

# Preventing youth violence

Practical Toolkit



Co-funded by  
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City of  
Gothenburg



sempre  
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RIK  
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<b>ABOUT THE TOOLKIT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ABOUT THE PROJECT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PROJECT PARTNERS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>8</b>
What is violence?	9
Gender norms and violence	10
Violence and aggression	10
<b>DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE</b>	<b>11</b>
Physical violence	12
Mental violence	12
Sexual violence and gender based violence	13
Economic violence	14
Digital violence and cyberbullying	14
Neglect	15
<b>VIOLENCE – PREVENTION AN INTERVENTION</b>	<b>16</b>
Violence – prevention and intervention	17
Consequences of violence - how violence affects mental health	17
Violence Prevention	18
Responses to Violence	19
<b>PRACTICAL TOOLS AND METHODS FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>ACTIVITIES THAT SERVE AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC OF VIOLENCE</b>	<b>25</b>
Creating principles for a safer space	25
Types of violence and associations with them	27
Pyramid of violence – an understanding of violence	28
<b>ACTIVITIES THAT DEEPEN THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TOPIC</b>	<b>30</b>
Activities that deepen the understanding of the topic	31
A little violence also hurts – cards for dialogue	31
Participatory Theater	33
Power-Flower	41
Non-violent communication	45
Sensoa Flag System	47
Trust your mind	50
<b>ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE USED AS A SUMMARY</b>	<b>51</b>
Activities that can be used as a summary	52
Our connections – art therapy	52
Paper metaphor	53
<b>USEFUL HELP NUMBERS</b>	<b>54</b>

## About the toolkit

***Preventing youth violence - practical toolkit*** is a final result of the project *Violence awareness raising – from campaign to everyday practice*, coordinated by the City of Gothenburg in partnership with Estonian Sexual Health Association, Sempre a Frente Foundation and Tartu Youth Work Center.

This toolkit is intended for professionals who want to work in the violence prevention area, such as youth workers, teachers, specialists, social workers and every person who is interested in the field of violence prevention.

It is divided into two parts: a theoretical part and a practical part. The first part describes the most important information about violence: the types of violence and typical symptoms, how to prevent it and how to react to it. In this part there is also an area dedicated to self-care for people working in the field of violence. The second part contains 10 practical activities that can be used in working with youth in the area of preventing violence. We recommend starting by familiarizing yourself with the basic knowledge about violence before moving on to activities with young people.

## About the project

**Violence awareness raising – from campaign to everyday practice** is an Erasmus+ Key Action 2, Small-scale Strategic Partnership project. The project is the initiative of four organizations from three different countries with the main objective to increase the capacity to prevent violence. It aimed to strengthen youth workers' knowledge about violence and violence prevention and to equip them with knowledge, tools and methods necessary in the daily work with young people.





# **PROJECT PARTNERS**

**PREVENTING YOUTH VIOLENCE**



# Project partners



**City of Gothenburg (Sweden)** – two social service administrations have taken part in the project. The districts work with social services, leisure activities and meeting points for youth. The districts have several initiatives and campaigns to prevent violence. The work to prevent violence is based on the World Health Organizations' strategies and with a special focus on four of them: increased awareness of violence, increased awareness of the link between gender norms and violence, the bystander perspective, and increased self-control.



**Tartu Youth Work Center (Estonia)** – a municipal institution under the Tartu City Government. It provides supportive, inclusive and creative environments for young people aged 7–19. The center operates five youth centers and offers mobile and outreach youth work to reach those who don't visit youth centers. In addition, Tartu Youth Work Center activities include open youth work, school holiday programs, training, youth-led events and participation support. It also coordinates the Tartu Youth Work Camp, giving 13–19-year-olds hands-on summer job experiences. The center supports youth initiatives and provides project guidance to help young people realize their ideas.



**Sempre a Frente Foundation (Poland)** – is a non-profit that works with children, youth, parents/guardians and youth workers in the area of psycho-social support since 2010 and has great experience in developing and implementing programs supporting mental health of youngsters. The foundation coordinates Child Advocacy Centre in Lublin- an interdisciplinary facility, which offers psychological, psychiatric, legal and medical assistance for children and youth who experienced violence, and Youth Information and Development Centre which offers free consultations, educational workshops and events promoting civic engagement and volunteering for youth. They believe in learning by doing, in their work, which combines psychological and therapeutic approaches with non-formal education methodologies.



**Estonian Sexual Health Association (Estonia)** – ESHA is a non-profit guardian organization for sexual and reproductive health and rights, founded in 1994. Their goal is to maintain and improve people's close relationships, sex life and health. They work towards this with prevention, monitoring and intervention; they cooperate with organizations at different levels of civil society; they take part in sectorial decisions and conduct trainings for different target groups. They help young people to become aware of their sexual rights and thereby make more informed choices in life. By contributing to the sexual education of young people (following the holistic sexual education of the European Region of the World Health Organization and sexual health services for young people (free youth counseling centers and free anonymous web counseling), they contribute to the growth of healthier and happier generations than before.



## Dear reader

A life free from violence is an inalienable right of every human being, regardless of age, gender or origin. Responding to situations involving violence is our social responsibility. As teachers, youth workers, social workers or other professionals working with youths and families, we have a real impact on the quality of life of those in our care and stopping situations involving abuse.

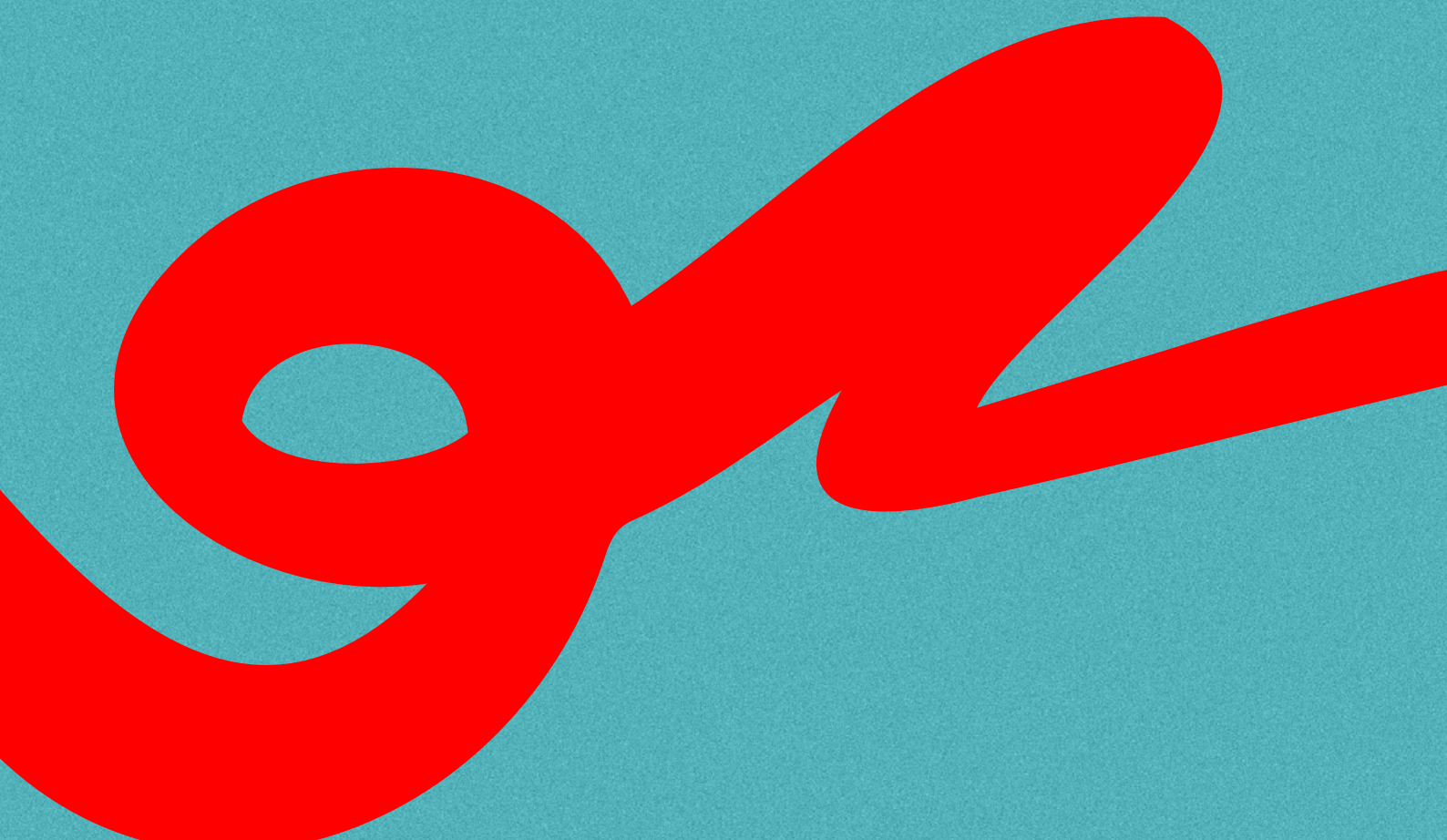
Prevention of violence is no less important than the reaction to it. Teaching young people how to communicate and solve problems, how to deal with difficulties constructively and dismantling harmful beliefs about violence is a step towards a world and communities free from it.

We hope that the information and workshop exercises contained in this toolkit will be helpful and useful in your daily work.

**Good luck! You are doing a good job!**



# **THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION**





# Theoretical introduction

## WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as *the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.*

The WHO definition emphasizes the intentionality of the act committed and excludes unintentional accidents such as injuries resulting from a road accident.

The use of the word *power* beyond the *use of physical force* broadens the understanding of violence to include acts arising from power/dependency relationships, such as threats and intimidation. The use of force also includes neglect and acts of omission. So “the use of physical force or power” should be understood to include neglect and all types of physical, sexual and psychological abuse.

The WHO definition of violence highlights the consequences of violence not only in terms of death or physical harm, but also in psychological harm, deprivation, and disruption to the normal development of the individual. These consequences can be both immediate and latent, and can last for years after the initial abuse. Defining the consequences of violence solely in terms of injury or death limits understanding of the full impact of violence on individuals, communities and society as a whole.

Another aspect that the World Health Organization pays attention to is the element of intentionality in action. Although violence always brings harm to the person experiencing it, the perpetrator’s intention is not always to use violence and cause harm. Sometimes it may be a means to achieve a goal (for example, a parent spanking a child to force him/her to obey), and sometimes violence may be part of the culture and various violent behaviours may not be perceived as such by the perpetrator. Nevertheless, violence is always an action that has negative consequences for the health (including mental health) and proper functioning of the individual.



## GENDER NORMS AND VIOLENCE

Gender norms are the socially constructed behaviors linked to individuals based on their sex. Some norms promote equality and respect while others reinforce harmful stereotypes.

Harmful gender norms often associate masculinity with dominance and aggression while norms linked to femininity often are submissiveness. **The World Health Organization (WHO)** highlights that such norms have a vital impact on men's violence against women. Statistically, men are more likely to perpetrate both physical and sexual violence (WHO). Approximately 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced either both or one of these types of violence and often from a male intimate partner.

Organizations like **MÄN (Swedish feminist civil society organization)** emphasize that challenging and transforming harmful masculinity norms is crucial in preventing violence.

## VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION

It is important to know the differences between violence and aggression and to be aware that they are not the same, especially when working with young people. Aggressive behaviour can be a symptom of a young person experiencing violence. We will react differently when aggression occurs, and differently when violence occurs.

Remember! A child who uses violence is still a child and also needs care in a given situation.

	VIOLENCE	AGGRESSION
Objective of the action	In the case of violence, suffering is a way of achieving another goal, for example, to force desirable behaviors	The purpose of aggression is to harm the victim, to cause physical pain
Position of people	There is a predominance of the person using violence over the person experiencing in various areas (physical, mental, social, numerical)	Aggression concerns people of similar strength and capabilities, the experiencing person has a better chance of defending themselves
Defending the person experiencing harmful behavior	A person experiencing violence is unable to effectively defend themselves	The attacked person has a chance to defend himself
Roles	There are fixed roles of perpetrator, victim and witness, people do not switch roles	People can switch roles with each other
Duration	Violence is a process, it is usually long-lasting and its rhythm is predictable (periods of intensification of aggressive behavior alternate with periods of relative calm)	Aggression is an incidental behavior that can be repeated but is not related to each other

# DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE





## PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Physical violence is any action using force to inflict harm or injury, such as pushing, overpowering, hitting, pinching, kicking, strangling, beating with hands, fists or objects, dousing with boiling water or corrosive substances, and the use of weapons. It involves violating a person's bodily integrity, intentionally causing bodily harm, inflicting pain or using threats of bodily harm.

A person experiencing physical violence is regularly subjected to physical harm. They may suffer injuries such as lacerations, fractures, contusions, bruises, or burns, resulting directly from the perpetrator's use of force. However, the effects of violence go beyond the physical. The person often struggles with serious psychological and emotional consequences, which can result from both physical suffering itself and prolonged stress and trauma. Physical abuse can be difficult to see. The marks it leaves can be hidden under clothing. Additionally, often the abuser knows how and where to strike so that it is not visible. Sometimes people assume that it is easy to recognize that someone is experiencing physical abuse, but this is not always the case.

As a result of such experiences, a person may develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which manifests itself in difficulties coping with daily life, panic attacks, anxiety and a chronic sense of threat. The person may live in constant fear and tension, fearing further attacks of violence. The stress of violence leads to sleep disorders, such as insomnia, and can result in serious mental disorders, including depression and anxiety.

As a result, the daily life of a person experiencing physical violence is full of suffering, both on a physical and psychological level. They struggle with a sense of powerlessness and lack of control over their lives.

A person who uses physical violence is usually seen as an aggressor who uses force to dominate, control or injure his victim. There are many theories and studies on factors that may contribute to this type of behavior. Clearly, physical violence is not random, and motives can be complex and related to a number of psychological, social and environmental variables.

## MENTAL VIOLENCE

Psychological violence is a form of harm defined as causing psychological suffering by controlling and restricting the victim's contact with friends, school and work, forcing isolation, forcible detention, forcing the victim to watch violent acts, intimidation, threatening physical harm to both loved ones and others, using threats, blackmail, threats of suicide, constant harassment, abuse of pets and destruction of private property. Psychological violence occurs when the perpetrator gains psychological control over the victim, causing harm through psychological influence. The effects of this form of violence usually manifest themselves in the victim's psyche. Psychological violence is the least discernible form of abuse, which also makes it the most difficult to detect and prove. Examples of psychological violence include threats, humiliation, intimidation, name-calling, excessive criticism, ignoring, ridicule, lying, breaking promises, restricting access to basic needs like sleep or food, imposing one's beliefs, and deliberately failing to help. Often more painful than physical violence, it leads to feelings of insecurity, lowered self-esteem, depression, helplessness and, in extreme cases, mental illness or suicide.

The aggressor often uses so-called "invisible violence" based on a strong feeling of aggression on the part of the perpetrator, which becomes apparent through body language, tone of voice or gaze, this can cause a strong feeling of fear in the victim.

# SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is violence committed against a person because of his or her sex or gender. Although the majority of victims and survivors of SGBV are girls and women, boys and men can also be harmed by SGBV.

Sexual violence is any sexual act or attempt to force such an act, unwanted comments, propositions or taunts of a sexual nature, forced prostitution, remarks about a person's sexuality, regardless of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, in any environment, including at home and at work. It **occurs when any sexual contact takes place without the consent of the affected person**. Extortion can take various forms, such as the use of violence, intimidation, blackmail, threats (e.g., physical force, dismissal, refusal of employment). Sexual violence also occurs when the victim is unable to give consent due to the effects of alcohol, drugs, medication, sleep, disability or lack of judgment. In the case of sexual violence against children, it involves sexual contact with people who are still dependent and not fully developed mentally and physically, as well as with young people who are unable to give informed consent.

Sexual violence is defined as: rape (including rape during armed conflict), sexual harassment, abuse of people with intellectual or physical disabilities, sexual abuse of children, sex trafficking, underage marriage, violent attacks on sexual integrity, including genital mutilation, forced virginity control, unwanted sexual comments, forced abortion, denial of contraception or protection against sexually transmitted diseases, forced viewing of pornographic material, touching against one's will, as well as assault or physical harm to genitals during the sexual act. It also includes filming during sexual activity, allowing others to observe such activities, and mocking one's appearance. Sexual violence also includes using third parties for sexual activities and forced prostitution.

A person experiencing sexual violence struggles with physical injury, pain and suffering, lowered self-esteem and self-worth, loss of attractiveness and dignity, sexual dysfunction, frigidity, shutting down /anxiety, fear, avoidance of sex/, generalized resentment and fear of the perpetrator's sex.

It is important to remember that victims of sexual abuse are both adults and children. There is also a special type of sexual violence, which is incest. This means taking sexual actions against related persons. Kinship does not only refer to relationships in which people share common ancestors, but also in situations where the perpetrator is not related to the victim, but acts as the child's guardian.

An important action in preventing sexual violence is sexual education, often confused with sexualization.

Sexualization is the perception of a person and their value through the prism of physical attractiveness (e.g. little miss beauty pageants). Sexualization leads to sexual violence.

Sex education is learning about health, body and anatomy, relationships and boundaries, emotions and sexual development. Sexual education is a protective factor in the context of sexual violence. It provides knowledge about what behaviors are inappropriate or illegal and how to respond to them.



## ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

Money and material goods are used as tools to gain power in the family, both overtly and covertly, sometimes becoming an instrument of manipulation. This phenomenon mainly affects those who are dependent and receive no salary, but also those who, despite their financial independence, are manipulated, leading to a sense of financial dependence on the perpetrator of economic violence, and the impression that their lives depend on their abuser. Examples of economic violence include stealing from other family members, avoiding family maintenance responsibilities, making it difficult to take up gainful employment, using blackmail, taking out loans or credit without the spouse's consent, and blocking access to common areas such as the kitchen or bathroom.

Source: Pikora, P. (2023). Interwencja kryzysowa wobec osób doświadczających przemocy domowej. *Biuletyn Kryminologiczny*, (29), 97–126.

## DIGITAL VIOLENCE AND CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is a relatively new form of violence that involves stalking and harassment using electronic devices such as computers and cell phones. With widespread access to technology and the Internet, more and more aspects of our lives, including social relationships and communication, are moving online. Unfortunately, this also brings with it new dangers, one of which is cyberbullying.

This phenomenon includes a range of undesirable activities, such as: harassment and intimidation via the Internet and instant messaging, ridiculing and publishing offensive comments on social media, sharing photos or videos without the consent of the person depicted in them, hacking into private accounts and using them in a manner detrimental to the owner.

Since cyberbullying is a rapidly growing phenomenon, new methods of online harassment continue to emerge. This problem affects children, adolescents and adults alike, so it is important to raise public awareness and take measures to eliminate it.

**There are several main types of online violence, including:**

- ➔ Flaming - involving the sending of aggressive and abusive messages via instant messaging,
- ➔ Trolling - intentionally posting a large number of negative and hurtful comments about the victim,
- ➔ Masquerade - setting up fake accounts to stalk others,
- ➔ Flood - flooding the victim's inbox with a huge number of messages, making it difficult for the victim to use online communication,
- ➔ Sexting – if happens without mutual consent among adults or towards minors, it's cyberbullying of a sexual nature, involving sending intimate photos, videos or links to adult sites. It often involves attempts to extort private content and subsequent blackmail for material gain.

# NEGLECT

Neglect refers to the failure of caregivers to provide adequate care, attention, support or basic needs to a person who is unable to care for himself or herself. It can take many forms and lead to various consequences.

## Examples of neglect:

- ➔ **Physical neglect:** failure to provide adequate food, clothing, health care, a safe place to live or care for hygiene.
- ➔ **Emotional neglect:** ignoring emotional needs, lack of support, love and warmth, neglecting one's feelings.
- ➔ **Educational neglect:** failure to provide adequate education, assistance in learning, and support in developing intellectual skills.
- ➔ **Medical neglect:** denying access to health care, avoiding treatment for illnesses or other health problems.
- ➔ **Supervisory neglect:** failure to provide adequate supervision, putting a person at risk, such as being left unattended for long periods of time.
- ➔ **Neglect of emotional safety:** creating an unsafe environment in the home through violence, lack of physical or emotional safety.

One form of neglect is parentification, which refers to a situation in which a child is forced to take on adult roles and assume responsibility for tasks that should be performed by parents or caregivers. This can include such responsibilities as paying bills, cleaning or caring for siblings, leading to the neglect of one's own needs. This kind of situation puts a strain on a child's emotional development, which often results in difficulties later in life.





# **VIOLENCE – PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**



# Violence – prevention and intervention

## CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE - HOW VIOLENCE AFFECTS MENTAL HEALTH

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that children and adolescents under 18 years of age have experienced (Crouch et al., 2019). ACEs cover a broad range of traumatic events, including physical and emotional neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, exposure to domestic violence, mental health problems of parents, family incarceration, separation, divorce and substance misuse (Felitti et al., 1998). ACEs can have lasting effects on health and well-being in childhood and life opportunities well into adulthood. Research has found that ACEs are associated with changes in biological systems. Children exposed to maltreatment showed smaller volume of the prefrontal cortex, greater activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, and elevation in inflammation levels, while adults with a history of maltreatment showed smaller volume of the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus, greater activation of the HPA axis, and elevation in inflammation levels compared to non-maltreated individuals (Danese & McEwen, 2012). Experiencing traumatic events in childhood can also affect physical health.

### People who have experienced $\geq 2$ ACEs (compared to people with 0 ACEs)

- ➔ 2 Times more likely to abuse alcohol and suffer from respiratory diseases
- ➔ 1.5 Times more likely to get cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes
- ➔ 2.5 Times more likely to experience anxiety disorders and depression (Hughes et al. 2019)

What is important is the fact that consequences of ACEs are cumulative: the more a person has experienced ACEs, the greater the risk that it will have serious, lasting consequences for their entire life.

### People who have experiences $\geq 4$ ACEs:

- ➔ 12 Times more common addictions, suicide attempts and episodes of depression (Felitti et al. 1998)
- ➔ more than 7 times more likely to be addicted to psychoactive substances, to use violence and to behave in an auto-aggressive way (Hughes et al. 2017)

Research has also established the link between poor mental health outcomes and ACEs (Beilharz et al., 2020; McLafferty et al., 2019). People with a history of ACEs are at greater risk of experiencing a range of mental health problems, such as depression, suicide, bipolar disorder and substance misuse (Fuller-Thomson et al., 2016; Leza et al., 2021; Merrick et al., 2017). ACEs also influence the emotional and social area, people who are subjected to them are more likely than their peers to experience difficulty developing healthy relationships due to lack of trust, poor emotional regulation skills, and maladaptive coping strategies (Poole et al., 2018). Consequently, ACEs are associated with increased social isolation (an objective deficiency in high-quality social relationships) and loneliness (a subjectively perceived gap between desired social contact and actual contact) in later life (Forster et al., 2020; Sheikh, 2018a, 2018b; Weber Kuetal., 2021). ACEs can also increase risks for maternal and child health problems including teen pregnancy, pregnancy complications, and fetal death. (Merrick MT, Ford DC, Ports KA, et al. Vital Signs, 2015-2017, MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2019, Hillis SD, Anda RF, Dube SR, Felitti VJ, Marchbanks PA, Marks JS. 2004)



In short, people with more ACEs are at significantly higher risk for a wide range of behavioral, mental and physical health issues – including the leading causes of death (heart disease, cancer, respiratory disease, stroke, obesity, addiction and suicide). While it may not seem immediately apparent how traumatic childhood experiences could lead to things like cancer, stroke, obesity and broken bones – consider how chronic activation of the stress response syndrome and thus exposure to increased levels of stress hormones like cortisol could impact the immune system and a person's overall well-being.

It is important to remember that not all people who experienced ACEs as children will have difficulty in adulthood. What matters here is the child's age at the time of experiencing traumatic events, the moment in his development, the duration of ACEs, their repeatability, whether there was any supportive adult in his environment and other supporting individual factors.

**You can see how crucial ACEs prevention is in this short video**



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gm-INpzU4g>, access: 07.05.2025

## VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Prevention is usually divided into three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary.

Primary prevention aims to stop problems before they occur. This level often includes universal interventions which often are targeted broadly in a population such as a geographical area, age group or a society as a whole. To work on this level can be effective to reduce violence in the long-term since a lot of strategies on these levels aim to transform norms and personal attitudes and beliefs, both among the individual as well as different environments and social contexts.

This is one of the reasons why this toolkit was created: to provide a basis of theoretical knowledge about the phenomenon of violence and to equip youth workers with practical tools for working in the area of preventing violence.

# RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE

## Responding to Worrying Behaviors in Children

Many behaviours exhibited by a child or young person can indicate the experience of abuse. What should always worry you is a sudden change in a child's behaviour.

### Symptoms of child abuse you may notice:

- ➔ withdrawal from previously enjoyable contacts and activities, lack of energy;
- ➔ sleep problems: insomnia or excessive sleepiness and changes in appetite;
- ➔ somatic symptoms in the urinary-genital and digestive systems, frequent body pains that have no health basis;
- ➔ injuries to the body in various places and at various stages of healing, inconsistent versions of events as to how these injuries occurred;
- ➔ self-harm;
- ➔ manifestations of sexual behaviours in pre-pubertal children.

These are just examples of the symptoms you may observe. The symptoms listed here are non-specific, which means their presence may, but does not necessarily, indicate experiences of violence. They may also result from experiencing difficulties that have a different basis than abuse. However, they should worry you and prompt you to talk to a child and be more attentive to them.

When such warning signs appear, it is crucial to respond appropriately and without delay. One of the ways to do so is by offering Emotional First Aid—a set of supportive actions aimed at helping a child or adolescent in emotional distress.

**Emotional First Aid** in crisis is a range of interventions that adults can undertake in response to behavioral changes observed in young people that are perceived as warning signs of emotional or mental health problems. It is the equivalent of medical first aid, which is worth reaching for in situations of emotional trauma. It is important that emotional support can be provided by anyone, e.g. a parent, legal guardian, teacher, educator, pedagogue, coach, whoever is the first to notice disturbing behavior in a child or teenager.

In the context of violence, it is important to remember that our job is to take care of the person in crisis, not to verify whether violence actually occurred. International studies indicate that only 2-6% of children falsely accuse their parents/guardians of violence, while as many as 75% of children try to protect the perpetrators by maintaining that they are not being harmed.

How can you help? It is essential to know the signals of an emotional crisis. The most common signals include: dominance of unpleasant emotions in the life of a young person (anger, sadness, grief, loneliness, despair, fear, helplessness, etc.), problems with memory and concentration, suicidal thoughts, risky and aggressive behavior, withdrawal from contacts, giving up pleasures, difficulties with sleep and appetite, lack of strength, fatigue, headaches, muscle pain, stomach aches. In summary, a crisis disrupts a person's emotional balance and mechanisms for coping with difficulties, it is a reaction of a healthy person to a difficult situation.

**Emotional First Aid is based on a simple scheme that can be used by anyone who is faced with the challenge of supporting a person in crisis: OBSERVE – ASK – ACCEPT – REACT**



**OBSERVE** : Pay attention to the symptoms of the crisis listed above, carefully observe changes in the young person's behavior. Remember that your role is not to diagnose the difficulties the young person is facing, but to support them here and now.

**ASK** : Being calm and friendly, say what you have observed and what emotions it evokes in you. Be specific and straightforward. You might ask: *I've noticed you've been sad lately. It worries me and I'd like to talk to you about how you're feeling. Have you told anyone about how you're feeling?* Listen patiently and observe the young person's reactions.

**ACCEPT** : It is not up to you to judge whether the difficulties a person is facing are important and serious. Your task is to provide support, not to verify. Accept what the young person shares with calm and empathy - their experiences are real and important.

**REACT** : Encourage the young person to continue the conversation and look for solutions together. Find out what has helped them so far and whose support they can count on. Inform the young person about the actions you intend to take in their case in the near future and what the area of their decision is (e.g. choosing which guardian to contact or who will accompany them to the specialist).

Don't promise the child or teenager that what you've heard will be kept a secret. Explain that you're open to talking about who and how to tell about the difficulties the young person is experiencing. By creating the opportunity to participate in decision-making, you give the child or teenager a sense of influence over a situation that is largely beyond their control.

As an adult, also make sure to establish an action plan, implement it, and monitor progress.

## Responding When a Child Discloses Abuse

It is important to act with care and professionalism when a child reports that they have been subjected to violence. You can always look at and use the Emotional First Aid described above.

Additionally, here are some general guidelines on how to support a young person in such a situation:

- ➔ **Listen actively and without judgment:** Give the child your full attention and let them tell their story without interruption. Acknowledge that you hear what the child is saying and that it is brave to speak up.
- ➔ **Show empathy and support:** Validate the child's feelings and express that it is normal to feel scared, sad, or confused. Reassure the child that it is not their fault and that you are there to help.
- ➔ **Document the information:** Record what the child says as accurately as possible, including dates, times, and specific details. This can be important for further investigation.
- ➔ **Protect the child's privacy:** Handle the information with discretion and share it only with relevant authorities or individuals involved in helping the child.
- ➔ **Inform relevant authorities:** Report the incident to social services or the police according to applicable laws and guidelines. It is important to follow the correct procedures to ensure the child receives the help they need.
- ➔ **Follow up and provide support:** Continue to be a supportive adult for the child. Ensure they have access to the help needed and follow up to ensure the child is safe and receiving the necessary support.
- ➔ **Remember!** Don't make promises to the child that you can't keep. Don't promise that the conversation will stay between you or that everything will be fine. You don't know what steps you will have to take next and how this situation will resolve for the child.

## Important numbers to report suspicion of a child abuse

There are some general numbers in Europe that you can call if you are concerned about a child. These numbers are free to call and are available in most EU countries.

**116 111** – International child helpline: This number helps children in need of care and protection, linking them to services and resources.

**112** - The general emergency number across the EU: This number can be used for all types of emergencies, including when a child is in danger.

You can also contact national helplines, local organizations and social services.

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## Burnout Prevention for Specialists

Professionals who help youth experiencing violence should be particularly attentive and sensitive not only to the needs of the people they support, but also to themselves. It is a difficult, responsible and burdening task. It is not easy to leave work and return home without thinking about the stories we have heard during the day.

Taking care of one's well-being is especially important in the context of secondary victimization. The concept of secondary victimization is related to the behavior of people who are supposed to help the victim of a crime when they meet them, but whose attitude actually causes them much suffering.

Inappropriate attitude towards a person who has experienced trauma may result in the emergence of difficult emotions (such as shame, fear and guilt), communication difficulties, lack of a sense of security, agency and effectiveness, and weakened contact with one's own emotions, needs and body. The person listening and providing help has the ability to prevent the emergence of secondary victimization if they are able to properly care for the needs and emotions of the victim of violence. The professional providing assistance should be able to counter the experiences of the person experiencing violence. To do this, they should know how to take care of themselves and prevent burnout.

**Burnout** is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion associated with work. It is a consequence of chronic stress at work, which is inefficiently managed primarily on a social and organizational level, and then on an individual level. It is characterized by three dimensions: exhaustion, work-related cynicism, reduced work efficiency (Maslach, 1981). Symptoms of burnout may include: lack of energy, muscle tension, headache, mood swings, anxiety, helplessness, attention and memory difficulties, distractibility, lack and self-care and withdrawal.

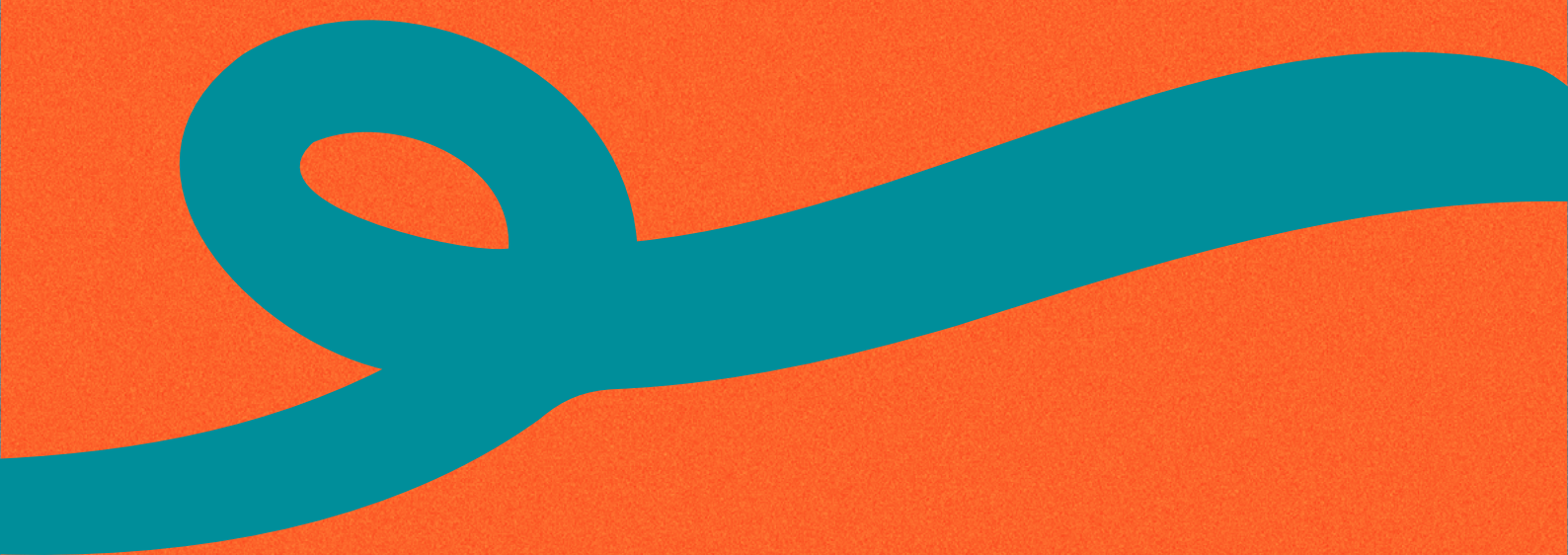
To prevent burnout in a difficult work environment, proper self-care and work-life balance should be implemented. Working in a good team, the opportunity to talk through difficult cases and regular supervision are the basis of working with people experiencing violence. We don't want to bring the clients' experiences home, so it's a good idea to tell a colleague about your emotions, and in this way ventilate the tension that may have remained after a difficult conversation. However, cases in which we don't know how to proceed and we need not only to take care of our emotions, but also to indicate the direction of work, are a good idea to work on in supervision with an experienced specialist.



Communication, setting boundaries and delegating tasks are also important in preventing burnout and ensuring proper work balance. It's okay to refuse and say no. Be honest. Try to have a dialogue with your colleagues and supervisors.

Remember to practice self-care, not only when you are stressed, but every day – this way you can build resilience. You can practice breathing techniques or meditation, avoid information overload, reach out to your friends – in person or online, eat well – balanced meals, try aromatherapy, remember to stay active – take a walk in a park or go to a gym. You can also try some apps. But most importantly, do what brings you comfort, joy and pleasure and remember that there is more to life than just work.

# **PRACTICAL TOOLS AND METHODS FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORKSHOPS**





# Practical Tools and Methods for violence prevention workshops

Here is the practical part of this toolkit. The activities described below can be used by youth workers to conduct violence prevention workshops for young people in various ages. Methods presented in this section are used by partner organizations in their daily work.

**There are three types of activities:**

1. activities that serve as an introduction to the topic of violence
2. activities that deepen the understanding of the topic
3. activities that can be used as a summary


Advice: You can choose one activity of each type and put them together to create a workshop program or you can use the activities separately depending on your and your group's needs.

You need to be aware that topics you will discuss in the presented activities are sensitive. They may trigger some people and evoke difficult emotions or memories. It is important to be prepared for different reactions and be able to react to them (look: First Emotional Aid). It is also important to create appropriate conditions for carrying out the activity/workshops. If you are conducting activities in a group where the participants do not know each other, make sure to provide enough time for team building activities before. As the leader, it is your responsibility to ensure that a safe space is created. It is recommended to create a code of rules (together with participants) that everyone will be obligated to follow during the workshops. The rules should include: no judgment, attitude of understanding and acceptance, all emotions are important and needed, the principle of confidentiality etc.

Take care of the comfort of the participants during and after the activity. It is important that everyone has space to share their thoughts and feelings (if they want to). You should also respect if someone does not want to take part in some activity or discussion. If you are not conducting the entire workshop, but only a selected exercise, make sure to end it appropriately, which will allow the participants to calm down and regulate.

# Activities that serve as an introduction to the topic of violence


## CREATING PRINCIPLES FOR A SAFER SPACE

 **Target group and number of participants:** The exercise can be conducted with both small and large groups. It is suitable for participants aged 7 years old and above.

 **Time:** 30-60 minutes (depending on the number of participants)

 **Aims:**

- ➔ Strengthening participants' awareness and responsibility in creating a safe environment by supporting the development of a sense of safety through respect, listening and learning.
- ➔ Implementing the principles of a safer space by providing appropriate tools, guidelines and agreements that support maintaining a safe atmosphere during activities and events.
- ➔ Creating an inclusive and safe environment where all participants feel accepted and can express themselves freely and authentically.
- ➔ Encouraging open discussion about violence and its impact, highlighting the importance of respecting boundaries and addressing harmful behavior. This can be done through a clear agreement that violence, in any form, will not be tolerated, and that participants are encouraged to speak up and support one another in maintaining a safe space.

 **Materials needed:** a flipchart, sticky notes, pens or pencils for each participant

 **Preparations before the activity:**

- ➔ Take a moment to reflect on how you define a safer space and why creating one is important.
- ➔ It is important to understand and explain to the group that we cannot create a safe space for everyone, which is why we focus on creating a safer space instead. The main idea is to create a sense of safety, not to be "perfect."

**Exemplary principles for a safer space:**

- ➔ *Respect participants' opinions, experiences, autonomy, and personal boundaries.*
- ➔ *We do not tolerate discrimination:*
- ➔ *We do not question or devalue others' experiences and opinions as long as they don't hurt others .*
- ➔ *Avoid making assumptions or generalizations about identities or personal characteristics.*
- ➔ *Give everyone the opportunity to speak, but do not pressure anyone to do so.*
- ➔ *Be open to giving and receiving constructive feedback.*





### Carrying out the exercise:

- ➔ Introduce participants to the exercise by saying that you will be thinking about creating appropriate conditions for group work. Hand out sticky notes.
- ➔ Invite participants to individual reflection. Ask each participant to think about the question: “What helps you feel good and safe in a group?”. Each thought should be written on a separate sticky note.
- ➔ Small group work: ask participants to form groups of 3–4 people. Each person shares their thoughts within the group. Then, ask the group to sort the sticky notes into thematic categories based on similar ideas.
- ➔ Sharing circle: ask each group to present their categories and key ideas. Ask them to stick their notes onto a flip-chart.
- ➔ Together, start clustering similar thoughts and give each emerging category a fitting name – based on how your group understands it.
- ➔ Group discussion: once all the ideas are visible and grouped, guide a shared discussion using the following questions:
  - ➔ Does anyone want to add or clarify something?
  - ➔ Do all the categories feel important and understandable?
  - ➔ Is anything missing or unnecessary?
  - ➔ Can everyone agree with the shared principles?
- ➔ To conclude, you can ask someone to design the shared principles for a safer space, which the group can continue to use in the future.

### Suggested questions to summarize the exercise:

- What are you taking with you from this activity?
- How can you personally contribute to following the agreed principles in the group?

# TYPES OF VIOLENCE AND ASSOCIATIONS WITH THEM



**Target group and number of participants:** group of 12-20 participants over 10 years old



**Time:** 30-60 minutes (depending on number of participants)



**Aims:**

- ➔ Introduction to the topic of violence
- ➔ Presenting different types of violence to the participants
- ➔ Learning about participants' associations, experiences and beliefs about violence



**Materials needed:** flipchart sheets, markers, pens



**Preparations before doing the activity:**

- ➔ We recommend that you familiarize yourself with theoretical information on violence before starting this exercise. You can use the theoretical part of this toolkit or your own sources. If you choose the second option, make sure the sources you use are reliable.
- ➔ You will need five flipchart sheets prepared in advance. On each sheet, write in large letters one type of violence: physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, economic violence, neglect.




**Carrying out the exercise:**


- ➔ Start the exercise with a discussion about what types of violence are known to the participants. Moderate the discussion so that the 5 basic types of violence mentioned above are said. If not all the expected answers are given, complete the discussion by providing them.
- ➔ Place 5 flipchart sheets with types of violence in different parts of the room. Ask participants to walk around the room and stop by each paper and write down the associations they have with a given type of violence. Associations may involve words, emotions, events. Emphasize that there are neither right nor wrong answers to this question. Spend about 15 minutes on this part.
- ➔ Once each participant has written down their answers, invite them to sit in a circle. Ask a willing person to read the written answers and invite participants to discuss this topic. Discuss each type of violence one by one.

**Suggested questions to summarize the exercise:**

- Do some types of violence occur more often than others?
- How violence can affect people?
- What do you think is the best way to deal with an experience of violence? Why?
- What would make it easier for you to tell someone that you are experiencing violence?
- Who would you turn to for help if you were a person experiencing violence?
- Can you name phone numbers, websites or places where people experiencing violence can seek help?


# PYRAMID OF VIOLENCE – AN UNDERSTANDING OF VIOLENCE


 **Target group and recommended number of participants:** adults, young adults and children. The activity can be introduced to a larger group (20 people), but discussions are good to have in groups of 4-5 persons.

 **Time:** 5 – 30 minutes

 **Aims:**

- ➔ Understanding of different forms of violence
- ➔ Understanding of the importance of stopping violence in the lowest parts of the pyramid
- ➔ A better understanding of the connections between different forms of violence

 **Materials needed:** Pyramid of violence (on photo, poster, printed version, PowerPoint)

 **Preparations before doing the activity:** read and reflect on the definition of violence by Norwegian psychologist, psychotherapist, and author of professional literature Per Isdal (2001) that is used in the City of Gothenburg.

***“Violence is any act directed against another person, which by this act hurts, pains, scares or offends, gets that person to do something against their will or refrain from something they want.”***

 **Carrying out the exercise:**

- ➔ Ask participants to look at the pyramid and reflect on violence on the different levels.
- ➔ Invite them to the discussion by asking following questions:
  - ➔ What do you consider to be violence?
  - ➔ Do you think that the actions in the bottom are violence? Why/why not?
  - ➔ Where can we react and try to stop it?
  - ➔ Do you think we all have the same understanding of violence?
- ➔ Present simple cases for the participants. Ask participants to place the case on the level they find suitable. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers, but the participants can motivate and reflect on their choice. Participants can place the cases differently. Example of cases:
  - ➔ A boy passes other kids at school. They take his hat and throw it away.
  - ➔ A student spreads a rumor about a classmate.
  - ➔ Someone rolls their eyes and laughs when a peer talks.
  - ➔ A person makes a sexist joke during lunch.
  - ➔ A boy pushes another student in the hallway.
  - ➔ A girl constantly excludes another from group activities.
  - ➔ A teen sends mean messages online to someone in their class.
  - ➔ Someone yells at their partner during an argument.
  - ➔ A boy grabs someone's arm roughly when angry.
  - ➔ Two students get into a fistfight after school.



- A teen forces their partner to do something sexual against their will.

**Suggested questions to summarize the exercise:**

- » What's your idea of what violence is?
- » Did it change after seeing and working with the pyramid?
- » Is the pyramid useful? What would you like to learn more about or talk more about?
- » Maybe it is a good idea to have printed, larger versions of the pyramid in relevant places, as a reminder for adults and young people.



# **ACTIVITIES THAT DEEPEN THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TOPIC**



## Activities that deepen the understanding of the topic

### A LITTLE VIOLENCE ALSO HURTS – CARDS FOR DIALOGUE



**Target group and number of participants:** children 10-15 years old, 3-4 participants with an adult leader



**Time:** 15 minutes (time can vary depending on group)



**Aims:**

- ➔ Increased understanding of what violence is and the consequences it has
- ➔ Understanding of that a little violence also hurts and can lead to more violence
- ➔ Building ability to talk about and act against violence



**Materials needed:** cards and preferably pyramid of violence



**Preparations before doing the activity:** You should read all the cards to be prepared and able to support the participants in the best way. It can also be helpful to look at and use the pyramid of violence.



**Carrying out the exercise**

- ➔ Form groups of 3-4 participants. Each group should have an adult leader, who guides the groups' discussions and helps the participants to identify constructive and respectful solutions to the tasks on the cards. The leader needs to ensure that the discussions are carried out without violations. Consider asking follow-up questions to get the conversation started.
- ➔ Inform the participants before you start that they do not need to have their own experiences or recognize themselves in what is written on the cards in order to participate. They also do not have to tell anything about themselves and can choose to say pass.
- ➔ The cards are originally adapted for a board game with a dice. When only using the cards you can either draw the cards from a pile, divide the cards or decide which cards to use.
  - ➔ Information about the cards:
    - Some cards are similar but are meant to be solved based on different strategies to act on.
    - Do something:** the card aims to show different ways of acting, feel free to try all three options.
    - Talk about it:** the card aims to make violence talkable by talking about violence. Available both as reflection cards and cards with several options.
    - Dare to ask:** The card aims to practice helping by acting and showing support.
    - Speak up!** The card is aimed at training in speaking up in the event of violence.
    - ?:** Facts on violence, norms and relationships.
- ➔ Ask participants to draw a card and to work on the topic the card presents. The group solves the task cards together. They play with each other and nobody wins. The activity consists of dialogue and training in acting on violence.
- ➔ Summarize the activity by asking participants to reflect what thoughts or questions they have. Feel free to let the group tell you about something they learned from the activity. If you notice that a child needs to talk more about this or that something he/she said made you worried, make sure to follow up with the child.

**Suggested questions to summarize the exercise:**

- ➔ How do you feel after this activity?
- ➔ Did you learn something new?
- ➔ Was it easy to talk about violence in a group?







# PARTICIPATORY THEATER

Participatory theatre is a form of theatre where the audience is not just an ordinary observer but actively participates in the process of the performance. The process of participatory theatre does not have to depict any “right way” but should explore different ways in which a certain topic could be dissected and performed.


One session of participatory theatre consists of 4 performances, where during the participatory theatre productions, young people can make advertisements, solve relationship problems, practice job interviews and write a toast for the birthday celebrant. But all this in reverse - men play women and women play men (or they can choose their own gender).

 **Target group and number of participants:** The recommended group size is up to 30 young people, aged 14-26 years old.

 **Time:** 4x45 min, 180 minutes in total.

 **Aims:**

- Playing out real-life situations in participatory theatre sessions.
- Gaining knowledge of how to recognize gender as a social construct and to understand gender as something that could be deconstructed and reconstructed.
- Increasing the level of knowledge about:
  - gender constructs and attitudes towards gender
  - understanding of methods for preventing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)
  - confidence in addressing/reporting SGBV.

 **Materials needed:** tables, chairs, colored markers and pens, a4 paper and notepads, 10 binders with hard covers, stickers for name tags, 1 basket/hat/bowl, drinks and snacks.

 **Preparations before doing the activity:**

## ➔ Familiarization with the information about sex and gender and gender equality

Can you explain the difference between “sex” and “gender”?

Sex refers to physiological attributes that identify a person as male or female.

Gender refers to widely-shared ideas and expectations concerning women and men. These include ideas about typically feminine/female and masculine/male characteristics and abilities, as well as common expectations about how women and men should behave in various situations.

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men in distribution of resources and benefits. This involves recognition of inequality and requires measures to work towards equality of women and men. Gender Analysis is necessary for gender equity.

Gender equality is a Transformational Development goal. It is understood to mean that women and men enjoy the same status on political, social, economic and cultural levels. It exists when women and men have equal rights, opportunities and status.

Equality between women and men (GENDER EQUALITY): refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.

Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well. Equality between women and men is seen as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for sociocultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same; it means that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

### ➡ **Moderation**

You are the actor who carries the audience through the play. There can be more moderators who perform the play. If there are more moderators, then gender balance is preferred within the moderator team so that all persons in the group could more easily develop a sense of security and relaxation. You should understand that the moderator function should be performed by individuals who have a strong sense of and experience in working with groups, as well as familiarity with gender-related issues. As a moderator in this play, your role is to act as an assistant—helping to develop stories and explore alternative realities on the scene. Each moderator needs to go through a rehearsal process to prepare for the multiple directions in which the scenes might develop. Since events on the scene are unpredictable, you will have the opportunity to develop your skills with each new play performed.

### ➡ **Organization of the space**

The final version of the space may depend on the possibilities (creative, financial, physical, etc.), but the basic requirements are as follows:  
A large theater stage. If for some reason such a space is not available, a spacious room such as a gymnasium (without sports equipment) would be a suitable substitute. A classroom is also suitable if the tables are pushed together and the chairs are arranged in a theater style.

Ideally, all simulations will take place in one place (one large stage instead of two or more smaller ones).



### **Carrying out the exercise:**

#### **The gender transformative social theatre (GTST) production consists of three phases:**

- ➔ **Introduction:** You will gather the audience in front of the stage, and introduce the play. You will explain that what follows is not a traditional theater performance but an interactive production—like a game or workshop—and will present an imaginary framework within which the performance is simulated.
- ➔ **Performance/Impact Stage:** You will facilitate the audience's participation in various simulations, where they will assume different roles based on given instructions and their own impulses. There should be no more than five scenes or simulations in total, with the goal of engaging as many participants as possible. As a leader, you are there to guide but should influence the development of each scene as little as possible. When assigning roles, consider that boys or young men should play female roles and vice versa—to foster role reversal and exploration of gender.
- ➔ **Discussion:** After each scene, you will lead a collective discussion to explore the deeper themes of the performance, such as gender roles and gender-based violence. This reflection helps participants understand and internalize the themes. Additionally, at the beginning of the production, you will set an imaginary context for the audience—based on the introductory narrative—that signals this is not a typical performance but an engaging, participatory experience. This framework, often set in a future or separate reality, prepares participants for their roles and enhances the illusion and immersion of the experience.



### **Important rules**

You should explain during the introduction, as well as in the event announcement and call for participation, that the purpose of this event is to help everyone acquire skills important for theater—that is, everyone can act because we all perform in our daily lives.

You should motivate the audience to explore theatrical techniques and encourage them to be creative in their participation. If someone chooses to move freely around the space, you should not hinder them. However, it's helpful to ask them at least once what they are doing and whether they wish to observe or actively participate, to foster a respectful and inclusive environment.

### **Detailed development of GTST production phases and scenarios:**

You should greet the participants from the stage as they gather and find their seats, and then introduce yourself. Explain that active participation from the audience is expected in shaping the theatrical performance, as indicated in the call for participation or the production announcement. Clarify that everyone is capable of creating, staging performances, and acting, and that concepts like “rehearsal” and “role-playing” are part of our everyday life.

You should avoid revealing the main themes or objectives of the performance directly. Instead, after this brief introduction, invite the audience to engage in ice-breaking, warm-up, and boundary-removing exercises—short activities where they create sounds or movements, such as imitating animals or instruments.

Once these exercises are completed, present the rules by explaining that there are no strict rules – this is an open, creative play where their intervention is encouraged. The only guiding principle is that men should play female characters and vice versa. Finally, invite the participants onto the stage, where they will be introduced to the first scenario or situation.

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## **Scenarios for Simulation**

### **Scenario 1 – TV show**

You should instruct the participants to pair up, with five people choosing partners of the same or opposite gender, making a total of 10 participants. Explain that they will reenact a scene from an imaginary TV show about relationships, depicting everyday issues faced by couples living together—such as misunderstandings, “tolerable habits,” communication problems, or gender-based violence.

Tell them that the couple who presents their problems in the most interesting and dynamic way, while seeking solutions or agreement, will be rewarded. Roles will be assigned by drawing brief descriptions on pieces of paper from a hat or bowl. Once they know which role they will play, they should share it with their partner and agree on the specific issues they will act out during the performance.

Give them 10-15 minutes to brainstorm ideas.

After their preparation, they will come to the stage, sit in their chairs, and turn to the “judges.” There should be three to five judges—participants who will take on this role. The number of judges should depend on the total group size—the larger the group, the more judges. The judges will “consult” the audience when making their decision, asking them to vote by expressing agreement or disagreement, to make the process more engaging.

Your role as the leader is to guide the performance—ask questions, provoke, comment, and help make the couples’ stories as interesting and lively as possible for the “audience.” The remaining participants should be encouraged to ask questions, cheer, whistle, or applaud to express their reactions and keep the energy high.

Once the simulation concludes, a discussion will follow, guided by you, to reflect on the themes and insights from the activity.

## **Scenario 2 - Job interview**

You should inform the participants that the CEO of a company is retiring, and now a new director needs to be chosen. The management team will nominate two individuals from among themselves to act as candidates—these can be two volunteers or nominated persons, with one male and one female. The female candidate will have a slight advantage in experience and knowledge, which you can prepare and share with them in advance.

Provide the candidates with 10-15 minutes to prepare a speech, where they will present their knowledge, experience, and achievements. After their preparations, the board of leaders will engage in a discussion with both candidates. During this conversation, ask questions about their skills, knowledge, availability, willingness to work overtime, personal commitments, and future plans—especially how these might impact their ability to lead the company.

Following the interview, all participants will vote openly for their preferred candidate. However, they must also discuss with others who they believe is the better fit to lead the company, explaining their reasoning. This discussion should be spontaneous and open, with your role as the leader being to intervene with relevant questions to deepen the debate.

Once the simulation is complete, you will guide a reflective discussion, encouraging participants to share insights and thoughts about the process and decisions made.

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## **Scenario 3 - Advertisement video**

You should introduce the activity by explaining that this is a rehearsal for an advertising campaign organized by a well-known marketing agency. Participants will need to divide into teams of 5-7 members, depending on the total number of participants. Each team should consist of separate “male” and “female” groups to encourage role diversity.

You instruct the teams to create and act out an advertisement for a product of their choice—or they can invent a new product. They should select a “main role” that will be the focus of their ad, while the other team members can play supporting roles or even serve as background actors. Remind them that the advertisement should not exceed 3 minutes, and they will have 15-20 minutes to develop and present their idea.

You will play the role of the marketing agency’s creative or production team, observing and judging which team has the most innovative idea and which team delivers the most successful presentation. You should be available during the development phase to assist teams by answering questions, but you should avoid interfering with their creative process.

After all teams have presented, you will facilitate a discussion, guiding participants to reflect on the ideas, presentation skills, and what they learned from the experience.

## Scenario 4 - Birthday greetings

You explain that the activity involves organizing a traditional 18th birthday party for a large group of guests. Divide participants into two main groups: one will prepare a toast for the male birthday celebrant, and the other for the female celebrant. Divide each group into three sub-groups, representing the parents, family, and friends. A representative from each sub-group will read the toast on behalf of that segment. The toast should include three key parts:

- ➡ Highlighting the main characteristics and virtues of the birthday celebrant.
- ➡ Sharing a funny story or situation about the celebrant.
- ➡ Offering good wishes for the celebrant's future life, achievements, and both short-term and long-term goals.

Each of the three representatives will read their part, and after one group completes their toast, the other group will do the same. The entire activity should last no more than 10-12 minutes, with each sub-group having at least 10 to 15 minutes to prepare their speech.

Your role as the leader is to walk around, ensuring that participants understand their task clearly, but you should avoid interfering with the content of their speeches or their creative process.

Once the activity is finished, you will facilitate a discussion, guiding participants to reflect on their experience and insights from the exercise.

**Note: The scenarios may be modified/adapted according to the traditions of the country.**

### Suggested questions to summarize the exercise:

- ➔ Why did you play your role and create the narrative as you did?
- ➔ How and according to what rules did the different characters in the play behave (social, community, group-oriented)?
- ➔ Did you embody traditional gender roles, or did you undermine them, and why?
- ➔ Did the roles you played reflect your own lives and experiences, and if so, to what extent? How much did you represent gender stereotypes during the simulations? Did the role-switching in the theater performance increase their awareness of the performative nature of gender roles?
- ➔ How did you view traditional notions of femininity and masculinity after having portrayed them in the play? Did you question their existing perceptions of equality and inequality in partnerships during the simulation (household chores, decision-making, gender-based violence, etc.)?
- ➔ Did you acknowledge and understand that different social relationships (economic, professional, governmental, etc.) that constitute the community or society also mutually depend on gender norms? How did social expectations regarding gender norms and roles reflect personal relationships embodied in the performance (partnership or family context)?
- ➔ Did the theater performance help you showcase different gender relationship models? What gender roles did you predominantly portray during the play?
- ➔ You can ask the audience which characters or figures were most emphasized during the performance. Then, you can inquire whether the conflict could have been avoided. To demonstrate how the conflict could have been avoided, you might invite someone from the audience to replace an actor, "rewind the film," and redo the scene.
- ➔ You should summarize the most interesting representations, scenes, and stereotypes presented during the play and ask the participants to explain what was most intriguing for them. At the very end of the event, the entire team should thank the participants for helping the production take place and for making it engaging.



## SCENARIOS:

### I Scenario: TV Show

1. **Couple:** You have been together for 2 years. One of you got a promotion at work and now earns twice as much as the other. The other feels bad because of this.

**GOAL:** You have come to the show to find a solution to your problem and stay together.

Think about who you are (he/she/they, names). Introduce your problem in an interesting way (e.g., by acting out a real-life argument). Be open to finding solutions/agreements with the host and audience to solve your problems.

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2. **Couple:** You have been living together for 1 year. One of you has hygiene issues - they do not want to shower or change their underwear and socks. The other is unhappy because of this.

**GOAL:** You have come to the show to find a solution to your problem and stay together.

Think about who you are (he/she/they, names). Introduce your problem in an interesting way (e.g., by acting out a real-life argument). Be open to finding solutions/agreements with the host and audience to solve your problems.

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3. **Couple:** You have been together for some time, but one of you does not want to talk publicly about your relationship or show it to others. The other feels pressured to keep it secret as well, although they would like to show their relationship publicly.

**GOAL:** You have come to the show to find a solution to your problem and stay together.

Think about who you are (he/she/they, names). Introduce your problem in an interesting way (e.g., by acting out a real-life argument). Be open to finding solutions/agreements with the host and audience to solve your problems.

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4. **Couple:** You have been a couple for 6 weeks and one of you wants to move in together. The other does not want to rush into it.

**GOAL:** You have come to the show to find a solution to your problem and stay together.

Think about who you are (he/she/they, names). Introduce your problem in an interesting way (e.g., by acting out a real-life argument). Be open to finding solutions/agreements with the host and audience to solve your problems.

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5. **Couple:** A freshly moved-in couple. One is a cleanliness freak, while the other refuses to clean or maintain tidiness at all.

**GOAL:** You have come to the show to find a solution to your problem and to stay together.

Think about who you are (he/she/they, names). Introduce your problem in an interesting way (e.g., by acting out a real-life argument). Be open to finding solutions/agreements with the host and audience to resolve your issues.

## II Scenario: Job interview

1. **Man:** You wish to apply for the position of company CEO. Prepare a 1-minute speech to introduce your knowledge, experience, and achievements.  
In reality, you know that you do not have enough for this position, but you hope for good luck.  

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2. **Man's supporters:** Your friend wishes to apply for the position of company CEO. Help him prepare a 1-minute speech to introduce his knowledge, experience, and achievements.  
In reality, you know he does not have enough for this position, but you hope for good luck.  

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3. **Woman:** You want to apply for the position of CEO in the company. Prepare a 1-minute speech to introduce your knowledge, experience, and achievements.  
You know you have more than enough for this position, but you fear a biased attitude towards you.  

---
4. **Woman's Supporters:** Your friend wants to apply for the position of CEO in the company. Help her prepare a 1-minute speech to introduce her knowledge, experience, and achievements.  
You know she has more than enough for this position, but you fear a biased attitude towards her.  

---
5. **The interviewer (current director):** Consider who you are (male/female). What does your company do? Prepare questions for the candidates. The questions will cover their skills and knowledge, availability, authority, overtime work, personal commitments, and plans (and how this may affect their commitment to the job/company, etc.).  
You will be assisted by the company's board of directors.  

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6. **Board of Directors:** Together with the interviewer, prepare questions for the candidates. The questions will address their skills and knowledge, availability, overtime work, personal commitments, and plans (and how this may affect their commitment to the job/company, etc.).  

---

## III Scenario: Advertisement video

1. **Group of "Men":** Choose a product designed for men and create a 1-3 minute advertisement clip for it.  
What is the product?  
Which product attributes appeal to women, enticing them to purchase it?  
What does this product promise them?  

---
2. **Group of "Women":** Select a product designed for women and create a 1-3 minute advertisement clip for it.  
What is the product?  
Which attributes appeal to men, compelling them to buy this product?  
What does this product promise them?

## IV Scenario: Birthday greetings

### 1. Grandmother and grandfather of the girl turning 18:

Come up with a short 1-minute congratulatory toast for the birthday child. One person will give the toast on the birthday (agree on who). You can use any of the following ideas (or several of them briefly) in your toast.

- Point out the main qualities and virtues of the birthday girl.
  - There is a funny story to be told about the birthday child (situation).
  - Good wishes for future life, achievements, short and long term goals, etc. should be expressed.
- 

### 2. Mother and father of a girl turning 18:

Come up with a short 1-minute congratulatory toast for the birthday child. One person will give the toast on the birthday (agree on who). You can use any of the following ideas (or several of them briefly) in your toast.

- Point out the main qualities and virtues of the birthday girl.
  - There is a funny story to be told about the birthday child (situation).
  - Good wishes for future life, achievements, short and long term goals, etc. should be expressed.
- 

### 3. Best friends of a girl turning 18:

Come up with a short 1-minute congratulatory toast for the birthday child. One person will give the toast on the birthday (agree on who). You can use any of the following ideas (or several of them briefly) in your toast.

- Point out the main qualities and virtues of the birthday girl.
  - There is a funny story to be told about the birthday child (situation).
  - Good wishes for future life, achievements, short and long term goals, etc. should be expressed.
- 

### 4. Grandmother and grandfather of the boy turning 18:

Come up with a short 1-minute congratulatory toast for the birthday child. One person will give the toast on the birthday (agree on who). You can use any of the following ideas (or several of them briefly) in your toast.

- Point out the main qualities and virtues of the birthday boy.
  - There is a funny story to be told about the birthday child (situation).
  - Good wishes for future life, achievements, short and long term goals, etc. should be expressed.
- 

### 5. Mother and father of a boy turning 18:

Come up with a short 1-minute congratulatory toast for the birthday child. One person will give the toast on the birthday (agree on who). You can use any of the following ideas (or several of them briefly) in your toast.

- Point out the main qualities and virtues of the birthday boy.
  - There is a funny story to be told about the birthday child (situation).
  - Good wishes for future life, achievements, short and long term goals, etc. should be expressed.
- 

### 6. Best friends of a boy turning 18:

Come up with a short 1-minute congratulatory toast for the birthday child. One person will give the toast on the birthday (agree on who). You can use any of the following ideas (or several of them briefly) in your toast.

- Point out the main qualities and virtues of the birthday boy.
- There is a funny story to be told about the birthday child (situation).
- Good wishes for future life, achievements, short and long term goals, etc. should be expressed.



# POWER-FLOWER


## About the tool

This is a modified version of The Power-Flower tool, which was created by Canadian social educators. Its purpose is to explore our identities as individuals and as a group in relation to those who have power in our society. The centre of the flower is divided into 16 segments, each of it represents one category of our social identity. This centre is surrounded by a double set of petals – one outer and bigger, one inner and smaller. The outer, bigger petals describe the dominant/powerful identities in society and the inner/smaller ones are for the discriminated/minority identities.

## What to expect

As this exercise reveals aspects of our social identity that we are often not aware of, sometimes the unveiling can cause pain, anger, or even denial. A person who feels personally powerless is confronted by the fact that regardless of how she might feel, she is seen as wielding quite a bit of power by society in general. On the other hand, someone who feels personally responsible for not having succeeded may be freed from self-blame when they see that there are structural reasons holding them back. Helping one another untangle the personal from the structural can help us move forward with our struggle to seek justice against other oppressions.

 **Target group and number of participants:** group 12-20 people over 10 years old

 **Time:** 45-90 minutes

 **Aims:**

- ➔ Raising awareness about our privilege, position in society, and how life experiences deeply impact how we see and experience the world.
- ➔ Discovering how close/distant participants are to the dominant/powerful identities in our society.

 **Materials needed:** pens, crayons/markers, “Power-Flower” printed sheets, list of social identities on the flipchart

 **Preparations before doing the activity:**

- ➔ Make sure that you have enough copies of the flower (one for each participant).
- ➔ We encourage you to complete the Power-Flower activity before workshops, so that you’ll be prepared to model these activities for participants.
- ➔ This exercise is included in this tool-kit because we treat discrimination as violence from a systemic perspective. We recommend that before starting the exercise, you familiarize yourself with theoretical knowledge about stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination in order to understand their essence and manifestations in society.

## Categories of social identities:

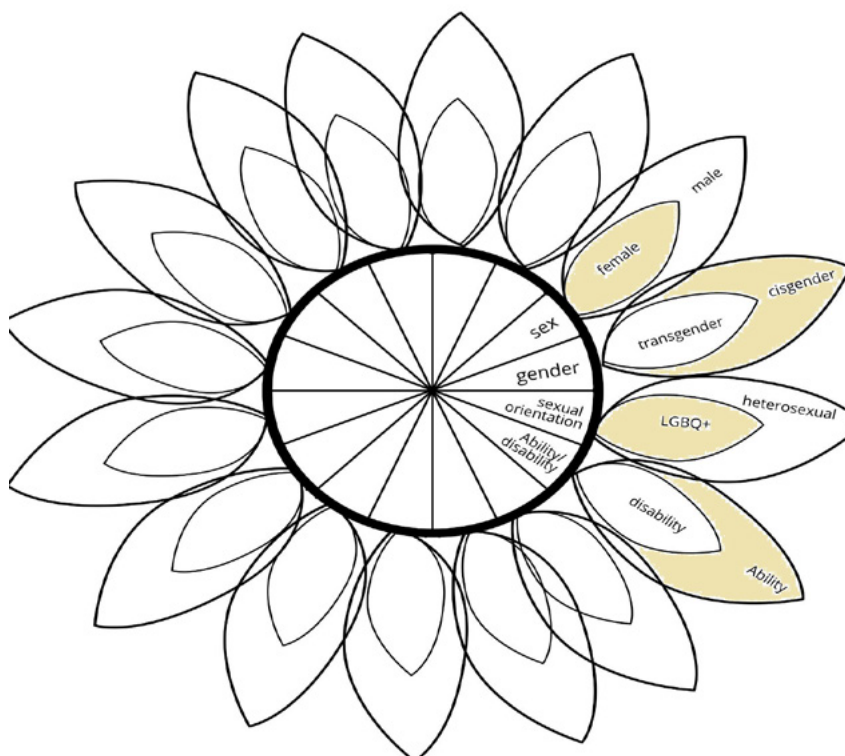
- |                                    |                              |                                 |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Sex                             | 6. Language                  | 11. Education                   |
| 2. Gender (cisgender, transgender) | 7. Religion                  | 12. Ability/disability          |
| 3. Sexual orientation              | 8. Family (Single? Nuclear?) | 13. Clergy/Lay                  |
| 4. Race                            | 9. Social class              | 14. Geographic region (origin)  |
| 5. Ethnic group                    | 10. Age group                | 15. Geographic region (current) |

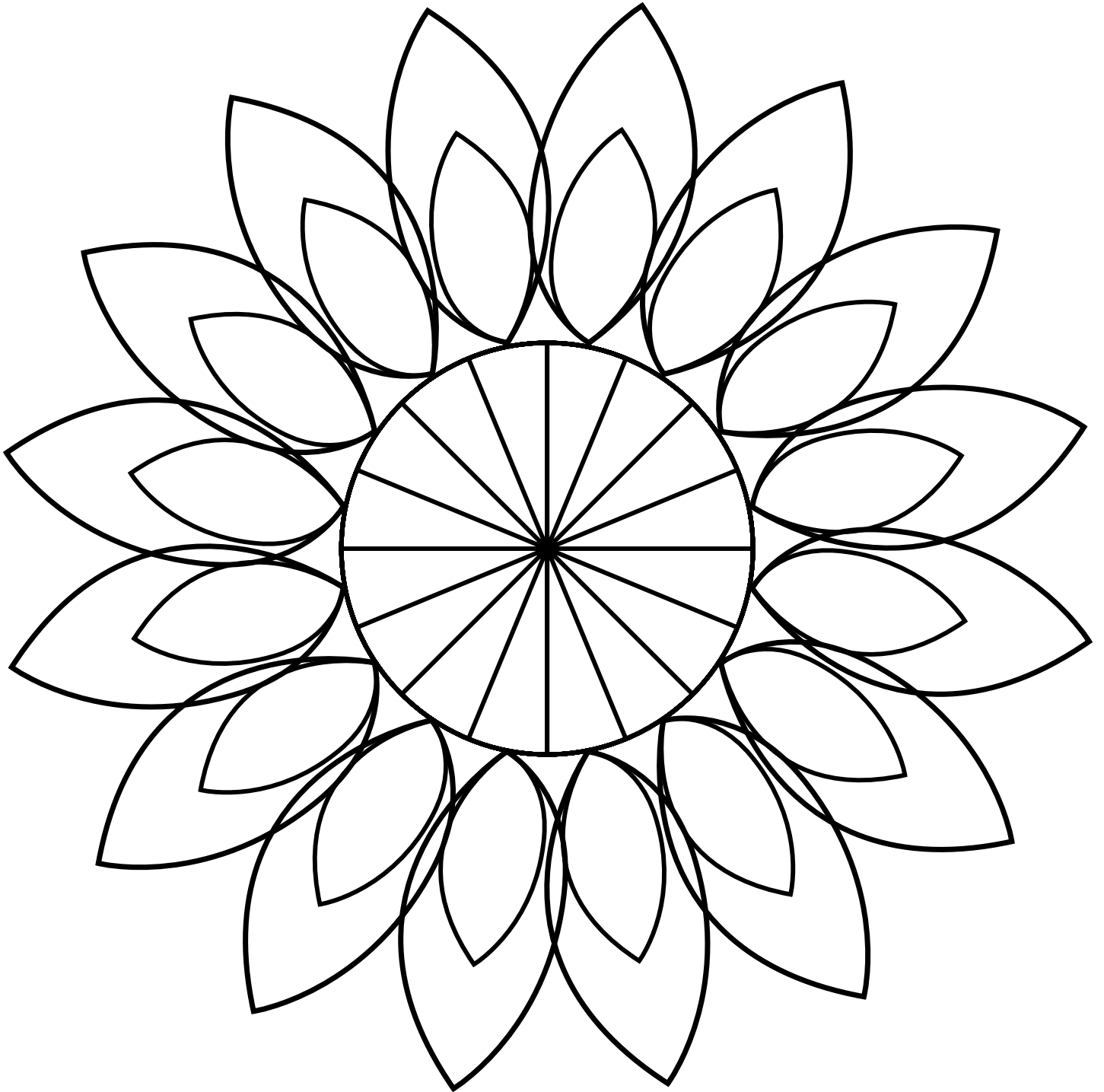


## Carrying out the exercise:

- ➔ Explain to participants that in this activity they'll work individually on their own identities. Completed Power-Flower sheet is in their ownership and it's their decision what they want to share. Assure participants that you won't collect completed sheets.
- ➔ Introduce participants to the tool. In the first step ask them to fill in the 16 segments in the centre of the flower with categories of social identities. They can use the list that you have prepared or they can propose their own categories. If they decide to use the prepared list, inform them that one segment will be left blank anyway. It is intended for filling with an identity that is not included on the list which they may want to include. It is not necessary to fill out this segment, however encourage participants to do so.
- ➔ When all participants will fill segments in the centre of the flower, ask them to go to the petals. Instruct them to write in the outer larger petals the identities they believe are privileged/powerful and in the inner smaller petals those ones they see as discriminated against.
- ➔ When participants fill in the petals, ask them to colour the petals that describe their identity in each category.
- ➔ After completing the Power-Flower sheet, give participants some time to look at their work and draw conclusions, and then invite them to discussion. Tell them that they can compare their work with others if they want.
- ➔ It is important to emphasize that we cannot judge someone else's beliefs. However, as a leader, you must take care to confront beliefs that are inconsistent with reality. Emphasize that noticing someone's privilege is not an attack. Its purpose is to notice in which areas we have power, which we can use both ways: to discriminate against minorities or to support them. From the other side, noticing our unprivileged identities shows in which areas we may experience discrimination and in which groups we may seek allies.

### Example of filling out the power-flower








### Questions for discussion:

- How many petals in your Power-Flower sheet shows that you are part of privileged groups and how many of them include you in minorities?
- What light does this throw on the way you have been treated as a person of privilege or as a marginalized person?
- Which of these can't be changed (e.g. sexual orientation, gender) and which ones could be changed (e.g. level of education)?
- If you compare your work, what does it tell you about who you are in this group? Are you fairly privileged? In what ways are you not privileged?
- How can you turn this knowledge to advantage as the group works together? As you make decisions? For instance, you might as a group decide to take measures to make sure members with less power do get a chance to be heard.
- How do you feel after this activity? What's your conclusion?


# NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

 **Target group and number of participants:** group 12-20 people over 10 years old

 **Time:** 30-45 minutes

 **Aims:**

- ➔ Showing participants that proper communication is the key to healthy, respectful relationships.
- ➔ Enabling participants to practice assertive communication using I-statements so that they engage with their feelings and behaviours.

 **Materials needed:** flipchart, markers, "situation cards"

 **Preparations before doing the activity:**

- ➔ We recommend that you familiarize yourself with theoretical knowledge about non-violent communication. For this purpose, you can use the book *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Deepak Chopra or online sources. If you choose the second option, make sure the sources you use are reliable.

 **Carrying out the exercise:**

1. Ask participants to sit in a circle.
2. Explain that assertive communication means engaging with your feelings rather than blaming someone else, and that effective communication requires clear explanations of how you feel, why you feel that way, and what you would like to happen. I-statements are a way to implement this plan.

**How to use I-statements:**

- ➔ Start by defining how you feel: **I feel...**
- ➔ Then identify the reason why you feel this way: **When...**
- ➔ Try to explain why you feel this way: **Because...**
- ➔ Finally, it is worth adding what change we expect in the situation. However, this is not mandatory: **I would like to...**

While explaining, write on the flipchart:

I feel..., when..., because... I would like...

- ➔ The I-statement may not change the other person's behaviour and therefore you may not always get what you need. It may be hard to understand sometimes, but you are the only person responsible for your emotions. You have control over them.
- ➔ Appropriately expressing your emotions and clearly stating your needs are methods of assertive communication.
- ➔ Give the group some examples:

- I felt angry when I came back from work and saw the sink full of dirty dishes. I like to use a clean kitchen, so I ask you to leave tidy after yourself.

- ➔ Deal with situations from *situation cards* and ask participants to read the situation from a given card and talk about their emotions using the I-statement. Start by asking for a volunteer for each statement or split them in groups so that all participants participate in the task.

Suggested questions to summarize the exercise:

- What do you think about I-statements?
- Was it easy for you to create I-statements?
- Is it easy to talk about our emotions? Why?
- Is it important to express our emotions and needs? Why?
- Do you think that using I-statements can reduce the amount of conflict that can arise in relationships? Why?
- How would you react when another person does not want to do what you asked them to do?


## SITUATION CARDS


Your friends are going to the cinema and you weren't invited. You are really upset.	Your friend was talking behind your back. You are sad.
The person running the class praised you for a good idea. You feel proud.	Two of your classmates make hurtful comments about another classmate's appearance. You are disappointed that they act this way.
Your mom has prepared your favourite dinner for you. It makes you feel good.	Your brother took your shirt without asking and got hot chocolate on it. You're furious.
You and your friend are working on a group project, but your friend isn't putting in the effort. You think it's unfair.	Your younger brother is bullying a classmate. You are disappointed.
Your friend borrowed a book from you and returned it smeared. You are angry.	Your dad knows you've been in a bad mood lately and takes you for a walk and a talk. You feel happier.
Someone in your group criticized your clothes. You feel embarrassed.	Your boyfriend/girlfriend never has time to hang out. You feel sad.
Your teacher speaks very quickly and sometimes you can't keep up with him. You feel frustrated.	Your teacher keeps calling you by a nickname that you don't like and it makes you feel uncomfortable.
Your mom has agreed to throw you a birthday party. You're really excited.	Your older sister is avoiding doing her household chores and is forcing you to do them for her. You are frustrated.
Your dad let you go with him to meet his friends, but he changed his mind. You're disappointed.	Your friend makes fun of other people in the group, and you find it upsetting.
Your best friend forgot your birthday. You are sad.	Your teacher thanked you for all the hard work you put into your project. You're bursting with pride.



# SENSOA FLAG SYSTEM

The Sensoa Flag System is a method for professionals working with children, young people and adults to promote discussion around (transgressive) sexual behaviour, assess it correctly and respond appropriately. You can easily modify it when assessing other violent situations. The Sensoa Flag System is a method that uses six objective criteria to assess sexually (transgressive) behaviour: Consent, Voluntary engagement, Equality, Developmental or functional level, Context, Impact.

 **Target group and number of participants:** suitable for both young people and adults. Individually or in a group.

 **Time:** 1-2 hours

 **Aims:**

- ➔ Objectively assessing sexual behaviour of children, young people and adults.
- ➔ Discussing sexual behaviour with the persons involved and other professionals.
- ➔ Better coordinating the (educational) steps to be taken within your team.
- ➔ Developing a vision and policy on sexual health within your environment.
- ➔ Reaching a carefully considered response after applying six criteria to a specific situation. This provides a counterweight to emotional or panicky reactions, or to indifference.

 **Materials needed:** Sensoa Flag System wheel, sample situations

 **Preparations before doing the activity:**

- ➔ We recommend that you familiarize yourself with basic theoretical knowledge about psychosexual development of children and teenagers.

 **Carrying out the exercise:**

- ➔ Invite participants to sit in a circle. Introduce them to the topic by saying that you'll talk about sexual behaviours. Emphasize that you know that it's not always easy to talk about this, especially with adults.
- ➔ Explain to the participants that children and adolescents exhibit sexual behaviour throughout their development and usually they are okay, but sometimes those behaviours may cross the line. You can use the Sensoa Flag System's six work formats to check which actions are acceptable and which are not.
- ➔ Use descriptions/pictures of sample situations to practice using of the wheel with participants.
- ➔ You first consider whether the criteria are okay, not (quite) okay or unclear. Then, based on this assessment, you assign the sexual behaviors a colored flag. Behavior is assigned a green flag when all the criteria are totally okay. You assign sexual behaviors a yellow, red or black flag when one or more criteria are not okay.
- ➔ Emphasize that the flag system evaluates the flag of the situation, not the person or phenomenon.

## Sensoa Flag System Wheel



The wheel legend:

**Consent** (thumbs up)

- Do I want it?
- Is it right for you?

**Voluntariness** (smiley)

- Is there no pressure, persuasion, threat, coaxing, lying?

**Equality** (equal sign) to start, change, stop

- Is there no abuse of power, force, status?

**Capability** (ladder)

- Can I handle it?
- Can you handle it?

**Context** (eye)

- Is the level of privacy OK for everyone?

**Impact** (patch), self-respect

- Are there no harmful consequences?

How to read the wheel?

All criteria OK

- You are on the right track

At least one questionable

- Discussa

At least one missing

- Stop and leave

At least one completely missing

- Stop, leave and seek outside help



**11-year-old boy takes photos of girls in the showers**



**Girls of 13 ask questions about sex to teacher**



**Photographer uses pictures of a dancer without her consent**

More example situations showing specific situations of sexual behaviour of (vulnerable) children, young people and adults from here: <https://www.en.sensoa.be/start-materials-flag-system#title2>

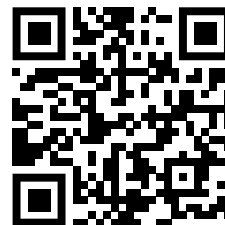
Further reading:

Flag System – How to respond to (transgressive) sexual behaviour:


<https://www.en.sensoa.be/flag-system-how-respond-transgressive-sexual-behaviour>

Work formats of Sensoa Flag System for children and young people: <https://www.en.sensoa.be/sites/default/files/work-formats-children-young-people-sensoa-flag-system.pdf>

# TRUST YOUR MIND



 **Target group and number of participants:** group 12-20 people over 10 years old

 **Time:** 30-45 minutes

 **Aims:**

- ➔ Increasing trust in oneself and others
- ➔ Highlighting the importance of benevolence and attention from the others in oneself
- ➔ Encouraging communication, creativity and self-knowledge

 **Materials needed:** -

 **Preparations before doing the activity:**

- ➔ This activity was taken from the Improve by Move manual. If you are interested in more details about this program, you can find them here: <https://linktr.ee/improvebymove>

 **Carrying out the exercise:**

- ➔ Invite the participants to form groups of 3-4 (depending on the number of participants). Person A should be in the middle of the group and they should resume a neutral position. At first, the partners should make sure that A stands in their healthy and neutral position (check Improve by Move manual to get more details). Once they all agree, the partners should move A's body to emphasize the imaginary connections that link A with outer space. For example, one of the partners could open A's arm to emphasize the connection between A and the door, or a window, or another person and so on. After each partners' action, Person A should keep his or her position, and the other partner should carry on from that exact position. The partners should alternate their engagement with Person A and leave enough time for him or her to feel the connections with outer space. The leader should invite A's partners to start by moving A's extremities at first. Following this, they could move A's spine, knee, and so on, bearing in mind the fact that each movement should be conceived to emphasize A's outer connections.
- ➔ The partners should always arrange themselves to support A, helping them to keep their balance and above all, keeping the spirit of working as a team towards the same goal with the maximum of benevolence they can provide.
- ➔ Advanced version: As they go through, the partners could move person A at the same time, paying attention to A's balance, making sure A doesn't fall on the floor. If they want to take A to the floor they should do it in the safest possible way.
- ➔ More advanced version: Person A could close their eyes from the beginning and the partners could try to lift him or her and keep the moving parts of his or her body according to the previous task. Each participant should experience the A role.

## Summary questions:

- How did you feel during this activity?
- What was difficult, what was nice?
- What conclusions do you have after this activity?
- In which role you felt the best? Why?
- Why is it important to be aware of your body and its connections to the surroundings?



# **ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE USED AS A SUMMARY**






## Activities that can be used as a summary

### OUR CONNECTIONS – ART THERAPY

 **Target group and number of participants:** group 12-20 people over 10 years old

 **Time:** 45-60 minutes

 **Aims:**

- ➔ Relaxation and regulation of participants after difficult conversations about violence.
- ➔ Summarizing the workshop.
- ➔ Showing that as humans we are interconnected, creating social systems and we are responsible for the common good.


 **Materials needed:** paints, markers, crayons, long roll of white paper

 **Carrying out the exercise:**

- ➔ In the first step, ask participants to form pairs. Unroll the paper roll to the appropriate length, depending on the number of participants. Then ask participants to sit by the roll so that each person in the pair sits opposite each other.
- ➔ In the next step, ask the participants to trace their hands on paper in the following way: let one person put their hands together, connect their lower parts (in a butterfly shape) and place them on the paper, and the partner of the pair traces them. Then the other person from the pair does the same.
- ➔ In the next step, ask participants to decorate their handprints however they want. Once they have done this, ask participants to find a way they can connect the reflection of their hands with the reflection of the hand of the person they are paired with.
- ➔ Once the pairs have found their connections, ask participants to find a way to connect the hands of all participants. In the last part of the activity, give participants space to decorate the card however they want. After the activity, give them time to look at their joint work.
- ➔ Invite participants to sit in a circle and engage in a discussion about the exercise. Ask how they feel, what their reflections are, how they agreed on connections in pairs and among all participants, what was difficult in this exercise. In the summary of the activity, emphasize that we all live in some social groups and are connected to each other and have a joint responsibility for what happens in our social circles. Our social responsibility is to take action if we know that violence is happening somewhere.

# PAPER METAPHOR

 **Target group and number of participants:** group 12-20 people over 10 years old

 **Time:** 15-20 minutes

 **Aims:**

- ➔ Summarizing the workshop.
- ➔ Showing participants how the experience of violence or other difficult experiences can affect people.
- ➔ Paying attention to the importance of our behaviour in relation to others.

 **Materials needed:** post-it's cards

 **Carrying out the exercise:**

- ➔ Give each participant one piece of paper. Then ask them to tear it up into as many small pieces as possible. Spend about 3-5 minutes on this.
- ➔ Once the participants' cards are in shreds, ask them to put the pieces of paper back together. Some participants will immediately find this impossible, while others may reach for the tape or glue and try to stick the note back together. However, it is important to note that even if they manage to glue the paper together, it will never look exactly the same as before.
- ➔ Summarize the exercise by pointing out that this is true of our actions towards others. Our actions or words can cause hurt and even if we apologize, the person will not be the same as before. That is why it is so important to be mindful of how we treat others.
- ➔ Ask participants how they feel and what reflections they have after this activity.





# Useful help numbers

This is a range of 6 free, European helpline numbers for children and adults in need, usable in most EU countries (though coverage is not yet EU-wide). They give access to selected local help services.

**116 000** - hotline for missing children

**116 111** - helpline for children

**116 123** - emotional support helpline

**116 006** - helpline for crime victims

**116 117** - non-emergency medical assistance

**116 016** - helpline for women who are victims of violence

**In case of emergency always call 112**