

12 Trauma-Informed Creative Methodologies
Poland (Dla Ziemi) · Germany (CRN) ·
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CREATIVE MINDS

45.



12.



41.



17.



36.





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Stowarzyszenie
Dla Ziemi

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Tips for Facilitators.

These 12 methodologies come from real practice — tested and refined by creative practitioners across Poland, Germany, and Luxembourg. Before diving into the activities, take a moment to read these guiding principles.

Trust the Process

Creative expression works differently than talking therapy. You are not there to interpret what someone's drawing means or analyse their movement. You are holding space for people to express, discover, and connect in their own way.

Watch and Adjust

If an exercise feels too intense, bring the energy down. If people seem disconnected, try adding more structure. Your observation matters more than sticking rigidly to the script. Every group is different. You are holding space for people to express, discover, and connect in their own way.

Create Predictability Within Creativity

While the content is creative and open, maintain clear structures: explain what will happen, how long it will take, and when breaks will occur. This predictability helps people feel safe enough to be creative.

Don't Rush the Warm-Ups

The grounding, breathing, and warm-up exercises are not just preludes to the 'real' work they are essential preparation that helps participants transition into a creative, present state.

Make Space for Silence

Not everything needs to be discussed or explained. Sometimes the most powerful moments happen quietly when people are absorbed in making, or in the pause after a shared creative experience.

Take Care of Yourself

This work can be emotionally demanding. Notice what you are feeling during and after sessions. Make sure you have your own support system. You cannot pour from an empty cup.

When Things Don't Go as Planned

Some activities will land differently than expected. A group might resist an exercise, or something might trigger unexpected emotions. Stay calm, offer choices, and remember you can always pause, adjust, or move to something else. Your flexibility matters more than completing every step perfectly.

REMEMBER:

These methodologies won't solve everything but they open doors. They create moments where healing can begin, where people remember their own creativity and resilience, and where community forms through shared making rather than shared suffering. Use them well. Adapt them to your context. Trust your instincts as a facilitator.

Introduction to the Collection:

This collection brings together 12 practical, creative activities developed for the Empowering Creative Minds project, funded by the Creative Europe Programme. These methodologies are designed for anyone working with people who have experienced trauma — educators, artists, community workers, and facilitators supporting immigrants, refugees, migrants, and individuals facing mental health challenges across Europe.

What You Will Find Here:

Creative partners from three countries have contributed activities drawn directly from their own practice:

- Poland — Dla Ziemi (3 activities)
- Germany — CRN (4 activities)
- Luxembourg — Douri (5+ activities)

The collection includes voice and movement workshops, contemporary dance sessions, drumming circles, collaborative drawing games, collage-making, zine creation, city walks exploring street art, sensory drawing exercises, film screenings with discussions, and relationship mapping through art.

Why These Activities Matter:

Trauma can be difficult to put into words. These creative approaches offer another way in through the body, through images, through rhythm, through making things together. Participants are never required to tell their stories verbally if they are not ready. Instead, they can express themselves through movement, drawing, sound, or simply by being present with others in a shared creative space.

Each activity emphasises choice and consent. Participants can always opt out, pause, or adapt exercises to their comfort level. The methods work across language barriers and different cultural backgrounds, making them especially valuable for diverse groups.

What Makes These Approaches Trauma-Informed:

- They create predictable, safe structures where people know what to expect.
- They build slowly from individual awareness to connection with others.
- They emphasise grounding, breath, and body awareness.
- They give people agency the power to make choices about their own participation.
- They focus on building skills like emotional regulation, self-awareness, and empathy, rather than processing specific traumatic events.

Quick-Reference Index:

Use this table to quickly identify the right activity for your session. Scan by duration, group size, or energy level.

#	Activity	Organization	Duration	Group Size	Energy
1.1	Voice & Song as a Path to Reconnection	Dla Ziemi	120 min	10 – 20	Moderate
1.2	Move to Connect	Dla Ziemi	90-120 min	10 – 20	Active
1.3	Common Pulse Drumming Workshop	Dla Ziemi	120 min	12	Active
2.1	Cadavre Exquis	CRN	20-45 min	3 – 6/group	Calm
2.2	Zine Creation	CRN	60-90 min	5 – 15	Calm
2.3	Collage Making	CRN	90-120 min	4 – 8	Calm
2.4	Landscapes of Trauma (City Walk)	CRN	90-120 min	10 – 20	Moderate
3.1 a-e	ArtWem Warm-Ups (series)	Douri	5-15 min	10 – 15	Calm
3.1 f-k	ArtWem Drawing Exercises (series)	Douri	10-60 min	10 – 15	Calm/Mod
3.2	Introduction & Context Setting	Douri	10 min	12	Calm
3.3	Circle Exercise - Relationships Map	Douri	30 min	12	Calm
3.4	Film Screening & Trauma Discussion	Douri	60 min	15 – 30	Calm
3.5	Museum Visit & Reflection	Douri	90 min	12	Moderate

DLA ZIEMI - POLAND

Performing arts · Contemporary dance · Music & rhythm · Intercultural integration

1.1 Voice & Song as a Path to Reconnection

Co-Creation Workshop | Submitted by Elżbieta Rojek, Dla Ziemi

Duration	120 minutes
Group Size	10–20 participants
Materials	Open room, optional speaker, water
Energy Level	Moderate
Touch	Optional — consent-based throughout
Music	Optional — traditional songs used

Aims of the activity:

- Support participants in reconnecting with their own body, breath, and voice through shared artistic experience.
- Develop awareness, trust, and presence in the group by combining bodywork, movement, and traditional song.
- Promote intercultural dialogue, emotional safety, and creative cooperation beyond language barriers.

Step-by-Step:

Set-up (5 min)

Prepare an open room with no chairs. Agree on filming/photo rules. Make water available.

Consent & Safety (3 min)

State the opt-in/opt-out policy for touch and voice intensity. Give brief body-care cues.

Stage 1 – Preparing the Body and Space (approx. 25 min)

Exercise 1: Waking up the Body and Breath

Participants stand in a circle. Invite slow shoulder, neck, face, and knee loosening. Encourage gentle shaking of wrists and ankles, and awareness of feet on the floor. Group takes slow collective breaths and begins humming softly on the exhale.

Exercise 2: Moving through Space

Participants walk freely around the room with slow, attentive movement, exploring filled and empty areas. They may hum softly or breathe audibly.

Exercise 3: The Triangle

Each participant silently chooses two people in their mind. Task: always form an equilateral triangle with those two people while moving. Group naturally comes to stillness. At the end, everyone shows who they chose creating a moment of shared recognition.

Stage 2 – Mutuality and Trust (approx. 25 min)

Exercise 1: Guided by Hands

In pairs one leads through gentle hand movements, the other follows. Facilitator first invites reflection on comfort with touch. All physical contact is optional.

Exercise 2: The Name in Motion

Walking freely, participants shake hands and exchange names. They continue introducing themselves with borrowed names until they hear their own name again.

Stage 3 – Resonance and Movement (approx. 35 min)

Back-to-back balance exercises, shoulder resonance, rhythm exercises ('sawing'), and vocal games (pingpong air ball, calling, animal voices) — progressively building toward song.

Stage 4 – Song and Co-Creation (approx. 35 min)

Introduce a simple traditional song (Ukrainian, Polish, Belarusian, or other).

Participants learn by ear, then sing in a circle, moving in pairs or trios, allowing spontaneous harmonies to form.

Stage 5 – Closure (approx. 25 min)

Trust exercise ('The Heart of the Bell'): one person stands in the centre with eyes closed and gently leans; others softly catch and guide them back. End with a shared song and a reflection round: 'Today I take with me...'



Learning Outcomes:

- Body and breath awareness, voice openness, and active listening skills.
- Trust, cooperation, and intercultural communication through collective creative experience.
- Emotional regulation, empathy, and non-verbal expression.

Evaluation:

- Observe participants' body language, engagement, and group dynamics (relaxed posture, open breathing, eye contact, spontaneous vocal participation).
- Short verbal reflections at the end ('Today I'm taking with me...') provide qualitative feedback.
- Optional documentation (notes, audio, video) supports further evaluation.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Create a calm, safe, and inclusive atmosphere from the start.

Begin with clear consent around touch and participation never skip this.

Guide rather than instruct allow silence, pauses, and natural rhythm.

Focus on listening, presence, and body awareness more than vocal perfection.

Encourage curiosity and playfulness, especially when working across languages and cultures.

Adapt timings to group energy throughout.

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1.2 Move to Connect

Contemporary Dance & Awareness Workshop | Submitted by Agnieszka Sikorska,
Dla Ziemi

Duration	90–120 minutes
Group Size	10–20 participants
Materials	Studio with warm floor (ideally ballet floor), optional paper and pens
Energy Level	Active
Touch	Optional — clearly explained before any partner work
Music	Yes — music used throughout

Aims of the activity:

- Develop interoceptive awareness — the ability to sense and understand internal bodily sensations.
- Experience movement as a form of self-regulation, grounding, and connection to the present moment.
- Stimulate the social engagement system by moving from self-sensing to connecting with others.
- Cultivate empathy, communication, and group awareness through partner and group exercises.
- Experience dance as a universal language accessible to all people.

Step-by-Step:

Introduction (10 min)

Introduce yourself and your interest in this field. Ask participants to share their names and one word expressing their motivation. Briefly present the methodology and plan.

Body Scan - Experiencing Interoception (10 min)

Participants lie on their backs. Sense the floor. Feel the 5 cardinal lines (shoulders to fingertips, hips to heels, head to centre). Observe asymmetry without judgment.

Movement of the 5 Cardinal Lines (5–8 min)

Slowly start moving the 5 cardinal lines close to the floor. Gradually add sitting, medium level, then standing. Ask: 'What do I need?'

Inner Rhythm - Experiential Anatomy (10–15 min)

Standing, sense feet on floor. Soft bouncing scan whole skeleton from feet to head. Add shake, change directions, explore soft tissues. Increase and release movement. (Leader: raise music volume.)

Awakening the Social Engagement System (10–15 min)

Find your walking pattern. Read others' patterns. Imitate briefly, then return to your own. Gradually expand from individual to pairs to groups.

Partner Work - Leader/Follower (10 min)

In pairs, one person walks and the other follows behind. Leader: sense your partner, play with rhythm. Follower: imitate exactly. Expand to groups of 4, 8.

Walking to Dancing - Social Dance (15–20 min)

Group moves in lines through the space. Leader proposes simple movements, progressively building. Participants then each take a turn showing a move the group can follow.

Move to Connect - Final Improvisation (20–30 min)

Group improvisation based on 'Passing Through' (David Zambrano). Rules: start with empty space, enter and exit freely, let walking transform into dancing if ready, explore leader/follower, pause individually and collectively, find a group ending.

Closing Circle (5–20 min)

Auto-applause (body-tapping). Closing circle with one word each. Optional: intuitive writing/drawing for 1 minute, then discussion.

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify and describe sensations related to interoception and body awareness.
- Demonstrate improved coordination and spatial orientation. • Apply movement-based tools for grounding and self-regulation.
- Collaborate effectively in pairs and groups through shared improvisation.
- Feel comfortable expressing creativity through spontaneous, embodied movement.

Evaluation:

- Observation of engagement, quality of attention, and responsiveness to tasks.
- Guided reflection at the closing circle short verbal expressions or one-word check-out.
- Embodied feedback: changes in posture, fluidity, and ease of interaction.
- Peer interaction and cooperation in leader/follower and group tasks.



Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Observe participants and their reactions adjust timing as needed.

Ensure everyone feels comfortable.

Offer alternatives if someone is struggling.

Use the script as inspiration, not a rigid rulebook make it yours.

Before the final improvisation, either establish a no-touch rule or check in with the group about it.

Further Reading:

Feldenkrais Method: feldenkrais-method.org

Polyvagal Theory - Deb Dana: 'Polyvagal Exercises for Safety and Connection'

Passing Through (David Zambrano): davidzambrano.tictacartcentre.com

Body Weather practice: bodyweather.org

1.3 Common Pulse - Drumming Workshop

Submitted by Tomasz Kozdraj, Dla Ziemi

Duration	120 minutes
Group Size	12 participants (no musical experience required)
Materials	~12 drums (djembe/cajon/frame drum), small percussion, markers, paper, earplugs
Energy Level	Active
Touch	No
Music	No — rhythm-based only

Aims of the activity:

- Build a safe, inclusive space for people from diverse backgrounds to make music together.
- Experience regulation through rhythm (breathing, tempo, volume) and strengthen agency.
- Co-create a short rhythmic composition and simple graphic notation.

Step-by-Step:

Set-up

Circle of chairs; instruments on the floor behind the chairs. Markers, sticky notes, board for recording rhythms. Earplugs visible on the table.

A - Introduction Welcome and objective: 'Today we build a common pulse and a short rhythmic composition. Participation is voluntary.' Explain hearing hygiene and earplugs. Grounding with 4 calm breaths, light tap on knee on exhale.

Distribute sound-imitating instruments (kalimbas, rain sticks, bells). With eyes closed, imitate nature sounds (rain, sea, trees). Sounds intensify and subside — repeated 2–3 times.

B — Rhythmic Warm-up

Body percussion focusing on right/left hands and feet. Use odd rhythms (3, 5, 7, 9): for example, 3/4 = clap – right leg – left leg; 5/4 = clap – tap knee – tap knee – stomp – leg.

C — Learning Simple Rhythms

Each person tests instruments and selects 2–3 short sounds. Combine into pairs/trios. Learn a polyrhythm with 4 drum parts plus shekere and bell. Write graphic notation together. Everyone learns all 4 rhythms and practises.

D — Pause for Silence

Using the piece as an example, learn to pause (mute on cue) and rejoin. Encourage earplugs if ears are ringing. (Hearing hygiene.)

E — Joint Composition: 'Pulse of the Community'

Everyone plays the same rhythm in unison. Anyone who wishes plays a solo while the group lowers the volume. The group rises toward controlled chaos, then slows to complete silence.

Rehearsal steps: agree count-in, practise conducting gestures (pause/stop/louder/quieter/loop). Play A-BBreak-C form. Adjust and perform. Recording optional — with consent only.

F — Closing

Repeat last 30–40 seconds of composition and stop together. Moment of silence: 3 breaths, hand on drum. Reflection in one sentence: 'What supported my pulse today?' One-word check-out in circle.

Learning Outcomes:

- Listening and cooperation in a group, role reversal (leading and following).
- Regulation of arousal through tempo and volume.
- Creative expression through guided improvisation and graphic notation.

Evaluation:

- Pre/post micro-survey (3 Likert questions, scale 1–5): agency when making music, ability to regulate through tempo/volume, feeling listened to. Treat a difference of 0.5+ as educationally significant.
- One-sentence reflections placed on the table after the final task: group into agency / regulation / being heard buckets.
- Facilitator observation: keeping the beat, listening and responding to gestures, role reversal, acoustic comfort.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Voluntary participation in every exercise right to pause or stop at any time.

Establish a group contract: kindness, confidentiality, clear gestures for quieter/ pause/OK.

Regulate through musical parameters (tempo, dynamics) avoid processing difficult personal stories.

Provide earplugs; monitor volume; take breaks. (WHO/ITU safe listening standards.)

Further Reading:

Djembe beginner guide: melbay.com

Village Music Circles facilitation manual: villagemusiccircles.com

Graphic notation exercise: BBC Ten Pieces (downloads.bbc.co.uk)

SAMHSA trauma-informed framework: library.samhsa.gov



CRN GERMANY :

Visual arts · Creativity · City walks · Trauma-informed cultural practices

2.1 Cadavre Exquis

Collaborative Drawing Game | Submitted by Anja Söyünmez, CRN

Duration	20–45 minutes
Group Size	3–6 per group (larger groups split into teams)
Materials	Paper, drawing implements (pencils, pens, markers, crayons), flat surface, optional timer
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	No

Aims of the activity:

- Foster creativity, collaboration, and spontaneity in a low-pressure setting.
- Encourage participants to let go of control and embrace the unexpected.
- Break down the fear of drawing and show how a shared artwork grows from individual contributions.

Step-by-Step:

Set-up & Explanation (5 min)

Explain the concept: a collaborative drawing where each person can only see tiny marks from the previous artist not the full image.

Drawing Rounds (10–30 min)

Each participant folds their sheet into equal sections (one per person). The first person draws a head in the top section, extending two small marks just over the fold line. They fold their section backwards to hide it, leaving only the marks visible. The paper passes to the next person, who draws the next segment using the marks as a guide, then folds and passes again. This continues until the last section is complete.

Reveal & Sharing (5–10 min)

Unfold the paper to reveal the complete, often surreal, collaborative figure. Discuss: 'What surprised you?' and 'How did it feel to build on someone else's drawing without seeing it?'

Learning Outcomes:

- Collaboration: understanding that a final product is built from many contributions.
- Adaptive Thinking: interpreting an abstract starting point and building creatively.
- Letting Go of Perfectionism: embracing spontaneity and accepting that not everything is under your control.
- Non-Verbal Communication: listening to a previous artist's work and responding through drawing.

Evaluation:

- Observe level of engagement, laughter, and surprise during the activity.
- Listen to reflections during the final reveal do participants connect with the process?
- Look at the drawings: do segments connect creatively, showing active interpretation?

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Recommendations for the Facilitator Emphasise the no-pressure rule simple lines and shapes are perfect. The goal is fun and collaboration.

Demonstrate the mark system clearly before starting.

Use a timer per segment (1–2 min) to keep energy high and prevent overthinking.

Introduce themes (e.g. 'mythical creature', 'machine') once the group understands the classic version.

Join in yourself it models a playful, non-judgemental approach.

Further Reading:

Video overview: [youtube.com/watch?v=B6GuVwN5QI8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6GuVwN5QI8)



2.2 Zine Creation

DIY Publishing Workshop | Submitted by Anja Söyünmez, CRN

Duration	60–90 minutes
Group Size	5–15 participants
Materials	A4 paper, scissors, pens/markers/crayons, old magazines for collage, glue sticks, optional photocopier
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	No

Aims of the activity:

- Reclaim agency and voice: participants decide what to include, hide, and how to arrange their story.
- Transform overwhelming emotions into tangible, external forms that can be seen, touched, and shared.
- Encourage reflection and creative engagement with one's own story, on one's own terms.

Step-by-Step:

Introduction (10 min)

Explain what a zine is (a small, DIY magazine). Show simple examples. Introduce the theme: Trauma and Art.

Demo the 8-Page Single-Sheet Zine (included in explanation)

Fold in half widthwise (short edges together). Fold in half widthwise again. Fold in half lengthwise. Unfold completely to see a grid of 8 panels. Re-fold widthwise.

Make one cut along the centre of the fold through the middle section only. Unfold fully, then refold so pages nest into a booklet.

Page order: front cover, inside pages 2–7, back cover.

Brainstorming & Planning (10 min)

Participants sketch a quick plan on a separate sheet. Remind them to consider page order.

Creation (30–50 min)

Distribute materials. Participants fold their template and fill it with drawings, writing, and collage.

Sharing (10–20 min)

Participants share their zines if they wish passing them around, a short 'reading', or a gallery walk. Optional: photocopy zines for participants to trade and take home.

Learning Outcomes:

- Storytelling and concise communication within a self-defined space.
- Visual literacy and design thinking: combining text, images, and decoration.
- Fine motor skills: folding, cutting, drawing, and collaging.
- Confidence in self-expression: sharing a personal perspective in a low-stakes format.

Evaluation:

- Observe whether each participant has a completed physical zine by the end.
- Note engagement during creation are they making active decisions about content and design?
- Listen during sharing: can participants articulate their concept? Do they show pride and confidence?
- A successful workshop produces a wide variety of zines, showing participants felt free to express individually.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Emphasise that perfection kills creativity a rough, DIY aesthetic is the goal. Pre-make a blank dummy zine and a completed example to show during the demo. Be ready to help individuals with the fold-and-cut step it can be tricky for some. Have simpler and more complex zine fold options ready for different needs. Celebrate all results during sharing applaud creativity, humour, and personal expression.

Further Reading:

8-page zine folding tutorial: youtube.com/watch?v=sMdus-INqFg

2.3 Collage Making

Visual Narrative Workshop | Submitted by Anja Söyünmez, CRN

Duration	90–120 minutes
Group Size	4–8 participants (small intimate groups essential)
Materials	Magazines/newspapers/books, cardstock, various papers, scissors (left- and right-handed), glue sticks, optional markers and paints
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	No

Aims of the activity:

- Provide a safe, non-verbal, and metaphorical outlet for exploring complex feelings related to trauma and healing.
- Bypass the difficulty of verbal expression, allowing individuals to externalise and reframe their experiences.
- Foster self-awareness and envision a path toward recovery in a supported environment.

Step-by-Step:

Creating a Safe Container (10–15 min)

Establish group guidelines: confidentiality, non-judgment, right to pass on sharing, respect for all artworks. Emphasise process over artistic skill.

Introduction & Centring (included above)

Introduce the theme of 'Trauma, Art, and Healing'. Frame the collage as a way to tell a story without words finding images that resonate with your experience. Offer a brief moment of silence to centre.

Creation Process (45–60 min)

Invite participants to browse materials without overthinking drawn to images, colours, or words that evoke a feeling. They cut, arrange, and glue onto cardstock. They may add drawings or words if they choose.

Voluntary Sharing (20–30 min)

Invite (but do not require) participants to share their collage. They can describe it, explain elements, or simply state what the process was like. The facilitator thanks them for sharing, without clinical interpretation.

Closing & Clean-up (10 min)

Thank the group for their courage. End with a grounding exercise, a collective deep breath, to transition out of the emotional space.

Learning Outcomes:

- Non-verbal expression: articulating complex internal states through imagery and metaphor.
- Metacognition and self-reflection: gaining insight into one's own emotional landscape.
- Symbolic thinking: using images as symbols for abstract concepts like pain, safety, or healing.
- Empathy and active listening: witnessing and respectfully receiving others' creative expressions.
- Agency and empowerment: making active creative choices that mirror steps in healing.

Evaluation:

- Observe level of focused concentration during creation deep engagement indicates meaningful self-connection.
- Listen during sharing: can participants articulate connections between chosen images and their inner experience?
- Ask at the end: 'How was this process for you today?' Responses often reveal catharsis, insight, or empowerment.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

You are a facilitator, not a therapist. Your role is to hold a safe space, not to analyse or interpret the artwork. Curate materials thoughtfully: include a balance of challenging, neutral, and hopeful imagery. Remove graphic or potentially triggering content. Always use invitational language: 'if you feel comfortable', 'you are invited to', 'you have the choice to'. Never interpret: do not say 'This image clearly means X.' Instead, ask open-ended questions if a participant is sharing. Facilitating this work is emotionally demanding ensure you have your own support and debriefing process. A variation: two or more participants create one collective collage together.

2.4 Landscapes of Trauma - City Walk

Guided Walking Tour: East Side Gallery, Berlin | Submitted by Anja Söyünmez, CRN

Duration	90–120 minutes
Group Size	10–20 participants
Materials	Knowledgeable guide, physical site of East Side Gallery (Berlin), optional map/handout of key murals
Energy Level	Moderate
Touch	No
Music	No

Aims of the activity:

- Facilitate critical and empathetic engagement with a historical site of trauma and transformation.
- Help participants understand how art can function as an immediate response to political change and a tool for processing collective grief and joy.
- Demonstrate how communities can transform sites of violence and division into spaces of memory, beauty, and hope.

Step-by-Step:

Introduction & Context Setting (15 min)

Tour begins at a designated starting point (e.g. near the Oberbaumbrücke). Guide provides historical context: the Wall's construction in 1961, its function as a deadly border, and the euphoria of its fall in 1989.

The Walk and Narration (60–90 min)

Guide leads the group along Mühlenstraße, stopping at key murals. At each stop: explain the artwork's symbolism, the artist's intent, and the historical figures or events referenced (e.g. 'The Fraternal Kiss').

Point out the specific topography: the River Spree as a former border, the 'death strip', and stories of victims who died at this site.

Explain the gallery's own history: its creation in 1990, preservation battles, and its role today as a monument.

Facilitated Dialogue (throughout the walk)

Pose open-ended questions: 'What emotions do you think the artists were capturing?' and 'How does it feel to walk this path today, knowing its history?'

Conclusion & Reflection (15 min)

Facilitated discussion summarising how the site layers history, trauma, art, and tourism. Participants share their reflections on the overall experience.

Learning Outcomes:

- **Critical Looking:** analysing public art as historical documents and political statements.
- **Empathetic Connection:** understanding the lived experiences of those affected by division.
- **Spatial-Historical Analysis:** connecting physical geography to historical events.
- **Interpreting Symbolism and Metaphor:** decoding artists' visual metaphors for complex emotions.
- **Ethical Reflection on Memory:** considering the challenges of preserving such sites.

Evaluation:

- Observe whether participants closely examine the art, listen intently, and ask thoughtful questions.
- Assess depth of contributions during the reflective discussion are they making connections between art and history?
- Brief post-tour question: 'What is one new understanding you are taking away?' or 'How did seeing the art in situ change your perception?'

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Balance the narrative: weave together historical facts, the joyful energy of the 1990 art action, and contemporary challenges of preservation.

Foster respectful observation: this is both a memorial and a celebration. Model mindfulness of both registers.

Use the site's contradictions: acknowledge the tension between its solemn history and its current status as a tourist attraction.

Ground the art in history: constantly connect murals back to the specific human experience of 1989/1990.

Be prepared for strong emotional responses and provide space for processing them.

Further Reading:

East Side Gallery: eastsidegallery-berlin.com Online exhibition: stiftung-berliner-mauer.de

DOURI LUXEMBOURG :

Drawing · Film · Integrative arts · Emotional expression · Grounding

3.1 ArtWem Method - Drawing Series

The ArtWem method was created by artist Walid Al-Masri. It combines visual memory exercises, sensory drawing practices, and techniques from the visual arts. The goal is to transform the way we look at things: from a superficial, hurried gaze to one that is deep, calm, and attentive. By integrating music with technical and sensory exercises, ArtWem explores the relationship between emotions, artistic techniques, memory, and psychology. The exercises below are presented as a series. They can be used individually as warm-ups or warm-downs, or sequenced into a longer session. Each includes an 'At a Glance' card for quick reference.

3.1a Draw with Music - Warm-up

Art-based mindfulness, drawing warm-up

Duration	5 minutes
Group Size	10–15 participants
Materials	Paper, pencils, music source
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Support gentle arrival in the creative process.
- Promote spontaneous expression.
- Soften anxiety or overthinking at the start of a session.

Step-by-Step:

Participants sit comfortably with paper and pencil. Soft, non-intrusive music is played.

Hands move freely across the page without planning sometimes following the music, sometimes following an inner rhythm. At the end, drawings are dated and signed as traces of the moment.

Micro-Reflection:

After the exercise, invite short voluntary sharing (e.g. one word or observation). All responses are accepted without judgment. Normalise varied experiences there is no correct result.

Evaluation:

Observation of body relaxation, engagement, and short comments about mood or focus before and after.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

A short duration and minimal explanation help keep this activity light. Avoid commenting on aesthetic quality this supports a non-judging climate.

3.1b Pencil Pressure Control - Warm-up

Drawing, sensory awareness, regulation

Duration	5 minutes
Group Size	10–15 participants
Materials	Paper, pencils, quiet indoor space
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Support awareness of physical tension.
- Promote calm attention.
- Illustrate in a simple way how intensity can increase and decrease.

Step-by-Step:

Draw lines starting with strong pressure at one end, gradually becoming softer until nearly invisible.

Repeat several times in a relaxed manner.

Notice differences in grip, breathing, and attention.

Micro-Reflection:

After the exercise, invite short voluntary sharing (e.g. one word or observation). All responses are accepted without judgment. Normalise varied experiences there is no correct result.

Evaluation:

Observation of body relaxation, engagement, and short comments about mood or focus before and after.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Emphasising curiosity rather than improvement keeps the activity gentle and suitable even for anxious or self-critical participants.

3.3.1c Emotional Texture Filling - Zigzag Warm-up

Expressive art therapy, drawing warm-up

Duration	10 minutes
Group Size	10–15 participants
Materials	Paper, pencils, or pens
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Connect inner feelings with visual patterns.
- Prepare hand and attention for more complex drawing.
- Provide a simple, regulating activity through repetitive mark-making.

Step-by-Step:

Draw a zigzag line across the whole page, creating intersecting shapes. Fill each enclosed space with a different pattern (dots, circles, short lines, triangles, etc.). Quietly notice how some textures feel more tense, others more relaxed.

Micro-Reflection:

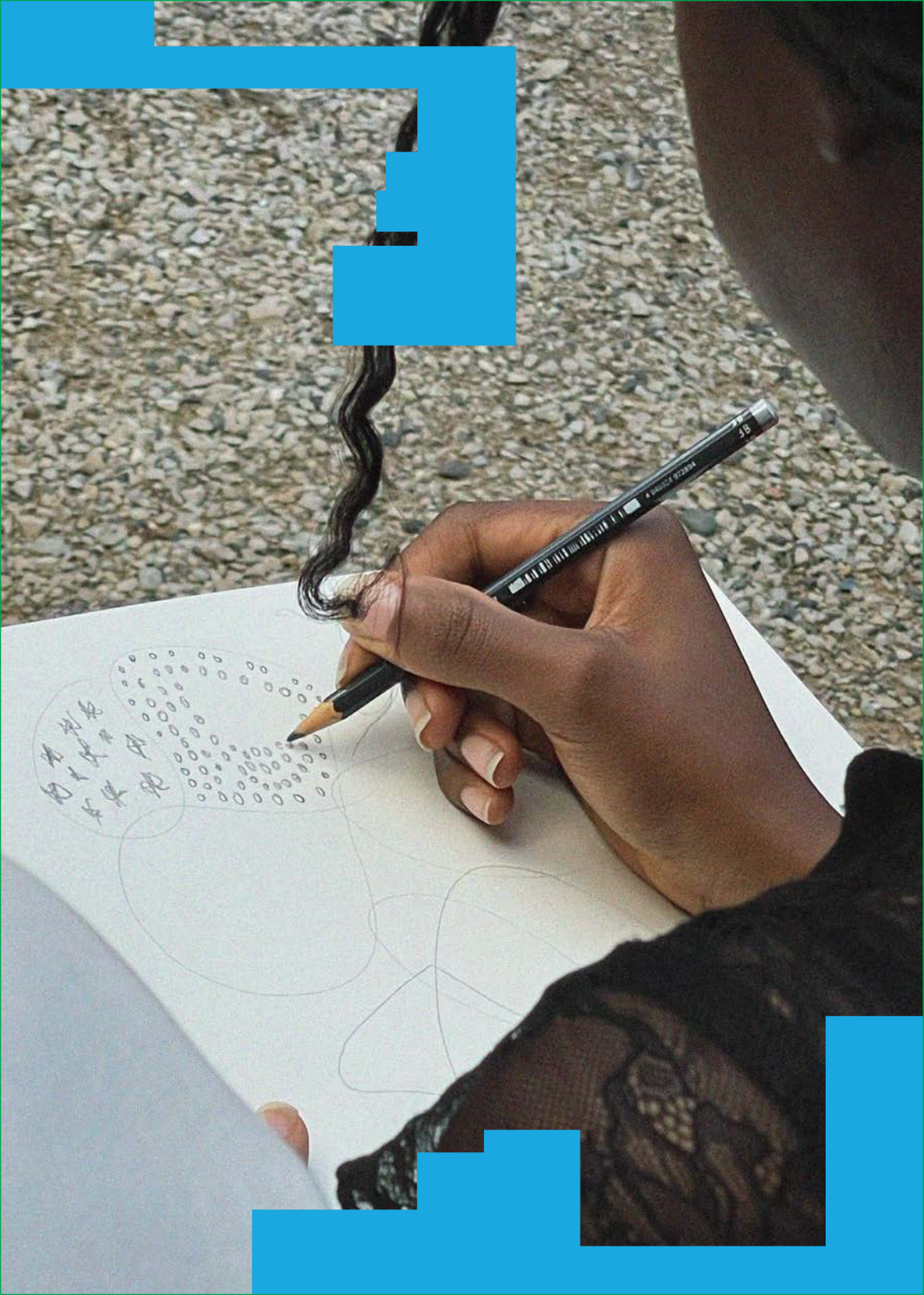
After the exercise, invite short voluntary sharing (e.g. one word or observation). All responses are accepted without judgment. Normalise varied experiences there is no correct result.

Evaluation:

Observation of body relaxation, engagement, and short comments about mood or focus before and after.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Avoid interpreting the drawings. The strength lies in the open, non-analytical character of the exercise.



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3.1d Sensory Still-Life Drawing

Drawing, mindfulness, sensory-based practice

Duration	10 minutes
Group Size	10–15 participants
Materials	Everyday objects (cup, bottle, chair), paper, pencils
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Deepen observation and reduce self-criticism around drawing.
- Support present-moment awareness by connecting eye, hand, and breath.

Step-by-Step:

Each participant chooses an object in the room.

After a brief pause to breathe and relax the shoulders, eyes remain on the object while the hand traces its imagined outlines on the paper.

The drawing is revealed only at the end, then signed and dated.

Micro-Reflection:

After the exercise, invite short voluntary sharing (e.g. one word or observation). All responses are accepted without judgment. Normalise varied experiences there is no correct result.

Evaluation:

Observation of body relaxation, engagement, and short comments about mood or focus before and after.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Keep the tone light and avoid comparisons. Mention that distorted results are expected and valued.

3.1e Blind Drawing from Memory

Mindfulness, cognitive stimulation, drawing

Duration	10 minutes
Group Size	10–15 participants
Materials	Paper, pencils (same room as previous exercise)
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Strengthen memory recall.
- Interrupt repetitive thinking through playful focus.
- Support freedom from self-judgment in creative work.

Step-by-Step:

Eyes are closed. Participants bring to mind the object previously drawn.

The hand moves freely over the page to sketch the remembered form.

When the drawing feels complete, eyes open and the result is viewed with curiosity.

Micro-Reflection:

After the exercise, invite short voluntary sharing (e.g. one word or observation). All responses are accepted without judgment. Normalise varied experiences there is no correct result.

Evaluation:

Observation of body relaxation, engagement, and short comments about mood or focus before and after.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

A gentle tone and reassurance that there is no 'correct' memory image keep the exercise safe and enjoyable.

3.1f Sensory ArtWem Portrait Drawing

Art therapy, social bonding, drawing

Duration	15 minutes
Group Size	10–15 participants
Materials	Paper, pencils, space for pairs to face each other
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Strengthen interpersonal connection.
- Reduce pressure to 'look good' in art or appearance.
- Promote mindful, attentive looking at another person.

Step-by-Step:

Participants form pairs and decide who draws first.

The model simply remains present; the drawing partner looks at their face and sketches without looking at the paper.

Switch roles. View all portraits in a short, supportive sharing.

Micro-Reflection:

After the exercise, invite short voluntary sharing (e.g. one word or observation). All responses are accepted without judgment. Normalise varied experiences there is no correct result.

Evaluation:

Observation of body relaxation, engagement, and short comments about mood or focus before and after.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Clear agreement on respect and consent is important. Remarks about portraits should be kind, focusing on the experience rather than anyone's appearance.

3.1g Movement-Based Drawing - Long Stick Pencil

Drawing, movement-based expression

Duration	20 minutes
Group Size	10–15 participants
Materials	Pencils attached to light sticks or rods, sketchbooks or large paper, outdoor or large indoor space
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Encourage spontaneity and loosen rigid control around drawing.
- Bring more physical movement and play into the group process.

Step-by-Step:

In a spacious area, sketchbooks or sheets are placed on the ground.

Each participant chooses a simple nearby object or form as a reference.

Using the long-stick pencil, they draw from a distance resulting in loose, surprising lines.

Emphasise movement, sensation, and shared atmosphere rather than accuracy.

Micro-Reflection:

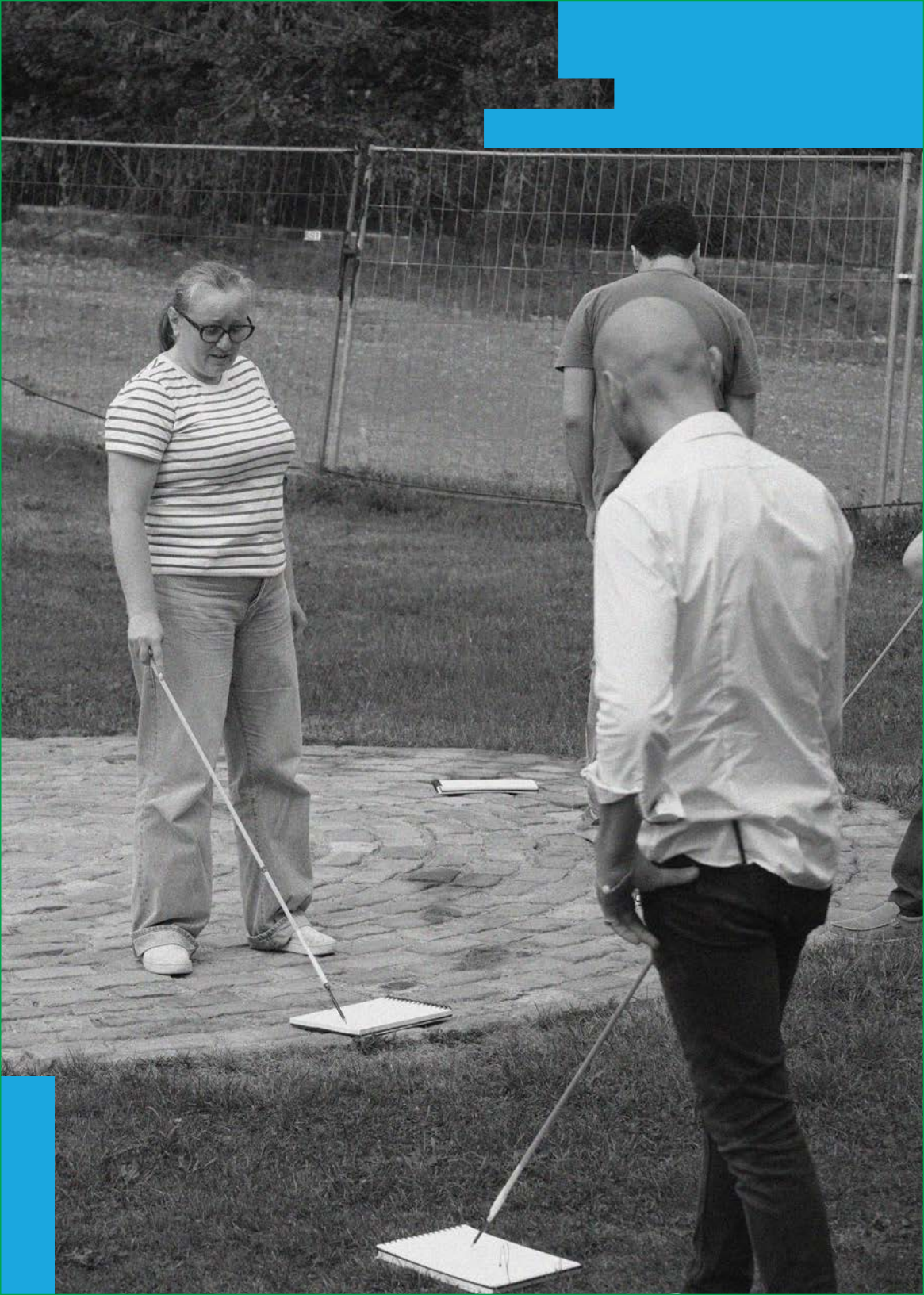
After the exercise, invite short voluntary sharing (e.g. one word or observation). All responses are accepted without judgment. Normalise varied experiences there is no correct result.

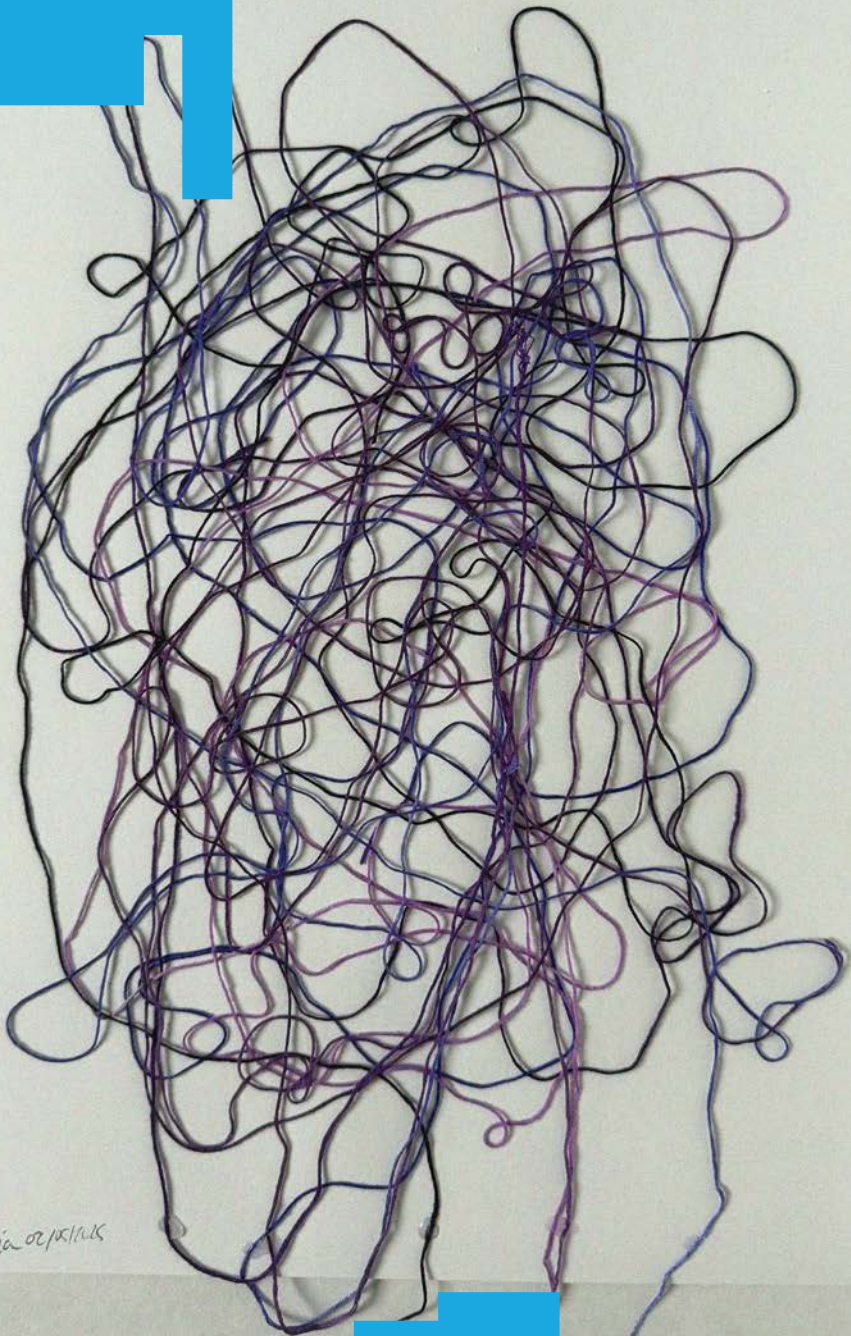
Evaluation:

Observation of body relaxation, engagement, and short comments about mood or focus before and after.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

A playful, non-judging stance encourages free experimentation. Good balance to more emotionally intense work.





Lucia orpinax

3.1h Linear Overlap Perspective - Nature Observation

Observation drawing, mindfulness, visual structure

Duration	30 minutes
Group Size	10–15 participants
Materials	Paper, pencils, access to garden or view of natural elements
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Build understanding of visual depth through overlapping forms.
- Encourage patient observation of nature.
- Support mental calm through structured drawing.

Step-by-Step:

Brief explanation: nearer lines overlap those behind them.

Participants choose a natural motif and draw it, allowing closer elements to 'cut across' more distant ones.

Leave space between layers to suggest air and distance. Build slowly.

Micro-Reflection:

After the exercise, invite short voluntary sharing (e.g. one word or observation). All responses are accepted without judgment. Normalise varied experiences there is no correct result.

Evaluation:

Observation of body relaxation, engagement, and short comments about mood or focus before and after.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Technical accuracy is less important than the experience of seeing. The exercise can be kept as exploration and quiet attention.

3.1i Memory Scene - Closed-Eye Drawing and Collage

Trauma-sensitive art therapy, drawing, collage

Duration	30 minutes
Group Size	10–15 participants
Materials	Paper, pencils, coloured and patterned paper, glue sticks, soft music
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Support safe reconnection with positive memories.
- Develop imaginative and visual thinking.
- Offer a creative framework for working gently with memory.

Step-by-Step:

Participants sit comfortably with pencil and paper while gentle music plays.

With eyes closed, recall a happy or comforting scene and sketch it as it appears in mind.

When the drawing feels complete, open eyes and add coloured paper to highlight, fill, or reshape elements turning it into a small personal artwork.

Micro-Reflection:

After the exercise, invite short voluntary sharing (e.g. one word or observation). All responses are accepted without judgment. Normalise varied experiences — there is no correct result.

Evaluation:

Observation of body relaxation, engagement, and short comments about mood or focus before and after.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Focus on positive or neutral memories only no pressure to disclose or explore difficult experiences. A slow, gentle pace is important.



3.1j Air Drawing for Enhanced Observation

Visual perception training, drawing, attention practice

Duration	10 minutes
Group Size	10–15 participants
Materials	Pencils or participants' index fingers, space to stand or sit freely
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Sharpen focus and strengthen hand-eye coordination.
- Build awareness of three-dimensional form through simple, embodied movement.

Step-by-Step:

Participants sit or stand comfortably, extend an arm, close one eye, and trace the outlines of objects in the room in the air.

The invisible drawing surface becomes a focus point; movement follows the seen contours.

Micro-Reflection:

After the exercise, invite short voluntary sharing (e.g. one word or observation). All responses are accepted without judgment. Normalise varied experiences there is no correct result.

Evaluation:

Observation of body relaxation, engagement, and short comments about mood or focus before and after.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Brief framing and a light, experimental tone keep the activity accessible and non-threatening.

3.1k ArtWem Life Line

Trauma-informed art therapy, self-reflection, drawing

Duration	60 minutes
Group Size	10–15 participants
Materials	Large paper, pencils, coloured and patterned paper, glue sticks, quiet private space
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Help participants organise memories visually.
- Reflect on emotional impact across time.
- Build a more coherent narrative of one's own life path.

Step-by-Step:

Right side of the page for positive memories, left for difficult ones. A point at the bottom represents birth.

From this point, lines rise toward different memories, slanting right or left by emotional tone, ending in small symbols or images.

New memories branch from previous ones.

In a second phase, coloured paper is added to highlight or soften parts of the timeline, allowing participants to re-balance and view their story in a new way.

Micro-Reflection:

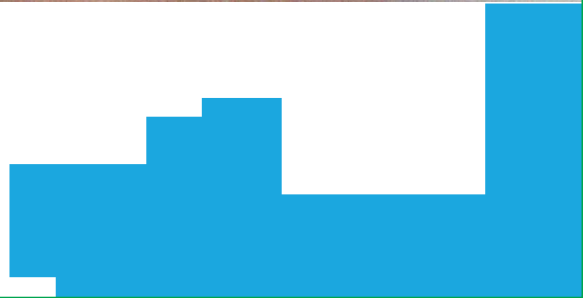
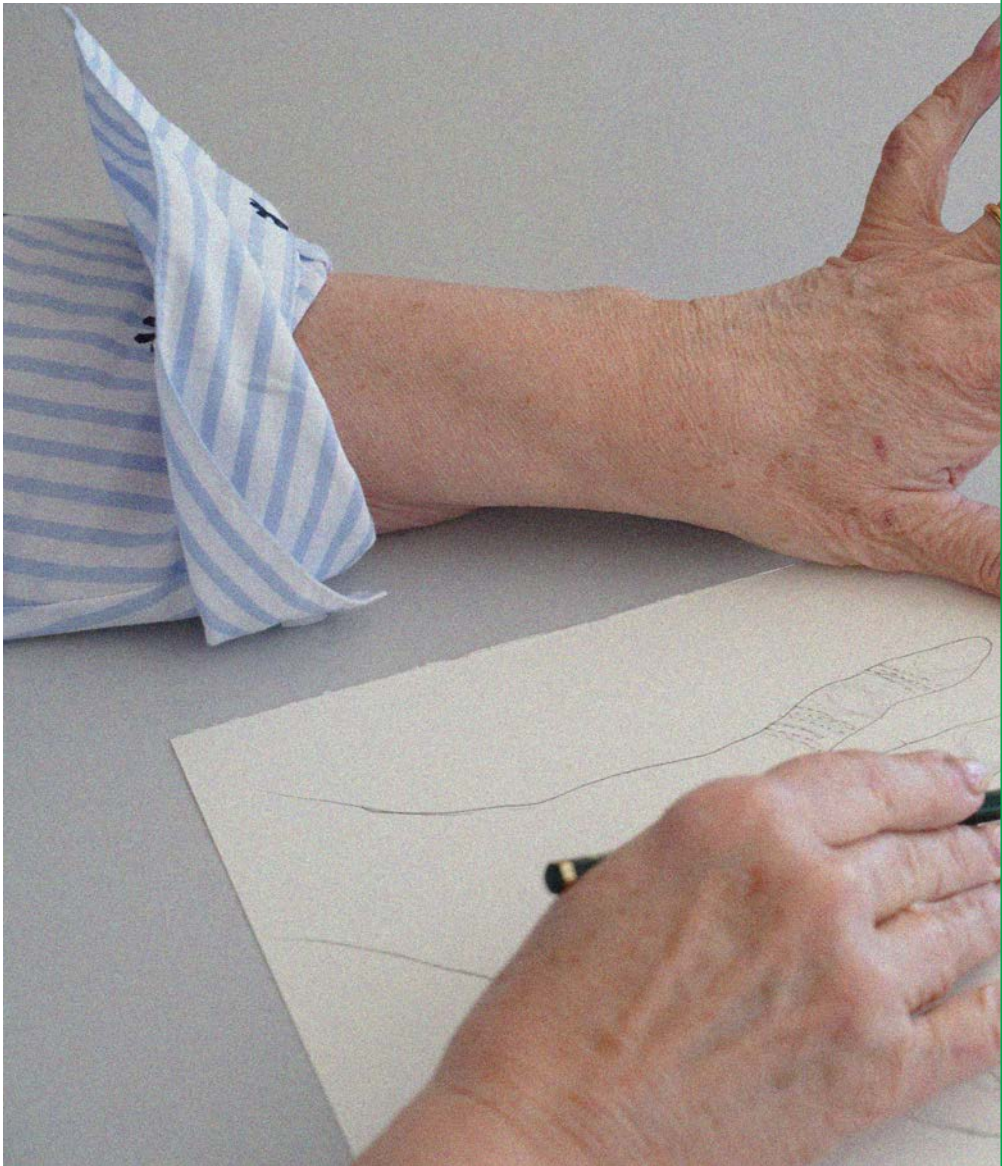
After the exercise, invite short voluntary sharing (e.g. one word or observation). All responses are accepted without judgment. Normalise varied experiences — there is no correct result.

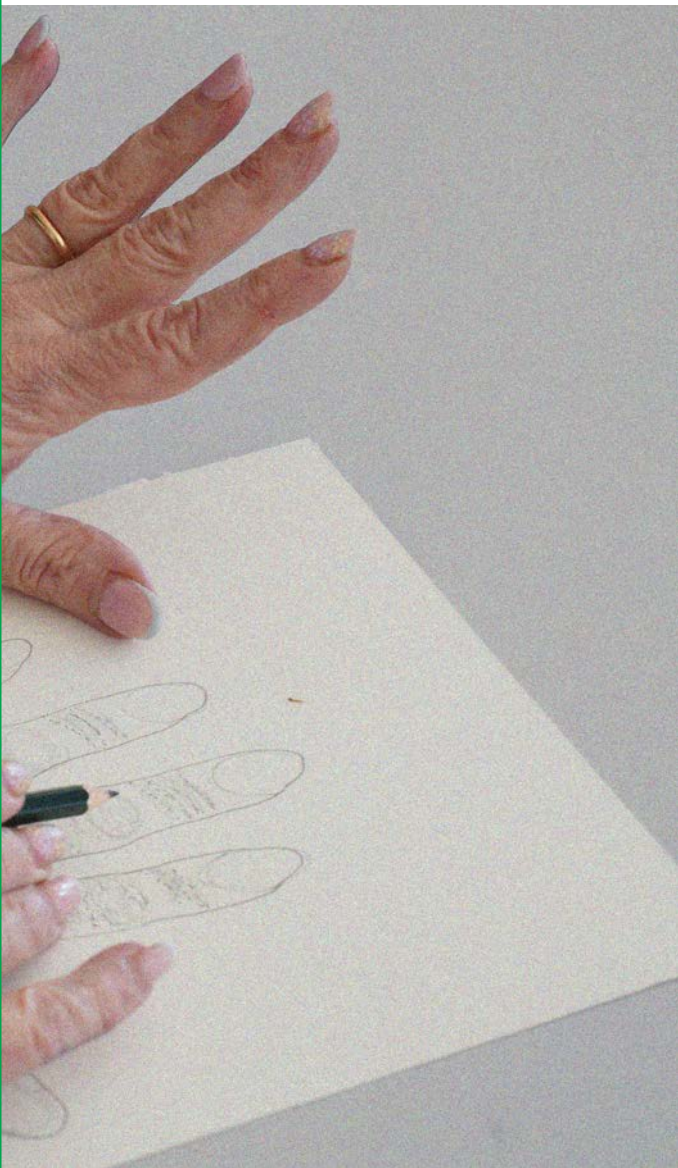
Evaluation:

Observation of body relaxation, engagement, and short comments about mood or focus before and after.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Sensitive, slow pace with options to pause or step out. Supportive closing (grounding, music, or a positive round) helps transition out of the exercise.





3.2 Introduction & Context Setting

Workshop Orientation | Submitted by Yusra Amounah, Douri

Duration	10 minutes
Group Size	12 participants
Materials	Optional simple slides/projector, circle of chairs, water
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	No

Aims of the activity:

- Provide a clear and gentle introduction to the workshop and the project.
- Create a first sense of trust and safety in the group.
- Reduce initial anxiety by explaining what will happen and what is optional.

Step-by-Step:

Briefly introduce Douri and the 'Empowering Creative Minds' project.

Present the main objectives of the workshop and outline the flow of the session(s).

Mention the principles of choice, confidentiality, and emotional safety.

Participants may share a short word about how they feel or what they hope for if they wish.

Learning outcomes:

- Understanding of the workshop's purpose and structure.
- A basic sense of safety and predictability.
- A first emotional connection to the group and facilitators.

Evaluation:

- Observation of body language, questions asked, and general level of engagement.
- Optional quick check-in: 'one word about how you feel starting'.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

A calm, friendly presence and simple language support trust from the beginning.

Repeat that participation is voluntary and that people can choose how much they share.

3.3 Circle Exercise - Relationships Map

Icebreaker & Self-Awareness Activity | Submitted by Yusra Amounah, Douri

Duration	30 minutes
Group Size	12 participants
Materials	Printed sheets with four concentric circles, coloured pencils or markers, optional soft background music
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	Optional

Aims of the activity:

- Build trust and comfort in the group.
- Increase awareness of personal support networks and boundaries.
- Start conversations about connection, community, and emotional closeness.

Step-by-Step:

Begin with short, creative self-introductions that do not refer to job titles or achievements. Each person receives a sheet with four circles (self, family, friends, community/universe) and fills them with colours or symbols representing people and groups in their lives.

Darker colours often indicate closer relationships, lighter ones more distant ties.

A voluntary sharing round follows: participants talk about what they notice in their circles, including themes like closeness, distance, and the role of community.

The facilitator maintains a positive, supportive atmosphere and reminds participants that sharing is optional.

Learning outcomes:

- Emotional awareness and identification of support networks.
- Empathy and perspective-taking through listening to others' reflections.

Evaluation:

Level of engagement in drawing, quality of reflections during sharing, and how carefully the circles were completed.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Keep questions open and do not push for details about sensitive relationships.

Respect silence and allow participants to pass in the sharing round this maintains safety.

Acknowledge that relationships change over time, and all forms of closeness are valid.

3.4 Film Screening & Trauma Discussion

Psychosocial Education through Film | Submitted by Zain Boush & Yusra Amounah, Douri

Duration	60 minutes
Group Size	15 - 30 participants
Materials	Film file and screening rights, projector and sound system, darkened room, chairs or cushions, water and tissues
Energy Level	Calm
Touch	No
Music	No

Aims of the activity:

- Deepen understanding of trauma and PTSD.
- Foster empathy for people living with trauma.
- Reduce stigma around mental health by using film as a medium.

Step-by-Step:

The facilitator briefly introduces the film and explains that it touches on trauma and therapy. The film is shown. The director speaks about the creative and emotional process behind it (if available). A guided discussion follows: participants share impressions, questions, and feelings, focusing on understanding rather than personal disclosure.

Learning outcomes:

- A more nuanced, human understanding of PTSD.
- Ability to connect artistic representation with mental health themes.
- Skills in compassionate listening and group reflection.

Evaluation:

- Depth and quality of reflections during discussion.
- Emotional regulation during and after the discussion.
- Participants' feedback about what they learned or felt.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Provide content warnings before the screening. Give clear permission to step out or take a break at any time. No pressure to share personal trauma stories during discussion. End with a short grounding or calming moment do not close abruptly after emotionally demanding content.

3.5 Museum Visit & Reflection

National Museum of Resistance and Human Rights, Esch-sur-Alzette | Submitted by Douri Coordination Team

Duration	Approximately 90 minutes
Group Size	12 participants
Materials	Access to National Museum of Resistance and Human Rights, museum guide, transport if needed, space for group reflection
Energy Level	Moderate
Touch	No
Music	No

Aims of the activity:

- Build empathy through contact with historical stories.
- Connect personal and collective resilience.
- Stimulate reflection on injustice, courage, and memory.

Step-by-Step:

The group visits the museum and joins a guided tour of the permanent exhibition. The guide presents key stories, objects, and contexts linked to resistance, repression, and long-term effects on societies. At the end, the Douri team facilitates a short reflection circle where participants share impressions, questions, or emotions inspired by the visit.

Learning outcomes:

- Deeper understanding of collective trauma and resistance.
- Historical empathy and strengthened reflective and critical thinking about human rights.

Evaluation:

- Richness and depth of reflections after the visit.
- Level of emotional engagement and connections made between past and present realities.

Recommendations for the Facilitator:

Maintain a trauma-sensitive pace and allow space for quiet moments. Give permission not to speak some participants may need to simply absorb what they have seen. Leave time after the visit for rest or a light, grounding activity before moving on. Acknowledge that different reactions silence, sadness, anger, inspiration are all normal responses to intense material.

CLOSING NOTE

This handbook was compiled as part of the Empowering Creative Minds project, funded by the Creative Europe Programme. The methodologies it contains were shared in good faith by creative practitioners across Poland, Germany, and Luxembourg. They are living tools meant to be adapted, refined, and used with care.

Tips for Facilitators:

Use these methods well. Adapt them to your context and your group.

Trust your instincts as a facilitator.

And know that by offering creative space to people who need it, you are doing important work.

TRAINER'S ACTIVITY HANDBOOK

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EMPOWERING

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