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# Activities for Improving Soft-Skills of Visually Impaired Adults



*Virtual Academy*

*for Professionals in Education and Training  
of Visually Impaired People*



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## I. PRESENTATION

The course “Activities for Improving Soft-Skills of Visually Impaired Adults” was developed within the scope of the “Virtual Academy for Professionals in Education and Training of Visually Impaired People” (VAPETVIP) project, funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

This course was developed for professionals working in the field of rehabilitation and education of blind and low vision adults.

The purpose of this material is to promote knowledge and provide tips and materials that can help the professionals work with their students/clients to improve the social skills needed in life. The need for social skills is obvious at the labour market today and they are needed side by side with being good at the technical things we do. Everyone needs to practice these skills but for a visually impaired person there might be some challenges to overcome because much of the social information is in a visual form.

This Social Skills training program includes practically useful materials on areas like basic social skills, which are necessary for normal communication and socialization, for social adaptation and inclusion, for establishing self-esteem and self-control, for taking care and responsibility for one’s own life and personal development and for reaching social maturity. The program consists of several subject categories. The subjects include basic communication skills, Internet communication skills, interpersonal and intercultural relations, teamwork skills, problem-solving and decision-making skills, self-assertiveness skills and others.

In this material there are chapters of the more theoretical point of view. The aim of this material is to give you the feeling of empowerment: the good feeling that you can help your student and should pass on this feeling to them so they feel like they can do things and know how to behave appropriately in different social situations.

The student can decide the sequence of the modules of the course, as well which modules will be taken. In order to receive a certificate, the learner must complete a minimum of 70% of the training.

## II. OBJECTIVES

### GENERAL GOAL OF THE COURSE

By the end of this course the professional will be able to implement different activities to help visually impaired adults improve their soft skills and better cope with real life situations.

### OBJECTIVES BY MODULE:

#### **Module 1 – Introduction to Positive Psychology**

By the end of this module the professional should be able to recognise and apply the 5 Positive Psychology principles that can contribute to individual, group and collective wellbeing.

We hope that this module will inspire the professional to use positive psychology as framework for helping clients.

#### **Module 2 – Introduction to Social Skills - Communication**

By the end of this module the professional should be able to identify common problems concerning the target group about social skills and behaviour

#### **Module 3 – Improving Social Skills**

By the end of this module the professional should be able to recognise and describe to the student an identified problem in a specific area of his/her soft-skills and develop the right activities to help him/her improve it.

### III. SCHEME

1. Introduction to Positive Psychology
  - a. What is Positive Psychology?
  - b. 5 Principles of Positive Psychology
    - i. Abundance
    - ii. Virtues and strengths
    - iii. Positive deviance
    - iv. Flourishing vs. languishing
    - v. Happiness and wellbeing
  - c. Misconceptions and critiques of positive psychology
  - d. Positive Psychology and Education
    - i. How to use Positive Psychology in Educational Practice
2. Basic Social Skills
  - a. Methodical requirements for organizing basic social skills training
  - b. Communication
    - i. Basics about communication with visually impaired persons
    - ii. Initial Situations
    - iii. Create an appropriate environment for a communication
    - iv. Behaviour in communication and interaction situation
    - v. Information about location and directions
3. Other Social Skills:
  - a. Team Work Skills
  - b. Analysing problems and decision making
  - c. Self-confidence (assertiveness)

## IV. CONTENT

### 1. INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

#### WHAT IS POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?

Positive psychology is a new branch of psychology that has emerged in the late 90's and is receiving growing attention. It involves the scientific investigation of factors and processes that facilitate a worthwhile life - one that is pleasurable, engaging and purposeful. It originated when Martin Seligman\*, in his role as the President of the American Psychological Association, promoted the importance of including a strength-based approach to psychology.

Positive psychology is an umbrella term which incorporates a number of themes focused on subjective experiences, mental health and flourishing, flow (being immersed in life's activities) and positive virtues and strengths. Instead of asking "what is wrong?", positive psychology asks "what is right?" Hence, the focus is on identifying and mobilizing assets to:

- Help mitigate dysfunctional emotions, cognitions and behaviours;
- Equip individuals with the skills and confidence to address life's challenges;
- Foster and maintain an optimal state of wellbeing whereby an ideal ratio of positive and negative states and experiences is present most of the time.

Instead of primarily focusing on the question: "what is my client's problem and how can this problem be solved?" the question is: "what does a valuable life look like in my client's eyes and how can this be achieved?" Although both questions may seem similar at first glance, they are not. Repairing weakness is not the same as building strengths. Moving closer to a desired direction is not the same as preventing oneself to move in an undesired direction. Subjective wellbeing is more than the absence of mental illness or problems. Getting rid of fear, anger, and depression will not automatically fill you with peace, love, and joy. Getting rid of weaknesses will not automatically maximize your strengths.

**Work proposal:** Find online some professional information about Martin Seligman, focusing on the history of his role in Positive Psychology and the model he proposed.

#### 5 PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

##### Abundance

Positive Psychology focuses on what is working well and how it can work even better, applying an "abundance lens" in order to help people excel and flourish. It shifts the way people are

looked at, seeing them as self-determined and creative, with inner resources to access and use, rather than being only passive victims of forces coming from the outside.

### **Virtues and Strengths**

The strength approach is at the core of Positive Psychology. The focus is on looking at what people do well and enhance this to use as potential do develop, not only fixing in identifying weaknesses.

Through the lens of Positive Psychology, it is assumed that everyone has strengths, because they are part of human nature, and deserves respect for them. It is also suggested that a person can only truly address and work on their weaknesses when making the most out of their strengths.

### **Positive Deviance**

We tend to focus on the negative aspects of things, showing bias for the negative side. Research has concluded that there are more negative emotions than positive ones, and that people respond more intensely, powerfully and automatically to negative events.

A key goal of positive psychology is to help reset this bias from negative to positive. Negativity can cost a person's opportunity, keeping the person from devoting time, energy and effort toward greater wellbeing and success. Positivity can encourage flourishing by amplifying the impact of positive emotions, practices and experiences, allowing the person to dare and look for inventive solutions.

### **Flourishing vs. Languishing**

Positive and negative are usually seen as opposites. But this notion can create an artificial dichotomy when it comes to understand the flourishing state – characterised by growth, resilience and care about the future. The opposite of flourishing is in fact “languishing” – a state where positive emotions appear too low to stimulate flourishing and emotional distress, social impairment or lack of fulfilment are present. According to Positive Psychology, both need to be understood and addressed in a more general way.

### **Happiness and Wellbeing**

Positive Psychology conceives happiness as including two forms of wellbeing:

- Subjective wellbeing: satisfaction with life, matched with a high level of positive emotions and low level of negative feelings.
- Psychological wellbeing: sense of fulfilment we get from personal relationships, lining a meaningful life an developing as a person



**Work proposal:** Based on a web search about the subject, try to build a definition of Positive Psychology using your own words.

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## MISCONCEPTIONS AND CRITIQUES OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Positive Psychology does not represent a calling for being happy all the time, despite portrayals by the media and other critics of the field as “happyology”. When applied with rigour and balance, PP provides meaningful insight, analysis and strategies to help people benefit from positive emotions and build wellbeing.

A common criticism of positive psychology is that it adopts an over the top optimistic mentality where everything in life is seen through rose coloured glasses and the aim is to achieve constant happiness. However, the intent of positive psychology is not to create a positive and negative dichotomy or a hierarchy where positive phenomena are always viewed as being superior to negative ones, but rather to recognise and appreciate the complementary roles of both negative and positive experiences and to pursue the ideal ratio of positive to negative experiences for optimal health.

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## POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN EDUCATION

*“The goals of Positive Psychology mirror the goals of Education”*  
– zonepositive.com

The combination of traditional educational and Positive Psychology principles has resulted in the birth of a new framework that incorporates not only the importance of focusing on learning achievements but also on training the heart as well as the mind: Positive Education.

Many professionals in the field of Education and Training are motivated to continue by the reinforcement they get by seeing their students thrive and perform at gradual better levels, feeling they can make a difference in their students’ life. Positive Psychology seeks the same by promoting life satisfaction and general wellbeing.

Positive Education is the combination of the study of happiness and wellbeing with traditional education and training core goals, bringing together the science of Positive Psychology with best teaching and training practices to encourage and support individuals to flourish - seeing “flourish” as a combination of ‘feeling good and doing good’. Positive Education focuses on specific skills that assist students to strengthen their relationships, build positive emotions, enhance personal resilience, promote mindfulness and encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Applying Positive Psychology in teaching and learning activities can lead to development of higher achievement, increased character strengths, self-awareness and emotional control, self-efficacy, resilience, flexible and accurate thinking skills, strategies for positive relationships and learned optimism. And research has shown that students with these positive core qualities are

more motivated and successful – both in and outside of the learning environment, by helping them to have insight into their own lives, showing the way from what is best and what’s probable to what is next and what is possible, according to their strengths.

**Work proposal:** find online an example of an organization applying Positive Psychology to Education. Write a brief resume (200 to 300 words) about the organization you found and focus on the observed outcomes. Don’t forget, in the end, the link to the original article or website.

### How to use Positive Psychology in Educational Practice

In the context of the course “Activities for Improving Soft-Skills of Visually Impaired Adults”, this chapter about Positive Psychology was introduced in order to inspire the professional in the education and training area, who is interested in developing its students soft-skills, to use Positive Psychology principals and to start using the “abundance” lens through which he/she can see students and clients and reinforce with them their self-knowledge of personal strengths that they can use to overcome problems. Positive psychology will help to focus on what works (what is going well in the learners’ life, what are their strengths) and to start from those so they can better deal and handle things that are not working that well. It’s a method of looking at things strength based, focused on what works, building on that to also deal with the things that are not working.

How? Considering that successful education and training requires:

- 1) Strengths;
- 2) Positive emotion;
- 3) Engagement and intrinsic motivation;
- 4) Relationships;
- 5) Resilience.

Let’s take a look at each of these aspects in education.

#### 1) Strengths;

Focusing on character strengths offers an important step toward greater engagement, greater achievement and well-being. The simple experience of self-naming one’s strengths can be an uplifting experience. We all have attributes, skills and talents that can be developed further and focusing on these areas can provide us continued confidence and purpose.

When someone has the chance to acknowledge and make use of their strengths, it is satisfying their natural urges: it feels good, invigorated, the person performs better and is more productive, it increases feelings of satisfaction and contentment, there’s a sense of accomplishment and meaning – the person thrives! By contrast, a continual focus on fixing weaknesses can leave increased feelings of frustration.

**Activity suggestion to work with students:** You can start with the simple exercise of asking your students to identify and write five of their strengths and how they can be used in, for example, in daily professional life. But attention: this should be an individual and private task, although, depending on the maturity, level and quality of relationship between the members, results can be, with the student's permission, shared within a group. In [Annex X](#) you have the [VIA Classification of Character Strengths](#), comprised of 24 character strengths that fall under six broad virtue categories.

**Exercise proposal for the professional:** like your students (in the future) identify and write five of your strengths and describe how they can be used in your professional life. This shall be an individual task, not to be shared in the platform or with the e-tutor.

## 2) Positive emotion;

A positive educational environment can forecast teacher's and learner's satisfaction, lower stress levels and improve the achievement of results. Equally, thinking positively and being in an emotionally calm and safe setting can increase the likelihood to be curious, creative and better able to resolve and cope with problems.

Hopeful and helpless thinking patterns are learned over time, but so can thinking more optimistically be learned.

Positive emotions can also be developed in the face of gratitude, so the increase of feelings of appreciation can also contribute: the things we are grateful for can be easily overlooked without consciously focusing on them.

**Activity suggestion to work with students:** Help your clients become conscious of their thinking patterns and to distinguish the type of statements that provide a positive and optimistic look: ask clients to think about three good things or blessings that have happened and explain why these things came about. Expectantly, they will begin to see they deserve good things and are responsible for much of this in their life.

## 3) Engagement and intrinsic motivation;

Everyone tends to enjoy what they can do well and pursue an activity if they enjoy doing it. A positive educational environment can mean that educators enjoy teaching and students enjoy learning – and that can make a difference: it will be like row with the flow and not against the tide.

Everyone has fantasies about being at their best and achieving potential, and helping clients explore their dreams and aspirations can get them to think of the kind of life they truly desire and goals they wish to achieve. This will help them to find self-direction and purpose.

**Activity suggestion to work with students:** Help your clients to be self-direct and have a purpose, by asking about their ideal self – where are they living and doing in this ideal state? Have them describe the realistic details of living a satisfying and fruitful life to understand their ideal future more clearly. But attention: keep feet on the ground – these images have to be realistic, adjusted to the client profile and development possibilities (for example: if the person is completely blind by a condition that has no cure, it doesn't make any sense to imagine is best self as having a perfect vision...)

#### **4) Relationships**

The relationship between educational actors is a critical factor in the positive environment – good relationships with foundations build on confidence and trust can serve the learners over the course of their life and not only in education.

#### **5) Resilience**

More than the capacity to bounce back from adversity, resilience is also the ability to take advantage of opportunity: students need more than completing training, high exam scores and good grades to succeed!

**When working on soft-skills or other areas with our students, remember: people can be educated about positive emotions and these can be cultivated. People can also learn to set and achieve goals and use their character strengths for greater well-being.**

## 2 BASIC SOCIAL SKILLS

### A. METHODOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BASIC SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

There are several methodical steps to be followed by every teacher who works on a subject or a sub-subject, in order to produce a sustainable result in the social skills training.

This basic social skills training program is based on learning by experience. It requires methods which improve the cognitive, social and emotional activity of the participants. Generally, the methods are based on dialogue (dispute, discussion, and brainstorming), play (didactic games and role-playing, drama), experiment (observation, experience, working on an exploration subject or project) and practical activities (exercises, situational methods – analysing causes and situations, working on social projects). Other methods include the use of various interactive techniques to improve the cooperation and the work capacity of the group like working (studying) in pairs, establishing rules for cooperation, working in changeable groups, „passing the torch” discussions, energizing games, etc.

#### 1.1 Assessing

Assessing the basic level of social skills of the trainees is needed in order to include them in the group efficiently. This is essential for exploring the strong and weak points in the practical functioning of the clients and their individual needs. The assessment may be done through the commonly used methods in our practice – check-lists, observations, interviews with relatives. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide a training profile of the group.

#### 1.2 Defining

Defining the purpose of the lesson. The trainer, the client and the group should be aware of what they will be working on.

#### 1.3 Motivation

Each one of the clients and the whole group should be convinced that acquiring a new skill is necessary and should understand why it will improve their independence.

#### 1.4 Dividing

Dividing the activity in operations and mastering each one of them subsequently.

The teachers should ask themselves “How do I do this?” and find out the easiest way to reach the training goal. The activity/the subject must be divided and until one operation is not mastered, we must not proceed forward to the next one.

### **1.5 Consolidating**

Consolidating the new skills in practice - it is necessary to provide a positive evaluation of the results, achieved by the group.

### **1.6 Demonstrating**

Demonstration of the new skills in various real life situations is important in order to assess the transfer of the acquired skills and their use in “real-life”.

### **1.7 Post-training**

The post-training evaluation is needed to check the progress of the group. The evaluation may be provided for the whole group but it is better to speak with each one of the participants. The evaluation can involve only qualitative marks (not grades, points and numbers).

## B. COMMUNICATION:

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Communication skills are essential for the overall image of each person. Human development is impossible without them. They are a unity of interpersonal processes.

Among the basic communication skills are:

- a. Active interaction;
- b. Information exchange;
- c. Mutual influence
- d. Mutual understanding.

Each one of these processes is relatively independent, but on the other hand, it does not exclude the others. The most important areas regarding the training of VIP in these subjects are: thought and opinion exchange, information, talking, self-presentation, studying people's reactions, listening actively, understanding others, evaluating the attitudes, feelings and beliefs of others, communication barriers. Communication skills play a significant role in forming relations with people.

### 2.1. BASICS ABOUT COMMUNICATION WITH VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS

#### 2.1.1. CHOICE OF WORDS



If you're talking to a visually impaired person, choose your normal vocabulary and don't try to avoid words that have something to do with seeing, e. g. "Take a look at it." For the blind person, this automatically means that he or she feels an object, for example.

If the visually impaired person is at the beginning of his or her confrontation with the disability and reacts, e. g. with "I can't see this," then you can say, for example, "I know that you can't see it, but you know what I mean when I say" look at it ". I want to treat you as much as possible as I do for the sighted, so that your disability is not permanently on first place."

### 2.1.2 NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Please consider that the person with visual impairment does not see any non-verbal communication (e. g. wink, smile etc.). If important for the context, verbalize your facial expressions/ gestures instead. Example: "I just smiled at you cheering you up.

## 2.2. INITIAL SITUATIONS

### 2.2.1 GREET



Greet a visually impaired person by introducing yourself with a name, extending your hand to him and verbalizing that you have done so: "Good afternoon Mrs. Harper. My name is Glen Gold. I stretch out my hand to greet you."

As a rule, the visually impaired person will also stretch out their hand to you and you will grab it.

You don't have to speak louder than usual. The visually impaired person does not see you, but hears normally or much better than most people.

## 2.3. CREATE AN APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENT FOR COMMUNICATION

### 2.3.1. LIGHT AND ILLUMINATION



Many visually impaired people need a lot of light to see objects. On the other hand, the light should not glare the person. Please ask if the light in the room is pleasant and switch off or switch on more light depending on the answer.



Ask the visually impaired person where he/she wants to sit. Some people prefer to sit with their backs to the window to avoid being blinded by the daylight.

### 2.3.2. A WALL TO LEAN AGAINST



If a visually impaired person has to stand free in the room for a long time, offer him/her a wall/rail etc. so that he/she can lean on it. Standing free in space without seeing is strenuous for visually impaired people. A further addition is that the orientation of the visually impaired person is easier when he/she knows which wall he/she is leaning on.

### 2.3.3. AVOIDANCE OF NOISY AND ANNOYING LOCATIONS



Blind and visually impaired people compensate their visual impairment with their sense of hearing.

Conversations in a noisy environment or with a variety of different sounds are therefore particularly stressful. If such locations cannot be avoided (e. g. railway stations, street areas), the discussions should be brief and contain only necessary information.

## 2.4. BEHAVIOUR IN COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION SITUATION

### 2.4.1. TO ADDRESS A VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSON



If you speak to a person with visual impairment, tell him/her your name so that he/she knows who he/she is dealing with.

If a person with visually impairment is accompanied by another individual, speak to the visually impaired person directly and address him/her physically too. A visually impaired person identifies exactly where your voice comes from.

### 2.4.2. LEAVING THE LOCATION

If you are talking to a person with a visual impairment and you want to leave the location or return, please let him know. It is unpleasant for the visually impaired person when he or she speaks in vain. E. g. conversation in the snack bar: "I'm going to get a drink. I'll be right back."

### 2.4.3. PHYSICAL CONTACT/TOUCHING



Please do not touch a blind person without having announced this before and ask if it is OK with him/her.

Imagine how unpleasant it can be to be touched by a stranger that you can't even see, and be pushed somewhere - even if the person is willing to help. It might also happen that the person is startled, because no physical contact was expected.

#### 2.4.4. OFFERING ASSISTANCE



If you want to help a person with visual impairment, ask him/her if he/she wants your assistance and respect his/her answer. Many visually impaired people mostly manage on their own and ask when they need help.

### 2.5. INFORMATION ABOUT LOCATION AND DIRECTIONS



As a sighted person usually describes a place by explaining: "There's a chair at the rear" and points in that direction. This information is not useful for visually impaired people.

If you want to direct a person with visual impairment in the room, there are different solutions for appropriate explanations:

- i. Tap on an object so that the person can hear where to go, e. g. on a tabletop, seat back, etc.
- ii. Talk to him if you want him to come to you. "I'm standing here. Come towards my voice."
- iii. Make location information with the description of a watch-face. For example, if you say: "A chair is diagonally to your right," the person with visual impairment can't exactly realize this direction. "To the right" is a very vague description according to the body position. Instead, you can say for example. "There's a chair in front of you at 2:00." They must proceed from the perspective of the visually impaired person: No matter how the person with visual impairment stands, he always looks at 12:00 o' clock, i. e. straight ahead in front of him is 12:00 o' clock. If an object is at a 60 degree angle to the right in front of it, say 2 o' clock.
- iv. If the person with impaired vision is to make a 90 or 180 degree turn, tell him/her either the degree or simply: "Please make a quarter/half turn to the right".

## 2.6. PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES FOR TRAINING THESE SOCIAL SKILLS

No	Subject	Acquired skills	Training method	Hours
1	Introducing and meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establishing contacts</li> <li>introducing oneself and meeting people</li> <li>forming attitude and skills for understanding and accepting others</li> <li>every-day and official greetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conversation</li> <li>dispute/ discussion</li> <li>situational gamer in a group</li> </ul>	1
2	Public speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>talking and presenting for various types of groups;</li> <li>giving information in a clear and understandable manner;</li> <li>skills to influence the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conversation;</li> <li>practical exercise;</li> <li>analysing causes</li> </ul>	1
3	Being a good interlocutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>requirements for successful personal communication;</li> <li>listening skills;</li> <li>asking questions;</li> <li>empathy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conversation;</li> <li>discussing typical cases;</li> <li>game, role-play</li> </ul>	1
4	Communication and feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expression of feelings;</li> <li>understanding others' feelings /sensitivity/;</li> <li>sharing and expressing feelings, wishes, fears;</li> <li>self-analysing and self-control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conversation;</li> <li>discussing typical cases;</li> <li>discussion;</li> <li>exercises;</li> <li>energizing games</li> </ul>	1
5	Communication in a group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accepting others' opinions;</li> <li>identifying others' perception of the Self</li> <li>making decisions in a group;</li> <li>saying "no";</li> <li>earning trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conversation;</li> <li>analysing group situations;</li> <li>energizing games</li> </ul>	1
6	Conflicts in communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opposing skills;</li> <li>efficient behaviour to critic, threat, aggression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conversation;</li> <li>analysing causes</li> </ul>	1

## 2.7. INTERNET COMMUNICATION SKILLS

This subject category includes the following subjects:

- a. Familiarization with Computer Based Communication (CBC);
- b. Voice communication;
- c. E-mail;
- d. Messengers (apps for synchronous communication);
- e. Social Networks;
- f. Risks of CBC.

### 2.7.1. PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES FOR TRAINING THESE SOCIAL SKILLS

No	Subject	Acquired skills	Training method	hours
1	Familiarization with Computer Based Communication (CBC)	integration in information society; applying netiquette in the global web; ethical communication with people on the Internet; skills to communicate taking in mind the limits of CBC.	lecture; debate/ discussion; practical exercise	
2	Voice communication	applying netiquette rules when using voice communication; personal and professional communication skills via CBC; respecting the other person in CBC.	conversation; discussing cases	
3	e-mail	awareness of the pros and cons of e-mail ; skills in writing e-mails correctly; safe use of e-mail; skills in working with mail client	lecture; discussing typical cases; practical exercise	
4	Messengers (apps for real live communication)	sending and receiving text messages; ethical communication, respecting the others' personal space and time; choice and usage of the proper app for various everyday needs; sharing file information via CBC.	Lecture; discussion; practical exercise	
5	Social networks	positive relations and cooperation in the cyber networking; knowledge of the social and psychological aspects of CBC; knowledge and understanding of the cultural aspects of CBC;	lecture; analysis, discussion of various online profiles and types of behaviour; conversation	

		skills in self-presentation in the social networks; communication skills in virtual societies		
6	Risks of CBC	recognizing various risks in the Internet; improving security in web communication; recognizing and preventing various types of hacks.	lecture; conversation; discussing certain cases	

## 2.8. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Intercultural communication generally means communication between people of different national cultures. Some of the characteristic features of intercultural communication are:

- An interactive process and the participants belong to different cultures;
- Communication between people with different linguistic and cultural origin;
- Asymmetrical, i.e., Political, economic, social and cultural influence and power are not equally distributed.

Intercultural communication competence is a system of knowledge and experience in communicating with culturally different people; skills to express cultural relativism; tolerance and exchange of values. An interculturally competent person understands that in the relations with people of other cultures, their own specific perceptions, thoughts and behaviour have to be considered. This sort of competence has three aspects:

- Cognitive: knowledge which pre-defines to a great extent relations and behaviour; self-awareness (cultural identification) and the knowledge of cultural differences.
- Relational: skills to overcome stereotypes and prejudices, avoiding discrimination, positive attitudes towards differences.
- Behavioural – communication skills to relate with people of different cultures. It means practically applying the knowledge and being open and active in intercultural activities.

This subject category includes the following training subjects:

- Cultural and intercultural sensitivity
- Language and foreign language skills
- Intercultural professional/business communication
- Communication in multicultural groups

### 2.8.1. TRAINING ACTIVITIES FOR THESE SOCIAL SKILLS

No	Subject	Acquired skills	Training method	hours
1	Cultural and intercultural sensitivity	<p>knowledge about both one's own and foreign traditions, lifestyle, customs, language, culture;</p> <p>overcoming stereotypes and insecurities, developing positive attitude to different cultures;</p> <p>familiarization with cultural differences, etiquette, norms in communication /such as personal distance, gestures, addressing , etc./;</p> <p>initiative and establishment of intercultural contacts – meeting, introducing.</p>	<p>conversation;</p> <p>presentation;</p> <p>role-play in a group;</p> <p>discussion</p>	
2	Language and foreign language skills	<p>efficient exchange of information with people of different cultures;</p> <p>good level of communication skills in a foreign language;</p> <p>positive attitude, interest and curiosity for language learning and intercultural communication.</p>	<p>presentation;</p> <p>practical exercises;</p>	
3	Intercultural professional/business communication	<p>searching opportunities for career development in foreign countries;</p> <p>skills for self-presentation and establishing contacts in a professional environment, business etiquette;</p> <p>-adaptation to a foreign or multicultural work environment;</p>	<p>conversation;</p> <p>practical exercises;</p> <p>presenting real examples</p> <p>discussion</p>	
4	Communication in multicultural groups	<p>expressing opinions and understanding others;</p> <p>expressing respect, empathy, understanding of a different point of view;</p> <p>-participating actively and equally in group discussions, making decisions and solving cases</p>	<p>-practical exercise in group</p> <p>-discussion</p>	

### 3 OTHER SOCIAL SKILLS

#### A. TEAM WORK SKILLS

**Description:** The work is done by several co-workers, each one of them doing a certain part of the task, but everyone submits their personal contribution to the common purpose. Team work has a direct influence on productivity, work environment, improved communication, etc.

### 3.1. CLASSICAL THEORIES AND CONCEPTS ABOUT TEAM WORK

The classical knowledge on which today's theories of teamwork are based is built on the theory of German American psychologist Kurt Lewin, who was closely allied with the Gestalt psychologists. His theory emphasized an individual's needs, personality, and motivating forces.

Kurt Levin (Dynamic Theory of Personality, The Psychic Field of Personality, and The Concepts of Group Dynamics).

#### 3.1.1 Dynamic Theory of Personality

[https://archive.org/stream/dynamictheoryofp032261mbp/dynamictheoryofp032261mbp\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/dynamictheoryofp032261mbp/dynamictheoryofp032261mbp_djvu.txt)

Kurt Lewin's core idea was to shift psychology's focus from what he deemed an "Aristotelian" to a "Galileian" approach. That is, he suggested that psychology needed to follow physics and have less focus on the idea of static, unchanging concepts and more focus on psychological dynamics.

One of the major cores in Lewin's work is the idea of a "life space." A "life space" is the combination of all factors that influence a person's behavior at a given moment in time. Therefore, a life space may include instantaneous thought, memory, drives and motives, personality, as well as the situation and external environmental factors. This idea is prominent today with the idea of the person-situation interaction.

Levin believes that behavioral classification based on individual characteristics would not lead to valid scientific laws in psychology. This leads to the need to discover the true deterministic forces of human behavior. And this is possible by presenting in some way the entire psychic field of the individual at a given time point.

#### 3.1.2. The psychological field of the personality

Field Theory is essentially an attempt to provide a somewhat empirical approach to capture a person's life space analytically. A person's "psychological field" emerges dynamically in relation to the individual's life space. Lewin suggested that the fundamental ways to get at a person's "psychological field" includes:



- a) avoiding rote classification,
- b) focus on the dynamic properties of events (e.g. how thought changes in the situation),
- c) a psychological approach instead of a physical approach,
- d) focus on the entire situation - not on individual components in isolation,
- e) always consider time, and
- f) develop a mathematical representation of the psychological field.

The field is "built up" by factors that are determinative forces, not just the characteristics of the individual. Field theory, K. Lewin borrows from Albert Einstein's theory of relativity that the field represents the "community of existing facts regarded as interdependent." In this view we find some continuity with the practical psychoanalysis of the individual case. According to field theory, man is in constant preparation for action in the present. The past is relevant only as far as it is part of the present, and the future is important only as organizing the goals being pursued again in the present time.

### 3.1.3. Concepts of Group Dynamics

- In studying the intragroup influence, K. Lewin distinguishes the forces that lead to a change in living space, of his own and induced, a distinction that he considers to be essential. Self-forces derive from the individual, while the inducers arise from the surrounding environment. The most effective are those forces that lead to social change, i.e., which include both varieties.
- Group Activity and T-Groups: emphasis on groups and the need for strong inclusion of individuals in group activity. The T-group or the Training Group is a form of group-based sociopsychological training, in which participants (usually between 8 and 15 people) learn about themselves and about the processes taking place in small social groups through communication between themselves. Using feedback, problem solving, and role-playing (as methods), participants get insights and new understanding of themselves, others, and social groups.

### 3.1.4. Generalization of Lewin's theory

In sum, Lewin's theory is basically that people are dynamic creatures with dynamic thoughts, emotions, and psychological forces. To understand people from a psychological perspective, Lewin advocates that one considers all possible factors that influence a person's behavior and consider how those factors interact and change in time to influence the person's present state.

### **3.1.5. Theory of Human Relations**

Another one of the classical views is the Theory of Human Relations, created by Elton Mayo. Despite its focus on group interactions in work, it strongly introduces the view that psychological and social factors have a strong impact in group processes. An individual is no longer seen as a mechanical executor of strictly prescribed actions. He possesses individual differences and personal motivation and is constantly under the influence of the groups in the organization. First, the groups give their members a sense of appreciation and dignity, but on the other hand they generate positive forces that can be used productively. One of the main conclusions that this theory suggests is that people have to be trained in human skills as they learn technical skills.

## **3.2. CONTEMPORARY THEORIES AND CONCEPTS ABOUT TEAM WORK**

### **3.2.1. Knowledge and understanding of groups**

Professional trainers should know the groups and the group processes well.

A group, in the broadest sense, is any gathering of people who are in direct communication with each other. Members are usually guided to feel as part of the whole and to know that they are dependent on each other. There are different types of the groups. The most common types are formal and informal.

Formal groups in organizations are leading and executive.

Leading groups include people with position-based roles, involving management decisions and the organization of their implementation: the company's president, vice-presidents, department heads, production unit managers, and others.

The executive (work, target) group typically includes people who work together or work on one job.

Informal groups in the organization are based on personal (interpersonal) relationships and consensus among people. Informal groups in the organization are generally perceived as spontaneously emerging, in which people enter into regular interactions to meet socio-psychological needs and interests. The effectiveness of a group is related to planning (decision making), organization of the performance of the planned work, motivation, performance assessment, performance control, stimulation and depends on the size of the group; the composition of the group; dynamics (development) of the group; group norms; the cohesion of the group.

### 3.2.2. Forming a group

The steps of forming a group are: forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning.

(<http://www.businessballs.com/tuckmanformingstormingnormingperforming.htm>)

In the first step, forming, the members of the group are distant to each other. The group does not know its purpose very clearly, and the norms and roles have not been clarified yet. The members of the group discuss things on a general level, observe each other's' behavior, and search for their own places in the group. There is a high dependency on the leader.

The next step, storming, is a stage where the different opinions and styles of doing things are most obvious. If there are hidden disagreements, they can lead to open conflicts between the members of the group. There are possible process problems that have to be faced. They slow down the working of the group. There are also processes for role creation and role taking going on.

In the stage of norming, the cohesion of the group develops and we can talk about the group feeling. The creation and taking of the roles is finished. The rules and norms of the group are created and formulated.

The fourth stage, performing, is the time for mature action and doing things. The roles are established, the group concentrates on doing things, and the possible disagreements are not in the main role.

The last stage is breaking up, adjourning, and finishing the work together. The goals have been achieved, and it is time to finish the co-operation. The members of the group continue to work on their own paths. Some new smaller groups may be built.

### 3.2.3. Other group processes

There are also different processes going on in the group situations and while the groups are working. These include among other things (Kauppila 2005): communication processes, co-operation processes between the members of the group, processes of creating/taking a role in the group, leading processes and processes of solving problems and making decisions.

Communication processes in the group are based on communication between the members. Different people have different communication styles, aggressive or friendly being the ultimate poles of the same line. As the group has a common goal, the members need to communicate between each other frequently. The negotiation and other forms of communication create a

complex communicational network in the group. This network is unique and may be typical only of this particular group. There are, however, several forms of communicational nets that can appear more or less similar in several groups. These include e.g. a circle, a diamond, a chain, Y, and a wheel (Hargie & Dickson 2004; Hargie, Saunders & Dickson 1987).

When working in the group, co-operation between the members of the group is needed. You have a common task to fulfil and in this you need to interact with the others. When working together you create co-operation processes and coherence. The co-operation processes are e.g. solving the problems and looking for the synergy and common benefits for the group.

Co-operation in a group also requires taking a role. Role-taking is a process and needs time. This process is dependent on the task of the group, the different expectations and qualifications of the members, and on other co-operational processes.

### **3.2.4. Knowledge and understanding of team and team interactions**

Training professionals should make a difference between group and team. Formal working groups can be functional groups (task groups), technology groups and teams. Functional groups have a clearly defined status in the organization. Technological groups have more limited autonomy and include people who perform part of a common work. Teams are autonomous groups with limited control. The team determines the positions of the people and initiates changes in accordance with the requirements of the organizational situation.

Group	Team
<p>People are united for administrative reasons and are willing to work "for themselves" independently of others.</p> <p>People consider themselves hired workers and do not engage in work and organization problems.</p> <p>People have to wait for orders and are reluctant to make suggestions and take an initiative.</p> <p>People should not trust their colleagues, and making statements and disagreements is undesirable because it leads to complicating relationships.</p> <p>One should be cautious in communicating to avoid envy, gossip, intrigue, conflict.</p> <p>People do not have the opportunity to fully implement their job opportunities because they are limited by others and their superiors.</p> <p>For people, conflicts are undesirable and should be avoided; it is more important to "get ready" for decisions taken than to participate in their development and acceptance</p>	<p>People are aware of their dependence on each other and understand that personal and common goals are achieved by common effort.</p> <p>People feel a sense of belonging to others on the basis of the commitment of the individual to the common goals.</p> <p>People use their abilities and talents, their knowledge, skills and experience to achieve the common goals, and they see the way to their own aspirations.</p> <p>People openly express their opinions, ideas and suggestions, agree and disagree, and stimulate an atmosphere of trust.</p> <p>People try to understand the different positions and respect the point of view of the others;</p> <p>People develop their skills, apply them in their work, and are inspired by the support of others.</p> <p>People accept the conflict as normal in communication and look for opportunities to generate new ideas and suggestions.</p> <p>People embrace participation in developing, discussing and making decisions as part of their work, such as teamwork and commitment to the organization.</p>

### 3.2.4.1. Stages in team development

- Team birth - setting a common goal, gathering team members (number and composition according to purpose and individual abilities), clarifying initial expectations and fears, identifying available resources and opportunities;
- Team structure - teamwork, team leader, allocation of functional roles, identification of the need for resources, agreement on the desired results;
- Productive teamwork - each member is aware of his/her role in achieving the goal, offering ideas and opinions, making common decisions, sharing information and resources to accomplish the task;
- Analysis of the results - reporting the results, achieving effective and satisfactory results, appropriate control and constructive feedback.
- Processes in team development: getting to know members, discussing personal needs, expressing different opinions and positions, reacting to leadership, establishing effective methods of communication, individual actions to support the common goal, integrity, cohesion, conformism, solving interpersonal problems (conflicts), cooperation, mutual support, teamwork, self-esteem and self-control, self-regulation.
- Roles in the team: in the process of interaction, team members perform different actions, assume different engagements. The complex of actions and behavior patterns is the result of the claims, capabilities and skills of individual members. There are many roles performed by team members who play an important role in the structure of relationships. The role of expected behavior is an essential component of team work and an indicator of how it is going. The team can meet roles as a catalyst, expert, knowledgeable and capable person, assistant to the leader, observer, critic, diplomat, chatter, moral critic, etc.

### 3.2.4.2. Behavior in the team

- Cooperative (supportive behavior) - this is a type of behavior centered on the cooperative relationships of the members in the team, helping to create a favorable work atmosphere and a positive psychic climate. The participants are actively engaged and committed to the task, offering ideas and seeking adequate solutions, which in turn contributes to teamwork. Cooperative behavior requires highly developed communication skills that contribute to the task;
- Destructive behavior - this type of behavior is detrimental to effective teamwork. Here, individualism and egoism prevail. Personal biases and prejudices dominate. The team and the target are forgotten. There are no commonly accepted forms of communication. The occurrence of negative qualities and feelings.
- The team leader: as a result of the interaction between the team members in the fulfillment of the common goal a person rises as an organizer in solving the specific

tasks. The other members of the team accept the leadership voluntarily, building their own attitude towards him/her as a leader. For its part, the leader is a member of the team that performs certain functions and has a significant impact on the behavior of other members. In essence, leadership is a dynamic phenomenon - the leader's influence may vary depending on circumstances, leaders may change, compete, displace, support.

### **3.2.5. Training of the VIP in team work skills**

The group must meet the following requirements: small in number (between 5 and 8 persons); group heterogeneity (well-defined general and specific characteristics), group leader (specially prepared for group therapy with visually impaired), self-presentation (each participant in the group is represented by briefly announcing his/her name, place of residence, education and profession), clarifying the group's goals (accessible language should explain why we are gathering and what we will do), specifying rules and schedule. Specific processes in group and team processes such as Group Attraction, Self-Testing, Self-understanding, and Constructive Action are well-grounded. An important accent in relation with the group and team processes is the psychological processes of motivation, communication, speech interaction and others.

Visually impaired persons might find it difficult to act in some informal social situations at the workplace. E.g. taking the seat in the coffee-room or taking part in a conversation. It is always a good idea to train them how to introduce themselves and tell people about their disability. If they want to find a seat, they can simply ask where there is a vacant seat. It is no shame to ask for help from the others. However, they might not expect situations to be one-sided. They must be helpful always when they can, e.g. clean the table, take care of their dishes etc.

Informal social rules are often hidden, so they learn them as the time goes by. Different workplaces have different habits and ways of doing things. They need to be sensible and listen to the others in order to become familiar with these rules. And, once again, it is no shame to ask.

They can use their colleagues to provide feedback to them. They can also discuss with other visually impaired friends and ask about their experiences at the workplace.

### **3.3. Contribution of everyone to the Teamwork**

A team that works well together understands the strengths and weaknesses of each team member. One of the benefits of strong teamwork in the workplace is that team leaders and members become proficient at dividing up tasks so they are done by the most qualified people.

Teamwork can be an important part of an effective workplace. An efficient team can be trained as a group, help each other maximize their job performance, and help to make an inviting and productive atmosphere for new team members.

When a team is able to work well together they accomplish more than individuals can do alone.

While there will always be some jobs and tasks which are process focused, most work now is a project or has a project component to it. Any task that has a distinct beginning and ending, or follows a specific life cycle is a project. Examples include: planning a company meeting, writing a new brochure, implementing the new software system, etc.

If the nature of the work has changed, it is important to think about some of the skills that will help us succeed in this different world. Below you can find several ways you can contribute more effectively to make the projects you work on more successful, regardless of your specific role.

#### **3.3.1. Understand the end goal.**

Since a project has a defined ending, it is important that each contributor to the effort knows the desired end result. Stephen Covey teaches to "begin with the end in mind." This is clearly important to project team members. By understanding the desired result, you can make better individual decisions and reduce confusion and re-work.

#### **3.3.2 Making a decision.**

Make a decision if you want to join the project or no. You have to decide is it possible for you to participate in the project as a project leader or as a contributor. You have to know how you could contribute to the project implementation.

#### **3.3.3. Identify clear roles.**

Each person is an important piece in the overall project puzzle. Know your role and the roles of others. If you are a project leader, take the time to clarify these roles for everyone. If you aren't a leader, ask until you really understand how you can best contribute.



### **3.3.4. Collaborate.**

Project work is often fluid and free flowing. Once you understand your role and the roles of others you are in a position to collaborate with them more successfully. This collaboration isn't just a nice thing for you to do. It is imperative to the ultimate success of the project. Look for ways and be willing to collaborate.

### **3.3.5. Recognize interdependencies**

The bigger the project, the more linked and interdependent are the people and the tasks. Certain steps need to be done before others can be completed. If you see only your small piece of the project, you may not realize how you finishing two days sooner might have a huge impact on several other things staying on track. Conversely if you fall two days behind on one of your tasks, the effects on the end results could be much longer delays. You aren't an island. Your work products, decisions and efforts affect many others. Recognize and work with the interdependencies between you and the others involved in the project.

### **3.3.6. Work Proposal: Exercise Team building at i-Portal - Section "Practical lessons"**

### 3.4. Practical lessons and training to build Team working skills

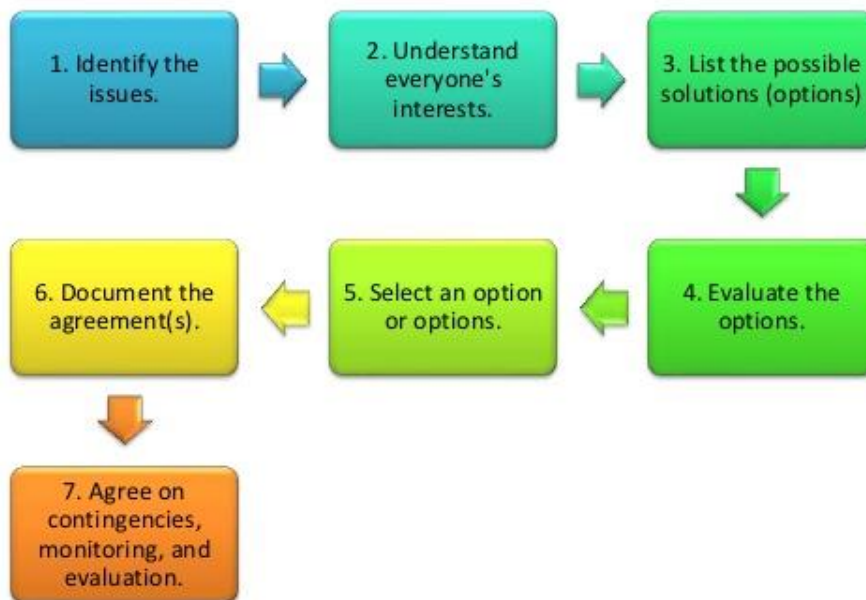
#### 3.4.1. Work Proposal: GO TO i-Portal - SECTION “Lessons” to study 6 practical lessons

No	Subject	Acquired skills	Training methods	Hours
1	Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- listening and perceptive skills;</li> <li>- focusing on what others have to say;</li> <li>- avoiding preoccupation with what we have to say;</li> </ul>	Lecture Quiz – self-evaluation discussion and case solving	1
2	Setting values	Ability to differentiate values in life	Role game “Spending your life” Discussion Homework	1
3	Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sharing knowledge and information;</li> <li>- ability to share important information, regardless of the fact that another person may cope better with it;</li> <li>- sharing knowledge that can be useful to someone else on the team ;</li> </ul>	Discussion of cases; Role game Quiz	1
4	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- efficiently communicating about the causes and consequences of failure;</li> <li>- efficiently communicating about the causes and consequences of achievements;</li> <li>- skills in analysing as a team;</li> <li>- skills to reflect on success and failure;</li> </ul>	Lecture Discussion Practical exercises; Self-evaluation - quiz	1
5	Hard work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ability to work hard by oneself;</li> <li>- ability to re-direct work to others on the team;</li> <li>- reflecting, understanding and performing better at work;</li> </ul>	Independent work – reading an article	1
6	Persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-skills to encourage sharing;</li> <li>-skills to prove/defend (a theory, a method, a purpose, etc.);</li> <li>-skills to re-define (theories, methods, goals, etc.);</li> </ul>	Discussion Exercise Independent work – watching video-clip	1

## B. ANALYSING PROBLEMS AND DECISION MAKING

**Description:** When making decisions and solving problems you will have to co-operate with the other members of the workgroup. You need to take into account their opinions and knowledge. You also need to express your opinion clearly and assertively. Here is one possible model for solving problems.

### Seven Steps for Effective Problem Solving in the Workplace



Here are seven-steps or the problem solving skills for an effective problem-solving process.

#### 1. IDENTIFY THE ISSUES:

- Be clear about what the problem is.
- Remember that different people might have different views of what the issues are.
- *Separate the listing of issues from the identification of interests likewise (that's the next step!).*

## **2. UNDERSTAND EVERYONE’S INTERESTS:**

- This is a critical step that is usually missing.
- Interests are the needs that you want satisfied by any given solution. We often ignore our true interests as we become attached to one particular solution.
- Here the best solution is the one that satisfies everyone’s interests.
- This is the time for active listening. Put down your differences for a while and listen to each other with the intention to understand.
- *Separate the naming of interests from the listing of solutions.*

## **3. LIST THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:**

- This is the time to do some brainstorming. There may be lots of room for creativity.
- *Separate the listing of options from the evaluation of the options.*

## **4. EVALUATE THE OPTIONS:**

- What are the pluses and minuses? Honestly!
- *Separate the evaluation of options from the selection of options.*

## **5. SELECT AN OPTION OR OPTIONS:**

- What’s the best option, in the balance?
- Is there a way to “bundle” a number of options together for a more satisfactory solution?
- Use your soft skills for the above.

## **6. DOCUMENT THE AGREEMENT(S):**

- Don’t rely on memory.
- Writing it down will help you think through all the details and implications.

## **7. AGREE ON CONTINGENCIES, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION:**

- Conditions may change. Make contingency agreements about foreseeable future circumstances (If-then!).

- How will you monitor compliance and follow-through?
- Create opportunities to evaluate the agreements and their implementation. (“Let’s try it this way for three months and then look at it.”)

Especially effective problem solving skills does take some time and attention more of the latter than the former. But less time and attention than is required by a problem not well solved. What it really takes is a willingness to slow down. A problem is like a curve in the road. Take it right and you’ll find yourself in good shape for the straightaway that follows. Take it too fast and you may not be in good shape.

## C. SELF-CONFIDENCE (ASSERTIVENESS)

**Description:** Assertiveness provides good self-esteem, confidence, faith in success and a sense of purpose. It is an important element of the whole personal development. The social skill of being self-confident and assertive is essential for the success and integration of VIP in everyday life and also in professional aspect.

We will present the role of this social skill in the equal inclusion of VIP in society.

Developing the skill of confidence is a lifelong process. The key phases are:

- a. Need and motivation for independence.
- b. Activities.
- c. Competence.
- d. Leadership.

These stages are related to each other and they represent the process of personal improvement. This is important especially for VIP. The close supportive environment has an important role in these phases – first the families and second, the teachers and friends. VIPs who don’t develop their self-confidence and assertiveness turn out to be fearful, shy, they avoid initiatives and activities.

Subjects

- Self-presentation.
- Self-expression.
- Self-control.
- Communication skills.
- Confidence in one’s own competence.
- Coping with anger

### 3.5. Practical lessons and training activities to build Self-confidence skills

#### 3.5.1 Work Proposal: GO TO i-Portal - SECTION “Lessons” to study 6 practical lessons

Nº	Subject	Skills	Training method	Hours
1	Self-presentation	The skill to attract attention. Expressing yourself properly. Developing adequate self-esteem	Theory Practical exercise Conversation. Discussion	2
2	Self-expression	The skill to create strategy and structure for self-presenting.	Theory Quizzes Exercise Discussion	2
3	Communication skills	Understanding different communication skills. Establishing contacts. Conversation skills	Theory Role-play game – Sociodrama Discussions	2
4	Confidence in one’s own competence	Setting goals. Gaining knowledge. Developing confidence.	Exercises Debate/Discussion	2
5	Self-control	Coping with feelings. Taking control in situations.	Role-play games Situational exercises Discussions Role games	2
6	Coping with anger	Control of personal emotions	Theory Discussion Exercises	2

## V. SUM-UP & GLOSSARY

**Gestalt psychology:** Gestalt psychology or gestaltism (German: Gestalt - "shape, form") is a philosophy of mind of the Berlin School of experimental psychology. Gestalt psychology is an attempt to understand the laws behind the ability to acquire and maintain meaningful perceptions in an apparently chaotic world. The central principle of gestalt psychology is that the mind forms a global whole with self-organizing tendencies.

**Intragroup:** occurring within an institution or community

**Insight:** 1: the power or act of seeing into a situation: penetration

2: the act or result of apprehending the inner nature of things or of seeing intuitively

**Cohesion (in a group):** Group cohesiveness (also called group cohesion and social cohesion) arises when bonds link members of a social group to one another and to the group as a whole. Although cohesion is a multi-faceted process, it can be broken down into four main components: social relations, task relations, perceived unity, and emotions.

**Group heterogeneity:** A group that comprises of people of different age, gender, social status, interests and s.o.

**Positive interdependence (in a group):** Positive interdependence is an element of cooperative and collaborative learning where members of a group who share common goals perceive that working together is individually and collectively beneficial, and success depends on the participation of all the members.

**Psychological dynamics:** an approach to psychology that emphasizes systematic study of the psychological forces that underlie human behavior, feelings, and emotions and how they might relate to early experience.

**Conformism, conformity:** the act of matching attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to group norms. Norms are implicit, specific rules, shared by a group of individuals, which guide their interactions with others. This tendency to conform occurs in small groups and/or society as a whole, and may result from subtle unconscious influences, or direct and overt social pressure.

Conformity can occur in the presence of others, or when an individual is alone. For example, people tend to follow social norms when eating or watching television, even when alone.

**Integrity:** Integrity is the qualifications of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness. It is generally a personal choice to hold oneself to consistent moral and ethical standards. In ethics, integrity is regarded by many as the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one's actions.

**Self-regulation:** Emotional self-regulation or regulation of emotion is the ability to respond to the ongoing demands of experience with the range of emotions in a manner that is socially tolerable and sufficiently flexible to permit spontaneous reactions as well as the ability to delay spontaneous reactions as needed. Self-regulation consists of several stages, and individuals must function as contributors to their own motivation, behavior, and development within a network of reciprocally interacting influences.

**Behavior pattern:** recurrence of two or more responses which occur in a prescribed arrangement or order. These patterns of behavior develop through operant conditioning. They are also described as chains of behavior, which are complexly linked from simpler, smaller segments. They are also called behavioral patterns. Ex.: "Most species exhibit a specific behavior pattern when it comes to feeding, mating, and reproduction."



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## **PROGETTO SENSNET**

**Il suo utilizzo è il risultato della sinergia e dell'accordo tra i due progetti!**