



INTENSIVE MENTORSHIP COURSE

“EMPOWERING PARENTS/GUARDIANS
FOR THE INDEPENDENT LIVING OF
YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES”

TITLE:

Intensive mentorship course "Empowering parents/guardians for the independent living of young adults with disabilities"

PROJECT:

"Encouraging independent living of persons with disabilities through empowerment of their parents and guardians", funded by the Nationale Agentur Bildung für Europa beim Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, the German National Agency for the Erasmus+ (Adult education) programme.

Project partners are:

- Outreach Hannover e.V., Germany
- Fondazione Don Giovanni Zanandrea Onlus, Italy
- LINK DMT SRL, Italy
- Company for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities ITECCION, Serbia
- Centre for Non-formal education and Lifelong learning, Serbia
- Centre for Youth Activism KRIK, North Macedonia
- Association Humanost, North Macedonia

PUBLISHER:

Outreach Hannover e.V., Germany

EDITOR:

Mila Karadafova

AUTHORS:

Mila Karadafova
Oliver Andreevski
Sasho Jovanov
Enrico Taddia
Giulia Ginesi
Jelena Ilić
Danijela Matorcevic
Stanče Matović
Pavle Jevdic

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Sonja Badjura

Hannover, Germany

2023



Contents

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT	1
BACKGROUND OF THE INTENSIVE MENTORSHIP COURSE (IMC)	3
Programme of the IMC.....	8
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE INTENSIVE MENTORSHIP COURSE (IMC)	9
DEVELOPED SESSIONS OF THE INTENSIVE MENTORSHIP COURSE: “Empowering parents/guardians for the independent living of young adults with disabilities”	12
Day 1 - Dividing the daily life and routines in different activities	12
Day 1 – Session 1: Introduction/Getting to know each other	13
Day 1 – Session 2: Common fears and challenges of parents/guardians of children with disabilities	16
Day 1 – Session 3: Assessing the activities the children can do independently and how to nurture and support them.....	18
Day 1 – Session 4: Body-mind techniques to manage stress and promote emotional wellbeing.....	22
Day 2 - Exploring activities that people with disabilities can do by themselves and how to support them in those they can not	25
Day 2 – Session 1: Creating objectives based on the challenges the children with disabilities are facing.....	26
Day 2 – Session 2: Practical tips for organising and managing daily routines to empower parents/guardians and children.....	28
Day 2 – Session 3: Introduction to practical activities like money management, cleaning, and self-care.....	32
Day 3 - Consultations to parents/guardians on overcoming personal common fears and doubts.....	36
Day 3 – Session 1: Practical demonstrations and hands-on activities related to managing money, cleaning and self-care	37
Day 3 – Session 2: Group discussions and sharing of experiences and challenges in implementing practical activities at home	40
Day 3 – Session 3: Support mechanisms and mapping existing support services	42
Day 4 – Agreeing on follow-up activities and mentorship	46
Day 4 – Session 1: Case studies to explore effective strategies for fostering independence	47
Day 4 – Session 2: Creating individual strategies for personal growth and independence	50
Day 4 – Session 3: Follow up and Mentorship	52
Day 4 – Session 4: Wrap up and final evaluation of the course	54
ANNEXES	57

Annex 1: Pre- and post-course evaluation questionnaires.....57
Annex 2: Tips for the mentors for the follow up process59



SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

Title of the project: “Encouraging independent living of persons with disabilities through empowerment of their parents and guardians”

Summary of the project:

People with disabilities still face difficulties in participating equally in different aspects of daily life. Their parents/guardians, on the other hand, lack the necessary skills to support their learning in life, including support to be more independent and able to experience appropriate participation, civic engagement, and integrity in the community. In addition to the education they receive and the potential support they could receive from institutions to be included in various activities in the community, they still depend on the willingness of their parents/guardians to accompany them. While parents/guardians are the first factor that needs support in understanding the importance of independence for their children with disabilities, their educators and the environment are the second factor that can contribute to positive changes and sustain the quality of life for young adults with disabilities. It is necessary for adult educators to address this issue and at the same time find an innovative response to support educational staff with new approaches, materials, and digital tools that will help improve the impact on solving this problem.

This project directly develops their skills by providing educators, institutions, and organizations with innovative and relevant data, tools, and educational materials to educate parents/guardians of people with disabilities. These intellectual achievements provide them with practical tools and activities to use for future programmes, so the project increases the level of quality work, as well as inclusion and diversity in education and training, and its ability to address urgent and emerging issues.

How would we feel if we were not allowed to decide what and when to eat, what time to leave the house, or when to meet friends? We make these decisions all the time and take it for granted that we do it ourselves. People with disabilities living in institutions do not share this freedom. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities commits both the EU and all its member states to realize the right of persons with disabilities to live independently in the community, which includes achieving the deinstitutionalization for those who reside in Institute settings. In Europe, still, residential facilities are the most common accommodation for people with disabilities when they lose their family caregivers.

Thinking about their children's future for a parent/guardian of a person with a disability means helping their children decide how to live, where to live, and who to live with when they no longer have their parents/guardians or family members beside them. It is important to begin this process as early as when the parents/guardians and family members of people with disabilities are still well and healthy and when they can help them begin to become independent. Addressing this issue at this stage will be beneficial for both parents and guardians, as well as for people with disabilities.

The path leading to the achievement of a life plan is far from simple for a parent/guardian. The aspects to be considered are housing, employment, legal, and financial, all amidst a context of fear and regulatory insecurity for parents/guardians. While these aspects are difficult to deal with at the time when parents/guardians are healthy and young, it is even more difficult and sometimes impossible for them in old age. For this reason, it is important that they are offered support and education to help their children achieve a certain level of independence. Likewise, adult educators should be supported with innovative methods developed for the empowerment in the education of parents/guardians of people with disabilities.

Our project addresses defined needs and aims to empower parents, guardians, caregivers, and adult educators to provide individualized support for people with disabilities to live independently.

Project goals:

- Empower parents and guardians in fostering the independent living of young adults with disabilities through the development of an inspiring, innovative and up-to-date manual and the development of an intensive course dedicated to them;
- Empowering our adult educators and improving our organizations' knowledge management in theory and practice to build skills of educators for independent living of (young) adults with disabilities through an innovative curriculum for educator training and a useful toolkit with workshops for beneficiaries.
- To share project results, exchange good practices at the local/national level, as well as further develop a quality strategic partnership among partners from 4 European countries with different realities regarding the opportunities available for adults with disabilities.

Project activities are:

- A1 – Project Management
- M1 – Kick-off meeting
- O1 – Handbook on independent living of (young) adults with disabilities
- O2 – Experiential Methodology of Intensive Mentorship Course for parents/guardians and their children with disabilities for independent living
- M2 – Second meeting
- O3 – Toolkit with workshops and recommendations useful to adult educators when organising activities with parents/guardians of people with disabilities (PWD)
- O4 – Curriculum for “Training of adult educators on how to support, educate and mentor parents/guardians of persons with disability for independent living of theirs”
- Local multiplying training courses
- E1, E2, E3 – National conferences in Italy, North Macedonia, Serbia
- E4 – International conference in Germany
- M4 – Final evaluation meeting

At the end of this project, the project partners, as well as other organisations and stakeholders, will have at their disposal more effective tools and more competent staff to engage in empowering and encouraging parents/guardians of (young) adults with disabilities for a more independent living.

BACKGROUND OF THE INTENSIVE MENTORSHIP COURSE (IMC)

The empowerment of parents and guardians plays a crucial role in enabling young adults with disabilities to achieve independent living. Recognizing the need for comprehensive support, this intensive mentorship course aims to equip parents/guardians with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to guide their children towards independence. By addressing common fears and doubts, identifying areas for development, and providing practical activities for daily life, the course empowers parents/guardians to foster self-determination and autonomy in their children. With a focus on collaboration and holistic support, this course strives to create a supportive community that advocates for the rights and well-being of individuals with disabilities.

The aim of the course is to equip parents/guardians with the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to foster independence and self-determination in their children.

The specific objectives for the course are the following:

- To overcome the personal fear and doubts of parents/guardians of young adults with disabilities for their personal development;
- To Identify and encourage the independence through everyday routines and activities;
- To create strategies and plans for fostering independence;
- To introduce practical activities in order to enhance the development and independence.

The primary target group for this course are parents and guardians who are supporting people with disabilities. This includes parents/guardians of children with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, sensory impairments, developmental impairments or combined disabilities. The children of the parents/guardians will be present during the second half of the 2nd day of the course and participate in the activities together with their parents/guardians. Professionals working in the field of special education, social work, or disability support who seek to enhance their knowledge and skills in supporting parents/guardians can benefit from this course.

Preferably, both parents/guardians should be involved in the entire course. In case a family includes only one parent/guardian and some of the grandparents, sibling(s) of the parent/guardian or sibling(s) of the person with disabilities, and if the parent/guardian feels the need for them to be involved they are welcome to the course. If these combinations occur, it is important that the additional family members that will be joining the programme spend on a regular basis at least half of the week with the person with disabilities. Another important aspect is that all additional family members joining the course are of legal age, meaning more than 18 years old. In case the sibling(s) of the people with disabilities and other family members are younger than 18 they can be involved in the mentoring process and participate at the mentorship meetings.

The training programme is intensive and implemented in a longer period of time, so it may be expected that not all families that start the course finalise it. A general suggestion is to start with 6-8 families. Having in mind that independent living of people with disabilities is a very sensitive topic for their parents/guardians and is requiring many changes in the systemic way of the functioning of the families, and not everyone is ready for such a change, the drop out of some of the families or family members is expected. This does not mean that the programme results are not responding to their needs, it just means that they are still not ready and might need more time to do this step.

Mentors of the programme that will be supporting the parents/guardians in the learning process should have experience in working with people with disabilities and be already sensitized to the topic and familiar with the process of independent living.

The role of the mentor is crucial in the follow up activities after the course, namely in the period of integrating new learned approaches and skills in everyday life of the involved families. Number of mentors depends on the number of involved families. It is suggested that one mentor follows 2-3 families. The mentors should be involved during the whole duration of the training days. During the training days, the mentors will support the families in their individual work. During the period between the training days, the mentors have specific tasks what they should work on with the families (explained in the mentorship process below).

Educators of the programme are responsible for the implementation of the 4 training days and to follow on the mentorship process. Their background does not have to be limited to the topic, but they are expected to have experience in training/teaching/educating. They are also expected to at least be sensitised and familiar with the topic of disabilities. They will lead all the sessions and have a responsible role in the input based activities, as well as in the theoretical sessions, while the mentors will be present in all the sessions that include individual work of the participants. The estimated number of educators for this programme is 2 people.

Preparatory meetings of mentors and educators - before starting the intensive mentorship course (IMC) programme, mentors should have a meeting (or more if needed) with the educators of the programme with the aims to:

- share the understanding on the needs of the target group before the course starts;
- share their standpoints;
- understand common objectives and aspects of each role;
- enhance the flow of learning and transformative process together.

Additional meetings should be organised between the training days and the mentoring meetings to make sure that the flow is running smooth, and all of the needs are addressed.

Measuring the impact of the programme - pre- and post-evaluation questionnaires

Pre- and post- evaluation questionnaires' are part of this programme. In order to measure the knowledge and skills gained within the programme, the participants will fill in the same questionnaire before and after the training course.

- The pre- evaluation questionnaires should be given to the participants before the course starts, as in that way it can serve as a guidance for the educators/mentors when developing detailed sessions in accordance with the real needs of the participants. It is important not to provide the detailed content of the programme before filling in the questionnaires since it may influence on some of the answers.
- The everyday evaluation will be facilitated by the educators/facilitators/mentors in order to monitor the programme daily.
- The post-evaluation questionnaires will be presented to the parents/guardians after the last session, on the last day and they need to fill them out after 1 week, respectively after the meeting for follow up process with their mentor. In this way, the parents/guardians will already have developed new competences and already have in mind potential changes to be made in their everyday life. In order to measure the long-term impact of the IMC programme and the satisfaction of the involved families, a focus group will be organised approximately 2 months after the training days are implemented.

Working programme of the IMC

The programme represents a comprehensive 4-day course designed to equip parents and guardians with the necessary knowledge, skills, and support to nurture independence and self-determination in their children with disabilities. Through a combination of interactive sessions, practical activities, and supportive discussions, the programme aims to enhance the participant's competences and empower them to create a beneficial environment for independent living.

The programme is split into 4 training days of which each includes 4 specific sessions related to the topic and the focus of the training day. The best way to implement the programme is gradually by combining training days and mentoring sessions in a period of 6 to 8 weeks, depending on the needs/possibilities of the target group. The recommendation is to organise a training day followed by one or two weeks of mentorship process. The programme consists of the following days:

- **Day 1 – Dividing the daily life and routines in different activities**

This day focuses on forming the group and creating a safe space, discovering the common fears and challenges of parents/guardians of people with disabilities, assessing their daily life and capacities for independent performance of daily activities and building capacities for assessment and objective observation of personal abilities.

- **Day 2 – Exploring activities that people with disabilities can do by themselves and how to support them with those who can not**

Day 2 is covering the process of exploring the challenges the children are facing and setting up objectives in order to overcome them, practical tips in planning and organising activities, as well as methods to plan and perform tailor-made activities for strengthening the independence of people with disabilities.

- **Day 3 – Consultations to parents/guardians on overcoming personal common fears and doubts**

Through learning methods for teaching basic self-care, money management and life-supporting activities for people with disabilities, day 3 is tackling the common fears and doubts, encouraging the parents/guardians to creative approaches, as well as effective use and mapping of support systems as mechanisms for overcoming challenges.

- **Day 4 – Agreeing on follow-up activities and mentorship**

The last day is focused on individual work, implementing the gained knowledge, developing follow up plan, evaluation and closure of the course.

The participants will acquire the following competences:

- Ability to assess and identify activities that promote independence in people with disabilities;
- Skills in creating structure and organising daily routines to empower parents/guardians and their children;
- Competence in teaching and supporting people with disabilities in practical activities at home;
- Capacity to utilise body-mind techniques for stress management and emotional well-being;
- Strategies for reaching out to existing support services and building a network of support.

The programme will use non-formal education methodology throughout the whole course. This includes:

- Interactive sessions in which the participants will get to know each other, share their experiences and contribute with suggestions and advice;
- Theoretical input and practical implementation of knowledge and skills gained;
- Individual and group work followed by discussion and feedback.

The methods used in the course include: presentation, group work, work in pairs, group discussion, individual work, listening to and comprehending new input, one-on-one work with the children, practical exercises, energisers, DIY activities, individual application of theory, sharing experiences and challenges, role-play, work in small groups, case study, working with a mentor, questionnaires.

By the end of the programme, participants will have gained valuable knowledge, practical skills, and a supportive network to effectively support their children's journey towards independent living.

Mentorship process

The mentorship process is happening in between the training days and for a certain period of time after the training is completed. Supporting the participants to practice and slowly integrate new

knowledge, skills and techniques into everyday practice is crucial and will ensure long term impact. After a training day is completed, the mentors support the participants to work independently on specific tasks related to the topic of the training day.

Week 1 – after training day 1

Focus on the assessment of the daily/weekly schedules

Participants: parents/guardians of people with disabilities

Venue: based on the needs of the participants it can be online or in person

After training day 1, the mentors are supporting the participants to work on the assessment of the daily and weekly schedule. During the training day 1 participants received an excel template for weekly and daily schedules and learned how to assess the current activities they are implementing with their children. The role of the mentors in this period is to support the participants in assessing their current daily and weekly schedules, and it is important that they fully assess them since following training activities will be based on it. In this phase, the mentors should work only with the parents/guardians. The mentors can decide together with the parents/guardians how they want to organise the meetings and support. There is a possibility for the meetings to be online or in person, depending on what works best for the parents/guardians. For some parents/guardians the best method will be to first work independently on the plans and then consult with the mentors, for others the best method will be to work on the plans together. The mentor should choose the method together with the parents/guardians.

Week 2 – after training day 2

Focus on planning new daily/weekly schedules

Participants: parents/guardians of people with disabilities and the people with disabilities

Venue: part 1 working with the parents/guardians - online or in person, depending on the needs of the parents/guardians. Part 2 working with the parents/guardians and their children-in person.

After day 2, the mentors are supporting the participants to develop the new daily and weekly schedules. In the previous mentoring week parents/guardians assessed the current activities they were implementing, and now they will plan new activities for their children, based on the new skills they gained during the training. The new planning process is based on exploring the challenges the parents/guardians and their children face, and on the objectives that the parents/guardians set during training day 2. In this mentorship phase participants will fully develop the new weekly and daily schedules. In this phase, mentors should work together with the parents/guardians and their children. It is recommended that mentors first work with parents/guardians alone on developing the new schedules (online or offline), and then involve also the children (this part of the mentoring process should be done in person).

Week 3 – after training day 3

Focus on developing action plans and mapping local support mechanisms

Participants: parents/guardians of people with disabilities and the people with disabilities

Venue: Part 1: working with the parents/guardians and their children-in person; Part 2: working with the parents/guardians - online or in person, depending on the needs of the parents/guardians.

After day 3, mentors are supporting the participants to work on the action plans they started developing during training day 3. During the training participants received the action plan template which will lead them through the planning process step by step, and gained new skills on how to set up the activities in the action plans and to organise them according to the needs of their children. The role of the mentors in this period is to make sure that the participants are developing the action plans with the activities, and to support them in that process. In this phase mentors should work together

with the parents/guardians (online or in person) and their children (in person). It is very important that the children agree with the action plan and its' activities.

The other topic covered during training day 3 is about mapping and exploring support mechanisms on the local level responding to different types of disabilities the children are facing. The participants are expected to receive guidance divided in 10 steps, which they should follow and explore what already exists on the local level that they can use. In the mentorship process, mentors should support parents/guardians in exploring and ensuring that the information they found are correct. The mentor should already have experience and understanding about the support services that already exists, and should provide additional information, links, and contacts to the parents/guardians for services that they did not know about.

Mentoring process after the completion of the training programme

Focus on challenges parents/guardians and their children are facing during implementation of the action plans and weekly/daily schedules

Participants: parents/guardians of people with disabilities and the people with disabilities

Venue: Working with the parents/guardians and their children-in person. Working with the parents/guardians - online or in person, depending on the needs of the parents/guardians.

After finalising the training programme, mentors need to support the participants for a certain period in the implementation of the new individual actions plans and schedules. This training and mentorship are aiming for long term behaviour change and adapting new habits (for parents/guardians and their children), and for this reason post training mentorship is needed. During the last day of the training mentors and participants set up the mentorship goals and agree how they will work on them.

In this post training phase parents/guardians are implementing everything they learn during the training, and for some of them it might be hard and overwhelming. This is where the role of the mentors is crucial, to support all involved participants in the implementation but also in making adjustments and changes to the action plans and schedules based on the challenges they are facing. Mentors and parents/guardians can decide if it is needed to involve the children in the mentoring sessions, or it is sufficient to have online meetings. Mentoring session in which the children are involved should be organised in person.

A general recommendation is to organise the first post training mentoring meeting one month after the training and then continue with once a month for an agreed period of time (this can vary from family to family). In this way participants have enough time to get used to the new approach, to practice and to realise if anything needs to be improved in the action plans and daily/weekly schedules.

Programme of the IMC

Day 1 - Dividing the daily life and routines in different activities	
AM	Introduction/Getting to know each other
	Common fears and challenges of parents/guardians of children with disabilities
PM	Assessing the activities children can do independently and how to nurture and support them
	Body-mind techniques to manage stress and promote emotional well being
	Short evaluation and reflection on the day
Day 2 - Exploring activities that people with disabilities can do by themselves and how to support them in those they can not	
AM	Creating objectives based on the challenges the children with disabilities are facing
	Practical tips for organizing and managing daily routines to empower parents/guardians and children
PM	Introduction to practical activities like money management, cleaning, and self-care – part 1
	Introduction to practical activities like money management, cleaning, and self-care – part 2
	Short evaluation and reflection on the day
Day 3 - Consultations to parents/guardians on overcoming personal common fears and doubts	
AM	Practical demonstrations and hands-on activities related to managing money and self-care
	Group discussions and sharing of experiences and challenges in implementing practical activities at home
PM	Part 1 Support mechanisms and mapping existing support services
	Part 2 Support mechanisms and mapping existing support services
	Short evaluation and reflection on the day
Day 4 – Agreeing on follow-up activities and mentorship	
AM	Case studies to explore effective strategies for fostering independence
	Creating individual strategies for personal growth and independence
PM	Follow up and Mentorship
	Wrap up and final evaluation of the course

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE INTENSIVE MENTORSHIP COURSE (IMC)

This document is designed for educators and organisers of the course, which explains the process of preparation, implementation, evaluation and follow up after the course. The profile of educators and organisers of the course can vary from very experienced to less experienced on the topic. Thus, the document provides a set of workshops that are explained systematic in order to ensure that the staff that is implementing the course is entirely familiarised with the content, topic and can deliver the course without obstacles.

The content and the topic of the course is targeting parents/guardians of people with disabilities, which are taking care, and permanently living with them. This course manual is based on the 'Handbook on independent living of young adults with disabilities' in which the background of the topic is explained in detail. The handbook provides theoretical and conceptual content for empowering parents/guardians in the process of support of the independence of people with disabilities. It is important to notice that parents/guardians of people with disabilities have a hard time and are lacking skills and knowledge to fully support their children in the process of independence. The staff implementing this course should bear in mind this information and create a safe and comfortable space for the participants in order for them to feel listened, understood and supported. Depending on the participants needs (parents/guardians), a caretaker or a special educator should be present during sessions in which children will be involved. The involvement of this person should be discussed with the parents/guardians. If the parents/guardians feel the need for an additional person to be present, then the caretaker or special educator should be involved.

The preparation phase of the course is crucial for successful implementation. During this phase, the educators should go over the course manual very carefully and in detail. They should visit the background documents recommended in each session and get as much familiarised as possible with the topic, the parents/guardians living situation and the process of independence. During this period, the organisers are carrying out the recruitment process and the logistical preparations for the course.

Important steps for the recruitment process:

- Prepare a call for participants containing details about the course, the target group, general location of the implementation (city, region and country), expected number of participants, period and expected results. When issuing the call for participants, the organisers should have in mind that sometimes the social medias may not be the best channel for reaching this target group. When mapping families that are having children with disabilities it is always a good idea to visit the Centre for social work and other professional centres, which are working with this target group so the outreach can be higher, and many people can be informed about the possibility.
- Prepare a template for the participants for gathering information about their age, location of residence, accommodation and food preferences, allergies, ability to attend and motivation, age of their child, type of disability, participation in previous courses/trainings, which will be shared in/with the open call. This will help the organisers to perform the logistical matters as suitable as possible to address the participant's needs;
- Address all logistical matters – exact location(s), coordination of staff and communication with participants, addressing the needs of the participants.

During the preparation process it is crucial to be in constant communication with the participants, informing them about all the steps the team is making in order to address everything that is needed to secure active participation and safe space for the participants.

Preparation meetings of educators and mentors

After the group is set and the organisers have all the information regarding the participants, meeting with the educators and the mentors should be organised. The background of the participants needs to be shared with them in order to make needed adjustments to the programme. During this period, the mentors and educators should consult on the programme and make sure that everyone understands their role and the programme in general.

Working spaces

The working room should be adequate to the needs of participants. When the participants are selected, the type of disabilities that the children are facing should be assessed. The organisers should choose a working room that is responding to the needs. If there is a person using wheelchair, the space should be adequate for them. If there are people, which are visual/hearing impaired, those sessions that are involving them should be planned accordingly. The working room should be a closed space so that no one except the participants can enter. The topic is sensitive, so a safe working space is very important for this group.

The working space for the mentoring meetings should be agreed on between mentors and families. Homes of the families are not recommended. Parents/guardians need to be focused on the meeting, and that can be hard if they are in their homes. It is better to organise these meetings in the office, in a bar, in nature or if needed online.

Programme of the IMC

All sessions of the IMC are described in detail, including the aim and objectives, session flow, needed materials, additional readings and recommendations for educators/trainers. During the implementation, it is important to follow the principals of non-formal education:

- **It is voluntary** – the participation in the course is not mandatory and all the participants are there by their own will;
- **Active participation** – encourage and motivate their participation and sharing as much as possible;
- **Group learning** – the environment should provide a space for the participants to also learn from each other;
- **Participant-centred** – the learning process is participant-centred. Make sure that the programme gets adjusted and flexible during implementation, based on the learning process of each participant.
- **Experiential learning** – through the practical exercises, provide an encouraging environment for the participants to learn by doing.
- **Reflection** – most important part of the learning process – to reflect on the process.

The course is designed to be implemented in 4 separate days. Having in mind that it contains learning, mentoring and practical performing of the knowledge and skills acquired, it is recommended to carry out the 4 training days in a time frame of 6-8 weeks. During the weeks between the training days, participants are working with their mentors on the provided tasks.

Having in mind different backgrounds and learning preferences of parents/guardians, it is important that educators are trained to transfer the content of the course in a simple and understandable manner leaving enough time for participants' questions and feedback. The sessions are planned to last for 90 minutes, but the educator should be open to prolonging if needed. If the sessions are prolonged the educator should provide also enough breaks so the participants can be fully focused.

Beside the parents/guardians, during some of the sessions, their children will also be present. The educators and the mentors should make sure that they also feel comfortable, do a needs assessment for them too, learn about what might trigger or disturb them and make sure that their needs are being addressed. The participation of people with disabilities in the scope of the course is very important for

achieving the goals. The practical work that the participants will do with their children mentored and guided by the educators and mentors will provide the expected results and the takeaways that the participants should gain after its completion. In those activities, it is important to pay attention to the process of organising the specific daily activities that parents/guardians are supporting their children with, regarding buying, cooking, cleaning, socializing, free time organising, evening activities, etc. When the children are part of the sessions, the sessions should last maximum 1 hour in order for them to be fully focused. The educator should provide breaks when needed.

Other important aspects of the course are reflection, self-reflection and evaluation. The educators should make short reflection session at the end of every training day by asking open-ended questions, listen carefully and take notes on the individual processes the participants share. This will provide the staff information about the adjustments needed the satisfaction of the participants, and also the advancements or decrements in the learning process. The educator should reflect with the participants on the given tasks and their progress during the following period. At the end of the course the educators should use the evaluation methods and activities provided in the course programme with the maximum possible anonymity, creating a trustful and safe environment in which the participants can feel comfortable to share, feel they are heard and understood.

The post-course mentoring phase is the last stage of the course implementation. It will provide to participants the needed support to implement new approaches and habits, and to educators and organisers a prolonged period for evaluation to confirm if the aim and objectives of the course are achieved or not, and to what extent. Based on this information, needed changes and adjustments of the course content and/or flow can be made.

Mentoring meetings should be organized once a month. Mentors should support participants in any challenges they are facing when implementing the action plans and daily and weekly schedules. Furthermore, explanation of the post-course mentoring process is essential in order for the participants to be active in seeking support, guidance and implementing their action plans. Mentors and participants should agree on what kind of support is needed.

This can include the following:

- scheduled one-on-one or group meetings;
- regular check-ins;
- support in assessment of the goals and activities planned for implementation by asking questions;
- providing measurement tools;
- sharing resources that can address the needs/challenges faced on the spot;
- providing support individually and with the group;
- providing problem-solving tools and guidance;
- celebrate the achievements of the participants with symbolic gestures;
- preparing the participants to transition to the self-sustaining mode;
- assessing the readiness of the participants to close the mentoring period and transition to self-sustaining mode.

At the end, the educators should offer closing milestones that are set at the end of the course – prepare the final reflection and adjustments to the action plans, to make sure that the participants are ready to continue with their individual work.

DEVELOPED SESSIONS OF THE INTENSIVE MENTORSHIP COURSE: “Empowering parents/guardians for the independent living of young adults with disabilities”

Day 1 - Dividing the daily life and routines in different activities

Day 1 focuses on getting to know each other, forming the group and creating a safe and encouraging working space, followed by discovering the common fears and challenges of parents/guardians of people with disabilities, assessing their daily life and capacities for independent performance of daily activities and building capacities for assessment and objective observation of personal abilities. On the first training day parents/guardians participate alone, without their children. The day is finalised with a session on body-mind techniques for overcoming stress and promoting emotional well-being.

Day 1 – Session 1: Introduction/Getting to know each other

Session Title: Introduction/Getting to know each other

Duration: 90 minutes

Background:

Getting familiar with the objectives of the course and getting to know the other participants is a crucial step for creating a pleasant atmosphere and a supportive working space for the entire course. The educators/trainers start the session with presenting themselves, and presenting the objectives of the course, as well as the detailed agenda of the course and of the first training day. On the first day only parents/guardians of people with disabilities participate.

Aim of the session: To introduce the programme and the background of the course to the participants, as well as to create space for getting to know each other.

Objectives of the session:

- To familiarise participants with the programme, the background of the course and the topics that will be covered;
- To encourage getting to know each other of the participants and the educators;
- To prepare participants for the execution of the programme.

Competences addressed:

- Communication skills;
- Teamwork;
- Literacy;
- Active listening;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Input on the programme;
- Group work;
- Work in pairs;
- Group discussion;
- Individual work.

Session flow:

I. Introduction of educators and participants (20 minutes)

The session starts with a personal introduction of the educator's background and expertise. This part of the session is performed in a non-formal setting, in which the educators are entitled to create an open and friendly atmosphere. After the educators present themselves, they give the participants a roll of toilet paper and ask each participant to take as much pieces as they want. The educator is not explaining why they are taking the paper when they are doing so. In this part, the toilet paper is given to the participants and the only information given is that they should take as many pieces as they want. After the round, the educator asks the participants to share their name, age and mention as many specific things about themselves as they have pieces of toilet paper. Except that, everyone should also

mention their role: participant, mentor or educator. This exercise will encourage participants to introduce themselves in a creative and engaging way and get to know the other participants.

II. Introduction of the programme and the background (10 minutes)

This activity starts with presenting the background of the course, the project and the importance of the course. The educators clearly inform participants about the process of creating the course and the project, background and research, as well as the handbook that is the theoretical base for the course. Then they present the course agenda session by session, and give basic background information for each day of the course. This can be done by writing down the title of each session on a piece of paper and sticking them on the wall/flipchart with indicated date/time/duration and coffee/lunch breaks, so that the agenda is visible for everyone at any time. The educators also present information about the mentoring meetings between the training days and after the entire course. The educator shares the information which family is matched with which mentor. The mentors are participating in all training days and support the participants in the individual work during the sessions.

III. Expectations, fears, contributions (15 minutes)

This activity can be done using post it papers. After presenting the programme, according to what was discussed during the presentation, the participants are asked to share their expectations, fears and contributions for the programme. The educator asks participants to take their seats. After that, he/she explains the next activity, which is sharing their expectations and fears of the course and potential contributions to it. The educator shares post-it papers in three different colours, one for each category. In a period of 5 minutes, participants should write down on the post-it notes their expectations, fears and contributions and stick them on a special place prepared by the educator beforehand on the wall. After all the participants have stuck the notes, the educator leads a discussion for each category, reads the notes and groups them by similarity. These notes are kept until the end of the course and are revisited at the end of the course to see if the expectations and fears were met/avoided and the contributions fulfilled.

IV. Speed dating (25 minutes)

Speed dating is a very useful method for getting to know each other. The educators split the group in two smaller groups and ask them to stand in two concentric circles, facing each other. Each participant needs to have a partner standing across from him or her. In case of an odd number of participants one of the educators or mentors should join the activity. After everyone is in position, the educator explains the rules:

1. The educator will ask a question.
2. Participants should talk about the question for 3 minutes.
3. After 3 minutes, the educator stops the group and asks the outside circle to move to their right/left – to the next person and asks a new question to be discussed.
4. This cycle repeats as much as the time allows it.

Questions that could be asked:

1. What is your favourite place in the world?
2. What is your favourite food that you can prepare?
3. Which country would you like to visit?
4. Which celebrity would you take out for lunch?
5. Close your eyes and guess your partner's eye colour.
6. How do you like your coffee/tea?
7. Compliment your partner.
8. What is your favourite object at home?
9. If you were an animal, which one would you be?
10. What is your biggest pet peeve?
11. What is your guilty pleasure?

12. What is your ideal vacation spot?
13. What is something that you wanted to do when you were a young adult that you still wish to accomplish?
14. Which season do you like the most?

V. Presenting pre-evaluation questionnaires (10 minutes)

During this activity, the educator presents the summary conclusions of the pre-evaluation questionnaires that all participants have filled-in before coming to this course. As the pre-evaluation questionnaire served as a guide for educators and mentors to adapt the whole IMC to the more specific needs expressed by participants. The educators and mentors are now able to address the (added) initiatives that address specific needs expressed during the pre-evaluation questionnaires.

If more detailed information from participants is needed for different elements of the IMC, the facilitators now ask participants potential additional questions that would further clarify participants' learning/mentoring needs.

VI. Wrap up (10 minutes)

During the wrap up, the educator should start with expressing gratitude to the participants for their active involvement in the session. The trainer can try to find something interesting or positive that the group or someone did and recognise their efforts and the way that they are contributing to the programme. If there was an issue that was not overcome during the session, the trainer should estimate the situation and decide whether to discuss it in the group or one on one with the person that raise the issue.

Materials needed: toilet paper, markers, paper, pens, flip charts, post-it notes in three colours (or lap top, projector and prepared board on Padlet), sticky tape.

Recommendations for future trainers/adult educators multiplying this session:

- Educators should read the session plan carefully and prepare all needed materials in advance. All handouts and supporting materials should be printed or digitally available for all participants since they will have to use them for the individual work.
- Parents/guardians of children with disabilities are a sensitive group to work with because of the many challenges they are facing on a daily basis. Educators should be understanding and supportive, especially in the beginning while the group dynamic is being created. This group may need time to start sharing their feelings regarding many difficulties they are facing. It also can happen that they are not familiar with non-formal education methods, so educators should be prepared and if needed to explain how this type of education works.

Day 1 – Session 2: Common fears and challenges of parents/guardians of children with disabilities

Session Title: Common fears and challenges of parents/guardians of children with disabilities

Duration: 90 minutes

Background:

In order to start learning and creating practical exercises and plans to encourage independence of young adults with disabilities, it is important to address as many fears and challenges of the parents/guardians as possible. The educator should be aware, that the target group has faced many challenges regarding this topic and there might be some clashes between the participants on certain details, as well as intense discussions. It is very important to maintain the dynamics of the group grounded and calm and facilitate the discussion in another direction.

Aim of the session: To provide a safe space for participants to express and to identify the common fears and challenges they are facing in their daily life.

Objectives of the session:

- To establish a safe space for the participants;
- To encourage sharing and comfort;
- To identify the most common fears and challenges of the participants.

Competences addressed:

- Active listening;
- Communication skills;
- Emotional intelligence;
- Analytical;
- Problem solving;
- Teambuilding.

Methodology and methods:

- Individual work;
- Group discussion.

Session flow:

I. Identifying fears and challenges (15 minutes)

The educator asks the participants to write down fears and challenges of their daily lives regarding the care of people with disabilities. Each fear and challenge should be written on a separate piece of paper. Each participant can write down as many fears and challenges as they want. After they write them down, they should put them in a box. There should be one box for fears and one box for challenges.

II. Group discussion about the fears and challenges (30 minutes)

After the papers are gathered, the educator asks participants to draw one paper out of each box – one paper with a fear and one with a challenge. Each participant needs to have at least one of each. In a circle, participants read aloud what is written on the papers and the group discusses the topic. The

educator should encourage the discussion asking 'Has someone else felt that/gone through that?' or 'What solution or advice can anyone contribute to the topic'.

III. Dividing the fears and challenges in categories (15 minutes)

After the discussion, the educator together with the participants, go through all papers of the fears and challenges and then group them into categories (similar fears/challenges together).

IV. Identifying and discussing the most common fears and challenges (20 minutes)

From the categories, the educator and the group identify the most common fears and challenges experienced by the participants and start an extensive discussion. The educator leads the discussion with open-ended questions such as:

- How did you feel about that?
- What triggered those feelings?
- How did you overcome the challenges?
- What was the most challenging/fearful aspect of it?
- What helped/helps you go through it?
- In your opinion, what kind of support would contribute to the situation and where can you find it?

V. Wrap up and conclusion (10 minutes)

The educator concludes the discussion and reflects on what was done and discussed so far.

Materials needed: 2 boxes, pens, markers, paper, post-it notes.

Recommendations for future trainers/adult educators multiplying this session:

- Sometimes, if needed, the educator should leave the discussion running (not stopping), even if it takes more time. This session can be very triggering and encouraging the participants to bring out their vulnerabilities in front of the group. It is important to show a lot of empathy and understanding for the participants and keep the group dynamics in a flow.
- For this session, the educator should prepare emotionally and accept the realities which the parents/guardians are living with compassion. The educator should try not to feel sorry for them or be angry with the system and the world. During the lunch break (which is planned after this session) educators can get together for a short reflection and discuss anything they feel they need to get rid of in order to restore their energy to continue working and supporting the participants. Educators should have in mind that they are in charge and they should be the one that are providing support to the participants, not the other way around. The lunch break is also a good opportunity for the participants to talk among themselves - peer support is a great way to overcome challenges and deal with strong emotions.

Day 1 – Session 3: Assessing the activities the children can do independently and how to nurture and support them

Session Title: Assessing the activities the children can do independently and how to nurture and support them

Duration: 90 minutes

Background:

This session is the starting point of understanding and encouraging independent life. Through an introduction into the subject and a short brainstorm on individual and general difficulties, participants should be able to use the reflection method in order to assess their daily routines. Parents/guardians of a person with disabilities are fully aware that they will have to take care of their child for their entire life. However, when thinking about "After Us" the vast majority of parents/guardians and relatives of people with disabilities experience a deep sense of anguish. The question is, "Who will take care of my child with disabilities when I am no longer here or when I can no longer assist them? Will siblings or other family members be able to take on that responsibility?"¹ This is why it is important to encourage the participants to assess the abilities and capacities of their children in an objective way.

Aim of the session: To assess the tasks that the children with disabilities are able to do independently and how to facilitate independence in more complex daily tasks.

Objectives of the session:

- To assess the abilities and capacities of the children of the participants;
- To encourage participants to think critically and objectively;
- To outline common challenges and setbacks that the children of the participants are facing in performing activities;
- To introduce participants to the "Life project";
- To encourage adopting different perspectives.

Competences addressed:

- Self-reflection;
- Citizenship competence;
- Teamwork;
- Planning and management skills;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Communication.

Methodology and methods:

- Individual and group work
- Discussion

Session flow:

I. Introduction of personal planning and personal assessment (10 minutes)

¹ „Handbook on independent living of young adults with disabilities“, Outreach Hannover e.V., Germany, 2023

The educator explains in short, the personal planning and assessment as a tool for developing capacities. The importance of mentioning the personal planning in this stage is to get the participants familiar with the concept and what that represents. With this background information, the participants will be able to understand the purpose of the activities in the following sessions, the importance of the personal planning and the concept of the “Life project” which is explained in the Handbook on independent living of young adults with disabilities. This includes the purpose of doing routines, schedules and assessment. After this short intro, the educator shares a previously prepared checklist of personal assessment and presents it on a projector. Furthermore, the educator should briefly explain the “Life project” concept.

II. Individual assessment and identifying of daily routines for children (60 minutes)

Part 1: Checklist for assessing the abilities of the children (30 minutes)

The educator hands out printed versions of the checklist provided below, and participants fill out the checklist to assess the skills and capacities of their child. The educator should first read and explain the items of the checklist to the participants. After the checklist is explained, he/she opens the floor for discussion and questions. When everything is clear, the participants proceed with filling in the checklist by themselves. The mentors support the families in this activity. Each of the mentors has 2 or 3 families to support, so they have to dedicate time to each family. This is a great way for the families to have also individual work, but also to be supported by the mentors when they have questions.

Annex 1 Checklist for assessing the abilities of the children

Can perform independently	Needs support	Cannot perform independently	
			The person is able to walk independently
			The person is able to communicate verbally
			The person is able to control their motoric
			The person is able to identify objects
			The person is able to understand visual communication
			The person is able to understand verbal communication
			The person is able to identify objects by touch
			The person is able to orient themselves in a room
			The person is able to orient themselves in an apartment/house
			The person is able to orient themselves in the neighbourhood
			The person is able to use transport
			The person is able to understand directions
			The person is able to use domestic technology
			The person is able to use mobile devices
			The person is able to comprehend logic
			The person is able to hold concentration
			The person is able to acknowledge and communicate emotions
			The person is able to assess the weather and temperature
			The person is able to use gadgets
			The person is able to read
			The person is able to write

Part 2: Daily and weekly schedule (30 minutes)

The educator presents the daily and weekly schedule (excel document). After the presentation, he/she opens the floor for questions and discussions. When the document is clear for the participants, they proceed in making a daily schedule and start with Monday. The educator gives out the daily and weekly schedules in which the participants fill out the daily routines for the first day of the week of their child. If laptops are available, participants are working directly in the excel format. If not, the educator prints copies of the schedule. In this session, participants are working only on Monday schedule. The rest of the days will be planned during the mentorship period between day 1 and day 2. The mentors are also supporting the participants in this activity.

The daily schedule which can be adapted for each day of the week is as follows:

Daily schedule of activities			
	Monday	Can do by themselves	Cannot perform independently
Morning	08:00-09:00		
	09:00-10:00		
	10:00-11:00		
	11:00-12:00		
Noon	12:00-13:00		
	13:00-14:00		
	14:00-15:00		
Afternoon	15:00-16:00		
	16:00-17:00		
	17:00-18:00		
Evening	18:00-19:00		
	19:00-20:00		
	20:00-21:00		
Night	21:00-22:00		

III. Discussion and wrap-up (20 minutes)

This session ends with concluding the session's outcomes and leading the participants to point out the benefits they have found in the exercises and the sharing of knowledge. The educator emphasises the objectives of this session and the importance of life project, including the "After us" period. Then, the educator asks participants if they found the activity useful and encourage them to think how they can implement the gained knowledge in practice. At the end of the session, he/she provides information about the mentorship process and explains to the participants that the other days of the week (from the weekly schedule) will be planned in the period between training day 1 and training day 2 with the support of the mentors. Information about the mentorship process which should happen in the next one or two weeks is given to the participants. The families are informed that the mentors have the personal numbers of each of them and that they will get in touch after this day to organise for the mentoring meeting.

Materials needed: pens and paper, projector, checklist for assessing the abilities of the children, and printed versions of Annex 1_Daily and weekly schedule.

Background documents and further reading:

- Handbook on independent living of young adults with disabilities, Outreach Hannover e.V., Germany, 2023, <https://outreach-hannover.de/our-publications/>

Recommendations for future trainers/adult educators multiplying this session:

- The educator should read and print (1 per participant) the Checklist for assessing the abilities of the children and the Daily and weekly schedule (sheet for Monday and the week) in advance. While explaining the content and the use of the two documents, the educators have to make sure that participants understand how to use it, and if needed an example of a filled-out document can be given. Furthermore, he/she should make sure to convey the purpose of the task in order for the participants to be motivated to accomplish the task and develop schedules that they and their children can actually benefit from. It is very important to mention multiple times to the participants to think of minimal steps and to appreciate any kind of progress.

Day 1 – Session 4: Body-mind techniques to manage stress and promote emotional wellbeing

Session Title: Body-mind techniques to manage stress and promote emotional wellbeing

Duration: 100 minutes

Background:

Parents/guardians of children with disabilities often experience unique stressors and emotional challenges. This session aims to provide them with body-mind techniques that can help manage stress, enhance emotional well-being, and promote self-care. Educators and especially mentors should have a good understanding of stress management techniques, mindfulness practices, and the specific challenges faced by parents/guardians of children with disabilities.

Aim of the session: To equip parents/guardians of children with disabilities with practical body-mind techniques to reduce stress, enhance emotional well-being, and foster self-care.

Objectives of the session:

- To introduce parents/guardians to body-mind techniques for stress management;
- To provide practical exercises and tools for promoting emotional well-being;
- To encourage self-care practices and cultivate resilience in parents/guardians;
- To create a supportive environment for sharing experiences and insights.

Competences addressed:

- Stress management and self-care;
- Communication skills;
- Analytical;
- Personal social, and learning to learn competence;
- Resilience building and coping strategies;
- Empathy and support for others;
- Active listening and communication.

Methodology and methods:

- Group work;
- Discussion;
- Guided visualisation.

Session flow:

I. Introduction and icebreaker activity (20 minutes)

The educator should open the session with a non-formal chat. After that, he/she should set the session's tone and goals and start with the icebreaker activity "Share a self-care practice that helps you relax and unwind." He/she asks participants to think and share about what is a thing they do and usually makes them feel better, a thing which calms them down, makes them smile, gives energy, or helps stop repetitive and negative thoughts. The educator invites participants to share their practices.

II. Mindfulness and breathing exercise (65 minutes)

The educator introduces the benefits of mindfulness for stress reduction and emotional well-being. After that follows a guided mindfulness exercise, focusing on deep breathing and body awareness.

Step-by-step exercise explanation:

Introduction (5 minutes): The educator begins with explaining the purpose of the exercise, which is to collectively engage in mindfulness and promote relaxation as a group, and emphasises the importance of being present in the moment.

Breath awareness (5 minutes): The educator instructs participants to focus their attention on their natural breath. He/she asks them to notice the sensation of the breath as it enters and leaves their bodies, and encourages them to let go of distractions and bring their full awareness to the breath.

Group breath coordination (15 minutes): The educator explains that he/she will guide the group through a coordinated breathing exercise, the "Journey of Breath." Inhale and exhale together as a group, creating a synchronised rhythm. He/she asks participants to close their eyes and continue to lead the group with the following instructions:

- Inhale slowly through the nose for a count of four.
- Exhale slowly through the mouth for a count of four.

Explanation for the educator:

Repeat the pattern several times, ensuring that the group breathes in unison. Encourage participants to focus on the collective rhythm and the sense of unity in the room. After few inhales and exhales until four, the number of count for exhales is increased by two. The next step is to exhale and count until six, then after couple of exhales, continue with counting until eight.

Body scan (10 minutes): Now the educator is directing the participants to breathe freely in their own rhythm, and leads the group through a body scan meditation. He/she instructs participants to direct their attention to each part of their body, starting from the toes and moving up to the head. While breathing, the educator is pointing out each of the body parts and saying to relax them.

Example: direct your attention towards your toes and relax them, continue towards the whole feet and relax, feel the lower leg, relax, continue with the knee, feel the joints and relax, continue to the thighs, and relax, feel the energy and the air going through your stomach and the internal organs, breath and relax, continue towards the lungs, feel the air, relax, feel your throat, the inside of your mouth, the jaw, the teeth, the tongue and the lips and relax. Continue towards your nose, feel the air and breathe. Feel the air circulating through your body. Continue to your eyes, eye lashes and relax, feel your head and the neck and relax.

Then, he/she asks them to notice if there is any tension or sensation in the body, and to consciously relax each body part as they go.

Guided visualisation (10 minutes): The educator continues to guide the group through a peaceful and calming visualisation exercise, describe a serene and tranquil place, such as a beach or a forest, and ask participants to vividly imagine themselves in that place, engaging all their senses.

Sensory awareness (5 minutes): After the visualisation, the educator should invite participants to open their eyes gently while maintaining a relaxed state, and then ask them to become aware of their senses and their surroundings, observing any sounds, smells, or sensations.

Sharing and reflection (5 minutes): The educator allows participants to share their experiences or reflections on the practice if they feel comfortable and encourage them to express any insights or feelings that arose during the exercise.

Gratitude and closing (5 minutes): The educator should close the exercise by thanking participants for their participation and emphasizing the benefits of mindfulness and collective breathing, then invite each participant to express one thing they are grateful for in that moment.

Closing words (5 minutes): At the end, the educator should offer some closing words of encouragement and mindfulness reminders and encourage participants to carry the sense of calm and presence with them as they return to their daily lives.

III. Group Discussion and Reflection (15 minutes)

Before ending the session and the first training day, educators start a short group discussion on the impact of body-mind techniques and self-care practices. He/she encourages participants to share insights, challenges, and ideas for integrating these techniques into their daily lives.

Materials needed: pens and paper, prepared guided visualisation text, set the room for the activity.

Background documents and further reading:

- Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat-Zinn
 - <http://www.ird.mcu.ac.th/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Full-Catastrophe-Living-PDFDrive-.pdf>
- Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself by Kristin Neff
 - <https://debphelps.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Self-Compassion -The-Proven-Pow-Kristin-Neff.pdf>

Recommendations for future trainers/adult educators multiplying this session:

- The educator should be well prepared and do research on how to do breathing and guided visualisation exercises. If educators are not experienced in leading visualisations they should prepare the text for it.
- Adapt the body-mind techniques and activities based on the specific needs and preferences of the target group.
- Consider incorporating personal stories or testimonials from parents/guardians who have found success with these techniques.
- Create a safe and non-judgmental space for participants to share their experiences and challenges.
- Provide additional resources and references for participants to explore further on their own. This could be articles, videos or audio recordings.
- Encourage ongoing support networks.
- When introducing mindfulness, the educators and mentors should be ready to also guide participants for future use of it with added explanations like: Any deep relaxation and mindfulness meditation seeks regular practicing after person gains long term positive effect on mental health and emotional well-being. The least we can do at the beginning of exercises is to show readiness to try it, willingness, curiosity, open mind... Negative attitude can hinder effects of relaxation and reinforce the resistance toward them.

Day 2 - Exploring activities that people with disabilities can do by themselves and how to support them in those they can not

Day 2 is dedicated to exploring the activities that people with disabilities can do by themselves and how their parents/guardian can support them with those they cannot perform independently. Through the in-depth learning and planning according to the needs of the person, the first part of the day is going to cover the process of creating objectives based on the challenges the children with disabilities are facing. The process continues with tips and tricks for organising and managing daily routines. These 2 sessions are dedicated to the parents/guardians. Their children are joining the last 2 sessions of the day which are focused on planning the weekly and daily schedules together with the children. These sessions include planning activities related to budgeting and buying, cooking, cleaning, socialising, free time organising, evening activities, etc. The children are involved in the last 2 sessions because it is important that they agree with the plan and contribute to its creation. The plans are for them, and they should be developed with them.

For this day organisers should consider involving caretakers, special educators or other professionals to join the sessions in order to ensure quality and full participation of the participants and their children.

Day 2 – Session 1: Creating objectives based on the challenges the children with disabilities are facing

Session Title: Creating objectives based on the challenges the children with disabilities are facing

Duration: 120 minutes

Background:

During training day 1 and the mentorship process, which happened in between training days 1 and 2, participants have already assessed the daily and weekly schedules. Based on the schedule, the participants are continuing working on assessing and identifying the needs of their children. This session will continue the process and will introduce the method of setting SMART objectives based on the challenges each of them are facing.

Aim of the session: To create space for learning to develop specific objectives that address the challenges the children with disabilities are facing.

Objectives of the session:

- To introduce the process of setting an objective by using the SMART method;
- To ensure that participants create specific objectives that address the needs and challenges their children face;
- To ensure safety and support in the process of developing objectives.

Competences addressed:

- Active listening
- Problem-solving
- Analytical;
- Defining objectives
- Literacy competence;
- Communication skills;
- Teamwork.

Methodology and methods:

- Individual work
- Group work

Session flow:

I. Introduction of the day and feedback collection from the mentorship (30 minutes)

The educator opens the day and first asks participants to share information on how they have spent the period between the 2 session days – how did they find the mentorship process and the individual work regarding the daily/weekly schedule assessment. Then, he/she introduces the focus of the working day and presents the agenda. All participants should have a fully assessed weekly schedule until now.

II. Identifying and listing key challenges our children are facing (30 minutes)

After the feedback collection and presented schedule, participants are invited to make a list of challenges which their children face while performing the activities from the daily schedule regarding

buying, cooking, cleaning, socializing, free time organising, evening activities, etc. Together with their mentors, participants should think about all possible challenges their children are facing and make a list. Then they should choose the 3 most important challenges from the list and continue working on them. They should choose challenges related to those activities in which their children can improve in order to become more independent.

III. Setting up objectives based on the challenges – introduction to SMART (60 minutes)

After the 3 most important challenges were chosen, parents/guardians will work on transforming them into objectives with the support of the mentors. The educator announces that they will need to complete this task, but before that comes, he/she gives an input on how to develop objectives and presents the SMART objectives method.

The acronym SMART stands for:

- Specific – Who and what?
- Measurable – How much/many?
- Achievable – How?
- Relevant – Why?
- Time-bound – When?

When explaining this method, the educator emphasises that when developing an objective, participants should ask these 5 questions in order to get the best possible formulation of an objective. While explaining, the educator is asking 3 of the participants to share one of their challenges and formulates the objective for each of them in order to give an example. After the presentation, the parents/guardians are working individually and setting the objectives according to the challenges. The educator and the mentors are present during this period and giving support to the participants as they are working on the objectives.

Materials needed: paper, pens, flipchart, markers.

Background documents and further reading:

- Handbook on independent living of young adults with disabilities, Outreach Hannover e.V., Germany, 2023, <https://outreach-hannover.de/our-publications/>

Recommendations for future trainers / adult educators multiplying this session:

- Educators and mentors have to communicate during the mentoring period and use the independent work outcomes of the participants as a base for setting the sessions. In this case, it means that they should go through the assessments of the daily/weekly schedules before the second training day familiarise themselves with the daily/weekly dynamic of the families. These insights should be used for planning the sessions.
- Educators should be skilled in setting SMART objectives, be able to explain the advantages and the process flow, as well as to give examples.

Day 2 – Session 2: Practical tips for organising and managing daily routines to empower parents/guardians and children

Session Title: Practical tips for organising and managing daily routines to empower parents/guardians and children

Duration: 60 minutes

Background:

In order to easily achieve the set objectives, participants will be provided with practical tips for creating and implementing the activities at home. By discovering techniques, systematic explanation and pedagogical methods, participants will gain skills and knowledge that are very useful when it comes to organising and managing daily routines. This session will go more in depth when it comes to organising specific activities regarding buying, cooking, cleaning, socialising, free time organising, evening activities, etc.

Aim of the session: To provide practical advice and structure on how to efficiently organise daily routines through empowering both parents/guardians and their children.

Objectives of the session:

- To introduce beneficial tips for organising and managing daily routines;
- To introduce efficient time management plans;
- To develop skills for assessment of needs.

Competences addressed:

- Self-empowerment;
- Organizational skills;
- Literacy competence;
- Entrepreneurial competence;
- Time-management skills;
- Communication and collaboration.

Methodology and methods:

- Input;
- Presentation;
- Practical exercises.

Session flow:

I. How to introduce activities to a person with disabilities (15 minutes)

The educators provide an input on tips and tricks on how to introduce an activity to a person with disabilities. They will describe the following methods on how to introduce activities to a person with disabilities:

- **Visual supports:** Incorporate visual aids such as pictures, diagrams, or written instructions to enhance understanding and communication. Visual supports can be particularly helpful for individuals with cognitive or communication disabilities.

- **Hands-on experiences**: Encourage exploration with touch and hands-on engagement by providing sensory materials or objects that are suitable to different abilities. This can facilitate learning and participation for individuals with sensory impairments or physical disabilities.
- **Multi-sensory approaches**: Engage multiple senses during the activity. For example, use sounds, elements of touch, and visuals simultaneously to create a more comprehensive and accessible experience for participants with sensory disabilities.
- **Adaptive equipment and assistive technology**: Utilise adaptive equipment or assistive technology devices that are appropriate for the activity and the individual's needs. These tools can help individuals with physical disabilities or sensory impairments actively participate and overcome barriers.
- **Peer support and collaboration**: Encourage peer support and collaboration by pairing people with disabilities with their peers without disabilities. This fosters a sense of inclusivity, promotes social interaction, and allows mutual learning and support.
- **Break down activities into smaller steps**: If an activity involves multiple steps or complex instructions, break it down into smaller, manageable tasks. This approach can make the activity less overwhelming and easier to follow for individuals with cognitive or attention-related disabilities.
- **Visual timers and countdowns**: Use visual timers or countdown sounds to help individuals with time management and transitioning between activities. These visual aids provide a clear and predictable structure, reducing anxiety and facilitating smoother transitions.
- **Communication strategies**: Use communication strategies that align with the individual's needs and abilities. This may include using alternative communication methods such as sign language, visual supports, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, or adapted communication boards.
- **Positive reinforcement and individualised feedback**: Provide positive reinforcement and individualised feedback throughout the activity to acknowledge progress and motivate them. Give specific feedback to each individual's needs and abilities, focusing on their strengths and achievements.
- **Continuous assessment and flexibility**: Continuously assess the person's engagement and adapt the activity as needed. Be flexible and open to modifying the activity on the spot to accommodate any unforeseen challenges or individual requirements.

II. **Practical exercises for managing daily routines and memory (45 minutes)**

This activity presents a variety of types of exercises for planning and managing the daily routines, covering also memory exercises. Examples of the exercises should be printed before the session – one exercise per paper – and put in a bowl/hat/cotton bag. The number of printed exercises depends on the number of participants – there should be one printed paper per participant. Each exercise should be printed 2 times, for example, if there are 20 participants, 10 exercises are needed.

The educator asks the participants to take one paper out of the bowl/hat/bag, and to pair up with the person that has the same exercise. The pairs read the exercises and discuss about them. After a while the pairs come together, read the exercise to the group and what they discussed. The educators can ask the following questions during the discussion:

- How do you understand this?
- Has anyone used it in the past?
- Was it successful? Why yes and why not?
- Does anyone have other examples on how the discussed exercise can be beneficial?

Some of the exercise may be disused more, some may be discussed less. This depends on the interest and the background of the participants. The idea with this part is to present the different exercises/methods, which they can use, not to master them. In the mentorship process, each of the participants can focus on one or two exercises/methods.

After the discussion, the educator wraps up the session with the following questions:

- How useful were these methods for you?
- How can you use them in your everyday life?
- Which one were the most interesting one's for you?

Proposed activities are the following:

- **Daily Routine Planner:** Create a visual or written daily routine planner that outlines the activities and tasks for each day. Use colours, symbols, or pictures to make it more accessible. Encourage the individual to refer to the planner regularly, checking off completed tasks and using it as a guide for their daily routine.
- **Task Prioritisation Exercise:** Provide a list of tasks and ask the individual to prioritise them based on their importance and urgency. This exercise helps them practice decision-making, organisation, and understanding the order of tasks in their daily routine.
- **Memory Games and Exercises:** Engage in memory games and exercises specifically designed to enhance memory skills. This can include activities like memory matching games, word recall exercises, or memorising and reciting a short list of items. There are also online resources and mobile applications available for memory training.
- **Memory Aids and Techniques:** Teach the use of memory aids and techniques such as mnemonic devices, acronyms, or visualisation techniques to improve memory retention. Encourage the individual to apply these strategies in their daily life, particularly for remembering important information or tasks.
- **Breaking Tasks into Steps:** Practice breaking down complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps. This exercise helps individuals with cognitive disabilities or difficulties in executive functioning to approach tasks more systematically. Guide them through the process of breaking down tasks and assist them in creating a checklist of steps to follow.
- **Repetition and Review:** Encourage regular repetition and review of important information or routines. Repeating tasks and information can help reinforce memory and promote retention. Set aside specific times for review and use reminders or alarms to prompt individuals to practice reviewing important information.
- **Utilizing Technology:** Introduce the use of technology and assistive devices to support memory and daily routines. This can include setting up reminders on smartphones or using specialised apps designed to assist with organization and time management. Explore options that best align with the individual's needs and preferences.
- **Real-Life Practice:** Provide opportunities for individuals to practice managing their daily routines in real-life situations. This can involve tasks such as planning and preparing a meal, managing personal finances, or organising their belongings. Offer guidance and support as needed, gradually encouraging independence.
- **Journaling:** Encourage the individual to keep a journal or notebook where they can write down important information, tasks, or reflections on their daily experiences. Regular journaling helps improve memory recall and provides a record of their routines and activities.
- **Seek Professional Guidance:** Depending on the specific disabilities and challenges, consider involving professionals such as occupational therapists, cognitive therapists, or rehabilitation specialists. These professionals can provide tailored exercises and strategies to address specific memory and daily routine management needs.

Materials needed flipcharts, markers, pens, paper, projector, list of Examples of practical activities, bowl/bag.

Background documents and further reading:

Memory activities:

- Mobile application – Memory games: Brain training
 - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.memory.brain.training.games&hl=en&gl=US&pli=1>
- Mobile application – Elevate – brain training games
 - <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/elevate-brain-training-games/id875063456>
- Jigsaw puzzles – can be bought in a store
- Working Memory Training in Children with Mild Intellectual Disability, Through Designed Computerized Program - <https://irj.uswr.ac.ir/article-1-540-en.pdf>
- 22 brain exercises to improve memory, cognition, and creativity
 - <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/brain-exercises>

Methods for teaching people with disabilities:

- Helping children with disability learn skills: practical strategies
 - <https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability/school-play-work/learning-behaviour/teaching-skills-to-children-with-disability>
- Teaching Strategies for Students with Disabilities in Regular Classes
 - <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation.aspx?paperid=117809>

Creative tools:

- Creative tool for designing images, videos, etc. www.canva.com
- Creative tool for developing presentations www.prezi.com
- Creative tool for developing presentations and visual materials www.mural.co

Recommendations for future trainers / adult educators multiplying this session:

- Educators should prepare flipcharts or papers with visuals for the first activity “How to introduce activities to a person with disabilities”. They should use creative tools to present everything in this session, in order to keep the attention and focus of the participants.

Day 2 – Session 3: Introduction to practical activities like money management, cleaning, and self-care

Session Title: Introduction to practical activities like money management, cleaning, and self-care

Participants: Parents/guardians of people with disabilities and their children. This is the first session of the training that involves the children as well. Since it can be hard for the children to focus, a 30-min break is planned between the 2 parts of the session.

Duration: 130 minutes + 30 minutes' break between two parts of the session

Background:

The importance of money management, cleaning and self-care are one of the key points of independence and self-support. These three components would make a person financially, personally and socially independent. They will be able to plan, earn and spend money, acquire cleaning skills and self-care skills in order to eliminate the dependence from other people to take care of them. The steps required to achieve independence need to focus on organising specific activities regarding buying, cooking, cleaning, socialising, free time organising, evening activities, etc.

Aim of the session: To raise awareness and provide practical tips on how to manage daily activities that are required for independent living

Objectives of the session:

- To introduce practical activities to the parents/guardians on how the person with disabilities can organise their financial, personal and social independence;
- To be able to apply practical tips efficiently in the daily routines;
- To give participants space to detect what cannot be accomplished independently;
- To be able to figure out solutions for a successful achievement of independence.

Competences addressed:

- Financial management;
- Self-awareness
- Mathematical competence;
- Entrepreneurship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Problem-solving;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Energiser;
- DIY Activities;
- Group work and discussion.

Session flow:

I. PART 1 – DIY Activities: Introduction and Energiser (30 minutes)

Educators start the session with a short introduction and welcome the children that are joining the training for the first time. They invite participants to introduce themselves by saying their name and

their interests/passion. After everyone is introduced the educator presents the plan for the session. Then he/she continues with a quick energiser to make sure everyone feeling safe in the working place. A list of energisers can be found in the “Background documents and further reading” section, and an adequate energiser, based on the group’s specific needs, should be chosen. The educator will know the type of disabilities the children are facing right after the participants are selected for the programme. This will help him/her to select and prepare a suitable energiser for this session, as well as for the other sessions that include an energiser.

II. PART 1: DIY Activities (35 minutes)

This part of the session is focused on presenting DIY activities for the parents/guardians to teach their children, so they can apply them on their own. The educator gives the **Prioritising and budgeting** printed sheets to the participants. Children will be answering the questions while the parents/guardians are helping them understand it, and writing it down for the ones which cannot do it for themselves. The mentors are supporting the families in the work. This session is a combination of group and individual family work. The educator will be reading questions, lead a short brainstorming with the entire group for each question, after which time is given to participants to write down their answers. The table/sheet looks as follows:

Number	What do I want to buy?	Why do I need it? Do I really need it?	How much money I need for it?	Do I have the money to buy it?
1.				
2.				
3.				

The educator brainstorms with the group what the person needs money for: What do I need to buy? In a plenary discussion, the educator opens the discussion with ideas on what do they usually buy and what would they like to buy. Some of the participants are invited to share their ideas. After this, the educator should give some time for the participants to write the answer on the template. Each of the participants should write down 3 things they need to buy.

- Is it necessary? What is more important than the rest on this list? Again, the participants should have some time to write the answer on the list.
- Planning: How much money do I need for them? The educator should give time after the question for the participants to write the answer.
- How can I earn the money? Do I have the money to buy it (monthly allowance, work, etc.)? The educator gives time to the children and their parents/guardians to discuss.
- Prioritising and Budgeting: What can I prioritise from the list? What do I need the most?

After all of the questions are answered a 30 minutes’ break follows.

III. PART 2 – Weekly and daily schedules: Individually adjusting new methods (30 minutes)

After introducing the template for budgeting, participants continue working on the schedules for cleaning and self-care (given in the first day). The educator together with the mentors should support participants in creating the daily/weekly plans with routines and activities on how to support the

person with disabilities to achieve independence. They should provide feedback to the participants and guide them to improvement.

Weekly and daily schedule templates

Participants open the blank document where they have the weekly and daily schedule (or printed tables are provided). Based on the assessment, they create weekly and daily schedules for cleaning and self-care. The participants are choosing two activities and the days they want to do them. For example: activities for cleaning the room. The educator gives examples to the participants, which they can choose from. He/she should have in mind that the activities should be divided into tasks and explained as concise as possible. For example, the activity “cleaning the room” should be divided into several tasks so that the participants can easier plan and carry out the activity.

Cleaning the room can be divided in:

- making the bed
- folding clothes and laundry and placing them in the wardrobe
- whipping dust and vacuuming
- changing the bed and pillow sheets
- cleaning the windows

Participants can add other tasks that are part of the proposed activity.

The educator can present several examples that are related to buying, cooking, cleaning, socialising, free time organising, evening activities, etc. Participants should choose two activities and make a plan in the weekly and daily schedule.

IV. Discussion and Wrap-up (35 minutes)

For the last part of the session and closing of the second training day, the educator invites 2-3 participants to share the plans they developed during the session. If more participants are interested to present their plans, the educator should ask the group if they agree with prolonging the session for a bit (this depends on the energy of the group, but also on the fact if they have some obligations after the training).

Educators can use following questions afterwards for a discussion:

- How was the activity for you?
- What was most interesting?
- What was most challenging?
- What will help you to keep up with this schedule in the future?

Since participants with disabilities participated in the session, educators should prepare various methods for the wrap up. He/she can give papers to the participants so they can draw how they feel and how this experience was for them. Another possible method can be that they can do a movement, make a facial expression, sing a song and similar (needs to be adjusted to the needs of the group).

Materials needed: pens, paper, flipcharts, markers, printed version of the daily and weekly schedule and Annex on Budgeting and prioritising.

Background documents and further reading:

- Cents and Sensibility – A guide to money management for people with disabilities
 - <https://www.fliconline.org/documents/patffinancialeducationbooklet-final.pdf>
- Practical money skills – Lesson three – Budgeting your money (teacher’s guide)
 - https://www.practicalmoneyskills.com/assets/pdfs/lessons/lev_5/L5TeachersGuide3.pdf
- List of energizers:
 - <https://www.sessionlab.com/library/energiser>

Recommendations for future trainers/adult educators multiplying this session:

- The educators should choose an energiser in which all participants, depending on their abilities, can participate in.
- After this working day, the participants continue working on developing plans for buying, cooking, cleaning, socialising, free time organising, evening activities, etc., with the support of their mentors. It is very important that the children are actively involved in the planning process together with their parents/guardians and the mentors.

Day 3 - Consultations to parents/guardians on overcoming personal common fears and doubts

Day 3 is focusing on consultations of parents/guardians on overcoming personal common fears and doubts about the life project of their child. The first part of the day revisits the work done until now. This is in order to check in with the participants about the work they have done in between the two training days. Furthermore, the process of planning pulls out the fears and doubts of the parents/guardians, so the second part of the day aims to provide space for sharing and learning about support mechanisms and how to find/create them. This day is focused on parents/guardians of people with disabilities, and their children are not involved in this training day.

Day 3 – Session 1: Practical demonstrations and hands-on activities related to managing money, cleaning and self-care

Session Title: Practical demonstrations and hands-on activities related to managing money, cleaning and self-care

Duration: 90 minutes

Background:

During this session participants will get familiar with the action plans which are an integral part of the individual life projects for their children. Action plans are important for setting up a clear structure for successful implementation of the set objectives. In the action plan, timeline, responsible people, location and concrete activities are defined, in order to be able to measure the success of the implemented activities.

Aim of the session: To create concrete action plans to support the parents/guardians to successfully implement the activities from the daily weekly schedule.

Objectives of the session:

- To reflect on the provided mentorship process and training on supporting children of disabilities in independent living;
- To understand how to individually support hands-on activities related to money-management and, cleaning and self-care;
- To create space for creating concrete action plans for hands-on activities;
- To support parents/guardians on the activities of their children for their independency.

Competences addressed:

- Financial management;
- Mathematical competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Problem-solving;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Reflection and theory-recap;
- Individual work – creating action plans.

Session flow:

I. Introduction (10 minutes)

The educator opens the day and presents the agenda for the day. After that, participants are asked to share information on how they have spent the period between the 2 session days – how did they find the mentorship process and the individual work regarding the development of the new daily/weekly schedules. All participants should have several fully developed weekly schedules until now.

The educator asks open-ended questions regarding the topics covered during training day 2:

- How can you recap the previous days and the work done in the meantime?
- Does everything fit in the plan and schedule?
- What is missing in the process of planning for you?

- What is remaining unclear for you?

If there is no time to answer all questions, the educators should use the method of parking lot. They should print or draw a picture of a parking lot and ask the participants to write their questions on a post-it note and park them on the parking lot, signed by the person who is parking the question. During the next activity, the educators should approach the participants who asked the question and dedicate time and attention to make it clear.

II. Practical Implementation (60 minutes)

After a short recap of the work done so far, the educator presents the action plan template that will be used during the day. The action plan is divided into 5 important parts:

- What do I and my children want to improve?
- How will we achieve it?
- Who and what can help us?
- When do we want this to be achieved?
- Where do we want to achieve this?

The working sheet given to participants looks as follows:

No.	What do I and my children want to improve?	How will we achieve it?	Who and what can help us?	When do we want this to be achieved?	Where do we want to achieve this?
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

Participants start to work individually on the action plans. This activity should be very strongly focused on the individual work of the participants and the educators and mentors should work with every participant one-on-one in order to prepare their action plans and incorporate everything they learned and assessed in the plans. Parents/guardians are revisiting the objectives they have set during the second training day, and based on them they start to work on the actions plans. Each participant sets activities based on the objectives. The activities should be as detailed as possible and to follow the SMART concept. By answering the questions above, they should divide the activities in sub-activities and create a plan for their implementation.

During the working process, the educators and mentors should go through each of the participant's plans and schedules thoroughly and discuss possible improvements. They should make sure that every participant has received appreciation about the work done and avoid using negative feedback. Instead, they should use positive and encouraging vocabulary to present possible improvements in the participant's outputs. Example: They should not use sentences like: 'Don't use this sentence here.' but use 'What do you think about this sentence?' or, 'Maybe it would sound better in this part.'

III. Conclusion and Wrap-up (20 minutes)

Before concluding the session, the educator asks participants to take a deep breath. He/she mentions that planning is a very demanding process, but when done on time and properly it makes the implementation of activities easier. Participants can ask questions, share their concerns regarding the action plan, and the educators and mentors give feedback and announce that during the mentoring process they will continue to work on the action plans.

Materials needed: pens, paper, flipchart-picture of a parking lot, post-it notes, and templates of the action plan.

Background documents and further reading:

- List of energisers: <https://www.sessionlab.com/library/energiser>

Recommendations for future trainers/adult educators multiplying this session:

- Educators and mentors should not use negative vocabulary, be constructive and gentle with providing feedback. They should make sure that everyone feels comfortable and is receiving the full support needed.

Day 3 – Session 2: Group discussions and sharing of experiences and challenges in implementing practical activities at home

Session Title: Group discussions and sharing of experiences and challenges in implementing practical activities at home

Duration: 90 minutes

Background:

After intensive work on the documents supporting the independent living (the daily/weekly plan and the action plan), this session should provide a space for deep discussion in a more non-formal setting. This session aims to provide a less intensive programme, in order for the participants to reflect and share. This session is necessary to create a supportive environment after a lot of input and work done in the process. It is going to reduce the stress affecting the work and build the participants' self-confidence.

Aim of the session: To create space for discussion and sharing, as well as contribute to reducing the insecurities, self-doubt and stress that might potentially occur during or after the course.

Objectives of the session:

- To provide a safe environment for sharing of personal experiences and challenges;
- To reflect on what the participants have achieved so far and encourage positive atmosphere;
- To encourage openness and building of a support group between the participants;
- To boost the self-confidence of the participants.

Competences addressed:

- Communication;
- Critical thinking;
- Teamwork;
- Self-reflection;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Group discussion
- Sharing experiences and challenges

Session flow:

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

After the previous session, educators continue on this session by mediating a relaxed and judgement-free environment in which every participant is enabled to share and reflect freely. Educators should start the session with a calming speech about the importance of rest and self-gratitude. If necessary, a short energiser can be included to make the group feel more comfortable. The list of the energisers can be found in the "Background documents and further reading" section. After that, they should set up the mood for sharing. It is beneficial if the educator shares one personal experience or story, so that the participants feel more comfortable to share next.

II. Sharing (50 minutes)

The educator should encourage participants to share their personal experiences in implementing activities at home before and after starting the course and their outcomes, challenges and successes. As stated before, if the group is still not comfortable with sharing, educators should share more of their personal experiences and relate to some of the examples examined in the previous sessions/days. Educators should explain to the participants that sharing will bring appreciation of their actions and will benefit their mental health, as well as their motivation to continue succeeding. Sharing outcomes and coping mechanisms will always be beneficial for someone else dealing with the same/similar challenges.

III. Identification and reflection on previously received support (30 minutes)

After sharing personal experiences, educators should lead the conversation in the direction of identifying support mechanisms. Following questions can be used:

1. What helped you in that situation?
2. Whom did you contact for support?
3. Which government institution was available?
4. What did you do?
5. Did someone offer something?
6. What was the first thought when you encountered the situation?
7. Which services did you use?

IV. Wrap-up (5 minutes)

The educator should conclude the discussion with identifying the support mechanisms that the participants used in the past. During the discussion, he/she should write down all the mentioned support mechanisms on a flipchart paper.

Materials needed: pens, papers, flipchart papers, markers.

Background documents and further reading:

- List of energizers:
<https://www.sessionlab.com/library/energiser/>

Recommendations for future trainers/adult educators multiplying this session:

- Depending on how out-spoken the group is, the educators should facilitate the sharing (if necessary through questions) while providing and mediating a relaxed and judgement-free environment in which every participant is enabled to share and reflect freely.

Day 3 – Session 3: Support mechanisms and mapping existing support services

Session Title: Support mechanisms in addressing personal fears and doubts

Duration: 160 minutes

Background:

Important segments of the personal life project are the available support mechanisms and services. Parents/guardians should be supported by their mentors in the in-depth analysis of existing mechanisms and services in their region/country. The support mechanisms are a resourceful tool, which serves as a pillar to the parent/guardian to make sure that they are doing the best of their abilities for their children to become independent. In this session participants will have the chance to understand what support mechanisms are and which ones are available in their community. They will also have the chance to go through the mapping of existing support services with the help of mentors due to the delicacy of understanding the concepts, complexity of the process and steps.

Aim of the session: To explore and provide support mechanisms on dealing with personal fears, challenges and doubts.

Objectives of the session:

- To be introduced to support mechanisms and acknowledge their importance;
- To be able to acknowledge the need of support;
- To reflect on fears, challenges and doubts that participants potentially face;
- To learn how to map the existing support mechanisms.

Competences addressed:

- Self-reflection
- Empathy
- Supporting others
- Opening up in groups
- Listening and assessing new information

Methodology and methods:

- Discussion;
- Brainstorming;
- Input;
- Presentation
- Discussion
- Group work

Session flow:

I. Introduction (20 minutes)

In the afternoon session, educators start with a short discussion and ask the participants about their knowledge on supporting mechanisms with the following questions:

- In your opinion, what is a supporting mechanism?
- How can we benefit from them?

- Why and how are they important?

These questions are opening a discussion and leading into the next part of the session in which the support mechanisms will be more defined and explored. If there is time, educators can add an energiser as well, taken from the list below at the Background reading and further materials section.

II. Input on support mechanisms and mapping (30 minutes)

a. Brainstorming and Input: Defining the support mechanisms

Before providing participants with useful input on the support mechanisms and services, the educator leads a brainstorming exercise with the participants to define support mechanisms. During the brainstorming the educator is taking notes and writing down the proposed definitions by the participants. Optionally, the educator can provide relevant official definitions (printed, written on a flipchart paper or by using a PowerPoint presentation).

b. Explaining the mapping as a concept

Next question for the participants is - What is mapping? The educator leads a short brainstorming session, takes notes on a flipchart paper and leads participants with by asking them questions to the definition of mapping. After participants gave their answers, the educator explains the process of mapping as following:

- identifying needs
- brainstorm possible services
- contact different sources
- note down services needed
- create a map of the findings and basic information

At the end of this part, he/she connects these 2 terms – support mechanisms and mapping. Further on, a list of services available are introduced by the educator, while participants (parents/guardians) are invited to add more to the list if they are aware of other existing services/mechanisms.

III. Mapping existing support services (70 minutes)

The participants are divided in groups according to the type of the disabilities their children face. Possible divisions: group for people with intellectual disabilities, group for people with physical disabilities, group for people with hearing and speech impairments, group for people with visual impairments and group for people with combine disabilities.

After the groups are formed, the educator explains the mapping process step by step. The steps should be printed or written on a piece of paper. One step should be placed on one paper. As he/she is explaining the steps, the paper should be taped on the wall. The participants get a printed handout with the mapping steps, and flipchart papers to work on during the session. The educator explains one step and leaves the group to work on the input for that step based on the type of disabilities their children have. When the participants are done with one step, the educator continues with the next one. The idea for this session is not for the parents/guardians to have the most professional document, but to explore the possibilities offered for their children and learn how to map resources which exists on local levels. The mentors are supporting the families in this process.

The step of this process and instructions to participants are as follows:

- Step 1: Define Your Purpose and Scope

Clearly define the purpose of your mapping exercise. What specific needs are you trying to address, and who is your target audience? Determine the geographic area or community you will focus on.

- Step 2: Identify Key Stakeholders

Identify the key stakeholders and partners who should be involved in the mapping process. This may include community members, local government agencies, non-profits, and service providers.

- Step 3: Data Collection and Needs Assessment

Conduct a needs assessment to identify the specific needs of the community or group you are serving. This may involve surveys, interviews, focus groups, or data analysis. Document the identified needs thoroughly, including their nature, scope, and severity. Categorise the needs into different areas (e.g., healthcare, education, housing).

- **Step 4: Brainstorm Possible Services**

Gather a diverse group of stakeholders to brainstorm and generate ideas for services that can address the identified needs. Encourage creative thinking and consider both traditional and innovative solutions.

- **Step 5: Contact Different Sources**

Reach out to various sources to gather information about existing services and resources. This may involve contacting government agencies, non-profit organisations, community groups, and local businesses. Create a list of potential service providers and organisations that may offer solutions.

- **Step 6: Note Down Services Needed**

Compare the list of identified needs with the list of potential service providers. Match each need with one or more potential services or resources. Note down the specific services needed to address each identified need. Be detailed in your descriptions.

- **Step 7: Create a Map of Findings and Basic Information**

Create a visual representation of your findings using a map or spreadsheet. You can use geographical maps (e.g., Google Maps) or create a digital or paper-based matrix.

Include the following information for each service or resource:

Name of the service/resource provider

Location (address, coordinates, or region)

Contact information (phone number, email, website)

Description of services offered

Eligibility criteria (if applicable)

Hours of operation

Accessibility information (e.g., wheelchair accessible)

Cost (if any)

Additional notes or comments

- **Step 8: Validate and Update Information**

Continuously validate the accuracy of the information you've gathered. Contact service providers to verify their offerings and ensure they are still available. Periodically update your mapping to reflect any changes in services, contact information, or needs.

- **Step 9: Share and Disseminate the Map**

Share the mapped information with the community, stakeholders, and relevant organisations. Make the map accessible through online platforms, community centres, or printed materials. Encourage feedback from users of the map to improve its accuracy and usefulness over time.

- **Step 10: Evaluate and Adjust**

Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of your mapping efforts in meeting the needs. Assess whether the identified services are making a positive impact. Adjust the mapping process as needed to address emerging needs or improve the accessibility of services.

IV. Purpose and benefits of support, wrap-up (30 minutes)

Educators explain the connection between the need of support and mapping. Then, they should continue with the importance of the acceptance of need of support. Possible questions for discussion:

- When do we acknowledge that we need support?
- How to accept the need and proceed with mapping?

The educator facilitates a discussion about the benefits of support, the availability of support, eliminating the shame and reaching out.

Then, educators finish the session with conclusions on the discussed topics and a short reflection on the emotional state of the participants. Educators ask participants to share their emotional state by

describing it with a fruit or a drink. Possible answers could be “Squeezed like a lemon”, “Ripe like a pear”, “Bitter like a beer”, etc. Educators should reflect shortly on the answers.

Materials needed: flipchart papers, markers, pens, Mapping steps handouts (Annex 6_Steps of the Mapping process).

Background documents and further reading:

- List of energisers: <https://www.sessionlab.com/library/energiser/>
- Guide to process mapping: Definition, how-to, and tips: <https://asana.com/resources/process-mapping>

Recommendations for future trainers/adult educators multiplying this session:

- After this working day, in the mentorship process continue. The mentors are supporting the participants to fully develop the steps of this mapping and find the services, which are most relevant for them. This process is different on national level and is best to be supported by a professional that already have experience and knows the process of navigation within the system. For this process, the mentor should support the families.
- Additionally, in this training day, participants started working on the action plans. The mentors should support the parents/guardians and their children together to revise the action plans they did and further work on setting up the plans. This is the period where the parents/guardians and their children, together with the mentor can assess what works from the action plan that they plan and improve it regarding the needs.

Day 4 – Agreeing on follow-up activities and mentorship

Day 4 is focusing on the process of effective strategies for fostering independence, agreeing on follow up activities and mentorship, wrapping up, evaluation and closure of the training programme. First part of the day includes case studies for exploring effective strategies that can be incorporated in the action plans and finishing the action plans. The second part is dedicated to agreeing on the follow up activities, the mentorship process and wrapping up the course and evaluation. Only parents/guardians of children with disabilities participate in the training.

Before carrying out the 4th training day, educators should have a meeting with the mentors and provide them with information for the following mentorship process. For this meeting the document “Annex - Tips for the mentorship process” should be used. The mentors are already familiarised with the families and already supported them during the course and the mentorship process. Mentors should work with the same families during the entire programme (unless there are objective reasons for changing the mentor-family match). Each mentor has 1 to 3 families to support (depending on the number of families that stayed actively involved in the programme until the end).

Day 4 – Session 1: Case studies to explore effective strategies for fostering independence

Session Title: Case studies to explore effective strategies for fostering independence

Duration: 90 minutes

Background:

Further exploration of successful strategies towards independent living is beneficial for the participants to develop a sense of strategic thinking. This session provides the opportunity to explore situations and applied strategies to encourage independence of people with disabilities. The strategies are not replacing the action plans that the participants are working on, but their outcome can be incorporated in their work.

Aim of the session: To explore different case studies and applied strategies for fostering independence in order to support the action plans and process of parents/guardians on the independent living of their children.

Objectives of the session:

- To explore specific scenarios of situations of people with disabilities for fostering independence;
- To explore different strategic approaches applied in certain conditions;
- To reflect on how presented case studies and effective strategies can be incorporated on the action plans developed by parents/guardians.

Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn;
- Analytical;
- Strategic thinking;
- Critical thinking;
- Communication and collaboration.

Methodology and methods:

- Self-reflection;
- Small group work - Case study analysis;
- Discussion.

Session flow:

I. Introduction and self-reflection (5 minutes)

The educator opens the day with presenting the agenda and the objectives of the day. After that, participants shortly share information on how they spend the period between training day 3 and 4. They reflect on the mentorship process and the individual work on the mapping and the action plans. All participants should have a finalised action plan and a map of support services that exists on their local level. Then the educator asks participants to show their level of energy with their body - standing straight means full of energy and getting lower is showing lower energy.

II. Presenting case studies (15 minutes)

Before sharing the case studies with the participants, the educator should explain the benefits of using case studies for learning. He/she divides the participants into two groups and present to each group one of the two prepared case studies. The case studies should be printed on paper in several copies.

Case Study 1: John

John is a 19-year-old person with an intellectual disability. He has a strong desire to find a job and live independently but struggles with daily tasks and social interactions. He requires support in managing his finances and maintaining a routine.

Case Study 2: Emily

Emily is a 32-year-old with a physical disability that affects her mobility. She uses a wheelchair and requires assistance with tasks such as getting in and out of bed, bathing, and cooking. She wishes to live independently and pursue her career as a writer.

III. Working on the case studies (30 minutes)

After presenting the cases, the educators should ask the 2 groups to come up with strategies for overcoming the challenges the persons are facing and to write them on a flipchart paper. The groups should agree on who is going to present their results to the other group and the educators.

IV. Discussion and presentation of effective strategies (25 minutes)

Each group has 5 minutes to present their results and to hang the flipchart paper. After the presentations, the educator presents the effective strategies for both cases and compares them with the results of the participants:

Effective Strategies for John:

- Vocational Training: Enrol John in vocational training programmes that focus on building specific job skills and provide opportunities for hands-on experience. This can help him develop the necessary skills for employment and foster independence.
- Life Skills Training: Offer John life skills training tailored to his needs, such as money management, cooking, and using public transportation. Break down tasks into manageable steps, use visual aids, and provide consistent support to help him practice and develop these skills.
- Social Skills Development: Provide John with social skills training and opportunities to interact with others in various settings. This can include role-playing exercises, group activities, and community engagement programmes. Focus on building his communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and self-advocacy to enhance his social interactions and independence.

Effective Strategies for Emily:

- Home Modifications: Assess Emily's living environment and make necessary modifications to improve accessibility. Install ramps, grab bars, and widen doorways to accommodate her wheelchair. This ensures she can navigate her home independently and perform daily tasks with ease.
- Assistive Technology: Introduce Emily to assistive technologies that support her writing career and daily living. This may include speech-to-text software, ergonomic keyboards, and environmental control systems that allow her to control appliances and lighting. Training and support in using these technologies will empower her to work and live more independently.
- Accessible Transportation: Assist Emily in exploring accessible transportation options to enhance her mobility outside her home. This could involve connecting her with paratransit services, accessible taxis, or helping her navigate public transportation routes that accommodate her wheelchair. This allows her to travel independently for work, social engagements, and community involvement.

- Peer Support and Mentorship: Connect Emily with peer support groups and mentors who have similar experiences. This provides her with an opportunity to share experiences, learn from others, and receive guidance on navigating challenges. Peer support can be invaluable in fostering independence and building a strong support network.

V. Wrap up and Conclusion (15 minutes)

Educators should wrap up and conclude the session with the key takeaways of the session – how important it is to find the right and effective strategy for each situation. He/she asks the participants how the outcomes of the presented strategies can be connected to the challenges they and their children are facing in implementing the personal action plans and can they contribute to a successful implementation.

Materials needed: printed out case studies and effective strategies, flipchart, markers, pens.

Background documents and further reading:

- What are case studies and how to use them? (General explanation): <https://www.teaching.unsw.edu.au/case-studies#:~:text=Case%20studies%20are%20effective%20ways,complex%20and%20solutions%20are%20uncertain>
- Using case studies to teach: <https://www.bu.edu/ctl/teaching-resources/using-case-studies-to-teach/>
- Making Learning Relevant with Case Studies: <https://www.edutopia.org/article/making-learning-relevant-case-studies/>

Day 4 – Session 2: Creating individual strategies for personal growth and independence

Session Title: Creating individual strategies for personal growth and independence

Duration: 120 minutes

Background:

This session is focused on wrapping up the whole process of preparing the documents (daily/weekly schedules, action plans, strategies). It gives participants the opportunity to ask questions, give feedback and express their needs for further mentoring and support in building their skills to empower their children with disabilities for an independent living.

Aim of the session: To further work on the life project and the working documents that participants prepared during the course.

Objectives of the session:

- To create space for finalising the action plans;
- To further promote teamwork and communication for effective planning and taking action;
- To review daily and weekly schedules and adapt them by using the theory gained.

Competences addressed:

- Communication and collaboration;
- Strategic thinking;
- Effective planning;
- Critical thinking;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Individual work;
- Mentorship work.

Session flow:

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

The educator introduces participants to the session and the key focus of the session which is about the finalisation of the action plans-Life project.

II. Finalising the life projects action plan (20 minutes)

Each participant works individually with the support of the educators and their respective mentors on finalising the action plans i.e. the activities and support mechanisms that might be useful. Educators and mentors should keep in mind to approach each participant during the session and give feedback on his/her work. The focus here is on last adjustments and questions participants may have in order to finalise the plans.

III. Presenting the action plans (30 minutes)

Educators should ask the participants to present their action plans with the most important aspects and goals. After the presentations educators start a Q&A discussion on the doubts and possible

challenges that may occur. Educators should ask them to share every detail that they doubt even if it sounds not worthy sharing and encourage them to be as open as possible.

IV. Finalizing the life projects' weekly daily plans (20 minutes)

Each participant works individually with the support of the educators on finalising the daily weekly plans i.e. the activities and support systems that might be useful. Educators should keep in mind to approach each participant during the session and give feedback on his or her work.

V. Presenting the weekly daily plans (40 minutes)

The educators ask the participants to present their weekly daily plans with the most important aspects and objectives. After the presentations educators start a Q&A discussion on the doubts and possible challenges that may occur. Educators should ask them to share every detail that they doubt even if it sounds not worthy sharing, and encourage them to be as open as possible. They should wrap up the discussion with key takeaways from the process.

VI. Closure (5 minutes)

In a plenary setting, the educator praises the work of parents/guardians, as well as mentors and remind them of what an awesome effort they did during the training days and mentorship period. He/she closes the session while inviting everyone to have a big applause on their work.

Materials needed: printed templates already used, pens, paper, participants should bring all the plans and schedules they developed so far.

Background documents and further reading:

- List of energisers: <https://www.sessionlab.com/library/energiser/>

Day 4 – Session 3: Follow up and Mentorship

Session Title: Follow up and Mentorship

Duration: 45 minutes

Background:

After 4 training days and having finalised the personal action plans, and learned how to develop weekly daily schedules for achieving the set goals and objectives, participants receive information about the follow-up process. In order to ensure results, successful implementation of the action plans and achievement of the goals, the follow-up period will include mentorship and regular meetings with the mentors. The mentors will work closely with each participant on achieving the desired results and guaranteeing self-sustainability beyond the end of the course.

Aim of the session: To create a structure and plan for the follow up and mentorship process after the course is finished.

Objectives of the session:

- To create a plan for follow up and mentorship of the participants;
- To present the options that are available to the participants after the IMC is over;
- To ensure a safe space that participants will continue working on the process of independence of their children.

Competences addressed:

- Self-reflection;
- Analytical thinking;
- Critical thinking;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Individual work
- Group work
- Work under mentorship

Session flow:

I. Explaining the process of follow up and mentorship (35 minutes)

The educator briefly explains the follow up process and how the mentorship is going to be performed. He/she explains that in the following period the mentors will be available for any questions and for supporting them in resolving challenges that might occur. They are already familiar with their mentor and have worked with them during the training course. In the following activity families will go through the suggested one-on-one mentorship plan and schedule the first meeting. Mentors and families focus on the following:

- Discuss the expectations and possible outcomes of the process;
- Discuss the tempo and the timeline of the process;
- Agree on tools and ways of communication and schedule the first meeting.

If the mentor has 2 families as mentees, he/she divides the given time to meet up with both families. While the first family is meeting with the mentor, the second one takes a short break and vice versa. If families agree, they can have the meeting with the mentor together.

II. Wrap up (10 minutes)

At the end educators conclude the session and announce that all participants will continue with individual mentoring in the upcoming weeks while they are incorporating new methods, approaches and skills into their daily lives. Developing and implementing a life project is a long-lasting process and for that reason follow up mentoring sessions will be available.

Materials needed: papers, pens, personal plans of the participants, flipchart, markers.

Background documents and further reading:

- Tips for mentoring, <https://www.mentorcliq.com/blog/top-books-on-mentoring>

Day 4 – Session 4: Wrap up and final evaluation of the course

Session Title: Wrap up and evaluation

Duration: 90 minutes

Background:

This is the final session of the course. In this session, the educators, mentors and participants evaluate the dynamic and the implementation of the course. The purpose of the evaluation session is to gather feedback from participants on the quality of the training course. By doing so, the educators and mentors can assess the strengths and weaknesses of the training course and make necessary improvements for future training sessions.

Aim of the session: The general aim of this session is to gather feedback from participants and evaluate the course.

Objectives of the session:

- To create space for reflection on the lessons learned;
- To go through the defined expectations, fears and contributions in the first day;
- To create space for evaluating the mentorship course;
- To assess the satisfaction of the participants.

Competences addressed:

- Communication;
- Self-reflection;
- Critical thinking;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Questionnaires
- Discussion
- Individual work
- Group work

Session flow:

I. Revisit the hopes, fears and contributions (15 minutes)

To start the evaluation, educators should look back on the expectations, fears and contributions from the first training day. Participants should go through them and check if they are fulfilled/avoided. If someone finds an expectation, fear, or contribution that was not met, then they discuss together with the educator.

II. Pizza evaluation (10 minutes)

The educator prepares a pizza evaluation by drawing a circle on a flip chart and slicing it with lines like a pizza. Every slice is named by a category that is being evaluated (working space, programme, educators, mentors, knowledge, etc.). The centre of the pizza is the best assessment, and the crust is the worst. Then the educator asks participants to put a dot of their satisfaction on the pizza evaluation and leaves the room for 5 minutes.

III. Personal reflection (40 minutes)

Educators give to the participants 2 pieces of paper – one with 2 suitcases, and the other with 2 trash bins. The suitcase symbolises the takeaways from the course – what the participants would take with them, while the trash bin symbolises the throwaways – what the participants would leave behind or throw in the bin. They have 10 minutes to fill the suitcase(s) and the trash bin(s) with writings. After that they cut them out and tape them on a wall – one place for suitcases and one for the trash bins. They share what they wrote with the rest of the group. The visualisation of suitcase and bin is presented below:



After this, the educator asks participants to sit in a circle and hands everyone a blank piece of paper. He/she asks the participants to write their name and hand the paper to the person next to them on the left. When the person next to them receives the paper, he/she should write or draw something that they feel or think about that person. Then, they continue and pass it to the person next to them. The activity finishes when everyone receives the paper with their name back. When they receive the paper, they read it for themselves (not aloud) and they keep the paper as a memory.

IV. Verbal round of evaluation and instructions to fill out post-questionnaires (15 minutes)

The educator invites everyone to share their highlights from the course, and challenges/dislikes they had. Then, he/she hands out the hard copy of the post-course questionnaires for evaluating the gained knowledge. They will not fill-out these post-questionnaires now, but after 1 week, respectively, after the first meeting with their mentors for follow up process. In this way, the gained knowledge can be measured by comparing the results to the result of the pre-course questionnaire.

V. Closure of the course (10 minutes)

The educator wraps up the course and asks the participants to share their highlights. All educators and mentors thank everyone for their active participation and motivate them to continue the path of independent living of their children. The close can be closed with a quote and/or a motivational message.

Materials needed: flipchart papers, paper, markers, scissors, printed Annex 9, questionnaires.

Recommendations for future trainers/adult educators multiplying this session:

- For the pre- and post- evaluation, if the participants have a laptop, an online form can be used. In this case just make sure that all participants feel comfortable with filling out an online form.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Pre- and post-course evaluation questionnaires

Pre-course Evaluation Questionnaire:

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

a) I feel confident in my ability to assess and identify activities that promote independence in my child with disabilities.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

b) I feel competent in creating structure and organizing daily routines to empower myself and my child with disabilities.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

c) I feel competent in teaching and supporting my child with disabilities in practical activities at home.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

d) I am familiar with body-mind techniques for stress management and emotional well-being.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

e) I feel equipped with strategies to reach out to existing support services and build a network of support.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

Please briefly describe any specific challenges or areas where you would like to improve in relation to the competences mentioned above.

Post-course Evaluation Questionnaire:

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements after completing the course:

a) I feel confident in my ability to assess and identify activities that promote independence in my child with disabilities.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

b) I feel competent in creating structure and organizing daily routines to empower myself and my child with disabilities.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

c) I feel competent in teaching and supporting my child with disabilities in practical activities at home.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

d) I am familiar with body-mind techniques for stress management and emotional well-being.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

e) I feel equipped with strategies to reach out to existing support services and build a network of support.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

Please briefly describe how the course has helped you address the challenges or areas for improvement mentioned in the pre-course evaluation.

Are there any specific tools, techniques, or resources from the course that you found particularly helpful in enhancing the mentioned competences? Please provide details.

How do you envision applying the knowledge and skills gained from this course in your everyday life as a parent/guardian of a person with disabilities?

Would you recommend this course to other parents/guardians of individuals with disabilities? Why or why not?

Annex 2: Tips for the mentors for the follow up process

Used in Day 4-before the training day

The following information should be an additional asset for the mentors when planning the mentorship process. These steps are not needed to present it to the group. These steps should be discussed with the mentors, before the beginning of this session.

Step 1: Action Planning

Participants, with the guidance of their mentors, create action plans (for the next period of the mentorship process) that outline the steps, tasks, and strategies needed to achieve their SMART goals. Action plans are personalised to address the unique needs and circumstances of each participant's child. The action plans are already made during the course, so the mentors should revisit them with the participants.

Step 2: Regular Check-Ins

Participants and mentors schedule regular check-in meetings to monitor progress toward the established goals. The recommendation from the programme is the meetings to be scheduled once per month. These meetings can be conducted through phone calls, video conferences, or in-person visits, depending on participants' preferences and availability.

Support that the mentors can provide to the participants:

Individual Support: Participants may opt for one-on-one mentorship sessions with their assigned mentors. This option allows for personalised guidance and a focus on their specific needs and challenges.

Group Support: Some participants may prefer group mentorship sessions where they can connect with other parents and guardians facing similar challenges. Group sessions provide a supportive community and opportunities for shared learning.

Online Support: In today's digital age, online mentoring platforms, video calls, and chat tools (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Google meet) can facilitate mentor-participant interactions, making it easier for participants to connect with mentors, especially if they are geographically distant.

Step 3: Skill-Building and Resources

Mentors provide participants with additional resources, such as articles, videos, or reference materials, to enhance their knowledge and skills. They may also offer guidance on accessing community services and support networks. These actions should be performed based on the specific situation during the mentorship phase, thus provide resources depending on the needs. The mentors should follow the local surrounding during the mentorship period and to share any educational opportunities that may arise that the families will benefit from.

Peer Support: Participants can connect with other parents and guardians who have gone through the course to share experiences, challenges, and solutions. Phone groups (whats app, Viber or whatever is used on local level) will be already prepared with the beginning of the course. The parents can use this group to communicate and share experiences.

Step 4: Problem-Solving and Adaptation

As participants encounter challenges or obstacles in their journey to foster independence in their children, mentors help them problem-solve and adapt their action plans as needed. Mentors offer advice, strategies, and emotional support.

Step 5: Celebrate Achievements

Mentors and participants celebrate both small and significant achievements along the way. Acknowledging progress boosts motivation and reinforces the commitment to the journey.

Step 6: Recognition Events

The mentor should consider organizing recognition events or ceremonies to commemorate milestones and successes, where participants can share their achievements with peers and mentors. They can meet for a coffee, ice cream with the families after the programme or do something, which is interesting for the families and their children.

Step 7: Closure and Transition

As participants near the end of the follow-up phase, mentors guide them in transitioning to a self-sustaining mode. Participants should feel confident in continuing to nurture their child's independence independently.

PUBLISHER:

**O Outreach
H Hannover**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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