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# THE YOUNG MIND

## ACTIVITY MANUAL



**THIS MANUAL DESCRIBES THE ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED  
DURING THE ERASMUS + TRAINING COURSE 'THE YOUNG MIND'  
HELD IN BIDART FRANCE IN MARCH 2024.**

**THE MANUAL DESCRIBES ACTIVITIES THAT ARE AIMED TO HELP YOUTH  
WORKERS DEAL WITH YOUNG PEOPLE MENTAL WELLBEING.**



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## AMAZING ISLAND

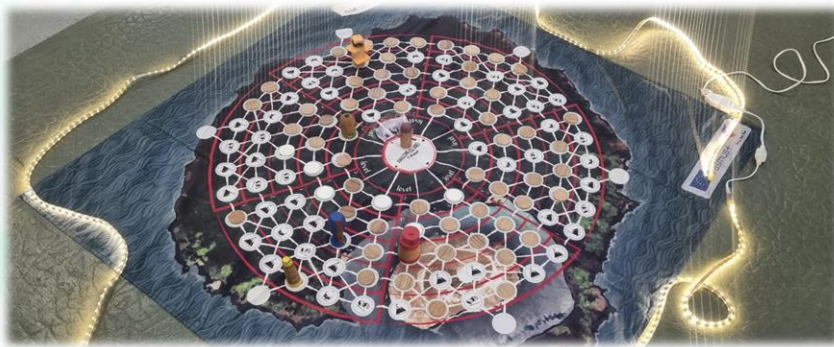
You can find the amazing island game [here](#)

Amazing island is a role-playing game in which the protagonists have different character traits, and we will have to make decisions in the face of CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES and DESTINY, in order to earn points and overcome the different levels of Emotional Health, Mental Health and Physical Health, and energy.

Each team has to cooperate and reach a consensus to make a decision on the choice to be made.

The game includes a board with pieces, different levels and the objective can be:

1. To reach the centre of the bullseye by surpassing all 5 levels, all participants win.
2. To only save equipment.



## ALL TO ONE:

The aim of the game is to create a musical melody all together.

Participants form a circle and read the following code on a white board:

1010101110001100  
01111001010101100  
1011010001110001110

The rule is simple:

- 1** means clap your hands.
- O** means stomp the ground.

The game ends when we manage to hear the complete melody.

## SECRET MISSIONS

The trainers explain that there are secret missions around the premises for each of the participants. It is secret, you cannot tell anyone and it is a mission that you have to carry out every day of the course. **ABSOLUTELY NO ONE CAN KNOW ABOUT IT.**





## IMPOSTERS

Dynamics of group knowledge and memory.

In a circle we will greet each other: Hello, I'm Encarna...Hello, I'm Irina.

At the next greeting we will change names. The game will end when I say hello again and find my real name.

## EYE GAZING

The goal of this exercise is to maintain eye contact.

Participants stand in the circle and look into the eyes of each of the participants for 2 seconds. It is important to remember that it is voluntary, and participants can decide not to participate.

At the end of the exercise, there is a time for reflection: **How did you feel?**

## FOR ME. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES



Participants are organised in a couples.

One is blindfolded and one is not.

Find a safe place to practice this exercise.

Participants walk outside until they reach the safe place, where the one who is blindfolded feel/check the place around him/her (the trunk of a tree, the grass, the ground...).

The partner who is not blindfolded can choose to talk or be silent.

After a while, the couples return to the starting point and the partner who is not blindfolded ask the one who was blindfolded if he/she know where he/she was.

We repeat the process again, exchanging roles.

## ARE YOU GOOD AT...?

Participants imagine that they are watching a movie about themselves, about their life.

Questions:

What would the main character be good at?

What would they be average at and what would be bad at?

At the end of a personal work session, participants can share with a partner the good, average, and bad traits that they have in common.

*"I felt comfortable with both the good and the bad thoughts because they all live in my mind"*



## POEM

Swoooosshhhh...

Swoooosshhhh...

Swoooosshhhh...

Among the waves of the vast and mysterious sea,  
where the heart of the sailor gets lost in thoughts,  
an old, solitary, and pensive sailor  
surrenders to the flow of uncertainty.

On the distant horizon, a light shine,  
like a beacon of hope in the darkness of the soul,  
and the old man, with eyes now weary,  
sees in it the reflection of his own destiny.

But in the encounter with other wandering sailors,  
his spirit awakens from oblivion,  
and in their words and gentle gestures,  
he finds the key to opening up to new horizons.

The lighthouse reveals its true meaning in the heart of man,  
for it is the light of understanding and sharing,  
that illuminates the path to self-realization.

Thus, among the waves dancing in the moonlight,  
the old sailor embraces his destiny,  
knowing that the true light resides within himself,  
and that only through others can it shine fully.



## EUROPEAN VALUES.

On a table, place [cards with different values](#) written on them.

Instruct participants to choose and write down 8 values each, the ones that are the most important to them.

Then instruct participants to rank them in the order from 1 to 8 according to importance. Instruct participants to discuss these values with a partner, see if they have any values in common and answer the questions:

- Why are they important for you?
- Which 3 values are the most important to you?
- Are they still the same 3 first ones that you put on top of your list?





## EMOTIONS EXERCISE



The first step is to choose one emotion from the [list of the emotions](#). Then, tell an experience related to the chosen emotion. The second step is to change your place if you identify with a person's experience.

## IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

Distribute one paper per person with one conflict to interpret.

The facilitator organises participants in a line and tell a story. Participants have to decide if they identify with it or not by taking one step forward. At the end, participants reflect about how these fears feel in each of them.

## PRESENT PERSONAL OBJECT.

Each participant brings a personal object. Each participant present why it is so special to them. Participants share their feelings with the group and reflect about the importance of sharing that kind of information.

## ENERGIZER

In a circle, 1 person leave for a moment meanwhile the group choice someone to lead the others with dance moves. Then the person comes back and guesses who the leader is.

## THE GAME “MISSION Z”

The [game](#) includes 5 teams: Blue, Yellow, Red, Pink and White. Each team has a secret mission. The goal is to place the pieces on the board to achieve that secret mission.

During the game not everyone has all the information. Participants felt different types of emotions such as frustration, confusion, and anger – which makes it hard to make decisions.



During our game, the White team was in disadvantage: they had less people on their team, they did not receive any news, some of the other teams received news to attack them. None of the teams wanted to try to cooperate, every team was attacking another one.

In real life who are the Whites?

Kids, minorities, refugees, free spirits, people who feel lost/confused...





There are situations in our lives that can affect our decision making, for example lack of sleep. That is why we have to give our emotions importance and take them into consideration because they play a huge role in our daily decisions.

## ENERGIZER

Approach a person and tell them “I see you and I appreciate you” and give them a hug.

## THE TABLE

Sociometry of beliefs: participants stand in a line, and we move to the left if they agreed with a statement, or on the right if they disagreed. They stay in the middle if they have a neutral opinion about it.

Examples of statements:

- “If something is dangerous, we should be upset and endlessly obsess about it”
- “It’s easier to avoid than to face life difficulties and self-responsibilities”.
- “Something that strongly affected your life, will definitely affect it again”.
- “We must have control over things in our life”.
- “It’s horrible when things are not the way we like them to be”.
- “We need others to love us for what we do”.

For every statement, participants reflect upon their choice. The goal of this exercise is to see your own beliefs, to reflect on how it help people in their life and try to better understand different beliefs.

## THE CHAIR OF BALANCE

Participants are asked to think of something they lost and made them lose their balance, mental stability. Participants write on a paper what activities, things, people make them recover their balance and stick it to a chair.

Then they reflect on how they integrate those things in their life when they lose balance and how they can take care of them better.





## THE CALL

Participants are asked to make a phone call to a close person and tell her/him that they love them.

This exercise is to make participants realise that they don't tell people enough that they love them and also, that some people don't have someone to call. Then participants reflect on who and why calling people when we need help.



## THE MIRROR



In pair, in front of each other, participants have to mirror the other person.

## GUESS WHO

For this activity everyone should be in a circle facing each other.

The facilitator informs the group about the rules.

- Everyone needs to close their eyes.
- The facilitator goes around the circle and touch someone.
- After this the group opens their eyes and have to point the person, they think was touched.
- Each person has to justify why they pointed to that person.

On the first round the facilitator doesn't touch anyone.

On the second round the facilitator touches everyone's back.

The goal is to observe everyone in the group, their emotions, their actions and to reflect on them.

## THE 4 BRAINS

The goal is to understand the development of the brain and the brain of kids and youngsters.

- Present the theory of "The 4 brains".
- The first part of the brain to develop is the red part, related to survival of the being. Its focused on resting and eating. It only reacts, doesn't make decisions. We see this clearly on babies.



- The second part to develop is the green one, related to the emotions, the social part and interactions. In this phase of development, we need to feel calm. When we feel in danger, this part of the brain goes bigger.
- The third part is the blue one, related to the storage of information and values. It's like a Hard drive.
- The last one is the yellow, the manager. Here is where we regulate our emotions. Because kids don't have this part developed, they cannot regulate their emotions.
- When we look at teenagers, we can compare to a computer updating - "Mind of youths is on an update mode". It is like is frozen during this moment so it's common they cannot regulate their emotions so well.

## EMOTIONAL TAXI

The goal is to express and identify emotions.

- The group needs to be in a circle with 4 chairs in the middle representing the taxi.
- The facilitator gives to everyone random papers with different emotions.
- Everyone should think about the emotion they have and think about how they feel after and during experiencing it. They should also think about a situation where they would feel like that.
- There is going to be one driver and 3 passengers. The passengers have to act the emotions that they were given, and the driver had to copy them. Every time a passenger entered the taxi, everyone has to copy the emotion.
- People in the circle have to identify every emotion and write it down on a paper.
- After the representation everyone one on the group should share what they thought it were the emotions.

Moment of reflection:

- Was it easy for the passengers to impersonate the emotions?
- What emotion was the easiest?
- Can you read the emotions of others?
- When someone is sad or is crying why do we say to stop? Every emotion is good, and we need to feel them.
- We can feel emotions based on other emotions. Example: I'm scared of spiders and then I felt ashamed because people saw my reaction.

## EMPATHIC LISTENING

The group needs to be in a circle.

The facilitator shared the story of their life.

Share the idea that is important for the youngster's to have an adult that can be vulnerable and that they can relate to. "It's good to show vulnerability so people can do it too."





## GPS OF EMPATHY

Paraphrasing -> Mirror the emotions -> Share from your experience -> Reflection

- Talk about what is empathy.
- Difference between empathy and sympathy.
- What do we need to have empathy?
- Explanations of the steps of the GPS of empathy.
- In pairs share something important to you and follow the GPS steps.
- In big group share how you felt during the exercise. How do you feel when you express yourself? How do you feel to listen to someone? Do you think this activity is useful in your life?

## DUPLIK

The space is organised with 5 table in the middle of the room.

The goal is to understand more about communication skills and find strategy/tips to better communicate and adapt our way of communicating information based on people we are talking to.

Each participant has a piece of paper with different empty squares, the facilitator gives a picture to one of the participant and ask that person to describe it out loud. The rest of the group have to draw the pictures, only following the description of the person in charge.

Q&A session at the end:

- Did you discover tips about communication? Is there a strategy that you use to communicate details and to allow people to understand better?
- Did you modify your way of expressing based on how people in the team were responding to you?

## CONNECTED OUTDOOR

Each participant gets one envelope with some tasks inside. The facilitator explains the rules of the game: this is a solo experience outdoor, time to be alone and reflect following the invitations written on the cards in the envelop, starting from choosing a special spot where participants feel connected to the space.

- Invitation 1: YOUR SPACE

What makes this your space? Why is this your space? What makes you feel comfortable?





Action: automatic writing -> take your notebook and pen and start writing. Keep going without stopping for 5 mins. Write down anything that comes up in your mind without judging it, just follow your feelings and express yourself.

- Invitation 2: YOUR ROLE

How is your role as a son/daughter, brother/sister, mother/father, lover/partner, a friend, a youth workers/educator/therapist.

Looking at these roles: where are the roles different? Why? In which role do you feel more comfortable or confident?

Write down notes about this

- Invitation 3: THE HERO/HEROINE IN YOU

When you are in charge of a group of people, what impression do you make on others in the group?

Who is looking at you as hero/heroine? Who sees you like that? For whom are you a hero/heroine?

Which hero/heroine qualities do they appreciate in you? Which qualities do you appreciate in yourself?

Where and when do you ignore or hide the hero/heroine within you?

Action: write a special letter to the hero within you, put the letter in the envelope, and write your name and postal address on it and close it.



# GOOD PRACTICES MARKET

## THERAPEUTIC EFFECT OF SKATING by Ine:



I will talk a bit about the work I did in the past years and the effect it has had. I founded with 2 friends an NGO about roller skating in the skatepark called Rampzalig. We filed for subsidies to give free roller skating as inclusivity as one of its biggest values.

You don't work directly about mental health, but it has therapeutic effects. Roller Skating for me is my meditation, you need to be in the present moment, or you are at risk of injury.

With skating you also navigate through a social environment, do something you never thought you were able to, face fears, cheer each other up, learn to ask help when a trick fails, learn to give workshops, build a social network, chances to undertake/ organize something .. These are all skills you can apply in your life. Girls often need an excuse or reason to be the public space. Roller Skating gives them a reason and a group to occupy the public space in the city. This is not only beneficial for the girls but for everybody. It's said that you can measure the quality of the public space by how many girls occupy it.

Now we are organizing FINTA (female, intersex, non-binary, transgender, agender) nights with skate lessons indoor.

With NGO Minus One I built a mini ramp and mobile skate objects. This way we could put pressure on the city to show that we need more skateparks and we got them!

We also showed the city that there are a lot of girls in the neighbourhood by outreaching with skate material. It is an easy way to make contact and show the enthusiasm. This way we got permanent subsidies for disadvantaged youth. We got a weekly open house for the girls of the neighbourhood.

With project GUST (Ghent Urban Sport Team) the city of Ghent wants to have eyes in the skatepark. They pay volunteers to patrol the skateparks, patrol and report. It creates ownership. It's still very male oriented. So, I am one of the volunteers who is trying to lobby to make this project more female oriented. Often in a project or an organisation there needs to be things added or changed so the project fits the needs of each gender.

The roller skating creates many chances for all women in Ghent.

## DANCING by Georgia:

No judgment and find your own way of moving. No right or wrong, if you feel it's right, connect to pleasure. This practice is for you, not to show to someone else.

Find a spot you feel comfortable standing, close your eyes, connect to your heartbeat, focus on your breathing and shake it out.

Open your eyes and start walking around in space. Notice how you put your feet on the floor. How are you walking? Zig zag, straight... Explore a space you haven't been before. Start to open yourself for other people, look in the eyes, maybe a smile, maybe share a touch, maybe





you want to encounter each other with heart to heart like a hug, thank them and keep going. Allow yourself to encounter other people.

Wherever you are right now, I ask you to do a small solo dance. However you want, wherever the music brings you, just feel your body stretch, twerk! why not...

When one person decides to stop/ freeze, the whole group needs to freeze too. When one person dances again the whole group also dances. Try to make it as accurate as possible.

To close, stand in a circle, give hands, right palm up, left palm down. Stand and feel the energy of the group. What are you giving? What are you receiving?

Let go of the hands and put arms on each other's shoulders. Feel the movement of the group like waves.

### RIVER OF LIFE by Ines and Telma

(Sounds of birds in the background) Everybody sit at a table and close your eyes. Think that your life is a river, are there other rivers connected, maybe there is a waterfall, maybe there are rocks in the river. Imagine your river. We want you to draw your river. If you wanna put names on for example a rock, a turn, a waterfall, you can do it. You have 10 min to draw your river, please do this in silence.

Whoever wants (you don't have to) can share something about his, hers or theirs drawing. Participants talk about why their rivers split, it gets stagnated, how to overcome obstacles... Did anything surprise you...?

Remember that the water needs to go somewhere, and it always will.

### TROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD by Pauline



If we would look through the eyes of a child, the world would be a lot more magical. Stand in 2 lines and face another one specific person. When the music starts one of the 2 will make faces and try to change their eyes. The other person will imagine how this person is evaluating into a new creature, say nothing (only observe). Then you will switch roles.

You see these objects like the ball, benches, tables. everyday. Now you will try to look at these objects like they are special. Maybe the bench is a dog, or the leg of the table is a stethoscope? Explore the room and imagine these objects are something special and act accordingly with it. (Everybody is playing around like a big circus.)

How was this for you? What object did you choose and what was it in your fantasy? Was it easy for you to get in this world?

To finish, I wish you to think how you can make your life more magical and weirder to be amazed again and break the routine.

### BLIND GUIDE by Monica

Make pairs, one person will be a guide. This person holds up a hand and the other person follows with the head more or less 40 cm distance. Don't go to fast, you can go up chairs, tables etc. And I encourage you to walk. Guide the other person.

Do this exercise in silence please (music playing).

Make a circle. How was it for to be led? How was it for you to lead?



### AFRICAN DANCE by Frank

A genius choreography on the song Shake body by Skales.

### TO BUILD TOGETHER by Encarna

Fill in the table in your own language

COUNTRY			
Spain	Acompanar	Ayudar si me lo pides	Estar
English	Walking together	Help if you ask me	To be always
Lithuania	Eiti Kartu	Paveti	Buti virada
Italy	caminare insieme	aiutare	essere
Macedonia	Peshacenje zaedno	(Da ti dadam) pomosh ako me prashas	Da bidesh sekogash
Portugal	Acompanhar	ajudar se tu me pedires	estar sempre
France	accompagner	aider si tu me demande	etre toujours
Czech	Doprovodit	Pomoch	Byt
Belgium	Begeleiden	Hulp bieden als je me dit vraagt	Aanwezig zijn
malt	Nimxu flimkien	Nghinek jekk isqasini	Li nkun dejjem prezenti
Turkey	Birlikte yurumek	yardim et, eger istersen	olmak, her zaman
Cameroon	on waka	helep	i dey
Slovenian	Spremljati	Pomogati, ce me vprasas za pomoc	Biti

### RELATIONSHIP WITH MONEY by Charles

Charles is asking the group one by one the following questions:

Rich people are good or bad?



Charles shares a personal story about his father. He was very sick. Charles asked for help to his uncles, aunts.. In two weeks, they got money together to go to a private hospital. The father needed urgent help. It was too late, the father died at the age of 42. Charles shares this story because his life in his 20s changed a lot. The meaning of money changed for him. What to do so this won't happen again, to not lose his mother also? Charles started to work a lot, study a lot and save a lot of money.

If I sell one apple, I have one euro, if I sell 1000 apples, I have 1000 euro. But if I sell two smartphones I also have 1000 euro. So, I started brainstorming. Because with money you can help your loved ones. You can decide with money you are good or bad.

To help his family he was working all week.

What if I buy an apartment and rent the rooms to get money. This way I don't have to go to work and stay home with my family. Or what if I give courses online?

I am 52 years old, so I've had a long journey with money. Connecting it to parts of the brain: Storing information in the brain, using money to survive, using money to save people you are emotional connected to.

### NATURE by Gerda and Monica

(There are branches, logs of wood and pineapples spread out. We sit on yoga mats around it in a circle. And there are sounds of birds on the background. Ideally this workshop is done outside in nature.)

Please turn your smartphones to silent. If there is a sound, I will confiscate it (haha). Ideally this exercise would be outside. I invite you to be present.

Help us to relax and think more clearly. Being in nature can restore our mood, refresh and rejuvenate us. We all know this because people have been living for years in nature. Only recently people have been living in big concrete cities. We know deeply in ourselves we belong in nature. So, think for yourself when was the last time you strolled in a forest and look around how beautiful it was. Who wants to share an experience?

There is this doctor who invented this treatment forest bathing. Bathing in the forest atmosphere or being in nature, connecting through our senses (touching, hearing, seeing, smelling...). We have the colours of the forest, the sounds of nature,...

We open up our senses and connect with the natural world. Humans have an biological need to do this as it is our origin. It is in our DNA.

It's fundamental for our health, it's as vital as exercise and healthy diet. We need a regular connection with it, otherwise our health will be affected. Whenever we walk in the forest, we are consciously connecting with it. Our nervous system resets when we are one with nature. It's doesn't even have to be a long walk, but it has to be a conscious one. Two hours a day would be ideal. Unplug from technology and slow down. Lower stress, improve vascular system, improve concentration, boost immune system, increase protein production, help you lose weight.. And many more things. We invite you to choose an object in the middle of the







circle and try to have a connection with it. Try to touch them, smell them, taste it, what sound does it make?

### ITALIAN GESTURE by Riccardo

We started the afternoon activities with Italian gesture masterclass. The class made us realize how rich and vivid Italian gestures are and how they all have different and unique meanings.

### STREET ART by Anja

Anja followed with a beautiful and immersive presentation about street art. This really gave us a deeper understanding of how important the street art is and how subtlety it can brighten our day. Street art is really worth more than a thousand words.

### YOGA by Marina

Marina gave us a very slow, gentle and spiritual introduction to yoga. We all together did a few gentle stretches and yoga exercises. This practice showed us how important it is to move our bodies and how conscious and grounding it can feel for us.



### SOUND WALKING by Jachym

We ended the Practice Market with Jachym practice of sound walking. This exercise was oriented towards understanding how many sounds surround us, how important it is to notice them and how can we gain perspective of what is going on around us just by collecting information with our ears. This exercise took place outside, and it was raining, so we got even more interesting experience while sound walking. We got to notice even more different sounds and some people described the experience felt like 3D.

## **NICE BACK-TALKING**

After a week we have spent together we got to know each other much better which gave us the ability to do the “Nice Backtalking” activity. We had enough time to talk in pairs about a person next to us and highlight their positive traits and their contribution throughout the week.