

Small steps to success

Training Programme for Active Career Planning through
Education, Employment and Self-Employment

Social
Innovation 
Initiative



Co-funded by
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Training Programme for Active Career Planning through Education, Employment and Self-Employment

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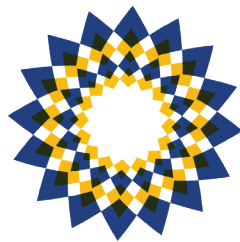
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Zagreb, 2026



HumanityHub

Where Cultural Inclusion Meets Economic Empowerment



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Psychosocial support for people who have experienced forced displacement, especially those with war trauma, requires a thorough understanding of the losses, traumatic experiences and sudden disruption of life plans. At the same time, it includes recognising their inner strengths, resilience and possibilities for building a new direction in life.

This manual was created precisely out of this need - to provide workshop trainers and educators with a clear, practical and culturally sensitive framework for providing psychosocial support to Ukrainian refugees and other people with migration experience, empowering them in the process of active career planning through education, employment or self-employment.

The manual, entitled “Small Steps to Success”, was developed as part of the project “HumanityHub: Where Cultural Inclusion Meets Economic Empowerment”, co-funded by the European Union through the ESF+ Social Innovation+ programme. The project was implemented in partnership between the Rehabilitation Centre for Stress and Trauma (RCT), ACT Group, and the Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo “Danilo Dolci” - Ente del Terzo Settore, with the aim of responding to the complex challenges of economic and social integration of Ukrainian refugees in Croatia and Italy.

HumanityHub is based on the belief that sustainable integration is not possible without simultaneously strengthening psychological well-being, social inclusion and economic empowerment. Therefore, the project is developing an integrated support model based on three interconnected pillars:

- 1. psychosocial support and cultural orientation,**
- 2. education on entrepreneurship and acceleration programmes,**
- 3. peer-to-peer support system focused on employability and employment.**

This manual represents an operational tool within the first pillar of the project, but is designed to support the broader goals of empowerment, independence and active participation in society.



The content of the manual is the result of joint work of experts in the field of mental health, psychosocial support and community work, as well as practical experience gained through pilot workshops with persons granted international protection from Ukraine carried out in Croatia during 2025 and 2026. The methodology was developed through practice, evaluation and reflection - in order to be as relevant, flexible and applicable as possible in real working conditions.

Before piloting the workshops, a working version of the programme was developed, which included 20 topics distributed in 24 workshops. Piloting the programme began on 25 September 2025, and it was implemented through a total of 24 workshops, each lasting 90 minutes.

The first group, which included 11 beneficiaries, participated in eight one-day meetings in the period from 25 September to 13 November 2025. The second group of 9 beneficiaries participated in eight one-day meetings in the period from 19 November 2025 to 30 January 2026. During the implementation of the pilot programme, a team of trainers continuously monitored and analysed the participants' reactions to the content, techniques and working methods, and based on these insights, the programme was further improved and adjusted.

Based on the results of the pilot, this final version of the manual was developed.

The manual is intended for trainers, educators, counsellors and project managers who work with refugees, asylum seekers, persons under international or subsidiary protection and migrants. It is especially useful for those who conduct group workshops on psychosocial support, career guidance and empowerment, regardless of whether they come from the fields of mental health, education, employment, culture or civil society.

In this context, we felt it was important for the workshop programme to be:

- **trauma-sensitive,**
- **culturally aware,**
- **empowering (rather than judgmental),**
- **safe for people with the experience of loss, career interruption, and discrimination.**

2.1 Trauma-sensitive approach

A trauma-sensitive approach starts from the understanding that many participants enter the programme with experiences that may have seriously undermined their sense of safety, predictability, trust and personal control. For people who have experienced war, forced displacement, loss of home, separation from family, prolonged uncertainty or multiple stressors related to integration, reactions such as increased tension, difficulty concentrating, emotional flooding, withdrawal, irritability, shame or distrust should not be seen as “resistance”, but as possible understandable consequences of difficult experiences. The WHO¹ states that depression, anxiety, PTSD and suicidality are more common among refugees and migrants than in the general population, while the UNHCR² emphasises the need for psychosocial support that protects well-being and reduces additional vulnerability.

In practice, a trauma-sensitive approach does not mean that every workshop is trauma-focused or that participants are asked to talk about their difficult experiences. On the contrary, one of the important principles is to avoid re-traumatisation. The WHO explicitly distinguishes between useful, evidence-based interventions and approaches that encourage detailed re-experiencing of traumatic events without a clear clinical purpose; psychological debriefing is not recommended. In the context of this programme, this means that the trainer should not insist on the disclosure of personal trauma, but rather create conditions in which participants can participate in a way that is safe, meaningful and under their control.

In professional terms, trauma-sensitive work is based on several related principles: safety, trust and transparency, collaboration, respect for choice, empowerment, and recognition of cultural, historical and gender factors. These principles are particularly important in group work, where both the content and the way of facilitating can enhance or reduce feelings of safety. For this programme, this specifically means that it is important to:

- **clearly explain the purpose of the workshop and what is expected of the participants,**
- **announce the work structure and possible sensitive topics in advance,**
- **emphasise the voluntary nature of participation and the person’s right not to share something,**
- **use language that is non-judgmental and non-shaming,**
- **respect boundaries, rhythm and different styles of participation,**
- **regularly restore a sense of control through small choices and clear steps.**

¹ World Health Organization. (2025, September 1). Refugee and migrant mental health. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/refugee-and-migrant-mental-health>

² Global Protection Cluster Working Group. (2010). *Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*. Geneva: Inter-Agency Standing Committee.



A trauma-sensitive approach also implies that the trainer pays attention to signs of overload. These may include sudden withdrawal, extreme agitation, absent-mindedness, crying that the person has difficulty regulating, visible disorganisation, somatic reactions, or difficulty in following the group process. In such situations, it is important to slow down the pace, simplify the task, offer a short break, a grounding exercise, or an individual check-in, without pressure or dramatisation. If the difficulties are assessed to be more pronounced and go beyond the scope of an educational-supportive workshop, it is important to refer the participant to a more appropriate form of professional help.

2.2 Intercultural sensitivity

Intercultural sensitivity in this programme does not mean simply “respecting differences”, but an active effort to understand participants in their cultural, social and migration context, without stereotyping and assuming that all members of the same group have the same experiences, values or needs. This is particularly important when working with refugees and migrants, as migration often involves the loss of familiar norms, language, professional identity, social status and support networks. Psychosocial support must be socially and culturally appropriate and linked to strengthening inclusion, rights and access to everyday resources.

In practical terms, intercultural sensitivity means that the trainer starts from the question “in what context the person is now” and “how cultural, linguistic and social factors influence their participation”. This includes attention to:

- **language and understanding instructions,**
- **meaning of silence, emotional expression and non-verbal communication,**
- **different experiences of authority, help and institutions,**
- **possible differences in gender roles, family expectations and work experiences,**
- **possible experiences of discrimination, stigma or feelings of not belonging,**
- **different ways of making decisions and seeking support.**

It is important to emphasise that intercultural sensitivity is not the same as careful avoidance of all differences. It involves a willingness to discuss differences respectfully, without their imposing or idealising. In some groups, participants will need more space to explain their own experiences, compare them with the norms of the host country, or ask questions about education, work, administrative procedures, and daily life.



An intercultural sensitive trainer does not take the position of an “expert on another culture,” but maintains an attitude of curiosity, respect, and checking their own assumptions, which includes a willingness to:

- **not generalise or speak for the whole group,**
- **check the meaning of words, behaviours and expectations,**
- **recognise their own position of power and institutional role,**
- **leave space for the participants to define what is important to them,**
- **respect different life paths, including differences in the education system, breaks in education and career,**
- **adapt the pace, examples and working methods to the real group, not to the imagined “average participant”.**

It is particularly important to link intercultural sensitivity to empowerment, not just “adaptation”. The participants are not just people who need to adopt new rules, but also bearers of knowledge, experience, professional identities and survival strategies. In this sense, an intercultural sensitive approach helps to look not only at what the participants lack in professional sense, but also at what they bring with them. Such a view is close to the Solution-Focused approach, the framework on which the manual is based, which emphasises existing resources, achievements and small steps under the control of the person.

In working with a group, this means that it is useful to use examples that are not culturally narrow, offer multiple ways of participating, clearly explain concepts that may not be implied, allow extra time for translation and checking understanding, and not interpret every difficulty solely as “resistance” or “lack of motivation”. Sometimes, behind weaker involvement lies linguistic insecurity, cultural rules of politeness, previous experiences with authority figures or fear of making mistakes. Intercultural sensitivity therefore requires patience, clarity and flexibility.

In the context of this manual, intercultural sensitivity is also important because it supports the broader goals of HumanityHub: psychosocial well-being, social inclusion and economic empowerment. When the participants feel seen and respected in their entirety, they are more likely to engage, recognise their own strengths and use the programme as a space in which they can more confidently plan their next steps in education, work and life in a new environment.

2.3 Solution-Focused (SF) approach

The manual is based on the Solution-Focused (SF) approach, a modern and proven effective model of counselling and group work that assumes that people, even in circumstances of great loss and uncertainty, possess the knowledge, skills and internal resources necessary for change. Instead of focusing on problems, diagnoses or causes of difficulties, the SF approach directs attention to desired outcomes, existing strengths and small, achievable steps towards improvement.

In the context of working with refugees and migrants, the SF approach is particularly valuable because it contributes to a sense of dignity, control and hope. Experiences of forced displacement are often marked by a loss of security, identity and a sense of personal efficacy. The SF approach consciously avoids re-traumatisation and does not insist on reliving difficult experiences, but creates a safe space in which previous achievements, coping strategies and strengths that users have already demonstrated are recognised.

Through structured questions, short exercises and group work, the participants are encouraged to define their own goals, identify exceptions where the situation was already at least a little better, and to devise concrete, small steps that are under their control. Such an approach strengthens the sense of self-confidence and the active role of the beneficiaries in their own integration process, instead of perceiving them solely as recipients of help. Possible SF questions that the trainer can ask the participants are also listed in each activity (they are noted as **Ideas for SF questions**).

In this manual, the SF approach is adapted to group work and the intercultural context. Special attention is paid to language, cultural differences and power dynamics between the trainer and the participants. Trainers are encouraged to take a facilitating role - as allies in the learning and empowerment process - and create an environment together with the group that fosters mutual respect, connection and a sense of belonging.

Therefore, the SF approach represents not only a methodological framework, but also a value statement that emphasises hope, the possibility of change and faith in the ability of people to, with appropriate support, build a meaningful and dignified life in a new environment.

The manual was created based on the previously developed curriculum and materials produced as part of document D6.1 “Psychosocial Support Programme for Active Career Planning with Guidelines and Materials for Implementation”. The D6.1 set the basic structure of the programme, the content of the workshops and associated working materials, and this manual represents a refined, implementation- and practice-oriented version of the programme that was prepared as a tool for trainers. The manual should be used flexibly - as a guide, not a strict plan.

Compared to the initial version of the curriculum, this version was further developed through practical experience gained in working with people from the target group in Croatia. During the pilot implementation, the trainers’ observations, reflections on group dynamics, as well as insights into which content, methods and pace of work were most understandable, most useful and most appropriate for the participants were collected. Feedback from the pilot programme participants, collected during the workshops and through structured oral and written evaluations, was also included in the adaptation process. Based on this information, the workshops that corresponded to users’ real needs and those that proved to be most useful and applicable in real working conditions were selected for the final version of the manual.

“Flexible adaptation of the planned programme to the real conditions of working with a group” in practice means the following:

- **some workshops are simplified and more clearly structured to make them easier for the participants to follow,**
- **more attention is paid to creating a safe and predictable group environment,**
- **the activities are adapted to working with an interpreter and to different cultural contexts,**
- **emphasis is placed on the participants’ strengths and small, achievable steps.**

It has also shown that not all of the planned workshops are equally important. If you have limited time, it is recommended to give priority to those that involve active participation and a concrete result for each participant, such as: e.g. creating a personal support system or working on an individual professional plan. For these activities, it is important to ensure enough time so that all participants can complete the exercise and gain full experience of the work.



Working with an interpreter almost always requires more time than planned. Therefore, it is okay to:

- **slow down the pace,**
- **omit less important activities,**
- **focus on the quality of the work instead of “getting through everything”.**

The refinements particularly involved clearer formulation of instructions, better structuring of individual workshops, strengthening the safety and predictability of the group process, adapting the work in situations of linguistic and cultural differences, and further emphasising the approach focused on strengths, resources and small, achievable steps.

The final version of the manual retained the structure and objectives of the original programme, while at the same time becoming closer to the users’ real needs and the practical challenges of implementation. In this way, the manual represents the final, improved tool for trainers who work in the field of psychosocial support, integration and empowerment of people with experience of displacement and migration.

The programme is aimed at empowering and encouraging the participants' active role in their own development, with an emphasis on strengthening motivation for employment and self-employment. The curriculum includes topics such as shaping a desirable future, developing personal and professional identity, strengthening self-esteem, stress management, effective oral and written presentation to employers, and creating an individual education and employment plan. The content is implemented in small groups through carefully designed, interactive activities that encourage the exchange of experiences, mutual learning and integration of personal insights.

The methodological approach is based on recognising and strengthening the participants' abilities, resources and potential, instead of focusing on their difficulties and obstacles. In group work, tolerance, constructive communication and sensitivity to their own and the needs of others are encouraged, with special regard for the experiences of people who, due to migration and war trauma, often face impaired self-confidence and a sense of passivity.

The training programme for active career planning consists of 20 topics, divided into four interconnected modules:

- **Introductions, building trust in oneself and the group**
- **Communication, social skills and cross-cultural adaptation**
- **Self-advocacy and empowerment in a new environment**
- **Economic inclusion: employment and self-employment**

Although the modules are clearly structured thematically, they are interconnected and complementary. Each module focuses on developing the knowledge and skills needed for active and independent career planning.

The work is carried out through interactive 90-minute workshops, with each workshop having one central activity aligned with the programme objectives. The curriculum is designed as a coherent and logically sequential process of motivating and activating the participants for inclusion in the labour market and social integration in a group context.

- Special importance is given to the initial module **Introductions, building trust in oneself and the group**, in which the prerequisites for quality work are created by introducing the participants to the programme, work rules and getting to know each other, as well as by building trust and a sense of security in the group.

- The module **Communication, social skills and cross-cultural adaptation** focuses on developing a positive self-image, strengthening self-confidence and self-esteem, improving psychosocial competencies and skills for dealing with stressful and demanding situations.
- The module **Self-advocacy and empowerment in a new environment** focuses on raising awareness of attitudes towards education, work and lifelong learning, developing goal-setting and planning skills, and practicing oral and written presentation to employers.
- The final module **Economic inclusion: employment and self-employment** focuses on taking responsibility for one's own career development, planning concrete steps to achieve the desired changes, and evaluating what has been achieved.

In relation to the initial version of the curriculum, this version selected topics that proved useful for the target user group through pilot workshops. This did not change the basic objectives of the programme, but rather adapted the content to the needs of the target group and in a way that provides trainers with a clearer work structure, greater flexibility in planning, and better adaptation to the dynamics and needs of each group.

The table shows a summary of the workshops:

Modules	Workshops
I. INTRODUCTIONS, BUILDING TRUST IN ONESELF AND THE GROUP	• INTRODUCTIONS, RULES, EXPECTATIONS • FROM CHAOS TO ORDER • POSITIVE INCENTIVES • SELF-ESTEEM • STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES
II. COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL SKILLS AND CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION	• MY STRENGTHS AND SKILLS • IDENTITY • SUPPORT SYSTEM • ACTIVE LISTENING • ASSERTIVENESS
III. SELF-ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT	• RESILIENCE • SMART GOALS • INDIVIDUAL PLAN
IV. ECONOMIC INCLUSION: EMPLOYMENT AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT	• WRITTEN PRESENTATION • JOB INTERVIEW • COOPERATION AND TEAMWORK • ENTREPRENEURSHIP • FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

The programme can be delivered in an intensive format, with multiple modules per day with scheduled breaks to facilitate content integration. Some of the modules are self-contained enough to be delivered as separate workshops or in a different order, as the learning outcomes of one module are not a prerequisite for participation in the others.

5.1 Recommended number of participants

The recommended number of participants in a group is 6 to 12. This range is considered optimal for ensuring quality programme implementation, allowing for a balanced combination of group dynamics, active participation, and individual approach.

Groups with a smaller number of participants may have limited opportunities for developing interaction and exchanging different experiences and perspectives, which may affect the overall effectiveness of the programme. On the other hand, a larger number of participants may make it more difficult to manage group processes, reduce the level of individual involvement, and limit the trainer's ability to adequately respond to the needs of each participant.

Working within the recommended range of participants contributes to creating a stimulating and safe environment, which is crucial for open communication, developing mutual trust, and achieving programme goals. It also facilitates the organisation of activities, monitoring the participants' progress, and timely adjustment of content and work methods.

In cases where that is justified, it is possible to deviate from the recommended number of participants, taking into account the specific programme goals, characteristics of the target group, and organisational conditions, while ensuring that the quality of implementation remains at a satisfactory level.

5.2 Workshop duration

The workshops were initially designed to last 90 minutes. However, experience from the pilot implementation has shown that some workshops (e.g. **My Path, Strengths and Skills, Support System, Individual Plan**) require an extended duration, up to 180 minutes, in order to ensure sufficient time for completing the tasks and quality individual reflection and exchange with all participants. This is particularly evident in working with an interpreter.

In addition, it is recommended to include the activity **Reporting on Positive Changes** for approximately 45 minutes at the beginning of each working day, given its positive impact on the motivation, engagement and monitoring the participants' progress.

5.3 Working with an interpreter

When working with groups in which some participants do not speak the trainer's language well enough, cooperation with the interpreter is not only a technical issue of transferring information, but also an important part of creating a safe and inclusive space. The quality of cooperation with the interpreter can significantly affect the comprehensibility of the content, the pace of work, the participants' sense of involvement and their willingness to actively participate.

It is desirable for the trainer and interpreter to briefly agree beforehand on the goal of the workshop, the planned activities, any potentially sensitive topics, and the method of interpretation. It is also useful to agree in advance on the pace of work, the method of involving the participants and a communication style that will be clear, warm and unobtrusive. Whenever possible, first-person interpretation is recommended, so that communication remains direct and as close as possible to the relationship between the trainer and the participants.

When working with interpretation, it is important to leave more time for each activity, use simple and clear language, avoid overly long instructions and check more often whether the participants have understood the task. Some workshops, especially those that include personal reflection, creative work or more detailed individual conversation, may therefore last longer than planned. The manual already indicates that individual workshops in such circumstances can last up to 180 minutes.

The interpreter is not an additional workshop trainer, but is an important collaborator in the process. It is therefore also important for them to be familiar with the basic principles of confidentiality, respect, impartiality and a trauma-sensitive approach. When emotionally sensitive topics are raised in the group, the trainer should be mindful not only of what is translated, but also how it is conveyed - with enough space, dignity and emotional safety for the participant.

5.4 Psychological safety in the group

Psychological safety is one of the fundamental prerequisites for quality group work, especially when working with people who have experienced loss, displacement, trauma, uncertainty and multiple adjustments. The participants will be more likely to engage, share experiences, try new ways of thinking and participate in activities if they feel that they will not be shamed, judged or forced to reveal more than they want.



Therefore, it is important that the trainer builds a framework from the very beginning that is clear, predictable and supportive. This includes agreeing on ground rules, respecting boundaries, voluntary participation, confidentiality within the group and the right of each participant not to answer a question or to temporarily withdraw from the activity if they feel they need to. In a safe group, the participants know that they can participate at their own pace and in a way that is possible for them at that moment.

Psychological safety does not mean that there are no emotions, discomfort or difficult topics in the group. It means that such situations are handled carefully, respectfully and without pressure. The role of the trainer is not to “extract” experiences from the participants, but to create conditions in which they can recognise their own strengths, connect with others, and gradually build a sense of personal efficacy. This is why it is important to use empowering language, offer choices instead of demands, acknowledge effort and small steps forward, and be careful not to let the group dynamic become too intense or overwhelming.

It is particularly helpful to regularly check in on how the participants are feeling, introduce short grounding and reflection activities, and leave space to close the workshop in a way that restores a sense of stability and control. In this way, the group can become a place where, in addition to learning and developing skills, experiences of trust, belonging, and hope are rebuilt.

INTRODUCTIONS, BUILDING TRUST IN ONESELF AND THE GROUP

Workshops

6.1 INTRODUCTIONS, RULES, EXPECTATIONS 90 min

Goals:

- Enable the participants to safely introduce themselves to each other
- Develop group cohesion and trust
- Activate creativity and expression through symbolic representations

Materials: associative cards, papers, pens, flip-chart, markers

Techniques: working with associative cards, interactive games, brainstorming, conversation

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: Selection of associative map and presentation 40 min

Description:

The trainer introduces themselves and briefly provides basic information about the psychosocial programme in which the group will participate and makes a brief introduction to the method of work. Then they ask the participants to choose one card (or 2, if they can not decide) that in some way symbolises their personality or current feeling. In turn, each participant shows a card and briefly explains their choice. The trainer and other participants ask additional questions to deepen the reflection, but the participant chooses how much to share.

Notes for the trainer:

- It is important to encourage everyone to participate, but respect the boundaries of those who are withdrawn.
- The trainer also chooses one card and explains why they chose it, giving an example of open and safe sharing.

Sensitive points:



- Some participants may be insecure or shy; allow them to choose neutral cards.
- Be prepared for emotional reactions if the topic of personal identity touches on traumatic experiences.

Practical advice:

It is a good idea to place the cards in the middle of the group on the table, which increases the feeling of inclusion and safety.

2. Activity: Chain memorising of names 20 min

Description:

Step 1: The participants first say their name out loud in a circle.

Step 2: After that, they say the name of their neighbour on the left, their name, and the name of their neighbour on the right (in that order), in a chain through the circle.

Step 3: In the next activity, the trainer adds an empty chair to the circle on their right and says “The chair on my right is empty. I invite as a guest...”, after which they call out a person from the group by name (e.g. Ivana). The person called out stands up and sits on the empty chair. Then they ask the person who now has the empty chair on their right to do the same, using the same words, i.e. invite someone else from the group to sit on the empty chair. The person called out sits on the empty chair. Now someone else has the empty chair on their right and they continue the game with the same words. The game continues until all participants have been called out at least once.

The activity encourages memorising names and getting the participants to know each other better, unobtrusively building cohesion in the group.

Notes for the trainer:

- The goal is not to test memory, but to create bonding and laughter in the group.
- Encourage humour and relaxed atmosphere.

Sensitive points:



- Participants who are afraid of making mistakes may feel stressed. Normalise mistakes as part of learning.

Practical advice:

- You can repeat the activity in a shorter version at the end of the day as a “mini-reminder” to reinforce the names.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What strategy helped you remember the names?*

3. Activity: Outcomes of joint work 25 min

Description:

The trainer asks the questions:

“What is the best thing you can hope for from being part of this group?”

“How will you know that participating in this group has been beneficial for you?”

The participants' answers are noted on the flip-chart and thematically grouped into 3-4 columns (e.g. learning/new knowledge, socialising, support).

Notes for the trainer:

- Visual display on the wall helps maintain focus throughout the workshop.



Sensitive points:

- The participants may be sceptical. Normalise expectations and focus on what is possible in this context.

Practical advice:

- Leave the flip-chart with expectations visible during all workshop modules.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What small signs would show you that you are on the right track?*
- *What strengths of yours can help you achieve your expectations?*

4. Activity: Feedback 5 min

Description:

The circle ends with a short reflection: the participants share their impressions of the workshop and their feelings in the group.

Notes for the trainer:

- Respect all responses; commend the participants for their active participation.



Sensitive points:

- If someone doesn't want to speak, don't insist; respect their choice.

Practical advice:

- The participants can write down feedback on paper if they don't feel comfortable speaking out loud.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What did you find most useful today?*
- *What little thing helped you feel included and safe?*

6.2 FROM CHAOS TO ORDER 90 min

Goals:

- focusing on resources, exceptions, small steps, future, and concrete steps
- encouraging reflection on the concepts of chaos and order
- developing creative expression and self-reflection

Materials: two A3 sheets of paper for each participant, oil pastels, glue

Techniques: drawing from experience, collage, reflexive conversation, SF questions

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: Creating a “chaos” 10 min

Opis:

The trainer briefly introduces the workshop topic and invites the participants to relax and surrender to the process. Each participant receives a first A3 sheet of paper and oil pastels. The task is to doodle across the entire surface of the paper without thinking, planning or stopping, following the impulse, rhythm and movement of the hand. The emphasis is on the process, not on the aesthetics or meaning of the drawing.

Notes for the trainer:

- Encourage continuous movement and continuous doodling.
- Stress that there are no “good” or “bad” results.



Sensitive points:

- Some participants may feel uncomfortable about losing control or needing to draw “correctly”. Normalise this feeling.

Practical advice:

- Soft music can help the participants to immerse themselves in the process more easily.

2. Activity: Identifying elements of order 15 min

Description:

After finishing doodling, the participants look at their drawing and look for *elements of order within the chaos* (repetitions, shapes, lines, rhythm, geometric shapes).

They then tear out (or cut, if it is easier for them) parts of the drawing of different shapes that seem significant to them.

Notes for the trainer:

- Allow the participants to choose whether to tear or cut - the choice is part of the personal process.



Sensitive points:

- Some participants may find it difficult to destroy their own work. Respect their pace and boundaries.

Practical advice:

- Stress that order is not “added”, but *discovered within the chaos*.

3. Activity: Creating a new order – calming collage 20 min

Description:

On another A3 sheet of paper, the participants glue the torn pieces together and create a new composition from them - an order that has a calming effect on them and in which they feel comfortable.

It is desirable to use as many pieces as possible.

Finally, the participants give their work a title.

Notes for the trainer:

- Remind the participants to rely on their inner sense of balance rather than the rules of composition.



Sensitive points:

- Perfectionism can block the process. Encourage experimentation and flexibility.

Practical advice:

- The question “When do you feel like enough is enough?” can help participants conclude the work.

4. Activity: **Reflection and discussion – order and chaos in life** 40 min

Description:

The workshop continues with a group discussion in a circle. The participants (voluntarily) share their experiences of the process and the meaning of their works.

Notes for the trainer:

- The participants choose how much they want to share.
- Connect the answers with the participants' personal strengths and resources.



Sensitive points:

- The topic of control, chaos or change can open up emotional content. Be present and supportive.

Practical advice:

- You can leave the works on display during the discussion to visually support reflection.



Ideas for SF questions: Questions about exceptions

- *Is there an area in your life where you already have enough order? How did you manage to achieve that?*
- *When did you successfully deal with “chaos” in the past - what did you do differently then?*
- *What went easier for you in this activity than you expected?*
- *When was chaos not really a problem in your life? What was different then?*



Ideas for SF questions: Questions about resources and strengths

- *What qualities of yours came to the fore as you put things back in order?*
- *What helped you not give up during the process?*
- *Who or what in your life helps you create order?*
- *What did you learn about yourself today through this activity?*
- *What strength did you recognise here that you may not have noticed before?*



Ideas for SF questions: “Miracle question” (miracle question variations)

- *Let’s imagine that a small miracle happens tonight and you wake up tomorrow with just the right amount of order for you. What would you notice first?*
- *What would other people notice that is different about you?*
- *What would be the first small sign that you are moving towards that desired balance of order and chaos?*



Ideas for SF questions: Scaling questions

- *On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means complete chaos and 10 is ideal order for you - where are you right now?*
- *What keeps you at that number and not lower?*
- *What would a shift of just half a point mean?*
- *What would be the smallest concrete sign of that shift?*



Ideas for SF questions: Questions about small steps

- *What is one small step you can take this week towards more order (or more conscious chaos)?*
- *What is realistically doable as soon as tomorrow?*
- *What would help you stick with that small step?*
- *How would you know that step is working?*



Ideas for SF questions: Relational questions

- *Who would be the first to notice the change you want to achieve?*
- *How would that person know you have made a move?*
- *How would your family/colleagues describe your relation to order and chaos?*



Ideas for SF questions: Reframing (positive meaning of chaos)

- *In what ways does chaos sometimes serve you?*
- *What would you lose if all the chaos disappeared?*
- *Where does a little bit of chaos actually give you creativity or freedom?*

5. Activity: **Feedback** 5 min

Integration - final questions:

- *What do you take with you from this activity into your daily life?*
- *What one thought do you want to remember?*

6.3 **POSITIVE INCENTIVES** 90 min

Goals:

- Getting to know each other better and gaining trust
- Raising self-confidence
- Building a positive image of oneself and own competences

Materials: sheets of paper/booklets, pens, felt-tip pens, pastels, crayons, collage material

Techniques: interactive games, work in pairs, drawing/collage

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: **Associations to the word “success”** 5 min

Description:

The participants in a circle say one word that comes to mind when they hear the word *success*. The trainer writes the words on the flip-chart.

Notes for the trainer:

- The activity is short and energising, serves as an “opener” and encourages reflection.
- Encourage all participants to find a word.

Sensitive points:

- Participants from vulnerable groups may be insecure. Don't force them to share.



Practical advice:

- Use the written words later as a reminder of the group's successes and strengths.

2. Activity: **Success story** 50 min

Description:

The participants are divided into pairs. Each partner in the pair has 5 minutes to talk about their recent success. It is important that they recall something they experienced as a success, even if it seems small and insignificant. The other partner listens carefully and actively and asks follow-up questions that show interest in the success of the other person, e.g.:

- *How did you do it?*
- *Who/what helped you?*
- *What other positive things happened as a result of your success? ..*

At the trainer's signal, pair members switch roles.

After working in pairs, the participants present their partner and their success to the group, and then the original speaker, with the help of the trainer, who carefully tries to encourage them to give as many details about their success as possible, completes the presentation.

Notes for the trainer:

- Active listening is key. Encourage questions that draw out the participants' strengths and resources.
- The trainer can give an example of their own small success to show openness and safety.



Sensitive points:

- The participants may compare themselves to others. Emphasise that all successes are valuable and different.
- Some successes may be emotional or trauma-related. Ensure a safe atmosphere.

Practical advice:

- After the presentation, stress the importance of support from others and acknowledge even small steps as successes



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What is your strength that helped you achieve this success?*
- *What step or action was key to success?*
- *What small thing would show that you are still growing?*

3. Activity: **Creating a success diary** 20 min

Process:

The trainer distributes booklets or notebooks to the participants that will serve as their *Success Diary*, in which they will write down their small and big successes and moments that made their time between the two meetings better (meetings with friends, active free time, moments when they felt relaxed, fulfilled, safe and good). The trainer asks them to create the cover page of their future diary from the materials at their disposal.

The trainer reminds them to write or draw in the diary positive events, lessons learned, small successes and moments of satisfaction that they experience between meetings, which the participants will share with each other at the beginning of each working day.

The trainer gives the participants freedom in choosing the materials (crayons, felt-tip pens, collage).

Notes for the trainer:

- The participants take the diary with them to all workshops; it serves as a tool for reflection and motivation.
- Encourage creativity and personal expression, not just writing words.



Sensitive points:

- Some participants may feel insecure in creative activities. Encourage individual approach and freedom of expression.

Practical advice:

- Sometimes you can use the diary for group activities as well. For example, the participants can share small parts of their writing if they want.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What small success do you want to record today?*
- *What resource or skill helps you achieve these successes?*

4. Activity: **Feedback** 15 min

Process:

The circle ends with a short reflection: the participants share impressions and feelings after the workshop.

**Ideas for SF questions:**

- *Which activity was most useful for you today and why?*
- *What little thing about this training helps you feel more confident and successful?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Commend the participants for their openness and creativity.
- Note key comments to track progress and motivation in subsequent workshops.

**Sensitive points:**

- If someone doesn't want to talk, don't insist. Respect their decision.

Practical advice:

- Feedback can be written down on paper if someone does not feel comfortable speaking out loud.

6.4 SELF-ESTEEM 90 min**Goals:**

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-acceptance
- Strengthening the sense of belonging to the group
- Developing creativity and imagination
- Connecting personal qualities with concrete experiences

Materials:

- Worksheet 1 - "My Positive Traits"
- Coloured paper, template for petals and a circle in the middle of the flower, scissors, glue
- Ball-point pens, felt-tip pens

Techniques: writing, drawing, discussion

1. Activity: **Reporting on positive changes** 40 min

Description:

The trainer asks the questions: "What has happened in your life since our last meeting until today, and what would you like to see continue to happen? What else? And what else?" The participants take turns sharing with the group what they wrote in their diary in a circle.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *How do you explain this type of change to yourself?*
- *How did you contribute to making things better?*
- *How did your environment react to that change?*
- *How did you feel when you saw their reaction?"*

2. Activity: **Flower of self-esteem** 20 min

Symbolism:

Flower as a visual representation of one's qualities and experiences

Description:

The participants use the materials the trainer places in the middle of a circle to make a large flower with a circle in the middle and 6 petals, marked with numbers from 1 to 6.

On the petals, the participants write:

1. Two advantages you were born with
2. Two qualities/positive traits
3. Two skills you have successfully mastered
4. Two people you are important to
5. Two obstacles/problems you have successfully solved
6. Two goals you plan to achieve

In the centre of the flower, they complete the sentence "SELF-ESTEEM IS..."



Ideas for SF questions: Questions with the petals

1. Advantages you were born with

- *In what life or business situations do you find these innate strengths most useful?*
- *How would your work team/partner/family describe your advantage?*
- *When was the last time you consciously used this strength?*

2. Qualities / Traits

- *Which of these qualities do you most often underestimate, but it actually has great value?*
- *In what circumstances does this quality come to its full expression?*
- *What happens when you consciously rely on it?*

3. Skills you have mastered

- *How does this skill increase your sense of competence today?*
- *What future situation could this skill make easier?*

4. People you are important to

- *What do you think makes you important to these people?*
- *How does your presence affect them?*
- *What does that say about your value?*

5. Obstacles you have solved

- *What inner quality did you then activate?*
- *How can this experience be your reference point in future challenges?*
- *If you were to face a similar obstacle today, what would you do the same and what would you do differently?*

6. Goals

- *What is already in your “flower” that supports the achievement of these goals?*
- *What is the smallest visible step you can take in the next 7 days?*
- *How will you know that you are moving in the right direction?*



Ideas for SF questions: Questions that connect the whole flower:

- *When you look at your flower, what does it tell you about your personal stability?*
- *Which petal is the foundation, and which is your potential?*
- *If this flower were your professional or life “strengths profile,” what would stand out most?*
- *What on this paper reminds you of your worth - even when you make mistakes?*



Ideas for SF questions: Scaling questions (practical, non-intrusive)

- *On a scale of 0 to 10, how well do you currently live up to your strengths?*
- *What is holding you back at that number?*
- *What would be a realistic step up in the next month?*
- *What would others notice if that step were to happen?*



Ideas for SF questions: Questions about exceptions (experience of stable self-esteem)

- *When was the last time you felt calm and confident of your worth? What was different then?*
- *In what situations does your self-esteem naturally grow - with no special effort?*
- *How can you create such situations more often?*



Ideas for SF questions: Final integration (action-oriented)

- *What specifically will you do differently after this workshop?*
- *What one petal do you want to consciously strengthen in the next month?*
- *How will you remind yourself of your own worth when the next challenge arises?*
- *If you were to come back here in three months - what would you like to be able to say about your self-esteem?*
- *If this work were a reminder, what would it remind you of?*
- *What would you like to be different about your story of order and chaos in three months?*

Notes for the trainer:

- The questions should focus on functioning, competence, contribution and future application. The tone is partner-like, reflective and practical.
- Encourage the participants to share at least one petal with the group.
- Stress that there are no “wrong” answers.
- Connect experience with the importance of recognising one’s own strengths.

3. Activity: **My positive traits** 20 min

Symbolism:

Concretising and strengthening personal qualities

Description:

Using the “My Positive Traits” Worksheet, the participants list 2 positive traits from the petals.

They recall specific examples of when they demonstrated these traits. Examples that the trainer may give may include: *I brought flowers to a friend when he was sick; I listened to a colleague through a difficult time; I lent money to my brother when he needed it, etc.*

The participants then share what they wrote on the worksheet, and the trainer asks additional questions.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What exactly did you do in that situation that demonstrated this trait?*
- *What inner strength did you activate at that time?*
- *If someone were to observe this situation from the outside, what would they say was your strongest quality?*
- *Where else in your life can you apply this same trait?*
- *In what upcoming situation could this quality be useful to you?*
- *How can these traits help you with future challenges?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Stress the importance of concrete examples
- Encourage reflection and discussion in the group
- Connect experience with self-confidence and self-esteem

4. Activity: **Feedback** 10 min

Description:

- The participants take turns sharing how they felt during the workshop
- The trainer validates their feelings and praises the efforts of each participant

Notes for the trainer:

- Normalise different emotions (joy, sadness, pride)
- Encourage empowerment and mutual support
- End the workshop positively and motivating
- Emphasise the importance of concrete examples from own life
- Encourage sharing, but do not force it

6.5 STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES 90 min

Workshop goals:

- Better understand stress and psychosomatic reactions to stress
- Recognise the factors of stressful situations and one's own reactions
- Learn about strategies for coping with stress
- Encourage a sense of control and choice
- Recognise and strengthen effective coping strategies.

Materials: Worksheet 2 Stress– schematic representation of the human body, felt-tip pens/ crayons, crepe tape with a scale of 1 to 10, sticky notes and scaling stickers

Techniques: drawing, scaling, discussion, reflection

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: Drawing stress 15 min

Description:

- Distribute papers with an outline of the human body to the participants.
- Ask them to colour and line the parts of their bodies where they feel stress and how they experience it (e.g. arrows, lightning, circles...)
- After 10 minutes, the participants can show the drawings and share reflections in a circle (voluntarily).

The trainer encourages exchange with the questions:

- Where in your body do you feel most tension?
- What reactions do you most often have when you are under stress?

Notes for the trainer:

- The activity is visual and introspective.
- No one has to share if they feel uncomfortable.

2. Activity: **Coping strategies** 20 min

Description:

The trainer places posters in the corners of the room with printed descriptions of 5 coping strategies (Worksheet 3: Coping strategies):

- **Problem solving** - active search for solutions, information, planning
- **Avoidance** - daydreaming, humour, denial, risky behaviours
- **Seeking social support** - instrumental and emotional support from other people
- **Emotion-focused coping** - verbal and behavioural emotional discharges
- **Cognitive restructuring and distraction** - changing thought constructs, riding a bicycle, walking, reading, watching TV

The participants walk around the room and choose the strategy they use most often and stand next to that poster. The trainer goes from poster to poster and asks individual participants questions:

- In what situations do you use this strategy?
- What other strategies do you use?
- How does the strategy you use help you relieve stress



Ideas for SF questions:

- *In what specific situation did this strategy help you last time?*
- *What did you do then that made a difference?*
- *What was the first sign that the strategy was working?*
- *What does this strategy say about your ability to cope with stress?*
- *How flexible are you in changing your strategy when the situation requires it?*
- *When this strategy is not enough - what do you do differently?*
- *Have you ever surprised yourself with your own reaction to stress? What was different then?*
- *In what situations might a different strategy be more useful?*
- *Which strategy would you like to have more “available” in demanding moments?*
- *What would be a small experiment - where you could try a different approach?*
- *Who in your environment uses the strategy that you would like to develop more strongly well? What can you take from them?*
- *What challenge awaits you in the near future where you will need to consciously choose a strategy?*
- *How do you want to react in that situation?*
- *What will you first notice about yourself when you react the way you want?*
- *What will others notice?*
- *How will they notice the change?*

Notes for the trainer:

- The focus of the question is not on why someone uses a particular strategy, *but when it works, what the person does well then, and how they can consciously repeat or expand on it.*

3. Activity: **Finding exceptions – theoretical introduction** 10 min

Description:

The trainer first makes a short introduction:

“When we talk about coping strategies, exceptions are times when you responded to stress more maturely, calmly, or effectively than you would have expected. You may not have even noticed that you were using a better strategy at the time. Exceptions are evidence that you already have the ability to cope better than you think. We look for them so that we can consciously repeat them.”

We will try to find out:

- When did you do better?
- What did you do specifically then?
- How did you decide to do that?
- What can you transfer from that to future situations?

“Think of a problem as a wall that is hard to see or walk through.

However, sometimes there are small cracks in that wall - moments when the stress or problem is not as strong, or you have managed better.

These cracks are exceptions: they show that there is a way for light to get through, that the problem does not rule completely.

Our task in the SF approach is to find these cracks, to see what you did then and how you can do it again.”

Mini-introductory activity: **The moment when things went better** 3-5 min

1. Set the frame

“Now we will try to find our own ‘cracks’ - moments when you coped better with stress than usual.

Don’t think about the problems, but about the situations when you responded successfully.”

2. Individual reflection 1-2 min

The trainer asks the participants: “Remember the last time you responded more effectively under stress than you expected.

What did you do specifically then? What was different?”

3. Pairs / short exchange 1-2 min

The participants share their small exceptions in pairs, without long explanations: “Then I ...”

4. Trainer's conclusion 30 sec

"Each of us has cracks through which light enters. These are our moments of exception. Once we recognise them, we can consciously use them in future stressful situations.

Notes for the trainer:

We are not looking for a deep analysis of the problem - the focus is on *identifying successful experiences, exceptions*.

4. Activity: **Scaling** 20 min

Process:

- Put a scale from 1 to 10 in a visible place.
- The trainer asks a volunteer to participate in the following exercise.
- The trainer asks the volunteer a "magic question"³ about stress and asks a lot of questions about the desired future, i.e. a state when stress is absent or at a level that the person will be satisfied with. The questions initially refer to small signs upon waking that will be a sign that a miracle has happened. Then the trainer asks the volunteer to describe in detail what the day will look like when the stress problem is solved: *What will they do first? What next? Who will notice that something is different? What will they be able to do that they could not before because of stress? Who else will notice and how?, etc.*
- The trainer notes that 10 represents the desired future that the person has just described, and then asks the person to write their name on a sticky note and place the sticker on the appropriate place on the scale that will indicate where they are at this point in their life in terms of coping with stress.
- The trainer continues the conversation by asking a series of questions:
 - What tells you that you are at this number right now, and not a lower one, e.g. 1? And what else tells you that you are right there? What else? ...
 - What are you already doing right now that helps you?
 - How will you recognise when you are just one step up (e.g. 4 instead of 3)? How will you know that you are coping with stress a little better?
 - Who in your environment will notice this change and how?
 - What number would you be satisfied with?
 - What can you do immediately, tomorrow, to move just 1 point forward?

³ As de Shazer et al. described in their work, "More Than Miracles: The State of the Art of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy" (2021), the miracle question emerged as a creative tool that requires both the therapist and the client to change their everyday way of thinking. By imagining a sudden resolution to their problems, clients can recognise exceptions and progress, aligning with the principles of solution-focused brief therapy. „Suppose you go to bed tonight and fall asleep as usual. And during the night a miracle happens. And the problem disappears. And the problems that worry you are solved, but you're still asleep. So you don't know that the miracle has happened. When you wake up tomorrow, what will first tell you that the miracle has occurred? How will you know that the transformation has taken place?“

Notes for the trainer:

- Questions should be asked in a way that encourages belief in the possibility of change.
- Scaling is a visual and participatory method that shows progress and self-awareness.

5. Activity: Feedback 10 min**Description:**

- The participants share what they have heard and learned from other group members.
- The trainer summarises the common coping mechanisms and strategies that have emerged.

Notes for the trainer:

- Focus on practical strategies and their application in everyday life.
- The activities are a combination of introspective work and group exchange.
- Encourage the participants to be honest and self-reflective, but respect personal boundaries.
- Use visual aids (drawings, charts) to help the participants understand and follow the process.
- Emphasise that the goal is *to identify and strengthen effective coping strategies*.

COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL SKILLS AND CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Workshops

7.1 MY STRENGTHS AND SKILLS 90 min

Goals:

- Recognising own competencies and skills
- Raising awareness of personal achievements
- Development of self-confidence and sense of competence
- Encouraging creativity and mutual exchange

Materials: Before the workshop, each participant should prepare a “booklet” with 6 sheets made of thick coloured paper (dimensions approximately 15x25 cm); dry pastels, felt-tip pens, glue, collage paper, magazine pictures, scissors

Techniques: Interactive games, collage, presenting works

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: My way 80 min

Materials: Booklets, felt-tip pens, pastels, collage paper, magazine pictures, scissors, glue

Give step-by-step instructions:

1. On the first page, make a collage or drawing of yourself.
2. Divide your life into key areas (school, family, work, hobbies, etc.).
3. For each area, make a small collage or drawing and write down the key skills, knowledge, and characteristics you have acquired during that period of your life.
4. On the last page, imagine yourself in the future and list the competencies you still want to develop.

Time:

After 40 minutes of work, the trainer reminds the participants that they have 5 more minutes to complete their works. After the creative part of work is completed, they present their works to the group. The trainer asks one volunteer to go first and first asks them about the process of making the booklet, and then asks them to present the content.

**Ideas for SF questions:**

- *What competencies have helped you get through the different stages of life?*
- *What do you know about yourself that helps you continue your journey in the best way?*
- *What skills do you want to develop further?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Provide support, help with the collage and writing.
- Encourage creativity and personal expression, without criticism.

Presentation of works 20 min

- Volunteers present their booklets to the group.
- The trainer asks the questions:
 - *What did you learn about yourself?*
 - *Which key competencies did you identify?*
- Provide positive feedback.

2. Activity: Mirroring hands 5 min**Description:**

- In pairs: stand facing each other, hands at shoulder height, palms facing each other, but not touching.
- One person is the leader and moves their hands in different directions. The partner follows the movements as if in a mirror.
- After a few minutes, switch roles.

**Ideas for SF questions:**

- *How easy was it for you to follow the movements?*
- *How did you feel as the leader, and how as the follower?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Emphasise cooperation, not competition.
- Encourage attention to the partner and their body.

3. Activity: **Feedback** 5 min

The participants share brief impressions of the workshop in a circle.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What meant to you most in today's activity?*
- *What will you apply in your everyday life?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Encourage individual expression and group exchange.
- Keep track of time and ensure that all participants complete the booklets.
- Focus on building self-confidence and awareness of the participants' own competencies.
- Encourage comments.
- End the workshop on a positive and motivating note.

7.2 **IDENTITY** 90 min

Goals:

- Raise awareness of how identity is formed and changes over time
- Distinguish between aspects of identity over which we have control and those over which we do not
- Encourage reflection about one's own roles, values and characteristics

Materials: sticky notes (5 per participant), pens/felt-tip pens, flipchart paper and markers

Techniques: Writing, group exchange, discussion

Raspored aktivnosti

1. Activity: **Who am I?** 80 min

Description:

Step 1: Writing about identity 10 min

- Give each participant 5 sticky notes.
- Write on the board: "What makes me who I am? What are the most important things that make you who you are?"

- The participants silently write or draw one important thing on each piece of paper.
- The trainer can give a maximum of 2 examples, so that the participants can be creative and authentic (e.g. “I am a nurse”, “I am a computer scientist”).



Ideas for SF questions:

- *Think about what traits you feel define you most, what is most important to you in your identity and why?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Emphasise silence and personal reflection.
- Encourage creativity (words or drawing).

Step 2: Grouping and naming 20 min

- The participants stick the pieces of paper on the wall and review each other's works.
- They can move the pieces of paper around and form groups of similar characteristics.
- The participants sit down, the trainer reads each group out loud and together with the group *gives each group a name*.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What do these groups say about shared and different aspects of identity?*
- *Are there any surprises or similarities that you didn't expect?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Encourage discussion, without judgment.
- Group names can be humorous, but respectful.

Step 3: Permanent vs. changing aspects 15 min

The trainer divides the flipchart paper into two columns:

1. What we are born with (unchangeable)
2. What we have become, learned or acquired (changeable)

Together with the participants, the trainer sorts the characteristics into columns.

The trainer encourages group discussion with questions:

- Would these 5 things have been the same 5 or 10 years ago?
- How does identity change over time and roles in life?



Ideas for SF questions:

- *Which characteristics of your identity are permanent, and which ones could you have shaped?*
- *How have life circumstances influenced your identity?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Emphasise that identity is **not** static.
- Encourage the participants to think about changes through life roles.

Step 5: Panel discussion and reflection 15 min

- Out of their 5 characteristics, the participants choose one that they could “drop” and still remain who they are.
- Discussion:
 - Which group does this characteristic fall into (changeable/unchangeable)?
 - Was it difficult to choose? Why?
 - What makes this characteristic “irrelevant” to your identity?

Notes for the trainer:

- The activity helps to recognise the flexibility of identity.
- Encourage reflection, without correcting the answers.

Step 5: Panel discussion and reflection 20 min

The trainer prompts a discussion in the group:

- How did you experience this activity?
- Did you learn anything about yourself that you didn't know?
- What influences our identity? (family, culture, work, decisions, environment...)



Ideas for SF questions:

- *Which aspects of identity come from internal decisions and which from external factors?*
- *How does your identity shape your actions and choices?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Before starting, clearly explain the *examples* so that the participants understand the expectations.
- The activity is flexible - it can be done individually or in a group.
- Encourage authenticity, creativity and mutual respect.

- Focus on reflection and discussion, not on the “correctness” of the answers.
- Remember that the goal of the workshop is *to raise awareness of the internal and external determinants of identity*.
- Encourage reflection on the fluidity of identity and personal control over some aspects.

7.3 SUPPORT SYSTEM 90 min/180 min

Goals:

- Review the current state of one’s social support network
- Visualise the desired future of support
- Determine sources of support (people and resources) and one’s own capacities
- Lay the foundation for defining goals and developing personal resources

Materials: quality black drawing paper, dry pastels, fixative spray, adhesive tape for sticking to the wall, drawing table(s)

Techniques: interactive games, drawing, conversation, reflection

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: Human knot 10 min

Process:

- The participants stand in a circle, extend their right hand towards the middle and grab the hand of the person across from them.
- Then do the same with their left hand and another person.
- Task: to “disentangle” without letting go of each other’s hands, passing under, over or around others.

Goal:

- Building community and trust in the group.
- Activating the body and breaking down initial reservations.

2. Activity: **My personal universe**⁴ 70 min

Process:

1. Preparation of materials:

- The trainer puts black sheets of paper and pastels on the tables.

2. Drawing yourself:

- The participants imagine the sky and a constellation.
- In the middle of the paper, they draw themselves as a celestial body (star, planet, etc.).
- They choose the colour(s) according to their feelings and personality.

3. Drawing the closest orbit:

- On the first orbit, they draw people/organisations that provide them with close support (including those who are no longer alive).
- They think about the ways these people support them.

4. Drawing the next orbit:

- On the second orbit, they draw people/organisations that are somewhat further away or less frequently in contact, but still provide support.

5. Drawing the farthest orbit:

- On the last orbit, they draw people/organisations that could provide them with support in the future, but have not had contact with them so far or that contact is not satisfactory.
- They think about the type of support they would like to receive.

6. Naming the drawing:

- When they are finished, each participant gives a name to their drawing.

Presenting the works

Description:

- A volunteer presents their support network.
- The trainer encourages the participant to talk about:
 - People/organisations they can count on.
 - Type of support they receive.
 - Any details they want to share (names are optional).
- The work is displayed on the wall.
- The next participant repeats the process until everyone has presented their work.

⁴ The idea for the workshop was taken from Barbara Kariž's handbook 'Likovna terapija za otroke', Counselling Centre for Children, Adolescents and Parents, Ljubljana, May 2010.

Notes for the trainer:

- Discreetly encourage details, but respect privacy.
- Focus on *resources* and *potential*, not problems.
- Finally, connect the group work: stress that everyone has their own support network and that it can grow.

3. Activity: **Feedback** 10 min

Description:

- The participants share their impressions from the workshop, one by one, in a circle.
- The trainer summarises key insights:
 - Current support resources
 - Potential for future contacts
 - Importance of own capacities and initiative



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What did you find most useful in this activity?*
- *What step will you take to improve your support network?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Activities combine creative work and introspective reflection.
- Respect the individual pace and choices of the participants.
- Emphasise that *support networks are flexible and can change*.
- Encourage the participants to identify their own resources within the network by asking questions such as:
 - How did you contribute to this person gaining trust in you?
 - What qualities of yours do they recognise and seek to support? ...

7.4 ACTIVE LISTENING 90 min

Goals:

- Understand the difference between passive and active listening
- Understand the importance of listening in more effective communication
- Practice listening carefully and remembering information about others

Techniques: conversation, games, active listening

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: Day and night 10 min

Process:

- The participants stand or sit. One of them says “day” or “night”.
- The others react: “day” → stand up, “night” → crouch.
- That participant can try to trick the others (e.g. repeat the word, change the dynamics).
- Whoever makes a mistake is out of the game.
- The game continues until there is one winner.

Goal:

- Developing attention, concentration and quick reaction.
- The game continues until there is one winner.

2. Activity: Onion – Active listening exercise 50 min

Preparation:

1. The participants count themselves: one, two, one, two...
2. Those with number one take chairs and form an inner circle facing outwards.
3. Those with number two form an outer circle around them.
4. Each person in the inner circle gets a partner in the outer circle.

Process:

1. The pairs sit face to face.
2. Ritual: handshake → one answers a question → the other answers a question → handshake → the outer circle moves one place.
3. The activity is repeated until the participants reach the partner they started from.

Example questions for the pairs (depending on the number of pairs, you can reduce or increase the number of questions):

1. What is your favourite childhood toy?
2. Which space in your house is your favourite and why?
3. What part of the day is your favourite and why?
4. Where would you go on a dream trip and why?
5. What is your favourite season of the year?
6. What is your favourite book and why?

Discussion after the exercise:

- A large circle is formed.
- The participants recount what they learned about their colleagues (active recall and memory)

The trainer asks the questions:

- “What did we learn about X? Who talked to them about... e.g. their favourite toy?”
- The participant confirms or supplements the information.
- Who talked to X about their favourite book? etc., until all questions are exhausted.

Then they move on to the next person and so on, until all participants have had a turn.

Goal:

- Developing the skill of active listening and remembering details.
- Strengthening mutual understanding and empathy.

3. Activity: Feedback 5 min

Process:

- The trainer uses a “barometer” on the wall (scale from 1 to 10).
- The participants stick their name next to the number that represents their satisfaction with their own engagement in the workshop.

Goal:

- Assessment of personal satisfaction with the activities..
- Visual representation of the group’s experiences.

Notes for the trainer:

- Emphasise the importance of careful listening and reflection.
- Encourage the participants not to comment or interrupt their partner during the dialogue.
- Encourage positive feedback and recognition of details told by others.
- The “Onion” activity especially encourages empathy and concentration.

7.5 ASSERTIVENESS 90 min

Goals:

- Understand the difference between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour
- Develop the skill of expressing own views and needs without endangering others
- Develop confidence in expressing views and needs
- Understand how to communicate constructively in different contexts
- Practice assertive communication through simulations of real situations

Materials: cut sheets with statements, pieces of paper with situations for simulations

Techniques: lecture, simulation of situations, discussion

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: Theoretical input 5 min

Description:

The trainer explains that assertiveness is a communication pattern, a way of dealing with others, in which we know how to stand up for ourselves and our rights while respecting the rights of others.

The difference between passivity, aggression and assertiveness:

- In *passive* communication pattern, in most cases we do not express our thoughts, attitudes, needs and feelings in order to avoid conflicts.
- *Aggressive* behaviour involves standing up for ourselves, our rights and needs, often violating the rights of others in order to “win” in communication.
- *Assertiveness* is the skill of expressing our own feelings, opinions, beliefs and needs - directly, openly and honestly, without violating the rights of another person.

The trainer’s emphasis should be on the fact that assertiveness is a *skill* that *can be learned* and one that *develops* throughout life.

2. Activity: Sorting statements 15 min

Description:

- The trainer places about 20 pieces of paper with statements in the middle of the room.
- The participants take 1-2 statements and sort them on a flip-chart as: *passive*, *aggressive* or *assertive*.
- The trainer reads the statements and comments with the group whether they are correctly categorised.

Goal:

- Identifying different communication styles.
- Understanding the difference between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour.

3. Activity: Situation simulations 60 min**„Atom“:**

- The participants walk freely around the room.
- At one point, the trainer shouts “ATOM X!” where the number X indicates how many members should be in the group.
- The trainer changes the number several times, and each time the participants quickly organise themselves into new groups of the required size.
- In the last round, the participants should remain divided into pairs.
- The pairs sit together, receive a piece of paper with a task, and prepare a short simulation of the given situation.

Types of situations to simulate (examples):

- Receiving and giving compliments with sincerity.
- Asking for help when needed.
- Expressing disagreement with someone’s opinion.
- Say “NO” when they don’t want to do something.
- Accepting an opinion that is different from one’s own.
- Speaking in front of a group.

Role-playing ideas:

- Asking the supervisor for days off.
- Asking a colleague not to have private conversations during work.
- Asking for salary during a job interview.
- Rejecting help requested by a colleague if it is inappropriate.
- Asking a friend to lend a small amount of money.
- The parent refuses to extend a child’s stay after midnight.

Simulation process:

1. The pairs have 15 minutes to prepare the scenario.
2. The trainer emphasises: it is important to show *assertive communication*, not acting skills.
3. Each pairs performs their situation in front of the group.
4. The participants rate all situations, except their own, and the trainer writes down the ratings on the flip-chart.
5. After all the performances, there is a group discussion about the situation that had the largest range of ratings and suggestions on how communication could have improved.

Notes for the trainer:

- Emphasise that assertiveness develops over time.
- If a participant sometimes reacts aggressively or passively, this is an opportunity for reflection and learning.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What situation tested you most in expressing assertiveness?*
- *What is the most difficult challenge for you in everyday communication and how could you overcome it?*
- *What positive reaction from others has motivated you to be assertive?*
- *How will you apply the skills learned in real-life situations?*

4. Activity: **Feedback** 10 min

Description:

- The trainer asks the participants to share their impressions of the workshop in a circle.

Goal:

- Reflection of what was learned.
- Assessment of the participants' personal experience and satisfaction.

SELF-ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT

Workshops

8.1 RESILIENCE 90 min

Workshop goals:

- Identify areas of strength and weakness in life
- Develop the skills of self-assessment and reflection
- Establish a foundation for goal setting and change planning
- Foster a sense of control and choice
- Raise awareness of one's own resilience and its pillars
- Identify skills and resources for continuous resilience building, especially in difficult life situations

Materials: Worksheet 4 “Balance Wheel” for each participant, wooden crayons/felt-tip pens, crepe tape and markers, participants' mobiles, projector and internet connection

Techniques: writing, assessment, discussion, reflection

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: My strenght 20 min

Description:

- Each participant takes a selfie that expresses their strength.
- When they are satisfied, they show other group members their strength or send the photo to the trainer.
- The trainer displays the selfies on the screen and comments on them together with the participants.

Ideas for SF questions:

- *What does this selfie say about you?*
- *What is your strength that you want to maintain and develop?*



Notes for the trainer:

- Foster a positive and safe atmosphere.
- Focus on own resources and self-confidence.

2. Activity: **Balance wheel** 60 min

Description:

The technique visually shows how balanced different areas of life are.

- Each participant selects 8 areas of life that are important to them from those offered.
- They rate their satisfaction in each area on a scale of 1-10.
- By connecting dots, a “wheel” shape is obtained that shows strengths and imbalances.

Examples of life areas:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| - Health | - Personal development/Learning/ |
| - Activity/Hobby | Knowledge and skills |
| - School/Work | - Emotional state/Stress |
| - Relationships with friends | - Self-confidence |
| - Family/Partnerships | - Future/Goals |
| - Finances | - Community participation |

Step by step:

1. Preparation:

- Draw a circle divided into 6-10 sectors, of your choice.
- Label each sector with an area of life.

2. Assessment:

- Rate your satisfaction with each area on a scale of 1-10.
- Draw dots closer to the centre (1) or the edge of the circle (10).

3. Visualisation:

- Connect the dots - you will get a “wheel”.
- See if it is balanced - can it “roll”?

4. Analysis:

Questions:

- Which areas are most important right now?
- Where are you strongest? That is the foundation of resilience.
- What surprised you?

5. Planning:

Choose 1 area to improve.

Steps for a desirable future (trainer's support):

1. On a scale of 1-10, the participant marks the current rating of an area and the desired rating.
2. The trainer guides the participant through questions:
 - How will they recognise that they have progressed?
 - What will they be able to do that they cannot do now?
 - Who will notice the change and how will they react?
3. *Exceptions* are explored - evidence that successes have already been achieved.
4. Together they create a small concrete step to achieve the next rating.
5. They agree to monitor and record changes until the next meeting.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What step can you take immediately to improve this area?*
- *What resources are already helping you progress?*

Notes for the trainer:

- The desired future must be specific and measurable.
- If the goal is not clearly defined, we look for a new, realistic goal.
- Focus on practical steps and recognition of existing resources.

3. Activity: **Feedback** 10 min

Description:

- The participants share impressions and insights from the workshop.
- The trainer summarises key insights and practical steps for building resilience.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What was most useful for you in today's workshop?*
- *What step will you apply in the coming period?*

Practical advice

- Focus on *identifying strengths, resources* and *concrete actions*.

Notes for the trainer:

- The activities combine introspective work, visualisation, and practical steps.
- Foster a *safe, supportive atmosphere*.
- Build a sense of control and choice
- Relate activities to *resilience* and *concrete everyday situations*.

8.2 SMART GOALS 90 min

Goals:

- Adopting the “Step by step” planning technique
- Developing initiative and perseverance
- Strengthening self-confidence and motivation

Materials: templates, A4 and A3 papers, crayons, felt-tip pens, electrical tape, paper balls

Techniques: interactive games, lecture, writing, discussion, reflection

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: Basketball – goal setting in practice 25 min

Goal:

The participants reflect on how they set goals, assess risk and choose strategies for achieving success through a simple game.

Preparing the space:

- Place a wastepaper basket at one end of the room.
- Make a line of electrical tape about 2.5 meters long.
- Mark the distances every 0.5 meters with a marker, numbers from 1 to 5:
 - 1 = closest to basket
 - 2 = farthest from basket

- Draw a table on the flipchart with the following columns:

Name	1st attempt	2nd attempt	3rd attempt	Total points

Instructions to the participants:

Each participant has three attempts to hit the basket with a small ball.

Before each throw, the participant chooses the distance from which they will throw the ball. The greater the distance, the more points they can score, but the harder it is to hit. If the participant hits the basket, they score the number of points indicated on the distance from which they threw. If they miss, they score no points.

Participants take turns throwing while sitting down, three rounds in a row.

The goal is to score as many points as possible.

The trainer:

- records the results of each attempt
- observes how the participants make decisions and change strategies:
 - do they play safe or take risks
 - do they change their approach after success/failure
 - do they set realistic or overambitious goals
 - do they give up or adjust their strategy

It is important to record interesting observations for the final discussion

Questions for discussion after the activity:

- How did you choose your distance?
- Did you play safe or take risks?
- Did you change your strategy during the game? Why?
- How does this activity relate to goal setting in real life?
- What does it tell us about your assessment of your own capabilities and motivation?

Goal:

- Recognise the difference between challenging and easy goals.
- Develop awareness of one's own choices and their consequences.

Notes for the trainer:

- Encourage the participants to explain why they chose that particular distance.
- Have them reflect on the relationship between risk and reward.
- Commend initiative and effort, not just success.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *How did you feel choosing longer distances?*
- *What would motivate you to choose more challenging goals next time?*
- *Is there a difference between setting goals in a game and in life?*

2. Activity: Theoretical part - SMART goals 10 min

Description:

Introduce the acronym SMART:

S - Specific: who, what, where, when, what obstacles, why?

M - Measurable: how to know we've achieved the goal?

A - Achievable: challenging but realistic goals.

R - Relevant: important for your life and development.

T - Time-bound: date or time frame.

Goal:

- Learn to set a specific and achievable goal.
- Develop step-by-step planning.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What is your main goal right now?*
- *How will you know when you have achieved it?*
- *What is stopping you from achieving it now?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Give examples of realistic SMART goals (career, education, health).
- How will you know when you have achieved it?
- What is stopping you from achieving it now?

3. Activity: Setting a SMART goal 10 min

Description:

- The participants receive templates for creating a SMART goal.
- They fill out the template according to the instructions.

Goal:

- Practice formulating specific, measurable, and realistic goals.

Notes for the trainer:

- Make sure the goals are specific and realistic.
- Encourage the participants to include time and specific step.

**Ideas for SF questions:**

- *What do you want to achieve and by when?*
- *How will you know you are successful?*
- *What is the first concrete step you can take?*

4. ACTIVITY: Steps to success 35 min**Preparation:**

- Draw 5-7 steps per participant on A3 paper.
- Highest step = SMART goal.

Description:

1. The participants write their goals at the top of the stairway.
2. Each lower stair represents a step towards the goal.

Example: goal “learn a new skill”:

1. Think about benefits of the skill
 2. Assess existing knowledge
 3. Research courses, prices and deadlines
 4. Secure financing
 5. Enrol in a course
 6. Attend the course
 7. Pass the final exam
3. At the top, draw yourself celebrating your success (medal/cup).
 4. Drawing time: 20 minutes.
 5. After that, the participants present their steps, and the trainer guides the discussion using SF questions.

Goal:

- Visualise and elaborate on the steps to the goal.
- Develop initiative, planning, and perseverance.

Notes for the trainer:

- Encourage detailed thinking about the steps.
- Make the participants identify potential obstacles.
- Validate effort and creativity, not the quality of the drawing.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *How will you feel when you reach your goal?*
- *What will you be able to do that you can't do now?*
- *Who will notice your success and how will they react?*
- *What is the first small step you can take right now?*

5. Activity: **Feedback** 10 min

Description:

- The trainer asks the participants what they think of the workshop.
- The participants share their impressions and experiences.

Goal:

- Reflection and workshop evaluation.
- Developing awareness of personal progress.

Notes for the trainer:

- Encourage honest feedback.
- Encourage the participants to highlight what they learned and what they will apply.

8.3 **INDIVIDUAL PLAN** 90 min/180 min

Goals:

- Systematise the participants' knowledge, skills and experiences
- Increase motivation for active job search or employment planning
- Strengthen the sense of personal worth through group support

Materials: Printed Worksheet 6 - My Individual Plan for each participant; pre-prepared large posters *Individual Plan*

Techniques: individual work, presenting individual plans, group discussion

1. Activity: **My individual plan - individual work** 20 min

Description:

The trainer distributes Worksheets 6 - My Individual Plan to the participants and briefly explains the purpose of the activity. The participants fill out the templates independently, focusing on their knowledge, skills, personality traits, interests, previous experiences, and possible directions for employment or further training.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What do you already have that can help you in the next step towards work?*
- *What strengths have you already demonstrated in previous experiences?*
- *What has helped you to cope with change so far?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Be available for clarification, but do not intervene too much in the personal process.
- Remind the participants of the previous workshops and the skills identified.



Sensitive points:

- The participants may have difficulty recognising their own strengths due to the loss of a professional role or experience of displacement.

Practical advice

- If the participants get stuck, offer examples of general skills (e.g. organisation, perseverance, language learning, caring for others).

2. Activity: **Individual plan – group work** 60/120 min

Description:

The trainer invites a volunteer who wants to further develop their individual plan with the support of the group. The plan is written on a pre-prepared poster visible to all participants.

The trainer listens carefully, asks additional questions and helps the participant identify their knowledge, skills, personality traits, strengths, limitations and realistic employment or training opportunities.

The group provides proposals, ideas and constructive suggestions.

**Ideas for SF questions:**

- *What would be a sign that you are moving in the right direction?*
- *Who or what can support you in implementing this plan?*
- *What have you done successfully in similar situations before?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Maintain a balance between encouragement and realistic planning.
- Validate the participants' effort, motivation and courage.

**Sensitive points:**

- Public presentation can cause discomfort or fear of evaluation; monitor nonverbal cues and slow down the process if necessary.

Practical advice

- Use affirmative language and regularly summarise what the group recognises as the participants' strengths.

3. Activity: Feedback and final reflection 10 min**Description:**

The workshop ends with a short reflection in a circle. The participants share their impressions of the workshop and their feelings about their own individual plan.

**Ideas for SF questions:**

- *What did you find most useful today?*
- *What one thing from today's workshop gives you hope or motivation?*
- *What small step can you take this week?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Thank the participants for their openness and participation.

**Sensitive points:**

- If someone doesn't want to speak, offer the option of written feedback.

Practical advice:

- The participants can be offered to write a personal message of encouragement to themselves at the end of the plan.

ECONOMIC INCLUSION: EMPLOYMENT AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Workshops

9.1 WRITTEN PRESENTATION 90 min

Goals:

- Strengthen self-confidence and sense of self-efficacy
- Develop written self-presentation skills
- Enable the participants to present their knowledge, skills, abilities and personal characteristics to the employer in a targeted and clear manner through a CV and a job application

Materials: A4 papers, pens; Worksheet 8 - Job Application; printed examples of current job advertisements; Worksheet 7 - Curriculum Vitae (CV) for each participant

Techniques: writing, case analysis, work in pairs, group discussion

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: Educational-instructional part: CV and job application 15 min

Description:

Through a short PP presentation, the trainer presents the basic elements of a CV and a job application. After the theoretical introduction, they show specific examples of CVs and job applications and explain the purpose of each item, with an emphasis on clarity, relevance and adaptation to the specific job advertisement.



Ideas for SF questions:

- Which parts seem clearest and most convincing to you?
- What could you apply immediately from these examples?

Notes for the trainer:

- Use simple and understandable language.
- Emphasise that there is no “perfect” CV, but one that is good enough and adapted.

**Sensitive points:**

- The participants may have negative experiences with rejection; it is important to normalise such experiences.

Practical advice

- Emphasise that the CV is a “living document” that can be constantly adapted.

2. Activity: Writing a CV 40 min**Description:**

The participants receive a CV form in EU format and complete it individually. The trainer is present to provide support, clarify individual sections and help formulate a description of knowledge, skills and work experience.

If there are technical conditions, the participants can create CVs on a computer or via an online tool.

**Ideas for SF questions:**

- *What experience or skill of yours would be most important to an employer here?*
- *What from your life so far speaks about your responsibility or reliability?*
- *Which part of the CV is easiest for you to complete - and why?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Encourage the participants to recognise informal experiences, too (volunteering, caring for family, learning a language).
- Offer suggestions for wording, but maintain the participants' authenticity.

**Sensitive points:**

- Gaps in work experience can be a source of discomfort; it is important to approach with understanding.

Practical advice:

- Suggest that the participants mark the parts they want to further refine later.

3. Activity: Writing a job application 30 min**Description:**

The participants are divided into pairs. The trainer displays current job advertisements and distributes Worksheet 8 - Job Application to them. Each participant writes their own application for the selected advertisement, focusing on connecting their knowledge, skills and personal characteristics with the employer's needs.

The trainer provides individual support during the writing process. If technically feasible, the participants can create applications in digital form.

After writing, the participants exchange applications with each other in pairs and give each other constructive feedback. Those who wish can read their application aloud.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What part of the application sounds most convincing to you?*
- *What might the employer remember about you from this application?*
- *What could you clarify or shorten a little?*
- *What small improvement is visible compared to previous attempts?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Direct feedback towards what is written well.
- Encourage specificity over general phrases.



Sensitive points:

- Reading aloud can be stressful; participation should be voluntary.

Practical advice:

- Suggest a structure for the job application: introduction (why I am contacting you), middle (what I am offering), conclusion (what I want next).

4. Activity: Final reflection and feedback 15 min

Description:

The workshop ends with a reflection on the experience of working. The participants share their impressions about writing a CV and a job application, and their own sense of readiness for applying for a job.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What did you find most useful today?*
- *What part of the written application seems clearer to you now than before?*
- *What is the next small step you can take after this workshop?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Thank the participants for their effort and courage.



Sensitive points:

- If someone is not willing to speak, allow written feedback.

Practical advice:

- Suggest the participants to save the CV and the job application as draft versions for further refinement.

Of course - now I bring the **final, manual version of the “Job Interview” workshop**, in the same style as the others: symbolism, SF questions, trauma-sensitive guidelines, scripts for the trainer and a clear structure.

Adapted to working with refugees and employability programmes.

9.2 JOB INTERVIEW 90 min/180 min

“From experience to convincing presentation”

Goals:

- Strengthening self-confidence and sense of self-efficacy
- Developing the skill of targeted and specific presentation of competencies
- Practicing communication and presentation skills
- Reducing anxiety related to the selection process

Materials: A4 paper and pens, examples of good job applications and CVs, examples of current job advertisements, CV form, Worksheet 9 - The most common questions employers ask in a job interview, A4 papers with statements: “I agree” / “I disagree”

Workshop symbolism:

Job interview as a *bridge* between who I am and the opportunity I aspire to.

The trainer can remark that the candidate is not begging for a job - they represent value. The interview is a dialogue, not an exam. They can also say that a job interview is not an assessment of their value as a person. It is a meeting where they present what they know and can do.

Notes for the trainer:

- Normalise gaps in work experience
- Validate foreign qualifications and informal experience
- Be aware of possible fear of rejection
- Explain cultural differences in self-presentation

The participants with migration experience may experience:

- Sense of loss of professional identity
- Fear of discrimination
- Insecurity due to language competencies

That's why it's important to stress:

"Your experience didn't disappear when you crossed the border. It travels with you."

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: **Attitude barometer** 15 min

Goals:

Encourage the participants to reflect on their own attitudes, identify resources and take small steps towards employment or self-employment.

Process:

Preparation

- At one end of the room, place a piece of paper with words I AGREE, and at the other end I DISAGREE.
- Prepare statements (written or read aloud).
- Have SF questions at hand to ask after the participants have positioned themselves.

Statements for the barometer

The statements go from external challenges to personal resources and the future:

1. "Finding a job in a new country can be challenging."
2. "Connections can help you find a job."
3. "Factors beyond our control also affect employment."
4. "The way I present myself can increase my chances of getting a job."
5. "Learning a language and new skills can open up more opportunities for me."
6. "I can take at least one small step that increases my chances of getting a job."
7. "I have knowledge and experience that are valuable, regardless of the country I am in."
8. "It is important for me to feel respected and dignified in the workplace."
9. "I am willing to adapt to new working conditions."
10. "Sometimes a starting job is a stepping stone to a better opportunity."
11. "It is important for me to have a plan, even if I have to adjust it."
12. "I believe that I can gradually build my professional future."



SF questions for discussion (after the positioning)

Selected safe and empowering questions:

- *“What small step can you take this week to get closer to finding a job?”*
- *“What strengths or skills are you already using that are helping you move forward?”*
- *“Can you think of a situation when something was different - and you succeeded despite the challenges?”*
- *“What helps you persevere in learning a language or new skills?”*
- *“What can you focus on now, instead of what you can’t control?”*
- *“Imagine that in a few months you feel more confident about your professional future - what would be different?”*

Instructions for the trainer

- Read a statement and ask the participants to position themselves next to I AGREE or I DISAGREE.
- Let the participants explain their choices, if they wish.
- Select 1-2 people for a brief reflection or ask the entire group one SF question.
- Focus on:
 - recognising resources and strengths
 - small, doable steps
 - successful exceptions from participants’ experiences
- Maintain a safe and non-intrusive environment - don’t force anyone to comment.
- End with a positive reflection: “What is one step or resource you can take today?”

2. Activity: Educational part 15 min

Description:

The trainer clarifies:

The employer will assess three things:

- Do you possess the required competencies?
- Can you clearly explain them?
- Will you fit in with the team?

Stress the difference between:

- bragging
- professional presentation

They can also add:

“In some cultures, modesty means not talking about yourself. In the context of employment, clearly presenting your competencies is professional behaviour.”

3. Activity: **How to present your qualities** 15 min

Description:

The trainer writes questions on the board:

- What skill do I have?
- In what situation did I use it?
- What did I do specifically?
- What was the result?
- How does it relate to the job?



Ideas for SF questions:

- *When was this trait most evident?*
- *Who benefited from your work in that situation?*
- *What does this say about you as an employee?*

If someone says “I have no experience”:

Refocus on:

- Taking care of family
- Organising the move
- Learning a language
- Volunteering
- Helping the community

4. Aktivnost: **Intervju** 15 min

Description:

The trainer divides the participants into pairs. Gives each pair a copy of Worksheet 9 - The most common questions employers ask in a job interview.

The pairs have 10 minutes to prepare for a job interview simulation in front of the group. They study the questions together, prepare answers to them and divide the roles: one of them will be the employer/HR person conducting the interview, and the other will be the job candidate. It is best to simulate a situation as similar as possible to the real one in which they were looking for a job or for the position they want to apply for.

The trainer reminds:

“This is a space for practice, not perfection.”

5. Activity: **Interview simulation** 30 min

Description:

A volunteer pair demonstrates an interview.

The group is tasked with writing down:

- Which competencies were clearly presented?
- When did the candidate seem most confident?

After the pair has finished the simulation, the trainer first asks (in that order):

1. Job candidate
2. Employer
3. Group members, to give them structured feedback:
 - What are they satisfied with?
 - What was concrete, good, convincing?
 - Is there anything that could be clearer, more convincing?

Notes for the trainer:

If the candidate shows nervousness, the trainer does a quick regulation exercise before starting:

- 3 slow breaths
- feet firmly on the floor
- looking towards the interlocutor

6. Activity: **Final scaling** 5 min

Description:

A tape with a scale from 1 to 10 is placed on the wall. The trainer asks everyone the question: “How ready do you feel for a job interview right now?” The participants place a sticky note with their name on the number that indicates their current readiness.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What keeps you at that number?*
- *What helped you most today?*
- *What small step will you take this week?*

The final message from the trainer can be that a job interview is not a test of someone's worth, but an opportunity to demonstrate their experience, strengths, and willingness to contribute. Something they already have.

Notes for the trainer:

A job interview can trigger:

- fear of rejection
- reminder of loss of status
- feeling of insecurity

It is therefore important to:

- normalise nervousness
- focus on specific steps
- emphasise that every exercise is progress

9.3 COOPERATION AND TEAMWORK 90 min

Goals:

- Developing cooperation and teamwork skills
- Encouraging mutual reliance and communication
- Strengthening the ability to give and receive instructions
- Reflecting on one's role in the team and the impact of cooperation on the result

Materials: A4 papers (big and small), adhesive tape, felt-tip pens, papers with printed instructions for making objects (ship, plane, box, letter...), blindfolds

Notes for the trainer:

- Activities can cause frustration or laughter - normalise both reactions
- Emphasise the importance of mutual reliance and support
- Encourage creativity, but also reflection on the process of cooperation
- Focus on the process, not just the result

1. Activity: **Instructions** 30 min

Description:

- Divide into pairs.
- One member receives printed instructions for making an object, the other is blindfolded.
- At the trainer's signal, the person with the instructions guides their partner on how to make the object.
- The activity continues until the objects are made or until the trainer's signal.
- After that, the pairs switch roles and repeat the process.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *How did you feel when you were dependent on your partner?*
- *What was the most difficult part in giving/receiving instruction?*
- *How did you communicate to be efficient?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Focus on encouragement and patience between the partners
- Validate the effort, not just the result
- Let reflection after the activity emphasise learning about cooperation and trust

2. Activity: **Paper tower** 40 min

Description:

- Divide into 2 groups.
- Each group receives the same amount of paper and adhesive tape.
- Task: build a paper tower as high as possible that will stand for at least 1 minute.
- 3 minutes for agreement, **no building**.
- At the trainer's signal, construction begins **without words**.
- At the trainer's signal, the work ends and the tower stands for a minimum of 1 minute.
- The trainer announces the winning group.
- Discussion about the process and the result follows, with a focus on cooperation and communication.

**Ideas for SF questions:**

- *How did you decide on the strategy without talking?*
- *What was your role in the team?*
- *What made the tower stand or fall?*
- *How would you apply this way of collaboration in real life?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Emphasise the importance of a shared strategy and active listening
- Commend teamwork, not just winning
- Be aware of the roles participants take on in the team (leader, creator, support)

3. Activity: Final reflection 20 min**Description:**

- Group discussion about both activities:
 - What did you learn about collaboration and communication?
 - What was the most challenging moment and why?
 - What strategy would you apply in real life?

**Ideas for SF questions:**

- *What personal skill helped you most in the collaboration?*
- *How could you improve your contribution to the team?*
- *What did you learn from other team members?*

Notes for the trainer:

- Encourage the participants to share experiences, but don't force them
- Relate the game experience to real life and everyday collaborations
- End the workshop on a positive and motivating note

9.4 ENTREPRENEURSHIP 90 min

Goals:

The overall goal of the workshop is to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and identify entrepreneurial competencies.

In the workshop we aim to:

- Understand the basic characteristics of entrepreneurship
- Identify own entrepreneurial traits and transferable skills
- Strengthen the sense of initiative and personal responsibility
- Develop creative thinking and teamwork

Materials: sticky notes, flipchart/posters, markers and felt-tip pens, pre-prepared poster with associations (covered terms)

Notes for the trainer:

- Present entrepreneurship beyond “starting a business”
- Respect possible experience of informal entrepreneurship
- Recognise entrepreneurship as a survival strategy
- Avoid glorifying risk (many have had risky experiences)

You can say:

“Entrepreneurship does not necessarily mean starting a business. Entrepreneurship is a way of thinking - recognising an opportunity and taking action.”

Sequence of activities

1. Activity: Opening 15 min

Goal:

Activate existing examples from own life.

Scaling question:

“On a scale of 1 to 10, how entrepreneurial do you see yourself?”

Resource question:

“When was the last time you took an initiative on your own?”

2. Activity: Meeting an entrepreneurship expert 60 min

Description:

Structured discussion with an expert in the field of entrepreneurship.

Topics:

- What opportunities exist in the local community / What incentives and measures are there for future entrepreneurs?
- What entrepreneurial ideas and experiences do you already have?
- What skills from your country could you turn into a service or product?
- What would be a small, first step (without a lot of risk)?
- What are the legal regulations in the new environment?



Ideas for SF questions:

- *“Imagine that in a year you started a small business that brings you income. What do you do? Who are your clients?”*
- *“How realistic is this idea for you (1-10)?”*
- *“What would raise the number by one?”*

3. Activity: Final integration and feedback 15 min

The trainer asks a question and a scale on the wall:

“How entrepreneurial do you feel right now?”

Circle of closing sentences:

- “One of my entrepreneurial traits is...”
- “A small step I can take is...”

Closing message:

“Entrepreneurship starts with an idea, but grows through small, courageous steps. You have already shown that you can take big steps in life.”

Goals:

- Evaluation of success of the module and the entire programme
- Awareness of personal progress
- Strengthening the sense of achievement and competence
- Exchange of experiences and mutual empowerment
- Emotionally safe closure of the process

Materials: large scale 1–10 (on poster or floor), sticky notes, felt-tip pens, envelopes (one for each participant), papers for messages, evaluation questionnaires

Workshop symbolism

The programme is presented as a journey.

Today, the participants:

- look back (where they started)
- recognise what they have learned
- realise where they are now
- take with them “resources for the future”.

Ending is not an end - it is a transition to a new phase.

Notes for the trainer:

- Endings can activate emotions (sadness, relief, insecurity)
- Do not force sharing
- Validate all reactions
- Maintain a tone of dignity and achievement

You can say:

“Today we’re not evaluating you as persons. We’re looking at the process and recognising the path you’ve taken.”

1. Activity: **Compliments** 40 min

The trainer notes that people often feel uncomfortable being the centre of attention and talking about themselves or receiving compliments, but that this is also part of assertive behaviour and it is important to practice these skills.

The participants sit in a circle. The trainer places a chair (preferably one that swivels) in the centre of the circle. They ask a volunteer to sit in the centre and explain the task: The person in the centre will choose who in the group they want to start with and will turn towards them. The person who is chosen will give them a “compliment”, saying a positive trait that they noticed while working together in the group. They will try to be authentic and look the person they are complimenting in the eye. The person in the centre of the circle will just politely thank them for the compliment, without any comment (the trainer insists on this rule for everyone). After receiving the compliment, the volunteer turns to the next person in the circle (to the left or right of the person they started with) and the compliments continue until the circle is closed. After that, the next person sits in the centre. The activity continues until all participants have received compliments from everyone in the group.

When the circle of compliments closes, the trainer begins a new round of questions:

- How did you feel when you received compliments?
- Which was easier, giving or receiving a compliment?
- Was it difficult to come up with an authentic compliment for others?

Notes for the trainer:

If emotions arise:

- Normalise.
- Leave space.
- Don't rush the process.

2. Activity: **Group discussion – “My journey through the programme”** 20 min

Draw a simple route on the flipchart.

Introduction:

“If we imagine this programme as a journey - where did you start, and where are you now?”

Questions for discussion:

- What was the most useful thing for you during these eight weeks?
- What did you learn from other group members?
- What are you leaving here with?



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What was your most important moment?*
- *When did you first notice you were making progress?*
- *What are you doing differently now than when you started?*
- *What surprised you about yourself?*

If criticism arises:

Thank. Note.

Don't defend the programme - model openness.

3. Activity: **Scaling progress** 10 min

A scale of 1–10 is on the wall/poster.

Explain:

1 = same place I was at the beginning

10 = feeling in control of my challenges

The participants physically stand on the number.



Ideas for SF questions:

- *What keeps you at that number, and not lower?*
- *What specifically did you do to get here?*
- *Who helped you?*
- *What would be a small step towards +1?*

Focus on progress, not distance from 10.

- Normalise different rates of progress.

4. Activity: **Evaluation** 20 min

Distribute anonymous questionnaires.

Recommended questions:

- How much did the programme help you (1-10)?
- Which workshop did you find most useful?
- What would you improve?
- Do you feel more prepared for the job market?
- Would you recommend the programme to others?

Emphasise anonymity and the importance of honesty.

5. Activity: **Final integration** 5 min

Short closing circle:

Complete the sentence:

- "One thing I take with me is..."
- "One strength I will continue to use is..."

Final message from the trainer:

"The programme may be ending, but your development continues. Everything you have learned - knowledge, courage, mutual support - you take with you."

Notes for the trainer:

In people with migration experience, endings can trigger:

- sense of loss
- fear of next step
- reminder of previous interruptions

It is therefore important to:

- emphasise continuity
- focus on specific next steps
- encourage mutual exchange of contacts

ADDITIONAL OPTION (if time permits)

Mini-exercise: "Letter to myself in 3 months"

The participants write a message to themselves:

- What do I want to remember?
- What strength do I want to continue using?
- What specific step will I take?

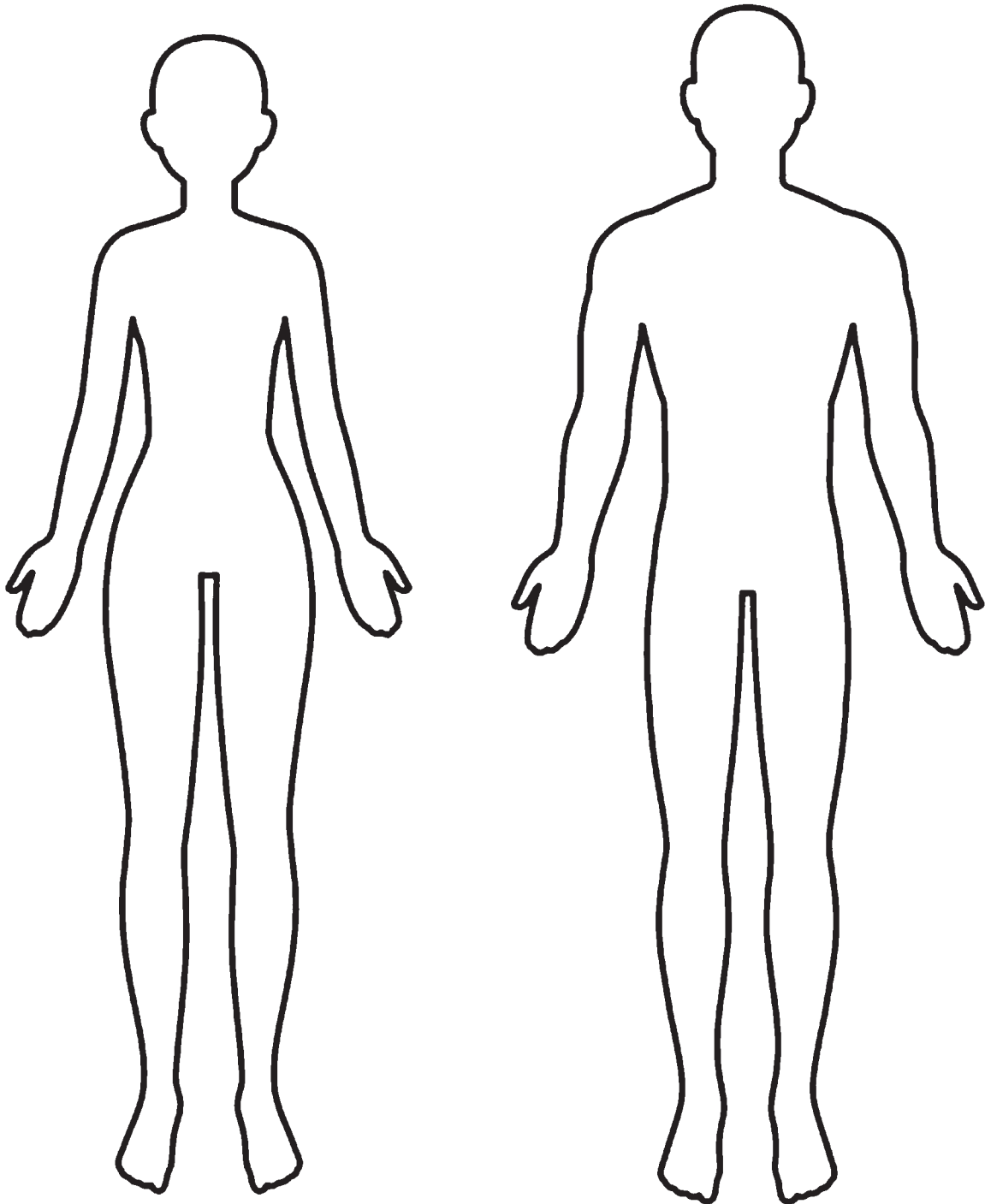


My positive trait:

Example of when this trait showed:

My positive trait:

Example of when this trait showed:



Problem solving - active and problem-oriented way of dealing with stress. Solving problems includes gathering information about the situation, seeking advice, finding strategies for solving problems, planning activities, agreeing, negotiating, etc.

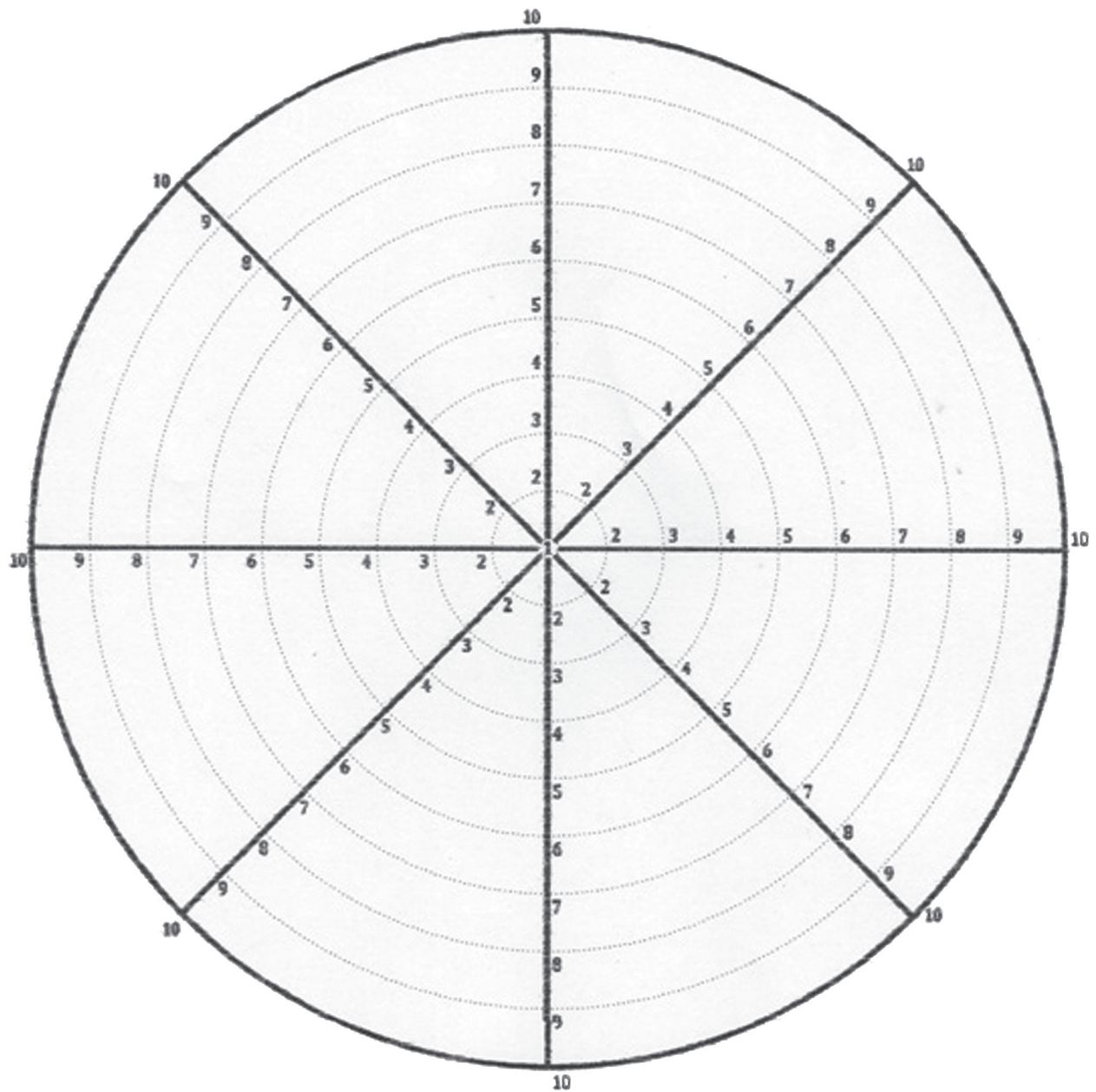
Avoidance - form of coping in which we try to avoid the situation, i.e. the reaction that the situation could cause in us. Fantasising, daydreaming, denial, risky behaviours, humour, “black humour” are some of the forms of avoidant behaviours.

Seeking social support - social support contains two main components: instrumental and emotional. In the first case, it is about gathering information, asking for opinions, advice or recommendations about possible actions. The emotional component includes comfort, understanding, support and empathy.

Emotion-focused coping refers to various processes through which we try to manage stress by changing our thoughts and/or behaviours, as well as through emotional expression or “release”. Emotional release can be expressed verbally, through arguing, yelling, and self- or other-directed blame, or behaviourally, through breaking objects, hitting, or venting anger.

Cognitive restructuring - strategy in which emotional relief is achieved through mental changes. *“It will get better”*, *“The situation is not so hopeless”*, are some of the mental constructs with which individuals are encouraged and thus emotionally relieved.

Distraction distraction often includes a behavioural aspect that involves redirecting attention away from a stressful situation through activity, thereby promoting relaxation. Examples include cycling, walking, exercising, reading, and watching television.



1. My SMART goal is (be as specific as possible):

2. What is the first small step I can take NOW to get closer to my goal:

3. Next steps to get closer to your goal:

STEP 1:

Time required to realise it: _____

Who/what can help me: _____

STEP 2:

Time required to realise it: _____

Who/what can help me: _____

4. How will I know (what will be different in my daily life) that I have achieved my goal?

Name and surname: _____

School (starting from highest completed):

Years of work experience:

Work experience:

Additional education (with certificates):

Knowledge and skills (without certificates):

Hobbies, interests:

My characteristics and qualities:

Professional development:

Employment opportunities:

Ways I am prepared to look for a job:

Availability to work (when I can start, shift work, weekends, mobility...):

Work restrictions:

Expected salary: _____

1. Personal information

Name and surname:

Address (street, number, zip code, city):

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Date of birth: _____

2. Work experience *(start with most recent job)*

Job 1

Period (year - year):

e.g. 2022 - 2024

Job title:

e.g. waiter / salesperson / warehouse worker

Company name and city:

What did you do at that job? *(list main tasks)*

e.g. working with customers, serving food, working at cash register

Job 2 (*if any*)

Period (year - year):

Job title:

Company name and city:

Main tasks:

(add as many jobs as you need)

3. Education and training (*start with most recent education*)

Period:

Name of school / institution:

Profession / qualification:

(e.g. economist, chef, nurse)

Important skills you have acquired:

4. Additional skills

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Mother tongue: _____

Other languages: _____

Language: _____

Listening: ☐ A1 ☐ A2 ☐ B1 ☐ B2 ☐ C1 ☐ C2Reading: ☐ A1 ☐ A2 ☐ B1 ☐ B2 ☐ C1 ☐ C2Speaking: ☐ A1 ☐ A2 ☐ B1 ☐ B2 ☐ C1 ☐ C2Writing: ☐ A1 ☐ A2 ☐ B1 ☐ B2 ☐ C1 ☐ C2*(add as many languages as you need)*

COMPUTER SKILLS

(e.g. Word, Excel, e-mail)

Other skills:

(e.g. B category driving licence)

5. Interests / hobbies (optional)*(e.g. sports, reading, music)*

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name and surname: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

2. COMPANY INFORMATION

Company name: _____

Company address: _____

Place and date: _____

3. TITLE

Subject: Job application for the position _____

4. INTRODUCTION

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to you regarding the vacancy for the position _____

which was advertised in _____

5. EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

I completed _____

I have experience in _____

and have acquired knowledge _____ in my education.

6. SKILLS AND QUALITIES

My important skills are: _____

My qualities that are important for this job are: _____

7. CONCLUSION

I believe that I can contribute to your company with my skills and motivation.
I would welcome the opportunity to be interviewed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF

Briefly present your education, work experience and skills. Connect them to the job you are applying for. Briefly “retell” your resume (CV).

WHICH OF YOUR SKILLS WOULD YOU HIGHLIGHT?

Highlight the skills that are important for the job you are applying for. Think about what you know about the company and the position and tailor your answer.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK WITH US?

Show interest in the company. Speak positively about the employer. Mention what you know about the company and explain how your skills and experience fit into their work.

WHY DID YOUR PREVIOUS JOB END?

Give a neutral and short answer. For example:

- the company changed location
 - the company had less work due to competition
 - the job was temporary (fixed term)
 - there was no opportunity for advancement or learning new skills
 - you are looking for a job that better matches your qualifications
-

WHAT ARE YOUR ADVANTAGES OVER OTHER CANDIDATES?

Highlight your qualities and experience.

You can give an example from a previous job when you successfully solved a problem. Advantages may also include:

- proximity to place of residence
 - flexibility in working hours
 - ability to perform multiple tasks
-

WHY SHOULD WE HIRE YOU, OF ALL CANDIDATES?

Example answer:

„ Because of the knowledge, experience and skills I can use in this job.”

WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST INTERESTING ABOUT THIS JOB?

For example:

- dynamic work
 - creative tasks
 - opportunity to learn and gain experience
-

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE YOU TO LEARN THE JOB?

Stress that you are a fast learner and that it won't take you long to adapt to the job.

HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO WORK WITH US?

Example answer:

„As long as we cooperate successfully and there is mutual interest.”

DO YOU PREFER TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY OR IN A TEAM?

Example answer:

„I can work both independently and in a team.”

If you realise that teamwork is important, stress that you enjoy working in a team.

WHAT SALARY DO YOU EXPECT?

Salary discussion often comes at the end of the interview.

It is good if the employer suggests an amount first.

If you must answer, provide a rough salary range (e.g. from - to).

You can obtain information about the salary from people who do similar work.

HOW OFTEN WERE YOU ABSENT FROM YOUR PREVIOUS JOB?

Emphasise that you were rarely absent and only in important situations (e.g. illness).

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

Take the opportunity to mention something important about yourself that you haven't said.

Progress monitoring questionnaire

The Form for Monitoring User Progress is designed as a brief self-assessment tool to track participants' experiences and the impact of the "Small Steps to Success" training program.

- The form can be used at the beginning and at the end of the entire program to capture overall changes in well-being, social adjustment, professional motivation, and confidence.
- It can also be applied after each module as a quick check-in to monitor short-term progress and identify areas where participants may need additional support.
- The average completion time is **2-3 minutes**, making it easy to integrate into group sessions without taking significant time away from activities.

Program: **“Small Steps to Success”**

Name/Code: _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____

Date: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please think about the last week (or since the previous session) and mark on the lines below how you feel you are doing in the following areas of your life.

Marks on the left represent low levels, while marks on the right indicate high levels.

1. Personal well-being

(How I feel about myself, my self-confidence, and my ability to cope with change)



Progress monitoring questionnaire

2. Social and cultural adjustment

(My comfort in Croatia, communication in Croatian, relationships with people here)



3. Career and professional goals

(My motivation, clarity of goals, and readiness for employment/entrepreneurship)



4. Overall well-being and progress

(How I feel overall about my life and future in Croatia)



Optional Reflection (1-2 sentences)

What is one positive change you noticed since the last session?

What is one area you would like to improve further?
