

# Peer Leadership Course

Tutors Handbook



**SAFESPACE4YOUTH**  
YOUTH COMMUNITY



# Module 1

## Understanding Youth Mental Health

### Learning outcomes

Knowledge	Skills	Competences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn about mental health and challenges that young people face</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn activities that foster well-being and self-care; coping strategies; develop self-awareness &amp; resilience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn to recognise mental health issues among young people and how to help them</li> </ul>

### Learning/delivery time of this module

Activities	Self-study	Evaluation / Reflection	TOTAL TIME
3 hours	6 hours	1 hour	10 hours

### Theoretical background

Mental health has become a widely discussed topic when speaking about the issues young people face nowadays. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. Meanwhile, it also helps us to determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

This module explains youth mental health challenges such as stress, depression, anxiety, eating disorders and social media addictions. It also suggests ways how youth workers can help young people when they notice that something is off balance. In particular, focusing on building inner resources such as resilience, emotional intelligence and active listening.





## Activity 1

Activity name	Befriending emotions
Objectives	Develop and enhance participants' emotional intelligence by increasing their awareness and understanding of different emotions, fostering empathy and communication skills within the group.
Time needed for delivery	45 - 60 min
Preparation (room setting, tools, props, resources)	Materials Needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paper</li><li>• Pens/pencils</li><li>• Art supplies (if needed)</li></ul>

### Introduction

Begin the exercise by explaining the importance of acknowledging and understanding emotions. You can stream some of the educational videos on YouTube about emotions, for example, [10 things your emotions are trying to tell you!](#)

It's important to emphasise that all emotions are valid and that learning to befriend them can lead to greater self-awareness, resilience, and healthier relationships.

Discuss some common emotions that teens might experience, such as happiness, anger, sadness, fear, and excitement. Explain that during this exercise, they will have an opportunity to explore these emotions constructively.

It is also important to make sure you create a safe environment by mentioning that the exercise is voluntary and it is a non-judgmental space. Remind the group that everyone's experiences are valid and unique.

### Step-by-step facilitation

#### 1. Emotion Identification (10 minutes)

- Ask each participant to take a piece of paper and write down a list of emotions they have recently experienced. Encourage them to be as specific as possible.
- After they have compiled their list, have them share one or two emotions they feel comfortable discussing with the group. This step helps normalise the experience of different emotions and creates a safe and supportive atmosphere.





## 2. Emotion Exploration (10 minutes)

- Instruct the participants to choose one emotion from their list that they would like to explore more deeply. It could be an emotion they struggle with or one they find particularly interesting.
- Ask them to spend a few minutes reflecting on the chosen emotion. What does it feel like in their body? How does it affect their thoughts and behaviour? Encourage them to write down their observations.

## 3. Expressive Art (10 minutes)

- Explain that art can be a powerful tool for expressing emotions. Encourage the participants to channel their chosen emotion into a creative outlet by drawing, painting, or writing.
- Provide art supplies and give them time to create something that represents their chosen emotion. Remind them that this is a personal and private activity, and they do not need to share their artwork unless they feel comfortable doing so.

## 4. Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes)

- After the art-making session, gather the participants in a circle and invite them to reflect on their experience. Ask the following questions:
  - How did it feel to explore and express your chosen emotion through art?
  - Did you gain any new insights or understanding about the emotion?
  - Did this exercise change your perspective on the emotion or how you relate to it?

## 5. Closing (2 minutes)

- Conclude the exercise by emphasising the importance of befriending emotions and providing ongoing support for the participants in their emotional journeys.
- Encourage them to continue exploring their emotions, practising self-compassion, and seeking support when needed.

## Methodological approach & tips

The facilitator should consider the following:

- Create a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable and welcomed.
- Foster an interactive and participatory learning environment. Encourage active engagement through discussions or sharing in pairs.
- Create a safe space for participants to ask questions, share insights, and provide feedback. Encourage open dialogue and ensure that everyone's perspectives are respected.
- Foster collaborative learning by facilitating group discussions and encouraging participants to share their experiences, ideas, and challenges related to the topic.
- Include practical exercises or real-life examples that allow participants to apply the knowledge and skills learned.



- Be flexible and adaptable to the needs and dynamics of the participants. Adjust the pace, level of detail, and activities based on their responses and progress.
- If any participant becomes overwhelmed by their emotions, have a plan in place to provide appropriate support or resources.

## Evaluation

To evaluate this activity, the facilitator should consider the following:

- Observe throughout the whole activity if participants have sufficient vocabulary to name and describe several emotions.
- Gather feedback throughout the reflection/discussion activity from participants on how they relate to the emotions, whether this activity changed the way they relate to these emotions and if they learned anything new about these emotions.
- Gather feedback from the participants about their strategy of befriending or handling some difficult emotion through the reflection/discussion activity. Encourage discussion around existing support networks in their lives including a contact list for professional help.

## Resources

- [List of emotions](#)
- [10 things your emotions are trying to tell you](#)
- [Why do we feel emotions?](#)
- [Dan Siegel - the adolescent brain](#)

## Activity 2

Activity name	Building resilience: Exploring mental health through group discussions
Objectives	Increase awareness and understanding of mental health issues among young people; promote open and honest discussion about mental health to reduce stigma; enhance participants' knowledge of resilience and coping strategies; foster a supportive and empathetic environment for sharing experiences and providing mutual support.
Time needed for delivery	2 hours
Preparation (room setting, tools, props, resources)	<p>Room setting: Chairs in circle</p> <p>Materials Needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Flipcharts papers/Whiteboards</li> <li>● Pens</li> </ul>





## Introduction

The aim of the activity is:

- to increase awareness and understanding of mental health issues among young people;
- to reduce stigma by promoting an open and honest discussion about mental health;
- enhancing participants' knowledge of resilience and coping strategies;
- fostering a supportive and empathetic environment for sharing experiences and providing mutual support.

Make sure you create a safe environment by mentioning that the exercise is voluntary and it is a non-judgmental space. Remind the group that everyone's experiences are valid and unique, sharing personal experiences is voluntary, and they can choose the level of detail they feel comfortable disclosing. Encourage active listening and discourage judgment or unsolicited advice during the sharing process.

## Step-by-step facilitation

### 1. Introduction and Icebreaker (15 minutes)

- Welcome the participants and introduce the topic of mental health.
- Conduct an icebreaker activity to help participants get to know each other and create a comfortable atmosphere. Example of an icebreaker activity: Good thing.
- Ask each participant to turn to a partner and share with them “something good”—whether it’s a current situation that’s making them happy or something they’re looking forward to in the future. Here are some sample sentence stems you can share to ease the discussion:
  - One good thing in my life is...
  - Something good that happened is...
  - One good thing I am looking forward to is...
- After they have discussed their “good things” with a partner, ask for volunteers to share with the class.

### 2. Mental Health Education (15 minutes)

- Provide a brief presentation or discussion on common mental health issues faced by young people, such as anxiety, depression, and stress.

### 3. Sharing Personal Experiences (20 minutes)

- Divide participants into smaller groups of 4-6 people.
- Instruct each group to discuss and share personal experiences related to mental health challenges they or someone they know have faced.
- Encourage participants to listen actively and demonstrate empathy and support for one another.

### 4. Resilience and Coping Strategies (20 minutes)

- Facilitate a discussion on resilience and coping strategies for maintaining mental health.





- Provide examples of healthy coping mechanisms such as exercise, mindfulness, self-care, and seeking support from friends, family, or professionals.
- Encourage participants to share their own strategies and techniques that have helped them build resilience.

### 5. Group Activity: "Resilience Toolkit" (30 minutes)

- Divide participants into small groups and provide each group with a large sheet of paper or a whiteboard.
- Instruct each group to create a "Resilience Toolkit" by brainstorming and listing different tools, strategies, and resources that can help individuals build resilience and maintain positive mental health.
- After the brainstorming session, groups can present their toolkit to the larger group and discuss the items they included.

### 6. Wrap-up and Resources (10 minutes)

- Summarise the key points discussed during the activity and emphasise the importance of continuing the conversation about mental health.

## Methodological approach & tips

The facilitator should consider the following:

- Create a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable and welcomed.
- Foster an interactive and participatory learning environment. Encourage active engagement through discussions or sharing in small groups.
- Create a safe space for participants to ask questions, share insights, and provide feedback. Encourage open dialogue and ensure that everyone's perspectives are respected.
- Foster collaborative learning by facilitating group discussions and encouraging participants to share their experiences, ideas, and challenges related to the topic.
- Include practical exercises or real-life examples that allow participants to apply the knowledge and skills learned.
- Be flexible and adaptable to the needs and dynamics of the participants. Adjust the pace, level of detail, and activities based on their responses and progress.
- If any participant becomes overwhelmed by their emotions, have a plan in place to provide appropriate support or resources.

## Evaluation

To evaluate this activity, the facilitator should consider the following:

- Observe if the participants use respectful language and active, non-judgmental listening throughout the sharing/discussions.
- Observe balanced participation in the group discussion - does everyone have enough space and time to share? However, no one should be forced to speak.
- Evaluate the number and quality/suitability of the coping strategies being presented during the presentation of the "Resilience Toolkit".





## Resources

- [How to activate your inner resources](#)
- [From stress to resilience](#)

## Suggestion for self-directed learning:

*Check the resources in the above exercises.*

Furthermore, you can check the following resources:

- [An interview with a 19-year-old Alejandra from Spain about her mental health experience](#)
- [Ted talk: Tessa shares her experience with Anxiety at school, she shares tools that can be included in classrooms](#)
- [Calm: The ultimate anxiety tool](#)
- [How to help a depressed teen?](#)
- [What is emotional intelligence?](#)
- [Create your own well-being plan!](#)
- [How to be a good listener?](#)
- [The art of active listening](#)
- [How FOMO Impacts Teens and Young Adults?](#)

## Evaluation and Assessment:

At the end of this self-directed learning component of the module, participants will engage in an assessment to evaluate their understanding and application of the acquired knowledge from Module 1. Participants will also engage in self-reflection to reflect on their own learning.

## Quiz

1. Mental health helps us to cope with everyday stress - YES/NO
2. Depression is characterised by anxiety - YES/NO
3. Depression might lead to self-harm and eating disorders - YES/NO
4. To help someone with mental health issues the best is to provide emotional support, active nonjudgmental listening and if needed, advice to seek professional help - YES/NO
5. Spending too much time on social media does not contribute to poor mental health - YES/NO







## Self Reflection

- *What knowledge, skills and understanding have you gained about mental health that you weren't aware of before going through the group discussions and self-directed research?*
- *What have you learned about your inner resources and coping strategies for maintaining mental health that you were not aware of before?*



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