

Guidelines on how to realise the How are you? -training for counsellors

This is a set of guidelines on how to implement the “How are you?”-educational materials in secondary schools. The educational material is comprised of four different themes.

1. Mental health and emotional skills
2. Inner strength and exhaustion
3. Social skills and communality
4. Addressing things and seeking help

Each theme forms its own around 30-minute-long module.

The counsellor should get familiar with the educational material before class. The counsellor does not have to be an expert in these themes. The purpose is more to get to know the themes with students, and discuss them,

The modules are comprised of:

- Videos, in which the theory related to each theme is introduced, followed by instructions for the assignments and discussions
- Discussions with a partner or in a small group.
- Independently done exercises

The counsellor will guide the flow of the education based on these directions. The modules can be completed one at a time, at different times. Or multiple modules can be completed one after the other, depending on how much time there is available. The modules are best worked through in numerical order, starting from mental health and emotional skill and ending up with addressing things and seeking help.

There are links and contact information after the slideshow in each module, through which one can find more information, help, and support. The slides should be made available to the students. For example, within the intranet of the school, where they can be found later., These slides should be made available for students so they can benefit, they can also find the information later in an easier way. The slides are available for download on the website for Yeesi,

Before implementing the How are you? education, the counsellor should make themselves familiar with the following:

- The constructive and the particular personal resources that the patient has the ability to utilize. should be central in mental health care.
- Tips on how to deal with the theme of mental health
- Following the principles of safe spaces.

The principles of progressive mental health work that focuses on mental and physical resource

Mental health is a resource, a part of health, and important for one's wellbeing and ability to function. Advancing the cause of mental health is an activity that aims to ensure the realisation of positive mental health and also to increase the amount of protective and strengthening environments. This is why mental health must be discussed even outside of crises and problems. Bringing awareness to mental health may also prevent mental health related issues through its positive effect on collective mental health.

Mental health is life skills, a resource and a source of power that one can strengthen with one's own actions. You can develop this resource through small every day choices, which influence the ability to cope. Things that bring joy, strength and pleasure produce wellbeing and confidence in one's own abilities.

One's ability to cope with mental health can be strengthened in various ways. Feelings of success strengthen one's own self-esteem. Encounters with other people, and sharing feelings and thoughts, creativity as well as expressing one's self, influence every day wellbeing. Paying attention to one's surroundings can help discover small wonderful things that produce joy and new ideas. Doing good things also reinforces your own, but also provides another with feelings of happiness. It is good to remember that it is also important to also leave time for relaxation and being lazy, to just take your time.

Tips on how to handle the mental health -topic

- **Remember a helpful approach.** We are used to talking about mental health mostly through problems and medical conditions. So it may be difficult to find a positive approach. This means that the councillor should gently, yet firmly direct the discussion away from the medical point of view. If it seems that it is not that easy to avoid, then even the hard topics should be discussed. But everyone should leave the conversation believing that mental illness is a resource.

- **Stick to generalities.** Issues with mental health are very common, so it is highly likely that some of the attendees have personal experience, either their own or from someone close to them. A short group meeting is hardly the time to handle difficult personal experiences. You should make it clear at the start that it is only intended to talk on a general level, and if necessary, a reminder might be in order. Remember to be discreet of kind though, if you have to cut off a participant's story. In case someone brings up their own painful experiences during the exercise, you may go ask them if they are alright after the exercise, and if called for you can direct them to the nurse. Remember to thank them for their trust.
- **Make sure the situation is safe.** The goal at Yeesi is always to follow the principles of safe spaces. In practice this means, for example that there is no discrimination, and that everyone tries not to make assumptions about each other. It is the responsibility of the councillor to stop name calling, racism, homophobia and sexism.
- **Let everyone participate in their own way.** Encourage participation and conversation, but do not pressure. For example, when trying to stir up conversation it is better to ask questions about the participants views on things on the matter rather than specific experiences. If you want to ask about experiences, then ask in a general way, not targeting an attendee. Also being more of a student that observes is valuable, so do not emphasize if someone does not talk as much.
- **Dismantle stigma.** Show through example that it is possible to talk about mental health in a direct and positive way. Intervene if attendees use derogatory or demeaning terms or uphold harmful stereotypes. Try to avoid unnecessary euphemisms.
- **Acknowledge your own bias.** Every one of us has our own biases and deep-rooted preconceived notions. Strive to be aware of your own biases so that you do not inadvertently spread them around. Think, do you for instance have expectations of what a depressed person looks, or why someone might get sick?

The principles of a safe space

Be Open. Approach new situations and people without prejudice. Take these new situations as a chance to learn and grow.

Respect. Give others space, be conscious of your choice of words and remember the diversity of the participants.

Do not assume. Respect everyone's right to self-determination and do not make assumptions, for example, about a person's gender. Background or family relations.

Intervene. In case you witness harassment or other inappropriate behaviour do not stay a spectator.

Encourage. Take responsibility for the experience of the other participants. Listen and encourage.

Relax. Making mistakes and asking questions is allowed.

The principles of a safe space will be gone over in the beginning of each module with all the participants, unless more than one module is completed during a single lesson, in which case they will only be gone over in the beginning of the class.

The principles for safe spaces are presented in the video: Principles for a safe space.

More information: <https://www.alli.fi/turvallisempi-tila>

Module 1: Mental health and emotional skills

The Modules structure:

- 1. The video –Principles for a safe space**
- 2. Video 1:** Welcome to the the lesson. This section's themes are mental health skills as well as emotional skills.
- 3. Slide 2:** What comes to mind from the word mental health?
After the video the counsellor will direct a discussion with partners. The students discuss with the person next to them for approximately 3 minutes about the subject: What comes to mind from the word mental health.
- 4. Video 2:** What is mental health?
After the video the counsellor will ask the pairs of students what they discussed in the beginning after the video.

Helpful questions: What kind of thoughts did the word mental health evoke? Did any of the same things come up in your discussions that were also in the video? Did you discuss something that was not in the video?

- 5. Video 3:** The many factors that affect mental health.
- 6. Video 4:** Mental health skills

After the video the counsellor will direct a discussion in either pairs or in small groups. The pairs or groups will discuss for 3-5 minutes about the topic: Why is it important to talk about mental health?

7. **Slide:** Why is it important to talk about mental health?
8. The counsellor will read the slide out loud. Ask the participants why they think it is important to talk about mental health.
9. Helpful questions: Did similar things that are in the slides come up in the discussion with your discussion partner or group. Did you discuss something else?
10. **Video 5:** Emotional skills
11. **Video 6:** At the very least remember these things, and finishing up the training.

Module 2: Inner strength and exhaustion

The outline of the Module:

1. **Video on the principles of a safe space.**

2. **Video 1:** What is inner strength?

After the video an exercise called a continuum of strength will be done.

The students will draw a line on their own paper following the example and then mark down the spot where they feel they are at currently in

regards to their own inner strength. The exercise is personal and it is for

meant for everyone themselves. After this the group will discuss the

exercise led by the counsellor. The counsellor may present questions to the participants:

Was it easy to figure out where on the line the ones inner strength capabilities currently lie?

Would the situation have been different last week or last month?

Are there changes in one's own inner strength?

3. **Video 2:** Study exhaustion

After the video a balancing exercise will follow. The participants will draw

three columns on their paper. They will then write down things in these

columns according to the instructions. This exercise is a personal one and everyone does it only for themselves. Afterwards there will be a conversation together guided by the counsellor. The counsellor may ask questions from the participants such as: Was the assignment easy to do? What was easy and what was difficult? Did participants get something in each column? Which column received the most entries?

4. **Video 3:** Towards stability, how to prevent fatigue, three things to remember, and conclusion.

Module 3: Social skills and communality

Structure of the module:

1. **Video on the principles of a safe space.**
2. **Video 1:** What are social skills?

An exercise will be left visible at the end of the video: A discussion on the propositions with a partner. The counsellor will divide the participants into pairs and will instruct them to discuss each proposition one at a time. Do they agree or disagree with the presented propositions? Why? Discussions should last around 10 minutes or once all of the topics have been finished.

3. **Video 2:** Community and what social skills are needed for

An exercise will be left visible at the end of the video:

Discuss with a partner or in a small group, how you as students could make sure no one feels like an outsider in your facility.

5-10 minutes is a good time to reserve for the discussion. Unpack the task by asking for opinions from the groups/pairs. Try to give everyone's suggestions their time and comment on them, or ask clarifying questions. You may also introduce the students on how to affect community matters in your school, what is already being done, or how suggestions can be taken forward

4. **Video 3:** Three things to remember and conclusion

Module 4: Addressing things and seeking help

Structure of the module:

1. **Video on the principles of a safe space.**
2. **Video 1:** The theme of this section is speaking openly and seeking help
3. **Video 2:** Things that may cause concern

At the end of the video, instructions for an exercise will be left visible. The counsellor will divide attendees into small groups or into pairs. Read the exercise on the slide. The groups will discuss what could be done in that situation and write down thoughts on paper for 5-10 minutes.

After this ask the groups / pairs one by one for one thing that they wrote down.

Remember to stress to the attendees that these issues and themes may evoke a lot of emotion and thoughts when going through these discussions. Many have their own experiences and have worried about a loved one or someone close. You should stress that it is always ok to talk to a trustworthy adult either in the school, contact the online chat or call. See slide "where to get help and support "

4. **Video 3:** A checklist for the situation.
5. **Video 4:** Supporting one another, Where to get help and support and the closure of the lesson.