



Co-funded by
the European Union

PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

**PROJECT RESULT: “HOW TO STRENGTHEN
RESILIENCE AND MENTAL WELL-BEING OF
ADOLESCENTS IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT”**

2022-1-RS01-KA220-SCH-000088133,

CO-FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

PROJECT COORDINATOR:

Music School "Stevan Hristić", Kruševac, Serbia

PARTNERS:

Liceul de Arta "Stefan Luchian" Botoșani – Romania

Secondary School "Ivan Vazov" Stara Zagora – Bulgaria

Nazilli Mehmet Akif Ersoy Anadolu Lisesi Nazilli – Turkey

Design

Sladjana Djokić

Muzička škola „Stevan Hristić“

Kruševac, Serbia

**PROJECT RESULT: “HOW TO STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE AND MENTAL WELL-BEING OF ADOLESCENTS IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT”
2022-1-RS01-KA220-SCH-000088133, CO-FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

C O N T E N T S:

INTRODUCTION	4
ABOUT THE PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM	5
1. MENTAL HEALTH, SOURCES OF STRESS, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE IN ADOLESCENTS	6
1.1 Workshop Title: Family and the Adolescent	6
1.2 Workshop Title: Family as a Factor in Psychological Resilience and Mental Health of Adolescents	10
1.3 Workshop title: Understanding and Managing School-Related Stress: The Role of Parents	15
2. EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL LITERACY OF ADOLESCENTS	19
2.1 Workshop title: The emotional life of adolescents	19
2.2 Workshop title: How parents can help their child regulate unpleasant emotions	21
3. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND MENTAL HEALTH	23
3.1 Workshop Title: Social Media and Its Impact on Adolescents’ Mood and Behavior	23
3.2 Workshop Title: How to overcome stress caused by the negative effects of social networks	26
4. MUSIC AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH: STRENGTHENING CONNECTION AND SOLIDARITY WITHIN THE FAMILY	28
4.1 Workshop Title: Musical family harmony	28
4.2 Workshop Title: Family values and rituals - strengthening mental health	30
Evaluation Questionnaires	33
1. Sample Evaluation Questionnaire for Workshops	33
2. Sample Evaluation Questionnaire for the Parent Support Program	33

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of intense emotional, cognitive, and social changes that can significantly affect young people's mental health. In this process, parental support plays a key role. Numerous studies in developmental and family psychology show that a stable, supportive, and understanding family environment greatly contributes to adolescents' psychological resilience and mental well-being.

At the same time, modern parents increasingly face challenges arising from changing family dynamics, the digital environment, and growing academic and social pressures that young people are exposed to. That is why it is important to create a space within the school where parents can receive support, information, and skills necessary for appropriate responses and for promoting their children's mental health.

The school, as a central place of education and development, is an ideal setting for connecting families with the educational system. By involving parents in mental health programs, a unified front of support for young people is built, and parents are empowered as partners in the upbringing and development process. Research shows that parents who are educated and emotionally competent have a greater capacity to recognize signs of distress in their children, provide adequate support, and seek professional help promptly.

ABOUT PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Parent Support Program consists of nine thematically connected workshops aimed at strengthening parenting competencies in the field of adolescent mental health through education, experience sharing, and practical activities. The workshops are designed to address various aspects of parenting in the modern age, with a focus on prevention and early recognition of behavioral and emotional challenges in children.

The first two workshops lay the foundation of the program, addressing the relationship between the family and the adolescent, as well as the role of the family as a protective factor in building psychological resilience. The following workshops focus on understanding school-related stress, emotional challenges during adolescence, and ways parents can help children regulate unpleasant emotions.

A special part of the program is dedicated to the influence of social media, with two workshops exploring their effects on mood, behavior, and mental health, as well as strategies for overcoming negative influences. The program concludes with creative and intergenerational approaches through the workshop “Musical Family Harmony,” along with reflections on family values and rituals as sources of stability, connection, and well-being.

Each workshop includes a detailed description of activities, required materials, and attachments. The goal of the program is not only education, but also creating a support network among parents, contributing to the development of stronger and healthier communities.

The final section of the manual includes examples of evaluation questionnaires. At the end of each workshop, an evaluation questionnaire for the specific session should be completed, and after the entire program, a general evaluation questionnaire should be administered for the whole Parent Support Program.

At the school level, it is necessary to select interested parents (ideally up to 20) who will participate in the program. It is recommended that a school-wide survey be conducted to choose motivated parents who are willing to later share their experiences, insights, and knowledge with other parents in the school. Ideally, each selected parent should attend all workshops and complete the entire program.

The Parent Support Program can be implemented by interested and motivated teachers, counselors, or school psychologists who have experience in delivering various trainings, workshops, and programs for parents. They will later support participants in possibly implementing some of the activities for other parents at school or in sharing their experiences and insights from the workshops within the framework of the Program.

1. MENTAL HEALTH, SOURCES OF STRESS, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE IN ADOLESCENTS

1.1 Workshop Title: Family and the Adolescent

Learning Goals: Enhancing parental competencies in supporting youth mental health by:

- Learning about the characteristics of adolescence
- Recognizing the role of the family
- Understanding the impact of parenting styles
- Realizing the importance of quality communication and setting boundaries

Duration: 90 minutes

Number of participants: 15–20

Materials needed:

- Flip chart and markers
- Cards with descriptions of different parenting styles

Introductory Part (15 minutes):

1. Introduction by the facilitator:

Adolescence is the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, marked by frequent mood swings, intense emotional reactions, and a pronounced drive for separation.

Parents may find it challenging to understand their adolescent and respond to the changes this stage brings.

To better understand adolescents, it is essential to know what changes come with this developmental stage.

After this short introduction, participants are invited to recall behaviors or traits they've noticed in their adolescent. Each parent shares their observation, and these are noted on the flip chart.

2. Initiating Discussion:

The facilitator poses the following questions to spark discussion:

- How do you feel or what do you think, when your child exhibits any of the mentioned behaviors?
- Is it possible to control certain behaviors during adolescence?
- What is important, and what can a parent do when their adolescent goes through such behaviors?

Central Part (60-70 minutes):

3. Understanding Adolescence – Developmental Changes:

The facilitator lists key developmental tasks in adolescence:

- Accepting one’s body and physical strength
- Achieving emotional independence from parents and adults
- Establishing mature peer relationships
- Accepting one’s gender role
- Beginning to prepare for marriage and family life
- Beginning to prepare for employment and career choice
- Developing a personal set of values, ethics, or ideology to guide behavior
- Developing socially responsible behavior

Further explanation:

During this period, cognitive abilities improve, and new information processing and self-regulation skills develop. However, it's also a time of impulsiveness and difficulty making rational decisions. Adolescents often experience fluctuations in self-esteem, behavior, and mood. Peer group inclusion becomes increasingly important. Risk behaviors may emerge—alcohol and substance abuse, violence, aggression, and peer bullying.

4. The Family:

Participants are asked to share associations with the word “family.” Each participant provides at least one.

After listing and discussing these ideas, the facilitator presents a definition:

A “successful” family is one that adapts over time, maintains unity, respects individual and developmental needs, and cares for both the elderly and children. A family’s success is reflected in the harmony and adaptability of the individual, the family, and their environment.

Families adapt in different ways, depending largely on their beliefs and value systems. More functional families have a wider repertoire of solutions and greater flexibility.

Discussion prompts:

- What is important for a family to function well?
- What contributes to your family’s functionality?
- How important is it for each family member to have responsibilities?
- How important is clear communication?
- How do unclear communication and poorly assigned roles affect family functioning?
- Name the most impactful beliefs that have stayed with you throughout life.

5. Key Family Functioning Processes:

The facilitator emphasizes key processes:

- **Organizational processes:** How effectively a family organizes resources—e.g., flexibility, openness to change, connection, behavioral stability and predictability
- **Communication processes:** Problem-solving, clear/direct messages, trustful atmosphere, brainstorming
- **Belief systems:** Shared values that provide meaning and shape actions—e.g., viewing crises as growth opportunities, avoiding mutual blame, seeing crisis as a challenge to overcome

6. **Family Developmental Tasks with an Adolescent:**

Facilitator poses questions:

- What tasks do parents of adolescents face?
- How do these differ from earlier stages of parenting?
- What changes are noticeable?

After the discussion, the facilitator summarizes:

- **Practical tasks:** Less predictable rules and routines, constant redefining, shifting boundaries, balancing control and freedom, changing family hierarchy
- **Emotional tasks:** Flexibility regarding changes and loss of control, fears related to sexuality, and children growing up
- **Relational tasks:** Maintaining strong parent–adolescent contact, caring for aging parents

Possible family crises: Adolescent problems, parents’ “midlife crisis”

7. **Parenting Styles and Mental Health:**

Cards describe four parenting styles. Parents are divided into four groups, each receiving one style.

Each group identifies strengths and weaknesses of their style and selects a spokesperson. A group discussion follows about how each style impacts adolescent mental health.

Conclusion:

The most effective is the authoritative style—warm, caring, engaged parents who set clear expectations but offer freedom within a mutually respectful, participative, and dialogic atmosphere with rational explanations.

8. **Communication and Boundaries:**

Facilitator initiates discussion with questions:

- How to set boundaries for adolescents?
- How important are boundaries?
- What role do boundaries play in the family?
- When should adolescents be allowed independence?
- How do we show we trust them?
- Why is trust important?
- What happens when there is no trust?

Conclusion:

Parents should set appropriate and clear boundaries and ensure adolescents face consequences when poor decisions are made. Consequences should relate to specific actions—not personality. Boundaries must be flexible but present. Parents should discuss boundaries with adolescents, explaining their importance while also listening to their views. Avoid punishment—opt for mutual agreements. If agreements are broken, discuss what happened and what can be done differently next time. Avoid ultimatums and blackmail, which adolescents may perceive as a challenge. Be brief and clear when setting boundaries—ambiguity leads to misinterpretation. Define in advance which areas are negotiable (e.g., room tidiness, staying out a bit later) and which are non-negotiable, especially regarding safety (e.g., alcohol, drugs, reckless driving, risky sexual behavior).

Final Part:**Summary and Workshop Evaluation****Attachment 1: Parenting Styles****Authoritative Style:**

Characterized by warmth and closeness. Parents set reasonable limits, offer guidance, allow open communication (explaining views, considering children's needs), and provide freedom of choice and decision-making. Children participate in problem-solving and learn self-responsibility. They trust and respect their parents.

Authoritarian Style:

Marked by rigid authority. Parents issue commands—children obey. Communication is one-way, relationships are tense and strict.

Permissive Style:

Few demands or boundaries. Warm and caring, but unwilling to oppose or control children. Often seen as "best friends," but the lack of expectations may hinder children's potential.

Neglectful Style:

Parents are uninvolved and uninterested. They don't set demands or address developmental needs. Their children often exhibit the most emotional and behavioral problems—low self-esteem, poor self-control, academic difficulties, substance abuse, or delinquency.

1.2 Workshop title: The Family as a Factor of Psychological Resilience and Mental Health in Adolescents

Learning objectives:

1. Understanding the importance of mental health
2. Recognizing signs of impaired mental health in adolescents
3. The importance of timely help and support from parents
4. Understanding the role of the family as a factor of resilience
5. Recognizing family characteristics that are protective/risk factors for adolescent resilience

Duration of activity: 90 minutes

Number of participants: 15-20 parents

Materials needed: flip chart paper/digital devices for working in small groups

Introductory part (10-15 minutes)

The facilitator asks the parents present how they would define mental health, whether there is a difference in understanding this concept concerning age (adulthood, adolescence), and why it is important to talk to parents about mental health during adolescence.

The goal is to motivate and encourage all parents present to answer the above questions. The facilitator writes down the parents' answers and summarizes what mental health is, why it is important, and why parents need to pay attention to the mental health of their adolescent. (Attachment No.1: What is mental health, and why is it important to us?)

Central part

1. Signs of impaired mental health in adolescents (20 minutes)

Divide the parents into several small groups. The facilitator instructs them to list at the group level what signs may indicate to parents that their adolescent's mental health is impaired. After 10 minutes of work in a small group, a representative from each group reports. The facilitator records the answers, summarizes those signs with which there is a great deal of agreement (listed in all groups, those listed only in some, adds some signs that are not listed, and summarizes with the help of Attachment No. 2 - Signs of impaired mental health.

2. How much do young people understand, and do they recognize when they have a problem, and how much do parents know? (20 minutes)

The facilitator starts the discussion by asking the following questions: How much do young people understand and do they recognize the problem? How much do parents know and do they recognize when their adolescent has problems related to mental health? Do parents react on time? Do and to whom do parents turn for help? What does this depend on? Who can they turn to

at school for help and support? How to improve cooperation between family and school in the field of mental health?

The goal is to encourage all parents to express their opinions, comments, dilemmas, and their experiences...

The facilitator summarizes the discussion with the help of Attachment No. 3: How much do young people understand, and do they recognize when they have a problem, and how much do parents know?

3. Family as a factor of resilience (20 minutes)

The facilitator introduces the parents to the meaning of the concept of resilience and introduces the parents to the fact that this concept can refer to an individual, but also to a family. (Attachment No. 4: The meaning of the concept of resilience)

After the introductory presentation by the facilitator, the parents work in small groups and are instructed to discuss and record which family characteristics are protective factors and which encourage adolescent resilience, and which characteristics represent risk factors. They are given a poster divided into 2 columns (family characteristics that protect/family characteristics that are a risk and undermine resilience) or they can use a digital tool, e.g. Padlet, to record their answers. They have 15 minutes to work. Each group presents a completed poster or a completed Padlet. The facilitator encourages parents to comment, discuss, exchange opinions and experiences, and finally summarizes with the help of Attachment No. 5: Key processes in family resilience.

Final part: Summary and Evaluation of the workshop

Attachments/ additional sources

Attachment No.1

There are numerous definitions of the complex concept of mental health. Mental health is most often defined as a state of well-being in which people realize or use their abilities and potential, can cope with everyday stressful situations, work productively, and contribute to society. A mentally healthy person is characterized by emotional well-being, i.e., the presence of positive feelings and positive functioning both psychologically and socially. A mentally healthy person is not only a happy person, but also a person who functions well.

Good mental health contributes to positive emotional experiences, such as happiness, satisfaction, and a sense of fulfillment. It also allows individuals to better manage and regulate their emotions, which leads to improved relationships with others.

There is a strong connection between mental health and physical health. Chronic stress and negative emotions can weaken the immune system, increase the risk of chronic conditions and diseases, and even affect recovery from physical illnesses.

Good mental health allows us to cope with life's challenges, failures, and provides psychological resilience to cope with difficult situations and move forward.

In addition to the above reasons, adolescents are a particularly vulnerable group for the emergence of mental health problems. Adolescence is a period of accelerated personal development and a sensitive time. The developmental characteristics of adolescence are such that a variety of behaviors are expected, including trying new things, taking occasional risks, deviating from social norms, increased curiosity, and various types of experimentation. These behaviors are part of the growing-up process, to form a young person's identity, and they carry a certain risk. At no other time in life is risky behavior as common as during adolescence. The worsening mental health of adolescents and young people worldwide is a major challenge. Data show that 20% of young people aged 16-25 have a diagnosable mental disorder, and that about half of all mental disorders first appear by the age of 14, and as many as three-quarters by the age of 24. Therefore, it is important to pay close attention to preserving and improving the mental health of adolescents.

Attachment No.2

Warning signs that adolescents' mental health is impaired can be different. If they last for more than two weeks or affect the daily life of the young person, it means that they probably need support. Parents should react if they notice the following signs: changes in the adolescent's mood or behavior - persistent irritability, sadness, anger or worry; low self-esteem or a very negative view of their future, lack of interest in the world around the young person or in activities they enjoyed until recently, lack of appetite or significant weight gain; slacking off in school or avoiding going to school, poor school performance; withdrawal from others; difficulty connecting with peers; inadequate, neglected appearance; signs of self-harm or harm from others; feelings of hopelessness; statements that life is not worth living...

Attachment No.3

Sometimes it takes a long time for an adult to realize that they have problems with their mental functioning. Sometimes we associate symptoms such as tension, moodiness, attention and concentration problems with fatigue, stress, and not as signs of impaired mental health

The same is true for adolescents. Sometimes they are too proud to admit it or do not know, they have no experience. Since we still live in a time when it is shameful to be weak and have a mental health problem, symptoms are hidden for a long time, and seeking help is postponed. The adolescent feels lonely, alone with his problem. On the other hand, adolescents need to face their problems independently, and then, for a long time, even parents do not notice or the young people simply do not contact them. Sometimes parents also have their problems and do not recognize the problems that their adolescent has.

Parents react relatively late because they associate some of their adolescent's behaviors with the developmental period - adolescence and the changes that occur in it. Experts say that children's personal confessions that they are not well, that nothing pleases them, and that they do not have a common language with anyone in their environment are very common. Parents or other adults in the environment do not take this seriously and simply attribute it to age. In addition to the above, there is a significant social stigma associated with seeking professional help. As many as 75 mental disorders occur before the age of 25, and therefore, it is important that parents, as well as

other adults who are in contact with young people, promptly recognize the signs of impaired mental health in adolescents and respond adequately. Mental health care is especially important during early adolescence (between the ages of 10 and 19) because personality is forming and developing at that time, and adolescents often face numerous challenges. The consequences if parents neglect, suppress, or remain silent about their adolescent's problems can be very bad for later life. Delaying seeking professional help in serious cases can seriously worsen problems. If cultural patterns do not encourage parents and young people to pay attention to mental health or if young people are criticized for being emotionally sensitive, they will remain closed off, will not seek help, or will hide their problems. Fear of judgment, rejection, or stigmatization will further distance them from seeking and seeking help. When coping with everyday life becomes permanent, then the young person either seeks help from parents and/or professionals, or unfortunately the suffering turns against him/herself. Self-destruction of young people is, unfortunately, relatively common, especially in the population of young people with mental health problems.

Data both in the world and in our country show that every 10th young person with mental health problems seeks help, and that there are many more who never seek help. The problem either gets over on its own, or, unfortunately, it remains simmering inside them for a long time and waits for another moment when the person's capacity to overcome it decreases or the body reacts through various chronic somatic diseases that we know can be directly linked to mental health - cardiovascular diseases, thyroid dysfunction, diabetes...

According to the findings of the U Report survey (UNICEF Serbia), only 36% of young people turn to their parents for support, which means that a large number of them do not expect support from their parents, but turn to their peers or social networks. Professionals are only the third choice for seeking support. Because of all of the above, it is important for parents to become familiar with the signs of impaired mental health, the importance of timely contacting professionals, and to be informed about where and who they can turn to for help.

Attachment No. 4

Psychological resilience is the process of adapting well to difficult circumstances, traumas, tragedies, threats and other everyday sources of stress. It is defined as the ability to withstand and recover from disruptive life challenges (stressors), and to emerge from them stronger and with more resources. Resilience can refer to both the individual and the family. Psychological resilience is also characterized by the relationship between risk and protective factors that occur in different areas of life – family, school environment, peer group, social community and the person himself. Risk factors increase the chance of displaying problematic behaviors, while protective ones protect by mitigating or eliminating the impact of risky ones. The essential difference between these two groups of factors is that protective factors protect us from getting into stressful situations, while psychological resilience enables us to adequately deal with difficulties when we encounter them.

Attachment No. 5

Family characteristics that are protective factors and contribute to family resilience, but also to adolescent resilience

1. Belief system – A resilient family has a positive attitude towards the future, perceives negative events as a challenge, as manageable, and as an opportunity for growth and development
2. Patterns of family organization – A resilient family is one that is flexibly organized, in which there is a strong connection, but also respect for mutual differences, interests and boundaries, equality and partnership between the parents, where family rules are defined with the participation of all family members, where adolescents also have their responsibilities in the family.
3. Communication/problem solving – Resilience is contributed by clarity of communication, open expression of emotions, positive interactions, humor, taking responsibility for one's actions, joint problem solving, openness, and availability of parents, parents as a model of how to react calmly and manage one's emotions...

1.3 Workshop title: Understanding and Managing School-Related Stress: The Role of Parents

Learning objectives:

1. Identify aspects of school that contribute to stress.
2. Understand parental expectations and their impact on children regarding school.
3. Recognize signals that indicate stress in children and learn how to respond to them.
4. Explore ways to collaborate with the school to effectively manage stress.

Activity duration: 90 minutes

Number of participants: 15-20 parents

Materials needed:

- Paper with examples of stressful situations at school
- Flipchart or whiteboard with markers
- Mobile phones
- Cards with examples of stressful situations for discussion

Introductory part (10 minutes)

The moderator introduces the workshop, its objectives, and initiates a short discussion on the importance of understanding and managing stress at school.

Central part

1. Identification of stressful aspects of school (15 minutes)

Parents are divided into four groups and are tasked with making a list of stressful situations at school on paper or a flipchart. After that, the groups present their lists and explain why they chose these situations. The moderator summarizes and groups the stressful situations into common categories, including:

- Assessment
- Peer relationships
- Teacher relationships
- Parental expectations

The workshop leaders, together with the parents, summarize which aspects of school are the most common causes of stress for students.

2. Parental expectations (15 minutes)

The moderator uses the last category (parental expectations) as an introduction to the next activity. Parents play a digital game on their phones (Attachment No. 1 - Digital game - QR code). This activity helps parents understand how children feel when they are expected to achieve certain results.

After the game, the workshop leader asks the following questions:

How did you feel while playing the game?

Was it difficult for you?

What result did you achieve?

Do you think you chose the best approach?

Do you think you met your expectations regarding the outcome of the game, and draw a parallel between your expectations while playing the game and the expectations they have of their children when it comes to school success?

Parents are divided into new groups of 4 members, in which they discuss their expectations regarding school and how these expectations can affect their children. Group representatives present their conclusions, and the moderator writes down key points on a flipchart. Parents are led to the conclusion that the outcome depends on whether the expectations are too high or adequate to the children's abilities and are realistic.

3. Recognizing stress signals in children (15 minutes)

The moderator presents and explains to parents the typical signs of stress in children:

- Changes in behavior
- Irritability and anger
- Difficulty sleeping
- Neglecting obligations
- Changes in diet
- More frequent illnesses

Then the parents are divided into 5 groups of 4 members. Each group draws a card with an example of a stressful situation (Attachment No. 2). They discuss how to recognize stress signals in a child in that situation. The groups present their thoughts, and the moderator summarizes the conclusions about the role of parents in timely recognition of stress signs and emphasizes the importance of parents, their expectations as possible sources of stress, but also that they are key factors in overcoming it.

4. How to help children cope with stress? (15 minutes)

The moderator writes a list of stressful situations on a flipchart and encourages a group discussion on strategies for helping children cope with stress. Asks questions such as:

How do you usually help your child in stressful situations?

How do you react when your child gets a “bad” grade?

What strategy do you not use, but think could be useful?

Do you exchange experiences with other parents, and does it help you?

5. Cooperation with the school (15 minutes)

The moderator reminds that today we talked about different sources of stress at school. The importance of cooperation between parents and the school in managing stress in students is emphasized. Parents share their experiences of existing forms of cooperation with the school. They suggest ideas for improving the support that the school can provide to children and parents when it comes to overcoming school-related stress and students’ academic success.

Final part: Workshop summary and evaluation

Attachments and additional resources:

Attachment 1: Digital game (QR code for download)



Attachment No. 2: Cards with examples of stressful situations

1. A situation in which stress is caused by peer violence

Ana is standing alone in the schoolyard. Marko and Jovana approach her. Marko starts provoking her with a comment about her jacket, comparing it to a costume from a cartoon. Jovana joins in the comments, agrees with him, and asks Ana where she found such a “unique” jacket. Ana shyly replies that she likes that jacket because her aunt, who lives abroad, bought it for her. Marko pretends to be amazed, commenting that something like that has never been seen before, while Jovana suggests that they take a picture of the jacket and post it on social media so that everyone can admire this “unprecedented miracle”. Ana tries to think of a way to avoid the situation, but her body and voice betray her insecurity.

2. Situation in which anxiety is a source of stress

Maria is 15 years old and is a first-year student at a music school. During exam periods and before performances, her palms sweat, her voice shakes, and she occasionally feels dizzy. The feeling of anxiety is so intense that she can't even concentrate in class before the exam. She is afraid that her parents will be angry if her grades aren't good enough, and she is already angry with herself for allowing her fear to take hold of her so much. She hasn't talked to anyone about it yet.

3. Situation in which stress stems from grades, relationships with teachers, and academic achievements

Luka has always been an excellent student, but in recent weeks, he has felt that his relationship with his math teacher has changed. No matter what he does, he doesn't get a good grade. Every time he hands in the extra assignments his teacher has given him to prepare for the competition, he makes many mistakes, and she often calls him to the board to correct them. He feels like he can't meet the high standards her teacher sets. Luka begins to believe that she simply doesn't like him and is deliberately giving him the most difficult assignments to show that he is not capable of competing. Stress becomes a daily occurrence for him. Every time he gets a new assignment, he feels a lump in his throat and fears that he will make another mistake. This affects his self-confidence and motivation to practice math, which used to be his favorite subject. Luka even starts to avoid math classes, making up all sorts of excuses. He can't shake the feeling that his teacher is deliberately sabotaging him, even though his classmates think she is strict but fair.

4. A situation in which stress arises from poor communication

Jovan is a teenager who has been feeling tension in his relationship with his parents for some time. Although they used to have open conversations, in recent months they have only communicated in short and superficial sentences. One evening, after he tried to explain something to them about his activities and needs, he got the impression that they did not even understand him. Their reaction was full of criticism and questioning of his decisions, which caused Jovan to feel unaccepted and disappointed. The feeling that his parents do not listen to him and do not understand him affects him deeply, causing him great stress and confusion about how to communicate with them further.

5. A situation in which stress arises from excessive parental ambitions or unrealistic expectations

Marko is a teenager who has shown great potential in school and sports from an early age. His parents have always been very interested in his success and have supported him to be the best in everything he does. However, in recent months, Marko has felt increasingly burdened by these expectations. Every grade below an A or every missed point in sports is analyzed and commented on in detail by the family. Every momentary failure is noted, and his parents constantly give him advice and instructions on how to improve and achieve more. In his mind, the pressure becomes too great. He feels that he can never fully meet their expectations, no matter how hard he tries. Stress becomes his daily companion, and he begins to wonder if he will ever achieve anything that will be good enough.

2. EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL LITERACY OF ADOLESCENTS

2.1. Workshop title: The Emotional Life of Adolescents

Learning objectives:

1. Empower parents to better understand the emotional world of adolescents,
2. Recognize the importance of emotional intelligence and
3. Develop the skills to talk about emotions with their children.

Duration: 90 minutes

Number of participants: 15-20 parents

Materials needed: Printed scenarios for role-playing

Introductory part (10 minutes): The Emotional Life of Adolescents

The facilitator welcomes the participants and introduces the topic of the workshop. Gives a brief explanation: “Adolescence is a period in which emotions become more intense, and understanding them is often more challenging for both young people and parents.” Asks parents:

“As parents, what comes to mind most when you think of your adolescent’s emotions?”, “What are the most common emotions you notice?”

Participants share short answers.

Central part:

1. Mini lecture on emotions in adolescence (20 minutes)

Characteristics of emotions in adolescence are: instability, intensity, rapid mood swings, and increased sensitivity. The facilitator explains each of the listed characteristics through examples from everyday life. He also explains what emotional intelligence is: the ability to recognize, understand, and manage your own and others’ emotions. Why it is important: Research shows that young people who can identify and regulate their emotions have fewer problems with anxiety, depression, and behavior.

Asks parents: Have you ever felt helpless in the face of your child’s emotions? What would you like to understand better?

2. Mapping emotions (20 minutes)

The facilitator gives the task for parents to write down which emotions they see most often in their child and how these emotions are expressed. After individual work (5–7 minutes), a

discussion in pairs or small groups follows: what they recognized, what surprised them, are some emotions are repeated. After the exchange, the facilitator encourages discussion

- Are you always sure what your child is feeling?
- What are your biggest challenges in recognizing emotions in adolescents?
- Do you talk about emotions with your children, and how much?

The goal is to encourage the exchange and empowerment of parents.

3. Role play (30 minutes)

The facilitator shares scenarios with typical situations (Appendix No. 1). Parents are divided into pairs. One plays the parent, the other the adolescent. The task in pairs is to have a short conversation in which the parent tries to recognize and support the child's emotions, without judging or advising. After a few minutes, they change roles. The facilitator invites several pairs to share their impressions: what was easy and what was difficult?

Final part: Workshop summary and evaluation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 - Role-playing scenarios

Scenario 1: Your child comes home silently, throws down his backpack, and retreats to his room. He does not want to talk.

Scenario 2: The child is angry because you did not allow him to go to a friend's birthday party in the evening. He says: "You are not fair, everyone else can go!"

Scenario 3: The child tells you: "I think I will fail math. There is no point in trying."

Scenario 4: You told the child that he could have tried harder on his homework. He responds vehemently: "Nothing is ever good enough for you! You only criticize!"

Scenario 5: The child says: "Marko has the latest phone and his parents buy him everything. But I never have anything."

Scenario 6: You ask the child how school was. He answers: "I don't know", "Nothing", or just shrugs

2.2 Workshop title: How can parents help their child regulate unpleasant emotions?

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the impact of unpleasant emotions on adolescents.
2. Learn strategies to help adolescents regulate emotions.
3. Reflect on parental behavior and its impact on children's emotional regulation.
4. Encourage the exchange of best practices among parents.

Duration: 90 minutes

Participants: 15-20 parents

Introductory part: Overview of the importance of regulating unpleasant emotions: (15 minutes)

The facilitator introduces the title and objectives of the workshop and asks the participants a question: “Which emotions in your child are the most difficult for you to understand or tolerate?”, and then explains that unpleasant emotions are not harmful in themselves, but an important signal that the child sends about their inner needs and emphasizes that parental support in regulating emotions is one of the most important protective factors for the mental health of adolescents.

Central part

1. Strategies for regulating emotions (20 minutes)

The facilitator explains to the participants that adolescents often do not have sufficiently developed self-regulation mechanisms and that they need support in learning how to regulate them. Anger often masks a feeling of hurt or injustice. Sadness and disappointment arise when a child experiences loss, rejection, or failure. Then, the facilitator explains the most common strategies for regulating emotions:

1. Validating emotions: “I understand you’re angry/sad, and that’s okay.”
2. Modeling: the parent as an example of how to deal with frustration.
3. Creating a safe space for conversation.
4. Using “I” messages instead of criticism.
5. Supporting through physical activity, music, and creative expression.

After a brief explanation of the strategies, the facilitator asks the participants a question.

After a brief explanation of the strategies, the facilitator asks the participants: “What do you most often say to your child when he is sad or angry?”

2. Emotion regulation techniques (20 minutes)

Parents work individually for 5 minutes and answer the question:

What can I do to help my child cope with unpleasant emotions of anger/sadness/disappointment? Then they are divided into groups of 3–4 participants, in which they exchange their strategies. The facilitator records some of the answers on a flipchart and names it “collection of techniques”. Possible participant answers are:

- I offer a walk to 'blow out' the anger a little
- I say: 'It's hard when you feel like that. What would you like now?'
- I give him space, but we say that I am here when he is ready to talk.

If the parents have no ideas, the facilitator can offer the listed techniques. When they finish presenting the techniques, the facilitator encourages discussion with questions:

When is it most difficult for you to remain calm in contact with your child?

What helps you not to react impulsively?

What prevents you from showing understanding when your child 'explodes'?

Participants share their experiences. The facilitator encourages them and emphasizes that it is sometimes difficult to deal with a child's unpleasant emotions, but that the goal is not perfection, but the presence of parents and support.

3. Situation analysis (20 minutes)

A scenario is read in small groups of 4-6 parents. The task at the group level is for participants to answer the questions: What is the child feeling? How to react in a way that helps, not worsens the situation? What not to say at that moment? Each group reads the resulting scenario, and then one scenario is briefly analyzed in the whole group.

Examples of situations:

A child throws books and things around the house because he did not get a good grade.

A child is crying because his friends didn't invite him to a party.

The child shouts: "You don't understand me! You never understand me! I hate you!"

Final part: Workshop summary and evaluation

3. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND MENTAL HEALTH

3.1 Workshop Title: Social Media and Its Impact on Adolescents' Mood and Behavior

Learning objectives:

1. Raise awareness about the use of social media and its impact on mood and behavior.
2. Provide practical strategies for healthy digital habits.
3. Encourage parents to think about screen time and exchange views on best practices that support adolescents' digital well-being.

Duration: 90 minutes

Participants: 15-20 parent

Materials needed:

- Mobile phones
- A4 paper
- Pencils
- Tables and chairs
- Refreshments (food and drinks)
- Printed scenarios (Attachment No. 1)

Introduction part (10 minutes)

In this day and age, social media has become an integral part of everyday life, but it is important to understand how it can affect the mood and behavior of adolescents. This workshop explores the reasons why young people spend so much time on social media and how it can affect them. It also provides an opportunity to practice healthy digital habits in social situations.

The facilitator then explains the workshop to the participants. Participants will be given a scenario in which they are in a social setting with family or friends, but are constantly busy with their phones, not participating in the conversation and interaction with those present. After the role play, the group will discuss how this behavior affects the individual and the environment and devise strategies for avoiding it.

Central part:

1. Role play (10 minutes)

The facilitator divides the participants into smaller groups (3-4 participants) and randomly distributes the scenario sheets to the parents. Their task is to think of how they will act out the situation they have drawn as faithfully as possible. The goal is to create a realistic atmosphere.

2. Role-playing the scenario and recording impressions (50 minutes)

Each group performs its scenario in front of the others. After each role-play, the facilitator asks all participants questions to encourage reflection:

How did you feel while playing the role of the person who is constantly on the phone?

How did this behavior affect your mood and the people around you?

Have you noticed changes in the dynamics of the social situation?

How has the constant use of the phone affected the quality of communication and connection between people?

What are the possible consequences of excessive use of social networks on personal relationships and well-being?

Have you personally identified with any of the scenarios? How do you feel when you see others acting this way in real life?

Parents write down their observations and feelings on paper. They can draw emoticons to represent their emotions during the activity. They then share their observations with the group and discuss their conclusions.

3. Co-creating strategies (10-15 minutes)

Parents together suggest ways to reduce time spent on social media and improve digital habits.

Possible suggestions include:

Setting limits on the time spent on the phone.

Using apps that help control the time spent on the networks.

Having “digital detoxes” – periods without the phone, especially during mealtimes or socializing.

Arranging family rules about phone use.

Consciously setting aside time for face-to-face interaction.

The moderator emphasizes the importance of being present in real interactions and using social media mindfully. Participants are encouraged to apply the learned strategies in their daily lives to improve relationships and reduce the negative effects of digital technologies.

Final part: Workshop Summary and Evaluation

Attachment No. 1: Possible Scenarios

1. During a family dinner, a teenager constantly checks his phone, scrolls through Instagram, TikTok, and texts friends, ignoring conversations with family members.
2. A group of friends spends time at a park, but one of them is completely focused on his phone and does not participate in the conversation or activities.
3. In class, a student checks notifications and scrolls through social media instead of paying attention to the lesson.
4. A couple is on a date at a restaurant, but one person constantly checks his phone and responds to messages, making the other person feel neglected.
5. During a group project, one team member uses his phone the entire time and does not contribute to the group's work.
6. At a social event, a person constantly takes selfies and posts them on social media, instead of enjoying the moment and socializing with those present.
7. During a conversation with a friend, one person constantly looks at their phone and responds to me.

3.2 Workshop Title: How to Overcome Stress Caused by the Negative Effects of Social Media

Learning Objectives:

1. To teach participants how to relieve their minds and bodies from the stress caused by social media.
2. To provide practical steps to improve mental health and well-being.

Duration: 90 minutes

Participants: 15-20 parents

Materials Required:

- Paper
- Whiteboard marker

Introduction (5 minutes- 10 minutes):

The workshop leader announces the topic of the workshop, stress caused by social media, i.e., the negative effects of social media on mental health. He/she explains the objectives of the workshop and encourages participants to be open during the session.

Central part

1. Problem identification (30 minutes):

Each participant writes on a piece of paper the specific problems they recognize that adolescents, but also adults, have due to the use of social networks, whether and how their use causes stress in young people, which are all negative effects of their use.

After that, the facilitator collects the papers, reads what the participants have written and encourages joint problem-solving, i.e., encourages participants to offer suggestions for solving them. He/she also offers suggestions.

2. Practical strategies (30 minutes):

The facilitator presents 11 strategies for reducing the negative impact of social networks on mental health. For each of them, participants will consider how they can apply them in their daily lives.

Regular exercise: Include physical activity to release endorphins and reduce stress.

Healthy diet: Maintain a balanced diet to support mental and physical health.

Sleep Regularly: Establish a consistent sleep schedule to improve mental clarity and mood.

Create a Daily Routine: Plan your daily activities to provide structure and reduce stress.

Improve your social environment: Strengthen positive relationships and interactions.

Manage Stress: Practice relaxation techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation, breathing exercises, and mindfulness techniques.

Make Time for Yourself: Set aside time for self-care and activities that make you happy.

Spend Time in Nature: Get outside regularly to refresh your mind.

Be Productive: Set achievable goals to increase your sense of accomplishment.

Take breaks when you're tired: Recognize when it's time to rest and avoid burnout.

Seek professional help when needed: Reach out to mental health professionals when stress becomes too much.

3. What can I do for my family (15-20 minutes)

The facilitator opens the door for questions and discussion. Participants share their thoughts and decide which strategies they will try to implement in their own lives to help their adolescents.

The facilitator reminds participants that managing social media stress is an ongoing process and encourages them to support each other and share their experiences.

Final Part: Workshop Wrap-up and Evaluation

4. Music and Adolescent Mental Health: Strengthening Connection and Solidarity Within the Family

4.1 Workshop Title: Musical Family Harmony

Learning objectives:

1. Understand the importance of music in overcoming stressful situations.
2. Learn practical ways to use music as a stress-relief tool for the whole family.

Duration: 60 -90 minutes

Participants: 15-20 parents

Materials needed:

- Access to a variety of music (playlists, CDs, streaming services)
- Speakers
- Whiteboard or flip chart
- Markers
- Paper and pencils

Introductory part: Favorite song (10 minutes)

Each participant shares their favorite song and briefly explains why they like it or how they feel while listening to it. Then, a shared playlist is created with these favorite songs, and the facilitator highlights different musical preferences.

Central part:

1. The power of music (10 minutes)

The facilitator explains the scientifically proven benefits of music for reducing stress, including its effects on the brain and body (e.g., reducing cortisol levels, lowering heart rate, improving mood). Then, he encourages participants to share their experiences and thoughts

2. Music and Movement (15 minutes):

The facilitator plays a series of short, varied music clips (e.g., calming, energetic, classical, jazz) and encourages participants to move or dance to the music, allowing the body to naturally adapt to the different rhythms and melodies.

This is followed by a group reflection: participants analyze how their mood changed with each type of music and how different music genres can affect the family's mood and activities at home.

3. Creating a Family Music Plan (30 minutes):

We will divide participants into small groups and give each team a flip chart. We will ask each group to think of ways to integrate music into family routines (e.g., wake-up songs in the morning, background music during dinner, family dance parties, relaxing before bed). Afterward, each group will share its ideas with the entire group.

4. Personalized Family Music Plan (30 minutes):

Each participant creates a personalized music plan for their family, including:

Specific times of day/week and activities to integrate music;

Types of music for different purposes (e.g., relaxing, energizing, connecting);

Ways to involve all family members in the selection of music and activities.

Participants present their family music plans, challenges they may face. Other participants provide practical advice for implementing these plans and their consistent application.

Final part: Workshop Wrap-up and Evaluation

4.2 Workshop Title: Family Values and Rituals - Strengthening Mental Health

Learning Objectives:

At the end of the session, parents will be able to:

1. Define family values and recognize the core values of their family.
2. Understand the difference between habits and rituals and recognize their importance in promoting mental health.
3. Learn how strong family values, habits, and rituals contribute to the mental health of adolescents and family members.

Duration: 60 - 90 minutes

Participants: 15-20 parents

Materials needed:

- Whiteboard or flip chart
- Markers
- Paper and pens
- Handouts with examples of family values, habits, and rituals

Introductory part:

1. Defining family values, habits, and rituals (10 minutes)

The facilitator explains the terms: family values, habits, and rituals, provides examples for each category, and invites participants to add their examples.

- Family values: The core beliefs that guide behavior and decision-making in the family.
- Habits: Regular practices or routines in which family members participate.
- Rituals: Significant practices or traditions that strengthen family identity and the connection between members.

Central part:

1. Identifying family values (15 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups. Each group is given flip chart paper and markers, and they are asked to brainstorm and list their top five family values. Afterward, each group will share its list with the entire group and explain why these values are important.

2. Impact on mental health (15 minutes)

The facilitator encourages discussion about how strong family values, habits, and rituals can positively impact the mental health of adolescents and family members, including:

- Providing a sense of stability and security
- Fostering a sense of belonging and identity
- Increasing communication and emotional support

Use real-life examples and research findings to explain the impacts listed above.

3. Creating a List of New Family Habits and Rituals (20 minutes)

Ask participants to individually think about their current family habits and rituals. Give them guidelines:

- What regular activities or traditions do you have as a family?
- How do these practices affect you and your family members?

Encourage them to record their thoughts.

Then, participants are divided into pairs or small groups and asked to consider new habits and rituals that could improve their family's mental health. The facilitator provides some examples:

- Weekly family dinner with games
- Daily conversations to check in on the emotional states of household members
- Family outings
- Celebrating small accomplishments together

Ask each group to come up with at least three new ideas to share with the larger group.
(Attachment No. 1 List of New Habits and Rituals)

4. Developing a Plan (20 minutes)

Ask participants to choose one or two new habits or rituals that they want to implement in their family.

They use a simple action plan template (Attachment No. 2 Action Plan Template) to define the steps to integrate these practices into their routine. When they are finished, they share their new plans with the other participants. The facilitator emphasizes that it is important to anticipate possible challenges in implementing the new plan, how to overcome them, and stay consistent. It is important that they now have other parents as collaborators and support. Encourage them to support each other

Final part: Workshop Summary and Evaluation

Attachments

Attachment No. 1: List of New Habits and Rituals

New Ideas for My Family:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Attachment No. 2: Action Plan Template

New Habit/Ritual: _____

Steps to Implement:

1. Step: _____

Who is Responsible: _____

Deadline: _____

2. Step: _____

Who is Responsible: _____

Deadline: _____

3. Step: _____

Who is Responsible: _____

Deadline: _____

Challenges and Solutions:

Challenge: _____

Solution: _____

Additional Resources:

Meg Cox: "The Power of Family Rituals" TED Talk, YouTube

<https://youtu.be/PfORNIRxXcs?si=jkFnt0hX1gKBXLyT>

Evaluation Questionnaires

1. Sample Evaluation Questionnaire for Workshops

Please rate the quality of the listed aspects of the workshop on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is the lowest and 4 is the highest. Circle the appropriate number for each statement.

The topic of the workshop is important for parents of adolescents

1 2 3 4

The way the topic is covered is good and adequate

1 2 3 4

The content of the workshop is useful and applicable for parents

1 2 3 4

The knowledge gained will be useful to me in working with other young people as a peer educator

1 2 3 4

The way the workshop leader works facilitates learning

1 2 3 4

Comments, remarks, suggestions:

2. Example of an evaluation questionnaire for the Parent Support Program

Dear participants,

We ask you to honestly answer the following questions in order to design the final version of the Parent Support Program.

Please rate the program as a whole using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "not useful at all", and 5 means "extremely useful and applicable". Circle the appropriate number for each statement.

Overall program rating

1 2 3 4 5

Work of the program leader

1 2 3 4 5

Usefulness of the content for parents

1 2 3 4 5

Interestingness of the content for parents

1 2 3 4 5

Workshop methodology

1 2 3 4 5

Topics covered by the program

1 2 3 4 5

The program topics and methodology enabled me to improve my parenting competencies

1 2 3 4 5

Atmosphere in the group

1 2 3 4 5

Working conditions at the workshops

1 2 3 4 5

What did you like the most?

What did you like the least?

Your suggestions and proposals for improving the program:





DISCLAIMER

The views and opinions expressed are those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the EACEA can be held responsible for them



**Co-funded by
the European Union**