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CONNECTING TO YOURSELF AND OTHERS

*allowing each one of us to be seen,
heard, felt and expressed*

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INCREASING SELF-AWARENESS

Identify your core values

The teachers/instructors are invited to print each value on a separate piece of paper. Then pupils are able to look at the values individually, placing aside the values that are not essential for them. This process is individual and takes place until only 3–5 core values are left.

The second part of the activity is working in pairs. Taking turns both partners explain to each other how this value guides them in their everyday life.

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| tolerance | responsibility | authenticity | safety | neutrality | flexibility |
| love | discretion | diligence | stability | success | justice |
| connection | loyalty | discipline | excitement | beauty | honesty |
| patience | integrity | trust | self-development | gratitude | compassion |
| frugality | order | wisdom | curiosity | respect | self-care |
| self-awareness | creativity | wealth | modesty | freedom | intimacy |
| friendship | openness | power | persistence | presence | fun |
| equality | kindness | balance | courage | independence | harmony |

Self-awareness quiz

This quiz enables young people to stop for half an hour and look deeply inward and map what their current emotional wellbeing,

health and relations to other people are. This quiz can be done several times with 2–3 month intervals to observe changes.

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:

5 – absolutely true, **4** – mostly true, **3** – somewhat true, **2** – somewhat untrue, **1** – completely untrue

| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I feel comfortable in my body. | | | | | |
| 2. | I know my strengths well. | | | | | |
| 3. | I know exactly the areas I want to develop. | | | | | |
| 4. | I know what I want out of my life. | | | | | |
| 5. | I know what inspires me. | | | | | |
| 6. | When I feel down, I know the reason. | | | | | |
| 7. | I forgive others more easily than I forgive myself. | | | | | |
| 8. | I find it difficult to express my feelings. | | | | | |
| 9. | It is hard to say NO. | | | | | |
| 10. | I tend to overstep my boundaries. | | | | | |

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:

5 – absolutely true, **4** – mostly true, **3** – somewhat true, **2** – somewhat untrue, **1** – completely untrue

| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. | I find it hard to apologise. | | | | | |
| 12. | I find it difficult to relax in silence. | | | | | |
| 13. | It's hard for me to communicate with people whose opinions and backgrounds are different from my own. | | | | | |
| 14. | I have defined my core values that my actions and behaviour are based upon. | | | | | |
| 15. | I know how to make myself feel satisfied. | | | | | |
| 16. | I know what activities give me joy. | | | | | |
| 17. | I see difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through. | | | | | |
| 18. | I try to take care of myself when I am feeling down. | | | | | |
| 19. | I find it easy to communicate with others. | | | | | |
| 20. | I feel that my native language can be an obstacle to communication/socialisation with people of other languages. | | | | | |
| 21. | I think that different interpretations of the words and the messages, can cause misunderstandings. | | | | | |
| 22. | I feel free to talk about any proposed topic. | | | | | |
| 23. | I am able to build my inner peace. | | | | | |
| 24. | I learn from my mistakes. | | | | | |
| 25. | It is important for me to be loved. | | | | | |

Fostering self-care

This activity takes place at a world cafe style. Each of the four questions is written on a separate A1 paper and placed on a separate table. Pupils are divided into four groups. Each group sits down at one of the tables and starts brainstorming answers to the given question. The ideas are written on post-it notes and placed around the question. The groups move on to the next table and again start brainstorming ideas.

1. *How do I take care of myself?*
2. *How can I commit to acting and communicating more consciously?*
3. *What are the challenges in making choices and communicating more consciously?*
4. *What do I need to cultivate to increase my well-being in the future?*

The activity finishes when each group is back where they started. Then all the answers are placed on the whiteboard and presented to the whole class.

Video 

Reviewing concepts and beliefs

We are all influenced by our closest caretakers and we accept some or many of their beliefs or perceptions of life. However, everyone's life experience is different and also reality and circumstances change. This is an individual practice with optional sharing at the end. Pupils are invited to take approximately 10 minutes and write down the perceptions, beliefs and advice they got from their parents, siblings, grandparents, school teachers when they were growing up.

Some examples:

Work hard and love comes along.

The second part of the exercise is to honestly review those "tips" and mark if they are something they find useful and true at the moment or not.



A Secret Message

In this exercise, pupils are invited to write a secret letter to their future self imagining a time in the future e.g in 10 years. They are asked to write briefly about their present:

- *Who are you?*
- *What are you currently doing?*
- *Where are you?*
- *What are your biggest fears and insecurities at the current moment?*
- *What makes you happy?*

And then write about your future.

- *Where will you be then?*
- *What do you hope to achieve by then?*
- *How would you feel in the future when looking back at your current struggles?*
- *What makes you happy in 10 years?*
- *What do you wish for yourself?*

Seal the letter and put it away in a safe place.



Analysing skills

Below is a choice of skills but every teacher/specialist can create his/her own list or adapt the one given here. It is best to print or write each one of them on a separate piece of paper.

The practice is done in pairs. All the following skills are passed one by one from A to B who makes a choice:

- to put aside the ones not to focus on developing at the moment
- to keep the ones that are important to work on.

It is best to do this exercise until ca 3 skills are left to focus on. Then the roles are reversed.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Create trust | Listen actively |
| Build relationships | Plan ahead |
| Express thoughts clearly | Make agreements |
| Keep promises | Take up challenges |
| Make changes | Work independently |
| Manage conflicts | Manage time |
| Take decisions | Handle stress |
| Stay calm in critical situations | Accept criticism |
| Encourage and inspire others | Be present |
| Analyse problems | Enjoy small things |
| Give feedback | Notice details |
| Ask open questions | Ask for help |
| Support others | Write correctly |
| Say NO | Handle people's emotions |
| Learn from mistakes | Relieve stress |

Reviewing the core – who am I?

This practice is best done with pupils aged 15+ and in pairs. A is asking the questions and taking notes on B's answers. In this situation A can focus fully on the question and later refer back to his/her answers.

1. MY IDENTITY

- *What kind of a person am I?*
- *What roles are important in my life?*
- *What are the three most important things for me?*

2. PERSONAL HISTORY

- *What have been the happiest moments in my life so far? Why?*
- *Who are the people who have had the most positive impact on my life? Why?*
- *What results have I achieved so far that I am most proud of?*

3. ENVIRONMENT

- *Where and with whom do I want to be on my 80th birthday?*
- *Which resources and possibilities has the environment given me?*

4. BEHAVIOUR

- *Which activity (activities) offers me deepest satisfaction?*
- *If I had unlimited time and resources how would I choose to spend my time?*

5. ABILITIES AND SKILLS

- *What are my biggest strengths?*
- *Which skills and strengths have the people who know me well noticed about me?*
- *Which hidden talents do I have that others are not aware of yet?*
- *Which skills and abilities do I admire most in others?*
- *Which skills and abilities would I like to develop?*

6. MISSION

- *What are the most important goals that I would like to achieve in the different roles that I play in my life?*



A Secret Wish

The pupils are invited to write down a wish they have that they haven't told anyone. They are asked to answer the following questions:

- *Why is it important to you?*
- *Have you already done something to make this dream come true?*

Meditation journaling

The objective of this activity is to promote mindfulness by encouraging pupils to connect with their personal experiences through journaling. By focusing on the breath and observing emotions and physical sensations, participants are invited to reflect on their inner narrative and the stories they carry. This practice fosters self-reflection and emotional awareness, helping the pupils to gain clarity about their feelings and experiences. Through journaling, participants can document these insights, making sense of their thoughts and emotions, and deepening their personal growth journey.

The teacher/facilitator leads a brief meditation with the participants inviting them to sit comfortably, then ask them to focus on their breath for a few minutes. Afterwards, the pupils are invited to observe any physical sensations present in their body: in the legs, abdomen, chest, back, arms, the temperature of their hands, neck, and shoulders. Finally, they are asked to notice how they are feeling emotionally. Once the practice is complete, the teachers ask the participants to write down what they felt and noticed during the practice, including emotions, physical sensations and thoughts.

Audio 

What if ...

The teacher creates a list of moral dilemmas for students to ponder (for example using ChatGPT), prints each dilemma on a separate piece of paper and puts them into a bag. Students pull out/ use WheelPicker to make the selection. Then they share how they would handle the situation using ethical reasoning & decision making skills.

Example dilemma:

Your friend breaks something and asks you not to tell anyone. Should you keep their secret or tell an adult what happened?

Creating your own reality

Participants are asked to take a label with one of the following roles (they do not see the role before picking it nor the roles of others):

A 19-year old man living and working in his parents goat farm in the mountains.

A 30 year old overweight person who suffers from diabetes.

A single parent of a disabled 5-year old boy.

An 83 year old former athlete with heart condition.

Then participants put on blindfolds and stand in a line with their backs facing the wall and in front of them room to take at least 8 steps. Then the instructor starts reading out the following questions:

Take a step forward if you feel

- *you are able to make enough money to live comfortably?*
- *you are able to study what you really want?*
- *you are able to do the work you love?*
- *you feel equal member of the community?*
- *you feel you are contributing to the society?*
- *you feel loved?*
- *you feel safe in this universe?*
- *you have enough friends who care about you?*

Then the participants remove the blindfolds and reveal their roles. It is fascinating to observe how people who had the same roles saw their lives.

This type of practice enables us to see how differently it is possible to create your own reality. Diseases, abuse, disability etc often make people fall into the victim role and stop taking responsibility for their own lives.



Victim versus accountable

The teacher explains to the pupils what the difference is between taking responsibility in their lives and falling into a victim role, i.e. blaming others, whining, suffering, etc. The explanation can be illustrated with real life examples.

For example, working in a low paid, not satisfying job instead of taking the time and making the effort to study something that would help to get a better job, etc.

The pupils are invited to identify and write down 3 situations where they have chosen not to take responsibility fully for their lives and blamed others for their misfortune. Then, pupils are asked to find 3 situations where they have taken responsibility.

The power of saying NO

This practice is done in pairs. Some desirable edible things, such as fruits, strawberries or chocolate are needed for this practice. A has the desired thing and B takes the role of a beggar who uses different strategies to get the strawberries or chocolate. The first person has to say NO to every request – this exercise can last approximately 2–3 minutes. Then B plays the role of a bully, so the asking takes a more aggressive tone and again A has to decline.

Then the roles are reversed. The goal of this activity is to help young people increase their confidence in saying NO.



HANDLING EMOTIONS

Compassion theatre

It is recommended to start the practice playing soft music and asking the pupils to walk aimlessly around the room. This helps to fall into a meditative state and connect to one's body.

Then the pupils are invited to connect to one emotion as deeply as possible. It is advisable to start with lighter feelings, such as gratitude, joy, relief and gradually moving to feelings, such as rage, sadness, shame, guilt etc. The pupils are first asked to dance or just move around the room expressing and feeling this emotion and at the end of the song come to stillness as a statue. The practice ends with connecting to another person/statue.

This is a beautiful compassion practice which enables the pupils to connect to their own feelings as well feel other people's emotions through body practice. People, especially teenagers, often find it difficult to verbally express their emotions. This is when bodily expression comes in handy. Also, there is an impersonal aspect, i.e. pupils can create the movement or dance either expressing the feeling in general or their personal story.



Variation: the practice can be done in pairs, while one pupil moves or dances expressing a given emotion and the other one is just a witness.

Emotional Mirroring

The teacher divides the group into pairs. A shares a personal experience that had a significant emotional impact. B (the listener) is invited to pay attention not only to the words but also to the tone of voice, body language, and emotions conveyed.

After the sharing, the listener reflects on what they heard and observed, trying to express what they believe the speaker was feeling, using phrases such as

"It seems like you felt..."

"I noticed you felt... when..."

The speaker confirms or corrects the interpretation, deepening mutual understanding. Then, the roles are switched.

This exercise helps participants connect emotionally with what the other person is saying, practising both active listening and empathy. The goal is to develop the ability to listen not only to the words but also to the underlying emotions, promoting a more empathetic and emotionally connected form of active listening.

The World is in Our Hands

In this exercise, the teacher passes a ball to one pupil saying one word describing a mood or emotion, such as: "upset", "grateful", "sad", etc.

Whoever catches the ball should share something connected to that emotion.

Examples:

"Today I am grateful to have a great family."

"Today I feel upset because I forgot my phone at home."

At the end, invite the children and young people to share their experience in pairs (or as a group if you consider it appropriate). Learning to recognize personal challenges and practising gratitude from an early age is crucial for the healthy emotional development of children and young people. By understanding emotions, they become more resilient and better equipped to handle difficulties. This practice fosters a sense of well-being and emotional balance. With this solid emotional foundation, they are more likely to develop active listening and empathy.

Bad "listeners"

Pupils sit on the floor in a circle, and one volunteer leaves the room while the others agree on how to behave as bad "listeners". Each one chooses to clearly demonstrate a lack of interest and lack of attention to the 'speaker'. Looking in the other direction, scratching, cleaning their nails, looking at their watch, coughing, etc. After returning to the room, the speaker should sit in the middle of the circle, choose the most interesting movie they have seen recently or tell something pleasant from their life (birthday, field trip, etc.) and begin speaking. After a short time the role-playing is interrupted and all listeners applaud the speaker(s).

Questions for the listeners:

- *How do you think the person speaking felt while you were not listening?*
- *If you were the speaker, how would you have reacted?*

Questions for the speaker:

- *How did you feel?*
- *What did you feel like you were doing when no one was listening?*
- *How would you describe when no one was listening?*



Silent meal

The aim of a silent meal is to create a unique and mindful dining experience where pupils come together to prepare and share a meal in complete silence. This practice encourages them to cultivate present-moment awareness, deepening their connection with the food they eat, and fostering a sense of communal unity through non-verbal communication. It is essential that the group keeps silence also during the preparation of the dinner, that the tasks are clearly communicated beforehand and that all the needed kitchen tools and food is provided and available at different work stations in the kitchen and dining room.

Guidelines for a silent dinner typically include:

Silence: The fundamental rule of a silent dinner is to maintain complete silence throughout the meal and during preparation time if it is decided to also prepare the meal together. Participants refrain from speaking or using any verbal communication during the dining experience.

Mindful eating: Participants are encouraged to eat mindfully, savouring each bite and paying full attention to the taste, texture, and aroma of the food. It involves slowing down the eating process and being fully present with each mouthful.

Non-verbal communication: While silence is maintained it is good also to refrain from non-verbal communication such as

eye contact, smile, and use of gestures. While this can feel too difficult at first time, the non-verbal communication can be used to acknowledge each other and show gratitude.

Present-moment awareness: The focus of the dinner is on the present moment. Participants are encouraged to let go of distractions, worries, and preoccupations, bringing their attention fully to the dining experience.

Respect and acceptance: Participants are asked to be respectful of others' silence and to accept any discomfort or awkwardness that may arise during the experience.

Communal unity: Despite the lack of verbal communication, silent dinners promote a sense of togetherness and communal unity. Participants share the experience of mindful eating, fostering a deeper connection with each other.

Electronic devices: To maintain the ambiance of the silent dinner, the use of electronic devices, such as phones or tablets, is discouraged or prohibited during the meal.

Variation: if the dining experience seems too intense, the teachers can start with “silent art class”, “silent handicraft class” or “silent hike”.

DEVELOPING SELF-EXPRESSION

Going on a trip

Pupils choose a place they have always wanted to visit, find pictures, fun facts in magazines, books, online. Then they decide on the following:

- *When is the best time to go?*
- *What do they want to see while there?*

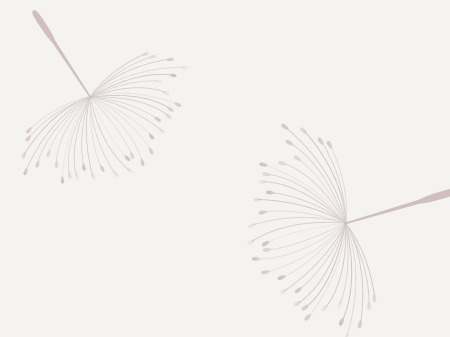
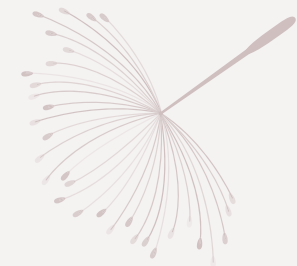
Finally they make their own scrapbook/ traveller's guide. This is a fun way to explore and learn geography as well as manifest one's dream and set goals.

The Happy Problem Box

Pupils are invited to write down small problems or situations that make them feel challenged or frustrated in their daily lives on small pieces of paper.

For example: My little brother constantly annoys me when I do my homework.

The papers are placed in a box. Each student picks a random problem and, in small groups, they discuss creative ways to solve the situation, focusing on how to turn it into an opportunity for happiness or well-being. They then share their solutions with the group, encouraging an open discussion on how small changes can lead to feelings of joy and satisfaction.



Laughing Through Stress: Reimagining Challenges with Humor

Think about a stressful experience and write about how it could have been resolved in a humorous way.

What do I feel?

In front of class, students mime smiles (polite/ grimace/ grin/ beam/ giggle/ amused/ merry/ gleeful/ jolly/ sarcastic). Their peers have to guess it.

Writing a humorous story

Each participant writes a short humorous story or anecdote from their life and shares it with the group. This develops self-expression and creative writing.

Asking to understand

Teachers explain the importance of open-ended questions in interpersonal communication, particularly those that encourage reflection and self-awareness.

In small groups or pairs, pupils practise formulating open and challenging questions based on either fictional or real-life scenarios. For example, one person tells a story of a recent positive or negative experience and others practise asking open-ended questions, i.e. questions that start with when, where, how, etc.

Some examples:

- *“How do you feel about it?”*
- *“What can you learn from this experience?”*

After exchanging questions and responses, the participants discuss in the group how well-crafted questions can deepen and facilitate the process of conscious communication.

Microphone or Beyond?

It is a game where players try to guess objects by asking yes-or-no questions. In each round, one player (the thinker) picks an object, and the other players (guessers) try to figure out what it is by asking questions that compare it to different categories.

The first question is always:

“Is it more like a tree or an artist?”

The thinker then chooses the closest category and answers based on that. For example, if the object is a pumpkin, the answer would be “tree.” If it’s a wooden nutcracker, the thinker uses their judgement to decide. The game keeps going until the object is guessed or players give up.

Story Told in Photographs

Pupils are invited to bring a series of 3 to 5 photographs that represent significant moments or "secret stories" in their lives. They share with the group how these images reflect their experiences or emotions, explaining the context behind each one. This activity promotes visual communication and offers a different way to tell personal stories, encouraging a deeper understanding of each person’s experiences.

This activity helps participants express their personal stories through visual means, making it easier to communicate emotions that might be hard to put into words. It fosters a sense of connection and empathy as participants share meaningful moments from their lives. By discussing the context behind the photographs, individuals deepen their communication skills while reflecting on their own experiences. The process also encourages active listening, as the group gains insight into the emotions and memories tied to each image.

Don't assume! Ask!

Pupils sit in pairs facing each other and start asking the following questions about their partners. The questions can be for example the following:

1. *Was your partner a good student at school?*
2. *Did your partner have many hobbies as a child?*
3. *Is your partner living with anybody?*
4. *Does your partner have children?*
5. *Is your partner happy?*
6. *Is your partner fond of sports?*
7. *Has your partner travelled widely?*
8. *Does your partner like you?*

It is fascinating to see if the participants sometimes answered: “I don't know.”. Society demands that we know everything, especially if one works as a teacher, tour guide, politician, etc. It is not widely accepted to answer “I don't know”. However, the only way to really find out the answer, is to say “I don't know.” and ask.

Video 

My secret story

In the story, pupils are invited to write about their own secrets or invent a character with his/her secrets. The pupils are given the following tips:

- to unveil secrets in their narrative mysteriously;
- to consider strategically placing revelations at crucial moments to maximise their impact;
- to build suspense by dropping hints and foreshadowing creating an air of anticipation that keeps readers engaged.

The character's hidden past, unspoken desires or undisclosed intentions can add depth and nuance, creating a rich context that readers find irresistible, creating complexity by introducing layers of secrets that interconnect and a web of intrigue. This complexity not only enhances the storytelling but also provides ample material for plot twists and character development. Explore revelation, delving into the emotional and psychological impact on your characters. Add realism and depth to your narrative. A hidden object, a cryptic message, a recurring motif can be a narrative device — they can become powerful symbols that enhance the overall meaning of your work.

Who am I to the world today?

Think about the following:

How do I want to introduce myself to the world?

What do I want to be noticed about me?

What am I proud of?

Take or have a photo taken of you that reflects you and your values. Don't say anything.

- Get into groups of three and choose an order. The first person shows a photo of himself to his friends. Others look at it and draw a picture for him as feedback. See what you see in the photo, what seems important to you. The drawing can be abstract. The pictures are handed over with comments on what caught the eye and what was considered important. The person for whom the picture was made and the feedback was given cannot say or comment anything.
- Exchange the roles. The same is repeated for the second and third person.
- Everyone looks at the pictures they have received and takes or has a new photo taken of themselves.
- Once again others express their feedback in a drawing and then verbally comment.
- Everyone takes or has a new photo taken of themselves.
- Sharing your image, how it changed based on the feedback.

Listening Without Interrupting

The pupils work in pairs to practise listening to someone speak for a set amount of time without interrupting, then reflecting or paraphrasing what they heard.

The teacher can give pupil A a short story to read and retell.

Pupil B listens carefully without interrupting and then summarizes the main points of the speaker's message to show they fully understood the meaning. This exercise allows the speakers to clarify vague information and to expand their message.

Example:

"So what you are saying is that you do not feel good in your family cabin in the mountains because you have no friends there and you feel lonely."

Drawing and symbolism

Pupils are invited to draw pictures to symbolise their secret story. They then share their drawings with the group, explaining the symbolism and its meaning. The exercise develops visual expression and symbolic thinking.

Comic charades

Pupils are invited to create a game of charades where participants act out a funny situation, like "walking on ice" or "trying to catch a flying balloon." The group tries to guess the scene. In addition to being enjoyable, it helps participants explore non-verbal communication and creative interpretation.

The Hidden Phrase

The teacher gives each pair a unique "hidden phrase" that they must incorporate into their dialogue. These phrases are secret and should not be shared with other groups.

Pupils work in pairs to create a dialogue that naturally includes their hidden phrase. The goal is to blend the phrase into the conversation so that it doesn't stand out or seem obvious to others.

Each pair presents their dialogue to the class. The other pupils listen carefully, trying to identify the hidden phrase.

If a group successfully guesses the hidden phrase, they earn one point. If nobody identifies the phrase, the presenting pair earns the point.



Game of Misunderstandings

In a group, seated in a circle, one pupil whispers a simple story to the person next to them, who then repeats the story as they heard it to the next person. This continues until the last person, who shares the story aloud, which will likely have humorous mistakes. This illustrates how misunderstandings can create funny situations.

Variation: pupils stand in line with their backs to the person behind them. The last person in line demonstrates a dance move to the person directly in front, then this person copies the move to the person in front of him/her and this goes on until the first person in line has seen the movement and shows how he/she understood it.

Focus on the positive

At the end of each day, write down the three funniest things you experienced. Describe how they made you feel.



STRENGTHENING COOPERATION

“They build ...”

Provide students with materials like straws, marshmallows, cards, paper cups, etc. and challenge them to build. Challenges can be the tallest freestanding tower, a bridge that can hold a certain weight or other structures following specific rules. Students must learn to think creatively, collaborate and iterate.

Finding similar likes

This is a group activity, ideally about 10–12 people taking part. One person makes a statement about his/her likes, e.g. "I like rainy weather." All the people who also like rainy weather, stand up and say: "I like rainy weather, too." The next person who feels called, stands up and makes a different statement about his/ her likes and again, the ones who agree, stand up and repeat.

Photo connecting

A set of photos or pictures is needed for this activity. The pictures are all laid out on a large table.

- A.** Pupils are invited to choose a picture that speaks to them or attracts them somehow.
- B.** Pupils are instructed to walk around and find three people who have something similar in their picture and with each person discuss the similarities.
- C.** The next task is to find similar emotion or energy with someone else's picture and share the ideas with this person.
- D.** The final task is to connect with another pair and form a group of four.

This task is a great ice-breaker and/or can be used to create stronger connection in the class.

Video 

Drawing details

This practice starts with the teacher placing a set of photos on a large table and asking the pupils to select one that calls for them or may be done as a follow-up to the previously described practice.

The pupils are invited to form groups of four and sit down together. Each person looks at his/her photo and selects one detail that inspires or speaks to them and draws this detail on a sheet of paper (preferably A3). Now the pupils are invited to look at the detail, be inspired and draw a story around it not copying the photograph.

The participants are then asked to give the picture they just completed to the person on the right. The person who gets the drawing finds one detail again that speaks to him/her and draws it on a blank sheet of paper adding a story to it.

Mirroring the drawing

This activity takes place in pairs and some crayons/pencils and A3 format paper are needed. The A3 format paper is folded into two equal halves. Pupil A starts drawing on his/her half of the paper and pupil B mirrors the drawing on his/her half. First it is recommended not to draw very complicated objects and keep the pace rather slow. The “mirroring pupil” is instructed not to guess or expect but keep an open mind and be fully present. This activity lasts ca 5–10 minutes after which the roles are reversed.

Video 

Happy communication

1. Daily happy communication challenge — each participant sets a goal to use positive communication techniques throughout the day and reflects on the results.
2. ‘Listen Closely’ is one of the simplest virtual communication games to play. All you need is paper and pens. In each round, one player describes an object while the others draw it, one shape or line at a time. For example, it could be a sun, a tree, a stoplight or a cat. The goal is for players to guess what the object is before the drawing is finished.

The game shows how important it is to give clear instructions, and it’s funny to see how different the drawings can turn out from what you expected.

Story from imaginary symbols

One sheet of A3 format paper is needed per each participant and pupils are asked to work in groups of four.

1. Each pupil wrinkles his/her A3 sheet of paper, opens it and passes it on to the person on the right. The person on the right wrinkles the paper, opens it and passes again to the person on the right. This goes on until each person has their original sheet back.
2. Then the pupils are invited to find some shape on the wrinkled paper and using a crayon or pencil draw the lines of the shape. Then they pass the paper on to the person on the right who finds some other shape and draws the lines. This happens until everyone gets their original paper back.
3. Next the pupils are invited to select one of these shapes and cut or tear out one shape giving the rest of the paper to the person on the right who finds another shape to cut out before passing the paper on to the next person. Finally, when everyone gets back their original paper, they should have four shapes or objects cut out.

4. Each pupil selects one of these four shapes or objects. They keep working in the same group of four where they now have four shapes for the whole group. Together using the four shapes for inspiration they create a story to perform. This can be pantomime, dance, drama, etc.



Storytelling Relay

One person starts a story, and each subsequent person adds to it, ensuring they listen carefully to continue the narrative.

Active Listening

Students are divided into two groups and sit in two concentric circles: the pairs sit facing each other.

On a signal, those in the outer circle start a speech on one a given topic. Those in the inner circle only listen, they do not speak. Then, using the same topic, those in the inner circle speak and those in the outer circle only listen. Listeners should not interrupt, should not say ("and why did you ..."), should not give advice and support "you could have ..." or "you should have ..." and should not mention their experience ("well I would have done ...").

The topic of discussion should be personal: students can talk about a pleasant or unpleasant experience, a friendship or a commitment that was successfully completed, etc. They talk in the form of 'my own statements', saying how they felt when such and such happened ... (2 topics maximum).

Examples of discussion topics (posted in advance).

- The most humorous event that has ever happened to me.
- Incident in which I was angrier than I have ever been.
- Imagine you are an all-powerful king/queen.
- What would you do for your classmates or the people of your town?
- What would be my favorite birthday?

Then everyone should repeat what they heard from their partner. They should repeat the words of their partner.

Gaining confidence

The class is divided into pairs. A is the “driver” leading B who is blindfolded. A is always behind B holding his/her hands on B’s back gently moving him around the room. There can be an agreement on turning right, left, stop, etc. Alternatively, A can hold B by the arm.

The teacher or one of the pupils can play the role of the animator. When the "blind person" feels safe, the animator can yell STOP and ask the "drivers" to gently pull away and find another "blind person" to drive. The process of changing "drivers" can be repeated several times.

Variation: The animator specifies an imaginary space, e.g., an abandoned water mill, in which the pair will move. A has his eyes closed and B leads him. As they walk hand in hand, B describes what he sees and A fills in what he hears, smells, etc. All this from their imagination.

Tribal dance

This is a group activity, ideally consisting of 12–16 members who are divided into groups of 3–4. Each group is given a task to create a dance using only a single body part, i.e. one group can dance while moving only the head, the next group shoulders, the third group arms/hands, the fourth hips and the last group legs/feet. First each group gets ca 5 minutes to create the dance and then a big circle is formed and each group demonstrates the move without music and everyone copies it. Then music starts playing and a dance is formed from the elements of each group, i.e. the head, then the shoulders, arms, hips and finally leg movement. This is a fun activity that can be done using different rhythms and types of music.

Video 



Finger guiding

This is a beautiful activity done in pairs. The two pupils forming a pair touch each other using one finger only. Then they decide who is the leader and who is the follower. The leader starts the dance by leading the follower only with one finger. This practice helps to connect to another person on a different level. Then the roles are reversed so both partners can be leaders and followers.



Happy Questions Circle

Pupils sit in a circle, and each one receives a question related to happiness and communication (e.g., “What makes you the happiest?” or “How do you communicate when you are very happy?”). One by one, the participants answer their questions, and the group is encouraged to ask follow-up questions to deepen the conversation. This activity promotes self-awareness and genuine interest in others, while also improving active listening and communication skills. It fosters open communication by encouraging participants to share personal experiences and respond to each other with curiosity and respect. Overall, it strengthens communication skills and builds stronger connections through the exchange of positive and reflective ideas.

Wishes for the World

The teacher invites the pupils to sit comfortably and imagine a huge floating ball above them. Then, the teacher asks them, one by one, to share their wishes for the world, encouraging them to express their wishes and imagining placing them inside the ball. Each wish makes the ball grow larger and heavier.

Together, they count to three and then "throw" the ball towards the sky, saying goodbye as they imagine it carrying their wishes to all the people around the world.

When the children and young people listen to their peers share their wishes for the world, they practise unity and faith in the good, mindfulness, active listening, and respect for others' perspectives.

Invent, Draw, and Describe

In pairs, students combine body parts of more animals, give their creation a name, draw and write its description, then present it in front of their classmates.

Join the Laughing Chain

Just start laughing and ask people to join you. After a while, nobody will be able to resist laughing.

MINDFULNESS DICTIONARY

| WORD | DEFINITION |
|--------------------------------|--|
| acceptance | willingness to tolerate a difficult situation |
| addiction | the inability to stop doing something, often harmful |
| attachment | a strong bond or feeling of love between people |
| authentic | real |
| awareness | the conscious knowledge and attention to the present moment, your thoughts as well as the environment |
| belief | the feeling of being certain that something is true |
| boundaries | the limit of what someone considers acceptable behaviour |
| breath awareness | mindfulness practice that involves paying attention to breathing |
| breathwork | the practice of conscious breathing to calm the mind and bring attention to the present |
| burnout | extreme tiredness or physical or mental illness caused by overwork |
| compassion | deep awareness of the pain or bad luck of others, often combined with the desire to help |
| compassionate listening | active listening with empathy and without judgment and interrupting, focusing on understanding the speaker |
| consciousness | being awake and aware of external stimuli and one's own mental activity and emotional state |
| contemplation | the act of thinking deeply or meditating on a particular subject |
| coping | dealing with difficult situation or problems |
| empathy | the ability to imagine being in the same situation with another human and feel similar emotions |
| feedback | the reaction to some communication, process or information |
| focus | concentrating attention on one specific task or thought at a time, eliminating distractions |
| gratitude | the practice of recognizing and appreciating the positive aspects of life |

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| grounding | techniques used to reconnect with the present moment and reduce anxiety or stress |
| healing | the process of getting well again, usually after an extremely stressful event |
| insight | the act or result of understaing the inner nature of things or of seeing intuitively |
| intention | setting a clear, purposeful focus for your thoughts, actions or meditation practice |
| journaling | the act of writing one's inner thoughts, goals, fears, etc. |
| judgement | labelling as good or bad, positive or negative |
| maturity | behaving mentally and emotionally like an adult |
| meditation | the practice that involves focusing or clearing your mind using a combination of mental and physical techniques |
| mindful communication | engaging in conversation with full presence, active listening and empathy |
| mindful eating | paying full attention to the experience of eating, savoring each bite, and recognizing hunger and fullness cues |
| mindful movement | engaging in physical activity, such as yoga or walking, with full awareness and presence |
| non-judgement | observing thoughts, feelings and experiences without labeling them as good or bad |
| non-reactivity | the ability to observe thoughts and emotions without immediately responding to them |
| patience | allowing things to unfold at their own pace without frustration or rush |
| presence | the state of being fully engaged in the current moment, without distraction |
| resilience | the ability to recover from challenges or stress with mental and emotional strength |
| self-awareness | understanding one's emotions, thoughts and behavior in the present moment |
| self-compassion | treating yourself with kindness and understanding during times of difficulty |
| self-Inquiry | the process of examining one's thoughts, emotions, and beliefs to gain deeper self-understanding |
| self-regulation | the ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts and behavior in a mindful way |
| somatic | relating to the body |
| subconscious | the part of our mind that we are not actively aware of but influences our behaviour |
| trauma | long-lasting emotional distress caused by a severe experience |
| visualization | a technique involving the creation of mental images to promote relaxation and focus |



More resources available:
<https://www.adelante.ee/en/erasmus/project-results/>