



Guidelines for the visual-art workshop

Expressing My Resilience



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**KINONIKES SINETERISTIKES
DRASTIRIOTITES EFPATHON OMADON,**
GREECE



**ANZIANI E NON SOLO SOCIETA'
COOPERATIVA SOCIALE, ITALY**



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OBJECTIVES

Visual-art based intervention can help develop a range of core components of resilience; can help participants talking about their own resilience individually or in a group and ultimately using arts activities can help foster social empowerment and communicate the lived experience of participants to wider communities.

Explain what psychological resistance is, to try art therapy methods in order to overcome various crises and stress.

SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Increase confidence, sense of identity, self-awareness and self-esteem
- Strengthen adult resilience to life's challenges
- Cooperate and share experience

MATERIALS

Markers, paper, glue, old newspapers, magazines, scissors, color pencils

TARGET GROUP

As most exposed to suffer severe distress or to risk social isolation as effect of the pandemic, the main target groups are:

- Older (65+)
- Disabled people
- People with mental health issues
- Health care professionals
- Ukranian refugees
- Family caregivers

TRAINERS

Psycho-social professionals will work in team with facilitators:

1. Facilitators will input to the workshop in terms of transferring basic creative-writing skills
2. Psycho-educational professionals will help participants in eliciting connections between their experiences and resilience-related skills.

DURATION

2-8 hours

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITIES

OPTION 1

The group sits in a circle. One hands a ball and says what they think about the workshop (what they expect from the workshop or what they are hesitant about). They give the ball to another person who continues in the same manner.

OPTION 2

Offer coffee and tea for participants

In the middle of tabel - MAK about emotions.

Task - choose a card that reflects your current emotion.

Questions for introduction:

- your name
- how are you feeling today? Why did you take such a card?
- what do you know about psychological resilience?
- when do you experience stress?

OPTION 3

The trainer presents the objectives of the workshop, introduces the concept of resilience, elicits expectations about the workshop and provides a pre-evaluation questionnaire to participants

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Psychological resilience is the ability to successfully cope with adverse conditions. At the same time, it is the ability to come out of that situation stronger, wiser and more capable. Indeed, psychological resilience gives us the ability to grow, improve, as well as accept certain risky situations and deal with the consequences of these situations.

It is important to realize that psychological resilience does not protect us from failure or unpleasant emotions, difficult conditions or behavior. However, this is a very big opportunity for us to accumulate a certain reserve of strength, which helps us deal with recurring difficulties and problems in the future.

As part of the project, various techniques and activities were developed to facilitate the participants' expression of resilience. The following will provide guidelines for the replication of what was carried out by the #MeRest partnership.

METHOD 1 - MAK COPE

MATERIALS

- 1) MAK (Metaphorical associative cards) Cope,
- 2) MAK Personal Limits,
- 3) MAK Mama,
- 4) blackboard,
- 5) markers,
- 6) white paper and pen for each participant;
- 7) MAK to express emotions.

THE MAK COPE METHOD

For this activity will be used MAK (Metaphorical Associative Cards) method. MAK have been around for over 40 years in 1975. Canadian art critic and exhibitor Ely Raman, eager to move art out of galleries and bring it closer to people, created the first deck of cards and named it "OH" (surprise). In 1983, German psychotherapist Moritz Egetmeyer, whom Ely Raman met, saw in these cards the long-sought instrument, which could be used to encourage the client to have an open conversation about himself and his problems. This is how metaphorical associative cards appeared.

The metaphorical associative cards were created in collaboration with card publisher Moritz Egetmeyer, renowned crisis and trauma coping specialist Dr. Ofra Aylon and artist Marina Lukyanova. Currently, Dr. Ofra Ayalon is the Director of the Nord Cope Center (Tivon, Israel) and Senior Advisor at the Community Stress Prevention Center (Israel).

The six cards that represent the hands are at the heart of the BASIC Ph model for dealing with crises and traumas proposed by the card's authors. This model reflects the main ways of coping: Belief, Feelings (Affect), Relationships (Communication/Social), Imagination (Imaginative/metaphoric), Thinking (Cognitive reprocessing) and Physical body and its senses. This model is part of international trauma training programs.

THE SIX CARDS

1. **Faith (Believe)** is based on faith in God or other higher powers, faith and trust in other people and oneself. The importance of faith and hope in overcoming crises is huge, and this is confirmed by scientific research.



2. Feelings (Affect) is the sensory aspect of awareness. The heart symbolizes love and hate, fear and courage, mourning and joy, jealousy and compassion, and many other feelings. This way of coping is basically based on the ability to recognize and name one's feelings, and then express them verbally (telling, writing, acting) or non-verbally (playing, dancing, painting, sculpting or making music).

- Raise your Hands, who are talking about your feelings?

I dare to use the "I message" to tell about my feelings.



3. Communications (Social). This way of coping is based on our connections - the interactions between people. We can give help to each other or receive it ourselves within our circle of family or friends, and we can give or receive help as professional helpers. When experiencing the consequences caused by trauma, there is a very great and important need to witness them - traumatic experiences must be recognized, expressed, listened to by the people providing help, accepted by them, stayed with them and provided the necessary help.

- Raise your hands, who dares to ask others for help?



4. Imaginative/metaphoric is the main way of coping when traumatic experiences are difficult to express in words.

A very good way to help yourself is therapeutic writing. I suggest you try free writing for 10 minutes. Another way is to draw your problem when there is no problem to solve it.



5. Thinking (Cognitive reprocessing) is very important. When under stress, negative thoughts arise - "I am unhappy", "Life is full of dangers"; They need to be stopped and replaced with positive, success-oriented ones:

- "I'm happy";
- "Life is wonderful";

Negative thoughts lead to unpleasant feelings - anxiety, anger, etc. Positive thoughts allow you to relax, be happy, and feel peace.

Unpleasant feelings lead to inappropriate behavior - avoidance, surrender, etc. Pleasant feelings encourage a person to behave properly, to try.



6. Body sensations (Physical) coping methods. Trauma is stored in the body. Peter Levin suggests using body awareness and somatic experience to "unwind" somatic trauma and regain control of your body and mind. These techniques are used to create a flexible balance between tension and relaxation, discover the limits of the body and review the relationship between personal space and trust.

Body scanning exercise and anti-stress breathing exercise are very suitable here.



ACTIVITY 1 - WORK WITH MAK COPE

30 MINUTES

Is asked to participants to choose a card that represents a difficulty you had but have already overcome. And cards that would reflect how that difficulty was overcome.

Participants present their cards.

Question to group for discussions: have crisis coping methods been used?

ACTIVITY 2 - WORK WITH CURRENT DIFFICULTY

50 MINUTES

Is asked to participants to think about the difficulty you have right now. Choose the matching card. Then choose the cards, what should be done to solve the problem?

Participants present their cards.

Question to group for discussions: have crisis coping methods been used?

CLOSING ACTIVITY - REFLECTION

10 MINUTES

- What did you understand about psychological resilience?
- How can you overcome various crises?



METHOD 2 - WHO AM I? DRAWING MY PERSONAL COAT OF ARMS

MATERIALS

Sheets of papers, pens, water colours, color pencils, painting brushes, glue, scissors.

ACTIVITY 1

Participants are asked to reflect and draw their own coat of arm better reflecting their identity, based on the following questions:

- What are my values?
- What I like to do the most?
- What are my most important achievements so far?

The coat of arms may contain drawing, symbols, words.

Participants may reflect and work individually for about 20 minutes.

When they finish the facilitator forms groups of 3 persons. Each participant will present their coat of arms to the other two persons. The other two participants may ask questions or make appreciative observations in the end. Presentations may take for about 15 minutes.

The facilitator will split the participants in groups of 3 according to different criteria, e.g. numbering from 1 to 3, and another round of presentations will follow.

Each participant writes his/her name on the coat of arms and post it on the exhibition wall in the training room, so that to be visible for all the other participants.

The facilitator invites some participants to express observations about the activity and draws conclusions about the role of the activity in defining participants' identity, values, strong points, resilience pillars.



ACTIVITY 2

The facilitator asks participants:

- To remember the most difficult moments in their lives/in the COVID period.
- To take a sheet of paper and write words that describe feelings, experiences, experiences from very difficult times when they had the feeling that they would fail, that they could not move forward.
- Then to cover the words with colors, so that they can be erased. The colours will transform your feelings.
- To cut the sheet of paper into pieces and set them aside.
- To take another sheet of paper, colour the first third of the page with yellow colour, the color of light.
- To glue the cut pieces on the yellow tape. The light will transform the feelings on the cut pieces, which symbolize the lived experiences. They will represent the stones, the soil from which you will be reborn.
- Then to draw a plant, a tree, a sapling, a forest that emerges from this soil - a symbol of their rebirth and development, of the power to overcome difficulties.
- They can also draw a strongly shining sun, symbol of the feeling of resilience.
- They are invited to complete the drawing according to their own imagination.

Working time: 20 - 25 min.

- Participants are invited to watch their work of art and reflect upon its message.
- Then participants are invited to post their works of art on the venue exhibition wall and share their impressions about the process of creation and their feelings.

ACTIVITY 3

The following activity is designed to increase self awareness and self confidence.

- The facilitator may begin with an introduction: "In difficult moments you need to remember who you are, to rely on yourself, to be happy that you have accumulated qualities and experiences. This activity aims to emphasize the positive aspects of your own person, so that you enjoy more self-esteem and confidence in yourself."
- The facilitator invites participants to take a sheet of paper, to put their hands on it and say: "I appreciate myself. I treat myself with honor and respect".
- Then, they are invited to reflect upon their main quality/qualities, turn it into a super power and themselves into a super hero.

- After reflection they may picture themselves like this. Some questions may help: what do they look like, what do they wear? What symbolizes their superpower? what colours do they wear?
- As a final step in elaborating their work of art they are invited to illustrate how they enjoy their super power and even to congratulate themselves, if they feel like doing it.
- Then participants are invited to post their works of art on the training venue exhibition wall and share their impressions about the process of creation and revelations they might have had.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

The facilitator invites participants to a final discussion about the objectives which the workshop met or not, about their feelings and awareness process, about the peer learning experience. He/she provides participants a post-evaluation questionnaire. The group shares final observations regarding resilience learning and expressing.

METHOD 3 - PICTURES AND FEELING

MATERIALS

Markers, paper, glue, old newspapers, magazines, scissors, color pencils, pictures.

ACTIVITY 1

To implement this activity is needed to use pictures of everyday situations during the Covid-19 period (ANNEX 1)

The pictures are placed on the table and is asked to the participants to choose one and tell what feelings the photograph causes to them.

The facilitator helps / encourages the participants to express their feelings if needed.

ACTIVITY 2

The participants are called to draw what was the thing/activity that helped them during the pandemic to go through this difficult situation.

After they finish, they share their thoughts about their artwork with the group.

ACTIVITY 3

The participants are called to work together and create and collage about a future dream. The theme of the dream is their expectation of the life we want to have from this day forward.

When the collage is ready, explain what the artwork represents.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

After gathering again in a circle will be discussed the thoughts about the workshop and what will be taken home. The aim is to keep about our experience of the pandemic and dreams about life after Covid-19.

METHOD 4 - MY RESILIENCE OPEN BOOK

MATERIALS

Materials for artistic work: black cardboards 40X50 cm, glue, old newspapers, magazines, scissors, color pencils, pictures, watercolours, white pencils, participants pictures.

ACTIVITY 1

2 HOURS

The creative art therapy workshop start from the resilience stories already realised by the participants.

The first activity provides that participants choose about twenty consecutive lines of their own story. The Blackout poetry method is adopted: from the short text selected by the participants, only the key words that the person considers particularly significant will be saved, blacking out all the others. The result will be a real poem and the next step will be to create artistic representations from it. They will use tempera, newspaper articles, pictures, cutouts, markers, to represent what had emerged from their words and they will graphically insert the text as well. The facilitator will lead participants towards the creation of the resilient open book, a sort of table-paper sculpture encapsulating the participants' soul-making, consisting of a stream of their words and images from the pandemic period.

ACTIVITY 2

2 HOURS

In the second and final meeting of the creative workshop. The participants will use paper cutouts or other pictures to create an image that represents Covid-19. Subsequently, they will use three frontal photographs of themselves to develop an image of the Self. At the end of the workshop, the resilient open book will be completed by participants and there will be the possibility to share the material developed.



EVALUATION

At the end of the workshop, submit to participants the following questionnaire.

Please, rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

- The drama workshop effectively engaged me in activities that allowed me to share my resilience-related skills.
 1 2 3 4 5
- After listening to other persons stories during the drama workshop, I feel strengthen my resilience to life's challenges.
 1 2 3 4 5
- The drama workshop enhanced my ability to provide solid resilience enhancing life models for other people.
 1 2 3 4 5
- The drama workshop increases basic acting capacities related with voice.
 1 2 3 4 5

- Overall, I found the drama workshop to be valuable in improving my abilities of cooperation.
 1 2 3 4 5
- The podcast development and recording were engaging and kept my interest.
 1 2 3 4 5
- The podcast development and recording were engaging and kept my interest.
 1 2 3 4 5
- I have learned new ways to share my experience from the podcast development and recording.
 1 2 3 4 5
- The podcast development and recording encouraged me to think more innovatively and creatively.
 1 2 3 4 5
- The facilitators were knowledgeable and supportive during the drama workshop.
 1 2 3 4 5
- What did you like most about the drama workshop? *[open question]*
- What did you like less about the drama workshop? *[open question]*
- Is there anything you think could be improved in the drama workshop? *[open question]*
- Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the drama workshop or the podcast collection that you would like to share? *[open question]*

AFTER THE WORKSHOP

The produced art-works are gathered in a digital exhibition available in the project website www.merestproject.eu/gallery-2/

ANNEX 1







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<https://merestproject.eu/>

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