

Shield - Awareness in the Era of Climate Change

Handbook for Training Peer Supporters

Appendix

2024-3-HU01-KA210-YOU-000293256

SHIELD Awareness in the Era of Climate Change – Handbook for Training Peer Supporters Appendix © 2025 by Holdkő Alapítvány & Stichting Paint with Green is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or Tempus Public Foundation. Neither the European Union nor the funding agency can be held responsible for them.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Appendix 1/1.

On Effective Communication

The communication technique associated with Thomas Gordon is based on accepting the other person—their feelings and their thoughts—while we communicate with them, without trying to “win” the situation at all costs, even when we are dealing with difficulties or conflicts. It is especially important to pay attention to what we express through our communication when we are in a position of power (e.g., teacher–student, helper–client, parent–child), as greater responsibility lies with the person who holds more power in the relationship.

When we use active listening techniques, we show the other person that we are paying attention, that we value what they are saying, and that we want to support them in understanding their feelings about the situation. In everyday communication, however, we often use so-called communication barriers or “roadblocks,” which have the opposite effect: they convey that “we know better,” that “they should behave differently,” or that the other person is unimportant, ridiculous, or that we simply don’t care about what they are saying. In emotionally charged situations, it is worth consciously avoiding these barriers so the other person has space to express themselves and can feel that we are standing beside them.

Of course, there are moments when more direct or blunt communication is appropriate. If the house is on fire, we shouldn’t spend time exploring exactly what kind of fear the other person is experiencing—we pull them out of the burning building, find safety, and only then address the emotions. Once the feelings have been clarified, we can begin thinking about solutions—together or separately. Sometimes active listening gets us there within minutes; but if we jump straight to logical problem-solving while emotions are still running high, everyone becomes frustrated and no solution emerges.

Active Listening Techniques:

- Small verbal responses (“I see,” “yes,” “uh-huh”)

These signal your attention without interrupting the flow of the story.

- Reflecting and repeating feelings

Reflection means paying attention to what the other person says and trying to understand what they might be feeling. They may explicitly say they are afraid, or you may infer it from their words or nonverbal cues. Either way, you hold up a mirror in which they can recognize their own emotions. Examples: “You seem sad.” “That must have been really frightening.” “I can see how upset you are.” You may not always reflect perfectly, and that’s fine—the other person can correct you, which still helps them clarify their feelings. Reflection reassures them of your attention and support, and helps them make sense of their emotions.

- Rephrasing, interpreting, clarifying, summarizing

Sometimes we hear a long, tangled, chaotic story. This usually happens because the person is still sorting through the events, one thing reminds them of another, and they themselves are unsure what they think. Summarizing what you hear can help create a clearer, more digestible narrative. This might happen at the end of the story (“So you and your friend misunderstood each other, and now a completely unnecessary conflict has blown up, and you’re not even sure how it started. Now you’re uncertain about the whole relationship.”), or during pauses (“So he made you angry, and now you feel like hitting back.”)

- Exploration (open questions)

When we want to help someone express the details of the situation or their feelings about it, open questions are far more useful than closed ones. Closed questions limit the answer (yes/no,

left/right, good/bad), while open questions allow the person to say what they truly feel, in the way and depth they choose. Instead of: “Did this affect you badly?” Try: “How did this affect you?”

- Providing information, affirmation, and limited self-disclosure

Sometimes we want to express our understanding more directly. We can do this by: providing information (offering a concrete, helpful piece of guidance - “If someone hurts you, you can call this number.”), affirmation (validating that their feelings are understandable - “I completely understand why this scared you so much—this is a frightening situation.”), self-disclosure (sharing just enough of our own experience to show empathy, without shifting the focus to ourselves - “I know what you’re going through; I was really shaken when our dog went missing once.”)

Communication Barriers

- Ordering, directing, controlling

Sometimes we start giving instructions while the other person is talking—whether out of helpfulness or to assert dominance. Either way, it reinforces or creates a power imbalance and undermines trust. Examples: “Stop crying and try to think of a solution.” “Enough of this whining—pull yourself together, you can’t behave like this here.”

- Warning, threatening

Like directing, threats signal that we don’t want to listen, which makes the other person withdraw. Threats can be explicit or subtle. Examples: “If you don’t stop this tantrum, I’m walking out right now.” “I don’t know how much longer I can tolerate this.”

- Preaching, lecturing, “should” and “you’d better,” teaching, moralizing, logical argumentation

These responses imply that we know better how the other person should behave or that their situation is their own fault. Logical explanations may feel helpful to us, but often make the other person feel stupid, ashamed, or unsafe to share their feelings. Examples: “I don’t know why you’re surprised—if you criticize someone that much, of course they’ll snap eventually.” “You’d better try to be more patient; clearly what you’re doing isn’t helping.”

- Criticizing, judging, disapproving, blaming

Even if we see that the person contributed to the problem, pointing this out while they are overwhelmed by emotion does not help. Later, when calmer, they may be able to reflect on their role—but only if they feel supported, even when they’ve made mistakes. Examples: “That was a big mistake—you only made him angry.” “Maybe he reacted that way because you didn’t pay enough attention.”

- Mocking, labeling, ridiculing, shaming, making fun

These are obviously hurtful, yet they often appear in everyday communication. We may not realize how much they hurt, especially when the other person is emotionally vulnerable. Examples: “Well, well, looks like the tables have turned.” “Look how red you are, Snow White.” “Only a fool would do that.”

- Giving advice, suggestions, or solutions

When someone brings us a problem, many people instinctively try to fix it. Although well-intentioned, advice is only helpful at the right time. While the person is still expressing their emotions, they cannot absorb solutions. Advice often makes them feel misunderstood. Professional helpers also avoid giving advice—they support clients in finding their own solutions. We should give advice only when the other person asks for it. If unsure, we can ask whether they want advice or simply want to be heard. Examples: “Have you tried telling them directly?” “I think you should write them a letter.” “If I were you, I wouldn’t bother with them.”

- Reassuring, sympathizing, comforting, encouraging, praising, agreeing

Like advice, these responses usually come from a desire to help. We encourage or praise the person because we think it will make them feel better. But what they truly need is to feel understood and accepted in their emotions—fear of failure, loneliness, shame, helplessness. Encouragement can be helpful in some situations, but it should be paired with genuine understanding. Examples: “Of course you’ll pass that exam!” Instead: “Yes, it’s scary how much depends on this exam. But I’ll be here for you afterwards. You’ve got this.”

- Humour, changing the subject, avoidance, distraction, withdrawal

Sometimes we don’t know how to handle the tension, or we feel uncomfortable—or we simply aren’t interested. We crack a joke, switch topics, talk about ourselves, or point out something unrelated. Even if we don’t mean harm, repeated avoidance signals that we don’t want to listen. Humour has its place—but usually only once the emotional storm has passed and the person can laugh about it afterwards. Examples: “Just blow in their face, haha.” “Speaking of which, what do you think about X and Y’s divorce?” “Look, that person looks exactly like John Lennon!”

Appendix 1/2.

Emojis



Happy



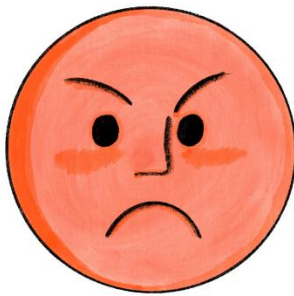
Loved



Funny



Sleepy



Angry



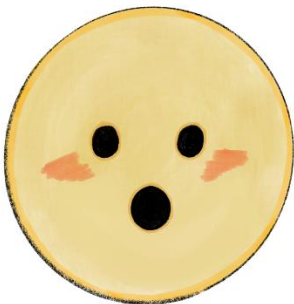
Mad



Disgusted



Sick



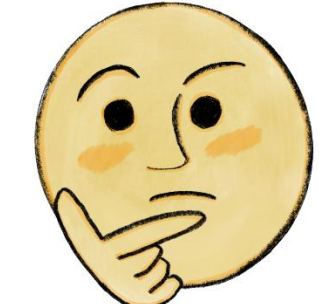
Surprised



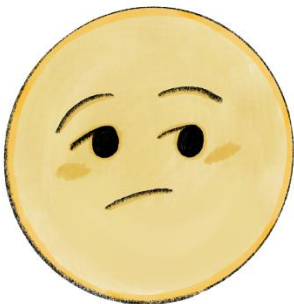
Stressed



Anxious



Confused



Annoyed



Worried



Hurt



Dissapointed

Appendix 1/3.

Situations

You are university students, attending a house party. It involves chatting, drinking, music in the background. There are around 30 people at the party altogether.
You are attending a family lunch on a nice Sunday afternoon. Quite a crowd gathered, around 15 people, with uncles and aunts, cousins, etc. You have these big lunches every once in a while, there is no special occasion.
You are working your shift at a fast food restaurant. It's a lazy Wednesday evening, there is not a huge crowd in the restaurant. You are on your break with some of your colleagues.
You are at a summer university course that would help with your studies, you don't know the other participants too well. You just finished your course for the day and headed home, waiting for the bus with some other students.
You are on a hike with your friends, and after climbing a high mountain peak, you sit down at the edge of a forest.
You are camping with your family on the shore of a lake, but the weather is pretty bad, it's rather chilly and it's raining a little.

Protagonist roles

You just had an interview for a promising job this morning, but you are not sure if you did well or not, the interviewees were a bit rude. You are trying to describe your experiences to the others.
You are worried about the results of the exam you wrote earlier at school. If you don't get a good grade, you might lose your scholarship. You are trying to tell the others how it went.
You just had an argument with your partner last night, and now you are worried you might break up. You are trying to tell about it to the others.
You had an argument with some of your friends earlier, and you are really upset about them. You are trying to tell the others about the argument.
You just had your first driving lesson in traffic yesterday. It was scary and exhilarating at the same time. Your instructor was shouting at you. You are trying to tell the others about it.
Your dog is sick and you are very worried about him, about leaving him home. You feel like you should be at home with him. You are trying to share your concerns with the others.

Communication barrier roles

You just broke up with your partner yesterday, that's all you want / able to talk about right now. They were your whole future, and now it's gone.	You have a tendency to make inappropriate jokes. You might not realize it, but they are quite hurtful. But you just meant them as a joke, right?
You are taking psychology classes, and you feel like you perfectly understand humans now. You are explaining the background of every little human behaviour, all the time.	You always seem to know what would be the best solution to every situation. You keep giving advice, whether others ask for it or they don't.
You want things happen in a certain way. Because that's the RIGHT way, everyone should know that. So you keep giving instructions to others on how to live their life.	You get quite uncomfortable when you hear about conflicts. You REALLY hate conflicts. You don't want to hear about them. At all. You rather change the topic if something gets too sketchy.
You kind of figured out life already. You don't really make any mistakes anymore. So you are quick to point out how others should have behaved in problematic situations.	You want to be friends with everyone. So whatever you hear, you agree with it, and you are sure that the person talking acted right. You keep praising them and their actions.
You think people should take responsibility for their actions. So you keep reminding them, all the time. You keep telling them how they messed up, because they should learn from it right?	You think it's hilarious how others get themselves in bad situations. It's just so funny when they mess up. You think they deserve to be ridiculed for their stupidity. So you ridicule them when you can.
When you hear someone tell a story, it usually reminds you of something that happened to you. And you do want to tell that story to others, because it is interesting.	You are getting tired of hearing other people's problems. You just want to have a good time. So you try to shut them down by telling if they don't finish with their story, you are going to leave.
You feel sorry for others and want to cheer them up, so you keep encouraging them, like "You can do it! I trust you! You are doing great!"	You are a rational person, you are looking for the causes of every action. So if you hear a story, you are trying to have logical arguments about it.
You want to document your experiences, so you keep making photos, asking others to pose for a selfie.	You like a lot the guy/girl a bit further away. You keep trying to make eye-contact with them.
You can't really pay attention to the conversation, because there is an event in your game, so you have to play on your phone in this exact 15 minutes.	Your back hurts from yesterday' training session, you keep stretching it, sometimes moan a little because it hurts so much.

Appendix 2/1.

Principles of Assertiveness

What am I entitled to do?

It is reasonable to expect others to treat me with respect and take me seriously.

I am free to say 'No' without having to feel guilty.

I have the right to change a previously made decision about myself, provided it does not violate any agreement made with someone else.

I may sometimes be wrong or make mistakes, and I accept the consequences.

My feelings and thoughts are my own. I do not need to justify them or explain why I feel the way I do.

I am entitled to shape my relationships with others, as long as I do not infringe on their rights.

I may decide whether or not I take responsibility for other people's problems and whether or not I offer help. If I do offer my help, others may accept or decline it.

I have the right to be alone.

What are others entitled to do?

Others may expect me to treat them with respect and take them seriously.

I need to accept that others may say 'No' to me and they do not have to feel guilty about it.

I must respect it if others change a decision that concerns themselves, provided it does not violate any previous agreement we have made.

Others may sometimes be wrong or make mistakes..

Everyone has the right to their own feelings and thoughts; I cannot expect them to explain what they feel or think if they do not wish to.

I need to accept that others shape their relationship with me according to their own wishes, as long as this does not violate my rights.

I cannot expect others to solve my problems for me. If they offer their help, I may accept or decline it.

I must allow others the right to be alone, no matter how close our relationship is.

Appendix 2/2.

Communication styles

Passive Communication

Passive communication is used when we try to avoid tense situations or conflicts and tend to give in to others, even at our own expense. We often try to guess what the other person wants and behave accordingly. Even when asked directly, it is difficult to express our own thoughts, and we may not even be fully aware of what we ourselves want.

Aggressive Communication

In aggressive communication, our goal is to make sure that we come out “on top”: things happen the way *we* want, *our* needs are met — even at the other person’s expense. It often involves dominance, criticism, and disrespect, as we attempt to impose our will on others.

Passive-Aggressive Communication

In passive–aggressive communication, what we say and what our non-verbal behaviour expresses are at odds with each other. Because we do not want to engage in open conflict, we verbally agree with the other person — but our facial expression, for example, may show that we find their idea ridiculous. Verbally we are passive, but our non-verbal communication/behaviour is aggressive. Since the aggression is covert, it is often hard to detect it, yet the underlying tension strains the relationship, may provoke the other person, and can lead to unhealthy interaction patterns. Its hidden nature also makes it difficult to resolve.

Assertive Communication

Assertive communication means expressing our needs, opinions, and thoughts clearly and confidently, without intentionally hurting our communication partner. (“Intentionally” here means that, for example, we simply say no to a request, and although the other person may feel offended by the refusal, our communication was still assertive.)

We see the other person as equal to ourselves, treat them as a partner, and do not try to overpower them.

Scenarios

A friend of yours from your friend group asks you out on a date. You don't really want to go on a date with them, you want to stay friends.

You get a marketing call from a lovely lady, who thinks you would benefit so so much if you bought some socks made of bamboo. One pair is free, as a gift! But actually you don't want those socks.

You have to complete a group task with your classmates. Your classmates think that you would be the fit for a certain part of the task, but actually that part is the most difficult and time-consuming. You don't think this would be fair.

You are at a party with your buddies. They want to keep drinking, and they keep offering you shots, but you don't want to drink anymore. But they don't seem to care and keep offering.

You just had your first real salary, and you treated yourself with your favourite chocolate cake ever (a whole cake), that you want to savour. Your roommates saw the cake and ask for a slice. But you want the whole cake to yourself.

Appendix 3/1.

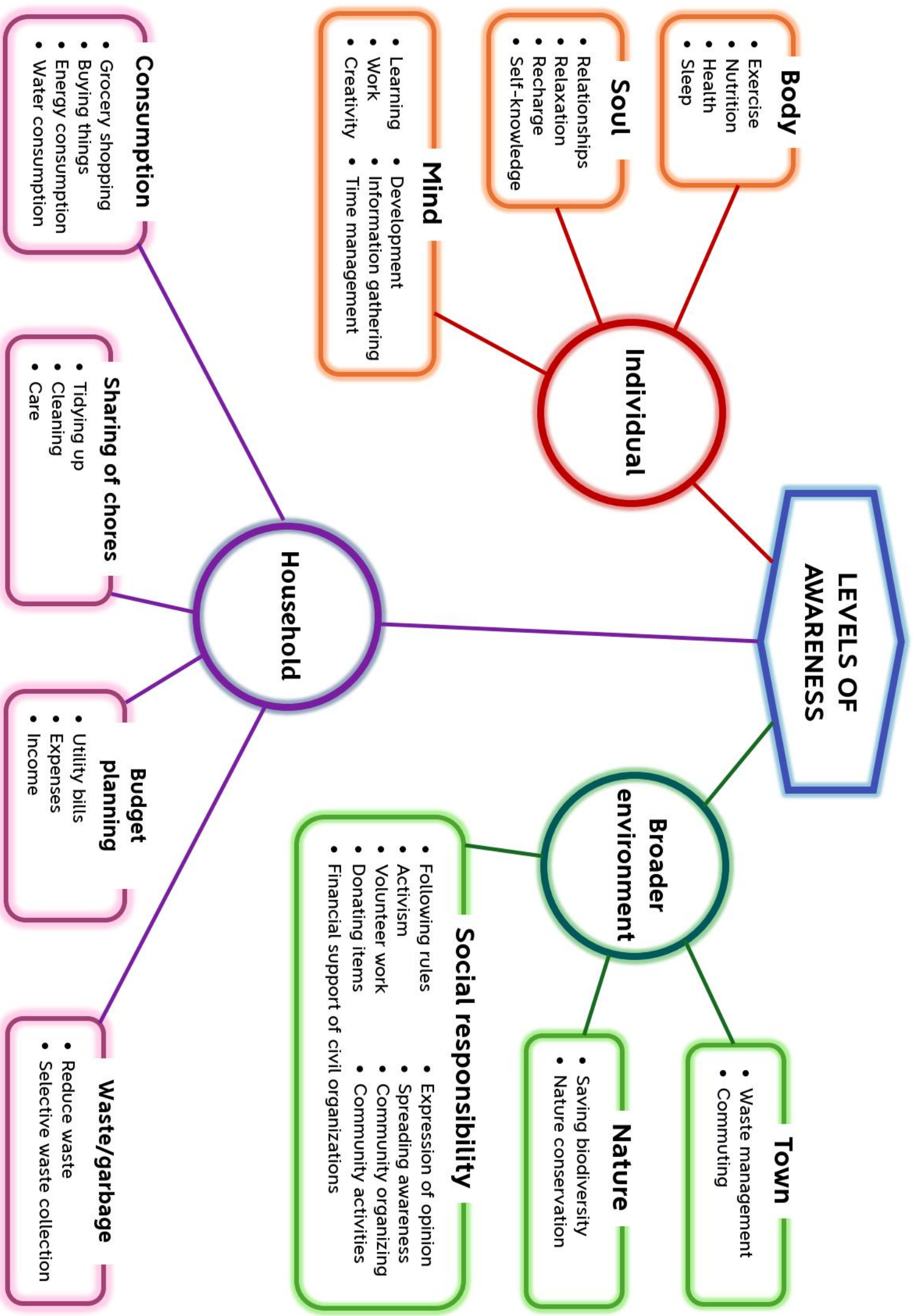
Types of hope

Patient hope	It suggests that change needs time, and it is out of our control. “A calm, receptive orientation to the future.”	This hope involves waiting in trust and confidence, allowing things to unfold in their own time, without forcing outcomes.
Sound hope	It suggests that change might happen through technological and scientific development. “A well-founded, reasonable hope grounded in real possibilities.”	This hope avoids both despair and wishful thinking, sustaining itself through rational assessment and realistic expectation.
Resolute hope	It suggests that change happens through personal action. “A determined, active hope that commits to action.”	This hope is animated by agency and perseverance, persisting even in the face of difficulty and setbacks.
Critical hope	It suggests that societal change is possible through activism. “A mode of hope that subjects present conditions and dominant discourses to critique.”	This hope resists naïve optimism and calls for a reflective, discerning engagement with the possibilities of change.
Transformative hope	It suggests that we can shape the future through present action. “A mode of hope oriented towards radical social and structural change.”	This hope embodies utopian imagination and envisions new forms of life that transcend existing constraints.

Appendix 6/1.

Association cards and mind map

Budget planning	Self-knowledge	Consumption
Exercise	Commuting	Donating items
Nutrition and Health	Learning, Development	Buying things
Financial support of civil organizations	Volunteer work	Energy and water consumption
Importance of biodiversity	Information gathering	Social responsibility
Relationships	Selective waste collection	Sharing of chores
Relaxation, Recharge	Creativity	Nature conservation
Community organizing Community activities	Time management	Reduce waste



Appendix 7/1.

Climate Emotions Wheel

Climate Emotions Wheel



Climate Emotions Wheel © 2024

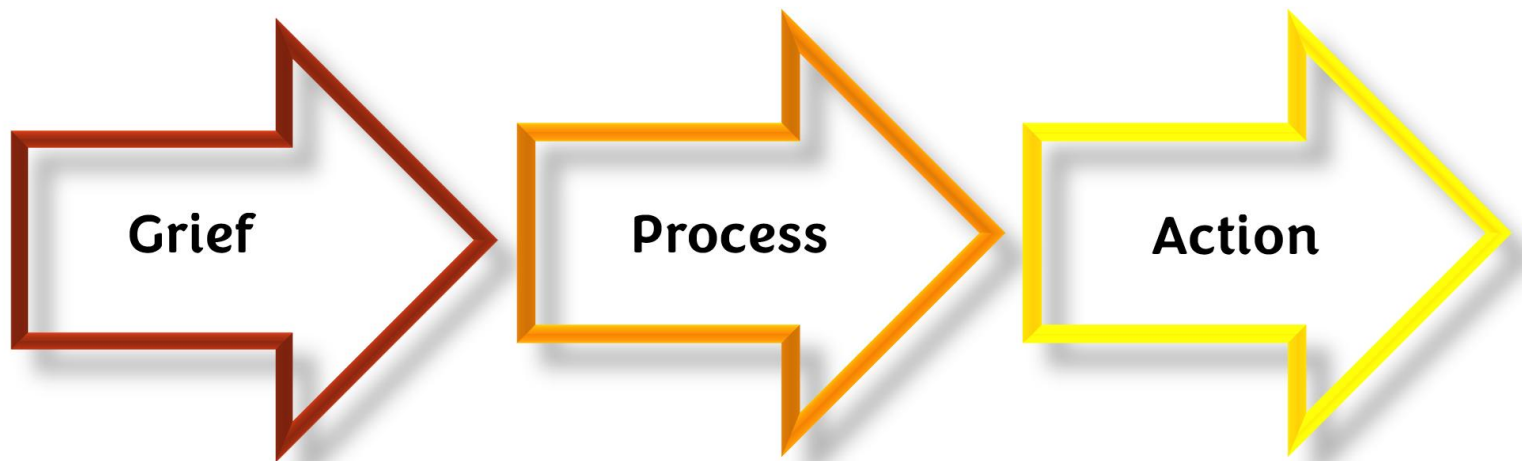


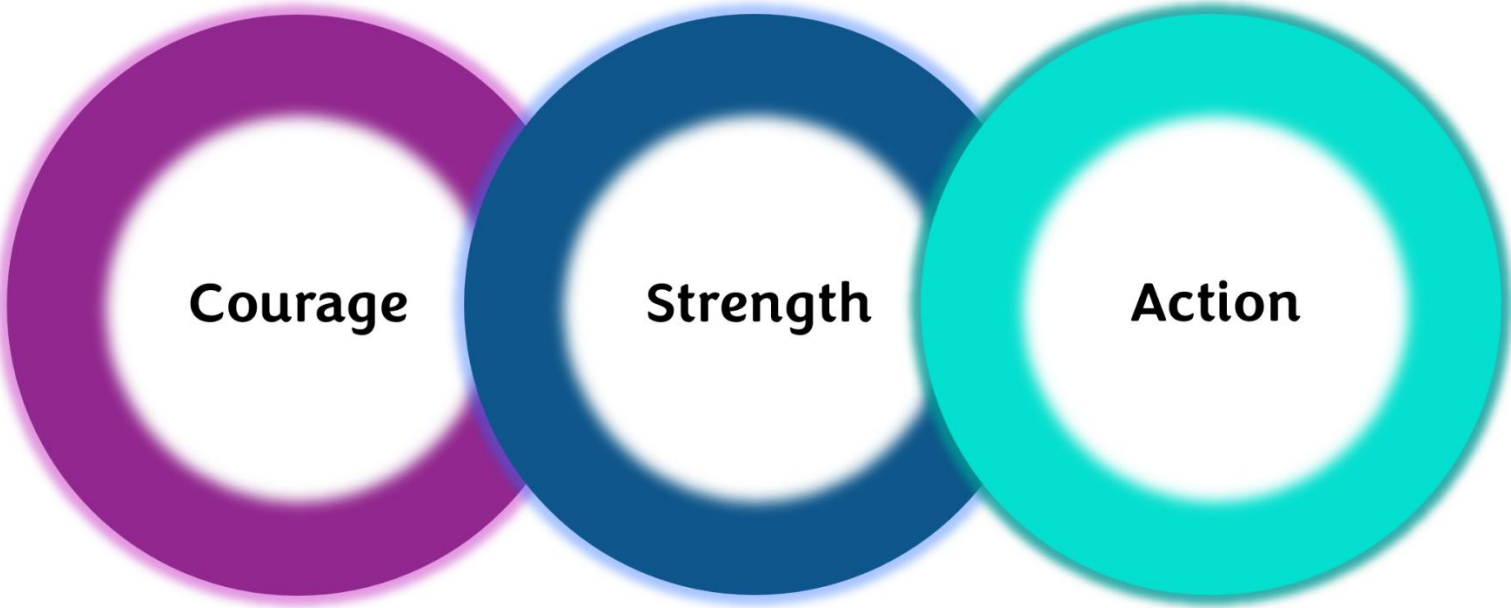
Climate
Mental Health
Network

ClimateMentalHealth.Net

Appendix 7/2.

Flowcharts

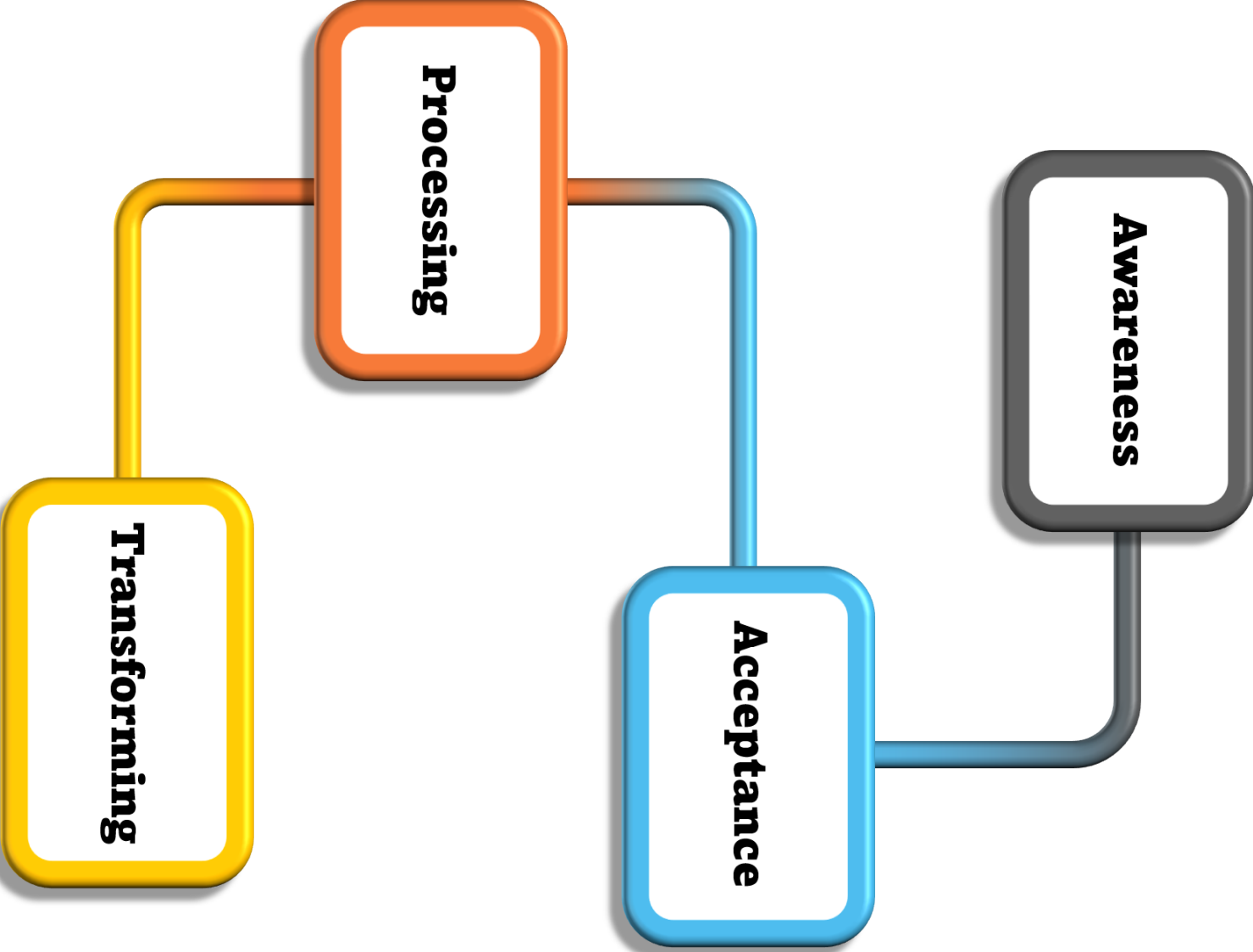




Courage

Strength

Action



```
graph TD; Awareness[Awareness] --> Acceptance[Acceptance]; Acceptance --> Processing[Processing]; Processing --> Transforming[Transforming];
```

Processing

Awareness

Acceptance

Transforming

Appendix 9/1.

Understanding community based on the work of Vilmos Csányi

Vilmos Csányi is a Hungarian ethologist who has studied both animal and human behaviour extensively. In his book *Az Emberi Viselkedés (Human Behaviour)*, he examines the processes that shape human groups and the mechanisms that regulate them.

About Communities

Belonging to a group is a fundamental human need. This is reflected in the social level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Community provides identity and safety and was essential for survival from an evolutionary point of view. Throughout development, children become members of different groups that shape their identity — this influence decreases during adolescence but continues to matter in adulthood.

According to Csányi, communities are held together by three elements: shared actions (doing things together), shared beliefs (a common understanding of how the world works), shared social constructions (concepts everyone agrees on, such as the value of money or the roles within a community). Together, these create loyalty, which in turn creates culture.

Formation of Communities

Temporary task-based groups typically go through the following stages: forming, storming, norming, performing and closing. Communities, however, form in various ways: they may be natural (family), chosen (hobby groups), or institutional (school, workplace). They are usually more lasting than short-term groups and influence a larger part of our lives and personalities. They also require a higher level of personal commitment.

Group identity exists independently of its members — a community maintains certain features even when its members change. For example, a village community remains recognisably “itself” despite people moving in or out. Belonging is reinforced by external markers (clothing, symbols), habits, behavioural rules, emotions and biological mechanisms (e.g., imitation). Identification, loyalty and morality all express our connection to the community.

The Functioning, Internal Regulation, and Typical Dynamic Processes of Communities

Simple cultural norms regulate a group's functioning and members' behaviour. They help maintain cohesion (e.g., egalitarian communities have clear norms about how to share resources). Members who violate norms may be sanctioned — formally (e.g., prison) or informally (e.g., exclusion). Emotions act as an internal signalling system: anger warns of danger, guilt signals norm violation. Rituals help regulate emotions. They not only carry traditions but also identity and security. These include initiation rites as well as everyday traditions like Sunday lunch. They help people navigate transitions (marriage, funerals), providing emotional structure and a sense of communal support.

Morality, although culturally variable, relates closely to humans' capacity for abstraction. Through moral development, individuals learn to follow rules based on internal conviction rather than external enforcement. There is no need for laws and regulations for every situation since the moral compass of the individual can tell them what is the appropriate behaviour. This strengthens the sense of belonging.

Social identity theory suggests that group membership supports self-esteem. As a result, people tend to favour their own group over others — a bias that can escalate into hostility or xenophobia. However, negotiation, friendship and alliances can strengthen cross-group connection.

Conformity — changing one's behaviour to fit the group — is a major factor in group dynamics. People often follow the majority even when it is clearly wrong.

Problems in Communities

Community problems include exclusion, which is particularly painful for those who do not fit group norms. Cliques (rigid subgroups within a community) and passivity (members not participating in communal actions) also harm group functioning. Scapegoating serves as a projection mechanism that channels group tension onto one individual.

Community dynamics can also be misused: brainwashing, propaganda or cults show that people's belief systems can be significantly reshaped within a few months.

Today, "one-person communities" are increasingly common — individuals create their own beliefs, decisions and lifestyles. This reflects personal freedom but also the absence of communal safety nets. Loneliness, especially loneliness within a group, is one of the most painful human experiences. Marginalised members often become invisible. The lack of community can contribute to mental health problems or even violence against the community. At the same time, community can be a powerful resource and protective factor. Both temporary and lasting groups require attention to community-forming mechanisms: norms, symbols, communication and rituals.

Appendix 12/1.

Media Literacy and Climate Emotions

Digital awareness is now one of the most essential basic skills. It helps us not only use technology, but understand and control it. We often overlook how much it affects our relationships, wellbeing and worldview.

The mechanisms of the online environment significantly contribute to the fact that many young people today struggle with stress, anxiety and other mental health issues. Without attempting to address every risk, the focus here is on how media consumption influences climate-related emotions.

Recent studies confirm the presence of the dopamine loop in social media use. Likes, comments and shares trigger dopamine release. Put simply, dopamine plays a key role in reward-seeking and motivation — similar to gambling mechanisms. (So if we feel annoyed with someone for spending too much time online, remember that they are experiencing a neurobiological effect!) After a "dopamine peak", a deficit follows, making everyday life seem dull, reducing our ability to find joy, and potentially leading to depression or anxiety.

The highest engagement is driven by emotionally intense content — which, in many cases, is negative, sensational, polarising or even false.

Algorithms ensure that the content we consume becomes increasingly personalised, aiming to maximise the time we spend on a platform to maximise profit. After viewing one climate-anxiety-inducing video, the system will show more similar content — this is the information bubble. Such content shapes what we perceive as normal or acceptable, narrowing our worldview. Encountering opposing views may then provoke hostility. Political election campaigns offer numerous examples of such "experiments". When empathy decreases and diversity disappears, communities can easily fracture.

It is important to acknowledge that digital technology is a tool that can also be used for positive goals — for example, to support constructive campaigns. Unfortunately, this tends to happen less frequently and with less awareness.

In summary, key characteristics of social media platforms include:

- The dopamine-loop mechanisms are designed to cause addiction.
- Algorithms keep users inside an information bubble in a manipulative way.
- All this affects our relationships, worldview, and mental health.
- Used consciously, these tools can also serve positive purposes.

How can we reduce negative impacts?

- Strengthen conscious digital presence.
- Set boundaries consciously while using these platforms.
- To counter the effects of the information bubble, disinformation, manipulation, and fake content, strengthen critical thinking.
- Verify content using multiple sources. Be aware of the creator's background, competence, and likely intent.
- Be open-minded. Intentionally read viewpoints that differ from your own.

Some useful tools for fact-checking and filtering:

Google Fact Check Explorer

InVID (browser extension): checking deepfake or manipulated videos

Reality Defender: deepfake detection

OSoMeNet: tracking how fake news spreads

Some apps supporting mental wellbeing, solution-focused content:

Digital wellbeing – function-settings

Headspace - mindfulness, stress management, focus

SuperBetter- self-development

Daylio – mood journal

Good News Movement – positive, solution-focused sustainability news

Earther (gizmodo.com/earther) – credible climate news

Appendix 12/2.

Role cards

Conservative political decisionmakers	Green activists
Union of teachers and pedagogues	Youth community
Owners of a car company	Local government