

Empowerment Coaching Workbook



Mielenterveyden
keskusliitto

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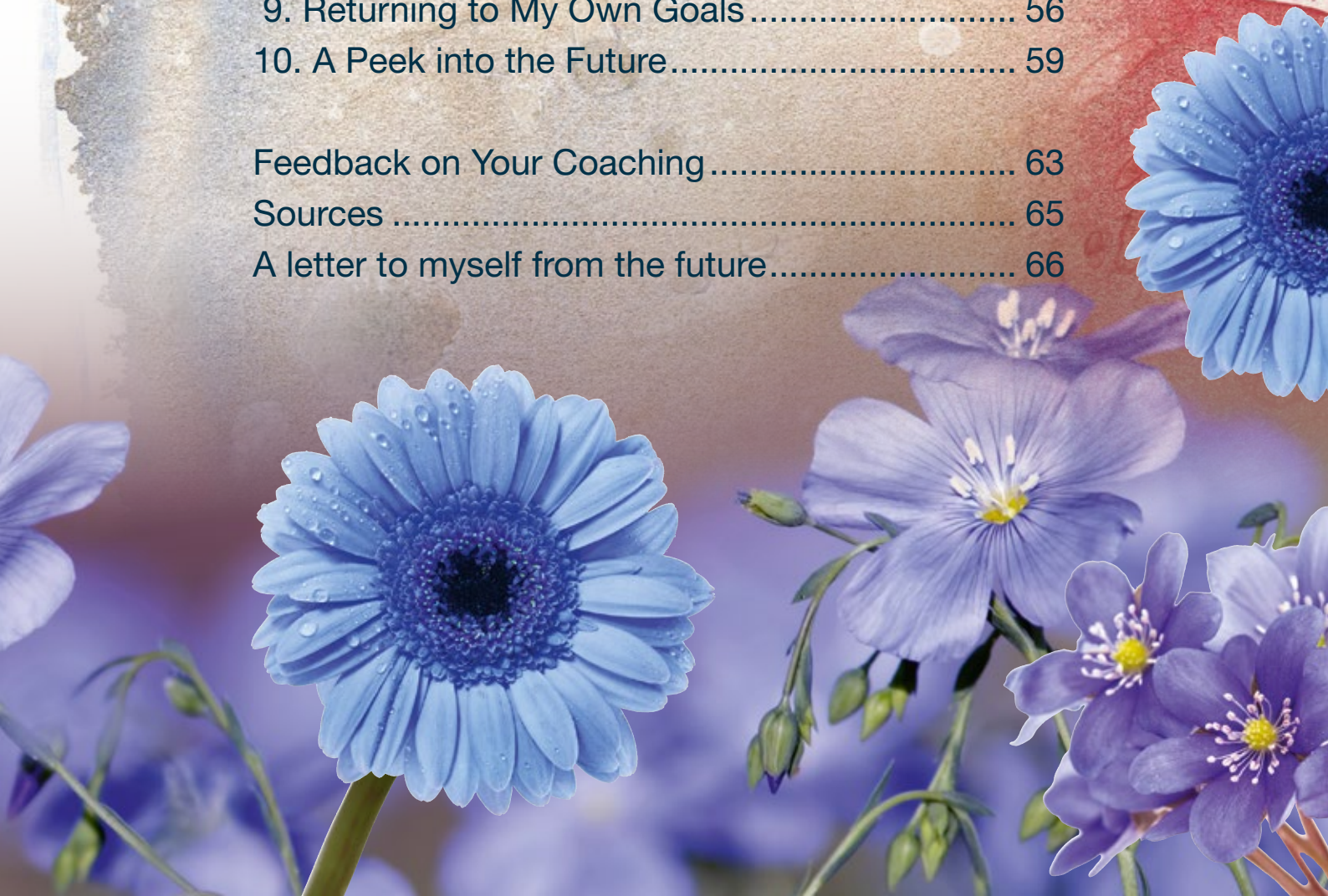
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Introduction

Empowerment Coaching Workbook

This Empowerment Coaching Workbook is aimed at participants, coaches and peer coaches involved in Empowerment Coaching.

For a decade now, the Finnish Central Association for Mental Health has been working with empowerment coaching in groups. Some of the coaching has been done with partner organisations, and they have expressed a need for such a workbook. This book is the fruit of practical experience. In it you will find exercises that we have used in our coaching and found to be effective.

In this workbook we tell you about empowerment coaching, give you tips about coaching in groups and advice on how to set up the exercises. Ideally, there should be at least two coaches to each group. We have had good experiences of using a peer coach in the group, that is somebody with first-hand experience of recovery. Through the story of their own survival the peer coach can create an atmosphere of hope and provide an encouraging example of how to progress along your own path to mental-health recovery.

The workbook gives participants a chance to assess their own resources in various ways and from different perspectives. For the coach, the workbook is intended to provide support in coaching empowerment groups. Naturally, the coach should feel free to make the most of their own professional skillset by also including other exercises that they have found to work well.

The themes and exercises in this book have been separated into coaching day units. There are sets of 2 or 3 exercises around a given theme and they can be used throughout a coaching day. All the exercises are easily accessible. For writing in the workbook, we recommend using a marker or ballpoint pen.

Together, the coach and participants can agree on a coaching programme that suits their particular group, so that you can take the time you need for each exercise. If the group prefers it, you can combine the exercises with other types of empowerment activities, such as visits, physical exercises, and discussion of any subjects that are raised. You can also invite experts to visit the group sessions in accordance with the needs and interests of the participants. Taking the time to talk about the thoughts that the exercises give rise to helps to strengthen the group and provides a good basis for peer support. The main thing is that the aims of the participants as well as the ideas and themes raised within the group are taken into consideration.

Empowerment Coaching

Empowerment coaching is a discipline that focuses on making use of the resources inherent in each person and our ability to help ourselves. The approach that focuses on resources is a positive way of meeting various challenges and difficult situations in life. The coaching aims to identify and strengthen each participant's access to their own resources, strengths and other positive things in their lives. The central tenet of empowerment training is that each one of us is the best expert on our own life.

Setting goals that are achievable for you, gives you a chance to experience success. Being hopeful and goal-oriented are key parts of empowerment coaching. Individual insights create the basis for positive change. Empowerment coaching uses peer support within a group setting: conversations within the group can help the participants to find new approaches and insights into their own situation.

People who have taken part in empowerment coaching have provided feedback about what they felt had been most useful in the coaching programme. The feedback keeps coming back to three essential elements:

- **peer support**
- **the awakening of hope, encouragement and support**
- **practical information and new skills**

Empowerment coaching groups usually meet once a week, for a total of ten three-hour sessions. We have also had more intensive empowerment coaching, either with more than one session per week or longer sessions. This latter arrangement has worked well, for instance when empowerment coaching is offered in areas where people have to travel long distances to attend the sessions.

Welcome to empowerment coaching!





Heartfelt Thanks

To Kaj Collin, Saara 'Riepu' Kaarna, Heini Kapanen,
Krisse Lipponen, Anneli Litovaara, Mikko Makkonen,
the peer coaches at Oulun Hyvän Mielen Talo,
Marika Tammeaid



1. Getting Acquainted, and My Own Goals

- **At the first coaching session the participants get to know each other and agree on the rules.**
- **Figures Exercise.**
- **My Own Goals.**
- **Discuss rules for the coaching sessions in small groups (for example: switch mobile phones to silent, rules of procedure, etc.)**



[illegible]

Figures Exercise

Choose the figure that best expresses your emotional state, that is how you are feeling right now. Then colour in the figure with whatever colour/s seem relevant to you and write the day's date at the bottom of the page.

You can do the same exercise again at the last coaching session. At that stage, you could also discuss whether or not any changes have occurred over the period of coaching sessions.

Sharing thoughts and feelings that have arisen through doing the exercise helps participants to get to know one another and increases group cohesion.





Source: A.C.A.T. Newsletter-3-March 1994-
Special Post-Conference Issue

My Own Goals

At the beginning of the coaching programme you set goals that fit your own life situation. The goals you set are based on the things you want to change in your life.

A goal is something that you choose to actively work towards achieving, something you can strive for. What goals feel so important and valuable to you that you are willing to put in the work needed to achieve them? When you think about your goals, it helps to differentiate between goals and expectations. Setting your own goal is not the same as simply expecting something to happen for you. Expectation, like waiting, is passive, it does not require any action from you.

It is important to make sure that the goal you set yourself is genuinely your own, not something your friends, relatives or carers want you to achieve. A goal that is genuinely significant for you is something that gives you energy and motivation. Big goals are best split into several parts, smaller goals that you can achieve little by little.

In the group session, you can discuss goals and setting them. Writing down your goals and saying them out loud will help you to clarify them in your mind, all of which will make your goals feel more real. It also means you will get support for your goals.

My Own Goals

Weekly Assignment:

2. Resources

- Resource Circle Exercise
- Everyday Resources
- Weekly Assignment

About Resources

Each of us draws on our own personal and individual resources. They give us strength and support in our life.

You can identify things that increase your personal resources by thinking about what you like doing, what you look forward to, what excites you. And what things help you to get through difficult situations? You can also ask yourself: What can help me reach my goals?



Some resources are easy to identify, others are yet to be discovered or awakened. The following exercises help you think about where your resources may be found.

Resource Circle Exercise

Completing a resource circle gives you a rough idea of what proportion of your personal resources come from the different areas of your life. The Resource Circle is divided into eight sections. Think about how much energy each section is giving you at the moment.

On the following double-page spread, colour in a corresponding amount of each section of the circle to express how much of a resource that particular area of your life is currently giving you.

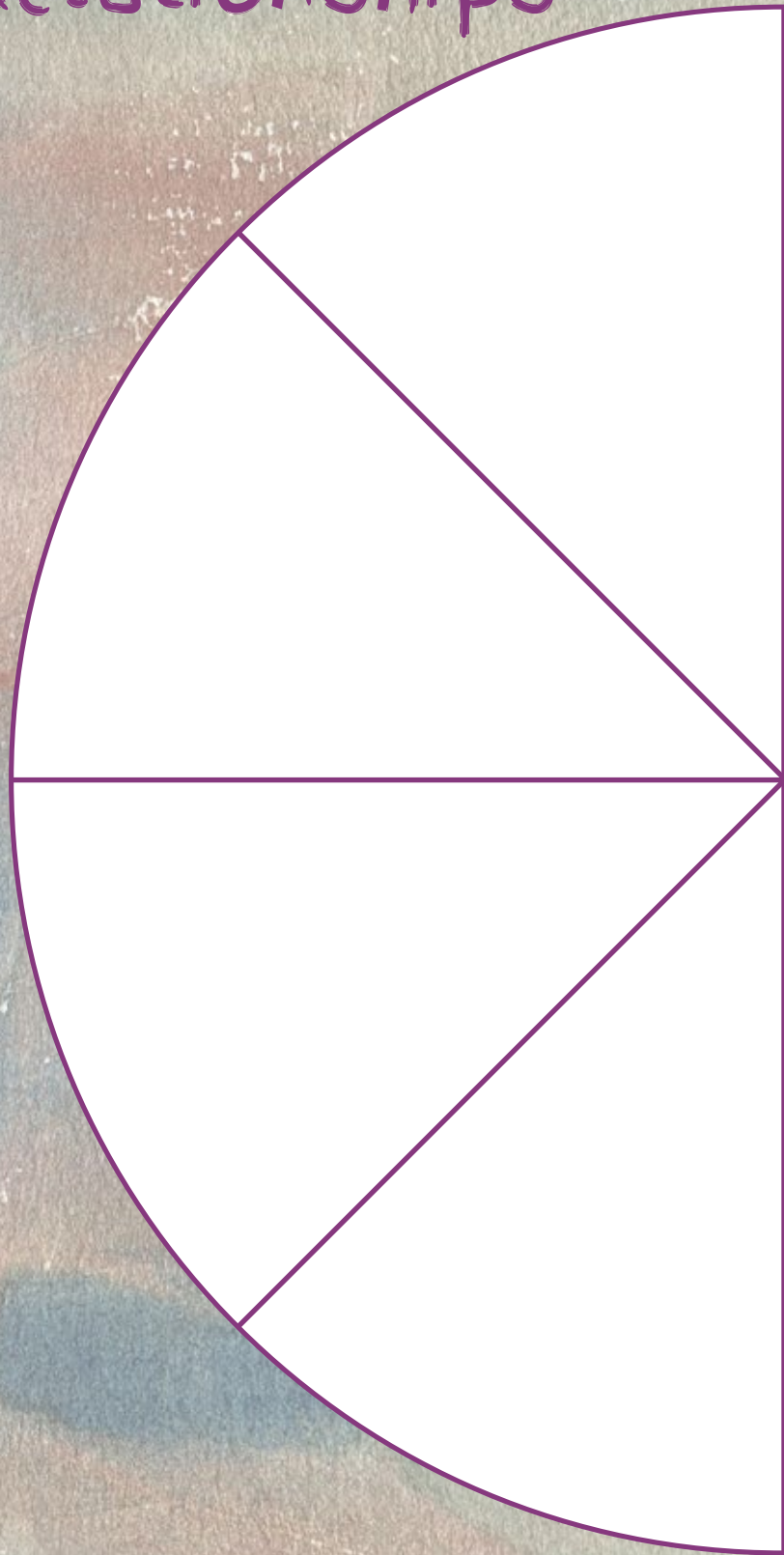


Relationships

Food

Hobbies and
meaningful
activities

Exercise



Home

Values

Relaxation and sleep



In the following categories, list the resources you can draw on from each area of your life.

Home: _____

Values: _____

Something else that is meaningful to you: _____

Relaxation and sleep: _____

Exercise: _____

Hobbies and meaningful activities: _____

Food: _____

Relationships: _____

To think about after the exercise

– What are the most important sources of resources for you?

– What resources would you like to develop?

Resources of Everyday Life

1. Today, what beneficial things are already a part of your daily life?

2. How do you take care that these good things will stay part of your life in the future?

3. What would you like to change in your everyday life?

4. What could be a starting point for you to start making the changes you want?

Weekly Assignment regarding resources:

3. My Own Skills and Strengths

- Exercise: My own skills and strengths
- Suggestions for discussion
- Exercise: Experiencing Success
- Weekly Assignment



My own skills and strengths

Your skillset consists of your own abilities, strengths and skills. Abilities and strengths can be inborn characteristics and talents or skills you have learned over the course of your life. You may have enhanced your skills through study, work experience, hobbies or in relationships. Think through your own skillset using the following questions:

1. What am I good at?

2. How do I typically do things? For instance, when you want to sort something out, do you look to the Internet or to books, do you phone a friend or do you think about it on your own? Do you usually do things alone or together with others?

3. What have you learned through work?

4. What skills and knowledge have you acquired through studying?

5. What skills have you acquired through your hobbies and whatever else you do in your spare time?

Choose the three most important skills or strengths that you have identified through this exercise and use them to introduce yourself to the rest of the group.

Ask yourself: What abilities and skills do I want to develop in myself?

Feeling Successful

Think about situations in your life when you felt that you had done well and were happy with yourself and your performance.

1. What happened?

2. What made it a good or successful experience?

3. What did you do to contribute to the fact that the situation went well or was a success?

4. What does this success say about your strengths?

5. Where and in what sort of situation do you feel you might do something like that again?

Source: Anneli Litovaara & Marika Tammeaid,
Ratkaisukeskeinen valmentaja -koulutus

Weekly Assignment:

4. Storytelling, and The Best of Me

- Narrative Exercises
- The Best of Me
- Relaxing and Feeling Good

Narrative Exercises

Narrative exercises provide an opportunity to look at various events and challenges in your life in the form of a story. Storytelling helps to create some distance between you and your situation, which lets you see it in a new light.



Exercise 1

Think about something that causes problems in your life. Invent a new imaginary name for it. (If, for example, depression makes life difficult for you, try giving it another name, such as 'the black lump'.)

What does it make you do?

What does it tempt you to do?

What does it make difficult for you?

What does it mean to you?

When you have answered these questions, you can put a line through them and move on to the questions on pages 30 and 31.

What have you done differently to the way your problematic thing tempted you to do it?

What does it mean to you that you have done something differently?



What difference would it make if you no longer had the problem?

Who of the people around you believe in the possibility of change?

Source: Ratkes ry: Narratiivisuus-koulutus

Notes

Weekly Assignment:

Exercise: The Best of Me

This exercise helps you to notice the good things in your life.

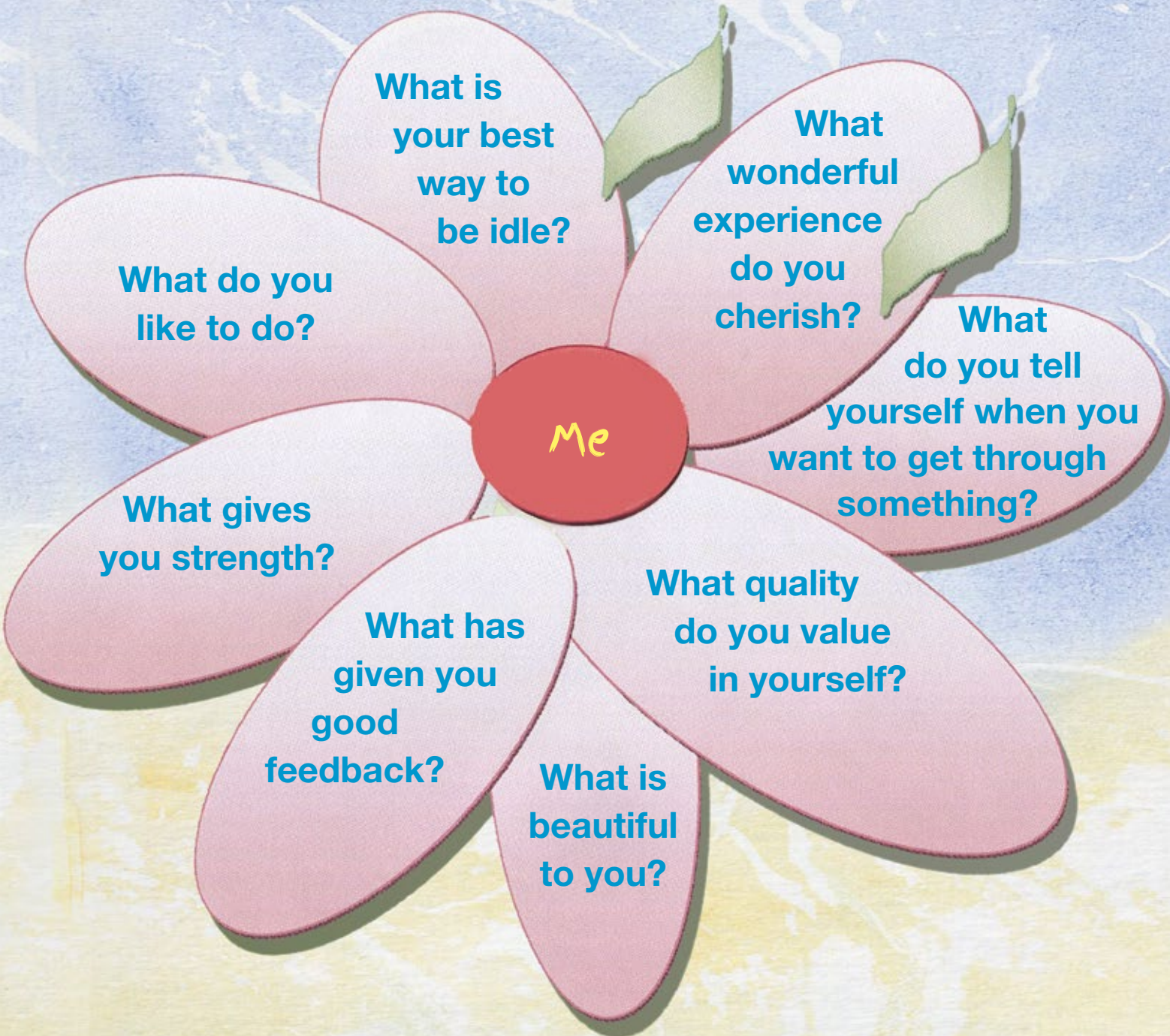
Overleaf are diagrams of two flowers. Answer the questions on the petals of the flower on the left by writing things about yourself on the corresponding petals of the flower on the right.

If you need more space for your answers, you can write around the flower too.

You can work in pairs to talk through the exercise before sharing with the whole group the key thoughts that were prompted by the exercise.



The Best of Me





Source: Matti Alpola

Relaxing / Feeling Good

1. What have you done recently to improve your wellbeing?

2. When do you feel relaxed / at peace?

3. What can you do today to feel good?

Working in pairs or small groups, think through the above questions. Each pair or small group writes their answers on a piece of paper, and will then present them to the whole group.

Everyone discusses the answers given by each pair or small group.

Notes



5. Meaningful Doing

- Opportunities for study and work
- My hobbies

Opportunities for study and work

Your own areas of interest and strengths are key starting points when you try to figure out what field of study would suit you or what your path to employment might be. It's also wise to take into account your own resources at the present time. Take baby steps. Experiencing success will increase your faith in yourself and your own chances.

Opportunities for work might be, for instance:

Rehabilitative work, transitional work, work try-out, job training, social enterprise, cooperatives, volunteer work, subsidized employment, or work on the open labour market.

Opportunities for study

There are opportunities for studying in, for instance:

Workers institutes, adult education centres, vocational special-education institutions, upper-secondary vocational education, adult high schools, universities of applied sciences, open universities of applied sciences, universities, open universities, preparatory training, apprenticeships.

The website **studyinfo.fi** provides information in English on degrees, professions and study courses in various schools and educational centres across Finland. It also advises on how you can apply.



A watercolor illustration featuring a blue rectangular sign with the text "My hobbies" in yellow script. The sign is held by a brown clip and sits on a black tripod stand. The stand is positioned on a wooden pier that extends from the bottom of the frame into a calm lake. In the background, there is a dense line of green trees under a sky with soft green and yellow watercolor washes.

My hobbies

What are your hobbies?

Is there a hobby you have stopped doing, but would like to take up again?

Are you interested in reading, writing, nature, the outdoors, exercise, painting, dancing, gardening, listening to music, or ...?

Is there a hobby that you would like to take up?

6. Thoughts and Wellbeing

- Challenging your thoughts
- Action and thoughts
- Weekly Assignment

Challenging your thoughts

Our thoughts have an impact on:

- **How we feel and on our mood.** The way we think about things can make them feel pleasant and exciting or unpleasant and constrictive.
- **What we do or don't do.** Our thoughts affect how we choose to do things or leave them undone.
- **How we view ourselves.**

Our thoughts frequently influence how things and situations seem to us, even when we are not aware of it. Constructive thoughts make us feel better and build our confidence: 'Even though I've messed up this time, I can learn from it.' We feel better when we think positive and optimistic thoughts, such as: 'I am good enough', 'I can always try again'.

Sometimes our thoughts can be too one-sided or negative. Such thoughts are a type of cognitive bias. Allowing yourself to get trapped into a negative pattern of thinking has an unhappy impact on your mood and ability to function.

You can learn to identify and question the traps your thoughts fall into, and work on changing them to take a more positive direction.

Examples of Thinking Traps:

- ✓ **Either/Or:** You see only two extreme options, such as: 'I will either be a huge success or an abject failure.' You tend to assess situations as either black or white, with no shades of grey.
- ✓ **Overgeneralisation:** By telling yourself things like: 'whenever I', 'I never', 'ever', 'every', 'all', 'nobody', 'anywhere', you are generalising your experience of previous difficulties and applying the same negative feelings to other situations.
- ✓ **Belittling:** You undermine your own successes or needs.
- ✓ **Overly demanding thoughts:** 'I have to', 'I really should', 'I must'.

- ✓ **Negative Brain Filter:** This is focusing on one thing, usually something negative, instead of seeing the whole. You don't notice positive things. For example, you may say: 'I've not done anything today,' even though you have done a lot.
- ✓ **Mind-reading:** When you assume you know what other people think.
- ✓ **Trapped thinking:** 'I'm trapped', 'There's nothing I can do about it'.
- ✓ **Negative approach** towards future events.

What thinking traps can you identify in yourself?

How do thinking traps influence what you do and how you feel?

How could you change your thinking patterns to take a more positive direction?



Source:
Pietikäinen, Arto (2012) Joustava mieli

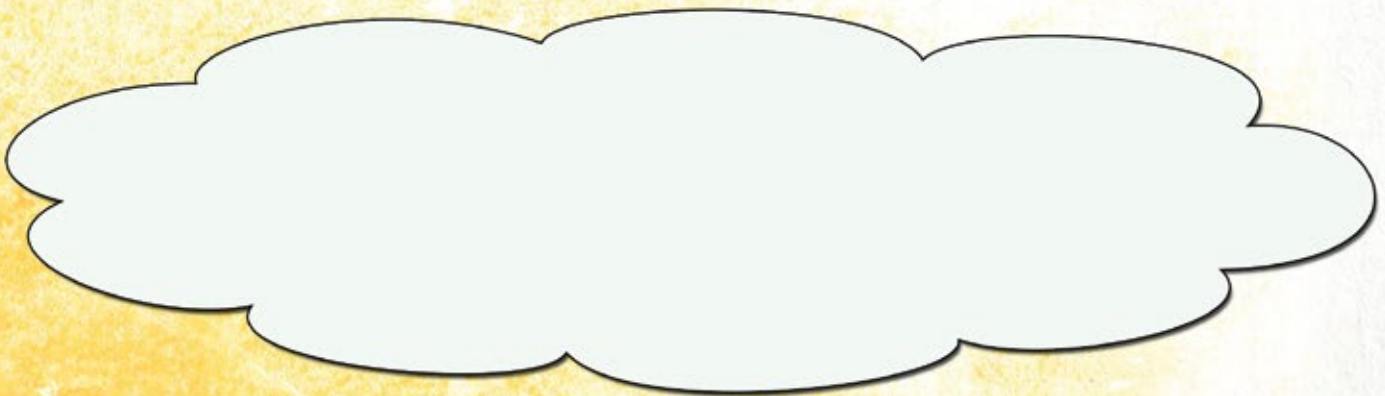
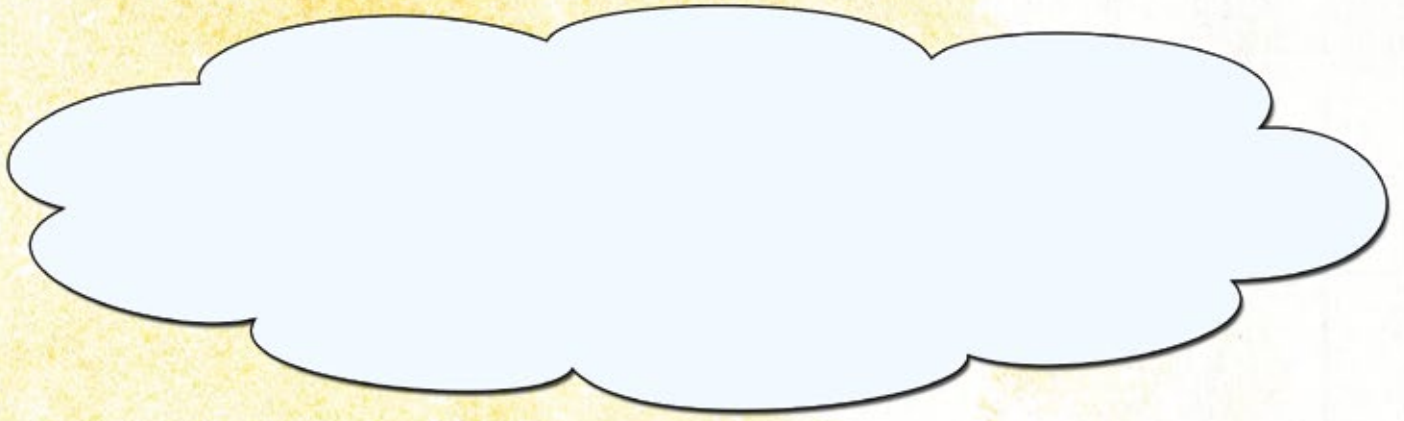
Action and thoughts

We can also influence our thoughts and moods by what we do and how we behave. Even doing small everyday things can help divert a disturbing pattern of negative thinking.

What methods can you use to stop negative thinking traps and break free from them?

Weekly Assignment

Your Empowering Words



7. Physical Activities

A Physical Activities coaching session can be spent painting, doing craftwork or perhaps setting up a Juke Box Jury. Another option is for each member of the group to give a brief presentation about a book, poem, song or object that is important to them. The key thing is for the group to come up with the idea of what to do.

If you choose crafting, you could create a self-portrait or a Map of Dreams.

Painting could be combined with listening to music. Try painting the ideas or feelings that the music inspires. This often results in some fascinating and surprising images.

As to the equipment needed, using watercolours is the easiest. You could also use coloured pencils, marker pens or watercolour pencils. You can combine drawing with painting or a collage of cardboard cut-outs, newspaper or magazine clippings, etc. The subject of your artwork can be anything you want, for example: 'My future', 'My music images', 'A book I have read'...

If the group prefers, you could all work together to create a single artwork. For instance, draw or paint a large tree to be displayed on a wall. Each branch could be painted by a different member of the group: you could draw leaves, or a person, people or creatures climbing or living in it or under it.

Using Photographs

Each member of the group brings in a photograph that is important to them or several photographs to illustrate their own history. Each participant in turn tells the others about their picture/s, perhaps to illustrate a turning point in their life, or about an event, a person, pet or place that is or has been important to them.

If you have access to several cameras or half the group have cameras on their mobile phones, you could do a nature hike, take a walk in the city or visit some other place of interest, capture various moments and end the outing by looking at the pictures together.

Through Empowering Photography (developed by Miina Savolainen) you could do an exercise called 'This is the portrait of myself I would like to have taken today'. In this exercise, the subject of the portrait tells the photographer exactly what kind of an image he or she wants to be in: what background, what distance, whether a close-up or full figure, and so on?

You can prepare for the photography sessions by bringing in props: clothes, objects, or something of particular importance to the person whose portrait it will be.

Ideas for Activities Session



Self-image Exercise



Tree Exercise



Tell a story about your pet



Map of Dreams



A landscape I won't forget



Map of Dreams



Hand, Heart & Foot Exercise



You will find brief descriptions of the exercises overleaf.

A green handprint with the following names written on it:

- Index finger: MARIA
- Middle finger: LEEVELLUS
- Ring finger: KLAUSITTAMINEN
- Pinky finger: MATTI
- Palm: TERO and TAJAANA



Self-image Exercise



52 | Physical Activities

Tree Exercise

With the tree exercise you can look at and make visible how you can work to improve your own situation throughout the coming week. 'Where am I now and where do I want to be by next week?', 'What am I prepared to do to reach the point I want to be at next week?'



Map of Dreams

A map of dreams is aimed at waking up your dreams. Dreams give us strength and bring energy into our everyday lives.



In Finnish, there is a workbook called **Unelmakeidas** (Oasis of Dreams), available online at www.mtkl.fi.

8. The Group's Own Theme

This coaching session includes going on an outing together to visit a place of interest chosen by your group. You could go for a picnic, go to an exhibition, or take part in an event of some sort.

It helps to start brainstorming ideas for your outing during an earlier session.

Ideas for your group outing:



Should we:

Go to the theatre? Go bowling?

Should we ask an expert to come and give us a lecture on something important? Social benefits? Healthy eating? Or ...?



Go for a hike?



Visit an art gallery?



9. Returning to My Own Goals

- Returning to My Own Goals
- Looking over the Figures Exercise
- New Beginnings Narrative Exercise

At the beginning of this coaching programme, you set your own goals.

Look back at those goals now. Which of them have you made come true, or have begun to make come true?

What has helped you to get closer to your goals?

What can you do in the future to achieve your goals?

Have some of your goals changed? If yes, how?

What sort of support do you need to reach your goals?

- Looking over the Figures Exercise

Remember the Figures Exercise earlier in this workbook? Now take another look at the image on page 11. Choose the figure that corresponds to how you feel today and colour it in or mark it in some relevant way, and add today's date.



New Beginnings Exercise



What sort of new beginnings have you already noticed in yourself, perhaps even in a difficult situation?

What do the changes tell you? And what do they mean to you?

How can you build on your new beginnings?

What sort of a future do they predict?

Source: Krisse Lipponen, www.taitoba.fi

10. A Peek into the Future

- A Peek into the Future
- A Thank-You Card
- Feedback
- A letter to myself from the future



A Peek into the Future

After completing the coaching programme, how do you want to develop or maintain the advances you have made?

My own wellbeing

Sources of joy

Work, courses, studies, hobbies

People and relationships that are important to you

What have you gained from this coaching programme that will be useful to you in the future?

What sort of support did you get, and what kind of support will you need in the future?

A Thank-You Card

My name _____



On this page, other people in your group might like to write you an encouraging message or a greeting of some kind.



Feedback on Your Coaching

Time and place of coaching _____

How would you rate the coaching programme overall?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Circle your rating on a scale from (1)Not helpful to (10)Excellent.

Why did you apply to this coaching programme?

What did you find most useful in the programme?

Did you make progress during the programme?

Did you gain new insights into your existing resources?

What was the best part?

What did you miss? What could have been done differently?

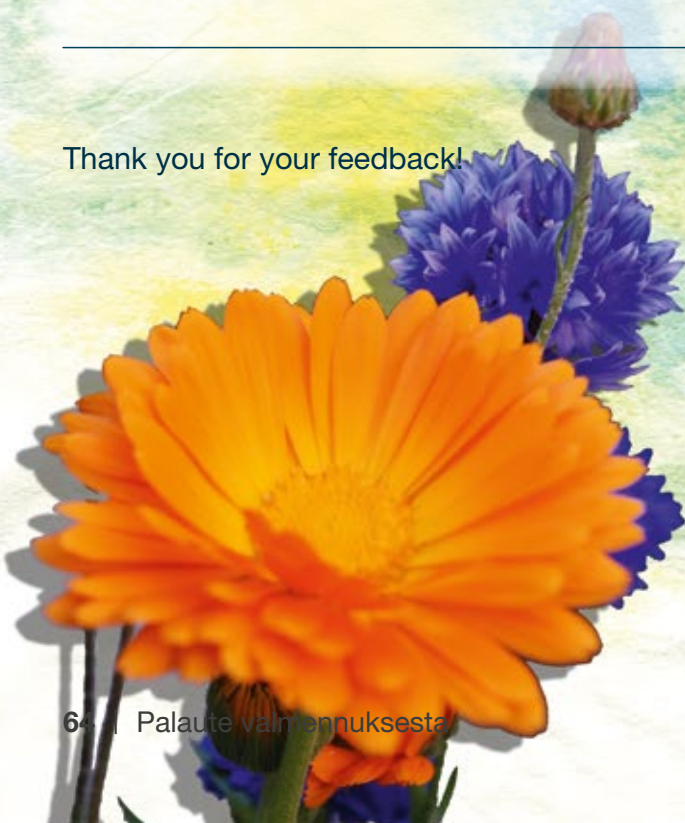


What other feedback or advice would you like to give us?

Suggestions for improvement

Were you happy with the programme arrangements: the premises, schedule, and so on?

Thank you for your feedback!



Sources

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kehittämishanke

Krisse Lipponen, www.taitoba.fi

Litovaara Anneli & Tammeaid Marika,
Ratkaisukeskeinen valmentajakoulutus

Ratkes ry: Narratiivisuus-koulutus

Matti Alpola

Rautakorpi, Eija, (slide-show)) Liiallisista vaatimuksista riittävän
hyvään – matka arvostavan sisäisen puheen luomiseen

Suomen Mielenterveysseuran materiaalit.
Kunnossa kaiken ikää -hanke

[http://www.mielenterveysseura.fi/fi/esitteet/
suunnista-hyvinvointisi-rasteille](http://www.mielenterveysseura.fi/fi/esitteet/suunnista-hyvinvointisi-rasteille)





A letter to myself from the future

Imagine yourself six months into the future. What will have happened by then? What changes will have taken place in your life during those six months? Or, if you prefer, you could project yourself even further (years) into the future. Write a letter to your present-day self from the future self that you have imagined.





Working Group

Work and Training Coaches

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Tuija Pasanen and Wille Härkönen

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