TRAIN-THE-TRAINER CONCEPT

BACKGROUND PHILOSOPHY

&

TRAINING MODULES
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CONTENTS

FOREWORD ........................................................................................................................................... 4
THE PRO-SKILLS’ PHILOSOPHY .............................................................................................................. 5
The background of the project .................................................................................................................. 5
“Why” promote basic skills in socially disadvantaged adults ............................................................... 6
Life skills for unprivileged persons in Lifelong Learning: The background theory that supports skills based education ................................................................................................................................. 7
The Pro-Skills ethical manifest ................................................................................................................. 10
Our Core Values ......................................................................................................................................... 11
Pro-Skills educational concept of Lifelong Learning ............................................................................... 12
Methodological principles of Pro-Skills concept ..................................................................................... 13
INTRODUCTION & STRUCTURE OF TRAIN-THE-TRAINER CONCEPT .............................................................. 15
Core aspects of a Pro-Skills train-the-trainer course ................................................................................. 15
The toolbox - Examples of good practice ............................................................................................... 16
Time frame and modules ............................................................................................................................ 17
TRAINING MODULES .................................................................................................................................. 19
MODULE 1: BACKGROUND PHILOSOPHY ............................................................................................... 20
Structure of the session ............................................................................................................................... 21
Exercises ................................................................................................................................................... 24
MODULE 2: PERSONAL SKILLS ............................................................................................................... 27
Introduction & definition ............................................................................................................................. 28
Methodology ............................................................................................................................................... 30
Structure of the session ............................................................................................................................... 33
Exercises ................................................................................................................................................... 35
MODULE 3: SOCIAL SKILLS .................................................................................................................... 37
Introduction & definition ............................................................................................................................. 38
Methodology ............................................................................................................................................... 38
TRUST .................................................................................................................................................... 41
COMMUNICATION ................................................................................................................................. 46
COOPERATION ...................................................................................................................................... 51
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT / CONFLICT ABILITY .................................................................................... 57
Structure of complete training session on social skills ............................................................................. 60
Exercises ................................................................................................................................................... 62
MODULE 4: SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS ........................................................................................... 72
Introduction & definition ............................................................................................................................. 73
Methodology ............................................................................................................................................... 76
Structure of the session ............................................................................................................................... 78
Exercises ................................................................................................................................................... 79
MODULE 5: PRACTISE ............................................................................................................................. 83
Structure of the session ............................................................................................................................... 85
MODULE 6: REFLECTION / EVALUATION ............................................................................................ 87
Why this module? ....................................................................................................................................... 88
Methodology ............................................................................................................................................... 88
How to use the results? ............................................................................................................................... 92
Structure of the session ............................................................................................................................... 93
Exercises ................................................................................................................................................... 95
Evaluation questionnaire ......................................................................................................................... 97
LITERATURE ........................................................................................................................................... 100
FOREWORD

Experience and studies from different parts of Europe show that adult education and Lifelong Learning offerings are predominantly taken up by individuals who already have a certain amount of training. People from a difficult social background who are without any training or who have difficulties to find jobs in their first profession are rarely represented among the trainees or experience difficulty in successfully completing educational courses. For this target group, a lack of social and personal skills can be a potential barrier.

Unfortunately these basic skills are rarely part of adult education curricula, and few offers exist that give adults the opportunity to try them out and practise them within a protected environment. The Pro-Skills project would like to fill this gap. The train-the-trainer concept on hand aims on the sensitisation and qualification of staff in the fields of adult education, Lifelong Learning and social work for the promotion of personal, social and self-management skills. Professionals working with the target group of disadvantaged adults are invited to get in touch with an approach that is special in the field of adult education, involving innovative approaches like self-regulated, productive, cooperative and experience-based learning.

The train-the-trainer concept on hand provides background information on the Pro-Skills philosophy as well as several training modules which can be realised in both frames, initial and on-the-job training of staff.

We are aware that the Pro-Skills concept is a piece of work in progress that needs further development and improvement. Trainers and professionals who want to embrace the Pro-Skills philosophy and be engaged in everyday practice with this perspective must keep alive collective thinking and exchange. The concept should be integrated into a wider programme of interventions, enhancing stakeholders' involvement and social dialogue at different levels between public social and health services, education and training providers to address the high goal of a more fair and healthy society.

This project could not have been successfully implemented without financial and staffing support. The financial backing was provided by the European Commission and the partners involved in the project. Particular thanks are due to all the people and institutions that have supported us in every conceivable way and provided feedback.

We hope that this training concept will be widely spread among trainers and staff so that adult education and Lifelong Learning can also reach the target groups who are particularly in need of them.

Your Pro-Skills team
THE PRO-SKILLS’ PHILOSOPHY

Adult Education is based on the “belief that people can take hold of their lives, can make changes, that they are not helpless in the face of structural forces”

(M.K. Smith, 1994)

Pro-Skills is a project part of the European Lifelong Learning programme (Grundtvig) and co-financed by the European Commission. The nine project Partners come from eight European countries and are represented by non-profit organizations with expertise in different fields of work: adult education, health promotion, addiction prevention.

Pro-Skills is concerned with the elaboration of a practice-oriented training concept for the promotion of personal, social and self-management skills in socially disadvantaged people (especially young adults) as basic conditions for Lifelong Learning.

The background of the project

People with a difficult social background or that are experiencing social disadvantage rarely have access to the offers of adult education and Lifelong Learning: for this target group, the lack or non-acknowledgement of social and personal skills represent a barrier. Apart from technical and methodological skills, social and personal skills are basic key competences of adults and important pre-conditions for the access and the successful accomplishment of any kind of formal and non-formal education. Furthermore they are essential for the development and consolidation of an individual social and cultural identity and are considered as important protectors against harmful and addictive behaviour thus representing an important tool to achieve a good quality of life.

These basic skills rarely are part of the curricula of adult education and there are no offers for adults to train these skills effectively in a protective learning environment; on the other hand, the number of adults facing conditions of instability and disadvantage lacking these skills is increasing: the first Pro-Skills project was targeted at filling this gap.

Pro-Skills2, the second phase of the project, focuses on a standardized “train-the-trainer” concept that qualifies for and supports professionals in the promotion of personal, social and self-management skills in socially disadvantaged adults. It aims at a broad dissemination and lasting implementation of the innovative elements of the Pro-Skills concept by making politicians and decision makers aware of the need for basic skills in curricula and educational offers in the field of adult education, Lifelong Learning.

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1 You can read more about “social disadvantage” – definition and aspects – in Pro-Skills1 Manual pp. 21-23

www.pro-skills.eu
“Why” promote basic skills in socially disadvantaged adults

In a continuously changing world, more and more special competences - in science and technology, as well as social and civic competences – are required to understand and deal with the challenges and complexities of modern day life, apart from the economic and social consequences of the global financial crisis.

In this context, the responsiveness of education and training systems to new demands must be improved in order to better meet the skills needs of the labour market and the social and cultural challenges of a globalised world, addressing as a matter of urgency the situation of young women and young men who face exceptional difficulties in entering the job market. In particular, more flexible learning pathways are required which will enable men and women at different stages in life to move between different education and training systems, as well as between formal and non-formal learning environments and which can attract non-traditional learners.

Within these needs **Pro-Skills partners chose to give specific priority**, addressing targeted approaches, **to the more vulnerable people**, particularly the low skilled, unemployed, younger and older workers, disabled people, people with mental disorders, or minority groups such as migrants, **who are at great risk of future inactivity and social exclusion and who are all dependent on social benefits**.

These people, being victims of specific unprivileged conditions or entire society, often perceive themselves as powerless and suffer a low level of self-esteem and self-efficacy in managing life events and health conditions. For this reason it is fundamental to offer them the opportunity to work on basic skills. Personal, social and self-management skills also influence the motivation to learn and become actively involved in and for the environment in which one lives.

The focus is on the personal basis and not on the external conditions that are difficult to influence always aware that living conditions, the way society is organised and the rules that govern it as well as social circumstances are further important conditions for integration.

The training of basic skills in socially disadvantaged adults aims at promoting an “inclusive” perspective into society. That is why the Pro-Skills concept better explains itself on the basis of certain ethical and philosophical principles.
Life skills for unprivileged persons in Lifelong Learning: The background theory that supports skills based education

“People who regard themselves as highly efficacious act, think, and feel differently from those who perceive themselves as inefficacious. They produce their own future, rather than simply foretell it.”

(Albert Bandura)

In 1986, the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion and the World Health Organization recognized life skills in terms of making better health choices and enabling people to learn throughout life. Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (WHO definition).

Life skills may be directed towards personal actions or actions towards others, as well as towards actions to change the surrounding environment making it conducive to health.

Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE) has a long history of supporting child development and health promotion. It is now acknowledged as effectiveness approach to address a variety of issues of child and youth development and thematic responses.

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2 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion First International Conference on Health Promotion Ottawa, 21 November 1986 Develop Personal Skills

Health promotion supports personal and social development through providing information, education for health, and enhancing life skills. By so doing, it increases the options available to people to exercise more control over their own health and over their environments, and to make choices conducive to health. Enabling people to learn, throughout life, to prepare themselves for all of its stages and to cope with chronic illness and injuries is essential. This has to be facilitated in school, home, work and community settings. Action is required through educational, professional, commercial and voluntary bodies, and within the institutions themselves.

3 The term life skills-based education is often used almost interchangeably with skills based health education. The difference between the two approaches lies only in the content or the topics that are covered. Skills-based health education focuses on “health.” Life skills-based education may focus on peace education, human rights, citizenship education, and other social issues as well as health. Both approaches address real-life applications of essential knowledge, attitudes, and skills, and both employ interactive teaching and learning methods. The term livelihood skills refers to capabilities, resources, and opportunities for pursuing individual and household economic goals; in other words, income generation. Livelihood skills include technical and vocational abilities (carpentry, sewing, computer programing, etc.); skills for seeking jobs, such as interviewing strategies; and business management, entrepreneurial, and money management skills.

Expected learning outcomes include a combination of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills with a particular emphasis on those skills that related to critical thinking and problem solving, self-management, communication and inter-personal skills.\(^5\)

The effective programmes are targeting young people in school settings to promote healthy behaviours and prevent risk factors. But it is also demonstrated that life skills programmes improve learning processes and teaching methods.

Life skills education is based on studies conducted - through decades of research and experience - in behavioural science, and the disciplines of education and child development, on the way human - especially children and adolescent- grow and learn; acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills; and behave.

One of the most important theories that lie at the core of the life skills education model is the social learning theory (or social cognitive theory) by Albert Bandura.

The social learning theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modelling. “Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.” (Bandura 1977)

Moreover the social learning theory asserts that people are more likely to engage in certain behaviours when they believe they are capable of executing those behaviours successfully. This means that they will have high self-efficacy. In layman's terms self-efficacy could be looked at as self-confidence towards learning.

Social learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences.

Self-efficacy is central in the theory of Bandura as it is referred to as the own concept a person has about the possibility to be able to face challenges and problems and to take control of the events in life situation and social context. “Self-efficacy is the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the sources of action required to manage prospective situations.” (Bandura 1986)

The self-efficacy is not an innate capacity but it is learnt during lifetime and it can increase or be reduced depending on life events.

Another important aspect of the social learning theory is the self-regulation concept that explains how people choose their learned behaviours. The self-regulation process occurs when the individual has his own ideas about what is appropriate or inappropriate behaviour and chooses his actions accordingly.

Self-efficacy and self-regulation are strictly related to the possibility to use one’s own competences and resources and activate life skills. On the other hand life skills are necessary to be able to face problems and situations and improve self-efficacy.
In Bandura’s theory the individual is active and is able to control and manage life’s events which mean most of all that everybody can learn how to do it.

It is thus possible to learn life skills: they are important protective factors to help people not to get lost in adversity, maintaining self-esteem and self-confidence, internal locus of control, and a sense of life purpose as well as social support from family, friends and community.

Several studies in community psychology have shown that these resources are fundamental in coping with vulnerability and different kind of stressors (Rappaport & Seidman 2000; Wiley & Rappaport 2000). The ability - due to the personal competence to find personal and social resources (life skills and social support) – to face stressing events and bad conditions is directly linked to social inclusion or disadvantage situation.

Life skills are also related to the sense of empowerment, “the process by which people increase control over events that influence their lives.” Empowerment is also a pre-condition of the psychological wellbeing, and “cannot be given but come from within individuals and the group that they have formed.” (Laverack 2007)

The Pro-Skills team considers social and personal skills as basic competences you need to manage your life and important pre-conditions for the access and the successful accomplishment of any kind of formal and informal education. Furthermore they are essential for the development and consolidation of an own social and cultural identity and they are seen as important resources for a healthy life style.

Unfortunately these basic skills are rarely part of the curricula of adult education, and few offers exist for adults to train these skills effectively in a protective learning environment. (Pro-Skills training concept)

For this reason it is important to offer a chance to start a new process of development and learning, improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective to this target groups.
The Pro-Skills ethical manifest

The Pro-Skills concept is built on certain ethical aspects, to use the concept in our spirit the user has to approve and embrace these views.

Our belief starts in a view of equal opportunities of every man and woman which means every human being is equal. With the Pro-Skills concept and as a result of the Pro-Skills intervention we strive to empower participants to be active in achieving a more even distribution of wealth, influence and active participation in society and everyday life.

Although our concept involves skill training this in no way means we do not acknowledge our target groups being skilful. Our target groups master skills to survive in their environment and these are, as every skill built on experience and reflection. Pro-Skills training offers a way to transform skills to be more useful and productive in an active participation to change disadvantaging conditions. This statement also reveals our overall belief that marginalization or disadvantage means locking out groups and individuals from our society. This directs the focus to the societal structures in our Pro-Skills training.

Our Pro-Skills concept therefore aims at empowering and connecting participants to take active part in changing conditions in their life and in society.

Conclusive this brings us to the point of communicating these views to participants or potential participants in our intervention. To communicate how we define problems, our strategy and aims by using the Pro-Skills concept is essential and a step that can’t be overlooked. There are both ethical and pedagogical reasons connected to this. The ethical dimension involves considerations on equal opportunities and addresses every human being’s right to decide in which process of development he wants to take part in. This is also related to the legitimacy our concept receives from the participants in both ethical and pedagogical terms. The pedagogical approach has a bearing of the importance of meta-cognition, also as a basic pedagogical principle, first as the awareness of development as a key component in learning, secondly as the right to be aware and master development and learning. This we regard as basic principles and key components in the Pro-Skills concept of learning.

Our aim with Pro Skills training is to add value in life and in health. Our knowledge interest focuses on life value\(^6\). This knowledge interest has the potential to make a difference in managing life and uneven conditions in order to change both life and conditions. This also benefits, in our way of defining it, health by improving the participants’ sense of coherence.

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\(^6\) This is in contrast to the most common recognized value of education, exchange value, where you strive to achieve predefined goals to exchange them on a market. This on the other hand doesn’t necessarily mean that exchange value could not support life value and vice versa. It should be looked upon as a main focus of the skills knowledge interests.
Our Core Values

“There is no escape from value choices in Welfare systems”
(R.M. Titmuss, 1977)

Our vision lies in a view of equal opportunities of every man and woman, with particular attention to the empowerment of socially disadvantaged people, and in the need for a common effort to achieve a more fair and inclusive society.

Our mission is to enhance Lifelong Learning education offers to contribute to human wellbeing and health by promoting personal, social and self-management skills in people with a difficult social background, as basic conditions for a real chance to take actively part in improving their life conditions.

Equal Opportunity,
Education is the gateway to opportunities. All human beings have the civil right to equal opportunities of access to education, to develop their potential, independence and identity. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all.

Social Justice
An equal access to Lifelong Learning is fundamental to pursue social change against issues of poverty, discrimination, unemployment and other forms of exclusion. This is vital for building social integration and respect for the worth, dignity and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

Democracy
The strive to ensure equal access to Lifelong Learning and other resources for socially disadvantaged people, refusing any kind of discrimination is an effort that can contribute to build real conditions of democratic life in our society.

Participation and active citizenship
Socially disadvantaged people are encouraged to participate meaningfully in decision making, to modify their difficult life conditions, build their own future and thus contributing politically to the wellbeing of the community.

Solidarity
The endeavour on behalf of people with a difficult social background refers to an attitude of solidarity: as worth, potential and key competences of individuals are enhanced; solidarity helps to realize equality among human beings.
**Autonomy**
In order to promote responsible self-determination in socially disadvantaged adults, we believe in the need of discovering existing resources and strengths, as human beings must become protagonists of their life. This goal can be achieved by the enforcement of basic skills, but also by interpersonal relationships and environmental opportunities.

**Collective Action**
Individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As professionals with an educational and preventing role, we believe that we can improve both professional status and the quality of Lifelong Learning offer when we act unite and advocate collectively.

**Partnership**
Partnerships with families, organizations, politicians and other stakeholders are essential for the quality of education and the empowerment of individuals, accordingly we believe that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change.

**Cultural Identity**
We treat each person in a caring and respectful manner, mindful of individual and cultural differences or personal values, aiming at promoting sensitivity to and knowledge about cultural and ethnic diversity. Social and cultural identity is also a learning resource and can become an important foundation for a healthy sense of self-esteem.

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**Pro-Skills educational concept of Lifelong Learning**

Lifelong Learning is “(...) all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective.” (European Commission on Education and Training, 2006).

Lifelong Learning, formal or non-formal, spans the whole of life; it comprises both theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills, it encompasses the acquisition, improvement and extension in whatever form, of skills of all descriptions.

The Pro-Skills concept includes elements and basic principles of some innovative approaches such as self-regulated, productive, cooperative and experience-based learning in adult education\(^7\). These approaches seem to be more effective for the sustainable support of knowledge and skills than traditional teaching methods. The learners are rather subjects of the learning process than objects because they train to regulate their learning process by themselves.

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\(^7\) You can read more on these approaches in Pro-skills1 Manual, pp 15-20 [www.pro-skills.eu](http://www.pro-skills.eu)
Founded on the concept of empowerment, the focus on personal key competences to manage life events also affects the capacity of organizations, groups with similar interests and community to influence life environment and health behaviour.

**Methodological principles of Pro-Skills concept**

“Theory without practice leads to an empty idealism, and action without philosophical reflection leads to mindless activism”

(Elias & Merriam, 1980)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human beings have potentials, resources and competences</th>
<th>that can be developed to reach life goals and wellbeing. Emphasis is placed on the individual’s personal growth and self-direction in learning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An experiential approach</td>
<td>to learning is favoured as the learner’s experience is enhanced as the main determining factor for participation in decision making and change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulation of all the senses</td>
<td>makes people “feel” what they experience: the feelings associated to real experience help to enforce learning capability and value of change. Simulation of real life situations helps to ensure that the trained skills will be transferred into every-day life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-conventional methods are preferred on the belief that pre-defined schemes, traditional and recognized methods, or technological instruments, etc. could be felt as a barrier to real learning by socially disadvantaged people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This “unplugged” approach</td>
<td>calls for an effort from the trainer to be more authentic and spontaneous and encourage the participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A surplus value is given to a protected environment</td>
<td>in which individuals are allowed to practice, experiment and feel, sustained in their potentials, without experiencing judgement or performance evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A common effort is given to promote and enhance a trusting and authentic relationship</td>
<td>to support people’s sense of self-worth and the feeling of self-efficacy which is a fundamental precondition for the learning process.</td>
</tr>
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Pro-Skills innovative teaching approach is based on a large use of games and relational dynamics exercises that act as tools for the aims and goals expressed by its philosophy: they stimulate people to go deeper to their thoughts and feel their experience “here and now”, to promote a change in life-conditions based on their own resources. In practice they aim at creating the conditions to the participants to absorb the knowledge or exercise the skills necessary to reach their goal concerning their needs; helping people to create relations and through the interaction to obtain a solution to a problem.
People can react in different ways to this kind of exercises or find a good chance to confess very deep feelings and situations: trainers must be very careful in using these techniques and games, handle the dynamics which are developed with efficiency and be able to control the situation also by offering alternative solutions. That is why it is important to make a contract with participants to engage people to certain commitments and make them more responsible for their choices.

In order to make the trainers able to use this methodology to reach the goals expressed by Pro-Skills philosophy we suggest this training proposal: we believe that a successful realization of Pro-Skills training concept with socially disadvantaged people requires a collection of skills, characteristics and tasks that seems necessary to work within this perspective.

Many trainers already have the knowledge and skills to use such games and techniques, but they have to be aware of the fact that, within Pro-Skills concept, these same methodologies assume a new significance.

That is why trainers who are interested in Pro-Skills must be trained in the way we suggest, also through this short handout.

By using this training proposal that refers to a holistic approach, trainers could have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their-selves and their role within the complex learning and social needs of this changing world.

Pro-Skills concept is a piece of work in progress that needs further development and improvement: trainers and professionals who want to embrace the Pro-Skills philosophy and be engaged in everyday practice with this “subjective” perspective connected to human rights, must keep alive collective thinking and exchange. An important need is also referred to collect experiences of Pro-Skills concept implementation with final target groups in order to allow evaluation of the same: in a period of lack of public financial resources, sustainability and dissemination of this proposal among other professionals and their organizations depends on the concrete results and values we are able to demonstrate.

We are finally aware that it should be integrated into a wider programme of interventions, enhancing stakeholders’ involvement and social dialogue at different levels between public services (social and health), education and training providers to address the high goal of a more fair and healthy society.
INTRODUCTION & STRUCTURE OF TRAIN-THE-TRAINER CONCEPT

The Pro-Skills train-the-trainer course can be realized in both frames, initial and on-the-job training of staff. It can be realized as a single training course or can get integrated into a wider educational program enhancing stakeholders’ involvement and social dialogue at different levels between public social and health services, education and training providers to address the high goal of a more fair and healthy society. The specific content and structure of a train-the-trainer course depends on the trainees’ pre-knowledge, work field and the organisational frame of training.

As the frame of realisation is open, there’s no fixed structure for the train-the-trainer course. In the following, we offer some suggestions and give advice what seems to be important from our point of view.

The brochure on hand explicitly focuses on the train-the-trainer concept. You find extensive information on the basic training concept for the final target group of socially unprivileged persons as well as background information like the guidelines on requirements for educational policy at our website www.pro-skills.eu.

The website also provides examples of good practice concerning pilot trainings in different European countries concerning both training of final target group and training of staff.

Core aspects of a Pro-Skills train-the-trainer course

Some aspects are most important regarding the realisation of Pro-Skill training courses:

The background philosophy: The Pro-Skills concept is built on certain ethical aspects and a special methodological approach; in order to use the concept in our spirit, the trainees have to approve and embrace these views. The internalization of the Pro-Skills’ background philosophy is indispensable and one of the main goals of the train-the-trainer courses. This also means that trainers need to understand why and toward what aim an exercise is used. Not all exercises fit all settings and aims, and this is also to be communicated to the trainees. The goal of introducing an exercise is to make the trainers familiar with the exercise and make them part of it. The discussion concluded to each exercise is performed to help the trainees (both staff and final target group) to participate actively in the learning process activated by the exercise. In this assumption, we draw upon basic pedagogical principles of meta-cognition discussed, for instance, in work by Piaget and Vygotsky, or in Dewey and Freire’s discourse on active participation and consciousness.

Safe training environment: Trainers have to be aware of both the key conditions discussed and the objectives pointed out above when using the Pro-Skills concept to improve and transform basic skills. The training strives to extend and transform basic skills; therefore, the environment has to support this by being a “safe” area to train, even if you train trainers and staff. We define “safe” as an environment that is actively supervised, and if necessary, you must intervene if an exercise becomes uncomfortable or destructive. “Safe”, on the other
hand, is not without challenges; the idea of training basic skills is to challenge, but we emphasize that this should be done under good supervision and that the exercise must be conducive to our aims. In our interpretation of good trainer skills, this implies that the trainer should be fully present and active (Alfieri, L. et al. 2011).

**Own practical experience:** Pro-Skills innovative approach is based on a large use of relational dynamics exercises that act as tools for the aims expressed by its philosophy: they stimulate people to go deeper to their thoughts and feel their experience; they aim at creating the conditions to the participants to absorb knowledge or exercise skills. In our opinion, trainers shall experience these exercises themselves before training other people; they shall feel the strength of these exercises, experience themselves the difficulties and barriers humans face while doing the exercises, either disadvantaged or not. Thus the realisation of exercises and the following discussion linked to the Pro-Skills philosophy are the most important parts of the train-the-trainer concept.

**The toolbox - Examples of good practice**

The European project partners have created the so-called Pro-Skills toolbox, an extensive collection of recommendable materials and exercises for promoting basic skills. All of these materials are available as a download on the Pro-Skills webpage [http://www.pro-skills.eu] in several European languages. The toolbox is structured in categories regarding the skills that are in focus of each exercise. We would like to point out from the outset that many basic skills are interlinked and that categorising them as personal, social and self-management skills is not always clear-cut. The exercises mentioned in the structure of training modules below are exemplary and can be replaced by other exercises that fit your training’s need and frame.

Some comments concerning the techniques and exercises:

**Relational dynamics exercises:** The relational dynamics exercises aim at creating the conditions for the participants to absorb the knowledge or to exercise the skills necessary to reach their goal concerning their needs. These exercises are the main part of a seminar or a workshop that will raise the topics to be dealt with and there is always a theoretic background on which they are built. The dynamics which are developed in the team only work when they are handled with efficiency by the facilitators, help people to create relations and through the interaction to obtain a solution to a problem. This solution could be a theoretic analysis declared by specialists and proved by scientific literature. In the relational dynamics development, people with the suitable guidance from the facilitators, are working themselves step by step on this theoretic analysis and extract those results which are suitable to their needs.
Getting to know each other techniques: It is very important in the introduction of a workshop or a seminar, that people get to know each other (some basic information about their backgrounds, their thoughts in the frame of the workshop/seminar, their needs, their wishes, their perspectives). All this information is essential not only for the participants themselves but also for the leader, trainer or facilitator of a workshop. The process of team building and the positive atmosphere which is necessary for this kind of training, start from these first exercises.

Energizers: The word itself explains the purpose of the energizers:
• It can be an ice-breaking energizer.
• It can help to foster the team building
• It can be a motivation for people to participate and to warm them up.
• It can be a tranquilizer when people are very energetic and cannot concentrate on the process.
• It can be a way for people to move or rest depending on their physical situation.
• It can help people to have fun after a stressing process
• Physical activity supports concentration and the learning process.

Time frame and modules

The Pro-Skills training concept offers six training modules:
- Module 1: Pro-Skills Philosophy
- Module 2 - 4: modules on personal, social & self-management skills
- Module 5: Practice - a practical implementation of what was learned
- Module 6: Reflection & evaluation

We suggest on a training of at least 18 - 24 hours, which means 3-4 hours per module. We can imagine both, a course at a stretch spanning three days or a weekly seminar split in six modules.

We suggest the extensive realisation of all six modules. Anyway the modules can be selected e.g. if they are imbedded in a wider educational program. In this case, the trainers have to ensure that the trainees reach a comprehensive understanding and internalization especially of the concept’s background philosophy, reflection and transfer to the trainees work fields and all-day life.
Module 1: Introduction / Philosophy
- Welcome and warming up
- Introduction of host institution
- Introduction of Pro-Skills (an information sheet should be sent to the participants before the training)
- Introduction of participants by a creative method
- Expectations / fears of participants
- Presentation of Philosophy & Methodology:
  - Difference of this training
  - Who is our target group
  - Exchange on participants’ own experience participants with target group
- Discussion on Pro-Skills philosophy
- Presentation of agenda / modules

Module 2 - 4: Skills modules
- Warming up exercise
- Purpose / goals of the module
- Introduction of skills
- Why are these skills important ⇒ needs of the target group
- Exercises to experience (check toolbox)
- Reflection on exercises and variations of exercises
- Evaluation of module (evaluation questionnaire + creative method)
⇒ In the handouts you find detailed suggestions of structure for each module!

Module 5: Practice
Basic idea: participants shall prepare and realise one exercise on their own and lead a discussion in the group on the exercise focusing needs of target group, variations of exercise etc.
- The participants can bring in own exercises or can be given the tool box and can take a choice from it.
- The preparation of this practical part can be part of the training (in case you have a course in one stretch) or can be done as homework (in case you have a weekly course spanning several weeks).
- The participants should work with this task at least in couples or in small groups.

Module 6: Reflection / evaluation
This is the “last but not least” module of the training!
- evaluation questionnaire
- additional creative method
- again extensive discussion on the background philosophy, the Pro-Skills approach and the training concept
TRAINING MODULES
MODULE 1: BACKGROUND PHILOSOPHY
The Pro-Skills concept is built on a background philosophy including certain ethical aspects and a special methodological approach. In order to use the concept in our spirit, the trainees have to approve and embrace these views. The internalization of the Pro-Skills’ background philosophy is indispensable and one of the main goals of the train-the-trainer courses. Thus module 1 copes with the background philosophy. This training module builds up the basis for the understanding of all further training modules and is obligatory for any kind of Pro-Skills training course.

It seems to be useful to provide the trainees with the background philosophy already in the forefront of the course and ask them to read it carefully in advance as preparation of the course.

Independently whether you realise a complete Pro-Skills train-the-trainer concept including all modules or if you integrate some modules separately into an existing educational concept, you should take enough time to discuss the Pro-Skills philosophical background with your trainees.

**Structure of the session**

This is the first module of the Pro-Skills training concept. It is also probably the first time you meet your trainees. Therefore it is utterly important that this first meeting will be done in a good spirited way that makes the trainees feel welcome and curious about the upcoming training. As following you find a suggestion of a structure of the session.

1. **Welcome and warming up**

   As the Pro-Skills concept is a training concept that promotes an active way of learning you can choose to start the training with an exercise that challenges the trainees. The spider net is an exemplary exercise that refers to the training’s topic right from the start of the session. It is realized right before the start of the session when people enter the training room. The trainees need to communicate, trust and cooperate in order to solve the challenge.

   It is important to realize a warm welcome afterwards inside the room and to link the first explanations to the exercise spider net.

   If your trainees are not used to active trainings and the spider net seems to swamp your trainees, feel free to choose another exercise which is less challenging. You find further exercises in the Pro-Skills toolbox.

   You can also choose to do the welcoming in a more traditional way, simply by warmly welcome the participants. Main point is that they get a nice welcome and feel well.
2. **Introduction of host institution**

The participants will like to know what institution you represent and who you are. Therefore we suggest you give a short presentation of your institution and yourself. You can have a short power-point presentation or just give an oral presentation.

3. **Introduction of Pro-Skills**

We suggest sending information on the Pro-Skills concept before the training, e.g. in terms of the basic Pro-Skills manual. Anyway the trainees will be curious about the Pro-Skills concept. You find a power-point presentation attached to this training concept in order to give a short introduction of the approach. It seems to be useful to add some framework information on the actual training (organizational aspects etc.).

4. **Introduction of participants by a creative method**

There are several exercises in the toolbox that can be used for the introduction of participants. One example is the exercise “Sorting in a row”. This exercise combines short information on the participants and being little active.

5. **Expectations / fears of participants**

Participants will have both expectations and maybe fears considering the training. The participants need time and space to express what they are expected to do, what their desires, needs and fears regarding this training are. We suggest realizing the exercise called “Expectation tree”. You can come back to this exercise and its results at the end of the training (see module 6: Reflection & evaluation).

6. **Presentation of Philosophy & Methodology**

You can use the power-point presentation about the philosophy and methodology as basis for discussing the philosophy. As earlier stated, we suggest providing the participants with the background philosophy in advance. This way they have time to get familiar with the underlying philosophy.

As the Pro-Skills concept is different from others training concepts, regarding its strong philosophical background theory, it is important to point this out. The exercises used are not only for fun: they have a deeper meaning.

It is important to point out that people can react in different ways to this kind of exercises or find a good chance to confess very deep feelings and situations. Therefore trainers must be very careful in using these techniques and games, handle the dynamics which are developed with efficiency and be able to control the situation also by offering alternative solutions. That is why it is important to make a contract with participants to engage people to certain commitments and make them more responsible for their choices.
Who is our target group? Exchange on participants’ own experience with target group

Take time to have a discussion about the target group with this training. Although the target group is disadvantaged in a way, and although our concept involves skill training for them, this in no way means we do not acknowledge our target groups being skilful. Our target groups’ master skills to survive in their environment and these are - as every skill - built on experience and reflection. Pro-Skills training offers a way to transform skills to be more useful and productive in an active participation to change disadvantaging conditions.

The trainees will most likely have own experience with the target group and it is essential they are given time to reflect about this and share their experiences with the others. This can for example be done in small groups that shares the participants own experience. The groups can for example discuss how to transform harmful skills to be more useful.

7. Discussion on Pro-Skills philosophy

Discussion on the Pro-Skills’ philosophy can be done in various ways depending on how many participants you have. We suggest you make small groups (can be done in a fun way, check the toolbox) and give them time to discuss the Pro-Skills’ philosophy. You can give them some questions to reflect about, such as:

• Why promote basic skills in socially disadvantaged adults?
• What do you think about the social learning theory?
• What is the meaning of a protected learning environment? Why is it important?
• Why use games and relational dynamics exercises as tools?

Ask the groups to collect their thoughts and ideas about the philosophy & methodology and give a short presentation at the end.

8. Presentation of agenda / modules

We suggest giving the participants a short overview of the upcoming agenda, modules and timeframe.
## Exercises

### Exercise: Spider Net

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>![Icon]</th>
<th><strong>Time frame:</strong> ~ 15-25 min</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td><strong>Location:</strong> in- and outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong> up to 10 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td><strong>Material:</strong> rope, ribbon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ![Icon] | **Procedure:**  
A spider net is stretched between two trees by using a rope or ribbon. The net should be at least 2 meters high. The number of the participants and the number of the holes in the net have to be identical. |
| ![Icon] | **Goal / purpose:**  
The challenge for the group is to get all members through the net without touching it. If the net is touched the whole group (optional: only the person who has touched the net) has to start from the beginning. Those who have reached the goal are not allowed to go back to the other side in order to help the others. Help can only be provided from the side where one actually stands. |
| ![Icon] | **Questions for discussion:**  
- Did you first discuss the solution or did you start to act right away?  
- How narrow were the rules? |
| ![Icon] | **Source:**  
game pool of PFIFF, Hochschule Fulda |
Exercise: Sorting in a row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Time frame:</strong></th>
<th>~ 10 min</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>in- and outdoors, free space to build a long row with all participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong></td>
<td>8 - 25 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material:</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Procedure:</strong></td>
<td>The participants stand up. They are asked to build a row and sort by a certain characteristic like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• name (in alphabetic order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• time it took to come to the training this day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• time since when they work with the target group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal / purpose:</strong></td>
<td>Participants get in contact and gain some first information about each other concerning the topic of training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source:</strong></td>
<td>Pro-Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise: Expectation and fear tree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Time frame:</strong></th>
<th>~ 20 min</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>indoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong></td>
<td>5 - 30 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material:</strong></td>
<td>flipchart or pin board (one per max. 10 persons), small paper cards in two colours (~ 4 cards per person per colour), pens, pins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedure:**

The rough structure of a tree is drawn on a flip chart paper. The trainees are asked to write down their expectations and fears concerning the training course on small paper cards, expectations cards in different colour than fear cards.

The cards are pinned to the tree afterwards, expectations to the treetop, fears to the trunk. The participants or the trainer structure the cards so repeated expectations and fears become visible.

If you have a big group, divide it into group of max. 8-10 persons and have several trees.

**Goal / purpose:**

Participants’ expectations and fears concerning the training become visible. It seems important to discuss inadequate and unrealistic expectations before the training modules start and to give further information regarding the fears.

There’s the chance to revisit this expectation and fear tree at the end of the course and discuss which expectations and fears were fulfilled or not. You ask the trainees at the end of training to visit the tree and

- remove the cards with expectations that were fulfilled and the cards with fears that were not significant; these cards are put in a small box below the tree;
- leave the cards with expectations that were not fulfilled and the cards with fears which came true; these cards remain at the tree.

The resulting tree must not be commented.

**Source:**

Mekka
MODULE 2: PERSONAL SKILLS
**Introduction & definition**

What we mean by personal skills is the ability to reflect on and regulate internal concepts and processes such as emotions, cognitions and one’s own identity.

In everyday life, personal skills, along with social and management skills, function simultaneously in a mutual relationship.

The aim of personal skills activities is to reflect on each skill and competence in order to clarify and be aware of each component and process that occurs on the intrapersonal dimension.

### Emotion and emotion regulation

- Ability to perceive and express one’s own feelings;

### Cognition

- Self-reflection: realistic self-evaluation; problem-solving ability; ability to perceive one’s own desires and longings; identifying barriers and resources; setting goals; making decisions;

### Identity and self-esteem

- Identifying values and beliefs

(Pro-Skills Training Concept paragraph 3.2)

### Why is it important to work on personal skills with socially unprivileged persons?

As mentioned in the Pro-Skills training concept, “socially unprivileged persons are all people whose rights, be they material or cultural, are not recognised, and whose potential and skills, whatever they may be, are not acknowledged.

“This unprivileged situation is created by a complex of factors and their interaction, which hinder the social inclusion of these people” (O. De Leonardis 2000).
On one side we can find cases of radically disadvantaged people lacking resources and also often with violated human rights.

On the other side we must include all the civil exclusion in several frequent and latent forms, all the passiveness and alienation arising from the civic participation in the local context, where citizenship is not actually realized (Bauman, 1999; Beck et al., 1997).

We should consider the whole complex and each situation of instability with which a lot of individuals have to cope, often suddenly and without any preparation. (Pro-Skills Training Concept chapter 2.4)

**Psychological aspects that affect unprivileged persons** are the sense of being victims of specific conditions or of the entire society, they often perceive themselves as powerless, or in a profound way they suffer from a low level of self-esteem and self-efficacy. On the other hand, they can possess several resources that are not acknowledged because of ethnic and cultural differences.

In any case, unprivileged persons who decide to start a changing process mainly need to redefine their personalities and identities for themselves, and this is even more important if they are currently in a crisis situation they want to escape from.

Embarking on a new personal changing process requires motivation and definition of needs and desires. As described in detail in the Pro-Skills Training Concept:

Motivation for lifelong learning will arise from the person’s motives and needs. These vary from person to person and also may change over time.

The most important basic condition for the arousal of motivation is that people discover and define their needs and wishes! Some people neither reflected their wishes nor know which potential options could be of interest. So it can be helpful to support a person in actually reflecting her/his motives and needs (Pro-Skills Training Concept chapter 2.2 paragraph b).

For these reasons, the priority of the Pro-Skills training is to provide the participants with the opportunity to work on their personal skills.

**Personal skills in the sense of a health promotion approach**

Personal skills’ training is conducted through a health promotion approach. The trainer works to improve the participants’ empowerment and resources, as it is assumed that people are able to control and manage their well-being and health.

The principle of health promotion is that health is the result of behaviour, attitudes, and lifestyle, and of course genetic predisposition in a complex interaction with the social context; people are responsible for their level of health and involved in an active process to improve their health conditions. The well-being that people may experience in this way depends on their level of self-efficacy and their perception of the “locus of control”: how much they can control and manage life events or how much they feel unable to do anything.
The health promotion approach works to improve and enhance the capacities of people and their communities to manage their life and health conditions and cope with problems and crisis situations in their social context and everyday life.

Personal skills are fundamental in this approach. There is a great difference between working on personal skills and working on personality and psychological characteristics when they are not functioning in the right way.

The main difference is the assumption that people are able and not impaired. It is important to look to the future and not to the past because in this context, it is not necessary for individuals to “repair” something that went wrong, but to find a better way to face situations in the sense of a more fruitful adaptation.

In any case, working with personal skills, meeting needs and defining identity can open up some important aspects of personal history, maybe even some personal psychological problems, so it is important to know how to offer opportunities and orientation towards psychological counselling if necessary.

**Methodology**

**How to work on personal skills?**

The personal skills’ training focuses on individual level and personal dimension.

The main object is to enhance the sense of self-efficacy as the basic personal skill to start a process promoting self-competences. Moreover, it is important to facilitate self-awareness and self-identity and to help each participant to be motivated and recognize his needs.

These are fundamental dimensions when starting to work on personal skills in the sense of empowerment.

To work on these personal dimensions, there are specific methodologies that can be implemented through several activities.

This specific methodology is based on:

**Direct and personal engagement of each participant in an active session:** This allows a personal skills process to be generated, recognized, observed, and then self-regulated;

**Group work and an exchange process:** Each participant can share and exchange his ideas, feelings, experience, and specific point of view with other group members.

The group has an important function regarding self-reflection. Through the other members of the group, each participant is self-reflected and gives reflection on the different aspects of the intrapersonal dimension; he can perceive a certain similarity with others, but his subjectivity is assured, respected and reinforced when enriched by the group contributions.
In order to work on personal skills with an active methodology and a group process, it is necessary to take care of some important aspects during the training session:

**Group work with personal skills**

The importance of the atmosphere to facilitate the group work is the highest priority, because we use the group to involve each participant in the experience, to discover and express himself and some important points of their personality and personal story.

- The group leader must pay attention to:
- atmosphere: create confidence and security, a relaxed and friendly situation in the group
- relationship: give simple instructions, a clear and defined situation that can open relationships and give the opportunity to express themselves
- graduality: let each participant to enter the situation gradually, respecting personal “time” and “will” (express clearly that if they don’t want to “open themselves”, it is possible)
- circularity: give all people in the group the same time and the same possibility to express their point of view, their experience and story

Working in groups can be of great help in achieving good results:
- individuals can practice new skills
- build or rebuild trust in other people
- develop abilities to help others
- decrease isolation

It is also assumed that participants give each other feedback. The group atmosphere helps people to open up, tell stories and learn from each other. A safe environment in the group enables participants to achieve some intimacy in relationships and helps to build, strengthen, or rebuild the self-image.

The leader of the group must pay attention to maintain a safe environment (which is sometimes not easy when the group gets lost in the storm of feelings and affection) and connection with each participant.

It is very important to ensure each member of the group gives feedback, starting from the personal point of view and experiences, and does not pass judgement on or give interpretations or advice to the others.
ACTIVE METHOD to EXPRESS PERSONAL SKILLS

Active methods are important to practice different skills in the group in a protected situation.

During the training session, each participant can have the opportunity to effectively try out his personal skills in concrete behaviours that can be observed and regulated (for example: expressing emotion, solving problems, making decisions).

It is important to let the group and each participant express personal characteristics: each participant can have a relevant and positive experience of being listened to and accepted by the group and give a personal contribution to creating a positive atmosphere by listening and accepting differences or other opinions.

To get into contact with the others in order to work and reflect on identity and regulation processes regarding emotion and cognition, is important to enhance positive relationships between the members of the group during the activities in order to prove and observe personal skills in interpersonal behaviour.

It is recommended to use some specific techniques and activities that facilitate self-expression, such as drawing, painting, dancing, drama playing. They can be useful to symbolically represent ourselves, our feelings, our behaviour and cognition: this kind of methodology can in fact facilitate the self-expression of personal contents not easily expressed in a verbal form more spontaneously and freely to create new personal reflections and self-knowledge.

Active methodology can assure the PRINCIPLES of the Pro-Skills Approach

- PARTICIPATION each participant can choose his level of involvement in the activities and decide to share and open himself
- EMPOWERMENT each participant has the possibility to express his feedback regarding the session and evaluate the activity from a different point of view, expressing needs and motivation
- WELL-BEING expressing themselves in a protected situation in the group can give participants a good opportunity to experience some of the benefits of relevant relationship and to start looking at their situation in a different way, recognizing resources and potential
Structure of the session

The suggestion is to structure the personal skills session in order to guarantee a process combined with active methodology:

1. Warming up

This is the first activity. It is proposed to the group so they can initialize contact with each other and get to know the other members of the training group and also start to participate in a new training experience.

The activities in this phase must be very simple, allowing movement, interaction, and exchange to create good feelings and a positive atmosphere in the group. The activity can anticipate the main theme the group is going to work on (for example, emotion and emotion regulation - the warming up activity could be: moving around the room, and when I meet another person I can say “hello” and then name an emotion, or I can say “I feel...”).

2. Participants’ needs and expectations/purpose of the session

This is the second introduction phase, and the leader of the group can propose the theme of the session and the aspects that are going to be treated; the participants must have the time and space to express what they expect to do, what their desires, needs and fears regarding this proposal are.

3. Exercises and reflection

This is the main phase of the session. It provides one or more activities to treat the content and the connecting aspects of the proposed theme (problem solving) of the session and engage each participant in it.

After the activity, it is important to initiate a sharing and exchanging process in the group to reflect and allow each participant to have a personal elaboration.

4. Evaluation

At the end of the session, it is important to ask for an evaluation: on activities, on the group atmosphere, on new skills acknowledgement, new information, and learning how is it possible to use them in everyday life.

The evaluation process can be conducted with creative and simple tools (not just with verbal questionnaires) to facilitate the participants’ expression of their points of view spontaneously and sincerely.
Example of one session

a) Warming up: two truths and a lie
b) Purpose of the session, needs of participant: exchanging and writing down main aspect
c) Activities:
   1. Making an emotional statue - in a small group
   2. Life-Size Self Portrait
d) Exchange in small group regarding the experience
e) Exchange in the plenum – reflection on principle aspect of emotion/identity regulation
f) Evaluation: sandwich
## Exercises

### Exercise: Life-size self-portrait

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time frame:</th>
<th>~ 90 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>indoor/outdoor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td>2 - 15 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material:</td>
<td>paints, wax crayons, colored pencils, oil pastels, magazines, textured materials, fabrics, colored tissue paper, sponges, brushes, water containers, glue, scissors, large pieces of paper (paper rolls)…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure:</td>
<td>Each of the participants lays a large piece of the paper on the floor, lie down on it and have someone trace around their entire body with a pencil. Once this is done they can use outline of themselves to create a life-size self-portrait. Ideas for how to do this include making a huge collage, painting it, writing words to fit inside the silhouette or making it part of an abstract painting… The facilitator tries to encourage the participants with some comments: Participating in this exercise takes courage, not talent. Try to have an honest look into your inner world (fears, motivation and personalities). Ask yourself “Who am I?” Once the art is created, the works should be put to the wall and everybody presents how she/he felt when creating the own self-portrait, how does it feel to look at it. Otherwise it is possible that each participant standing in front of her/his portrait looks herself/himself like it is a mirror. Ask him/her to start a conversation and help to express feelings, thoughts and reasoning and then ask to give a message to her-/himself. It is important that the facilitator go with the participant standing close to her/him helping to express feelings and thoughts (to help her/him, facilitator can repeat the words of the participant and try to continue opening the sentences for example participant says” I find myself here“ facilitator can say “I find myself here because…/ and this makes me feel…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal / purpose:</td>
<td>- Expression or exploration of thoughts, feelings and behaviour - Increase self-awareness, improve self-esteem, develop a sense of identity, more open communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions for discussion:</td>
<td>- How people feel about their involvement in the exercise? - Is using this method helpful for them to express their feelings? - What was safer for them: the non-verbal part or verbal part of the exercise?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source:</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise: Statue of emotion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Time frame:</strong></th>
<th>30 min</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>indoors and outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong></td>
<td>Small/medium groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material:</strong></td>
<td>papers/pens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedure:**
Participant are walking in the space they have to think about the different emotion they feel in everyday life.
They have to write the name of the emotions in a paper put on the wall.
The trainer reads one emotion on the paper and then he puts his hand on one’s participant shoulder this participant can express the emotion as he is a statue of ...(fear, curiosity, surprising, etc.)

It is possible to ask to the group to repeat the statues. In this way there are more statues of one emotion and the participant can sculpt the expression in others and try to give a different level of emotion expressed.

**Goal / purpose:**
Helps to perceive and express one’s own feelings

**Questions for discussion:**
Did you find it difficult to identify and then express emotions?
How did you feel when you saw emotions in the others?
What was your feeling while you sculpt emotions in others?

**Source:** Marmocchi P., Dall’Aglio C., Zannini M., (2004), *Educare le life skills*, Erickson, Trento
MODULE 3: SOCIAL SKILLS
SOCIAL SKILLS

“Social skills are not the same thing as behaviour. Rather, they are components of behaviour that help an individual understand and adapt across a variety of social settings.”

Steedly et al., 2008

Introduction & definition

In the Pro-Skills concept of life skills, social skills are connected to different social environments and focus on the ability to be an active and autonomous part of these different settings. Our aim in training social skills is to initiate the process and to help the participants develop into active and autonomous citizens able to both connect with other persons and, from this position, also to agree and disagree after reflecting which aims and moral values they are in favor of. 8

Mastering social skills means dealing with and using all these skills in a variety of social settings. Our aim is to develop an awareness of social skills in play in different social settings and also to develop an enhanced ability in mastering social skills.

Methodology

To reach this aim, the Pro-Skills concept defines two major key areas to focus on in training, trust building and connecting.

Trust is the basic factor needed to connect with others and to act both in an active and autonomous way and to make decisions to go along, to influence or to withdraw.

Every interaction is built on rational reasoning (even if we as bystanders cannot see the rationality in any given moment). Basically, this means dealing with expectations of exchange value when you decide whether to interact or not. This is an important feature when we talk about the willingness to take part or not. Sometimes we take part reluctantly and unwillingly, but this is also the result of trust or lack of trust and its commonly human conditions and connections with others built either on trust or fear, which also can be regarded as distrust.

8 This is based on the assumption that different social settings require different social skills. This is discussed for example in Aspund, J. 1987. Det sociala livets elementära former (The elementary forms of social life in our rudimentary translation) The basic skill revealed in this work which is needed to act consciously in different social settings is to decide on which response to give in any given social interaction, i.e. to respond or not to respond.
We can define four active dimensions in play when we describe the phenomenon of trust (Straker 2009):

**Predictability** - this is connected to our sense of coherence (Antonovsky 1991; Frankel 1977), and it means imagining what is going to be our instrument to interfere with our destiny. Once again, this can also be built on distrust.

**Value-exchange** - this in a way is rational decision making, based on your prediction making the accounts. This can either be to change the conditions or avoid getting punished.

**Delayed reciprocity** - this is equivalent to what we call solidarity; solidarity is not sharing wealth for good-hearted reasons, it is an act between equal parts which in a way also counts on that you can receive the same attention in an unspecified way and time.

**Exposed vulnerability,** connected to our need of being connected and cared for. This need is so great that we may expose ourselves to the danger of being abused. Even when reasoning rationally, we end up choosing to be a part of something, even if it damages us (Fromm 1982).

Dealing with these four dimensions during training is fundamental to connecting to others, and also the basis of communication and group dynamics (including conflict management). Furthermore, this becomes the basis of cooperation and, in this case, forms the foundation of cooperative learning, productive learning and experience-based learning.

This then becomes our theoretical model of the methodology approach in the work with social skills.

**Model of the hierarchy of social skills:**

When we are working with social skills, we work simultaneously on all levels, both in the randomly chosen exercise from the toolbox and in real life. Our keypoint is that in any given example of life-long learning, we can observe the learning principles, communication patterns as well as group dynamics, and finally, what or which dimensions of trust are in use.
We also recognize social skills as a resource to survive in hostile environments and as a key feature, for some participants, in their existence; on the other hand, these skills rest on distrust. As a spin-off effect, our target group has difficulties presenting evidence of being trustworthy themselves; this we can look upon as a product of having to use social skills to survive (the outcome can be explained by our wish both to belong to and to survive in any given social environment. This is discussed for example by Fromm 1982 and Frankl 1977). If we can establish trust in a trustworthy setting (our training), this also creates opportunities to prove to be trustworthy. This provides a platform for making both short-term and long-term connections with others. By training connecting, we try to establish a solid ground for action in an autonomous mode in different social settings and give opportunities to trust and to be trusted (here we partly draw upon the humanistic psychology theories on hierarchy of needs presented by Maslow 1943 and 1987).

Findings suggest that quality interventions and related instructional strategies might focus on social and emotional learning strategies that encourage reflection and self-awareness (Steedly et al. 2008).

**Why train social skills?**

> “The socially disadvantaged in particular are seldom represented among the trainees or experience difficulty in successfully completing educational courses. For this target group, a lack of social and personal skills can be a potential barrier. In addition to subject-specific and practical knowledge, social and personal competencies are basic adult skills which are the precondition for accessing and successfully completing any form of formal and informal training and further education. Moreover, they are crucial for developing and consolidating individual social and cultural identity. They are seen as an important resource for leading a healthy life.”

(Pro-Skills 2008)

This is one of the reasons to train social skills. Another is connected to emancipation and active citizenship and the fact that every man and woman has the right to obtain access to usable tools to change their life situation by education (Biesta & Säfström 2011) and development. Sometimes, the latter aspects are forgotten in intervention programs suited to socially disadvantaged groups (Säfström 2011). This is the reason for training social skills.

**Modules for Social Skills Training**

The training concept for social skills focuses on several skills: trust, communication, cooperation and conflict management. In the following, you will find detailed background information and approaches for different modules. If you realise a longer training, you can choose from these materials and have several sessions on different skills. You will find several exercises for each of session in the Pro-Skills toolbox in internet.

At the end of this chapter, you will find a structure for a training session that focuses on social skills in total. It allows focusing on the different skills step by step or having separate groups discuss one skill only.
TRUST

“Trust is the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community.”

F. Fukuyama

In a social context, trust has several connotations (McKnight & Chervany 1996). In sociology and psychology, the degree to which one party trusts another is a measure of belief in the honesty, fairness, or benevolence of another party. The term "confidence" is more appropriate for a belief in the competence of the other party. In all cases trust is a heuristic decision rule, allowing the human being to deal with complexities that would require unrealistic effort in rational reasoning.

Processing, reflecting on, and communicating about trust experiences along the Lifelong Learning activities can help participants to explore and better understand their feelings, reactions, and their relationships with others involved in the activities.

Definition

Trust is a person's “expectations, assumptions, or beliefs about the likelihood that another's future actions will be beneficial, favorable, or at least not detrimental to one's interests.” (Robinson 1996).

Conceptually, trust is also attributable to relationships within and between social groups (families, friends, communities, organizations, companies, nations etc.). It is a popular approach to frame the dynamics of inter-group and intra-group interactions in terms of trust (Hardin 2002). For different ways of defining trust see David Straker 2009.

Creating Trust

“Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another.”

D.M. Rousseau

Taking into account the David Straker descriptions about the trust, we can apply the following ways in order to create trust:

- **Active care** – active care may be contrasted with passive care, which is more of a “do no harm” approach where the caring person does not go out of their way to help the other person. We offer passive care to most other people, but active care only to those we particularly like and care for. Active care thus signals “you are special”.

- **Passive care** – passive care is not the opposite of active care. The opposite of passive care is active harm, where you deliberately seek to harm others. By avoiding active harm, you are implementing passive care.

- **Building rapport** – many ways to create trust: Active Care /don’t wait to be asked/; Co-location /just be nearby/; Encouraging /getting them to speak/; Holding Gaze /eye-to-eye attraction/; Listening /a powerful method of creating a bond/; Mirroring /direct copying of their actions/; Matching /indirect copying of actions/; Open Honesty /exposing your own vulnerability/; Paraphrasing /rephrasing in your own words/; Parroting /simple repetition of what they say/; Passive Care /do no harm/; Reflecting Verbal Style /use their overall modes of speech/; Reflecting Words /echo individual words they say/; Be Reliable /deliver on your promises/; Seek Advice /rather than opinion/; Synergizing /combine ideas for an even better idea/; Use Their Name /show you know them/. “Rapport” is “a feeling of sympathetic understanding”, where two people feel a bond between one another, so that they will more easily trust one another.

- **Be reliable** – do what you say you are going to do. Turn up on time. Always repay debts. If you make a promise then always do your very best to keep it. Also be predictable and “normal”. Do not do things that others do not expect. Make a particular effort to show that you are reliable. If you do not keep a promise or are unreliable in some way, apologize profusely and give a strong excuse as to why this happened.

- **Self-control and trust** – if you want somebody to trust you, then it helps if you can show that you have a clear ability to control yourself. This not only includes a general self-control, but also the ability to control short-term impulses. In doing so, it can be more effective if this process is visible, so that you are seen to be experiencing inner conflicts and emotions and yet clearly displaying self-control, with a calmer outer behavior. Keep this subtle, with muted body language, perhaps with less movement, pauses, slight facial expressions, and so on.

- **Similarity principle** – we trust people who are like us or who are similar to people we like. Show that you are similar to the other person or similar to the sort of person they would trust. Dress like them, talk like them, and otherwise show how similar you are to them.

- **Evidence principle** – we cannot deny what we see with our own eyes. In our interactions with others, we often disagree and know that they will try to persuade us. Evidence is particularly important when we are uncertain. In these situations we go into an “evidence-seeking” mode, where everything is questioned.
Trust in the Group

“Building trust is a process. Trust results from consistent and predictable interaction over time.”

Barbara White

When a group forms, they will typically go through the formative “Form, Storm, Norm, Perform” sequence and they will own different levels of self-confidence and trust at the start. When members of the group have collected enough information about each other and learned about the group’s operating rules, and after the realisation of an adequately trusting environment, they will start to work together and typically divide their work up into familiar roles to which they are individually best suited, so that they can meet the group needs together.

A MODEL OF TRUST FORMATION IN THE GROUP

I. different levels of self-confidence and trust
II. increase, interaction and equalization of the different levels of self-confidence and trust
III. formation of the group trust

It is a known psychological effect that we deduce our beliefs from our actions, and the neophyte will often deduce that he has accepted the group trust rules because of the actions that he took to join the group (Straker 2009).

It is very important for the participants to feel accepted and to develop trust in the trainer and training. As with every human being, trainers and participants are both influenced by sympathy and antipathy. It would be regrettable if the training were to miss its mark because a participant could not get on with the trainer as an individual. Employing a training team increases the chance of each participant finding a contact person he/she can trust (Pro-Skills 2008).
Trust Building Activities

“You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.”

Plato

Trust building activities help people to develop mutual respect, openness, understanding, and empathy, as well as helping to develop communication and teamwork skills, furthermore they can break down barriers and build deep feelings of trust and reliance between individuals and within small groups. However, it is vital to demonstrate and actively encourage a high level of care and responsibility towards people in these exercises who take the risk of trusting.

Much depends on the role played by the trainer. Since participants are being asked to take psychological and physical risks by trusting other people, it is important to establish a serious, concentrating, caring atmosphere. The trainer also needs to step in assertively if he/she observes or senses that full care isn’t being taken. In some cases it may be preferable to stop a trust activity and do a simpler exercise if a significant lack of trust and responsibility is evident. Make sure that the entire group is aware that there is no room for any anti-trust behaviour including jokes or comments. Many trainers will undertake some form of Full Value Contract with a group for this reason (Neil2009).

Finally, it is highly recommended to manage trust carefully. It can, as the sages say, take a lifetime to build and a moment to lose. The simplest way to do this is to be trustworthy, dependable, and care about people. So manage your activities with groups carefully, learn about the group members’ culture/subculture, and acquire the needed information about their psychosocial background. If you want others to trust you, show that you are able to control yourself, including handling negative emotions and not making rash decisions. This can be more effective if they see you struggling a little with emotions and being able to control your anger, fear, and so on. Gather evidence both for your argument and against other arguments, and seek objective evidence that cannot be denied. Look for things that will shake the other person’s beliefs. You have to learn a lot about trust, how it works, and how to build it. If you do it well, group members will give you the earth. If you betray them, they will hunt you to the ends of the earth.
Structure of module on trust

1) Get-to-know-you activities

Avoid doing trust activities too soon. If trust activities are introduced too early or too fast, emotional and/or physical harm can occur, with trust broken rather than built. Therefore, it is suggested to start this module with some icebreakers and get-to-know-you activities.

2) Short PowerPoint presentation

- Definition
- Ways to create trust
- A model of trust formation in the group
- Trust building activities

3) Exercise: Willow in the wind

- members of the group get the opportunity to experience the process of trust building in the group.
- with this exercise, participants can develop mutual respect, openness, understanding, and empathy as well as efficient communication and teamwork skills.
- it is very important to demonstrate and actively encourage a high level of care and responsibility towards participants in this exercise.
- much depends on the role played by the leader of the group, therefore, make sure that the entire group is aware that there is no room for any anti-trust behaviour including jokes or comments.

You have to be able to read the moods of the group as well as the emotional cues of individuals within the group.

Suggested questions for discussion

- Which kind of feelings did you perceive?
- Was it easy or difficult for you to trust the group?
- What made you feel trusting? (E.g., clear communication, positive encouragement, etc.)
- What made you feel less trusting? (E.g., laughing/joking, lack of communication, etc.)
- What do you think about trust and distrust?

4) Evaluation

- interview
- questionnaire

Understanding and consistently demonstrating trustworthy language and behaviour will help you earn and keep the trust among participants you work with.
COMMUNICATION

“It’s not possible not to communicate!”

Watzlawick

Definition and meaning of communication

Communication is transmission of a message from sender to receiver by means of a system (language, letters, pictures etc.). This means that communication is more than the mere words. The so-called ‘sender’ of the message wants to talk about something that he has experienced. But linked to the facts, he has his own interpretation of what happened which is linked to his personal values and former experiences, and this leads to emotions.

Moreover, the sender not only sends facts by mere words, he also sends information by voice, gestures and facial expression.

The ‘receiver’ of the message perceives both words and non-verbal expression and interprets it influenced by his own values and experiences, and has emotions concerning what he heard.

In a next step, the receiver answers and reacts to the message. This means that sender and receiver exchange their roles and the whole process starts again!

By these simple figures of sending and receiving a message, you already can see many aspects that can cause misunderstandings and difficulties in communication!
Cognitive matters of communication like language skills, structure, and logic of message can bear difficulties in communication, but **the main cause for misunderstanding and failing in communication is the fact that people often are not aware of the meaning of different points of view and underlying attitudes!**

⇒ The meaning of a message is as much defined by the receiver as by the sender!!

Both sender and receiver are responsible for communicating their own values and interpretations! You cannot presume that your communication partner a) knows and b) shares your values and interpretations!

To achieve purposeful and fruitful communication, people need to learn to

- change perspectives!
- take the communication partner’s point of view
- explore underlying objectives & attitudes
- be aware of clearly own objectives and attitudes

**Useful approaches**

**A) Four-Ear-Model** (Schultz von Thun 1981, German psychologist & communication scientist)

Each message has four aspects and each receiver has four ears:

- **Facts:** mere data & facts of message
- **Self-revelation:** speaker gives information on himself (motives, values, emotions etc.)
- **Relationship:** information on relationship between sender & receiver
- **Demand:** wish or demand to the receiver
Example: (black: his message; blue: her interpretation)

Facts: “I see something green”
“He sees something green”

Self-revelation: “I don’t know what it is”
“He doesn’t like it”

Relationship: “I expect that you know what it is”
“He thinks I’m a bad cook!”

Demand: “Please tell me what it is!”
“I shall only cook things he likes.”

Often people have one ear that’s more sensitive than the others. Probably you know a person that always interprets personal criticism or blame in very simple and neutral messages!? This person has a very sensitive ear for relationship-messages.

It’s not useful to hear only one aspect of a message! We should not interpret aspects of messages that are not clearly sent by the speaker!

B) The inner team: “Several souls in one breast” (Schulz von Thun 1998)

• We have different roles in different situations (child of our parents, being a mother/father ourselves, being a friend, employer etc.).
• There can be different voices in us, representing different interests.
• These inner voices may contradict each other.

⇒ This leads to situations when verbal message and non-verbal expression might be contradictory!

Example: You agree to do the weekend shift because one colleague worked the last three weekends and another colleague is ill, but you are angry because you’d planned a weekend trip with your girlfriend ⇒ You verbally agree, but your face and gestures express anger!
C) Communication rules:

1) Rules for **sending** messages:

- express clearly your own objectives & attitudes
- be aware that your communication partner’s attitudes & objectives could differ
- take responsibility for your non-verbal expressions
- only speak for yourself and not for others
- in very important situations, it can be useful to reflect on your communication partner’s potential attitudes & objectives

*Example: You go to a job interview → what are the principles & targets of the company?*

2) Rules for **receiving** messages:

- be aware that your communication partner’s attitudes & objectives could differ from yours & that she/he speaks from his/her point of view
- be aware of your own “favorite ears” because they influence your interpretation of the message
- ask further questions or repeat what you understood if you are not sure about your comprehension
Structure of module on communication

1) Exercise: Leading the taxi

⇒ Participants experience the difficulties of communication: not only the need of clear instructions but also the barrier of differing perspectives on the topic.

2) Powerpoint presentation

• Background: definition / what happens while communicating?

• Useful approaches:
  - Four-ear-model / example
    ⇒ Exercise The four ears
  - Inner team / example

• Communication rules

3) Discussion

Discussion with the participating trainers on the topic of communication, their impression on the presented approaches, their own feelings while doing the exercise and their relevance for the final target group.
COOPERATION

“Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.”

Definition

1. The instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1993, p. 9).


Creative teamwork maximizes individuals' strengths and minimizes their weaknesses, leading to an environment that is efficient, dynamic and productive.

To be cooperative, to reach the full potential of the group, five essential elements need to be carefully structured into the situation: positive interdependence, individual and group accountability, promotive interaction, appropriate use of social skills, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005).

Positive interdependence creates a commitment to other people’s success as well as one’s own and is the heart of cooperative learning. If there is no positive interdependence, there is no cooperation.

Individual and group accountability - The group must be accountable for achieving its goals. Each member must be accountable for contributing his or her share of the work (which ensures that no one “hitch-hikes” on the work of others). The group has to be clear about its goals and be able to measure (a) its progress in achieving them and (b) the individual efforts of each of its members. Individual accountability exists when the performance of each individual student is assessed and the results are given back to the group and the individual in order to ascertain who needs more assistance, support, and encouragement in completing the assignment.

Promotive interaction, preferably face-to-face, occurs when members share resources and help, support, encourage, and praise each other’s efforts to learn. Cooperative learning groups are both an academic support system (every student has someone who is committed to helping him or her learn) and a personal support system (every student has someone who is committed to him or her as a person). There are important cognitive activities and interpersonal dynamics that can only occur when students promote each other’s learning. This includes orally explaining how to solve problems, discussing the nature of the concepts being learned, teaching one’s knowledge to classmates, and connecting present with past learning.
**Interpersonal and small group skills:** In cooperative learning groups students are required to learn academic subject matter (task work) and also to learn the interpersonal and small group skills required to function as part of a group (teamwork). Cooperative learning is inherently more complex than competitive or individualistic learning because students have to engage simultaneously in task work and teamwork. Group members must know how to provide effective leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management, and be motivated to use the prerequisite skills.

**Group processing** exists when group members discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships. Groups need to describe what member actions are helpful and unhelpful and make decisions about what behaviours to continue or change. Continuous improvement of the process of learning results from the careful analysis of how members are working together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIVIDUAL SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE COOPERATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION: Communicates easily on paper with speed and clarity. Presents ideas concisely and in a structured way. Uses appropriate language and style. <strong>Speaks to others with ease and clarity.</strong> Expresses ideas well and presents arguments in a logical manner. Gives information and explanations that are clear and easily understood. Listens actively to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADERSHIP: Shows skill in directing group activities. Has natural authority and gains the respect of others. Is capable of building an effective team. Involves all team members and gives advice and help when required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM MEMBERSHIP: Understands own role and the role of others within the team. Shares information and seeks help and advice when necessary. Offers suggestions and listens to the ideas of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLANNING AND ORGANIZING: Can make plans and forecasts. Can define objectives and allocate the necessary resources. Sets realistic targets and decides priorities. Devises systems and monitors progress. Makes good use of his/her time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECISION MAKING: Evaluates alternative lines of action and makes appropriate decisions. Responds to situations quickly and demonstrates flexibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTIVATION: Shows energy and enthusiasm. Works hard and is ambitious. Is able to work on own initiative with little detailed supervision.</td>
</tr>
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Importance of cooperation

- **Social benefits**

Cooperative learning also has social benefits. One of the essential elements of cooperative learning is the development of social skills. People learn to take risks and are praised for their contribution. They are able to see points of view other than their own. Such benefits contribute to the overall satisfaction of learning. Members work with others in the group who have different learning skills, cultural backgrounds, attitudes, and personalities. These differences force them to deal with conflicts and interact with others. Social interaction improves communication skills that become a necessity to functioning in society.

- **Bonding, support**

It is hard to maintain positive feelings about someone who is trying to make you lose. Hurt feelings and arguments often result from competitive play. In cooperative play, challenge, discovery, and success are shared. Emphasis is on participation, acceptance, and the "joy of play". In the end, your relationship with each other counts.

- **Teamwork and shared decision making**

Competition makes it difficult to share our skills, experiences, and resources because each person is separately involved in his or her exclusive goal. In cooperative settings, every person's role is important and valued. Individuality is respected, and concern for the needs of others fostered. The challenge shifts from "striving to be number one" to working toward a mutual goal. The idea that we all share in decision-making is a powerful tool.

- **Openness, trust and safety**

Often competition in work and play results in arguments, hurt feelings, and separation. Many games are based on secrecy and intimidation resulting in players feeling unsafe. In work or play, People really want and need to feel safe, be open and honest, and above all feel trusted.

Cooperative situations help create that atmosphere, because participants give encouragement and support to one another.

- **Self-worth and personal power**

Cooperativeness has been linked to greater learning, emotional maturity, and strong personal identity. Participants often become more flexible in their thinking and willingness to invent creative solutions. The result is enjoyment, personal confidence, and a feeling of self-worth. As your personal power grows, you get that "I can make a difference" feeling.
- **Well-being**

Most competitive situations are highly stressful. The possibility of failure creates agitation if not outright anxiety. The fear or anger generated from being eliminated or losing often causes embarrassment, tension, and hostility. Cooperative activities are non-threatening and non-judgemental. As a result, this creates an atmosphere for relaxation and well-being, the foundation for more genuine, healthy, and playful fun.

**Methodology**

- Experience sharing
- Story analysis
- Lecture method
- Discussion method
- Games / group exercises
- Individual and small group work

Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1998) describe four steps used to teach cooperative skills:

**Step 1.** Make sure group members understand the need for the teamwork skill. To accomplish this, the trainer can do the following:

- Ask group members to develop a list of social skills needed to improve group work. From the skills they list, emphasize one or two.
- Present a case to group members so they can see it is better to know the skill than not to know it.
- Illustrate the need for the skill through a role play that provides a counter-example in which the skill is obviously missing in a group.

**Step 2.** Make sure the group members understand what the cooperative learning skill is, how, and when to use the skill. To accomplish this, the trainer can do the following:

- Define the skill in terms of verbal and nonverbal behaviours and explain thoroughly what group members have to do.
- Demonstrate and model the skill in front of the group members and explain it step by step so they have a concrete idea of what the skill entails in terms of verbal and nonverbal behaviour.
**Step 3.** Set up practice situations and encourage skill mastery. The trainer guides practice as group members master the skill through repetition.

**Step 4.** Give group members feedback on their use of the skill. Help them reflect on how to engage in the skill more effectively in the future. Effective communication has to occur in the learning process. In cooperative learning, the observer reports to the group on the information gathered, and group members in turn report their impressions about their behaviour. The observer provides positive feedback to all group members about their efforts to learn and help others learn. Whole-class processing follows small-group processing. The trainer provides feedback to the group as a whole.

**Structure of a training module on cooperation**

1) **Warming up**

Warm up (ice-breaker) in order to get into the lesson and to relax, get to know other members or start thinking about the topic. In this phase, the trainer has the opportunity to assess whether group members will be able to do the lesson they have planned, assess who is strong and who is weak (for future pairings) and see how group members interact with each other.

2) **Expectations**

Developing group expectations allows group members to share the reasons they have come together. It is very informative to both the group and the facilitator. Gathering expectations gives the group a sense of ownership; it also gives the facilitator a better idea of what the group would like to experience during their time together.

**How to generate expectations:**

- Explain what expectations are to the group and provide them with a couple of examples
- Ask the group members to take a few minutes and silently think about what they would like to get out of the experience
- Prompt the group to share their expectations
- Lead the brainstorm by modelling strong facilitation skills and recording expectations on paper
- Read through the expectations and check for understanding from the entire group
3) **Exercises and reflection**

Reflective practice is a process which enables you to achieve a better understanding of yourself, your skills, competencies, knowledge and professional practice. Although most of us engage in thinking about experiences either before, during, or after an event, we need to document our understanding in order to clearly identify and demonstrate the components of our learning. Identifying what we have learnt requires us to think about our experiences and consider the outcomes, in order to evaluate the experience and identify our thoughts, feelings, and understanding of the relevant issues. The objective is to identify what we have learnt in order to construct new or different approaches to our future practice, or to recognise and validate effective practice to utilise in the future.

4) **Evaluation**

Evaluation on activities, on the group climate, on new knowledge/skills acknowledgement, and learning how is it possible to use them in everyday life.

The various methods of training evaluation are:

- Observation
- Questionnaire
- Interview
- Diaries
- Self-recording of specific incidents
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT / CONFLICT ABILITY

Definition / Meaning of conflict management / ability

Conflict management involves implementing strategies to limit the negative aspects of conflict and to increase the positive aspects of conflict at a level equal to or higher than where the conflict is taking place. Furthermore, the aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes (effectiveness or performance in organizational setting) (Rahim, 2002, p. 208). It is not concerned with eliminating all conflict or avoiding conflict. Conflict can be valuable to groups and organizations. It has been shown to increase group outcomes when managed properly (e.g. Alper, Tjosvold, & Law, 2000; Bodtker & Jameson, 2001; Rahim & Bonoma, 1979; Khun & Poole, 2000; DeChurch & Marks, 2001).

Conflict management is the practice of identifying and handling conflict in a sensible, fair, and efficient manner. Conflict management requires such skills as effective communicating, problem solving, and negotiating with a focus on interests. Mediators have to have a big knowledge about conflict management.

The term conflict management correlates with conflict ability, which means the ability to communicate about conflicts, stress, and imbalances in a way that reduces conflict among two or more team members / persons.

There is no single definition of conflict. At least there must be two independent persons or groups and these persons / groups perceive some incompatibility between themselves, and the persons / groups have the necessity to interact with each other in some way. They have to have a voluntary or involuntary relationship.

Conflict is almost always accompanied by feelings of anger, frustration, hurt, anxiety, or fear.

“Who wants to have a good relationship, must be able to dispute”

(Source: Hessische Landesstelle für Suchtfragen e.V., URL: www.hls-online.org)
Reasons for conflicts could be multifariously and based on:

- **task-related causes**: competing goals, incompatible interests, disagreement about strategy and / or execution, missed deadlines, etc.
- **external influences**: foreign language, struggle of resources, lack of information, budget allocations, ineffective processes, cultural / religious / ethical misunderstandings or differences, etc.
- **emotional triggers**: mixed feelings, anger, unfriendly nonverbal signals, distrust, feeling unappreciated, being or feeling isolated, etc.
- **behavioural antecedents**: demeaning language, competitive culture, miscommunication, hostility, assuming the worst of others, assuming best of self, arrogance, etc.

Conflicts can be solved, differences will stay

Conflicts have a lot to do with emotions, relationships and personal values.

The reasons of conflicts are very often not clarified positions of persons / groups and their points of view (cultural, political, see “reasons of conflicts”).

If differences cannot be managed any more, it will come to a conflict – otherwise it would only be a crisis (Chin. wei-jì = danger and opportunity), problem or difficult situation.

If a situation is defined as a conflict (or dangerous situation), depends on the situation / context (example: parking-deck at day or night).

Importance to develop conflict ability

Unsolved conflicts can be the reason for a lot different illnesses (organic diseases, mental problems, psychosomatic disorders) they can block the view to solutions, they cost a lot of mental energy and also maybe money / resources, they are responsible for stress and unsuccessful working-, family- or spare-time atmospheres.

The ability to communicate about conflicts, stress, and imbalances in a group ore between two parties helps to reduce the “barriers” among team members.

“The ability to manage conflicts in a positive, trust-building way” is one of the five key skills of emotional intelligence (EQ: The ability to quickly reduce stress, to recognize and manage your emotions, to connect with others using nonverbal communication, to use humour and play to deal with challenges and last but not least, to resolve conflicts positively and with confidence). “Successfully resolving differences is supported by the previous four skills of emotional intelligence. Once you know how to manage stress, stay emotionally present and aware, communicate nonverbally, and use humour and play, you’ll be better equipped to handle emotionally-charged situations and catch and defuse many issues before they escalate” (http://helpguide.org/mental/eq5_raising_emotional_intelligence.htm).
Especially in the target group of socially unprivileged persons we can realize a gap in the field of emotional intelligence (EQ). To develop these competences and help the members of the target group to solve “difficult situations”, is one of the main goals of Pro-Skills.

Methods to develop conflict ability

In the tool-box of PRO-SKILLS, but also in a lot of other books and internet-pages you will find thousands of exercises to develop social-competences, one of them is conflict ability! The competence of conflict ability usually (theoretical) develops with the development of your personality. Therefore it is necessary to find exactly fitting exercises for the target group.

The teaching of skills must be combined with practical exercises. Programmes / exercises should employ the tested and proven methodical/didactical methods. The more experience participants and coach have, the more they can construct “real” conflict situations. We can get our experiences and develop our conflict ability in the field of role games (interactive theatre, “hot chair”, etc.), in games (world famous board game “Ludo” also known as “Sorry”, “Trouble” or “Mensch ärgere dich nicht”) or in the field of in- or outdoor adventure pedagogy (rope courses, white water rafting, mountaineering, rock climbing, survival-training, etc.).
Structure of complete training session on social skills

1) Introduction and short presentation on social skills

2) Scene
   o An everyday scene is presented (accident between a biker and a car)
   o Many persons can be seen at this picture: the biker lying on the street, the car driver getting out of his car, a woman passing by, an old lady looking down from her window etc.; each person has different thoughts or makes comments on the scene;
   o While the picture is shown, single persons will be highlighted and speech bubbles will appear that show the person’s thought or comment while the trainer speaks it loud:
     - Biker: Please help me!! It hurts so much!
     - Experienced ambulance man: Don’t worry, it’s only an open fracture of your leg!
     - Old woman on the left: Did somebody inform his family?
     - Man at the café: That’s the results of driving with a bike and living healthy, ha-haha...
     - Lady on scooter: Damn accident!! I have to hurry, the film in the cinema starts in five minutes!
     - Biker again: Where is the asshole which crashed in my bike?!
     - Car driver: Sorry honey, it will become a little later, something slowed my down!
     - Man at the window: What a luck!! Finally something happens in my quiet street
     - Young ambulance man: Hopefully I don’t make a mistake, it’s my first emergency operation...
   o Participants can comment on the scene; the trainer can help the discussion by focusing on social skills aspects of the scene;

3) Work groups:
   The participants are split in three small groups (5-7 persons) which discuss the scene focusing on different skills (special aspect: which social skills do you need when you train basic skills!?): communication / cooperation / conflict ability

4) Plenum discussion:
   The groups assemble and exchange opinions from their discussion
Exercises

Exercise: Willow in the wind

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time frame:</th>
<th>~5 minutes per person in group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>large area, preferably with soft ground for falling, e.g. grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td>8-10 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material:</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure:</td>
<td>in groups of about 8-10, one person volunteers to be the &quot;willow&quot; in the middle, closes his/her eyes, does a &quot;trust lean&quot; and is &quot;passed around&quot; the group. Facilitator demonstrates the &quot;willow&quot;: feet together; closes his/her eyes; arms crossed and hands on shoulders; keeps buttocks tight and body straight; establishes contact with group (it can go like this: Willow: &quot;I am ready to fall. Are you ready to catch me?&quot;; Group: &quot;We are ready to catch you. Fall away.&quot;); Willow: &quot;Falling.&quot;; Group: &quot;OK&quot;); does a &quot;trust lean&quot; and allows him-/herself to be &quot;passed around&quot; the group. The group needs to be taught correct spotting technique: one foot in front of another; arms outstretched, elbows locked, fingers loose; ready and alert. Requires good facilitation and fairly mature group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal / purpose:</td>
<td>build trust; show reliability; enjoy the feeling of security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions for discussion:</td>
<td>Which kind of feelings did you perceive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wilderdom.com">www.wilderdom.com</a>, James Neil, 2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Exercise: Leading the taxi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Time frame:</strong></th>
<th>&quot;~ 15 minutes&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>indoors or outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong></td>
<td>2 - 20 persons in couples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material:</strong></td>
<td>copies of maps A and B; one copy per couple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Procedure:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                 | - group is divided into couples  
|                 | - each couples sits back to back  
|                 | - one person of couple gets map A, the other map B (without knowing that there are different maps)  
|                 | - person A ("taxi office") is instructed to lead person B ("taxi driver") with verbal instructions from the starting point (see map) to the opera  
|                 | - Problem: both persons don’t know that they have maps from different perspectives |
| **Goal / purpose:** | participants experience the importance of clear communication and of being aware of and communicating different perspectives and points of view |
| **Questions for discussion:** | see sheets below! |
**Exercise: The four ears**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Time frame:</strong></th>
<th>~ 45 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>indoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong></td>
<td>3 - 20 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material:</strong></td>
<td>4 pinboards or tables; sheets (see below); lots of cards &amp; pens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- in each corner of the room, there is one pinboard/table, one on the ear “facts”, one on the ear “self-revelation”, one on the ear “relationship” and one on the ear “demand”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the respective sheet is on the board/table;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- there are cards and pens at each board/table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Procedure:</strong></td>
<td>- before starting the exercise, the trainer explains the four-ear-model of Schultz von Thun (see sheet);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the participants are divided into groups of 3 – 6 persons, max. four groups;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- if the participants are able, they can discuss and do the exercise on their own, if not they need either a “guide” who leads the group from one board to the next or there is a guide at each board;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the group can discuss the examples and think of further examples from their own lives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variation A) each group comes to each of the 4 pinboards, discusses the topic and pins cards on the pinboard with their impressions; after 10 minutes, the groups change pinboards and go to the next topic;

Variation B) each group only works with one topic; the group discusses the example on the pin board, thinks of more examples from their own lives, chooses one own examples and prepares a short role play; after 30 minutes, the groups assemble and present their “particular ear” by acting the role play and giving some short comments

**Goal / purpose:**

- participants experience and train the different aspects of understanding and interpreting a message
- participants get a feeling for their own “preferred” ways of interpreting a message and become more sensitive when detecting their communication partners’ “strong ears”

**Questions for discussion:**

see sheets below!

**Four-Ear-Model**
(Source: Schultz von Thun, German psychologist and communication scientist)

Each message has four aspects and each receiver has four ears:

- **Facts:** mere data & facts of message
- **Self-revelation:** speaker gives information on himself (motives, values, emotions etc.)
- **Relationship:** information on relationship between sender & receiver
- **Demand:** wish or demand to the receiver

Example: (black: his message; blue: her interpretation)

- **Facts:**
  - “I see something green”
  - “He sees something green”
- **Self-revelation:**
  - “I don’t know what it is”
  - “He doesn’t like it”
- **Relationship:**
  - “I expect that you know what it is”
  - “He thinks I’m a bad cook!”
- **Demand:**
  - “Please tell me what it is!”
  - “I shall only cook things he likes.”

Often people have one ear that’s more sensitive than the others. Probably you know a person who always interprets personal criticism or blame in very simple and neutral messages!? This person has a very sensitive ear for relationship-messages.

⇒ It’s not useful to hear only one aspect of a message! We should not interpret aspects of messages that are not clearly sent by the speaker!
Ear 1: Facts

At first glance, hearing the mere facts of a message seems to be the best solution for correct understanding. But is this true?

⇒ Get into discussion:

• What happens when people only hear the facts of a message?
• Do you know situations or persons in your own life with a strong tendency to hear facts?
• How do you feel when you communicate with these persons?
Ear 2: Self-revelation

Example:

Father looking into the messy room of his son
Father: “What absolute chaos!! You are a slob!! It’s horrible to live in such a mess!”
Son: “Did you have a bad day in the office, dad?”

⇒ Get into discussion:

- What’s the boy’s benefit of interpreting his father’s statement like this?
- How could the father formulate the sentence so the son with the self-revelation-ear will understand correctly?
- Do you know persons who have a strong tendency to interpret self-revelation while communicating?
Ear 3: Relationship

Example:

What are these green things in the soup?

If you don’t like my food, you can go and have lunch with your mother again!!

⇒ Get into discussion:

• What is happening in this scene?
• What kind of problems will the couple have if the woman always hears with her relationship-ear?
• Do you remember situations in your life when you had a strong relationship-ear? What happened, and how did you solve the situation?
Ear 4: Demand

Example:

⇒ Get into discussion:

- What will happen to people who always interpret demands while communicating? How will other persons probably react to these demand-hearers?
- Do you know persons in your everyday life who have this strong demand-ear?
- How could you protect yourself from having a strong demand-ear?

Is there any more coffee left?

I’ll make more coffee immediately!
### Exercise: Pipeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Time frame:</strong></th>
<th>~ 10-30 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>indoors/outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong></td>
<td>3 - 20 persons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Material:**   | - gutter ball kit  
|                 | - pipeline kit  
|                 | - lengths of half pipe or narrow guttering, marbles or balls, or can also be done using water |
| **Procedure:**  | This activity involves moving marbles or different sized balls or even water down lengths of half pipe or 1"/2" gutters. The trick? Each participant has only one short length of pipe each, and the start and finish points can be separated by an obstacle course. |
|                 | • As facilitator, you can control how hard or easy to make this task. You can take them over obstacles, down stairs, around trees, etc. If, for example, the group is in the forming stage, put only one minor obstacle in the path and create opportunity for fairly instant experiential success of teamwork. If the team is functioning cohesively, make the obstacle course longer and harder and more physically challenging in order to deepen their experience of what they can achieve together. |
|                 | • Brief the participants on the start line and the finish point (a distinctive container is helpful), and give them any extra rules you may wish to add to the task, such as: every person must carry the marble at least once; participants need to take turns in a certain order; or both feet must remain on the floor at all times - get creative if you want to add challenge. |
| **Goal / purpose:** | - A teambuilding activity where each participant gets one short length of half pipe, and the group must work together to deliver a marble down the pipes from starting point to finish. Requires a high level of communication and teamwork. |
### Questions for discussion:

- How was your experience working with the people in your group?
- Was the communication effective?
- How do people feel about their involvement and contribution to this project?
- Was everyone in your group involved?

### Source:
http://wilderdom.com/games.descriptions/Pipeline.html
MODULE 4: SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS
SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

“Self-management skills constitute the ability to make wise choices to achieve a fruitful and joyous life”

Introduction & definition

Self-management skills help one to learn, but also with life in general. Self-management skills are embedded in and support everything we do throughout our lives.

What do we mean by self-management?

• The term combines the two words “management” and “self”.
• Management deals with motivation, planning, goal-setting, calculating resources, controlling, regulation etc. according to a task.
• Self has a double meaning: the self as an autonomous agent or manager (not somebody else outside) and as the target of the management.
• Theoretical roots can be found in self-management therapy (Kanfer) focusing on patients’ autonomy by supporting their self-regulation potential in the context of a chronic disease.
• Cognitive psychology (e.g. Bandura) and action theory (Heckhausen, Gollwitzer) in particular establish the theoretical and empirical ground for the important aspects of self-management (e.g. volition, meta-cognition, cognitive learning strategies etc.).

Definition

Currently, there is no homogenous definition of self-management and self-management skills. Some foci can be worked out:

• strategic technique for efficient and successful planning and self-regulation
• gaining autonomy (link to empowerment)
• integrated self-actualization (link to identity)

We propose the following working definition:
Self-management skills are skills which we decide on to facilitate the awareness, realization, and maintenance of our goals that are important for our self.
Self-Management is linked to personal and social skills

Self-management skills use the other skills as resources and combine them strategically in an action process for the needs and goals of the individual. Self-regulation, self-control, time management etc. can be seen as integrative components of self-management.

Self-management skills and lifelong learning

In the special context of learning, the learning strategies overlap with the general self-management skills focusing on learning goals.

The additional aspects of autonomous self-regulated learning in combination with self-actualization in the sense of our working definition are of great importance for lifelong learning. The awareness of own skills for realizing a learning project and for reaching a learning goal lead to the perceived self-efficacy that is essential for the motivation and volition to start an own lifelong learning project.

Important steps of self-management

Self-management skills are crucial for successfully planning and implementing activities. Each activity – wittingly or unwittingly – is based on a sequence of cognitive and active steps.

With regard to learning processes, the following steps can be distinguished:

Setting goals:

- The individual must decide on an own specific learning goal.
- The predominant goal may for example be earning one’s living, attaining a higher standard of living or a higher level of educational.
- What is now needed is to define interim goals en route to the higher-level goal, which in turn requires additional cognitive and active processes to be performed.

Specific to target group:

It is important to identify and set an own goal which is realistic and coherent with their identity, e.g. defining goals with SMART (Doran, 1981).
Calculating resources & barriers:

- The individual has to weigh up resources such as time, money, and social support, as well as resolve practical problems such as childcare during a training course, reaching the event venue, and suchlike.
- Weighing up resources and barriers can also influence the motivation and which goals are chosen.

Specific to target group:

It is important to analyse the resources and barriers, to focus on supporting resources and to be realistic about barriers. Solutions can be found in group discussions to overcome barriers.

Effective planning of the project:

The individual develops a sort of work plan as well as a realistic timetable, taking the available resources and the existing barriers into account.

A lot of planning tools and checklists are available. They have to be adapted to the situation of the target group so they are not too technical or complex.

Step-by-step implementation:

- The planned steps of the activity now have to be successfully implemented in the correct sequence. Resources have to be mobilized, obstacles overcome and timetables and deadlines adhered to.

- In the process, further obstacles and questions may surface which were not previously discernible or had not been taken into consideration. The individual must respond flexibly to these circumstances when selecting techniques and using resources so as to achieve his interim goals.

Unforeseen problems are the most critical situations for the target group. At this point, a group situation is important to support a person with ideas and help.
Maintaining motivation:

- Putting the steps the activity entails into practice may take some time and require unforeseen obstacles to be surmounted. To achieve this, the individual requires patience and stamina as well as constant motivation.

This part refers to the personal emotion regulation skills and self-control. In the context of self-management skills it is important to be prepared for the situation of low motivation, unforeseen barriers and disappointments. Solutions to cope with losing motivation in the process can be discussed in the forefront.

Methodology

Remarks on self-management skills training

According to the cognitive paradigm, self-management mainly focuses on analytic and self-reflecting aspects.

People who are more impulsive or not used to deliberating on everything should be introduced to it in a playful way, step by step and in a group situation. Self-reflection can be learned best in group discussions.

Thinking about pros and cons as well as about supportive resources and critical barriers can be learned in a first step, if this later “internal” discussion is externalized in a training session with persons playing the role of the pros and cons.

Training goal setting and planning to reach the goal should be important to and achievable for the participants.

How to incorporate the reflective part of self-management skill in learning processes

Some examples:

- Journaling: keeping a journal can aid planning, goal-setting, and keeping track of accomplishments
- Discussions: talking about accomplishments, difficulties, and achievements can be a way to develop self-management skills
- Role-play: the opportunity to practice new skills in a safe environment can provide confidence to use new skills in a public setting
Personal reflection: thinking about accomplishments is a valuable tool for self-assessment, also for goal planning. There should be enough time set aside for reflection of achievements.

Peer assessment: it might be easier to accept constructive criticism from people who we accept as peers rather than an authority.

Self-assessment: it is important to acknowledge our own achievements and difficulties.

Debates: formalized discussions provide opportunities to offer and take constructive criticism.

Combining social, personal, and self-management skills, we are able to achieve our goals!
Structure of the session

We suggest that you follow some kind of structure to get a good result and guarantee a successful process.
Below, you will find a suggestion for a structure of an approximately two-hour session with trainees working with the final target group.

1) Welcome

2) Getting to know each other
   This part of the session needs to be quite simple and easy for people to get involved. In our toolbox, you will find many nice exercises to use. One of them is the “Good morning” exercise.
   - Exercise “Greetings - good morning”

3) Theoretical part (PowerPoint presentation)
   - Aim of workshop connected with lifelong learning
   - What are the management skills?
   - Approaches and methods
   - Self-regulated learning
   - Productive learning
   - Cooperative learning
   - Experiential learning

4) Practising an exercise in self-management skills, such as the following
   - Exercise "Stepping on the footprints"

5) Short feedback and end of the session
# Exercises

## Exercise: Good morning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time frame: 15’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong> one big room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong> 6 – 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material:</strong> cd player and vivid music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Procedure:**  
**Instructions to the participants:**  
We would like you to walk round in the room while you are listening to the music. When the music stops you are asked to greet the person which is closer to you according to the instruction. Try to choose every time a different person. Say good morning to the person who is closer to you:  
...as if he/she was your friend.  
...as if he/she was the baby of your friend.  
...as if he/she was the priest of the church in your neighborhood.  
...as if he/she was a famous pop star.  
...as if he/she was your boss.  
...as if he/she was the Archbishop in the hospital.  
...as if he/she was your boyfriend or girlfriend. |
| **Goal / purpose:**  
To energise the team |
| **Questions for discussion:**  
You ask for a short feedback. |
| **Source:**  
Movement “PROTASI” – Centre of Creative Occupation – |
Exercise: Stepping on the footprints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Time frame:</strong></th>
<th>aprox. 60 mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>one big room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong></td>
<td>at least 15 persons (in case of less or more participants alterations are needed to be done to the procedure).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material:</strong></td>
<td>pens, sticky tape, 9 footprint stickers, 3 baskets and 3 symbolic or real barriers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedure:**

The participants are separated into three groups with the technique of three jigsaws. (They are presented with three pictures on A4 paper which have each been cut into five disproportionate pieces. They try to assemble their jigsaws, and thus, they form their group of five persons each).

In their subgroup, they have to work on the following task:

"Going back to your institution, you will implement a training concerning personal, social, and self-management skills. You are asked to define three important steps which are needed in order to organize your training better.

Among the five of you, you have to choose:

- One person who will be the person responsible for organizing the training (this person can also be the trainer, but it is not necessary),
- two persons who will give the organizer the resources which are needed to organize the training and
- two persons who will focus on the occurring barriers that the organizer will have to take into consideration in order to make each step.

After you have taken your roles and before you start stepping on the footprints, take some 5-10 minutes to reflect and write down on a small piece of paper individually and according to your role either 3 possible steps or some resources or some barriers.

Now you all together start your itinerary from the DESIRE to the AIM. You stop on every step and discuss according to your roles, your attitudes giving inputs to the "stepper". You can put your ideas in the baskets or move the barrier and stop the "stepper" every time you present an obstacle to the process. It is good to keep a dialogue or debate among the people of resources and barriers.

The final decision on each step is taken by the organizer, while the other four persons act as consultants to the organizer”.

In order to make this exercise more exiting, we have made a drawing showing the positions in the room.
Goal / purpose:
To practice a plan for their work in a real life situation predicting the barriers and difficulties with the aid of other people in a group task.

This exercise helps somebody to command his personal management skills, obtain new ones and develop ways to realize step by step a project. The organization of these steps and their sequence, helped by a group of people who share similar desires and aims, bring somebody to a situation of deeper knowledge of a problem he, she is asked to solve and finally to a solution. You may select a project which is very probable to happen. The aim is to choose an exercise in a real life situation, people will have to deal with.

The help from the people of the needed RESOURCES and the occurring BARRIERS to our STEPS, are in fact the other “voices” we have as individuals and depending on the circumstances, we hear them or not. In this exercise the other “voices” help us to have an holistic approach of our attempt, think more than one way to solve a problem, estimate unforeseen risks and dangers or better ideas. The final decision is ours which means that we have taken our responsibility. Having done this itinerary from the desire to the aim, somebody has become the master of his own learning process.

Questions for discussion:
- How was the process?
- What did you feel concerning the resources and barriers?
- Which aspects of self-management could you identify?
- How can this exercise be adapted to your target group?
- Did you feel that this exercise helped the organizer to develop his management skills?
- What corrections would you have to make to improve this exercise?

Source: Pro-Skills
Pro-Skills - Train-the-trainer concept

European project “Pro-Skills 2: Train-the-trainer” Nr. 509958-LLP-1-2010-1-DE-Grundtvig-GMP
MODULE 5: PRACTISE
Pro-Skills innovative approach is based on a large use of relational dynamic exercises that act as tools for the aims expressed by its philosophy: they stimulate people to go deeper to their thoughts and feel their experience; they aim at creating the conditions to the participants to absorb knowledge or exercise skills.

As mentioned before, in our opinion, trainers shall experience these exercises themselves before training other people in order to feel the dynamic and strength of these techniques as well as potential barriers humans face while doing the exercises, either disadvantaged or not. Beyond that it is most important that trainers get **aware that these kinds of exercises are never the same when they are applied to people**. Differences in personality, age, gender, cultural background etc. give almost different results and people react in different ways. So, these exercises should not be seen as recipes; they don’t give solutions themselves automatically, as the ingredients are not the same every time.

On one hand, an experienced trainer can **consciously take advantage from this fact**. The techniques and exercises are part of the general concept and act as tools. Aiming on the goals of the respective training, the trainer can regulate the exercises’ process by special instructions and also his non-verbal behaviour.

On the other hand, it is fact that the trainer **unconsciously takes influence on the training process at any time by his personality**, his behaviour as well as human characteristics like sympathy and antipathy. Thus realising the training concept and exercises requires a high level of awareness and reflection of the trainers.

The trainer must always be:
- aware of the concrete goals of the exercise
- aware of his own feelings (fears, likes, dislikes) when realising it
- aware of the target groups characteristics and needs
- free of prejudices and interpretations
- well equipped with different techniques and exercises
- flexible to apply the proper techniques according to the relational dynamics developed in the group
- attentive, reflecting and capable to intervene the exercises’ process according to the participants’ reactions, feelings and needs
- be able to compose ideas, raise topics and facilitate the expression of all participants

Trainers have to be very careful in using these techniques and exercises, test them before applying and always try to “close” if they are “opened”. They don’t allow situations to go out of control or to create conflicts and negative atmosphere. Sometimes person find these techniques and exercises a good chance for psychotherapy or confess very deep thoughts, feelings and situations. The trainer has to be very clear of the limits of a training session and alert to control the situation by offering alternative solutions or restricting those people who violate the decided limits.
Thus train-the-trainer courses shall sensitize the future trainers concerning these facts and shall offer the occasion and frame to experience and train these trainer skills before facing the real training situation with the final target group.

Thus, the **basic idea of this module** is that participants prepare and realise at least one exercise on their own and lead a discussion in the group on the exercise focusing needs of target group, variations of exercise etc.

---

**Structure of the session**

1) **Introduction**

The trainees shall be sensitized on their influence on the training process by concrete instructions, non-verbal behaviour and personality.

You can vary the length of this introduction and thus the procedure of module:

   A) Long introduction: The trainees get extensive information on the trainer’s influence on the exercise’s proceeding; matters are discussed in the forefront of the preparation and realisation. The powerpoint presentation on hand can be used for this.

       Important: The trainees are instructed to *consciously vary* their behaviour and instructions while realising the exercise.

   B) Short introduction: The trainees are instructed to prepare and realise one exercise and thereby reflect the trainer’s influence to the exercise, but they do not get extensive information.

2) **Preparation**

The participants prepare at least one exercise which is realised later on with the group of trainees. They can bring in own exercises or can be given the tool box and can take a choice from it. The participants should work with this task at least in couples or in small groups.

The preparation of this practical part can be part of the training (in case you have a course in one stretch) or can be done as homework (in case you have a weekly course spanning several weeks).

3) **Realisation and discussion of tools**

The trainees realise the exercises within the group. Beside the mere realisation, they shall present the exercises aims and intention. After the realisation of exercises, the group shall discuss the techniques strengths and potentials, variations, advantages and disadvantages. The participants give feedback to the realising trainers concerning the effects of the exercises and their own feelings and experiences while doing it. The trainees who lead the exercise give feedback concerning their feelings and difficulties realising the tool.
4) Final reflection and discussion

According to variation A or B you chose for the introduction of module, the module is closed by a more or less extensive final reflection and discussion round:

A) In case participants *consciously varied* their behaviour and instructions while realising the exercise, they now can report their ideas and experiences.

B) In case participants were not instructed extensively, you can collected their experiences by cards or at a flipchart and summarize it with the help of the powerpoint presentation.
MODULE 6: REFLECTION / EVALUATION
Why this module?

Why closing the Pro-Skills train-the-trainer course with an extensive module on reflection and evaluation!?! We do this for three reasons:

1) Benefit for the trainees: As we remarked in the beginning of these brochure, reflection on the Pro-Skills concept and internalisation of its background philosophy are most probably the most important aspects of the train-the-trainer course. Thus, the last training module and session shall focus on reflection and evaluation of the Pro-Skills concept. It may help the future trainers to get deeper into the Pro-Skills philosophy, reflect the own attitude towards Lifelong Learning, the target group of socially unprivileged persons and the aim of equal opportunities of life and learning, and finally to decide whether they are willing to work and train in the sense of the Pro-Skills approach or not.

2) Benefit for the “trainer-of trainers”: Beyond that, also experienced “trainers of trainers” need feedback on their way of teaching and the reactions and learning process they try to cause in the trainees. Experienced trainers may be on risk to follow their habits and get less attentive for their trainees needs and the training process. So regardless the degree of experience and expertise: a trainer never should stop asking for feedback.

3) Benefit for the training concept: It was already said that the Pro-Skills concept is a piece of work in progress that needs further development and improvement. Trainers and professionals who are engaged with the approach must keep alive collective thinking and exchange as well as collecting experiences with Pro-Skills concept implementation with both final target group and training of trainers.

Methodology

A lot is written on evaluation methods in general and approaches concerning evaluation of training in specific. However this chapter does not claim to be a scientific paper or to give the basis for a systematic evaluation study. We like to provide some easy manageable tools in order to get feedback from the trainees on their satisfaction with the course, their attitude concerning the Pro-Skills concept and its usefulness and potential transfer to daily work.
The module of evaluation comprises aspects and actions that are realised before the start of training. We suggest having some kind of evaluation in the forefront in order to assess trainees’ expectations to the course and – especially if the participants are not known before – their pre-knowledge, work field and final target group.

The following structure of the module is a suggestion focusing aspects of evaluation which are important and useful in our point of view and give most benefit to all parties concerned. Of course you can do your own choice from our offering or realise other evaluation tools instead.

The actual evaluation session can be realised directly after the last training module or in a separate meeting. The trainees’ initial reaction to the course gives a first impression on their satisfaction and impressions. A more detailed evaluation is realised after reflection and discussion.

We like to combine the use of standardized questionnaires and creative evaluation and feedback tools.

**In the forefront**

Independent from the kind of training you realise, it is useful to inquire the participants’ expectations in the forefront of training, especially if you face experienced trainers or staff in an advanced training. You can realise this either by sending a questionnaire to the trainees few weeks before the training, for example together with further materials. If you offer an explicit Pro-Skills train-the-trainer course and you don’t know the participants very well before, this is the chance to ask for more details like work field, experience and expertise in the field of Lifelong Learning or adult education and so on. If it is possible to get the filled questionnaires back some days before the training starts, you can align your course to the trainees’ expectations or can handle inadequate and unrealistic expectations at begin of the training.

Another opportunity is to inquire the participants’ expectations and fears concerning the course at the beginning of the training with the help of a creative method called “expectation tree”:
The rough structure of a tree is drawn on a flip chart paper. The trainees are asked to write down their expectations and fears concerning the training course on small paper cards which are pinned to the tree afterwards, expectations to the treetop, fears to the trunk. The participants or the trainer structure the cards so repeated expectations and fears become visible.

It seems important to discuss inadequate and unrealistic expectations before the training modules start and to give further information regarding the fears.

There’s the chance to revisit this expectation tree at the end of the course and discuss which expectations and fears were fulfilled or not.

**Reaction**

The immediate reaction of participants to the training course is often focused on the trainees’ satisfaction and first impressions. As this provides initial information on whether anything major is going wrong, it is useful to have this kind of feedback - including organisational matters and the group atmosphere - at the end of each training module or training day.

We suggest assessing trainees’ immediate reaction towards a training course by creative methods and give two examples of these kinds of evaluation methods below: the mood barometer and the target method.

**Mood barometer**

The mood barometer offers the opportunity to quickly assess participants’ mood or satisfaction level at various times during the course. People make their assessment by placing a sticker at the point on a barometer scale that corresponds to their current mood.
**Target method**

The target method enables various aspects of training to be assessed and subsequently discussed. Examples include the mood in the group, the applicability of the taught content, the organisation of the course and the training’s methodology.

The “target” is transferred to a flipchart. Participants are given four stickers and express their satisfaction by sticking the dot closer to or further away from the centre of the target disk. The closer the point is placed to the centre of the target disk, the more positive the assessment.

**Results & transfer**

Before the detailed evaluation of training is started, the participants should have another chance to reflect and discuss the training concept with special regard to their all-day work and the final target group they work with. We suggest having again a small presentation on the core ideas of the training concept and on the training modules which were realised with the trainees. In case of advanced training of staff, it seems to be useful to link this discussion to the participants’ all-day work field and target group. As the Pro-Skills training concept is not a fixed approach but open for adaptations, it is important to give the trainees the opportunity to reflect on potentials and barriers linked to the transfer of concept into their work fields, to discuss on it, answer open questions and work together at solutions. It’s an important goal of the train-the-trainer course to help the trainers developing a concrete vision of the courses they will realise themselves later on.

This can be realised in small discussion groups or by a discussion strategy like the fish bowl method (see below). In case you have staff from different institutions, it can either be useful to build group by institution in order to discuss the respective conditions. The groups can bring in potential questions and barriers in the plenum later on or discuss it in the small group with the leader of the train-the-trainer course. If the complete group is not too big, the fish bowl method allows realising these discussions in the plenum.

The final training evaluation is realised by a standardised questionnaire. It records the extent to which participants gained new information or skills, their attitude towards the concepts and their anticipation and plans concerning the realisation of Pro-Skills training courses.
How to use the results?

The results from an evaluation provide reliable feedback about the work done. How can this information be used?

We suggest discussing the evaluation results in the trainer team in order to adapt and improve further training offers to the trainees’ needs and interest. Of course there might be trainees who reject the Pro-Skills’ philosophy and cannot approve its ethical or pedagogical principles. Nevertheless it seems to be worthwhile to scrutinize the own action: Did we succeed to link our ideas to the trainees pre-knowledge? Did we succeed to attract their interest? Did we succeed to vitalize the Pro-Skills approach in our training?

We also ask you to stay in contact with the Pro-Skills partners that introduced the approach to you or give feedback on questions and critics to the Pro-Skills team e.g. via the project’s website. Pro-Skills concept is a piece of work in progress that needs further development and improvement and you are asked to keep alive discussion and exchange on the implementation of concept.

Beside this, you can take further benefit from your evaluation results. You can use evaluation results in order to make the success of a programme visible for sponsors and financial backers, media and public. Reporting on a concrete training, its results and the trainees’ feedback will catch people’s interest and can be a chance to start publicity on your training offers.

Last but not least, the presentation of evaluation results may help to sensitize and convince responsible decision makers and politicians to support the lasting implementation of the Pro-Skills training approach for the benefit of socially disadvantaged persons.
Structure of the session

1) **Energizer: “Good morning” / “The elephant”**

Both if you link the evaluation session to the last training module or you have a special evaluation meeting, it seems to be useful to start it with an energizing exercise in order to refresh people’s minds, reunite the group and prevent the evaluation session from being a boring or droughty meeting.

“Good morning” is a nice exercise to open a separate evaluation session; “the elephant” can be realised if the session is realised subsequent to the last training module.

2) **Initial reaction: Target method**

With the help of the target method (see above), the participants express their spontaneous impression on the group atmosphere, the applicability of the training concept, the organisation of the course and the training’s methodology. The result is not discussed or commented.

3) **Short powerpoint presentation:**

In a short presentation, the trainer repeats and summarizes the core ideas of the Pro-Skills concept and the training modules which were realised with the trainees. This helps the participants to go to a meta-level and start reflection.

You can use the powerpoint presentation from module 1.

4) **Reflection & discussion:**

A) You have staff members from different institution, but several members per institution: Build small discussion groups by institution and give them some time to discuss the following questions:

- Do you agree with the core values of Pro-Skills and is it aligned to the basic guidelines of your institution?
- Is there an existing framework to implement the Pro-Skills training? Which organisational barriers do you worry about?
- Which kind of reaction would you expect from the final target group you work with? Would they be open for this kind of trainings? What will be their barriers and fears?
- Which concrete steps do you have to realise in order to implement a Pro-Skills training in your institution?
B) You have staff only from one institution, you have single members from different institutions or you realise the training in the frame of an initial education: Realise the fish bowl method (see below) and give the following questions for discussion:

- Do you agree with the core values of Pro-Skills? What are your critics to this approach?
- Is the pedagogical approach of Pro-Skills suitable for adult education / the work with socially unprivileged adults?
- What do you personally think about basic skills for Lifelong learning, especially regarding the target group of socially unprivileged adults?

5) Evaluation questionnaire

The standardized evaluation questionnaire (see below) is spread to the participants. They are given some time to fill it. A box is prepared to put the questionnaire in and assure anonymity.

6) Expectation and fear tree

In case you realised the expectation and fear tree exercise (see above) at the start of the training course, you can ask the trainees now to visit the tree and

- remove the cards with expectations that were fulfilled and the cards with fears that were not significant; these cards are put in a small box below the tree;
- leave the cards with expectations that were not fulfilled and the cards with fears which came true; these cards remain at the tree.

The resulting tree must not be commented.

7) Closing the training: Exercise “Network”

The exercise is a nice game for closing a meeting by symbolizing the network that has grown among the participants.
Exercises

Exercise: Good morning
⇒ see Module of Self-management skills!

Exercise: The elephant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>time frame:</th>
<th>15’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>location:</td>
<td>a big room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants:</td>
<td>6 – 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>material:</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>procedure:</td>
<td>The participants create a circle so as one is standing behind the other. The leader tells the story while he / she is making certain movements on the back of the person in front of him / her. The others watch and do the same which is in fact a relaxing message. There was a big forest <em>(Make circle movements with both hands on the back of the person in front)</em> Full of trees <em>(Draw vertically the palms. While the right is down, the left palm is up)</em> Full of woodcutters who cut them down <em>(Hit the back with the edge of both palms)</em> The trees became trunks <em>(Make circle movements with the thumb)</em> Then an elephant came and stepped heavily on them <em>(Hit with the fists)</em> The police came and took him in the jail <em>(Grab from the waist with both hands)</em> The elephant writes a letter on the typewriter to his mother explaining what happened <em>(Clack with the fingers)</em> and inserts another sheet of paper <em>(draw both hands on the back)</em> and sticks a stamp on it <em>(press with the thumbs)</em> (The story starts from the beginning for at least one more time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goal / purpose:</td>
<td>To relax the participants and to entertain them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source:</td>
<td>“Communication without violence”, Nada Ignjatovic Savic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise: Fish bowl (Variation B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>time frame:</strong></th>
<th>1 ½ hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>location:</strong></td>
<td>a room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>participants:</strong></td>
<td>12 – 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>material:</strong></td>
<td>chairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**procedure:**
- Participants build an inner and an outer circle; the inner circle spans 4-5 persons.
- The people in the inner circle start the discussion on a certain question.
- The outer circle acts as silent audience.
- Trainees form the outer circle can ask to join the discussion by raising hands. A person from the inner circle has to leave and change the chair with the new member of the discussion round.
- Alternatively a member of the discussion round can quit the inner circle and another participant can join it.

The trainer opens the discussion with a certain question (e.g. by writing it on a board or giving a card with the written question into the inner circle. He also moderates the discussion round if necessary and gives a new question after some time.

**goal / purpose:**
A certain topic can be discussed in a big group but the number of active speakers is limited. Nevertheless each member of the big group can participate.

**Questions for discussion:**
- 

**Source:**
According to Movement “PROTASI” – Centre of Creative Occupation
### Exercise: Network

| **time frame:** | 5’ |
| **location:** | inside or outside, place to build a circle with all participants |
| **participants:** | >5 persons |
| **material:** | ball of wool |
| **procedure:** | The participants stand in a circle. One person starts by saying “good bye” in a way that is typical for her/him and what she/he wishes for the group of participants; than he/she throws the woollen ball to another participant while holding the start of the woollen string. The next person catches the ball, says good bye and the wishes and again the ball is thrown etc. Step by step a network among the participants is build. If all participants are linked by the woollen network, the trainer says some nice parting words referring to the network which was built among the participants during the training course. |
| **goal / purpose:** | Visualize the potential network among members of a group. |
| **Source:** | unknown |

---

### Evaluation questionnaire

see below!
Dear participants, we hope you enjoyed the Pro-Skills course and got new inspiration! We’d like to ask you to give us feedback concerning your satisfaction with the course, the training concept and if its content is of use for you and your work. Please fill in this questionnaire and drop it into the foreseen box until the end of the course. Thanks in advance!

**Personal data**

**Age:**
- □ < 30 years
- □ 30 – 40 years
- □ 40 – 50 years
- □ > 50 years

**Gender:**
- □ female
- □ male

**Work field:**
- □ initial training of staff (e.g. university)
- □ advanced training of staff
- □ adult education
- □ social work
- □ health promotion / addiction prevention
- □ employment / job centre
- □ Others - please specify:

**Organisation & frame**

Please rate your satisfaction with the following organisational aspects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>very unsatisfied</th>
<th>very satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation in general</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information in advance</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainers</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere during the course</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Pro-Skills approach & training concept**

Please express your consent with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>don't agree</th>
<th>totally agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My expectations to the course are fulfilled.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In total, I agree with the ideas of the Pro-Skills’ approach.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my opinion, the pedagogical approach of Pro-Skills is suitable for adult education / the work with socially unprivileged adults.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my eyes, the Pro-Skills’ concept fills a gap in adult education / the work with socially unprivileged adults.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see the chance to implement the Pro-Skills concept in my daily work.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critics to the approach**

I see some critical points of the approach, as there are:
Basic skills for Lifelong Learning?

What do you personally think about basic skills for Lifelong learning, especially regarding the target group of socially unprivileged adults?

Say it in your own words

What was good?

What didn’t suit you?

Further comments

Thanks for your feedback!!
LITERATURE


**Literature references**


Frankl, V.E. (1977). *Livet måste ha mening (eng.: Man’s Search for Meaning)*


Maslow, A.H (1943). *A Theory of Human Motivation*


