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THE BOOK OF LIFE TOOLKIT

Manual for independent life



THE BOOK
OF LIFE

Edited by: Michał Olszowy

Authors: Raluca Ferchiu, Hallam Cooper, Marta Kaciuba,
António Gomes, Nicola Ferretti, Judit Núñez, Nélida Díaz, Celia Ramos,

Illustrations: Adrianna Madej

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Foundation Institute of Animation and Social Development

Probostwo 34, Lublin 20-089, Poland

biuro@iairs.pl

www.iairs.pl

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

In life, you have to cross different stages: childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. Each stage has joyful moments and challenges but one of the most difficult phases is when you launch yourself into independent life, leaving the family nest.

Young people know that they have to go to school, get a job and build their own future, and do “mandatory” steps, but often it happens that they arrive at the edge of an independent life with a sense of loss and uncertainty about their future. How to find your way?

This book aims to be an instruction manual for youth that are launching their independent life. It will help them to start asking questions related to their personal and professional life.

The project “The Book of life Write your own bestseller!” is a transnational and cross-sectoral cooperation in which 5 organizations from 5 European countries (Romania, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Poland), working in the field of youth, development, test and implement some innovative non-formal methods, through combined expressive techniques. This way the organizations try to increase youth involvement in community life, motivate them to become architects in their own lives and teach them how to gain independence and build a healthy lifestyle.



Its specific objectives are: Increasing the capacity of young people to reach the planning and implementation of a healthy lifestyle through the use of innovative tools of expressive type, in the process of personal and professional development; Increasing the quality of non-formal activities in the youth field, by developing a personal and professional development toolkit for young people, as well as an integrated intervention program that youth workers can use to develop decision-making capacity for life independence of young people; and finally increasing the organizational capacity of 5 European youth organizations, to use non-formal tools focused on the personal development of young people and to develop sustainable working methodologies in the field of youth, for the return after the pandemic period.

The manual begins with a description of the systemic theory of change, the stages of the family life cycle, and the changes and challenges that occur in the stage of starting an independent life. It also helps them to deal with aspects related to the management of these changes, such as time and resource management, career planning, and route choice, what a functional relationship means and what are the adaptive challenges of starting one's own family, negotiating borders to gain the necessary independence, and making decisions for oneself, knowingly.

Take a seat, get comfortable, and start this journey to an independent life with us. Along the manual, you will find ten different topics that together make the overall well-being of young people, developed from theoretical and practical points of view.

In the end, you can use this manual as a tool to start living your own bestseller, and in any circumstance, the manual of instruction is always there for you.

PARTNERS

GAMMA - The Association Institute for Research and Study of Quantum Consciousness (GAMMA Institute of Psychology) is a non-governmental organization from Iasi, founded in 2011, whose purpose is the promoting, development, research and initiative for activities in the field of psychology, psychotherapy and mental health, in particular through training programs, workshops, psychological services and psychological assistance, counseling, psychotherapy and training of specialists; also, another aim is to facilitate the cooperation between Romanian specialists from the fields mentioned above and other specialists from international area.

<http://www.gammainstitute.ro/>



IAIRS – Fundacja Instytut Aktywizacji i Rozwoju Społecznego based in Lublin, Poland is a non-profit organization founded in 2012. Through its activities, the foundation aims to support young people and adults in their personal and social development by non-formal education in workshops, local and international projects.

<http://www.iairs.pl/>



ASPAYM - ASPAYM Castilla y León is an organization dedicated professionally to people with disabilities, which offers multidisciplinary, comprehensive and personalized services, open to all members of society, wherever they are, to help them develop their life project, through empowerment, and the defense of equal opportunities, as well as a more inclusive society.

<http://www.aspaymcyll.org/>





PARTNERS

CEIPES – International Centre for the Promotion of Education and Development is a non-profit organisation based in Palermo, Italy. CEIPES has expertise in Education, Innovation and Project management in different European programmes tackling the Education and the capacity building of different target groups. It also promotes lifelong learning, vocational training and entrepreneurship with the aim of enhancing opportunities for youth and adults to improve and acquire competences and therefore boost their employability and inclusion.

<http://www.ceipes.org/>



CHECK-IN - Associação Check-IN – Cooperação e Desenvolvimento is a non-profit organization, founded in 2010, based in Beja, also operating in Lisbon, Portugal. Check-IN works in close cooperation with public and private entities, actively participating in quality-of-life improvement activities. As main aims of the NGO, there is promoting lifelong learning opportunities, encouraging and promoting social integration, education for sustainable development and social entrepreneurship.

PT - <http://checkin.org.pt/> **EN** - <http://checkin.org.pt/en>



TARGET GROUP

"The Book of Life" project addresses:

1. Youth specialists - who will be provided with a non-formal learning method in working with young people that has a strong impact on participants, both during workshops (by stimulating life skills) and the debriefing. This last section has a well-documented psychological underpinning and contains questions to facilitate decision-making and change the way young people can make decisions about their future. Specialists will benefit from the toolkit, in particular those working in vocational training or human resources organisations, working in the youth field, those working in companies and multinationals where the majority of employees are young people (such as outsourcing, IT companies), youth organisations developing group activities, student associations, specialists in career centres in universities.

2. Young people who want to develop a healthy lifestyle or who want to develop personally, professionally and family wise - they will benefit from an innovative, recreational and educational activities, through which they will be able to develop their planning, negotiation, problem-solving, emotional and financial management, conflict resolution skills and will become aware of their weaknesses, which they should work on in a personal development programme or in organized youth activities.

3. Organisations and institutions in the youth field or corporations where there is a high turnover of staff - will benefit from The Book of Life toolkit as a non-formal method of working in their youth groups.

1

THE FAMILY LIFECYCLE & LEAVING HOME

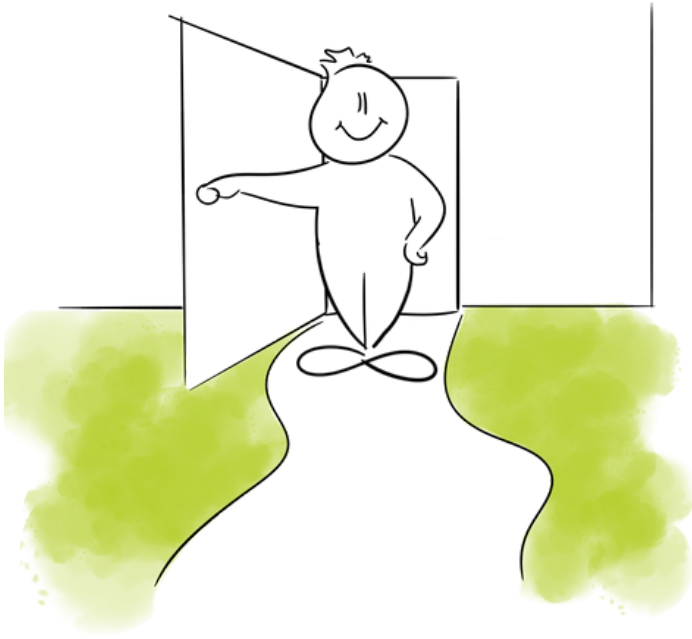
There are diverse theories and strategies related to the family lifecycle and the major transition of leaving home, principally because there are so many different versions of how these processes play out in people's lives. In light of this diversity, one-size-fits-all theories of family systems, development, and cycles have been widely criticised as being inappropriate in not recognising the heterogeneity of human experience. Indeed, common variants such as the increasing number of single-person households, cohabitation by unmarried adults, delayed parenting, and rising divorce rates must be taken into account when considering strategies for healthy and constructive family lifestyles. Similarly, the conditions under which a young person might leave home vary widely – there are numerous conditions (positive and negative) under which a young person might leave home, as well as variable ages at which this might take place.

Thus, any recommended steps and strategies can only be made in the context of the particular conditions and situations. This said, there are some general principles that apply to all circumstances.

Before leaving home

- Try to resolve any family issues and stressors. Try to clear any outstanding issues with your family, especially those related to your leaving home.
- Make plans to visit home. You and members of your family will probably miss each other, so set up lines of communication – like regular phone calls or video calls, and times to meet, for example to eat together, or a trip home for a weekend.
- Understand and accept that you will probably experience anxiety about leaving home. Indeed, a certain level of anxiety is normal and can even be a productive motivator. Try to use this anxiety to your advantage by focusing on what in particular is concerning you, and thinking about how you can resolve the problem.
- Make a list of the concerns you may have. Break these down into manageable units, and try to address them individually. If addressing them seems overwhelming or too difficult for you to resolve, ask a family member or friend for help.
- Finances
 - Try to work out what your monthly expenditure will be, distinguishing between essential and non-essential expenditure.
 - Plan your budget for the moving process itself and for the different items you will need once you've moved

- Especially important is to plan any purchases necessary for your accommodation.
- If possible, and in line with your objectives, try to have stable employment lined up before you move. You need to be sure, in advance of moving, that your earnings can cover all of your expenses (or, if they do not, to resolve with family what help they might be able to provide you).
- Find a suitable place to live
 - Use any contacts you may have – family, friends, colleagues - to find suitable accommodation, being clear about your price range and desired location
 - Use online platforms to search for a place
 - Choose a location based on its proximity to your workplace and other useful places
 - Make sure the place is safe, being wary of a particularly low rental (for which there may be some hidden reason)
 - If it's important for you to have good connections to public transport, ensure that this is available
 - Resist the temptation to go beyond your budget
- Practice good habits before moving out
 - Improve your cleanliness and tidiness (you will be amazed by how sustaining having a clean and tidy space of your own can be)
 - Spend an amount that you would spend if you had already moved to get used to this and understand better what you will and will not be able to afford
 - Start organising your day according to the normal routine that will apply when you have moved so you can get used to it before actually moving.



After moving out

- Stay connected to home
 - Keep in touch with family (or friends if you have moved city), and keep up a routine of regular contact with them
 - Don't spend so much time talking to family and old friends, especially if this is online, that it inhibits you from meeting new people in your new life
- Make friends
 - Be proactive about this – having friends prevents us from becoming lonely and friends can help us when we need support. Try new activities in order to meet people (e.g., evening classes, clubs, sporting activities)
- Create a routine – regular activities, including hobbies like sport, can serve to create structure and purpose

- Explore the local area – get to know the area where you live, walking or cycling around if it is safe to do so
- Don't be afraid to ask for help – your parents have likely been through the same thing as you will be going through, so they are likely to be sympathetic and want to help you.
- Create a schedule of household chores
 - Decide which are regular chores (e.g., laundry, food shopping) and those that need to be done less frequently (e.g. paying monthly bills)
 - If you have a housemate, include them in creating a schedule of routine activities (such as cooking and cleaning)

A cautionary Note:

For some people moving out of home will occur in especially difficult circumstances. Perhaps family relationships at home will have broken down completely. Perhaps you will have been experiencing abuse, physical or emotional. Perhaps the family will not be able to afford to remain in a home together. The principles outlined above for moving away from home in ordinary non-stressful circumstances will apply equally in these special cases. Moving away in any of these special circumstances will present particular additional problems that will need to be directly addressed. It is very likely that you will need to call on special services to help you through this transition and you should not hesitate to call upon the assistance of such resources.



THE FAMILY LIFECYCLE & LEAVING HOME

SUMMARY

You should need special support, do not hesitate to call upon it.



BEFORE LEAVING HOME:

- Practice good habits before moving out
- Try to resolve any family issues and stressors.
- Make plans to visit home.
- Accept anxiety about leaving home.
- Make a list of the concerns you may have.
- Financial Independence
- Find a suitable place to live

AFTER MOVING OUT:

- Stay connected to home
- Make friends
- Create a routine
- Explore the local area
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- Create a schedule of household chores

These principles apply equally in special and difficult cases.

2

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

BASIC CONCEPTS

Health is the level of functional and (or) metabolic efficiency of a living being. In humans, it is the general condition of a person in mind, body and spirit, usually meaning to be free from illness, injury or pain (as in “good health” or “healthy”).

The WHO (World Health Organization) defined health in its broader sense in 1946 as a “state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Although this definition has been subject of controversy, in particular as having a lack of operational value and the problem created by use of the word “complete”, it remains the most enduring.

The maintenance and promotion of health is achieved through different combination of physical, mental and social well-being,

together sometimes referred to as the “health triangle”. The WHO’s 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion furthered that **“health is not just a state, but also a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities”**.

Lifestyle is a term to describe the way a person lives, which was originally coined by Austrian psychologist Alfred Adler in 1929. The current broader sense of the word dates from 1961. A set of behaviors, and the sense of self and belonging which these behaviors represent, are collectively used to define a given lifestyle.

A lifestyle is a characteristic bundle of behaviors that makes sense to both others and oneself in a given time and place, including social relations, consumption, entertainment and dress. The behaviors and practices within lifestyle are a mixture of habits, conventional ways of doing things, and reasoned actions.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE?

With all the choices available, it’s no wonder that the majority of individuals that try to improve their condition, eventually drift back into old habits and fall short of their goals, feeling discouraged and even more confused about how to effectively begin living a healthy lifestyle.

A comprehensive model of healthy living should address physical and mental training, nutrition, and how to balance these with quality rest and recovery. Resistance training enhances your capacity to perform activities requiring physical strength.

This coupled with cardio-conditioning increase your endurance, or the ability to work longer periods of time without overtaxing. Combining strength and endurance with systems of exercise that increase flexibility, or the range of motion in a joint, aid in allowing for a greater sense of confidence and coordination as you move.

The best gauge of health and fitness is “how well you feel on a daily basis”. At the core of this level of wellness is a different built around balance and moderation. Take time to take care of yourself. The result of your investment will prove to be well worth the effort.



3 EASY HABITS TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

There has never been a time in human history where you can live longer and live better than you can today. Incredible advances in pharmaceuticals, medicine and healthcare enable people to overcome disease and illness and continue to thrive well into their 70's and 80's. For most the entire history of the human race, longevity was a matter of accident or coincidence. Today, longevity is a matter of design and choice. You can actually decide today to enjoy superb levels of physical health, and developing specific health habits you can assure that you live longer and better than has been possible for any other generation in human history.

Practice no 1. Choose to be healthy and fit

The first habit for you to develop is the habit of achieving and maintaining your proper weight. Everything you are, and ever will be, is the result of your choices and decisions. If you want to change some aspect of your life, you have to make new choices and new decisions, and then you must discipline yourself to follow-through on your decisions.

Eating healthy is an important part of a healthy lifestyle and is something that should be taught at a young age. The following are some general guidelines for helping your adolescent eat healthy. It is important to discuss your adolescent's diet with his or her health care provider before making any dietary changes or placing your adolescent on a diet. Discuss the following healthy eating recommendations with your adolescent to ensure he or she is following a healthy eating plan:

- Eat 3 meals a day, with healthy snacks.
- Increase fiber in the diet and decrease the use of salt.
- Drink water. Try to avoid drinks that are high in sugar. Fruit juice can have a lot of calories, so limit your adolescent's intake. Whole fruit is always a better choice.
- Eat balanced meals.
- When cooking for your adolescent, try to bake or broil instead of fry.
- Make sure your adolescent watches (and decreases, if necessary) his or her sugar intake.
- Eat fruit or vegetables for a snack.
- Decrease the use of butter and heavy gravies.
- Eat more chicken and fish. Limit red meat intake, and choose lean cuts when possible.

Practice no 2. Get enough rest and sleep

Dr. Breus explained that the circadian system, also known as your biological clock, affects every area of functioning in the body, controlling everything from the multiplication of cancer cells to the integrity of the immune system.



Good timing isn't something you choose, guess, or have to figure out. It's already happening inside you, in your DNA, from the minute you wake up to the minute you fall asleep, and every minute in between. An inner clock embedded inside your brain has been ticking away, keeping perfect time, since you were three months old. This precisely engineered timekeeper is called your circadian pacemaker, or biological clock. Specifically, it's a group of nerves called the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN), in the hypothalamus, right above the pituitary gland. In the morning, sunlight comes into your eyeballs, travels along the optic nerve, and activates the SCN to begin each day's circadian (Latin for "around a day") rhythm. The SCN is the master clock that controls dozens of other clocks throughout your body. Over the course of the day, your core temperature, blood pressure, cognition, hormonal flow, alertness, energy, digestion, hunger, metabolism, creativity, sociability, and athleticism, and your ability to heal, memorize, and sleep, among many other

functions, fluctuate according to and are governed by the commands of your inner clocks. Everything you can do or want to do is controlled by physiological rhythms, whether you realize it or not. For fifty thousand years, our ancestors organized their daily schedules around their inner clocks. They ate, hunted, gathered, socialized, rose, rested, procreated, and healed o perfect bio-time, or biological time. As a species, we thrived by rising with the sun, spending most of the day outdoors, and sleeping in total darkness. We created civilization and societies and made incredible advances that, ironically and effectively, turned our finely tuned and evolved inner clocks against us.

Practice no 3. Get some exercises

The third habit you need to develop is the habit of effective exercise. Many people stop exercising in their late teens and early twenties, even people who were active in sports when they were growing up. However, the human body, made up of 610 muscles, is meant to be exercised regularly throughout your life. Develop the habit of articulating and moving every joint in your body, every single day. This keeps your muscles and joints agile and flexible. Regular exercises assures that you have greater balance and mobility. It helps to diminish the likelihood of muscle or joint pain or problems.

Develop the habit of exercising 200 minutes each week. If all you did were to gor for a walk, 30 minutes per day, seven days per week, you would be one of the fittest people in our society. If you discipline yourself to ride an exercise bicycle, work on a treadmill, swim, jog or engage in any aerobic exercises that get your lungs and heart pumping, you will dramatically improve your levels of health and energy in a short period of time.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

SUMMARY

A comprehensive model of healthy living should address physical and mental training, nutrition, and how to balance these with quality rest and recovery.

Everything you are, and ever will be, is the result of your choices and decisions

Follow the healthy eating recommendations

Everything you can do or want to do is controlled by physiological rhythms

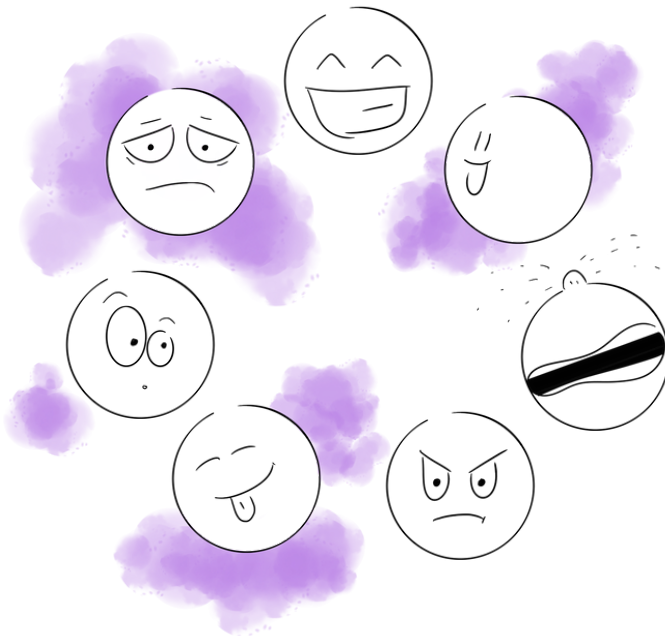
Regular exercises assures that you have greater balance and mobility

3

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Emotional health (or mental health) is a fundamental part of overall health, and is seen by many as equally important as physical health. Indeed, the condition of people's emotional/mental health can also have a significant impact on physical health itself. Emotional health, indeed, is essential in keeping humans healthy on multiple levels. When emotional health is monitored and taken care of, people are more in control of every aspect of their life: from feelings to thoughts, people can be more prepared and able to deal with all of life's emotional distress and challenges. Being emotionally healthy means to be aware and to control emotions. Emotionally healthy people know how to manage their negative feelings and they also know when to seek help from their doctor.

Research shows that emotional health is a skill and there are steps to take to improve emotional health. There is extensive research on strategies for maintaining good emotional health, some of which has been incorporated into common practice and streamlined into five fundamental areas. These five ways prove that it is important to cultivate emotional well-being starting from small daily actions, focusing your energies on what can really make a difference.



5 WAYS TO MENTAL WELL-BEING

1. **Connect with others**

Our relationships are fundamental to our mental well-being. We are evolved as communal, social, and cooperative beings. Good relationships serve to:

- Develop a sense of worth and belonging
- Provide opportunities for sharing positive experiences
- Provide emotional support and opportunities for supporting others

How?

- When possible, take time every day to be with family or friends by, for example, having a fixed time to eat together
- Organise to spend a day out with a friend you haven't seen for a while
- Disconnect from technology in order to play a game or spend time with friends or family
- Have lunch with a colleague
- Visit a friend or family member who needs support
- Volunteer to help somewhere (e.g. a local school, hospital or community group)
- Use technology to keep in touch with people – especially video call technology, and particularly if you live far away from each other
- Try not to rely on technology or social media to build relationships. Contacting people electronically can easily become a habit and prevent you from trying to see people face-to-face.

2. Be physically active

Physical activity helps both physical health and mental health.

This is done by:

- Raising self-esteem
- Helping you to set goals and achieve them
- Improving your mood through chemical processes in the brain

How?

- Get information about how to get started with exercise
- Find free activities to help keep you fit, for example:
 - Walk as much as possible
 - Get free running plans like “couch to 5k” (<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-running-with-couch-to-5k/>)
 - Download free strength and flexibility exercises (<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flex-exercise-plan/>)
 - Cycle to work
 - Start climbing
 - Play games in the park
 - Start using home workout exercise routines (many are only around 10 minutes long, e.g. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/10-minute-workouts/>)
 - Try skipping
 - Find an outdoor gym
 - Try to find free equipment – many people give away unused equipment

- If you have a disability, find out about getting active with a disability, for example:
 - Finding an accessible gym
 - Finding disability accessible sporting activities and events
 - Try to build in exercise to your usual daily activities
 - Use online workout videos suitable for your disability
 - Start running – using podcasts or apps
 - Find out how to start swimming, cycling, or dancing

3. Keep learning

Learning new skills contributes to improving mental well-being:

- It can improve your self-confidence and self-esteem
- It can help you develop more of a sense of purpose
- It can help you connect with others



How?

- A simple thing to do is to learn to cook something new
- Take on a new responsibility at work, like improving a skill (e.g. presentations), or mentoring a junior staff member
- Work on a DIY project – fixing something, or building something simple – use online video tutorials to help you
- Sign up for a course at a local college. For example, begin learning a new language or a practical skill
- Try new hobbies – like something creative or a sport



4. Give to others

Generosity and kindness through acts of giving is beneficial to mental health by:

- Creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- Developing feelings of purpose and self-worth
- Helping you connect with others

How?

Seek out small acts of kindness, or bigger ones like volunteering in your local community, for example:

- Thanking people for the things they have done for you
- Asking people like friends, family or colleagues how they are and carefully listening to their answers
- Spending time with someone you know who needs support
- Offering to help someone with a project they are working on, like DIY
- Volunteering in your local community, like at a school, hospital, or care home

5. Take notice and pay attention to the present moment

Paying attention to the present moment – your thoughts, feelings, and bodily reactions - to the world around you, can improve mental wellbeing.

This is called “mindfulness”. It can help you to enjoy life more and understand yourself better. It can positively affect your attitude towards life and its challenges.

How?

- Download a mindfulness app (e.g. <https://www.headspace.com/> or <https://www.calm.com/>)
- Read or watch videos online that introduce mindfulness, explain simple techniques, and take you through guided mindfulness exercises (e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/user/GetSomeHeadspace>).
- Pay special attention to the everyday things of your experience for example,
 - The sensations of things (how they look, feel, and sound)
 - The food we eat (the taste and texture)
 - The feeling of the air

Make a regular time for particular mindfulness - e.g. your commute to work, a walk at lunchtime – when you decide to be aware of the sensations of the world

- Try something new
 - Change simple things in your life that you are used to – e.g. sit in a different place at work, go somewhere new for lunch – anything to help you notice the world in a new way

- Be aware of your thoughts
 - Mindfulness isn't about making thoughts go away – but rather to be able to stand back and see them as mental events – that come and go.
- Name thoughts and feelings
 - Part of developing an awareness of your thoughts and feelings is silently naming them for yourself.
- Free yourself from the past and future
 - We are often trapped in reliving past problems or pre-living future worries. By focussing on your experience in the moment you can free yourself from these troublesome ways of thinking and feeling.
- You can incorporate other physical activities into mindfulness, like yoga or tai-chi

EMOTIONAL HEALTH SUMMARY

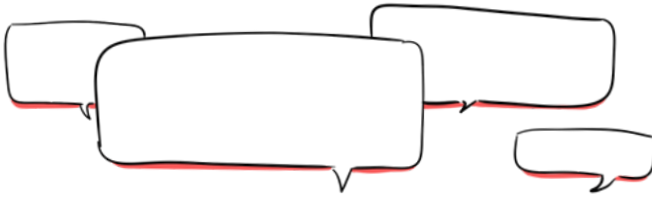


4

RELATIONAL HEALTH

Each of us would like to maintain healthy and satisfying relationships with other people. We need contact with other people, because thanks to this we satisfy one of our basic needs - closeness. In addition, we can derive much more benefits from the relationship, such as acceptance, understanding, mutual support, knowledge, we can develop our social competences, in a word - grow. In interpersonal contacts, we not only take something from another person, but also give them something from ourselves. This is our mutual interaction. Just as much of the benefits we can derive from a healthy relationship, so much harm is our being stuck in a toxic relationship from which it is often difficult to get out. How to establish and cultivate healthy relationships? How to recognize a dysfunctional relationship?

In psychology there is the so-called relational-cultural model, according to which we can distinguish four main features conducive to the growth of relationships. They are: mutual commitment, authenticity, empowerment and the ability to deal with differences.



It is worth noting that no type of relationship (friendship, relationship, etc.) is a permanent construct. It may seem that having a best friend, he will remain our friend forever no matter what. Is it really so? Now try to think about your close relationship with another person. Notice how much effort both sides put into caring for and maintaining it. Perhaps you support each other in difficult times, share joy with each other, pursue similar passions, hobbies, etc. Perhaps you do not even realize how much work you both put into this relationship to make it so special. And that's what it is - any relationship requires joint work and mutual commitment from both parties. Thanks to this, it can develop and bring you closer to itself. It is worth mentioning here that not only commitment is important, but also the perceived commitment, i.e. how I perceive the commitment of the other person. Is it smaller, similar or greater than my commitment? Remember that you judge through the prism of your own perspective, which is not always objective. Try to look at your relationships as objectively as possible and remember - the key is MUTUAL commitment.

Have you ever pretended to be someone you are not? What did you want to achieve with this? Think about how you would feel, all the time pretending to be someone other than you really are. It is certainly difficult and exhausting. Should our relationship with another human be like this? Absolutely not. Another determinant of a healthy relationship is AUTHENTICITY, which can be described as the process of learning about yourself and others. It is also a sense of the freedom to be your true self in a relationship. Life is so much easier when we don't have to pretend and feel accepted as we are. The point is not to stop working on yourself and think that either someone will fully accept me or not accept me at all. The point is to be aware of yourself, your advantages and disadvantages and to surround yourself with people who will accept us as we are and will support us in developing and shaping ourselves.

Have you ever experienced a situation where, after talking to another person, you lost all your enthusiasm and energy? As if that person sucked it out of you. It is definitely not a relationship that you want to be in for a long time. What, then, can a relationship that serves you give you? The answer is REINFORCEMENT. In an unhealthy relationship, you may feel that the other person is cutting your wings and pulling you down with their behavior, actions or words. In the case of a healthy relationship, it is quite the opposite. You can experience a sense of encouragement, inspiration and empowerment to take some action. A healthy relationship will not pull you down - a healthy relationship will help you reach the top.

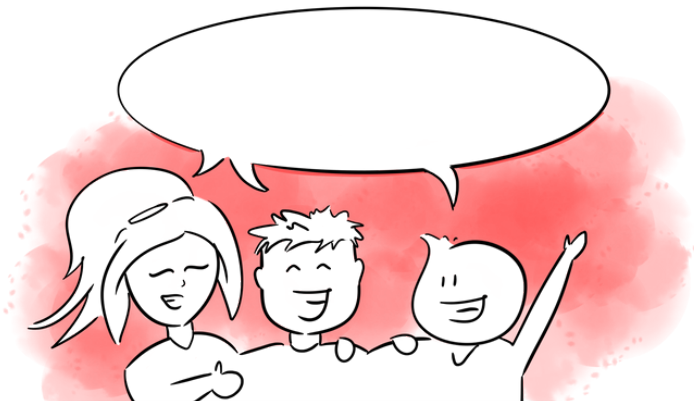
In every relationship, even the best and the closest, we can experience some unpleasant thing. It is a conflict. For many people, dealing with it is a very big challenge. Handling conflict incorrectly can put our relationship at risk. Dealing with conflicts between us and other people is a process of expressing, working through, and accepting differences in feelings and perspective. The ability to constructively deal with emerging conflicts will not only provide us with satisfaction but also strengthen our relationship. Remember that each of us is different, has different experiences, knowledge, perspective, and can feel different emotions. In a conflict situation, try to look at the problem more broadly and understand the perspective of your interlocutor. Quoting the words of the Dalai Lama: "Do not let little quarrels destroy a great friendship."

Proper communication is also an extremely important aspect of a satisfactory relationship. It is not uncommon for people to experience attitudes such as judging, threatening, criticizing or being guided by stereotypes. They have a very negative impact on communication and their presence disturbs the relationship. How should we communicate? The elements of proper communication are the ability to listen carefully, actively and emphatically, and to express your feelings assertively while respecting the feelings of another person. When listening to the interlocutor, try to be attentive enough to understand them and get to know their perspective without judging. It is the ability to listen that is crucial in communication.

One of the basic human values is friendship. It is a unique interpersonal relationship characterized by voluntariness, reciprocity (e.g. mutual help, emotional support), equality of position, confidentiality and joint activity. A friend, therefore, is a person who does not belong to our family, and yet we feel that he is close to us, we are united and drawn to him a lot. So she/he is a person we like, trust, believe and are content to be in his company. And what does friendship actually give us? Thanks to making friends, we receive emotional support, we do not feel lonely, we experience security and emotional well-being, we can reciprocate the feelings shown, we develop empathy, self-confidence, and we share fears and hopes. These are just some of the benefits of friendship. Note how important it is therefore to choose your friends properly and create healthy and stable relationships based on partnership.

It happens, however, that we get caught up in a relationship that completely does not serve us. We can call it "toxic" because, like poison, it is harmful to our health. What behaviors indicate that we are dealing with a toxic relationship? We can list here all manifestations of aggression (verbal, mental and physical), outbursts of anger, insults, quiet days, jealousy, insincerity, suspicion, manipulation, arousing guilt, etc. Such a relationship not only stresses us emotionally, takes away our strength and enthusiasm, but it also causes stress. How do toxic relationships come about? Their formation is reflected in e.g. errors of perception, i.e. distortions in the reception of reality. One of them is the "error of excellence", which is the belief that, as a valuable person, I should deal with an unusual situation, thanks to which I will prove my skills. The second error is the so-called

"approval error" consisting in the desire to obtain approval and acceptance from other people (even if the price is to give up one's own path in life). Another possible reason for getting caught up in this type of relationship is the problem of setting boundaries. Each of us is responsible for setting our own limits and enforcing them, thus each of us decides to what extent we allow other people: whether they will respect our limits or we will allow them to exceed and break them.



When talking about the factors influencing the formation of toxic relationships, it is also worth paying attention to low self-esteem. People with adequate self-esteem care more easily about their limits and less seek acceptance at all costs. While stuck in such a relationship, we can experience strong extreme emotions (alternating between positive and negative) and freeing from it can be extremely difficult. If you feel that you are in a toxic relationship that is hard to get out of, remember that you can always ask for help. It may be another person close to you with whom you are building a healthy relationship or a specialist (e.g. a psychologist). Remember that you are responsible for your well-being, your health and happiness.

As you can see, socializing is one of the most important parts of our lives. It is social relationships that are the main source of our well-being and well-being. They include the need for closeness, showing mutual support, acceptance, understanding, trust and care. The ability to establish satisfactory contacts and healthy relationships with another person is therefore necessary so that we can feel safe and not feel lonely. See what people you surround yourself with, create healthy, satisfying relationships and take care of yourself and the people you love.

To sum up:

1. Social relations are a very important part of our lives. Their quality translates into our health, emotions and well-being. Make sure you create good and satisfying relationships.
2. Thanks to social relations, we can develop ourselves, our social competences and skills. By engaging in and caring for a healthy relationship of reciprocity, you also develop yourself.
3. You may be dealing with unhealthy social relationships in your environment. Take note of how you feel around certain people and think about which relationships are good for you. Free yourself from toxic relationships.
4. In a toxic relationship, you can experience: extreme positive and negative emotions (alternating), manifestations of aggression, manipulation, feeling of "cutting wings", feeling of depression, helplessness, lack of acceptance, presumed guilt and other unpleasant emotions, feelings and experiences. If you are unable to free yourself from such a relationship, do not hesitate to ask a loved one or a specialist for help.

5. What is a healthy relationship:

- Mutual commitment - remember that the relationship must be cared for. A healthy relationship is based on mutual commitment to a similar degree.
- Authenticity - By pretending to be someone you are not, you will not create a healthy relationship. To get satisfaction from it, remember to stay yourself. By creating the right relationship, you will have no difficulty being authentic.
- Empowerment - a healthy relationship gives you wings, motivates and inspires. If in a relationship you feel that you want more from life thanks to it and you are able to achieve it, know that this is it.
- Ability to deal with conflicts - accept that the other person has a right to a different opinion than yours. Resolve conflicts together and don't let them destroy your relationship.
- Good communication - avoid communication barriers such as judging, giving "good advice" when the other party doesn't ask for it, stereotypes, etc. Instead, listen to what the other party has to say. Try to understand her feelings and perspective. Simply put, close your mouth, open your ears and open your heart.

RELATIONAL HEALTH

SUMMARY

mutual
commitment

authenticity

empowerment

ability to deal with
differences



healthy relationship will
help you reach the top



each of us is responsible
for setting our own limits
and enforcing them

do not let little quarrels
destroy a great friendship



a friend is a person we like, trust, believe and
are content to be in his company

5

FAMILY

According to Perea Quesada (2006), the family is considered the fundamental basis for the primary socialisation of the person and as a preventive agent of vital importance, since it is in this formation within the family where children acquire a series of behavioural repertoires that will later lead them to face different situations. According to the same author, the family is where security and trust are found, as well as the transmission of cultural, ethical, social and spiritual values, which are essential for the wellbeing of both its members and society as a whole. She also adds that "it is within the family that a person acquires his or her beliefs, attitudes, values and social norms and that a young person's behaviour cannot be understood apart from the functioning of the family" (p. 422). Thus, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) cited by Sallés and Ger (2011) recognises the family in Article 18 as:

society's priority group and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members, especially children, as it is the space where they begin to discover the world, to relate to and interact with the environment and develop as social beings (p.26).

If we refer to the general theory of systems, the family is, according to Ares (1990), a group or system composed of subsystems which would be its members and at the same time integrated into a larger system which is society (p. 8). Likewise, as asserted by Cánovas and Sahuquillo (2010), the family is the first and most relevant socio-educational space, especially due to its enormous potential in the formation of individuals. Hence the need to guarantee, from the different family forms, the nuclei of coexistence and relationships that benefit personal, educational and social development in a highly positive way.

It should be noted that, despite the many existing definitions of the concept of family, it is dynamic, as it changes over time and as society and the life cycle of each person progresses (Sallés and Ger, 2011). It should also be borne in mind that, from an ecological-systemic analysis, there are a series of internal and external factors that condition family dynamics. Within this perspective, the primary microsystem is the closest and most influential context, as it is mainly made up of parents, children and siblings with a hierarchical structure and in which a wide variety of situations can occur, ranging from the single-parent family to the extended family (Bronfenbrener, 1979).

In this way, Millan (1996) defines the extended family more concretely as that which follows a line of descent and which includes people from several generations as members of the family unit. At the same time, he adds that this type of family represents the maximum possible proliferation of the family unit and that it is structured on the basis of inheritance or legacy. The transmission of the legacy is the key to this type of family and includes the biological and material inheritance, as well as the set of psychosocial characteristics that characterise the members of the family and that define and differentiate them from others.



Within this first legacy or "baggage", it is worth highlighting the importance of the family in the development of an integrated sense of ourselves, which requires incorporating a sense of belonging, security and stability about who we are in relation to our closest family and social context. The basic functions of the family include the care, educational, biological, affective and material function of its members, and the development of strong emotional ties (p. 6).

In this line, Allard, quoted in FIEEX Observatory, refers to a series of functions that the family has and that are related to covering a series of basic needs such as:

- Need to have: refers to material things such as the economic and educational aspects necessary to live.
- Need for relationships: the family teaches how to socialise, to communicate with others, to love and feel loved, as it is the first socialising agent.

Need to be: the family should provide the individual with a sense of autonomy and self-identity.

Other authors state that for older adults living in extended families, their families constitute the primary environment of greater coexistence in which relationships of cooperation and exchange are established that allow their survival, socialisation and care so that they can develop by participating in new and different roles in society (p. 6), as well as influencing their sense of security, since this evolves through the connection and identification with those who care for them: mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents, etc. (Pearson New International Edition, 2014).

So much so that children develop a series of social mechanisms, self-confidence and emotional intelligence when there are affective bonds, while there is a strong feeling of attachment to their parents. Therefore, family life is, on the one hand, the centre of affective communications where social attitudes are shaped and, on the other hand, it is also the origin of normative patterns of behaviour. This same influence of the family is

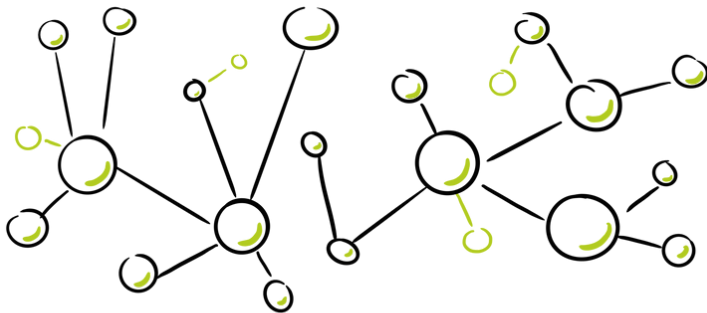
supported by Franco, Londoño & Restrepo (2017) who state that the family contributes to the positive acquisition of emotional and also social skills, being the most relevant learning space that allows a correct social development.

Therefore, the family has a vital function in the correct development of the person and those alterations in family life cause, in most cases, emotional alterations, imbalances in health, etc.; affecting a greater number of possibilities in the first years of life. In this sense, authors such as Ceberio (2006), consider the importance of communication and an atmosphere of affection and affection, in order to know how to manage situations of conflict and tension between family members.

The family is the best transmitter of values and counter-values of the cultural guidelines and of the norms of conduct and behaviour of the society in which it lives; in short, the family transmits its own social and cultural baggage to the young people in its nucleus and family environment. Thus, if the family environment or surroundings in which adolescents or young people develop is not an emotionally and socially balanced environment, it can influence behaviours or situations of adaptation or maladjustment in the process of emotional development and social integration of the adolescent or young person.

According to Moreno et al. (2015), through communication, families transmit ideas, values and beliefs that are irreplaceable for their personal evolution and maturation.

The functions and effects/influence of the family in socialisation are important in the life stage from childhood to adolescence and young adulthood. Its objectives include communicating and transmitting social, ethical and moral values, ways of interacting with society and the confirmation of a personal, family and social identity, among other aspects that promote the well-being of each individual and their environment. The family is the setting in which a certain self-esteem and sense of self is built



As a biopsychosocial system, according to Simkim and Becerra (2013), the family is the place for the formation of social interaction skills and the space to offer protection and affection.

The family is people's first support network, which is why it is very necessary to promote a healthy family environment where the necessary resources are offered for good personal and social development (Cardona et al., 2015).

Within the family it is necessary to highlight the importance of sibling relationships because although there is less research on sibling relationships, it is not the fact of having siblings but the quality of sibling relationships that influences a person's psychosocial adjustment. Those who benefit from the affective support of the older brother or sister are better adjusted and more self-confident; on the contrary, when sibling relationships are conflictual, it is associated with a lower adaptive capacity (Hawkins et al., 1992 and Musitu et al., 2010). In turn, as Gold, 1989; Norris and Tindale cited in Pearson New International Edition (2014) state: "once parents are gone, the sibling bond can become our primary bond" (p. 139).

Finally, as Muñoz (2005), quoted by Sallés and Ger, states that "children and young people in our society are not only influenced by the family context, but as they grow up, they are increasingly influenced by other contexts such as peers, school, the media, etc." (p. 26).

On the other hand, it is worth highlighting the importance of establishing rules and limits within the family context, as this is one of the most significant protective factors when it comes to reducing the probability of the appearance of risk behaviour, both in childhood and adolescence. Therefore, the role of families in this respect is fundamental, as they should focus on establishing clear, relevant and reasonable rules. Within the possibilities when it comes to establishing these rules, we can find extremes, ranging from complete authority to total permissiveness. In the middle between these two polarities we

find a more horizontal and democratic model (Guide for families). This idea is supported by Minuchin (1974) stating that boundaries are rules that regulate and define the flow of information and energy that has to enter the family system in order to maintain a harmonious balance. The clarity of boundaries is a parameter for assessing family functionality.

Finally, as Muñoz (2005), quoted by Sallés and Ger, states that "children and young people in our society are not only influenced by the family context, but as they grow up, they are increasingly influenced by other contexts such as peers, school, the media, etc." (p. 26).

Boundaries and standards are therefore of an essential nature because:

- They provide children with feelings of protection and security.
- Children are creating their own references and acquiring a series of guidelines of what is and is not valid, which will help them to shape their own scale of values.
- They contribute to a more organised coexistence, promoting respect for others as well as for oneself.
- They prepare children for life, since society is governed by a series of restrictions and obligations that they must learn to comply with in order to function properly.
- Setting limits on children's behaviour is a way of teaching them to gradually develop frustration tolerance, i.e. the ability to manage situations that do not turn out as they would have liked beforehand.

Whenever the family wants to encourage compliance with the rules established within the family, we must start with realistic, clear, consistent, coherent, fundamental, important and accessory rules.

In addition, standard setting involves a process that follows a series of steps:

- Maintain emotional management: parents should be in a state of calm when setting a rule.
- Value the age and maturity level of the children: this education on rules will have certain characteristics depending on their age. In the early years it will be vitally important to establish clear and concise rules, as the clearer the rules, the greater the security the child will have in his or her behaviour and relationship with the environment in which he or she lives. However, when they are adolescents, a confrontation may arise with regard to the rules and it is therefore of vital importance to argue the reasons and find the need that arises from the rule. It is in adolescence when the negotiation of accessory rules becomes important, since on the one hand, they allow achieving an advisable degree of compliance and, on the other hand, teach adolescents to make decisions and consider the positive and negative points of each decision they make.
- Reflecting on the rule: once parents have assessed the need for a rule, it should be stressed that the rule should be agreed upon, i.e. parents should jointly discuss the behaviour to be implemented.

According to Chávez and Friedemann (2001) cited by the same author, the family is the most important context in human development and alterations in its functioning favour the disintegration of the family group. Likewise, family functionality depends on the close relationship between the members and the modification of any of them would provoke a modification in the others and in the whole family as a whole, for this reason, when analysing its functioning, it is considered necessary to see it from a systemic perspective, since, as Ares (1990) states, the family is a group or system composed of subsystems which would be its members and at the same time integrated into a larger system which is society (p. 8).

According to González Quirarte (2016) "family functionality is considered by researchers as one of the indicators that allow us to know the well-being and health of the family as a group, i.e. that the family is able to satisfy the basic material and spiritual needs of its members, acting as a support system" (p. 8).

This functionality, according to Friedemann, is the result of assessing four essential processes, which describe the family in a systemic perspective. This family system and its subsystems interact with the suprasystem of the environment, thus, the processes are susceptible to be affected. These processes take place on an interpersonal, intrapersonal and family level. All are of utmost importance since family health happens when there is a coherence and balance between the four processes:

- **Coherence:** this refers to the harmonious relationships between family members, which in turn provide a sense of family unity and belonging through the internalisation of love, respect and concern for one another, while sharing a set of values and beliefs that allow them to create emotional bonds for the survival of the system.
- **Individualisation:** refers to the personal identity structure that develops through communication with other systems. It is in this interactive process, involving the performance of various roles and responsibilities, that talents, initiatives and knowledge are strengthened and lead to a greater understanding of oneself and others. This in turn brings about new perspectives and purpose in life by expanding the horizon of the person.
- **System maintenance:** this process encompasses most of the strategies related to tradition, flexibility and the family structure itself that provide a sense of stability and control. This process involves roles, rituals, communication patterns, values, norms, decision-making, care patterns, financial management, and thinking about the future, among others.
- **System Change:** this encompasses the incorporation of new knowledge to assume different behaviours in the face of internal personal, family or environmental pressures. It requires an openness to new information that modifies the value structure before present and future life priorities such as the ability to make conscious decisions, strengthens control and family or personal growth supported by a feeling of autonomy and security.

FAMILY SUMMARY

Transmission of beliefs, attitudes, values and social norms.

Dynamic concept - changes over time as society and the life cycle of each person progresses.

Group or system composed its members integrated into a larger system - society.

Need for relationships: teaches to socialize, communicate, love and feel loved.

Need to have: covers material aspects such as economic, educational aspects.

Functions of the family based on basic needs:

Need to be: provides autonomy and self-identity.

Parameters to evaluate that a family works:

- Having all the above-mentioned needs covered.
- Establishment of realistic, clear, conscious, coherent and fundamental rules and limits. These provide in the children:
 - Feelings of protection and security.
 - Acquisition of own references and guidelines of what is or is not valid (formation of values).
 - Organized coexistence
 - Promotion of self-respect and respect for others
 - Preparation for life and society

6

PEER GROUP

Merton (1980) cited by Vivas et al. (2009) defines the group as "a number of people who interact with each other according to established schemas" (p. 36), being key for this author, the interaction between the people who make up the group and the established schemas that these people share, as a result of this interaction. Likewise, Rodríguez San Julián, et al. (2002) affirm that a fundamental characteristic of the group is interpersonal relations and that from the social imaginary, the group par excellence would be the peer group.

The group concept occupies a large place in people's lives and is indispensable in their daily lives. So much so that the way in which we shape ourselves as individuals is determined by the groups we are part of and even those we certainly do not belong to.

In a more detailed way, Brea (2014) refers to identity as "the notion that a person has about him or herself. It refers to the definition of the self. It is the image that individuals construct of themselves in their relationships with other individuals through a process of internalisation". (p. 17). Therefore, this acquisition of a sense of personal identity is one of the essential aspects of self-definition.

In this sense, the anthropologist Marc Augé (1994), quoted by the same author, states that there is no identity without the presence of others (p. 18). This means that individual identity is constructed through relationships with others and the sharing of a series of meanings and experiences, which is why group identity is constructed on the basis of group interrelations. This social identity is defined by Tajfel (1978) as "those aspects of an individual's self-image which derive from knowledge of his or her membership of a social group or groups together with the valuational and emotional meaning associated with this membership" (p. 443). In turn, this valuation contributes to the fact that, to the extent that people feel that they belong to a group, there is a heightened perception of similarity between the person and their group and differences with others (Turner, 1990 cited by Brea, 2014).

Within the identity of a group, there is a fundamental aspect, the awareness of its members of belonging to the group. In this sense, a person's subjective belonging to a group implies that he or she takes that group as a reference for his or her own identity or life cycle. For this sense of belonging to be possible, a process of socialisation must take place. In this way, the sense of belonging enhances socialisation and group cohesion and, at the same time, both strengthen the sense of belonging.

More specifically, within the peer group, the idea stands out that, although people need to be able to differentiate themselves from others, belonging to the group based on similarity is also vital, since from this similarity they can also differentiate themselves from everything that is not the group itself, that is, from the rest of the community. This, in turn, provides a space of reference and belonging that allows the person to define him/herself. Therefore, peer groups are a fundamental context for constructing knowledge about oneself and about the people around you. Likewise, Erikson (1968) quoted by Torres Jiménez (2015) affirms that:



More specifically, within the peer group, it is important to grasp the intrinsically psychosocial and transactional nature of identity development, as Erikson has already highlighted. Identity is situated at the crossroads of individual and social processes: on the one hand, it brings individuality - experiencing oneself as a unique person - and on the other hand, a sense of belonging linked to the social context and recognised by the subject. Identity formation thus involves a continuous interaction between the person and the context (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Luyckx, Meca, & Ritchie, 2013), and the adjustment of this formation process can have effects on the healthy development and psychological well-being of subjects (Schwartz, Hardy, Zamboanga, Meca, Waterman, Picariello et al. (2015). (pp. 90-91).

This is why exercises based on group formation, according to Alfageme González (2003), are of vital importance in the formation of group identity, given that:

These are basic exercises that are indirectly used for a variety of purposes such as: helping students to get to know each other, demonstrating to students that each person is a uniquely valuable member of the team, building trust among peers, demonstrating the benefits of cooperative interaction, fostering group identity, producing an atmosphere of empathy, etc. (p. 103)

Once the importance of the group in the formation of one's own identity and in socialisation processes has been defined, with the peer group as one of the major agents of socialisation and in the group relations of young people, it is worth highlighting some of the most prominent and well-known types of groups. This differentiation is highlighted by Vivas et al. (2009), who state that:

There are as many types of groups as there are groups in everyday life. Thus, we can determine groups by their size, by their composition, by their functions and even by their origin. Thus, we could say that there are large and small, primary and secondary groups. Heterogeneous or homogeneous groups, either because of their diversity or because of the characteristics of their members. We could also say that there are groups that are helpful or therapeutic, for training or for academic purposes (p.22).

Therefore, within the existing diversity of typologies, some of the most prominent are reference or membership groups, primary and secondary groups, and those that are functional and structural.



With regard to reference and belonging groups, Amorín (2012) defines them as "social devices insofar as they "arrange" the supports on which the situation and the subjective experience of facts and events will be lived. They are called reference groups because, among other aspects, they give the subject an image of him/herself and of reality, and of belonging because the subject is immersed, inserted or participating in that group dynamic and an effect of affiliation and affiliation has been generated" (p. 78). In turn, Merton defines reference groups as a group used by the individual or another group for comparison. Sociologists refer to any group that individuals or groups use as a standard for the evaluation of themselves and their own behaviour within the groups of which they are a part, i.e. within the membership groups.

The reference group is the group through which a person internalises rules or values, but to which he or she not only does not belong, but is not recognised as part of it by its members. These groups are used for the purpose of assessing and determining the nature of a certain individual or group characteristics and other sociological attributes. It is the group to which the person aspires to belong, becoming a parameter from which the person internalises his or her way of acting, orders his or her experiences, perceptions, ideas and knowledge about him or herself. It is of vital importance for the determination of their own identity, attitudes and social relations and as a reference base for comparisons and contrasts, in the evaluation of appearance and performance, i.e. these groups establish the guidelines and contrasts necessary for the comparison and evaluation of the group and personal characteristics of those who make it up. Therefore, reference groups have two fundamental functions: they act as models for comparison and as sources of norms.

On the other hand, membership groups refer to the group to which an individual belongs. In this type of group, the person is part of the group and, in turn, is recognised as a member of the group. Thus, the norms and rules established by this group are accepted and complied with by all its members. In these groups, the person is involved because of having been born into one of them, as is the case with the family, or because of a personal decision such as the choice to belong to a certain group of peers, being called belonging because the person is part of them. One of the characteristics of this type of group is that the members of the group put pressure on their members to adopt the same

values, beliefs and attitudes. It should be noted that sometimes the reference group coincides with the group to which the individual belongs. In short, belonging groups:

- It is the group to which we belong.
- Identification is not necessary.
- It does not necessarily explain the social actions of individuals.
- They coincide in space and time with all individuals.
- Normal socialisation.

Whereas reference groups:

- It is the group to which we wish to belong.
- There is full identification with the group.
- It explains the social actions of individuals.
- It is not necessary to coincide in space or time.
- Anticipatory socialisation.

Beyond an elaborate distinction based on the sense of belonging or reference, we can differentiate between primary and secondary groups. Within primary groups there are intense, close, affective relationships, made up of few members who have a series of aims in common and with a high degree of internal cohesion and intimacy between the members who make up the group, maintaining affective relationships with a great mutual dependence. In this sense, we would allude to the peer group, the family, the couple, etc. (Coley, 1909 cited by Rodríguez San Julián, et al., 2002). Likewise, these authors state that:

many authors have discussed the important work of primary groups as agents of socialisation, in modulating the social identities, values and attitudes of individuals, despite the increasingly notorious socialising task of secondary groups and in any case "reference groups", beyond the direct context in which people's affectivity unfolds (p. 8).

In secondary groups, interpersonal relations are based on institutional criteria that are usually independent of individuals. In this type of group, the importance lies in the position of the persons and not so much in the persons themselves. This would take the form of institutions (legal, economic, political, etc.) in a particular sector of reality (administration, market, sport, scientific research, etc.).

Along the same lines, other authors such as Macionis and Plummer according to Gallego (2011) define the "primary group as "a small social group whose members share personal and lasting relationships united by primary relationships, usually individuals belonging to the same primary group spend much of their time together, engaged in a broad set of common activities and feel that they know each other fairly well [...] Unlike the primary group, the secondary group is a large, impersonal social group whose members pursue a specific interest or activity" (p. 115).

Finally, Martín-Baró (1991) cited by Vivas et al. (2009) proposes a typology that leans towards a psychosocial aspect, since he interprets the group in relation to the social structure in which it is found and which, in a certain way, determines it and in which all this ends up being reflected in the group, i.e. Martín-Baró analyses the group in terms of the social structures with which it shares, without describing the group from what happens inside it, assuming that although groups are made up of people and that a series of rules and roles are established in them, they require structures and organisation; that they make decisions, etc.; groups relate to other groups and establish power relations; that they require structures and organisation; that they make decisions, etc.; groups relate to other groups and power relations are established. Therefore, factors such as the power of the group, its identity and its work must be considered.

In this way, the author analyses groups within the variables referring to group identity, group power and group activity, and divides groups into:

- Primary: the same as the previous definition, but with a slight nuance, since the group cannot be understood outside its broader social context: "The nature of the primary group consists in concretising and being the bearer of the determinisms of social macrostructures". (Vivas et al., 2009, p.25).
- Functional: depends on the roles or positions people occupy within a social system.
- Structural: refers to the most basic division between the members of a society according to the objective interests that derive from the ownership of the means of production.

The peer group would be located within the primary group, defined as:

It is well known the enormous importance attributed to this type of groups for the development and growth of the person, both from the point of view of their contribution to psychological and emotional stability and the impact on the acquisition and consolidation of roles, in short, to the social location of a subject in a context (Rodríguez San Julián et al. 2002, p.9).

Having located the peer group within the different groups and theories, it is important to highlight some of the core values within peer groups composed of young people. It should be noted that depending on the type of relationship and the context in which these relationships occur, the contents and expectations of the relationships themselves will be different.

As these same authors state, there are differences between those values that depend on whether we are referring to friends or acquaintances, such as "colleagues", partners, etc. It is friends who create a climate based on trust and sincerity to talk about various personal problems or concerns, and among whom there is a fundamental value: fidelity. When relationships are of a different nature, such as relationships characterised by weekends, other values take precedence, which will pursue a series of more concrete and immediate goals such as fun, moving away from the expectations of having a more personal communication. Thus, the degree to which each of the values defining the type of relationship is put into practice will depend on each individual case and each person.

In this sense, it should be noted that another of the elements that will affect the acquisition of values will be whether the relationships take place in isolation (one to one) or within a group, since friendship is based on a series of values that reach their maximum degree of expression in individual contact. Thus, trust, sincerity, respect, fidelity, affection or affection occur at a more individualised level, since these values can be more conditioned by the characteristics of the beneficiary of these values, and there are cases in which within a group there is also room for several people who meet the definition of a true friend. However, it is in group relationships where a whole series of elements are generated, such as the sense of belonging, refuge, identity, etc., which in their external manifestation are articulated around the main expectation of the group itself, fun, since when young people go out in a group, problems and confidences take a back seat.

In the same way, the expectations of a group change according to the context that originates and defines them, since relationships between pupils in the same class, who have not chosen that group and whose nexus of union is a territory that the young person does not experience as his or her own, are not the same as relationships between a group of "colleagues" who go out to party with expectations of meeting and having fun. In conclusion, the values will be different depending on the type of relationship that determines the characteristics of the groups in which the young people are inserted, being different depending on whether they are friendships or relationships with acquaintances, peers or colleagues.

More specifically, young people build and establish their friendships on the basis of a series of fundamental values and elements, such as the following:

Trust: friends are the figure where there is enough trust to be able to talk about what is needed, to talk about all kinds of problems, to ask for or offer help or advice. This trust is generated thanks to the expectation of being able to tell the friend any kind of thing given the personal certainty that he/she will not betray the principles on which the relationship is based, that is, the friend is not only expected to be able to tell all kinds of problems and concerns knowing that he/she will help us and act for our good, but the friend is expected to help you and worry about you, otherwise this trust diminishes and he/she will no longer be considered a friend, thus undermining the trust. Therefore, in order to establish a level of trust between two people that contributes to a relationship of friendship between them, two essential elements must be combined: time and contact.

The passage of time will bring about the necessary conditions that will give way to friendship, and this will lay its foundations, taking into account the fact that some people connect before others do, and that they give each other high doses of trust much more quickly than would be the case in relation to another person. As these same authors state: "if friendship represents eternal values, only the passage of time will be able to demonstrate the reality of these values, and only the continuity and durability of these values will convince us that we are in the presence of a true friendship" (Rodríguez San Julián et al. 2002, p. 35).

This time must be combined with another factor: **contact**. It is the combination of these two factors that causes, on the one hand, two people to strengthen their bonds of affection and, on the other, to preserve and reinforce them. The idea of friendship, assumed as a source of good and eternal values, would be above possible setbacks such as temporary distances or loss of contact. However, there are many pillars that support friendship and that can be affected by the loss of contact, weakening with them, gradually, the degree of trust between two people, assuming that, in the end, "this double approach leads them to accept an idea that acquires its meaning in the conjunction of both: friendship, as an ideal and eternal value, exists and endures, but it weakens if it is not "taken care of" (p. 37).

Finally, it should be noted that, ultimately, trust also requires factors that are closer to the personal characteristics of each person and what each of them can contribute to the person who gives them that trust. For this reason, among a group of peers there will be many and varying degrees of trust, knowing at all times what they can and should tell each of their friends and vice versa, with true friends being very rare.

Another of the values on which the word friendship is based is **sincerity**. This will depend directly on trust and will be constituted as a reflection of this, because if you show sincerity to a person, it means that you trust him or her. Sincerity, therefore, corresponds to the trust you place in the other person and it is a value that allows friends to get to know each other and to share a series of daily experiences and experiences on which friendship is based.



There are a number of nuances here, since the fact that trust exists between two friends does not imply, in all cases, that it is put into practice or that it is carried out in the same way with all friends. With a friend you will always consider the possibility of being sincere, even if you are not sincere, but with someone with whom you do not share that friendship it is not considered. In turn, this sincerity will depend on the degree of friendship with the person, since there are friends to talk about different aspects. This is where the implementation of this value comes in, together with an element that acts as a counterbalance: intimacy, since with friends it is necessary to be sincere, but this does not imply renouncing the doses of intimacy that each person needs with respect to each of their friends. In short, "sincerity will be a desirable and ideal value insofar as it is a reflection of other fundamental values for a friendly relationship to exist (trust and fidelity, mainly), but it is duly framed by the limits set by personal intimacy" (p. 43). Moreover, all seem to agree on the fact that "there are certain areas (those that each one considers) that correspond to a purely personal level and that trying to preserve this personal dimension does not imply renouncing the trust on which friendship is based" (p. 43).

The third pillar within friendship relationships is **fidelity**. This value is also a reflection and a practical demonstration of the existence of a relationship of trust, the basis on which friendships are established. This fidelity is interpreted as an attitude of loyalty with all that this may imply: loyalty to the trust placed, to the respect due, to the sincerity given and in the face of good times, such as fun, and bad times, that is to say, in the face of the various problems and difficulties. Therefore, any absence of either can be identified as a lack of loyalty to the friend or within group relations.

Other values to take into account are **respect** and **affection**. When we talk about respect in peer groups, we refer to the fact that in this type of horizontal relationships, of equal to equal, a series of common aspects will be allowed, such as jokes, different vocabulary, etc., which in other types of relationships would be considered disrespectful. In this way, it should be noted that:

The dominant discourse on interpersonal and group friendship rests on the conviction that, strictly speaking, a relationship of this type must be based on a "two-way" relationship, in which one gives but also receives, in the form of an implicit mutual agreement. Hence, values that are difficult to exchange, such as those that are strictly emotional, tend to be analysed more as a logical consequence of the development of this relationship (which, on the other hand, will contribute to improving it), than as a catalyst for it. (p. 50).

Finally, it is worth highlighting three aspects, regardless of whether the previous ones are fulfilled to a greater or lesser extent, as constituents of a good friendly relationship: **reciprocity**, **balance** and **demonstration**.

All these elements, depending on their existence and degree of application, determine the essential characteristics of relationships between people and, specifically, between the peer group. These contents and the way in which all these values are applied serve young people to establish the parameters of what is considered a true friendship, being constituted, in general terms, by "being mutual, balanced, demonstrated, based on trust, sincerity and loyalty, arising from "rubbing" or contact and consolidating over time" (p. 54).

PEER GROUP

SUMMARY

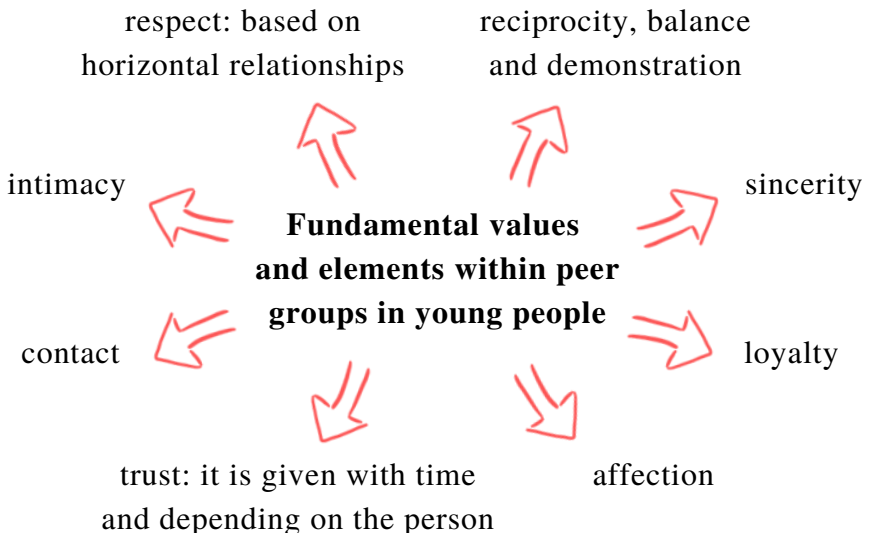


Concept:

- The group par excellence from the social imaginary is the peer group.
- One of the main agents of socialization.

What the peer group provides:

- Development of a self, group and social identity.
- Knowledge of oneself and about the people around him/her.
- Sense of belonging and reference.
- Enhances socialization and group cohesion.



7

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

1. Financial education

How to get started on saving and investing in your future

Unfortunately, personal finance is not a required subject in most high schools or colleges. This lack of basic financial education leaves many young adults clueless about how to manage their money, apply for credit, and get or stay out of debt. States are beginning to remedy this shortcoming—as of 2020, 21 are requiring high school students to take a course in personal finance, and 25 are requiring they take an economics class.

That should help at least a segment of the next generation, but for everyone past high school, let's take a look at eight of the most important things to understand about money. These financial tips are designed to help you live your best financial life and take advantage of the fact that the younger you are, the more time your savings and investments have to grow.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A class titled “Finance for Young Adults” unfortunately isn’t usually part of a high school curriculum.
- Taking the time to learn a few critical financial rules can help you build a healthy financial future.
- Learning to prepare your annual tax return yourself could save you money.
- Start an emergency fund and pay into it every month, even if it is a small amount.
- Saving for retirement is an integral part of any financial plan, and starting young gives you the most time to grow your nest egg.

2. Learn Self-Control

If you’re lucky, your parents taught you this skill when you were a kid. If not, keep in mind that the sooner you learn the fine art of delaying gratification, the sooner you’ll find it easy to keep your personal finances in order. Although you can effortlessly buy an item on credit the minute you want it, it’s better to wait until you’ve actually saved up the money for the purchase. Do you really want to pay interest on a pair of jeans or a box of cereal? A debit card is as handy and takes the money from your checking account, rather than racking up interest charges.

If you make a habit of putting all your purchases on credit cards despite not being able to pay your bill in full at the end of the month, you might still be paying for those items in 10 years. Credit cards are convenient and paying them off on time, helps you build a good credit rating. And some offer appealing rewards. But—except in rare emergencies—make sure to always

pay your balance in full when the bill arrives. Also, don't carry more cards than you can keep track of. This financial tip is crucial for creating a healthy credit history.

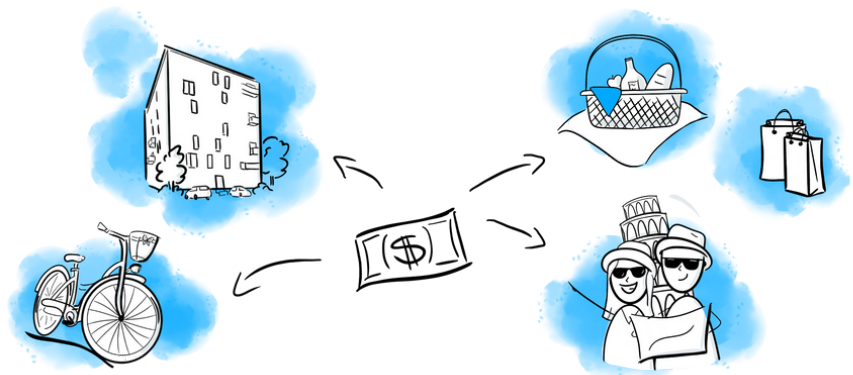
3. Control Your Financial Future

If you don't learn to manage your own money, other people will find ways to (mis)manage it for you. Some of these people may be ill-intentioned, like unscrupulous commission-based financial planners. Others may be well-meaning, but they may not know what they're doing, like Grandma Betty, who really wants you to own your own house even though you can only afford one by taking on a risky adjustable-rate mortgage.

Instead of relying on others for advice, take charge and read a few basic books on personal finance. Once you're armed with knowledge, don't let anyone catch you off guard—whether it's a significant other who slowly siphons off your bank account or friends who want you to go out and blow tons of money with them every weekend.

4. Know Where Your Money Goes

Once you've gone through a few personal finance books, you'll realize how important it is to make sure that your expenses aren't exceeding your income. The best way to do this is by budgeting. Once you see how the cost of your morning coffee adds up over the course of a month, you'll realize that making small, manageable changes in your everyday expenses can have as big an impact on your financial situation as getting a raise.



In addition, keeping your recurring monthly expenses as low as possible can save you significant money over time. Even if you can swing an amenity-packed apartment now, picking something plainer could let you afford to own a condo or house sooner than you otherwise would.

5. Start an Emergency Fund

One of personal finance's most-repeated mantras is "pay yourself first." No matter how much you owe in student loans or credit card debt, and no matter how low your salary may seem, it's wise to find some amount—any amount—of money in your budget to sock away in an emergency fund every month.

Having money in savings to use for emergencies can keep you out of trouble financially and help you sleep better at night. Also, if you get into the habit of saving money and treating it as a nonnegotiable monthly expense, pretty soon you'll have more than just emergency money saved up: You'll have retirement money, vacation money, or even money for a down payment on a home.

It's easy to put your fund in a standard savings account, but that earns almost no interest. Put your fund in a high-interest online savings account, short-term certificate of deposit (CD), or money market account. Otherwise, inflation will erode the value of your savings. Just make sure the rules of your savings vehicle permit you to get to your money quickly in an emergency.

6. Start Saving for Retirement

Just as your parents probably sent you off to kindergarten with high hopes of preparing you for success in a world that seemed eons away, you need to plan for your retirement well in advance. Because of the way compound interest works, the sooner you start saving, the less principal you'll have to invest to end up with the amount you need to retire.

Why start saving for your retirement in your 20s? Here's an Investopedia example: You start investing in the market at \$100 a month, averaging a positive return of 1% a month or 12% a year, compounded monthly over 40 years. Your friend, who is the same age, doesn't begin investing until 30 years later and invests \$1,000 a month for 10 years, also averaging 1% a month or 12% a year, compounded monthly. After 10 years, your friend will have saved up around \$230,000. Your retirement account will be a bit over \$1.17 million.

Company-sponsored retirement plans are a particularly great choice, because you get to put in pretax dollars and companies will often match part of your contribution, which is like getting free money. Contribution limits tend to be higher for 401(k)s than for individual retirement accounts (IRAs), but any employer-sponsored plan you're fortunate enough to be offered

is a step closer to financial health.

If you don't have access to a company plan, don't despair. Those who are self-employed have a range of options for setting up



retirement plans. Others can open their own IRAs, allowing for a set amount of money each month to be withdrawn from your savings account and contributed directly into your IRA. Even if it's only a small sum, it will eventually add up to something helpful.

7. Get a Grip on Taxes

It's important to understand how income taxes work even before you get your first paycheck. When a company offers you a starting salary, you need to know how to calculate whether that salary will give you enough money after taxes to meet your financial obligations and, you hope, your goals.

Fortunately, there are plenty of online calculators that have taken the dirty work out of determining your own payroll taxes, such as [PaychekCity.com](https://www.paychekcity.com). These calculators will show you your gross pay, how much goes to taxes, and how much you'll be left with, which is also known as "net" or "take-home" pay. An annual salary of \$35,000 in New York City, for example, would leave you with around \$27,490 after federal taxes without exemptions for the 2020-2021 filing season—about \$2,291 a month.⁴ Then you need to consider state and (for New York City) city taxes in addition.

By the same token, if you're considering leaving one job for another in search of a salary increase, you'll need to understand how your marginal tax rate will affect your raise. A salary increase from \$35,000 a year to \$41,000 a year, for instance, won't give you an extra \$6,000 per year (\$500 per month)—it will only give you an extra \$4,227 (around \$352 per month). The amount will vary depending on your state of residence and its potential tax bite, so take that into consideration if you're considering a move.

Finally, take the time to learn to do your own taxes. Unless you have a complicated financial situation, it's not that hard to do, and you won't have the expense of paying a tax professional for the work. Tax software makes the job much easier than it was when your parents were starting out and ensures you can file online.

8. Guard Your Health

If meeting monthly health insurance premiums seems impossible, what will you do if you have to go to the emergency room, where a single visit for a minor injury like a broken bone can cost thousands of dollars? If you're uninsured, don't wait another day to apply for health insurance. It's easier than you think to wind up in a car accident or trip and fall down a flight of stairs.

If you're employed, your employer may offer health insurance, including high-deductible health plans that save on premiums and qualify you for a Health Savings Account (HSA). If you need to buy insurance on your own, investigate the plans offered

by the health insurance marketplace of the Affordable Care Act—there are federal plans or your state may have its own plan. Look at quotes from different insurance providers to find the lowest rates and see if you qualify for a subsidy based on your income. If you have health issues, know that a more expensive plan could be cost-effective for you; research the options.

If you're under 26, your best choice may be to stay on your parents' health insurance, if they have it—an option allowed since the 2010 passage of the Affordable Care Act. If you can manage it, offer to reimburse them for the additional cost of keeping you on their plan.

It also pays to take daily steps now to keep yourself healthy—such as eating fruits and vegetables, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising, not smoking, avoiding excessive alcohol consumption, and driving defensively. All these behaviors can save you on medical bills down the road.

9. Protect Your Wealth

To make sure that all of your hard-earned money doesn't vanish, you'll need to take steps to protect it. Here are some steps to think about, even if you can't afford them all right now.

If you rent, get renter's insurance to protect the contents of your place from events such as burglary or fire. Read the policy carefully to see what's covered and what isn't.

Disability income insurance protects your greatest asset—the ability to earn an income - by providing you with a steady

income if you ever become unable to work for an extended period of time due to illness or injury.

If you want help managing your money, find a fee-only financial planner to provide unbiased advice that's in your best interest, rather than a commission-based financial advisor, who earns money when you sign up with the investments their company backs. The latter has a potentially divided loyalty (to their company's bottom line and to you), while the former has no incentive to guide you down a wrong path.


You'll also want to protect your money from taxes—which is easy to do with a retirement account—and inflation, which you can do by making sure that all of your money is earning interest. There are a variety of vehicles in which you can invest your savings, such as high-interest savings accounts, money market funds, CDs, stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. The first three are relatively risk free, while the remaining three carry greater possibilities for financial setbacks, but also greater possibilities for monetary rewards. Learning about investing is an important skill for building up your savings and, eventually, building wealth.

The Bottom Line

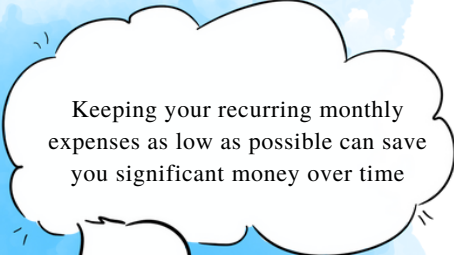
Remember, you don't need any fancy degrees or special background to become an expert at managing your finances. If you use these eight financial rules and financial tips for your life, you can be as personally prosperous as someone with a hard-won MBA in finance.

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

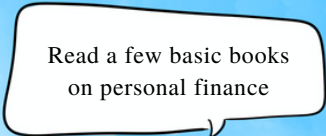
SUMMARY




Don't carry more cards than you can keep track of




Keeping your recurring monthly expenses as low as possible can save you significant money over time




Read a few basic books on personal finance



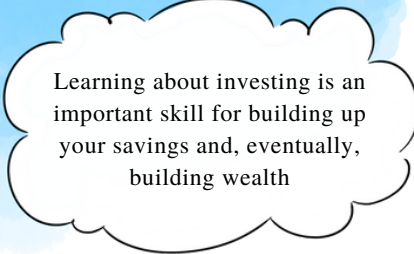
Take the time to learn to do your own taxes



If you're uninsured, don't wait another day to apply for health insurance



If you get into the habit of saving money and treating it as a nonnegotiable monthly expense, pretty soon you'll have more than just emergency money saved up



Learning about investing is an important skill for building up your savings and, eventually, building wealth

8

TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management plays a key role in our everyday life. It could be defined as “the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between different activities.”

Types of time management styles

Proper time management is one of the most important skills, which serves to better organize life, both from professional and private sides.

Which are the most famous and used time management strategies?

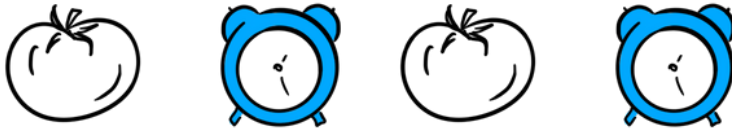
1. SMART goals

According to this strategy, setting goals is a fundamental thing,

since it indicates in which direction you want to go in life. Each SMART written goal must be noted according to the following criteria:

- Specific: the result to be achieved must be clearly defined
- Measurable: there must be several ways to measure and track progress
- Achievable: the goal can be achieved with the resources available (without setting goals that are not realistic, at least in the immediate future)
- Relevant: it needs to fit into a bigger picture and you need to know why you want to achieve something
- Limited in time: it is essential to indicate a clear deadline, within which the objective will be achieved

2. Tomato technique



When you do intense work, you often forget to take breaks. The tomato technique aims to help you plan and take breaks between the various tasks you plan to carry out.

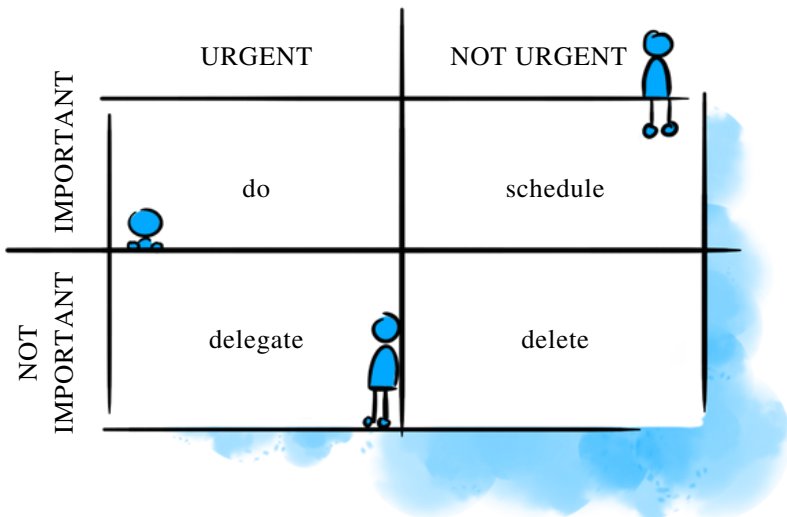
According to this approach, try to organize your work into 25-minute work sessions (tomatoes), each one followed by 5-minute breaks. After 4 cycles, take a 20 minute break.

In this way you will see your time management skills increase, focusing more on the single task, avoiding distractions and having healthy breaks to finish one task and start another.

3. The Eisenhower matrix

Another time management technique is the one known as the Eisenhower Matrix, where the main focus is on the type of activity to be performed, which can be labeled as: important / not important and urgent / not urgent.

By following this approach, you evaluate the tasks based on their importance and urgency and address them in relation to this. Having all the activities to be carried out grouped into 4 different areas, it becomes easier to plan effectively, establish priorities in order to focus on the most important and urgent situations to be solved.



3. The 10 minute rule

According to this technique, you have to tell yourself that you will work on a task for 10 minutes. After the 10 minutes have elapsed, you decide whether to stop or continue.

By working hard to accomplish that goal, this technique can help you as much in developing effective planning and stress management, as well as in defining healthy breaks.

4. Kanban Board

Kanban is a Japanese word meaning a billboard or signboard. The main idea of the Kanban board is to have a visual board that helps you track your progress on your goals.

People who are Kanban fans usually use a large dry-erase whiteboard to visualize their goals.

You should draw several columns on the board, visualizing the board, visualizing the stage of each specific activity. The columns of the blackboard are usually:

- To do
- In progress
- Done

By writing down the different objectives and their progress, you have a clear picture of the situation.

Not all time management techniques are suitable for everyone - we don't all work the same way, so we don't all face the same time management problems. Everyone has a prevailing time

management method of approaching work, that is, a time management style.

Risk of burn-out and how to manage it

The theme of burnout is often linked to the concept of time management. What is burnout?

Burnout is a state of physical and emotional exhaustion. It can occur when you experience long-term stress at work or when you work in a physically or emotionally draining role for a long time.

Some pretty common signs of burnout:

- Feeling tired or empty most of the time
- Feeling powerless, having trouble sleeping
- Having little energy and little interest in work, feeling very absent
- Being easily irritated by team members or customers

This can be derived from various causes, such as: the difficulties in carrying out effective planning (both from the work side and from the personal one); the lack of social support (if you feel isolated at work and in your personal life, you may feel more stressed); not balance between work and private life. If your job takes so much time and effort that you don't have the energy to spend time with your family, friends, you may run out quickly.

How can we react to situations of this type?

Evaluate your options. Discuss specific issues with your supervisor. Maybe you can work together to change expectations

or reach compromises. Try to set goals for what needs to be done and what can wait.

Try a relaxing activity. Many times we forget how sport can help us in daily activities. So why not do activities like yoga and meditation? Do some physical activity? By taking your mind off work, your well-being will tend to increase.

Get some sleep. When we are stressed, trying to work on many things at the same time, it can happen that we have more difficulty sleeping. Sleep restores well-being and helps protect your health.

Look for connections. Seeking interpersonal interactions and ongoing personal and professional development. Find coaches and mentors who can help you identify and activate positive relationships and learning opportunities. Another great option is to volunteer - getting to know lots of people and doing activities together is another particularly effective way to get out of a negative cycle.

Balance in daily life

Finding a balance in the work-life relationship is one of the most difficult challenges there is. Here are some tips that can be useful in improving it, which allow you to obtain improvements in mental and physical well-being and health.

1. Be more efficient at work

As we have seen, there are various techniques for trying to get

1. Be more efficient at work

As we have seen, there are various techniques for trying to get the most out of time management. Indeed, it is important to focus on one activity at a time, working on it until it is completed. To do this, it may be important to turn off the phone and other devices, which can very easily distract us.



2. Disconnect when you are at home

Once you get home, forget everything about work. We don't need to be available 24/7. Constantly checking and replying to text messages and emails increases stress levels, makes it difficult to connect with family members, and negatively affects sleep.

When it is working time, we work; outside of it, it is important to focus on other things in our life.

3. Prioritize taking care of yourself

Make the decision to take the time to exercise. Choose and plan nutritious meals and quality time with friends and family. Sport, as well as a healthy and balanced diet must have a relevant place in your daily day.

4. Take breaks (not only vacations)

If you have a streak of vacation days, don't let them accumulate or roll over from year to year. It is important to take your free time, both for sleeping, for going out, for a walk. Do not wait for the holidays to relax, find within each day the time to give yourself, which can contribute to improving the work-free time balance and have positive repercussions on your well-being.

TIME MANAGEMENT

SUMMARY

1

Time management - the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between different activities

2

Types of time management styles:

- SMART goals
- Tomato technique
- The Eisenhower matrix
- The 10 minute rule
- Kanban Board

3

Burnout signs:

- Feeling tired or empty most of the time
- Feeling powerless, having trouble sleeping
- Having little energy and little interest in work, feeling absent
- Being easily irritated by team members or customers

5

Finding a balance in the work-life relationship tips:

- Be more efficient at work
- Disconnect when you are at home
- Prioritize taking care of yourself
- Take breaks (not only vacations)

TIPS

4

How can we react?

- Evaluate your options
- Try a relaxing activity
- Get some sleep
- Look for connections

9

DECISION MAKING

Decision-Making is a very important concept. If we think about it, at every moment of the day we are asked to make choices, many of which we sometimes make unconsciously.

Discovering the impact and importance of decision making is a key process to understand ourselves, to try to understand how to make the most of it. The decision-making process, in fact, has an interconnection with well-being, and if activated in a reasoned way, it can contribute to bring a meaningful improvement to our mental health.

Decisions are made by all humans. When we refer to people facing mental health problems such as anxiety or depression, decision making can become even more difficult. Studies have shown that anxiety disrupts the decision-making regions of the prefrontal cortex. It is essential to reduce anxiety to improve

your decision making. At the same time, in a period of distress or chaos like the one we are living (with events such as pandemics, war, etc.), it is important to learn coping strategies and self-care methods that work to clear your mind and take you to a place of calm that is most optimal for effective decision making.

Situational elements within your environment and behavioral elements within you can have a significant impact on your decision-making ability; the mere fact of being aware of it is a step towards greater well-being. Beyond this awareness, the next steps go towards practicing one's own healthy forms of self-care or seeking professional help.

Types of decision making strategies

As we know, we make a lot of decisions in our life. Are there some strategies that could help us in a better understanding of the decision making process?

1. Decision-making process: **rational**

The rational style is characterized by an in-depth search for information and a systematic evaluation of the alternatives identified; it is methodical and involves a well-ordered sequence of steps to arrive at a decision. You rely on information that is objective and can be easily observed.



Through this model, a series of steps are analyzed that must be considered if their goal is to maximize the quality of choices. In

other words, if you want to be sure you are making the best choice, it may make sense to follow the formal steps of the rational decision model. From the definition of the problem, we move on to the search for adequate solutions, evaluating which is the best choice to make. Once the choice has been made, it is put into practice and subjected to continuous analysis, in order to estimate its goodness.

2. Decision making process: **bounded rationality**

This style can be defined as avoidant, characterized by the attempt to avoid the decision-making process as much as possible.

According to this model, individuals consciously limit their options to a manageable set and choose the best alternative without conducting an exhaustive search for alternatives. An important part of the bounded rationality approach is the tendency towards satisfaction, which refers to the acceptance of the first alternative that meets the minimum criteria.

3. Decision making process: **intuitive**

The intuitive decision-making model is characterized as an important decision-making model, driven by confidence in one's intuitions and feelings, refers to making decisions without conscious reasoning. Many times may happen to make decisions in difficult circumstances with tight deadlines, constraints, a lot of uncertainty, highly visible and high-risk results and in changing conditions: it makes sense that they don't have the time to formally work out all the steps of the rational decision model.

This is another type of decision-making process, where the decision maker saves time and energy by accepting the first alternative that meets certain minimum standards.

Therefore, these decision-makers rely on feelings to make quick decisions. They don't mind taking risks and move confidently forward through life.

4. Decision-making process: **spontaneous**

In addition to rational decision making, bounded rationality models, and intuitive decision making, spontaneous decision making is a vital part of being an effective decision maker. It is another type of decision-making process that is adopted (unknowingly) in a variety of situations.

This style is characterized by immediate insights and the desire to make the decision as quickly as possible and can be valid in different contexts, when you do not have a lot of time to make a choice and / or the variables / information would not be sufficient to make a choice. a rational choice.

Tips about decision making

1. Make decisions when you are emotionally neutral

Most great decisions make us feel great emotions; for this very reason, it is important to avoid making these kinds of choices when we are emotionally too high (extreme of anger, excitement, sadness, nervousness, etc.) or when we are exhausted.

2. Make decisions when you have enough information

No decision should be made without due diligence, which means picking up major imports, talking to more knowledgeable people, researching all options. Therefore, you should give yourself some time to make this process. It is important, at the same time, not to spend too much time on getting too many details.

3. Make a pros and cons list

You can do a risk assessment in several ways: making a list of pros and cons for each course of action and then comparing them could be a good solution to have an overview of the situation.



4. Don't let stress get the better of you

It is important not to choose something without thinking about it, or avoid making a decision because stress has knocked you out. If you feel anxious about a decision, try to manage your stress so it doesn't cloud your thoughts.

5. Talk about it

It can be helpful to get another person's point of view on your problem or situation, particularly if they have faced a similar decision in their life.

When and how making important decisions for life

All important or difficult decisions must be made on paper. By writing things down, you will have a list that helps you see the situation clearly, the obstacle or opportunity in front of you. This way, you will help your mind to focus instead of talking about abstract things. If you can't focus on the choice and instead get wrapped up in your thoughts, your energy will be spreaded.

At the same time, it is key to pay attention to which words you are choosing to describe this situation. If you are using positive language to describe the decision, chances are you will be potentially excited about it. In case you are using negative language, it is a good indication of fear. Examine what's behind this language to understand what's driving this particular decision.

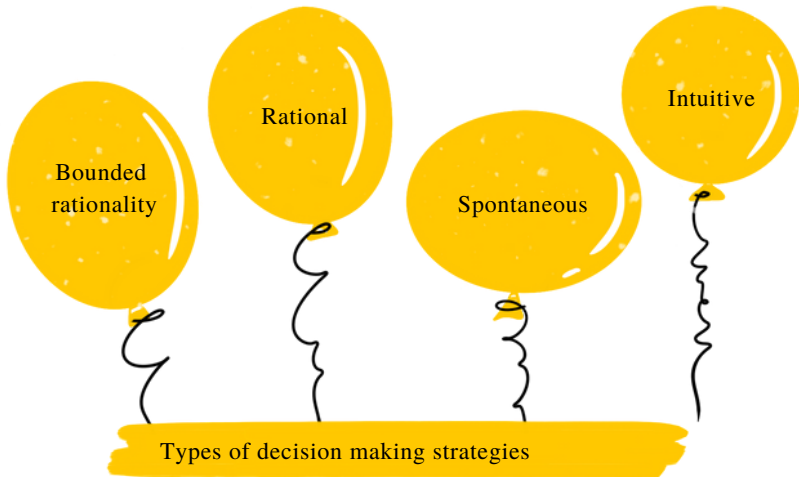
Feelings are often playing a key role in the decision making process. So, it is important to speak clearly to yourself. Why are you pursuing this path? Will this decision benefit you mentally, physically or professionally?

We are often tempted to choose the easier path or the path of inaction. But this is not the reasoning to follow. When you know that a decision is the right one for you, remind yourself of your reasoning and follow it, because that is what you have analyzed empirically.

DECISION MAKING

SUMMARY

Decision Making - the process of making choices by identifying a decision



Tips about decision making:

- Make decisions when you are emotionally neutral
- Make decisions when you have enough information
- Make a pros and cons list
- Don't let stress get the better of you
- Talk about the decision you want to make

10

CAREER PLANNING

What exactly is a career? Probably most of us are familiar with the phrase "make a career". As it turns out, this is quite a subjective concept, because what is a career for one of us, can only be a distinction for the other. However, it cannot be denied that this is a process that lasts our entire life - a process of learning and improvement. Going a bit further, it can be said that a career is our whole life because it concerns both its private and professional part. In the course of our lives, each of us is at some point faced with the question: what next? Choosing a career path is one of our most important decisions, which determines our success in both professional and private life. The right choice of profession gives us satisfaction, while the wrong one can lead to frustration and conflicts also transferred to private and family ground. Already in adolescence, we have to decide what our career path will look like. As a child, each of us

dreams to pursue a certain profession in adulthood. Of course, this dream can change over the years. In adolescence, we choose the school in which we want to study and a specific educational profile. Assuming that our childhood dream about



a specific profession is still alive in us and has become our personal goal, the decision on the further career path and related education seems to be simple. But what if this is not the case? What if we don't know what we want to do in life? How to make such an important decision?

Puberty problems can also take a toll on our self-image. Self-perception, i.e. self-esteem, also has a significant influence on the decisions we make. When choosing a career, we will probably hear questions like: What am I good for? Can I make it? One of the factors influencing self-esteem is our attitude. C.S. Dweck shows two attitudes presented by people: focus on durability and focus on development. People focused on durability are characterized by the belief that their features remain permanent, therefore they must constantly prove their worth. By experiencing failure, they feel worthless and define themselves as failures. This is a huge blow to self-esteem. The opposite of this attitude is the development attitude. Development-minded people take failure as a lesson from which they draw conclusions, thanks to which they make even more efforts to be successful in the future. This attitude is based on the belief that we can develop our qualities through work and

effort. It is worth noting that this attitude is also not something permanent, sometimes the mere awareness of the existence of both of these attitudes is enough to change your attitude and focus on development. Take note of the attitude you usually adopt towards yourself and the difficulties you encounter. Cultivate an attitude to development and see how it will affect you and your decisions.

Self-confidence and self-esteem concern our perception of ourselves and are very subjective feelings. Each of us is different in his own way. We differ in personality, character traits, temperament, passions, interests, skills, knowledge, values, needs, health, etc. When planning your professional career, you should not ignore these factors. It happens that we look at ourselves very critically, emphasize shortcomings and shortcomings, and do not see advantages and potential. We can also see ourselves completely the opposite - in superlatives, not seeing our own limitations and weaknesses. When deciding about your future, you should look at yourself as objectively as possible, you can say that we should get to know ourselves. Try to honestly write down your strengths and potential, as well as your weaknesses and barriers. You can use the so-called **SWOT** analysis, which looks like this:

STRENGTHS It is a collection of your abilities.	WEAKNESSES It is a collection of your shortcomings and incapacities.
OPPORTUNITIES These are all kinds of external factors and circumstances that you can take advantage of.	THREATS These are all kinds of external factors that can be detrimental to you.

When planning your future career, take into account the professions that are compatible with you and will allow you to develop your potential. Such an objective look at both your strengths and weaknesses will make it easier for you to make a selection of potential professions, thanks to which it will be easier to reject those you simply don't feel, thus narrowing down the list to 2-4 professions that suit you most.

It is worth noting that the knowledge and the so-called hard competences (skills) nowadays are becoming insufficient on the labor market. Increasingly, employers and entrepreneurs appreciate such abilities as the willingness to learn and develop,

empathy, patience, problem-solving skills, communication, time management, cooperation, etc. It is worth noting that depending on a given profession, selected soft skills may be more or less valued by employers. It can be said that they are one of the key elements of a career, so the higher you are on your career ladder, the more important your soft skills play a role.

In a constantly evolving world and an overwhelming amount of information of various kinds, it may seem to us that we already know everything. But what do I know about the labor market that I will soon enter? How many jobs do I know and how much do I know about their job? Where can I get this information, important to me, from? Sometimes more is not always better. Being overwhelmed with various information (more or less important), we can sometimes feel lost, which is another obstacle for us. So where to start? One of the sources of such information is the well-known Internet. It is enough to enter the search term "list of professions" in the search engine, so that in front of our eyes a collection of various professions gathered in one place appears. This way, you can discover professional areas that you haven't even heard of before. When getting to know them, you should pay attention not only to information about the activities or requirements of a given profession. Remember to take into account factors such as contraindications to perform a specific profession and get to know (study) the labor market and the economic situation in more detail, i.e. the demand for employees in this profession, company policy, places to prepare for the profession and their requirements, etc. this information, try to choose the profession that suits you best.

Okay, you already know what you want to do! But how do you go about it? When deciding to start a specific career, you are probably already familiar with its requirements and the most important information about working in a given profession. The next step is to plan your career path. There are two main elements to this planning. The first is setting goals for our professional and life future. It is not easy to formulate goals correctly. It is worth using the various methods available to us. One of them is the **SMARTER** method. The name is an abbreviation in which each letter tells us what to remember when formulating our goal.

- S** **Specific** (formulated so that there is no doubt what it is about)
- M** **Measurable** (measurable / verifiable, preferably expressed with numbers)
- A** **Achievable** (real, achievable)
- R** **Relevant** (important to you, worth the work and time put into it)
- T** based on **Timeline** (with completion date)
- E** **Exciting** (exciting for you to motivate you to achieve it)
- R** **Recorded** (written e.g. on a piece of paper)

Listed goals, so it's time for the next step. It is identifying tasks that will lead us to achieve these goals. There is no single path to your goal, you can achieve it with a variety of tasks. Time for their detailed planning (step by step description) and choosing your own path that will allow you to gain competences enabling employment, and thus lead you to your goal.

Remember that your career plan (which is also a life plan) consists of many detailed (stage) goals. You may be wondering why you should plan your life so carefully? Having such a plan brings many benefits. By building a career according to a specific scheme, we take full responsibility for our lives. Do you like when someone runs your life for you and your role in it resembles a puppet? I don't think anyone likes it ... By planning and building your own career, you gain the feeling that you are the creator of your fate. That is why it is so important to consciously and responsibly choose your career path. Thanks to this, you can fully feel that the decisions you make are right.

Or maybe you feel that you know it all, but still feel overwhelmed by the decision to plan your future career? There is nothing strange about it, after all, it is one of the most serious decisions we make in life. Luckily, you don't have to go through this alone. There are various forms of supporting young people in planning their careers. These needs are met by, among others, schools and numerous non-governmental organizations. As part of their activities, they conduct various types of programs and studies of professional predispositions and even organize meetings with career advisers. The job of career counselors is to

help you acquaint you with various professions and specialties, as well as to learn about your professional preferences. In addition, this type of support helps you develop adaptive skills and deal with difficulties that you may experience in the labor market. You can also self-increase your knowledge of economic and labor market changes by searching for relevant information in various types of magazines and publications. Just remember to rely on reliable literature.

And if you are concerned that your career decision will be wrong, remember that you always have the opportunity to try something new. Learn about different fields of work, test yourself in them and see what suits you best. Choose consciously and pursue yourself through a career.



To sum up - when planning your professional career:

1. Take responsibility for yourself and your decisions / actions.
2. Get to know yourself, your interests and dreams.
3. Honestly assess your strengths and weaknesses: you can write them down on a piece of paper using the SWOT analysis.
4. Get to know the professions and the job market.
5. Confront your preferences and possibilities with professional areas and the job market offer.
6. Talk openly with the adult guardian: listen to what he has to say, but also remember to express your own opinion.
7. Set your goals and tasks that will help you achieve them. You can use e.g. the SMARTER method.
8. Learn for yourself and enjoy learning - set yourself up for development.
9. Do you have big doubts and feel that you are unable to make a decision on your own? - use the help of a career counselor.
10. Test yourself in various fields and choose the profession that is most suitable for you.
11. Choose consciously.

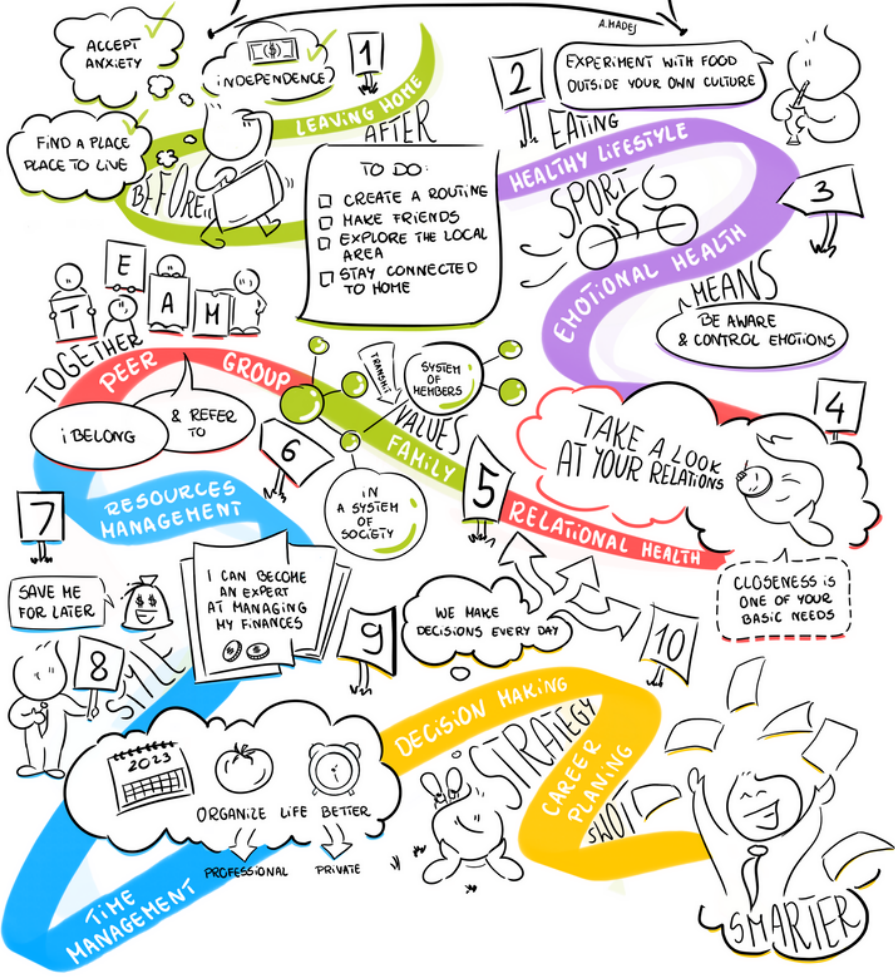
CAREER PLANNING

SUMMARY



THE BOOK OF LIFE

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CONTACTS

Address: Iași, Romania, Sos. Nicolina, no. 1, bl. 928B, sc.A, et.1, ap. 1

Website: www.gammainstitute.ro

Email: projects@gammainstitute.ro

Phone: +40 0741 093 131

Contacts:

Diana Laura Ciubotaru - President

Email: diana.ciubotaru@gammainstitute.ro

Raluca Ferchiu - Gamma Projects&Research Coordinator

Email: raluca.ferchiu@gammainstitute.ro



GAMA INSTITUTE
Sănătate, Educație, Cercetare

Address: Probostwo 34 Street, 20-089 Lublin, Poland

Website: www.iairs.pl

Email: biuro@iairs.pl

Phone: +48 570900881

Contacts:

Michal Olszowy - President

Email: m.olszowy@iairs.pl

Adrianna Madej - Project manager

Email: a.madej@iairs.pl



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AKTYWIZACJI
I ROZWOJU
SPOŁECZNEGO**



CONTACTS

Address: Calle Treviño, 74. Valladolid (Spain)

Website: www.aspaymcyll.org

Email: proyectos@aspaymcyll.org

Phone: +34 983 14 00 88

Contacts:

Natalia Neira - Project manager

Email: natalianeira@aspaymcyll.org

Judit Nunez - Project technician

Email: juditnunez@aspaymcyll.org



Address: Via Giuseppe la Farina, 21, 90141 Palermo PA

Website: www.ceipes.org

Email: info@ceipes.org

Phone: +39 0917848236

Contacts:

Alessia Di Francesca - Vice president & project coordinator

Email: alessia.difrancesca@ceipes.org



Address: Rua Campo de Tiro, no 14, 7800-256 Beja, Portugal

Website: checkin.org.pt

Email: projects@checkin.org.pt

Phone: +351 963 224 049

Contacts:

Antonio Gomes - President

Email: antonio.gomes@checkin.org.pt

Nicola Ferretti - Project manager

Email: nicola.ferretti@checkin.org.pt



