



WELL-BEING
SKILLS

TRAINING FOR THE STUDENTS



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Well-being skills. Training for students.

Modified version of Nyytin Elämäntaitokurssi ©

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Preface

Love yourself 

In an airplane before take-off, the flight attendants give us instructions in a case of an emergency. One is to put the oxygen mask first on to you and only then help others. That is not because you should love others less but because if you do not take care yourself you might not be fit to help others either. Many times when the pressures in life, studies, work, and personal life, get too big, we take the time out of taking care of ourselves. In order to be able to love yourself, the best way, you need to get to know yourself. This booklet gives you tips or more like steps to take for your self-care and your well-being. Going through the booklet and its' exercises help you to get to know and understand you and your needs better. When you get to know better yourself and your needs, it becomes easier to see what is good for you and what is that you need. You know yourself the best and the better you get in self-acknowledgement more you may flourish.

The bookshop at the airport or anywhere, actually, you will find a section of self-help and life skills books. Although all that information is available, the statistics indicate that mental health issues have become increasing matter among higher education students in Finland and through the whole western world. Universities, health-care workers, Lutheran church, and others in the third sector offer group courses and individual counselling to the students. In a Finnish higher education, the amount of international students is constantly increasing. However, there has not been a proper life skills booklet in English, costumed to an international student, to recommend. Initially the need for the material became relevant when the lack of well-being courses in English apposed itself in some planning group in Haaga-Helia. That was the start

to the university chaplain's first Life Management courses in English at Haaga-Helia. A lot has happened since then and the variety of courses has increased. This booklet we have essentially collected from those experiences and in collaboration with many life skills courses conducted in Finnish in Higher and secondary education by Nyyti ry.

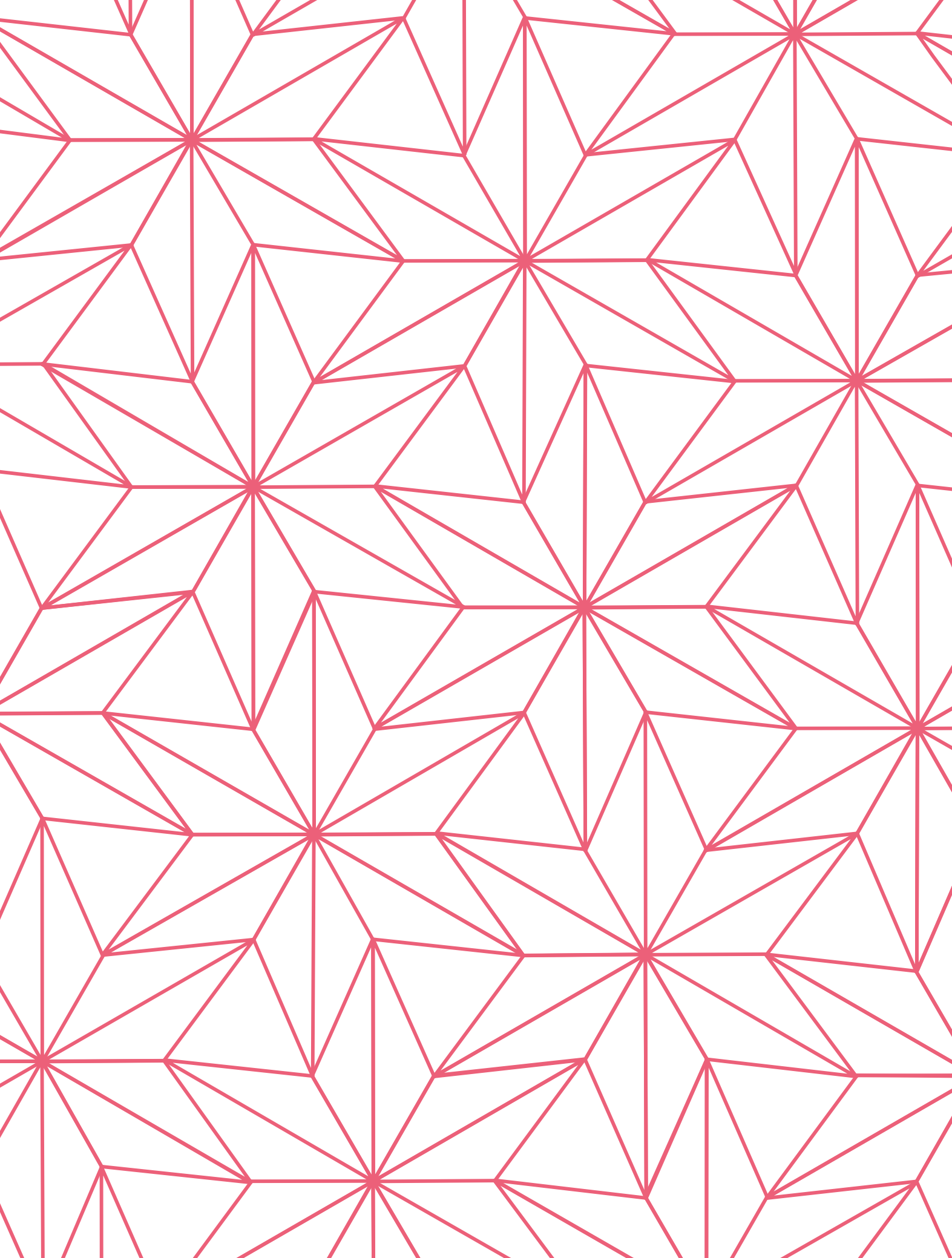
The booklet, also works well as a self-help tool. While working with the booklet you can collect your own portfolio by writing down your reflections and doing the exercises of the booklet. That way it is easy to go back and see what you have thought while doing them.

Thank you Lutheran Church in Helsinki and Nyyti ry for funding and giving us time to write and work with the text. Thank you Haaga-Helia for the trust and giving Kaisa a change to create and teach a new course called Life Management for several times. A lot of the material we have tested for higher education students in English at Haaga-Helia. Our collaboration goes back to time when Kaisa started first courses and Elina was working with Nyyti Elämäntaitokurssi -course material.

We are thankful for the University of California project led by the professor of Psychology emeritus Ricardo F. Muñoz and others who had created depression courses for different populations especially Latinos in the USA and offered the material in the internet for everyone to use. Besides that, our first English versions had influences from Finnish Nyyti Elämäntaitokurssi. In addition, there was some good books. For the books, look the Bibliography of this booklet.

Helsinki 22.12.2020

Kaisa Iso-Herttua & Elina Marttinen





**TOWARDS A LIFE
THAT LOOKS LIKE
YOURSELF**

1.1 Getting to know yourself

"Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans", sang John Lennon to his young boy in a lullaby Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy). It does not, however, need to be only so. Life is not only what happens uncontrollable to you instead there are ways you can have an active role in developing your life toward what looks like your own. Even small acts and changes can improve the flow of our everyday life.

You can help yourself to feel good by getting to know yourself. To understand yourself better consists of to know: What makes you feel good? What works well in your everyday life? What gives you strength? What skills do you already have?

When you have identified the things you want and need in life, you are already well on your way:

- You understand yourself and your hopes better.
- You can plan and do the things that support your well-being.
- Your everyday life feels meaningful when you do things on your own terms.
- You are able to take things – and yourself – more positively and kindly.
- Your life looks more like yourself.

Life skills can be learned

Your reactions to different things reflect your personality. These reflections and concepts of reality do not need to be forever. You can change your habits and way of taking things by practice. It is possible to affect your mood. This booklet gives you hints and with different exercises, you can try various ways to react and behave in order to fine what suits you and make you feel good.

What makes you feel good?

When you know yourself better, it is easier to focus on the essential things in your everyday life. At the same time,

you are taking responsibility for your own life and your well-being. This helps you to identify places and situations in where you can make choices.

A good start for building a life that looks like you is to identify your own needs and values. What do you need for your well-being? What things in life are the most important to you?

Fulfilled needs support well-being

Satisfied needs create positive energy. Unfulfilled needs, on the other hand, often cause worrying and anxiety in everyday life. Our needs include among other things at least these:

- Intimacy with others
- Being accepted and valued
- Belonging in a community
- Opportunities to live fully through play, work, studies or some other activity
- Independence
- Basics such as food, water and shelter

If our everyday life does not satisfy our needs, we become unhappy and our mood suffers. The more important the need, the more notable are the effects. For instance, if to be accepted by others is particularly important to you, then others rejection feels all the harsher. Vice versa: the more you think that others appreciate you, the better you feel.

If your everyday life seems to consist of things simply happening without you being able to affect anything and you are constantly feeling low, you should stop and take a step back. Are your everyday needs satisfied if not what should you change to satisfy them?

Lead a life that reflects your values

When you reflect things that you consider the most important in life, you are thinking about your values. When you live a life that reflects your values, your everyday life feels more meaningful. It is good occasionally to step back and

reflect on what you consider the most important things in life.

When you lead a life that reflects your values, your everyday life feels much more meaningful

The most important thing about values is that they are meaningful to you. Your values are your own personal views. You should not use them to compete with others. Your decisions and actions should reflect your main values. If you for example, value your family, the most, then you will care for your family and home life. That value reflects the fact that you believe that love for family is more important than anything else in your life. As well, if you value being healthy you will for example exercise regularly, eat the good food, live positively, and avoid drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

1.2 Why to explore personal values?

'Why Explore Personal Values' -section is based on Life Skills Training by Prevatt and Hyles.

You act upon values that you consider your guidelines. From time to time, you might want to check whether your life reflects your values. If you consider health the most important thing in life, take a moment to evaluate whether your daily choices truly cherish health. Does it get the importance it deserves or does it have to compete for your attention with other things? It takes time to truly explore and identify your values. Behind your choices and actions are the values that you based your choices and decisions in life. Do these help you to live fully or diminish the quality of your life? You have opportunity to base your life on the values that are consistent with how you want to live your life. Your values change over time in response to your changing life experiences.

Commonly our behaviour is conducted by our habit or to fulfil others expectations toward us. Even when life contains a certain number of unpleasant things or duties, which you do not feel like taking care of all the time, it is still possible to lead a life that reflects your values.

When you are able to identify your needs and values, you can make changes, that support your well-being in your everyday life. As a result, your life will feel meaningful and important, your mood will improve and you feel like being in charge of your own well-being. At the same time, you are telling yourself that you are important and worth the effort.

What are values?

Values are your personal measure of what something is worth shaped by beliefs, ideas, and principles that are important to you. Values shape your priorities and guide you deciding what is right and wrong. Your values reflect your attitude and believe. Culture and society shape our values. People's values differ, and we should learn to tolerate the values of others as well as challenge them in a respectful manner.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- What do you want from life?
 - What are the most important or valuable things in life for you?
 - What are your goals and how can you get closer to them?
 - What are you willing to do for your well-being?
-

1.3 Planning ahead

Goals help you lead a life that reflects your values. You might need some practice working with goals – but it is worth it. It will help you both bring about changes and make your life increasingly reflect your values. Here are a few points to consider when setting goals.

- Come up with a concrete main goal and put it into words as precisely as possible.
- Divide the goal into smaller intermediate goals that lead towards the main goal.
- Write down small steps that lead to the intermediate goals. Think of what you could do tomorrow, next week, next month or half a year.
- Reward yourself not only for success, but also for a good effort!
- Accept changes and setbacks as a part of life. Sometimes setbacks happen but you can regard them as learning experiences.

A certain amount of orderliness is good. Solve one issue at a time and do even that in small steps. This way, even large goals become achievable and entirely possible. Sometimes things do not quite go as planned. This is normal and setbacks can happen. Do not lose heart – rethink your plans, make the necessary changes and continue forward. Be patient and gentle with yourself. Sometimes changes require a lot of time and practice. Remind yourself that you are good enough the way you are.

Exercises

1 Core values

- A. Consider what things are the most important in your life. Make a list of them. The things you listed tell about your values. Values can be general principles, personal guidelines, or everyday practical matters. For example, friends or good food can be important things and tell you about your values.
- B. List your five main values.
- C. Select them one by one and write a paragraph on why this particular value is so important to you.
- D. What does this value mean in your life?
- E. How is, the value you hold important, shown in your action? Give an example.

You have now identified your core values, their show what is important to you. You can refer to your values list whenever you have to make a difficult or important decision.

2 My purpose and vision

The following questions lead you to explore the experience of purpose and vision:

- Why am I here on earth?
- What is my passionate and fervent purpose?
- What difference or contribution can I make?
- What is important to me?
- What values are so important to me that I want to live by them?
- Most importantly, how do I want my life to be lived?

3 Life path

Draw your own life path. Pick up experiences that have been meaningful to you.



Then write:

- How would you describe your coping strategy for negative experiences?
- Your good moments in life
- The most important things in your life
- Write down about your dreams: big and small ones
 - The most important ones
 - Executable ones

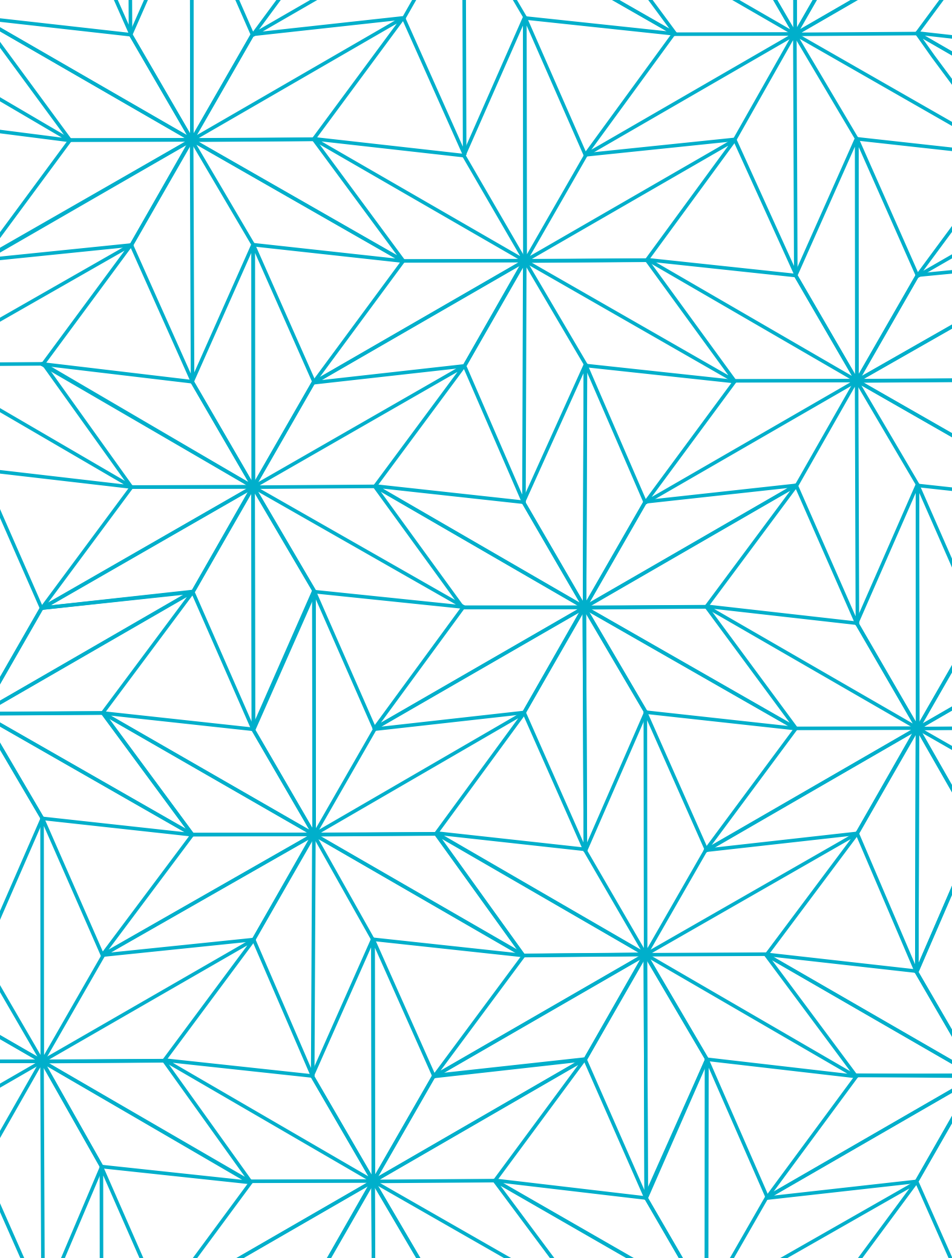
4 What need do you have?

Make a list of them. What things do you need to be happy and feel good? One's need can effect, for example, to the way we hope other people treat us, our own space, or even a good way to study.

5 Setting a reachable goal

This exercise is adapted from the Going for the Goal Program, by Steven J. Danish, et. al.

- **Step 1** Figure out, what you want to do. It has to be something that is important to you.
- **Step 2** If your dream is big, pick a manageable part. This will help you to make a good start.
- **Step 3** Pick your goal and nail it down stating when, what, how much, where and how.
- **Step 4** Make sure your goal is something you can manage.
- **Step 5** Break your goal into steps.
- **Step 6** When your reach you goal or a step toward your goal celebrate and reward yourself.



2.

***BASIS FOR GOOD
EVERYDAY LIFE -
SLEEP, NUTRITION,
AND PHYSICAL
FITNESS***

2.1 The important thing in the nutrition is the big picture

Ways to improve mental and physical fitness!

- Mental health: hobbies, take a break and have a vacation, go outings, remember to laugh
- Physical health: Physical activities, enough rest, eat healthy meals, take care of yourself

Every one of us makes personal nutritional choices. Besides our customary habits, our values and culture also influence these choices. Eating, ideally, is a well-rounded manner, however, that is not always possible in different reasons such as hurry or financial matters. When people's eating habits have examined in long-term studies, the most important thing is that the diet secures the sufficient and well-balanced supply of nutrients. In other words, you should pay more attention to the big picture and nutritional variety than to single meals.

In a functional whole, the most important choices are those that form the core of your everyday diet. No single ingredient is in itself better than the other. Giving yourself a treat is also a part of nutrition. The most important thing is how much and how often you eat.

Regular meal rhythm helps to shape your everyday life

The benefit of eating regularly is that hunger never grows too great and the energy levels stay balanced. Additionally, regular meals help to keep portion sizes moderate, which helps in weight management. The lure of snacking and binging on food also decreases. You can achieve a regular meal rhythm by having approximately the same number of meals every day at approximately the same times. Eating around every 4–5 hours keeps blood sugar levels steady, which maintains energy and strength.

Each meal of the day has an important role to give you energy

If you eat around every four hours, your day will include about five meals. Breakfast is an important start to the day and gives you energy for the morning. If you do not have the appetite for breakfast immediately after waking up, you could consider taking a packed breakfast with you to eat after getting to your study place, for instance.

Lunch gives you energy to work efficiently in the afternoon, while a snack later refreshes you and makes exercising before dinner possible. Additionally, a snack can help you to avoid gobbling on food after getting home or succumb to buy goodies on your way home.

Dinner is a meal that provides you with energy for the evening. An evening snack, on the other hand, has the function of securing restful sleep for the night and giving your body the energy to renew itself.

Find the rhythm that suits you best

There is no one right meal rhythm that suit for everyone. Some eat less in the morning but more at lunch or as an afternoon snack, whereas others enjoy a generous breakfast and dinner but have only a light lunch, for example.

You will be able to find the meal rhythm that suits you best by listening to your hunger and fullness and by monitoring your energy levels. In other words, follow your own senses instead of the clock. If you can avoid a massive hunger during the day and do not experience any notable slumps in your energy levels, you are probably following a suitable meal rhythm.

Your emotions may affect your eating

Sometimes, eating and to swings in mood and emotions are related. Sometimes we eat for sorrow – to comfort or calm ourselves. We might want to alleviate the feelings of stress, boredom or distress by eating. This might make us feel better for a moment, but the negative feeling will return – sometimes stronger than before.

If you realize, you are eating for some other reason than hunger, pause and listen to your mood and emotions. You can also think of the situations that cause your emotional eating. Do these situations share something? When you identify the factors that cause your emotional eating, you are better equipped to anticipate and control them. You can challenge yourself to think other solutions to make you feel better than eating. Could you a message or talk to a friend, go for a walk, listen to music or what would suit you the best?

You can also use small everyday acts to influence your emotional eating to prevent it from to control your life. You can keep your cupboards empty of snacks, which forces you to put in more effort to satisfy your cravings, for example.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- How eating habits support your well-being and good mood?
 - Identify things you should change regarding your eating habits.
 - How do you allow yourself to treat yourself occasionally?
-

2.2 Utilise the benefits of physical activity

Physical activity can take many forms – there is surely something suitable and pleasant for everyone. It is worth to remember that physical activities include more than just sports and physical training different kinds of everyday actions hold a physical side. Walking or cycling to places, doing housework and climbing stairs are good examples of everyday physical activities that you can do without even noticing them. Physical activities, in other words, refer to all sorts of moving around.

Physical activity works wonders on both your body and mind. At the best, it helps you unload stress and increase pleasure. Physical activity makes studying more efficient. Have a break, do some exercise between study assignments, it refreshes you and improves your ability to focus, learn and memorize.

Find your own type of physical activity

Identify your own way of doing physical activity. Pick out what motivates and inspires you and what drives you away from exercise. Look back and make a note of activities that have given you the best feeling. Feeling uncomfortable at the gym or on a jog does not mean that you could not fine

and exercise that you enjoy, maybe swimming, climbing or cycling. It is good to look for a physical activity that you really enjoy you can try new ones as well. Having even only one activity that you enjoy doing increases the possibility for a long-term habit of being active.

Make a physical activity a part of your study days

If you do not have any energy left for physical activity in the evening, you could consider increasing your physical activity during the day. Even a small amount of physical activity is beneficial. Increasing physical activity is also easier in small increments than excessive goals.

Tips to increase physical activity during study days

- Have a break and go for a walk. Take some fresh air between lunch and afternoon lectures, for instance.
- Climb the stairs instead of using the elevator. You might even want to run up the stairs at times.
- Use the toilet facilities on another floor during lecture breaks.
- Have short exercise between lectures.
- Do some tasks at standing workstation or while sitting on an exercise ball.
- Occasionally stand during lectures.
- Walk or cycle some of your daily journeys, for example, cycle to the university or back every other day or set a goal of cycling one return trip of under ten kilometres once a week. Another option is to get off the bus a couple of stops early and walk the rest of the way.
- Do some light exercises or stretch yourself while watching the television.
- Start your day with a gentle yoga routine or other light exercises (YouTube has tons of instructional videos for this).
- Study for an exam on the move: Read the material aloud and record it. Listen to it on the run or a walk. You can also read your exam books while using an exercise bike.
- Plan group work while you all have a walk together.
- Often study places have gyms or look for other good place for exercise during your free period and hit the shower.
- Reserve time for exercising from your calendar in advance.
- Utilise even short moments for physical activity. Take a 15-minute walk or exercise before watching TV show or doing study assignments.
- Make choices – Do you watch an episode of your

favourite show today or will you do some physical activity if you cannot combine them?

- Could you decrease the number of courses you are on to find some time for exercise?

Source: *The students of Sport and Health Sciences from the University of Jyväskylä / 2015.*

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- Do you recognize what sort of physical activity gives you joy and lifts your spirit?
 - What method could you use to increase your physical activity during the week?
-

Relaxing

What benefits there are from being able to relax? What is your way of relaxing? Benefits of relaxing: better sleep and vitality, crowing self-esteem and less self-accusations, easier to get contact with your own feelings, possible less psychosomatic symptoms, less painfulness, less piling up of stress, more energy and productivity, better concentration, and memory.

Find your own way to relax: Listening to music, singing, playing an instrument, art gallery, theatre, movies, painting, drawing, wander in the wild, outdoor activities, meeting friends, cooking, baking, handworks or maybe hard physical exercise. Most common relaxing methods are breath relaxing and muscle relaxing.

Relax every day

It is important to relax occasionally in order to have the energy to study, work and take care of everyday life. Relaxation decreases stress and improves sleep, the ability to concentrate and productivity. You may achieve relaxation in a variety of ways. For some, watching a movie is the best way to relax, whereas others relax in the company of friends or by jogging. There are many different ways to relax – something for everyone. Reserve some time for relaxation every day.

Tips for relaxation

Find a pleasant hobby that lets you develop yourself: seeing your own development is motivational and allows you to focus on things than do not produce stress. Find something that acts as a counterbalance to your regular duties. Do many different things than what you do when you study: if you read a lot because of your studies, make something entirely different on your leisure time. Do not

postpone your decisions: excessive contemplation will weigh on your mind. Locate the causes of stress: does your life include heavy issues/people or do you react to things too seriously. Exercising may help – yoga in particular! Tips from students / 2015.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- What methods do you use to relax?
 - How do you benefit from relaxation?
 - What new methods of relaxation could you try?
-

2.3 Sleep maintains the body

Sleep is important to our everyday well-being, which is why you should nurture it. Sufficient high-quality sleep is important for learning and creative thinking. Sleep helps people recover from the strains of the waking state. While the body rests, sleep takes care of its own important tasks.

This is how sleep maintains the body:

- The body recovers its strength from various physical exertions.
- The brain recharges its energy supplies and works through the events of the day.
- Sleeping also improves resistance. Sleep heals, which is why you must sleep a lot when sick.

What constitutes a sufficient amount of sleep depends on the individual, but the average need for sleep is 7–8 hours per night for adults. The most important thing is that you feel well rested in the morning and alert during the day.

Temporary sleeplessness is normal

Everyone has occasional stressful or difficult situations in their life that disturb their sleep. This produces sleep deprivation. It is a normal reaction to ongoing or recent changes in life and no reason to worry. Temporary sleeplessness is a part of everyone's life at some point.

Temporary sleeplessness may easily cause you to worry. Your mind becomes cluttered thoughts such as 'I won't be able to sleep this night either' and 'I'll fail tomorrow due to being tired'. However, better thoughts in this situation would be ones like 'sleep will come' and 'I'll be fine with less sleep for one day'. Temporary sleeping problems usually correct themselves within a short time. A few nights with too little sleep or sleepless nights are not dangerous.

Prolonged sleeplessness requires treatment

When your sleeplessness continues for a longer time, for weeks, it becomes a sleeping disorder. Sleeplessness is dissatisfaction towards the amount or quality of sleep. The main issue in defining sleeping disorders is whether you think that you are suffering because of sleeplessness. The typical symptoms of sleeplessness include the following:

- Recurring difficulties in falling asleep
- Intermittent sleep
- Too short or low-quality sleep even when you have the opportunity to sleep in

Types of sleeplessness may occur individually or the sleepless person may suffer from all symptoms. If you suffer from continuous sleeplessness, you should ask for help from healthcare professionals.

Students + sufficient sleep = impossible?

Studying may seem to consist of performing constantly: study days are long and work on independent assignments goes on late into the night. Time remaining for sleep shortens. Study days do not necessarily have regular rhythm either. Many students also work besides their studies – with shifts often set for evenings or nights.

Despite this, it is important to aim for regularity in both your sleep and daily rhythm to prevent sleeping problems. You should adhere to regular times for both going to bed and waking up – on your days off too. This helps your body's internal clock to stay on time: That is to know when to wake up and when to go to sleep.

Please remember that your mind needs to recover after mentally demanding work (such as an exam or writing a thesis). Small, relaxing moments to punctuate studying support sleeping well!

Daily activities affect sleep

Sleep and the waking state affect one another. This is why our activities when awake matter to our sleep. If you want to improve your sleep quality, you should also pay attention to your days.

Do you have the time to process your thoughts? The ways in which we work through our thoughts and emotions during the day have a great impact on our sleep. When things that weigh on our minds are unprocessed during the day, they enter our minds at night. The solution could be to take a worrying break during the day. Think about things that weigh on your mind and consider how

you could affect your worries yourself. Sharing your worries with friends can help too.

Does your day include exercise? Regular exercise improves sleep quality, the ability to fall asleep and daytime energy levels. Exercise increase muscle fatigue and psychic relaxations, which improve sleep.

What is your meal rhythm like? If we fast or eat too little, hunger will interrupt our sleep at night and make us feel cold easily. On the other hand, too much food just before sleep can begin the digestion process, which then keeps us awake and decreases sleep quality.

Keep in mind that you should not fill your days with too much performing. Ensure that your days include enough relaxing moments without the pressures of performing. Excessively hectic days may make it harder to calm down for sleep in the evening.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- Do you get enough rest?
 - What kind of a day precedes a good night's sleep for you?
 - How do you feel when you have well rested?
-

Exercises

1 A good night's sleep comes from a good day

Think of the times when you slept well and woke up rested in the morning. What was the previous day like then? Can you find some common factors in a good night's sleep from the day before?

2 A bad day also affects the night's sleep

What is an effect of a bad day on your sleep?

3 Find a relaxation exercise that suits you

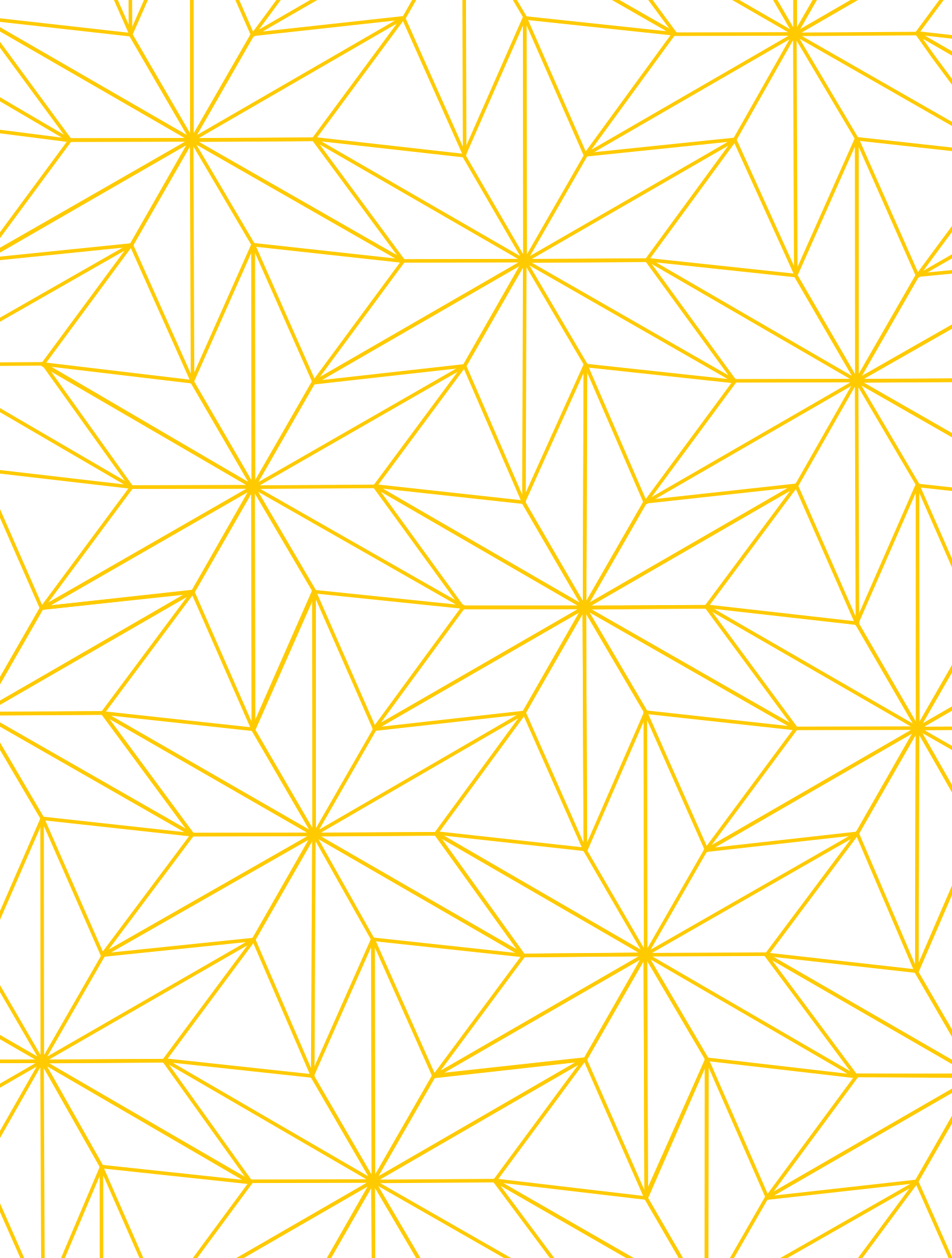
You can practice relaxation just like any other skill. If you practice relaxation for 20–30 minutes each day, you will probably be more relaxed all the time after a couple of weeks. The Internet is full of instructions for various relaxation exercises. The following are the most common relaxation methods: Breathing relaxation, muscle relaxation, exercises with mental images, practicing conscious presence.

Try out different exercises. Find the ones that suit you and start using them in your everyday life!

4 Breath relaxing

In an exciting and distressing situation, you can learn to relax by focusing on breathing. Chose a power word that relaxes you. Repeat the word to your calmly during breath exercise.

- "It is all right!"
- "I love myself and accept me!"
- "It is okay to feel this way!"
- "I am safe!"
- "I let go everything unnecessary."



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3.

***STRESS
AND TIME
MANAGEMENT***

3.1 Get to grips with stress

What is time?

Everyday life occasionally includes stress. This is normal and even necessary. Stress can even be a good thing on occasion. A suitable amount of stress spurs you on and makes you do things efficiently. However, good everyday life means that there is not too much stress – at least for long periods at a time. If you have too much stress, life feels tough and tiresome. You should learn to recognise the symptoms of stress and exhaustion in advance and practice different means of alleviating stress.

Threatening and overburdening situations produce stress

You produce stress when you think that your skills and abilities are not enough or that you have to push yourself to the limit. The following are examples of things that can produce stress: constant hurry, changes in relationships and living conditions, lack of social relationships and loneliness, lack of support, financial problems, unreasonable demands and schedules or burdensome lifestyle.

Sometimes even positive things, such as graduation or a new relationship, can produce stress. Stress is individual: something that stresses one person out, does not affect another at all. Some people also stress more easily than others do. Your personality traits, temperament and situation in life are all things that affect how you experience stress. Excessive expectations and demands from yourself or others can also often increase stress levels.

Temporary stress tunes you up for action

We are at our best when we are excited and focused on what we are doing. Positive stress tunes us up for action, gives us energy and helps us focus. If we never experience any kind of stress, we might not get anything done. Stress also tells us which things are important to us – that is why

they stress us out! The main issue is whether the stress is temporary or constant. Short-term stress does not usually cause any problems – it makes people do their best. Long-term stress, however, can be harmful in many ways.

Recognize excessive stress

You should learn to recognize the symptoms of stress that is excessive to you. You can then act on it before the pressure gets too high. Learn to listen to yourself as the symptoms of stress vary from person to person. The most typical symptoms include the following:

Various physical symptoms, such as headaches, muscle tension and pain, heart palpitations, dizziness, upset stomach and stomach pain.

Emotional symptoms, such as annoyance, anxiety, the increased tendency to cry, volatility and melancholy.

Behavioural symptoms, such as sleeping disorders, withdrawal from normal functions, impatience, nervousness, restlessness and dawdling.

Symptoms related to thinking, such as problems with concentration, pessimistic thoughts, and difficulties in making decisions, increased self-criticism, and memory disorders.

Long-term stress can cause serious health problems, such as heart disease, severe depression, high blood pressure, fatigue and sleeping problems. Please consult a healthcare professional if needed.

Learn to control stress

When you learn stress management, you will be able to maintain stress on such a level that its negative effects do not bother you. Things you can focus on with stress management include the following: Affecting the situations that causes stress, affecting your own ways of thinking and reducing the effect of stress.

Defeat the stress-inducing situation

Start with the easy things. If insufficient rest or not being outdoors enough causes you stress, change your everyday rhythm. Sometimes changes relate to bigger things, such as changing your study place or line of study. List things according to their importance and consider what measures are necessary for change to happen. Stress often concerns a particular situation, such as holding a presentation. Face the stress-inducing situation again, and you will get an important experience of surviving it. You can also skip stress-inducing situations that are not essential.

Minimize the effects of stress

Time management is a good way to control stress. Try out the following tips: Plan your schedule carefully and ask yourself what is essential and in what order you should do things. Set both short-term and long-term goals and schedule yourself small steps for achieving each goal. Order your tasks according to their importance. Weed out unnecessary tasks and ask others for their help. Remember to reserve time for things that you like.

Utilise your relationships when feeling stressed, too: Accept any support you get and talk about stress with your loved ones and friends. Seek other people's company even if you do not always feel like it but look after your own limits and do not let others lead you. Be stern.

The starting point for everything is looking after yourself in your everyday life: Maintain a rhythm and familiar

routines in your life. Exercise in a way you find pleasant. Sleep enough and eat regularly and in a healthy manner. Use alcohol only in moderation. Do pleasant things that bring joy to you. Add nature elements into your everyday life. Give yourself treats. Relax every day.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- What signs tell you that you are stressed?
- How does stress effect on your well-being?
- How do you process stress?

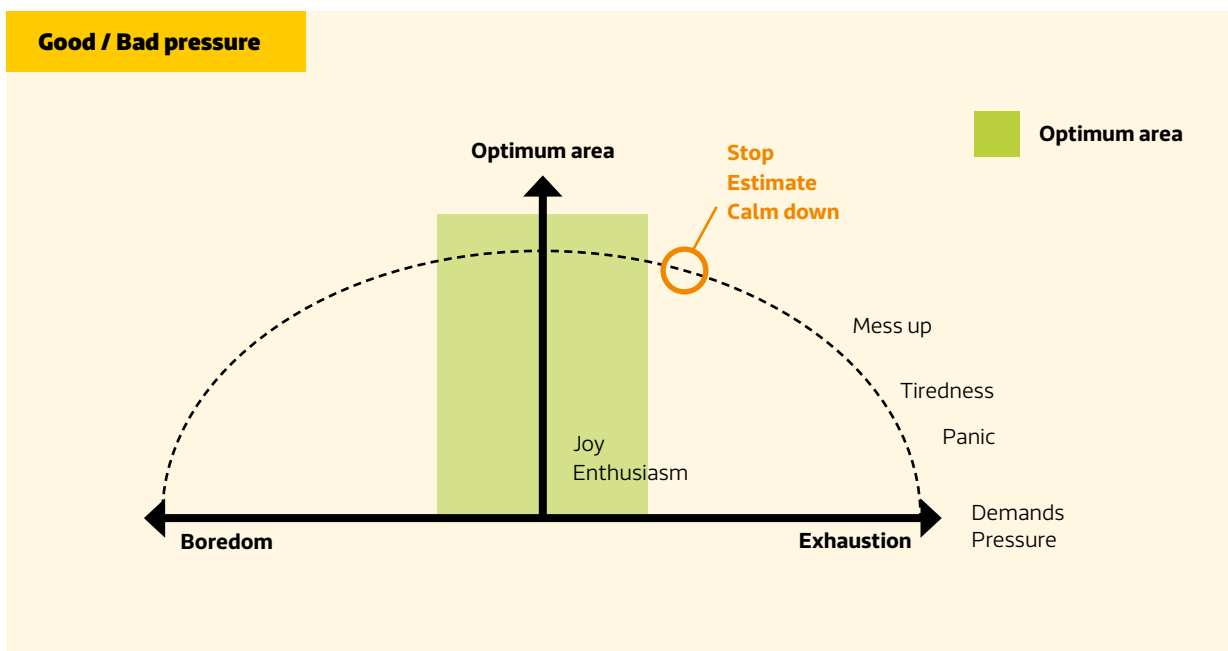
What stress is for you? In your body, where do you feel stress?

Stress is the "wear and tear" your body experiences as you adjust to your continually changing environment. It has physical and emotional effects upon you and can create positive or negative feelings.

Positive: 1) can help force you to action 2) can result in a new awareness and an exciting new perspective (eustress).

Negative: 1) the feelings of distrust, rejection, anger, depression, distress 2) health problems: headaches, upset stomach, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke.

Stress can help or hinder you, depending how you react to it!



Katajainen, Lippinen & Litovaara, Duodecim, 2003

Consequences of stress

Enthusiasm and concentration. Working is rewarding and you have a good feeling of control > flow –experience. Good stress can turn into action and adds depth and enrichment to your life (even frustrations and sorrows). Your own requirements are important. Fit them into the right balance with the resources that you have at that moment. Insufficient stress acts as a depressant! Learn how to manage stress and how to use it to your benefit! Find out your optimal level of stress. Managing stress: Identify unrelieved negative stress and be aware of its effects on your life and start working toward change: changing the source of stress and/or changing your reaction to it.

Ways to control your stress

Physical and lifestyle: abdominal respiration, relaxing, diet, regular exercise, idle time, short breaks, time management, non-poisonous environment, sleeping habits, material security

Emotional: Social support, feeling of belonging, self-care, assertiveness, good communication, hobbies, speaking of feelings, humour

Cognitive: Constructive thinking, ability to resist negative thinking and not paying attention to drawbacks, acceptance, and task oriented thinking, ability to tolerate ambiguous

Life philosophical: Consistent goals and aims, positive life philosophy, mental and spiritual values

Bad ways to control stress

Caffeine: Coffee, tea, cola and energy drink. These accelerate the nervous system and elevate the excretion of adrenaline. They can cost sweating and palpitation. The effect can hold up to 12 hours.

Alcohol: It can feel like relaxing and make easier to go to sleep but the quality of sleep suffers. As depressed and gloomy it aggravates symptoms.

Tobacco: Nicotine stimulates the nervous system and elevates blood pressure and the pulse. Then the withdrawal symptoms of the nicotine and the nervousness create relaxing effect. The tobacco reduces the quality of sleep.

3.2 Harness time management as a resource

All of us have the same number of hours to use in a day. The way and ability to manage time, however, are individual. Your aim in time management should be to get your goals done – but in a way, that leaves time for relaxation. Time management also allows you to take responsibility of your life and manage yourself. This increases your self-respect and improves your self-esteem.

Tips for time management

Be aware on what you use your time. Write down the things you use time on for a couple of days. Note down everything and be honest. Take note of your time thieves: the things you are using time on when you should have been doing something else. Use a calendar (electronic or paper version) in time management. Be loyal to your basic values. Do not let momentary desires or impulses guide your actions. When you want something in life, you must be able to give up something else. What could you give up immediately? Make a list of the things that are important to you. Make sure that they are in line with the goals you have set. Think about what you are about to do before doing it. Dare to say no to other people's expectations and requests. Remember that quality time is flexible. Being flexible in time management provides you with space to change things. Practice presence in this moment. Cherish self-control. Time management requires you to postpone instant pleasure and gratification. Remember that life is more than simply performing. Reserve time for casual activities.

Monitoring your time management is important when you want to find out how you use the time available to you. This also relates to planning your own activities and self-management. The most important thing is to focus on what is relevant and to remain aware of your own objectives.

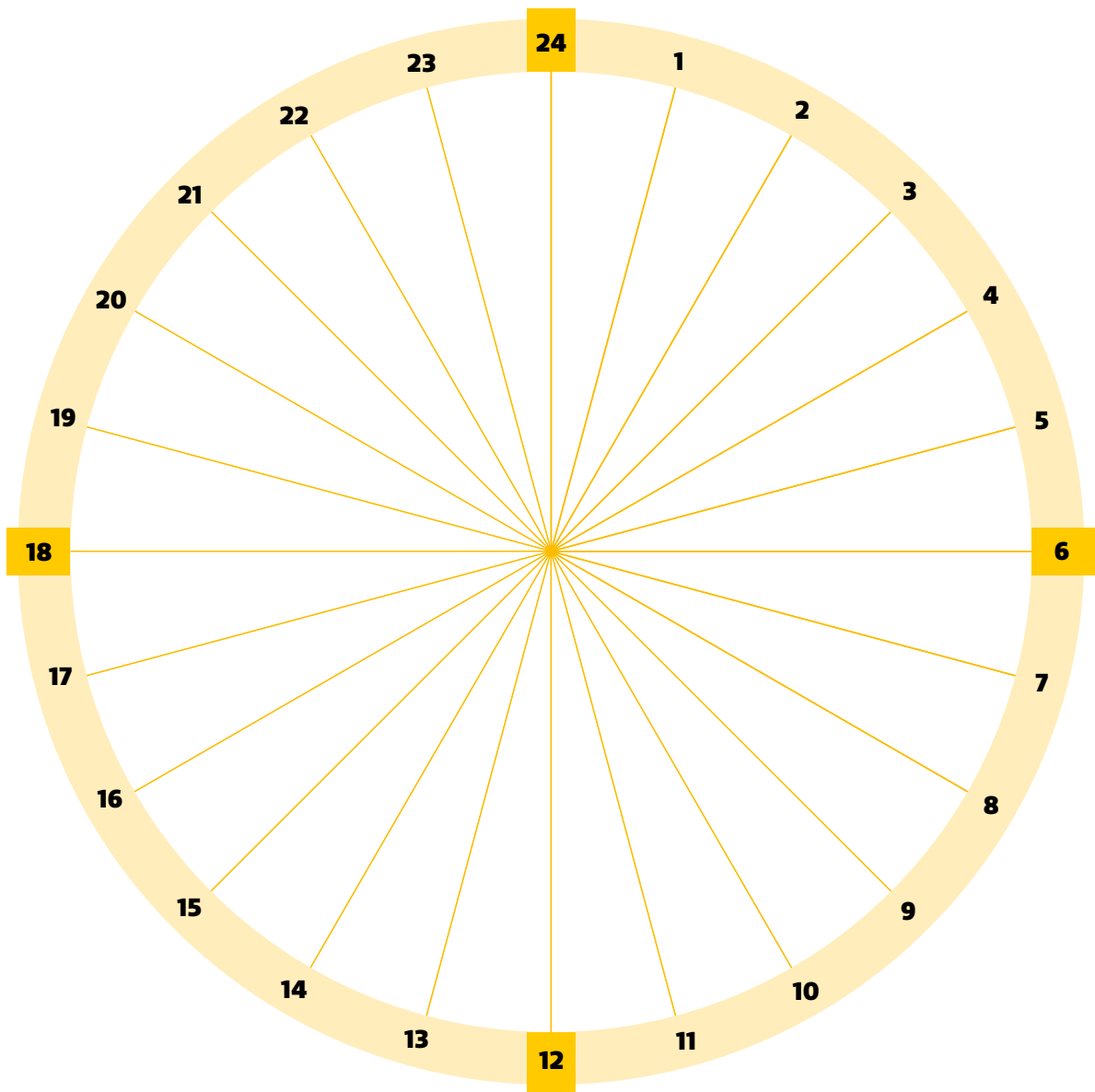
Time Management is more than just managing your time; it is managing yourself in relation to time.

Exercises

1 Time management

Fill in the 24-hour clock face and mark your timetable for one day in it. Some events are **externally controlled** such as meetings, family obligations, work and school. You internally control other activities such as chatting in social media, commitment to a club or project, meeting friends or just “playing around”.

Look more from the next page



- Review your obligations, your time wasters and time savers.
- Define your priorities.
- Use a weekly calendar and a daily "To-Do" list. Then use to set daily priorities – what must be done and when?

Identify areas of wasteful use of time. Do you put off doing important tasks? Crises management, or lack of it, leaves no time for the routine matters of enjoyment. Do you lack of concentration and focus? Are there motion blocks (boredom, daydreaming, stress, guilt, anger, frustration)? Negative stress can lead to sickness. Manage stress that you cannot avoid.

Time savers

"To-Do" lists, goals, checklists and action plans (daily, weekly, monthly goals, long-term, medium-term and short term)

Time management is associated with goal setting: Write down your goal. Then break it down into a project, an action plan or a simple to-do list. Mark deadlines and make priorities to individual items on the to-do list.

How do you manage your time?

Do the other circle and mark how you would like your timetable to be? First: Write down your goals. Then break them down into projects, action plans or a simple to-do list. Mark deadlines and make priorities to individual items on the to-do list. Notice time wasters / barriers and time savers.

A good day

What kind of day is a good day? What are the basic things that at least need to be in it or need to happen?

2 Many aspects of stress

Merely stating stress in the style of "yes there has been stress" may not yet bring relief. It is good to stop in order to listen how stress reflects in you. What are the effects of stress?

A. Your thoughts and emotions

B. Your behaviour

C. Your body sensations i.e. how does stress feel in your own body?

3 Traffic lights

How do you recognize your own stress level? Mood effects on how do you feel stress? It is important that you learn to recognize your own warning signs: When lights are yellow or red.



GREEN LIGHT

Sufficient resources:

- A small amount of stress is ok and keeps you inspired.
- You feel well.
- Free time is enough for recovery.

Here's how:

Continue with the same way!



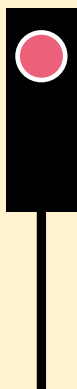
YELLOW LIGHT

Strong prolonged stress can lead to the following symptoms:

- The mind and body go into overdrive
- tiredness, difficulty concentrating, restlessness
- irritability, tension
- difficulty sleeping
- difficulty enjoying sex
- depression
- seeking relaxation from increased alcohol use and smoking

Here's how:

Prioritize things, you cannot do everything at once. Start finding and eliminating the causes of stress. Ensure adequate rest and recovery, otherwise, there is a risk that the body will not fully return to normal. Take advantage different ways to relax.



RED LIGHT

Resources will run out unless you eliminate threats. Strong long-lasting stress can eventually lead to the following symptoms:

- the mind and body go in exhaustion
- worn down, running out of resources, surrender, burnout
- decreased performance and willingness to try
- indifference, hopelessness
- hypersensitivity, crying a lot
- problems with memory
- fear of losing control
- serious depression
- the appearance of various diseases

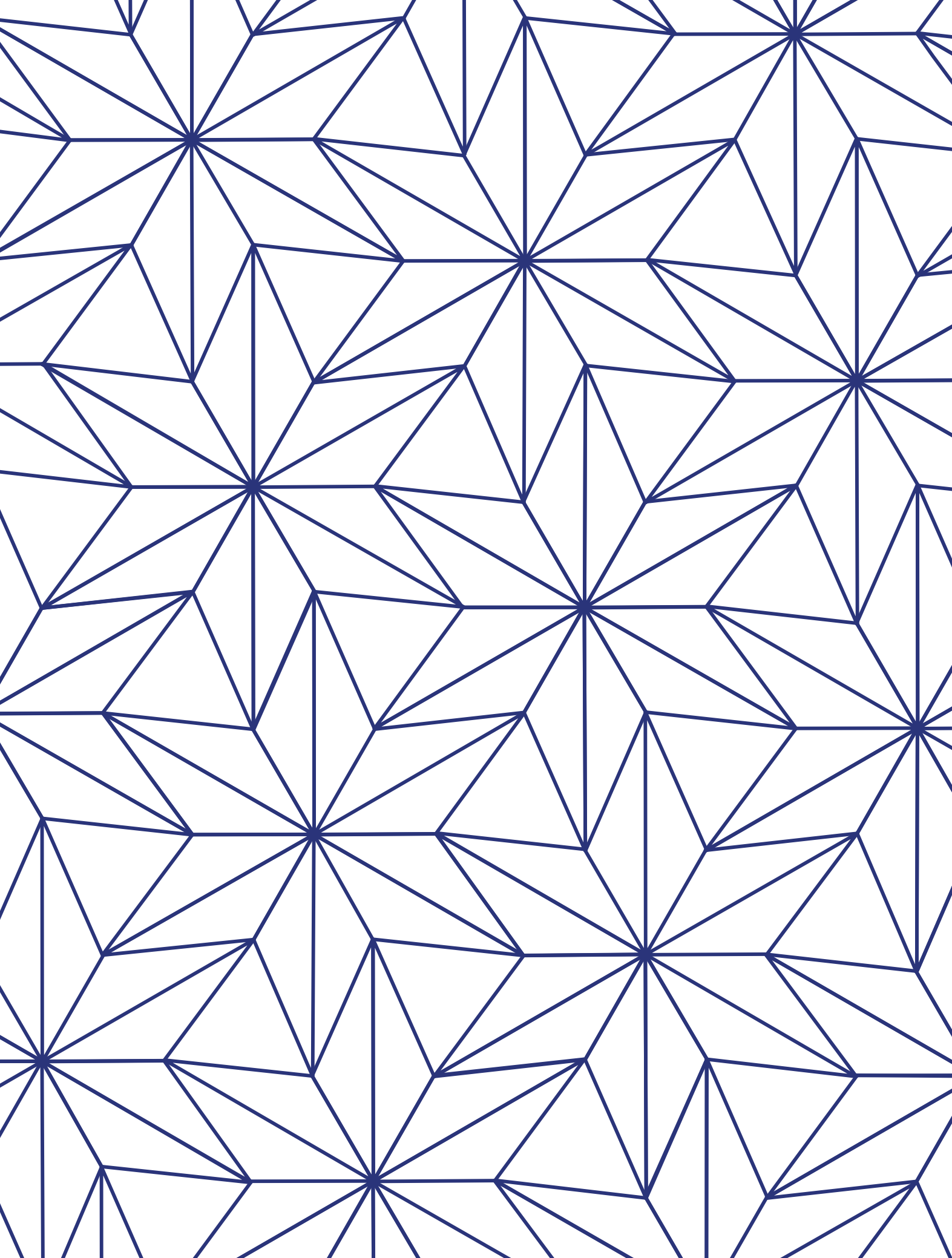
Here's how:

Apply for a professional help. The situation requires a holistic life re-evaluation. Overcoming can take years.

4 Week calendar

Plan your calendar for one week. Remember what basic things you would like it there to be! Make it realistic. Something that you could live for real. Follow your plan. After the week, you can look back and estimate how you did. Is there something you need to change, to make it work better? **Reflect your week calendar:** What remarks you make while doing it? Did you change something? What pleasant things did you have? How did your calendar work, did you stick to it? How well you think you manage your time? What is difficult/easy in it?

Clock	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8 – 12							
12 – 16							
16 – 20							
20 – 24							





4.

***THOUGHTS
AND PROBLEM
SOLVING***

4.1 What are thoughts?

Thoughts are ‘sentences we tell ourselves’ (a self-talk). At any point in time, we may have several thoughts, some of which we are aware of and many of which we are probably not aware of. Thoughts can have positive and negative effects on us. The body can reflect on thoughts. For example, when you have upsetting thoughts, your body may be tense up. Your actions can reflect your thoughts as well for example the way you behave or react to some situation. If you go into a situation, where you think ‘they won’t like me’ you are likely to behave in an uncomfortable and awkward way. You can affect your moods with your thoughts too.

Thoughts can really be about anything. However, we can also do many different things with our thoughts. With thought we can

- Motivate ourselves
- Demoralize ourselves
- State things
- Plan things in advance
- Dwell on the past
- Dream

Helpful thinking vs. harmful thinking

Constructive thinking puts you together, For example ‘I can learn.’

Necessary thinking helps you do what you have to do. ‘To find out if I have a cancer I need to take a test’ for example.

Positive thinking makes you feel better. ‘I can focus on what is good in my life or what I can do.’

Destructive thinking tears you apart or even destroys you. ‘I don’t know anything.’

Unnecessary thinking does not change anything, no matter how hard you focus and think about it. ‘What if I have cancer?’

Negative thinking makes you feel worse. ‘There are many things that are wrong in my life and nothing I or anybody can to fix them.’

Identifying helpful thoughts

Positive, constructive and useful thoughts improve our mood, encourage us and make us act:


- “Even though things are really bad right now, at least I’m trying to do something about it.”
- “Even though I screwed up now, it can help me learn something for the future.”
- “This day was tough but I made it through it.”

Helpful thoughts give us more possibilities and obstacles do not seem impossible to overcome.

Some specific helpful thoughts can make it less likely that you will become depressed. These thoughts can make your depressed mood less intense and less long and decrease the frequency of depressed moods.

What are these specific thoughts?

Thought chaining exercise:

- 9 I can focus on what is positive in my life and make positive changes.
 - 8 I am still capable of doing many things.
 - 7 There are things I can do to take care of myself.
 - 6 I need to learn more about my health problems.
 - 5 I have a serious health problem.
 - 4 This is really awful.
 - 3 Why me? Why I am been punished?
 - 2 I’m not normal. I won’t be able to do anything.
 - 1 Everyone else have fun. No one cares about me.
- 

How does thinking effect feeling?

- We can make choices about the way we think!
- Thoughts really do affect how we feel.
- Thoughts also affect the way we behave.
- Thoughts can even affect our health.
- When thinking differently, we can change internal reality.
- Once we start thinking in different ways, our behavior changes.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- What kind of thoughts help you to feel better?
 - What kind of thoughts you need to keep your feelings good?
 - Which thoughts give you strength?
 - What kind of thoughts help you feel good about yourself?
-

Identifying harmful / unhelpful thoughts

Negative, destructive or useless thoughts often make us feel bad and bring our mood down. They also discourage us and make challenges seem harder:

- "I don't know anything no matter how much I have studied."
- "Everything's getting worse."
- "I never get anything done."

When reading through the examples, did you observe any difference in how the positive and negative thoughts affected you? If you give too much space and value to your destructive thoughts, they will start to affect your actions. The same applies in the other way around. When you pay attention to positive thoughts, their effect becomes stronger.

Depression or feeling miserable is not "all in your head". Real things that happen to you (e.g. health problems, financial problems) affect your mood. All thoughts are real, but many are not accurate. Sometimes thoughts contribute to mood problems.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- Are there times when particular thoughts that you have can lead you to feel depressed?
 - Which thoughts are the most likely to trigger depression?
 - Which thoughts are the most likely to keep the depression going once starts?
 - Which thoughts drain you?
 - Which thoughts make you feel bad about yourself?
-

Helpful / harmful thoughts

How would you rate thoughts in these sentences: helpful / harmful?

- 1 I just got diabetes diagnose.
- 2 The rent is due and I don't have any money.
- 3 I live in a place where winters are cold.
- 4 I am at the store and there is a very long line. I am in a big hurry for an important appointment.
- 5 I haven't talked to my relatives for years. I want now. I don't know how they'll react.
- 6 People treat me different because I am disabled/ overweight/ tiny/ not Finnish speaker / poor / woman / man / lgbtq.

Thoughts affect your action

Thoughts are internal speech directed to yourself. Your mind is constantly getting new thoughts – tens of thousands of them on a single day! Single thoughts often only flash through our mind without you paying much of an attention to them.

However, frequently recurring thoughts have a strong impact on the way you act and behave in different situations. If you have the negative thoughts of yourself, such as 'I never get anything right', you will also start to behave in a belittling manner towards yourself. You will make choices based on the assumption that you cannot succeed.

To identify the effect that your thoughts have on your actions, you must stop and listen to yourself. Identifying your thoughts is worth because it provides you with the opportunity to work with them. Additionally, you will become better at identifying what is real and what is merely your own interpretation.

Do harmful thought patterns guide your actions?

Sometimes we are stuck to the same recurring negative thought pattern even though it discourages us and make us feel bad. Harmful thoughts patterns can guide how you observe things, act and make your choices. For this reason, you should try to recognise recurring thought patterns because they can:

- Prevent you from being yourself
- Prevent you from utilizing all your skills and abilities
- Lower your self-esteem.

Unhelpful thought patterns

Negative internal speech

These are negative thoughts of yourself and of things and other people in relation to yourself. You criticize, invalidate and diminish things.

Generalisation

You make negative generalizations. You use words and phrase such as always, all, all the time, never, ever, every time and nothing.

Overgeneralization

Taking one negative characteristic or event and seeing it as a never-ending pattern. "They do not like me" > "no one likes me" "I could not do this thing" > "I can't do anything"

Mindreading

You think you know what others think of you. You think others know what you wish for, want or expect.

Blaming yourself

You think that unpleasant and negative things happen and that they are always entirely your fault.

All or nothing thinking

All good or all bad. The best or worst. Perfect or failure. There is no balance.

Negative filter (ignoring the Positive)

You only remember the negative events and filter out positive events. As a result, your cup of life ends up being very bitter and negative.

Pessimism

The expectation that negative things are more likely to happen positive are never, or hardly ever, going to happen.

Exaggerating

Exaggerate problems, the possible harm they could cause, and underestimating your ability to deal with them. "Mountain out of a mole hill"

Labeling (either yourself or others)

Attach a negative label, instead of seeing an error or problem. Labels can become self-fulfilling prophecies. "Stupid" vs. not good in math.

Not giving oneself credit

Thinking positive things that happen are either just luck or a result of someone else's doing and never the results of your own effort.

Negative fortune telling

Thinking that you can see how things will be in the future and it is bad.

"Should"ing yourself

Telling yourself you should, ought, or must do something. That makes you feel forced to do things, controlled, and resentful. Weighing yourself down with 'should.'

What unhelpful patterns can you find?

- 1 I have to be the best.
- 2 The party is going to be really boring so why bother going
- 3 My partner seems very upset today maybe I did something wrong.
- 4 I can't work. I am useless.
- 5 I can't believe I don't know the answer. I must be stupid.
- 6 If I can't get this job, then everything's lost. I might as well give up.
- 7 If we lose, it will be entire my fault.
- 8 Why bother talking to the doctor, them probably can't help me.
- 9 Yeah, I can feel better if I take a walk outside, but it's not permanent.
- 10 I can't tell others how I feel because they will think I am crazy.

Answers

- 1 All or nothing thinking + should
- 2 Negative fortune telling
- 3 Mind reading + blaming oneself
- 4 The negative filter (ignoring the positive), blaming oneself.
- 5 Labelling.
- 6 Overgeneralization.
- 7 Blaming oneself (possible ignoring the positive)
- 8 Pessimism.
- 9 The negative filter (ignoring the positive) + all or nothing thinking
- 10 Mind reading

Question your established thought patterns

By learning to question your thought patterns and finding different perspectives, you can decrease the harmful thoughts effect on your actions. This does not mean you should entirely avoid negative thoughts – there is a time and place for them too. You should stop and think about your own established thought patterns: How do you usu-

ally talk to yourself and what you think of yourself? When you consciously work on your own internal speech, you can change it little by little to become more encouraging, tolerant and contributing to your well-being.

Ways to work on your thought patterns

You can practice changing your thoughts for the positive with different techniques. Here are a few examples:

Spur yourself on!

You can act as your own coach and give yourself guidance, encouragement, thanks and support. If this feels hard at first, you can try to imagine what you would say to a friend who is in a similar situation as you are.

Reward and thank yourself

Positive feedback and support give you strength – and you should thank yourself too! Recognise your own accomplishments and give yourself credit. The courage to try to test things deserves thanks too. Resting and relaxing are activities that are worth a reward as well: 'Thankfully I listened to myself and allowed myself a break!'

Change 'should' into 'want'!

You might find new perspective to things by changing your 'shoulds' to 'wants' and 'cans'. Do you really have to act in the way you have always acted or could you act as you really want to? You might discover what you really want to do or notice things that are not necessary or even possible.

Techniques for altering your thoughts

We have now presented you some holistic methods for influencing your thoughts. Some methods you can test when working on your thoughts on your own. Try them out, practice them and find the ones that work for you.

Worrying break

During a worrying break, you should do nothing else but focus on the issue troubling your mind. Choose a peaceful spot and spend 10 minutes there, letting the thoughts that cause you to worry freely enter your mind. Do nothing else. If you feel like you can focus your thoughts on the problem and solving it, do so. At other times during the day, you can interrupt distressing thoughts by telling yourself that you will only return to them during your worrying break.

List of good things

You can reinforce positive thinking by making a list of everything that is good about you and everything that is sufficiently well in your life. Read the list every day and

come up positive things to add to it. You will learn to remember that you have good qualities and that many things in life are decent. Thinking of nice things every day will also train your brain to produce thoughts that are more positive.

Interrupting your thoughts

Sometimes you can be stuck in a cluster of negative thoughts. This burdens you and makes you feel bad. Learn to stop the sequence of disturbing thoughts. One way of doing this is to sternly say 'stop' in your mind and then to purposefully focus on whatever concrete thing you are doing or to go outdoors to exercise, for instance. If you feel overcome by disturbing thoughts, just tell yourself: 'This makes me feel bad. I want to think of something else!' You can also write down the thought and think about it later (see worrying break).

The worst that could happen

Think of the worst possible thing that could happen if your fear comes true. You might be worried about not finishing a study assignment in time and this worry disrupts your actions. However, the worst that could happen is that your assignment looks unfinished and you receive a bad grade. After a few years, you most likely will not even remember the whole thing. Do not use this method for worries that might have serious consequences.

Moving forward in time

Sometimes you encounter times or situations that seem difficult. It often helps to imagine a future time when things are okay. Perhaps earlier in your life you have encountered difficulties and made it through them. When you focus your thoughts on better times in the future, you can get the strength to make it through the current difficult situation.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- What kinds of thoughts do you have of yourself and your life?
 - Do you recognize when your own thoughts make you feel bad?
 - Do you give enough space for different interpretations of things?
 - What methods do you use to get rid of thought patterns that cause you anguish?
-

4.2 Problem solving skills

Problem solving method "ITCH"

You probably already use the aspects of problem solving. Under stress is easier to forget to use it. At those times, having a clear understanding of the steps can be useful. Many therapists use the same method. Here we will use problem solving to reduce conflict between people.

Step 1: Identify the problem

- Write it down. Be as specific as possible.
- If it is a big, giant problem or group of problems, divide it to small pieces.

Step 2: Think about possible solutions, without evaluating them

- There should be a number of different possible solutions.
- At the stage of brainstorming, it is important not to evaluate the solutions.
- After brainstorming and having a lot of different solutions take a look at your problems again.
- Go through each problem and elicit possible solutions from the group.

Step 3: Choose the best combination of solutions

- Choose the ones that are the best for you not for someone else.
- Try them.

Step 4: How well does it work?

- Try it and find out?
- Then re-evaluate the problem and consider additional alternatives.
- Follow it up for a week and report it back next week how well your solution worked.

Pacing yourself

- When the roadblock for doing something pleasant is feeling too tired, not having energy, time, or you just don't feel like it, it may be important to think about pacing yourself.

Pacing yourself means:

- Go at your own speed.
- You don't have to do everything at once
- Do things in small steps.

Factors to consider when pacing yourself

- Energy level

- Time
- Health / Pain
- Interest
- Last time since you did the activity or a similar activity
- Demands of others

Indicators of Nonconstructive Self-talk by Kranzler:

Highly evaluative

Words like "should," "ought," or "must" (for example, he ought to say what I'd like to him to say, or I should be able to do this well)

Catastrophing

Words like 'It's awful' or 'It's terrible' or 'I just can't stand it'

Overgeneralization

Such as 'I'll never be able to do this' or 'Nobody will ever like me' or 'I'm really a bad rotten person.'

Self-talk can also be reasonable like 'I wish...' or 'I would have preferred...' or 'I am disappointed about' or 'I don't like...' Statements about your wishes, preferences, likes, and dislikes are perfectly reasonable.

For each of the nonconstructive things you said to yourself in Section B (the checked statements), write in Section D how you would dispute or argue against them.

1 Dealing with harmful thoughts

The flow of thoughts is constant and individual thoughts come and go. When the same harmful thought patterns come to mind repeatedly, it is good to stop and to examine them.

A. What harmful thought patterns do you recognize? Identify them.

B. Take a good look at one thought in more detail: is it properly realistic, accurate or overly harmful

C. Find another perspective on harmful thought patterns. Options:

- 1 Examine the evidence
- 2 Make an experiment
- 3 Find the antidote to your pattern of thinking
- 4 Stop harmful thoughts
- 5 Worry time
- 6 Balance your thoughts
- 7 The blow-up technique
- 8 "The worst that could happen"

Choose one and write it to the space below the options.

1. Examine the evidence

STEP 1: Mostly True, Mostly False or Neither?

- What are the evidences that my thought are 100% true?
- What are the evidences that thought are 100% false?
- How much of those do I think are true (percentagewise) and how much of those do I think are false (percentagewise)?

STEP 2: Talk with another person, someone whose opinion you trust

- Often we consider things differently when we say our thoughts aloud to someone else.
- Different people have different points of view, what is your friend's point of view?
- If your friend has this thought or problem, what would you tell them? Should you maybe use your own advice?

STEP 3: So what?

- What if my thought is 100% true, or mostly true, what can I do about it?

2. Do an experiment

- To see if your thought is true, gather more evidence.
- For example: "If I go to the party, I will not have a good time" (negative fortune telling) it might be useful to actually go with an open mind and see how it really is?
- What could be the experiment for you?

3. Finding the antidote to your pattern of thinking

STEP 1: Identify your thought pattern

- Does your harmful thought fit a pattern?
- Which pattern? (Look categories of unhelpful thoughts, here earlier.)

STEP 2: Identify your antidote to the pattern

- What is the antidote to the pattern?

- What does it mean to you?
- How can you apply it to your specific thought or your specific situation?

STEP 3: Apply the antidote

- When you apply the antidote how does your thinking change?
- When you think about changes, does your feelings change?

4. Thought stopping

- ➊ Replace the harmful thought with another thought. Use a card of positive thoughts to ‘replace’ a harmful thought.
- ➋ Do a relaxation exercise, which helps train you to keep your thoughts on the present.
- ➌ Take the mental inventory of all major muscle groups, focus on breathing peacefully and relax. Wave image: Imagine an ocean with large strong waves. As you relax, allow the waves to become smaller. Continue to relax until the surface is completely calm.

5. Worry time

- It is not a realistic plan to avoid harmful thoughts totally but limiting how often you focus on them is quite possible.
- Schedule five or ten minutes a day where you can focus on these thoughts.
- Think about the problem and decide what to do with it.
- When the time is over, move on with the rest of the day.
- Try not focus anymore on the negative thoughts instead proceed to more pleasant thoughts and activities.

6. Thought balance

- Fight back against “all or nothing thinking”
- Add a “yes but” to your thoughts
- You don’t need to ignore or deny your problems to decrease harmful thoughts.
“I feel nervous a lot”
“Yes, I feel nervous a lot, but I am still relatively healthy.”

7. The blow-up technique

- That is to blow up a worry out of its proportion to minimize its’ impact. If you are worrying without good reason about not being a good person, you might imagine being put on the front page of the newspaper with the words “This is a bad person” written next to you, for example. The technique works best if you can exaggerate the worry so much that it becomes ridiculous and funny.
- The point here is that worrying about a certain thing does nothing to solve it. The best you can do is to stop worrying and if something do what you can do.

8.”The worst that could happen”

Merely think through the worst that will happen if your fears come true. For some period, it may reduce your fear enough to let you work well.

2 ABCD-method: Analysing your thoughts, beliefs and emotions and their relatedness

(based on Albert Ellis's technique and method of Gerald Kranzler)

It is to help people to think more constructively about every day unpleasant events. Method is called "Rational-Emotive Therapy" to stressing the connection between what you think and how you feel. It helps to identify the kinds of beliefs or attitudes you hold that may lead you to overreact to problems or difficulties.

A = Activating Event

B = Belief or Self-talk about A

C = Emotional Consequence

D = Dispute of self-talk

It is not accurate to say that A causes C when we talk about psychological pain. When you feel angry or hurt or very down (C), it is not A (the Activating Event) that causes your emotional reaction; rather, it is B, what you believe or say to yourself about A, that results in your emotional reaction (C). It's your interpretation (B) of events (A) that leads to emotional upset (C).

Step 1: Turn to Section C and briefly describe an unpleasant emotion you have experienced today.

Step 2: In Section A, briefly describe the activating event, the situation or event that seemed to lead to your emotional reaction.

Step 3: As accurately as possible, list the kinds of things you are saying to yourself at point B. Place a check mark beside those statements that are not constructive or reasonable.

3 How do I feel each day?

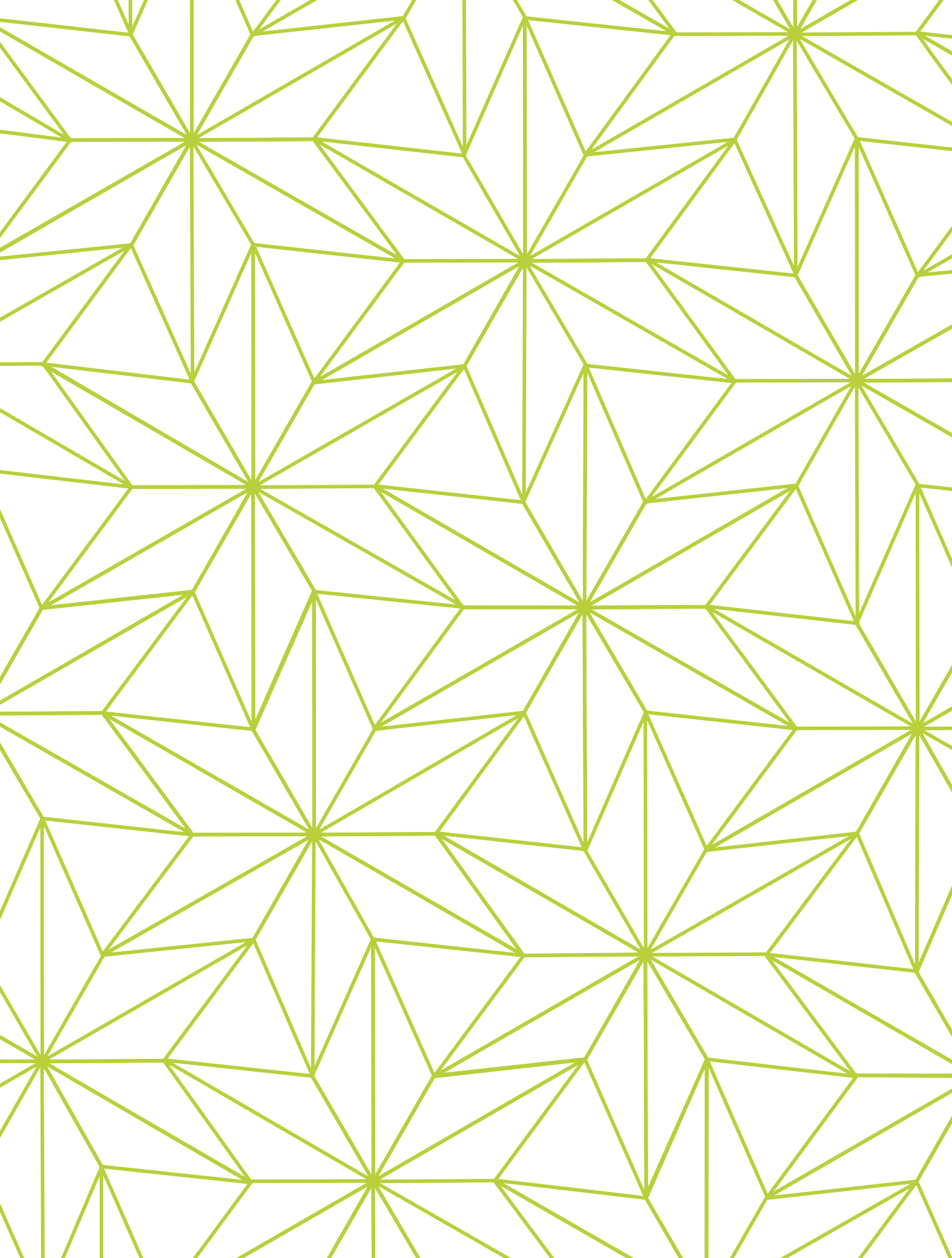
Do the Daily Mood Graph from the appendix for a week. Do it each day.

Daily Mood Graph		
Clock	Day 1	Day 2
08:00		
10:00		
12:00		
14:00		
17:00		
20:00		
22:00		

Instructions for filling in the Daily Mood Graph:

- Monitor the variations in your emotions throughout the day two normal study days.
- Make a note of your mood at different times. You can describe your current emotional state by drawing the appropriate smiley. If you wish, you can refine your emotional state next to the smiley in words.
- The variation of emotions from side to side is complete normal. The most important thing is how you act on your feelings. How does your emotions change? What does your table look like? :)







5.

***EMOTIONS AND
SELF-ESTEEM***

5.1 Mood

Mood is affected

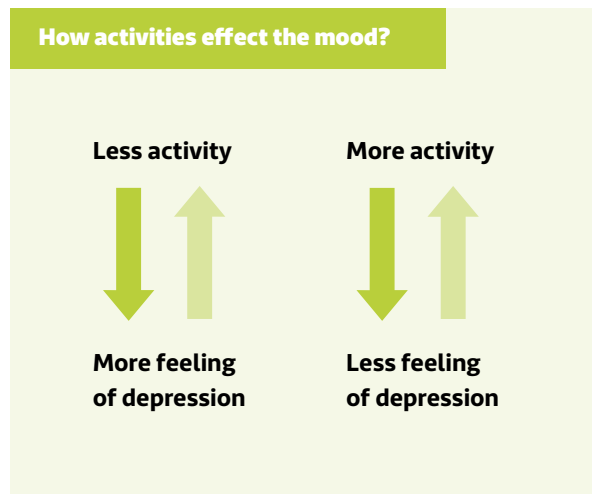
- By thoughts
- By behaviour, especially pleasant things
- Being contact with others

You can effect on your mood

- By changing your thoughts
- By doing more nice things
- By increasing pleasant contacts with others

When you have control of your life

- You know the consequences of your actions
- You can choose between many options in different situations
- You will have strategies to reach your goals



You can work with the mood!

- ① Working with your thoughts.
- ② Making sure there is enough pleasant activity in your daily life.

③ It is possible to learn to recognize destructive thoughts and learn to change them to way that is more positive.

Pleasant activity

It is very individual what one likes as a pleasant activity. For the well-being, it is important to have regularly recurring pleasant activities in daily life. However, it does not need to be so exceptional! Usually just something common will do fine for example kissing, watching movies, shopping, helping others, outing, driving a bike, meeting a friend, an enjoying of being alone or playing games with others.

External / Objective Reality: the facts; parts of your reality that are observable and measurable. The things you and others actually do, places you have visited, illnesses you have experienced, how many people live with you and our physical surroundings, for example.

Internal / Subjective Reality: the world of your mind, which is yours alone: not observable by others. Thoughts, memories, beliefs, expectations and the way we understand what has happened to us, for example.

5.2 Listen to your emotions

Emotions are a part of our everyday life and are involved in everything we do. Some things make us angry, some nostalgic and some make us choke with laughter. Every emotion has its place – even the emotions we often consider 'bad'. Emotions provide us with important messages that we should learn to listen. They also create meaning and make things 'feel like something'. Accordingly, you should forget the distinction between good and bad emotions and learn to value the importance of all emotions. Without your emotions, you would not be yourself.

By accepting all emotions as a part of you, you are also able to accept yourself as you are. This will also improve your self-esteem and allow you to be yourself even when things do not go as well planned.

Your own way to experience emotions is the right one to you

Emotions refer to short-term, spontaneous and passing reactions. The stimulus originates either from you or from the outside. Experiencing emotions may include physical signs for instance:

- Increased heart rate
- Sweating
- Increased blood pressure
- Blushing
- Trembling
- Nausea

There is no single correct way to experience emotions. We all experience and express our emotions individually. Our individual differences in experiencing and expressing emotions make us unique. When we give space to our individual sensations, it allows us truly accept what we are. Our temperament, personality and previous experiences affect how different emotions feel like in our body, what kinds of emotional reactions different situations cause or how we express emotions.

Difficult emotions are important too

It is easy to think of good and positive emotions. Working with them is easy and straightforward. Emotions such as joy, love, excitement and approval release energy and help everything function smoothly.

Negatively considered emotions, however, are the difficult ones. Hatred, disgust, the shame, fear, pain and sense of failure are examples of feelings that we often find hard to accept. Nonetheless, they are as important as the emotions we consider positive.

Difficult emotions make us act in many ways:

- Prepare for challenging things and situations
- Find alternative solutions
- Search means for change
- Try harder
- Protect us from dangers

Remember that there is always a reason for a certain emotion to awake. Emotions have important messages to tell us, whether they are about things, we have ignored in life or opportunities for personal growth. By listening to the messages your emotions have for you, you will learn to understand yourself better. Your self-knowledge will increase, you will learn to function better in different situations and interacting with others will become easier. Your self-esteem will improve once you accept yourself in all aspects.

To process emotions

You cannot stop emotions from arising, but you can always learn new ways to process them.

Try to remember the following when you face your emotions. Emotions may arise suddenly. You do not need to act according to your emotions you can just acknowledge them and let them go. Eventually, even though the feelings of distress and anxiety might not disappear, you may still feel somewhat better. You can listen to your emotions and observe how they affect your mood and thoughts and how they feel like in your body.

You do not always have the opportunity to process emotions immediately when they arise. Emotions are to awaken by many things such as new situation, event or someone's words, general aspect, gestures or voice. If you cannot observe the emotion, then it is possible to return to it later. It is never too late to process emotions you have not been able to face earlier. Pay attention to emotions that will not leave you. What helps you to let go of them? Sometimes it helps to exercise, be outdoors or do something else pleasant. Listen to and value your emotions they can help you to protect yourself.

Give your emotions a concrete shape

It is good to talk about your emotions. The more you talk about them, the better you become at it. It also makes it easier to accept and understand your emotions. In your mind, you can create characters for your emotions. Because emotions are invisible yet still very true in your mind, imaginary characters might make it easier to control them. Mental images hold immense power. You can even do exercises that relate to your emotions. You can increase your understanding about emotions for example by drawing or otherwise visualizing the emotions you experience. You may also keep an emotion diary.

To attach emotions by things like music or exercising is very useful. Do you have a trusty song that you listen when you sad/angry/happy, etc.? Music awakens emotions and helps a deal with them. Exercising can give you similar benefits to process emotions.

Do exercises with mental images: visualize such situations in advance that are sure to evoke emotions. Go through different optional ways in which you could act in them and choose the one you think is the best.

How to act when experiencing strong emotions?

- Make a conscious effort to calm down: Focusing on your own breathing and calmly breathing in and out are in themselves efficient ways to calm your own agitated reactions.

- Call a time-out: Step back and recognize your feelings but do not react yet. If possible, go to another place or do something completely different to calm yourself down.
- When your emotions stabilize, wait a moment and consider the situation.
 - What happened?
 - Why are you feeling the way you are?
 - What alternative ways to act do you have?
 - Which one would be the best choice?
 - How could you best express yourself?
 - After having done this, act in your chosen way.

Sometimes emotions can get you too stuck in a certain state and leave you emotionally trapped. If needed, you should ask for support for processing emotions from an outsider.

★ **QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:**

- How do you usually feel?
 - Do you easily recognize your emotions?
 - How do you act with your emotions?
-

5.3 Know yourself – feel better

The role of self-knowledge in well-being is very essential. It is much easier to be satisfied and happy with your life when you know who you are and what you want. By improving your self-knowledge, you are improving your self-esteem as well.

Self-knowledge refers to your personal understanding about yourself. You can practise self-knowledge with the help of the following questions:

- What kind of person do I consider myself to be?
- What kinds of thoughts do I have of myself?
- In what am I good at and where do, I succeed.
- What are the situations where I feel like I have failed and how long does this feeling last?
- How do I react to failures and setbacks?

In our everyday life, we may often act according to the way we are used to or expected to act. Sometimes we might also think we want something that does not really answer our needs.

When you take the time to examine yourself, you might get close to your true self. You can build a meaningful life on this foundation. When you know and accept yourself with all your faults, your self-esteem bases on a real image of you.

You can ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this really a feature in me? How does that exhibit itself in me or in my actions?
- Am I really like that (or the way people think I am)?
- Can I accept the fact that I am not perfect?

Good self-knowledge can help you to overcome your fears as well as understand and accept that you are different from your own or others expectations.

★ **QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:**

- How do you answer the following questions: who I am and what do I want?
 - Do you think that your everyday life is meaningful and looks like you?
 - How could you improve your self-knowledge?
-

You have self-esteem

How do you regard yourself and how do you appreciate yourself? Your answers reveal a lot about your self-esteem.

High self-esteem makes it easier for you to be gentle and accepting towards yourself and others too. This helps you acknowledge your own mistakes and screw-ups while still deep down considering yourself a good person. Behind high self-esteem lies genuine self-knowledge.

A person with high self-esteem

- To have truthful self-image – you identify and are aware of your weaknesses. You do not defend your bad behaviour with their weaknesses for example: ‘This is who I am, I cannot help it.’
- You trust yourself and values you as a person. Valuing yourself does not mean letting others hurt you, for instance. Self-confidence, on the other hand, refers to having the courage to take on challenging tasks – you might not be able to overcome them but you can still have the courage and try it.
- You consider your own life valuable and unique.
- You are independent both in decisions concerning your own life and of others’ opinions.
- You do not feel the need to hurt others but still live your own life the way you want – not according to the prevailing values of the environment.
- You tolerate uncertainty, disappointments and failures.

High self-esteem is not

- The same thing as confident behaviour or outward success.
- Merely self-confidence and seeing yourself only in positive light.
- Shy or withdrawn people can also have high self-esteem and social courage. On the other hand, a loud, visible and social person who is always the centre of attention among their friends can suffer from low self-esteem behind the surface. Self-esteem does not always show on the outside.
- Self-fulfilment at the expense of others.
- No one has perfect self-esteem – that should not even be the goal. Everyone, no matter what, also has at least a tiny bit of self-esteem. It is possible to improve your self-esteem in all phases of life. This helps you increase your satisfaction in life and strengthens your feelings of control over your own life.

Tips to improve self-esteem

- Find yourself. What kind of an image do you have of yourself? If you are used to thinking of a certain feature as an attribute of yourself, ask yourself whether it is true and whether you actually are like that.
- Accept yourself the way you are! Detach yourself from the false feelings of shame and guilt.
- Be merciful! Forgive yourself and others.
- Regard other people with compassion – it helps you be compassionate to yourself too.
- During difficult times, recall all the good things that you have had – both difficulties and better times are a part of life.
- Learn to make choices and decisions and to express your will. You might have to practice making decisions even in trivial issues if you are not used to wanting anything.
- Seek company that makes you feel good.
- Focus on things that are important to you.
- Stop comparing yourself to others or at least change the way you do it: do not only compare yourself to those that seem to be doing well.
- Check whether your standards towards yourself are reasonable.
- Accept positive feedback you receive from others.
- Take care of your everyday life; sufficient rest, eating and exercising.
- Do exercises with mental images. Imagine that you will succeed just the way you are. Think of all your good aspects, write them down and return to the list during moments of weakness.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

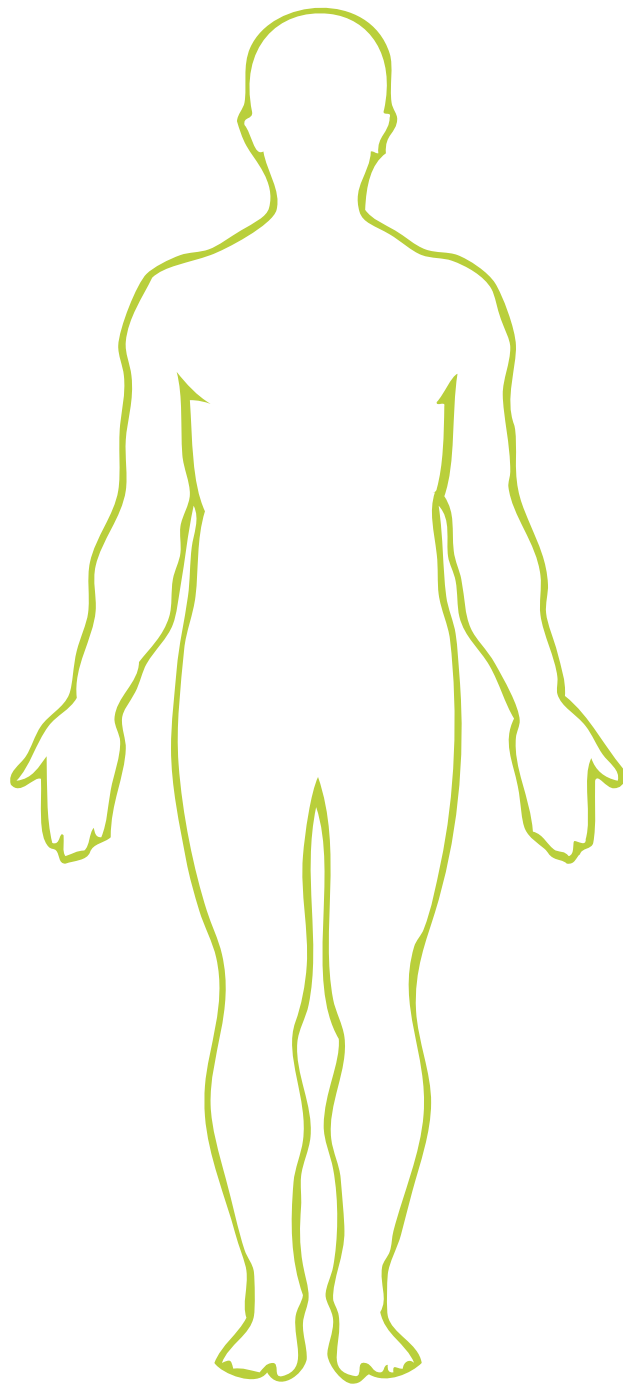
- Are you mostly satisfied with being YOU?
 - Do you accept and what kind of weaknesses in yourself?
 - What kinds of methods could you try to improve your self-esteem?
-

Exercises

1 Emotions in my body

Write or draw where in the body you can feel the following emotions.

Joy
Anger
Sadness
Excitement
Fear
Shame
Anxiety



2 Different emotions during a day

Make a list what emotions have you experienced during a day.

3 Emotions bring messages

Choose an emotion you find difficult: anger, fear, grief, etc. Consider what your feelings are trying to tell you.

4 Music and emotions

Music has a strong effect on our emotions. For example, a particular song can help in a sad emotional state; or the other hand, some song infects us with a happy feeling. Choose three emotions and try to think just the right song for it.

Emotion: _____

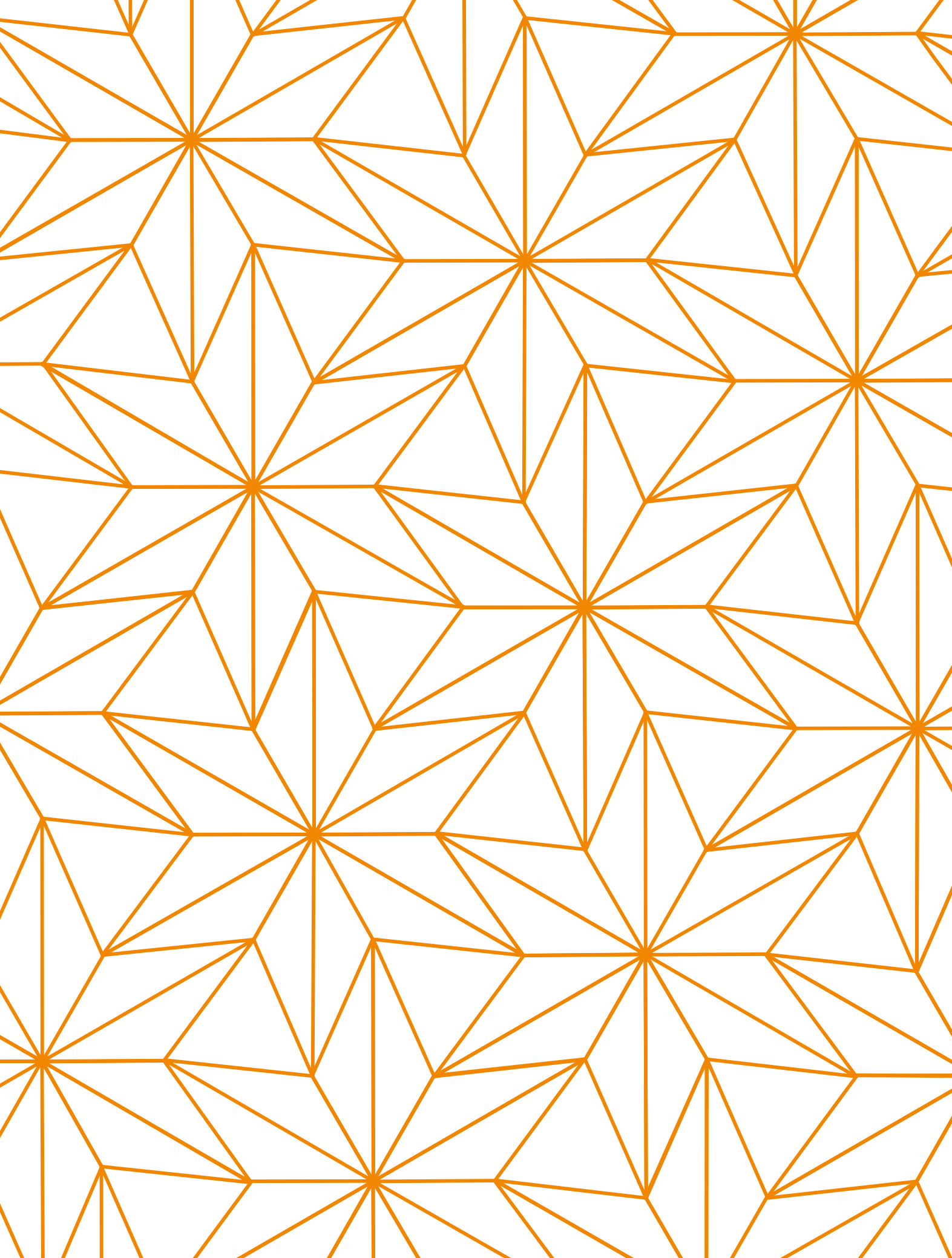
Song: _____

Emotion: _____

Song: _____

Emotion: _____

Song: _____





6.

**SOCIAL
SKILLS AND
RELATIONSHIPS**

6.1 You can practice social skills

Asking questions, introducing yourself and listening – all these are examples of social skills. We need social skills to manage everyday affairs. These skills help us with larger decisions in life, such as applying for a job or starting a relationship.

Because they are skills, you can learn them throughout life. If a certain interactional situation feels challenging, you can strengthen your skills to act in the situation by practicing them. You can achieve confidence and feeling relaxed in interaction by repetition, practice and experience.

In a new situation in life, such as beginning new studies or at a new job, we will also have to practise our social interaction skills in a new way.

Social skills for all purposes

Social skills become visible in the way we act in both familiar and unfamiliar interactional situations. The following are examples of situations where you use your social skills:

- Meeting people and starting to talk with them
- Working in groups
- Asking for advice
- Listening
- Handing out and receiving compliments
- Expressing your opinion

Being social is different from social skills

Some people naturally feel at home in social situations. They actively make contact with other people and are talkative. It might be that being social is the innate temperament of socially agile people.

Social temperament, however, is not the same thing as good social skills. Everyone needs to practise social skills. For a very extrovert, social person, listening might be something that needs practice. While, a shy and silent person might well have excellent social skills.

Social skills improve with practice

You can practise social skills with people you know simple by discussing things or by concretely practising specific communication situations. Practising helps, you feel more comfortable in a real situation.

A good way of practising social skills is watching how others behave. How do they enter situations? What do they say? How do they react to other people?

How do you act in social situations?

You can occasionally pause to examine what kind of an outward impression you give about yourself. Your face, manner of speaking and attitude all effect the first impression people get of you.

Your own behaviour might give others the impression that you are not interested in them or that you would rather be a left alone. This stop people from approaching you and interaction remains at a minimum. Others think that you do not want to talk right now.

Things that you can pay attention to include following:

- Do I remember to introduce myself to new people?
- Do I respond to greetings and questions directed at me?
- Do I listen to other people; do I give them a chance to speak?
- Do I look people in the eye when talking to them?
- Do I express my own opinions in conversations?
- Do I remember to use the words 'thank you', 'sorry' and 'please'?

You could also consider how your own mood affects interaction with others. When you are in a bad mood, you might interpret others' behaviour towards you as avoidant or rude even though that might not be the case. In some occasions, when yourself are irritated, you communication

might turn in to something that you would not want yourself to be treated.

Sometimes communication situations just do not work out

Mistakes and setbacks occur when we communicate with others. Avoiding them is not possible – they are part of life. No one behaves smoothly all the time, find the right words and control their emotions in all situations. You can move forward from situations by encouraging yourself. You could also take a point that with mistakes and setbacks you have collected more experiences. It is also comforting to know that others will not remember as much as you think.

Conflicts are also a part of interaction. Thankfully, we have opportunities to return to situations afterwards. If you are left wondering about something someone said, you can simply ask them to clarify the matter. Sometimes it all has just been misunderstanding. To work out conflict situation is worth if nothing else because than the fact that unpleasant experiences would not weigh on your mind.

Rude behaviour should not discourage you. The way people regard you does not necessarily have anything to do with you. The person in question might have their own worries and trouble that make them behave rudely or seem disinterested.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- What kinds of social skills do you have?
 - What kinds of social situations do you find challenging?
 - Which social skills would you like to develop in yourself?
-

6.2 What is your social network like?

A social network is not the same as simply knowing as many people as possible or constantly forming new contacts. Your social network consists of the people you consider meaningful to yourself.

Everyone has a different kind of network. It can include people from your family, study place or hobbies. Neighbours, pets and familiar salespersons from the local store can all be a part of your network too.

A social networks do not have to be especially extensive and include several dozens of people. Being personally satisfied in your network is more important than the number of people in it.

In other words, there is no single ideal social network that all of us should strive for. However, a beneficial social network supports your well-being and provides you with joy and energy. Your network should include people you can turn to when you need help.

Social networks change

As years pass by, close friends may become acquaintances and work colleagues may become closer to you than your own relatives may be. It is natural that some relationships in your network last for a lifetime while others disappear. This is something that simply happens because of changes in people's situations in life. Factors that previously connected friends just are not relevant anymore.

Even though networks inevitably change, you can chose to maintain them nevertheless this requires active maintenance. To stay in contact requires you to be active too. Does your network include someone you have not contacted in a long time? Maybe you should send them a message today.

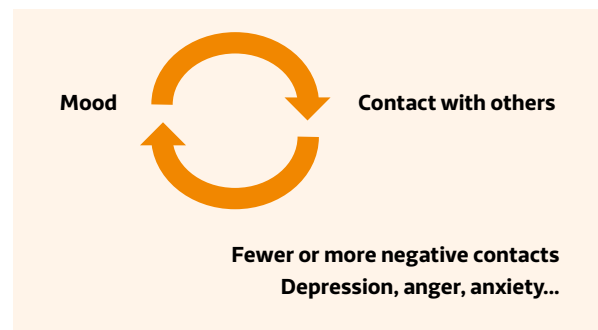
Ask the people in your network to help you

Do not hesitate to utilise your network when facing difficult situations in life. If you feel bad, you may avoid other people and be quieter than normal. You might like to be alone or would not want to burden others.

Despite this, it is important to keep in contact with your friends and loved ones during difficult situations in life. You can discuss your problems with them and they provide you with compassion and concrete help.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- Does your social network suit your needs?
 - What would you need more? And what would you need less?
 - What kind of things can you do to make changes to your own social network?
-



Analyse your relationships

When you think about the person you like, what types of changes do you notice in your mood? What about in your body? How does your mood or body change when you think about a person who makes you uncomfortable?

Our contacts can have either positive or negative effects on our mood, thoughts, behaviours and physiological reactions. You can choose whom you will spend time with and how much time you will spend with them. Negative contacts or having too few contacts can make your mood worse. You can choose to spend time with people who make you feel positive and helpful.

Generally, when people have positive contacts with other people, they are more likely to have positive thoughts about themselves and about their lives. You can improve your mood with positive contacts.

Social support system

(Adapted from Brugha's Preparing for Parenthood manual 1998)

Whom do you turn to when you need:

Practical support

- Whom you ask to drive you to the hospital
- Whom you call to lend you something you need.

Companionship

- Who will walk around the park with you?
- Whom will you spend the afternoon with you?
- Who will share your joys with you?

My assertiveness rights in social relationships

- I have the right to evaluate my own behaviour, my thoughts, and my feelings and take full responsibility for their consequences and myself about them.
- I do not have to explain the reasons for my behaviour.
- I have the right to decide for myself to what extent I have to find solutions to other people's problems.
- I have the right to change my mind.
- I have the right to make mistakes and be responsible for my mistakes.
- I have the right to say 'I do not know'.
- I have the right to be inconsistent in my solutions.
- I have the right to say 'I do not understand'.
- I have a right to say 'I do not care'.
- I have the right to defend myself even when it offend someone else, as far as my motivator is concerned defence and not attack.
- I always have the right to ask someone for something, as long as I understand that he has the right to say no.
- I have the right to tell someone else my own needs, even when
 - the other thinks my needs are unreasonable or inconsistent.
 - the other does not want to hear about my needs.
 - the other hurts or accelerates me while listening.
 - I personally think I should not have such needs.
- I have the right to use my own judgment to decide if another person's request is reasonable.
- I have the right to answer no without feeling guilt.
- I have the right to refuse even when the applicant
 - would definitely like me to agree.
 - is leading me or is in a position of authority.
 - suffers from emotional disturbances.
- I have the right to say how another person's words and deeds affect my emotions.

Advice or information

- Whom will you ask for advice when you don't feel well
- Whom will you ask for advice when you don't understand how to do something

Emotional support

- From whom will you look for encouragement?
 - From whom will you look for understanding?
 - From whom will you look for to share your feelings?
 - From whom will you look for to help you feel less depressed?
- 1 While going through situations, how many people did you think? Were they mainly friends/family/professionals?
 - 2 Where there parts which had plenty of support?
 - 3 Were there gaps? In which areas?
 - 4 Who gets many mentions? (Is there a risk of relying too much on one person?)

Different people have different support needs. Some people only need one or two people in to the so called "people who are closest to me" category. (Quantity vs. Quality issue) It's important to have people in all the different categories. For example, even though someone may not be a "close friend," we can still have fun going out with them. Often just seeing acquaintances, like a clerk at the grocery store, can improve our mood. People do not always remain in the specific category. For example, someone who was in the "friend" category can become a "close friend" and someone who was once "closest to me" may one day be a "friend".

Social Network Categories



1. people who are closest to me
2. close friends
3. friends
4. study / work mates
5. acquaintances

Finding new friends

The easiest way to meet people is to do something that you like to do and doing it in the company of other people. Even if you don't find anyone in particular whom you would like to get to know better, you will still have been doing something pleasant and you will be less likely to think that you wasted your time. Since the focus is the activity you are doing, and not just meeting others, there will be less pressure on you than in a setting where the whole purpose is to meet people.

Improving people skills

Talking and listening can seem basic to us, after all we've been doing this since we were little kids, but are they really? Misunderstandings like people either not speaking their mind or others hearing things differently. This might result in interpersonal conflict.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- What you need to consider when you communicate across cultures compared with communication inside of one culture?
- What can be disturbing / surprising in cross-cultural communication?
- How can you make cross-cultural communication easier for yourself and maybe for the other as well?

Exercises

1 Active listening

For this exercise, you need another person. One of you is the speaker and the other one is the listener.

A speaker

- Look at the listener.
- Describe something that has happen to you during last week.
- Do it in short sentences

A listener

- Look at the speaker.
- Just listen. During short breaks, the speaker haves, repeat in your own words, what the speaker has told.
- After a small conversation, reflect these questions together:

For a talker

- How did you know did your partner listen to you? (verbal and non-verbal clues)
- How did it make you think that someone just listened to you?
- What was good about what your partner did?
- What was not so helpful?

For a listener

- What did you do to make your partner think that you are listening to them?
- How well do you think you understood what your partner was saying? (content and at an emotional level)
- How was it to focus to listen to?
- How did you think about listening to your partner?
- What was the key message that your partner was telling you?

2 Talking skills

There are three main ways to communicate: passive, aggressive and assertive.

Think about these different ways of presenting and reflect with these questions:

- If I were (passive / aggressive / assertive), how might I get my point across?
- If I were (passive / aggressive / assertive), how well others would understand my request?
- If I were (passive / aggressive / assertive), how do you think others would feel about me?
- If I were (passive / aggressive / assertive), how would I feel?

Communication styles	Respects wishes of others	Respects own wishes
Passive	yes	no
Aggressive	no	yes
Assertive	yes	yes

Assertiveness and making requests

Assertiveness means being able to make requests in a clear and positive way. It allows us to ask for what we want and need. This way others know how they can help us. Assertiveness increases the chance to get support. However, it does not guarantee that we will get what we want. Other people may agree to a different compromise or just refuse, but at least we know the answer.

3 Practice to make a request

- Identify what you want.
- Pick whom you should ask for help.
- Figure out a way to say it so that it is clear and direct.
 - Indirect 'boy, the trash can is full' / 'I wonder when you'll be taking out the trash' /
 - Direct request 'Could you please take out the trash in the next half hour'
- Give the acknowledgement to the other person if it is appropriate.
- Be willing to compromise.
- Respect the other person's right not to do what you request.

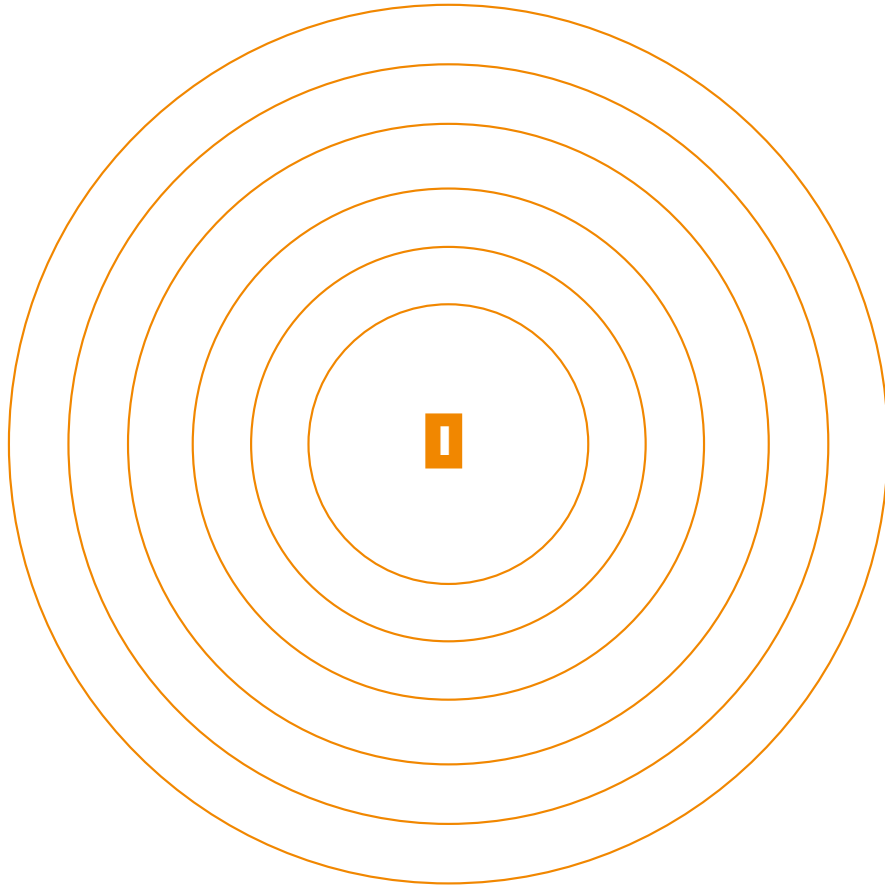
Express thoughts and feelings in an assertive way

- 'I think.....'
- 'I feel.....'
- Note 'I statements' are recognized as an Eurocentric form of communication.

Do you know or does your family or other close ones have other effective ways of to express feelings, thoughts or wishes without using 'I statement'?

4 My social network

Mark your own relationships in the network diagram. Place people the closer to the centre of the circle, the more important they are for you. Mark further away people who are not that important to you. There can be many significant people in a network diagram: family, relatives, co-workers, and friends. Other people we meet can also be important contacts for us. You can also mark pets and the close relationships you have had in the past. If you feel there is no one, you could tag in the picture, think of the people you meet or meet whom you might smile at or which you greet. You can draw another chart to describe your social network as such, than you want it to be in two years.



Reflect:

A. What relationships are you happy with and what are you dissatisfied with?

B. Whom can you turn to if you need help?

C. What would you like to add to your social network?

D. What current relationships can you bring closer if you wish?

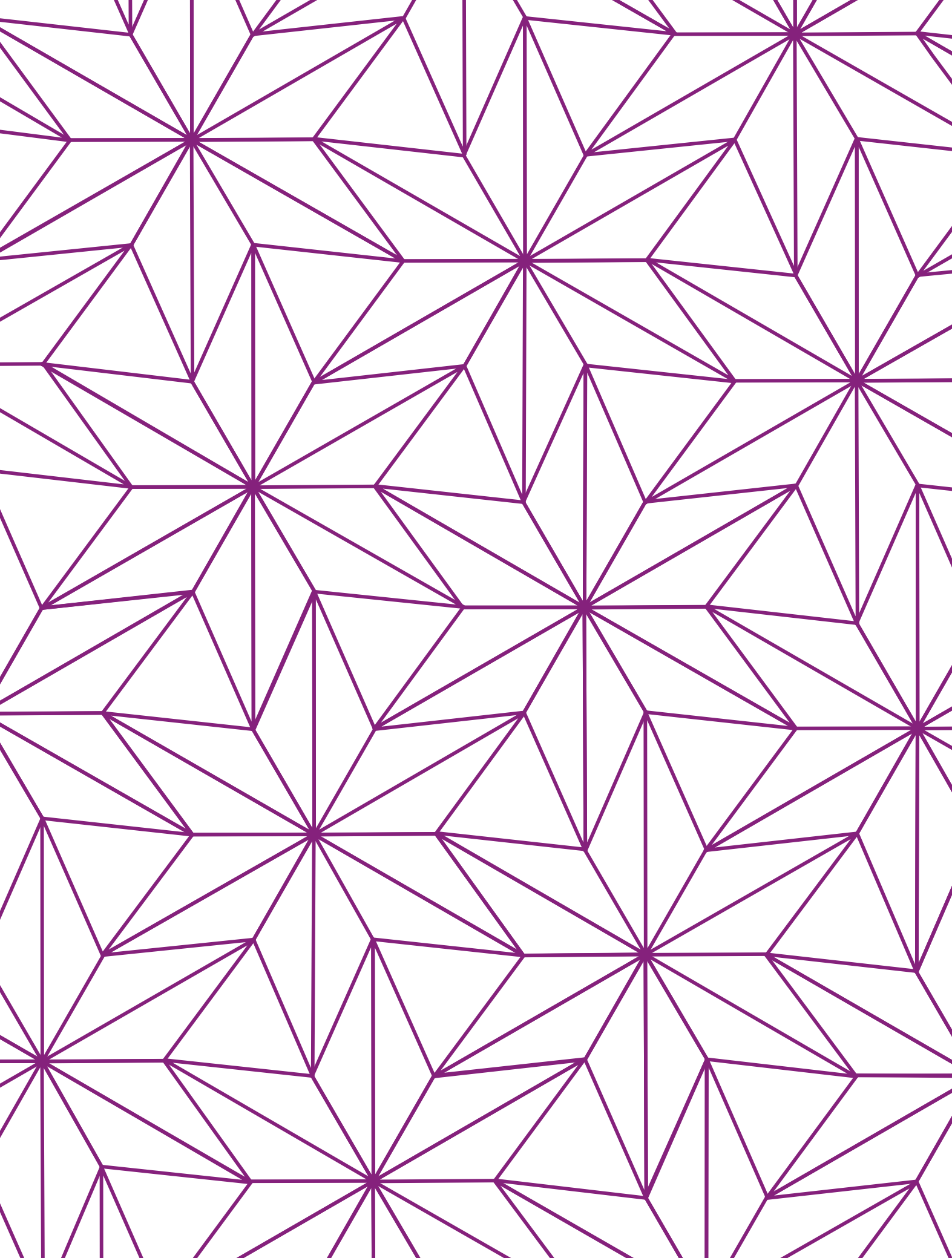
E. What would you like to reduce from your social network?

5 Assertiveness is important

A. Choose from the list of assertiveness rights the four most important rights for you.

B. What prevent / have prevented you from exercising your rights?

C. What things help / have helped you exercise your rights?



The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of purple lines forming a complex, interconnected geometric design of triangles and polygons. A solid purple rectangular box is centered on the page, containing the main text and a large number.

7.

***FIND YOUR
OWN WAY IN
YOUR LIFE***

7.1 Pleasant moments are everyday treasures

Do something you have never or for a long time not done; however, you have always wanted to do. Listening to music, baking pastries, going for a jog and having coffee with a friend – a few examples of pleasant moments. We may think that pleasant things must be huge and unique, like a large party or a trip abroad. Pleasant everyday moments do not have to be anything big or special though. A good mood is composed of small, daily moments in your everyday life.

Sometimes you may feel like you cannot fit anything pleasant into your day at all. It might take some practice to notice the daily moments that bring joy to you. Nevertheless, practice is worth it: though as the ability to notice pleasant moments enables you to focus your thoughts on what is good in life.

Set up pleasant moments

You simply should not wait for pleasant moments to occur naturally – you can just as well begin setting them up consciously. Reserve some time from your calendar for a pleasant moment tomorrow. Having a relaxed breakfast, watching your favourite series or going for a walk – what is your pleasant moment?

When you decide to arrange something small and pleasant for every day, you are taking care of your well-being. You will also have something nice to look forward to each day. It will be easier to make it through difficult moments when you can look forward to a pleasant upcoming moment.

Examples of pleasant moments:

- Sending an important email
- Making tasty buns
- Taking a nap
- Finally arranging a meeting with a friend
- Making a packed lunch
- Reading articles on the Internet
- Talking with a stranger on the bus stop

- Finding a lost item
- Getting a compliment on especially good-looking hair
- Finally getting a laundry slot in the washing room of the student housing unit
- Seeing an improvement in tense relations with a certain one

Source: Life skill courses in autumn 2014 / spring 2015

Look after your mental health, small things matter

We all have mental health. Our mind's well-being varies daily. The Study or work stress during a busy everyday life stress can accumulate. It is important to stop thinking and taking advantage of the little moments of everyday life. Those moments will help you to relax.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- What kinds of moments bring joy to your everyday life?
 - Do you recognize them easily?
 - What sort of pleasant moment could you set up for yourself tomorrow?
-

Shaping your reality

Much of what we have accomplished in the past and what we hope to accomplish in the future takes time. Like the saying, 'Rome was not built in a day' our reality is not either constructed by one single action. Let's say that you start in the circle. Every move you make your gold comes a little bit closer. At first, it might not look much but imagine where you could be after ten moves or hundred moves later.

At each moment in time, you can choose what you will do and how you will react to what is happening.

If you consciously choose to do or think about something that will improve your emotional and physical health, you will gradually improve your personal reality. This is how you can shape your life.

By taking many small steps, you can improve your life and your reality.

7.2 Resources give you energy for everyday life

Every one of us has the potential to become the star of their own life. This helps us feel like the main character in our lives, someone who has influence over it. Life seems to hold more possibilities and the future looks bright.

When you look after yourself, you are also telling yourself that you are important and worth the effort. You can learn to be more lenient and kinder to yourself. You will notice your successes and positive changes. You will accept that you are not perfect and sometimes make mistakes but are valuable regardless.

Try to approach things through your strengths and by encouraging yourself. When you encounter setbacks, focus more on the solutions than the problems themselves. Moreover, dare to dream – dreams give you strength for your everyday life.

Try to approach things through your strengths and by encouraging yourself.

When you recognise your strengths and resources, it is easier for you to use them in your life. Resources could include your own attributes or anything related to your environment that gives you energy and takes things in a good direction.

The following are examples of resources:

- good relationships
- organised nature
- ability to plan for the future
- familiar local shopkeeper who sells bread approaching it's the best before date at a discount

You can surely find things from yourself and your environment that give you energy. Locate your resources and try to utilise them as diversely as possible in different situations. This allows you to maximise their ability to do good.

Focus on solutions when faced with setbacks

Difficulties and failures are a part of life – no one can avoid them. What matters is how you act when faced with setbacks. By focusing on solutions instead of problems, it will be easier to move forward and avoid the unnecessary feelings of guilt.

Remember the three principles of solution orientation:

- 1 Only fix what is broken.
- 2 Do more of what works.
- 3 Do less of what does not work.

Even small choices we make when faced with setbacks can often affect the outcome. When you utilise solution orientation in troubled life situations and harness your resources to help you, the outcome is more likely to be good than if you only wallow in the problems.

Tips for solution-orientation:

- Pay attention to what works – your attention makes it stronger.
- You have all the resources you need to make a change or solve a problem. Just do your best – whatever is possible right now.
- You are the foremost expert on yourself, your work and your relationships. You know what is good for you.
- Set your goals yourself according to your own will and wishes.
- Problems have multiple solutions. Search for the solutions that differ from the usual methods of action.
- Playfulness, humour, creativity and positivity are all important when searching for new potential solutions.
- Small changes might solve even the larger problems.
- It is more useful to create mental images of what the solutions look like than to focus on dwelling in the past.
- Utilise your own and others' experiences when solving problems.
- Solve problems together with other people.
- Remember to give feedback to everyone involved in the solving process.
- Thank yourself and others involved.

Dreaming provide energy for your everyday life

Do not forget about dreaming as one way to influence your well-being. Dreams about the future both encourage us to create something new and develop us as human beings. If we deny dreaming from us, we live in an energy-saving mode.

The journey towards the dream can often be wonderful in itself even if the dream does not ever come true. Dreaming in itself helps you cope better in your everyday life. Dreaming brings meaning to life as you have goals to aim for. Daydreaming is also an excellent way to relax.

★ QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

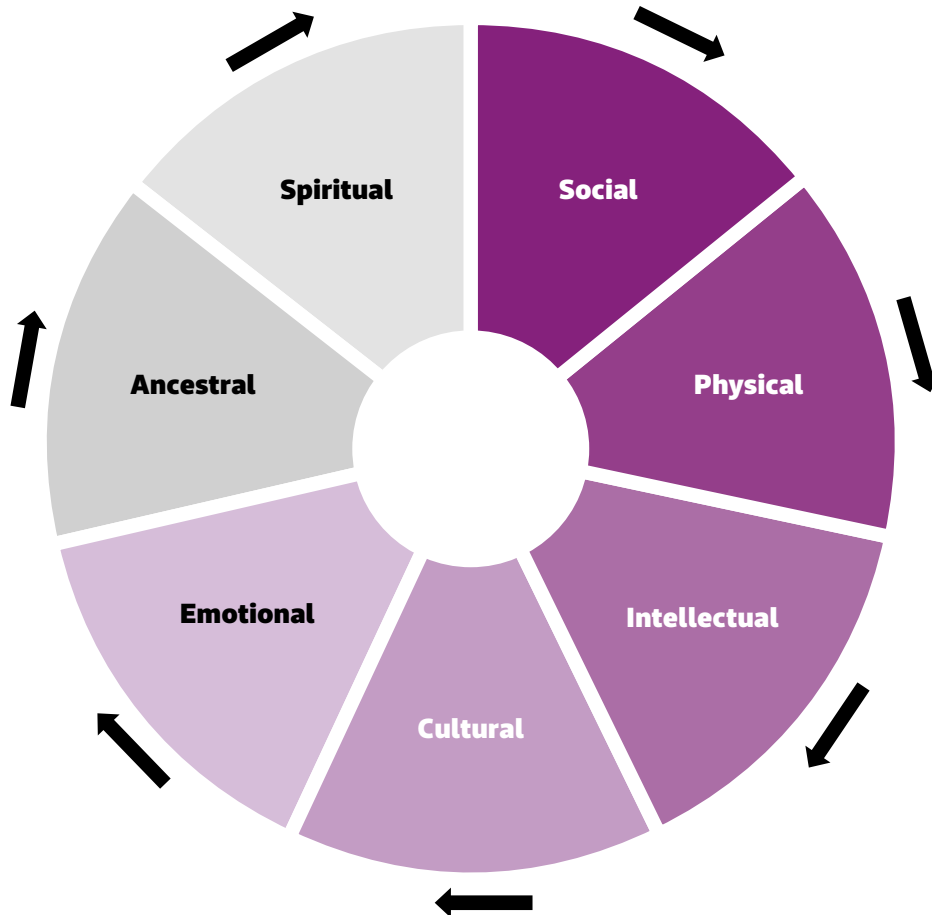
- Can you name your strengths and things that give you energy (=resources)?
 - How do you act when faced with setbacks?
 - What do you dream?
-

Exercises

1 My Wheel of Life: Maintaining a positive balance

Based on Life Skills Training.

- 1 Look at each of seven dimensions.
- 2 In pairs: First, one you will talk and other will listen to. Take one dimension at the time. Talk about the facts, your feelings, and your hopes in that dimension. Then change turns. Go through all the dimensions.
- 3 For each dimension, write down your strengths your achievements and your plans to build on your strengths, and to improve and be the very best.
- 4 Mark your order of priority what areas you need to work on to determine your personal balance and power.



2 Life is learning

How have you survived the difficult moments in your life?

Write also about your positive experiences during your life?

3 Find your own slogan

A slogan can help you see things the way you want to see them – by consciously using the power of thoughts to cope and feel better. You can use your slogan as a general life motto or as a thought that gets you into a good mood even when faced with challenges. A slogan can help you continually to reinforce your belief that you are good enough and will manage just fine.

A good slogan encourages you and spurs you on. For instance:

- If life gives you lemons, keep them. Because hey, free lemons!
- Be awesome.
- Ships are safe in the harbour but that is not why people build them.
- Life is too important to be taken seriously, and too short to enjoy later.



4 Practice dreaming

An example of how to practice dreaming is writing down your dreams, big and small. You can draw a treasure map or write down the path of your dreams.

If dreaming feels difficult, approach it through your goals. Where would you like to be in life in 10 years? On the other hand, your needs and values can help you in dreaming, too. What would your life look like if all of your most important needs were satisfied and you were leading your life to the full according to your own values?

Start with the things you consider important and worth pursuing. No matter what your dreams are like, they are yours and just right as they are. Do not forget that even if your dreams never come true, you are good enough as you are. You have the right to exist and use your voice as you are.

5 My future path

Draw what you would like your future path to look like for the next 30 years, for example.

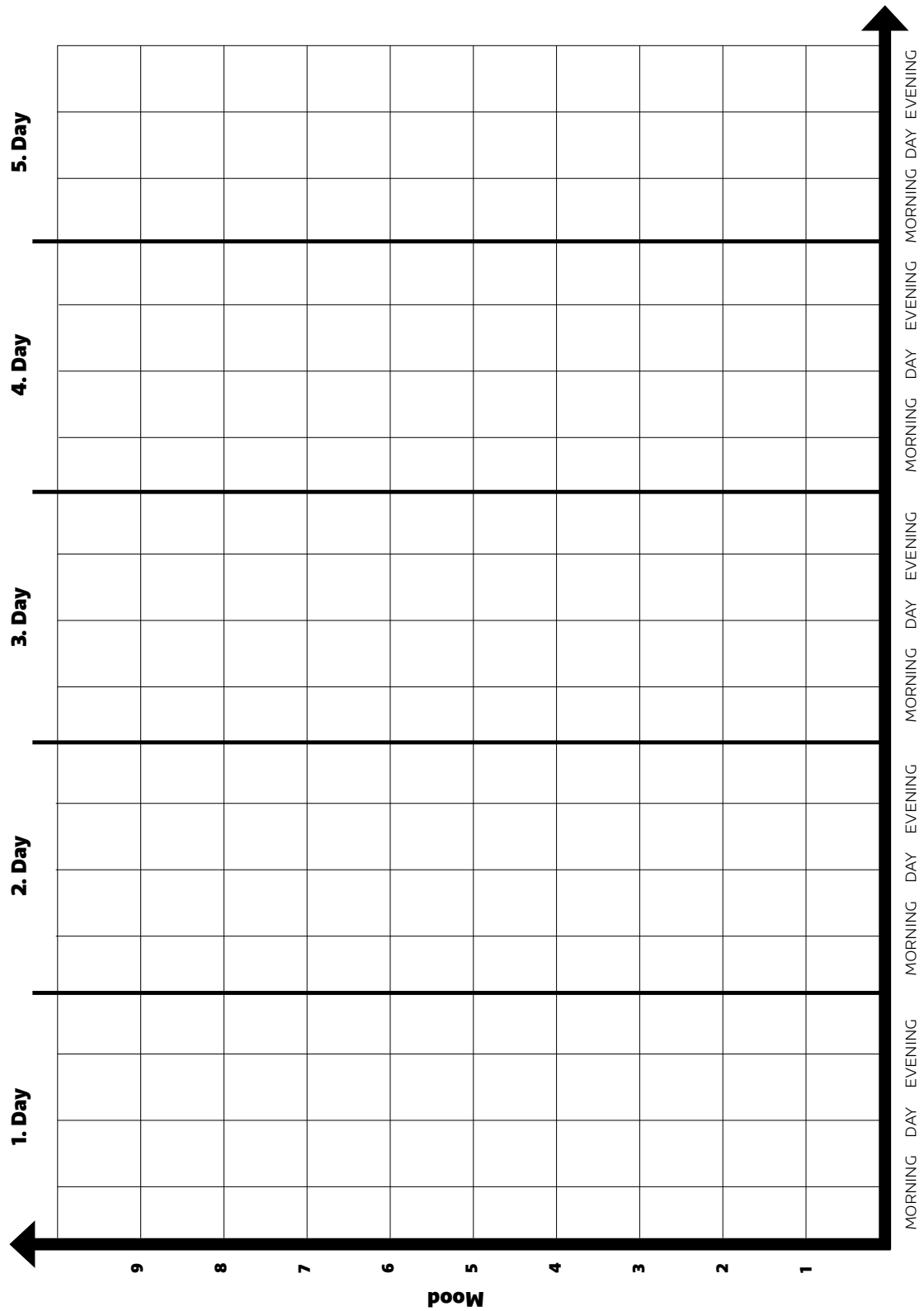


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Appendix

Continue your mood graph for five days



Welcome to the journey to learn well-being skills!

This guide is intended as a workbook for all students and young adults for a strengthening of life management skills.

The guide is available as an electronic publication by Nyyti ry website - www.nyyti.fi.

The guide is also suitable for Well-being course instructors. In addition, the guide can be used by all professionals who feel they need ideas and tools for supporting life management of students and young people in groups and in personal guidance situations.

The aim of the well-being skills guide is to help find ways to maintain and increase one's own well-being, self-care and self-knowledge. The guide contains information and exercises central to life management.