

A hand holding a white coffee cup with a brown sleeve. The cup has a checklist on it with three items: 'GOOD', 'ALRIGHT', and 'FEEL like CRAP'. The hand is wearing a blue sleeve and a colorful beaded bracelet with a yellow smiley face bead.

HOW are

you DOING?

TESTED TIPS
FOR YOUNG
PEOPLE

- GOOD
- ALRIGHT
- FEEL like CRAP

SKILLS
for MIND
& BODY

JUGEND
INFOS

österreichische

We have made every effort to ensure that all information is correct, complete and up to date, but cannot accept any guarantee or liability. We are grateful for feedback, additions and, if necessary, corrections. All information: Status as of August 2022, translated in August 2023. We welcome feedback on the brochure at info@jugendinfo.at

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Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.



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EDITORIAL ADDRESS: Lilienbrunnengasse 18/2/41, 1020 Vienna

info@jugendinfo.at, ZVR number: 682385929 - Management Aleksandar Prvulović

EDITORIAL TEAM: Sarah Jagfeld (WIENXTRA-Jugendinfo, chief editor),

Niklas Dopfermann (WIENXTRA-Jugendinfo), Viki Weißgerber (WIENXTRA-Jugendinfo).

QUOTES: Angela Doe (angeladoe.com, [instagram.com/angeladoe](https://www.instagram.com/angeladoe))

GRAPHICS/LAYOUT: Franziska Viviane Zobel (franziskavivianezobel.net)

IMAGES: Via unsplash.com: Adrian Swancar, Renee Thompson, Dương Hũru, DDP.

EDITING: Katja Schifferegger

2nd edition: March 2023



**THIS PUBLICATION IS FOR YOU.
EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE.**



Welcome to the English version of this important publication! We felt it was a great opportunity to get these really practical information and methods out to a wider international audience. Try it and see how it can help you!

Originally created by the Jugendinfo Zentrum – Editorial Team/Sarah Jagfeld, this publication has already been used to great effect in activities with young people (during Trainings for European Solidarity Corps volunteers). Grateful thanks for the support from the team at the Austrian National Agency for the EU programs Erasmus+ Youth, Erasmus+ Sport, and European Solidarity Corps.

Translation into English has involved some adaptation, shortening and small additions – always in consultation with the original authors.

Bára Stemper Bauerova & Mark E. Taylor

Barbora Stemper-Bauerova and Mark E. Taylor (proofreading)

We welcome feedback on the English Version at training.barasb@gmail.com



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Dear Reader!

How are you? Often this question is asked in passing and all too quickly we answer «fine» without meaning it. So that we don't take up too much time. So that we don't have to think about or explain how we are REALLY doing and why.

The truth is: everyone and anyone has a good time, everyone and anyone has a shitty time. The truth is also: we all strive to be happy. For this, among other things, our «mindset», i.e. how we look at all our troubles and joys, is very significant. And how we take care of ourselves.

This publication contains many topics that are important in life and that (can) have an influence on your mental health.

It may help you to rethink some things and gives you some tools, e.g. how to deal with negative thoughts or feelings. You will also learn when you should get help and what that can look like. But

first and foremost, it should strengthen you and bring you joy. There is so much you can do for yourself! There are some ideas and an extensive A-Z of mental health at the end.

HAVE FUN BROWSING, READING AND FILLING IT OUT!

YOUR EDITORIAL TEAM

ÖSTERREICHISCHEN JUGENDINFOS



YOU & THE OTHERS

Who belongs to you? Write down all the people who play an important role in your life.

On page 8 you create your own sociogram.

EXAMPLE:

Mika has two good friends, Tom from his class and Selin, a neighbour of the same age.

Since the last school report, his mother has been putting a lot of stress on him and his father was also involved.

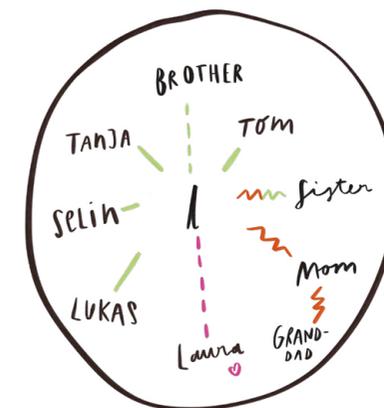
Mika gets on well with Lukas, his cousin, and they often go out together.

With the sister there are always arguments, even though they are close to each other.

With the brother, the relationship is easier, but he is not often at home.

Mika is in love with Laura, but she doesn't know about it yet.

Tanja, the neighbour, is an older woman with whom Mika gets on well and he visits Tanja from time to time because there is always cake and somebody ready to listen.





Draw your own sociogram here. The closer a person is to you, the closer they are to you on the page. If the relationship is difficult or not yet so close, you can draw wavy or dotted lines.

ME

What do you notice when you look at your relationships? Are you satisfied with them?

Are there people you would like to be closer to?

Are there relationships you would like to change?

Remember: such a sociogram is always a snapshot. It can change in as little as three months because relationships change, break off or new people join. Relationships can and will change.

YOU & YOUR PARENTS

For most children, parents are the first and most important people in their lives. Some children have only one parent, some grow up with relatives, e.g. grandparents, some have a foster family or the parents consist of two mothers or two fathers.

Whatever the case, since babies and young children are defenceless, they need at least one person to provide them with food, warmth and affection. Children are dependent on this attention and usually do everything to get it. If necessary, they also adapt to bad living conditions in order not to be «cast out» and to survive. Most parents love their children and want the very best for them. And most children adore and love their parents.

It is only as they grow older that children realise their parents are not just perfect. And that's okay, because no one is perfect.

Often parents are an important anchor. They provide support and are there when you don't know what to do. But sometimes your parents also disappoint you, so it comes to quarrels and sparks can fly. You may sometimes feel misunderstood or despair because your parents demonstrate their power (or their helplessness), e.g. with banning you from going out in the evening. These «fights» are quite normal. It's about standing on your own two feet and becoming independent. It is part of growing up that people sometimes have different opinions

What do children and young people need from their parents?

LOVE: «I love you the way you are. My love is not dependent on what you do.»

SECURITY: «I am always there for you, even when things go wrong.»

ENCOURAGEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE: «I trust you in your decisions.»

COMPANIONSHIP: «I'll stand by you when you need support or struggle with decisions.»

TRUST: «You will make your way.»

ENCOURAGEMENT: «You can do it. I believe in you.»

ACCEPTANCE: «You can be the same as me and you can be different from me.»

TOLERANCE: «You can live your sexual identity and choose your partners freely.»

PREDICTABILITY: «You can count on me.»

HELP: «I will help you if you ask me to.»

RESPECT: «I respect your boundaries and your privacy.»

Sometimes, however, parents don't give their children what they need. Either because they have never received it themselves or because they are busy with other things.

If children do not receive support and love from their parents in the long run, but feel devalued, rejection, disinterest or coldness, this can lead to various psychological problems.

Sometimes this happens much later, when they have already grown up.

It is also difficult if the parents have a bad (e.g. violent, degrading, unloving) relationship with each other. This can have a negative effect on their own relationship experiences. However, it is also possible to become a psychologically stable and healthy person despite negative experiences in childhood.

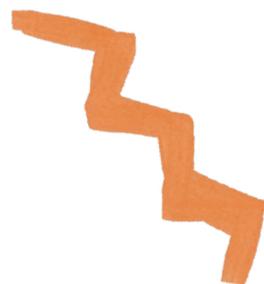
(Read about this under A-Z: Resilience, p. 93).

When you realise that you can't stand it at home any more:

- Are there other (adult) caregivers you trust (relatives, teachers, neighbours) with whom you can talk about your problems?

- Seek support from counselling centres

- If you can no longer live at home, e.g. in case of physical or psychological violence (see A-Z p. 80), contact the youth welfare office or the police. They can arrange for you to move out, even if you are a minor.



IF YOU SAY IT,
IT MIGHT BREAK
SOMETHING.

IF YOU DON'T SAY IT,
IT WILL BREAK YOU.

ANGELA DOE



YOU & YOUR FRIENDS

Who by your side makes you feel most like yourself?

Angela Doe

Friendships become more important the older you get. Friends can be found at school, in the neighbourhood or in a club (football, scouts etc.).

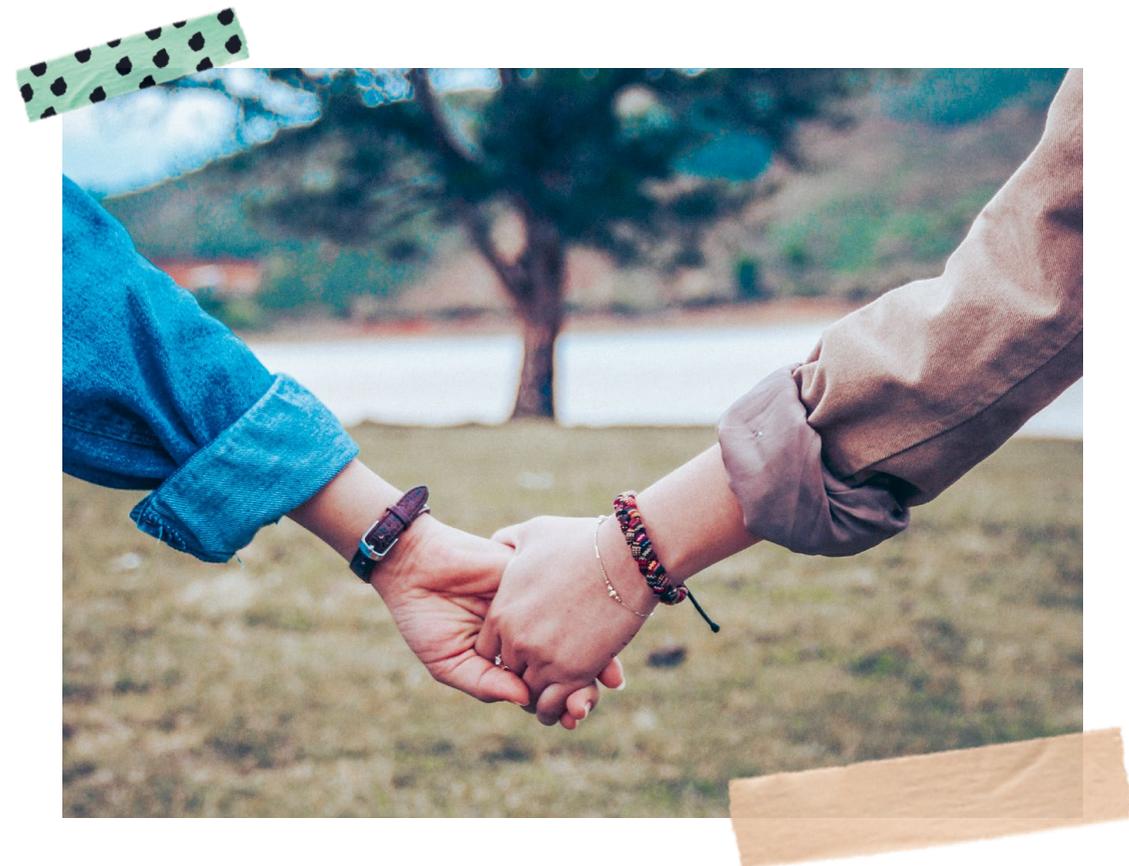
Friendships often develop through common interests or topics that people like to talk about. As you are still changing and developing as a young person, interests and topics can change over time and so can friendships.

Friends can stand by you in good and bad moments. You may share «everything» for a while. Many wish to have a best friend or a

group of friends who stick together forever, like in films or series. In «real life» this is sometimes not so easy. People move, change schools, change, meet other people or develop in a completely different way than expected.

Losing a good friend can be very painful and feel a bit like heartbreak (see *Dealing with heartbreak*, p. 64).

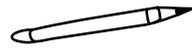
BUT REMEMBER that you will also meet new people (e.g. through education, hobbies, voluntary work, etc.). Maybe your best friend will only appear in your life in a few years.



Test

ARE YOU A GOOD FRIEND?

Test yourself to see what type of friend you are. Think of someone who is close to you and whom you like.



1 | You're playing games and your friend writes you an SOS message because she is having a stressful time with her parents. What do you do?

- A** Ask how I can help her/him and if it's possible, I sort things out myself.
- B** Ignore her/his message because I don't have time right now.
- C** Of course, I am immediately on the spot and do everything to make her/him feel better.
- D** I write that I am busy at the moment and ask whether we can talk about it tomorrow.

2 | Your friend has won 2 tickets for a concert and tells you about it. You say:

- A** Will you take me with you?
- B** Good for you.

C How cool, I'm looking forward to it!

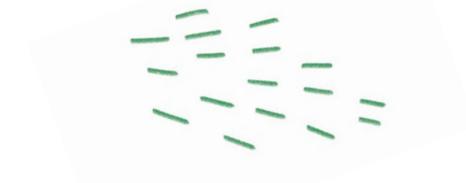
D Who are you taking with you?

3 | Your friend wants to take you to a festival that you don't really want to go to. What do you do?

- A** I tell her/him that it's not my thing and suggest another joint pastime.
- B** I always change the subject when she/he brings it up.
- C** What one doesn't do for friends... of course I'll go along anyway.
- D** I tell her/him that she should rather go with someone else who is more interested.

4 | Your friend is banned from using his mobile phone and is completely desperate. What do you do?

- A** I try to calm her/him down and suggest that I visit him at home.
- B** I feel really sorry for her/him, but there's nothing that can be done.
- C** It doesn't matter, we are together all the time anyway, so then she/he can use my mobile phone.
- D** I give her/him tips on how she/he could persuade her/his parents to lift the mobile phone ban.



5 I You and your friend had a fight. What are you going to do?

- A I need to gain a little distance first, but then I suggest we talk about it again sensibly.
- B I wait until things calm down and then pretend that nothing has happened.
- C I try to sort it out as quickly as possible because I don't like arguments at all. If necessary, I give in.
- D I'll wait and sleep on it. Depending on the outcome I'll get back to her/him with a message.

6 I It's your friend's birthday. What are you giving her/him?

- A I give her/him something, that we both like.
- B We don't give each other gifts, we never do.
- C I give her/him something special so that he/she can always remember me.
- D I give her/him something small that I think he/she will like.

7 I Your friend is having a party and asks you to help him. You:

- A I help her/him of course.
- B If I have to, I'll help out a bit that evening.

- C I love to throw parties and I will plan everything from start to end with her/him.
- D I ask what exactly I should do.

YOU TICKED A THE MOST:

Everyone is lucky to be friends with you. People can rely on you and you know how important friendships are. At the same time, you take good care of yourself. Keep it up!

YOU TICKED B THE MOST:

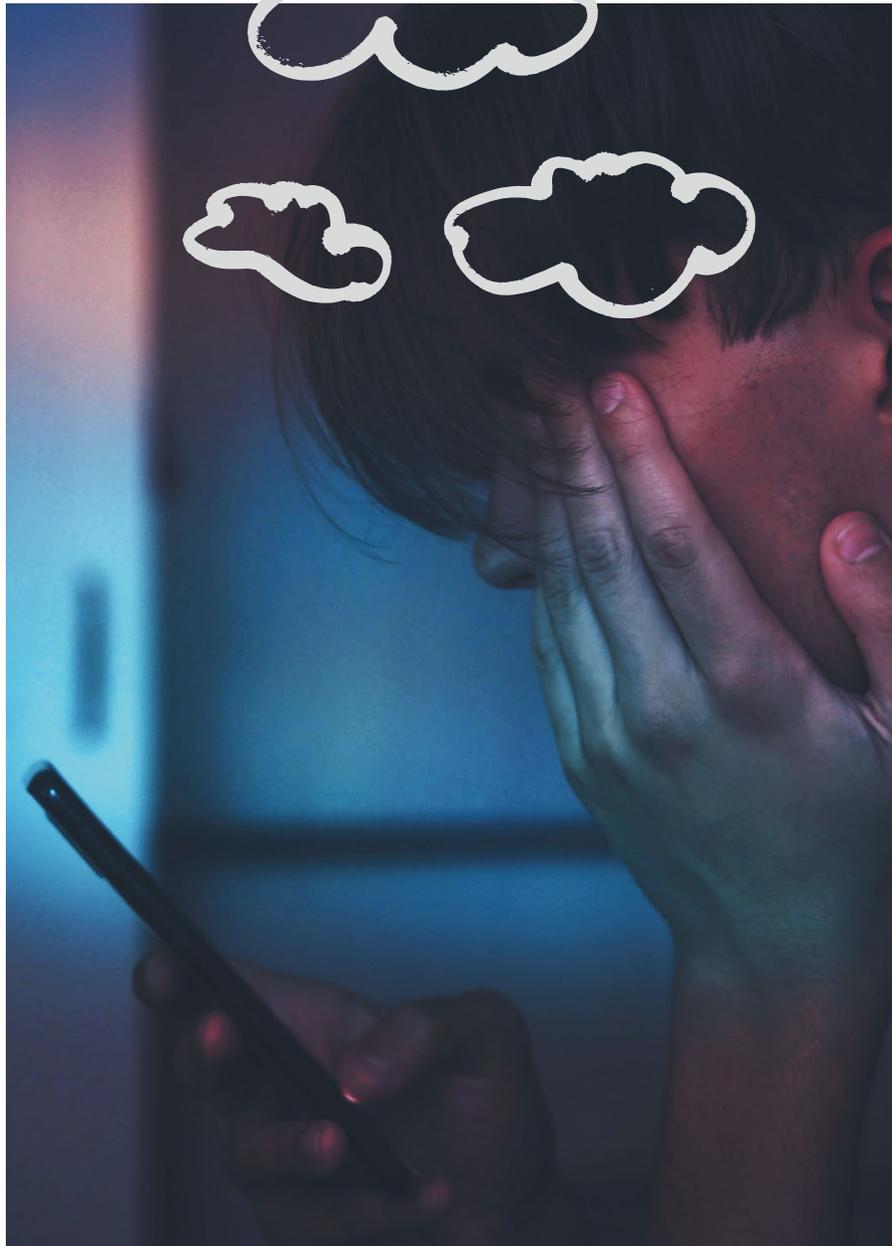
You prefer to keep friendships non-committal and spontaneous. Maybe this is because you are afraid of investing «too much» in something and being disappointed? However, people may withdraw when they realise that you are not reliable for them. Sometimes think about how you would like things to be and then act accordingly.

YOU TICKED C THE MOST:

You are a very supportive friend who stands by your people one hundred percent! That is a beautiful quality. At the same time, it is important that you do not forget yourself! Always ask yourself if the friendship is good for you? Do you really want to do things or are you just afraid of saying no and hurting or losing someone?

YOU TICKED D THE MOST:

You are a reliable, good friend. At the same time, you are very attentive to your own needs and boundaries. That's great! However, it can sometimes make you seem a bit distant. Remember to show that you care for the people you like.



SMARTPHONES & LONELINESS

Thanks to smartphones and social media, young people are better connected than any previous generation, yet more and more feel lonely. People chat, comment and share hearts and likes, but they are still often alone.

In addition, there is the danger of comparing oneself with others who seem to lead a much more exciting and beautiful life.

Some also read bad news too often, such as facts (and fakes) about war, pandemic, climate crisis and other serious issues. All this can be psychologically stressful and overwhelming.

The influence of social media on eating disorders, anxiety disorders and depression cannot be underestimated.

Think about it:

- When do you reach for your phone (are you bored, afraid of missing something or don't know where to look)?

- For example, can you sit in a waiting room without looking at your phone?

- What does it make you feel when someone reads a book on public transport?

- How do you feel when you scroll around on social media or look at the news?

What feelings does it trigger?

- What else could you do instead of looking at your phone?

It's healthy for your psyche if you always have offline times and do things where your phone becomes unimportant or even distracting (sports classes, real meetings with people, studying ...). Try out how it feels for you to put your phone away more often and fill your time with other things - you might actually become happier and more balanced.



BULLYING & MOBBING

People experience an increased form of loneliness when they are affected by bullying or mobbing.

Mobbing happens in groups that one does not choose voluntarily - so e.g. at school, at work and in families. Bullying can take place offline or online (cyber-bullying). We speak of mobbing when someone is excluded, annoyed, insulted, harassed, or ignored by a group over a couple of weeks. This is very painful for the person affected and can lead to deep psychological wounds.

If you observe mobbing or bullying and do nothing about it, you are actually part of it.

If you are affected by bullying or mobbing yourself:

You are NEVER to blame for being bullied. Bullying is never justified. **People who bully lack social competence,** i.e. they do not know how to behave appropriately in socially challenging situations. You are not the problem, the problem is the behaviour of those who bully! Therefore, it is important that you get help. Contact a trusted person or a counselling centre.

What you can do if you see bullying or mobbing:

- LET THE PERSON KNOW THAT YOU DO NOT AGREE WITH THE WAY IN WHICH THEY ARE BEING TREATED. EVEN IF THEY MAY BE MANAGING TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AT THE MOMENT OR NOT SHOWING IT, YOU WILL CHANGE A LOT FOR THEM BY LETTING THEM KNOW.
- REPORT IT TO AN ADULT YOU TRUST (TEACHER, PARENT, SUPERVISOR).
- ALLY WITH OTHERS AGAINST THE BULLIES AND INTERVENE TOGETHER BY STOPPING/RESTRAINING THE PERPETRATORS AND CRITICIZING THEM FOR THEIR BEHAVIOUR.
- CONTACT A COUNSELLING CENTRE THAT KNOWS ABOUT BULLYING/MOBBING; CHECK YOUR LOCAL YOUTH INFORMATION CENTRE/SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST.

YOU & YOUR ROLES

«People will talk.
Who cares?
It is MY Life.»

Sarah Jagfeld

We all have different roles in life. Almost like in a film or a play. In the different roles, we are often also slightly different people.

AS AN EXAMPLE:

Büsra is: daughter, sister, friend, pupil, apprentice, Turkish, Austrian, niece, writer, footballer, dancer, first aid volunteer, class representative.

Lars is: son, father, husband, stepfather, brother, uncle, carpenter, business partner, homeowner, owner of a dog, hiker, club president, Norwegian, educator, gamer, friend.

Your name:

I am:

The nice thing about the different roles is that you can also «try out» different ones for yourself a bit. You probably deal differently with your friends than with your parents.

In a class you have a certain role again. Major changes in your life, e.g. change of school, change of training/study, change of residence, etc. can also be used to take on a new role.

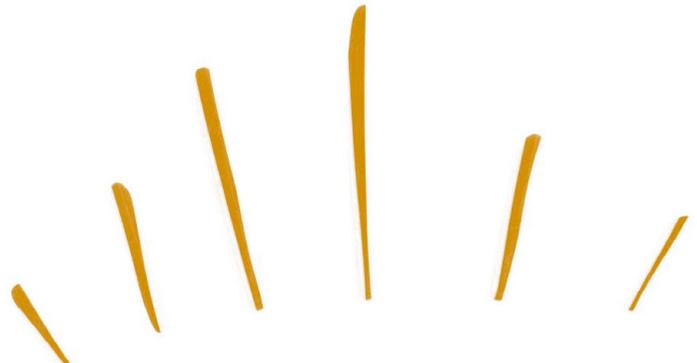
With other roles, it is more difficult to reinvent yourself: for your parents, you will always be the child and it takes a lot of adaptation on both sides to deal (well) with change.

When people are important to us, we usually try to fulfil our own role well. For example, we want to please our parents or our friends. Sometimes this comes at the expense of our own energy and convictions.

Ask yourself from time to time:

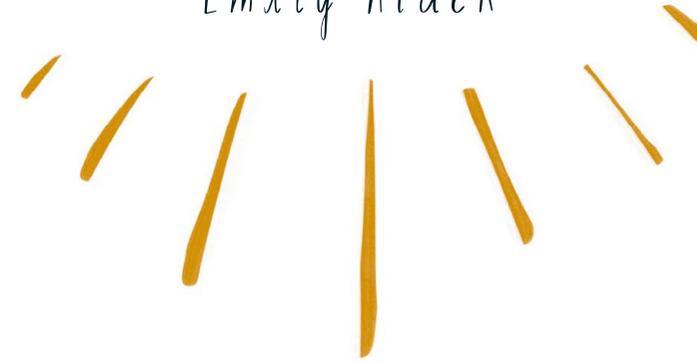
- In which role do you feel most comfortable?
- Which role do you not want to play anymore?
- Which role costs you (too much) energy?
- In which role do you feel uncomfortable, insecure or overwhelmed?
- Which role gives you the most energy?
- Which role can you shape actively?

If possible, spend more time and energy on the roles that make you feel really good.



Everyone is
comparing lives on social
media and wants the
perfect body, perfect image,
perfect outfit,
perfect life - we are
striving for this perfection,
and it is so unhealthy
because there is no such
thing as perfection.

Emily Attack



The most important thing is that you yourself play the leading role in your life. This can lead to having to «disappoint» other people because they have a different idea of how you should be.

Or how they would like you to be. Often we are also too afraid to show ourselves as we really are, but when we do, it is not as bad as we thought. People who love you will accept you. Even if it takes some time and they don't react enthusiastically at first.

Should you have difficulties in a role: Find like-minded people and connect with them.

- *Find like-minded people and connect with them.*
- *Contact a local counselling centre or Youth Info Centre.*
- *If possible, spend more time and energy on the roles that make you feel really good.*

HOW MUCH DO YOU LET YOURSELF BE INFLUENCED?



1 | Your cousin is getting married and you are supposed to help with the preparations and the party. Actually, you don't like this cousin very much.



You refuse and tell her she should be happy if you come to the party at all.



You clearly show what you think of this demand and try to grab at least the more exciting tasks.



Even if you don't like the cousin, it's clear that you will support the family.



You still like to participate - family is the most important thing after all.

2 | Your classmates are talking about the latest smartphone that you absolutely must have.



You beg your parents to buy it so that you are one of the first to have it.



You don't give a shit about what's «in» at the moment.



You take a good look at it and if you think it's really cool, you save up for it.



If you can afford it, you buy it.

3 | You are lying in the park with your friends and they are listening to music that you don't really like at all.



What my friends like, I usually like too.



Well, I won't say anything. Maybe I'll get used to it.



You tell them to turn it off/play something else.
But usually it is you who decides what to play anyway.



You roll your eyes and make sure there's a change of music soon.

4 | How important are your clothes and what others think of them?



It's not unimportant to me, but I still have to really like it.
Sometimes I wear things that are not mainstream.



I tend to wear different clothes than the people around me and feel good about it.



To be honest, I'm quite influenced by what others think of my clothes and no one can match me in terms of style.



It's important for me to strike a good balance. I don't like to stand out and I prefer to wear the style of people around me.

5 | Someone at the supermarket wants you to try the latest organic snack bars. Actually, you don't feel like it. What are you doing?



I say, «No, thank you» and walk on.



I just try them, it doesn't matter



I ignore the person.



I'm not very good at saying no, so I'll take one with me.

6 | Your hairstyle...



Fits perfectly.



Is super or, depending on the kind of day, super-neglected!



Is very simple.



Is pretty unimportant.

7 | How do you rate the effort you put into school/training or learning?



Average. Sometimes I ask friends to help me.



I already invest quite a lot in order to get good results.
I would also take tutoring if necessary.



It's a daily struggle... But it has to be done.



Depending on whether something interests me.
Sometimes I invest more, sometimes less.

FRIEND

Test results

Which colour did you tick the most?

YOU HARDLY ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE INFLUENCED BY YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND ALWAYS STAND BY YOUR OPINION. WHAT OTHERS THINK OF SOMETHING IS RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT TO YOU. HOWEVER, THE FOLLOWING PROBABLY APPLIES TO YOU: HARD SHELL, SOFT CORE.

YOU DO CARE WHAT OTHERS THINK, BUT YOU DON'T LET YOURSELF BE INFLUENCED TOO MUCH. YOU NEED YOUR OWN SPACE OF ACTION AND KNOW YOUR OWN LIMITS. YOUR WAY HAS TO BE RIGHT FOR YOU.

YOU ARE VERY CONSCIENTIOUS AND USUALLY DO WHAT IS ASKED OF YOU. IT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU TO LOOK GOOD. TO DO SO, YOU SOMETIMES GO BEYOND YOUR PERSONAL AND FINANCIAL LIMITS. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU DIDN'T DO THAT?

YOU ARE AN UNCOMPLICATED PERSON AND LIKE TO ADAPT YOURSELF FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS. HOWEVER, IT COULD ALSO BE THAT YOU DO NOT PERCEIVE YOUR LIMITS WELL. ASK YOURSELF MORE OFTEN: WHAT DO I ACTUALLY WANT?

YOU ARE

DOING

GREAT!

YOU & YOU (YOU WITH YOURSELF)

Anyone want some of my thoughts? I've made too many. Angela Doe

YOU & YOUR THOUGHTS

Since you are about three years old and have learned a language, you also have thoughts.

The words and images of your thoughts come so fast that you would not manage to write at the same pace. Thoughts are very helpful.

Thanks to them you can:

- Learn and implement what you have learned
- Protect and secure yourself from danger
- Find your way in everyday life
- Form opinions and lead discussions
- Plan and realise plans

So thoughts are a helpful tool. But they should not control you.

Because thoughts tell you all kinds of things and not all of them are true.

They are triggered by a wild collection of experiences, what we have learned, what we have seen and heard. In addition, your feelings influence your thoughts and vice versa.

Thoughts can be beautiful and joyful. But they can also drag you down, rob you of sleep, and make you feel bad and just not good enough.

That 's why it 's helpful to take a step back from your own thoughts sometimes.

The good thing is that you are not your thoughts. You were already there before your thoughts.

Not everything our heads tell us is true.

The following exercise helps to look at your own thoughts from a distance:

- 1 Sit somewhere where you will not be disturbed.
You can sit on a chair or on a cushion on the floor.
- 2 Set an alarm/countdown for at least three minutes.
- 3 Then observe your thoughts carefully:
What is going through your mind right now?
Are you thinking about something that happened (today, yesterday, a long time ago)? Are you thinking about something you are going to do or have to do? Are you thinking about something else?
- 4 Now name your thoughts internally as «thinking» or «planning» or «remembering» (depending on what the thoughts are doing) and then pay attention to how you are breathing: Feel how you inhale and exhale: where do you perceive the breath? In the nose? In the chest? In the belly? (If it is uncomfortable for you to pay attention to your breath, you can also turn your attention to your seat or feet - the places that touch the floor or the chair. Notice the pressure you feel there).
- 5 As soon as you notice that you are thinking about something again, you name it «remembering», «planning» or «thinking» and then let it go by focusing on the breath or your body sensation again.

BE YOUR BEST FRIEND



When you do this exercise, you realise that there is a part of you that can observe your thoughts. This means that there is someone «behind» all these thoughts. You are not your thoughts, you just produce them. The more often you do the exercise, the easier it will be for you to see your thoughts for what they are: Just thoughts. No more and no less.

Many people who start to observe their thoughts notice that these thoughts are not very friendly. Often people are rather hard on themselves in their thoughts. They judge and shame themselves and generally think they should do or know how to do this and that better. If you notice that your thoughts are not very nice, you can ask yourself from time to time: what would you say to a friend if they came to you with the same problem or in the same situation?

Would you then also say that they are wrong, stupid and ugly or would you rather encourage and reassure them? What would you say specifically? How would you strengthen them? And then say the same words to yourself, even if it feels strange at first.

The exciting thing is: the friendlier we are with ourselves, the friendlier we are with others. So it pays off twice to become your best friend.

YOU & YOUR FEELINGS

It's okay if you are overwhelmed, if you are worried, if you are angry, if you feel lonely, if you are torn between this or that, if you feel everything at once.

Angela Doe

While thoughts are in your head, feelings are in your body. Thoughts trigger feelings and feelings trigger thoughts.

For example, if you walk into a room full of strangers, you might feel an uneasy feeling in your stomach, get sweaty palms and think that you want to run away.

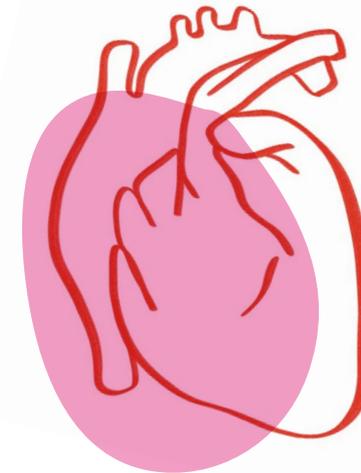
Feelings such as fear, anger, sadness, disgust, but also joy and surprise can be felt in the body.

They do not show themselves in the same way in every person and can also change constantly. We may feel a tightening in the chest, a tight throat, a trembling in the legs, a tingling in the stomach or even pain. Feelings are not always understandable or helpful,

but they still make sense.

If we are afraid, for example, fear is normally there to protect us. It mobilises all forces (e.g. rising pulse, increased attention, muscle tension) to initiate the usual reactions to fear: fight or flight. Sometimes the feeling is not appropriate. Just as anger or sadness are not controllable, the feeling is there and we have to find a way to deal with it.

Sometimes feelings are so unpleasant that we would rather not feel them and suppress them as best we can. In the long run, feelings can rarely be locked up. Suppressed feelings are like a ball that you try to keep under water. It needs an extreme amount of attention



Feel
every-
thing.

and energy to keep them under water and they keep popping up. Some people try to distract themselves from feelings by keeping busy or fighting them with addictive substances such as alcohol or other drugs. Some feelings are difficult to deal with alone and need help (more on this on p. 49).

Unpleasant feelings that you fight against become bigger. If you accept and embrace the feelings, they become less threatening. Interestingly, people often think it's the other way around.

Next time you feel bad, try the following exercise:

1 Sit down somewhere where you can be undisturbed for a while. Either on a chair or on a cushion on the floor.

1 Give attention to that feeling. Where does the feeling show itself? How does it feel in the body?

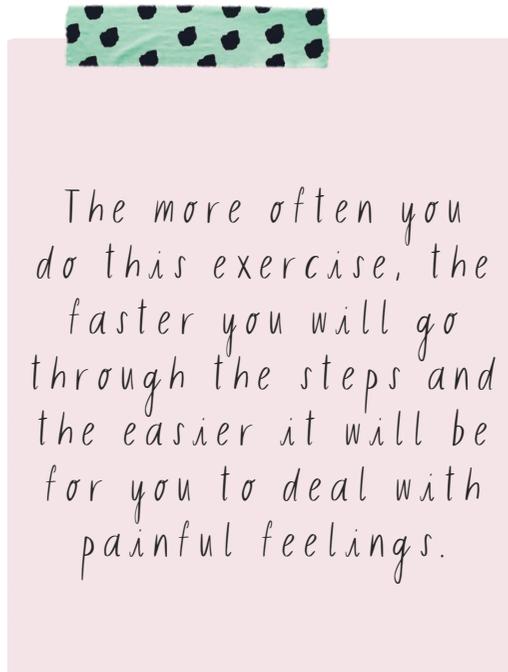
1 Name the feeling without judgement. So e.g. «I feel fear». If you can't name the feeling exactly, just say/think: «I feel pain.»

1 Each time you breathe in you give the feeling in the body as much space and attention as it needs.

1 «It's okay to feel anxious, the feeling has a right to be there.» You keep doing that for a few breaths.

1 The next step is to focus on your surroundings.

So what do you see in the room you are in? What do you hear? What else do you feel? What do you smell? So you continue to feel the feeling, but instead of letting negative thoughts carry you away, you stay in the present moment.



The more often you do this exercise, the faster you will go through the steps and the easier it will be for you to deal with painful feelings.

YOU & YOUR SOURCES OF ENERGY



WHAT YOU ADVISE OTHERS TO DO IS OFTEN EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED YOURSELF. ANGELA DOE

In order to keep yourself mentally healthy, it is of great importance that you always do things that bring you joy. Or that make you relax. Or give you energy. Or calm you down.

Tick at least 3 things that do you good.

- Scribbling or painting
- Listening to music
- Eating something I like
- Reading or watching a film
- Dancing
- Making music (singing or playing an instrument)
- Writing (diary, song lyrics, stories, ...)

- Making someone a present
- Going for a walk
- Lifting weights, hitting a punch bag, doing push-ups
- Tidying up or rearranging my room
- Cooking or baking
- Sport, namely _____
- Lying in a bathtub
- Being with friends
- Playing: computer, board games with smaller siblings
- Shouting loudly
- Taking a nap
- Volunteering somewhere
- Tinkering, repairing, sanding something down, knitting or sewing
- Watching YouTube tutorials and learn new things

I am not as beautiful
as you are, I am as
beautiful as I am.

Angela Doe



Psychological problems often also show up in the body. This is called «psychosomatic». It means that mental stresses have a physical effect, e.g. through stomach aches or headaches. Some people also actively damage their bodies due to psychological stress, e.g. through self-harm, drug use, unhealthy eating behaviour, etc.

Conversely, (prolonged) physical illnesses or complaints can also put a strain on the psyche and lead to depression, for example.

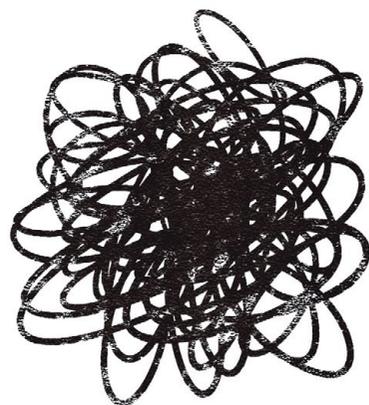
One great thing about the body is that it does everything it can to keep us alive and always recovers – from sleeping disorder, partying through the night, fights or illnesses. Whether you like it or not, it does that for you. And if you take care of your body a little, e.g. through regular exercise, healthy food, pleasant caresses, etc., then you automatically take care of your psyche as well.

WHEN EVERYTHING BECOMES TOO MUCH

Angela Doe

Why you should talk to someone:

Now:



After:



GETTING HELP

Sometimes it can happen that everything becomes too much. That we don't manage to tame our thoughts and our feelings overtake us. It often helps to talk about it with someone. This can be a trusted friend or family member, but also a professional at a counselling centre or a therapist.

Getting help, is a strength!

You should seek professional help if you have been suffering from one or more of the following problems for a long time:

- You feel ill or in pain without the doctor finding a reason for it.
- You are scared or panic for no good reason.
- You are scared in certain situations, e.g. in tiny spaces, in contact with other people or during exams.

- You have sleeping disorders
- You are plagued by thoughts that you are afraid to talk about (e.g. feelings of shame or guilt, hatred, the feeling of being persecuted or controlled by others...).
- You feel exhausted, listless, unmotivated or overwhelmed.
- You find no joy in life.
- You are constantly sad or feel lonely.
- You are in a stressful situation, e.g. divorce of parents, death of a loved one, serious illness, accident or unemployment.
- You always have difficulties in dealing with other people.
- You are addicted to alcohol, drugs, food, games, etc.
- You feel forced to think or do the same thing all the time (e.g. washing your hands).
- You feel the urge to hurt yourself (see also p. 95).
- You are afraid of making decisions.

Contact your local psychological counselling centre or a therapist.
In Austria you can find out how to get psychotherapy and how it can be financed at <https://www.jugendportal.at/themen/gesundheit-wohl-fuehlen/psychotherapie> (Info in German language)



WHEN RELATIVES OR FRIENDS ARE NOT DOING WELL

What can you do if you notice that a family member or friend is not doing well?

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS AND HINTS:

- 1 You can gently approach the person and tell them what you observed and that it worries you.
- 2 Do not judge or pressure the person. As long as you are not a doctor, you cannot make diagnoses and if the person is defensive, that is their responsibility. You cannot force someone to get help.

3 You can offer your help by agreeing to listen and/or accompany the person to a counselling centre or a doctor or psychotherapist.

4 If the person is close to you, it is important not to forget yourself! You have to feel good too! If the situation overwhelms you or makes you feel bad, get support and help! Here are a few addresses you can turn to: (Info in German language).

[hpe.at](https://www.hpe.at) • [rataufdraht.at](https://www.rataufdraht.at) • Mehr Informationen zum Thema: [wie-gehts-dir.ch](https://www.wie-gehts-dir.ch) (Info in German language)

Interview CONVERSATION WITH A PSYCHOTHERAPIST: DIETER WAGNER

WHAT WAS YOUR MOTIVATION TO BECOME A PSYCHOTHERAPIST?
WHAT DID YOU DO BEFORE THAT?

I first worked as an accountant and tax advisor, but soon realised that this was not really suited to me. That's why I tried different things afterwards, e.g. I was involved in research on sustainability in China for a while and I built furniture for two years. I have always got along well with children and adolescents and when my own children were born, I knew: I also want to be there for other children and adolescents as a professional, give them a voice, accompany and support them. I have now been a psychotherapist in my own practice for 8 years.

HOW MANY YOUNG PEOPLE (12-18 YEARS) DO YOU HAVE CURRENTLY IN TREATMENT?

There are about 25 individual young people per week and four group therapies with 6 to 8 young people each.

HOW DO THE YOUNG PEOPLE COME TO YOU (E.G. REFERRAL)?

The young people come either based on recommendations by others who are already in therapy or through the network of hospitals, doctors, psychiatrists or child and youth welfare offices, here in Austria.

WHAT IS THE FIRST MEETING/FIRST INTERVIEW LIKE?

In the beginning, the main thing is to get to know each other. Often a parent or guardian is also present at the first meeting. I ask what the problem is and tell them who I am and how the therapy is structured. We find out whether we can imagine working together. It is also about whether it will be individual therapy or whether the young person wants to come



to group therapy. Groups are often helpful to realise: I am not alone with my problems. The others are in a similar situation.

HOW LONG DOES A THERAPY SESSION LAST AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

An individual session lasts 50 minutes and a group session 90 minutes. Roughly speaking, they are divided into three phases:

In the warm-up phase, I ask what things do worry them at the moment, what topics, problems, questions or wishes for change are emerging. Sometimes all that is needed is a listener, an adult who helps to resolve the complexities of the environment, and who understands the young people and challenges them at the same time.

The action phase is about working out possibilities for action or ways of looking at things that can reduce inner tensions. We work with creative methods such as drawings, fantasy journeys, scenic work and constellation therapy both standing and sitting. Both as movement or in conversation, depending on what the young person prefers.

The third phase is about understanding and integrating what has just been worked out. So: what was new about it? What can I try out, how can I try it out, what do I need to be able to implement it? We look for answers to these questions in this phase.

Finally, as a therapist, I also share

my own experiences that fit the specific topic. It is important to become visible as a therapist, because I can only be in the encounter if I am in ready for an exchange and tangible.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO IN THERAPY BESIDES TALK?

It is often about «getting into action», i.e. re-enacting situations in a safe setting, trying out possibilities for action and listening to oneself again and again: how do I feel about this? How do I feel in this situation? What triggers stress? How can I influence the situation? What could be supportive? This can happen in role plays or by setting up the situation with figures or other objects.

HOW OFTEN DOES THERAPY TAKE PLACE?

The group therapies take place once a week. Individual therapy is also once a week, sometimes every fortnight. When the process is more or less complete, you may go once a month for a while.

HOW LONG DOES THERAPY LAST?

That is quite individual. However, most of them only come when the pressure of suffering is great, sometimes even when physical symptoms already appear. Many therapies last 1-2 years, some even longer.

WHY CAN'T PEOPLE JUST TALK TO THEIR FRIENDS OR PARENTS ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS?

They can and they should. Sometimes, however, parents and friends cannot deal with the problems. They also have a different role, which makes it more complicated to help. Sometimes they are involved in the problem themselves or disappointed when their help is not received. This is not the case in therapy. You have a safe environment and the therapist is always on your side, no matter what happens. At the same time, a therapist's help is not «limitless» - there is a clear framework in which there is space for experiencing and changing the way you deal with emotions (= feelings).

ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES TO THERAPY?

Not really. Of course, you can do a lot for yourself, such as exercising regularly, maintaining a good social network, self-care, talking to people about your problems and not keeping anything bottled up. These are very important things. But there are moments when you need therapy to develop and learn to deal with your emotions.

WHAT PROBLEMS DO THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO COME TO YOU HAVE? HAVE THE ISSUES CHANGED SINCE CORONA OR HAVE NEW ONES BEEN ADDED? IF SO, WHICH ONES?

I have many young people with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and autism. Otherwise, anxiety disorders are a big issue, especially since Corona. Many young people are increasingly afraid of groups - not so much because of possible infection, but because they are no longer used to be in groups. As a young person, you actually have to train yourself to behave in a

group every day, and if you don't do that for a long time, it becomes difficult. Many are therefore afraid to go to school. Anxiety disorders that have already been treated have also returned in some cases. And those who were already anxious have developed even more fears through Corona times.

Depression has also increased because many young people have been alone too often and their thoughts then started going round in circles.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU GIVE TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHO DO NOT DARE TO SEE A THERAPIST?^

It is important to know: therapists are always benevolent and not teachers who tell you how to do it better. Unfortunately, some people still find it «embarrassing» to go to therapy. In this case, it is perfectly okay to make excuses for the therapy appointment, you don't necessarily have to tell others that you are doing therapy. At the same time, it would be great if therapy could just become part of normal life!

For young people who don't dare, there is fortunately the possibility to get advice by phone, by e-mail for example in Austria at Rat auf Draht. Rat auf Draht (147).

≡ all THE FEELS

«... There are moments - sometimes when therapy is needed in order to develop yourself and to learn how to deal with your feelings.»

Dieter Wagner



Interview

INTERVIEW WITH MELISSA, 19

WINNER OF THE VIENNA YOUTH SPEECH CONTEST 2021.

CURRENTLY ATTENDS A DAY CLINIC.



Melissa deliberately goes public with her situation to encourage other young people to get help for mental health problems.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST REALISE THAT YOU NEEDED PROFESSIONAL HELP?

The first time I realised I needed

help was when I was 7 years old, and I was already seeing a therapist. I had a great »fear of loss« at that time. When I was 12 or 13, during adolescence, I noticed again that I thought about things much more and in a different way than my friends. When I was 16 or 17, I shared this with my mother and said: I can't take it anymore, I need professional help.

HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT THINGS THEN?

It was all quite exhausting. We got names and addresses of therapists from my doctor and I researched on the internet. We also asked friends if they could recommend anyone. Then I went to a therapist twice and dropped out again because it seemed too strange to me. Instead, I started talking about it more during this time.

Especially with my family and my closest friends. They actually encouraged me to really go back to therapy.

HOW DID YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS REACT?

My mother didn't understand at first or probably didn't want to admit it. But luckily she always supported me and said: if you need professional help, then you should get it. Many friends were totally cool with it, maybe they had mental health problems themselves. Some of them were shocked at the beginning and rejected it at first, but then they read about it themselves and understood me. Some said I was much too young for the thoughts I was having. I stopped meeting those, who didn't understand me. I don't want to have friends who can't understand that I'm not mentally well. I also have many people in my circle of friends who have mental health problems themselves. That's also cool, because we can exchange with each other what skills we use to get better.

WHAT HAS SURPRISED, AMAZED, MAYBE EVEN DELIGHTED YOU THE MOST SINCE YOU GOT PROFESSIONAL HELP?

What surprised and shocked me at first, but then also pleased me, was the information that I am not the only one who has the problem. On the contrary. There is a word for it, a diagnosis. In the meantime, I know many people of all ages who have or have had the same problem as me. Group therapies are also very helpful. It is relieving to know that you are not alone.

What I didn't know before is that there are day clinics. You just go there during the day and go home again in the evening, just like going to work. They offer a lot there and very individually for each person what they need. For example, I am currently in emotional and stress tolerance groups, there is occupational and physiotherapy; the body and psychosomatic issues are also treated. It is very exhausting to deal with yourself and your traumas so intensively, but it also helps you a lot.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO PASS ON TO OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT DOING WELL MENTALLY?

That it is quite normal. No matter what you have, there is a great variety of mental illnesses. You shouldn't let others put you down, in the sense of «it's not so bad». Everyone feels differently and you should take yourself seriously. It also doesn't mean that if someone is depressed, they can't laugh. The two go together.

You should build up a circle of friends who treat you with understanding and that you can trust. And where it is also okay to say: now I'm going to get professional help. It doesn't matter how old or young you are.

I also think it's important to say that you should get to know many different therapists. If you don't get on so well with one, you should definitely go to someone else. Until you really feel you are in good hands.

Love can be very intoxicating. When you are in love, life is really beautiful and everything feels easy.



YOU & LOVE

I hadn't planned that
you feel like home.

Angela Doe

You recognise that you are in love when e.g.:

- ♥ You get excited as soon as you meet the person you have fell in love with.
- ♥ You have very intensive thoughts about this one person.
- ♥ You blush or get nervous when someone asks you about it.
- ♥ You like to spend a lot of time with the person you are in love with

Enjoy these feelings. You will encounter them again and again throughout your life. But with all your «being in love», don't forget the rest of your life: your friends, your family, your current job, school or education, hobbies and other interests. Because these

things remain, should the «being in love relationship» come to an end. Are you «unhappily in love»? Unhappy in love is when you long for someone who is or seems unreachable. This can be, for example, a well-known personality or someone who is already taken or who shows no interest in you. Unrequited love can be beautiful and painful at the same time. Or simply terrible. Remember: whoever loves always wins - namely feelings of love, beautiful fantasies, perhaps lust. But: you can't force anyone to love you, no matter how much you want it. So stay fair and accept a «no».

Maybe the tips on heartbreak on page 64 will help you.

How do you know if you have found the «right» person?

Love is good when...

- ♥ They inspire you and make you happy.

In the arms of this person you can forget all the misery of the world for a short time.

- ♥ You can relax and let go.

The trust is mutual and you feel safe.

- ♥ You can apologise and make up again after an argument.

- ♥ You can also say «no» at any time, e.g. if you want to be alone or if you don't like a touch.

Sometimes love also gets complicated. Arguments happen in all love relationships. That is normal. But if a relationship permanently drags you down, everything feels hard and you often feel bad about it, it's time to take a closer look.

You are far too whole to be only half-loved.

Angela Doe

Love is not good when...

- ♥ Hurtful words and arguments occur more often than good and encouraging moments.
- ♥ You don't trust your partner (any more).
- ♥ You constantly feel anxious and insecure in the presence of the other person.
- ♥ You have a guilty conscience when you do something alone.
- ♥ You are constantly hurt, insulted or devalued in your relationship.
- ♥ Physical or sexual violence occurs.

In these cases, it is important that you set boundaries. If you find this difficult, get help! Either get help from people you trust or from a counselling centre such as in Austria: Rat auf Draht (Advice on the wire, tel. 147). In case of violence, also call the police or emergency hotlines, e.g. [frauenhelpline.at](https://www.frauenhelpline.at) (Info in German language).

What about jealousy?

Many people know the feeling of jealousy. They want to have a lo-

ved one for themselves and fear that he or she might be interested in others or even get close to them. Those who are jealous often suffer a lot because they imagine all kinds of situations that hurt. In the long run, jealousy can damage a relationship. It leads to arguments, mistrust and control mania. Jealousy does not have much to do with love. Most of the time, the jealous person has low self-esteem and is afraid of not being enough. Those who suffer from strong jealousy should therefore seek professional help.



DEALING WITH HEARTBREAK

Sometimes love ends. It doesn't matter if you've left your first great love or been dumped yourself, or if your best friend has sworn never to speak a word to you again: the heart can hurt a lot. So sore that you also have physical complaints - e.g. headaches or stomach aches or you can't eat or eat too much. Maybe you can't sleep or just want to lie in bed all the time. Some people doubt they will ever be happy again or think they will never be able to love again. The good news is this despair eventually passes.

But what helps in those bad moments? When does it get better?



And how does one cope with the end of a relationship at all?

We have collected the best tips against heartbreak for you:

♥ Laugh. Cry. At the same time and in turns. Everything is okay and normal.

♥ Allow all feelings to be there. Anger, sadness, despair. You can find an exercise on how to deal with feelings on page 42?

♥ Do something good for yourself: eat/bake a chocolate cake, do some physical exercise (for more ideas see page 43).

♥ Let friends or your parents spoil you. Write down your thoughts, let it flow.

♥ Avoid social media and delete from your social media accounts the person you are grieving.

♥ Dance, run, scream and let the fury out and/or: take bubble baths, hot water bottles, cuddly toys/ pets

♥ You don't have to be hard and you don't have to be proud.

♥ Talk about it with people you trust. Or don't talk if you don't feel like it.

♥ Look for answers to your questions in books, films or songs.

♥ Clean, rearrange your room, clean out when you need a fresh start.

♥ Write a farewell letter and then burn it or let it be carried away by a river.

THERE ARE NO RULES IN HEARTBREAK - THE PAIN IS HARD AND UNFAIR. MAYBE THESE TIPS WILL HELP YOU, MAYBE NOT. IT'S OK THE WAY YOU ARE AND FEEL. GIVE YOURSELF AND YOUR FEELINGS TIME. IT TAKES TIME FOR THE HEARTBREAK TO PASS.

selflove day



SEX, PRESSURE & PORN

Legally, only adults are allowed to consume pornography. Nevertheless, many young people come into contact with pornography before their 18th birthday. They receive it, see or search for it on the internet.

There is nothing wrong or reprehensible about watching porn and pleasuring yourself. However, remember that these are professional actors and actresses who have sex according to a script and have been cast specifically for this purpose. **In porn, many things are not portrayed as they are in real life.**

FOR EXAMPLE:

- Most porn performers have particularly large penises - that is not average.
- Many porn actresses have had their vulva lips surgically reduced.
- Condoms are very rarely seen.
- Contraception in general does not play a role in porn.

- In porn, sex often takes quite a long time. Especially at the beginning of one's sex life, for example, it usually takes only a few minutes from the insertion of the penis into the vagina to orgasm.

- Cuddling, love and tenderness are not shown - but that is precisely what often makes sex particularly beautiful.

- There is little talking or laughing. Certainly no one says: «No, I don't want to do that» - but personal boundaries are important to communicate.

- The different positions are not feasible for many people and certainly not pleasant.

So don't use what you see in porn as a model for your own sex. Porn is only for quick pleasure. Talk to your sex partner about contraception, about what you want to do together and what you don't want to do together. There are basically no limits to pleasure and



fantasy, as long as everyone involved wants it and enjoys it.

Sex – also with yourself - can help you to get to know and feel your own body better. **Good sex is healthy and makes you happy.**

Sometimes sexuality is also connected with shame and insecurity. How much masturbation is normal for a (young) person? Why do I not feel like having sex? Why do I always feel like having sex? What does cunnilingus mean? Do I have to have anal sex?

These and many, many other questions can arise. Often people don't want to talk about it with their parents or friends. There is a lot of information on the internet - but not everything is correct. If you have questions about sexuality, it's best to talk to a specialist! You can find them, for example in Austria, at Rat auf Draht (147) - there you can ask your questions anonymously (without giving your name).

WOMAN, MAN, OR...?

Test

ARE YOU A REAL MAN/ A REAL WOMAN?



1 | You sit for the driving test and fail. What do you do?

- A** You cry for days and are devastated
- B** You swear at the examination board and threaten to report it to the police
- C** You don't let your feelings show

2 | Your hobbies are...

- A** Football, Sex and singing in the choir
- B** Painting your nails, dancing and barbecuing
- C** Hiking and meeting friends

«Do you like men or women?»
«yes, also.»

Angela Doe

3 | Do you want to have children?

- A** Yes, absolutely and at least three
- B** No way
- C** I don't know yet, but family is one of the most important things for me

4 | Your favourite colour is:

- A** Pink
- B** All the colours of the rainbow
- C** Green

5 | You and your friends are going camping for the weekend. You have the following in your backpack:

- A** Your survival equipment including a knife
- B** Your hair straightener, hair dryer, a 100-metre extension cable and a power distributor
- C** Mosquito spray, insulated mat & your reading light

YOU TICKED A / B OR C THE MOST?

Congratulations. You are just right the way you are. There is no such thing as a «real man» or a «real woman». Neither hobbies, nor sports, colours, taste in music, appearance or behaviour is «female» or «male». You can like knitting and be into football at the same time. You love dresses and skirts and you like boxing. That's all ok.

Almost all of us grow up in a world where there is male and female and nothing else. This «masculine» and «feminine» is connected with many images, prejudices, behaviours, etc., to which we usually adapt without noticing it.

So think about it again and again: is this actually true for me? Do I feel comfortable with these attributions? And if not, how can I change it? The older you get, the more you realise what you need and want and how you feel. You move more and more from what you «should» be to who you actually are. This process is important and part of growing up. The further away one's own self is from social or even family expectations, the more difficult this process can be. Some people also discover that they do not act at all like the supposed «majority».

There are many services for people who belong to the LGBTIQA* community. For example, you can find advice on how to deal with your family and network with people with the same or similar experiences. If it concerns you or you are curious, contact in Austria.

courage-beratung.at • HOSI (hosiwien, hosilinz, hositirol) • Info in German language.

love
is love

Perhaps you have heard of **LGBTIQA***?

≈ The G stands for Gay: a man who likes men.

≈ The B stands for Bi: a woman or man who likes men AND women.

≈ The T stands for trans: a person questioning their biological sex. For example, someone was assigned the gender «male» at birth, but this does not feel right to the person.

≈ The I stands for Inter: a person has no definite sex characteristics or was born with male AND female sex characteristics.

≈ The Q stands for Queer: queer refers to people who see their sexual and/or gender identity as outside of the social norm.

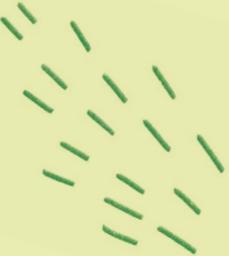
≈ The A stands for asexual: a person has no sexual desire at all.

≈ The asterisk* stands for all other forms of identity and sexual orientation that do not appear in the letters.



So if that's
reality now,
I'm not
interested.

Angela Doe



YOU & YOUR FUTURE

The last few years were marked by the pandemic and were often exhausting, difficult and discouraging, especially for young people. No one knows how everything will continue, the world is a big building site, with wars and climate crises. Some people find it difficult to look positively into the future. But this is exactly what can give us the necessary power to keep on going in such times. Because the future is coming and no matter what it looks like, you are part of it.

So:

What is important to you?

How do you want to shape your future?

What are the values you want to follow?

YOU & YOUR VALUES

Your values show up in your beliefs, behaviour patterns, characteristics, likes and dislikes. And they shape your life plans, wishes and dreams. They are things you can hold on to, even when life gets stormy. Values are, for example, character traits, ideals, qualities or attitudes that you consider desirable. Often external factors also play a role in values, e.g. how and where you were brought up. Which values are important to you can vary from person to person. And they can change in the course of life.

Enclosed you will find a collection of values. Spontaneously mark the things that are particularly important to you. **Decide on a maximum of 10 values.**



ADVENTURE, Charity, *Self-determination*, Mindfulness,
LIVING LIFE, Spirituality, Enthusiasm, Variety,
Independence, Compassion, Punctuality,
Responsibility, Authenticity, Honesty, Tolerance,
Connectedness, Self-worth, Diet, Family, KNOWLEDGE,
Sensitivity, *Flexibility*, Freedom, Friends, TRAVELLING,
Accuracy, SEX, Justice, RICHNESS, Calmness,
Openness, Generosity, Harmony, Healing,
READINESS to help, Relaxation, *Humour*, Safety,
Intelligence, Intuition, Creativity, LIVELINESS,
Minimalism, Passion, Satisfaction, Willingness
to learn, Love, Loyalty, Belonging, Love of
nature, Luxury, TEMPERANCE, Lightness, *Movement*,

Think about it now: are you living the values that are important to you?
Which values were given to you by your parents?

Courage, Nearness, COMMITMENT, Happy relationships,
Optimism, Order, Thankfulness, Esteem,
Expressiveness, Faith, *Maturity*, Fearlessness,
Respect, *Risk-taking*, Self-knowledge, SELF-LOVE, SELF-
RELIANCE, Success, Enjoyment, Inner peace, ACCEPTANCE,
Solidarity, Fun, Adaptability, Uniqueness,
Tradition, Transparency, LOYALTY, Curiosity,
Popularity, Discipline, *Reliability*, Trust, WISDOM,
Fantasy, *Prosperity*, Sustainability, Civic Courage,
Capability, Desire, Appearance

WHAT ARE YOUR DREAMS AND GOALS FOR THE FUTURE?

*How would you answer these questions?
Use the space for it here:*

1 HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE CORONA PANDEMIC? WHAT DO YOU TAKE AWAY FROM IT FOR THE FUTURE?

2 WHAT DREAMS WOULD YOU LIKE TO FULFIL IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?

3 WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS AND WISHES FOR THE FUTURE?

4 WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 10 YEARS?

5 WHICH EMOJI SYMBOLISES YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE?

Compare your dreams and desires with those you had three years ago. Just as values can change, desires and dreams can change.

Maybe in two or three years you can pick up this publication again and see if and what has changed.

Are your dreams still the same? Are your values visible in your life? Has anything changed?

**WHEN YOU CHANGE THINGS,
THINGS CHANGE.**

ANGELA DOE

The **ABC**
of Mental
Health

*The definitions used here were created by the team
of authors for the purpose of this publication.*





Adrenaline

Adrenaline and noradrenaline are also called «stress hormones». With adrenaline and noradrenaline, a person can react sensibly to a threat or to acute stress: the cardiovascular system ramps up, important energy reserves are released and alertness increases. This may also lead to anxiety, panic and sweating.

ANIMALS/PETS Especially pets can have a stabilising and calming influence on mental health. Stroking animals releases oxytocin and animals, e.g. dogs, can help create nice relationships with other pet owners as well as bring some exercise.

ADDICTION

Describes the strong urge to consume a certain substance (alcohol, cigarettes, cannabis...) again and again or to repeat a certain behaviour permanently, such as shopping, sports or watching porn. If this consumption or this behaviour becomes more and more important over time and other interests, school or work, hobbies or family and friends become unimportant, then we speak of addiction. Often, you can no longer get out of this on your own. Behind addictive behaviour there are often complex psychological problems.



COMFORT

We all need comfort sometimes. «Comforting» means listening to someone who is sad, encouraging them, empowering them, and holding them. Comforting builds a connection between the person who is feeling the pain and the one who is comforting. It eases the pain and shows «Hey I am here for you». Empathy helps us to deal with difficult situations.



DRUGS are substances that have a «psychoactive» effect on the body. This means that they influence perception, emotions and the relationship to the environment for a short time. Depending on their chemical composition, they can have a stimulating or calming effect or even cause hallucinations. One then sees colours or hears feelings, for example. A distinction is made between legal (tobacco, alcohol, medicines) and illegal drugs (cannabis, cocaine, LSD, amphetamine...).

DIAGNOSE.

With diagnoses, one records the clinical picture and has different names for it, e.g. «depression» or «panic disorder». The diagnosis is partly important for further treatment, but above all for health insurance/financing of therapy. For some, it is a relief that there is a name for their problems. At the same time, diagnoses can lead to a description or attribution, with which you are reduced to an illness by others or also by yourself.

DOPAMINE is one of the «happiness hormones». It normally regulates the emotional world and promotes balance and contentment.

If there is too little of it, this can lead to depression, for example. Our brain also releases dopamine when we use social media, with likes, retweets, comments, etc. The problem: it's addictive. You feel like you need this kick again and again, but like any addiction, the disadvantages outweigh the benefits after a while.

Depression

Is a serious and widespread mental illness. People with depression often feel sad, exhausted and unmotivated. This can go so far that they lose the meaning in life and would rather not live anymore. Depression can occur at any age and usually requires professional help. See also mental illnesses, p. 90



Empathy means that one can empathise with someone else, or empathise with what they are experiencing and feeling. To feel empathy, it is not necessary to have had the same experience. Empathic people often find it easier to deal with other people because they can assess and classify facial expressions, body posture, moods, etc. well.

EMPOWERMENT is the process of becoming stronger or more self-confident. There are abilities and powers in all of us. Sometimes we do not see them or no longer see them due to external influences. That is why it is important that we have people who help us to perceive our abilities and powers. Or you yourself can «empower» someone by telling them why you appreciate them and showing them what they can do and what they have already achieved.

Endorphine

are hormones that are released in the brain when we do something with «thrills» (e.g. skydiving) or also in an accident so that we don't feel the pain. But also during hearty laughter or yoga. They have a calming effect, strengthen the defence system and regulate stress. But beware: addiction potential! If you release more endorphins more often, you need bigger and bigger «kicks» to reach the same state.



Fear

is an important feeling to protect us from dangerous situations. However, too much fear and anxiety in situations that are actually not dangerous can be very stressful and permanently lead to withdrawal or avoidance. In this case, it is important to seek professional help, because unfortunately the fear does not normally go away on its own. See p. 92 «Doing Psychotherapy»)



GRATITUDE

Those who are grateful - even for small things - are happier in the long run. It means to keep focusing on what is going well. You can practice gratitude by keeping a «gratitude diary». Every day you write down three things you are grateful for that day and why. This can be, for example, a warm bed, a nice conversation and a delicious meal.



Ghosting

When you are ghosted, someone breaks off contact without warning, is suddenly unreachable and plays »dead«. There is no explanation and no discussion – even though perhaps you had previously felt that the relationship or the dates had been nice and committed. Ghosting is a cowardly and above all painful way to end a relationship. If it has happened to you, perhaps the tips about heartbreak on p. 65 will help you.



Health

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as: «Health means a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely absence of disease». So just because you don't need to see a doctor doesn't mean you are healthy.

Happiness

What is happiness? Happiness refers either to a successful event of chance or events in your life which make you happy or to an attitude towards life. Some describe happiness as perfect harmony or lasting contentment. There is even research into happiness. According to statistics, the happiest people live in Scandinavia (Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland). Basically, each person defines for themselves what happiness means. Are you happy?

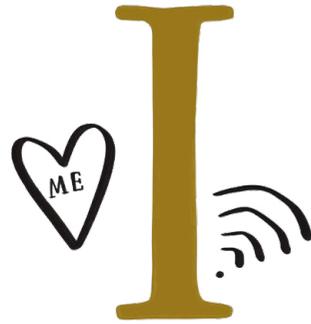
Help

Sometimes everything can become too much or problems cannot be solved on your own. Fortunately, it is becoming more and more natural to get help when you are in a bad mental state or don't know what to do. There are many counselling centres and therapists you can turn to. Getting help is always a strength, not a weakness! See also p. 49 (Getting help).

HUMOUR

Laughter is very healthy for body and mind. Tension and stress are relieved, the cardiovascular system is stimulated, you tense 300 muscles and release endorphins. Children laugh on average 400 times a day, adults only 15 times. You can laugh with others, but also alone while reading or watching a film. Is there a video that always makes you laugh? Save it on your mobile phone for a rainy day.

INDULGENCE What can you really enjoy? A piece of your favourite chocolate? A song by your favourite band? A round of jogging? Lying in your warm bed for a while in the morning? Whatever it is, give it your full attention and don't do anything else on the side. Indulgence is very healthy for your psyche and you can train yourself to indulge by making it a part of your everyday life and consciously taking time for it.



Identity

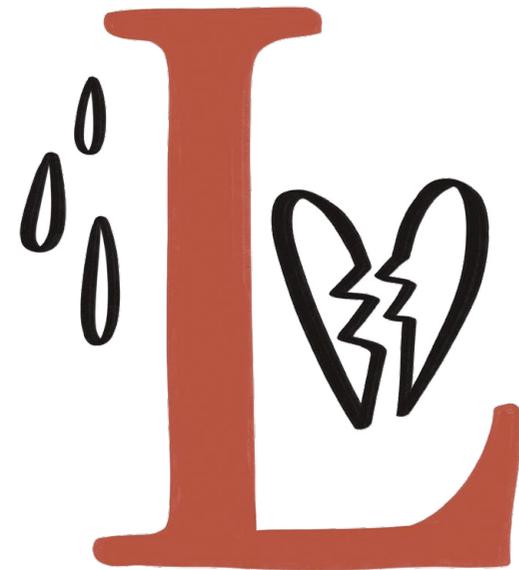
describes how we define ourselves based on our biographical development and our social environment. Strong identity-forming characteristics can be: sex, gender, social origin, nationality, education, profession, religion, sexual orientation, (sub)culture and many more. So it is normal that we have many different identities. These can change in the course of life or some identity-forming characteristics can lose importance while others become more important.

Internet

The internet has many advantages and some disadvantages. In terms of mental health, the advantages are: you can network with people who think similarly or have similar problems or difficulties. This makes you feel less alone with it and you get a lot of help and ideas to deal with situations. However, the downside of the internet can also be isolation and loneliness, see p. 21 or cyber-bullying, see p. 24

LONELINESS

More and more people feel lonely. Some are surrounded by other people and some are in fact alone. Loneliness can be very painful and is unhealthy in the long run, also for the body. What can help: take good care of yourself, (re)establish or maintain contacts, start a new hobby or volunteer activity and put away your mobile phone if it increases the feeling of loneliness. Read also p. 21 (Mobile phone and loneliness).



MINDFULNESS has been quite hyped in recent years - and rightly so. Many studies show a positive influence on the brain and an improvement in mental health. Mindfulness is about living more «in the moment» and perceiving it more consciously. You can find two mindfulness exercises on p. 37 + p. 42



Movement is not only good for the body, but also for the soul. It releases happiness hormones, promotes concentration and has a positive influence on your self-efficacy. In fact, sometimes small movements are enough to make you feel better. If you straighten your body and walk like an emperor/empress, you will notice after a short time that you feel better mentally.

MENTAL ILLNESSES

Almost every third person has a mental illness at some point in their life. Anxiety disorders are the most common, followed by depression. Addictions are also widespread. It is important to get help as soon as possible and not to wait. Because mental illnesses, just like physical illnesses, can limit your life a lot. See also p. 49 (Getting help)

Meaning of life It has been proven that people feel better when they see a «meaning» in their lives. This can look very different. Some people have faith and religion says what the meaning of life is. Others find meaning in realising themselves creatively or in helping others.

MENSTRUATION CYCLE

The female cycle begins on the first day of menstruation and ends on the last day before the next period. It can vary in length, but on average it lasts 28 days. Mood swings as well as headaches and abdominal pain, which also affect the psyche, can be influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the cycle.

Nightmares

During sleep we process experiences, even unpleasant ones. In the worst case, nightmares occur. These are intense anxiety dreams that lead to increased heart palpitations, rapid breathing, sweating and increased muscle tension. The unpleasant feelings in the dream increase steadily and end with a lightning-like awakening. After waking up, it is usually quickly clear: that was a dream - a nightmare. Unfortunately, it can happen that nightmares recur, e.g. as a result of trauma (see item Trauma, p. 96).

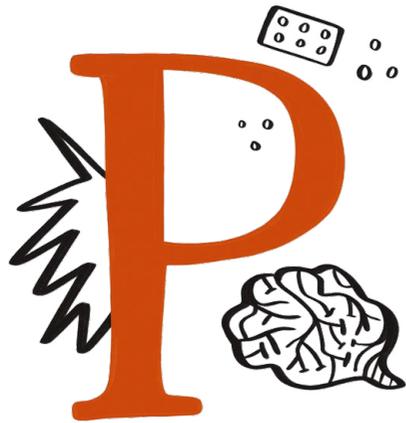
NUTRITION Healthy and regular meals have a positive effect on the psyche. They can help prevent or alleviate depression. A diet is considered healthy if it consists mainly of vegetables, fruits, fish and wholemeal products. There is a lot of science around food and, unfortunately, more and more young people with eating disorders. We talk about eating disorders when life revolves around food (too much, too little, obsessively healthy).



OXYTOCIN is also called the «cuddle hormone». It is released especially during hugging, caressing, cuddling and orgasm and promotes bonding, love and trust. It also regulates stress hormones in the body, reduces anxiety and strengthens the immune system.

Optimism When someone is optimistic, they are hopeful about the future and have a confident, positive view on life. Optimistic people are less likely to have depression and are less at risk to cardiovascular diseases. The opposite of optimism is pessimism.





PSYCHE

is an ancient Greek word and is translated as «soul» or also «breath» or «liveliness». The psyche covers our entire feeling, thinking and sensation.

PSYCHOLOGY

is a science that studies, describes and explains human experience, behaviour and development. You can study the subject at university and then work in different establishments and professions that deal with people, such as in hospitals or as a school psychologist.

PESSIMISM

Pessimists often expect the worst, brood a lot and see disadvantages everywhere. They tend to have low self-esteem and protect themselves from disappointment through negative assumptions. Their negative attitude has an impact on their soul and body: they suffer more often from depression and often have a weaker immune system.

Psychotherapy

refers to the professional treatment of mental disorders using different methods, procedures and concepts. There are different «schools» within psychotherapy, e.g. analytical, humanistic, body-oriented, and many more. Therapists can help people deal with psychological difficulties, reduce suffering and develop themselves. How to get psychotherapy in Austria: jugendportal.at/psychotherapy

PSYCHIATRY

is a speciality within medicine. Psychiatrists are doctors who specialise in mental illnesses and their treatment with medication.

Psychotropic Drugs

Psychotropic drugs are medicines that a psychiatrist can prescribe to reduce the effects of mental illness. For example, there are so-called antidepressants that help someone with depression to feel better. Or benzodiazepines as tranquillisers. It is important to know: some of these drugs can be addictive and they should only ever be taken in consultation with a doctor.

PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

Degrading, insulting, bullying, belittling, embarrassing, intimidating, threatening, blackmailing - psychological violence can take many forms. All of them are very harmful in the long run and at least as bad as physical violence. It is very important to get outside help, e.g. from a counselling centre!

RESILIENCE refers to psychological resilience - i.e. how well someone can withstand setbacks, crises, difficult circumstances, etc. and still develop healthily. Resilience is partly inherited, partly influenced by external factors (e.g. social environment). It can be strengthened through training (e.g. mindfulness) and positive changes in external factors.



RELATIONSHIPS Humans are social beings - we need each other. How we live relationships has a great influence on our mental health. Relationship means not only the couple relationship, but also relationships with friends, family and colleagues. The more comfortable and secure we feel in our relationships, the better we feel - psychologically AND physically. See also p. 14 (Friendship)

SLEEP is important for your mental balance. You can recover and process your experiences. People who suffer from sleep disorders are more irritable, less concentrated, more anxious and more susceptible to accidents and (mental) illnesses. It is not bad and normal to sleep badly for one or even a few nights, depending on the situation. However, if you sleep too little for a long time, you should seek professional help.



Serotonin

Like dopamine, it is a «happiness hormone». When you are in love or very happy, you have a high «serotonin level». Serotonin also regulates the sleep-wake rhythm. It is not produced at night, which is why thoughts torment us much more at night than during the day.

Self-efficacy means that you are aware that you can make a difference through your actions. YOU make the difference - in your personal environment, at school or at work, on all the paths you walk every day. Self-efficacy also means that you remember your strengths and know that you can overcome challenges.

SELF-AWARENESS, SELF-CONFIDENCE, SELF-WORTH

Strictly speaking, there are some differences in the definition of these terms. Basically, however, it is about how you measure your personality, i.e. the sum of your abilities and characteristics, including how you deal positively with your own past. The higher your self-confidence, the more you trust yourself, the more clearly you set your limits and the better you can master crises. For good self-confidence, an encouraging environment, mastered tasks and experiences, as well as an inner, friendly attitude towards yourself help (see p. 49 Be your best friend).

Self-injurious behaviour

When people intentionally hurt themselves, cause pain or wounds, this is called self-injurious behaviour. There are many different types, such as scratching the skin or burning oneself with cigarettes. Excessive exercising or refusing to eat can also be forms of such behaviour. Self-injurious behaviour is often just a symptom of a deeper mental illness. (See also p. 62 Getting help)

SENSITIVITY

Some people are more sensitive than others. This means that they perceive sensations more strongly. This can concern the sensory organs (hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, etc.) but also empathy and feelings. In recent years, there has been a change in the sense that «sensitive» is no longer automatically devalued as «being weak», but the quality of sensitivity is increasingly appreciated. Sensitive people are often more mindful of themselves and their environment.

Stress

When we are under stress, the hormone adrenaline is pumped through our body. In principle, and depending on the situation, this is quite desirable. Stress is problematic when it occurs in situations where we cannot deal with it and/or when it becomes chronic. If we constantly feel stress and body and soul cannot relax, this can lead to numerous mental and physical illnesses. Relaxation and mindfulness exercises can help to reduce stress. If this is not successful, professional help should be sought.



TOXIC RELATIONSHIP/ FRIENDSHIP

Toxic means poisonous. A relationship, whether friendship or partnership, that is «toxic» includes, for example: frequent criticism, blaming, being put down, feeling like you can't do anything right, a constant back and forth of appreciation and disrespect. You can recognise a toxic relationship by the fact that you are stressed with the person and feel worse and worse overall. It is not uncommon for other contacts to be neglected and to develop a certain dependence on that (toxic) person, which is often intentional. Get help if you realise that you are in a toxic relationship and are not able to end it.

TRAUMA

A mental wound is called «trauma». A distinction is made between shock trauma (e.g. car accident, natural disaster, rape ...) and longer-lasting trauma, such as developmental trauma in childhood or war/escape. Traumatic experiences are when there is a feeling of being «at the mercy» of a situation and maybe even dying. Almost all people are burdened with certain traumas, which is why there is now more and more research and awareness of this, as well as specific specialisations such as trauma education and trauma therapy.

Vulnerability

People with high vulnerability react more strongly to stress, strain, negative feelings or strokes of fate. They take longer to recover and are more often affected by depression and other mental illnesses.

Just like its counterpart, resilience, vulnerability is partly inherited but can be reinforced by external factors (childhood, social environment). But Vulnerability has also a positive side, to find out about it more check the famous TED Talk of Brene Brown: The Power of Vulnerability on: https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability?language=en



Useful Web Links

... collected by Bára Stemper Bauerova and Mark E. Taylor

SELF-CARE AND CARING OF OTHERS⁴ inspirational TED Talks and other Videos

Too busy to take care of yourself? These TED talks and stories are here for you!

TED TALKS offer inspiration and simple ways to stay healthy - both emotionally and physically.

https://www.ted.com/playlists/299/the_importance_of_self_care

These POWERFUL STORIES shatter «false» notions about mental illness, and pose the provocative question: what can the world learn from different kinds of minds?

https://www.ted.com/playlists/9/all_kinds_of_minds

Check the YouTube Channel of DR. JULIE: clinical psychologist, online educator, and blogger. <https://doctorjuliesmith.com/>

She also provides free online videos and articles that can help you with topics like dealing with low mood and depression on:

<https://www.youtube.com/DrJulie>

6 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR EMOTIONAL INTUITION

Nick Wignall: clinical psychologist, writer, teacher, and podcaster writes about it. <https://nickwignall.com/6-ways-to-improve-your-emotional-intuition/> and also about «Negative self-talk» here:

https://www.thefriendlymind.com/negative-self-talk/?ck_subscriber_id=2060844510

YOUNG MINDS SERVICE: From practical advice to helping you find support, originally created for young people in the UK, but some parts can be used for all young people.

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/>

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH EU PROJECT: The website of a project and an innovative app that address both the need for psychological self-care, psychological first aid and the development of social and emotional competencies for promotion of young people's resilience and flourishing

<https://positivementalhealth.eu/for-young-people/>

COYOTE MAGAZINE is only available ONLINE and looks into the different corners and overlaps of youth work practice, policy and research!

Coyote Number 32 on Wellbeing Inspiration! Practical tips. Reflected experience on the topic of «Wellbeing in Youth Work»

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/coyote-magazine/issue-32>

