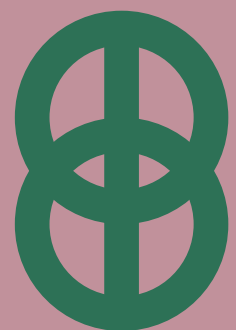
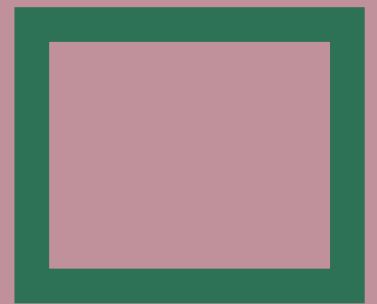
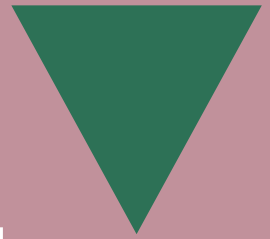


Journey of Emotions

**Art-based Methods for
Working with Adolescents:
Emotional skills &
Autobiographical work**





About the Guidebook



Journey of Emotions – Art-based Methods for Working with Adolescents: Emotional skills & Autobiographical work

One of the main objectives of using art-based methods in child protection services is to help children get in touch with their emotions and memories. This will help them become more self-aware. Art enriches interaction and communication, especially on emotional levels where there may be a lack of natural linguistic connection. Every child needs versatile ways of getting themselves seen and heard, this way they can become more associated with their emotions. This is particularly important for children in complicated and vulnerable life situations. (E.g., Kähkönen 2013.)

Child protection services aim to create space for emotional expression and to prevent obstacles from forming due to the lack of this. Thus, art-based methods provide functional tools a child and their loved ones may need. Versatile methods of communicating are needed in child protection services when children have lived in traumatic environments. They may be distant due to shame and hurt, with conflicting feelings they cannot put into words. (E.g., Kähkönen 2013.)

Our guidebook is designed for professionals of institutional child protection. Our objective was to create an approachable, low threshold method package for them to use when working with adolescent clients. We hope that by the help of our guidebook, it would be easier for professionals to use art-based methods as a tool. The methods in the guidebook are created with the use of theory, ready-made methods and our own adaptations, thus they are a mixture of all three. Our aim was to make exercises that are easily executed without the need of long-term commitments. Thus, all of them can be implemented individually without any particular order. Howev-

er, the nature of the guidebook is arranged in such a way, that it can be completed as a continuum when the entire package is utilised. In addition, the methods can be implemented both as individual and group guidance's.

Our personal enthusiasm and passion for art-based methods inspired us to work with it. We hope that by using our guidebook, professionals in the field of child protection would gain an interest on the topic as well.

The guidebook consists of introductions to emotional skills and autobiographical work, as well as six methods based on those subjects. At the end of the guidebook there is a list of references and tips for further reading.

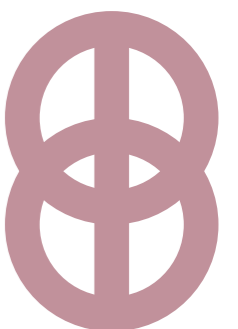
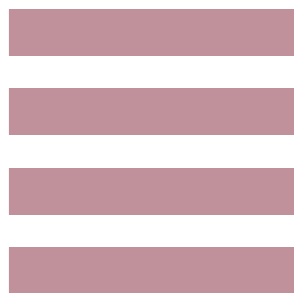
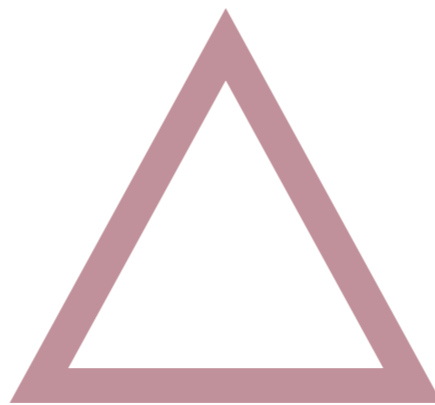


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Emotional skills

Journey of Emotions – Art-based Methods for Working with Adolescents: Emotional skills & Autobiographical work

Emotional skills refer to the ability to recognise, express and regulate ones' emotions. Emotional skills are the foundation of self-awareness and good mental health. They are important for many reasons. They help express and regulate emotions, control inner conflicts when necessary, recognise needs, be assertive when it comes to boundaries, build successful relationships, take care of well-being and live an enjoyable life. Without good emotional skills one can easily become a prisoner of built-up emotions. It can control their life without making conscious decisions about which direction to go to. These skills navigate the reaction of one's own emotions.

Emotional skills are taught in early childhood. If a child or adolescent hasn't been able to talk about their emotions, it becomes hard for them to also recognise them. In addition, as mentioned earlier, emotions can become distractions in decision making. If it becomes hard to differentiate them from one another, it also becomes hard to understand the underlining reason behind them. It may become difficult for someone to realise that an exterior emotion is what in fact impacts their current feelings. By distinguishing emotions from one another means setting responsible boundaries for one's own life. Behind a burst of cry may underline fear or a sense of helplessness. Additionally, behind rage may underline suppressed shame.

In order to become aware of ongoing emotions, means to take them seriously and accept them as they are. This does not mean to transfer them onto someone else but rather to pose self-respect. Once these emotions have been established, the needs behind them become more transparent.

In addition, anxiety is a prevailing feeling in adolescents. It is a mixture of different emotions, which is why anxiety is not an emotion in itself. It becomes more difficult to decipher where it stems from. Physical symptoms such as dizziness, sweating and heart palpitations can derive from anxiety and thus their acknowledgement and management is taught in connection with emotional skills as well.

As Salminen (2008) explains: "To become fully whole, means to bravely overcome every shameful aspect of ourselves. This is who I am, together with my anxiety and fears."



Emotional Compass

Supplies: Paper | Coloured pens/pencils | List of emotions (separate sheet)

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Time: 1-2 hours

The aim of this method is to improve young people's ability to become more aware of their emotional state and thereby learn to regulate it. In addition, the emotional compass aims to teach new constructive ways of expressing emotions and also enrich them with new vocabulary. This method is constructed into an individual guidance but if there are several participants, the method can be implemented as a group.

1. The instructor shares different feelings words with the adolescent. The adolescent writes down all of the words that come into his or hers' mind. If needed, the "list of emotions" can be utilised to find more words.

2. The adolescent draws a compass on a big piece of paper. In the cardinal points (north, east, south, west) are added the main emotions – happy, sad, fear and anger. These cardinal points can be written in whichever colour the adolescent feels comfortable with.

3. Next, the adolescent aims to add as many words as possible into the cardinal points, so under the main emotions. Try at least 10-12. The words are added under the emotions the adolescent feels it fits best in. If some words go under multiple cardinal points, they are added under each of them.

4. If it is hard to place the words in the compass or the adolescent hasn't experienced such emotions before and thus doesn't know where they may belong, the instructor must help and guide them.

☆ *Additional exercise*

The youth can create a table for each main emotion. The table consists of "Emotion" and "Origin". The aim is to list the words found in the previous exercise and write down which situation has possibly triggered that particular emotion. For example, under the main emotion of sadness may lay a feeling of doleful – the adolescent has found that the origin has come from a bad exam.

Note! "hungry" and "tired" are not emotions but needs. Also, feelings of jealousy, anxiety and envy are mixtures of emotions and are formed through many different feelings.

Body of Emotions

Supplies: Paper roll* | Painting supplies | List of emotions (separate sheet) | Pencils/Pens

//

Time: 1-2 hours

The aim of this exercise is for the adolescent to locate where they feel their emotions in their bodies. It is important that the adolescent can connect with their physical emotions in order to understand their emotions. This method can be implemented in a group or individually.

1. The adolescent lays down on a big piece of paper while the instructor outlines their body with a pencil. Once this is completed, the adolescent can write down the body parts we have in our anatomy, to make the task clearer.

2. The instructor hands out the list of emotions. In their own time, the adolescent paints the emotions onto the body parts they feel best correlates to that particular emotion. For example, fear in the chest and, excitement in the stomach. If the adolescent doesn't know which emotion corresponds to each body part, this can be discussed together with the instructor. The adolescent may have never felt certain physical emotions before, so a general understanding is beneficial. Remember to write the emotions onto the anatomy so that the colours aren't forgotten.

3. When the task is completed, an open discussion is executed. If the method has been completed as a group, the adolescents can share their findings with one another.

* (if not possible, big papers can be attached together)

Six Feelings

Supplies: A3 paper | Pens/ Masking tape (to split the paper) | Painting supplies | Coloured pens/ Pencils

// Time: 30min – 1 hour

The aim of the task is to support the growth of emotional skills by using art-based methods. Art is used as a tool to visualise ones' own emotions and recognise them.

1. The adolescents split an A3 paper into six parts. He or she does this however way they want to.

2. Next, the instructor names one emotion at a time, giving the adolescent 1 minute to complete the painting. When the time is up, the instructor moves on to the next emotion. Even if the adolescent has yet to finish an emotion, they move onto the next one.

3. The emotions can be painted however way desired for example by only using colours or by drawing.

4. If the method is completed in a group, the adolescents can share their paintings with the others without telling them which paintings correspond to which emotions. In this way the adolescents realise that others may perceive the link between colours and emotions differently to the maker.

★ *Additional exercise*

The adolescent chooses one emotion they would like to paint a bigger version of. The following painting doesn't have to look or be the same as the one used in the previous task. The emotion is chosen purely by intuition.

Six feelings list:

- Love
- Fear
- Surprise
- Happiness
- Sadness
- Anger

Auto- biographical work

Journey of Emotions – Art-based Methods for Working with Adolescents: Emotional skills & Autobiographical work

Autobiographical work aims to reach a piece of a child's own life story. Life story is formed in connection to other people. The way the child has been accepted, heard and treated has an effect on how the child sees themselves.

Past events exist in present thoughts, feelings, values, attitudes and perceptions every day. It affects our behaviour and coping mechanism. The past has an effect on adolescents' everyday choices. Interpretations they make based on their experiences define what kind of choices they make, how they behave, whether or not they trust other people, how they value themselves, and how they express themselves. The adolescent structures, organizes and analyses their story based on their experiences.

Looking back and becoming more aware of their own story, the adolescent can find explanations for their own behaviour. However, autobiographical work also means being present in the current moment. Events from the past are addressed, referring to how they feel and appear now as opposed to how they have felt in the past. What kinds of interpretations can be made from them? In addition, autobiographical work is a process of looking ahead, finding necessary resources, strength, joy and energy.

Often the past events adolescents under child protection have undergone, are more painful than what they are capable of coping with due to their age and development. The adolescent will have a better understanding on who they are and how they have become that way, once they know their history. To structure their own experiences, emotions and memories, adolescents need adults for support. This way they can travel from past to present safely.

Autobiographical work is an essential part of the treatment and rehabilitation of adolescents. It's a way for them to connect with their feelings, experiences and memories. Painful events can be tamed when they are shared with other people. As the adolescents' self-knowledge develops, the professional gets to know them on a deeper level.



The Pictures from My Past

Supplies: Aquarelle paper | Coloured pens/markers | Painting appliances

//

Time: 2 hours

The objective of this exercise is to activate the memory and bring out recollections. It is a means of constructing a story to replace possible memory gaps and storylessness. The exercise is designed for individual guidance's but can be implemented for groups as well. For the latter, questions in the second part of the exercise can be left out and the completed pictures can be addressed together with the group.

1. Firstly, look back at the adolescent's childhood home and its floor plan. The adolescent paints or draws the floor plan of that home, disregarding the accuracy of proportions. The professional can help by asking questions about the location, appearance, furniture and rooms of the home. Furniture and items that the adolescent remembers, are painted or drawn.

2. When the floor plan is ready, the professional asks the adolescent to paint/draw three memories that first come to mind, on separate papers. This is done, using their "less functional" hand. At the same time, the professional asks questions related to the memories, such as: what is happening in the picture, who are the people in it, what have you thought of that person, where is it located? The adolescent does not answer vocally, but by drawing, writing or painting the answers in the picture.

3. Lastly, the professional and the adolescent can together discuss the addressed topics.

☆ If seen appropriate, the exercise can be repeated by changing the childhood home to another place, such as a place where the adolescent was at their happiest or a place where a crisis happened.

The Life Course

Supplies: A3 –paper | Pens/Markers | Painting appliances

//

Time: 1-2 hours

The adolescent draws or paints a horizontal line on a big paper. Years are added up until the present moment, starting from birth. After this, the line is divided into life stages e.g., "happy times", "time at home", "time in foster care", "difficult times". Together with the adolescent, try to bring back memories and events to write on the life course line. While recollecting, the professional can help by asking questions regarding the adolescents' places of residence, schools, memories, family members, friends and other important people. Emotions and individuals can be associated to experiences. Linked to this, it is helpful to ask questions such as: How did you feel about it? Who was with you? Do you remember what you were thinking about?

Continue the life course line a little bit further. Together, think about where the adolescent would want to be and do in 2-, 5-, and 10 years from now. What are their wishes and expectations?

☆ *Additional exercise*

Think about the strengths of the adolescent together. What strengths does the adolescent recognize in themselves? Choose one or two of those strengths and highlight the event or period of time on the life course, in which these strengths were prevalent. At the end of the horizontal line, the adolescent adds how and when they can utilise his/her strengths in the present. How can these strengths be used in a more reinforced way? Can the adolescent recognise any other strengths in themselves?

☆ *Some strengths for help*

- Compassionate
- Open
- Helpful
- Thankful
- Honest
- Bold
- Open-minded
- Precise
- Artistic
- Supportive
- Friendly
- Persistent
- Funny
- Sporty
- Considerate
- Fair
- Hopeful
- Sensitive
- Socially intelligent
- Easily excited
- Creative
- Trustworthy

A Collage of Experiences

Supplies: Aquarelle paper | Painting supplies | Scissors | Pens/markers | Glue/tape

Time: 1-2 hours

The objective of this exercise is to bring to light the adolescents' backgrounds, dreams and interests. The exercise can be implemented in groups and if necessary, for individuals as well.

1. The adolescents draw or paint the outlines of their feet with the help of a partner/professional. On each toe, the adolescent writes about their background. Where do they come from and what have they experienced?

2. Next, the outlines of their hands are drawn/painted. On each finger, the adolescent writes down the things they would want to do and experience in the future.

3. Lastly, a heart is drawn/painted. In the heart, the adolescent writes down the aspects that interest and excite them.

4. If the exercise is done in a group, the adolescent can introduce their work to others. The works can be placed in a ring of people and the adolescents can determine themselves, on what they want to share. A collage is made of all the adolescents' feet, hands and hearts. The edges are cut off from the pictures, and they are all joined together on a big paper. In the case that a big enough paper isn't available to glue the pieces on, the pictures can be joined together from the edges with tape. The pictures are assembled in a circle so that the feet are on the outer ring, hands on the middle ring and hearts in the inner ring.

5. If the exercise is implemented for an individual, the illustration of the adolescent is discussed together with the professional. The empty edges of the pictures are cut off and they are joined together in a way that the adolescent sees best. This can be done on a big paper or by joining the edges of the pictures together like explained in the previous step. In the case of difficult linguistic expression, the adolescent can draw or paint the themes addressed in the exercise.



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Attachments

List of emotions for "Emotional Compass"

Calm	Enchanted
Vengeance	Disappointed
Confident	Hilarious
Annoyed	Frustrated
Safe	Self-loving
Valuable	Central
Courageous	Gloomy
Guilt	Casual
Sunken	Insensitive
Meaningful	Comforted
Sad	Humiliated
Longing	Repentant
Affectionate	
Determined	
Glum	
Empty	
Grateful	
Bitter	
Melancholic	

Attachments

List of emotions for "Body of Emotions"

Anguish
 Joy
 Stress
 Tension
 Grief
 Love
 Fear
 Anger
 Astonishment
 Shame
 Peace
 Safety