Embrace your emotions

Mental health matters

Take care of yourself

Mental health begins with me

Healing takes time

One step at a time

You'll be fine

Mental health first

Not all wounds are visible

It's okay not to be okay

GUIDE TO
HEALTH

GUIDEBOOK

**INTEGRATIVE TOOLS TO MANAGE
CHILDREN'S ANXIETY (IN SCHOOL):
GUIDING LIGHT TO BETTER MENTAL HEALTH**

Project with multiple beneficiaries
under the ERASMUS+ Programme

GUIDE TO
HEALTH

GUIDEBOOK

INTEGRATIVE TOOLS TO MANAGE
CHILDREN'S ANXIETY (IN SCHOOL):
GUIDING LIGHT TO BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Your Guide to Mental Health in Schools

Teaching is inspiring—but it can also be challenging. Students and educators alike face stress, anxiety, and emotional pressure every day. That's why we created this **E-Guidebook**: a practical, creative, and easy-to-use toolkit designed to make mental health support part of everyday school life.

Inside, you'll find **15 chapters packed with activities**—from energizing physical exercises to collaborative social games and expressive artistic projects. Each activity is simple to implement, requires minimal equipment, and comes with clear instructions and expected outcomes. Whether you're planning a classroom session, a teacher training, or a summer camp, this guide will help you create a safe, supportive, and engaging environment.

Why use this guide?

- **Boost resilience and emotional balance** for students and teachers.
- **Turn lessons into experiences** that reduce stress and prevent burnout.
- **Build stronger social and emotional skills** through creative methods.
- **Access ready-to-use resources** like videos, templates, and music.

The best part? It's digital, adaptable, and shareable. You can translate it, customize it, and keep it alive long after the project ends. Together, we can make mental health a priority in education—because well-being is the foundation of learning.

Let's start creating happier, healthier schools—one activity at a time!

1. CHAPTER: HOW TO OVERCOME ANXIETY BY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Physical education work to prevent anxiety

1.1 Purpose of the activity

Physical activity plays a fundamental role in combating anxiety, as it promotes balance between body and mind. During exercise, the body releases substances such as endorphins and serotonin, known for their relaxing and well-being properties, which help reduce stress and anxiety levels. In addition, maintaining a routine of physical activities improves the quality of sleep, increases self-esteem and promotes concentration, all of which are essential factors for controlling emotions. Therefore, regular exercise becomes an important ally in preventing and treating anxiety, contributing to a healthier and more balanced life.

1.2 Duration of the activity

1 hour, divided into three phases: warm-up (10 min), main part (33 min), cool down (17 min).

1.3 Methodology of the activity

Students in front of the teacher

The teacher performs the choreography in a mirror (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPGjM6df9jc)

1.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity (min., max.)

10-24 participants

1.5 Equipment needed for the activity

The only essential equipment is a sound system to play music. Good-quality speakers enhance the experience by making the music immersive and engaging.

1.6 Supplementary material for the activity (if any)

· Radio
· Projector
· Mattress for every 2 students

1.7 Description of the activity

Phase 1: Warm-up (10 min)

  1. The teacher performs the choreography in a mirror.

    · Choreography to the song "Madre Tierra" – Cheyene

Phase 2: Main part (33 min)

  1. The teacher controls the technical execution of the movements:

    · Making a tabata (high-intensity interval training protocol).
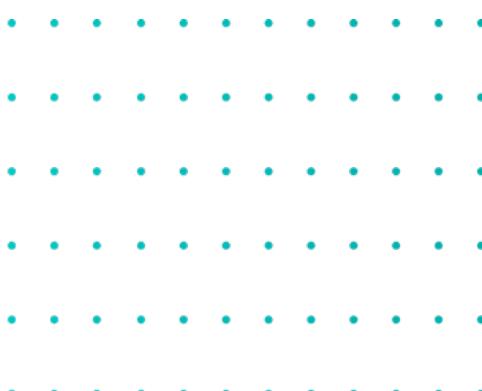
Phase 3: Cool down (17 min)

1. The teacher controls the technical execution of the movements:

· Inhale deeply through your nose for 5 to 10 seconds;
· Hold your breath for 5 seconds;
· Slowly release the air through your mouth for another 5 or 10 seconds.
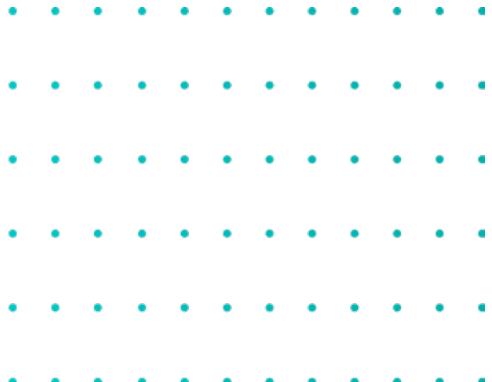
1.8   Outcome of the activity

· Improve sleep quality
· Favors concentration
· Improves self-esteem

2. CHAPTER: HOW TO OVERCOME STRESS BY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Physical education work to fight stress

2.1 Purpose of the activity

Physical activity is a powerful tool in combating stress, promoting physical and mental well-being. Regular exercise releases endorphins, which have positive effects on mood and reduce body tension, helping to control stress. In addition, physical activity helps regulate stress-related hormones, such as cortisol, and improves sleep quality, contributing to a state of general relaxation.

2.2 Duration of the activity

50 min, divided into three phases: warm-up (10 min), main part (30 min), cool down (10 min).

2.3 Methodology of the activity

Students in front of the teacher

The teacher performs the choreography in a mirror

2.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity (min., max.)

10-24 participants

2.5 Equipment needed for the activity

2.6 Supplementary material for the activity (if any)

· Radio,
· Projector,
· a rhythm ball and a mattress for every 2 students

2.7 Description of the activity

Phase 1: Warm-up (10 min)

1. The teacher performs the choreography in a mirror.

· Choreography the music "Together"- Sia

Phase 2: Main part (30 min)

1. Making a tabata.

Phase 3: Cool down (10 min)

1. 2 by 2 with a rhythm ball and a mat:

· Massage your partner's body with the pressure of the ball rolling over their body. Press the ball except when it passes over the joints. Roll the ball in the direction of the heart. Front back and then swap roles.

2.8 Outcome of the activity

· Increased disposition
· Improves the quality of sleep
· Reduction of anxiety and depression,

3. CHAPTER: HOW TO OVERCOME BURNOUT BY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Physical education work to fight burnout

3.1 Purpose of the activity

Regular physical activity is an important ally in combating burnout syndrome, as it significantly contributes to reducing stress, anxiety and mental fatigue. During exercise, the body releases endorphins, known as feel-good hormones, which help improve mood and promote a feeling of relaxation. In addition, physical activity improves the quality of sleep, increases energy and promotes emotional balance, all of which are essential factors for facing everyday challenges and recovering from exhaustion caused by overwork.

3.2 Duration of the activity

60 min, divided into three phases: warm-up (10 min), main part (30 min), cool down (20 min).

3.3 Methodology of the activity

Students in front of the teacher

The teacher performs the choreography in a mirror

3.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity (min., max.)

10-24 participants

3.5 Supplementary material for the activity (if any)

· Mattress for every 2 students
· Rhythm ball and a plastic bar for every 2 members
· Flares
· 2 basketballs
· Radio

3.6 Description of the activity

Phase 1: Warm-up (10 min)

1. The teacher performs the choreography in a mirror.

· Choreography the penguin song

**Phase 2: Main part (30 min)**

1. Running a route: 2 by 2 (3 by 3 afterwards) with a bar resting on their right feet must run a route without dropping the bar as shown in the image.

2. Rope game: 3×3 pull a rope

3. Crossing the river: 2 mattresses for each group of 6. Without putting their feet on the ground, they have to move from one point to another another exercise can be withith 4 elements on a mattress.

Phase 3: Cool down (20 min)

· 2 by 2 with a rhythm ball and a mat:

Massage your partner's body with the pressure of the ball rolling over their body. Press the ball except when it passes over the joints. Roll the ball in the direction of the heart. Front back and then swap roles

3.7   Outcome of the activity

· Promotes emotional balance
· Improves the quality of sleep
· Relax your mind

4. CHAPTER: HOW TO IMPROVE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE BY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Physical education work to developing emotional intelligence

4.1 Purpose of the activity

Physical activity plays a crucial role in developing and enhancing emotional intelligence. Regular exercise can help reduce stress, increase self-esteem and improve mood, all of which are important elements for good emotional management and social interaction.

4.2 Duration of the activity

50 minutes, divided into three phases: warm-up (10 min), main part (30 min), cool down (10 min).

4.3 Methodology of the activity

Students in front of the teacher

The teacher performs the choreography in a mirror

4.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity (min., max.)

10-24 participants

4.5 Equipment needed for the activity

- · Radio
- · Rhythm balls (6);
- · Basketballs (8)
- · Mattresses (6)

4.6 Description of the activity

Phase 1: Warm-up (10 min)

1. To the sound of the music, the elements move around the space respecting the teacher's instructions. The teacher observes and gives feedback to move as if:

- · They were walking on glue;
- · Slow;
- · Quickly;
- · Walking like giants;
- · Walking like dwarves;
- · Dancing;
- · Jumping;

Phase 2: Main part (30 min)

· 2 people each hold a gym mat at one end. On top of the mat is a basketball. They must move from one end of the hall to the other without dropping the ball (5 min).

· 4 people each hold a gym mat at one end. On top of the mat is a basketball. They must pass the ball to their team-mates (5 min).

· 4 elements. Each person tries to go into the middle to get a ball to put in their hoop. When there are no balls in the middle, they can take them from their opponent's hoop. The winner of the game is whoever manages to put 3 balls in their hoop. The game starts with 5 balls in the centre hoop (10 min).

· Group divided into two teams. One team member has to carry 5 basketballs at the same time from one hoop to the other. The group that finishes first wins the challenge. All the balls must stay inside the hoop (5 min).

· Group divided into two teams. One person runs round the cone, then holds hands with their colleague, then they both go round the cone and so on until everyone has gone round the cone holding hands (5 min).

Phase 3: Cool down (10 min)

· 2 by 2 to the sound of music, one remains still, relaxed and without tensing their muscles. The other moves their body or parts of their partner's body. The teacher controls the technical execution of the movements.

4.7   Outcome of the activity

· Improved self-esteem and self-confidence
· Developing the ability to deal with negative emotions
· Improves self-esteem
· Strengthening resilience

5. CHAPTER: HOW TO IMPROVE SOCIAL COMPETENCES BY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

5.1 Purpose of the activity

Physical activity plays a crucial role in developing social skills, especially in children and adolescents. Through participating in physical activities, such as team sports, people learn to work as a team, communicate effectively, respect others, and deal with conflict. Furthermore, physical activity can increase confidence, self-esteem and a sense of belonging, contributing to better social integration.

5.2 Duration of the activity

50 minutes, divided into three phases: warm-up (10 min), main part (30 min), cool down (10 min).

5.3 Methodology of the activity

The teacher observes and gives motivational, corrective and positive feedback.

5.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity (min., max.)

10-24

5.5 Equipment needed for the activity

· Radio
· Balls (3 big ones)
· Arches (9)
· Waistcoats (5 of a color + 5 of another color)

5.6 Description of the activity

Phase 1: Warm-up (10 min)

Everyone in a circle and one element with a ball in the centre of the circle. The player who has the ball throws it into the air and says the name of a team-mate. The team-mate who heard their name must grab the ball before it hits the ground.

Phase 2: Main part (30 min)

· *Rooster game with waistcoats:* Two teams try to line up the colours of their waistcoats horizontally, vertically or diagonally (10 min).

· *Ball games:* Ball over head, group divided into two teams. All the players sit on the floor in a row, the first passes the ball to his colleague behind him and so on. When the ball reaches the last player, he gets up, runs to the front and passes the ball (10 min).

· *Bow game:* Two teams should stand in a circle holding hands. Bow between the arms of two players. The hoop must pass through all the elements of the circle and end when it reaches the starting point again. Phase 3: Sharing and Reflection (5 min).

· *Statues game:* Two by two placed face to face. One person makes movements and the other tries to imitate them (mirroring) (5 min).

Phase 3: Cool down (10 min)

Divide the group into two, make two lines and all line up to perform the penguin dance. The teacher controls the technical execution of the movements (5 min). Perform the steps to the rhythm of the music.

5.7   Outcome of the activity

· Promotes teamwork
· Improves communication and social interaction
· Develops empathy and conflict resolution skills
· Increases confidence and self-esteem
· Reduces isolation and promotes social integration

6. CHAPTER: HOW TO OVERCOME ANXIETY BY SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

6.1 Purpose of the activity

To help students understand, express, and manage anxiety by engaging in creative, reflective, and collaborative activities. The aim is to improve self-awareness, emotional control, and supportive connections among peers through the arts and mindful practices.

6.2 Duration of the activity

45 minutes

6.3 Methodology of the activity:

1. Observation and Interpretation of Visual Art

This technique guides students to closely observe an artwork and then interpret its meaning, emotions, or messages. It helps develop critical thinking, visual literacy, and empathy.

· *Process:*

- · Observe closely: Students look at the artwork silently, noting details like colors, shapes, subjects, and composition.
- · Describe: Students share what they see without judgment, focusing on factual elements (e.g., *"There are dark clouds and a person sitting alone"*).
- · Interpret: Students discuss what they think the artwork means or expresses, using conditional language to allow for multiple viewpoints (e.g., *"The artist might be showing loneliness"*).
- · Support with evidence: Students explain what in the artwork supports their interpretation, encouraging reasoning skills.

· *Benefits:*

- · Improves careful observation and attention to detail
- · Builds vocabulary and expressive language
- · Encourages respect for different viewpoints
- · Develops emotional intelligence by connecting visual cues to feelings

2. Commentary and Discussion on Quotes

This technique uses meaningful quotes related to themes like anxiety and resilience to spark reflection and conversation.

· *Process:*

- · Present a quote and ask open-ended questions such as:
"What does this quote mean to you?"
"How does it relate to your experiences?"
"Do you agree or disagree? Why?"
- · Encourage students to support their opinions with reasons or examples.
- · Facilitate respectful dialogue that values diverse interpretations.

· *Benefits:*

- · Promotes critical thinking and personal connection to abstract ideas
- · Develops argumentation and communication skills
- · Encourages empathy by sharing different life experiences
- · Supports a deeper understanding of complex emotions and concepts

3. Mindful Listening and Journaling

This hands-on technique helps students focus their attention, manage emotions, and reflect internally using sound stimuli.

· *Process:*

- · Create a calm environment and guide students to relax (e.g., close eyes, breathe deeply).
- · Play short audio clips (nature sounds, calming music, guided breathing).
- · After each clip, students write about their feelings, bodily sensations, and thoughts.

Optionally, students can share reflections in pairs or groups.

- *Benefits:*
  - Improves concentration and presence in the moment
  - Supports emotional control and stress reduction
  - Cultivates self-awareness through reflective writing
  - Provides a non-verbal way to express feelings

4. Creative Digital Expression and Peer Assessment

This collaborative technique combines technology and creativity, allowing students to express ideas visually and evaluate peers constructively.

- *Process:*
  - Students work in small groups to create digital artifacts (e.g., collages, images, short videos) that represent concepts like "calm places" or "managing anxiety."
  - Use tablets or computers with apps for image editing or presentations.
  - Upload creations to a shared platform (e.g., Padlet).
  - Groups present their work and provide peer feedback using guided criteria.
- *Benefits:*
  - Encourages teamwork and communication
  - Develops digital skills and creative problem-solving
  - Fosters critical thinking through peer review
  - Builds confidence and ownership of learning

These techniques, when combined, create a rich learning experience that develops cognitive, emotional, and social skills in students, especially around themes like anxiety and emotional well-being.

6.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity

Minimum: 10

Maximum: 25

6.5 Equipment needed for the activity

- Interactive whiteboard or projector
- Audio system for playing music and sound clips
- Tablets or computers for group work
- Worksheets for reflection and creative tasks
- Internet access (for Padlet or similar platform)

6.6 Supplementary material for the activity

- Visual art images depicting emotions or anxiety
- Selected quotes about anxiety (e.g., *"Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strength."* – Charles Spurgeon)
- Relaxing audio clips (nature sounds, calming music, guided breathing)
- Worksheet templates for reflection and group tasks
- Padlet or similar digital tool for sharing group creations

6.7 Description of the activity

### Activity 1: Introduction – "The Anxiety Flag" (10 minutes)

- The teacher shows an artwork that expresses anxiety and presents relevant quotes. (*sample provided below*)

· Students observe the image and read the quotes individually.
· The class discusses guided questions:
"Which items or elements can you identify in the picture?"
"How do they relate to the feeling of anxiety?"
"What is anxiety for you? When do you feel anxious?"
"What do you think the quote means? Do you agree?"
· Students describe, interpret, and express their thoughts.

Activity 2: Mindful Listening for Anxiety Relief (20 minutes)
· The teacher explains the process and creates a calm environment.
· Students close their eyes, relax, and focus on their breathing.
· Four different audio clips (nature sounds, calming music, guided breathing, etc.) are played.
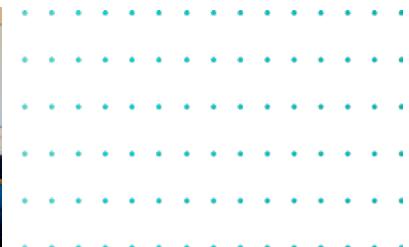
· After each clip, students write in their worksheet.
· At the end, students share which sound helped them most and how they felt.

Mindful Listening Worksheet Instructions:

· Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and listen.
· While you are listening, put your palms on the belly and your chest.
· Make sure you breathe in and out <u>in your belly</u>. You can feel it like a balloon!!!
· After each clip, answer the following questions thoughtfully

Questions	Clip 1	Clip 2	Clip 3	Clip 4
1. What did you notice first when you started listening? (Did any particular sound or instrument stand out?)				
2. How did the sounds make you feel? (Use 3–5 feeling words, e.g., calm, sleepy, curious, bored, focused…)				
3. Did your mind wander while listening? (Describe what you imagined/ saw in simple words)				

Activity 3: Can You Imagine a Calm Place? (15 minutes)

· Students form groups (5 groups of 4).
· Each group receives a worksheet with instructions to imagine and create a digital image or collage of a "calm place" where anxiety disappears.
· Groups use tablets to create and upload their work to https://padlet.com
· Each group presents their creation and gives feedback on others' work (peer assessment).

Can You Imagine a Calm Place?
Step 1: Imagine Your Calm Place   Take a moment to close your eyes and think about a place where you feel completely calm, safe, and free from anxiety. It can be: · A real place you know (like a beach, forest, or your bedroom)   · A place you have seen in a movie, book, or picture   · A completely imaginary place you create in your mind   *Think about:*   · What do you see around you? (colors, objects, nature, buildings)   · What sounds do you hear? (birds, waves, silence)   · What smells or sensations do you notice? (fresh air, warmth, cool breeze)   · How does this place make you feel? (safe, relaxed, happy)
Step 2: Plan Your Digital Image or Collage   Before you start creating, write down or sketch some ideas: · Key elements you want to include (trees, water, cozy spots, light)   · Colors that make you feel calm (soft blues, greens, pastels)   · Any symbols or objects that represent peace or comfort to you

Step 3: Create Your Digital Calm Place

Use a tablet, computer, or any digital tool to create your image or collage. You can:

- Combine photos, drawings, and textures
- Use apps like Canva, Google Slides, PowerPoint, or any photo editing software
- Include words or quotes that inspire calmness if you like

Be creative! There is no right or wrong way to make your calm place.

Step 4: Reflect and Share

After completing your digital calm place, answer these questions in your worksheet or journal:

- Why did you choose the elements and colors in your calm place?
- How do you think this place helps you manage anxiety?
- When could you imagine visiting this place in your mind?
- How did creating this image make you feel?

If you feel comfortable, share your calm place with your classmates and explain what makes it special to you.

Alternative Activity: Somewhere Over the Rainbow – My Calm Image (5–10 minutes)

- The teacher plays "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."
- Students individually imagine and describe (in writing or orally) a calm place inspired by the song.
- Students share their images and thoughts with the class.

6.8   Outcome of the activity

- Students develop vocabulary and language skills related to emotions and anxiety.
- They gain awareness of their feelings and triggers.
- Students practice mindful listening and relaxation techniques.
- They express creativity and collaborate using digital tools.
- The activities create a supportive classroom environment, encouraging open discussion and empathy about anxiety and well-being.

7. CHAPTER: HOW TO OVERCOME STRESS BY SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Stress less, Shine more!

7.1 Purpose of the activity

To help students notice early signs of burnout, understand its physical, emotional, and mental effects, and learn practical, evidence-based ways to manage stress, promote self-care, and maintain mental well-being in their school and personal lives.

7.2 Duration of the activity

60 to 75 minutes per session (can be adjusted to fit the group's needs)

7.3 Methodology of the activity

1. Guided Self-Assessment

What it is:

A structured activity where students assess their own experiences, feelings, and behaviors using prompts or questionnaires.

Why it's important:

Burnout tends to develop gradually and quietly. Self-assessment allows students to stop, think, and identify their own warning signs.

How to implement:

- Provide a short questionnaire with statements and a rating scale.
- Guide students to reflect privately on their responses.
- Follow with optional journaling prompts (e.g., "*What surprised you about your answers?*").

Tip: Create a calm, non-judgmental atmosphere. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers—just awareness.

2. Interactive Group Discussions

What it is:

Structured conversations where students explore topics like stress, burnout, and self-care by sharing personal insights and listening to each other.

Why it's important:

Sharing normalizes experiences and decreases feelings of isolation. Students often gain insights from hearing how others cope.

How to implement:

- Start with open-ended questions
- Encourage respectful dialogue and peer-to-peer learning.
- Use visual aids or real-life examples to support the discussion.

Tip: Set ground rules for respectful listening. Allow quieter students to share in pairs or smaller groups if they feel hesitant to speak in the full group.

3. Collaborative Reflection Activities

What it is:

Group exercises that help students explore shared experiences and solutions (e.g., mapping stress, identifying coping patterns).

Why it's important:

Collaboration highlights common stress points and encourages peer empathy. It shifts the focus from individual struggle to shared resilience.

How to implement:

"Stress Mapping": In small groups, students create a visual representation of their week and mark stressful moments.

What it is:

A reflective activity where students track their weekly stress patterns to find peak stress times and common triggers.

How it works:

- Give students a blank weekly schedule or ask them to draw one (e.g., Monday to Sunday, morning to night).
- Students fill in:
  - Stressful moments: Tests, deadlines, family arguments, etc.
  - Stress intensity: Use color codes (e.g., red for high stress, yellow for moderate).
  - Signs of stress: "Felt anxious," "Skipped lunch," "Headache."
  - Relief activities used: "Went for a walk," "Talked to a friend."
  - Conclude with group reflection

Tip: Encourage visuals (colors, symbols) to help students express themselves creatively.

4. Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises

What it is:

Simple guided activities that help students calm their minds and bodies, such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or visualization.

Why it's important:

Mindfulness reduces stress, improves focus, and boosts emotional awareness—essential in preventing burnout.

How to implement:

- Lead a 5-minute breathing or body scan exercise. Use soft music or audio guidance.
- Ask students to notice any physical or emotional changes before and after.
- Practice regularly to build lasting habits.

Tip: Model the practice yourself. Keep instructions slow and gentle. Stress that mindfulness is a skill that improves with time.

5. Personal Action Planning and Journaling

What it is:

Students reflect on what they've learned and commit to specific steps for improving their well-being.

Why it's important:

Planning turns awareness into action. Personalization boosts motivation and follow-through.

How to implement:

- Use a worksheet with categories like: "Daily Habits," "Support Systems," "Break Time Ideas," and "My Triggers."
- Have students select 2 to 3 strategies they want to try for one week.
- Journal prompts like: *"What's one thing I'll do for myself this week?"* or *"What helps me recharge?"*

Tip: Check back on these plans in future sessions or encourage students to post reminders on a wall or in their locker.

7.4   Optimal number of participants in the activity (min., max.)

Minimum: 8

Maximum: 25

Smaller groups allow for deeper discussion and more personalized support. The teacher should aim to create a safe, supportive environment that encourages openness.

7.5   Equipment needed for the activity

- Comfortable, quiet space with chairs set in a circle or small clusters
- Soft instrumental or nature music (optional for mindfulness)
- Journals or reflection sheets
- Flip chart or whiteboard and markers
- Burnout self-assessment questionnaires (printed)
- Audio playback device (for guided relaxation)
- Posters or handouts with stress management strategies and coping tips

7.6   Supplementary material for the activity (if any)
- Burnout self-check questionnaire
- Guided mindfulness audio (e.g., breathing or body scan)
- Visual aids with grounding techniques, energy restoration practices, and self-care strategies
- Example stress maps and personal well-being plans

7.7   Description of the activity

1. Introduction: Understanding Burnout (10 minutes)

Objective: Ground the session in real-life relevance and start building emotional safety.

Notes: · Introduce the idea of burnout in simple terms: *"Burnout happens when we're under too much stress for too long without enough recovery."*

· Share brief examples: *"Have you ever felt exhausted after exams even though you got enough sleep? Or felt so unmotivated that even fun activities feel like work?"*

· Invite students to describe what stress feels like in their body or thoughts. Write answers like: "Tight chest" - "Snapping at people easily" - "Trouble focusing"

Prompt Questions:

· *"When have you felt 'burnt out' or completely drained?"*
· *"What does stress look or feel like for you?"*

2. Activity 1: Burnout Self-Check (15 minutes)

Objective: Increase self-awareness about current stress levels and warning signs.

Instructions:

· Hand out a printed burnout self-assessment (see page 22).
· Students rate each statement on a simple scale (e.g., Never / Sometimes / Often).
· Stress confidentiality. Students can share insights if they choose but are not required to.

Reflection Prompts:

· *"What surprised you about your results?"*
· *"Are there patterns in your answers that suggest something you want to change?"*

Teen Burnout Self-Assessment Statements	Circle what is more common to you
📚 **School & Motivation** · I feel unmotivated to do homework, even when I know it's important. · I often put off tasks because they feel too overwhelming. · I used to enjoy learning, but now school feels like a burden.	**Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often**
😴 **Energy & Physical Signs** · I feel tired all the time, even after getting enough sleep. · I get frequent headaches, stomachaches, or feel tense for no clear reason. · I zone out during class or feel mentally foggy.	**Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often**
📚 **School & Motivation** · I feel unmotivated to do homework, even when I know it's important. · I often put off tasks because they feel too overwhelming. · I used to enjoy learning, but now school feels like a burden.	**Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often**
😔 **Emotional Well-being** · I feel irritated or frustrated more than usual. · I've been feeling emotionally numb or detached lately. · I get upset easily or cry more often than I used to.	**Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often**
🧠 **Mental Health & Self-Perception** · I feel like I'm not doing enough, even when I'm really trying. · I sometimes think I'm not good at anything or that I'm failing. · I feel like I don't have control over my life or time.	**Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often**
🌐 **Social & Coping** · I avoid friends or social situations because I'm too drained. · I scroll on my phone or watch videos to escape stress. · I find it hard to ask for help, even when I need it.	**Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often** **Never / Sometimes / Often**

3. Activity 2: Stress Mapping (20 minutes)

Objective: Help students identify personal and shared stressors and their rhythms during the week.

Instructions:

- In small groups (3 to 5), students create a weekly calendar and mark high-stress moments (e.g., Monday morning test, Wednesday after-school activity).
- Encourage them to note physical signs (e.g., headaches, skipping meals) and emotional cues (e.g., anxiety, frustration).
- Groups then discuss:

"What times are most stressful for you?"
"What triggers that stress?"
"Do we share similar stress points?"
"What do we have in common? What helps us cope?"

Tips: Help students notice recurring patterns.

Share examples of time management and short break strategies.

DAY OF THE WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Stressful moments						
Stress intensity						
Signs of stress						
Relief activities used						

4. Activity 3: Mindful Reset (15 minutes)

Objective: Experience and reflect on the immediate benefits of mindfulness in stress recovery.

Instructions:

- Lead students through a short, guided mindfulness exercise (e.g., 5-minute breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or 4-7-8 breath).
- Ensure a calm, softly lit space. Invite students to close their eyes or soften their gaze.

Reflection Prompts:

- *"What did you notice about your thoughts during the exercise?"*
- *"How does your body feel now compared to before?"*
- *"Could this be something you use before a big test or after school?"*

5. Activity 4: My Well-being Plan (15 minutes)

Objective: Encourage agency and long-term behavior change through personal planning.

Instructions:

- Each student gets a personal worksheet: "My Well-being Plan."
- They pick at least three strategies for managing burnout, organized by:
  - Daily Practices (e.g., 10-minute walk, healthy snacks)
  - Emotional Support (e.g., journaling, talking to a friend)
  - Boundaries & Breaks (e.g., limiting screen time, saying "no" to extra commitments)

Optional:

Allow students to create a visual "stress relief menu" or decorate their plans.

Set up a group "Well-being Wall" with anonymous tips or quotes.

Personal Action Planning and Journaling Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Daily Habits

What positive habits can I include in my daily routine to support my well-being?

Morning routine ideas: _____

Healthy habits I want to keep or start: _____

Evening routine to help me relax: _____

2. Support Systems

Who can I turn to when I need help or someone to talk to?

People I trust (friends, family, teachers): _____

Places where I feel safe and supported: _____

Ways I can ask for support when I need it: _____

3. Break Time Ideas

What activities help me recharge and feel calm during breaks?

Quick activities I enjoy (e.g., deep breathing, stretching, listening to music): _____

_____

Longer break ideas (e.g., walking outside, drawing, talking with a friend): _____

_____

4. My Triggers

What situations, thoughts, or feelings tend to make me feel stressed or anxious?

Common triggers I notice: _____

How I usually react: _____

Strategies I can use to manage these triggers: _____

5. Reflection Journal

Today, I noticed that...

_____

_____

Something I did well was...

_____

_____

One thing I want to try or improve tomorrow is...

_____

_____

Closure & Reflection (5 to 10 minutes)

Instructions:

> · Invite students to finish a final prompt in their journals:
> *"One thing I will do differently starting today is..."*
> *"A strategy I want to try this week is..."*
> *"I can recognize burnout in myself when..."*
> · Stress there is no pressure to share. If students do, thank them for their bravery and insights.
> · End with a calming moment— a breath, a stretch, or an uplifting affirmation.

🌬️ Mindful Breath

"Box Breathing" (4-4-4-4 Method):

> "Let's take one minute together.
>
> Inhale... 1, 2, 3, 4.
>
> Hold... 1, 2, 3, 4.
>
> Exhale... 1, 2, 3, 4.
>
> Hold... 1, 2, 3, 4.
>
> Repeat once or twice. Feel your body soften."

Alternative: "Smell the flower, blow out the candle"

> "Breathe in like you're smelling a flower. 🌸
>
> Breathe out like you're blowing out a candle. 🕯️
>
> Repeat slowly 3 times."

🧘 Gentle Stretch

Quick Full-Body Reset (1–2 min):

> "Stand up if you're able. Reach both arms above your head.
>
> Stretch side to side like you're swaying gently in the wind.
>
> Roll your shoulders back, then forward.
>
> Take a deep breath in as you reach up.
>
> Exhale as you bring your arms down and relax."

💬 Encouraging Affirmations

You can say these out loud together, write them in journals, or choose one to post on a classroom wall:

> "I am doing my best, and that is enough."
>
> "It's okay to ask for help when I need it."
>
> "I can take one small step at a time."
>
> "My well-being matters."
>
> "I have the tools I need to take care of myself."

7.8   Outcome of the activity

By the end of the session, students will:

> · Be aware of early signs of burnout in themselves and others
> · Understand the impact of stress on physical, emotional, and mental health
> · Learn practical strategies for managing stress and renewing energy
> · Practice mindfulness as a recovery tool
> · Create a personalized well-being plan they can refer to

8. CHAPTER: HOW TO OVERCOME BURNOUT BY SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Dance Improvisation for Wellbeing

8.1 Purpose of the activity

Students move out of stress, shake off the pressure, and get connected—with themselves and each other.

8.2 Duration of the activity

90 minutes

8.3 Methodology of the activity

Minimum: 6 participants

Maximum: 30 participants

8.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity (min, max)

The activity is designed for groups of 15 to 50 people. A minimum of 15 ensures a group dynamic where people can interact and feel the energy of others. A maximum of 50 maintains an intimate enough setting for the facilitator to engage with everyone effectively

8.5 Equipment needed for the activity
- a speaker or sound system
- selected and arranged playlist of music
- open indoor space for movement
- comfortable clothing and water bottles
- paper and pens
- timer or clock

8.6 Supplementary material for the activity (if any)
- Cards, pieces of paper or post it stickers
- Yoga mats or cushions for the final relaxation phase

8.7 Description of the activity

1. Welcome Circle (10 mins)

Facilitator: Greet participants warmly. Say something like:

> *"Today's about movement, not performance. There's no wrong way to do this. Just feel and flow. This is your space to let go."*

Ground Rules (could be written on the board or on a poster):
- No judgment—everyone's expression is unique.
- Respect space—yours and others'.
- Be open—try something new.
- Most of all: <u>have fun!</u>

Breathing Together (Box Breath):
- Inhale for 4 counts
- Hold for 4
- Exhale for 4
- Repeat 3 times

Facilitator Prompt:
- *"Notice how you feel right now—no need to change it, just observe."*

2. Grounding Flow — Easing In (15 mins)

Music: Mild, instrumental (nature sounds, slow piano), such as *Ambient Chillout Music – Beautiful Light Instrumental Music* (YouTube / playlist) YouTube, *Signs of Life (instrumental)* by Pink Floyd

Movement Ideas:

- Slow side-to-side swaying
- Slow walking around the room
- Shoulder rolls
- Arms up, allowing them to drift down

Facilitator prompt:

- *"Inhale as you expand, exhale as you soften.".* Ask: *"How's your body feeling as you move?"*

3. Dynamic Pulse — Power & Expression (15 mins)

Music: Firm rhythm with beats (drums, hip-hop), such as *Acoustic Chill · Soft Indie Folk Playlist*

Movement Ideas:

- Find your beat: Start by listening to the music. Let your feet tap along with the rhythm
- Clap with intention: Add claps on the beat. Try different levels—above your head, down low, to the side
- Punch air lightly: Imagine you're pushing stress away with each punch. Keep it controlled, not aggressive.
- Step heavily on the floor: Stamp your feet in time with the music.

Facilitator prompt:

- *"Imagine your movements sending any stress or tension away. Send it far from you."* Ask: *"Which movement made you feel strong/confident?"*

4. Release — Letting It All Go (15 mins)

Music: Wild, fast, powerful (EDM, tribal beat) such as *Strobe* (instrumental) *by Deadmau5*

Movement Ideas:

- Shake tension out
- Spin, jump, wiggle, let go loose
- Move as your body wishes

Facilitator prompt:

- *"Move as if tension is flying off your body with every shake. You don't have to cling to it anymore."* Ask: *"What was it like to move without thinking?"*

5. Lightness — Joy & Play (15 mins)

Music: Uplifting and melodic (folk, soft jazz) such as *Cozy coffeehouse*

Movement Ideas:

- Twirl, skip, float
- Reach high, dip low
- Smile, dance freely

Facilitator prompt:

- *"Move like nobody's watching—or better yet, like everyone's dancing with you."* Ask: *"If you could sum this feeling up in one word, what would it be?"*

6. Quiet Presence — Reflection & Grounding (15 mins)

Music: Calming ambient (water sounds, singing bowls) such as *Ambient Music* (Relaxing Music for Stress Relief — Meditation Music...), *Marooned (instrumental) by Pink Floyd*

Movement Ideas: (lying down on mats or standing)
- Gentle stretches
- Simply standing or lying down
- Slow breathing (inhale from nose, exhale from mouth)

Guided visualization:
- "Imagine you are by the ocean. Waves caressing your feet. Each wave sweeps away tension."

Journaling prompt:
- *"Write down one word or one phrase that describes how you are feeling at this moment."* Ask: *"What's one takeaway you'd like to use in your daily life?"*

7. Closing Circle (10 mins)

Encourage open sharing while sitting on pillows, mats or even standing (no stress, students can pass if they want).
- *"Say one word that describes how you feel right now."*
- *"What was your favorite move or part of today's activity?"*
- *"Did you notice a moment when you felt lighter or less stressed?"*
- *"What's one thing you might try at home or school to help yourself feel calmer?"*
- *"Name one thing you enjoyed about being in this group today."*

Final Gratitude:
- *"Thank you for being here—for yourselves, and for each other."*

8.8   Outcome of the activity
- Release of emotional tension through movement
- Increased body awareness and self-expression
- Increased feeling of community and empathy among participants
- Centered, relaxed, and renewed state of being
- Healthy, creative way of dealing with emotions

9. CHAPTER: HOW TO IMPROVE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE BY SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Emotional Intelligence-Drama as a mental health tool: Find the joy

9.1 Purpose of the activity:

The aim of this workshop is personal development via consciousness of our emotions. In a playful process of games, building confidence tasks, interaction, and shared experience, participants identify with each other and a friendly environment is established. This serves as a context for openness and gives birth to setting new goals for emotional well-being.

9.2 Duration of the activity:

2.5 hours in total:

- · 1 hour: Ice-breaking and group introduction
- · 1.5 hours: Main activities
- · 0.5 hour: Reflection and closing

9.3 Methodology of the activity:

The main methodologies are Drama in Education and Psychoeducation. The group is worked with, then in pairs, and finally as individuals.

9.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity (min., max.)

A small number of up to 28 adolescents or adults.

9.5 Equipment needed for the activity:

- · Music via YouTube

9.6 Supplementary material for the activity (if any):

- · A4 paper
- · Markers
- · Post-it notes

9.7 Description of the activity:

Part A: Warm-Up & Group Formation (1 hour)

· Zip-Zap-Boing

The group stands in a circle. Players reach out to one another by clapping and producing sounds "Zip," "Zap," and "Boing" to move the energy:

- · Zip: Sends energy to the right individual.
- · Zap: Sends energy directly across the circle.
- · Boing: Reverses direction.

A high-energy, playful icebreaker that promotes focus and spontaneity.

· Name Game – Hand on Heart

With hands clasped over the heart in a circle, each person says his/her name out loud to the group. The game goes around in wave fashion, with each person calling the next by gesture. Go ahead and mess up—this breaks the ice and develops a loose, joking atmosphere.

· "Raise your hand if."

Participants remain seated or standing in a circle.The facilitator (or a volunteer in the middle) says: *"Raise your hand if you…".* Everyone who relates raises their hand, looks around, and smiles or waves.

Part B: Exploration (1.5 hours)

· Emotional Walk & Freeze

Participants move around the room to music. When the music ceases, they freeze, visualizing themselves as an emotion: anxiety, joy, sadness, fear, satisfaction, love, etc. They describe how that feeling acts:

> · Anxiety may bite its nails
> · Fear may hide under a table
> · Satisfaction basks in the sun
> · Love glows warmly

Finally, they sketch *joy*—how it moves, feels, and looks like. Eyes closed, they see joy as a living entity.

· Drawing Joy

Drawing on A4 paper with markers, participants sketch what *joy* looks like them. They compare drawings in pairs and explain choices in shape, size, color, and background.

· The Happiest Moment of My Life

Members sit comfortably in their chairs and are led through a guided visualization to recall their happiest moment. They focus on all the details: time, place, people, environment, and emotions.

· What Makes Me Happy

Each member writes down three things that make them happy. They share and then vote on the top 5 reasons for happiness in small groups and then share with the whole group.

Part C: Reflection (30 minutes)

· "It was the moment when..."

In a circle, every member completes the sentence to relate to a moment of realization, sensation, or personal change they experienced during the workshop.

· The Wall of Joy

Players write down ideas for happy actions on post-its and stick them on the "Wall of Joy" to make a collage. A member of the group selects one or more post-its with the aim of performing the happy action mentioned by another group member.

· A Touch of Appreciation

Standing in a circle, each person gives a friendly pat on the back of the individual beside them and says "well done" for being involved, engaging, and sharing. Lastly, they hug themselves congratulatory.

9.8 Outcome of the activity:

· To build team cohesion through expressive play, physical and mental relaxation, being present in the here-and-now, and establishing a verbal and non-verbal group communication code.

· To increase awareness of the emotions, connection with the self, comprehension of decisions in life, and acceptance of the coexistence of pleasant and difficult feelings as one of the essential aspects of humanity.

· To reestablish the motivation that brings meaning to life.

· To deepen existential consciousness through shared energy.

· To establish a space where we are seen, supported, and encouraged to share and bring out the best in each other.

· To empower emotions through the collective energy of the group.

10. CHAPTER: HOW TO IMPROVE SOCIAL COMPETENCES BY SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Enhancing Social Competences through empathy and communication

10.1 Purpose of the activity

To improve students' social skills by promoting empathy, communication, and teamwork. This empowers them to form healthy relationships, create a supportive peer environment, and tackle social challenges in and out of school.

10.2 Duration of the activity

60 to 90 minutes per session, adjustable based on group needs.

10.3 Methodology of the activity

1. Interactive Group Discussions

This is a guided conversation where students share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to a specific topic.

How it works:

- The teacher introduces a theme or question (e.g., "What does empathy mean to you?").
- Students take turns sharing their ideas while others listen respectfully.
- The teacher encourages quieter students to speak up and helps keep the discussion focused.

Why it is effective:

- It builds communication skills and confidence in self-expression.
- It promotes active listening and respect for different viewpoints.
- It helps students connect their experiences to broader social concepts.

Tips for success:

- Set ground rules for respectful listening and speaking.
- Use open-ended questions to encourage deeper thinking.
- Summarize key points to reinforce learning.

2. Role-Playing Scenarios

What it is:

Students act out scripted or improvised social situations to practice communication, empathy, and problem-solving.

How it works:

- Present a realistic social scenario (e.g., resolving a disagreement).
- Assign roles to students and allow preparation time.
- Students perform the role-play in small groups or in front of the class.
- Afterward, the group reflects on what went well and what could be improved.

Why it's effective:

- It provides a safe space to try out different responses.
- It enhances perspective-taking by "walking in someone else's shoes."
- It develops practical skills that can be used in real-life interactions.

Tips for success:

- Choose scenarios relevant to students' experiences.
- Encourage creativity and empathy in role interpretation.
- Debrief thoroughly to reinforce learning.

3. Collaborative Problem-Solving Tasks

What it is:

Group activities where students work together to solve a challenge or complete a task.

How it works:

- Present a problem that requires teamwork (e.g., planning a group project or resolving a conflict).
- Students discuss ideas, assign roles, and decide on solutions as a group.
- The group presents their solution or reflects on their process.

Why it's effective:

- It encourages teamwork, negotiation, and leadership skills.
- It teaches students to value different opinions and compromise.
- It builds a sense of community and shared responsibility.

Tips for success:

- Set clear goals and roles to prevent confusion.
- Monitor group dynamics and support positive interactions.
- Celebrate successful teamwork and discuss challenges.

4. Reflective Sharing Circles

What it is:

A structured group time where students share personal reflections and listen to others in a supportive environment.

How it works:

- Students sit in a circle to promote equality and openness.
- A prompt is given (e.g., "Share a time when you felt understood by a friend").
- Each student has the chance to speak without interruption.
- The group listens attentively and may offer supportive feedback.

Why it is effective:

- It fosters emotional awareness and empathy.
- It builds trust and strengthens relationships within the group.
- It helps students process experiences and learn from one another.

Tips for success:

- Create a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere.
- Use a "talking piece" (like a small ball, stone, stick, or any item agreed upon) to manage turn-taking if needed.
- Encourage honesty and respect confidentiality.

These methods, when combined, create a rich learning environment that nurtures social skills through active engagement, practice, and reflection. They help students not only understand social skills intellectually but also experience and embody them in meaningful ways.

10.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity (min., max.)

Minimum: 6

Maximum: 20

10.5 Equipment needed for the activity

- Flip chart and markers
- Sticky notes
- Scenario cards
- Interactive whiteboard or projector

10.6 Supplementary material for the activity (if any)

To support the activities, use the following resources
· Videos demonstrating effective communication

· Visual Aids on Nonverbal Communication Clues (provided below)
· Worksheets for self-reflection (see page 35)

These can be printed as posters or presented digitally:

Social Cue Type	Description & Examples
Facial Expressions	Happy 😊, Sad 🥲, Angry 😠, Surprised 😮, Confused 🤔, Calm 😌 (Use clear photos or drawings)
Body Language	Open posture (arms relaxed, facing others), Closed posture (arms crossed, looking away), Nodding to show understanding, Smiling to show friendliness
Eye Contact	Maintaining appropriate eye contact shows interest; looking away may indicate discomfort or distraction
Tone of Voice	Friendly (warm, calm), Sarcastic (sharp, exaggerated), Nervous (hesitant, shaky)
Conversation Flow	Taking turns speaking, Asking questions, Giving feedback

10.7 Description of the activity

Introduction (10 minutes)

Start with an open conversation about what social skills mean. Invite students to share moments when they felt included or excluded and how it affected them. The goal is to help students reflect on their social skills, recognize strengths, and identify areas for improvement.

Social Competence Self-Reflection

Instructions: Read each question and answer honestly. There is no right or wrong answers.

1. How comfortable am I starting a conversation with someone new? Very comfortable / Somewhat comfortable / Not comfortable
2. When a friend is upset, how well do I understand their feelings? Very well / Sometimes / Not well
3. How often do I listen carefully without interrupting? Always / Sometimes / Rarely
4. How do I usually handle disagreements with friends or classmates? Talk it out calmly / Avoid the problem / Get upset quickly
5. How can we improve the ways we act, talk, and play with others to get along well and form good relationships?
6. Describe a recent time when I helped someone feel included or supported.......
7. What do I find most challenging about working in a group?
8. How do I show respect to others during conversations?

Activity 1: "Empathy Walk" (20 minutes)

Students pair up and share a recent challenge. The listener practices active listening and then summarizes the speaker's feelings and needs. Partners switch roles. The group reflects on how it felt to be truly listened to.

- Ask students to stand and walk freely around the space.
- When the teacher claps or uses a signal, everyone pairs up with the nearest person.
- Instruct one student in each pair to talk about a recent personal challenge (e.g., a stressful school assignment, a conflict with a friend, or feeling excluded) for 2 to 3 minutes.
- The listener should practice active listening: maintaining eye contact, nodding, avoiding interruptions, and showing empathy with facial expressions like soft eye contact, slight nodding, tilting their head slightly to show concern, smiling gently at appropriate moments, or showing a caring expression when someone shares something difficult with affirmations like "I see" or "That sounds hard."
- After the speaker finishes, the listener summarizes what they heard, focusing specifically on the speaker's feelings and needs (e.g., "It sounds like you felt overwhelmed and needed more time to finish the assignment").
- Then they switch roles and repeat the exercise.
- Once both partners have shared, bring the class back into a circle for a group reflection.
- Ask: How did it feel to speak without being interrupted? What was it like to be fully listened to? Did you learn anything surprising about your partner or yourself?

Activity 2: "Role-Play Challenge" (30 minutes)

· Small groups receive scenario cards (e.g., resolving a disagreement, welcoming a new student). Each group acts out their scenario, focusing on respectful communication and problem-solving. After each role-play, the class discusses what worked well and what could be improved. Divide the group into smaller teams (3 to 5 students).

· Give each team a printed scenario involving a common social challenge (e.g., feeling left out, peer pressure, classroom conflict).

· Ask each group to first act out the situation, showing how the problem typically unfolds.

· Then, ask them to replay the scene using positive social strategies: active listening, assertive communication, compromise, or asking for help.

· Encourage teams to think about what emotions the characters might be feeling and how they can express those constructively.

· After each performance, briefly discuss with the class what worked well and how similar techniques could be used in real life.

Print and cut these cards for small group role-play activities:

---

1. **Resolving a Disagreement**

Two classmates disagree on how to complete a group project. One wants to finish quickly; the other wants to take more time to do it thoroughly. How can they find a solution that works for both?

---

2. **Welcoming a New Student**

A new student feels shy and left out on their first day. How can you introduce yourself and help them feel welcome?

---

3. **Handling Teasing**

Someone in your group is being teased about their clothes. How can you respond to support your friend and stop the teasing?

---

4. **Asking for Help**

You don't understand the homework and feel nervous about asking the teacher. How can you politely ask for help?

---

5. **Inviting Others to Play**

You notice some students playing a game but not inviting others. How can you encourage everyone to join in?

---

6. **Apologizing After a Mistake**

You accidentally hurt a friend's feelings by saying something thoughtless. How can you apologize sincerely and make things right?

Activity 3: "Building Our Social Toolbox" (20 minutes)

As a class, brainstorm strategies for handling common social challenges. Write these on a flip chart to create a "Social Toolbox" poster for the classroom.

· Start a brainstorming session titled "What Helps in Difficult Social Situations?"

· Prompt students with guiding questions such as:

"What do you do when someone is being left out?"

"How can you respond if someone says something unkind?"

"What can you do when you feel left out or frustrated?"

"How do you calm down during a conflict?"

· As students share their ideas, write each one clearly on a large flip chart or poster.

· Group similar ideas under themes like *"Communication Tools," "Emotional Regulation," "Conflict Resolution,"* and *"Kindness in Action."*

· Label the poster *"Our Social Toolbox."*

· Examples of contributions to include: *"Use 'I' statements to express your feelings.", "Walk away and breathe before reacting.", "Check in on a classmate who seems upset.", "Apologize when you've hurt someone.", "Invite others into your group."*

· Encourage students to suggest visuals or symbols for each tool, which can be drawn around the phrases for easy recall.

· If possible, let students decorate the poster to personalize it.

· Display the completed *"Social Toolbox"* in a central area of the classroom as a cooperative reference for positive behavior and problem-solving.

Reflection (10 minutes)

· Hand out journals or reflection sheets titled *"Today I Learned."*

· Ask students to respond to three specific prompts:

1. *Today I learned...* – Students write a key insight or skill they gained from the session (e.g., the importance of listening or a new way to express their emotions).

2. *A skill I want to practice...* – Students reflect on one communication or empathy skill they'd like to use more often (e.g., using 'I' statements, giving others time to speak).

3. *A time I used empathy...* – Students recall a real-life situation when they showed empathy or recognize a moment they could have done so differently.

· Give 5 to 10 minutes for quiet writing.

· *Optional:* Students can draw a symbol or image to represent what empathy means to them.

· Invite volunteers to share one of their reflections with the group.

· Conclude by reinforcing empathy and social skills are strengths that improve with practice.

My reflection journal!
Today I learned...
A skill I want to practice...
A time I used empathy...

Outcome: Participants improve their ability to listen, express themselves, and respond with empathy. They gain tools for conflict resolution and develop a stronger sense of group cohesion. Teachers see improved classroom dynamics and fewer incidents of social tension.

10.8 Outcome of the activity

Students will:

· Show improved listening and communication skills

· Exhibit greater empathy and understanding of others

· Develop practical strategies for handling social situations

· Feel more confident in their ability to form positive relationships

11. CHAPTER: HOW TO OVERCOME ANXIETY BY ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES

"Hidden Poetry: The Caviardage of Emotions"

11.1 Purpose of the activity

In moments of anxiety or emotional overwhelm, creative expression can become a powerful tool for self-awareness and release. Caviardage is a creative technique for poetic and artistic writing that involves "blacking out" words or phrases from an existing text (such as a book page, newspaper, or magazine), highlighting only certain words that, when read together, form a new meaning or poem.

This activity combines poetry, visual art, and music to help students explore their inner world, process stress, and transform complex emotions into meaningful artistic creations. Through the technique of caviardage, students can find beauty and clarity in unexpected places, while discovering how art can offer relief and emotional balance. Using the caviardage technique to transform written texts into visual poems that help to reflect on stress and inner well-being.

11.2 Duration of the activity

Approximately 3 hours.

11.3 Methodology of the activity

· Introduction to caviardage: explaning the technique and viewing the examples.
· Musical inspiration (optional but recommended): a short listening session where students hear a selected instrumental track or meaningful song related to emotional themes (e.g., calmness, anxiety, hope). They can write down any words, images, or feelings that arise.
· Text selection: students choose pages from books or newspaper articles.
· Creation of the hidden poem: by blacking out certain words and highlighting others, students create a meaningful poem based on emotions, possibly inspired by the music.
· Artistic decoration: they complete the piece with drawings or colors to visually reinforce the emotional message of the poem.
· Sharing and reflection: students present their works and participate in a group discussion about how creativity and music can be allies in managing anxiety and emotional stress.

11.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity (min., max.)

Minimum 10, maximum 25 students.

11.5 Equipment needed for the activity

· Old books, magazines, or newspapers
· Markers, highlighters, pencils
· Drawing paper for additional decorations
· Audio player/speakers and a selected music track (instrumental or lyrical)

11.6 Supplementary material for the activity (if any)

· Sample caviardage pieces for inspiration
· Printed lyrics or emotion-themed word lists (optional)

11.7 Description of the activity

Each student creates a hidden poem by eliminating parts of a text and highlighting the words that evoke emotions. Inspired by music and personal reflection, they decorate their poem to turn it into a meaningful visual artwork.

11.8 Outcome of the activity

A collective mural featuring all students' caviardage pieces, creating a unified artwork that visually and poetically expresses their inner emotional landscapes.

12. CHAPTER: HOW TO OVERCOME STRESS BY ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES

Street Photography

12.1 Purpose of the activity

Adolescence is a time of change and challenge, often accompanied by significant levels of stress related to school, social relationships, personal identity, and future expectations. In this context, photography emerges as a powerful and accessible tool to help adolescents manage stress, express their emotions and develop greater awareness of themselves and the world around them.

The activity includes a photography workshop in which the students will be guided to discover various places in the city that will have to be immortalized and told from their personal and emotional point of view.

This can prove to be a powerful ally in managing stress and increasing psychological well-being.

The activity of street photography offers a unique opportunity to turn a walk into a therapeutic experience. It is an invitation to slow down, observe, and reconnect with the world in a deep and meaningful way, providing an effective antidote to stress.

This activity is usefull to develop:

- **Nonverbal Expression:** Photography offers a non-verbal channel for expressing emotions, thoughts, and perceptions.
- **Identity and Self-Esteem:** Through photography, teenagers can explore their identity, what interests them and the way they see the world.
- **Mindfulness and Presence:** The act of photographing requires attention and concentration. To take a good photo, a teenager must observe carefully, perceive the light, composition and details.
- **Social Anxiety Management:** For some teens, social interaction can be a source of stress. Photography can offer a "mediator" between them and the world.
- **Creativity and Problem Solving:** Every photograph is a small creative challenge.
- **Connecting and Sharing:** Sharing your images and receiving feedback can create a sense of community and belonging
- **Perspective and Recognition of Beauty:** Learning to photograph means learning to see the world differently, to notice beauty in everyday details or in unexpected situations.
- **Control and Autonomy:** Photography gives teens a sense of autonomy and control. They decide what to photograph, how to process the images and when to share them.

12.2 Duration of the activity

The activity lasts a total of 4 hours, distributed in 3 phases of work:

- Introduction (1h)
- Photography in the places of the city (2h)
- Printing photos, sharing and reflecting (1h)

12.3 Methodology of the activity

The activity is based on art therapy techniques and visual storytelling. Students will work individually and then share their work with the group, fostering dialogue and mutual understanding.

12.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity (min., max.)

15-25 students

12.5 Equipment needed for the activity

- **Cameras:** Smartphones with good cameras are perfect and accessible to everyone. Alternatively, small compact digital cameras or SLRs/mirrorless cameras if available.
- **Notebook and pen:** For notes, ideas and reflections.
- **Projector/IWB:** To show examples and discuss photos.
- **Printer:** Printer with thermal rollers to print photos of participants in vertical strips

12.6 Supplementary material for the activity (if any)

- Posters to paste photos

12.7   Description of the activity

STEP 1: Introduction and Preparation

1. Welcome and Icebreaker (15 min):

> · Brief presentation of the purpose of the workshop: *"to photograph the way to explore the world and find a moment of calm"*.
> · Round of introductions: *"My name is... and the thing I like most to photograph is..."*.

2. What is Street Photography? (15 min):

> · **Simple definition:** Spontaneous and unposed photograph of everyday life in public spaces.
> · **Visual Examples:** Show images by famous (Henri Cartier-Bresson, Vivian Maier, Robert Doisneau, etc.) and contemporary photographers, emphasizing the ability to capture moments, emotions, details, lights.
> · **Discussion:** *"What strikes you about these photos? What do they say?"*.
> · **Focus on stress:** Explain how street photography can help:
>> • **Mindfulness:** Being present and observing.
>> • **Expression:** Giving voice to one's emotions and points of view.
>> • **Movement:** Being outdoors and walking.
>> • **Positive distraction:** Focus on other things than worries.

3. Photography Basics (30 min):

> · **Simple Composition:** Rule of Thirds, Guidelines, Symmetry, Asymmetry, Shots (Close-up, Long Shot).
> · **Light:** Importance of natural light, shadows, contrasts.
> · **Perspective:** Changing point of view (from below, from above, through something).
> · **Decisive Moment:** The importance of being ready to shoot when something interesting happens.
> · **Practical Exercise:** Ask the children to take 3-5 photos of objects in the room or courtyard, applying one of the rules of composition discussed.

STEP 2: Street photography

1. Preparation for the "Expedition" (10 min):

> · Brief review of the rules of ethics and composition.
> · Establish a specific area for exploration (e.g. a street in the historic center, a park, a square).
> · **Task of the day:** *"Today we will go hunting for details. Look for: an interesting shadow, a color that stands out, a particular texture, an unexpected interaction, an object out of place."*

2. The Photo Walk (90 min):

> · **Encourage calmness:** *"Walk slowly, observe, breathe. Let your eyes get used to the environment."*
> · **Active Silence:** Encourage focusing on observation rather than noisy conversation.
> · **Tips during the activity:**
>> · *"Approach (but always with respect)."*
>> · *"Try different angles."*
>> · *"Wait for the right moment."*
>> · *"Don't be afraid to take multiple shots of the same subject."*

3. Return and Selection (20 min):

> · Back to school.
> · Each guy selects 3-5 of his favourite photos from the session.
> · **Guided discussion:** *"Why did you choose this photo? What struck you? What did you want to communicate?"* (Focus on the process, not just the outcome.)

STEP 3: Print, Share and Reflect

1. Collective printing and revision (30 min):

> · Print and project selected photos (anonymously or with consent).
> · **Constructive Feedback:** Encourage the kids to give positive feedback and constructive suggestions *("I like how you caught the light here", "Maybe if you had moved a little to the left...")*.
> · **Focus on storytelling:** *"What does this image tell? What is its history?"*
> · **Reflection on stress:** *"While you were shooting, did you feel more present? Have you noticed your worries less?"*

2. Reflection and Tools for Well-being (30 min):

> · **Guided discussion:**
>> · *"How did you feel during the photography sessions?"*
>> · *"What have you learned about yourself or your surroundings?"*
>> · *"Do you think photography can help you manage stress or feel better in the future?"*
>> · *"What other tools (besides photography) help you feel better?"*
>
> · **Connection to Mindfulness:** Reinforcing the concept that the act of observing and focusing is a form of mindfulness.

12.8 Outcome of the activity

Deliver certificates of participation or small *"street photographer certificates"*.

Encourage people to continue practicing street photography independently.

This type of mental activity can take your mind off personal problems and offer a sense of accomplishment.

13. CHAPTER: HOW TO OVERCOME BURNOUT BY ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES

Artistic Activity to prevent Burnout "This Is How We Are"

13.1 Purpose of the Activity

Through the act of observing and portraying oneself using various expressive means, a process of introspection is triggered, leading to greater self-awareness and understanding of one's inner world. Self-portraiture can be a deep personal growth experience. Additionally, through art, students can discover aspects previously unknown, overcome difficulties, and gain greater awareness—and give tools to prevent burnout.

13.2 Duration

Approximately 3 hours, divided into three phases: preparation (30 min), artistic creation (2 h 15 min), sharing and reflection (45 min).

13.3 Methodology

Students will work both individually and in pairs.

13.4 Optimal Number of Participants

15-25 students, with individual and group sections.

13.5 Necessary Materials

- · Small mirrors for self-portraiture (one per student)
- · Smartphones for photography
- · HB or 2B pencils
- · Watercolors, tempera, oil pastels
- · Glue, scissors, collage paper
- · Markers, chalks, and coloured pencils
- · Relaxing background music
- · A board for drawing the self-portrait model

13.6 Description of the activity

Phase 1: Preparation (30 min)

1. **Brief Introductory Discussion (Primary and Secondary Emotions):** Introduction to the concept of "inner journey" and how art can help explore oneself, emotions, and manage stress.

2. **Self-Reflection Exercise:** In front of a mirror, each student observes his/her face quietly for a minute and writes down three words describing his/her current state of mind.

Phase 2: Artistic Creation (2 h)

1. **Self-Portrait in Pencil with Mirror:**

· Students prepare the base of their self-portrait following the Loomis method explained by the teacher. Using self-observation in the mirror, they define their facial features. This exercise aims to deepen self-knowledge, recognizing the lines that represent them and their self-perception.

2. **Pop Art Style Photographic Portrait (Photos with Real-Life School Situations):**

· Drawing randomly from cards depicting various school life situations (e.g., How do you react to a bad grade? How do you respond when a classmate compliments you?), students, in pairs, capture a selfie expressing the related emotion. These expressions will be printed in sequence on a vertical strip and then modified/coloured in Pop Art style, ideally creating a kaleidoscope of emotions represented through symbolic shapes and colours.

Phase 3: Sharing and Reflection (30 min)

1. **Group Discussion:** Reflection on personal difficulties and resources that students focused during the activity.

2. **Message to Themselves:** Each student writes a short letter to their "future self", offering encouragement or advice on handling stress and maintaining balance. The letters will be stored and read after a month.

13.7 Benefits of the Activity

· Enhances emotional awareness through visual storytelling
· Reduces stress and burnout through reflection and creativity
· Improves self-esteem by visualizing personal strengths

These activities foster emotional exploration, creativity and personal growth, helping students manage stress and burnout, strengthen their self-awareness through artistic expression.

13.8 Outcome of the activity

Participants will gain deeper self-awareness and emotional clarity through self-portraiture and creative expression. They will identify personal strengths and coping strategies, fostering resilience and reducing stress. The activity promotes introspection, empathy, and confidence, equipping students with practical tools to prevent burnout and maintain emotional balance.

14. CHAPTER: HOW TO IMPROVE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE BY ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES

Artistic Activity to focus on Emotional Intelligence: "The Islands That Lead to Me"

14.1 Purpose of the Activity

This activity helps to develop the ability to understand and manage emotions, creating good relationships with the others, through a symbolic and creative journey within oneself and the others. Students will explore their emotions, desires, and sources of stress, transforming them into a visual artwork that represents their growth and self-perception.

14.2 Duration

Approximately 3 hours, divided into three parts: introduction (30 min), creative activity (2h), sharing and reflection (30 min).

14.3 Methodology

The activity is based on art therapy and visual storytelling techniques. Students will work individually and then share their work with the group, fostering dialogue and mutual understanding.

14.4 Optimal Number of Participants

15-25 students, in groups of 3-5 to encourage collaboration.

14.5 Necessary Materials

· Large posters
· Acrylic paints or tempera
· Brushes of various sizes
· Coloured pencils, chalks, and markers
· Glue, scissors, collage paper
· Magazines and newspapers for collage

14.6 Description of the activity

Phase 1: Introduction and Relaxation (30 min)

1. **Initial Discussion:** Brief introduction to the theme of emotions and school burnout, discussing stress and strategies to cope with it.

2. **Emotional Brainstorming:** Each student writes on a sheet of paper a word or a sentence that represents their current mood.
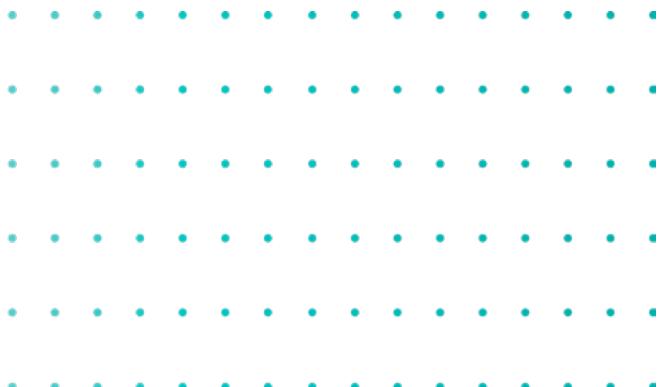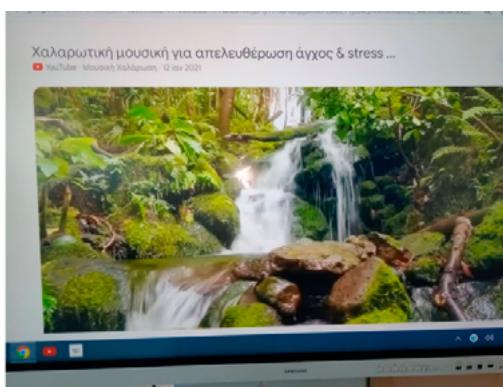
Phase 2: Emotional Islands Map (2h 30min)

1. **Drawing the World of Emotions:** Students are divided into groups, they draw on posters an imaginary world where the islands represent primary and secondary emotions. The morphology of the islands reflects the type of emotions that the figurative images evoke (sharp mountains, hills, cliffs, etc.). The islands will be populated with symbolic elements such as mountains (obstacles), rivers (change), islands (safe spaces), and roads (future paths). The posters with the islands will then be matched together to create a unique world.
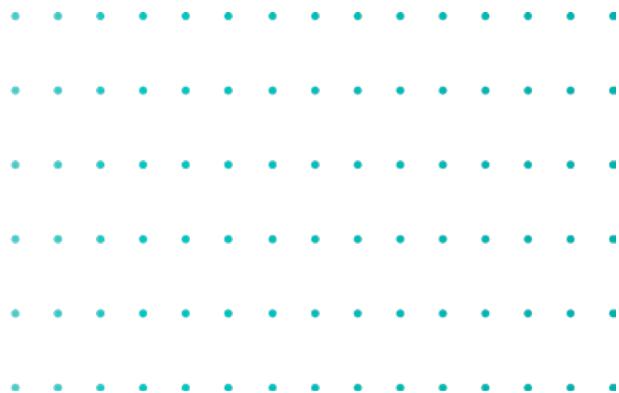
2. **Creation of the "Resilience Talisman":**

a. Each student creates a small symbolic object, such as a paper amulet or a pocket-sized drawing, representing a quality or inner resource that helps them overcome stressful moments.

b. They can decorate it with motivational phrases or meaningful symbols.

Phase 3: Sharing and Reflection (1h)

1. **Final Reflection:** Guided discussion on the sensations experienced during the activity and how art can be a tool for managing stress and share emotions.

2. **Closing with a Positive Message:** Each student writes a positive thought or encouragement for themselves or their peers on a post-it, which will be attached to a "Wall of Resilience" in the classroom.

14.7 Benefits of the Activity

Promotes self-awareness and emotional expression

Develops collaboration and a sense of belonging

Creates a positive and motivating environment

This activity allows students to transform their emotions into something visible and shareable, helping them visualize their feelings, feel less alone in their struggles, and become more capable of facing them.

14.8 Outcome of the activity

Participants will enhance their emotional intelligence by recognizing and expressing emotions through artistic creation. They will develop self-awareness, resilience, and stress-management strategies, while fostering empathy and collaboration within the group. The final artworks and symbolic objects serve as tangible reminders of personal growth and shared emotional understanding.

15. CHAPTER: HOW TO IMPROVE SOCIAL COMPETENCES BY ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES

Physical education work to prevent anxiety

15.1 Purpose of the activity

It is no coincidence that the most innovative, quoted, projected, and discussed film in schools in recent years is Pixar's masterpiece *Inside Out*. On the one hand, this film has given shape, image, body, and face to something that is among the most abstract and incorporeal—emotions. On the other hand, in order to depict these emotions, it has chosen a narrative form and an empathy-driven approach that only cinema can provide. The revolution of *Inside Out* was its ability to represent emotions in order to work on them, achieving that perfect synthesis, that sort of "magic formula" of every narrative already theorized by Charlie Chaplin in his film *The Kid*: "a smile—and perhaps, a tear." The power of images, their ability to attract, and the possibility of linking them, to create a "story" that engages all emotional components, are elements that generate an inter-subjective relationship between the viewer and the possible worlds of fiction.

From a cognitive perspective, visual storytelling stimulates logical faculties and critical thinking, promoting an active attitude in which reasoning develops and awareness of oneself and others increases. From an emotional point of view, film narratives—equipped with text, images, and a soundtrack—can help children and adolescents build and enrich "interpretive maps" of feelings, "rationalizing" emotions, understanding where they come from, why they arise, and how they act on us. These are all necessary tools for present and future life.

For the well-being and learning of students, creating a short film is usefull for following purposes:

- Reduce anxiety and tension on specific topics by rationalizing events, phenomena, traumas, and issues;
- Stimulate the flow of ideas;
- Encourage creativity, imagination, and collaborative work;
- Simplify topics and make them more interesting and understandable;
- Suggest new interpretive models, knowledge, and other cultures;
- Draw from the students' experiential background, helping them recall past events and experiences;
- Foster active participation in proposals, aimed at a common and shared goal;
- Use various communicative languages (drawings, words, music);
- Introduce the basics of audiovisual language;
- Promote a first approach to the use of videomaking technologies;
- Provide students with a collection of images;
- Enhance argumentative skills;
- Provide an outlet for students' emotions and feelings;
- Strengthen social skills, organizing them into a narrative form.

15.2 Duration of the activity

7-8 hours, divided into three working sessions

15.3 Methodology of the activity

- Cooperative learning: students work together to achieve a common goal.
- Peer-to-Peer Learning: students teach each other, leveraging their experience and knowledge.
- Project-Based Learning: students engage in concrete and meaningful activities.

15.4 Optimal number of participants in the activity (min., max.)

There is no defined or optimal number of participants, as the short film is tailored to the number of participants. However, it can be hypothesized that a minimum of 10 participants and a maximum of 20 would be ideal, so that the various stages of the work and collaboration among participants can be consistently monitored and the progression of the work doesn't become too scattered.

15.5 Equipment needed for the activity

- Digital board
- Notebook
- Smartphone with camera and voice recorder

· Drawing album
· Pencil, eraser, markers or crayons
· Photo and video editing software (Wondershare Filmora, Adobe Premiere, or others)

15.6 Description of the activity

FIRST WORK SESSION

· *Introduction to Cinematic Grammar:* The main types of cinematic framing are shown and explained, from the *Very Long Shot* (VLS) to the *Close-up* (CU) and *Detail*, using examples from well-known films that all the students are familiar with. This introduction is useful to make students reflect on the reasons why a director might choose one type of framing over another, since "images are the words of the directors" and the emotional effects they evoke. The analysis of different types of framing will be essential when the students create the drawings that will form the short film, deciding which emotion to highlight and what effect to evoke (1H)

· *Choosing the Text to Represent:* Poetry, short story, news article, or a story written by the students. These narrative forms have the advantage of being short in length, which makes it easier to divide the work among the students. The chosen text, or one written directly by the students, must narratively and visually convey a social competence, prompting reflection on it. An example might be the poem *Ithaca* by Konstantinos Kavafis, which tells the story of Odysseus, a universally known story, and prompts reflection on concepts like resilience, gaining awareness and confidence in one's abilities, the importance of knowledge, and the need to have a goal in life, overcoming all difficulties (1H).

SECOND WORK SESSION

· *Drawings.* The chosen text is divided according to the participants in the project. Each participant receives a sentence to represent in a drawing. Any artistic technique is allowed: markers, crayons, collage, etc. In creating the drawing, each student must consider the types of framing analyzed in the first phase of the work. For instance, a *Long Shot* could be used to define the environment in which the story takes place, while others may focus only on a *Particular* or a *Detail*. Typically, the assigned sentence already suggests what type of framing to use, but it is in this phase of the project that the students' creativity truly shines, as well as their ability to "represent emotions." There is no need for accuracy or for the drawings to be fully consistent with each other. It will be the editing and final unity of the project that will "harmonize" the various styles and contributions. At the end of the work, each drawing will be photographed with a smartphone (2H).

· *Vocal Recordings.* Using a smartphone voice recorder, the students will then record the assigned sentence. Each of them may record multiple versions of the same sentence, until they find the right tone that best expresses the feeling and emotion they "feel" behind the words (1H).

THIRD WORK SESSION

· *Editing.* A Project is started using a video editing program (Filmora Wondershare or others). All the digital material produced — photos of the drawings and voice recordings — is transferred there. A suitable soundtrack is also chosen. This can be selected either from free resources (copyright-free) available online or from famous music tracks. In this case, it is fun to choose a song that is relevant to the story being told, the values, and the emotions it conveys. Using the editing program, the students can then give unity and meaning to what they've created so far, connecting the images, emphasizing the words, linking the words with the song, using small special effects, overlaying key words, and formatting opening and closing titles. This phase of the work is

also highly creative. Each student alternates on the editing program, building upon the work of their predecessor and leaving space for those who come after them (3H).

15.7 Outcome of the activity

The video created is converted into MP4 format and downloaded. It can then be uploaded to the school's social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube channel).

Below is the link to the video of the poem *Ithaca* by Konstantinos Kavafis, created as part of the *Continuity Project of* the Istituto Comprensivo Perugia 2 during the 2022-2023 school year: