Positivity

Synoptic Table of Intermediate Activities

Title	Objectives	Overview	Evaluation & Reflection
Identifying Positive Intention	• Communication • Negotiation • Decision-Making Skills • Problem-Solving Skills • Self - Awareness • Self - Regulation Level of Difficulty**:** Intermediate	This Group Activity aims to help the participants to use the skills needed in order to identify positive intentions in any given scenario.	Through this activity participants will understand that almost always behind every disagreement, reluctance and resistance that is expressed through a negative statement lies something else hidden, probably not negative as firstly perceived.
Skill of Meta - Position	• Problem-Solving Skills • Analytical Thinking Level of Difficulty**:** Intermediate	This Group Activity prompts students/participants to pay close attention to the way another person talks and expresses himself or herself, in order to find ways to better communicate with each person according to their way of understanding and interaction.	The completion of this activity should prove beneficial in boosting student's ability to understand the message given to them by others through communication and how to better negotiate if needed and solve and/or avoid any conflict.
Pace and Lead The Way	• Communication • Self-Presentation • Negotiation Skills • Teamwork • Analytical Thinking Level of Difficulty**:** Intermediate	This Group Activity is linked with mirroring, Mirroring is used in this activity in a way that will help participants to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the general notion of empathy and self-reflection.	Upon completing this activity, the participants will be able to use mirroring together with empathy and non-verbal or verbal reflection in their personal or professional-academic life. These skills are extremely helpful for the maintenance of healthy relationships of any kind and effective interaction.
Introjection	• Creativity • Problem - Solving Skills • Communication • Analytical Thinking • Negotiation Skills Level of Difficulty**:** Intermediate	This Individual Activity is designed to help participants to comprehend in a more advanced level the notion of "thoughts" and "beliefs" and how these can hold us down when their connected with negative content, feelings or assumptions.	Through the implementation of this activity participants will become aware that thoughts create beliefs. Hence thoughts and beliefs both influence the way we think, feel about ourselves and others and subsequently shape our behavior as well.
Changing My Mindset	• Self - Regulation • Self - Awareness • Analytical Thinking Level of Difficulty**:** Intermediate	This Individual Activity aims to help participants replace negative words and negative thoughts that we typically use when we are under stress, disappointed or feeling depressed.	By the end of this activity, participants will become aware that experiencing feelings of sadness or feeling sad are only temporary situations and we shouldn't take as absolute the thoughts and the wording we use at those specific moments to translate the world around us.

| Decision Timeline | • Critical Thinking
• Decision – Making Skills
• Self - Awareness

Level of Difficulty: Intermediate | This Individual Activity aims is to help participants to set up a timeline for carrying out decision-making process, boost their self – accomplishment feelings and alleviate any stressors that accompany procrastination and putting aside their personal goals no matter how big or small. | By the end of this activity participants will gain a useful tool on how to set goals with more ease and become more assertive, which will help them not to feel panic or overwhelmed when called to make an important decision. On the contrary they will enjoy long-lasting positive feelings of self-accomplishment, confidence and overall happiness. |

Intermediate Activities for Positivity

Title of the Activity:	Identifying Positive Intention	
Duration:	(45 minutes)	
Type of Activity:	Group	
Level of Difficulty:	Intermediate	
Objectives (including skills which are expected to be enhanced):	• Introduce to students / participants the necessary skills for identifying "positive intentions" (if any) on other peoples' negative statements, so that they can manage to change those negative beliefs and statements into positive ones by overcoming, disagreement, resistance and reluctance. • The activity aims to enhance: *communication, negotiation, decision making* and *problem solving*. • Also, the activity aims to indirectly enhance the skill of *self-awareness* and *self – regulation* as the person who has to apply the skill of positive intention needs to recognize and manage his / her own feelings.	
Instructions:	**Material:** • Pen / Pencils • Papers • Flip chart or Blackboard • Markers **Implementation Procedure:** The school counselor / facilitator is encouraged to conduct a brief introduction as it is described in paragraph (A) and then proceed by applying step (B), (C) and (D):	

(A) During our school and future professional life, we (will) discuss with people who have their own beliefs and feelings and come to conclusions and jump into assumptions based on these beliefs and feelings. the times disagreement, reluctance and resistance.

One of the most important and useful principles for managing disagreement, resistance and reluctance which is usually expressed through words relates to the notion of "positive intention."

(B) The school counselor can use four different flip charts to note the principles of positive intentions:

(ii) Separate the negative aspects of the statement from the positive intention behind it.

(ii) Identify and respond to the positive intention of the resistant person. (iii) Offer the person other choices of behavior to reach an agreement.

(C) Ask students to work in pairs / groups and ask them to remember a real-life example of a challenging situation on which they came across a disagreement, resistance or reluctance. Then, they have to analyze this example by following the steps i, ii, iii.

(D) Finally, ask from some pairs/groups to present a role play to the whole class. One person will be the person who expresses disagreement, reluctance and persistence and the other person will try to find a solution by guiding the discussion and applying the steps i, ii, iii.

In case that the groups are facing difficulties in finding real life situations to which they had to deal with disagreement, resistance and reluctance the school counsellor can take a part in the role playing by being the reluctant person or the person who tries to find a solution by implementing the steps

	(i), (ii), (iii).
Evaluation & Reflection:	Students need to understand that behind every disagreement, reluctance and resistance that is expressed through a negative statement might be something else hidden. This can be either (a) a secret secondary agenda of the person who expresses the negative statement (e.g.: a) different goals, b) their own genuine motives that they are doing the right thing or c) other assumptions, beliefs and feeling from past experiences. We also need to keep in mind that by using positive intention we can somehow explore or investigate other people's thoughts and somehow find a common ground of understand and achieve a negotiation. It is important to realize that one can acknowledge another person's point of view, without having to agree with that person, e.g. it is different to say "I understand that you have this perspective", then to say, "I agree with you". Saying, "I appreciate your concern", or "That is an important question" or "Thank you for bringing that up, it is a really important issue" is a way to acknowledge the person or their intention without necessarily implying that they are right.

Reference:

Language as a Powerful Tool of Persuasion, Negotiation and Belief Change, Robert Dielts.

Title of the Activity: Duration:	**Skill of Meta - Position** (45 minutes)
Type of Activity:	Group
Level of Difficulty:	Intermediate
Objectives: (including skills which are expected to be enhanced):	• This activity will help students /participants to understand someone's way of speaking in order to adapt accordingly and find ways to communicate and negotiate with peers, relatives, classmates and colleagues, as well as finding well as finding *problem – solving* ways. • The activity will also increase student's/ participant's *analytical thinking* by addressing basic information from the "Meta – cognition Model" and the "Precision Model".
Instructions:	**Material:** • Pen / Pencils • Paper • Print out the three steps of "Meta Position Technique" so that each student can use the during the implementation of the role plays **Implementation Procedure:** (1) Communication between people always involves more than one perspective, opinions and/or ideas. This might cause different type of difficulties in the interaction between the sender and the receiver such as miscommunication or not reach to an agreement for the desired outcomes. Even when during the communication, sender and receivers of the message do not agree it's important to establish a good quality relationship because this enhances the possibility to reach to 50-50% agreement, or for the possibility of a future cooperation. (2) The participant's communication includes different perspectives, disag

referred to as a "triple description" because there are three different perceptual positions occurring within a communication. Those perceptual position are: one of myself (first position), the other individual (second position), and the witnessing of us collectively (third position).

<u>So, what does each position means?</u>

First position: is you standing on your own physical space, on your own habitual body posture. When fully associated in first position, you will use words like "me", "I", and "myself" when referring to your own feelings, perceptions and ideas. In first position, you are going through the experience of the communication from your own perspective: seeing-noticing, listening, feeling, everything that is going on around you and inside of you.

Second position: is being able to assume another person's perspective within the interaction. (If there is more than one receiver-participant on the communication, there may be multiple "second positions"). This is a temporary, information gathering position in which you shift to another person's perceptual position, taking on his or her physical posture and world view, as though you were that person. You see-notice, hear, and feel what the communication loop is like from that person's point of view (it's like being on "that persons shoes"- closely related to emotional intelligence). In second position, you will be experiencing the world through another person's eyes, thoughts, feelings, beliefs. In this position, you will be disassociated from yourself and associated into another person.

Third position, or "observer" position, puts you temporarily outside of the communication in order to gather information, as though you were a witness to, and not a participant in, the interaction. Your posture will be symmetrical and relaxed. In this position, you will see-notice, hear, and feel what the communication loop is like from the position of an interested but neutral observer. You will use "third person" language,

such as "she" and "he," when referring to the persons you are observing (including the one that looks, sounds and acts like you). You will be disassociated from the interaction, and in a type of "meta" position. This position gives you valuable information about the balance of behaviors in the loop.

In summary:

1st Position: Associated in your own point of view, beliefs and assumptions, seeing the external world through your own eyes – an *"I"* position.

2nd Position: Associated in another person's point of view, beliefs and assumptions, seeing the external world through his or her eyes – a *"you"* position.

3rd Position: Associated in a point of view outside of the relationship between yourself and the other person – a *"they"* position.

Divide students into small groups (4 – 5 members to each group or less) and then distribute to one member from each group the case studies which you will at the end of the activity (Appendix: The solution to get me Through).
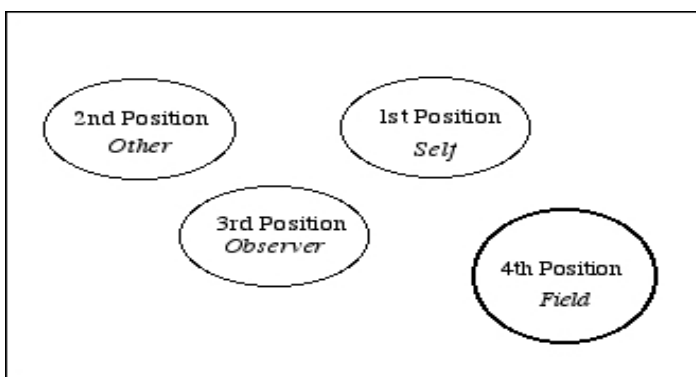
Evaluation & Reflection:	The school counsellor needs to start a guided discussion about the disagreements, oppositions and conflicts that we all meet on our everyday life: "Is it any way to always and forever fully agree with everyone?", "Can we avoid someone every time we disagree with him/her?". Negotiation is a strong part of our life and can have a negative impact on our personal and professional development. "Think about you self at the university, college, or a work, you will be interacting with different people from diverse backgrounds." The school counsellor should ask students to give examples on how they will implement the skill of meta position on their everyday life. They can even share their own recent examples on how the dealt with an individual with whom they had a disagreement or with whom they faced opposition or reluctance.

Reference:

Adapted from: Gilligan, S. (2002). *The Legacy of Milton H. Erikson: Selected Papers of Stephen Gilligan*, Phoenix, AZ: Zeig, Tucker and Theisen, Inc.

Title of the Activity:	Pace and Lead the way!
Duration:	(45 minutes)

Type of Activity:	Group

Level of Difficulty:	Intermediate

Objectives (including skills which are expected to be enhanced):	- Introduce to students / participants the technique of " pacing and leading" an activity which is linked to the previously described action of "mirroring". - The activity aims to enhance the following skills: ***non - verbal communication*** (including EQ), ***self -presentation, negotiation, team -work, analytical thinking.***

Instructions:	**Material:** Chairs **Implementation Procedure:** The idea of pacing before leading, is that if you try to persuade without helping your audience / the person you communicate with, to be in alignment with you. The most likely assumption is that you will possibly receive resistance or objection from the other person. While pacing is not necessarily enough to ensure persuasion, without it the chance of success may be reduced. Pacing may be achieved by copying the target person in some way, this should be done carefully as it is easy for this approach to seem obvious and hence create even more resistance. It is better than you get the person to firstly agree with you prior inviting them to pace with you. It is suggested that you should try to lead them before they feel aligned with you. Pacing may require a significant effort before they feel they can trust you sufficiently to follow you. Even if they like you, they may still be cautious about you taking the lead. Preferences around this may vary for

each person.

Once they feel some kind of connection with you is much easier to get them to agree to follow you. For this to work, the connection needs to be maintained throughout the whole duration of the activity. The connection can be broken if not handled carefully, so it is important that we are fully aware and on the look for any factors that might interfere with the connection such as external interruption or suggestions that are not relevant with the subject.

Start explain to participants that there are specific ways for "pacing and leading" one discussion during an official meeting within or outside professional context. One of these ways it was the "mirroring" which was previously described "mirroring" together with "empathy" and "reflection". For the purpose of this activity other important ways for promoting rapport will be introduced such as "pacing and leading" and the techniques to achieve this:

Parroting: Simple repetition of what they say.
Agreeing: Showing you think similarly.
Focusing: If you don't agree totally, then focus on a part of the statement which makes more sense to you.
Similarity: Showing how you are alike in some way.
Truth: Stating what is unarguably true now.

Evaluation & Reflection:	Encourage participants to discuss and share their comments and feelings about their experience of discussing in groups. Encourage participants to use mirroring together with empathy and non-verbal or verbal reflection in their personal and professional life as these are valuable tools for healthy personal and professional relationships.

Title of the Activity:	Introjection
Duration:	(45 minutes)
Type of Activity:	Individual
Level of Difficulty:	Intermediate
Objectives (including skills which are expected to be enhanced):	- Help participants to understand the definition of "thoughts" and "beliefs", but also the difference between the two. In the meantime, the activity aims to help participants to understand, how these beliefs and values might be "limiting" their actions towards finding a solution to a given situation. - Help participants understand that beliefs and thoughts are closely linked to our words, and are in fact internalized words. - The activity aims to increase students / participants *creativity, problem solving, communication, analytical thinking* and *negotiation.*
Instructions:	**Material:** Chairs **Implementation Procedure:** The facilitator will start explaining/discussing with students all the information below: **(A) What is a belief?** A belief is a generalization about something(s), which most of the times it is created by a group of thoughts linked with each other and positive or negative experiences that we had. Beliefs have a serious impact on thoughts (and vice versa). Beliefs can either empower us or limit us. Beliefs, also known as core beliefs, tell us and others who we are, how the world works and how we fit into the world.

(B) What is a thought?

A thought is very easy to be communicated in words, it is something specific, and focused which (sometimes) can be easily seen and realized with some basic-minimum focus and/or effort.

Example:

Do you think you are good enough? OR Do you believe that you are good enough? Ask participants / students to share similar examples about their beliefs and thoughts.

Beliefs, Thoughts, and Words (1):

As human beings, whatever we see and notice, think and feel it's symbolized with words inside our brain. Beliefs and thoughts are represented with words in our minds. From time to time, we might have doubts about ourselves and/or abilities or you might have questioned: "I'm I a good advocator?", or you might have negatively criticized yourselves by saying: "I was really not good enough!" So, we can use words publicly when we speak (verbal communication), but also in our heads which will eventually form our beliefs and thoughts.

Close your eyes, and bring a very disturbing, stressful, thought into your heads: "I am stupid", "I am useless". Pay attention to this thought and then repeat that thought, say it over and over again. Repeat this thought over and over again, until you will believe that you are what your thought is. Now, focus on this thought and say it again, but this time use in front of this thought the phrase: "Sometimes, I might think that I am...". Now, use the same thought, but this time use in front of the thought the phrase: "I have noticed that from times to times I might think that I am stupid". Finally, try to see the difference between the two ways of thinking... What do you see?

What you might have noticed is:

- By using the phrases: "I am ......" and "I have noticed that from times to times I might think that I am stupid, give us the opportunity to keep

some distance from the thought and evaluate it in a more critical way. We do not become attached or stuck to the thought but we are somehow more separated from that thought.

What are the thoughts and beliefs?

- Thoughts are just words and parts of our inner language, inside our brain.

- Thoughts do not necessarily mean that are true or have always significant amount of truth.

- Thoughts can be important or not! It's up to us to decide if we going to pay attention to them or not and how we will evaluate them.

- Thoughts can be right or wrong, doesn't necessarily mean that we have to "obey" them follow their patterns.

- When we strongly held on a thought or a group of thoughts then that becomes a belief.

Beliefs, Thoughts and Words (2):

Close your eyes and start thinking a really negative thought. Try to think of this thought as much as you can. Think it again and again. Now bring the same thought into your head, but this time you can sing this thought to the rhythm of happy birthday. After you do that, try to sing this thought again but this time to the voice of your favorite cartoon hero.

What do you notice?

- The thought lost its intensity, it's not that bad anymore and not that harmful

- Somehow thoughts can be eliminated or lost their intensity according to the meaning or the attention that we will give to them.

- Thoughts are just words nothing more than inner language

Evaluation & Reflection:	Thoughts create beliefs. Thoughts and beliefs somehow influence the way we think, feel about ourselves and others and the way we behave. Thus, it is really important to observe and evaluate our thoughts.

Title of the Activity: Duration:	**Changing My Mindset - The power of words** (45 minutes)
Type of Activity:	Homework
Level of Difficulty:	Intermediate
Objectives (including skills which are expected to be enhanced):	• This activity aims to help participants replace the negative thoughts and the negative words that we might use when we feel stressed, sad, disappointed or when we are under pressure. • Thus, the activity increases *self-regulation, self-awareness, critical* and *analytical thinking*. Also, the activity helps to change our negative limited mindset and think on broader context
Instruction:	**Material:** • The spreadsheet "My Words Matter" which you can find at the end of the activity. Ensure that you will make enough copies for all participants. **Implementation Procedure:** Firstly, explain to the students/participants the activity and underline that it is highly important to be focused and try to think and improvise. Also, mention that this activity will help them identify and change if needed, the thoughts that they have for themselves, but also realize and change the way that they speak or present themselves to other people. Explain to the students that in order to change the current way of thinking / speaking they need to focus on the left column "Current Way of Thinking and Speaking" and then on the right column "Alternative and Realistic Way of Thinking" provided in the Appendix. Encourage them to challenge their current way of "Thinking/Speaking about themselves" by using questions. For example: "What do I need to change in my personality? or "which behaviours do I have to change?"

Evaluation & Reflection:	As soon as the students /participants complete the spreadsheet, initiate a discussion by encouraging students /participants to give some on examples on how they change their negative, limited wording into a more positive and broader context wording.
	Encourage participants to share their own thoughts and feelings about the way they think and speak about their self and why is important to change this way into a more a functional way.

APPENDIX:

Changing My Mindset (My statements matters!)

Current Way of Thinking / Speaking	Alternative Realistic Way of Thinking/ Speaking
I am not a creative person	
My Personality cannot change.	
Misery is everywhere	
No one of my colleagues /classmates is supportive	
I am not good in Math	
I will never find a good job	
I will never past this course	
Maybe I am not that good	
Life is always unfair	
I am not happy	

Title of the Activity: Duration:	**Decision Timeline** (45 minutes)
Type of Activity:	Individual
Level of Difficulty:	Intermediate
Objectives (including skills which are expected to be enhanced):	• The Timeline Technique aims to help people set up a timeline for carrying out the decision-making process. Many times, when we are called to make an important decision we might hesitate or procrastinate in an attempt to avoid the stressors, thus when the time becomes limited the pressure becomes even greater. • This exercise will help participants to set goals with more ease and be more assertive. Achieving their goals and constantly working on them will help the students feel **self-accomplished**, confident and subsequently happy. • This activity aims to enhance **critical – thinking, decision making skills** and **self – awareness.**
Instructions:	**Material:** • A4 paper or Printed Copies of the Timeline • Pen / Pencil • Printed Decision Timeline Sheets • Printed Decision Timeline Scenario / Example **Implementation Procedure:** Start by explaining to Participants how important is when faced with an important decision to follow a process and not avoid it due to the stressors. To promote fast and effective decision-making, three or four options are usually enough, thus you can set up a Timeline and fill in the dates. You can follow the template provided; in the next pages you will find a Decision Timeline Scenario / Example explaining how we can use it as School

	Counselling practitioners. The students can complete their Decision Timelines at home setting specific goals they want to achieve and breaking down the steps they need to take.
Evaluation & Reflection:	With the completion of the Activity, initiate a conversation using the following questions: - Did you find this Activity helpful? - Did it help you do alleviate the stress of deciding which is the best choice for you? - Do you think that this Activity helped you to weigh your options in a more effective manner? - Will you use it the next time also?

Reference:

Walker, D. K. (1987). A guide to managing resources for today's families – Improving Decision-Making Skills. Kansas State University, Family Resource Management.

Additional Resources:

Appendix: Decision Timeline

APPENDIX:

Decision Timeline

Timeline: Action and date

Identify the problem or opportunity. By _____ .

Analyze the situation. By _____ .

Clarify your goals or objectives. By _____ .

Identify some alternatives. By _____ .

Consider the consequences. By _____ .

Compare alternatives with your goals and with each other. Select the best alternative. By _____ .

Put your decision into action. A trial decision is one good method for dealing with uncertain situations. By _____ .

Celebrate. Do something special to reward yourself for having made your decision. By _____ .

Evaluate the results. By _____ .

APPENDIX:

Decision Timeline Scenario / Example

Lisa, a senior class student is in distress. Her main concern is applying for her Undergraduate studies. She hasn't picked a Major yet or decided which Universities she would like to apply to. That causes her great anxiety and instead of trying to figure out what she wants to do and how to go about it, she procrastinates in order to avoid the intense stressors. However, the deadlines for Undergraduate Students are very strict and she has to make her decision and plan her actions accordingly before she loses any chance to apply.

Lisa can use the **Decision Timeline Technique**. She will break down the steps that Lisa needs to take and set a specific date that each step needs to be done in order to proceed. The Decision Timeline Technique will assist Lisa to do all the steps on time. Following this method will make sure Lisa won't lose the application deadlines and subsequently the chance to study a Major or to a University according to her likes.

The date is September 21st. Lisa wants to study in the UK and 15th of January is the deadline for the majority of Undergraduate Courses.

Timeline: Action and Date

Identify the Problem or Opportunity

"Choose Majors"

By: 01 / October

Analyze the Situation

"Which University offers the Major/s I want?"

By: 05 / October

Clarify your goals and objectives

"Which specific Programme and which University is the combination I prefer and is my no1 option"

(for example: Lisa wants to do a BSc at the University of Brighton).

By: 10 / October

Identify some alternatives

"Alternative Programmes or Universities that could be a good fit with my desires in case I am not accepted to my first choice"

(for example. BA Psychology at The University of Manchester, BA Psychoanalytic Studies University of Essex, HND Social Sciences University of Kent).

By: 20 / October

Consider the consequences.

"What happens if I am not accepted to my first choice?"

Decide if you would like to apply to another University in UK, study in another country or apply for other Majors as well.

By: 25 / October

Compare alternatives with your goals and with each other. Select the best alternative.

Choose the alternatives (schools, majors, countries) that you will apply to.

By: 05 / November

Put your decision into action.

Prepare the Applications and the documents needed.

(You can break down this step into smaller ones, ex. Prepare Recommendation Letters by: 20 / November, Personal Statement Preparation by: 25 / November)

By: 10 / December

Celebrate. Do something special to reward yourself for having made your decision and the needed steps.

Reward consistency and promptness, they are key ingredients for success and happiness!

By: 20 / December

Evaluate the results.

Final Step needs to be done after you get the Application Acceptance or Rejection. Reflect on what you could do differently in order to get the desired outcome.