INTRODUCTION

When planning group work, it is worth realising the variety of educational tools and methods, which, according to the most basic classification, can be divided into: knowledge acquisition (lecture, work with a book, talk), self-study (case study, brainstorming, simulation games) and skills training. Each training may contain different ratio of individual methods, resulting from the specificity of the topic, knowledge of participants' expectations, as well as thoroughly researched needs of non-profit organisations.

Taking into account the fact that hands-on experience teaches the most, one should have in mind and important rule - when the participant has no basic knowledge, the training should be preceded by a theoretical introduction, as it is difficult to analyse and conclude on a completely unknown topic. Reflective methods should always be chosen when the participants have at least minimal experience, so that in the course of the undertaken activities they are able to refer to their knowledge (theoretical and practical), as well as make a basic evaluation of the attempts made and the results achieved.

It is impossible not to mention the rapid development of on-line forms (webinars, e-learning courses) accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as practically all trainings have been transferred to the virtual space. It may be expected that traditional methods will be more and more commonly combined with distance learning methods, known as integrated and blended learning. A reasonable solution for the future seems to be the use of educational methods mainly based on webinars, courses focusing on own work in the form of e-learning, complementing them with methods that activate participants in the training room. There are many indications that nothing can replace mutual learning and social interactions taking place while working with a group live.

The following chapter highlights the methods that can be successfully used in the implementation of the **Motivate. Support. Strengthen**. Programme. Each of the programme modules described in part II contains examples of exercises related to the given topic - to be used during training and own work.

In this chapter, methods of working with a group will be presented, emphasizing the development of skills and competences of a volunteer working with children at risk of exclusion. The examples of workshops conducted in the non-profit organisation Change the World - the Norwegian Project Partner, are undoubtedly an added value.

LECTURE AND PRESENTATION

Despite the fact that the programme provides mainly activating and practical methods - the trainer's box cannot lack tools for the event when transfer of theoretical knowledge would be necessary. If the volunteer does not know the theoretical basis, e.g. about the impact of stressors on the body or cognitive functions, the most appropriate method will be a lecture, presentation, or possibly an educational film.

The purpose of this method is mainly to provide a resource of information and it is not expected of the participants to be active and experiment. The topics of the training programme for volunteers working with children, where the transfer of knowledge is an important introduction to exercises, experience and skills development, are theoretical issues related to:

Creation of Emotions

1. How the organism (brain, body) reacts to stress
2. What secondary traumatisation is
3. Basics of communication (Thun etc.)
4. How to recognize early signs of burnout
5. Pillars of self-esteem

WORKSHOP

It belongs to the activating and practical methods. Taking into account the objectives of the workshop, the way it is conducted, the required activity of the participants, the workshop is a practical training that improves a specific skill. It is a platform for acquiring new knowledge, influencing skills and attitudes, provides experiences related to experience, and enables reflection (insight). The aim of the workshop is achieved by engaging participants who have specific tasks or exercises to perform. During the workshops, as in any group process, there is interaction, mutual learning.

The mutual interaction of participants also triggers an important process that has a significant impact on the course of the workshop: evaluation and self-evaluation. In planning the workshop activities, it is important to ensure participants' sense of (mental) safety, an atmosphere of support and mutual acceptance. This is a prerequisite for a successful workshop.

A. Sequential: theory - exercise - conclusions

1. Introduction
- mini-lecture or short presentation introducing the topic

2. Analysis of the topic
- group discussion - what problem will this knowledge help us to solve?
- what actions should we take to solve this problem?

3. Presentation of an example
- a demonstration
- a film
- a case study

4. Real situation simulation
- group work
- solving partial problems
- experimenting
- working out solutions

5. Presentation of the results of work by each group
- discussion of partial solutions
- decision of the whole group regarding the chosen/accepted solution

6. Closing discussion
- reflection/ consideration
- evaluation and conclusions

B. Reflective: experience – analysis and conclusions – using new knowledge in practice

A classic example of this approach is the Kolb learning cycle, which is based on four assumptions:

- Knowledge is acquired through practice and experience.
- Some concrete experience leads to rational observation.
- This reflection produces abstract generalising rules that are used not so much to describe a particular event, but all similar ones.
- The resulting knowledge is then verified by active experimentation, i.e. testing the new idea in practice, which leads to the creation of new experiences and the cycle starts all over again.

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Figure 1 – Learning through experience – Kolb's Learning Cycle

Each of these models can be used in training practice. Recommended workshops can be successfully carried out in both forms. Therefore, by presenting examples of workshops conducted or developed by partners (Change the World, Verum Foundation and Coedro), some of them are presented sequentially, some in a reflective model. Ultimately, it is up to the trainer who conducts the workshop to evaluate which form would be the most effective, taking into account the substantive criteria (such as the level of knowledge of the subject by the participants of the training), organisational criteria (time, place, tools, form of the meeting, e.g. online or in a training room) and formal (e.g. requirements specified by NGOs in this regard). You will find more tips in the Guide for Trainers/teachers/Co-ordinators.

CASE STUDY

A case study is a special type of story, containing a description of an event, a situation in which the main characters are organisations, people working in it and stories linking the perspective of several pages (e.g. organisation, volunteer, parents of pupils), etc.

By analysing the sequence of events in chosen case study, it is possible to identify the reasons that contributed to the success and the difficulties that made the failure, which allows to learn from someone else's achievements and failures. Case study is a good method to show the approach to action or the way of solving problems of a given organisation or team. Participants engaging in the analysis of the case study have an excellent opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses (of people, organisations, undertakings, projects), and the educator (trainer, facilitator, teacher or mentor) communicates relevant theoretical content corresponding to the conclusions of the analysis made by the participants, essential from the point of view of the training objectives.

A case study requires the trainer to prepare appropriate texts. An excellent solution would be to ask the organisation or participants before the training to share examples of stories that they would like to discuss during the training. The trainer's task is, of course, to adapt these materials in the form of a case study, with extreme caution and confidentiality in revealing details, reducing them to a

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version that makes it impossible to identify the organisation or person. At the same time, it is good practice to obtain relevant permission to use real history as part of the case study.

When developing the case to be used in the training, the trainer:

- specifies the goal - how is it to correspond with the goals of the training? What are the participants expected to achieve by this?
- collects data and designs materials - supplementing the content indicated by organisations or participants, or preparing it on his/her own after examining training needs and defining the purpose of the training
- specifies the vision of the whole - with the preparation of a concept for conducting a case study and a series of questions.

As an educational method, case studies can be used to educate volunteers with the skills they need to work with non-profit organisations, such as:

- communication
- making a positive impact
- solving a conflict
- coping with stress
- non-violent communication
- building autonomy, etc.

GROUP COACHING

Group coaching is coaching organized for a group of people who are connected by a similar (but not joint) goal - e.g. people from different organisations are working on improvement assertiveness or self-confidence. In group coaching, people work to achieve the goals of individual group members using the wisdom of the group. There is, however, no work to create from the group a team functioning effectively.

Group coaching is a process carried out using workshop methods, i.e. a coaching-workshop focused on the individual work of each group member on areas and goals that are important to him/her. In group coaching, it is permissible for the coach to propose a programme indicating what goals can be achieved thanks to it, therefore the participants at the moment of applying for the process declare their willingness to work on such a goal/goals.

Features of group coaching:

- It is a programme with set time. The coach plans, for example, 6-8 meetings.
- It focuses on achieving the specific goals of the participants.
- It is addressed to a specific (small) number of similar (in terms of needs) participants.
- It is based on content, coaching tools, group cooperation.
- You can help more people in a shorter period of time.
- It has a fixed structure and rhythm of work.
- It includes an important element not found in individual coaching: group synergy.

On average, one group coaching session lasts from 90 to 120 minutes. The main axis of the meeting is the work of each participant on the topic; moreover, reflection on the task done/ homework, and an additional bonus is the feedback from the participants.

Group coaching can be organised for a group of volunteers from the same organisation or as an open group coaching it can be aimed at volunteers from different organisations who want to solve a similar problem.

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY

Open Space is a method that allows large groups (5 people and more) to find answers to complex questions in a short time. It engages all participants in direct dialogue and leads to constructive conclusions.

It works well when we are looking for new and more effective solutions, we want to deal comprehensively with a problem, the topics are potentially controversial, we do not know the answers to the questions asked, and taking up the problem requires engaging a larger group of people in a discussion.

Goal

The goal is to conduct a productive meeting with great freedom and develop an action plan to solve a problem.

Concept and process

The participants form a circle, the facilitator explains the topic of the workshop, and the participants set the program. This is a process in which participants write down topics they want to discuss and post them on the notice board. A meeting time and place (e.g. a place in a room) are set for each item on the board. The person who proposed the topic is responsible for setting up the working group. Participants decide which group they want to join and are free to move between groups at their discretion. Discussions usually last from 50 min up to 1.5 h. The number of simultaneous discussions and rounds depends on the size of the group, spatial and organisational conditions, as well as the complexity of the problem and the involvement of participants.

What it teaches

Making joint decisions on issues that may provoke conflict, which relate to developing an action plan and working with the group.

Supported attitudes and values

Autonomy, efficient communication, responsibility.

Author | Source

Change the World based on: Open Space World (www.openspaceworld.org) and the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector of New Zealand (www.goodpracticeparticipate.gov.nz)

Dragon Dreaming is a fun, inspiring, inviting and meaningful method to help groups wishing to make their dreams come true. As a process, it allows teams to build a strong vision (dream) together, turn it into specific goals (plan) and activities (action), and then accept the entire process to move on (celebrate). Dragon dreaming is based on getting out of her/his own comfort zone, because that's where learning takes place. Outside the comfort zone, symbolic "dragons" await us - hence the name of the method.

Goal

Showing participants how to establish a shared vision, build a plan for its implementation and safely operate outside the comfort zone in order to make the vision come true. It is a bridge method between working on self-awareness and project management.

Concept and process

The method has 4 stages - building a shared vision (Dreaming), setting sub-goals (Planning), adopting a detailed action plan and implementing it (Action) and celebrating success, which is at the same time, a time for reflection. The latter one (celebration) should account for no less than 25% of the total cost and energy. Since the method is a process and not a one-time workshop, it usually covers a long period and involves a large number of meetings, the formula of which can be quite flexible and combine various methods and techniques of work (many well-known and well-established methods have been used in the process of the creation of this method and anyone can further develop it). These are group meetings, e.g. in a circle, combined with breathing and relaxation exercises. The recommended minimum number of participants in the process is 10 people.

What it teaches

Building a community and a sense of community, cooperation with all and everyone - always trying to create conditions for a win-win game, asking reflective questions, willingness to strengthen the development of personal competences, the courage to go beyond one's own comfort zone.

Supported attitudes and values

Sensitivity, openness, empathetic and attentive listening, trust in oneself and in others.

Author | Source

Change the World based on: Dragon Dreaming Institute (www.dragondreaminginstitute.org)

SPEED DIALOGUE

Speed dialogue is a form of dialogue in which participants take part in a series of short one-on-one conversations with different partners. A speed dialogue is useful if you have a limited amount of time and want to consult people quickly, so that anyone interested can contribute to discussion or reflection. It can be used both before and after a presentation or seminar.

Goal

The goal is to create a discussion on a specific topic by quickly generating different groups of opinions. It enables the discussion of important issues for a given group in a way that allows each person to express his/her own thoughts and hear and discuss a number of other perspectives. It can also be used as a tool to help participants get to know each other better as an icebreaker.

Concept and process

Participants stand in two rows facing each other in pairs. Each couple says hello and then starts a discussion on a specific topic or question. After about 2-4 minutes, one of the rows moves one place, so each one gets a new partner. The process continues for 3-5 rounds. The method can also be used while sitting in a circle.

What it teaches

To promote discussion, look more at networking opportunities, effectively organise the exchange of ideas in a group in a way that allows each person to express his/her own thoughts and listen to and discuss a range of other perspectives as well as to open up to each other despite differences.

Supported attitudes and values

Establishing an understanding, going beyond own comfort zone, overcoming barriers of shyness and differences, connecting people regardless of age, gender, origin, culture, etc.,

Author | Source

Change the World based on: Dialogue Society (http://www.dialoguesociety.org)

WISHES TREE

Wishes tree is a creative and fun way to collect wishes, information, suggestions, ideas, etc. from a community on certain topics relevant to it. A wish tree is a real or fictional tree that is used as an object of wishes and offerings.

Goal

To reach out and hear from a wide-range of people in their community about certain issues that concern the community.

Concept and process

Local authorities, organisations or individuals in a community can fulfil the wishes from the tree. It is very important to make clear the purpose of these wishes to the participants to avoid misunderstandings and false expectations. **Example of purposes**: The wishes will be collected and handed over to local politicians to commit them, the municipality wants to know the opinion of the community, we want to brainstorm with contributions from the community, etc.

It is especially advisable to do this exercise around the Christmas season due to the good Christmas spirit and good wishes. It is important that no limitations are placed on wishes; dreaming is allowed and encouraged. **Examples of the themes for the wish tree:** "What kind of community do you want?", "What would you give to your community?" "What will your community look like in the year 2050?", "What service would you like to have in your community, school, university, etc.?", "What would improve in your community?"

Form of the wish tree: Here the limit is the imagination, it can be: A Christmas tree, a representation of wood, wire, a drawing with sheets of coloured paper or a computational tree. Each wish will be a new leaf that will be placed on the tree, so the community can read the wishes of others. Where to place the tree of wishes: This will depend on the objective of the wish tree, and whom you want to reach. It is important that it is placed in a noticeable space, e.g. in a bus station, local elementary schools, a gas station, bank lobby, coffee shop, local hospital, etc.

The tree can be fixed in place or it can be a wandering tree that goes from place to place.

What it teaches

Empowerment of local community, participation, democracy, use of public space.

Supported attitudes and values

Empathy, respect, mutual understanding, empowerment.

Wish Trees are found in many different cultures around the world and although the specific rituals differ from one country to another, what all Wish Trees have in common is that of being placed where people reconnect with their inner truth, i.e. with ideas and things that truly matter to them.

TALKING STICK

This is a simplified method of creating a calm and thoughtful dialogue in a small or large group. It allows summarising the group session/ workshop, when each participant shares with others comments on what they have learned, what reflection they have, or what they are grateful for. A stick, a carved stick, a branch with leaves plays the role of a stick, i.e. the personification of the speaker, it can also be a shell, a feather and similar (natural) objects found in the immediate vicinity.

Goal

It is used in all situations when we need to ensure good communication and mutual understanding. It also allows people who, for various reasons, avoid speaking and presenting their view in front of the group. It is also worth using the "talking stick" technique in a situation where there is a conflict, a significant difference of opinion or concepts that make it difficult to find an agreement.

Concept and process

Everyone stands or sits in the circle, giving themselves a moment to organise their thoughts and calm their emotions. The trainer or the person indicated by the group, holding a stick in his/her hand, starts to say everything (but not more) what is important to communicate to the other participants. She/he presents what the situation (event, problem) looks like from her/his point of view, what he/she feels, thinks and what his/her opinion or conclusion is. The inviolable principle is to remain silent and refrain from comments, even non-verbal ones (gestures, facial expressions, sounds) by the other participants - only the person holding the stick speaks up. After the "speech of the stick" is finished, she/he passes it to the next person, who thus gets the right to speak. The stick is then passed on to the next person until everyone has expressed his or her opinion in turn. When using this exercise in resolving conflicts, or eliminating differences of opinion, emphasis should be placed on bringing to a complete understanding of the intentions of the other person, e.g. by using reflection, paraphrasing (e.g. "I heard this ... do I understand correctly that...?"). They should be repeated until the speaker agrees that this is exactly what he/she meant and wanted to tell the participants.

What it teaches

Communication, listening skills, openness to a different point of view and finding a compromise, the ability to briefly present your position, assertiveness.

Supported attitudes and values

Respect, mutual understanding, empathy.

Author | Source

The talking stick technique is a tradition of the indigenous peoples of North America, who during the deliberations of tribal councils allowed for keeping order, speaking and listening to each of the members of the tribal community.

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