Training Manual on Work and Well-Being: How Can I Take Good Care of Myself?

for Civil Society Organisations Supporting Refugee Protection in Europe

This template was developed within the framework of the Erasmus+ project *Caring to Include* (2024–2027), co-funded by the European Union

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Introduction

Objective

To make participants aware of the importance of wellbeing in the workplace and to give them practical tools to promote their own wellbeing and that of their colleagues. The training focuses on the participants' own responsibility.

Target group

All paid staff, volunteers and interns working at refugee assisting organisations.

Main theme and content

Participants learn about well-being from the perspective of the Self-Determination Theory, developed by Edward Deci and Richard M. Ryan (1985), and how autonomy, connectedness, and competence influence well-being. The Self-Care section raises awareness of the importance of self-care (it is not selfish) and provides guidance on coping with stress.

Understanding and strengthening the importance of mental safety in teams is covered in the Mental Safety and Work Culture section.

Participants answer questions about resilience and learn practical strategies for better coping with stress and setbacks.

Finally, translating the insights gained into concrete actions for daily work.

Methodology

The training is organised into modules.

Homework assignment

Self-test before the training.

Requirements

In the room

Flipchart

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Laptop + projector

Material for Participants

Print out attachments	Number of copies
Self-care wheel	x number of participants
Resilience circle	x number of participants
Implementation canvas	x number of participants

In digital learning environment

PPT

To be brought by trainer

Post-it notes

Pencils and markers

Disclaimer

The programme and exercises in this training manual can be adapted to the needs of the organisation and the participants.

Trainers can adjust the timing, divide the training into shorter sessions, select or replace exercises, and use examples that are relevant to their own organisational context. It is not necessary to follow the programme exactly as described in the manual.

When adapting the training, make sure that there is enough time for reflection, discussion and exchange between participants. Take into account the size and composition of the group, team dynamics, hierarchy and the needs of the participants. It is important to create a safe environment in which participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences.

The training focuses on what staff and volunteers can do to support their own well-being and that of their colleagues. At the same time, the organisation and management also have a role in creating a working environment that supports the physical and mental well-being of staff and volunteers.

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Programme overview

10:00 – 10:30	Programme explanation and introduction
10:30 – 11:15	Well-being: What, why, and how?
11:15 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 12:30	Self-care in balance
12:30 – 13:15	Lunch
13:15 – 14:00	Mental safety and work culture
14:00 – 15:00	The resilience circle
15:00 – 15:15	Break
15:15 – 16:00	From insight to action
16:00 – 16:15	Evaluation and closing

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Detailed programme

INTRODUCTION

10:00 – 10:30 **Explanation of the programme and introduction**

Objective

- Participants understand the programme structure, and any applicable house rules have been explained.
- Participants get to know each other and the trainer.
- Participants are aware of the experiences present in this group.
- Participants are aware of each other's expectations.

Working method

Plenary explanation + short pair assignment

Materials

Flipchart with the training programme on it

Implementation

Explain the programme and the training times. See if there are any questions following the explanation, and then move on to the introductions.

Ask each participant to say something about the following points briefly:

- Name + working group + position.
- How are you feeling? How is your well-being?
- What are your expectations of the training? What do you want to take away from it?

Mention that everyone is participating from their own role and that differences are okay. Then ask the participants to discuss in pairs what wellbeing in the workplace means to them and have them write it down. This can be achieved by discussing it while standing or taking a short walk to promote well-being. After 10 minutes, the trainer briefly explains and records the answers on a flipchart.

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MODULE I.

10:30 – 11:15 **Well-being: What, why, and how?**

Objective

- Participants understand how autonomy, competence and connectedness contribute to their well-being at work.
- Participants understand how they can strengthen these elements.
- Participants will be able to understand the five pillars of wellbeing.
- Participants are aware of where these pillars are present in their work and how they can be strengthened.

Working method

Introduction by the trainer, see separate sections below

Materials

PPT with model, post-it notes, flipchart

Implementation

Step 1: Introduction to well-being and self-determination theory

Start by explaining why well-being is essential and why we are focusing on it by sharing the most important research findings from Caring to Include. Then ask the participants the following general question: What motivates you to do something with full commitment?

To understand well-being, we examine the question: What motivates people and satisfies them in their work? What is their intrinsic motivation? There are various theories on this subject, and we will highlight one of them. According to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), three basic psychological needs directly influence our well-being: Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness.

- **Autonomy** = The feeling that you are in control of your work and can make your own choices.

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- **Competence** = The feeling that you have skills and are growing in your work.
- **Relatedness** = The feeling that you belong and experience support from colleagues.

Research has shown that when these three elements are present, we feel better and are more motivated. When they are absent, we experience more stress and less job satisfaction.

We will now be able to explore how these three building blocks are present in our work and where improvements can be made.

Step 2: Individual reflection

Give each participant three post-it notes.

Ask them to answer one question per sticky note:

- Autonomy: To what extent do you have control over how you perform your work?
- Competence: When do you feel empowered in your work? When do you not?
- Connection: Do you feel connected to your colleagues? How do you notice this?

Give them 5 minutes to write down their thoughts.

Step 3: Discuss in subgroups and plenary

Have participants stick their answers on a flipchart under the appropriate category (Autonomy, Competence, Connection) and go through the answers together and ask in-depth questions:

- Where do we see patterns or similarities?
- Which elements do you feel are strongly present?
- What are the challenges?

Step 4: Transfer to the workplace

Ask participants to discuss in pairs:

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- How can we strengthen autonomy, competence and connection within our organisation?
- Is there one category that we consider more important than the others - for example, I consider connectedness with my colleagues more important than autonomy?
- What small actions can we take to improve our well-being?
- If management is also involved in the training, what is its role? What do employees expect from management?

Feedback: Have each pair share one action with the group. Write these down on a flipchart.

Conclusion: These three elements—autonomy, competence, and connection—form the basis for well-being at work. In the rest of the training, we will examine how to reduce stress, increase mental safety, and achieve a healthy work-life balance. Think about how you can bring more autonomy, competence, or connectedness into your work. Later, we will work on a personal action plan.

11:15 – 11:30 **Break**

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MODULE II.

11:30– 12:30 **Self-care in balance**

Objective

- Participants are aware of their own self-care habits.
- Participants understand the importance of self-care.
- Participants can formulate concrete actions to improve their well-being.

Working method

Introduction by the trainer, see separate sections below

Materials

A4 sheet with the Self-Care Wheel for each participant

Pencils and pens

Implementation

Step 1: Introduction to self-care

In refugee organisations, we often work with great passion and commitment. But how well do we actually take care of ourselves? Self-care is not selfish; it is essential for continuing to work sustainably and effectively.

Olga Phoenix has developed a self-care wheel with six dimensions of self-care:

1. Physical self-care – health, nutrition, exercise, sleep
2. Mental self-care – thoughts and intellectual stimulation
3. Emotional self-care – recognising, expressing and regulating feelings
4. Social self-care – relationships and social connection
5. Spiritual self-care – meaning, purpose and values
6. Professional self-care – work-life balance and personal development

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We can now examine what your self-care looks like and where there is room for improvement.

Step 2: Completing the self-care wheel

1. Give each participant a printed 'Self-care wheel'
2. Ask participants to fill in a score for each dimension (1-10): How well do I take care of myself in this area?
3. Ask them to write down: Which habits help them in this area? What is missing?

Optional: Have participants colour in their self-care wheel as a visual tool and experience how meditative colouring can be!

Step 3: Plenary feedback

1. Ask the following questions:
    - What stands out to you about your self-care wheel?
    - In which area would you like to see improvement?
    - What small action could you take?
2. Plenary feedback:
    - Ask a few participants to share their insights.
    - Write common patterns on a flipchart.

Step 4: Self-care action plan

1. Ask participants to write down for themselves: One concrete action they can take in the coming week is to take better care of themselves.
2. Ask everyone to explain what they have written down briefly.

Step 5: Conclusion

Self-care is an ongoing process. Small habits can make a big difference. How can we help each other, as individuals and as a team, to take better care of ourselves? Conclude with a short check-out round: What have you learned from this exercise?

12:30 – 13:15 **Lunch**

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MODULE III.

13:15 – 14:00 **Mental safety and work culture**

Objective

- Participants understand the importance of mental safety in the workplace.
- Participants understand their own work culture and recognise areas for improvement.
- What do we mean by mental safety at work – Word cloud.
- Characterise the work culture at your organisation.

Working method

Introduction by the trainer, see separate sections below

Materials

PPT, post-it notes, flipchart

Implementation

Step 1: Introduction to mental safety

Begin the introduction with the following dilemmas. Indicate in the room where you will be able to stand if you agree and where if you disagree (form a line 1-10 to what extent you agree with the following statements)*:

1. *"Discussing mistakes openly within the team is always a good idea."* Discuss: When is it easy or difficult to share a mistake? What makes it safe/unsafe?
2. *"I find it easier to give feedback than to receive it."* Discuss: What helps you to give or receive feedback in a safe way?
3. *"If I disagree with my team or manager, I always speak up."* Discuss: What makes it easier/more difficult to speak up?
4. *"Being vulnerable (e.g. admitting that you don't know something or are unsure about something) is part of professional behaviour."* Discuss: What does vulnerability mean to you in the workplace? When does it feel safe/unsafe?

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**You can also adjust the statements to your particular organisational context.*

Then explain what mental safety means and why it is important. Within our organisation, cooperation and openness are crucial. But do we really feel free to express our opinions, admit mistakes and take risks? This depends on mental safety – the feeling that you are able to speak and act without fear of negative consequences.

Harvard research by Amy Edmondson (1999) on team dynamics reveals that teams with high mental safety perform better because they are willing to discuss mistakes and learn from them. In 2012, Google established Project Aristotle to investigate why some teams perform better than others. Characteristics of mental safety:

1. Mistakes are able to be made without fear of punishment.
2. Daring to express opinions, even if they differ.
3. Asking for feedback and help without shame.
4. Feeling like you belong and are valued.

Why is it so important?

1. Better cooperation – teams function more efficiently
2. Fewer mistakes – problems are solved more quickly
3. More innovation – people dare to share new ideas
4. Greater engagement – employees feel heard and valued

What undermines mental safety?

1. Fear of judgment or punishment
2. Strict hierarchy in which only leaders speak
3. Adverse reactions to mistakes or questions
4. Lack of open communication

How do you create mental safety?

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1. Listen without judgement – show respect and interest
2. Normalise mistakes – see mistakes as learning opportunities
3. Encourage open communication – encourage questions and ideas
4. Give constructive feedback – focus on growth and improvement
5. Show vulnerability as a leader – admit your own mistakes and be open

We will now examine how mental safety is present in your team and how we can strengthen it using specific statements.

Step 2: Interactive exercise

1. Think back to a time when you felt mentally safe or unsafe in a team.
2. What made the difference: How are we able to promote team safety? What makes our work culture strong and safe? What hinders mental safety in our team?
3. Discuss in subgroups:
   - Positive aspects – what should we keep?
   - Areas for improvement - what are we able to address?
   - Write down one action you can take to increase mental safety in your team. Ask a participant to share this with the group.

Use concrete situations from your team(s) for the interactive exercise. Optional: Group role-play on the work culture - hand out play cards and portray the issues faced.

Step 3: Conclusion

A safe environment leads to better performance, collaboration and well-being. A mentally safe team is a successful team! A culture of mental safety does not happen by itself, but starts with small changes. What action can you take, either as a team or as an individual, tomorrow to create a safer working environment?

If management is also involved in the training, what is its role in this? What do employees expect from management?

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MODULE IV.

14:00 – 15:00 **The resilience circle**

Objective

- Participants understand what resilience is.
- Participants recognise the factors that contribute to resilience.
- Participants are aware of their own resilience and know how to strengthen it.

Working method

Introduction by the trainer, see separate sections below.

Materials

PPT with the four pillars of resilience, A4 with the Resilience circle

Implementation

Step 1: Introduction to resilience

Working at a refugee organisation can be challenging. How do you deal with setbacks, stress and uncertainty? This has to do with resilience - the ability to adapt and remain strong in the face of difficulties.

Four pillars of resilience:

1. Mindset: How you think about challenges and failure.
2. Emotional regulation: How you deal with stress and emotions.
3. Support: How do you utilise resources?
4. Self-care: How do you take care of yourself?

You will be able to fill in the resilience circle and develop specific strategies and actions for each of the four pillars of resilience to enhance your own resilience.

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Step 2: The Resilience Circle

1. Give participants an A4 sheet with the circle and four pillars on it.
2. Have them fill it in individually first.
3. Then form subgroups and have them discuss their strategies: What worked well for one of the pillars? What could be improved?

Ask participants to identify the insights they have gained and take them back to work with them. Explanation: Reflection helps you gain insight into your own resilience, making you stronger and more aware in challenging situations.

Step 3: Conclusion

Resilience is a skill that can be trained. Small actions, such as challenging negative thoughts or seeking support, can make a significant difference. What is one action you will be able to try next week?

15:00 – 15:15 **Break**

15:15 – 16:00 **From insight to action**

Goal

- Participants will be able to translate the knowledge and skills acquired during the training into practical actions that they can apply in their daily work.

Working method

Introduction by the trainer, see separate sections below.

Materials

Flipchart, implementation canvas, post-it notes

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Implementation

Step 1: Review of the training

Today, we discussed various aspects of well-being in the workplace, including the self-determination model, self-care, resilience, and mental safety. However, knowledge alone does not change anything – it is action that does. In this exercise, you will be able to draw up a concrete implementation plan so that you can apply this in practice.

Step 2: The "Bridge to practice"

Question for the group: What can go wrong in practice when implementing wellbeing strategies in the workplace?

1. Write down obstacles on a flipchart (e.g. lack of time, no support from colleagues or managers, old habits).
2. Briefly discuss how these barriers can be overcome.
3. Ask participants to consider a personal strategy to address at least one obstacle.
4. For managers, on an organisational level, what is your role in this?

Step 3: Implementation canvas

Handout: Participants individually fill in an implementation canvas with the following components:

1. Goal – What do I want to implement in my work (or team)?
2. Why? – Why is this important to me and my colleagues?
3. First step – What is a small action I can take tomorrow?
4. Resources – Who or what can help me with this?
5. Possible obstacles and solutions – What could hold me back, and how will I be able to deal with this?
6. For managers: What are you able to do as a manager? What obstacles do you see?

If there is sufficient time, ask participants to discuss their canvas with someone else for extra commitment and inspiration.

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Step 4: Conclusion

Ask participants to write one concrete action on a post-it note and stick it on a 'commitment board'.

Plenary session: Ask a few participants to share their action with the group.

Make agreements for follow-up:

Can they check in with a colleague within a month to see how things are going?

Would anyone like to set up a buddy system for support and motivation?

Is peer review desirable?

16:00 – 16:15 **Evaluation and conclusion**

What will the participants be able to take away from this training? What will they be able to work on? What insights has it given them? What loose ends are still left? What have they learned from today?

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ANNEX I.

Training Plan: Module on 'Mental Safety and Work Culture'

Time:	What?	Who and tools needed:
10:00-10:05	1. Short introduction about the project and the training module	
10:05-10:10	2. What do we mean by mental safety at work? Word Cloud	Flipchart
10:10-10:15	3. Characterize the work culture at HHC with one word - each person	Post-it
10:15 - 10: 30	4. Dilemmas exercise: We say the four statements and people form a line based on to what extent they agree and then we discuss - *"Discussing mistakes openly within the team is always a good idea."* Discuss: When is it easy or difficult to share a mistake? What makes it safe/unsafe? - *"I find it easier to give feedback than to receive it."* Discuss: What helps you to give or receive feedback in a safe way? - *"If I disagree with my team or manager, I always speak up."* Discuss: What makes it easier/more difficult to speak up? - *"Being vulnerable (e.g. admitting that you don't know something or are unsure about something) is part of professional behaviour."* Discuss: What does vulnerability mean to you in the workplace? When does it feel	

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	safe/unsafe?	
10:30 - 10:35	5. Explanation of mental safety - share handout and people will read it	Handout to be print - see p2
10:35-10:45	6. Why do you think this is important? Gather ideas and collect on the flipchart - then reveal 4 points written on the next flipchart page	Flipchart - write down 4 points before
10:45-10:50	7. What undermines mental safety? Again, brainstorm, then show 4 points	Flipchart - write down 4 points before
10:50 - 11:00	8. How do you create mental safety? Brainstorm on the flipchart - leave conclusions on the board	Share the conclusions of the Handbook
11:00 - 11:15	9. Pairwork: think of a situation that felt safe and unsafe at work, discuss the difference - share	
11:15 - 11:30	10. What can I do to promote a safe working environment - pair-work and then share	Post-it

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ANNEX II.

Burnout Quiz

Search and Rescue Society of British Columbia (SARBC)

ARE YOU BURNING OUT?

Have you noticed changes in yourself over the past 6 months?

Assign a number from 1 (for no or little change) to 5 (for a great deal of change).

___ 1. Do you tire more easily? Feel fatigued rather than energetic?

___ 2. Are people annoying you be telling you, "You don't look so good lately"?

___ 3. Do you feel guilty if a person you've treated blames you?

___ 4. Are you increasingly cynical and disenchanted?

___ 5. Are you often invaded by a sadness you can't explain?

___ 6. Are you „forgetting" (appointments, deadlines, personal possessions)

___ 7. Are you increasingly irritable? More short-tempered? More disappointed in the people around you?

___ 8. Are you seeing close friends and family members less frequently?

___ 9. Are you too busy to do even routine things like make phone calls or read reports or send out christmas cards?

___ 10. Are you suffering from physical complaints? (aches, pains, headaches, a lingering cold)

___ 11. Do you have doubts about the result of your work?

___ 12. Is joy elusive?

___ 13. Are you unable to laugh at a joke about yourself?

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___ 14. Do you eat/drink more/less than earlier?

___ 15. Are you fed up with friendly conversations with your friends?

TOTAL (from H. Freudenberger and G. Richelson)

Don't let a high total alarm you, but pay attention to it. Burnout is reversible, no matter how far along it is. The sooner you start being kinder to yourself, the better.

0 - 25	fine
26 - 35	there are things you should be watching
36 - 50	you're a candidate
51 - 65	you are burning out
over 65	you're in a dangerous situation, threatening to your physical and mental well-being

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