ON THE WAY TO EXCELLENCE

BEGINNER TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM

TRAINING PROGRAM

January 2024

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KA220-SCH – Cooperation partnerships in school education

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About the project

The "On the way to excellence – beginner teacher support program" project is implemented by Sysco Polska Sp. z o.o., a Warsaw-based Polish organisation in partnership with:
– CENTRO PER LO SVILUPPO CREATIVO DANILO DOLCI (Italy),
– KENTRO MERIMNAS OIKOGENEIAS KAI PAIDIOU (Greece),
– THE BOARD OF EDUCATION IN WARSAW (Kuratorium Oświaty w Warszawie) (Poland).

The main objectives of the project are:
– development of an innovative training program "On the way to excellence" for beginner teachers,
– development of educational materials to support teachers in difficulties related to work in crisis situations and the changeable environment (with a particular emphasis on pandemic and post-pandemic situations),
– increasing the professional competences of teachers at the beginning of their journey working in the school sector by promoting participation in training courses on development of social skills necessary in working with students, taking into account the pandemic and post-pandemic situation.

Implementation of the project involved developing an innovative training program "On the way to excellence". Participation in the training equipped teachers starting work at school with the competences and tools necessary to cope with some of the more difficult and challenging situations faced by them in their everyday professional life, such as: building authority, building relationships with students, including in an emergency or a pandemic, working with students in remote conditions, working with students in a crisis situation, in uncertain and changeable conditions, coping with peer aggression, working with students with poor control of their behaviour under the influence of emotions, disciplining the class (including while working remotely), building relationships with students' parents, and solving problems related to difficult behaviour of students, particularly those at risk of social exclusion and early school leaving, i.e. aggression, depression, suicidal thoughts. Additionally, the training focused on counteracting the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic experienced by teachers at work.

When working on the project, the partners focused on the important issue of the need for professional development of young teachers in the field of key competences in their work, i.e. social competences, while at the same time responding to the above-mentioned challenge of providing effective assistance to beginner teachers through the training program developed.

An important aspect of the project activities was to draw attention to the school

staff itself – head teachers and teachers, including the more experienced ones, who can support their younger colleagues by encouraging them to improve their competences and by sharing their own experiences with them.

As part of the project, the partners have developed an innovative training program "On the way to excellence" with methodology and tools for beginner teachers, as well as educational materials in the form of an online publication – a guide for trainers and teachers to equip teachers starting work at school with the professional skills necessary to work with students, including those with special educational needs, and support students in a crisis situation.

Moreover, the developed educational materials supporting the training program will enable young teachers to prepare themselves to cope with difficult professional situations, including crisis situations.

Implementation of the project has led to:
– increasing the quality of preparation of educational staff to work at school,
– increasing the quality of teaching in schools,
– reducing the outflow of teaching staff from schools (burnout, stress),
– increasing the professional competences of the teaching staff,
– increasing the quality of teacher education by equipping young teaching staff with the social skills necessary to work with students, this to include interpersonal competences,
– increasing access to, participation in and level of education of teachers by expanding the training offer and depth of preparation for working in the profession,
– improving the quality of the training offer available on the market, taking into account the real needs of beginner teachers.

The indirect result of the project is the building of a coalition by the partners to support teachers starting work at school by gathering around them organisations and institutions that are working today to improve the competences of this professional group (such as teacher training centres, universities, including institutions offering higher teacher education programs) and providing them with a ready-to-use product that they can successfully apply in their training activities.

About the training program

This innovative training program for beginner teachers will equip them with the skills of the profession necessary to work with students, including those with special educational needs, and provide student support in crisis situations.

In addition, the developed educational materials supporting the training program will enable young teachers to prepare themselves to cope with difficult professional situations, including crisis situations.

The program consists of 5 modules:
1. Interpersonal skills in working with students
2. Supporting the student in dealing with a crisis situation
3. Communication with students with special educational needs
4. Educational materials to support teachers in dealing with crisis situations
5. Pass it on – how to use your potential and experience (mentoring in the workplace).

Modules 1-3 are training modules to be implemented at intervals of approx. 2-3 weeks, where the expected length of training for a given module is approx. 16 hours (avg. of 2 days).

Interpersonal competences play a significant role in the didactic up bringing process. It is to a large extent on them and the teaching style applied that the effects achieved by students depend. Module 1 covers, among others, the ability to establish contact with others, work within a team, negotiate and resolve conflicts, exert influence, show assertiveness and build authority. These skills are the key aspects of a teacher's work with students, including dealing with difficult situations with learners.

The COVID-19 pandemic meant that students and teachers were forced to function in changing, uncertain conditions. The various reactions of children and adolescents caused by different challenging circumstances, educational problems, and also those of a psychological and emotional nature, require teachers to offer new, often innovative, solutions, including those to support students in crisis situations. Module 2 focuses on the issue of supporting students in recognising and dealing with problems in the emotional, social and physiological sphere, as well as providing assistance in adapting to new, frequently difficult, situations. Additionally, it addresses the issue of expressing emotions, sharing them and dealing with the more difficult ones caused by uncertain, changing circumstances, as well as supporting students in recognising that a crisis can pose not only threats but also opportunities, etc.

Young teachers are much more likely than the experienced ones to report the need for greater development of skills in the field of teaching students with special

educational needs. Module 3 provides teachers with specific tools and skills to apply in practical work with students with special educational needs. It covers, among others, the topics of tailoring the approach to working with students with special educational needs to individual cases, customising messages, teaching students with special educational needs how to become self-reliant and independent, motivation, effective methods of working with students with special educational needs, working on educational resources for students with special educational needs, and assessing progress of students with special educational needs.

The uncertainty and confusion experienced by teachers when working in previously unknown conditions and the insufficient support received from the educational authorities contributed to deterioration of their psychological condition and caused many of them to suffer from symptoms of anxiety and depression. Module 4 assists teachers in their own work and can also be used by boards of education, where the objective is to support teachers in their work in crisis situations.

Module 5 is a value-add to the training program. It is devoted to the "pass it on" method – consisting in the transfer of knowledge acquired and used in practice to other teachers (so-called peer mentoring) and serves to obtain the ability to successfully apply the method to pass knowledge to others. It enables trained teachers to share their experience with those entering the first stage of their work at school. In this way, the trained teachers will consolidate the knowledge and skills gained during the training, use their knowledge, and support other teachers that may find themselves in a similar situation. In addition, it is one of the ways of maintaining continuity of the project and building structures within schools following completion of the project. The module describes how mentoring works, presents the principles and methods of transferring knowledge to adults from one's environment, and addresses the concepts of active listening, working with a purpose, etc.

MODULE 1
Interpersonal skills in working with students

1.1. General information on the topic

Teaching involves building and structuring an ongoing relationship with the student. The search for contact with others inevitably leads to the emergence of an affective dimension. The growth of an emotional relationship becomes a fundamental element when working with young people. In fact, it is much easier for students to establish a relationship when they can trust the person they are dealing with and feel they have built a special connection with them.[1]

In order to have a multifocal and complex vision in the management of all the aspects of the educational field, the teacher must commit to completing a series of actions. A fundamental characteristic required to succeed in the educational relationship lies in the teacher's ability to critically and reflectively review their own way of being. Moreover, the teacher must always try to create constructive interactions, to grasp the emotional processes of the educational relationship and to exercise emotional and relational skills.[2][3]

The teacher's capacity to truly engage students and manage the classroom dynamic is often a personal indicator of success and reliant on great people skills.[4] Nowadays, at school, it is becoming increasingly important for teachers to implement interpersonal strategies useful for establishing contact and relationships with their students. Very often beginner teachers find themselves having to manage extremely complex situations without possessing the tools to deal with what happens in the classrooms, such as: dealing with a class of students with a wide range of learning abilities; managing problematic behaviours or disciplinary challenges; handling

[1] Zapparata, M.V., (2016). Le competenze emotive e relazionali nella professione del docente. Un laboratorio per lo sviluppo delle Life-skills nel corso di Laurea Magistrale in Scienze della formazione primaria, Tesi di dottorato, Università degli studi di Palermo

[2] Contini M., Demozzi S., Fabbri M., Tolomelli A., (2014). Deontologia pedagogica. Riflessività e pratiche di resistenza, Franco Angeli, Milano

[3] Mancino E., (2013). Farsi tramite. Tracce e intrighi delle relazioni educative, Mimesis, Sesto San Giovanni (Udine)

[4] Primavesi F., (2013). Le competenze socio-emotive e relazionali degli insegnanti. Bisogni formativi e riflessioni sulla professione, Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana, SUPSI

the presence of students with special educational needs; dealing with students with different cultural backgrounds; communicating effectively with colleagues and so on. Furthermore, over the past two years, social distancing, the use of masks and the restrictive measures adopted in many European countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly affected the quality of interpersonal relationships at all levels.[5]

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the relational methods of communication between teachers and students have undergone a sudden and profound change. The computer screen has become the universe through which one now finds access to the world of learning and socialisation. What used to be built during lessons at school was suddenly interrupted and transformed and teachers had to experiment with new ways to attract students' attention and involve them in remote activities.[6] Now that we are back to school in person, as anticipated, the construction of a solid and trusting relationship with the class group is becoming particularly difficult for newly hired teachers who started their job in the pandemic era. In fact, they are the ones who most need to strengthen their personal skills in order to be able to interact with students who may carry traces of relational difficulties due to closure and isolation.

Therefore, today more than ever, school becomes a fundamental environment for socialisation, where the teacher must be able to implement caring pedagogy.[7] The teacher has to develop a global vision of the student and apply that vision through concrete support actions. This can involve many different approaches: the ability to listen actively and transmit acceptance and emotional warmth; the willingness to provide help and assistance; the capacity to read the emotional and social signals of the students, taking the time to understand their needs; the ability to compliment and encourage students, as well as deliver content in an interesting and engaging way during lessons.[8][9]

The idea of this module is to provide newly employed teachers with training through which they will identify and acquire useful interpersonal skills for their work at school, particularly focusing on:
– Leadership: through the acquisition of this ability, teachers will be able to build their authority, be respected and seen as points of reference;

[5] Herrmann L., Nielsen B.L., Aguilar-Raab C., (2021). The Impact of COVID-19 on Interpersonal Aspects in Elementary School. Front. Educ. 6:635180. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2021.635180

[6] Delvecchio E., Moretti G., (2022). La relazione tra insegnanti e alunni, in Corriere della Scuola, Scuola Oltre Editore. Available at: https://www.scuolaoltre.it/art-la-relazione-tra-insegnanti-e-alunni

[7] Hayes, C.B., Ryan, A.,Zseller, E.B., (1994). The Middle School Child's Perceptions of Caring Teachers, American Journal of Education, 103, 1 – 19

[8] Erickson. M. T., (a cura di.), (2017). Disturbi emotivi a scuola. Strategie efficaci per gli insegnanti, In Pellai, A. & Tamborini, B. (cur.). Promuovere relazioni positive a scuola. (pp.357-392). Le guide di Erickson: Trento

[9] Jeffrey, A.J., Auger, R.W.,Pepperell, J.L., (2013). If We're Ever in Trouble They're Always There. The Elementary School Journal, 114(1), 100–117. doi:10.1086/671062

– Empathic communication: strengthening this competence will enable teachers to listen and communicate more consciously;
– Conflict resolution and negotiation: deepening this topic will allow teachers to feel more comfortable when faced with situations of difficulty and conflicts within the class group;
– Adaptability, flexibility and resilience: building resilient attitudes will facilitate adaptation within the new work context.

Acquiring and understanding interpersonal skills through training will allow teachers to feel more confident and be able to work with their students, establishing with them deep relationships based on listening and communication, and re-activate those crucial networks the pandemic has put on hold for nearly 2 years.

1.2. Definitions

Interpersonal communication involves the face-to-face exchange of thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions between two or more people. This includes both verbal and non-verbal elements of personal interaction. Interpersonal skills cover a wide range of scenarios where communication and cooperation are essential. Through and thanks to these skills, we become able to build relationships with others. They include both the innate personality traits and what people have acquired to handle certain social situations.[10]

Thus, by interpersonal skills we mean «the ability to relate to others and manage the emotional fatigue that accompanies it. It has to do with the ability to feel, to be present in the relationship, to be able to get in touch with others, to understand their requests, needs and points of view».[11]

Interpersonal skills help to succeed in almost any kind of a job by helping understand other people and modify the approach to cooperate in the job process. However, to make these skills essential and fundamental in the workplace, we must first learn to recognise and develop them internally through a deep personal listening.[12]

According to Primavesi, it is essential for teachers to acquire the ability to develop interpersonal skills at school. Teaching leads to the construction of a deep bond, to

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[10] Donahue W. E., (2022). Improving Interpersonal Communication Skills: A Competency-Based Approach that Integrates Communication and Interpersonal Skills with Interpersonal Relationship Building, Competency-Based Workbooks for Structured Learning

[11] Blandino, G., (1996). Le capacità relazionali. Prospettive psicodinamiche, UTET, Torino

[12] Matthew McKay, Jeffrey Wood, (2019).The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Skills Workbook: Practical DBT Exercises for Learning Mindfulness, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Emotion Regulation, and Distress Tolerance, New Harbinger Workbook

the birth of a concrete exchange. The exchange between teacher and student has not only to do with theoretical topics but also with the transmission of values and points of view. In order to build fruitful and profitable learning paths, a teacher must be able to open up to understanding the needs and desires of the student. The ability to structure a dialogue of this type depends on the teacher's readiness to update and change.

Therefore, for students, school is a fundamental place of growth and training. It is a place of transition, where socialisation and diversity are experienced for the very first time. At school, one creates relationships that take place outside the family context, learning to establish contact with the world of peers. Consequently, the teacher becomes a guide within this path of discovery, an example to follow in order to achieve the socio-emotional capacity required to face the "outside world". The birth of a relationship of trust and contact can lead the teacher to become a figure of reference in the development of the psychological wellbeing of the students.[13]

According to Petter, in order to start building an educational relationship with young people, it is necessary to learn how to be a good listener and a proactive guide at the same time. Being able to listen allows the teacher to develop a deep connection with the student by analysing verbal and behavioural attitudes which can prove to be valuable indicators relating to the student's interest, needs and preferences. The first phase of listening and deepening is preparatory to the second one. In fact, it is through listening that it becomes possible to identify the right behaviours to follow with the class group in order to be able to play a leading role.[14] The attention, respect, listening and care that the teacher dedicates to the students can have an extremely positive impact on their personal growth. Indeed, feeling listened to allows students to reduce their difficulties and strengthen their emotional and relational skills.

There are specific interpersonal skills that we believe teachers should develop in order to be able to do their job in a more efficient and conflict-free way. For the reasons mentioned above, the module will be divided into four main topics. Each topic will correspond to a skill that we think is necessary to strengthen in the school environment:

1. LEADERSHIP: The term comes from the verb to lead which means also to direct, to organise, to manage. Therefore, it refers to the ability to know how to lead

[13] Primavesi F., (2013). Le competenze socio-emotive e relazionali degli insegnanti. Bisogni formativi e riflessioni sulla professione, Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana, SUPSI

[14] Petter, G. (1992). La preparazione psicologica degli insegnanti, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, Smith, R. A., Brown, M. G., Grady, K. A., Sowl, S., Schulz, J. M. (2022). Patterns of Undergraduate Student Interpersonal Interaction Network Change During the COVID-19 Pandemic. AERA Open, 8. https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211073160

a group of people. Leadership is the ability to see the problem and be the solution, even taking risks. Leadership is a transversal and interpersonal competence. Leadership skills are useful in professional and political areas but also in everyday life contexts related to social and family life.[15]

In the education field, being a good leader means being able to work for and with the other members of the group so that everyone feels an active and responsible part of the team. The teacher, as a leader, must feel motivated and contribute in an original way to the achievement of the goal, through a path identified collegially.[16] Effective leadership is not limited to presenting a plan and distributing tasks, but it gives the opportunity to all the participants to feel that they are protagonists in terms of conception, design, implementation, and verification. Leading is about involving everyone in the lesson and creating a sense of belonging for all students; it is also about finding a way to engage the entire class so that everyone succeeds as a group.[17] It's no longer about penalising those who break the rules, it's about finding a manner to integrate personal and individual differences into a wider successful story. If students are given the possibility to feel part of a creative process, their desire to be involved in classroom activities will increase and their behaviour towards the teacher can improve.[18] The growth and acquisition of leadership by teachers allow them to build authority, to feel more confident in the class and to exert their influence in a conflict-free and linear way.

2. EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION: Empathic communication occurs when a person focuses on listening and wishes to understand others. Listening to someone does not only mean to pay attention to the concepts the other person is expressing but also to participate emotionally in the story they are sharing with us. Being interested in others is a form of empathy and empathic communication is above all based on active and deep listening.[19]

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[15] Teti S., (2021). La leadership adattiva. L'importanza della leadership nel trasformare le organizzazioni e le comunità, Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche, Cattedra di Leadership nelle organizzazioni pubbliche, Università LUISS Guido Carli

[16] Mulford B., (2003). School Leaders: Challenging Roles and Impact on Teacher and School Effectiveness, OECD Commissioned Paper, University of Tasmania

[17] Bowen J., (2021). Why it is Important for Students to Feel a Sense of Belonging at School?, College of Education News, NC State University. Available at: https://ced.ncsu.edu/news/2021/10/21/why-is-it-important-for-students-to-feel-a-sense-of-belonging-at-school-students-choose-to-be-in-environments-that-make-them-feel-a-sense-of-fit-says-associate-professor-deleon-gra/

[18] Mulford B., (2003). School Leaders: Challenging Roles and Impact on Teacher and School Effectiveness, OECD Commissioned Paper, University of Tasmania

[19] Stiff J. B., Price Dillard J., Somera L., Kim H., Sleight C., Empathy, Communication, And Prosocial Behaviour, (1988),in Communication Monographs – 55, pp. 198-213

Being empathic is a necessary skill for people who decide to undertake a professional path in education, especially for those working with children and adolescents. Naturally, for a teacher it can be very hard to empathise with multiple students and situations at the same time, however it is an extremely important competence to develop.

The pre-adolescent and adolescent phases are dominated by the emotional sphere. These are moments of growth during which great inner conflicts are experienced. In these phases, young people have the perception of not being understood by the outside world. For this reason, being able to rely on a figure who implements an empathic communication can be of great help to them. By putting themselves in the shoes of the students and viewing the problem through their eyes, teachers are able to gain an understanding of the problem and help reach a solution.[20]

Moreover, empathic communication with all the members of the class group facilitates the start of a teamwork process. Working in a safe and comprehensive environment stimulates collaboration, exchange of opinions and acceptance of diversity.

3. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND NEGOTIATION: Conflict management in education means the ability of teachers to prevent and deal with students' attitudes of restlessness, challenge, transgression of the rules, and peer abuse.[21] More and more often, also due to the great differences existing between the students, it is possible to witness strong conflicts between the different members of the class group.

   Teachers and educators must act as a valid model, becoming an example for all the students and take all aspects of students' lives seriously. The educational approach to be adopted must be authoritative but also encouraging and engaging. Choices that focus on cooperative learning are very important.[22] These methods allow students to learn to support their own point of view without rivalry and antagonism – in this way they can learn how to incorporate the perspectives of others.

4. ADAPTABILITY, FLEXIBILITY, RESILIENCE: In this new era, characterised by continuous and sudden changes in the way of working, the ability to develop adaptability skills to new contexts becomes fundamental. Particularly in the past

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[20] Health&Care, (2022). La comunicazione empatica in ambito educativo, in Corsicef Magazine.

[21] Save the Children, (2019). Gestione dei conflitti a scuola: 6 spunti per iniziare, in Save the Children – Educazione. Available at: https://www.savethechildren.it/blog-notizie/gestione-dei-conflitti-scuola-6-spunti-iniziare

[22] see above

few years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many teachers have had to adapt to a new way of teaching, focusing on building a different relationship with the class group.[23]

Therefore, teachers, now more than ever, must learn to move flexibly in the education field, get out of the box, collecting new practices, being resilient, not giving up in front of the difficulties and the traumatic events, but finding the strength to move forward, transforming the negative impact to positive and productive energy.[24]

1.3. Importance of the topic

Focusing on improving teachers' interpersonal skills is particularly important for the creation of a safe and protective environment, in which, both teachers and students can feel secure and collaborate in the construction of a productive relationship of mutual understanding.

For newly hired teachers, the perception of having received inadequate preparation is related to their daily lives and to situations perceived as problematic in the classroom and at school. There are difficulties that teachers of all levels of the school system have in common and that prevail over others: to promote motivation to learn, to maintain discipline in the classroom and to obtain satisfactory learning outcomes for students.[25]

«The first transition from teacher education to the teaching profession can become a dramatic and traumatic process. This process is called reality shock, transient shock, and praxis shock. These definitions are used to describe the collapse of ideals in the face of reality».[26] The first years of the profession are an essential stage for teachers to create their professional and personal identity. However, very often newly hired teachers are forced to face adaptation issues due to unsuccessful pre-service training experiences that did not really show them a virtuous path to follow. The difficulties experienced during this early phase can deeply affect

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[23] Raghunathan S., Singh A.D., Sharma B., (2022). Study of Resilience in Learning Environments During the COVID-19 Pandemic, in Frontiers. Available at:
https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2021.677625/full

[24] Wang Y., (2021). Building Teachers' Resilience: Practical Applications for Teacher Education of China, in Frontiers. Available at:
https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.738606/full

[25] EU Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018. Teaching Careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support. Rapporto Eurydice. Lussemburgo: Ufficio delle pubblicazioni dell'Unione europea

[26] Veenman, S., (1984). Perceived problems of beginning teachers, in Review of Educational Research, 54(2), 143-178

the creation of a teaching identity, compromising new teacher's commitment to teaching and building a relationship with their students. Therefore, finding themselves in an unfamiliar environment, in which they do not feel totally in control of the situation, can lead teachers to experience conditions of stress, anxiety, frustration, loss of motivation and burnout syndrome.[27]

For all the reasons mentioned above, we have arrived at the conclusion that it is extremely important to help new teachers in the construction of a safe and challenge-free process through which they will have the opportunity to acquire the necessary tools to identify and develop the interpersonal skills required to establish fruitful relationships with students, taking into account their needs and being able to help them in crisis situations.

1.4. Learning outcomes

By the end of this module, teachers and educators will be able to deal with a variety of different situations. The learning outcomes that teachers and educators will gain are divided into 4 sections, corresponding to the relevant reference topics.

• LEADERSHIP: Through the involvement and participation in the various activities included in the training, we expect teachers to acquire a series of useful tools for leading and managing the class group.

  The learning outcomes that we expect to be obtained by those participating in the training are as follows:
  1. Improved self-esteem and confidence in one's abilities;
  2. Increased awareness by teachers of their leadership roles;
  3. Growth of teachers' skills in managing the class group;
  4. Acquisition of problem-solving skills;
  5. Ability to become an example to follow for the students.

• EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION: Through the involvement and participation in the various activities included in the training, we expect teachers to acquire a series of useful tools to understand their students and be able to communicate with them in a deeper and more significant way.

  The learning outcomes that we expect to be obtained by those participating in the training are as follows:
  1. Improved communication skills;

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[27] McCann, T.M., Johannessen, L.R., (2004). Why do new teachers cry?The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 77(4), 138-145

2. Self-control and ability not to put personal needs first;
3. Acceptance of the differences found within the class group;
4. Improved ability to establish relationships with students;
5. Ability to find a balance between authoritarianism and permissiveness.

• CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND NEGOTIATION: Through the involvement and participation in the various activities included in the training, we expect teachers to acquire a series of useful tools for managing conflicts within the student group.

The learning outcomes that we expect to be obtained by those participating in the training are as follows:
1. Promotion of students' understanding and respect of different points of view;
2. Promotion of constructive dialogue amongst students;
3. Encouragement of students' participation in sharing opinions;
4. Encouragement of students' participation in conflict resolution;
5. Development of students' critical thinking skills.

• ADAPTABILITY, FLEXIBILITY, RESILIENCE: Through the involvement and participation in the various activities included in the training, we expect teachers to acquire a series of useful tools to become more flexible, adaptable and resilient.

The learning outcomes that we expect to be obtained by those participating in the training are as follows:
1. Understanding of the concept of resilience and its various aspects;
2. Consideration of themselves as resilient people, able to remain strong in difficult situations, focusing on solutions instead of problems;
3. Ability to use different tools to adapt to different conditions;
4. Ability to involve students during lessons;
5. Willingness and desire to experiment with new teaching methods.

1.5. Diagnostic tools

Interpersonal skills are essential as they allow people to interact and express themselves in society. As we have seen in this module, these skills become fundamental in the school environment when teachers have to build a relationship with students. Teachers and educators working in the educational field must acquire excellent interpersonal skills, such as empathy, active listening and negotiation skills. In addition to the above activities, they should use assessment tools that could help them develop these skills.

Below we list some tools available online that can be used to self-assess one's interpersonal skills – mainly the ones which are the topic of this module. These tools can

be a strong contribution for one's self-reflection, while at the same time they could support teachers in the process of identification of their strengths and areas of improvements, thus providing effective help on the journey of professional growth.

Leadership: a large number of tools for self-assessment of teachers' leadership skills has been developed over the past few years. One of the most used is the Teacher Leadership Self-Assessment (TLSA), by Marilyn and Bill Katzenmeyer (2009), which identifies in teachers' leadership the following 7 dimensions:
1. Self-Awareness
2. Leading Change
3. Communication
4. Diversity
5. Instructional Proficiency and Leadership
5. Continuous Improvement
7. Self-Organisation

It is possible to find the tool at the following link:
http://gulyarejepova.pbworks.com/f/26.10.10.pdf

Empathy: in a scientific article Samavi[28] – referring to the studies of Wang et al., states that empathy really depends on the context. When taking into consideration several tools to assess empathy in teachers, the author concludes that teachers may have different empathy for their pupils depending on the actual educational context. Therefore, these scales [to measure empathy] may have no predictive or explanatory value to assess the empathy of teachers regarding their pupils.[29] However, some tools are introduced in order to give inspirational approach to teachers, or a starting point for reflection to identify areas of improvement.

1. *Balanced Empathy Quotient*:[30] this tool is composed of 60 items, and even if it has been developed to be used by mental health professionals for individuals with mental health issues, it has been used in other contexts for the general population. It takes into consideration the dimension of cognition and affection. It is possible to find an online version of this tool atthe following link: https://psychology-tools.com/test/empathy-quotient .

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[28] Samavi, A., Hajializadeh, K., Javdan, M., Farshad, M., (2022). Psychometric validation of teacher empathy scale: Measurement invariance in gender. Front. Psychol. 13:1042993. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1042993

[29] Wang, X., Zhang, L., Peng, Y., Lu, J., Huang, Y., Chen, W., (2022). Development and validation of the empathy scale for teachers (EST). Stud. Educ. Eval. 72:101112. doi: 10.1016/j.stueduc.2021.101112

[30] Baron-Cohen, S., Wheelwright, S., (2004). The empathy quotient: an investigation of adults with Asperger syndrome or high functioning autism, and normal sex differences. J. Autism Dev. Disord. 34, 163–175. doi: 10.1023/B:JADD.0000022607.19833.00

2. *Interpersonal Reactivity Index:* this tool is based on the definition of empathy as "reactions of one individual to the observed experiences of another" (Davis, 1983).[31] It has 4 sub-scales that can be summarised as follows:
   – **Perspective Taking:** the tendency to spontaneously adopt the psychological point of view of others,
   – **Fantasy:** taps respondents' tendencies to transpose themselves imaginatively into the feelings and actions of fictitious characters in books, movies, and plays,
   – **Empathic Concern:** assesses "other-oriented" feelings of sympathy and concern for unfortunate others,
   – **Personal Distress:** measures "self-oriented" feelings of personal anxiety and unease in tense interpersonal settings.

   It is possible to obtain an overview of this tool at the following link: INTERPERSONAL REACTIVITY INDEX

3. Over the past few years, more tailor-made scales relating to teachers' needs and empathy have been developed. The latest one is the *Empathy Scale for Teachers*, which is an open-ended survey addressed to teachers, and as such is not useful as a self-assessment tool. However, when addressing the issue of measuring empathy, it includes some interesting areas of analysis, such as cognitive empathy, negative affective empathy and positive affective empathy, as well as perspective taking, empathic concern, prosocial behaviour and teacher-student relationships.[32]

Resilience: over the past ten years, the interest in resilience has been increasing and this has multiplied the number of tools and approaches to (self)assess the factors related to it. Regarding teachers, below we list some related to their resilience and profession:

1. *Teachers' Resilient Scale (TRS):*[33] this scale has been developed recently and it takes into consideration previous studies and scales used in the field and addressed to teachers. The scale assesses both the internal and external protective factors of resilience focusing on the teaching profession. Among the factors identified, it takes into consideration a) personal competences and persistence; b) spiritual influences; c) family cohesion; d) social skills and peer support. It isn't a self-assessment tool, but it can give an interesting perspective on the factors that make up resilience.

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31 Davis, M.H., (1980). A multidimensional approach to individual differences in empathy. JSAS Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology, 10, 85.

32 Wang, X., Zhang, L., Peng, Y., Lu, J., Huang, Y., Chen, W., (2022). Development and validation of the empathy scale for teachers (EST). Stud. Educ. Eval. 72:101112. doi: 10.1016/j.stueduc.2021.101112

33 Daniilidou, A., Platsidou, M., (2018). Teachers' resilience scale: An integrated instrument for assessing protective factors of teachers' resilience. Hellenic Journal of Psychology. 15.

2. *Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale:* this is one of the most known tools regarding the assessment of resilience. It is used mainly for people affected by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). There are currently 3 versions of this scale: the complete one with 25 items (called CD-RISC 25), and shorter versions with 10 items (CD-RISC 10) or 2 items (CD-RISC 2). According to the authors of the scale, this tool can be used "as (I) a measure of degree of resilience, (II) as a predictor of outcome to treatment with medication or psychotherapy, stress management and resilience-building; (III) as a marker of progress during treatment; (IV) as a marker of biological (i.e. physical) changes in the brain. The scale also has promise as a method to screen people for high, intermediate or low resilience".[34] The tool is not free to use; permission is required before implementing it.

Conflict resolution: there are several tools to understand own level of conflict resolution skills and additionally to generally understand the style of conflict resolution one person implements in their daily life. Below are listed those easiest to find and use:

1. *Conflict Handling Style Scale:* this tool – developed by South Carolina Women in Higher Education – helps to self-reflect and identify the main style of handling conflict, gathering all the potential reactions to conflict: a) yielding; b) compromising; c) forcing; d) problem solving; e) avoiding. It can give a short indication as to what type of style one's conflict resolution approach is, as well as a good starting point to think about potential improvements in dealing with conflict. It can be found at the following link:
   http://www.scwhe.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Conflict-Self-Assessment-Style-Scale.pdf

2. *Conflict Style Assessment:* another tool – developed by the United States Institute for Peace –the choice of selecting 2 possible answers among 30 items allows one to understand one's profile in handling conflict, identifying the following profiles: 1. Competer; 2. Problem Solver; 3. Compromiser; 4. Avoider; 5. Accomodator. It is possible to find the tool at the following link:
   https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2017-02/Conflict%20Styles%20Assessment_0_0.pdf

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[34] http://www.connordavidson-resiliencescale.com/

1.6. Training program

This module is designed for 16 training hours (1 training hour = 45 minutes). 4 hours are dedicated to each topic over 2 days of training.

Session 1: Leadership

No.	Topic	Learning outcomes	Duration	Materials/equipment
1	Self-assessment evaluation	Through this activity, participants will answer some questions about the module they are about to do, identifying what their knowledge on the topic before the training is	15 min.	• Pens • Questionnaires
2	Introduction	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • understand the goal of the module • discuss their expectations and impressions on the topic	30 min.	• PowerPoint presentation • Laptop/PC • Projector
3	Importance of the topic and why it is important at school – leadership	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • identify the benefits of acquiring leadership skills in the context of management of the class group	20 min.	• PowerPoint presentation • Laptop/PC • Projector
4	Activity 1	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • cooperate with others • develop non-verbal communication skills • increase awareness of the topic	35 min.	A large room and a space to move around
5	Activity 2	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • understand more about different leadership styles • confront each other • consider one's own abilities • acquire information about problem solving skills	60 min.	• Post-its • Paper • Markers • Pens
6	Closure and evaluation	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • outline the basic elements of the module • compare their expectations with the module's experience • give feedback on their own capabilities	20 min.	• Paper • Pens

Session 2: Empathic communication

No.	Topic	Learning outcomes	Duration	Materials / equipment
1	Importance of the topic and why it is important at school – empathic communication	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • identify the benefits of acquiring the skills enabling them to communicate with their students	20 min	• PowerPoint presentation • Laptop/PC • Projector
2	Activity 3	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • cooperate with others • define and understand concepts relating to the topic of communication • acquire awareness and knowledge about their own communication skills	60 min.	• Post-its • Paper • Markers • Pens
3	Activity 4	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • accept differences • use their improved communication skills • understand the perspective of others	80 min.	• Post-its • Paper • Markers • Pens
4	Closure and evaluation	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • outline the basic elements of the module • compare their expectations with the module's experience • give feedback on their own capabilities	20 min.	• Paper • Pens

Session 3: Conflict resolution and negotiation

No.	Topic	Learning outcomes	Duration	Materials/ equipment
1	Importance of the topic and why it is important at school – conflict resolution and negotiation	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • identify the benefits of acquiring conflict resolution and negotiation skills at school	20 min.	• PowerPoint presentation • Laptop/PC • Projector
2	Activity 5	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • identify others' points of view • deepen the emotions underlying someone's behaviour • acquire the patience to confront each other	60 min.	• Post-its • Paper • Markers • Pens
3	Activity 6	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • listen to someone else • promote constructive dialogue participate in sharing opinions	80 min.	• A large room and a space to sit in a circle
4	Closure and evaluation	• Following this activity, participants will be able to: • outline the basic elements of the module • compare their expectations with the module's experience • give feedback on their own capabilities	20 min.	• Paper • Pens

Session 4: Adaptability, flexibility and resilience

No.	Topic	Learning outcomes	Duration	Materials / equipment
1	Importance of the topic and why it is important at school – adaptability, flexibility and resilience	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • identify the benefits of acquiring adaptability and resilience skills at school	20 min.	• PowerPoint presentation • Laptop/PC • Projector
2	Activity 7	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • identify what makes them feel safe and unsafe within the school environment • start a discussion about the topic of adaptability at school • focus on solutions	60 min.	• Post-its • Paper • Markers • Pens
3	Activity 8	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • identify and imagine different types of solutions • listen and draw different kind of scenarios • acquire awareness of their own sensations, feelings, and emotions	80 min.	• Post-its • Paper • Markers • Pens
4	Closure and evaluation	Following this activity, participants will be able to: • outline the basic elements of the module • compare their expectations with the module's experience • give feedback on their own capabilities	20 min.	• Paper • Pens • Evaluation questionnaires on the content of the module

Video References

Leadership: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2qu_j6GAG8

Conflict resolution and Negotiation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KY5TWVz5ZDU; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jg_Q34kGsKg

Adaptability, Flexibility and Resilience: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-cgyemmOmCA; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3DUzXGkzyM; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyX6UULJEic

1.7. Learning activities

The learning activities are divided into 4 sections, corresponding to the relevant reference topics. For each area, theoretical and practical sections are included, with a reference to specific case studies and potential scenarios connected to the school context.

Below are some activities and exercises which can be carried out to strengthen the interpersonal skills of teachers and educators. All the activities presented here can be done in a group.

Learning activity 1: How to build leadership skills – LEADERSHIP

As an icebreaker for the group, the first activity on leadership is more physical. Propose to the group to make movements all together in silence. All the attention is focused on the movements of the body. Ask the participants to be careful and focus on the movements, following these instructions:

- 1st step – with the leader: One participant stands in front of the others and performs body movements that the group must imitate together. The pace is slow, the aim is to create group harmony. You can start by giving an example, and then assign this role to someone within the group.
- 2nd step – without the leader: The group stands in a circle. At the start, the participants must try to perform movements all together. Everyone can follow or suggest a movement to the rest of the group.
- 3rd step – discussion: The participants confront each other and discuss the two different situations. You can structure the discussion by asking:
  1) How did you feel during the first activity? And what about the second?
  2) Can you try and list the features of the first and second context created by the activity? Which of them are "caused" by leadership?

You can use a flipchart to take note of the answers, thus focusing all the discussion on the main keywords that you can use as the "fil rouge" for all the sessions.

Learning activity 2: Leadership styles – LEADERSHIP[35]

The following activity is based on the concept of Lewin's three leadership styles:[36] autocratic (also known as authoritarian), delegative (also called free reign) and democratic (which is also called participative).

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[35] This activity has been adapted from https://positivepsychology.com/leadership-activities/

[36] Clark,. D., (2015). Leadership Styles Activity. Retrieved from www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/styles.html

An autocratic leader makes decisions without first consulting others, while a delegative leader allows the staff to make the decisions. Finally, a democratic leader consults with the staff in making workplace decisions.

Below is an excellent resource for exploring different leadership styles.

First part: Divide the group in three subgroups of 5 people each. Provide to all the groups a list of scenarios displaying the three different leadership styles. You can copy and paste the list in a Word file and print it out or read it aloud. If you print it out, remember not to tell the participants which kind of leadership style is proposed as they have to figure it out by themselves within the group. Some examples of scenarios that you can present to the groups:

1. A new teacher has just been hired at school. She immediately starts by telling the students what changes needs to be made. When some suggestions are made by the students, she tells them she does not have the time to pay attention to them (Authoritarian).
2. In class, there has just been an argument between two students. The teacher asks everyone in the class to form a circle and discuss what happened, trying to find solutions together to prevent this from happening again (Delegative).
3. In class, it is necessary to decide which student will be selected to present a project in front of an external commission. The teacher asks everyone to vote. The student who will receive the majority of votes will present the project (Democratic).
4. A student keeps disturbing the lesson, seeking the attention of his classmates. The teacher writes a disciplinary note to be signed by the parents and sends the student directly to the school head teacher's office (Authoritarian).
5. A chair broke during a ball game in class. The teacher asks the students to repair it and involves the whole class in the work (Democratic).
5. In the classroom, it is decided to change the seating arrangement. The teacher leaves the classroom and asks the students to rearrange the space in 30 minutes without giving them instructions (Delegative).

After reading it, every group should choose a different scenario. This will allow each group to work together to figure out which leadership style is used in each scenario and to talk about whether it is effective, or if a different style could work better, given the different contexts and profiles they will be assigned.

Encourage the participants to imagine themselves in a similar situation and their reaction to the particular leadership style. How would they implement this style?

If you prefer, you can provide each group with a flipchart on which to take notes during the discussion, with a table allowing you to compare the results of the work done during the session.

The table could look like this:

Group no.	
Scenario	
Description of context	
Style of leadership	
Positive consequences	
Negative consequences	
Suggestions	

Second part: Provide the participants with the statement 'consider a time when you as teacher or another person you have worked with, used the authoritarian (autocratic), participative (democratic) or delegative (free reign) style of leadership'.

Ask the participants to reflect on the statement and make a few comments, such as: Was it effective? Would a different leadership style have worked better? What were the students' experiences? Did they learn from the leadership style? What was it that they learned? Which style is easiest to use (and why)? Did it help you in the classroom management? Was there some impact on the learning process of your students?

In the event they don't have experience with students yet, you can refer to their experience as a leader of a group or – alternatively – to a situation in which they were students and experienced their teachers' leadership, and ask them to reflect on that moment from a different perspective.

To conclude these two activities, ask the participants to come together as one group and discuss what was learned about the three styles of leadership.

Learning activity 3:
Defining words – EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION

Through this activity, the participants will have the opportunity to share their knowledge and compare it with the definition provided, where as a result they will all start from the same level of knowledge of the topic.

1. Form 3 groups of participants of 5 people each.

2. Ask them to define the following concepts:
   • Transmission
   • Communication
   • Sender
   • Address
   • Message
   • Communication channel
   • Code
   • Meaning

   Give the participants flipchart sheets and markers to write their definitions. Give each group some time to complete the activity.

3. At the end, ask them to present the results of the work done: go through each concept, collect the results, and put the definitions together trying to summarise the ideas offered by each group.

4. After collecting the results, show them the "official" definition (copy and paste the definitions listed above found in the official dictionary of your country into a PowerPoint presentation). Let the participants discuss the perceived differences between the official definitions and those given by them.

Learning activity 4: In the shoes of – EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION

The activity is based on the role-playing method. Role-playing games (RPGs) can be used for several purposes:
• evoke new ideas as a result of the participants taking part in the role-playing;
• collect information during an experimental situation;
• communicate a concept;
• give shape to an intangible product;
• exercise specific behaviours.

In order to proceed with the activity and guarantee a smooth implementation, it is suggested to follow the below phases:

1. **Theoretical part:** explain the rules of the role-playing game at the beginning of the session, you can also show a PowerPoint presentation providing the key information based on bibliographic research on this methodology. In fact, we recommend preparing a presentation on this topic by dealing with the following points:
   • description of the role-playing methodology;
   • functions and objectives;
   • activities during which role-play can be used;
   • role-play in education.

   However, the preparation of the PowerPoint presentation is not mandatory. The activity can also be carried out without providing a theoretical introduction.

2. **The scenarios:** after presenting the methodology, form 3 groups (5 people per group) and provide each of them with a scenario. Each of these represents a typical situation that a teacher may face in the classroom and for which they should use their empathic communication skills. In dealing with students, it is necessary to listen and relate with empathy. However, it is not always easy. Below is one example of empathic communication and one of non-empathic communication to facilitate understanding of the exercise.

   – Empathic communication:
     Student: "I've been feeling really overwhelmed lately. It's been hard to focus on school."
     Teacher: "I'm sorry to hear that you're going through a tough time. It's completely normal to feel overwhelmed. If you're comfortable with it, would you like to talk about what's on your mind? I'm here to listen and support you, and we can figure out a plan to help you manage both school and whatever else you're going through."

   – Non-empathic communication:
     Student: "I've been struggling to keep up with the assignments. It feels like too much."
     Teacher: "Well, everyone else seems to manage just fine. Maybe you're not putting in enough effort. You need to catch up if you want to pass."

   Now let's move on to the scenarios. They can be adapted to the local reality as well as the needs of the group. Below are examples of 3 possible scenarios. You can read them aloud to the groups or print them out and give one scenario to each group:
   • *A stressful situation:* A student is stressed for personal reasons, and this affects his motivation. He would like to find interesting opportunities to move forward

but he finds himself trapped in his situation. Furthermore, he is a nervous person with whom it is not easy to communicate. You have an appointment with him to try to find a solution. However, the day did not exactly get off to the right start…

- *A newcomer:* A new foreign student arrives at school. She does not speak the language well and she is very attached to her cultural background, which is very different from that of the host society.
- *Listening:* In class the students seem to dominate the teacher who is unable to stand their ground and be listened to.

3. **Creation of the story:** Each group will have 30 minutes for developing the story, preparing the scenarios and proposing solutions. Some of the participants will have to "play" the roles proposed in the scenario, the others will have to structure and create the story. The trainer can assist the groups if necessary. There are no rules regarding the presentation. The participants are free to play as they wish.

4. **Presentation:** Each group will have a maximum of 10 minutes to represent its work. All the other participants will have to analyse the story presented.

5. **Reflection:** At the end of the role-play, the facilitator will have to analyse the situations presented by the participants, additionally posing questions to the group. It will be possible to use the following questions:
   - What do you think about it?
   - Do you think the problem could be solved differently?
   - What communication skills have been used?
   - What other communication skills would you use?
   - How did you feel during the role-play?
   - During the last section, the facilitator will have to take notes of the different proposals to explore some of the themes in more depth. The questions listed above can also be used during a non-formal evaluation to analyse the activity carried out.

Learning activity 5: Iceberg as a metaphor – CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND NEGOTIATION

This activity can be useful to help understand the peer mediation approach – it can be very helpful in managing conflicts and disagreements in the classroom. In fact, during the training, this activity will be carried out with teachers, but they can replicate it in class with their students, giving them the opportunity to converse and confront each other in a conflict situation.

Iceberg as a metaphor for this activity.

- Create two groups.
- Use flipchart paper to draw the outline of an iceberg. Explain that only a small part of an iceberg is visible to us, while most of it is hidden below the water-line. Ask the groups to brainstorm and write down on the iceberg the kinds of emotions that are more easily revealed in conflict (i.e. sadness, anger, frustration, etc.) above the waterline, and those that are usually hidden or "under-lying" the conflict (i.e. fear, distrust, pain, isolation, powerlessness, etc.) below the waterline.
- Ask the groups to reveal what they have written and why.
- Give the groups the opportunity to discuss the reported content by asking them to refer to situations in the classroom during which they have not been able to identify the emotions underlying someone's behaviour.
- Ask the groups if it would be useful for them to repeat the exercise in class with the students.

Learning activity 6: Restorative circle – CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND NEGOTIATION[37]

Peacemaking Circles is another restorative justice approach that can be implemented in the classroom. Circles are ideal for conflict resolution and can also contribute to the development of a safe space in the classroom, in order for everyone to reflect and participate in a problem solving process. Circles do not only involve the two immediate parties of the conflict but also the entire community that may have been affected by the dispute and can support those in conflict.

Main steps to implement the activity:
1. Give participants a conflict situation to think about – one that might have happened in the classroom. Have each participant play the role of a student involved in the conflict. Below are 2 examples of conflict situations:

- One of your students notices that her purse is missing from her desk. An angry confrontation arises between her and the alleged thief. Some of the students record the confrontation on their mobile phones and send the video to their friends. In this situation, one participant can play the robbed student, another one – the teacher, another one – the alleged thief and some others – the students who record the incident.
- In class there are two students, C. and M., who have not spoken to each other for a few days because they had a fight over jealousy. Both are very attached

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37   This activity has been adapted from https://practice-school.eu/part1/module7/, which is based on material developed by Student Piece Alliance.

to another student B. and are contending for her as an object of their affection. During recess, a fight breaks out involving the whole class which seems to be split into two groups. In this situation, one participant can play C., another one – M., and yet another – B., while the remaining participants can be split into the two different groups created in the class.

2. Invite the participants to sit in circle in order to create a sense of community and select a talking piece appropriate for all the participants. The talking piece gives the holder the opportunity to speak and express themselves, while it provides the other participants with the opportunity to listen to the speaker, without the need to respond. If there are objections, ask the participants to express and discuss them.

3. The circle keeper begins the conversation, while holding the talking piece (the trainer in this case). They present their point of view and introduce the participants to the procedure and the conflict that has arisen, e.g. "Today, we will share our thoughts and feelings about what happened and try to create a plan on how to show our respect to everyone. I would like to invite everyone to speak from their heart, share their insights and to be open to the ideas and perspectives that are shared in the circle". The facilitator shares their point of view and passes the talking piece to the person sitting next to them.

4. The following questions can be asked:
   • What were you thinking at the time?
   • What did you think when you realised what happened?
   • What have you thought about since?
   • Who do you think has been affected?
   • What impact has this had on you and others?
   • What has been the hardest thing for you?

   Participants will be asked to make up their answers based on the scenario, so you may have to provide support in developing the contents or the "storytelling".

5. The talking piece is passed around the group, so that everyone has the chance to express themselves, answering some of the above questions.

5. A discussion and exchange of opinions then begins, where the objective is to find a solution. The trainer can ask some of the following questions:
   • What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
   • What could anyone do to help resolve the conflict?
   • What can we do to make sure this doesn't happen again?
   • What are the steps we agree to take as a group and what is our timeline?
7. The circle breaks up and the facilitator summarises the most important decisions that were taken.

Learning activity 7:
Building resilience – ADAPTABILITY, FLEXIBILITY AND RESILIENCE

The objective of this exercise is to highlight what, according to the teachers, are the skills that they need to acquire in order to learn to better adapt to the new working context.

1. Ask each participant to write down two emotions on 2 post-its, a positive one and a difficult one, that they usually experience during their working day at school.
2. Collect all the emotions: you can display all the post-its on the wall, dividing them into 2 groups, 1) positive and 2) difficult. Try to create groups with post-its naming the same emotions, thus allowing the visualisation of the results for the group. Ask the participants to explain why they have written them.
3. Divide the participants into two groups and ask the first one to create a curriculum in which they have to indicate the positive emotions and the interpersonal skills to be developed that every teacher should have in order to be able to adapt to the school context more easily.
4. Then invite the second group to come up with ideas as to what the school system could do to help teachers to feel safer and more understood in the school environment.
5. Ask participants from both groups to begin a conversation about their process of adaptability at school starting with the curricula they have developed.

Learning activity 8:
Storytelling – ADAPTABILITY, FLEXIBILITY AND RESILIENCE

Storytelling, the art of narrating thoughts, emotions, and experiences through a process of identification, is a methodology which may help teachers reconnect with themselves in order to develop adaptability skills. This methodology allows the user to undertake a path of interior growth and self-understanding into an environment that cares for the needs of the individual. This practice does not involve a simple chronological narration of the events, instead the goal is to let users identify with the plot, feeling the story as their own. In doing so, the message crosses every barrier because it becomes the viewer's personal narration. In this way, the story becomes an experience for the user, who, through the narration of a fictitious story, manages to establish links with their own experience, finding answers to some questions about their own existence. The activity tries to use the potential of storytelling as a tool to allow the participants to think about emotions, trying to identify both their own and the ones of the character of the story. This can also be used as a creative approach to "listening" to own feelings and "projection" of personal emotions on the stories of others.

• Read aloud a story, but stop before you reach the end. The website below has several short stories by the most famous authors of the world literature: https:// americanliterature.com/100-great-short-stories/

- Divide the participants into two groups and ask them to recognise all the emotions that are mentioned in the story.
- Ask both groups to name the emotions identified and to compare with each other. Try to have a discussion focusing on the different definitions of the same emotion and explore the differences that the participants find.
- Ask each group to imagine and write the conclusion of the story.
- Invite both groups to read their story, make a comparison with the story of the other group, and start a discussion. Try to focus on how the participants felt during the reading of the story and if there's some personal reference. Be careful not to put pressure on the participants to continue the analysis if they don't want to. Use a flipchart to take notes of the different definitions of emotions and keywords which can be useful for the work during the remainder of the session.

1.8. General recommendations

The implementation of this module requires attention to detail and the presence of an experienced trainer capable of engaging the group in the proposed activities.

The involvement of numerous diverse activities necessitates preparation, monitoring, and ongoing dialogue with the participants to ascertain whether they are effectively gathering essential information and internalising the content presented in the module.

To facilitate the teachers' involvement, we propose to start the sessions with warm-up exercises that may enable them to feel more comfortable and connected to each other. This type of activity serves to consolidate the group dynamic and to create a safe and friendly environment in which exchange of opinions and dialogue are strongly recommended.

Role-playing games, as well as other activities involving the staging of various situations, can be particularly difficult for some individuals. It is, therefore, necessary to listen to the needs of each member of the group and modify the exercise if necessary, i.e. if it causes someone difficulty. A good trainer must be able to find the right solution that suits the group they are working with.

At the end of the module, we recommend organising moments of reflection and self-analysis with the participants in order to understand the level of awareness achieved and identify any remaining potential doubts.

This module, if well implemented, can contribute to the improvement of teachers' awareness of certain topics and the strengthening of their self-esteem. Both aspects can foster greater perception of their role in the classroom and the right behaviour to follow.

MODULE 2
Supporting the student in dealing with a crisis situation

2.1. General information on the topic

Only after satisfying the need for satiety, security, warmth, comes the time for the need for power, the search for the truth.

Abraham Maslow

These words of the American psychologist Abraham Maslow aptly illustrate the fact that in the process of educating anyone, the key need to be fulfilled is security. More and more often, students perform most of their daily intellectual, social, physical, and artistic activity at school.

What is security and what events can disrupt it?

How do we define crisis, difficult and traumatic situations?

How to prepare students to deal with crisis situations?

What is the role of the teacher in this process?

How can teachers be supported in carrying out their tasks related to the protection of children in crisis situations?

Such, among others, questions arise in the discussion on supporting students in crisis situations.

Security as a value should be afforded a place among high and significant values: next to the so-called cardinal values – goodness, truth, beauty, justice, and in the immediate vicinity of such other fundamental values as life, health, freedom, dignity, privacy, humanity, tolerance, solidarity, humanitarianism, etc.[38]

According to one definition, security in the individual and group dimension is understood as a peaceful state free of threat and one that provides room for exercising

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[38] J. Szmyd; The sense of security as a social, ethical and existential value. Basic considerations in: State and Society 2014 (XIV) No. 2, p. 12. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/214931309.pdf

rights, freedom and democratic order. It also means no danger and protection from all dangers.[39]

Undoubtedly, a crisis understood and marked with negative meaning is a significant threat to building a safe space for the development of a young person.

However, the Greek etymology of the term "crisis" does not confirm its pejorative character. The Greek verb krinein means "to decide", "to decide", "to judge", "to divide", "to sift".

Does equipping students with the ability to cope with a crisis situation consist precisely in the fact that they will efficiently resolve, decide or distribute information and events significant from the point of view of a security threat and counteract it in an effective way?

For the analysed issue of supporting students in coping with crisis situations, it becomes crucial to build students' attitudes, in which the teacher plays a significant role.

One of the definitions characterises attitude as a position, a way of behaving, an attitude towards a person, event, views, etc. Attitude organises the way of thinking, determines the type of tension, determines the strength and character of emotions accompanying a given situation, the approach to the surrounding reality, the tendency to certain types of behaviour. Attitude (e.g. negative or positive) sometimes depends on the individual characteristics of the individual (personality traits), environmental influences, including upbringing, and different educational, social and cultural factors.[40]

The three most important components of attitudes are: the cognitive component, the emotional component and the behavioural one.
The cognitive component of an attitude may include relevant messages about the object of the attitude, beliefs, assumptions, or doubts, with particular emphasis on beliefs.[41]

The essence of the emotional component is the emotional reaction to the object of the attitude.[42] This can include positive feelings, such as sympathy, satisfaction, joy, and negative ones, such as fear and anxiety.

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[39] dr hab. Ryszard Stępień: Ensuring security – a challenge of our times. Post-conference materials: Parents, Teachers, students – partners in creating a safe school. Warsaw 2005

[40] Janus, J., Dictionary of pedagogy and psychology. Issues, concepts, terms. Warsaw 2011, Buchmann, p. 212.

[41] Mądrzycki, T., Psychological regularities of shaping attitudes. Warsaw 1977, WSiP, p.19.

[42] Fidelus A., (2012). Social Attitudes as an Element of the Social Capital and Its Connections with the Process of the Social Readaptation. Pedagogical Forum, 1, p. 97.

The behavioural component is a more or less homogeneous set of dispositions for a specific behaviour towards the object of the attitude.[43] These behaviours are actions that are consciously taken in the face of a crisis situation.

Crisis has many definitions, including: a state of disorganisation in which a person experiences the destruction of important life goals or a deep-reaching disorder of their life cycle and methods of dealing with stressors, accompanied by a sense of fear, shock and difficulties experienced in connection with the disorder.[44]

It is also defined as feeling or experiencing an event or situation as unbearable, draining one's stamina and coping mechanisms with difficulties.[45]

In this module, we will look at helping beginner teachers fulfil their basic responsibilities in keeping students safe and supporting their development. We will present basic information about crisis situations that students may experience. We will present the conditions resulting from the developmental age of the target group of students. We will suggest solutions that will help young teachers support students in crisis situations.

Difficult, crisis and traumatic situations experienced by students

The symptoms of a crisis are:
– occurrence of an acute critical event or presence of chronic stress
– experiencing the event as unexpected
– perceiving the situation as a loss, threat or challenge
– experiencing difficult emotions and experiences
– feeling of uncertainty about the future
– feeling of losing control
– sudden violation of routine ways of behaviour, rhythm of the day, habits,
– state of emotional tension that usually lasts from 2 to 6 weeks (although sometimes as long as several months),
– the need to change the current way of functioning.[46]

In order to help novice teachers identify the symptoms of a crisis, assess the degree of risk, and take appropriate actions to support students, it is worth recalling the basic information concerning the developmental age of the target group of students.

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43 Nowak, S., Theories of attitudes. Warsaw 1973, PWN, p. 31.

44 Brammer, M., 1985, cited in: R. K. James, B. E. Gilliland, Crisis Intervention Strategies, trans. A. Bidziński, Warsaw 2004, p. 25.

45 Richard K. James, Burl E. Gilliland, "Crisis Intervention Strategies", PARPA, Warsaw 2004, p.26

46 W. Badura-Madej, Basic concepts of crisis theory and crisis intervention, (in:) W. Badura-Madej (selection and elaboration), Selected issues of crisis intervention. Handbook for social workers, Katowice 1999, p. 17.

Characteristics of the developmental age of students

It should be emphasised that supporting students in coping with crisis situations requires from each teacher, especially from a beginner teacher, knowledge about the characteristics of the developmental age of students whom they wish to help. In this project, the target group covers students aged 10-18.

The early phase of adolescence (also called early adolescence), i.e. the age from 11/12 to 14/15, is a particularly important time in a teenager's life. It marks the definitive end of childhood and the entry into a phase of life associated with rapid transformation at the beginning and profound changes in biological, mental and social functioning in the long term.[47]

In order to diagnose the needs of a student in a crisis at this age and to plan effective support, the teacher must take into account the following areas of developmental changes: physical development; emotional, cognitive and social functioning; relationships with parents and peers; perception of one's own body.

Physical development is characterised by a hormonal storm, the effect of which is, among others, the manifestation of primary and secondary sex characteristics. In a young person, there is an increased interest in their own body, concentration on it, and also special criticism.

The emotional functioning of a student at this age is distinguished by the frequent experience of difficult emotions and difficulties with controlling emotions in general. Children are susceptible to adolescent depression and easily succumb to difficult emotions.

Cognitive functioning changes and as a result of development, a teenager gains the ability to think abstractly and develops vocabulary and language complexity. Social functioning can be very diverse. There are socially acceptable behaviours, and at the same some antisocial ones take shape too.

When it comes to relations with parents, it is characteristic of early adolescence to strive for independence and autonomy, which results in conflicts with parents and withdrawal from treating parents as an authority. Slowly, parents become partners in mutual relations.

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[47] K. Piotrowski, B. Ziółkowska, J. Wojciechowska: Development of a teenager. The early phase of growing up [in:] A Good Teacher's Toolkit, edited by prof. dr hab. Anna Izabela Brzezińska, Wyd. IBE, Warsaw 2014, p.5.

The area of peer relationships is crucial for adolescent students. They want to be treated equally to others. For this reason, they often remain lonely, which is very dangerous in view of the emotional lability they experience.[48]

Summing up this difficult period of early adolescence, it should be noted that a young person struggles with the need to adapt to intense changes that concern them and have a direct impact on their everyday functioning. These changes are characterised by impulsiveness in each of the above areas. Adolescence is also difficult for the people with whom a teenager interacts on a daily basis: parents, siblings, teachers, peers.

In this situation, the role of the teacher is to shape the appropriate educational environment, also in relation to parents who are often not prepared at all for the rapid developmental changes and the accompanying behaviour of their child.

Age: 14/15–19/20: the late phase of adolescence is a period of incorporation of a young person into a socially sanctioned way of thinking, acting and organising activities aimed at independence. In this phase of life, as well as in early adolescence, the most important developmental task of a person is to shape their identity, the essence of which lies in the search for an answer to the question "Who am I?".[49]

The teacher's awareness of the areas of development and the different directions it can take, which in turn enables the teacher to recognise the key areas in which to support teenagers, determines the way of acting.

Biological development aims at stabilising the somatic and nervous functioning of the body. As a result, a student gradually gains knowledge on how to take care of their body and health.

During late adolescence, emotions stabilise and a sense of control over emotions develops.

The development of thinking is focused on ethical thinking and the so-called moral realism.

In relations with parents, the teenager moves away from the position of a rebel towards the position of an independent partner. Adults are perceived as authority again.

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48 K. Piotrowski, B. Ziółkowska, J. Wojciechowska: Development of a teenager… op. cit., pp. 8-9.

49 K. Piotrowski, B. Ziółkowska, J. Wojciechowska: Development of a teenager. The late phase of growing up [in:] A Good Teacher's Toolkit, edited by prof. dr hab. Anna Izabela Brzezińska, Wyd. IBE, Warsaw 2014, p.6.

Relationships with peers lead to stable love relationships due to mature identities.[50]

A characteristic feature of the late phase of adolescence is the increase in social involvement of a young person. And independence increases in more and more areas. Developmental changes lead to a teenager turning into an adult.[51]

Students in late adolescence plan for the future, begin to fulfil adult roles and commitments. Keep in mind that they are not yet completely ready to climb into adulthood. Both parents and teachers have a lot to do during this period.

The role of teachers is to create space for students to talk and propose activities pertaining to adulthood and future professional pursuits in order to enable them to find their place in society.

The above information characterising the target group of students allows for an easier diagnosis of their real needs, recognising the symptoms of a crisis and proposing appropriate measures to help deal with a difficult situation.

2.2. Definitions

A difficult situation is a stressful situation that is associated with experiencing unpleasant emotions and requires a lot of effort and mobilisation in dealing with it from the person who experiences it. The specificity of experiencing a difficult situation is the need to get out of the so-called comfort zone. Children and young people experience many stressful situations at school leading to difficulties in cognitive, emotional and social functioning in a given environment.[52]

Difficult situations at school are experienced by students every day. They come with fulfilling the role of a student, organisation of the school system, working methods during educational activities, and interactions with other students and teachers.

Student responsibilities are typically assigned to all students, without regard for their individual circumstances. Thus, even doing homework can present a difficult situation for a child. Organisation of the school's work is based on the classroom and lesson system, setting strict timeframes for activities and breaks, and

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[50] K. Piotrowski, B. Ziółkowska, J. Wojciechowska: Development of a teenager. The late phase of growing up [in:] A Good Teacher's Toolkit, edited by prof. dr hab. Anna Izabela Brzezińska, Wyd. IBE, Warsaw 2014, p.10.

[51] K. Piotrowski, B. Ziółkowska, J. Wojciechowska: Development of a teenager. The late phase of growing up … op. cit., p. 13.

[52] S. Kluczyńska, L. Zabłocka-Żytka, A child in a crisis situation. The supporting role of education workers. Centre for Education Development, Warsaw,2020, p. 5.

it does not take into account the student's psychophysical disposition on a given day, or the level of motivation and concentration. The teaching methods used by teachers rarely take into account learning styles, focusing on achieving didactic and educational goals at any cost. In particular, a knowledge testing system that promotes one format of the so-called written test covering a lot of content from a given section of the curriculum, or a written test checking extensive curriculum material, poses a difficult situation for many students, which is additionally cyclical in nature.

Not all students are able to cope with difficult situations resulting from the need to deal with peer relationships. As mentioned above, in early adolescence children can experience difficulties in building relationships with others, and social research confirms that they often feel lonely.

The successive waves of the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of teaching using distance learning methods and techniques undoubtedly constituted a difficult and – for some students – a crisis situation in many spheres. Overnight, without preparation, students had to learn a different way of learning and socialising. In addition, they experienced anxiety related to the health of their loved ones, fear related to isolation and uncertainty about the future.

Crisis situation – characterised by the fact that it is an unforeseen event, usually occurring suddenly and requiring the use of new ways of coping as the existing ones turn out to be insufficient.[53]

At school, a crisis situation affects not only those directly affected by the crisis but also the entire school environment: teachers, parents, other school employees, a specific group of students or all students.

The process of growing up, as we have already mentioned, is full of the so-called related development crises with building a child's identity and difficulty in recognising social roles played by, for instance, parents and peers.

Teachers, however, need to prepare in a special way for the so-called situational crises – random and often traumatic, related to the emergence of sudden, negative events. It is crucial for teachers to be able to identify hazards and counteract a crisis situation, as well as have knowledge of procedures related to different crisis situations.

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[53] Czabała J. C., Psychological counselling, [in:] Czabała J. C., Kluczyńska S. (red.), Psychological counselling, Warsaw (2015). PWN Publishing House, s. 14–15.

Identification of hazards

The school community is subject to various risks. The school head teacher is obliged to diagnose them, and so in 2020, the Ministry of National Education prepared a handbook titled "Safe school. Threats and recommended preventive actions in the area of physical and digital security of students."[54]

As written in the introduction to the handbook, the intention of the authors of the study was to create a concise guide, containing a package of tasks recommended to be carried out at school, and referring in detail to solutions, training materials, documents and educational multimedia that will allow teachers and school head teachers to improve their competences to ensure students' safety, including in cyberspace, and to systematise the knowledge they already possess.[55]

The publication emphasises the importance of the specificity of the school environment resulting from various factors: the relationship between students and teachers, school infrastructure and equipment – all of them having a specific impact on both potential threats and the ways in which a crisis can be responded to.

Physical hazards named in the handbook include fire at school and evacuation rules during lessons and breaks – rules of conduct after an alarm is announced at school and other educational institutions.[56] Then, entry of an attacker (terrorist) into the school is discussed –teacher conduct, cooperation with the police.[57] The handbook additionally defines the rules of conduct in the event of an explosive charge being planted – procedure to follow in the event of a bomb threat[58], planting of a suspicious package[59], chemical or biological contamination at school[60], epidemic and cataclysm – procedures to be followed in the event of emergency situations.[61] The handbook includes instructions on how to deal with the indicated physical hazards, including the responsibilities of those in charge, how to conduct an evacuation and notify the relevant emergency services, how to deal with students with special educational needs, as well as general school staff duties.

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[54] Safe school. Threats and recommended preventive actions in the field of physical and digital security of students, Ministry of National Education, Warsaw 2020, Bezpieczna_Szkoła_Zagrorzenia_i_zalecane_dzialania_prezentowe_w_zakresie_bezpieczen_fizyczny_i_cyfrowego_uczniów.pdf [access: 10/01/2023]

[55] Ibid., p. 9.

[56] Ibid., p.23.

[57] Ibid., p. 27.

[58] Ibid., p. 29.

[59] Ibid., p. 30.

[60] Safe school. .. op. cit., p. 33.

[61] Ibid., p. 40.

The handbook also refers to internal threats and procedures for responding in the event of such a threat.

Aggressive behaviour at school and the phenomenon of hazing – procedures to be followed in the event of aggressive behaviour on school premises, i.e. physical and verbal aggression by a student or teacher.[62]

From the point of view of the developmental age of students, this is an extremely dangerous situation, which, due to the way of dealing with emotions in adolescence, requires support from teachers.

Risks resulting from aggressive behaviour are manifested as, for example:
– teasing, ridiculing, name-calling, beating,
– use of threats and force,
– less interest in learning,
– outbursts of anger towards peers, teachers,
– no guilt for negative behaviour,
– manifestations of demoralisation: vandalism, drinking alcohol, taking psychoactive substances,
– expression focused on phenomena related to violence,
– special interest in criminal groups.[63]

It is worth noting that aggressive behaviour of students can also result from inappropriate behaviour and attitudes of teachers, such as: malice towards students, ridicule, exerting psychological pressure, threats, hiding negative behaviour of other teachers and lack of support for the student in such situations.[64]

What are the recommendations for counteracting risks resulting from aggression at school?
– Aggression must not be allowed to develop, which requires early reaction and not disregarding any signals indicating a potential risk of aggression.
– A climate of trust should be built in the school so that students can report problems and know whom to turn to for help.
– It is necessary to ensure the creation of a system of consequences that will always be drawn against the perpetrators of aggressive behaviour and known to the school environment.
– A friendly social climate should be created based on clear and fairly applied rules of conduct in all areas of the school's functioning.
– Continually strive to maintain good relations among the school community.

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[62] Ibid., p. 41.

[63] Ibid., p. 42.

[64] Ibid., p. 42.

– It is worth monitoring the school environment for possible risks associated with aggression and other threats.
– Teachers' professional problem solving skills should be developed, and parents should be educated.[65]

Procedures for dealing with the most common physical internal threats described in the handbook specify: the purpose of launching the procedure, persons in charge, procedure, duties of employees.[66]

Another internal school threat is the presence of psychoactive substances in school. Creating the right procedures and ensuring all teachers (including beginners) are familiar with them is not easy due to specific underlying conditions.

Psychoactive substances can threaten not only the health but also the lives of students. This particular crisis situation creates the need to involve emergency services, such as the police and medical services. **The risk of a psychoactive substance being present at school,** or even a suspicion of its use by a student, requires cooperation with parents. This can be difficult due to the frequent denial of the problem of psychoactive substance use by the child, rejection of it, blaming the school for the lack of proper care.

The risk associated with a punishable act committed by a student, procedures to be followed in the event of a student committing a criminal act, and providing assistance to a student who is the perpetrator of a criminal act are also worth discussing.[67] In this crisis situation, the provisions of the Act of June 9th, 2022 on the support and social rehabilitation of minors (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 1700) apply. School procedures should also specify the rules of conduct in relation to victims of a punishable act at school.

Additionally, internal threats include a group of dangerous digital threats.

They are particularly dangerous due to the fact that it is not a complete list, with new types of threats constantly emerging.

The "Safe School. Threats and recommended preventive actions in the area of physical and digital safety of students" handbook defines the basic actions to ensure safety in the digital environment. It gives specific guidelines for the school community, including teachers, in the area of appropriate responses to crisis situations, and thus adequate support for students.

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[65] Ibid., p. 43.

[66] Ibid., p. 46.

[67] Ibid., p. 59.

Preventive activities conducted towards and with the participation of all members of the school community: students and their parents, head teachers, teachers and other school employees (e.g. psychologists, educators, office staff) are of the greatest importance for ensuring the foundations of digital safety at school. These activities should be of a systemic, continuous, long-term and coordinated nature, and their scope should be entered in the educational and preventive program implemented at school.[68]

How to protect students from digital threats?

In practice, the school's activities consist in limiting access to the Internet in the school space. The cyclical studies "Teens 3.0" conducted by NASK (National Research Institute whose mission is to search for and implement solutions for the development of ICT networks in Poland and to improve their efficiency and security)[69] bring an interesting insight into crisis situations with the Internet as their source as experienced by students.

The most important findings from the latest research carried out in 2021 include:
– A steady increase in the number of hours teenagers spend online. Currently, teenagers spend an average of 4 hours and 50 minutes online per day. On days off from school, this time is on average up to 6 hours and 10 minutes.
– Parents do not know the time their children spend online. They also do not control their children's use of the Internet at night.
– Every third teenager shows a high intensity of indicators of problematic use of the Internet (PUI), and three in a hundred – very high.
– Girls attending post-primary schools suffer the most intense symptoms of PUI.
– Every fifth teenager admits that they have experienced online violence most often involving verbal abuse, ridicule, and humiliation.
– Almost 75% of the parents of the surveyed teenagers state that their children have not fallen victim of online aggression. More than half of the surveyed teenagers declare no direct experience of online violence.
– The opinions of the majority of adults (69.1%) indicate that the most important way of dealing with online violence is to seek support from parents and guardians. However, only every fourth teenager is of a similar opinion.
– Teenagers watch "pathostreaming" more often than their parents suspect they do.
– Accepting invitations from strangers on social media is a risky behaviour according to almost half (44.3%) of parents and carers. Only every twelfth (8.5%) teenager is of a similar opinion.[70]

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[68] Ibid., p. 62.

[69] https://www.nask.pl/ [access: 11/01/2023]

[70] Teens 3.0. Report on the nationwide study of students. (ed.) Dr. Rafał Lange, NASK – National Research Institute, Warsaw 2021, pp. 6-7.

The findings cited above show that the level of exposure to digital risks among young people is increasing.

The polarisation of the opinions of students and their parents regarding the use of the Internet, as shown by research, is particularly worrying. Parents do not have knowledge about the level of digital risks their children are exposed to, they perceive themselves as a source of support for their children (which is not confirmed by the children), and they maintain that they can identify risky behaviours relating to the use of the Internet. Additionally, parents do not control the use of the Internet by their children.

Due to the lack of sufficient protection against digital risks on the part of parents, it is the school and teachers who fill this gap.

Recommendations regarding implementation of preventive measures are included in the "Safe school. Threats and recommended preventive actions in the area of physical and digital safety of students" handbook referred to above. It identifies the minimum of preventive recommendations consisting in preparing the teaching staff to conduct classes on digital security.[71]

Traumatic events in the lives of children and adolescents

The International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10, 2002) defines a traumatic event as exposure to an exceptionally threatening or catastrophic stressor, both short– and long-term. According to the American Psychiatric Association's classification of mental disorders (DSM-5, 2013), a traumatic event occurs when a person has been exposed to death, serious injury, or sexual violence, either directly or as an eyewitness. Traumatic events differ from other events in that they are violent, sudden, surprising, and they pose a threat to life and health; they evoke strong emotions – most often fear, suffering, a sense of helplessness, terror.[72] Bearing in mind the tasks of teachers related to supporting students in crisis situations, the possibility of a traumatic event occurring should also be taken into account.

The characteristic symptoms of an acute stress reaction are similar. These include, among others:
– breathing problems,
– agitation with symptoms of rapid breathing and increased heart rate,
– diarrhoea, nausea,
– a feeling of being detached from reality,

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[71] Safe school. .. op. cit., p. 68.

[72] S. Kluczyńska, L. Zabłocka-Żytka, A child in a crisis situation…, op. cit., p. 9.

– feeling difficult emotions and their uncontrollable bouts,
– disorientation,
– despair, anger,
– difficulties in establishing contact and lack of response,
– repetition of certain gestures, actions or statements,
– persistent depressed mood,
– intrusive thoughts,
– frequent replaying of traumatic events in one's mind.

These reactions are independent of the age of the traumatised person.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which may be a consequence of a traumatic event, can be particularly dangerous for a child or a young person.

In this situation, it is of great importance to be aware that the stage of child's development and the insufficient readiness to cope with difficult situations forces adults to be vigilant in recognising the symptoms and development of PTSD.

Teachers, bearing in mind the need to respond to the dangerous effects of PTSD in students, which may also in extreme cases lead to suicide attempts, should identify the risk and protective factors that influence responses to experiencing trauma and post-traumatic symptoms.

The most important factor protecting against the development of PTSD is the help and support received immediately after the trauma is experienced. Thanks to the support of relatives, teachers, and other people in their environment, children are able to cope with trauma and its negative consequences.[73]

The primary task of teachers in supporting students who have experienced trauma is a determined attitude of offering immediate help. The decision as to the type of help to be provided by the teacher and the selection of the appropriate sequence of actions that bring measurable benefits to the student requires professional preparation. TF-CBT (trauma focused cognitive behavioural therapy consisting of 12 sessions) is an example of a therapeutic program for children and adolescents. It should be emphasised that the role of the teacher is not only direct support but also providing information to different individuals, entities, and institutions authorised to provide appropriate assistance to the child and their family.

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[73] S. Kluczyńska, L. Zabłocka-Żytka, A child in a crisis situation…, op. cit., p. 12.

Supporting a student in a crisis situation

Where difficult, crisis and traumatic situations are concerned, it is important to provide parents and professionals with clear and transparent information on planning and problem solving. This should include:

1. Identify the communication channels, such as face-to-face meetings, telephone calls or e-mails, that will be used to communicate information.
2. Identify the procedures to be followed to recognise and resolve issues, and determine who will be responsible for carrying them out.
3. Identify ways in which parents and professionals can work together to provide appropriate assistance to a child in a crisis situation.
4. Identify ways to support parents and professionals, such as counselling sessions or support groups, to help them deal with the emotions of the crisis.
5. Provide parents and professionals with access to specialist help, such as psychological or psychiatric help.

Supporting students in the problems they face is one of the key tasks of teachers. They are able to observe the way the problem develops and its dynamics and, knowing the turning points, react appropriately.

1. Understanding and recognising a crisis situation: it is important to be able to recognise a crisis situation and understand its causes and symptoms.
2. Responsiveness: it is important to be able to respond to a crisis in an appropriate way to help the student deal with the difficult situation.
3. Listening skills: it is important to be able to actively listen to the student and understand their perspective.
4. Conversation skills: it is important to be able to talk to the student and help them express their emotions and thoughts.
5. Knowing what support is available: it is important to know what resources are available, such as professionals, counselling centres and organisations that can help a student in difficulty.
6. Knowledge of emergency procedures: it is important to know emergency procedures, such as suicide attempt procedures and school violence procedures.
7. Ability to work in a team: it is important to be able to work with parents, professionals and other teachers to provide comprehensive support to the student.
8. Ability to manage one's own emotions: it is important to be able to manage one's own emotions, such as anxiety and helplessness, which may arise when working with a student in a crisis situation.

Principles of effective communication

Table. Principles of effective communication with parents[74]

Conditions for a successful conversation	Communication barriers (what to avoid?)
Organising space for conversation. The environment and conditions in which the conversation with the parent takes place create the atmosphere for this contact. Ask the parent to sit down to show you are willing to spend time with them. Sitting across from each other signals a desire to get closer, and setting the chairs at a certain angle is the optimal way to organise the space for conversation.	Avoid the impression of randomness of the conversation, the feeling of time pressure (e.g. a standing conversation in the corridor during a break). Do not create barriers between you and the parent (e.g. sitting on opposite sides of the desk emphasises differences and distance between interlocutors).
Tuning and listening. Concentrate on what the parent is saying, let them know how carefully you listen to them. Maintain face-to-face contact. Keep a relaxed and open body posture. Confirm that you are listening to what they are saying with understanding words and nods, e.g. „yes", „I understand", „aha", „mhh", etc.	Avoid showing a lack of focus on the content of the conversation by fidgeting, looking around, switching off, etc. Avoid interfering with the parent's own thoughts, other threads and associations. Do not interrupt, do not engage in an active exchange with the parent, do not finish their sentences for them.
Keeping in touch. Gently encourage the parent to speak. To this end, use messages that encourage talking, e.g. „We can talk about this…"; „Please tell me more about this…" etc. Make sure you understand it correctly by paraphrasing it, e.g. „If I understood you correctly, then…"; „From what you say, I understand that…" etc.	Avoid imposing your interpretations, judging the parent and giving so-called good advice.
Clarification of doubts. Ask the parent for clarification whenever something is unclear or incomprehensible to you. Say, for example: „I'm lost…"; „I've lost the thread, let me tell you what I understood from what was said…"; „It's not clear to me if I understood correctly that…"	Avoid taking the know-it-all attitude. Don't pretend you understand when you don't understand something and have doubts. Do not form an opinion on a given topic based on unclear statements made by the parent. Don't keep the parent at arm's length using professional pedagogical language.
Asking questions. If you want to encourage the parent to continue talking, ask open-ended questions that require a longer response starting with: „What …?" or „How…?", e.g. „How did you try to deal with this behaviour of John?" Only when you need detailed data or clarification of the information you have, ask closed questions, starting with „Do you…?".	Avoid overusing closed-ended questions. Throwing a series of questions at the parent creates the impression of an interrogation. Don't pre-empt the parent's response by making your own premature assumptions.

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[74] T. Garstka, Principles of conducting conversations with parents. A guide for teachers. Dr Josef Raabe Spółka Wydawnicza Sp. z o.o., Warsaw 2009, pp. 5-7

Reflecting feelings. Show the parent how you understand what they are going through. We read information about feelings from what and how the parent says it, from their body language and behaviour. The purpose of reflecting feelings is to show the parent that we empathically understand and accept their emotional experiences, e.g.: „I have the impression that this is important to you...”; „You must be experiencing this very much...” etc.	Don't give up on relating to the parent's feelings. Avoid inappropriately reflecting feelings. Don't be fooled by appearances – sometimes a parent talks about their concern, trying to give the impression of calm. It is a mistake to accept this apparent calmness. Rather, by recognising body language, you should notice the concern hidden under the mask of calm.
Sharing your own feelings. The „I” message speaks of your feelings and emotions, it does not interpret the behaviour of a parent or their child. Such a message consists of specifying your own emotional state (I feel [I]...) and a description of the specific behaviour that causes this state (... when you...), e.g.: „I am very sorry that you are late for our meeting today and I am afraid that it will be difficult for us to talk calmly”; „I'm glad you took this problem seriously”.	Avoid using „you” statements (that is, one that focuses on what the parent is like, rather than focusing on your feelings), such as „You are unpunctual and unreliable.” It is perceived as evaluating and accusing.
Emotional induction. It is a suggestion given to the parent how their child might feel in a given situation. The purpose of emotional induction is to stimulate the parent's empathy and help in better understanding the experiences of their adolescent child.	Avoid interpreting the parent's hidden or hostile intentions in dealing with the teen.
Focusing. When the conversation with the parent is to solve a problem or when it strays from the proper topic. In this way, you encourage the parent to think about and expand on what caught your attention or what you find important, e.g. „Karolina is so difficult”, you can help him or her specify what the difficulty really is by saying: „You said difficult.. [pause]”.	Avoid succumbing to the chaos of the parent's statements, following new threads. However, don't force direction when the parent needs to share their thoughts and feelings.
Initiating (entering) a conversation thread. Sometimes it is necessary for the teacher to introduce a topic of conversation that seems important to them, and at the same time takes up little space or is omitted in the parent's statements.	Avoid indelicacy and tactlessness when proposing topics you consider important.
Summary. Use a concise summary of key information and findings.	Avoid jumping to a new thread when the previous one is not finished.

Practical examples of helping students in various crisis situations – operating procedures

1) Chronic illness of a student

Example: A student diagnosed with epilepsy is hospitalised for a serious seizure.

Operating procedure:
1. Contacting parents: the teacher should immediately contact the student's parents and inform them about the situation.
2. Informing other students: the teacher should inform the other students about the situation and explain that the student is sick and in hospital.
3. Contacting the doctor: the teacher should contact the student's specialist doctor and obtain information about the student's health and recommendations regarding their return to school.
4. Preparing a learning plan: the teacher should prepare a special learning plan for the student that takes into account their needs and limitations.
5. Providing emotional support: the teacher should provide emotional support to the student and their parents, offering help and support in difficult times.
6. Support in returning to school: the teacher should provide the student with appropriate conditions for returning to school, such as appropriate adaptation of the classroom and adaptation of the curriculum to his needs.
7. Learning support: the teacher should support the student's learning by offering extra support and help with test preparation.
8. Support in relations with others: the teacher should help the student to establish and maintain relations with peers by organising special classes or group meetings.

2) Mourning experienced by the student

Example: A student loses their father.

Operating procedure:
1. Contact with the guardians: the teacher should immediately contact the student's guardians and inform them about their support and seek their opinion on how to inform the other students and teachers.
2. Informing other students: the teacher should (if the guardian wishes) inform the other students about the situation. Gently and respectfully tell the rest of the class group about the difficult time faced by the student.
3. Providing emotional support: the teacher should provide emotional support to the student and their guardians, offering help and support in difficult times.
4. Adapting teaching to the student's needs: the teacher should adapt teaching to the student's needs to take into account the emotional and physical difficulties resulting from bereavement.

5. Informing other teachers: the teacher should inform the student's other teachers about the situation so that they can adapt their activities to the student's needs and provide support.
6. Support in relations with peers: the teacher should help the student to establish and maintain relations with peers by organising special classes or group meetings.
7. Contact with psychological counselling: the teacher should contact psychological counselling or other professionals if they think that the student needs additional support and help.

3) Immigration and studying in a foreign country

Example: An immigrant student arrives at a new school and has difficulty adjusting to their new environment.

Operating procedure:
1. Contact with parents: the teacher should contact the student's parents and get to know their perspective and inquire about the student's history and needs.
2. Adapting teaching to the needs of the student: the teacher should adapt teaching to the needs of the student, taking into account their linguistic and cultural difficulties.
3. Support in learning the language: the teacher should provide the student with additional support in learning the language, such as individual lessons or classes with a native speaker.
4. Support in relations with peers: the teacher should help the student establish and maintain relations with peers by organising special activities or group meetings.
5. Informing other teachers: the teacher should inform other teachers about the student's situation so that they can adapt their activities to the student's needs.
6. Support in adapting to the new environment: the teacher should help the student adapt to the new environment, e.g. by encouraging them to participate in extracurricular activities or organising trips around the area.
7. Contact with psychological counselling: the teacher should contact psychological counsellors or other professionals if they think that the student needs additional support and help.

4) A child in a situation of parents' divorce

In a situation of parents' divorce, a student may experience difficult emotions and challenges related to experiencing this situation. A practical example of helping a student may be to provide them with a safe and neutral place to talk about their experiences and emotions. The teacher or educator should be understanding and

empathetic and provide the student with information about the forms of help available to them, such as counselling or a support group.

Operating procedure:
1. Noticing the situation: the teacher or educator should be alert to signals that may indicate a student's difficulties related to their parents' divorce, such as a change in behaviour, difficulties in learning or relationships with peers.
2. Conversation with the student: the teacher or educator should provide the student with a safe and neutral place to talk about their experiences and emotions. During the conversation, listen from the student's point of view and avoid judging or giving advice.
3. Providing information: the teacher or educator should provide the student with information about the forms of support available to them, such as counselling or a support group.
4. Support: the teacher or educator should stay in touch with the student and be available for conversation in order to provide support during a difficult situation.
5. Cooperation with parents: the teacher or educator should cooperate with the student's parents as far as possible in order to provide the student with the best possible help.

5) Violence against a child in the family

A situation of domestic violence can be very difficult for a student and have a negative impact on their mental and emotional health. A practical example of helping a student may be providing them with information on the forms of help available to them and support in the process of obtaining help.

Operating procedure:
1. Noticing the situation: the teacher or educator should be alert to signals that may indicate violence in the student's family, such as behavioural changes, difficulties in learning or peer relations, physical signs.
2. Conversation with the student: the teacher or educator should provide the student with a safe and neutral place to talk about their experiences and emotions. During the conversation, listen from their point of view and avoid judging or giving advice.
3. Intervention: the teacher should report the situation to the school psychologist, and then start school procedures related to suspicion or violence against a child or student.
4. Providing information: the teacher or educator should provide the student with information on the forms of help available to them, such as counselling, support group, help of specialists (e.g. psychologists, educators) and how to contact relevant services (e.g. the police, a social welfare centre).

5. Support: the teacher or educator should stay in touch with the student and be available for conversation in order to provide support during a difficult situation.
6. Cooperation with relevant services: the teacher or educator should, as far as possible, cooperate with relevant services (e.g. the police, a social welfare centre) and the student's parents in order to provide the student with the best possible help and ensure their safety.

6) Childhood depression

Depression is a serious mental health problem that can have a negative impact on a student's performance at school. A practical example of helping a student may be providing them with access to professional help, such as counselling or therapy, and support from a teacher or educator.

Operating procedure:
1. Notice the situation: the teacher or educator should be alert to signals that may indicate a student's depression, such as mood swings, difficulty concentrating, decreased motivation, isolation, physical signs.
2. Conversation with the student: the teacher or educator should provide the student with a safe and neutral place to talk about their experiences and emotions. During the conversation, listen from their perspective and avoid judging or giving advice.
3. Providing information: the teacher or educator should provide the student with information on the forms of help available to them, such as counselling, therapy, support group, help from specialists (e.g. psychologists).
4. Support: the teacher or educator should stay in touch with the student and be available for conversation in order to provide support during a difficult situation. This can also help the student cope with difficulties at school.
5. Cooperation with parents: the teacher or educator should cooperate with the student's parents as far as possible in order to provide them with the best possible help.

7) The COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic had a serious impact on the functioning of students, including their mental and emotional health, as well as their learning abilities. A practical example of helping a student can be providing them with access to various forms of support, such as counselling, remote classes or individual classes, as well as taking into account the difficulties related to the pandemic in the learning process.

Operating procedure:

1. Notice the situation: the teacher or educator should be alert for signs that may indicate a student's difficulties related to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as behavioural changes, difficulties in learning or peer relationships, physical signs, problems with concentration, difficulties with remote learning.
2. Conversation with the student: the teacher or educator should provide the student with a safe and neutral place to talk about their experiences and emotions. During the conversation, listen from their perspective and avoid judging or giving advice.
3. Providing information: the teacher or educator should provide the student with information on the forms of help available to them, such as counselling, support group, help from specialists (e.g. psychologists).
4. Support: the teacher or educator should stay in touch with the student and be available for conversation in order to provide support during a difficult situation.
5. Adaptation of learning: the teacher or educator should adapt the learning process to the student's difficulties related to the COVID-19 pandemic, e.g. through individual classes, classes using ICT tools, online communicators, widely understood remote learning using all IT solutions available in the country.

2.3. Importance of the topic

Supporting students in crisis situations is extremely important as it allows students to get the help they need to deal with the difficulties they are experiencing.

Crisis situations such as illness, bereavement, domestic violence, financial hardship, depression or anxiety can have a serious impact on a student's wellbeing and ability to function effectively at school. Supporting students in these situations can help them overcome difficulties, improve their wellbeing and enable them to continue learning.

Support for students can take many forms, depending on the needs of the student and the nature of the crisis. This may include individual consultations with a school psychologist, providing financial assistance, organising support groups for students experiencing similar difficulties, or providing information and materials that can help students cope with the situation.

Lack of support for students in crisis situations may lead to a deterioration of the student's situation, which may result in a decrease in motivation to learn, absenteeism from school or even dropping out of school. Therefore, it is important for schools and teachers to be aware of the need to support students in difficult situations and to be ready to provide help when it is needed.

Supporting students in crisis situations poses several challenges and competency demands for teachers. These include:

1. Identifying Signs of Distress: recognising subtle signs of emotional or psychological distress in students can be challenging, requiring teachers to be observant and perceptive.
2. Balancing Academic and Emotional Support: striking a balance between addressing academic needs and providing emotional support can be demanding, especially when students face crises that impact their overall wellbeing.
3. Cultural Sensitivity: acknowledging and understanding diverse cultural backgrounds is crucial. Teachers need to be sensitive to cultural nuances when assisting students, as crisis responses can vary based on cultural norms.
4. Building Trust: establishing trust with students is fundamental for effective support. Building a trusting relationship takes time and requires consistency in communication and empathy.
5. Collaborating with Professionals: knowing when to involve mental health professionals and collaborating with them is a key challenge. Teachers must navigate the delicate balance between providing initial support and seeking external expertise.
6. Confidentiality Concerns: balancing the need for privacy with the responsibility to ensure students' safety can be tricky. Teachers must navigate confidentiality concerns while taking appropriate actions to address crises.
7. Emotional Resilience: supporting students in crisis may take an emotional toll on teachers. Developing emotional resilience and self-care strategies is crucial to maintain the teacher's wellbeing.
8. Limited Resources: some schools may lack adequate resources for comprehensive mental health support. Teachers may need to navigate limited resources creatively while still providing meaningful assistance.
9. Educating Peers and Parents: teachers often play a role in educating not only students but also their peers and parents about mental health and crisis response. This requires effective communication skills.
10. Adapting to Varied Crises: crises come in various forms, from personal issues to broader community challenges. Teachers need the skills to adapt their support strategies based on the nature and scope of the crisis.

Addressing these challenges requires ongoing professional development, a supportive school environment, and a commitment to the holistic wellbeing of students.

Mental health promotion

Mental health promotion at school is an important element of support for students. This means that the school should be proactive in providing the right environment that is conducive to mental health.

One of the important elements of mental health promotion at school is health

education. Students should be taught how to manage their emotions, deal with stress, take care of their mental health and what kind of help is available if they need support.

Another important element is to create a safe and friendly environment. Creating a safe and welcoming environment is crucial when promoting mental health in schools. It involves cultivating an atmosphere where open dialogue about mental wellbeing is encouraged without fear of judgment. Anti-stigma campaigns play a pivotal role in dispelling misconceptions, fostering understanding, and reducing the stigma associated with seeking help. Inclusive language is essential to respect diverse perspectives, contributing to an atmosphere where everyone feels acknowledged and valued.

Providing comprehensive training for school staff enables educators to recognise signs of distress and respond effectively, empowering them to play a proactive role in supporting students' mental health. Establishing confidential support services within the school, such as counselling, ensures students can seek help with confidence in maintaining their privacy.

Promoting peer support programs encourages students to look out for one another, contributing to a supportive school community. The physical environment should be designed to support wellbeing, offering comfortable spaces for relaxation and reflection. Implementing holistic wellness programs addresses not only academic but also emotional and social aspects of students' lives, fostering a healthier overall school climate.

Clear communication channels between students, teachers, and parents regarding mental health initiatives help build trust and understanding. Developing a comprehensive crisis response plan outlines procedures for handling mental health emergencies, ensuring a swift and effective response to critical situations.

By prioritising these aspects, schools can weave mental health promotion into the fabric of daily life, creating a culture of wellbeing and support.

The school should also provide access to professional help, such as counselling or therapy, for students, teachers and staff who need support.

2.4. Learning outcomes

Training on how to support students in crisis management can provide many benefits for teachers and students, including:

1. Increasing the knowledge and skills of teachers in recognising the symptoms of emotional difficulties in students, as well as knowledge on how to help and support students in crisis situations.
2. Improving teachers' ability to build positive relationships with students, which can increase students' openness to seeking help and support.
3. Increasing students' awareness of the importance of support in crisis situations and increasing their ability to deal effectively with difficulties.
4. Increasing the sense of security and involvement of students at school by providing them with support in difficult situations.
5. Improving the school performance of students who receive appropriate emotional and psychological support, as improved wellbeing and the ability to cope with stress can contribute to improved academic performance.

2.5. Diagnostic tools

Diagnostic tools intended for use by teachers and educators

Teachers and educators can use a variety of diagnostic tools to diagnose students in crisis situations. Some examples include:

• Surveys: Teachers can conduct student surveys to gain information about their experiences and needs. Surveys may include questions about mental health, relationships with peers and parents, and learning difficulties.
• Interviews: Teachers can conduct one-on-one interviews with students to gain their perspective and more detailed information about their situation.
• Psychological testing: Teachers can use short psychological tests to diagnose emotional states and behavioural problems.
• Behaviour assessment: Teachers can assess student behaviour to identify potential problems such as difficulty concentrating, changing behaviour, isolating.
• Collaboration with other professionals: Teachers can collaborate with other professionals, such as psychologists and educators, to help diagnose students in crisis situations.

Examples of tools to be used during classes with students:
• The scale of the impact of COVID-19 and home isolation on children and adolescents by M. Orgilés, A. Morales & J. P. Espada,
https://www.ore.edu.pl/wp-content/plugins/download-attachments/includes/download.php?id=34498.
https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.579038

- Highly Sensitive Child Scale (HSC Polish Version) by M. Baryła-Matejczuk,
  The-Highly-Sensitive-Child-scale
- Characteristics of the student (Spheres: leading personality traits, cognitive efficiency, emotions and feelings, interpersonal contacts, social functioning) by Z.B.Gaś;
  link: CHARAKTERYSTYKA UCZNIA

It is important for teachers to remember that diagnosing a student in a crisis situation is a process and several methods and tools are needed to get a complete picture of the situation.

2.6. Training program

This module is designed for 16training hours (1 training hour = 45 minutes).

Training 1.
How to effectively react to a child in a difficult, crisis and traumatic situation

Objectives
1. Familiarising participants with knowledge about difficult, crisis and traumatic situations in a child's life
2. Developing the ability to recognise warning signals regarding threats to the mental and physical health of students
3. Developing the ability to respond and provide first aid in crisis situations
4. Making participants aware of their own resources and areas for development in working with a child in crisis

Training results
1. Increasing awareness of the risks to the mental and physical health of students
2. Increasing the ability to recognise warning signals and provide first aid in crisis situations
3. The ability to effectively respond to a child in a crisis situation and organise help

Materials
Presentations and training materials on difficult, crisis and traumatic situations
Examples of case studies and scenarios of crisis situations to practice

Training sheets

No.	Topic	Learning outcomes	Duration	Materials / Equipment
1	Introduction	Familiarising participants with the topic and work during the training	45 min.	• Photocopy of pre-training questionnaire for each participant • Stationery
2	Theoretical part	Providing basic information on selected issues related to a difficult, crisis and traumatic situation in a child's life	1 h	• PowerPoint presentation • Computer • Projector
3	Practical, exercise part	Developing empathy and the ability to understand the needs of a child in a crisis situation	25 min.	• Printed worksheet no. 1 for each participant • Stationery
		Preparing to effectively help a child in a crisis situation	25 min.	• Printed worksheet no. 2 for each participant • Stationery
		Developing the skills of cooperation for the benefit of a child in a crisis situation	40 min.	• Printed worksheet no. 3 for each participant • Stationery • Computer • Internet • Projector
4	Summary	Summary of the knowledge and skills acquired by the participants of the training	30 min.	
5	Homework	Deepening knowledge about difficult, crisis and traumatic situations in a child's life and dealing with them	2 h	• Photocopy of Module 2 for each participant

Training 2.
Supporting a student in a crisis situation

Objectives
1. Familiarising participants with knowledge about psychological help for students and the institutions that provide it
2. Familiarising participants with tools for diagnosing students in crisis situations
3. Familiarising participants with techniques of working with students and their guardians
4. Developing the ability to recognise difficult, crisis and traumatic situations
5. Making participants aware of their own resources and areas for development in working with a child in crisis

Training results

The final results of the training should be to increase teachers' skills in the field of:
• maintaining communication with the student and their parents or guardians
• maintaining calmness and composure in difficult conflict situations
• maintaining neutrality
• recognising, reacting to and helping students in difficult, crisis and traumatic situations

Materials

Presentations and training materials on conflict and difficult situations

Worksheets for observing the student, talking to the student, talking to the parent

No.	Topic	Learning outcomes	Duration	Materials / Equipment
1	Introduction	Familiarising participants with the topic and work to be completed during the training	30 min.	
2	Theoretical part	Providing basic information on selected issues related to helping students in difficult, crisis and traumatic situations	1 h	• PowerPoint presentation • Computer • Projector
3	Practical, exercise part	Developing empathy and the ability to understand the needs of a child in a crisis situation Preparing to effectively help a child in a crisis situation Developing the skills of cooperation for the benefit of a child in a crisis situation	30 min.	• Printed worksheet no. 4 and 5 for each participant • Stationery
			30 min.	• Printed worksheet no. 6 for each participant • Stationery • PowerPoint presentation • Projector
			40 min.	• Printed worksheet no. 7 for each participant • Stationery • PowerPoint presentation • Projector
			10 min.	• Computer • Internet • Projector
4	Summary	Summary of the knowledge and skills acquired by the participants of the training	40 min.	• Evaluation surveys for each participant
5	Homework	Deepening knowledge about recognising and helping students in difficult, crisis and traumatic situations	2 h	• Photocopy of Module 2 for each participant.

2.7. Learning activities

Training 1

– Welcome the participants
– Presentation of the training plan, goals, results
– Setting the rules of group work
– Presentation of the topic of Module 2 Part 1
– Filling the pre-training questionnaire + other documents

Supporting students in difficult, crisis and traumatic situations

Characteristics of the developmental age of students. Early and late adolescence

Definitions:
1. Difficult situation
2. Crisis situation
3. Traumatic event

Identification of threats

Activity no. 1 – A student in a crisis situation:
• individual work (worksheet no. 1 should be completed in accordance with the instructions),
• discussing the completed task openly with the group,
• the trainer writes down on the board what behaviours of the adult were needed and effective in the discussed difficult situation.

Activity no. 2 – What helps a student in a crisis situation:
• work in groups of 4 people (on the basis of their own experiences and completed worksheet no. 1 "Student in a crisis situation", worksheet no. 2 should be completed together),
• presentation of the results of the teamwork in front of the entire group,
• the trainer writes down effective and ineffective behaviours of adults on the board.

Activity no. 3 – A plan to help a student in a crisis situation:
• discussion and completion of the worksheet in accordance with the instructions in groups of 4 people,
• presentation of the results of the teamwork in front of the entire group,
• the trainer writes down the support procedure for each discussed situation,
• comparison of the procedure prepared by the participants with the procedures set out in the script of the Ministry of Education and Science "Safe school. Threats

and recommended preventive actions in the area of physical and digital safety of students."
• conclusions.

Movie
Never Give Up: A Complex Trauma Film by Youth for Youth
Never give up
https://www.nctsn.org/resources/never-give-complex-trauma-film-youth-youth

Summary of training
Questions &answers

Getting acquainted with the materials related to Module 2 "Supporting students in crisis situations" Part 1

Movie:
War in Ukraine. How to talk about it with children and teenagers?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5JyMmbG1PI&t=2267s

Training 2

– Welcome the participants
– Presentation of the training plan, goals, results
– Setting the rules of group work
– Presentation of the topic of Module Part2
– Summary of own work from Part 1

Supporting students in difficult, crisis and traumatic situations
1. Importance of the topic
    – promotion of mental health
    – types of psychological help and institutions that provide it
2. Diagnostic tools
    – examples of tools to be used during school activities
3. Educational activities
    – observation of the student
    – conversation with the student
    – interview with adults about the student

Activity 1 – Student observation:
• work in groups of 4 people,
• read worksheet no. 4,
• agree with the group three selected difficulties of the student and write them on worksheet no. 5,

- independently mark (simulation) how the student dealt with the difficulty in the following months,
- discuss your results with the group,
- what actions will you take as a class group in relation to this student,
- discussion of the completed task with the group – each group presents its work in front of the entire group.

Activity 2 – Conversation with a student:
- Individual work,
- the trainer familiarises participants with the stages of an effective conversation,
- the participants complete worksheet no. 6 as instructed,
- the trainer presents a diagram of a conversation with a student causing behavioural problems,
- questions &answers.

Activity3 – Conversation with an adult about a student:
- the trainer familiarises participants with the principles of effective communication,
- completing worksheet no. 7 as instructed in groups of 4,
- the trainer writes down on the board the stages of the interview with the adult about the student –presentation of the work completed by all the groups,
- comparison of the procedure prepared by the participants with the written procedures
- conclusions.

Movie
How to work with a difficult (attacking) parent?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKHBLv-J_cs

Summary of training
Questions &answers
Completion of evaluation questionnaires

Familiarisation with materials related to Module 2 "Supporting students in crisis situations" Part 2

Movie
How to "deal" with difficult students
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssFziXy1Dzc&t=149s

Worksheet No 1
A STUDENT IN A CRISIS

**MY EXPERIENCES AS A STUDENT FINDING MYSELF
IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION**

Recall an event from the time when you were in primary school that turned out to be a problem for you, a difficulty, a big challenge?

What happened?

....
....
....

What were your thoughts in the situation?

....
....
....

How did you feel then?

....
....
....

What did you do then? How did you behave?

....
....
....

What did you expect from adults?

....
....
....

What behaviors of adults were supportive and helpful for you? Who helped you? What did the adults say? What did they do? How did they behave?

....
....
....

What behaviors, statements of adults were not helpful?

....
....
....

Worksheet No 2
WHAT HELPS A STUDENT IN A CRISIS

Behaviours and statements of adults that give the student strength to deal with problems	Behaviours and statements that deprive the student of strength and willingness to cooperate with adults

Worksheet No 3
A PLAN TO HELP A STUDENT IN A CRISIS SITUATION

After reading the description of the student's situation, discuss how you can help them. Consider the best method and make a point-by-point plan to help the student.

No.	Description of the situation that the student is struggling with	What are the student's difficulties and needs?	Assistance plan – procedures. How can you help the student?
1.	A student diagnosed with epilepsy is hospitalised for a serious seizure on school property		
2.	A student loses their father		
3.	An expat student arrives at a new school and has difficulty adjusting to their new environment		
4.	Suspicion of depression in a student		

Worksheet No 4
STUDENT OBSERVATION

OBSERVATION WORKSHEET STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT	SCHOOL YEAR: CLASS : NAME :						
A – ALWAYS B – USUALLY C – SOMETIMES D – NEVER							
STUDENT SKILLS	**XI**	**X**	**XI**	**I**	**III**	**IV**	**V**
Active in class							
Understands the teacher's instructions							
Prepared for the lesson							
Solves tasks independently							
Participates in group work							
Follows the course of the lesson							
Adheres to the rules of behaviour							
Needs help understanding content							
Understands written instructions							
Accepts critical remarks to work							
Treats the teacher and peers with respect							
Follows the teacher's instructions							
NOTES							

Worksheet No 5
STUDENT OBSERVATION

OBSERVATION WORKSHEET STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT	SCHOOL YEAR: CLASS : NAME :						
A – ALWAYS B – USUALLY C – SOMETIMES D – NEVER							
STUDENT SKILLS	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
....							
....							
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NOTES							

Worksheet No 6
TALKING TO THE STUDENT

Plan the stages of the conversation with the student causing behavioural problems in accordance with the principles presented and discussed.

1…..

2.…

3…..

Worksheet No 7
SCENARIO OF A CONVERSATION WITH A STUDENT'S PARENT

You need to talk to the parent of the student who is having behavioural problems. Prepare the next stages of the conversation based on the principles of effective communication.

Conversation script

1…

Recognising the needs of students in difficult, crisis and traumatic situations

The school and teachers can recognise the needs of students in difficult, crisis and traumatic situations in many ways. Teachers who spend many hours with children at school are often the first people to be able to catch, diagnose, recognise and activate first aid intervention.

Student observation

Observing a student in crisis can help the teacher understand their difficulties and needs and take appropriate action. When observing a student, the teacher should pay attention to the following aspects:

1. Behaviour change: the teacher should notice if the student is experiencing changes in their behaviour, such as apathy, aggression, anxiety, or difficulty concentrating.

OBSERVATION WORKSHEET STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT	SCHOOL YEAR: CLASS: NAME:						
A – ALWAYS B – USUALLY C – SOMETIMES D – NEVER							
STUDENT SKILLS	XI	X	XI	I	III	IV	V
Active in class							
Understands the teacher's instructions							
Prepared for the lesson							
Solves tasks independently							
Participates in group work							
Follows the course of the lesson							
Adheres to the rules of behaviour							
Needs help understanding content							
Understands written instructions							
Accepts critical remarks to work							
Treats the teacher and peers with respect							
Follows the teacher's instructions							
NOTES							

2. Change in academic performance: the teacher should notice if the student is having difficulty learning or passing tests.

3. Change in relationships: the teacher should notice if the student has difficulty establishing and maintaining relationships with peers.

4. Changes in appearance and behaviour: the teacher should notice if the student has difficulty maintaining hygiene or changes in physical appearance.

5. Rarely asks for help: the teacher should notice if the student rarely asks for help, which may indicate a lack of trust in adults.

Exercise:
Observation of students in a regular classroom using an observation sheet.75

1. What is it for?
The sheet is used to check whether the student acquires basic skills associated with:
– work in the classroom
– socially acceptable behaviours
– difficulties.

2. Who completes the observation sheet?
The observation sheet can be completed by the form teacher, specific subject teachers, educators and others.

3. Why complete it and for whom?
It allows you to notice the student's progress or lack of it. It is mainly useful in the case of students with numerous difficulties who need support on several fronts where a joint effort of the entire teaching staff is required.

4. How to complete it?
The columns provide space to mark the student's current skill level (in a given month) using the following key:
A-always, B-usually, C-sometimes, D-never.

The frequency of the assessment should be adjusted to the needs of the student and the involvement of teachers.

5. How to analyse it?
Start completing the observation sheet – if after the second assessment there are no visible improvements resulting from the help provided, explore the reasons for the failures.

When the observation sheet is completed by specific subject teachers (one observation sheet per teacher), it would be worth noting in which subjects the student

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75 Brzoskniewicz   B.,   Student   observation   sheet.   https://barbarabrzoskniewicz.pl/jak-obserowac-zachowanie/

is doing better, and exploring the reasons for it. Teachers can be asked to share the methods that affect the student's achievements, i.e. the so-called 'good practices'.

6. How to customise the observation sheet?

If you want to use the observation sheet to make a note of other areas of the student's functioning, use the version providing the space to enter the student's skills and achievements yourself.

7. How to use the observation sheet?

Observation should take place every month, and in the event of no improvement or increasing difficulties, ways of providing assistance to the student should be reviewed.

Conversation with the student

Talking to the student is an important way of getting to know the child's difficulties. This is an opportunity for the teacher to get to know the student, understand their needs and provide them with appropriate support.

The conversation with the student should be conducted in a friendly and safe atmosphere in which the student feels comfortable and without experiencing fear. The teacher should be an attentive listener and focus on the student without interrupting or judging.

The teacher should also be able to properly formulate questions to understand the student's difficulties. Questions should be open-ended, allowing the student to answer freely, and should also relate to the problems the child is struggling with.

Talking to the student can help the teacher understand the student's perspective and learning needs. The conversation should be conducted in a stress-free and non-judgmental way so that the student feels comfortable and open to the conversation. It is also worth encouraging the student to talk about their difficulties, and not just answer the teacher's questions.

Conducting a conversation with a student should be conducted in accordance with the following principles:
1. Establish an atmosphere of trust and security: the conversation should be conducted in a way that allows the student to feel comfortable and at ease.
2. Listening carefully: the teacher should focus on what the student is saying and give them the feeling that their opinions are important.
3. Non-judgmental: the teacher should avoid assessing the student and their problems, instead focusing on learning the causes and solutions.

4. Encouraging to talk: the teacher should encourage the student to talk about their difficulties by asking for details and giving them space to express their feelings.
5. Adaptation to the student's needs: the teacher should adapt the actions taken to the student's needs and choose solutions that will be best for them.
6. Help in solving problems: the teacher should help the student solve their problems by providing them with the tools and support they need.

Exercise:
Prepare and plan the stages of the conversation with the student experiencing behavioural problems in accordance with the above principles.
1.....
2....
3.....

Check if you have taken everything into account:

Talking to a student who is experiencing behavioural problems can be difficult, but there are steps that can help you solve the problems and improve the situation.

1. Initial assessment of the situation
Before starting a conversation with the student, it is worth analysing the situation thoroughly and determining what the problem is. For this purpose, you can talk to other teachers, parents, school counsellors, etc. It is also worth checking whether the problem is related to the student's behaviour, their academic performance or maybe their relationships with other students.

2. Establishing contact with the student
Once you know what the problem is, make contact with the student. It is worth doing it in a calm, positive atmosphere and explaining to them that this is a conversation about how you can help them and improve the situation.

3. Listening to the student
Then, give the student the opportunity to express their opinions and talk about their problems. It is important to listen carefully and show understanding.

4. Setting goals together
After listening to the student, set goals together. You can ask the student what is most important to them and what they want to improve.

5. Determining how to achieve the goals
Together with the student, consider what steps need to be taken to achieve the goals. It is also worth talking about what the consequences will be if the goal is not achieved.

6. Ending the conversation
At the end of the conversation, it is worth summarising everything that has been said and once again showing understanding for the student. It is also worth scheduling a follow-up interview to assess your progress and see if your goals have been met.

7. Follow-up

After the conversation, take the actions that were agreed during the conversation. It is also important to monitor the student's progress and be ready to talk if new issues arise.

Conversation with adults about the student

Interviewing adults, such as parents or guardians, can also be an effective way to learn about a student's difficulties. It can help the teacher to obtain additional information about the student's developmental history, their behaviour at home, as well as possible health difficulties or family problems that may affect their functioning at school. During the conversation, it is worth being open and listening carefully to get the parents' perspective and adapt your actions to the student's needs.

Exercise:
You need to talk to the parent of the student who is experiencing behavioural problems. Prepare the next stages of the conversation based on the principles of effective communication.
1....
2.....
3....

Check your proposal with the prepared scenario:[76]

Scenario of a conversation with the parents of a student experiencing behavioural problems
1. Greeting (right atmosphere, right place, time).
2. Presentation of the purpose of the meeting.
3. Determining the degree of understanding of the problem by the parent.
4. Determining whether the parent made an attempt to find out the reasons for the difficulties or searched help.
5. Joint search for solutions.
6. Suggestions for specific actions from the parent and declaration of support from the school.
7. Selection of goals and setting the date of the next meeting.
8. Signing an agreement for cooperation in the implementation of the goals by the teacher and the parent.
9. Farewell.

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[76] Łuczak-Wiezbicka B., The teacher's file. The role of the educator. https://slideplayer.pl/slide/9850101/

2.8. General recommendations

The training was aimed at enhancing teachers' skills in fostering students' resilience and coping mechanisms within the school environment. Participants gained insight into concepts such as mental health, stress management, and building psychological resilience. Through interactive sessions, teachers acquired practical tools to support students in effectively managing emotions and stressors. Emphasis was placed on improving communication skills, encouraging open expression of feelings, and fostering a supportive peer community. The program focused on creating a school culture that promotes social inclusion and peer support. In summary, the training aimed to equip teachers with practical strategies to empower students in navigating various life situations within the school setting.

MODULE 3
Communication with students with special educational needs

3.1. General information on the topic

Over the past 20 years, the support for integrating students with special educational needs (SEN) into regular schools has grown on a global scale. The first international declaration to demand the acknowledgement of the right to inclusive education was the Salamanca Statement resulting from the UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education in 1994. Since then, various international policy statements have reaffirmed the idea that schools should accommodate every child with their unique skills and educational requirements.[77] Indeed, the European Commission – through the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, encourages EU Member States to move towards inclusive, high-quality education, abandoning the dated trend of segregated special schooling.[78] However, numerous issues challenge the notion of inclusive education. The lack of a universal, or even European, definition for SEN, the different frameworks at both European and national level for the identification of children with SEN, the very broad spectrum of SEN, and the inadequate teacher education and training widen the gap between the vision of inclusive education and its application.[79]

Data from the European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE) reveal the current situation concerning integration in education in European countries. On the pre-primary level, the enrolment rate in mainstream education ranges from 95.87% to 100.00%, with the total average being 99.6%. On primary and lower-secondary levels, the enrolment rate in mainstream education ranges from 92.08% to 102.06%, with the total average being 98.34%. On the upper-secondary level, the enrolment rate in mainstream education ranges from 22.23% to 100.00%, with the total

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[77] Cera, R., (2015). National Legislations on Inclusive Education and Special Educational Needs of People with Autism in the Perspective of Article 24 of the CRPD. In Della Fina, V. & Cera, R. (Eds) Protecting the Rights of People with Autism in the Fields of Education and Employment. Springer.

[78] European Commission Communication (2010). European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe. COM (2010) 636 final.

[79] European Commission (2018). Access to quality education for children with special educational needs. accessible at: link

average being 96.41%.[80] These high percentages indicate that students with SEN are present in mainstream education classes, stressing the need for implying effective practices, solutions, and tools in everyday teaching practice.

Teachers' work skills in diverse settings with students with SEN are crucial for creating an inclusive education system. To effectively teach children, teachers must have the ability to recognise each student's unique learning needs, apply varied instruction strategies, encourage cooperation, and support social integration. By enhancing these skills, teachers can create a more supportive and accepting learning environment, benefiting all students and promoting individualised learning.

Motivation for children with SEN can be accomplished by giving them small rewards based on their interests and preferences to help develop their social, language, and behavioural skills. Positive reinforcement, encouraging activities such as social stories and scripting, allowing them to choose their own activities, using play therapy, rewarding them with favourite toys or food, using music therapy, integrating activities that affect sensory stimulation, and constantly introducing new fun activities can all help motivate them. These strategies can help them learn faster, stay focused, and be better behaved, ultimately reducing future social isolation and improving communication skills.

(Special Learning, Motivating Special Needs Children, accessible at: https://special-learning.com/motivating-special-needs-children/)

A learning disability is thought to affect five to fifteen percent of school-age children, according to the American Psychiatric Association. It is estimated that 80% of people with learning difficulties, namely those with dyslexia, have trouble reading. Twenty percent of people have dyslexia, making it a very common condition. Specific learning difficulties frequently co-occur with anxiety and other neurodevelopmental disorders, such as ADHD. This module concentrates on dyslexia, ADHD, and the autism spectrum as a consequence of their increasing frequency.

("What Is Specific Learning Disorder?", American Psychiatric Association, 2021, accessible at: https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/specific-learning-disorder/what-is-specific-learning-disorder)

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[80] European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022.European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education: 2018/2019 School Year Dataset Cross-Country Report. (A. Lenárt, A. Lecheval and A. Watkins, eds.). Odense, Denmark

The present module aims to familiarise educators with the nature of students' particular needs and difficulties and enhance their social and communication skills. The research team assesses educators' familiarisation with the clinical characteristics of learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the adjustment of their teaching style to children's individualised needs, using particular communication tools and methods of foremost importance.

3.2. Definitions

1. **Special educational needs (SEN)**: It is a legal definition and refers to children with learning problems or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children the same age. These difficulties may affect their ability to socialise, their school performance, their understanding, their concentration levels or/and their physical ability. Children with SEN require extra help with their schoolwork, while reading, writing, number work or understanding information, expressing themselves or understanding what others are saying, making friends or interacting with adults, behaving properly at school and organising themselves.

   The category includes:
   a) Students with **learning disabilities** such as dyslexia – a specific learning disability that affects reading and related language-based processing skills and dysgraphia – a specific learning disability that affects a person's handwriting ability and fine motor skills
   b) Children with **ADHD** – a disorder that includes difficulty staying focused and paying attention, controlling behaviour and hyperactivity
   c) Students with **ASD** (Autism Spectrum Disorder) – a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain
   d) Students with **cognitive impairments**
   e) Students with **physical disabilities**.[81]

   There is no universal or European definition for SEN, with some countries grouping children into multiple categories or using a general disability definition. Identifying SEN is not automatic and can be challenging, as many disabilities may not be diagnosed at birth and can be developed later in a child's life. Acknowledging the wide spectrum of SEN helps policymakers and practitioners define inclusive settings and relevant adaptations.

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[81] LEAs, Head Teachers and Governors of Schools, early education practitioners and other interested parties. (2001). Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, Ref: DfES/581/2001. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-educational-needs-sen-code-of-practice

The above list is a very brief description of the most common special educational needs, for more information and a more detailed explanation, you can visit SEN Category Descriptors of the West Berkshire Council, 2017.

2. **Educational Communication**: Educational communication as a term is complex and with multiple meanings. In addition to the standard communication criteria (e.g. number of participants, means of communication, and content of communication), educational communication incorporates an incomplete ability of one person to communicate with the other (communication between a student and a teacher or other source of information). Consequently, its main goal is to help students develop skills for complete and independent communication with people and establish effective means of communication. Key aspects that affect its efficiency are:
   a) the ability or competence of the sender to convey the message or effectively implement the content of communication;
   b) the ability or competence of the receiver to understand the message or content of the communication;
   c) effective feedback;
   d) removing noise or reducing it to a minimum.[82]

3. **Student-Teacher Relationship**: The student–teacher relationships play a significant role in children's cognitive and social development. Literature suggests teacher relationships make a unique contribution to children's social and cognitive development through adolescence.[83] Teachers can influence the quality of students' social and intellectual experiences via their ability to instil values; by providing classroom contexts that stimulate children's motivation and learning; by addressing children's need to belong; by developing a social identity and fostering the development of their emotional, behavioural, and academic skills.[84]

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[82] Suzić, N. (2005). Motivation of students in university teaching (Animiranjestudenata u univerzitetskojnastavi). Banja Luka: Fakultetposlovneekonomije.

[83] Resnick, M. D., Bearman, P. S., Blum, R. W., Bauman, K. E., Harris, K. E., Jones, J., et al. (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm: Findings from the national longitudinal study on adolescent health. Journal of the American Medical Association, 278, 823–832.

[84] Davis, H., A. (2003). Conceptualising the Role and Influence of Student-Teacher Relationships on Children's Social and Cognitive Development. Educational Psychologist, 38(4), 207-234. DOI:10.1207/S15326985EP3804_2

What words could be used to speak to or write about children with disabilities?

No.	Acceptable words and expressions	Unacceptable words and expressions
1	A person with a disability/ impairment	Sick, lame, incomplete, deformed, abnormal
2	Non-disabled person, a person with no disability	Normal, healthy (as opposed to the disabled)
3	Wheelchair user, a person with spinal cord injury, a mobility-impaired person	A wheelchair confined, a person with a wheelchair
4	A child with cerebral palsy (or something similar)	A child who suffers from cerebral palsy
5	Affected by/disabled as a result of infantile paralysis or another cause	A child who suffers from infantile paralysis or its consequences/ a victim of infantile paralysis
6	A person with a mental disorder (only for adults)	A mentally deficient person
7	Child with a developmental delay, children with mental impairments, people/ children with special educational needs	Stalled, backward, moron
8	A person/child with Down syndrome	Down, mongoloid, downie
9	A person/child with Epilepsy	Epileptic, sleepwalker
10	A person/child with inborn disability	Birth defect, misery, not normal
11	A person/child with mental health problems	Crazy, insane
12	Blind, a visually impaired person/child, a person/child with poor eyesight	Totally blind
13	A person/child with hearing impairment, a deaf person/child, a person/child with impaired hearing	Deaf mute

Table 1: Acceptable and non-acceptable expressions for disability[85]

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[85] ADA National Network, Guidelines for Writing About People With Disabilities, https://adata.org/factsheet/ADANN-writing

3.3. Importance of the topic

When focusing on improving communication, the relationships between educators and their students with SEN are vital for the promotion of an inclusive, participatory, and safe educational environment. The literature supports that, particularly in preschool and primary school, educators frequently view their relationships with students with SEN as less pleasant than their relationships with students without SEN.[86] [87]Additionally, compared to their classmates without SEN, students with SEN often feel that their interactions with their teachers are less satisfying.[88] [89] Indeed, literature suggests that poorer relationships between teachers and students with SEN may arise from students' learning, social and/or behavioural challenges.[90] Teachers report a less close and more conflictual relationship with students with SEN, and they also report more tension and disaffection with students who display lower control, increased restlessness, impulsive reactions, decreased prosocial behaviours, increased difficulties in complying with rules, respecting commitments and engaging in socially appropriate interactions in conflictual situations.[91] In addition, teachers' beliefs about their efficacy in dealing with students with perceived challenging behaviours, as well as their expectations regarding students' competence, may affect their involvement with the students and the teaching strategies that are implemented.[92]

[86] Demirkaya, P. & Bakkaloglu, H. (2015). Examining the student–teacher relationships of children both with and without special needs in preschool classrooms, Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 15, 159–175

[87] Murray, C. & Murray, K. (2004). Child level correlates of teacher–student relationships: An examination of demographic characteristics, academic orientations, and behavioural orientations, Psychology in the Schools, 41, 751–762

[88] Murray, C., & Greenberg, M. T. (2001). Relationships with teachers and bonds with school: Social-emotional adjustment correlates for children with and without disabilities. Psychology in the Schools, 38, 25–41

[89] Al-Yagon, M. & Mikulincer, M. (2004). Socioemotional and academic adjustment among children with learning disorders: The mediational role of attachment-based factors, Journal of Special Education, 38, 111–123

[90] Sabol, T. & Pianta, R. (2012). Recent trends in research on teacher–child relationships, Attachment & Human Development, 14, 213 -231

[91] Freire, S., Pipa, J., Aguiar, C., Vaz da Silva, F., & Moreira, S. (2019). Student–teacher closeness and conflict in students with and without special educational needs. British Educational Research Journal, 46(3), 480-499

[92] Damianidou, E. & Phtiaka, H. (2017). Implementing inclusion in disabling settings: The role of teachers' attitudes and practices, International Journal of Inclusive Education, 22, 1078–109

The consequences of a poor teacher-student with SEN relationship may include the following:

1. Increased conflict in teacher-student relationship has been associated with **lower social competence** for students, which is translated to decreased cooperative play, rule-following and empathy, and increased aggression.[93]

2. Moreover, findings indicate that the quality of the relationships that students form with their educators has a significant impact on their emotional and behavioural wellbeing. Students with SEN with higher levels of teacher rejection have reported **higher loneliness** than the ones with low levels of teacher rejection.[94]

3. Students with SEN and emotional/behavioural disabilities experiencing high dissatisfaction in their relationships with teachers have **reported higher levels of anxiety and higher conduct problem or/and delinquency**.[95]

4. Particularly true for populations at-risk of peer victimisation (such as students with SEN), unsupportive teacher-student relationships further **reduce their wellbeing**.[96]

5. The poor teacher-student relationships for children with developmental disabilities are positively correlated with the children's concurrent and future adjustment to school;[97] which means that the poor relationships with their educators possibly lead to **poor school adjustment**.

At this point, it is important to make a distinction between psychological and educational interventions in students with disabilities. Psychological and educational interventions are two different approaches that can be used to support students with disabilities. While both interventions are focused on helping students achieve success, they differ in their goals and methods. According to anecdotal discussions with experienced professionals, the following distinction and practice is suggested.

Psychological interventions aim to address the emotional, behavioural, and mental health needs of students with disabilities. This type of intervention is often carried out by a licensed psychologist or therapist who specialises in working with children

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[93] Pianta, R. & Stuhlman, M. (2004). Teacher–child relationships and children's success in the first years of school, School Psychology Review, 33, 444–458

[94] Al-Yagon, M. & Mikulincer, M. (2004). Socioemotional and academic adjustment among children with learning disorders: The mediational role of attachment-based factors, Journal of Special Education, 38, 111–123

[95] Murray, C., & Greenberg, M. T. (2001). Relationships with teachers and bonds with school: Social-emotional adjustment correlates for children with and without disabilities. Psychology in the Schools, 38, 25–41

[96] Huber, R. S., Sifers, S., Houlihan, D., & Youngblom, R. (2012). Teacher support as a moderator of behavioural outcomes for youth exposed to stressful life events. Educational Research International, 1-10. doi:10.1155/2012/130626

[97] Lauderdale-Littin, S., Howell, E., & Blacher, J. (2013). Educational Placement for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Public and Non-Public School Settings

and adolescents. Psychological interventions may include individual or group therapy sessions, behavioural interventions, and counselling services.

Psychological interventions aim to help students manage their emotions and behaviour, cope with stress and anxiety, and develop coping strategies for dealing with the challenges of living with a disability. These interventions may also involve working with the student's family and caregivers to provide support and guidance.

Educational interventions, on the other hand, are focused on helping students with disabilities succeed academically. This type of intervention is often carried out by special education teachers who work with students to develop individualised education plans (IEPs) that outline the students' academic goals and the accommodations and modifications that will be made to support their learning.

Educational interventions may include modifications to the curriculum, such as providing additional resources or using different teaching methods to better meet the students' needs. They may also involve the use of assistive technology, such as computer software that reads text aloud or speech recognition programs.

The goal of educational interventions is to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to education and are able to succeed academically. These interventions may also involve working with the students' families and caregivers to provide support and guidance.

Both types of interventions can be effective in supporting students with disabilities, and often work best when used in combination.

This training focuses on teachers' communication with students with special educational needs, but each category has different challenges. For example:

1. Students with **dyslexia** may struggle with one or more of the following:
   • Mind racing and difficulty expressing thoughts
   • Retrieval of information from memory
   • Reading and spelling difficulties
   • Understanding and following instructions
   • Mixing up similar sounds or words
   • Coherently organising thoughts
   • Reduced confidence and anxiety
   • Need for additional processing time[98].

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[98] Mayo Clinic, 2022, accessible at:
https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseasesconditions/dyslexia/symptoms-causes/syc-20353552

2. Students with ADHD may struggle with one or more of the following:
   • Difficulty with attention regulation
   • Impulsivity and difficulty managing behaviour
   • Challenges with planning and organising
   • Struggles with coping with change
   • Difficulty with staying focused on tasks
   • Inattentiveness during discussions or lectures
   • Trouble following instructions and completing assignments
   • Poor time management skills
   • Impaired listening skills
   • Trouble expressing thoughts and ideas clearly
   • Poor reading and spelling abilities
   • Mixing up similar sounds or words in speech or writing
   • Reduced confidence and increased anxiety in communication situations[99].

3. Students within the spectrum of **autism** may struggle with one or more of the following:
   • Difficulty with social interactions and understanding social cues
   • Sensory sensitivities to noise, light, or touch
   • Challenges in understanding and expressing emotions
   • Limited or repetitive language and conversation skills
   • Difficulty with non-verbal communication, such as body language and facial expressions
   • Trouble adapting to changes in routines or unexpected events
   • Literal interpretation of language, which can lead to misunderstandings
   • Difficulty with abstract or figurative language
   • Challenges with turn-taking and initiating or maintaining conversations
   • Narrow or intense interests that may dominate conversations
   • Difficulty with understanding and following instructions
   • Challenges with empathy and perspective-taking
   • Reduced eye contact and engagement in social interactions[100].

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[99] Centers for Disease, Control and Prevention, 2023. "School changes – helping children with ADHD",
https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/features/adhd-and-school-changes.html#:~:text=Children%20with%20ADHD%20struggle%20more,keep%20them%20engaged%20in%20learning.)`

[100] Lisa Jo Rudy, 2023. "Why Is School So Challenging for Autistic Children?" ,accessible at:
https://www.verywellhealth.com/why-school-is-so-challenging-4000048

3.4. Learning outcomes

By the end of this module, educators will be able to:
• explain the importance of positive teacher-student with SEN relationship;
• apply social stories and comic strip conversations in their classrooms;
• understand the importance of adjusting their teaching methods to students' strengths and difficulties.

3.5. Diagnostic tools

There are numerous assessment tools that can be useful within educational settings fostering the assessment of any additional needs a young person may have, as well as helping to develop strategies which can be used to support students with special educational needs and disabilities (SENDs) in the setting. This section aims to familiarise educators with some of these tools by providing them with an overview to initiate further reading.

It is important to note that all diagnostic tools are professional tools that should only be used by trained and qualified professionals, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and licensed clinical social workers, who have experience in administering and interpreting psychological assessments. It is not intended for use by individuals without the appropriate training and credentials.

When it comes to assessing and diagnosing special educational needs, it is important to understand that there are a variety of assessment tools available, some of which are free of charge and others that have a cost associated with them.

There are many free resources available online, such as screening checklists and questionnaires, that can be used to identify potential areas of concern and determine whether further assessment is necessary. These free resources can be a helpful first step in the assessment process, but they may not provide a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's needs. Stakeholders can continue their study here.

More comprehensive assessment tools, such as standardised tests and diagnostic evaluations, often come with a cost. These assessments are typically administered by trained professionals and provide a more detailed and accurate picture of an individual's strengths and challenges. The cost of these assessments may vary depending on the complexity of the evaluation and the professional administering it. Stakeholders can continue their study here.

Moreover, there can also be differences in diagnostic tools and criteria between different countries in Europe and globally.

The criteria used for diagnosing specific conditions or disorders, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), may vary depending on the region or country. For example, while the DSM-5 criteria are widely used in the USA, other regions may use different diagnostic manuals or guidelines.

There may also be differences in the types of assessment tools used, as well as the specific tests or measures used to evaluate different aspects of an individual's functioning. For example, some regions may have specific language or cultural considerations that impact the assessment process.

To address these differences, international organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have developed guidelines and recommendations for SEN assessments that can be used across different regions and countries. These guidelines aim to promote standardised and culturally sensitive assessment practices to ensure that individuals with SEN receive accurate and effective evaluations.

Ultimately, the most important thing is to ensure that individuals with SEN receive the appropriate assessment and support they need to thrive and reach their full potential. Whether using free or paid assessment tools, it is essential to work with professionals who are knowledgeable and experienced in the field of special education and can provide accurate and effective assessments. Additionally, it is important for professionals conducting SEN assessments to stay up-to-date with the latest research and guidelines in their field, and to be aware of any cultural or regional factors that may impact the assessment process.

3.6. Training program

This module is designed for 16training hours (1 training hour = 45 minutes).

Session 1: Communicating with students with disabilities –social stories

No.	Topic	Learning outcomes	Duration	Materials / equipment
1	Introduction	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • understand the scope of the workshop • discuss their expectations and impressions on the topic	15 min.	• PowerPoint presentation • Laptop/PC • Projector

2	Theoretical orientation and definitions	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • recall the necessary definitions on disability and student-teacher relationships • illustrate the basic concepts around disability	30 min.	PowerPoint presentation Laptop/PC Projector
3	Activity 1: Disabilities in the classroom	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • evaluate possible situations in classrooms with students with disabilities • develop action plans • present feasible solutions in possible challenging situations with students with disabilities	1 hour & 40 min. (100 min.)	• Printed scenarios • Post-its, paper • Markers • Pens
4	Social stories	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • describe the social story method • list examples of social stories	45 min.	• PowerPoint presentation • Laptop/PC • Projector • Speakers
5	Activity 2: Develop your own social stories	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • create social stories • apply the social stories method to their needs • evaluate the method's difficulty level	1 hour & 40 min. (100 min.)	• List of tips • Laptops (one laptop/team) • Printers • Internet connection • Paper • Pens/markers
6	Closure, evaluation and homework	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • outline the basic elements of the workshop experience • compare their expectations with their workshop experience • understand the objectives of the homework activity	40 min.	• Social stories (developed in previous step) • Self-evaluation activity • Homework presentation
7	Homework	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • list supporting services for students with disabilities and stakeholders • discuss on relevant to the topic projects and initiatives	15 min.	• Laptop/PC • Internet connection • Paper • Pens
8	Homework	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • list tools and methods useful for educators' work with people with disabilities • name diagnostic tools for children with disabilities	15 min.	• Laptop/PC • Internet connection • Paper • Pens

Session 2: Comic strip conversation

No.	Topic	Learning outcomes	Duration	Materials / equipment
1	Introduction	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • understand the scope of the workshop • discuss their expectations and impressions on the topic	15 min.	• PowerPoint Presentation • Laptop/PC • Projector
2	Importance of the topic and why we should study it	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • analyse the challenges in working with students with disabilities • identify the benefits of working with students with disabilities	20 min.	• Laptop/PC • Projector • PowerPoint presentation • Speakers
3	Comic strip conversation	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • describe the comic strip conversation method • list examples of comic strip conversations	45 min.	• PowerPoint presentation • Laptop/PC • Projector • Speakers
4	Activity 3: Create your own comic strip conversation	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • create a comic strip conversation • apply the comic strip conversation method to their classrooms	1 hour & 40 min. (100 min.)	• List of tips • Laptops (one laptop/team) • Printer • Internet connection • Paper • Pens/markers
5	Closure, evaluation and homework	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • outline the basic elements of the workshop experience • compare their expectations with their workshop experience • understand the objectives of the homework activity	40 min.	• Comic strip conversation (developed in previous step) • Self-evaluation activity • Homework presentation
6	Homework	Upon completion of this section, participants will be able to: • list tools and methods useful for educators' work with people with disabilities • name diagnostic tools for children with disabilities	2 hours (movie) + 20 min. of processing	• Laptop/PC • Internet connection • Paper • Pens

3.7. Learning activities

Learning activity 1: Disabilities in the classroom

This activity facilitates the learning of theory through group work with scenarios on disabilities. First, explain to your audience the objectives and the goal of the activity. Then split your audience into groups – each group should be comprised of 5 participants. Hand out the printed scenarios to your teams – each group should be provided with 2 scenarios. Give time to the groups to read the scenarios and ask questions. The groups then work on the scenarios. Once they are finished, it is necessary to have a wider discussion based on the findings of the exercise.

Scenarios for Learning activity 1

Scenario 1: Non effective communication between teacher and autistic student

Teacher: "Why aren't you participating in class? You need to engage more and speak up."

Autistic Student: remains silent

Teacher: "You're not going to learn anything if you don't participate. I need you to try harder and speak up."

Autistic Student: starts stimming

Teacher: "Stop fidgeting and pay attention. You're being disruptive."

Notes for the trainer
In this example, the teacher is not effectively communicating with the autistic student. The teacher is using a demanding tone, not recognising the student's communication style or need for processing time, and is not being accommodating to the student's individual needs. This can lead to the student feeling overwhelmed and anxious, making it even harder for them to engage in class. A more effective approach would be for the teacher to ask the student how they prefer to participate in class, and to offer accommodations that meet the student's needs.

Scenario 2: Non effective communication between teacher and dyslectic student

Teacher: "Why can't you read this paragraph? It's not that difficult. You're not even trying."

Student with dyslexia: feels frustrated and embarrassed

Teacher: "You need to pay more attention in class and practice reading more often."

Studentwith dyslexia: feels discouraged and anxious

Teacher: "You're not going to succeed if you can't read properly. You need to work harder."

Notes for the trainer
In this example, the teacher is not effectively communicating with the student with dyslexia. The teacher is using a demanding tone and not recognising the student's learning difference or the challenges that dyslexia presents. This can lead to the student feeling ashamed, anxious, and discouraged, making it even harder for them to learn and make progress. A more effective approach would be for the teacher to acknowledge the student's dyslexia and offer appropriate accommodations and support, such as providing extra time to read or alternative reading materials. The teacher could also work with the student to develop strategies for improving reading comprehension and build their confidence and motivation.

Scenario 3: Non effective communication between teacher and student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Teacher: "Why can't you sit still and pay attention? You're disrupting the class."

Student with ADHD: feels restless and overwhelmed

Teacher: "You need to focus more and stop distracting others. This is important information you're missing."

Student with ADHD: feels frustrated and anxious

Teacher: "You're not trying hard enough. You need to control yourself and behave."

Notes for the trainer
In this example, the teacher is not effectively communicating with the student with ADHD. The teacher is using a demanding tone and not recognising the student's ADHD symptoms or the challenges that come with it. This can lead to the student

feeling ashamed, anxious, and discouraged, making it even harder for them to control their behaviour and focus on learning. A more effective approach would be for the teacher to acknowledge the student's ADHD and offer appropriate accommodations and support, such as breaks to move around or fidget tools. The teacher could also work with the student to develop strategies for managing their symptoms and improving their focus and attention.

Benefits of Learning activity 1: Scenarios
– Students with dyslexia: Scenarios can benefit students with dyslexia by presenting information in a visual and contextual format. Reading and understanding text can often be challenging for students with dyslexia, but scenarios provide them with a visual representation of different situations, making it easier for them to comprehend and engage with the material.
– Students with ADHD: Scenarios can help students with ADHD by providing structured and organised information. Scenarios break down complex situations into smaller parts, helping to improve attention and focus. The visual aspect of scenarios also aids in holding the students' attention and keeping them engaged throughout the learning process.
– Students with ASD: Scenarios are beneficial for students with ASD as they offer predictable and concrete examples of social situations. This helps them to develop and practice social skills, understanding appropriate responses, and navigating social interactions more effectively.

Learning activity 2: Social stories

Social stories, developed by Carol Gray in 1990, are stories which can be used with students who face intellectual and emotional challenges to exchange information that is personalised and illustrated. These stories are sometimes called social scripts, social narratives or story-based interventions. A social story is a simple and effective tool for teaching children how to do certain things, handle problem behaviours, master social skills, and navigate new or unfamiliar social situations. Social stories can benefit all children and can be particularly beneficial for children who have:
1. Expressive or receptive language delays
2. ADD/ADHD
3. Autism Spectrum Disorder
4. Sensory processing disorders
5. Behaviour difficulties
6. Anxiety
7. Auditory processing disorders
8. Social skill deficits

Social stories benefit children in many ways, including:

Promoting Self-Regulation Skills
A child's ability to manage their emotions and behaviour is tied to stronger academic performance, fewer behavioural difficulties, and higher resilience.

Developing Theory of Mind
Children are taught to take the characters' point of view.

Improving Social-Emotional Skills
Explicitly talking about how the emotions of others can help children better understand how their actions affect others

Clear Expectations
Straightforward explanations with pictures can improve a child's cooperation with a task

Literacy Exposure
Making the connection between real-life events and written stories can improve a child's narrative language skills

Simple Sequencing
Seeing illustrated scenes in order and hearing words like "first", "next", and "last", helps children learn to sequence events

Figure 1: Benefits of social stories for students

<u>Tips for developing a social story</u> (And next comes L, n.d.)

1. **Identify the target behaviour/skill in the title.** Make the title of the social story clear and concise. It should specify exactly what the social story is about, for example, "How to Behave when I am Angry Social Story".

2. **Focus on one thing or event at a time.** Only write about one topic per social story. You do not want to overwhelm your students. So, pick one topic, such as going on a trip, for your social story and write only about that particular topic.

3. **Use pictures to support the text.** Most children with autism or hyperlexia benefit from visual support to accompany the text. Pictures aid in comprehension and help the child see what certain things about the event or thing look like (e.g., a picture of a dentist's chair can show the child what the dentist's office might look like). You can use your own photos, make your own drawings, or search for free stock photos or clipart websites.

4. **Keep the format of the social story simple.** Use a simple format for the social story by limiting the text on each page and by using simple colours and fonts.
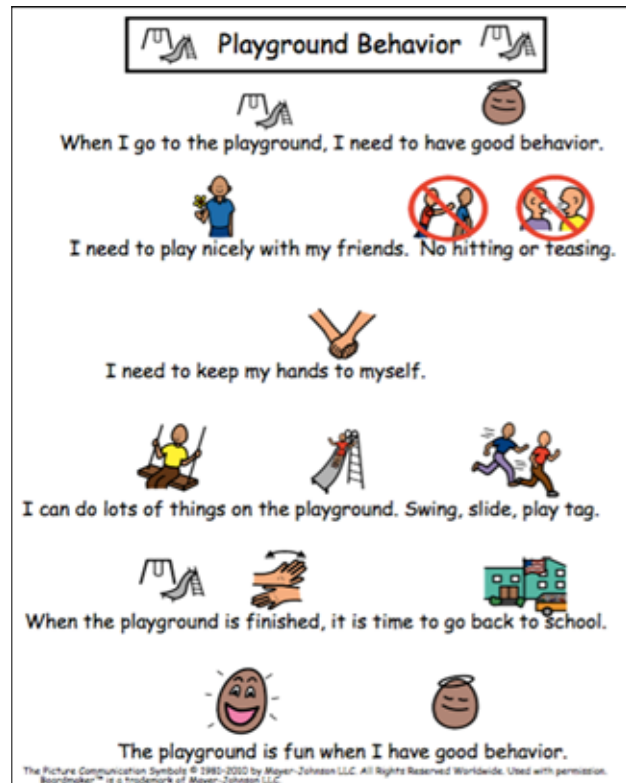
Figure 2: Benefits of Social Stories for students

5. **Break down the event into simple steps.** Try to think of every step possible involved in a certain event or skill and try to include each step in the social story. Since children with autism or hyperlexia are literal thinkers and struggle with abstract concepts, it is best to include the hidden implied steps that neurotypical people generally take for granted. For instance, to prepare my school bag for the next day, I check the lesson plan, I put the necessary books and exercise books in the bag, and then I close the bag.

6. **Include exact phrases or scripts for the student to say.** Use the social stories to teach your child expected responses for the situation so that the child can repeat that exact phrase correctly while actually engaging in the specific situation.

7. **Be descriptive and answer the WH-questions about the event.** Social stories should always include descriptive sentences, which answer the WH-questions like when, who, what, where, why, and how.

8. **Describe how the student, and others, should feel or react.** Social stories should also describe how the child should feel or react to a certain event or skill, for example, "It is okay for me to cry at a funeral". It is also important to include perspective sentences in a social story. Perspective sentences describe the feelings, thoughts, or moods of someone else, for example, "My parents will be so proud of me for learning how to create a presentation on the computer!".

9. **Describe exactly what the student should do.** Social stories should describe exactly what behaviour is expected of the child by writing directive sentences. These directive sentences describe what the child should do during the situation or to master the skill. These directive sentences should always be written in a positive manner (i.e. try to avoid the words "do not").

10. **Keep the language simple and positive.** Avoid metaphors, idioms, or other abstract concepts. The language should always focus on the positive. The social stories should focus on what the child should or can do and not on what the child can or cannot do.

11. **Write the social story in the first person.** Write it from the perspective of the child, as it will help them relate to the story.

12. **Write the social story in the present tense.** Always write the social story in the present tense.

Examples of social stories for students with SEN

An example of the text used in a social story for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder might be as follows:
- **[Title: Recess]**
- Every day I go to recess. **[picture of a school playground or a generic stock photo of a playground]**
- I go to recess after lunch.
- First I put on my jacket. Then I line up. **[picture of a child putting on jacket, picture of lining up]**
- If the weather is nice, I go to the playground. **[picture of a sunny day at a playground]**
- I can choose to go on the swing, the slide, or the jungle gym. **[pictures of children at each piece of equipment]**
- Sometimes I can go straight to my favourite equipment. **[picture of a child going on a swing with no line]**
- Sometimes I wait my turn. **[picture of a child waiting in line at playground]**
- I can choose to play with friends or play alone. **[picture of a child playing with others; picture of a child happily playing alone]**
- When the bell rings, I line up to go inside. **[picture of children lining up]**
- Recess is a great time for exercise and fun. **[happy children at a school playground.]**

The final product may look like this:

Figure 3: Social story example for students with ASD

Further reading and inspiration sources

• Guidance for writing and delivering Social Stories
• USING SOCIAL STORIES TO TEACH SOCIAL SKILLS: A Professional's Guide
• Social Story Creator & Library Application
• [Video] Autism Help – How to Write Social Stories for Kids
• [Video] How to Make Social Stories for Children with Autism – Teaching Materials (3/5) | Autism at Home

Notes for the trainers

Begin with a presentation

Using a PowerPoint presentation provides the theoretical framework of social stories, including:
• Background information
• The benefits for students with disabilities
• Tips on how to develop their own social stories
• Examples of good practices.

Tip: Do not hesitate to use interactive tools, such as videos, to increase your learners' engagement.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lNjVc-xTWd0&t=50s
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbpaGtqQVW4&t=97s
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqyXd85FtXk

Continue with group work:
- Split the audience into teams – each team should be comprised of 5 participants
- Explain the activity to the teams
- Provide them with time and material to prepare 1 or 2 unique social stories per team
- Print the social stories.

Benefits of Learning activity 2: Social stories:
– Students with dyslexia: Social stories benefit students with dyslexia by presenting information in a clear and concise manner. They use simple language and include visual supports, making it easier for students with dyslexia to understand and process the content. Social stories can also help students with dyslexia improve their reading skills and comprehension.
– Students with ADHD: Social stories work well for students with ADHD as they are short, focused, and provide direct instruction. The use of visual supports in social stories helps to maintain the students' attention and engage them in the learning process.
– Students with ASD: Social stories are particularly useful for students with ASD as they provide explicit guidance on social behaviour and help them understand and navigate social norms. Social stories help individuals with ASD develop social skills, enhance communication, and improve their understanding of others' perspectives.

Learning activity 3: Comic strip conversations

Comic strip conversations, created by Carol Gray, are simple visual representations of conversations. They can show:
a) the things that are actually said in a conversation,
b) what people might be feeling,
c) what people's intentions might be.

Comic strip conversations use stick figures and symbols to represent social interactions and abstract aspects of conversations, with the addition of colour to represent the emotional content of a statement or message. By seeing the different elements of a conversation presented visually, some of the more abstract aspects of social communication (such as recognising the feelings of others) are made more 'concrete' and are therefore easier to understand. In a comic strip conversation, the supported person takes the lead role, with teachers offering support and guidance.

Example **symbols** (taken from Gray's 'Comic Strip Conversations', 1994) used to represent a range of concepts that may be involved in a conversation are:
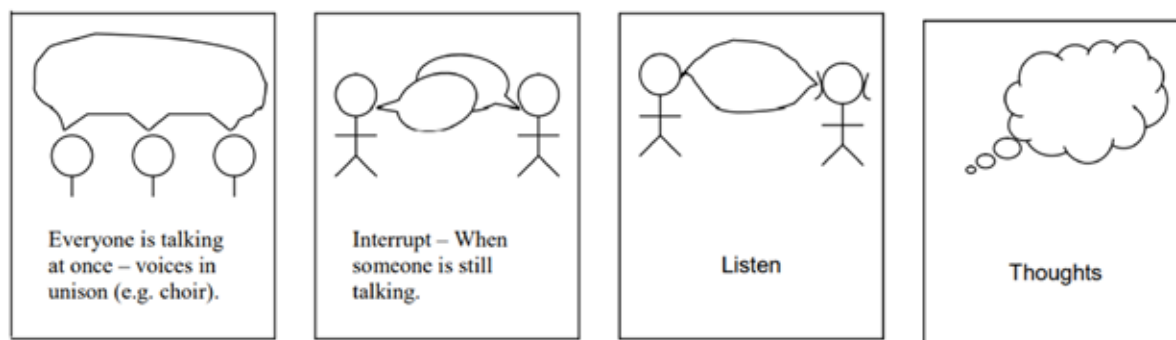

Figure 4: Comic strip conversation example symbols

Examples of **colours** that may be used in comic strip conversations to represent a range of feelings and ideas:

Figure 5: Comic strip conversation example colours

Template examples can be found at the end of this module; however, educators are called to adapt them to their students' needs and let them lead the activity.

When can you use comic strip conversations?

1. Any time a person with intellectual disabilities would benefit from help to identify and discuss 'hidden information' – the kind of information that other people might pick up more easily. For example, what someone might have felt and thought and why they responded as they did.

2. To highlight to the person with intellectual disabilities when they have managed a situation well and/or impacted positively on another person. To draw their attention to an effective strategy they used.

3. To consider an alternative way of responding when things did not go so well, thus providing a suggestion for the person with intellectual disabilities for future occasions.

4. To prepare for an upcoming event by helping the person with intellectual disabilities make predictions about what to expect and brainstorm useful things to do or say or strategies that might support them.

5. Comic strips can be particularly valuable when explaining incidences of sarcasm or light-hearted teasing – when someone's thoughts do not match their words or actions.

<u>How to use a comic strip conversation</u>

1. When introducing comic strips, use a social situation or conversation that went well, to get used to talking and drawing them out. It is very important that the young person does not associate comic strips as only being used to unpick situations that the young person feels have 'gone wrong'.

Figure 6: Example of a comic strip conversation

2. Do not use a comic strip when the young person is upset. Find a time when you are both calm and if possible, in a quiet space.

3. Draw who was involved, what was happening and use the talking bubbles to record what was said. Use the thought bubbles to identify how the young person was feeling during the interaction. Be prepared that they might not always know! You may also have to support the young person's understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the other people in the situation.

4. Once you have 'unpicked' the situation or explained the misunderstanding, then you can consider possible solutions or alternative ways of managing the situation with the young person. You might draw out other possible scenarios and explore the different outcomes. This can help the young person to understand how they might manage the same situation differently next time e.g., "Next time you might come and find the teacher first".

5. Some young people like to keep their comic strip conversations in a folder or scrapbook and look at them again. Others want to throw them away as soon as they are done. Everyone is different. Just because it might not work the first time, don't give up.

6. Remember to focus on all the things that the young person does right and not just the bits that did not go according to plan!

Questions that can be used to gather information from the supported person:

a) Where were you?
b) Who else was there?
c) What were they doing?
d) What happened?
e) What did you say?
f) What were you thinking when you said that?
g) What do you think the other person was thinking when you said that?
h) How did you feel at the time?
i) How do you think the other person felt?

Further reading and inspiration sources

Comic Strip Conversations: Colourful, illustrated interactions with students with autism and related disorders
• [Video] Comic Strip Conversations
• [Video] Comic Strip Conversations webinar Nov 2020
• [Video] Comic Strip Conversations: Supporting Communication Through Simple Drawings

Notes for the trainers

Begin with a presentation

Using a PowerPoint presentation provides the theoretical framework of a comic strip conversation, including:
• Background information
• The benefits for students with disabilities
• Tips on how and when to use the comic strip conversation method
• Examples of good practices.

Tip: Do not hesitate to use interactive tools, such as videos, to increase your learners' engagement.

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RTVZ3kFjI0
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mz7JhQmlC6c&t=67s
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yihJiJaPXP8&t=43s

Continue with group work
• Split the audience into teams – each team should be comprised of 5 participants
• Explain the activity to the teams
• Provide them with time and material to prepare 1 or 2 unique comic strip conversations per team.

Benefits of Learning activity 3: Comic strip conversations:

– Students with dyslexia: Comic strip conversations benefit students with dyslexia by presenting information in a visual and sequential format. The combination of text and images helps students with dyslexia follow the conversation more easily, enhancing their comprehension and engagement.

– Students with ADHD: Comic strip conversations work well for students with ADHD as they are visually stimulating and organise information in a structured manner. The visual nature of comic strips helps sustain the students' attention and focus on the conversation.

– Students with ASD: Comic strip conversations are particularly effective for students with ASD as they offer a visual representation of social interactions. They depict nonverbal cues, emotions, and appropriate responses, helping students with ASD understand and communicate in social situations. The visual structure of comic strip conversations also supports their learning style and enhances comprehension.

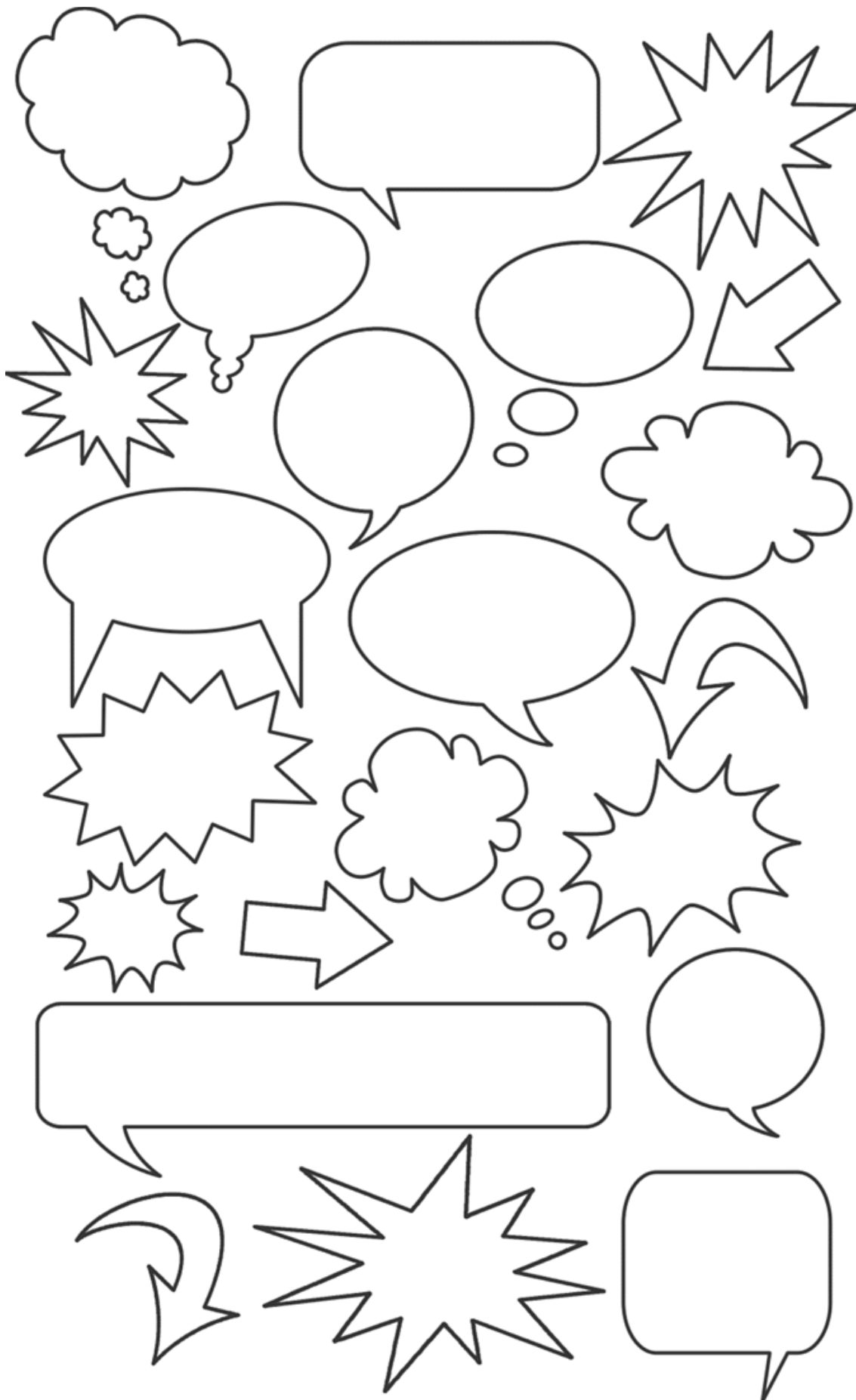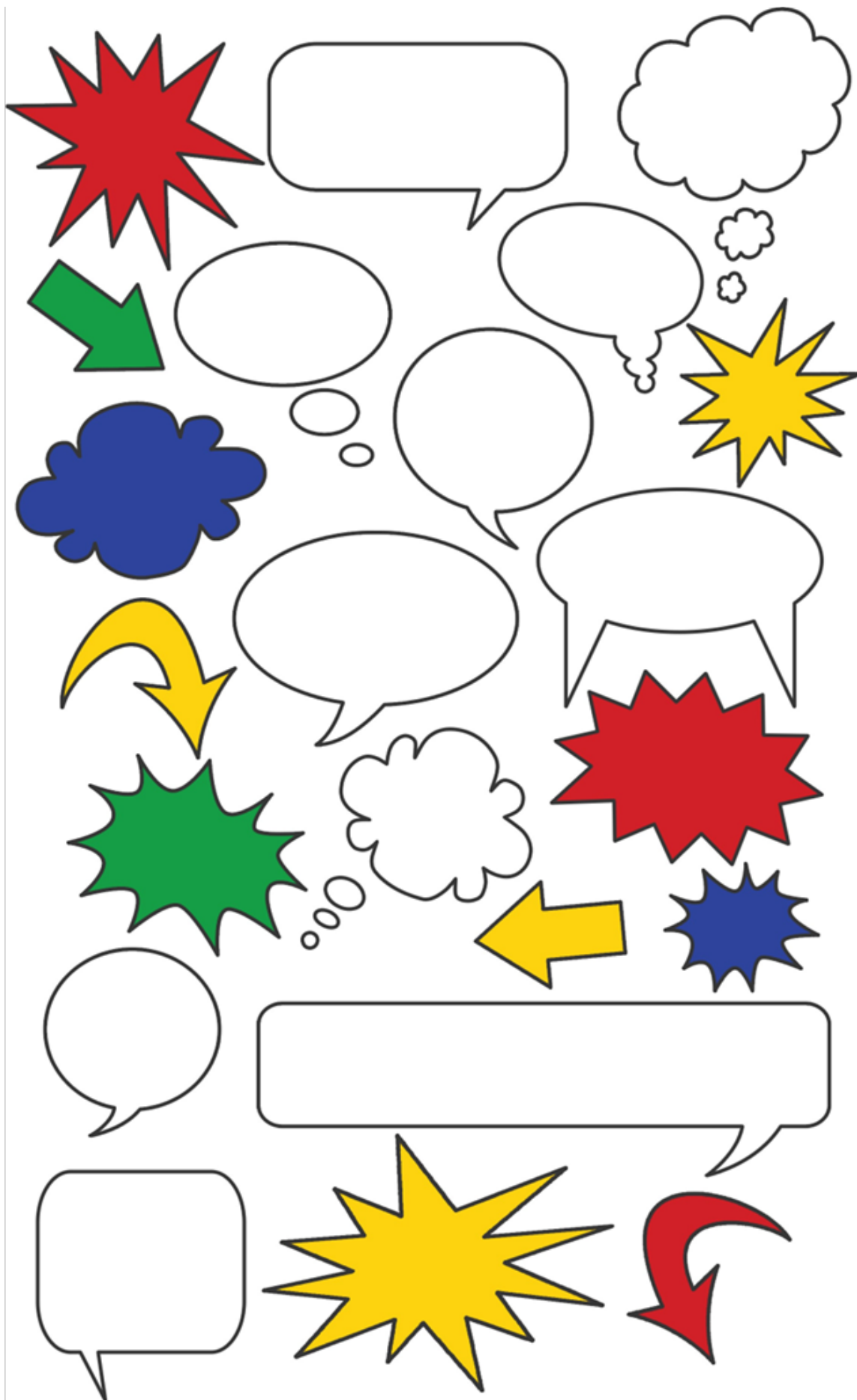**Comic strip templates for Learning activity 3**
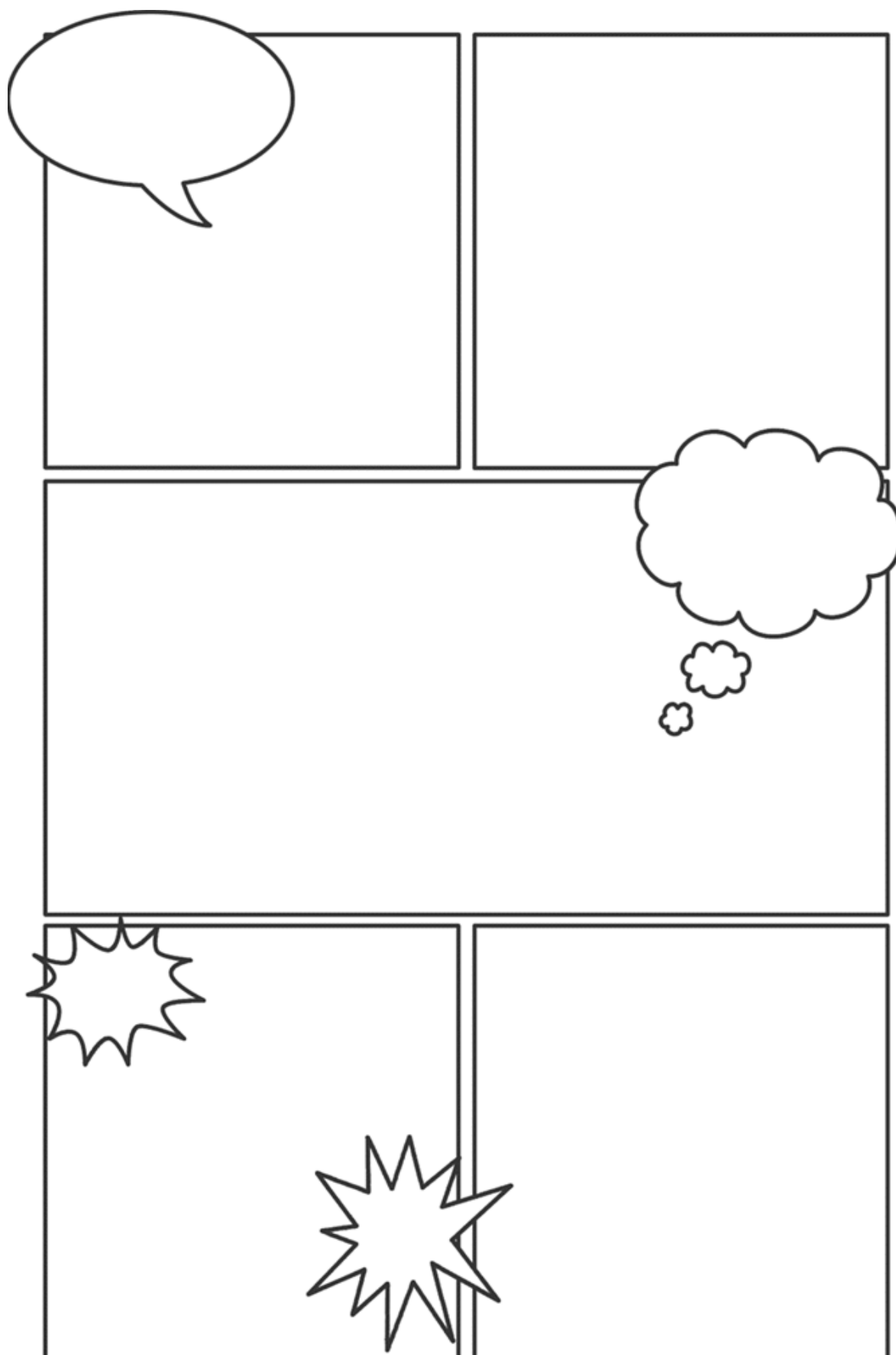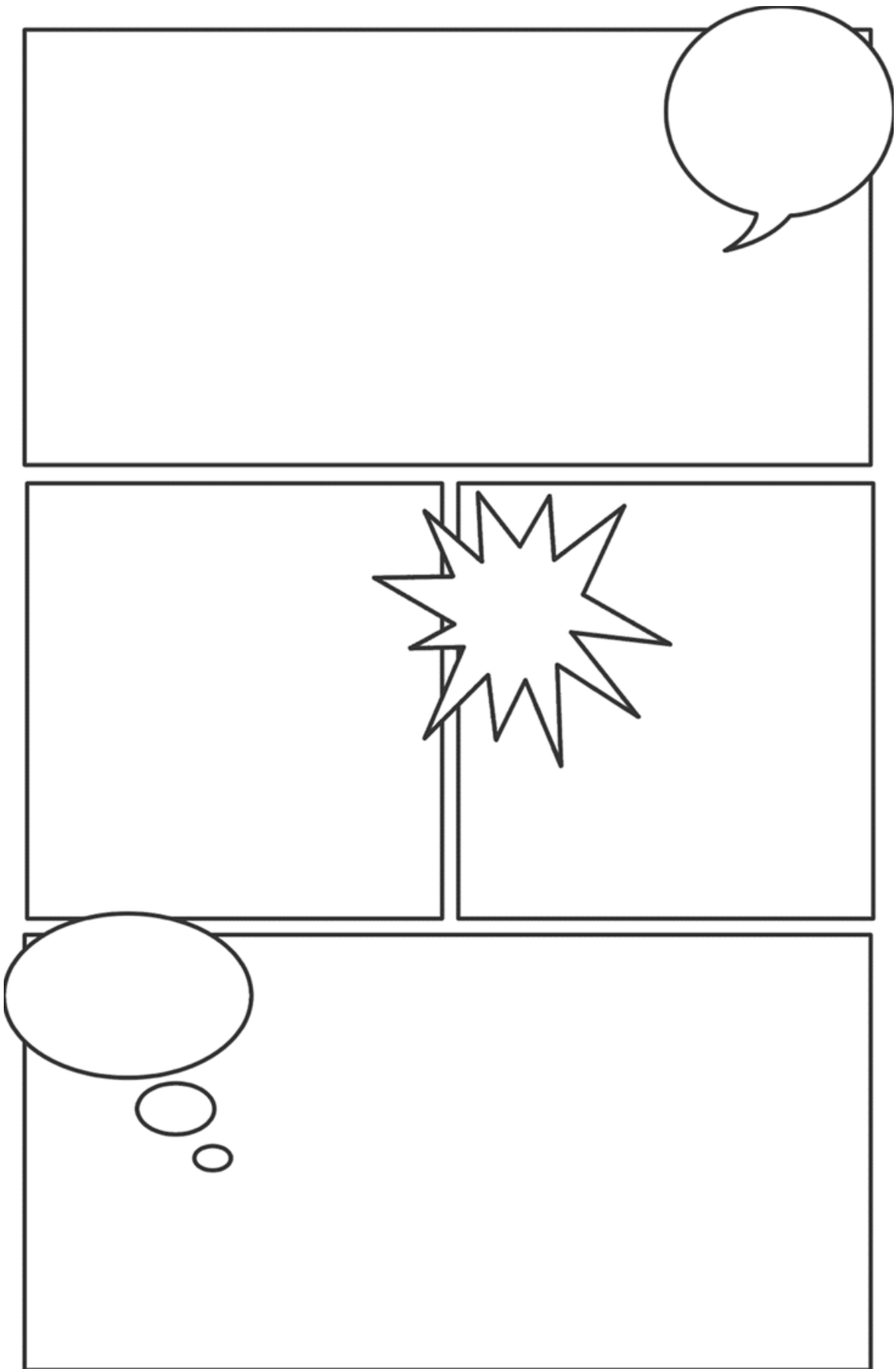
Self-evaluation tools

At the conclusion of each session, incorporating a dedicated period for reflection and interactive self-evaluation would be beneficial. One practical approach could involve strategically placing thought-provoking questions throughout the learning space, allowing participants to share their insights by adding their answers on post-it notes. This method encourages active engagement and fosters a more dynamic and inclusive reflection process.
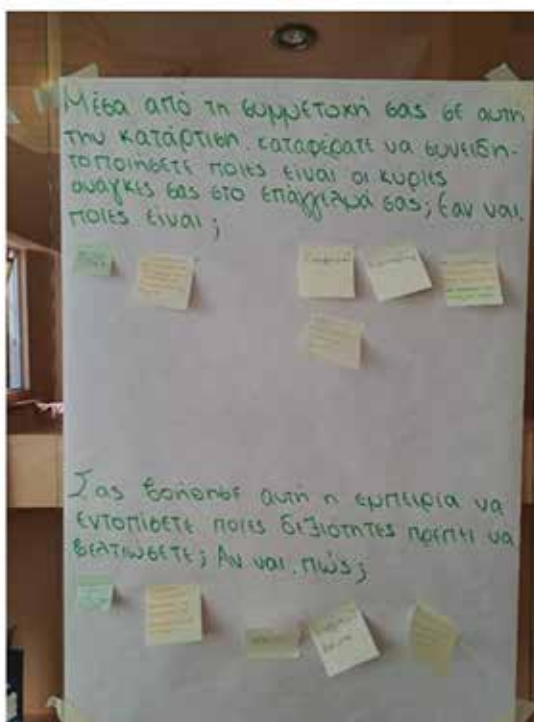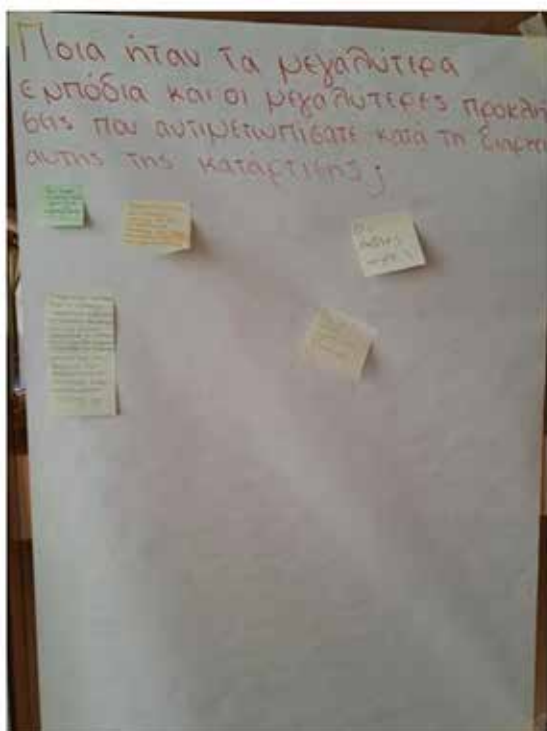
3.8. General recommendations

1. Option of individual work on learning activities

Providing the option for individual work on certain learning activities allows participants to engage with the material at their own pace and delve into specific areas of interest or challenge. This promotes personalised learning and caters to diverse learning styles within the group.

2. Flexible module sessions

While maintaining the total duration of the training, introducing the flexibility to break down the module into multiple sessions can prevent participants from feeling overwhelmed by the duration. This approach acknowledges the importance of avoiding training fatigue and allows for better retention and application of the acquired knowledge.

3. Interactive theory sessions

Shifting from a traditional lecture format, incorporating Q&A at the start of theory sessions serves as a diagnostic tool to explore participants' existing knowledge levels. This interactive approach not only makes the sessions more engaging but also tailors the content to address specific gaps in understanding. The subsequent explanation can then be more targeted and relevant.

4. Adaptability for high-functioning children

It is crucial to highlight that the proposed activities are particularly effective with high-functioning children.

5. Ice-breaking activities at the beginning

Incorporating ice-breaking activities at the outset of the training fosters a positive and comfortable atmosphere among participants. This helps in building a sense of teamwork, creating an environment for collaboration and shared learning throughout the training program. Ice-breakers can include team-building exercises, introductions, or interactive games to break down initial barriers and encourage open communication.

In conclusion, effective communication with students who have special educational needs is crucial for their academic and personal success. By understanding their unique communication needs and adapting our communication styles accordingly, we can establish positive relationships with these students and create an inclusive learning environment. Through this training, we have learned about various communication strategies such as using clear language, using visual aids, active listening, and providing feedback. It is essential to prioritise their individual needs and be patient, empathetic, and respectful while communicating with them. By implementing these strategies, we can foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, where every student has an equal opportunity to succeed.

MODULE 4
Educational materials to support teachers in dealing with a crisis situation

4.1. General information on the topic

Teachers can experience a crisis in different ways, depending on their individual needs and circumstances. Here are some examples of ways teachers can experience a crisis:

1. **Stress:** Teachers can feel a lot of stress due to the difficult situations they find themselves in, such as emotional crises of students, family conflicts or difficult student behaviour.
2. **Emotional fatigue:** Teachers can feel emotionally exhausted when they are constantly exposed to difficult situations and have difficulty dealing with the emotions associated with these situations.
3. **Loneliness:** Teachers can feel lonely when they do not have access to adequate support or when they cannot share their experiences with others.
4. **Hopelessness:** Teachers can feel hopeless when they are unable to solve the difficult situations they find themselves in or when their actions do not bring the expected results.
5. **Impact on health:** Teachers may experience negative physical and mental health impacts from crises, such as health problems, insomnia, difficulty sleeping, difficulty concentrating, digestive problems, and cardiovascular problems.
6. **Impact on relationships:** Teachers can feel the negative impact of crises on relationships with family, friends and other loved ones. They may experience difficulties in communicating and maintaining positive relationships.

The prepared material is used during teachers' own work. It can be used during trainings, teaching staff meetings, and for in-school teacher training. Its aim is to support young educators in crisis situations related to their professional work.

The role of professional development of teachers in preparation for appropriate response in a difficult, crisis and traumatic situation.

The discussed topic is extremely important in the process of efficient functioning of the school. Teachers in kindergartens, schools and educational institutions are often the only people who can recognise a child's mental difficulties and provide them with appropriate help.

Professional development for teachers plays a pivotal and multifaceted role in preparing them to respond adeptly in difficult, crisis and traumatic situations within the educational setting. This intricate process involves a comprehensive exploration of various aspects:

1. Understanding psychological first aid

Professional development programs must delve deeply into the principles of psychological first aid. Teachers need to grasp the fundamentals of providing immediate and compassionate support to students facing emotional distress or trauma.

2. Recognising signs of distress

A nuanced understanding of early signs of distress is crucial. Teachers should undergo training that sharpens their ability to identify behavioural, emotional, and academic indicators, allowing for timely intervention.

3. Trauma-informed approaches

Teachers should be immersed in training that introduces trauma-informed approaches. This includes strategies for creating a classroom environment that is sensitive to the needs of students who have experienced trauma, emphasising safety, trust, and empowerment.

4. Communication skills

Advanced communication skills form a cornerstone of effective crisis response. Professional development should focus on refining teachers' ability to engage in sensitive conversations with students, parents, and colleagues, emphasising active listening, empathy, and clarity.

5. Collaboration with mental health professionals

Collaborative skills are paramount. Teachers should be trained to work effectively with mental health professionals, understanding when and how to involve external resources to ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach to student wellbeing.

6. Crisis response planning

In-depth training on crisis response planning is imperative. Teachers must engage in developing and practicing protocols tailored to different types

of crises, ensuring a proactive and efficient response when faced with challenging situations.

7. Building resilience in students

Strategies for fostering resilience in students should be integral to professional development. This involves incorporating resilience-building activities into the curriculum and creating a classroom culture that supports emotional wellbeing.

8. Self-care techniques

Recognising the emotional toll of supporting students in difficult situations, teachers need training in self-care techniques. This includes understanding stress management, maintaining emotional resilience, and seeking support when needed.

9. Legal and ethical considerations

Detailed knowledge of legal and ethical considerations is imperative. Teachers should be well-versed in their responsibilities, boundaries, and the legal framework surrounding student wellbeing.

10. Continuous learning and updates

Professional development is an ongoing process. Teachers require access to continuous learning opportunities, resources, workshops, and updates to stay abreast of the latest research, methodologies, and best practices in the dynamic field of mental health and crisis response.

In essence, a comprehensive professional development approach ensures that teachers are not only academically proficient but also emotionally resilient and practically equipped to provide effective support in challenging, crisis and traumatic situations within the educational landscape.

4.2. Definitions

Each case of a crisis is different, and therefore it is difficult to define a ready-made solution that would help to emerge from all crisis situations. Nevertheless, there are a few steps that can help you deal with difficult situations:

1. Identify the cause of the crisis. To be able to deal with it, you must first understand what the cause of your crisis is. Is it an emotional problem or is it caused by a difficult external situation?
2. Create an action plan. If you know what you need, try to create an action plan to achieve those goals. This can be, for example, a daily schedule that includes time for work, relaxation and rest.
3. Talk to someone close. In difficult times, it often helps to talk to someone close to you who can listen and provide emotional support.
4. Seek professional help. If you are feeling severely stressed or depressed, consider seeking professional help, such as a therapist or psychologist. They can help you understand and deal with the crisis.
5. Be flexible: don't expect an immediate solution to a crisis. Sometimes it takes a while to get over it. Be open to different solutions and don't be afraid of changes.
6. Find ways to relax. Whatever the cause of the crisis, finding ways to relax and unwind can help. It can be reading a book, listening to music, playing sports or spending time outdoors.
7. Take care of yourself. In difficult situations, it is easy to neglect your health and wellbeing. Remember to eat and drink regularly, exercise and rest, and adapt your lifestyle to your own needs and capabilities.

Of course, these are just a few examples of steps that can help you get out of the crisis. It is important to find solutions that will work best and most effectively for you. Teachers in crisis can use various forms of assistance, depending on their needs and circumstances. Here are some examples of forms of help:

1. Individual therapy. Teachers can use individual therapy to analyse the difficult situations they find themselves in and get support in dealing with them.
2. Support groups. Teachers can use support groups to share their experiences with other teachers and get support from them.
3. Training and workshops. Teachers can benefit from training and workshops to gain the knowledge and skills needed to deal with difficult situations.
4. Legal aid. Teachers can use legal aid if they need help with work-related or other legal issues.
5. Professional help. Teachers can use the help of specialists such as psychologists, therapists and educators to get specialist help in dealing with difficult situations.
6. Rest. Teachers can take advantage of rest and relaxation to regenerate and alleviate the symptoms of the crisis.
7. Literature. Teachers can use different studies, books, articles related to crisis and traumatic situations.

8. Using the project "On the way to excellence – beginner teacher support program" is one of the best practical ways to gain awareness, recognise, and work with conflict situations in the teacher's work.

Teachers in a crisis situation can seek help in different places, depending on their needs and circumstances. Some examples of where teachers can seek help include:
1. School specialists. School psychologists, guidance counsellors, and school counsellors may be available at school and may be able to support teachers in difficult situations.
2. Teachers' unions. The teachers' unions can offer support to teachers in difficult situations, such as therapy sessions, support groups, and legal aid.
3. Psychological services. Psychological services can support teachers in difficult situations and may offer services such as individual or group therapy.
4. Non-governmental organisations. They assist teachers by offering interesting classes within the framework of the core curriculum, they propose additional activities that go beyond the school curriculum and serve the development of students. They help to implement educational, preventive, and educational programs and other tasks resulting from the provisions of the core curriculum and educational law. They train teachers and school head teachers, introduce innovative working methods and new technologies, and help break school patterns. They support teachers in their educational work.

External crises

An external crisis is a situation or event that is difficult or stressful for a person and can have a negative impact on their emotions, thoughts and behaviour. An external crisis can be caused by various external factors, such as illness, job loss, family conflict, natural disaster, or other unexpected events. In such a situation, a person can feel fear, uncertainty, anxiety and even panic. Everyone has their own way of dealing with crises, and there is no one "right" way to overcome them. It is important to seek help if you need support during this difficult time.

Types of external crises that can affect a person:
1. Financial crisis. Not having access to money or having difficulty maintaining financial stability can be very stressful.
2. Health crisis. Illness or injury are situations that can be difficult for the individual and their family to bear.
3. Family crisis. Relationship difficulties with siblings, parents or spouses can lead to a crisis.
4. Work-related crisis. This may include losing your job, having difficulty performing your duties, or conflict with work colleagues.
5. Environmental crisis. Climate change and other environmental problems can lead to stress and anxiety about the future.

6. Political crisis. Political conflicts and political instability (e.g. war) can lead to anxiety and uncertainty.
7. Housing crisis. Moving to a new place or life difficulties (e.g. lack of housing) can be stressful.

Internal crises

Internal crises are situations that are directly related to a person or organisation and can affect their functioning. An internal crisis is a change or breakthrough in a person's thinking, feelings or behaviour that may lead to a change in the way they function. An internal crisis can be caused by various factors, such as puberty, trauma, illness, or other unexpected events. Some examples of an internal crisis include:
1. Identity crisis. When a person starts asking themselves questions about who they are and what they want to achieve in life.
2. Existential crisis. When a person starts to question themselves about the meaning of life and their place in the world.
3. Developmental crisis. As a person begins to mature and goes through developmental stages, they may feel insecure and have difficulties with these changes.
4. Traumatic crisis. When a person experiences severe stress or trauma, they may experience an emotional crisis.
5. Personal crisis. When a person has to face difficult personal issues, such as illness or the loss of a loved one, they may experience an emotional crisis.

Internal crises are a natural part of life and can be an opportunity for growth and change. It is important to find effective ways to deal with difficulties and seek help and support.

Crises and teacher's authority

A teacher's authority is founded in the reputation, respect, and recognition in the eyes of students and others. They build it based on the knowledge, competences and skills held, as well as the way they conduct classes and educate their students. A teacher with authority is able to effectively transfer knowledge and skills, as well as shape the attitudes and behaviour of their students. A teacher's authority is related to the fact that they are perceived to be trustworthy and deserving of respect, and they are seen as experts in their field. A teacher's authority is of key importance a sit enables effective education and facilitates positive relationships with students.

Factors – crisis situations that may reduce a teacher's authority:
1. Lack of substantive preparation for classes – if a teacher is not well prepared to conduct classes, it will be difficult for them to gain the respect and trust of their students.

2. Lack of consistency in the application of rules and observation of school regulations – if a teacher does not apply clear rules and fails to comply with school regulations, it will be difficult for them to gain authority among students.
3. Lack of empathy and inability to establish good relationships with students – if a teacher is unable to establish good relationships with students, it will be difficult for them to gain their respect and trust.
4. Inability to deal with difficult situations and conflicts – if a teacher is unable to effectively and professionally deal with difficult situations and conflicts, it can lead to a decrease in their authority.
5. Inappropriate teacher behaviour– such as disrespect for students or inappropriate behaviour towards other teachers or parents, can lead to a decrease in a teacher's authority.

Crisis intervention in a situation of peer violence at school

According to the World Health Organisation,[101] violence is the deliberate use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that causes or is likely to cause injury, physical harm, death, psychological pain, developmental disability or deprivation.

Mobbing[102] (from the word 'mob', meaning 'crowd', 'community') is defined as the harassment of an individual, usually by a group. It involves the exercise of psychological terror: accosting, isolating, backbiting, unfriendly statements and behaviour of a group or person towards another group or person, aimed at excluding a specific person from a circle of friends or a professional group. A mobber subjects the victim to long-term economic, psychological, and social violence in order to intimidate, humiliate and reduce their ability to defend themselves. The mobbed person feels it subjectively, but mobbing can also be confirmed inter subjectively. It is a multi-stage process in which the perpetrator uses methods of manipulation ranging from the most subjective and imperceptible by the victim to the most drastic, leading to the victim's social isolation, self-deprecation, sense of injustice, powerlessness and rejection by peers (co-workers), and consequently severe stress and somatic and mental diseases. Persecution can be direct or indirect, up to and including physical violence. It may be limited to harsher treatment (e.g. nobody wants to sit at the same desk with a given person, meet after school or play with them). It is long-term violence, with its origins usually to be found in a conflict, often of little importance. Mobbing frequently results in isolating an individual from a group against their will.

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[101] Adapted from: World report on violence and health, World Health Organisation, Geneva 2002.

[102] S. Orłowski, School against aggression and violence [in:] Kamińska-Busko B., Szymanska J. (ed.) Prevention at school. Guide for teachers, CMPPP, Warsaw 2005.

The term **bullying** (from the word 'bully', meaning 'tormentor', 'oppressor') means, similarly to mobbing, a form of psychological terror among students (or in the workplace). It is often defined as deliberate, repetitive and unprovoked aggressive behaviour of one or a group of perpetrators towards the victim with the intention of causing them physical pain, distress, humiliation or terror, most often in front of a group of 'spectators', with a clear imbalance of power – the victim's inability to defend themselves and a sense of impunity of the perpetrator.

TYPES OF BULLYING[103]			
Direct bullying		**Indirect bullying (hidden)**	
Physical pushing, spitting, kicking, hitting, taking and hiding things, forcing to perform humiliating, ridiculing and repulsive acts, including those of sexual nature.	Verbal (emotional) threatening, humiliating by name-calling, ridiculing, making faces and provoking.	Relational backbiting, spreading rumours, getting others to isolate, reject, and ignore the victim.	Cyberbullying – posting defamatory information online (e-mails, blogs, social networks).

Crises are complex phenomena. Those working with them are looking for relatively simple and effective models of intervention. The classic model of crisis intervention is to provide emotional support, a sense of security, and reduce anxiety. In crisis intervention, it is important to respond empathically and practically to the needs of the person in crisis.

Gilliland's[104] six-stage model of crisis intervention includes successive stages designed as an integrated problem solving process. The diagram below presents the Gilliland model with a synthetic description of the individual steps.

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[103] Collective work. (2021). CRISIS. Quick response. A guide for the teaching staff of educational institutions. Warsaw. Education Office of the Capital City of Warsaw. WCIES.

[104] R. K. James, B. E., Gilliland, Crisis Intervention Strategies, Wyd. PARPA, Warsaw 2008.

Assessment:
Far-reaching, continuous, dynamic throughout the crisis; defining current and past situational crises in terms of a student's ability to cope with difficulties; degree of danger; ability to operate. Used to form an opinion on the course of action that should be taken by the person conducting the intervention.

Hearing	**Action**
Listening: dealing with the student, observing, understanding and responding with empathy, sincerity, respect, acceptance and care; non-judgmental.	Engage in the intervention in a non-directive, directive or cooperative manner – depending on the assessment of the student's condition and the availability of support within the school environment.
1. Define the problem	**4. Consider the possibilities**
Recognise and define the problem from the student's point of view. Use active listening, including open-ended questions. Pay attention to both verbal and non-verbal messages sent by the student.	Help the student in the search for choices in terms of a possible course of action at the specific moment in time. Help them find support and identify ways of dealing with the difficulties experienced by them and encourage them to employ positive thinking.
2. Keep the student safe	**5. Draw upa plan**
Assess the seriousness of the threats to mental and physical safety of the student in terms of danger to their life and complete loss of their ability to function. Assess the situation and, if necessary, make the student aware of alternative behaviours for impulsive self-destructive actions.	Help your student develop a realistic, short-term plan identifying additional sources of support and coping mechanisms. The plan should include specific actions that the student can understand and claim as their own.
3. Provide support	**6. Get the student to commit to take action** (e.g. write down a contract)
Convince the student that the person conducting the intervention is truly supportive. Convey (in words, tone of voice and body language) caring, positive, non-possessive, non-judgmental, accepting and personal commitment to the cause.	Help the student to engage in decisive, positive actions that they can consider their own and realistically finalise and accept them.

The end of a crisis

A crisis can end in many ways, depending on its initial cause and circumstances.

1. Resolution of symptoms: Sometimes a crisis subsides, and the person regains emotional balance and wellbeing.
2. Dealing with the problem: A crisis can end with solving the problem that caused it. This may be, for example, a change of job, treatment of an illness or obtaining support from relatives.
3. Change of mindset: Sometimes a crisis can lead to a change of mindset and attitude towards the world, which will allow one to better deal with difficult situations in the future.
4. Lifestyle change: A crisis can cause a person to change their habits, which can improve their health and wellbeing.
5. Help: In some cases, a crisis may be ended with treatment, e.g. pharmacological, psychotherapeutic, or ad hoc.

As you can see, there are many different ways in which a crisis can end. It is important to find solutions that allow the affected person to regain emotional balance and wellbeing.

Examples of training areas that should be available and addressed periodically at teaching staff meetings:

1. Effective communication (with both adults and children)

Effective interpersonal communication is an important element of a teacher's work. This means that teachers should be aware of their communication needs and be able to communicate effectively with students, parents, fellow teachers, and others at school.

Effective interpersonal communication includes several important elements such as:
• listening carefully,
• speaking clearly and understandably,
• using language appropriate for the audience,
• using the right tone of voice,
• maintaining the right body posture,
• using appropriate communication strategies.

Teachers should also be able to recognise and resolve interpersonal conflicts and adapt their communication to different situations.

2. Identifying emotions and stress and dealing with them effectively

Identifying and dealing with emotions is an important part of a teacher's job as emotions can affect their relationships with students, as well as their ability to work as part of a team and their efficiency. Teachers should be aware of their emotions and be able to recognise and manage them.

One of the important steps in dealing with emotions is identifying and naming them. Teachers should be able to recognise when they feel anxious, nervous, or tired and name these emotions.

The next step is to understand the reasons for these emotions and consider whether they are fitting to the situation. Teachers should also be able to recognise and resolve interpersonal conflicts and adapt their communication to different situations.

Dealing with stress is just as important. This may include relaxation techniques such as breathing or meditation, as well as avoiding work overload and taking care of one's physical and emotional health.

3. Counteracting professional burnout

Mitigating teacher burnout requires a nuanced and comprehensive approach that encompasses various dimensions of educators' professional lives. Central to this effort is the cultivation of a school culture that prioritises support, collaboration, and a sense of community. When teachers feel valued and connected within their professional environment, they are more likely to sustain their passion for teaching.

Ongoing professional development plays a critical role in providing teachers with the necessary tools to navigate the challenges of their roles. This includes training programs focusing on stress management, coping strategies, and self-care. By investing in the continuous growth of educators, schools contribute to their resilience and ability to handle the demands of the profession.

Promoting a healthy work-life balance is fundamental in preventing burnout. Schools should actively discourage excessive work hours and encourage teachers to take breaks, fostering an environment that recognises the importance of their wellbeing beyond their professional responsibilities.

Recognising and celebrating teachers' achievements, whether through formal acknowledgment or informal appreciation, creates a positive work environment. Acknowledgment fosters a sense of accomplishment and validation, contributing to teachers' overall job satisfaction.

Mentorship programs can be instrumental in providing guidance and support to educators, especially those newer to the profession. The exchange of experiences and insights within a mentorship framework not only aids professional development but also fosters a supportive network within the school community.

Providing resources for continuous professional growth is crucial for maintaining teachers' engagement and enthusiasm. Access to workshops, conferences, and learning materials allows educators to stay updated on best practices, contributing to their sense of professional fulfilment.

Peer collaboration opportunities further enhance the support structure within a school. Facilitating an environment where teachers can share experiences, strategies, and challenges creates a sense of solidarity, reducing feelings of isolation.

Addressing workload concerns is pivotal in preventing burnout. Schools should regularly assess and adjust work expectations to ensure they align with realistic and manageable standards, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of educators' responsibilities.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) offering counselling and support services can provide crucial assistance to teachers facing personal or professional challenges. Access to such resources underscores a school's commitment to the holistic wellbeing of its staff.

Encouraging a growth mindset among teachers fosters resilience. Viewing challenges as opportunities for learning and development, rather than insurmountable obstacles, promotes a positive and adaptive approach to the dynamic nature of the teaching profession.

In summary, the prevention of teacher burnout requires a concerted effort across various dimensions, from creating a supportive culture to providing continuous professional development and recognising educators' contributions. A holistic approach acknowledges the complex nature of teachers' roles and strives to create an environment that nurtures their wellbeing and professional satisfaction.

4.3. Tools

The section below provides examples of crisis procedures to be implemented at schools. Crisis intervention can limit the effects of traumatic experiences. Its application to children and adolescents seems to be particularly valuable as at the start of their lives it can protect them against the full development of symptoms of PTSD. The effectiveness of crisis intervention is related to compliance with the rules of its conduct. Help should be provided intensively and immediately after the event, it should be focused on the effect and the central problem, taking into account the resources of the person experiencing the crisis and available external support.[105]

1. Infectious diseases

After receiving a notification, from, e.g. parents or the media, of a suspected dangerous infectious disease contracted by a student:
1. Verify the suspicion with:
    a) a doctor – if possible;
    b) the public health inspector on duty.
2. Together with the public health inspector on duty, determine how to proceed.
3. Notify the relevant education authorities.
4. Ensure compliance with the recommendations issued by public health services by school employees and students.
5. Prepare a suitable notification for students and parents.

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[105] Group work. (2021). CRISIS. Quick response. A guide for the teaching staff of educational institutions. Warsaw. Education Office of the Capital City of Warsaw. WCIES.

6. Arrange (if necessary) a meeting for an infectious disease specialist or representative of epidemiological services to meet with parents.

Always follow the recommendations of public health services and other competent services.

2. Suspicious item or package at school

Stay calm!

1. Isolate the site and secure the room.
   ATTENTION!
   No one is allowed to approach, open, touch or smell suspicious items.
2. Make sure that the windows are closed, the ventilation and air conditioning systems are turned off and there is no air movement in the room.
3. Secure the suspicious item or package – containing suspicious liquid or solid content (powder, dust, gel, foam, or other).
4. Call or designate a person to call the emergency number: 112.
5. Determine who (if anyone) had contact with the suspicious item or package.
6. Make sure those identified as having had contact with the suspicious item or package wash their hands thoroughly.
7. Next, gather them in one room and ensure they don't come into contact with anyone else, staying isolated until the competent services arrive.
Once the competent services arrive, follow their instructions carefully.

3. Terrorist threat

a) Entry of attackers into the facility
   Stay calm!
   1. Surrender to the will of the attackers – follow their orders carefully.
   2. Try to draw the attackers' attention to the fact that they are dealing with people (show yourself and others as humans, addressing students by their names) to increases everyone's chances of survival.
   3. Always ask for permission, e.g. when you want to approach students with a command.
   4. Memorise details of the kidnappers and surroundings – this information can be valuable to the emergency services.
   5. Try to reassure the students – control your own emotions as much as possible.
   6. Until the exit command is issued:
      – do not let the students out of the room or look out of doors and windows,
      – have the students lie down on the floor.
   7. Follow the instructions issued by the anti-terrorist group.
      ATTENTION!

Be prepared to be brutally treated by the police. Until you are identified, you are a potential terrorist to them.

8. Following completion of the rescue action:
   – check your students' are with you to make sure that everyone has left the building –notify the police of any missing students,
   – don't let any of your students walk home alone,
   – keep a record of the students being picked up by their parents/authorised persons.

b) Active shooter on school premises

In case of direct contact with the attacker:

1. Have the students lie down on the floor.
2. Try to calm the students down.
3. Make sure the students do not turn their backs on the attacker when following orders to move.
4. If the attacker gives orders, make sure that the students follow them, ensure that they do so calmly – a sudden movement can increase the attacker's aggression.
5. If possible, call the emergency number: 112.
   ATTENTION!
   Stay on the line and try to provide an ongoing report as to what is happening.
6. Once the situation is under control:
   – check for injured students and possible hazards resulting from the use of fire-arms(e.g. fire),
   – call or designate a person to call the emergency number: 112.
   – provide first aid to those most in need of it,
   – if the use of firearms caused another hazard, it should be dealt with accordingly.

c) Bomb threat

Case 1 –Receiving a bomb threat

Stay calm!

1. When the bomb threat is received via telephone:
   – listen carefully,
   – remember as much as possible,
   – if possible, record the conversation, if not, try to take notes,
   – pay attention to the details of the speaker's voice and other characteristics, and any sounds in the background,
   – never hang up the phone first,
   – if your phone has the caller ID feature–note the number down.
2. If the bomb threat is received as a written message, secure it so that no one touches it – it will have to be handed over to the police.
3. Immediately after the call, call the emergency number: **112**.

4. Inform school staff and students about the threat in a calm way as not to give rise to panic.
5. Order evacuation in accordance with applicable procedures.
ATTENTION!
Instruct students to bring their personal belongings: backpacks, bags, etc.
6. Secure important documents, money.
7. Turn off or ask the technical staff to turn off the gas supply and electricity.
8. If you find a suspicious item, do not touch or open it.
9. Restrict access to the site by third parties as far as possible,
10. Try to find the owner of the item.

Once the competent services arrive, follow their instructions carefully.

Case 2 – Detection of a bomb (suspicious object)
Stay calm!
1. Do not touch the suspicious object.
ATTENTION! If you see a "bomb", it means you are within its range.
2. Call the emergency number: 112.
3. If possible, secure the area in a way that prevents access by third parties – do not expose yourself and others to danger.
4. Inform school staff and students about the threat in a calm way as not to give rise to panic!
5. Order evacuation in accordance with applicable procedures.
6. Secure important documents, money.
7. Turn off or ask the technical staff to turn off the gas supply and electricity.
8. Open windows and doors.
9. Remove all flammable materials from the area.
10. Do not use radio devices (radio phones, mobile phones).

Once the competent services arrive, follow their instructions carefully.

Case 3 – Bomb explosion:
Stay calm!
1. Assess the situation in terms of the number of people injured and determine whether the explosion has caused any other hazards.
2. Call the emergency number: **112**.
3. Provide first aid to those most in need of it.
4. Check the safety of escape routes, and then order evacuation in accordance with applicable procedures.
5. If the explosion caused another hazard, it should be dealt with accordingly.

Once the competent services arrive, follow their instructions carefully.

4. A student's suicide attempt

1. Determine and verify the type of incident.
2. Do not leave the student alone.
3. Remove any objects that might enable the student to follow through with their attempt.
4. Quietly lead the student to a safe, secluded place.
5. Gather preliminary information about the circumstances of the incident.
6. Call for help (ambulance, fire department, police) – depending on the need, call the emergency number: 112.
7. Make sure that the intervention of the competent services is discreet.
8. Notify the relevant education authorities.
9. Make a quick assessment of downstream risks.
10. Notify parents/legal guardians.
11. Protect the student and others from unnecessary trauma (e.g. media, witnesses, etc.).
12. Provide psychological support to the student.

5. A social and behavioural crisis

1. Assemble a crisis team, jointly assess the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural aspects of a required crisis response, establish rules for contacting people or groups involved in the crisis, including a media contact strategy.
2. Designate a person that will be responsible for communication with the media.
3. Identify the main problems or "crisis triggers", create and explore alternatives.
4. Organise a teaching staff meeting and ensure reliable minutes are taken.
5. Be clear about things: talk about aggression, violence, bullying, name calling, sexual harassment, lying – rather than 'bad behaviour', 'disgraceful behaviour', 'inappropriate behaviour' in general), and identify the specific rules and rights that have been violated.
6. Discuss the consequences of the crisis for all members of the school community (not just the students).
7. Encourage those who have caused damage (if any) to think about remediation.
8. Agreeing with the teaching staff how to design and implement methods of preventing future situations in which educational problems and difficult situations, will take on crisis proportions.
9. Always be ready to openly talk with teachers about any concerns that the students bring to your attention.

6. Lesson disruption

Disrupting the course of a lesson should be understood as any student activities that prevent the normal implementation of teaching and learning activities (vulgar behaviour towards peers and the teacher, loud conversations, walking around the room, lack of reaction to the teacher's instructions).

1. If the behaviour of a single student or several students does not allow the teacher to carry out the lesson normally, they should send the class head to notify the school counsellor, and if they are not found, to the school office. The school office is obliged to immediately notify the school head teacher of the situation.
2. The teacher may also ask for assistance from a member of the school's non-teaching staff. This employee is obliged to help the teacher.
3. The school counsellor is obliged to go to the classroom indicated by the teacher and find the disturbing students, and, if necessary, remove them from the classroom to a separate room, e.g. to the educator/psychologist's office or in justified cases, to the school head/deputy head's office.
4. The school counsellor conducts a conversation with the students and determines the consequences of the behaviour depending on the misconduct committed.
5. If a student has seriously violated the rules in force at the school, at the request of the counsellor, the teacher will notify the student's parents of the incident.
6. If a student has grossly violated the rules, the counsellor will notify the school head/deputy head and call the parents to come to the school immediately.
7. If the lesson is disrupted due to an incident covered by other procedures, the applicable procedure should be followed.
8. Other teachers should not be disturbed during lessons (e.g. teachers whose students have recently committed a misconduct).

7. Aggressive student behaviour

1. A teacher observing such behaviour is obliged to stop it using verbal or physical persuasion.
2. Notify the student's form teacher of the incident.
3. The form teacher conducts a conversation with the student in the presence of the teacher – a witness of the event (identification of the victim, aggressor, witness, assessment of the event, drawing conclusions).
4. The form teacher makes a note (description of the event, participants, perpetrator, injured party) of the incident in the class record book.
5. The form teacher informs the parents of the incident.
6. The form teacher reports the matter to the school counsellor and the school head teacher/deputy head teacher.
7. The form teacher, in consultation with the counsellor and the school head teacher/deputy head teacher, agrees on sanctions against the perpetrator of the incident based on the school's statute.

8. The form teacher informs parents (verbally or in writing) of the consequences applied to the student.

8. Student accident

1. In the event of an accident involving a student, any school employee who has learned about the accident is to immediately provide care to the injured person, in particular by bringing in professional medical assistance, and, if possible, providing the injured person with first aid.
2. The employee brings the injured person to the doctor's office (school nurse), notifying the head teacher/deputy head teacher immediately afterwards.
3. If the teacher has classes with the class at that time – they ask a colleague teaching in the nearest room to supervise their class.
4. If the doctor's office is closed, the injured person is handed over to the head teacher/deputy head teacher who takes responsibility for providing assistance.
5. If the accident is caused by a technical malfunction of a classroom or equipment – the site of the accident should be left undisturbed for the purpose of visual inspection.
6. If the accident happens in the evening (evening parties, discos, etc.), and the school head teacher/deputy head teacher is not present, the teacher makes an independent decision on the course of action.
7. In more difficult cases, the teacher calls an ambulance or the emergency number **112**, and then notifies the head teacher/deputy head teacher by phone, and then notifies the parents.
8. If the accident happens during a school trip – all relevant decisions are made and taken responsibility for by the person organising the event.
9. The responsible person notifies the student's parents.
10. The head teacher/deputy head teacher immediately notifies:
    − the occupational health and safety inspector,
    − the governing body of the school.
11. The prosecutor and head of the local board of education are to be notified immediately of all fatal, serious, and collective accidents.
12. The public health inspector for the area is to be immediately notified of an accident resulting from poisoning.

9. Communication with the media in crisis situations

A crisis situation is an extreme departure from the norm, something sensational that the media are very interested in. They cannot be underestimated as they have a wide reach and high credibility.

1. The head teacher contacts the media or appoints a person responsible for communication with the media.

2. Only the appointed person gives interviews (no one else from the teaching staff or school employees).
3. The person responsible for communication with the media prepares statements, e.g. on the following questions:
    − Why has there been a crisis situation?
    − What are or could be its consequences?
    − Who is responsible, who is the perpetrator?
    − Who can gain and who can lose because of it?
    − Could the situation get worse?
    −Are political repercussions possible?
    − Is the crisis a part of something bigger?
4. The person responsible for communication with the media adheres to the following guidelines:
    − Be the first to talk about the bad news.
    − Be absolutely sure of the facts and statements you make.
    − Maintain coherence, logic and consistency of the message.
    − Do not disclose confidential information to the public.
    − Analyse data.
    − Do not speculate, cast suspicion or offer hypotheses.
    − React quickly and decisively to rumours by denying them and demonstrating their falsehood or inanity.
    − Keep your nerves in check and don't count on understanding from those demanding explanations and awaiting information.
    − Show that the school head teacher is in control of the situation and has a vision to get out of it.
    − Do not reveal the names of the victims before the family finds out.
    − Always express sympathy and concern for any losses, suffering, casualties, damages, even if they are inevitable and fully justified.

When communicating with the media, a school employee has certain strategies to choose from. Each of them has its advantages and disadvantages. The choice of strategy belongs to the head teacher and those providing support in the given crisis situation.

COMMUNICATION IN A CRISIS –CONDUCT STRATEGIES	
DEFENCE BY ATTACK – strong opposition to demands and accusations, firm adherence to one's position, confrontational behaviour, attacking in advance	
BENEFITS: ● determination deters for any future incidents, ● attack unites, gives a sense of strength, eliminates the weak in one's own ranks	DEFECTS: ● explosion of tension, ● difficult to revert to other attitudes, ● inevitable victims, ● being seen as an intimidating bully

DEPRECIATION – ignoring the incident, presenting it as trivial, not worth discussing, laconic messages	
BENEFITS: • time takes its course, it makes judgment less severe	DEFECTS: • possible to misjudge the situation
SILENCE – not commenting and not responding to accusations and demands, avoiding confrontation	
BENEFITS: • we avoid giving fodder to our "enemies"	DEFECTS: • we can be provoked, accused of pride
INFORMATION NOISE – 'burying' a crisis situation in a multitude of other information provided to the public, bombarding the public with messages that only address the real issue to a small extent, being highly active, taking full initiative in terms of any communication	
BENEFITS: • no one can accuse you of pride and ill will	DEFECTS: • you can get confused and end up issuing contradictory messages, • a large volume of material poses the threat of different interpretations being made
SUBSTITUTE TROUBLE – causing or indicating another problem, crisis, thereby diverting public attention away from the real issue	
BENEFITS: • if the problem or crisis situation requires that the other issue be taken care of, then it's OK	DEFECTS: • self-interest, • someone can see through you
COOPERATION – cooperation with all participants of a crisis situation in such a way as to minimise tensions, conflicts and seek clarification of all the issues that require it, however, while maintaining our own values, standards and priorities	
BENEFITS: • building a good basis for contacts in the future	DEFECTS: • time consuming, • lots of attention and patience
STRIPPING BARE – confession of guilt, full and unconditional acceptance of demands, claims, conditions, compensation for victims	
BENEFITS: • giving rise to positive feelings towards you, • the crisis situation is over quite quickly	DEFECTS: • showing your hand, • definite loss of reputation, • long road ahead working on recovering your image, • often involves loss of jobs, positions (facing the formal consequences)

10. The end of a crisis

1. Following resolution of a crisis situation, teachers and school staff are obliged to provide support and increase the sense of security. The specificity of a crisis intervention is that it should be undertaken immediately after the event, as soon as possible.
2. In a crisis situation, the head teacher/deputy head teacher is obliged to seek psychological help from a regional psychological and pedagogical counselling centre.
3. The teacher's role is then to support the psychologist in their therapeutic work. Other employees should be aware of the seriousness of this issue.
4. What should carers know:
   − listen to the student,
   − give the student emotional support facilitating emotional release,
   − counteract denial tendencies,
   − assess the current ways of coping,
   − look for proven action strategies,
   − create a help plan.
5. What carers should avoid:
   − comfort the student,
   − giving advice,
   − teaching,
   − suppressing emotional reactions (e.g. making statements such as: 'it's going to be okay', 'don't cry anymore'),
   − hurrying the student,
   − forcing quick decisions.
6. Development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – which is a set of behaviours, emotional reactions and thoughts related to a traumatic event – is a normal reaction to a crisis situation. Symptoms of PTSD usually last for approximately 6 months following participation in a crisis situation.
7. Consequently students can:
   − avoid talking about the incident or focus on it too much
   − have recurrent, intrusive memories, replay the traumatic situation in their minds,
   − have nightmares,
   − experience difficult emotions in situations related to the memory of the trauma experienced,
   − 'remember nothing' – experience psychological amnesia.
8. In addition, a decrease in interests, regression in development, a sense of alienation, fear of planning the future, hypersensitivity to stimuli, trauma memories experienced during posttraumatic panic brought on by a similar stimulus, and different behavioural disorders can be observed.

9. In order for what is considered to be a normal reaction to a crisis not to turn into a chronic one, teachers and educators should ensure that the help of a psychologist is provided to the students, create a climate that allows them to talk about their difficult experiences, enable them to return to normal activities and rhythm of the day – without underestimating what they have gone through, provide clear and transparent explanations of what has occurred, support them by simply being there for them.

4.4. National aspects

GREECE

Live Without Bullying	
Topic/Area	Bullying
Areas of problems faced by teachers	Bullying between students, bullying in the working environment, offensive behaviours/harassment
Description of a crisis situation	Students having psychological problems, being socially isolated, being aggressive, not wanting to go to school or participate in classroom activities, possible incidents of domestic violence
Title	Live Without Bullying
Type of Resource	Online Tool
Date released	2016
Description	Online Counselling platform where young people and adults chat directly to trained and experienced psychologists so as to be assisted in incidents of school and cyber bullying. The program offers webinars for teachers and parents and a game for students.
Purpose/Aim	**Live Without Bullying** is an initiative of KMOP, based on an online counselling platform where young people and adults chat directly to trained and experienced psychologists so as to be assisted in incidents of school and cyber bullying. Our counselling procedure is free of charge, anonymous and confidential, based on a person-centred& cognitive behavioural approach. Since 2016, the LWB platform has supported more than 30,000 students, and our message has reached hundreds of thousands of people in Greece. Live Without Bullying is supported by the Greek Ministry of Education and has been evaluated by COFACE Families Europe as a Good Practice for confronting bullying.

National Aspects	Live Without Bullying was created in 2015, addressing children's and adults' need to find an everyday and-easy-to-use tool where they can seek help in incidents of school and cyber bullying, anonymously and free of charge.
	This specially designed platform allows children to talk – confidentially and anonymously – about their concerns with trained counsellors – psychologists. The platform also educates teachers, parents and children about bullying and allows them to exchange views and seek good practices for combating bullying. Logging in to www.livewithoutbullying.com is very simple and the site is user-friendly. The user needs simply to register using any name and set a password.
	The platform has been introduced to schools across the country – on the basis of a Memorandum of Cooperation signed with the Greek Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Sports. At the same time, several educational activities have been implemented to help children, parents and educators understand why bullying occurs and help them acquire the skills needed for addressing the phenomenon. Since 2015, more than 30,000 students have received support against bullying from psychologists through the platform. Additionally, training on the subject of bullying has been delivered to more than 6,000 students and more than 3,000 educators in over 100 schools, while over 4,000 parents have been informed about the program and received basic advice and guidance on how to identify and handle cases of their children's involvement in bullying.
	Additionally, it made the list of HundrED 2023, with the most impactful innovations in education. (https://hundred.org/en/innovations/live-without-bullying)
References	https://livewithoutbullying.com/en/home-en/

Life guidance for teachers	Happy teachers for better students
Topic/Area	Short-term projects for mobility of learners and staff in school education
Areas of problems faced by teachers	Mental health of new teachers and how to deal with everyday problems
Description of a crisis situation	Personal mental and psychological breakdown, refusal to work, unable to stay cool when dealing with difficult situations, being stressed, not being patient
Title	Life guidance for teachers: Happy teachers for better students.
Type of resource	Erasmus+ project
Date released	2021

Description	The activities of the program will help in the areas of: – adjusting emotions, – finding work-life balance, – happiness and flow, – healthy mind management, – introduction to attention, – time management strategies, – expression of emotions and opinions, – determination and self-confidence inside and outside the classroom: how we communicate our feelings and opinions.
Purpose/Aim	Teachers participating in the program will gain a certain level of self-awareness about their role, their approach to teaching and their participation in a larger group, in order to prevent stress and promote a healthy work-life balance, satisfaction and effectiveness.
National aspects	The interaction of the psychology of students with the psychology of teachers, who are under pressure at personal and work level, leads teachers to despair, physical and psychological stress. The demands of the school environment are increasing and teachers wishing to conscientiously carry out their responsibilities toward their workplace and students have to perform to a certain standard. However, they do not simply act as employees, instead taking a human approach, and as they are not superheroes, there is a limit as to what can be expected of them – where they have to be aware of their own limitations and have the ability to manage them properly. This program is designed to support teachers, providing them with the means to protect themselves from breakdowns and professional burnout. The objective for teachers is to build a healthy environment in which to function well on a physical, spiritual and mental level, and thus be able to perform effectively at work, achieve a sense of fulfilment and support the wider educational community, colleagues, students and parents. Teachers' mental condition impacts directly on their work and students. A stressed, tense, tired and frustrated teacher, however much they wish to, cannot be effective. While, on the opposite end of the spectrum, a happy, optimistic, creative teacher is able to instil in their students a love of learning, promoting their creativity and talents.
References	https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2021-1-EL01-KA122-SCH-000030599

Telephone line	10306 – for psychological support for parents, teachers, children
Topic/Area	Psychological support for parents, educators and children
Areas of problems faced by teachers	Helpline for mental health and support for dealing with issues in the school environment
Description of a crisis situation	Personal mental and psychological breakdown, refusal to work, unable to stay cool when dealing with difficult situations, being stressed, not being patient
Title	Telephone line 10306
Type of resource	Free of charge supportive telephone line
Datereleased	2020
Description	By calling the 10306 telephone line, citizens can choose: Option 1: For psychological help Option 2: For social issues Option 3: For issues concerning children and adolescents
Purpose/Aim	The line was first established because of the multidimensional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic during the first quarantine period.
National aspects	Since April 2022, the line has become a National Line for Psychological Support, accepted and promoted by the Minister of Health, responsible for mental health, Ms Zoe Rapti. It is funded by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance (National Recovery and Resilience Plan). Since then, it has been operated by the Union of Psychological Rehabilitation and Mental Health "ARGO" with the support of the academic team from the First Psychiatric Clinic at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.
References	https://blogs.sch.gr/gymagia1/2021/04/11/grammi-10306-gia-psychologiki-ypostirixi-goneon-ekpaideytikon-paidion/ https://10306.gr/

ITALY

Topic/Area	Prevention of Radicalisation
Title	PRACTICE – Preventing of Radicalisation through Critical Thinking Competences
Type of resource	**Comparative Research Report:** based on desk-based research and primary research through interviews and focus groups with teachers, education professionals and stakeholders about the context, policy and practices in the area of CPD, critical thinking teaching and prevention of radicalisation in the school sector in six European countries. **Open Educational Resource (OER) – Prevention of Radicalisation Program:** innovative tools for secondary school teachers and educational support staff to work effectively with students on critical thinking and prevention of radicalisation.

Date released	2018-2021
Description	The Prevention of Radicalisation Program aims to: • promote critical thinking and effective strategies to engage with students; • develop critical thinking skills in students by using small group work and other activities; • effectively address controversial issues challenging students' misinformed views and perception; • challenge false myths and stimulate understanding and appreciation of diversities; • include basic knowledge of radicalism; • enhance teachers' and school leaders' skills in identifying potential risks and mitigating them.
Purpose/Aim	The Paris Declaration (2015) states teachers need new skills and competences to deal with complex classroom realities and to confidently respond to diversified groups, and the continuing professional development (CPD) programs have been recognised as not always sufficiently relevant to teachers' needs and the challenges they face. To respond to these needs, **PRACTICE** has innovated CPD approaches whilst responding to the relevant need for teaching methods applicable to diverse learners with the aim to prevent radicalisation. Across Europe, schools have a key role to play in preventing radicalisation by promoting common European values, fostering social inclusion, enhancing mutual understanding and tolerance, and developing students' critical thinking about controversial and sensitive issues as a key protective factor against radicalisation. **PRACTIC** addresses the current challenges and needs in terms of preventing radicalisation in the school environment and supporting opportunities for teachers' continuing professional development in this area, by developing, testing and disseminating an innovative approach, using participatory methods and a collaborative process.
National aspects	According to Italian counterterrorism officials, radicalisation is not as a significant problem in Italy as in some other European countries. Nevertheless, Italy is experiencing a tendency towards extremisms on the political spectrum due to political instability, economic stagnation and lack of structural reforms, together with a significantly high youth unemployment rate and other factors such as the raise of immigration flows. In Italy, there are no relevant services for the prevention of violent radicalisation in schools. Projects addressing the educational drive towards diversity and intercultural and interreligious dialogue are carried out by schools in several regions in an autonomous and fragmented way. In the schools involved in the projects, there is a good level of inclusion between students and acceptance of diversity; students show a high acceptance of what they directly know, but at the same time, they demonstrate to perceive the reality in a dichotomic and sometimes confused way and are becoming more and more passive receivers of information they get in contact with, particularly from the Internet. Therefore, even if radicalisation is not perceived as a major treat in Italy, its prevention is seen as fundamental, given the general climate of political and social extremism and propaganda, with the rise of racist episodes, homophobia, bullying and cyberbullying and the high exposure of youngsters to this era of hyper-connection with all the consequences it brings.
References	https://practice-school.eu/

Topic/area	Management of behavioural crises in schools
Title	Management and prevention plan for behavioural crises at school – Piano di prevenzione e di gestione delle crisi comportamentali a scuola
Type of resource	Governmental Paper containing operational suggestions for drafting a crisis prevention and management plan.
Date released	2017
Description	This resource defines what is meant by a behavioural crisis. This work deals with behaviours that can be risky for the children who adopt them, classmates, teachers and school staff. These behaviours can also be often destructive for school equipment and materials. The problem of behavioural crises does not only affect children with special educational needs, and it can be determined by various factors. The paper aims to provide initial support for schools and administrations which inevitably have to deal with this particularly relevant topic.
Purpose/Aim	The resource's goal is to provide tools for writing a school behavioural crisis prevention and management plan. The plan is a fundamental tool for enabling schools to deal with behavioural crisis situations in a specific, organised and competent way. The plan consists of two separate documents: a) a general plan covering the school's management guidelines; b) an individual plan, referred to each student who manifests a behavioural crisis. Each plan consists of two different modes of action: a) pathways to prevent behavioural crises, and to reduce their intensity and frequency; objective: to understand and teach; b) the methods of intervention when a behavioural crisis arises; objective: de-escalation and containment of a crisis, pedagogical debriefing following occurrence of a crisis.
National aspects	The proposal of creating a crisis management and prevention plan at schools is a novelty for Italy. In other countries, the drafting of this document is already mandatory. Italian public schools contain within their classes children and youth coming from very different contexts. Diversity, which is certainly a richness, can also lead to conflict situations between students potentially resulting in behavioural crises. For this reason, attention to diversity can be a powerful prevention tool in a multicultural and multifaceted school context.
References	allegatoPartePrima_def.pdf

Topic/area	Inclusive Education, Tolerance and Acceptance of Diversity, Reciprocal Maieutic Approach
Title	REACT – Reciprocal Maieutic Approach pathways enhancing critical thinking
Type of resource	Report summarising, condensing and framing the status quo and the strategic perspectives with regard to the application of the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA) with the aim of providing details and insights for a better understandings of the challenges and opportunities. National report which will consider the evaluation of the social impact in terms of social pedagogy and pedagogy of the community. Model and Manual is conceived for transferring and exploring the REACT Model in secondary schools. The concept behind the structure and the content of this document is to deliver a teachers' guide, a complete presentation of the REACT approach both as a pedagogical theory and a basis for further "hands-on" intervention and a well-documented compendium of replicable learning activities.
Date released	2020 – 2023
Description	The REACT project intends to develop and implement an innovative methodology for the enhancement of critical thinking (CT) skills acquisition, aimed at fostering inclusive education and the common values of tolerance and acceptance of diversity. The new methodology involves the key actors of the educating communities: teachers, students and parents. The approach starts with the application of a set of laboratories based on the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA) for discovering and discussing the process that leads to the creation of intolerance and spreading of stereotypes.
Purpose/Aim	The general objective of REACT is to develop and implement an innovative method and related practices to foster inclusive education and promote common values.
National aspects	The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated a process of innovation that in previous years had mainly affected primary schools, with changes taking place at a different pace. It is also for this reason that Italian schools started feeling the urgency to keep up with the times and experiment with new methodologies to be able to deal with the class group following the pandemic.
References	https://www.react-erasmus.eu/

Topic/Area	Bullying, Inclusion and Peer Communication
Title	KITE FIGHTERS – Children and Teachers Fighting for Inclusion
Type of resource	National Adaptation Plan – guideline for schools, youth workers and educators on how to implement the Kite Fighters Toolkit in light of local/national circumstances, considering specific curricula and school environments. It is based on research on existing good practices, national school curriculums, and local challenges. Kite Fighter Toolkit – collection of best practices with the aim of training trainers to provide teachers with creative methods. It includes innovative practices based on methods such as symbol work, digital storytelling and folk tales. Teacher Training Curriculum – 30 hours teachers' training course to empower them to use the tools contained in the toolkit. The 30 hours are divided into 10 modules that can be used for different methods and target groups.
Date released	2019 – 2022
Description	The project aims to assist educators working with young people, with a focus on diversities, to strengthen social inclusion, and promote peer-to-peer communication and team building. The project stresses the role of bullying as a major threat for the self-development and for the growth of a healthy and inclusive society. In this context, the project wants to offer a concrete support to teachers and students, providing them with innovative methods and tools to cope with bullying situations and prevent the escalation of conflicts at school.
Purpose/Aim	The Kite Fighters objectives are: – to equip teachers with tools to enhance their capability to support students, promoting development of their mental health/emotional intelligence; – to enable teachers to use creative and innovative methodologies as symbol work, storytelling, folk tales and other non-formal education approaches.
National aspects	In Italy, "inclusive education" is an ongoing process that aims to offer strong education for all students, respecting diversity and different needs, characteristics and educational expectations of students and communities, avoiding any form of discrimination. That is why the Italian legislation adopted the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) "promoting child-friendly services and systems; eliminating all forms of violence against children; guaranteeing the rights of children in vulnerable situations; promoting child participation". The inclusive school helps all students, taking into account their different social and cultural characteristics, and allows student to feel completely integrated and accepted by their peers. Where dealing with violence in school, there is a lot of attention for the victims and the perpetrator, preventing and contrasting any forms of violence. In addition, several national laws contrast bullying and cyberbullying in all expressions with preventive actions.
References	https://kitefighters.eu/

POLAND

Topic/Area	This psychological and pedagogical support program for students and teachers is financed by the Ministry of Education and Science. The main objective of the program is to help combat the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by conducting scientific research aimed at in-depth diagnosis and strengthening the mental wellbeing of participants in the education process at the primary and secondary education level. The program is aimed at: children and youth from primary and secondary schools, students of youth care centres and youth sociotherapy centres, teachers, school head teachers, parents and specialists (e.g. educators, psychologists, therapists).
Title	Psychological and pedagogical support program for students and teachers
Type of resource	1. Implementation of scientific research As part of the program, scientific research is conducted in order to obtain up-to-date knowledge on the mental wellbeing of students, teachers and parents. The results will be used to design training and prevention programs. Quantitative research is conducted by the PAN Foundation. 2. Organisation of conferences along with the publication of scientific publications The program includes the organisation of four scientific thematic conferences along with the publication of scientific publications resulting from scientific research related to diagnosis, therapy, and prevention. 3. Organisation of trainings As part of the program, 10,000 hours of training for teachers, parents, specialists, including specialists from psychological and pedagogical counselling centres will be conducted. 4. Organisation of online support for parents, students, and teachers, as well as specialists from psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, along with conducting qualitative research As part of the consultancy, a research and scientific diagnosis will be carried out, which will be aimed at obtaining practical information, e.g. on the most urgent needs of students, parents and teachers related to the educational process. 5. Development of a Model of Psychological and Pedagogical Support, including a scientific monograph The planned result of the program is the development of a Model of Psychological and Pedagogical Support to be used in the future as a starting point for organising innovative specialist support (psychological and therapeutic) and pedagogical counselling for students, charges of youth care centres and youth sociotherapy centres, teachers and parents. 6. Appointment and operation of a Steering Committee The members of the Committee are practitioners and experts in the fields of pedagogy and psychology who are responsible for implementation and further development of the program's assumptions – also after the pilot period. 7. Promotion of the task along with the creation of an Online Specialist and Counselling Platform The Online Specialist and Counselling Platform is a source of theoretical knowledge and practical examples, useful in reducing the negative effects of problematic situations in education. It guarantees unlimited access to consultations and teaching and research materials, unlimited in time and place. 8. Functioning of Support Coordinators in the regions The implementation of the research process is supervised by appointed and trained Support Coordinators for the program operating throughout the country. They organise the flow of information to local schools and monitor the proper course of diagnosis and training in a given area.

Date released	01.06.2021 – 30.11.2022
Description	The main task is to organise a basic form of support for students, teachers and parents who are looking for information on psychological wellbeing after the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, we are preparing downloadable and viewable materials that may be useful in planning an educational policy that is more friendly to students, teachers, and parents.
Purpose/Aim	The main objective of the program is to help combat the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by conducting scientific research aimed at in-depth diagnosis and strengthening the mental wellbeing of participants in the education process at the primary and secondary education level.
National aspects	The situation related to the functioning of schools and universities in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic has released new forces in many of us – to undertake high-quality didactic, educational and therapeutic activities, as well as to carefully observe and learn about the changed reality. The leitmotif of the conferences will be a discussion on the organisation of the work of schools and educational institutions in the conditions of a pandemic, support for educational services and counselling, raising the professional competences of education employees. The topics of speeches will also oscillate around the issues of digital competences and psychosocial consequences of distance education. The conference is addressed to teachers, pedagogues, specialists, school head teachers and other employees of educational institutions interested in the above issues.
References	https://pwpp.uksw.edu.pl/

Topic/Area	You feel constantly depressed… You can't cope with everyday life... You are experiencing an emotional crisis… You are in a no-win situation… You can't handle stress... You don't want to live... You are a victim of violence… Are you worried about your health… You think „there's something wrong with you"... Can't get over the loss of a loved one...
Title	Support Centre
Date released	24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Description	All people who need help, talk, advice, psychological support or talk to a psychiatrist. In addition, using the number of the Support Centre you can make an appointment with a lawyer or social worker, if necessary.
Purpose/Aim	Assistance for people in mental crisis, where psychologists are on duty ready to listen, understand and accept. They will also provide help in identifying appropriate specialist facilities in a given region of the country where direct assistance can be obtained. The Support Centre aims to enable those in need to talk about their problems and provide them with professional support.

National aspects	The current epidemic situation has greatly increased the level of anxiety and stress felt by the population. As a result, the problem of addictions is growing, the frequency of self-destructive behaviours is increasing, and depressive and neurotic disorders may be intensifying or appearing for the first time. The Support Centre serves to help people in mental crisis seek help.
References	Telephone number for the Support Centre: 800 70 2222 THE LINE IS FREE OF CHARGE AND THE HELP OF A PSYCHOLOGIST IS AVAILABLE 24 HOURS, 7 DAYS A WEEK E-mail: advice@centrumwspiera.pl

Topic/Area	**The Navigating in Crisis – protect yourself, support others program– was created as a preventive response of IPZIN (Institute for Integrated Prevention) experts and the Archipelago of Treasures® program trainers to the needs related to the difficult and dynamically changing situation of young people, families, schools and the entire society, resulting from the COVID-19 epidemic.**
Title	Navigating in Crisis – protect yourself, support others
Date released	2020
Description	The program is aimed at young people, parents, and teaching staff. The initiative consists of several elements. First, young people, parents and educators take part in a survey (with questions adapted to each of these groups). Then, the trainers of the program meet with young people from individual classes in the presence of tutors at online preventive meetings. At the end, each group of participants receives reports developed on the basis of selected research results from a given school, containing conclusions and tips on how to effectively deal with an epidemic crisis situation. We know that in the so-called „normal time", it is necessary to conduct effective preventive actions among young people in many areas of risk. During the epidemic, a particularly difficult time for the whole society, one cannot forget about supporting young people in dealing with objectively difficult circumstances and the emotions associated with them. The time of epidemic and quarantine is also particularly difficult for parents as they have new, additional concerns and it can be difficult for them to respond to the psychological needs of children – especially those older ones, teenagers, with whom relationships are usually more complex than with younger children. Many parents experience big adaptation problems related to working at home and performing professional tasks in a small space, often in noise. For teachers, this is a time of new, very difficult challenges related to switching to e-learning. It is most often conducted from their own home, which therefore ceases to be an asylum for them (young people participating in the lessons may hear the noises of the private life of the teacher at home, which can be difficult and stressful). Many teachers work nights to adapt their classes to the e-learning mode, often without sufficient technical and IT support. In such a situation, the support of professional preventive care specialists is very much needed. However, since the previously developed prevention programs are not suitable for implementation in the current conditions, it was necessary to efficiently develop a new impact – responding to the needs of the epidemic. Such an impact is the Navigating in Crisis – protect yourself, support others program.

Purpose/Aim	The main goal of the program is to provide psychological support to young people and help them find ways to cope with difficult emotions and live during an epidemic and quarantine, as well as learn how to cope with various other crisis situations. The second objective of the program is to support adults (parents, teachers) in their educational and preventive functions in new, previously unknown realities. Quarantine conditions make it a particularly important task for preventive care specialists to carry out activities that foster mutual understanding between young people, parents, teachers and educators, build solidarity in the face of a crisis independent of everyone and indicate specific ways of helping each other in experiencing the situation.
National aspects	The proposed program is part of a wider prevention initiative implemented across Poland under the name 'Navigation Initiative – protect yourself, support others' instigated by a team of specialists from the Institute for Integrated Prevention and the community of trainers of the Archipelago of Treasures® program.
References	https://ipzin.org/

4.5. General recommendations

To summarise, there are some practical steps to be taken to support teachers in dealing with crisis situations:

1. Establish a safe and inclusive environment: Foster a space where teachers feel comfortable discussing challenging topics related to students' wellbeing without fear of judgment.
2. Provide mental health education: Offer workshops that enhance teachers' understanding of mental health issues, stressors, and resilience-building strategies.
3. Incorporate practical coping skills: Include hands-on activities and simulations that equip teachers with practical tools to teach students effective coping mechanisms.
4. Promote open communication: Encourage a culture of open dialogue among teachers, enabling them to share experiences and strategies for supporting students in difficult situations.
5. Peer support training: Integrate training sessions that focus on developing teachers' abilities to identify signs of distress in students and facilitate peer support networks within the school.
6. Collaborate with mental health professionals: Facilitate collaboration between teachers and mental health professionals to ensure a comprehensive and informed approach to supporting students' mental wellbeing.
7. Foster a positive school culture: Emphasise the importance of creating a positive and inclusive school culture that contributes to the overall mental health and wellbeing of both teachers and students.
8. Continuous professional development: Implement ongoing training and resources to keep teachers updated on the latest research, strategies, and best practices in promoting students' resilience.

9. Strengthen teacher-student relationships: Highlight the significance of building strong, supportive relationships between teachers and students, as these connections play a crucial role in fostering resilience.
10. Establish a support network: Create a system where teachers can access support and resources when dealing with challenging situations, promoting a collaborative and resilient school community.

MODULE 5
Pass it on – how to use your potential and experience (mentoring in the workplace)

5.1. General information on the topic

The module is a value-add to the "On the way to excellence – beginner teacher support program". It is devoted to the 'pass it on' method – which assumes the transfer of knowledge acquired and used in practice to other teachers, the so-called peer mentoring, and serves to acquire the ability to transfer knowledge using this method.

Peer mentoring fits into the model of the school as a learning organisation. In a modern school, a teacher is no longer just a person who passively imparts knowledge, instead, and above all, consciously managing various teaching methods, his or her own work and the development of qualifications and competences based on cooperation within the school and between schools and taking advantage of other development opportunities.

In this module, we show teachers the peer mentoring methodology, which can be directly used to network and transfer the knowledge contained in Modules 1-3. The 'pass it on' method gives you the opportunity to consolidate and pass on knowledge to colleagues who cannot take part in the demonstration training. Thanks to peer mentoring, a trained teacher will consolidate the knowledge and skills gained during the training, use their knowledge and support other teachers who find themselves in a similar professional situation. This is particularly important for young teachers who are exposed to severe stress related to the new situation and lack of knowledge about methods and tools for coping with crisis situations.

Peer mentoring as a means of exchanging and transferring knowledge and experience will increase the potential and experience of young teachers. In turn, young teachers have knowledge of modern teaching and student approach methods and techniques and can share them through peer mentoring.

Peer mentoring is a form of mentoring that takes place in a partnership relationship between a person who has lived through a specific experience (peer mentor) and a person who is new to that experience (peer mentee). Using the value of an educational situation in which individuals learn rather than being taught is to include

several people in the developmental process. In a group, individuals learn from each other, and the roles of mentor and mentee do not have to be handed out once and for all. In peer mentoring, the main emphasis is placed on the transfer, exchange of knowledge and experience between the participants of this process. This can take place both in mentor-mentee and mentor-mentee pairs, and in the group itself without division into roles. The way the process is carried out is determined by the context of the developmental situation, such as the school's resources: e.g. the number of teachers, their motivation and commitment to the change, as well as the readiness of the school management to develop the staff, the state of the premises, the favour of the governing bodies.

The aim of the module is to prepare teachers and head teachers to independently introduce the peer mentoring model in schools and to develop competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that allow for better use of the internal resources of an educational institution for the self-development of teachers and pedagogues. The peer mentoring method allows teachers to share their experience with others who are entering the first stage of work in their school.

By learning from each other, teachers consolidate the knowledge and skills gained during trainings, strengthen the sense of meaning and value of their professional work, develop their interpersonal, communication and professional skills, as well as increase the potential of knowledge in an educational institution.

In peer mentoring, teachers exchange knowledge and experience, as well as support each other in solving problems and improving their skills. Learning this method as the potential of bringing teachers numerous benefits.

5.2. Introduction to peer mentoring: definition of peer mentoring, roles of peer mentor and peer mentee, goals, benefits, peer mentoring group

Peer mentoring is a support and teaching process in which people with similar experience and level of knowledge (so-called peers) exchange knowledge, experience, and skills. In peer mentoring, an experienced person (the so-called mentor) helps the less experienced person (the so-called mentee) to solve problems, learn new things and achieve their goals.

Compared to traditional mentoring, which usually involves a hierarchical relationship between the mentor and the mentee, in peer mentoring both parties can transfer knowledge and experience to each other, to the benefit of both parties. The goal of peer mentoring is to help each other grow professionally.

Peer mentoring has many benefits for both the mentor and the mentee. A peer mentor can refresh and thus consolidate their knowledge and skills by helping others. A peer mentee, using the experience and knowledge of their mentor, increases their chances of professional development.

The role of a peer mentor is to transmit, share their experience and knowledge with other people, and help them achieve their goals. In another situation, e.g. after gaining new knowledge during a training in which only some of the teachers participate, a person who was a mentee in a different situation or experience now becomes a peer mentor.

Peer mentoring enables all participants in the process to develop their interpersonal skills: It helps them with:
• development of leadership and communication skills,
• increasing self-esteem, meaning and influence,
• developing the ability to look for solutions on their own,
• increasing the impact on their development through active learning,
• building a network of contacts and developing relationships with others.

Peer mentoring can be conducted individually (mentor and mentee) as well as in a group, where several people take part in the mentoring process in a controlled educational situation – they learn from each other. This can happen when several people act as a mentee and one person is a mentor or moderator of the group.

In a group case study, you can share your knowledge and experience and achieve your goals faster through multiplied opportunities to find solutions. Group peer mentoring may be particularly appropriate in the case of a specific problem (e.g. a student in a crisis situation) or a specific situation (e.g. training) or when the learners have similar goals and challenges (e.g. development of interpersonal skills in working with a student, communication with a student with special educational needs).

5.3. Peer mentor-peer mentee relationship: contract, rules and plan of cooperation, ethics, monitoring of effects

The term *mentor* is interchangeable with the terms t*eacher, supervisor, guide, master, advisor, supervisor, critical friend.*

In a relationship with a mentor, there is *a mentee who can be, depending on the circumstances, a trainee, a candidate, a partner, a protégé.*

In peer mentoring, roles can be exchanged depending on the context and needs of the people participating in the competence development process. A mentee learns from a mentor, and sometimes a mentee becomes a mentor. A platform for cooperation, exchange of knowledge, sources, methods, experiences, ideas, and solutions is created. A sense of belonging, trust and security is increased at school. A culture of inclusion is built, the sense of influence, motivation and commitment of teachers is increased, which translates into the quality of educational work, which is particularly important in the initial stages of a teacher's work.

Contract

A contract, i.e. establishing the rules of cooperation between a peer mentor and a peer mentee or group, is the framework recommended by us for the partners' activities in the peer mentoring process. It does not have to be written down, however it is worth discussing it before entering into the peer mentor-peer mentee relationship and establishing it as a jointly developed description of the main principles.
• Who will be involved in the process?
• The purpose of the meetings, e.g. transfer of knowledge and skills after training, solving a problem.
• How applications are recorded and distributed among participants.
• A way of communicating between meetings.
• Distribution of roles.
• Plan of topics, scope of cooperation.
• Expectations from the process, mentor and mentee, measures of effects.
• A framework for relationships and a sense of security: confidentiality, honesty, without criticism or judgment, the right to refuse, motivation and commitment.

A contract is worked out jointly by all parties to an individual or group process. It can be considered permanent or modified on a case-by-case basis.

Just like in traditional mentoring, coaching or consulting, also in peer mentoring it is worth giving the participants the option of choosing their own mentor-mentee pairs.

Cooperation plan

A cooperation plan can be developed:
• In a short-term mode – related to a given situation, e.g. transfer of knowledge after training based on the materials contained in the On the way to excellence program dealing with a crisis event at school.
• In along-term mode – for a specific period of time, e.g. three months, half a year, taking into account that the process is a cycle from experience to experience through reflection, conclusions and practice, according to D. Kolb's adult learning model.

The topic of the meetings may be, for example, the development of interpersonal skills in working with a student using Module 1 of the material from the "On the way to excellence" program – after the knowledge on this topic has been passed on by a trained teacher, a peer mentor-mentee group or pair analyse how to implement the acquired experience into teaching practice. Implementation is followed by another cycle of reflections, conclusions and practical application. The number of cycles and the way the process is carried out depend on the stakeholders and the goals set.

It is worth taking care of planning in advance:
• regularity and frequency of meetings, e.g. once a week,
• type of meetings, e.g. in-person, online, hybrid,
• meeting places,
• who schedules, organises, and cancels meetings?

Ethics

Relationship peer mentoring assumes acceptance, tolerance and understanding for the needs of all parties to the relationship. Each person in the role of mentor is responsible for creating an environment of trust and safety.

What is important to a mentor are the interests, values, emotions, attitude of the mentee and the whole of their inner experience. This is not subject to evaluation or criticism. Differences in perspectives and interpretations of experiences are an opportunity to enrich the resources of both parties. It is unacceptable to use the advantage of a mentor to gain any one-sided benefits, manipulate other participants in the process, pass on confidential information, ridicule and criticise the mentee.

Monitoring of effects

The effects of peer mentoring can be experienced in a subjective way by the peer mentee, as an increase in self-confidence, trust in their competences, better coping with difficult situations, as well as an increase in knowledge and skills of all people involved in the process. They should be visible from the changes in the quality of education and educational work for both the mentor and the mentee, in appreciative feedback from the school team, students and parents.

The effectiveness of the achieved goals should be monitored by both the mentor and the mentee throughout the peer mentoring cycle and after its completion, always in relation to the expected results. Monitoring of the effects may also be carried out by the school management and presented, for example, at a teaching staff meeting.

5.4. Peer mentoring at school: selection of people, organisation of peer mentoring in the institution, role of the school head teacher

The selection of people to participate in a peer mentoring program should be thoughtful and responsible. A peer mentor should be an empathetic person, open-minded and ready to share knowledge and experiences with others. It is important that the mentor is a person who is respected, liked and trusted, ready for this type of additional commitment. On the other hand, mentees should be teachers with similar seniority, experience and competences to the mentor. It is important that they actually report their need for peer mentoring support and help.

It is important that this form of self-education is consciously introduced into schools and supported by managing bodies and school authorities. At school level, this can be an initiative of the teachers themselves or the school management. Specify:
• Teacher development needs and goals.
• Results to be delivered by peer mentoring.
• Teachers interested in both supporting and supporting – choose peer mentors/ peer mentees.
• Framework for teachers' cooperation in the peer mentoring process.
• Process time.
• Process monitoring.

Additional Notes

• Not everyone is ready to grow professionally through mentoring. Therefore, it is important to present this form of self-help within the school in such a way that people motivated to change know clearly what the goals and benefits are of participating in the peer mentoring process.

• Peer mentoring cannot be enforced. Participation should be voluntary, made after a well-thought-out decision of the interested parties, both the mentor and the mentee. Peer mentoring assumes full voluntariness of participation and the possibility of resignation at every stage of the process.

• Peer mentoring is not a cure-all for all the problems and challenges of a teacher's work. In addition to coaching, consulting, or mentoring, this is an option for professional and personal development. Perhaps these forms of support will be a better method for a person who decides to seek support. Sometimes, especially in a crisis situation, a teacher may need medical, psychiatric or therapeutic help. It will be helpful to analyse the actual needs of educational staff and leave teachers with an autonomous decision to participate in peer mentoring. In this way, the level of involvement of the people involved in the process increases.

- Peer mentoring can run in parallel with other forms of professional development: training, counselling, coaching, it is important that these activities are coordinated and well planned in time. Too much burden on the teacher with too many forms of development leads to fatigue, frustration and discouragement with development and change.

- New teachers, people just starting out in the school after graduation may be invited, encouraged to participate in peer mentoring after three to six months. They need time to get to know the structure, culture of the institution, its formal and informal rules, find their place in it – a sense of belonging, and above all, start building their identity as a teacher. Only then can a young teacher take full advantage of the internal transfer of knowledge and experience at school.

- In our On the way to excellence program, we particularly emphasise the support between teachers with no more than 5 years of experience, although peer mentoring should not be the only stage of teachers' professional experience. However, in this study, we deal with peer mentoring of people who can use each other's resources and skills at the beginning of their professional path.

The organisation of peer mentoring in a school institution should be led by the head teacher or another person responsible for the development of the team. This may include the goals and scope of the program, the selection of mentors and mentors, then the action plan and how to evaluate the use of the program.

The head teacher may be an innovator, initiator or moderator of the peer mentoring method at school, where they:
- Actively support the program by organising its resources for implementation.
- Support the selection of mentors and mentees.
- Support and motivate people acting as mentors and mentees.
- Can take part in mentoring meetings and monitor the progress of the mentee.
- Monitor the progress of the program and make changes and improvements as necessary.
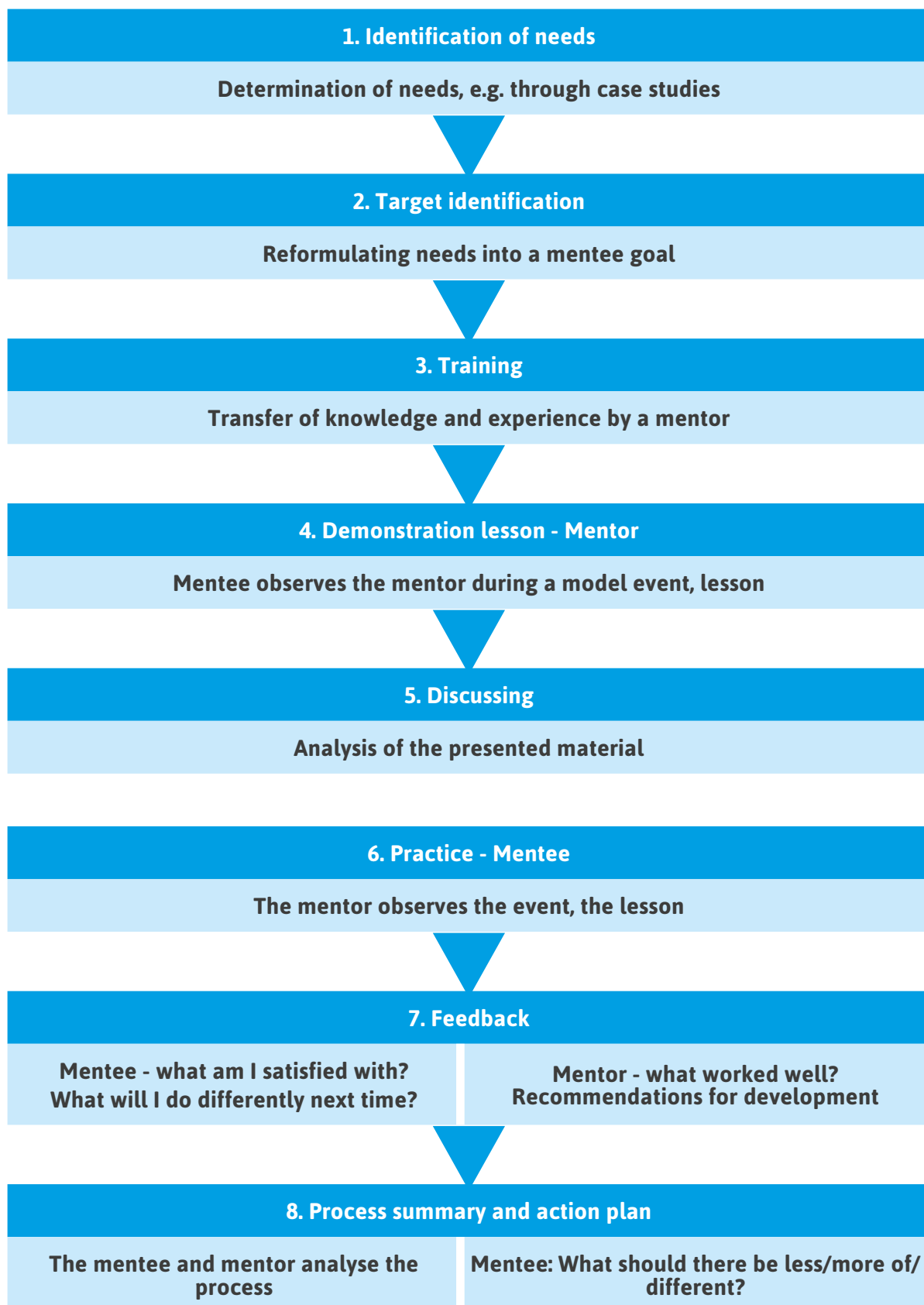- Encourage team members to participate in the program and promote its benefits for the whole school.

1. Identification of needs

Determination of needs, e.g. through case studies

▼

2. Target identification

Reformulating needs into a mentee goal

▼

3. Training

Transfer of knowledge and experience by a mentor

▼

4. Demonstration lesson - Mentor

Mentee observes the mentor during a model event, lesson

▼

5. Discussing

Analysis of the presented material

6. Practice - Mentee

The mentor observes the event, the lesson

▼

7. Feedback

| Mentee - what am I satisfied with? What will I do differently next time? | Mentor - what worked well? Recommendations for development |

▼

8. Process summary and action plan

| The mentee and mentor analyse the process | Mentee: What should there be less/more of/different? |

Figure 7: An example of a peer mentoring process model (own design)

Practical application of the peer mentoring process model

The process can be carried out both as a mentor-mentee pair and mentor-mentee group.

1. Identification of needs

When analysing the mentee's needs, we take into account the most important ones, as well as those perceived to be the most urgent at the specific time.

2. Defining the goal

The goal is defined by the mentee – positive, future-oriented, written down.

3. The training prepared by the mentor is tailored to the needs and goals of the mentee.

Peer mentors can use the ready-made On the way to excellence program, in which Modules 1-3 provide training for beginner teachers, to equip them with the professional skills necessary to work with students, including students with special educational needs and to support students in a crisis situation. In addition, the educational materials provided supporting the training program will allow young teachers to prepare to cope with difficult professional situations, e.g. in crisis situations. Modules 1-3 are recommended to be completed at intervals of approx. 2-3 weeks. The expected length of training for a given module is approx. 16 hours, e.g. 2 days x 8 lesson hours.

Module 4, which aims to support teachers in a crisis situation, also provides ready-made professional and practical educational materials for teachers' own work. They can be used as material for trainings as well as demonstration lessons and can also be used during e.g. teaching staff meetings.

4. Demo Lesson – Mentor

An event (e.g. a conversation with a student with special educational needs), a situation (e.g. a crisis intervention), a demonstration lesson (e.g. in the classroom or outside of school) – these are examples of mentoring forms in which the mentor shows good practice, the way of applying the previously presented knowledge and skills in the form of training. The mentee is an observer and actively analyses the way the event progresses in terms of their professional development.

5. Discussion on the event, situation or demonstration lesson during a separate meeting of the mentor-mentee pair or group.

This part is carried out according to the principles of adult learning – D. Kolb's cycle (experiencing – reflecting – inference – applying in practice). It is important for the mentee to prepare their own action plan, outline or other form of preparation for their own practice.

6. Practice – Mentee

It can take place under the same conditions as those in which the mentor operated, or in different ones, depending on the situation and context to be established by the parties involved. The mentor can use an observation sheet, e.g. the degree of achievement of the mentee's goal, knowledge, skills, attitude, way of communication, conducting classes, difficult situations, recommendations for development.

7. Feedback

First, the mentee gives him/herself feedback:
• What am I satisfied with?
• What will I do differently next time?
• The mentor does not judge or criticise, but focuses his/her and the mentee's attention on drawing developmental conclusions for the future:
• What worked well?
• Recommendations for development
The mentee concludes this part by summarising what he/she takes away from this experience and what he/she will apply in practice.

Constructive feedback:
• mentee competence analysis – knowledge, skills, attitude,
• principles of 'learning to learn' – development of the mentee's self-awareness and self-reflection,
• working on resources – building on strengths and supporting in looking for developmental solutions,
• appreciation of the mentee's commitment and attitude,
• a plan of action established by the mentee him/herself.

8. Process summary and action plan

The mentee provides feedback to the mentor regarding the relationship and the results achieved.

Other methods that can be used in the peer mentoring process

The 'flipped learning' method in which the facilitator, the mentor, is not the only provider of knowledge – they indicate sources and moderate the discussion in which the group/person actively looks for answers and solutions. The mentor complements the solutions by sharing their knowledge and experience. A mentee is more active than a mentor, he/she has own ideas, makes hypotheses, answers questions.

A method of 'experiential learning', not as a result of passive reception, but through experience with conscious reflection, conclusions and application in practice. The method is useful in working with a group. The mentor moderates the process from reflection to practice, complements the conclusions with his/her expertise, and can also create experiential situations. The mentee independently comes to conclusions and establishes a plan of action. After its implementation and experience, the next cycle of the process can be started: reflection (in a group – feedback from other mentees), conclusions, practice.

Modelling – observation by the mentee of the mentor's actions, work style, communication, and behaviour. The mentee imitates and introduces this model into their operations, modifying it to own needs and capabilities.

Based on the peer mentoring model of the Promentors – Promoting Mentors' Work in Education project (https://promentors.org), a teamled by Ewa Domagała-Zyśk (Domagała-Zyśk et al., 2020a, 2020b) developed a mentoring model called 'Model of Community Teacher Mentoring'(CTM)). This process involves not only teachers but also parents and students who provide feedback to the teacher in a partner-like, safe relationship.[106]

Work with a goal: needs analysis, SMART, CLEAR, GROW, motivation to change

Defining the goal in peer mentoring takes place at the beginning of the mentor's and mentee's work. Once you have identified the needs of the teacher or teachers, you can move on to the defined goal for the peer mentoring process. Tools to help you create a goal include:

SMART – helps to define goal measures and detail the most important effects of peer mentoring work. We check if the goal is:
   • Specific, detailed,

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[106] Ewa Domagała – Zyś. Mentoring in Educator Education for Inclusive Education, EDUCATION 2021, 1(156), 31–41
   https://www.ibe.edu.pl/images/EDUKACJA/NUMERY/2021-01/PDF/3_Domagaa-Zyk.pdf

- Measurable,
- Acceptable/Relevant,
- Realistic, achievable,
- Time-bound.

S.M.A.R.T. criteria	Examples of issues to consider by peer mentors and peer mentees
Detail, specificity	How does peer mentoring respond to the needs of a peer mentor, peer mentoring group, school, students, parents? What knowledge and skills will the mentee/group gain while working together?
Measurability	What facts will prove that the goal has been achieved? When will it be possible to consider that the goal has been achieved? What measures and tools will be adopted to assess this?
Acceptability, relevance	Are the goals of working with the mentee/group a response to key professional problems and needs? What has been or can be done to recognise these needs? Is the target attractive to the mentee/group? What is their motivation to achieve the goal.
Realism, the possibility of achieving	Is the goal realistic? Is it achievable taking into account the resources of the mentee/group and the environment in which they operate?
Determination in time	How long will the process of working with the mentee/group take? Will the beginning, duration and end of mentoring be related to other events at school (e.g. end of the year)?

To determine the structure of peer mentoring meetings, the CLEAR model, which is used in coaching work, comes in useful.[107]

CLEAR includes five stages of a meeting, and they are:

1. Contracting – contract

Setting rules, e.g. discretion in matters considered confidential by the mentee, being here and now, i.e. focusing attention on the meeting, the format of the meeting, e.g. discussion, training, brainstorming with a summary of conclusions. The contract can be duplicated in subsequent sessions, updating the topic, scope or form of the meeting. It is important that it is recognised by all people participating in the meeting.

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[107] Meant to be a mentor. Handbook for volunteer mentors. FRSE https://www.frse.org.pl/czytelnia/meant-to-be-a-mentor-2018

2. Listening

Active listening to the mentor or the group gives space to develop the mentee's narrative. Safe conditions for presenting the situation and the mentee's experience through their verbalisation are in themselves self-reflection. The mentee carries out their narrative without pausing to give answers to the listeners, thanks to which they gain greater insight and understanding of their intentions, thoughts, limitations and possibilities. A mentor or other people in the mentee group help broaden the mentee's perspective by asking open-ended questions.

3. Exploring – asking questions

It concerns the context and possible solutions that the mentee wants to achieve by using the resources already at their disposal and supplementing the missing ones.

Helpful questions:
- What do you want to achieve?
- What will happen when the issue is resolved?
- How will you know if the goal has been achieved?
- What do you already have to achieve?
- What else do you need to get closer to solving the problem?
- What steps can you take today to achieve your goal? Where do you start?
- What are the biggest challenges of achieving your goal? How will you deal with them?

4. Action

Creating an action plan, as detailed as possible in the first few steps, preferably in a realistic time perspective and with the awareness of who can help, support, e.g. a mentor, other teachers, the head teacher, and what else is worth taking care of, e.g. supplementing knowledge through reliable sources.

5. Review – summary

Summary of the meeting by the mentee (What was achieved? What are the impressions and wellbeing of the mentee? What helped, what presented an obstacle during the meeting?) and the mentor who gives feedback to the mentee focusing on their strengths and trust in their abilities.

The whole cycle can be repeated at subsequent meetings, referring to the previous ones and the implementation of the assumptions and plans of the mentee, all the time deepening the self-reflection and awareness of the mentee.

GROW – this is a coaching tool used in peer mentoring to structure the process.
1. What is the goal? –*Goal*
2. Where are we now? –*Reality*
3. What are the possible ways to get there? – *Options*
4. Which way does the mentee/group choose as the best? – *Will*

STAGE	ACTION	CONVERSATION STRUCTURE/ FOLLOW-UP COACHING QUESTIONS (examples)
Purpose (Goal)	Setting a goal	Questions about the goal: What do you want to achieve? How will you know that the goal has been achieved?
Current state (Reality)	Determination of the current situation	Questions about reality: How is it now? What is working? What doesn't work/what went wrong?
Options (Options)	Finding solutions	Questions about solutions: So, what options do you see for you? Who can support you? What else can be done?
Choice (Will)	Decision	Questions about the decision: What do you want to do? What will be your first step?

Motivation to change

Peer mentoring as a transfer of knowledge and experience between teachers is based on motivation to change, readiness to leave the comfort zone, look at one's abilities and limitations, recognition of one's rights and shortcomings.

An important question WHY? It should appear frequently during mentor-mentee meetings.

The answer is the drive to make an effort, to engage one's resources.

Therefore, it is important to recognise and name the mentee's motivators as well as those working for the mentor.

The question is *why*? It contains answers from the area of the teacher's needs, values and mission, the meaning of their work and the sense of influence on their work and professional development.

Support motivation and commitment in peer mentoring:
- development of self-awareness, self-reflection of the mentee and mentor,
- working on resources – relying on strengths, on what works well and on this leading the change of what doesn't,
- support in finding solutions in the environment of mindfulness and acceptance, giving the right to make mistakes,
- a sense of meaning and influence on the change process,
- satisfaction with the effects achieved through self-discovery, self-education in a group.

Principles of Adult Learning: D. Kolb's Cycle

In the process of peer mentoring teachers, we consciously use various forms of active, conscious learning of adults.
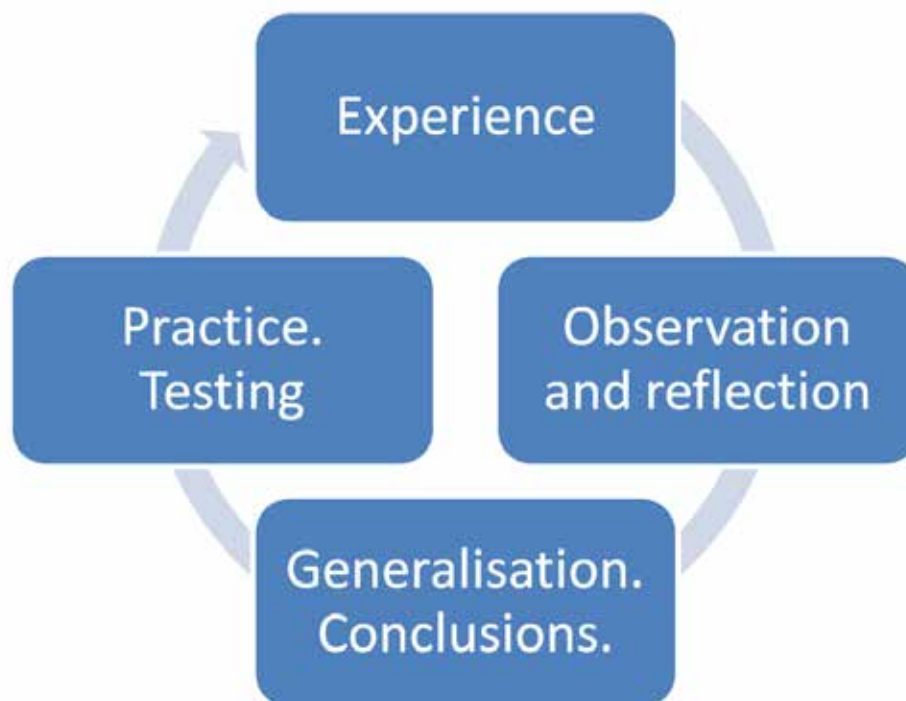One of the most popular models in this range is the so-called D. Kolb cycle.

Figure 8. Kolb's experiential learning model[108]

In contrast to the delivery methods, in Kolb's cycle it is important to reflect on the experience itself and the impressions, the feelings of the participant of the experience (training, demonstration, case study, simulated or experienced situation). Only then do you move on to conclusions, supplement them with knowledge – this is the work to be done by a mentor who indicates sources, shares their knowledge

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[108] Knowles Malcolm S., Holton Elwood F., Swanson Richard A. (2009), Adult Education. Academic Textbook, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House

and experience, and encourages other mentees to exchange knowledge and experience in a group. Testing, i.e. translating into practice, is first established through an action plan, the first steps, and then as another experience in the cycle, from which there are further reflections, conclusions, solutions, plans and new experiences.

5.5. Communication tools in peer mentoring: "I" message, asking questions, active listening, paraphrasing, clarification, open and closed questions. Feedback

In peer mentoring, as in any developmental form of cooperation between people, the most important thing happens through communication.

The ways, methods and frequency of communication are determined by the parties in the contract and during the entire process, monitoring the effects of their actions.

It's important to remember how important it is to listen carefully in effective communication.

Active Listening

This is one of the strongest communication tools that gives space to the speaker, allows you to focus attention on the mentee, and eliminates barriers to communication.

Principles of Good Listening
1. Focus on the person talking to you
2. Let the speaker know how you understand them
3. Ask when you don't understand something
4. Don't judge, don't provide advice
5. Maintain eye contact

Reasons to listen
• Listening soothes misunderstandings
• Listening enables collaboration
• Listening helps you make decisions
• Listening builds confidence

Inactive listening, we use:

Paraphrasing – a repetition of the most important words, information that we have heard, without guesses, interpretations or suggestions:
– Did I understand you correctly, you say that ....

– If I heard correctly, ...
– Please let me check if I have understood correctly, ...
– I understand that .....

It allows you to make sure that both parties understand the message in the same way.

The interlocutor has a chance to confirm what they said.

It gives a sense of mutual understanding of thought, meaning and intention.

Rephrasing –an effective way of dealing with doubts and objections.

Changing a negative message into a positive one:
You are right... still, thanks to this, yes that's right... This is because, therefore,

Showing cause and effect dependence:
If... it's..., Therefore, it's...

Connectors
• expressing addition –'and'
• expressing reason and result –'so', 'therefore'
• clarifying – 'that is'

Connectors can evoke different reactions:
• 'and', 'however', 'in spite of this', 'however' – they make it easier to convey difficult messages, help to build convincing argumentation,
• 'but', 'whereas'– emphasise differences and oppositions, they may arouse resistance and opposition.

A peer mentor can use the so-called "I" message, which is non-judgmental, takes responsibility for their own perspective and respects the other person' perspective.

"I" message:
• It tells you directly how you feel right now, exactly in relation to this situation.
• I see, I think, I feel, I expect, I need.
• I take responsibility for my impressions, observations, interpretations – I don't pass them on to the other person.
• The key to peer mentoring is asking questions. They cannot be questioning the mentee; they do not serve to satisfy the mentor's curiosity. They are asked by the mentor in a way that the mentee him/herself could ask him/herself, and only he/she knows the answers to these questions best.

Types of questions:
- **Opening** – *How? Where? When? Who? What? Why? How?*
- **Open-ended** to establish context, define behaviours, expectations, motives, meaning, point of view, opportunities – c*an you tell us more about that? How will this happen, what benefits will you get from it, and what are the risks?*
- **Deepening** – *And what happened next? And? What else can you do?*
- **Closed-ended** to verify information, get a specific answer – *Is there anything else you want to add? Do you have any questions?*
- **Reflecting** – *Are you worried about this situation...? Would you like to have more time for that?*
- **Clarifying** – *I take it this is important to you?*
- **Hypothetical** – *What would you do if...? If everything was possible, what would you choose?*

Instead of *What did you do?* ask *Why did you do that?* We can't undo the past, but we can try to understand the reasons without making us feel guilty. The question is *why*? is valuable when we ask about values, needs *Why is this important to you?* or we look for solutions, i.e. we focus on the future: *Why will this solution be good?*

In asking questions, the peer mentor may use coaching methods in which asking open-ended, in-depth, sometimes provocative questions allows the coachee to analyse their world of beliefs, experiences, skills, and other resources. In coaching, asking the "I" question several times can move the coachee into previously unconscious areas of their knowledge about themselves. In peer mentoring, it is also useful, questions have the power to open a narrative, increase self-awareness, allowing you to name problems, observe the process of arriving at solutions and the mental and emotional states that accompany it.

It is important that after asking a question, there is space to listen to the answer. The mentor's task is to share his/her knowledge and experience, to be active in his/her expertise, to advise, hint, and give guidance. Nevertheless, when he/she asks questions – he/she listens, gives the mentee the opportunity to come to independent conclusions, to discover the way to solutions based on his/her knowledge and experience. Adults working with adults in peer mentoring respect their potential and wealth, create an environment for building autonomy, which always increases motivation and commitment.

Effective communication in peer mentoring
- Confirm
- Opening phrases
- Valuing
- Paraphrase
- Reflect

- Clarification
- Summary

Feedback

An important element in the peer mentoring process is giving mutual feedback after completing a task or experience in working with a student or parent in a team of teachers.

Feedback cannot be an evaluation or criticism and the mentee is an active dialogue partner in it, has space for self-analysis of the development situation, an opportunity to learn through experience and exchange of information between other participants of the peer mentoring process.

A constructive analysis begins with the mentee's answers to the following questions:
1. What are you satisfied with? It refers to the goal achieved, the manner and course of the task, the experience, e.g. a lesson, a conversation with a student or a parent.
2. What will you do differently next time? It refers to future events that will be influenced by previous experiences and lessons learned from them.

Feedback card

Topic of the interview/practice:	
What worked well?	**Specific examples:**
Recommendations for development:	**Specific examples:**
The mentee:	
Action plan: What will I do less of? What will I do more of? What will I do differently?	

5.6. Assertiveness, occupational hygiene

As in any other development process, difficulties and challenges can arise in peer mentoring. They are usually related to the interpretation of events, beliefs that limit development, the motivation of people participating in the changes, and the conditions of the environment in which the process takes place.

It is worth taking care of an assertive attitude in the mentor-mentee relationship, both parties in the process of exchanging knowledge and experience are attentive to the process of this relationship and accept their own and each party's boundaries. They know and understand their rights, on which an assertive attitude is based.

Assertive behaviour:
- Fosters the development of equality and partnership in interpersonal relations.
- Enables you to act in your best interest, to defend your own position without undue fear.
- It allows you to freely and honestly express your feelings and needs and exercise your own rights without infringing on the rights of others.

Assertive Communications
- Separate facts from judgments, person from problem.
- Be honest, express your feelings and needs clearly.
- Be mindful of the other person's feelings and needs.
- Define what you expect.
- Positive attitude.

I'm assertive
- I present my point of view in a convincing way.
- I accept the possibility of disagreement.
- I justify my arguments using specific arguments.
- I always try to avoid being aggressive.
- I'm soft on people and problems.

I'm looking for solutions
- Please help me solve the problem,
- I refer to the needs of the interlocutor.
- I present my own proposal, supporting it with arguments for and against.

I have rights – I recognise the rights of others
- You have the right to do what you want – as long as what you do doesn't hurt someone else.
- You have the right to make your requests known to others – as long as you recognise that the other person has the right to refuse.

- There are situations between people where the rights are not obvious.
- You have the right to exercise your rights.

Each person taking part in peer mentoring is responsible for the development of their knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is worth taking care of your work hygiene with mindfulness of your values, needs and capabilities.

My health and safety
- Take care of yourself, your emotions, your body and soul.
- Keep your distance.
- Work on your competences and qualifications.
- Benefit from the knowledge and experience of others.
- Find your own ways to relieve stress.
- Ask yourself often: What do I need? What is important to me right now?
- Cultivate a sense of impact and meaning in your work.
- Smile!

Added value
- Teachers will be able to benefit from the experience and knowledge of other teachers, which can contribute to the development of their professional skills and competences.
- They will be able to form relationships with other teachers, which can help them motivate and inspire each other.
- They will be able to better understand the needs and expectations of their students and better adapt their teaching methods to their needs.

Gains for teachers
- They will be able to manage their time better and use their resources more efficiently.
- They will be able to get support and help from other teachers in solving problems and doubts related to their work.
- They will be able to acquire new skills and develop their professional interests.

How can peer mentoring influence teachers' work?
- It can improve the quality of their work as they will be able to benefit from other teachers' experience and expertise.
- It can increase their motivation and engagement at work as they will be able to establish relationships with other teachers and motivate each other.
- It can help them to better adapt their teaching methods to the needs of modern education.

5.7. General recommendations

Implementing peer mentoring among teachers with little experience requires careful planning, the involvement of all participants, and continuous monitoring and adjustment of the program. Effective mentoring can contribute to teacher development and improve the quality of teaching in schools.

Peer mentoring is certainly a method that can bring many benefits – individual development of teachers' competences and increasing the effectiveness of the work of the entire team at school. It will bring results, satisfaction, development and change if it is carried out in an atmosphere of cognitive curiosity, trust and acceptance.

The implementation of peer mentoring at school allows to maintain the sustainability of the "On the Way to Excellence – a support program for beginner teachers" project and builds new opportunities for development within schools after the end of the project.

Types of sources

Training materials for Modules 1-3 of the "On the Way to Excellence – beginner teacher support program" project in which there are ready-made training outlines in the area of:

Module 1. Interpersonal skills in working with students
Module 2. Supporting the student in dealing with a crisis situation
Module 3. Communication with students with special educational needs

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