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The **general aim of the project** is to prevent homophobic cyber-bullying among young people: a form of bullying that takes place over digital devices and platforms like mobile phones, computers, social media and tablets perpetrated against LGBTQI youth (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intrasexual).

The **main object** will be reached through the attainment of the following specific objectives:

- Promotion of a respectful language used through digital devices and platforms referred to LGBTQI;
- Spreading a respectful and appropriate language against LGBTQI, particularly in the use of internet and social media;
- Creating a permanent network of youth association and Youth Workers to promote prevention and raise awareness on the theme of the homophobic cyber-bulling.

Specifically, the proposal virtual activities involve youth workers giving them the opportunity to develop a virtual exchange project with other colleagues from different countries.

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GUIDELINES

ON PROMOTION OF ONLINE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

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0. Introduction

Welcome to the guidelines for the "**Promotion of the Online International Dialogue**" under the project ***Free to be Virtual (101081200)***, funded by the European Commission and coordinated by GAYCS (Italy). These guidelines are designed to support and enhance the work of youth workers in the digital realm, fostering an environment of learning, collaboration, and intercultural exchange. As we navigate the complexities of online engagement, it is crucial to equip youth workers with the necessary skills and tools to effectively manage and deliver impactful online programs.

The digital landscape offers vast opportunities for knowledge sharing and youth work, allowing us to reach and engage diverse groups across the globe. This document will explore various aspects of online international dialogue, focusing on:

1. **Knowledge Sharing & Youth Work**: Leveraging online platforms to disseminate information, share best practices, and create a global community of youth workers dedicated to positive change.
2. **Youth Worker Skills:** Identifying and developing essential skills for youth workers to thrive in an online setting, including digital literacy, communication, and engagement techniques.
3. **Working in an Intercultural Environment**: Promoting understanding and collaboration among youth from different cultural backgrounds, ensuring inclusive and respectful online interactions.
4. **Preparation of Online Trainings:** Offering practical guidance on designing and conducting effective online training sessions tailored to the needs of youth workers and their audiences.
5. **Online Tools in Youth Work:** Exploring a range of digital tools and resources that can enhance the efficiency and impact of youth work activities conducted online.

These guidelines aim to empower youth workers to harness the potential of online platforms, creating a vibrant and inclusive space for international dialogue. Together, we can build a connected and supportive community that transcends geographical boundaries, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose.

We invite you to delve into these guidelines, embrace the opportunities presented, and contribute to the collective effort of promoting online international dialogue within the ***Free to be Virtual*** project ***(101081200).***

1. Knowledge sharing & youth work

There are two main types of education: formal and non-formal education. We encounter formal education in schools, colleges, universities and other institutions that follow a curriculum and award recognized academic certificates or degrees. Formal education is an organised and regulated system of education while non-formal education is additional education that gradually contributes to the process of the lifelong learning of individuals. Non-formal education is of great importance because it provides people with opportunities to extend their knowledge and upgrade their skills outside of the borders of the traditional education system. Thus, non-formal education enables young people to learn more about the topics that aren't covered in formal education, further helping them boost their skills and enter the complex labour market. Besides the learning aspect, through non-formal education, people are able to improve their self-confidence, get out of their comfort zone and find their bigger purpose. Non-formal education is closely related to activism which encourages people to contribute to their local communities and great positive stories that will inspire change. Through non-formal education, we are not only learning and growing as people but also contributing to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment free of hatred, prejudices and stereotypes.

Importance of knowledge sharing in the field of youth work.

If knowledge is power, then collective knowledge has much more power! If there is only one individual with the necessary skills, it can hinder your success and prevent others from progressing. But if we want to make changes, especially in our family, our environment and in our society, then we must also share our knowledge.

Good knowledge management and giving people a platform to access and share can have many benefits.

Sharing knowledge happens through some of the following forms: exchanging information, ideas, insights, and experiences. There are a number of ways this can happen, including through talks, mentoring, training courses, and online resources. The best way you can experience it all, take our modest advice, is to attend various non-formal online or physical activities.

The exchange of knowledge is especially important in youth work. If we want to make changes in our communities and societies, and achieve the purpose of our organizations, then we must share our experiences, our work, the methods we use.

Here are several reasons why knowledge sharing is important:
1. enhanced learning and skill development
2. fostering innovation creativity

3. building stronger relationships
4. accelerating personal growth
5. increasing problem solving capabilities
6. boosting organisational productivity
7. empowering organisations and communities
8. engagement and development
9. culture building
10. building knowledge database
11. sharing is caring

Strategies/best practices in the field of youth work

Youth work presents one complex field and it is necessary to adequately approach young people and help them fully express themselves. When working with youth it is important to nurture one safe environment where they will feel free to engage in discussions, exchange experiences and present their ideas without feeling ashamed or having a fear of becoming the target of prejudices and inappropriate jokes. It is important that they feel valued and heard so they could feel more comfortable while expressing their thoughts.

Youth workers need to have an open-minded and friendly approach as this aspect is very important in creating connections with people and a good working atmosphere. Despite being friendly and open, a youth worker needs to be objective and not engage in conflicts and thus, pick a side.

Utilising technology for knowledge sharing in the field of youth work

At our fingertips, we can access a plethora of online tools to aid us with knowledge sharing in the field of youth work. There are endless opportunities for collaboration, learning, knowledge sharing, and promoting inclusivity - all with the help of technology. As our world heavily shifts to a focus on digitalisation and technology, we must adapt as youth workers to ensure that we are maximising our reach potential to increase our impact overall. From building online communities to creating digital resources to sharing thoughts, opinions, cultural norms, real life events, etc. with the world, the benefits of utilising technology in today's day and age are vast.

In the field of youth work, there are always considerations that need to be taken into account when utilising technologies. You want to ensure that the tool of choice that you are using is accessible to all and that it is free, to ensure equal opportunities for all stakeholders involved. You want to ensure that you provide clear and concise instructions (such as documentation or a guide) in advance to your participants on how to use the tool and set up an account if necessary. In addition, you want to ensure that your participants feel welcomed to ask questions related to technical setup in the case that assistance is needed.

Although there are many digital tools focused on knowledge sharing, for the purposes of this guide, we will list the main tools that we use on a daily basis at our organisations and have found to be the most productive:

1. For collaborative document sharing - we recommend Google Drive or Microsoft OneDrive, depending on your preferences. By consolidating all of your documents in organised folders on a cloud-based system, you are ensuring that your documents are backed up, easy to access, and can be shared with relevant parties. Both Google and Microsoft have their own suite of collaborative document tools that allow you to work in real-time with others who may be thousands of kilometres away.
2. For virtual/remote meetings/workshops/other - we recommend Zoom or Google Meet, depending on your preferences. There are multiple video conferencing softwares available however, when it comes to accessibility and efficiency, these tools work the best when wanting to connect with participants around the world and to ensure the practice of knowledge sharing is available to everyone.
3. For online communities - we recommend platforms such as Facebook Groups and Slack workspaces as they provide online environments for constant communication, sharing and disseminating information, and structured organisation of materials.

All of the tools listed above are the most frequently used and have been proven to aid productivity and inclusivity in our field of work. By leveraging the use of technology in the field of youth work, you are providing your stakeholders with access to unlimited information that will hopefully guide them to becoming better citizens of the world.

2. Youth Worker Skills

Being varied in a multitude of fields enables a youth worker to interact with pupils in a manner so as to meaningfully engage with all of them. Empathy, good communication, leadership skills, teaching skills and cultural sensitivity are some key skills that would enable a youth worker to excel.

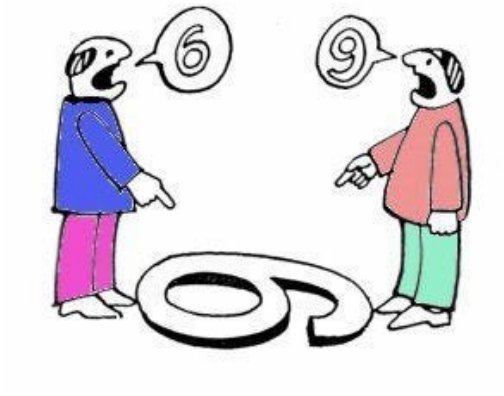
Communication

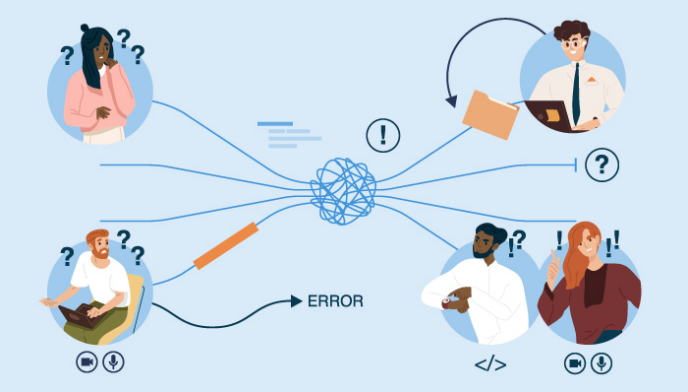
Communication is one of the most important skills a youth worker needs to possess. We first need to understand what it includes, so that we can improve it. In youth work, we don't only communicate with young people, but also with stakeholders, other organisations and of course, other youth workers. The way we communicate depends on what our goal is in that situation, but some communication strategies remain important in any circumstance.

How-to steps:

1. How to communicate with young people - approaching them, motivating them, recognising their needs, active listening.
2. How to communicate with stakeholders - knowing what they want, best way to approach them, formal communication
3. How to communicate with other organisations - approaching them, proposing joint activities and partnerships, remaining in good relations with them
4. Communicating with other youth workers - teamwork, supporting each other

Images about communication:





Teaching Others How to Teach Themselves

It is of great benefit to pass knowledge onto others, however, to truly succeed as an educator one would have to foster the desire to learn in the pupil and then giving them the tools to teach themselves, so that they do not have to depend on others.

How-to steps:

1. Self-evaluation
2. Where to find good learning materials
3. Autodidactic techniques
4. Developing study routines

How to Find Sources That are Adequate for Your Topic of Choice

When picking a topic that we wish to share with others it is of great importance to ensure that all of the information is factual and that it is coming from reliable sources.

How-to steps:

1. How to differentiate between useful from non-useful sources
2. How to represent the information in an engaging way

3. Working in intercultural environment

The workplace is a highly meaningful context for intercultural communication where persons who come from different countries, identify with different ethnic groups or speak different languages get to collaborate and develop relationships with one another.

What is an intercultural environment

An intercultural environment is an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other's global perception. By embracing diversity, you can learn about new cultures and gain a deeper understanding of your colleagues' perspectives resulting in a more inclusive work environment.

1. Overcome Language and Cultural Barriers-

When working in a multicultural team, one of the most common challenges is handling language barriers between employees. If each team member speaks a different language, you'll want to find a common language you can all use so every member can communicate with ease.

2. Consider Different Cultural Communication Styles -

Every culture nurtures its own communication style, like speaking patterns and nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication includes everything beyond words — gestures, facial expressions, and body language. It's crucial to understand diverse communication styles between cultures and speak to your colleagues according to these rules.

3. Be Open to All Cultures and Their Differences -

The best way to show your colleagues that you respect and appreciate them is by being open to the traditions and values of all cultures. This means avoiding promoting or embracing only one culture in the workplace. For instance, during the holiday season, it's important to vary your decorations so all cultures are included. This way, your multicultural team will know you respect and embrace whatever they celebrate during the holidays.

What visuals would you include?

What to avoid: Avoid stereotyping

Stereotyping and making assumptions about people from different cultures can be harmful and counterproductive. It's important to approach each person as an individual and avoid assumptions based on their background. Addressing stereotypes requires awareness, education, and empathy. It involves challenging our own biases and questioning societal norms that perpetuate stereotypes.

By promoting diversity, inclusivity, and respect for individual differences, we can work towards breaking down stereotypes and fostering a more equitable and understanding society. Embracing diversity and recognising the complexity and richness of human experiences can lead to greater empathy, acceptance, and appreciation for the unique contributions of every individual, regardless of their background or identity.

A stereotype is a preconceived notion about a person or group of people where we sometimes unfairly believe that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same. Promoting a non-discriminatory workplace with openness and acceptance of individual differences helps in preventing common negative effects caused by stereotyping. Stereotypes can easily form in our minds. As part of socialisation in our cultures from personal experiences, media, peers and our family, we learn rules and expectations regarding who is given status and who isn't, who is capable and who isn't or even what is attractive and what isn't.

These stereotypes can be conscious (something that we are aware of) or unconscious. Universally, our brains are wired to create these stereotypes to make sense of the world and our place in it.

How-to steps:

• Get to know others who appear different from you.
• Stop yourself before making snap judgments about others.
• Consider what you have in common with other people—it may be more than you think!
• Develop empathy for others. Try to walk in their shoes.

• Educate yourself about different cultures and groups.

4. Preparation of online trainings

Preparing online trainings for youth workers on intercultural dialogue requires careful planning and thoughtful execution. We are going to collect an approach to ensure the training sessions are effective, engaging, and impactful.

1. Define the Objectives

- Clearly outline the goals of the training. Objectives might include:
- Enhancing understanding of intercultural dialogue.
- Promoting respect and empathy among different cultures.
- Equipping youth workers with tools to facilitate intercultural communication.

2. Identify the Target Audience

- Understand who your participants are:
- Age range, cultural backgrounds, and previous experience with intercultural dialogue.
- Specific needs or challenges they might face in their work.

3. Develop the Curriculum

- Create a structured curriculum that covers key topics:
- Introduction to intercultural dialogue: concepts, definitions, and importance.
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity.
- Communication skills in an intercultural context.
- Conflict resolution and mediation across cultures.

4. Choose the Right Technology

- Select user-friendly and reliable technology platforms for delivering the training:
- Video conferencing tools (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams).
- Interactive platforms for activities and discussions (e.g., Miro, Padlet).

5. Create Engaging Content

- Design content that is interactive and engaging:
- Use a mix of videos, presentations, and reading materials.
- Incorporate real-life case studies and examples.
- Develop interactive activities such as role-plays and group discussions.

6. Train the Trainers

- Ensure that trainers are well-prepared:
- Provide them with comprehensive materials and resources.
- Conduct training sessions to familiarise them with the curriculum and technology.
- Emphasise the importance of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity.

7. Facilitate Interactive Sessions

- Encourage active participation and interaction:
- Use breakout rooms for small group discussions.
- Include Q&A sessions and encourage open dialogue.
- Utilise polls and surveys to gauge understanding and gather feedback.

8. Evaluate and Improve

- Continuously assess the effectiveness of the training:
- Collect feedback from participants through surveys and discussions.
- Analyse the feedback to identify areas for improvement.
- Make necessary adjustments to the curriculum and delivery methods.

9. Provide Ongoing Support

- Offer resources and support beyond the training sessions:
- Create an online community for participants to share experiences and resources.

- Provide access to additional reading materials and tools.
- Organize follow-up sessions to reinforce learning and address new challenges.

5. Online tools in Youth Work

In today's digital era, especially post-COVID-19, online tools have become integral to our lives and essential for remote communication and collaboration. As a youth worker or someone aspiring to be one, or if you are hosting online meetings, various platforms can enhance your effectiveness. This section of the guide explores some of the most popular online tools used by youth workers worldwide.

Presentation of Online Meeting Platforms

When organising activities, you can use platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and Skype, depending on your preferences and needs. These tools facilitate remote communication, offering features like video conferencing, participant chat, presentation sharing, and enabling users to connect.

How-to Steps:

- Scheduling the Meeting: Sign in to your account and click on the "Schedule a meeting" option. Select the date, time, and duration of the meeting. For Google Meet, invite participants directly through the platform. For others, send the link via email or social media to attract more participants.
- Joining the Meeting: Participants can join by clicking the meeting link or entering the meeting ID. Options to join include a web browser or the platform's desktop or mobile application.
- Navigating the Meeting: Hosts can mute/unmute participants, turn video on/off, share screens, use the chat, record the meeting, and divide participants into breakout rooms.

Visuals:

- Screenshots from the platforms demonstrating options and processes from scheduling to navigating the meeting.
- Short YouTube videos for each platform to simplify the understanding of each tool.

Presentation of Interactive Tools

To encourage interaction and collaboration among participants, use tools such as Miro, Padlet, Mentimeter, Kahoot, and Quizizz. These tools offer features like real-time polling, interactive quizzes, and collaborative brainstorming.

How-to Steps:

- Creating a Quiz/Activity: Choose a template or create your own for the poll/quiz/activity. Add questions, answer choices, and multimedia elements to engage your target group.
- Sharing the Quiz: Share the quiz through the provided link via email, chat, or your presentation. Most platforms also offer a QR code for participants to join via smartphones or computers.
- Analysing Results: Review and display results on a leaderboard to see participant performance. Use this information to address uncertainties, provide additional information, and gather feedback.

To make your activity more engaging and appealing, use content creation tools like Canva, Pitch, AhaSlides, and PowerPoint. These tools offer a wide range of templates, fonts, and graphics, simplifying the creation process and allowing you to showcase your creativity.

How-to Steps:

- Creating Presentations: These tools are often free to access. Create an account by entering your email and password. Choose a template or start from scratch, adding text, images, and other necessary content.
- Sharing Your Presentation: Share your presentation via a provided link. Adjust access levels, allowing participants to view, edit, or comment as needed.
- Presenting: Enhance your presentation with animations, slide transitions, and presenter notes. Practice your presentation to ensure a smooth delivery.

By leveraging these online tools, youth workers can significantly enhance their remote communication and collaboration capabilities, making their activities more engaging and impactful.

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