



12

EASY PRACTICES TO

RECONNECT
YOURSELF TO
THE BASICS

toolbox

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ABOUT

Dear Reader!

This toolbox has been created in the frames of 'Reconnecting to the basics' - Erasmus+ training course which took place on 19-25 August in Zakrzewo, Poland. 24 participants from 6 countries came together to explore how to connect with oneself and others, and regain stability in crisis moments.

This toolbox contains step-by-step instructions to 12 exercises based on the methods used during the training, namely **Non-violent Empathy Based Communication, Applied Drama, Anthroposophy** and **Nature Work**. You can practice them on your own  or with a partner .

We hope this toolbox will help you reconnect to the basics you value most.

WICI Association

1

FINDING BACK YOUR TREE



FINDING BACK YOUR TREE

1

MATERIALS

clothes for going in the woods, a blindfold

AIM AND BENEFITS

This activity will help you with opening the senses, exploring and connecting with nature and the persons involved, being in the present moment, awakening curiosity, and getting grounded.



Once in the place chosen for this activity, take time to connect to yourself and the nature that surrounds you. In pairs, choose who is going to start as a witness and who will be blindfolded and do the activity the most silently possible.

As a witness:

1. While you walk, choose a place where there are groups of trees or big plants.
2. Blindfold your partner and spin them in circles, softly.
3. Start walking, keep physical contact with your blindfolded partner using strategies to guide them providing a quiet and safe space. Be attentive to their needs giving clear body signals about possible obstacles. Maybe you will need some time to tune yourselves and create a common body language.
4. Guide your blindfolded partner to a tree of your choice, put their hands on the tree and tell them to explore its surface with all senses, in silence.
5. When your partner finishes the exploration, still blindfolded, guide them back to the place where you started, unfold your partner and ask to go find their tree. Be careful of not revealing any information for them to find it on its own.

As a blindfolded:

1. Put a blindfold over your eyes, open your senses and stay attentive to your witness' indications. Keep connected to yourself and to your sense of touch (all over your body) as well as your witness' movements to provide yourself with a safe space at the same time as the exploration takes place.
2. Your witness will tell you to explore the tree they brought you to.
3. What do you perceive? Are you capable of having a mental image of the place where you are by opening other senses, without being able to see?
4. Once your witness tells you to remove the blindfold, go find back your explored tree in silence.

NB! Debrief only after switching roles.

2

TREE OBSERVATION





TREE OBSERVATION



MATERIALS

colour pencils, paper, a tree

AIM AND BENEFITS

To practice observation by the characteristics of elements, to connect with nature, to develop observation skills, to awaken curiosity.

This exercise is inspired by Goethean Phenomenology, used by **Rudolf Steiner** (creator of **Anthroposophy**) to explore the world and its different aspects, using the element's attitude to aid observation.

Choose a tree of your preference.

Take some time to connect to yourself and open your senses.

Imagine you observe your tree as if it was the first time in your life you saw one.

EARTH

What does it look like? What measure do you think it has? How large? How heavy? What do its branches, leaves, trunk and roots look like? Where are its boundaries? What are its proportions? Try to draw it as precisely and in detail as possible (it does not matter if you are not a great drawer, the most important thing is to pay attention to the details). Stay factual and descriptive on your observations. Look at it again, is there anything you see that you didn't see before?

WATER

Follow the branches with your eyes and see its solidified movement. Look at its leaves, could you imagine their changes throughout the year? how do you imagine it was before? How is it today? how was its process to become as it is today? You can look at it in terms of metamorphosis, draw it on a paper by using long flowing lines, not going into details. If you were the movement of your tree, how would you move? do this movement with your whole body, empathize with your tree, pay attention to the mood it is evoking you, what are those impressions? Write some words about it.



2

TREE
OBSERVATION

AIR

Identify the characteristic features of your tree and write them down, see it as a whole, let its image come to your mind. What would you describe as the behaviour of your tree in terms of characteristics? Is it a tree that likes the wind? Is it a tree that needs a lot of water or light ...? Could you see any of its needs? Are they your needs or the needs of your observed tree? How would you draw your idealised tree? Keep the attitude of the observer of the object, letting its characteristics manifest, being mindful of describing instead of judging, just like objects in real air are more clearly visible if the air is pure, the characteristics will be clearer if you yourself are inwardly pure.

FIRE

Now, with all the information taken from the previous observation, close your eyes, take 3 deep breaths exhaling by the mouth and imagine yourself in a safe and calm space. Imagine the tree you have been observing today, allow all the observations to enter your mental image: the concrete observations, the movement and its perception in your inner self or its mood, its characteristics. Now let them disappear. Then stay in the quietness of your peaceful mind and let any image related to your observation come to your mind, this time you are letting the symbolic image of it appear, its core essence. Does it awaken any mood, sensations, impressions on you? which ones? maybe you have an expression, a word about this image, or an orientation.

How does it touch you? Feel the effect.

When you feel ready, open your eyes and write down or draw about this last part of your observation, about the symbolic image and how it touched you.

After putting into practice all these attitudes for observation and gaining contact and connection with your tree, put your sheets of papers with the drawings and words one after the other and take some time to contemplate what just happened. How do you feel? How was it to observe? Did you feel any admiration for the object? maybe respect, or any other thing? What could you say about the effect of each particular attitude? Which element attitude was easier for you? and the more difficult? Is there any you would like to develop more to aid your inner self?

3

THE WELCOMING



3

THE WELCOMING



MATERIALS

nothing but a partner

AIM AND BENEFITS

This activity is aimed at giving presence and tuning in with other humans, awakening the body gently, grounding, warming.

For this exercise there is a verse to be pronounced melodically and at a calmed pace, connecting it with some gestures you will be doing to the person in front. I invite you to read it several times before starting, memorizing, so you can be more focused on the present moment and sensations during the process.

Stand in front of your partner holding hands and looking in the eyes.

The 'giver' starts saying:

" _____ (name of the person you have in front) is here.

With a **head** (squeezing the head a bit),

two eyes (touching each contour of the eyebrows),

and a nose right here (touching the nose),

two ears (touching each ear's contour),

and a mouth like this (touching the mouth).

Two arms (place your hands on the shoulders of your partner, and squeeze softly until getting to the hands),

two hands (holding hands),

chest (pushing softly on it),

belly (rubbing it),

legs (same as with the arms but from the hips to the knees),

knees (rubbing them),

and far below where you can hardly see, (you continue from the knees squeezing down to the feet)

two strong feet (touch them strongly, imagining them as roots to the ground).

Repeat if needed and switch.

4

FEELINGS AND NEEDS VOCABULARY



EVALUATIVE WORDS CONFUSED WITH FEELINGS

Key Word	Giraffe Feelings	Giraffe Needs
	<p>Enraged, hurt, bewildered and frustrating family Angry, frustrated, righteous</p>	<p>Blaming, resentment, longing want, wanting, regret misunderstanding, physical safety, for things things</p>
	<p>Kind, family, just actions</p>	<p>Respect, connection emotional, belonging, safety, understanding Respect, attention, care for our self, acknowledgment, Trust, respect</p>
	<p>Worried, angry, nervous, anxious Anxiety, frustrated, tense, frustrated</p>	<p>Trust, responsibility, honesty, Accountability, stability, Safety, justice</p>
	<p>I feel I have disappointed</p>	<p>Accountability, honesty, safety, Safety, justice</p>
	<p>Confused, confused frustrated, family, bewildered, Anxiety, angry, frustrated</p>	<p>Accountability, honesty, safety, Safety, justice</p>
	<p>Worried, frustrated, angry, nervous Anxiety, frustrated, tense, frustrated</p>	<p>Accountability, honesty, safety, Safety, justice</p>
	<p>Worried, frustrated, angry, nervous Anxiety, frustrated, tense, frustrated</p>	<p>Accountability, honesty, safety, Safety, justice</p>
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	<p>Worried, frustrated, angry, nervous Anxiety, frustrated, tense, frustrated</p>	<p>Accountability, honesty, safety, Safety, justice</p>
	<p>Worried, frustrated, angry, nervous Anxiety, frustrated, tense, frustrated</p>	<p>Accountability, honesty, safety, Safety, justice</p>

4 FEELINGS AND NEEDS VOCABULARY



MATERIALS

You can find different inventories in your mother tongues, which gather the variety of words to describe the feelings and needs which we might be experiencing as humans. We recommend the ones published by the Centre for Nonviolent Communication (cnvc.org) or by a local NVC centre in your region.

AIMS AND BENEFITS

NVC sets a new perspective on the communication process. It uses specific vocabulary and structures, just like a separate language. For that reason, we encourage you to read and practice the specific vocabulary of feelings and needs, which are the core elements in the model. You may also find this vocabulary useful for the next activities.



[Feelings Inventory.](#)



[Needs Inventory.](#)

Click the links to visit cnvc.org.

5

CREATIVE EXHALATION



5 CREATIVE EXHALATION



MATERIALS

color pencils, crayons, water colors, pastels, big paper sheets, magazines, scissors, glue and/or any type of material of your wish to put your creativity onto paper.

AIM AND BENEFITS

This activity is aimed at releasing emotions, tensions, expressing yourself, developing creativity. Reconnecting to yourself by creative expression.

This activity is inspired by the method **Journal Créatif**® created by Anne-Marie Jobin and on methods from Waldorf Education that support self expression and releasing of emotions, tensions, helping to calm down and liberating by diving into colors, shapes and figurative subconscious expression, focusing on it more as a releasing trance than a piece of art.

You could practice this exercise in combination with the feelings and needs inventories (from Exercise 4).

Process:

Close your eyes, take a deep breath and focus on your belly, your breathing, check your body.

Think of an intention for your practice, maybe there is something you would like to work on, release or transform with it. You could imagine this subject as if it was a fireball in your body. Where is it placed? What does it look like? let it travel through your body and come to your hands, as if it were branches of a tree wanting to get out. Choose the color and material you want to start your exercise with, intuitively. Take your paper and let yourself dive into the colors, and forms by drawing and painting as you need. Focus on the tonality, on what your eyes are seeing, what your hands are touching, keep present. You can try different forms, shapes, directions of the lines you make, concentrating on your body and feelings, maybe painting and coloring using other parts of your body as well.

When you feel it, you can stop with the colors and choose an image of the magazine. Maybe there is an idea, feeling or need you would like to accentuate on your creation, maybe something you want to tell or give yourself symbolically. You can cut the image and paste it on your paper. Continue with the process the time you need.

When you finish the last details, stay calm for a moment in front of your creation.

How do you feel now? What has changed from the beginning of the process? Is there anything you would like to tell yourself?

Choose a word or a short sentence to wrap the process up and write it down on the back of your paper.

6

BODY SCAN WITH FEELINGS



6

**BODY SCAN WITH
FEELINGS****MATERIALS**

your bodies, optionally - feelings inventory

AIM AND BENEFITS

To practice focusing the attention. To practice observation of body sensations. To become more present and grounded in the body. To notice where the feelings start in the body.

This activity can be done alone or with a witness.

As a doer:

1. Find a place on the floor, lying down comfortably on your back (or sit down comfortably, in front of your witness)
2. Close your eyes, take a deep breath and tune into your body... Take a minute to feel yourself lying down... What do you notice as you lay down? What calls your attention?
3. Can you observe or are you thinking of other things? What do you notice about the thoughts you are thinking? What do you notice about what you are feeling?
4. Notice the weight of your body on the ground, feel it being supported by the Earth. What parts of your body are in connection with the floor?
5. Begin with scanning your body, from feet to top of the head...not trying to change anything, just building a picture of how the body feels in this moment...and welcoming any condition that arises..
6. Bring your awareness to your feet..noticing the sensations.. moving up to your calves... your knees... thighs... moving your awareness to your hips...your back.. your abdomen...chest... your neck and head... your shoulders...arms...hands and fingers..
7. Feel your entire body, lying down on the earth.. breathe, just allow yourself to rest here, supported by the ground...what do you notice?
8. Move slightly your toes and fingers..., then the hands, arms and legs..., make a loud sigh or yawn... finally open your eyes
9. Write down the feelings you have noticed in the body's sensations (or share them with your witness).

As a witness:

1. Seat comfortably in front of your doer, minding not to cross the boundaries of their physical and psychological space.
2. Be in silence throughout the experience of the doer, trying to be in this experience together with them.
3. At the same time notice how you feel in this experience, how the image of the doer, their moves, their mimics, might cause some feelings in you.
4. When they open their eyes, listen to what they want to share in silence.
5. Only after they have finished, share your feelings and observations.

7



EXPLORATION OF NEEDS



7 EXPLORATION OF NEEDS



MATERIALS

a list of needs, something to write (a marker, a pen, a pencil), empty paper sheet or a journal

AIM AND BENEFITS

To notice the needs alive at the present moment, what asks to be taken care of.

Needs are a sign of disbalance in some spheres of our lives. At one moment you might need one thing, at another moment something completely else, sometimes one need is present through many moments in one's life. As the situations we are in and our mental and body condition are changing, so are our needs. Moreover, we might experience several needs at the same time!

1. Take a list of needs and go through it all, marking on the paper those of them which relate to your personal experience. Choose 10 of them, which have been present in your life.
2. Once having marked the 10 needs from the list, rate each of them on a scale from 1 - I barely have it now in my life, to 10 - I feel fully satisfied in this aspect of my life.
3. Having done this, choose one of your selected needs. It might be one that is present now in you and asking to regain balance or one that is already in balance and you want to celebrate this fulfillment.
4. With the chosen need, create 3 spaces on an empty piece of paper (or in your journal) - as columns, rows, bubbles, or with any other form you might imagine.
5. Write down in separate spaces:
 - how do I take care of this need on my own for myself*
 - how do I satisfy this need with help from others, what do I ask others to do to help me in satisfying my need/ how do I act when I notice/ know that another person experiences this need, what specifically do I do to help another person satisfy this need?*
 Name as many strategies, ways, behaviours, as you remember from your life.
6. Recognise which of them are/were useful and which were NOT. Use different colours to distinguish them. Be honest.
7. Having done your own thinking, go and ask others what strategies they use. We might be limited, get stuck with the actions that we know and use for many years, while they might have lost their effectiveness. Use the experience of other people to enrich and refresh your box with what is possible, what you haven't thought about on your own, or were too shy to name it.

8

EMPATHY BUDDIES



**MATERIALS**

feelings and needs inventory

**EMPATHY
BUDDIES****AIM AND BENEFITS**

Active listening for feelings and needs of another person. This activity builds the skills of hearing and naming feelings and needs.

This is a practice in pairs where one person is sharing their thoughts and experience of the day, while another person is listening to hear the feelings and needs present in the story.

1. One person shares for a few minutes, while another person listens in silence.
2. When the person sharing finishes a certain (part of) story, they stop and now listen to their buddy. The buddy shares which feelings and needs they have heard in the story, always checking with the story owner if that resonates with them and could be true! Don't assume that what you have heard is the "correct" answer to the experience of the story owner. It is a way of connecting to the story and the person, a way of approaching the essence of the story.
3. Switch roles.

9

**DANCE OF
THE JACKAL AND
THE GIRAFFE**



9 DANCE OF THE JACKAL AND THE GIRAFFE



MATERIALS

your body and space where you feel safe and can move freely

AIM AND BENEFITS

To gain awareness of the four perspectives on communication, recognise the jackal and giraffe alive in oneself, experience the different positions of a jackal and giraffe and the possibilities for them to communicate with each other

Solo practice - it doesn't matter whether your moves are big, small, perfectly flowing or clumsy. It matters that they are not censored by your thoughts.

Mind that this activity might open up some difficult situations, thoughts and feelings connected to them. Remember that you can stop at any moment. You can also choose what kind of situations and images you decide to explore and follow. Create a scale from 1 to 3 and use it to check with yourself, during the activity, towards which level you are going. Choose a level that allows you at the moment to be present not only in the movement, images and thoughts that will arise, but also in the whole activity, to draw reflection from it.

1. Stand comfortably, close your eyes and take a moment of stillness to breathe, relax and listen to the body. What do you need to do in order to stay fully present? Notice any sensations, become aware of the current state of your body, of your energy, of your mood. Find a move to start - whatever feels comfortable and right at this moment, what your body needs - give it now. Keep eyes open or closed. Continue for 2 minutes.
2. Now, find a move of a Jackal - which means a movement of attack directed to the outside world. Explore it for around 2 minutes. Recognise your patterns in that movement.
3. Now, find a move of Jackal directed to yourself. Don't be too harsh to yourself. Focus on the quality of this move. Explore it for around 2 minutes.
4. Find a move of a Giraffe - which means a movement representing compassion, love, and empathy towards yourself. Give it to yourself and notice the change in the quality of your moves. Continue for around 2 minutes, or as long as you need.
5. Move the Giraffe from yourself to the outside world. Find compassionate moves directed to the outside world. Continue for around 2 minutes, or as long as you need.
6. Slow down your moves, stop in one comfortable position. Open your eyes. Notice, what you see around you, the colours and shapes, notice smells around you, touch the environment around you. Come back to here and now.
7. Write down in your journal any reflection that came to you about your actions in daily life towards - myself, -others, -the environment where you might have been behaving as a Jackal or a Giraffe.

10

TRANSFORMING THE IMAGE OF THE ENEMY



10

TRANSFORMING THE IMAGE OF THE ENEMY



MATERIALS

guidelines, journal/ something to write on and to write with

AIM AND BENEFITS

Recognising and connecting to my own unmet needs, recognising the “enemy” images I create about other people, connecting with the needs of the person I’m judging, finding new opportunities in challenging relations.

This exercise is inspired by the work of Inbal Kashtan and Miki Kashtan.

The process follows a few steps, where you go from your own perspective, to the perspective of your “enemy”, and back to yourself, to finally look at the both of you from a distance with a fresh attitude. Not to get lost in the process, it can be helpful to write down your answer on each of the steps, and highlight the most meaningful answers afterwards.

ME

THOUGHTS, JUDGEMENTS ABOUT ANOTHER PERSON

What can disturb me hearing the other person?

FACTS

What already happened?

TAKE A DEEP BREATH, WHAT DO YOU FEEL NOW?

Are those feelings or thoughts?

WHAT DO YOU NEED? (in relation to that person, situation)

Go on until you feel a relief

Change your position to talk from the perspective of the other person.



10

**TRANSFORMING
THE IMAGE
OF THE ENEMY****THEM**

Open for the perspective of another person. WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN THEIR FEELINGS AND NEEDS?

If judgements about the other person appear in what you are saying now, go back to the position of "Me" and give more empathy to your feelings and needs

CAN YOU FORM A REQUEST TO YOURSELF OR TO ANOTHER PERSON? What would it be?
Make it specific and doable

Go back to the position of yourself

ME

Back to myself, WHAT FEELINGS AND NEEDS APPEAR NOW? WHAT IS IMPORTANT NOW?
-what has changed?

Look from a distance at both of you. WHAT NEW OPPORTUNITIES CAN YOU SEE NOW?
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO?
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

11

APPROACHES TO CONFLICT





11 APPROACHES TO CONFLICT



MATERIALS

several sheets of paper and something to write on them, optionally needs inventory

AIM AND BENEFITS

To recognise that every action we take might be the best/ the only way or the one we know the best to meet certain needs. To recognise that behind each action stands a need.

Think of different strategies that you know how to approach a conflict which you have used in your life.

Write each of them on a separate paper.

Now, take one of them, and write down all the needs that you remember present in your experience when you used that strategy.

You can keep your notes for later.

Next time when you are in a conflict situation and notice that you are starting to use one of the strategies, take a breath, and try to tell the other person about your needs.

If you notice that your opponent is going for one of the strategies, stop them and yourself, take a breath, name the needs, which you have recognised before, and ask the person if this might be what they need at this moment.

Later on, note down somewhere the results of this experiment. What was different in the situation compared to other conflicts that you have experienced?

12

RECONNECTING CIRCLE



12

RECONNECTING CIRCLE



MATERIALS

space where to sit comfortably and calm in a circle, a Talking Stick, A gathering element: something to symbolize the centre of the circle like some elements of the season (dried leaves, flowers, sticks), some tissue or some symbolic object participants bring, candles, posters or papers with guidelines, eventually something to write.

AIM AND BENEFITS

Reconnecting with the group by verbal communication. Practicing active listening. Preventing group tensions.

The origin of this practice is connected to the tradition of gathering in a circle and sharing stories, typical of many indigenous cultures all over the world. The model has been readapted by **Jack Zimmerman and Virginia Coyle** and used in multiple ways for effective communication, also called **The Way of Council.**

PREPARATION:

For this practice it is important to choose a prompt that is connected with the aim of the session itself (getting to know each other, exploring a certain topic, sharing, conflict resolution, etc) and write it down presenting it in the beginning of the process.

There is a Talking Stick (it could be a stick from the woods or some other object that would make sense for the practice) that will be used for talking.

There are several guidelines to share with participants to keep the circle a safe space for expression which are:

- Speaking with intention and listening with attention,
- One person speaks at a time (Only the person who has the Talking Stick is encouraged to talk),
- Speak the essence (Mind the space and time we share between each of us),
- Whatever comes in the moment is the best thing that could come (no need to overthink),
- I speak from "I" (I like, I think, I feel...),
- I talk about myself and my experience (instead of doing it about someone else's, I do not respond to other person's opinion or situation, don't give advice),
- What happens here, stays here.



12

RECONNECTING
CIRCLE**THE PROCESS:**

Invite participants to take a seat on the circle, being sure that everyone is able to see each others faces, indicating the middle of the circle with the altar you create with the elements of the season, candles and the Talking Stick.

Invite participants to place their precious object or the object that makes sense for them to place on the altar from the middle of the circle.

Present the intentions of the circle with the prompts written down and place them in the middle.

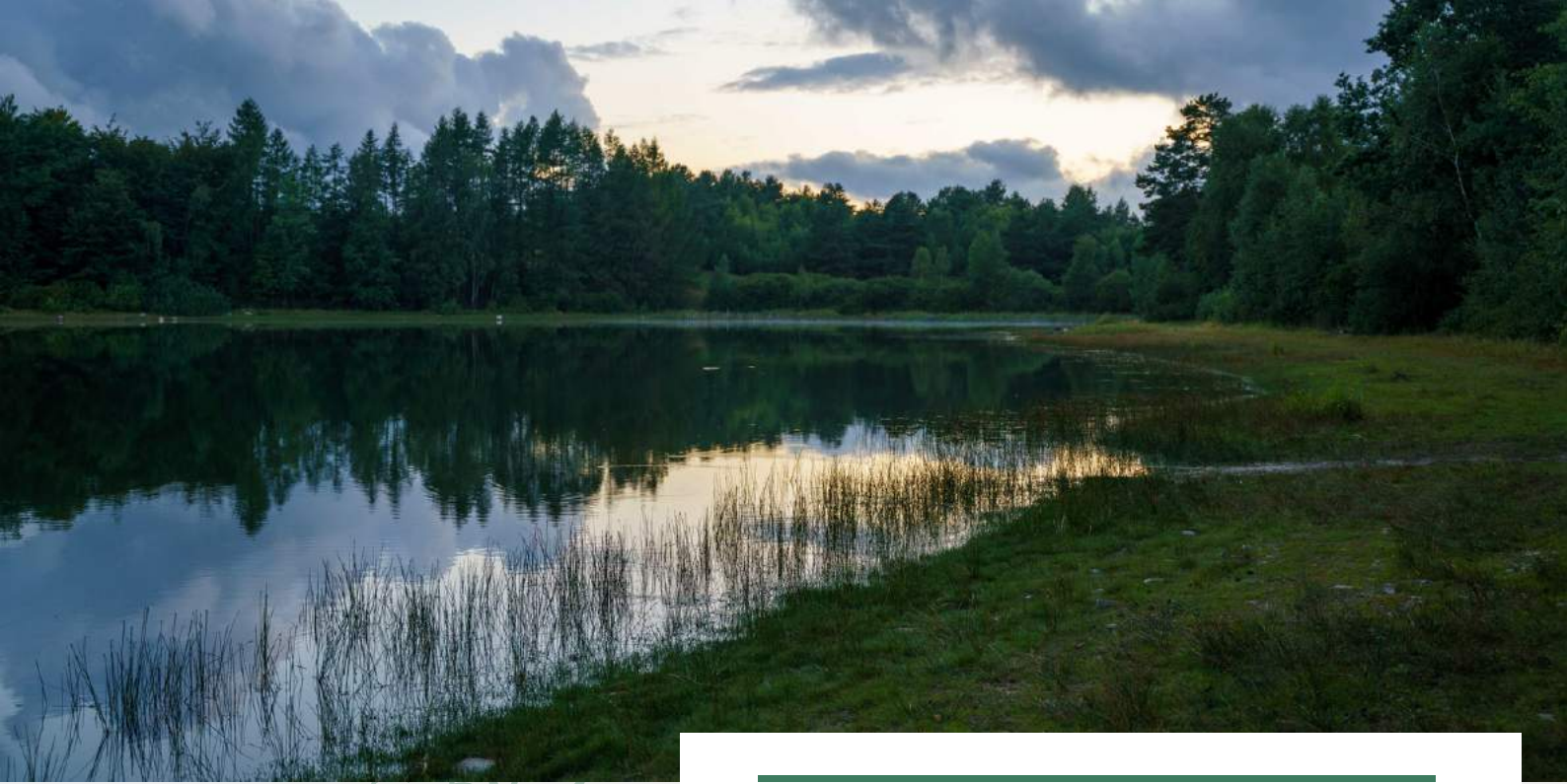
Present the guidelines that are important to be respected for the development of the practice and place them visible too, clarifying that you as a moderator will make a gesture if some of the guidelines are not being respected, for the person to try it differently.

Present the Talking Stick saying that only the person who has it is the person to speak during the process.

Indicate that it is time to take the Talking Stick and start sharing one by one.

Once every person on the circle had their turn to express, the talking stick will be placed on the centre of the circle again and it will be time to close the practice. Check that it is ok for all participants, take some seconds in silence to integrate the process if needed and blow the candles.

The Way Council was born to support a free form of expression, so the aim is to create an atmosphere which is free of any kind of judgement, where the participants can feel free to express themselves spontaneously, which includes the possibility to remain in silence, to sing or dance, to chose not to share anything, etc.



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RECONNECTING
TO THE BASICS



Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.