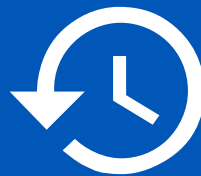




Stress, Trauma, and Mental Well-Being in Times of Crisis Toolkit

Community Resilience



International Child
Development Initiatives

2026

Acknowledgements



The Stress, Trauma, and Mental Well-Being in Times of Crisis Toolkit has been authored by Shakun Gargs, Nikolaos Koufos and Asia Koerten from International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI) within the context of the [‘Mind the Future’ programme](#).

Design and layout by: Francesco Abbadessa



International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI) is a knowledge organisation that supports and develops initiatives in the field of early childhood education, child protection and well-being.
www.icdi.nl



Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Netherlands Enterprise Agency

The Ukraine Partnership Facility (UPF) funds this project. UPF is a programme from the Netherlands Enterprise Agency commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. UPF supports damage repair and reconstruction projects for the public and private sectors. UPF aims to help the recovery and sustainable reconstruction activities of the Ukrainian economy and society in the water, healthcare, circular reconstruction, sustainable energy and agricultural sectors.

Project Partners



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1. INTRODUCTION

Stress, Trauma, and Mental Well-Being in Times of Crisis is a practical, community-centred toolkit designed to help individuals and groups understand and navigate from the emotional and psychological impact of crisis — whether facing everyday stress, collective trauma, or the profound disruption that comes when serious situations such as emergencies or sudden changes in daily life arise.

This toolkit was developed as part of the **Mind the Future** programme, a 3-year, innovative programme aiming to intervene in and contribute to systemic change in Ukraine's mental health services sector by enhancing the effectiveness and reach of local mental health services for vulnerable youth affected by the ongoing war. The target groups of the programme are vulnerable and marginalised youth (12 to 26 years old), local mental health service providers, educators, and community members. The programme is implemented by a consortium of partners, consisting of ICDI, Labour and Health Social Initiatives (LHSI), PRO-FIL, and De Veranderkamer.

The toolkit is designed for and can be used by those supporting others in their communities, including teachers, youth workers, coaches, facilitators, and community members. It aims to strengthen everyday support skills without replacing professional services.



2. FRAMEWORK OF THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit follows a simple and practical approach to help strengthen communities and support mental well-being during difficult times. It is based on well-known ideas from mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), which show how important it is for people to **feel safe, connected, capable, and hopeful as they recover**. It also recognises that people cope better when they feel supported, included, and able to make sense of their experiences together.

The toolkit includes a set of structured, easy-to-use activities that help people connect, reflect, and support one another. These activities are designed to be flexible and adaptable, so they can be used in different community settings and with diverse groups. Together, they provide a clear and supportive way to put these ideas into practice, helping communities build on their strengths and respond to challenges in meaningful ways.

Respecting Different Backgrounds & Being Inclusive

Everyone's experiences and backgrounds are different. People vary in their identities, cultures, languages, abilities, and life situations. When using this toolkit, approach each person with openness, curiosity, and respect. Take time to understand their experiences and avoid making assumptions or being influenced by stereotypes.

Use simple and clear language, especially when there are language differences. Adjust how you communicate so it works for each person's needs and situation. Be aware of inclusion and accessibility by checking if people are understanding everything and by considering different needs, including age, ability, and gender.



Structure of the Activities

The activities in this toolkit are designed to support community workshops through four categories: **REACH OUT**, **CONNECT**, **SUSTAIN**, and **STRESS RELEASE**, each serving its own purpose in building strong, supportive communities.



REACH OUT

Reach Out activities focus on icebreakers that help participants feel seen, welcomed, and included, helping them feel like they belong right from the start.



CONNECT

Connect activities go deeper, encouraging participants to build relationships, share experiences, and strengthen resilience together, creating trust and mutual understanding. These activities explore both what you bring and what you can receive.



SUSTAIN

Sustain activities are longer-term. They focus on creating ongoing community routines and shared practices that help people stay connected, motivated, and engaged over time, often linked to existing services or regular gatherings.



STRESS RELEASE

Stress Release activities can be used across all categories. They are simple, flexible tools that can be used at any time to help participants reset, relax, and regain balance, supporting well-being throughout the process.

ACTIVITIES

The activities are designed to build community resilience and promote mental well-being during and after times of crisis. These exercises are flexible and can be adapted for workshops, classrooms, or community settings.



FACILITATOR'S NOTE ON PLANNING

For a 60 to 90-minute session, we recommend choosing at least:

- 1 Reach Out activity (15-20 min)
- 1 or 2 Connect activities (15-20 min each)
- 1 Sustain activity
- 1 Stress Release activity (5-10 min)

Ensure your session is accessible and that everyone feels comfortable participating. Be ready to adjust activities before or during the session to meet your group's specific needs. For example, if an exercise involves standing or walking, you can easily adapt it for participants with mobility issues by ensuring it can be done while seated. You should always allow extra space and time for those who have difficulty speaking or need more time to express themselves. Keep the focus on the experience, as participation and reflection are more important than getting every step "perfect."

In addition, ensure you leave enough time for reflection after each activity. Reflection is as important as the activity itself; it is where participants process what they experienced and connect it to their own lives. As a facilitator, your role is to create a space where everyone feels encouraged to contribute to the dialogue. Each activity (except the warm-up) includes two guiding questions: one focused on the experience and the other on transfer to real life. These are starting points; the conversation that follows will naturally deepen, depending on the group's responses and the time available. To close each reflection, briefly summarise its purpose.

How to Read an Activity Card

Activity number and name

Icon for type of activity:
REACH OUT, CONNECT,
SUSTAIN, STRESS
RELEASE.

TOOLKIT COMMUNITY RESILIENCE Activity Stress Relief 02

STRESS RELEASE



02 Hand Tracing Breathing

Objective



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

This activity explores how to manage your own reactions and how to calm yourself. It increases focus and awareness of your body. It is a simple tool that participants can reuse anytime.



DURATION
5-10 minutes



MATERIALS
No materials required

Preparation:
duration and materials



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

1. Participants sit or stand comfortably. Ask them to hold one hand up (like a star shape), spreading their fingers.
2. The facilitator says:
"We will use our fingers to trace our hand while breathing slowly."
3. Use one finger to trace the outline of the other hand:
 - When moving up a finger → breathe in
 - When moving down a finger → breathe out
4. Move across all five fingers. Keep breathing slow and steady
5. Switch hands or repeat once more
6. Close:
 - Rest your hands comfortably
 - Take one final deep breath

The facilitator says:

- "You can use this anytime you want to feel calm."

Step by step
activity guide

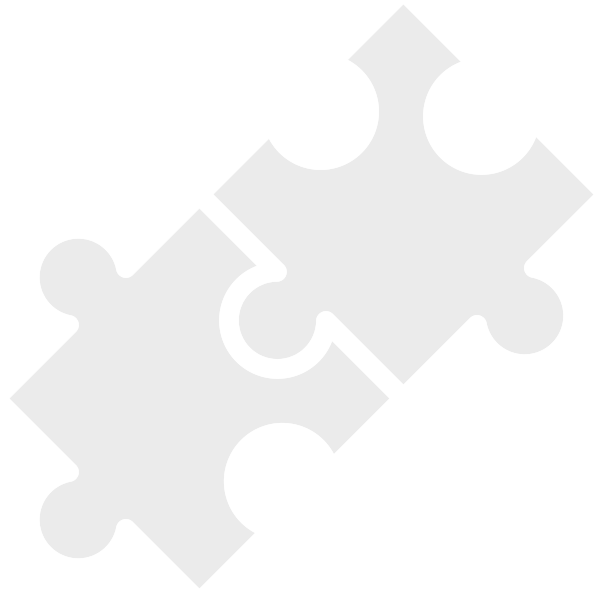


REFLECTION

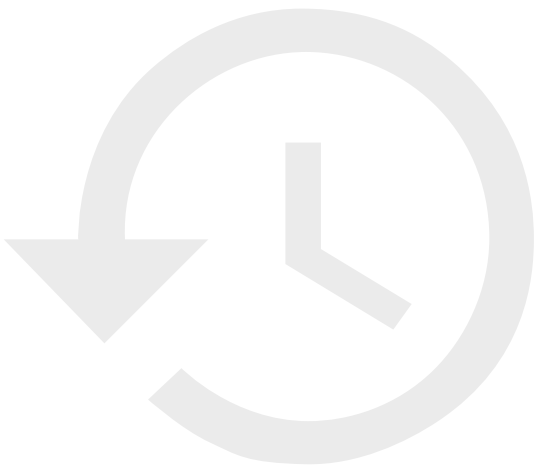
- "How did your body and mind feel before, during, and after the breathing activity?"
- "What did you notice about how focusing on your breath and movement helped you feel more calm or present?"

➤ This activity shows how simple, mindful breathing combined with gentle movement can support emotional regulation, focus, and calmness. By guiding attention to the breath and the body, participants experience how they can slow down their reactions and create space for awareness and balance. It highlights a practical tool for self-regulation that can be used in everyday situations to support well-being.

Reflection and
guiding questions



ACTIVITIES





01

Would You Rather!



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

This activity helps build relationships by sharing, listening, and learning more about the people you're playing with by answering creative, funny, or thought-provoking "Would you rather" questions.



DURATION

15 minutes



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

1. One person acts as the facilitator and all others are participants.
2. The facilitator will ask a "Would you rather" question. Participants need to choose one of the two options.
3. If participants choose option 1, they raise one hand. If they choose option 2, they raise both hands. All participants look at each other and learn more about the people in the group.
4. Now, participants choose a partner (or turn to the person on their right or left). Both participants explain their choice to each other for 60 seconds.
5. After the couples have shared, the facilitator asks the second question, participants choose an option, and find a partner to share with. Participants can switch partners if they want.
6. Ask 5–10 questions per round or as many as there is time for.
7. The facilitator thanks participants at the end of the activity.
8. Anyone is invited to share: 1) the funniest or most surprising choices; and 2) how they felt playing this game with a group of people.

LIST OF "WOULD YOU RATHER" QUESTIONS -

1. Would you rather play a board game or go for a walk together?
2. Would you rather cook a traditional meal or try a new recipe?
3. Would you rather spend a day indoors or outdoors?
4. Would you rather spend time in the mountains or by the sea?
5. Would you rather wake up early or stay up late?
6. Would you rather watch the sunrise or the sunset?
7. Would you rather eat something sweet or savory?
8. Would you rather spend time with a small group or a large group?
9. Would you rather watch a movie or spend time with friends?
10. Would you rather listen to slow or upbeat music?

**REFLECTION**

- *"What did you learn about someone else that surprised you?"*
- *"How did explaining your choice help you connect with your partner?"*
- *"Was it easier or harder to speak with someone you didn't know well? Why?"*
- *"How did the activity change the atmosphere or energy in the group?"*

➤ This activity shows how simple conversations can quickly build connection, trust, and inclusion. By sharing personal preferences, listening to others, and finding common ground, participants practise open dialogue in a relaxed and playful way. Small moments of interaction help create a positive group atmosphere where people feel seen, heard, and more comfortable engaging with one another.





02 Four Corners Community Resilience



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

To explore and understand how people experience and handle stress, identify what keeps them going, and the type of community support that could improve their well-being.



DURATION

20 minutes



MATERIALS

Place signs in the four corners of the room:
Corner A, Corner B, Corner C, Corner D
(You can also use colours or symbols.)



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

Begin by explaining that:

- There are no right or wrong answers.
- People can choose not to answer.
- People can change corners if they change their minds.

1. The facilitator reads a question and four possible answers.
2. The participants move to the corner that best matches their answer.
3. The facilitator can tell them that moving to a corner is already enough and that they don't have to explain their answer if they don't want to.
4. After people move to their corner, ask them:
 - "Would anyone like to share why they chose this corner?"
 - "Do you think many people here cope in a similar way?"

Do not force anyone to speak.

Warm-up Question (Easy Start)

When I feel stressed, I usually...

- A – Talk to someone.
- B – Stay alone.
- C – Keep busy / work / do tasks.
- D – Try to rest / sleep.



1. Stress Questions

When I am very stressed, the hardest thing is...

- A – Not knowing what will happen.
- B – Being tired all the time.
- C – Worrying about family.
- D – Money / work / practical problems.

I notice I am stressed when...

- A – I cannot sleep.
- B – I feel angry or irritated.
- C – I feel very tired / no energy.
- D – I worry a lot / cannot stop thinking.

After each question, ask 1–2 people to share if they want.

2. Coping & Resilience Questions

Say: “Now we will talk about what helps people cope and continue, even in difficult times.”

What helps you the most in difficult times?

- A – Family.
- B – Friends / people.
- C – Faith / religion / beliefs.
- D – Work / staying busy / routine.

What gives you the strength to continue?

- A – My children / family.
- B – Hope for the future.
- C – Support from others.
- D – I don’t know, I just continue.

After this section, the facilitator can say: “We can see that even in very difficult situations, people find ways to continue. This is important and shows strength.”

Community Support Questions (Most Important Section)

Say: “Now we want to understand what kind of support helps people the most and what is missing in the community.”

What kind of place would help people feel better?

- A – A warm place where you can sit and drink tea.
- B – A place where children can play.
- C – A place where you can talk to someone.
- D – A place where you can find information and support.

What support is most needed now in this community?

- A – Emotional / psychological support.
- B – Support for children.
- C – Practical support.
- D – Activities that bring people together.

After these questions, ask:

- “What does this tell us about what people need most?”
- “What should exist more in this community?”

**Closing - End on Strength**

What gives this community strength?

- A – People helping each other.
- B – Families are strong.
- C – People don't give up.
- D – Faith / traditions / culture.

**REFLECTION**

- *"What did you notice about the different ways people experience stress or cope with difficulties?"*
- *"How can understanding each other's experiences help strengthen a community?"*

➤ This activity shows that people experience stress in different ways, but many also share common needs, worries, and sources of strength. By moving, observing, and listening to others, participants practice empathy, reflection, and respectful dialogue. The activity helps people feel less alone, highlights the importance of community support, and encourages conversations about resilience, well-being, and what helps people continue through difficult situations.





03 Birthday Line Up



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

This activity builds connection and trust in a relaxed, low-pressure way while encouraging inclusion across generations. By working together toward a shared goal, participants develop teamwork, increase engagement through movement, and strengthen a sense of community and shared participation.



DURATION

15 minutes



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

1. Ask participants to stand in an open area.
2. Make sure there is enough room for people to move around comfortably.
3. The facilitator says: "Your goal is to line up in order of your birthdays—from January to December."

Clarify: only the day and month matter, not the year.

1. No talking: participants must communicate using gestures.
2. Give participants time (5–10 minutes) to organise themselves into a line.
3. Observe and gently encourage cooperation if needed.
4. Once participants are in a line, go down the line and ask each person to say their birthday (day and month).
5. Adjust if needed and celebrate.

Ask simple reflection questions:

- "What helped you communicate?"
- "Was anything difficult?"
- "Who helped you during the activity?"
- "How did it feel to work together without speaking?"

Debrief: facilitator highlights

- How people support each other, even without words.
- Emphasise cooperation, patience, and community.

**REFLECTION**

- *“What helped you communicate and work together without speaking during the activity?”*
- *“What did you notice about how people supported each other while trying to complete the task?”*

➤ This activity shows how cooperation, patience, and non-verbal communication can help a group achieve a shared goal. By observing, adapting, and supporting one another, participants build trust, strengthen teamwork, and experience how community often forms through simple acts of coordination and care.





04 Move, Meet & Connect



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

This activity encourages connection between participants who may not know each other while creating a safe, relaxed, and positive atmosphere. It also supports meaningful intergenerational interaction and helps build energy, engagement, and a stronger sense of community within the group.



DURATION

20 minutes



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

1. Ensure there is enough open space for participants to move around freely.
2. Ask everyone to stand and spread out.
 - a. The facilitator says:
 - i. "When you hear clapping, music, or a bell, please walk around the room."
 - ii. "When the sound stops, find the nearest person and form a pair."
 - iii. "I will give you a simple question. You'll have about 1 minute to chat."
 - iv. "At the end, you'll create a fun or unique way to say hello or thank you to each other."
3. The facilitator begins clapping or playing music/a bell.
4. Participants walk around the room at a comfortable pace.
5. The facilitator stops the sound.
6. Participants quickly pair up with the closest person.
 - a. The facilitator gives a simple, friendly question, for example:
 - i. "What is something you enjoy doing in your free time?"
 - b. Partners take turns sharing (about 1 minute total).
7. After sharing, partners:
 - a. Invent a simple, fun greeting or gesture (e.g. high-five, wave, fist bump, small bow).
 - b. Say "thank you" to each other.
8. The facilitator observes when most pairs are finished.
 - a. Start the sound again → participants move around.
 - b. Stop the sound → form new pairs.
 - c. Ask a new question.
 - d. Repeat for 3–5 rounds.
9. Bring the group back together.
 - a. Optionally ask:
 - i. "Did you discover anything interesting?"
 - ii. "How did it feel to meet different people?"

**TIPS**

- Be mindful of participants who may prefer less physical contact (offer alternatives like waving).
- Model a simple greeting to reduce hesitation.

**REFLECTION**

- *“What did you notice about how it felt to meet and connect with different people in a short space of time?”*
- *“How did simple questions and shared greetings help you feel more comfortable with others in the group?”*

➤ This activity shows how small, repeated moments of interaction can quickly build comfort, connection, and trust. By moving, meeting, and sharing in a relaxed way, participants experience how openness, curiosity, and simple gestures can strengthen relationships and create a stronger sense of community across diverse and intergenerational groups.





01 3-6-9 Clap Game



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

It boosts cognitive skills like attention, memory, and pattern recognition, while also showing how someone can destress and be more mindful. Through clapping and taking turns, participants improve their coordination, stay present, and connect with others, building a sense of community and shared enjoyment.



DURATION

10-15 minutes per round



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

Start with a **practise round** so everyone understands what to do.

1. To play, make a circle with the participants.
2. For the 3-6-9 Clap Game, you cannot say the numbers 3, 6, or 9, or any number containing a 3, 6, or 9.
 - a. For example, you can't say 6, 13, 29, etc. If one of these numbers comes when it's your turn, you don't say the number; you clap.
3. The first person begins by saying "one" and the next person says "two", but the third person claps because it is a 3.
 - a. In this example, if a person says "three", they are out.
4. If they clap, they remain in the game. Then, the next person continues counting.
 - a. Example: 1, 2, clap, 4, 5, clap, 7, 8, clap, 10, 11, 12, clap....
5. When participants get to the 30s, 60s, and 90s, they should clap for each number because they all contain a 3, 6, or 9.
 - a. Example: 28, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, 40.

Reflection: choose one or all from below:

- Discuss how it felt to work together in a group.
- Invite participants to share a moment of fun or laughter.

**REFLECTION**

- *"How did it feel to stay focused and work together as a group while keeping track of the pattern?"*
- *"What moments of fun, challenge, or laughter did you notice during the game?"*

➤ This activity highlights how attention, presence, and shared focus can create both mental engagement and enjoyment. By clapping, listening, and responding together, participants strengthen concentration, build group coordination, and experience how shared rhythm and play can support connection, mindfulness, and a sense of community.





02 Fruit Salad



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

1. To encourage social interaction and inclusion in a safe, playful environment. Building a sense of shared play, trust, and laughter.
2. To practise attention, observation, and quick thinking in a fun, interactive way.



DURATION

15 minutes



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

1. Have participants sit in a circle and leave one empty spot in the middle.
2. Choose the first participant to stand in the middle.
3. Spot and Call Out: the person in the middle says something they notice about one of the others (e.g. "I see someone who is smiling.").
4. All of the participants matching that description (including the person in the middle) get up and swap places with each other.
5. One person will be left standing, who will be the new middle person.
6. The new middle person says a new observation (e.g. "I see someone who likes music."). Swap places again.
7. At any point, the middle person can shout "Fruit Salad!"
8. Everyone needs to get up and swap places with anyone in the circle, creating a fast, chaotic round.
9. Continue the game. Play for several rounds until everyone has had a chance to be in the middle.

More Prompts:

1. I see someone who enjoys sports.
2. I see someone who drank tea or coffee today.
3. I see someone who likes to help others.
4. I see someone who likes ice cream.
5. I see someone who can make a funny face.
6. I see someone who likes games.
7. I see someone wearing black shoes.
8. I see someone wearing a white coloured top.

**REFLECTION**

- *“What did you notice about how quickly you observed, reacted, and connected with others during the game?”*
- *“How did it feel to be included in movement and shared play, especially when you were chosen or noticed by others?”*

► This activity shows how observation, attention, and playful interaction can strengthen connection and inclusion within a group. By moving, noticing similarities, and responding quickly, participants experience shared laughter, energy, and engagement. It also highlights how simple moments of play can build trust, awareness of others, and a stronger sense of community.





03 Ah Soh Ko!



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

1. To enhance focus, coordination, and quick thinking while promoting social interaction, fun, and group cohesion in a playful and engaging way.
2. Increased emotional engagement, fun, and stress relief through playful competition.



DURATION
15 minutes



MATERIALS
No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

Everyone sits in a circle or semi circle, and learns the three commands and their movements.

1. Ah! The person says "Ah" loudly and puts their left or right hand across their forehead in a saluting motion, with fingers pointing at the person next to them.
2. So! The person says "So" loudly and puts their left or right hand across their chin in a saluting motion, with fingers pointing at the person next to them.
3. Ko! The person puts both arms together in front of them in a clapping motion and points to someone else, anywhere in the circle.

The phrases must always go in that order, and each phrase needs its hand motion. You go when you are pointed at by someone next to you using "Ah" or "So", or by someone across from you using "Ko". When you are "Ko"-ed at someone, you start the sequence over again.

When someone goes out of order or uses the wrong hand motion, they don't get out. Instead, they become a checker and help watch for mistakes in others.

The person who was on the right side of the excited person starts the sequence again by saying "Ah!" and pointing to the left or right.
The game continues until there are two people left.



REFLECTION

- "What helped you stay focused and respond quickly during the sequence of actions in the game?"
- "How did it feel to support the group by becoming a "checker" instead of being eliminated?"

► This activity highlights how focus, coordination, and shared attention support both individual engagement and group cohesion. By staying present, responding to cues, and learning from mistakes in a playful way, participants experience how mistakes can become opportunities for learning rather than exclusion. It also strengthens connection, trust, and collective responsibility within the group.



04 1, 2, 3, Look



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

This game promotes attention, focus, and quick decision-making while encouraging non-verbal communication, social interaction, and group cohesion. It creates a safe, playful space for connection, trust-building, and shared enjoyment—perfect for icebreaking or community-building.



DURATION

15-20 minutes



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

1. Before getting started with the game and allowing some ease, the facilitator can do the following: have the participants walk around freely; encourage them to make brief eye contact with someone, smile, then move on; allow a few minutes for this so that most people have been able to exchange glances and smiles.
2. Once the above is done, everyone closes their eyes and lowers their heads. The leader calls out 1-2-3-Look! As the leader calls “look”, everyone looks up at one specific person.
3. Participants cannot change who they are looking at during each round.
4. If that person is looking back at him/her, both players are out. If that person is looking at a different person, the participants put their heads back down and wait for the next call of “1-2-3 Look.”
5. Continue the game rapidly to close the circle and eventually you'll be left with two people and the game is over.

Facilitator Tip

Instead of direct eye contact, participants can look at someone's forehead, shoulder, or general direction.



REFLECTION

- “What did you notice about how attention, focus, and non-verbal communication influenced your decisions during the game?”
- “How did it feel to make quick choices while being aware of others in the group at the same time?”

➤ This activity shows how attention, presence, and non-verbal cues shape connection and decision-making in a group. By engaging in shared focus and simple interaction, participants build awareness of others, strengthen concentration, and experience how trust, anticipation, and playfulness can create both excitement and community cohesion.



01 Community Singing and Movement



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

This activity makes people feel more connected by having them sing, make noise, and move together. Singing and clapping together naturally create a sense of unity, belonging, and collective energy. The simple act of participating in music as a group can lift someone's mood, reduce stress, or make them feel positive emotions. It allows everyone to feel included, seen and supported, and present in the moment. Beginning or ending the day in this way sets a tone of joy, cooperation, and well-being.



DURATION

20 minutes



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

1. Invite everyone to stand or sit in a circle or a semi circle.
2. Choose a familiar song that's easy to sing and that most people know (for example, Happy Birthday, This Little Light of Mine, or any popular community favorite).
3. Begin singing together as a group.
4. Introduce a simple rhythmic clap that fits naturally with the song.
5. Go around the circle, with each person leading the clap for a few beats while others follow.
6. Encourage smiles, eye contact, and relaxed participation — perfection is not the goal, shared experience is.



REFLECTION

- “How did it feel to sing, move, and make rhythm together as a group?”
- “What did you notice about your mood, energy, or sense of connection while participating?”

► This activity shows how shared music and movement can quickly build connection, lift energy, and create a sense of belonging within a group. By participating together without the pressure of perfection, people experience inclusion, presence, and collective joy. It highlights how simple shared rhythms can support well-being, reduce stress, and strengthen community.



02 Community Clubs

Story Club, Adopt a Patch, Recycle-Reuse-Rebuild Club,
Knitting or Crochet Club, Dance and Movement Club



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

These activities can be done in community spaces where people come together regularly to create, share, and connect. Each activity combines working with your hands and expressing emotions, helping build a deeper sense of belonging over time.

They focus on the power of doing something meaningful with both your hands and your heart, creating opportunities for healing, joy, and community resilience. These regular interactions help build relationships by creating a sense of belonging and community identity.



DURATION

To introduce any of these clubs, it's suggested to hold a 30-minute community meeting. During these meetings, a facilitator shares the idea and anyone in the group can volunteer to lead a club.



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

Story Club

A Story Club is a regular, welcoming space where participants come together to share, listen to each other, and to create stories—from real-life experiences to imaginative, fictional, and playful tales.

It is a space where people can use their creativity, voice, and imagination. They can tell a personal memory, invent a fun story, or build a story with others.

Adopt-a-Patch (Community Gardening)

Participants take care of a small shared outdoor or indoor space (garden, planter, or green corner).

- Promotes responsibility and teamwork.
- Connects people to nature and growth.
- Creates a visible result that grows and changes over time.

Recycle, Reuse, and Rebuild Club

A creative space where people repair, reuse, or transform old items into something useful or beautiful.

- Encourages resourcefulness and creativity.
- Offers a sense of achievement and purpose.
- Supports sustainable practices.



Knitting or Crochet Circle

A calm, repetitive, and social activity where participants knit or crochet items together (scarves, blankets, small gifts).

- Provides relaxation and stress relief.
- Encourages quiet conversation and connection.
- Can contribute to community needs (e.g. making items for others).

Dance and Movement Club

A joyful space for simple group dances or other physical activities, adaptable to all ages and abilities.

- Promotes physical well-being and emotional release.
- Builds energy, joy, and a shared rhythm.
- Encourages non-verbal connection.

These clubs allow people to find a sense of purpose while nurturing their talents and connecting with people.



REFLECTION

- *"What did you notice about how working together over time builds a different kind of connection compared to one-off activities?"*
- *"How can shared creative, practical, or expressive activities contribute to a stronger sense of belonging and community identity?"*

➤ This set of long-term community clubs shows how sustained, meaningful participation can deepen relationships, purpose, and belonging over time. By creating spaces for creativity, care, expression, and shared responsibility, participants experience how regular interaction builds trust, strengthens identity, and supports both individual well-being and collective resilience within a community.

03 Promise for the Day



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

Speaking intentions aloud increases awareness and accountability. Hearing others' intentions fosters understanding and creates a supportive environment for growth.



DURATION

15-20 minutes



MATERIALS

No materials required



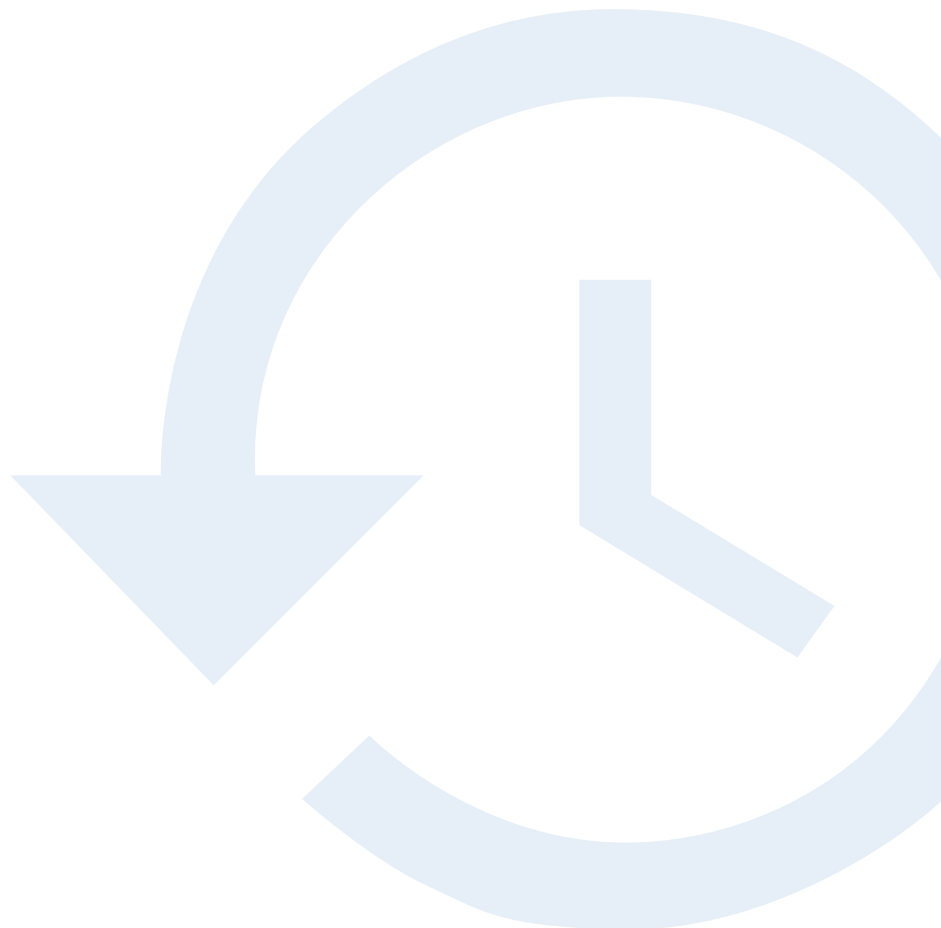
HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

1. Invite everyone to gather in a circle at the start of the day.
2. Explain that each person will share one word or a short phrase.
3. Ask participants to think about how they want to feel or what they would like to focus on during the day. It could be something you need for the day to be a good day.
4. Give examples if needed
 - o I need patience today.
 - o I will be focussed today.
 - o I will be practicing kindness and confidence today.
 - o I will try to enjoy each moment.
 - o I will make someone happy today.
 - o I will stay strong.
 - o I will breathe and relax.
 - o Support.
 - o Courage.
 - o Connection.
 - o Trust.
 - o Peace and Calm.
5. Go around the circle, allowing each person to share their word or phrase.
6. Encourage attentive listening and respect while others are speaking.
7. Conclude by acknowledging the group's shared intentions and wishing everyone a positive day.

**REFLECTION**

- *"What did you notice about how it felt to hear your own intention spoken aloud and to listen to others' intentions?"*
- *"How can setting a simple intention at the start of the day influence your actions, emotions, or interactions with others?"*

► This activity shows how expressing intentions can build awareness, focus, and a sense of shared purpose within a group. By hearing and acknowledging each other's hopes for the day, participants create a supportive environment that encourages reflection, accountability, and connection. It highlights how small daily intentions can shape mindset and strengthen collective well-being.



04 Community Tree



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

A long-term, creative activity where the community builds and maintains a shared tree that celebrates people, milestones, and positive moments, helping strengthen connection, belonging, and hope. This also helps foster a sense of belonging and shared identity by creating a visible symbol of hope, growth, and resilience. It celebrates both individual and collective achievements.



DURATION

30 minutes for one time set up of the tree



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

The facilitator explains:

- “We will create a Community Tree that grows over time.”
- “This tree will represent our community, our stories, and our positive moments.”
- “Everyone can contribute to it.”
- Use paper, cardboard, fabric, or a wall mural.
- Draw or build a large tree trunk with branches.
- Place it somewhere visible and accessible (e.g. community center wall).

Introduce simple symbols:

- Leaves → birthdays (name + day/month).
- Flowers → achievements (big or small).
- New buds → new beginnings for any member.
- Birds on the tree → hopes or wishes for the future.

Encourage participants to add to the tree over time.

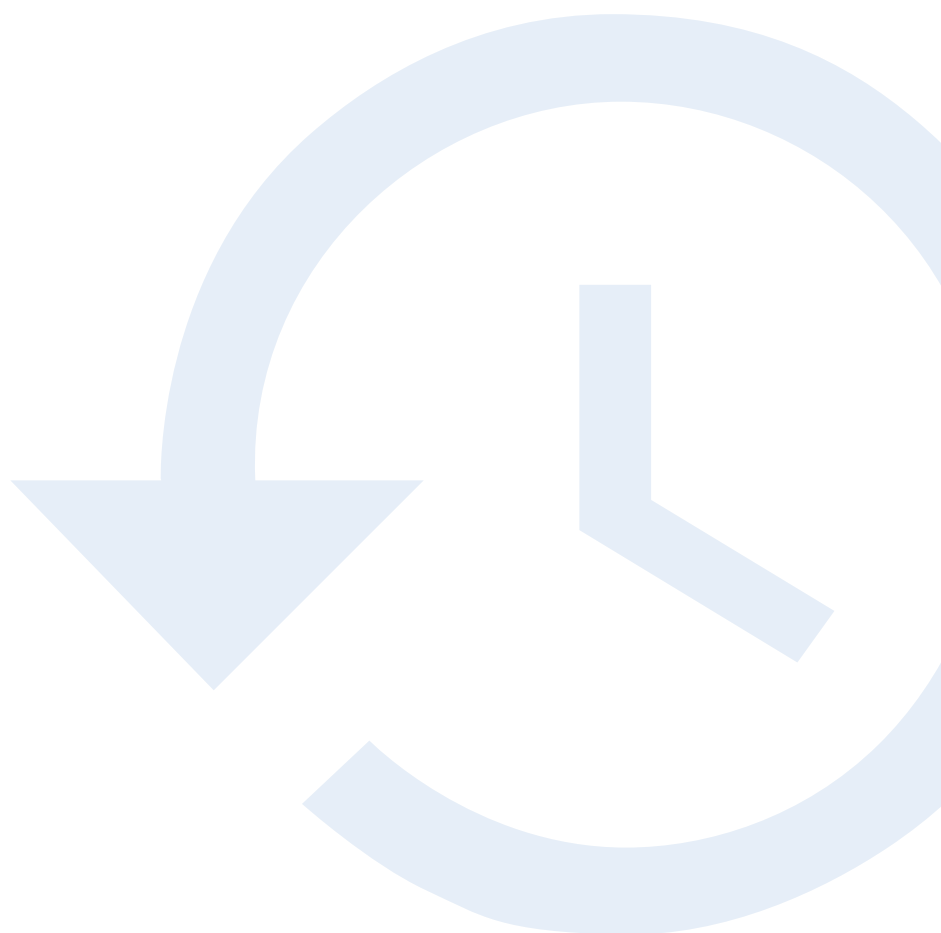
Take a few minutes periodically to:

- Acknowledge new additions.
- Celebrate achievements.
- Highlight birthdays.

**REFLECTION**

- *“What does the Community Tree represent to you and the group as it grows over time?”*
- *“How does seeing your own and others’ milestones, hopes, and achievements in one shared space influence your sense of belonging?”*

► This activity shows how shared symbols and visible storytelling can strengthen connection, identity, and collective memory within a community. By contributing over time and witnessing the growth of the tree, participants experience a deeper sense of belonging, recognition, and shared purpose. It highlights how celebrating individual and collective moments together can build hope, resilience, and a stronger community identity.





01 10-1 Shakeout



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

This activity is designed to release physical tension and stress in a simple, playful way while helping participants re-energise and refocus. At the same time, it creates a shared moment of fun and connection, strengthening the sense of togetherness within the group.



DURATION

5-10 minutes



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

Use an open space where everyone can stand safely and move their arms and legs freely without bumping into others.

1. Get Ready

Ask participants to stand feet shoulder-width apart and with their knees slightly bent. Keep the posture relaxed and comfortable.

2. Start Shaking (10 seconds)

Lift your right hand and shake it while counting out loud from 10 to 1.

Repeat with:

- Left hand
- Right leg
- Left leg

3. Continue the Countdown

Repeat the same sequence, but now shake each limb nine times, counting down from 9 to 1.

Continue reducing the number each round (8, 7, 6... all the way to 1)

4. Finish and Reset

After finishing the activity, stand still with both feet on the ground. Take a deep breath in, put your arms up, exhale slowly, and bring your palms together in front of your chest.

**REFLECTION**

- *"How did your body and energy feel before and after the shaking activity?"*
- *"What did you notice about how simple movement can help release stress or help you refocus?"*

➤ This activity shows how intentional movement and playful physical release can support stress reduction, re-energising, and present-moment awareness. By moving together and then settling into stillness, participants experience how the body and mind can shift from tension to calm, strengthening both individual well-being and shared group connection.



02 Hand Tracing Breathing



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

This activity explores how to manage your own reactions and how to calm yourself. It increases focus and awareness of your body. It is a simple tool that participants can reuse anytime.



DURATION

5-10 minutes



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

1. Participants sit or stand comfortably. Ask them to hold one hand up (like a star shape), spreading their fingers.
2. The facilitator says:
“We will use our fingers to trace our hand while breathing slowly.”
3. Use one finger to trace the outline of the other hand:
 - When moving up a finger → breathe in.
 - When moving down a finger → breathe out.
4. Move across all five fingers. Keep breathing slow and steady.
5. Switch hands or repeat once more.
6. Close:
 - Rest your hands comfortably.
 - Take one final deep breath.

The facilitator says:

- “You can use this anytime you want to feel calm.”



REFLECTION

- “How did your body and mind feel before, during, and after the breathing activity?”
- “What did you notice about how focusing on your breath and movement helped you feel more calm or present?”

➤ This activity shows how simple, mindful breathing combined with gentle movement can support emotional regulation, focus, and calmness. By guiding attention to the breath and the body, participants experience how they can slow down their reactions and create space for awareness and balance. It highlights a practical tool for self-regulation that can be used in everyday situations to support well-being.



03 Pass the Breath



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

This activity helps participants slow down their breathing and release tension, creating a sense of immediate calm. It provides a gentle, non-verbal way to regulate stress and emotions in a safe group setting.

It establishes a peaceful tone at the beginning or end of a session, helping participants feel more settled.

The act of “passing the breath” creates a subtle sense of trust, flow, and cooperation within the group and it introduces a simple technique participants can use independently in moments of stress.



DURATION

15 minutes



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

1. Form a Circle

Invite participants to stand or sit in a circle, either facing inward or in a way that they can see each other.

2. Establish a Base Rhythm

The facilitator starts by taking a gentle breath—inhaling through the nose and exhaling slowly through the mouth.

3. "Pass" the Breath

The person who just exhaled turns to the person next to them (e.g. to the right), nods, or makes gentle eye contact to signal they are “passing” the next inhalation to them.

4. Continue the Cycle

The next person takes their deep breath and passes it, continuing around the circle.

5. Focus

The goal is to focus on the sound and rhythm of the breath, allowing it to bring a sense of shared calm to the group.

**REFLECTION**

- *"What did you notice about your breathing, body, and mind as you took part in the shared rhythm?"*
- *"How did it feel to pass and receive the breath within the group?"*

➤ This activity shows how shared breathing can create calm, focus, and a sense of connection within a group. By synchronising breath and attention, participants experience how collective rhythm can reduce stress and support emotional regulation. It highlights how simple, shared practices can build trust, presence, and a shared sense of calm.



04 Circle of Strength Rhythm



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

It helps participants experience moving together in a shared rhythm, reinforcing a sense of togetherness. The physical movement and rhythm helps release tension and promote a sense of well-being.



DURATION

15 minutes



MATERIALS

No materials required



HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY

Everyone stands in a circle.

Clap together four times:

- Clap – 1
- Clap – 2
- Clap – 3
- Clap – 4

Then take four steps inward toward the center (count together aloud):

- 1 – 2 – 3 – 4

Clap again four times.

Take 4 steps backward to the original position:

- 1 – 2 – 3 – 4

Repeat the same structure:

- Clap three times
- Move three steps inward
- Clap three times
- Move three steps outward

Encourage increasing rhythm and energy.

And the same structure with 2 and 1.

Final round – count to 10.



Now build collective crescendo:

- Clap together ten times while turning clockwise slowly around the circle.

Count aloud together:

1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9... 10!

End with:

- Big smile.
- Eye contact around the circle.
- Optional cheer or collective exhale.



REFLECTION

- *“What did you notice about how moving and clapping together affected your energy, focus, and connection with others?”*
- *“How did it feel to build rhythm and intensity as a group and reach the final moment together?”*

➤ This activity shows how shared rhythm, movement, and coordination can build energy, focus, and a strong sense of unity within a group. By moving and clapping in synchrony, participants experience how collective action can release tension, strengthen presence, and deepen feelings of togetherness and shared achievement.

