



YOUTH AND RESILIENCE

MANUAL FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL PROFESSIONALS ENGAGED WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

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Introduction

This manual aims the support professionals working with youth to understand and address causes of violent behaviours and provide source for resilience. It is a resource for frontline practitioners and trainers in providing psychosocial support for young men living in vulnerable or unstable situations; provide guidance in managing psychosocial support programs and sets out psychosocial activities specifically designed for young men living in difficult conditions. The manual provides resources for designing and implementing programs that promote positive coping mechanisms and resilience in young men. The age range is from 15 to 30 years and can be scaled up or down to fit the local context. It will include guidance for front line practitioners on integrating resilience building into a variety of youth programs.

Youth face various challenges in our world today. How youth cope in very difficult circumstances and how resilient they are depending on a wide range of factors. This Manual can be used as a stand-alone resource or as part of the Youth's resilience programme. It has been written for community workers, trainers, teachers, parents, – both those people who are directly caring for Youth and those who are supporting or training others in their work with Youth. It looks at psychosocial support and coping mechanisms, and describes how activities in the Youth's resilience programme can be used both within formal school settings and out of school in all kinds of child and youth friendly contexts.

Youth in Albanian legislation means a person belonging to age category of 15 to 29 years old¹, in compliance with EUROSTAT² definition and documents policy the union european (EU); while and UN defines the youth how people aged 15 to at 24 years old³, explains these definitions using indicators the demography, education, employment and health.⁴

Program context:

Youth are especially in need of care and protection when faced with very difficult circumstances. Whether youth find themselves caught up in a natural disaster, for example, or in an armed conflict or are affected longer term by HIV within their community, it is vital to focus on the needs and wellbeing of youth. At all stages of a crisis situation, youth are particularly vulnerable – it is unfortunately the case that crises increase youth's risk to neglect and exploitation and other types

1INSTANT. Young people in Albania. Retrieved from <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/2791/libri-t%C3%AB-rinj%C3%ABn%C3%AB-shqip%C3%ABri-sfidat-n%C3%AB-koh%C3%ABt-q%C3%AB-change%C3%AB.pdf>

2EUROSTAT (2015). Being young in Europe today. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/6776245/KS05-14-031-EN-N.pdf/18bee6f0-c181-457d-ba82-d77b314456b9>

3Perovic, B. (2017). Defining youth in contemporary national legal and policy frameworks across Europe. Retrieved from <https://pjpeu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668203/Analytical+paper+Youth+Age+Bojana+Perovic+4.4.16.pdf/eb59c5e2-45d8-4e70-b672-f8de0a5ca08c>

4UNESCO (2014). UNESCO operational strategy on youth 2014-2021 Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000227150>

of harm. This is why the protection is integrated into the activities of the youth's resilience programme.

How youth cope in difficult circumstances and how resilient they are depends on a wide range of factors. These include their family and life circumstances, their sense of belonging and acceptance within a community, as well as their age and gender. Sometimes youth who have gone through extremely difficult times need particular care and support to help them cope and recover. Helping youth at a certain point in their lives can help them resume everyday activities, and strengthen their ability to cope, which can help to prevent negative long-term psychosocial consequences. This is what this manual and the youth's resilience programme is about.

This approach to resilience assumes the active engagement of the individual. The right to participation, as recognised in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is therefore central to the Youth Resilience training. This right is safeguarded through for example the four Introductory workshops, which are intended to actively involve the participants in the design of the programme and ensure that the thematic workshops (complemented with other activities as necessary) address issues important to them.

The Youth Resilience training module is based on the principle that children and youth have the ability and will to overcome difficulties and to learn new competencies to cope with future adversities ('bounce back') using their own internal resources and with the care and support of families and communities. Focus is upon the youth as an active subject who can influence his or her own world, rather than passive adaptation and survival.

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WHAT is the Youth Resilience Programme?

- Builds life skills linked to behaviour and social interaction that are essential for sustaining the resilience, protection and wellbeing of young individuals.
- Consists of a series of workshops conducted by the same facilitators, for the same group of youth.
- Complemented by sessions for parents and caregivers and close linkages to the communities.

WHO is the programme designed for?

- Boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 29 (and caregivers), but may also benefit those above this age.
- The level of development and the life situation of the targeted individuals will determine design and content of the programme.

Terminology

Resilience is linked but not equivalent to a young person's wellbeing or thriving. It describes a process wider than simply 'feeling good', and it includes all aspects of a young person's life. Resilience is concerning people's will and ability to overcome challenges and develop in a healthy and positive way in spite of difficulties ('bouncing back').

- It is about the individual and what is around him or her (people, communities, systems, etc.). It is a dynamic process of action and interaction between individuals and their environment.
- It is about skills and abilities that can be both learned and lost. Resilience is not a set of permanent individual personality traits.
- Resilience can change over time and is bound to the specific context. What is resilient behaviour in one situation may not be resilient behaviour in another. This is because different situations demand different skill sets.

Resilience is not equivalent to wellbeing or robustness of personalities and it is not merely an outcome. Rather, resilience describes "the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural and physical resources that sustain their wellbeing and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways".

Attitudes and life skills are closely interlinked. Social norms, ethics, morals, values, rights, culture, tradition, spirituality and religion and feelings about self and others play a critical role in terms of how life skills and knowledge are put in use and made meaningful/

Crisis is used when a person is in a life situation in which their previous experiences and learned coping strategies are not sufficient to deal with the present situation.

Distress and acute distress is used in the context of unspecified psychological effects after a distressing event. It is not linked to a specified diagnosis or syndrome.

Feelings covered by these terms include anxiety, sleeping problems, poor appetite, being withdrawn, and concentration problems, which are all likely to recede slowly with appropriate care.

Life skills is a broad concept and comprised numerous of different types, including livelihood or vocational skills; practical skills such as health and safety; physical skills; knowledge, experience and skills related to behaviour and social interaction.

The Youth Resilience training module acknowledges the World Health Organisation's (WHO) definition of life skills as "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life".

WHO groups life skills loosely into three broad categories of skills: (i) Decision-making and critical thinking, (ii) Communication and interpersonal skills and (iii) Coping and self-management skills. This means that the programme both seeks to build these types of skills of young people, and seeks to influence the availability and accessibility of supportive social networks, including peer-networks, friends and community support.

Participation of the youth themselves in programme design and implementation is fundamental. Guided by the Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we apply nine basic requirements when planning and monitoring children's and young people's participation.

Participation should be: (1) transparent and informative, (2) voluntary, (3) respectful, (4) relevant, (5) child-friendly, (6) inclusive, (7) supported by training for adults, (8) safe and sensitive to risk, and (9) accountable.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a diagnosis recognised by DSM-V and used for persistent mental and emotional stress occurring as a result of severe psychological shock after one or more traumatic event(s). It is characterized by a certain pattern of symptoms.

The term should not be used arbitrarily or confused with general psychological responses to traumatic events. The term remains controversial because children and young people's reaction to traumatic events must be viewed within a developmental framework.

This means that while some psychological reactions indeed can constitute symptoms of "traumatization," they may also just be a normal reaction of a child in a certain age.

Psychosocial support refers to the dynamic relationship between the psychological and social dimension of a person and how these interact. The psychological dimensions include internal, emotional and thought processes, feelings and reactions. The social dimensions include relationships, family and community networks, social values and cultural practices.

Psychosocial support is a systematic way of supporting children's development and their resilience to recover from the impact of crisis on their psychological, social, physical and emotional wellbeing. It includes aspects of mental health but expand to address child development and wellbeing as a whole.

Psychosocial support is based on a recognition that child resilience and psychosocial wellbeing as a complex process in which children learn cognitive, emotional and social skills such as trusting others, communicating their needs and developing distinct identities. It is a layered system of support that represent 1) basic services and security, 2) community and family support, 3) focused, non-specialised support and 4) specialized services, where each layer complements the others.

What is youth?

Youth is more than just a matter of age. Youth is a specific period in life between childhood and adulthood, and neither the end of childhood nor the beginning of adulthood is defined by a specific age in most contexts. Rather, it is a constant movement between different positions of power and authority. While youth may start at puberty, the onset of adulthood is related to a range of factors with different importance in different contexts, such as marriage, having work and an income, contributing and having a voice in the community, and gaining independence economically and in terms of decision-making.

We define 'Youth' as a transition period between childhood to adulthood, marked by certain rituals or physical changes. It is a stage of social and physical development stretching from puberty to the acceptance of the responsibilities of employment, marriage, family, community engagement etc. This transition may happen at different times for boys and girls, in rural or urban areas, and can vary substantially from context to context.

The level of development and the life situation of the targeted individuals should determine design and content of any youth programme. This includes considering how the young people understand and process information, how they communicate and relate to others and their life situation as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

What is youth resilience training manual?

It is a nonclinical psychosocial and protection methodology that focuses on young people's positive coping and resilience. It is a psycho-educational and neuro-affective regulatory method with elements of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy approaches.

The program builds key life skills linked to behaviour and social interaction that are essential for sustaining the resilience, protection and wellbeing of young individuals. This is done through a series of life skills workshops, conducted by the same facilitators, for the same group of youth. The programme is designed for boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 20, but may also benefit those above this age.

The workshops facilitates the active participation of youth to identify issues within their lives and communities that they want to address through the thematic workshops.

A critical component of the programme design is also the sessions for caregivers and parents, and linkages to the community. Such systemic approach is critical to promote internal and external protective factors and reduce risk factors in young people's lives at an individual, family and community level.

Objectives

The objective of the Youth Resilience programme is to promote positive coping and resilience among young individuals to sustain their protection, psychosocial wellbeing and healthy development. It seeks to build personal skills as well as protective social networks of young people at family, friends and community level.

Through a process of carefully selected games and activities, we build young people's knowledge, skills and confidence so that they are better equipped to learn and thrive. The resilience promoting

activities are selected based on modern criteria of neuroscience and other advances in child and youth development research.

The objectives of the youth workshops are to:

- Improving cooperation and peaceful interaction between youth, positive attitude to others, assertiveness and problem solving.
- Build self-esteem and a sense of belonging to empower young people to positively explore life and make healthy choices.
- Enhance positive expectations to the future.
- Enhance impulse control (in relation to aggressive behaviour and/or risk taking behaviour).
- Enhance awareness and ability to protect of oneself and peers.
- Explore ways to strengthen community mechanisms to protect youth.

Main principles

- **PROGRESSION:**
 - The process starts out 'light' and become more and more and sophisticated/'serious'.
- **STRUCTURE:**
 - The module stretches over time with a certain period in between each workshop. The structure includes repetition whereby each workshop starts and ends in the same way.
- **RELATIONS:**
 - All activities are conducted in groups to enhance social connectedness and peer support.
- **PLAY AND JOYFULNESS:**
 - The activities are creative (linked to play and joyfulness) and always with a clear purpose.
- **A WELL-TRAINED FACILITATOR:**
 - The facilitators are the role models and know how to facilitate sessions in a fun, safe and inclusive way, where the method of facilitation is as important as the activity itself.

This is not a stand-alone and an end in itself, but a point of departure for further programming and engagement with adolescents and youth. The module is a good way to start engaging with youth. It is most effective when it is part of a broader youth programme that addresses other areas of life, such as vocational and technical skills, health and socio-economic development.

Life skills such as building up self-esteem, managing emotions, promoting a positive self-image, negotiation skills, problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making determine whether a young person's knowledge and experiences are put to use in a constructive way for the individual and society.

Such skills promote young people's position to access services, obtain a livelihood in the future or claim a position in society. Knowledge is also crucial to a young person's capacity to protect him or herself.

Life Skills Module

The right to participation is a fundamental component of the programme. It encourages the youth themselves to take the lead in mapping issues within their communities and lives and in identifying specific skills and qualities to be strengthened through the workshops. It also encourages the parents and caregivers to influence the selection of topics to be covered through their meetings. The programme is appropriate for young people and their caregivers in all life situations, though it can be particularly useful in situations where youth have experienced various forms of hardship and distressing events, including family violence, poverty, community unrest, natural calamities, technological disasters or conflict emergencies. The programme uses techniques which have been shown to be effective in building resilience of young people and assumes a fun, safe and inclusive environment conducive for this purpose.

Goals of psychosocial interventions

It is important to keep the overall goals of a resilience-based intervention in mind, when planning and implementing life skills workshops for youth. Programmes must strengthen protective factors at all levels in order to build resilience in young people, and provide the support and opportunities that promote positive adaptation. In addition, they must work to eliminate risk factors, which undermine resilience. The life skills workshops for youth in the programme aim to help the participants to:

- Resume normal, routine activities in the aftermath of or even during crisis.
- Have strong personal and social skills to better adapt and cope with adversities.
- Feel good about themselves and confident in their own abilities.
- Make good and safe life choices.
- Be more social and act as a role model to other children and young people.
- Trust others and feel comfortable about sharing feelings and thoughts.
- Seek help from others (peers and adults), when needed, and have a stronger awareness about who can help.
- Solve problems without violence.

It is essential that workshop objectives are used in implementing the programme.

Facilitators will find they are able to be more flexible in each activity and alert to the process, if they keep the overall objectives in mind. It is equally important for participants to understand what the objectives of the workshops are and for them to have an opportunity to share their expectations. This gives the facilitator an indication of whether the participants have understood why they are there, and what they will be doing.

Introductory Session

The introductory session contain in total five core activities, in addition to a variety of other activities, such as games and energizers. The core activities are essentially a range of different mapping exercises with a focus on both the individual and the community.

Each core activity helps the youth explore their personal strengths, as well as resources in the community that can help them to positively cope with difficulties. The core activities facilitate the identification of life skills that the youth would like to learn or strengthen, as well as areas for improvement in their communities (and where young people may have an influence). The core activities of the introductory workshops are:

- “Lifeline”
- “Who am I and which roles do I play in life?”
- “The wellbeing and distress tree”
- “Drawing our community”
- “My personal goal”

Using these core activities, the facilitator gathers information from the participants about the content for the thematic workshops. All core activities include a discussion on the life skills participants feel they have or need to address difficulties in their lives or in the community. Questions to help identifying life skills during the core activities may be as following:

Activity: “Lifeline”

- Looking at your notes and drawings, which coping strategies seem the most common?
- What would you need to know or which skills would you need in order to grow up well in your community and manage difficult situations?
- Are these skills that you, if possible, would like to work on in this programme?

Activity: “Who am I and which roles do I play in life?”

- Why is it important to talk about who matters in our lives?
- Which skills do you need in order to create and maintain important social relationships?
- Are those skills that you would like to work on in this programme?

Activity: “The wellbeing and distress tree”

- What knowledge or skills would a person need in order to grow up well in your community?
- How can you increase wellbeing and decrease distress among yourselves and other young people in the community?
- What skills are important in this regard, that, if possible, you would like to address in this programme?

Activity: Drawing our community

- What skills or knowledge would help you and other young people to address the problems in your community or benefit from the positive aspects? Which skills would enhance your influence in the community?
- Are those skills that you, if possible, would like to work further on in this programme?

Activity: My personal goal

Each youth presents their own goal that he or she would like to achieve during the workshops. As a facilitator, listen, reflect and take note.

During these activities, facilitators stimulate the discussion and note down the key life skills that are mentioned by the youth on a flipchart paper. After each introductory workshop, the facilitators should review the list of key life skills that were mentioned during the discussion and reflect upon whether they can and/or should be worked upon in the programme.

The questions below can be used by the facilitators as a guide for reflection during this review:

- Are any life skills mentioned repeatedly during the same workshop, or are any like skills referred to in several workshops? If the same area of skills is mentioned several times, for instance conflict resolution skills, then it makes sense to include this as one of the thematic areas.
- Are there any linkages between the change wished for at an individual level and community level? For example, the youth may mention confidence in communicating in front of other people as an important individual skill, while also mentioning the importance of doing joint communications/awareness-raising to promote a change at community level.

If this happens, it makes sense to include communication skills as one of the thematic areas.

The lists of life skills that are generated in each introductory workshop should be kept until the last introductory workshop. The entire group then reviews the lists, and a final selection of life skills is made.

Helping youth to identify life skills

During the activities and discussions, the youth themselves may not be able to articulate what life skills are important to them or phrase important factors in their lives using life skills terminology. They may however give examples of stories or personal experiences using other words. The role of the facilitator is to help the youth to identify life skills by:

- Asking probing questions about what helped the young person positively cope with an adversity. Do NOT focus on any details of the difficult event itself.
- Reflecting and rephrasing the story of the youth to reflect life skill(s).
- Verifying with the youth that the life skills(s) adequately reflect what they meant before noting it down

Observing the group's needs

In addition to discussions on life skills, the four introductory workshops feature activities that require the participants to work both individually and in groups. This gives the facilitators opportunity to observe how groups and individuals relate to one another. The information gathered from these activities is helpful in noting strengths and areas for improvement, which can then be used to guide the selection of life skills to be included in the thematic workshops.

The following questions may help facilitators in the observation process:

- How does the group generally function in terms of listening to each other and creating dialogue?
- How do individuals integrate themselves within small groups?
- Do small groups welcome new members?
- How do teams solve problems?
- How do teams come to a decision?
- Are there any tensions/conflicts within teams or between individuals? What are the underlying causes? What are the consequences?
- What is the capacity of the youth to experiment in front of others (such as presenting themselves)?
- What do youth say about themselves and their role in relation to others?
- What emotions are being expressed (and not expressed) during the workshops – both verbally and non-verbally?
- Are there any activities that seem particularly easy or difficult for the youth to carry out? Why?

The facilitators should take time to reflect together after each workshop. These observations will help to identify life skills that the group need to work on, such as active listening, trust, managing emotions, communication, etc. Which issues are particularly important? Where are the strengths and resources of the group? Where are the areas that need to be worked on?

Prioritise which life skills are the most important based on the observations. Then, look for synergies with the list of life skills identified as important by the youth themselves. It is crucial to analyse observations after each of the introductory workshops before making the final selection of themes at the end of the introductory session.

A fun, safe and inclusive learning environment

Creating a fun, safe and inclusive environment is essential. It is the foundation for developing trust and empathy between participants and provides the basis for life skills activities promoting resilience in young people and for successful caregivers' meetings. Building resilience in young people and empowering parents and caregivers is not just about the specific activities within a programme, but is also about the manner that these activities are facilitated. The facilitator is a role model and is responsible for the atmosphere and communication in the group. To create a stimulating space for life skills learning, facilitators should establish a fun, safe and inclusive environment.

What are the roles and responsibilities of facilitators?

Being a facilitator is both a very rewarding and quite complex task. It requires excellent knowledge on programme content; strong interpersonal skills; the ability to empower young people; and the capacity to engage parents and caregivers. It is based on a process of mutual learning and exchange between facilitator and participants. The facilitator must understand youth development and be able to identify young persons who are in need of specialised services. It is therefore crucial that facilitators are supported by programme coordinators and managers in order to carry out their role successfully.

Number of facilitators for each workshop

Each workshop should be facilitated by a minimum of two adults. This requirement fulfils minimum standards in child protection¹⁰ and enables facilitators to pay careful attention to group dynamics. The same facilitators should implement the workshops throughout the cycle, to maintain a sense of stability and safety among the youth. If for some reason, it is necessary to replace a facilitator, this should be clearly communicated.

It is recommended that facilitators work with a maximum of three groups per week and that they do not implement a workshop for more than one group per day. This allows facilitators to take the necessary time for reflection and planning, as well as enabling facilitators to keep the processes within each group.

As for the number of participants, the groups should not be too small, nor too big (this depends very much on the needs of the participants). An optimal number of participants for the workshops presented in this programme is between 15 and 20.

The facilitator needs to be prepared for expressions of emotion, and be able to adapt the workshop activities to deal with this. Here are some guidelines in facilitating the workshops in this context:

- Give choices: Be sure everyone in the group knows ahead of time what will be discussed and that some people may choose to share personal stories. Let participants decide for themselves if they want to speak during the activities.
- Respect each other's private information. Let the participants know from the beginning that these workshops are a safe space, and that private information they share will be respected through the rule of confidentiality.
- Respond to personal stories, Do not force anyone to share personal experiences if they do not want to. This can feel like an intrusion on personal boundaries and make the person very uncomfortable. When participants choose to share, respect what they have to say, and let them know that you appreciate what they have told the group. If they express strong emotions, just try to reflect those back. For example, "I can see that this has been a very difficult experience for you."

Furthermore, for the thematic sessions, some preliminary research was prepared to identify the following:

Theme 1: Decision-making

This session is primary linked with important factors when taking a decision, like friendship.

Central steps in decision-making: invite participants to create a framework to apply when making decisions. In groups, participants discuss some decision-making scenarios and define important steps in making a well-considered decision.

Practising decision-making: a follow-up under the same theme : "Central steps in decision-making." Through role-play, participants practise decision-making and explore important factors in making decisions. Participants also explore the link between values and decision-making.

Imagining the future: using reflection on their own hopes for the future, participants are encouraged to think about their dreams and reflect on how the decisions they make will influence their futures.

Instructions:

1. Explain to the participants that the group is going to think about the process of making decisions.
2. Begin the activity by asking the participants for examples of situations where young people in the community have to make decisions. These could be small, everyday decisions, as well as more life-changing decisions. Encourage the participants to think about their friends, their brothers and sisters or themselves. Write the examples on the flipchart.

Cases

Scenario 1: You are invited to a dinner at your best friend's place this evening to celebrate her birthday. You are really excited and looking forward to it. Then, your parents tell you that your cousins and their parents are coming to your home this evening. Your cousins are keen to see you. They are coming from far away. You have not seen them for a long time and they really would like to spend some time with you. What will you do?

Scenario 2: You are a 20-year-old boy just entering the final grade in secondary school. Your father died several years ago and your uncle has paid your school fees for the last few years. Your uncle, who was quite old, has just passed away and now there is no one to pay for your final year in school. What will you do?

Theme 2: Communication

The youth explore obstacles to effective communication and the importance of body language. Using role-plays, the participants practise non-judgemental and assertive communication methods. Discussions also enable the youth to formulate and deliver their own assertive messages. The discussions are:

Passive, aggressive and assertive communication: introduces different ways of communicating and indicates obstacles to effective communication. Participants learn about passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour.

Body language and "I statements": participants explore body language and reflect on its importance. Using role-plays, participants practise non-judgmental, assertive communication through the use of "I statements".

Assertive messages: Participants learn the steps to creating an assertive message. Role-playing activities and group discussions enable participants to formulate and deliver their own assertive messages.

Instructions:

When you introduce the topic of assertiveness, keep in mind that communicating assertively is not considered the norm in all cultures. Assertiveness may be interpreted in different ways. For example, some participants will come from families where speaking up for oneself or refusing a request is considered inappropriate.

You do not want to encourage young people to behave in ways that could have unpleasant consequences for them in their cultural or family circles. It is important, however, that all

participants understand that there are certain situations in which assertive behaviour will often lead to positive results. For example, resisting pressure from peers or romantic partners, or in relation to the use alcohol or other drugs, or to join a gang or failing in school.

Cases

An additional activity: “Passing the message” is presented at the end of this session. Due to time constraints, it was not included as an ordinary activity in this session but may be included if time allows given the specific context. The activity is useful in circumstances where the facilitator would like to reinforce the importance of asking clarifying questions and not assume messages that can turn into false stories (which in turn can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts).

Theme 3: Emotions

Discussions are carefully designed to allow the participants to recognise, understand and express different emotions, while ensuring personal safety. The focus is not on individual stories or remembering distressing events, but rather on the common experience of living through events in different ways.

Using role-plays, participants explore how to constructively deal with emotions and identify ways to cope with stress. activities are:

Exploring emotions: introduces the concept of different emotions. Participants learn to recognize and express different emotions. A discussion of how and why emotions change helps participants understand that it is common and normal for people to experience events in different ways and that even unpleasant emotions can serve an important purpose.

Managing emotions: participants reflect on the connection between events, emotions and reactions. Using roleplay, they explore how to deal with emotions in a constructive way. The group identifies steps in managing emotions.

Coping with stress: participants learn about stress and its symptoms, differentiating between positive and negative/long term stress. Using role-play, participants identify and learn positive ways of dealing with stress.

Instructions:

This can be useful for young persons who have experienced a traumatic event or series of events and who are finding it difficult to talk about their feelings and reactions to the event. Be aware that the activity does not encourage probing into difficult personal experiences, but encourages sharing of general examples of experiences that can lead to specific reactions. It is crucial to learn about common and normal reactions in order to cope and establish a feeling of control. Knowing that certain reactions are common and that others may share a similar reaction may also help individuals to calm down, stabilising the situation. There are certain communication techniques to support this process, called ‘normalisation’ and ‘generalisation’.

Cases

Ask if someone can explain what emotions are. Allow two or three participants to answer. Use the text box for your reference.

Ask the participants: • Which emotions did you recognise in the game?

Write their answers on a flipchart.

Encourage reflection by asking the following questions: • Why is it important to know our own emotions? It is important because we all have emotions and we react to them. Sometimes we (re)act in a positive way, but sometimes our reactions can lead to negative consequences. If we are aware of our emotions, we are also more able to understand and manage our reactions.

• Can you think of any examples of a person reacting positively or negatively to his or her emotions?

Examples may include: If you are sad, you may react positively by seeking comfort and support from someone you trust. Alternatively, you may react negatively by becoming withdrawn and pushing people away which may make you feel even worse: others may become angry with you as they do not know that you are sad. If you are fully aware of your sadness, it may be easier to deal constructively with the situation.

Prepare handout:

My name is:

I am happiest when...

I am saddest when...

I dislike when...

My greatest fear is...

When I am happy, I...

When I am sad, I...

When I am angry, I...

When I am frightened, I...

Sometimes I feel...

And when I feel like this I...

Theme 4: Identity

The session includes activities to stimulate participants' understanding of themselves and to build their self-esteem. Using discussions about role models, the youth are encouraged to reflect on characteristics and qualities they admire and seek to emulate. Participants are also given the opportunity to identify positive aspects of themselves and explore how they can influence how they feel about themselves through positive actions. The activities are:

Identity: enhances participants' understanding of themselves and encourages reflection about who they are and want to be. Through a discussion on role models, participants are encouraged to reflect on characteristics and qualities they admire and seek to emulate. Please note: This workshop combines well with the workshop on leadership.

Self-esteem: participants are introduced to the concept of self-esteem and encouraged to reflect on its meaning and source. Participants do a variety of activities to help them become more aware of their own worth and how to build self-esteem.

Self-awareness and self-esteem: Activities aim to enhance self-awareness and build the self-esteem of participants. Participants are encouraged to focus on positive aspects of themselves. Activities also aim to create awareness among participants of how they can influence how they feel about themselves through positive actions.

Instructions:

1. Let the participants walk around the available space. Explain to them that when you clap, they should form groups of 5 to 6 people as quickly as possible (make sure to choose a number so that no participant is left out, to safeguard the principle of inclusiveness)..
2. When they are in the groups, they have a few seconds to find something they all have in common, for example, something they like; same school; same number of brothers; same favourite food or same hobby, etc.
3. Ask the groups to raise their hands as soon as they have found a similarity they all have. Then they should wait for the other groups.
4. When all groups have their hands raised, let each group call out what they have in common.
5. Let the group members shake hands to say goodbye and then start walking around again. Repeat the process a few times – each time with different group compositions.
6. As a closing exercise, let the whole group come together and find something they all have in common.

Be aware that the topic of role models is very important for young people. Role models have a significant influence in their life. During the activity, emphasise that having a role model is important because it can help people to grow, but that does not mean that the aim is to be like this person. It is more important to reflect on the specific characteristics or qualities that are admired in the role model and how one can learn from that person

Handout

Recently, I felt better when I

Think about yourselves and your skills, qualities and characteristics (both positive and negative). What are some of the things you might want to change about yourself? And what might you want to improve about relationships with family members and friends? What actions can you take to make this change?

Theme 5: Interpersonal relationships

Activities under this theme stimulate participants to develop and maintain positive relationships to other people. The youth are encouraged to think about different relationships in their lives, what they value in these relationships and how they can show appreciation to others. Through various activities, the participants also identify and practise dealing with factors that influence social relationships, such as power, empathy and trust. The workshops are:

People around me: The aim is to stimulate the development of successful inter-personal relationships. Participants identify the different relationships in their lives and name qualities they value in these relationships. They are then encouraged to reflect on ways in which to show appreciation of and maintain important relationships.

Self-assertion and maintaining interpersonal relationships: participants practice assertiveness and interpersonal skills in order to improve the way they manage relationships constructively. Using activities such as a game, discussion and role-play, the participants practise their problem solving and negotiation skills.

Empathy: participants explore the notion of empathy. Using small exercises and role-plays, participants practise their empathetic skills.

Trust: participants explore what trust means and what role trust plays in relationships. They also explore how trust may be built or broken in relationships. Using various activities, participants practise creating trusting relationships.

Leadership: In this workshop, the participants explore the role and the need of leadership. Using a variety of activities and discussions, the participants get to brainstorm around e.g. the qualities of a positive leader and discuss different types/styles of leadership. The workshop also allows participants to reflect on ways in which they may be positive leaders/role-models for other young people. Please note: This workshop combines well with the activities on identity.

Instructions:

Please ensure that these scenarios are adapted to the local context.

Cases:

Alda lives with her parents, uncles, cousins and grandparents as an extended family. She would love to be a doctor when she grows up. She likes to give a lot of time to her studies, but her grandmother wants her to do the household duties when she gets home from school. Whenever Sheena sits down to study, she is made to get up again for some kind of chore. Her parents feel helpless as they feel they should not argue with their elders. Alda's grades have started going down. What should she do to get her family's support?

You have been invited to a dinner. Your best friend would love to go, but he/she has not had an invitation. For some reason, the host and your friend do not get along very well together. What will you do?

You are with a group of friends, when two of them have a quarrel. Over a week has now passed and neither of them is speaking to the other and there is a great deal of tension in the air. It seems like neither of them is willing to take the first step in resolving the situation. What will you do?

Your parents are out for the day and they asked you to do several things, including cutting the grass and weeding the garden, which will probably take about three hours. However, your friends are trying to persuade you to go out with them. What will you do?

Handout: Leadership styles

Authoritarian leader

Authoritarian leadership gives clear expectations for what needs to be done, and when and how it should be done. In this style of leadership, there is a clear division between the leader and the followers. Authoritarian leaders make decisions independently with little or no input from the rest

of the group. Abuse of this style is usually viewed as controlling, bossy and dictatorial. Authoritarian leadership is best applied to situations where there is little time for group decision-making or where the leader is the most knowledgeable member of the group.

Delegative leader

Delegative leadership offers little or no guidance to group members and leave decision-making up to group members. While this style can be effective in situations where group members are highly qualified in an area of expertise, it can also lead to poorly defined roles and a lack of motivation.

Participative leader

Participative leadership is often shown to be the most effective leadership style. Participative leaders offer guidance to group members, but they also participate in the group and allow input from other group members. Participative leaders encourage group members to participate, but retain the final say over the decision-making process. Group members feel engaged in the process and are more motivated and creative

Theme 6: Equality and non-discrimination

These activities are linked to all the three dimensions of life skills that influence resilience of young people. Discrimination may affect some of the participants in the group personally for a range of different reasons such as belonging to a certain group, speaking a minority language, living with a disability, being a refugee, etc. This may influence the sense of identity, confidence and self-esteem of a young person. How young people are able to prevent or cope with discrimination is influenced by the level of social support available from family and friends, when needed. Each and every person can play an active role in preventing discrimination from happening and promoting inclusion of young people.

These activities raise awareness about the issue of non-discrimination and equality. The first takes a more general focus, whereas the second one focuses on gender norms more specifically.

Preventing discrimination: participants are encouraged to discuss issues and experiences of discrimination. Participants explore discrimination in their community and are encouraged to develop strategies to help prevent it.

Gender norms: participants reflect upon different social norms associated with boys and girls in the community. The discussions focus on different needs and barriers to promote equal opportunities.

Instructions:

This activity involves the participants acting in two roles. They experience both being discriminated against and being the one discriminating against others. The aim is that the participants experience both situations (to discriminate and being discriminated against) and that they learn that everyone has rights and responsibilities. Be sure to take the time needed at the end of the activity to talk about the participants' experiences, and to make sure that all the participants feel comfortable when the activity is over.

Be sensitive to difficult feelings and emotions that may arise when discussing discrimination. It can be a difficult topic, as it can remind participants of negative experiences. It can also challenge norms or values they have been brought up with.

Be aware of the multiple factors that can lead to experiences of discrimination when preparing for this workshop. Reflect on the social views about discrimination that are current in the context you are working in.

Role Play “Gender in a Box”

Divide the participants into two groups: boys and girls separately.

Give two flipcharts to each group and markers.

Explain to the participants that there are no right or wrong answers in this activity and that you would like them to express themselves freely. Explain that they will be working in their groups and every now and then, they will reconvene and give a summary of what they have discussed in their groups.

Ask the groups to brainstorm what comes to mind when they hear the phrase, ‘Act like a man.’ Ask them to write down all words as they are spoken on one flipchart. Then, ask each group to draw a box around the words and explain that this is the ‘Man Box.’

Now, ask the participants to brainstorm on what comes to mind when they hear the phrase, ‘Act like a woman.’ Ask them to write down all words as they are spoken on the other flipchart. Again, ask the groups to draw a box around the words and explain that this is the ‘Woman Box.’

Bring the two groups back together and invite them to look at each other’s flipcharts.

Briefly discuss the following questions:

- Where do these messages come from (who is the messenger)?
- Do the messages differ, depending on whether they come from a man or a woman (or mother, father, teacher, sibling, peer etc.)?
- Are there differences and similarities between the ‘Man Box’ and the ‘Woman Box’ (for example, ‘women are sensitive’ vs. ‘men are strong’)?
- Are there any contradictions in terms of how men or women are expected to act? (for example, men should be ‘sensitive,’ while also being ‘strong.’)

The boxes may look similar to the following examples. Variations are likely depending on whether the boxes have been written by male or female participants.

Woman Box	Man Box
Sensitive, have long hair, slender, fragile, vulnerable, dependent on men, cry easily, emotional, good in language and arts, good mothers, shy, timid, modest, not proper to swear, sexy, flirtatious, take care of children and family members etc.	Tough, macho, are involved in fist fights, good in maths and science, like sports cars, play football, have facial hair, athletic, ambitious, strong, muscular, they do not cry, are responsible for their family etc.

Explain to everybody that the two boxes refers to gender roles and describe how we expect people to act, depending on the society's idea of what is considered masculine or feminine behaviour. These expectations (stereotypes) come from family, peers, society, media, stories, etc.

What is meant by gender roles?

Gender roles are behaviours, attitudes and actions society feels are appropriate or inappropriate for a girl, boy, woman, or man, according to cultural norms and traditions. Gender roles vary between cultures, over time, between generations, and in relation to other social identities such as social class, socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and health status. Gender roles may also shift with processes of urbanisation or industrialisation, and the fluid nature of gender roles requires careful and ongoing gender analysis. In many societies, girls and women are expected to be responsible for cooking, cleaning, and childrearing, while boys and men are responsible for earning money for the household. In those contexts, the gender roles of girls and women are linked to 'reproductive' work, while the gender roles of boys and men are related to 'productive' work.

Ask the participants to return to their groups to discuss a set of questions as follows: (Some of these questions may be more appropriate to discuss in plenary – as facilitator, decide which is better for the participants in the workshop).

- What are the behaviours and roles that lie 'outside' the boxes (i.e. behaviour that is contrary to the types of behaviours you have listed inside the boxes, such as actions or behaviours that are different from the 'common' behaviour women/men have in this community)? Are behaviours 'outside' the 'Man Box' considered 'feminine'? Are behaviours 'outside' the 'Woman Box' considered 'masculine'?
- How do the behaviours 'outside' the box differ from what is 'inside' the box?

Explain to all participants that many men, boys, women and girls work hard to 'stay in their respective boxes'. Ask the groups to reflect on the system of 'rewards and punishments', that is in place to keep people inside the boxes. Ask the following question:

- What advantages there are for men or women to follow the rules/roles within the 'Man Box' or 'Woman Box' and fit the norms within it?

Some examples of advantages of 'staying in' the box can be acknowledgement, recognition and respect by others. Other examples can be to get more opportunities in the society, have greater opportunities for success or increased popularity and influence. There are almost certainly differences between the advantages for men and women.

Continue by asking the groups:

- What happens to men who do not conform to the societal expectations in the box or choose to 'step out of the box'? How are they treated by their families, peers and the community if they look or behave differently than what is expected of them?
- What happens to women who do not conform to the societal expectations in the box or choose to 'step out of the box'? How are they treated by their families, peers and the community if they look or behave differently than what is expected of them?

Ask the groups to write their responses on the flipchart on the outside of the two boxes. The lists are likely to include bullying, isolation, mocking, rumours, discrimination and physical violence and there are almost certainly differences between the consequences for men and women.

Now, shift focus slightly. Explain to all participants: Men and women in all communities are trained to fit into a box, by being rewarded for certain kinds of behaviours and rejected for other kinds of behaviours. Sometimes, the boxes force men or women into harmful behaviour, particularly if they do not 'fit in' the box.

Give flipchart paper to each group and ask them to label it 'Disadvantages of staying in the box.' Continue the discussion by asking the groups:

- Are there any disadvantages of 'staying in the box'?
- What are the consequences of 'living inside the box' for an individual man or woman?
- What are the consequences for the community?

Issues that might come up are:

- Pressure from family, friends and others in the community. This may affect the physical and mental health of the person: he or she feels confused or puts him or herself at risk.
- Men or women who do not feel loved and appreciated as they are, may turn to poor self-care or negative coping strategies, e.g. suicide, alcohol/drug abuse.
- Men or women cut off their feelings, which in turn affects their bonding with other people (friends, family, etc.). This in turn can have consequences such as abandonment, separation or social withdrawal.

Encourage continued discussion by asking the following questions:

- Can you think of examples of men or women in your own lives who do not conform to the messages inside the box?
- How are they able to 'move beyond the box'?

Gather the participants in a circle and use a 'talking ball' while discussing the following questions:

- What can you as young people do to be role models for your friends and siblings and give them feelings of being accepted as they are?
- How can you change your own behaviours and attitudes? How can you influence behaviours and attitudes of others?

Wrap up the activity with a summary of the discussion and link it to the role of the young people themselves. You can use the following as a guide: Children, young people and adults all experience pressure to conform to the ideals of what it is to be a man or a woman. Depending on how much they conform, they may be rewarded or punished by themselves and/or their surroundings. A person's social identity is not cast in stone but is shaped by society. Traditions, popular culture, the media, peers, family and the community (including schools) all play a role in shaping and reinforcing gender norms. These norms and expectations that have been ascribed to women and men change over time, from one culture to another and within different groups in the same culture. The norms are changeable and can be challenged. Adults and young people alike have the power to accept or reject them.

By raising our own and other's awareness about the roles and responsibilities that are given to men and women by society, we also become more aware of our own behaviours. This activity aimed at encouraging you to 'think outside the box'. It showed you how you can create an environment where young people have the right to be valued and respected for who they are and have the responsibility to value and respect others.

What is the difference between gender and sex?

<p>Sex (biological): This refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that identify a person as male or female. Example: The fact that many females can give birth and breastfeed is a biological characteristic.</p>	<p>Gender (social): This refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for girls, boys, women and men. Example: In some countries, women are not allowed to drive, while men are permitted to drive.</p>
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Please note: In many languages, there is no direct translation for the English term 'gender.' Where a word or phrase is constructed to mean 'gender,' it is often used in academic circles but not known by the wider public.

Theme 7: Conflict management

These activities are primarily linked to life skills and seek to enhance the participants' understanding of conflict, how to constructively manage a conflict and generate positive solutions. This in turn has a strong influence on available social support from family and friends when needed. The youth learn about and practise dialogue and how to analyse the motivations, needs and values behind other peoples' views. Participants reflect on peace and consider how they may contribute to a peaceful environment:

Understanding conflict: seeks to enhance participants' understanding of conflict. Participants reflect on their own reactions to conflicts and practise how various reactions to conflict affect the course of a conflict. They also practise using escalating and de-escalating language.

Practising dialogue: participants are guided through a dialogue involving the whole group. They gain an understanding of the motivations, needs and values behind different views. They learn to see things from a different perspective and discover the possibility of changing one's view.

Managing conflict: participant's understanding of conflict will be enhanced. Participants learn to analyse a conflict and generate positive solutions. Participants also practise conflict management.

Promoting peaceful relationships: aims to stimulate reflection about peace and reinforce the idea that everyone has something to give as well as to receive in peace-building work. Activities aim to stimulate thought on how each participant can contribute to a peaceful environment.

Handout: Escalating and de-escalating language

<p>Escalating language</p> <p>Escalating language is, for example, blaming, criticizing, attacking, judging, generalising and making up interpretations of the other person's motives.</p> <p>Using "You" messages, which often implies a sense of blame.</p>	<p>De-escalating language</p> <p>De-escalating language is, for example, clarifying own views calmly, respecting the other as a person, allowing other perspectives and values and taking responsibility.</p> <p>Using "I" messages, which express how the situation makes you feel and what you would wish for instead.</p>
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<p>Interrupting</p> <p>Showing indifference to the other person's views.</p> <p>Leading questions or questions which can only be answered "yes" or "no".</p> <p>Abstract and generalising</p> <p>Focusing on the past</p> <p>Going after the person</p>	<p>Listening</p> <p>Showing interest in the other person's views</p> <p>Open questions (when, how, why, what, etc.)</p> <p>Concrete and specific to the situation</p> <p>Focusing on the present and the future</p> <p>Going after the problem</p>
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Handout: Conflict: Two sides of the coin

A conflict	
A conflict has to do with a disagreement, which we call the CASE.	A conflict also affects the RELATIONS between the people involved in the conflict.
Managing conflicts means	
<p>Finding sustainable solutions to the CASE</p> <p>If we do not deal with the CASE, the solution will not be sustainable.</p>	<p>Working with the social RELATIONS between the people involved in the conflict</p> <p>If we do not deal with the RELATIONS between people, the tensions will remain between the individuals involved.</p>

Closing Session

It ends with a closing session, which gives participants the opportunity to reflect on what they have done during the activity series, and what their plans are for the future. There are two closing workshops available to choose from in this programme:

Alternative 1: My future - encourages participants to visualise their dreams and hopes for the future and identify ways to achieve them. This activity provides a good follow-up to the personal goals that the participants developed in the introductory session.

Alternative 2: Our future - is focused on exploring how the participants can help make their community a better place, using relevant activities that they suggest together with the facilitator. This intervention provides a good transition and planning activity for programmes with a community engagement component.

Discussion type of Interventions:

Instructions:

1. Start the activity by saying the following: I would like you to keep dreaming about your future – about what you want to be when you are adults, what kind of jobs you want, how you will make a living, what kinds of things you will do, where you will go, who you will work with and how you would like to be as a person. Think of as many details as you can.
2. Explain to the participants that they will continue the previous activity of how they see themselves in the future, by making a collage. A collage is a picture made from printed images cut out from the newspapers and magazines and stuck on a piece of paper.
3. Give each participant a piece of paper and old magazines, scissors and glue. Explain that the first collage will have the title: WHAT I WANT TO BE.
4. As the participants are working on the collage, go around the room and ask them what they are making. Encourage them to talk with each other about their work as they are doing it.
5. When they have finished, ask some volunteers to share with the group what it is they want to be. Encourage those who did not talk much during the previous activity to express themselves, without pushing them. When everyone has had a turn, display the collages together in a space you have chosen for this.
6. Now prepare the participants for the next step in the activity, by saying the following: To achieve our dreams about what we would like to be in the future, we need to do certain things and we may need help from others. For example, if you want to become a doctor, or a teacher, or an athlete, what do you have to do while growing up to achieve this dream?
7. Let the participants reflect on this question for short while in plenary. Try to get realistic answers, for example: I would have to study hard; I need to save up money when I start to earn; I need to go to school, etc.
8. Ask the participants to make a second collage featuring the steps they would need to take to achieve their future goal.
9. When they have completed the second collage, ask them to share with the group what they have made. When everyone has had a turn, display the collages together again in a space you have designated for this.
10. If time allows, divide the participants into groups of three and let them spend some more time discussing the steps to achieve their future goal. Ask them to discuss ways of remembering these steps. If time is short, move on to the next step.
11. Ask the participants the following question:

You have identified what you want to be and the steps to achieve this goal. Now I would like you to think about the help you might need to fulfil your dream. Examples could be resources (such as books), people (such as teachers or family members or friends), individual discipline, etc.
12. Write the participants' answers on a flipchart.
13. Complete the activity by thanking the participants for their hard work and praising the collages they have made. Ask these final questions:
 - What was it like doing this activity?
 - Did you learn anything new about yourself or others during this activity? What?

Resource materials

American Psychiatric Association (n/a): DSM-Development: About DSM-V at <http://www.dsm5.org/about/pages/default>.

Antares Foundation at <http://www.ataresfoundation.org>

Buzzle (n/a) Leadership Activities and Games to Build Teamwork at <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/leadership-activitiesgames-to-build-teamwork.html#build-teamwork>.

Canadian International Development Agency: A kind of friendship- Working with war affected children and youth.

Career Internship Network: Group Ice Breakers & Energizers- Practices to Stimulate Youth at <http://careerintern.ydinstitute.org/cin/resources>.

Career Internship Network: Group Ice Breakers & Energizers: Practices to Stimulate Youth at <http://careerintern.ydinstitute.org/cin/resources>

Child Fund International: Child and youth friendly participatory action research toolkit.

Ford, J. D., Connor, D. F. & Hawke, J. (2009): Complex trauma among psychiatrically impaired children: A crosssectional, chart- review study. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 70.

Henley, R. (2010): Resilience enhancing psychosocial programs for youth in different cultural contexts: Evaluation and research. *Progress in Development Studies*, 10, 4. p. 295 – 301.

Hunter-Geboy, C. (1995): Advocates for Youth: Life Planning Education: A Youth Development Program at <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/chapter9.pdf>

IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support & Save the Children (Terlonge, P., Juul Rasmussen, T., Ager W., Dybdal A. & Wiedemann, N.) (2012): The Children's Resilience Programme. Psychosocial support in and out of schools: Facilitator's Handbook 1. Getting started.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2007): IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings. Geneva: Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

Knox, G. 40 Icebreakers for Small Groups At: http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf

Peer Education At: http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/Y4Y-Manual_digital_v12.pdf