuing to strengthen your coping skills, you are actively investing in your mental health and well-being.



SLIDE 133

## CONCLUSION

### OBJECTIVES DE LA CONCLUSION

- 🎵 Reflect on key lessons from the course.
- 🎵 Share their learnings and future mental health goals.
- 🎵 Identify future resources they can use.



#### Activity “Training quiz: evaluating your understanding”

**Objective:** review and reinforce the key concepts covered throughout the training.

**Required material:** Annex 17 – End of training quiz.

#### Step by step

We’ve come to the end of our training and it’s time to see what you’ve learned!

The trainer can decide how they want to do the quiz:

- 🎵 Create a Kahoot
- 🎵 Ask the question on the PPT

skills to **better understand your own mental health, recognize challenges, and apply coping strategies to maintain well-being.** Remember that resilience is a journey, not a destination – it requires ongoing practice and adaptation.

As you move forward, continue to apply what you have learned, explore new coping strategies, and share your insights with others. By fostering an open and supportive environment, we can all contribute to breaking down stigma and promoting mental health for everyone.

SLIDE 135

### Practical tools

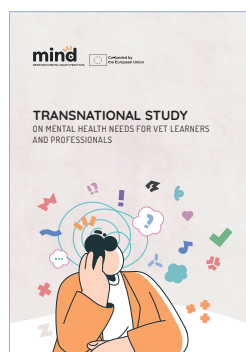
To find out more about mental health, learners can be redirected to the following website:

<https://adice.asso.fr/projects/mind/>

Each tool is available in English, Estonian, French, Spanish, Slovak and Macedonian.

On this website participants will find several tools they can consult online or download:

**A transnational study to understand the mental health needs in Europe.**



SLIDE 134



### Reflexion on the training

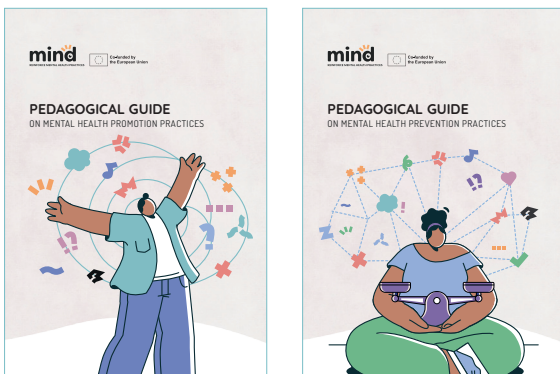
Mental health is a complex and evolving aspect of our well-being that requires attention, understanding, and continuous effort. Throughout this training, you have developed



The study focuses on several critical aspects of mental health in VET:

- 🔊 **Perception of mental health:** how do professionals and learners perceive mental health and its impact on their daily lives?
- 🔊 **Stress factors in VET:** what are the main factors affecting the mental well-being of learners and professionals, particularly during mobility periods?
- 🔊 **The role of VET professionals:** what support can they provide to learners, and what resources do they need to better assist them?
- 🔊 **Current practices and gaps in support:** the study sheds light on existing practices and identifies areas for improvement to better integrate mental health into educational projects.

### A Promotion and a Prevention guides on mental health



These guides are part of a set of educational tools designed to integrate better mental health practices into international mobility projects. The aim is to provide professionals and young people in mobility with tailored resources to prevent risks and promote mental well-being throughout their journey.

### An interactive tool to understand how to take care of your mental health

With this tool, participants will be able to follow interactive stories on 5 themes: stress, international mobility, emotions, anxiety and general mental health.

SLIDE 136

**Thank you for participating!**  
**Stay resilient and take care of yourself!**

Say goodbye to the group and thank them for their participation.



## EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING

Evaluating the training is essential to ensure its effectiveness and continuous improvement. These questionnaires, administered **before and after the training**, allow both trainers and participants to assess the learning process, identify areas of improvement, and measure the impact of the training on mentoring practices. (Annex 18).

To gather feedback on the training given, evaluate it with the participants. Use online or paper questionnaires. Evaluating training enables you to improve it so that it meets participants' needs even better.

### Step 1: Explain the purpose of the evaluation

Before closing the session, take a few moments to introduce the evaluation and explain why it matters. Clarify that the goal is to:

- ✱ Understand the impact of the training on participants.
- ✱ Identify what worked well and what could be improved.
- ✱ Gather suggestions to better adapt future sessions to participants' needs.

Inform participants that their feedback is anonymous and will be used to enhance future training sessions.

### Step 2: Share the evaluation questionnaire

You can choose between two formats depending on your setup:

#### ✱ Option 1: Online form

- Share a QR code, a link, or send an email with access to the evaluation form (e.g., via Google Forms or Typeform).
- Encourage participants to fill it out before leaving the session or within 24 hours.

#### ✱ Option 2: Paper version

- Distribute printed copies of the evaluation form during the final part of the session.
- Allow participants 5 to 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire on-site.

### Step 3: Follow up and encourage participation

- ✱ For online forms, track responses and send a reminder within 24–48 hours to those who haven't completed the evaluation.
- ✱ Remind participants gently of the importance of their feedback in improving future training sessions.

### Step 4: Review and use the feedback

Once responses are collected, take time to analyze the feedback by looking for common trends:

- ✱ Did participants feel better prepared or more confident after the training?
- ✱ Which parts of the training were particularly useful or in need of revision?
- ✱ Were there any logistical issues or suggestions for improvement?

Summarize the key insights and share them with your team or stakeholders to guide future updates or adaptations of the training.





## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Calm. (n.d.). Coping strategies.  
<https://www.calm.com/fr/blog/coping-strategies>

CAMH. (n.d.). Talking about mental illness (TAMI) Teacher's Guide.  
[http://www.camh.net/education/Resources\\_teachers\\_schools/TAMI/tami\\_teachersall.pdf](http://www.camh.net/education/Resources_teachers_schools/TAMI/tami_teachersall.pdf)

Centers for disease control and prevention. (n.d.). Mental health study: School nurses.  
[https://archive.cdc.gov/www\\_cdc\\_gov/healthyschools/shs/school\\_nurses\\_mh\\_study.htm](https://archive.cdc.gov/www_cdc_gov/healthyschools/shs/school_nurses_mh_study.htm)

Consilium. (n.d.). EU policy on mental health.  
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/mental-health/#:~:text=Anxiety disorders affected an estimated,11 million people%2C 2.4%25>

Counseling@Wake Forest. (2022, September 26). The difference between feelings and emotions.  
<https://counseling.online.wfu.edu/blog/difference-feelings-emotions/>

GoodTherapy. (n.d.). Coping mechanisms.  
<https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/coping-mechanisms>

Healthcare Utah. (2017). 10 celebrities who struggle with mental health.  
<https://healthcare.utah.edu/healthfeed/2017/04/10-celebrities-who-struggle-mental-health>

Healthdirect. (n.d.). Mental illness stigma.  
<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/mental-illness-stigma>

MComme Mutuelle. (n.d.). Votre bien-être passe aussi par votre santé mentale.  
[https://www.mcommemutuelle.com/magazine/votre-bien-etre-passe-aussi-par-votre-sante-mentale/#:~:text=Le nouveau dispositif gouvernemental "Mon,et la mutuelle à 100%25](https://www.mcommemutuelle.com/magazine/votre-bien-etre-passe-aussi-par-votre-sante-mentale/#:~:text=Le nouveau dispositif gouvernemental )

Medical news today. (2022, May 18). Medical myths: Mental health misconceptions.  
<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/medical-myths-mental-health-misconceptions>

Mental health commission of Canada. (2023). Fact sheet: Common mental health myths and misconceptions.  
<https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/resource/fact-sheet-common-mental-health-myths-and-misconceptions/>

Mental health foundation of New Zealand. (n.d.). What is mental distress?  
<https://mentalhealth.org.nz/social-action-grants/what-is-mental-distress>

Mental health literacy. (2018). Module 1 – What is mental health?  
<https://mhlcurriculum.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/final-module-1.pdf>

Mental Health Literacy. (n.d.). Module 1.  
<https://mhlcurriculum.org/module-1/>

MIND. (2024). Transnational study on mental health needs for VET learners and professionals.  
<https://adice.asso.fr/publications/mind-etude-transnationale/>

MIND. (2025). Pedagogical guide on mental health promotion practices.

MIND. (2025). Pedagogical guide on mental health prevention practices.

Munich Business School. (n.d.). Iceberg model in psychology and communication.  
<https://www.munich-business-school.de/en/1/business-studies-dictionary/iceberg-model>

National alliance on mental illness. (n.d.). Dispelling myths on mental illness.  
<https://www.nami.org/mental-illness/dispelling-myths-on-mental-illness/>

National alliance on mental illness. (n.d.). Six myths and facts about mental illness.  
<https://www.nami.org/stigma/six-myths-and-facts-about-mental-illness/>

National institute of mental health. (n.d.). Mental health publications.  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications>

National university. (2023). Why social emotional learning (SEL) matters for educators.  
<https://www.nu.edu/blog/social-emotional-learning-sel-why-it-matters-for-educators/>

Nightline France. (n.d.). Kit de vie – Réguler ses émotions.  
<https://www.nightline.fr/kit-de-vie/reguler-ses-emotions>

Nightline France. (n.d.). Kit de vie.  
<https://www.nightline.fr/kit-de-vie>

Northern lakes community mental health. (n.d.). Famous people who have had a mental illness.  
<https://www.northernlakescmh.org/learn/general-mental-health-topics/famous-people-who-have-had-a-mental-illness/>

PsychCentral. (2023). Fixing cognitive distortions.  
<https://psychcentral.com/lib/fixing-cognitive-distortions#identify-the-distortion>

Skyland Trail. (n.d.). 10 common types of cognitive distortions.  
<https://www.skylandtrail.org/10-common-types-of-cognitive-distortions/>

Tandfonline. (2013). Article on mental health and stigma.  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17542863.2013.786108>

The Juniper center. (2022). The importance of coping skills and better mental health.  
<https://www.thejunipercenter.com/the-importance-of-coping-skills-and-better-mental-health/#:~:text=They help us to manage,cope with difficult life events>

The therapy group of DC. (2021). Historical misconceptions fueling therapy stigma today.  
<https://therapygroupdc.com/therapist-dc-blog/historical-misconceptions-fueling-therapy-stigma-today/>

Trauma Research UK. (n.d.). The traffic light technique.  
<https://traumaresearchuk.org/the-traffic-light-technique/>

Verywell health. (2023). Coping mechanisms.  
<https://www.verywellhealth.com/coping-mechanisms-5272135>

Verywell mind. (2022, August 10). Self-reflection: Importance, benefits, and strategies.  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/self-reflection-importance-benefits-and-strategies-7500858>

WebMD. (2022, novembre 14). What to know about emotional health.  
<https://www.webmd.com/balance/what-to-know-about-emotional-health>

WebMD. (n.d.). What causes mental illness?  
<https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/mental-health-causes-mental-illness>

World health organization. (n.d.). Mental disorders.  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders>

World health organization. (n.d.). Facts in pictures: Mental health.  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/mental-health>

---

World health organization. (n.d.). Speaking out on stigma.  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/speaking-out-on-stigma>

World health organization. (n.d.). Q&A on stress.  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/stress>







### **ADICE**

<https://www.adice.asso.fr>  
adice@adice.asso.fr  
+33 3 20 11 22 68



### **Volunteers Centre Skopje**

<https://www.vcs.org.mk>  
vcs\_contact@yahoo.com  
+389 75 243 726



### **Fundación Plan B Educación Social**

<https://planbeducacionsocial.com>  
contacto@planbeducacionsocial.com  
+34 923 994 177



### **KERIC**

<https://www.keric.sk>  
keric@keric.sk  
+421 908 913 995



### **JMK**

<http://www.jmk.ee>  
jmk@jmk.ee  
+372 7300 544

This project is co-financed by the European Union. The views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the funding authority can be held responsible for this.