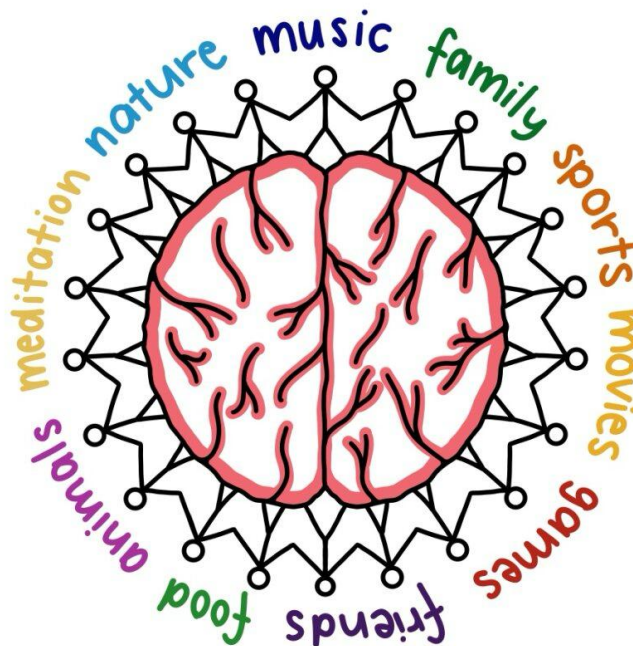


ERASMUS+

2024-2026

COMPARATIVE MEETINGS TO PROMOTE SELF-
CONFIDENCE AND CREATE MENTAL STRATEGIES IN
A STRESSFUL TIME

MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICES





Kristinehamns
kommun



IES LUCÍA DE MEDRANO



Frederikshavn Gymnasium
STX, HF & MARITIM STUDENT

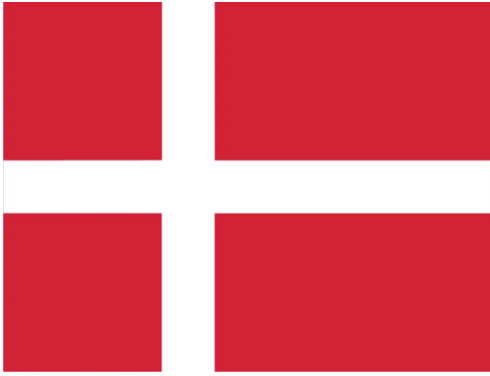


Four European high schools from Denmark, Hungary, Spain, and Sweden collaborated on a two-year Erasmus+ project entitled "*Mental Strategies in a Stressful Time.*"

A recurring issue that has arisen in the four secondary schools is the need to address our pupils' mental wellbeing. We approached this issue from several angles, as we detected a number of signs and symptoms amongst our students that we felt warranted more thorough investigation. The basic premise was to carry out a comparative, synchronous study between the four schools and, ultimately, between the mental wellbeing strategies of the four countries.

We developed a set of best practices which, shared amongst ourselves and with other institutions, can help improve and maintain pupils' mental wellbeing. Some activities were carried out during the project meetings, others form a regular part of the participating institutions' everyday practices.

One of our goals is for the institutions to learn from each other, enriching each other's practices and exchanging more and more knowledge and experience, which will benefit the whole school community. Below you can find the list of best practices that include games, coping strategies and topics for discussion.



Mental health practices

1. Go for a walk in nature
 - Prioritize getting fresh air
 - Exercise outdoors
2. Create a good balance between school and work
3. Do social media detoxes occasionally
 - Ex once a month for a week
4. Turn off the news
 - Limit your time watching the news or on social media
5. Talk with your friends
 - Talk about the hard things and things bothering you
6. Take a break
 - Take breaks when you feel stressed or overwhelmed




Mental health practices

1. Mentoring (patrónus)

The role of a mentor (patrónus) goes beyond that of a form tutor. A mentor acts as a mentor to 12–13 pupils and supports them throughout their school life for five or seven years. They provide support with learning difficulties, social challenges and any issues with subject teachers. Each term, they have at least one one-to-one conversation of around 60 minutes with each of their mentees, but their students (the 'chicks') can approach them at any time with their problems, or simply if they fancy a chat.

2. The 'csibe' as a community

Each mentor (patrónus) has 12–13 mentees; together, they form the 'csibe' community. For five or seven years, every Wednesday they take part in a joint, one-and-a-half-hour 'csibe' session with their patron, during which we discuss learning, leisure activities, ethical issues and topics of interest to them. From the very beginning, we encourage them to recognise that getting to know each other's views and listening to one another form the basis of civilised dialogue. The 'chicks' also have their own 'rituals': we celebrate everyone's birthday, spend Christmas together and see out the year together, and attend cultural events in the town. As the pupils spend their first two to four years together in their block-timed lessons and often work together in the same project teams, strong bonds develop between them. Ideally, the 'chibe' is a supportive, nurturing community where almost anything can be discussed and where acceptance is part of everyday life.

3. Theme Weeks

In every year group at the grammar school (7/9–13), the year group representatives organise four project weeks for all pupils at the school, scheduled in advance for the same dates. The year group representatives, sometimes consulting the pupils' views, tailor the programme for the theme week to the pupils' current needs. The themes include regular sessions held in every year group: social awareness, village research, fieldwork in natural sciences, acceptance of diversity, voluntary work, and drug and alcohol prevention. Other themes respond to the needs of the particular year group and are organised at the appropriate time, e.g. community building, developing cooperation, mental and physical wellbeing, digital detox, etc.

4. Peer Helpers' Team

Every year, the school's psychologists organise a peer support club for current Year 11 pupils (aged 16–17). Over the course of this one-year programme, with the help of the psychologists, they learn how to talk to their peers (young people of secondary school age) in a way that promotes their personal development, helps clarify their questions, and allows them to voice their uncertainties. Through this training, the young people learn the limits of their own competence and recognise when it is necessary to involve the school psychologist. In addition, mentors may seek their assistance during theme weeks and other school projects.

5. Menta tea

Every month, our psychologist colleagues organise an afternoon session to discuss with parents a topic of their choosing relating to the emotional and mental wellbeing of teenagers. In this way, parents receive tips and ideas from the specialists, whilst also benefiting from the experiences of fellow parents; furthermore, open communication helps to alleviate their own uncertainties and anxieties, as does the realisation that other parents are facing similar challenges.

6. Morning class assembly (Nyitás)

Each year group begins the day with a fifteen-minute year group meeting. The pupils in each year group gather in their own 'little school' (the part of the school where their classrooms and lockers are) every day before their first lesson begins, and they play a game together, sing, listen to a reading, or discuss a topic. This way, they don't just walk straight into lessons from the street, but have time to settle into the day within their own community.

7. Physical exercise

The school offers its pupils a wide range of optional afternoon physical activities to suit their interests, from which pupils in Years 9–13 are required to choose one. In addition to traditional ball games, yoga and the weekend excursion club are also popular. Group yoga and therapeutic exercise sessions are also organised for teachers – some for a small fee – to take place during free periods.



Mental health practices

1. Cold bathing

- Health aspect: Cold bathing releases endorphins, which increases well-being and reduces low mood.
- Theoretical background: The research is based on studies of the body's stress response. Cold bathing has a positive effect on short-term stress.

2. Forest bathing (shinrin-yoku)

- Health aspect: Forest bathing reduces stress and anxiety.
- Theoretical background: The research is grounded in studies on the calming effect of nature on the nervous system.

3. Creative arts

- Health aspect: Creative arts enhance emotional processing and reduce stress.
- Theoretical background: These health benefits are based on art therapy, where creative expression is used to promote mental health.

4. Writing poetry

- Health aspect: Writing helps with self-reflection and emotional processing.
- Theoretical background: Poetry is linked to expressive writing, which shows positive effects on mental health.

5. Sports

- Health aspect: Physical activity improves mental health, reduces depression, and increases self-esteem.
- Theoretical background: Sports research is based on how endorphins and neurobiological effects are influenced by physical activity.

6. Dancing

- Health aspect: Dancing promotes joy, reduces stress, and also creates social connectedness.
- Theoretical background: The research is based partly on sports science and partly on studies showing how bodily movement affects both emotions and thoughts.

7. Listening to music

- Health aspect: Music regulates emotions, which can reduce anxiety and improve mood.
- Theoretical background: This is linked to music therapy and the brain's reward system.



Mental health practices

1. Welcome Days.

- For new students of 1st Secondary Education and 1st Bachillerato, there is a short trip so that they meet each other and feel more comfortable and zero anxiety to face the first days at school with new classmates.

2. Program “Before Friends, We are Classmates”

- It highlights respect and tolerance for every student.

3. Workshops.

- The Guidance Department provides workshops and personalized attention to reduce the students’ anxiety.

4. School Lidership team.

- Arranges schedules that consider the teacher’s preferences to improve their mental wellbeing.

5. Teacher training courses.

- Related to how to deal anxiety inside the classroom.

6. World Mental Health Day 10/10/2024.

- We created an app called Emotion Meter to measure our feelings every day, both for teachers and students.

7. Contest "I have an Idea"

- Creating a digital campaign of emotional wellbeing by taking part in the national juvenile contest "I have an Idea".

8. Talks.

- Talks about how anxiety in teenagers is a challenge in education.

9. Mindfulness workshop.

- Emotional regulating techniques to reduce anxiety in teenagers.

10. ActCoacha.

- A mobile application that helps manage anxiety in a practical and accessible way. It allows the user to monitor their emotional well-being at any time, especially in situations of daily stress.

11. Google Family Link.

- Installing an app for families and students to have a parental control on when to use their mobiles and the apps they use.