

# A HOPEFUL, HEALTHY, AND HAPPY LIVING AND LEARNING - GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

The Guide for Teachers supports educators in supporting children's mental health. It specifically targets increased anxiety, depressive symptoms, social isolation, and difficulties experienced by schoolchildren (ages 4-18). It is a single toolkit covering a large variety of important mental health topics. The Guide provides a unique and structured handbook with specific steps for teachers, supporting their overall work. Its different exercises make it extremely versatile and adaptable to the many situations and issues teachers and children may face.

## HOW CAN IT HELP CHILDREN?

- Improve the ability of children to discuss mental-health-related issues openly.
- Improve awareness regarding mental health issues.
- Increase the confidence and ability of children to seek help when needed.
- Support the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The guide is designed to enhance psychosocial wellbeing through fun and engaging activities that promote emotional and social learning. It is structured around five key social-emotional learning areas:

- **Self-awareness:** Understanding emotions, thoughts, and values.
- **Self-management:** Managing emotions and behaviours to achieve goals.
- **Social awareness:** Understanding and empathising with others.
- **Relationship skills:** Building and maintaining healthy relationships.
- **Responsible decision-making:** Making ethical, constructive choices.

THESE ACTIVITIES CAN BE IMPLEMENTED AT HOME, IN SCHOOLS, OR IN REMOTE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS. THEY ARE DESIGNED TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH UNCERTAINTY, ANXIETY, AND STRESS WHILE BUILDING RESILIENCE.

"With regular use, it makes a real impact, helping children open up and engage thoughtfully in discussions."

"My pupils see it as a fun game, not something 'forced,' which makes them work together naturally."

WHAT TEACHERS  
AND  
IMPLEMENTERS  
SAY

"The activities promote self-awareness and conflict resolution, helping children connect, calm down, and understand each other better."

"Highly adaptable for all grades, subjects, and classroom needs. I recommend it to every school."

## THE TEACHERS' GUIDE STEP-BY-STEP

**1. Identify all available resources.**

**2. Gain approval and support** from the school principal and educational authorities.

**3. Select activity based on age and focus area:** Activities are grouped by age (4-7, 8-11, 12-18) and focus on specific social-emotional learning areas.

**4. Prepare materials:** Each activity lists the necessary materials, which may include simple items like paper, pens, or physical objects.

**5. Facilitate the activity:** Follow clear steps to engage children in the activity, with variations for group settings or individual work.

**6. Adapt to the context:** Activities can be adjusted for remote learning, smaller groups, and based on the teacher's availability, ensuring flexibility.

**7. Discussion and reflection:** Each activity includes a reflection or discussion session to reinforce the learning objectives.

**8. Track progress:** Use follow-up activities or discussions to assess the impact and continue developing children's psychosocial resilience.

## ANALYSE YOUR SPECIFIC SITUATION

No countries, places, situations, or people are exactly alike. To ensure the guide works as effectively as possible and takes into account the values and specific factors that make your country unique, it is advisable to conduct a Situation Analysis and Needs Assessment (SANA). Read about Greece's and Slovakia's SANA [here](#).



## IN BRIEF, THE SANA SHOULD ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Who are the stakeholders: Who should be trained? Who benefits? Who needs to be involved to make this project a success? How many of them are there? How can your work be embedded within existing structures and projects?
- What are the resources and goals of your organisation in this?
- What are the needs of the children? This will require gathering information on and understanding.
  - the mental health needs and knowledge gaps of teachers who may require training and support in addressing students' mental health.
  - the needs of parents who may benefit from education on recognising and supporting their children's mental wellbeing.
  - the specific mental health challenges faced by children: increased anxiety, depression, social isolation, and difficulties with remote learning.
- What are the laws regarding accessing and working with schools?

**Once the needs have been assessed, they need to be prioritised based on urgency and what your organisation is able to provide.**

## KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Translation** of the guide's content and resources into the local language and adaptation to align with the country's specific cultural, social, and educational context.
2. **Stakeholder engagement:** collaboration with relevant stakeholders, such as teachers or other educators, professional associations, or school governance teams, academics, VET trainers, teachers' or parent networks, parent or caregiver organisations, professionals providing mental health support, informal caregivers, service providers, and other institutions or NGOs.
3. **Training:** development of a comprehensive training programme to equip educators, sports coaches, parents, and caregivers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively implement the guide. Training sessions will have to be conducted that cover topics such as understanding mental health, using guide resources, implementing strategies for promoting wellbeing, and addressing specific challenges faced by children and adolescents.
4. **Implementation support:** provision of ongoing support and guidance to the pilot sites throughout the implementation process, including regular check-ins, troubleshooting, and addressing of any challenges that arise.

## FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS



There may be many supportive factors, but also those that can make implementation difficult or are complicated to address; these may include:



### BARRIERS

- **Limited resources:** Insufficient funding, staffing, and infrastructure.
- **Time constraints for teachers:** Demanding teacher schedules can impact the ability to fully engage with the guide.
- **Lack of awareness and knowledge:** Limited awareness or understanding of mental health issues and the potential benefits of the guide could hinder its adoption.
- **Policy and regulatory challenges:** Inconsistent policies, regulations, or bureaucratic hurdles may hinder the implementation process.

### FACILITATORS

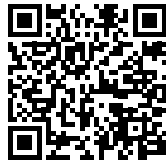
- **Strong stakeholder engagement:** Active involvement and collaboration with key stakeholders, including parent networks, policymakers, educational institutions, and community organisations, can foster support and facilitate implementation. For example, the Coalition of Schools played a key role in building wide support for the Guide in Slovakia.
- **Training and capacity building:** Providing comprehensive training programmes to educators, parents, and caregivers enhances their knowledge and skills. For example, Comprehensive training programs on the Slovak ONLINE platform equipped teachers with the necessary tools and skills to implement the Toolkit effectively.
- **Clear communication and advocacy:** In Slovakia, effective communication and maintaining consistent engagement with schools, teachers, and mental health professionals ensured ongoing support and collaboration, which was crucial for success.
- **Integration into existing systems:** Aligning the guide with established practices and frameworks.
- **Evaluation and evidence:** Demonstrating the effectiveness and positive outcomes of the guide through evaluation and evidence.

## KEY PERSONNEL

- Project Manager
- Scientific Coordinator
- Communication/ Dissemination Manager
- Psychologist/researcher

**Don't forget to decide on the duration of the initial implementation period!**

**SCAN THE QR CODE FOR THE AVAILABLE MATERIALS AND THE OTHER MENTALITY PRACTICES**



## AVAILABLE MATERIALS

- The Teacher's Guide ([Greek](#), [Slovak](#), [English](#), [Polish](#), [Romanian](#), [Russian](#), [Ukrainian](#), [Hungarian](#))
- Online platform ([Slovak](#))
- Theoretical background ([Greek](#) and [English](#))
- Situation Analysis and Needs Assessments (SANA) from Greece and Slovakia ([English](#))
- Implementation reports from Greece and Slovakia ([English](#))
- Template implementation report ([English](#))
- Monitoring of implementation questionnaire ([Greek](#), [English](#))
- Evaluation questionnaires for training (pre- and post- intervention in [Greek](#) and [English](#))
- Interview questions to assess teachers' and school principals' experiences ([Greek](#), [English](#))
- Infographics on implementing the Teacher's Guide and other MENTALITY practices ([English](#))



## ABOUT MENTALITY

MENTALITY's (2023 - 2025) main objective is to transfer and disseminate promising practices in mental health care, with a specific focus on children, healthcare and other care workers, people with pre-existing mental health problems and psychosocial disabilities, migrants, and service providers.

The project establishes a path for successful and sustainable transfer and adaptation of practices in participating countries that also leads to in-country upscale and further future implementation in other EU countries. Capacity-building activities and materials are developed and made available to support this. An EU-wide awareness-raising campaign is carried out at the same time to break a major barrier to mental health support, stigma and discrimination. To learn more about MENTALITY, go to [mentalhealthurope.org/project/mentality](https://mentalhealthurope.org/project/mentality)



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