

Prepare to Exchange

A preparation meeting for future youth exchanges with youth at risk



a collection of the workshop reports

by Alex Truyts

An initiative of Emmaüs (Belgium), Asociación Experientia (Spain), Kamaleonte (Italy), Mutsaersstichting (The Netherlands), Pressley Ridge (Portugal) and Upplifun (Iceland).



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The group



Village of Ulassai

1. SUNDAY

1.1. Welcome and getting to know each other (Sofie and Alex)



Camp house in Santa Barbara, Ulassai

- **Making rows** in a circle, standing on chairs : participants make an order from one extreme to the other, without touching the ground. In the circle the 2 extremes of the row stand next to each other. Between these 2 persons is an 'invisible wall', so people can't pass there. We did rows from:
 - Young to old
 - Names a-z
 - Colour of eyes: light to dark
 - Name of organization
 - ... (What do you like to know from your fellow participants?)
- **Intro:** goals, roles!, method, reports of workshops, house rules, ...

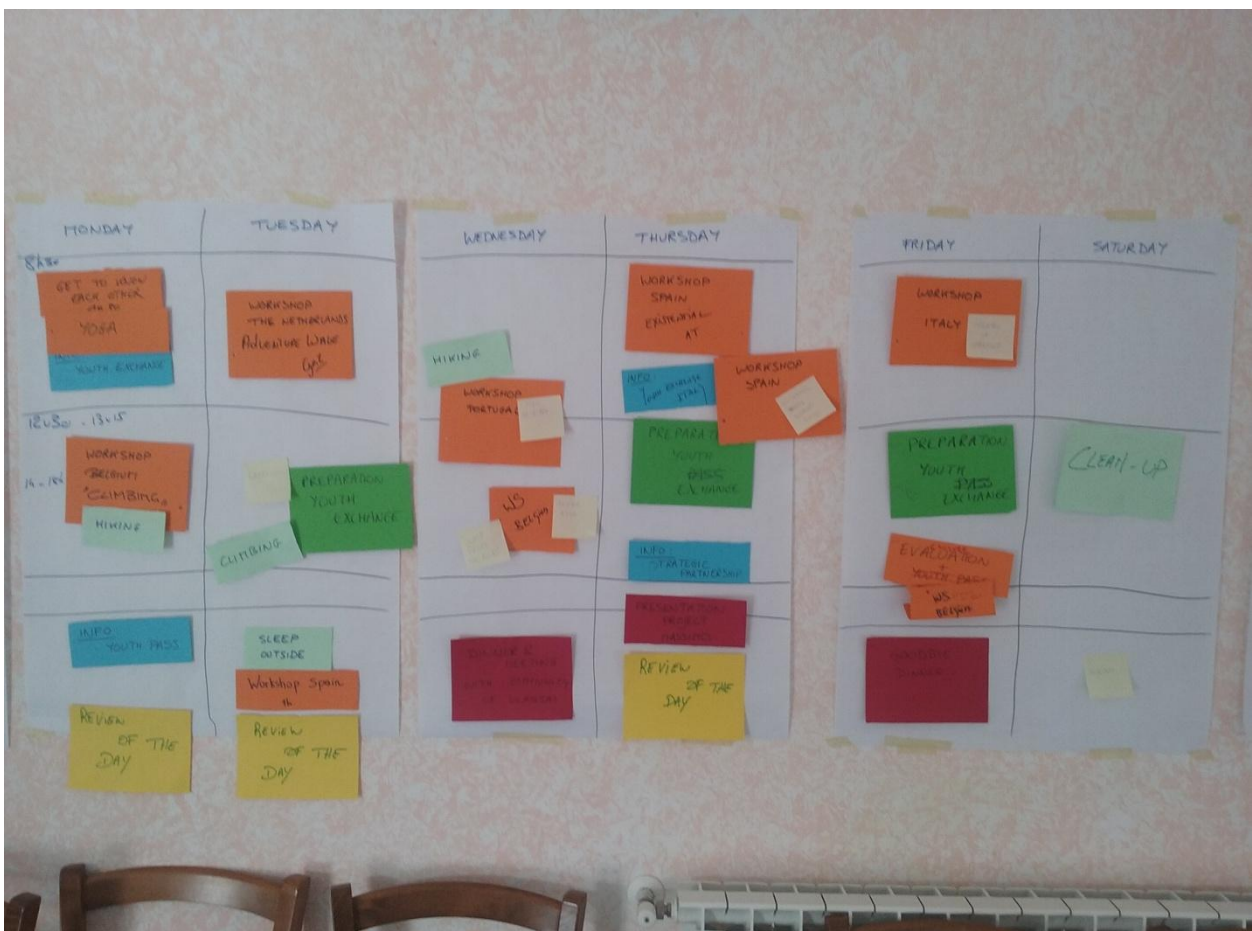
1.2. Co-constructing the program schedule (Sofie and Alex)

Sofie and Alex prepared a program schedule in advance. But because our method is experiential the schedule was a good base to start from and should be ready to adapt it to meet the needs and objectives of the group. This evening we proposed to re-make and co-construct the program schedule.

We made a big empty schedule on the wall and coloured cards, representing different categories like 'sessions/workshops of participants', 'possible activities to link with sessions', 'info moments' (youth pass, youth exchange, application writing, ...), 'review of the day', 'preparation future youth exchanges', 'presentations', 'dinner with the community of Ulassai', ...

We organized the filling in of the schedule in different steps. Sofie and Alex facilitated more the (group) process than the content (What should be placed where?).

- Consultation per country: talk about your workshop, where to put it in the planning, personal needs, logistical and practical consequences,...
- Short sharing moment in group
- Representatives (of each country) came together to the empty schedule on the wall and filled in the program (in group discussion)
- Presentation to the big group and approval



1	In the house	Express yourself on these flaps! Talk with your partner and write, draw, show it here:	What is essential for you so this program will be successful? Practical – Program – Learning (in group) – Feeling good (in group)
2	Terras on the other side of the road	Put up this tent together (and afterwards put it nicely back into the bag ☺)	What is your favorite dinner moment? What, with who, where, ...?
3	On the field in front of the house	Tie the knot, you see in the small rope, into the end of the big ropes, without using your hands! In competition?	In which way you make it yourself more difficult/complex sometimes?
4	Terras on the other side of the road	Play petanque, jeu de boules (or create your own game with these probs)	What are your passions/hobbies/... in life?
5	On the field in front of the house, start with light pole	Get yourself and your partner with these chairs from here to the 'other side' marked by a helmet without touching the ground	What was your biggest physical achievement?
6	One of the trees close to the entrance	Go searching for some fruits, berries, ... and pick them together.	What do you like searching for?
7	Picknick table next to the building	Tatoeages: tattoo each other inspired by the answers and stories to the questions below. The client chooses the place on the body (or on something else).	Where do you want to be in 5 years time? What do you want to be doing in 5 years time?
8	View point	Teach each other something new. Or tell something the other one is not familiar with.	Which 3 little positive experiences did you already have today?
9	The trees on the field in front of the house	Help each other on the slackline. Can you walk on it?	When are you on your edge?

We wanted to end this brief encounters with a last same task for every duo (but we didn't have time): take your partner to a place that says/fascinates you the most and tell him/her more about it.

2.2. Body work (Sofie)



- **Goal:**

- Experience relaxation
- Body consciousness, focus on breathing
- Exploring ways of trust
- Discover parts of (physical or mental) tension and 'letting go'
- Observation: own body + partners' body and reactions
- Exploring giving and receiving

- **Method:**

Choose a partner which whom you feel comfortable. Same size and weight can be helpful. The workshop is divided in two parts: 1 person lay down and 'receives' the treatment, while the other give it. Halfway we switch roles.

Sofie talks the duo's through the whole process while giving exercises. The duo-exercices build up gradually, connecting with each others breathing, stretching muscles and bringing the other persons body to relaxation. The whole body has been taken in account: back, legs, arms, etc. The movements vary between massage, stretching and conscious contact.

The full exercises was ended with a group conversation, exchanging experiences and feedback.

- **Timing:**

40min for each person
 30min debrief
 Total: 1.5/2 hours

- **Metareflection:**

The group experienced this exercise as an exploration in giving and receiving. They appreciated the softness and mindfulness of this exercise. Nevertheless the physical contact can be too much for some participants. This close contact with (sometimes) somebody you don't know well, can be somehow intimidating. This can be a block in the relaxation and undermine the goals of the workshop. An alternative could be:

- Using a tennisball (instead of the hands) to avoid immediate contact
- Give a more detailed information in group about the exercises so participants can make a clear decision in whether to participate
- Check in group before how comfortable everybody is with physical contact, in order to adapt exercises.

2.3. Master mind on the rocks (Elien, Ann, Nadia)



- Background

It's a group dynamic climbing exercise. Search as a group for a secret color code. There are 4 kinds of color balls. The code has 3 colors. The group climbs on the rock and tries out the different possible color combinations. On each time a different climbing altitudes until they have found the right combination.

- Material

- Material for 3 top rope installations
- Helmets and harness for each participant
- 3 plastic ropes with loops and balls in 4 colors

- Review

A freeze moment or active review depending on the theme of the moment in the group. Higher-lower. Position yourself higher or lower on the surrounding rocks. How satisfied were you about how the group dealt with this exercise? Afterwards participants are invited to tell more about their position. Extra questions:

- how much did you talk
- were the things you said meaningful for the group
- What can you do to participate in a more constructive way in the group

- Meta-reflection

What do we take with us?

- Good activity for Youth Exchange
- It is good that it is a combine activity (climbing is something more individual but by using the group challenge it is also good for the group spirit)
- It is a different way to climb
- Having 3 levels is a good way to include everyone
- Making the participants belayers

What would I adapt/ change/improve for YE?

- Introduce the game later, let them first climb (otherwise it is too difficult)
- Make an easier game

What I don't take to YE?

- The amount of time that youngsters have to wait to start: it can be filled with something helpful
- Be aware of assurance and professional competences!

2.4. Preparing the 2-day expedition



3. TUESDAY

3.1. 'Adventure Wave' (Cyril)

In the weeks before "Prepare to Exchange" should take place, it was for me very clear that I should need an activity that would get out the things I would like to come out from the participants, and let them "feel", experience what they probably could use in their work. How can we reach young people so that they become motivated for change, setting goals, evaluate and transfer of learning in an organised situation to everyday life.

For the activity:

- Will they listen to the explanation I'll tell them?
- Who will take the lead?
- Who is directly starting with a possible solution?
- Who would be in the lead but has no opportunity?
- Is there someone who would like to say something but can't?
- Are they making a plan?
- Do they discuss how to solve the problem;

Questions like:

- What do you need to achieve what you want to achieve?
- Is there something that helped you/worked before?
- Who could help you to achieve what you want to achieve?

- What did you do?
- Can you explain me how you did this?

I prepared 3 activities, 3 starters en 3 cooling-down activities for my workshop in Santa Barbara. A starter, a core-activity and a cooling-down activity is called an Adventure Wave (AW). After the AW the reviewing of the AW will take place. The reviewing is also a part of the AW. Briefing and debriefing of the activities is very important. Three major questions:

- What? ⇒ *Facts*
- So What? ⇒ *Feelings/Findings*
- Now What? ⇒ *Future* (How do you use the gained experiences now, for the next activity, in a school/work situation and everyday life. Are your goals still okay, or should you customize them.)

For me a task to look and listen very well to what is happening and what everybody will say (or won't do and say) during the workshop.

[My workshop.](#)

When we were, on Sunday, discussion about the program of the week, it was clear that I had only 3-4 hours for my workshop. No problem, so I was able to do 1 Adventure Wave.

[Warming-up](#)

[What do you need?](#)

- For every participant a piece of thin rope, 1 meter;
- For every participant a balloon
- Free space, 10x10 meter or bigger, depending on the mount of participants

Every one received a balloon and a piece of rope. They should blow up the balloon and tie the balloon with the rope at an anklebone. At my sign they should try to step on a balloon of someone else.



[Core-activity:](#)

[What do you need?](#)

- 2 climbing ropes, to make a small inner circle, the island. And a bigger outer circle, the sea. (at any place about 5 meters wider than the inner circle)
- Bamboo sticks, little pieces
- Different kinds of rope;
- 6-8 black-spots (ore Frisbees ore something familiar) ⊙ 20cm
- Tape (to tie the pieces bamboo together)
- 2 buckets (where you put the black-spots in)
- Some useless materials that you can spread in the area between the 2 ropes



Summary:

You see 2 circles made by ropes. The circle inside is an Island; the space between the 2 circles is the ocean. Nobody is allowed to stand or touch the ground in between the 2 ropes.

Task:

There is a big storm coming towards to you. You have to go to the Island. On that Island you're safe. To go across the water to the Island, you'll need some black-spots. These spots are in a helmets/buckets. You must lift these helmets/buckets out of the water, do not drag them. The only things you may use are the things lying in between the two circles.

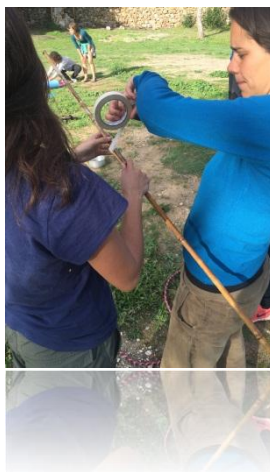
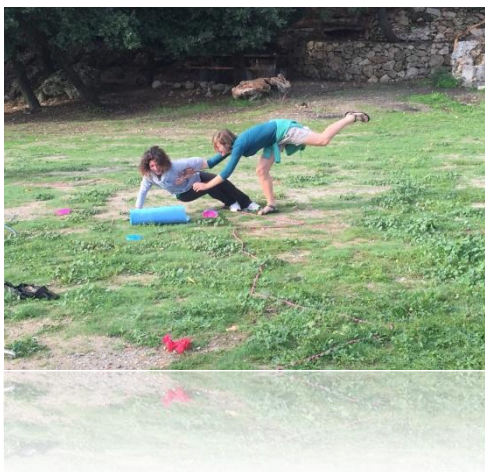
You need the black spots to "walk" over the water to the Island. Be aware that you always must have a connection with the black-spot. This must be a part of your body. When a black-spot is not touched by a part of your body, the black-spot will sink in the ocean and it's gone.

I've split the group in 2. 11 persons did the activity, 4 persons where the observers. The observers looked to the group with the following questions:

- Is there a leader? Who takes the lead?
- Who is the worker? Does he start working without communication?
- Who want to be the leader but is not able to?
- Is there anyone who wants to say something but is not able?

After the explanation the group started to accomplish the task. Here are some photos.





When the group thought that they were ready, achieved the goal, I've asked them to stand in a circle. (So every one can see every one)

I started the review of the activity. I've used the 4-F's (Facts, Feelings, Findings and Future) to questioning the participants.

I've used active reviewing for this part of the activity.

During this review the observers put in the information that they had gathered. For me it seems to be a nice and no oppressed way of reviewing the activity.

The reactions afterwards confirmed my idea of the review.

- Ask the right questions, nice how you did that;
- You saw things and give that back on a good way;
- I didn't feel pressured
- Going into the dep't
- Giving every-one the space to talk (or not)
- Good using of the observers

[Cooling down activity:](#)

[Wikkel - Wokkel:](#)

- **What do you need?**
 - 2 different articles. For example balls or fruit

You and all participants are standing in a circle.

- The leader gifts one of the articles to person 1 standing on the left of him and says: *This is a wikkkel*. Person 1 asks: *A what?* The leader says: *a wikkkel*.
- Person 1 gifts the article to person 2 on the left of him and says: *This is a wikkkel*. Person 2 asks: *a what?* (This questions goes back to the leader) and person 1 turns to the leader and asks him: *A what?* The leader says: *a wikkkel*. Person 1 says to person 2: *a wikkkel*. Person 2 says to person 3: *This is a wikkkel*. Person 3 asks: *a what?* Person 2 asks person 1: *a what?* And person 1 asks the leader: *a what?* The leader says: *a wikkkel*. Person 1 says to person 2: *a wikkkel*, person 2 to person 3 *a wikkkel* etc etc
- When it is clear the leader starts with the other article on his right. He says: *This is a wokkel*. Person 1 on the right asks: *a what?*, The leader says: *a wikkkel*. Person 1 on the right says to person 2 on the right: *This is a wokkel*. Person 2 asks: *a what* etc etc. See what will happen if the wikkkel and the wokkel will meet!!

Meta-reflection:

- **What do we take with us?**
 - A new knowledge of group dynamics;
 - 10 weeks of preparing before the weekend;
 - Good dynamics to do with youngsters;
 - Good activity, like the idea of someone observing;
 - The challenge of problem solving for the group-excellent group process;
 - Good process and reflection;
 - The trainer's attitude promotes our trust on him.
- **What would I adapt/ change/improve for YE?**
 - (Maybe) make it more simple, the instructions (more visible);
 - More clear role of observers at the review;
 - Shorter review more observations from participants.
- **What I don't take to YE?**

Background:

ADVENTURE TRAINING

Adventure Training is consisting out of simple, challenging activities, which are offered in order of themes and gravity. It comes to preparing young people and become motivated for change, setting goals, evaluate and transfer of learning in an organised situation to everyday life.

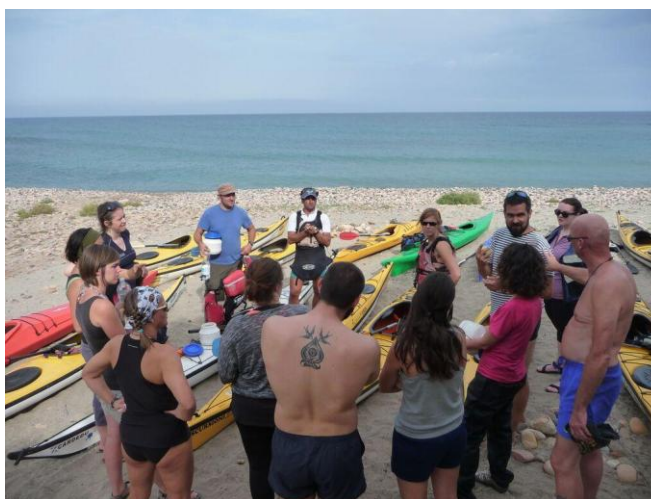
Themes that could be including in the Adventure Trainings are f.e. personal responsibility, group responsibility, communication and social skills, confidence, teamwork, decision making, your role in a group and trouble solving.

Those activities are similar to natural sports and games, which can be done close to home ("survival activities in the back yard"). Some of the activities take place on a rope course, where survival activities are simulated. The activities include a certain problem, linked to a fictional story, which will be submitted to the group. Then the group is going to work on that problem. In fact, it is not important what result there is extracted. It is more about to how

both the individual and the Group process expires. Processing the experiences gained during the activities, where success and fun the dynamics forms, is an important phase in order to achieve a transfer to everyday life and hence to the work situation.

3.2. Expedition: Sea kayaking (Saeunn and Jonina)

When we were making the program for the week many people were interested in sea kayaking. Sofie and Alex found a skilled guide who was willing to guide us. On tuesday we went to the beach, the guide went over safety and technical guidelines in Italian language which was translated by participants who spoke Italian. He tried to pair each participant with a suitable kayak considering size/weight and kayaking experience. Two participants decided not to participate due to past experience.



One by one he helped each participant to get into the boat and on the the sea and asked them to wait together about 200 meters from shore. One participant went back to shore after a little while due to lack of confidence. We kayaked through some reef and to the next shore. There we stopped and the guide said that only 8 could paddle further with him for the last part because it was windy and big waves. One participant fell into the sea. There was no danger but it was challenging for him to get back onto the boat. The rest of the group waited on the beach and some had a swim. When they came back everyone got into their boat and headed back.

The participants were mainly alone but they also had a chance to communicate with each others for example short jokes, racing and water splashing. 2 participant shared a boat and therefore got the opportunity to get to know one another.

- Metareflection

What can we take with us to youth exchange?

- Great activity to see different things in group dynamic, for example:
 - Who is looking for the adrenaline?
 - How share/show/deal with fear?
 - Who asks for help and who gives the help?
 - Courage to say what you want – group pressure?
- Recreational activities are ok, which will give people more room to be themselves and enjoy the moment. Learning also happens in recreational activities.
- Can put participants and trainer on the edge depending on water/weather conditions.
- The calmness of the sea

What would I adapt/change/improve for youth exchange?

- Add a review
- Have to keep safety in mind in youth exchange
- Diversity of activities will help all succeed - different challenges and skills are developed.
- More guides depending on the physical/experience of the participants makes it possible to divide the group.
- Set up goal individual and group
- Create a task for group or person that will makes kayaking more educational
- Prepare the youngsters before by talking about their past experience, fears, etc.
- You can go without a guide if you have enough experience, if you use a external guide you need to make his role clear before.
- If two person kayak is used it can give a different experience: Trust, communication, get to know one another.



What we don't take to youth exchange?

- If it is touristic: Follow the leader
- The execution: It was too recreational, need's to be made more therapeutic.

3.3. Expedition: Hiking, camping and Wilderness Therapy (Natalia)

- Hiking



Night hike to the area where we camp. Prospection to the area beforehand to make sure that is a good spot with everything we would need – We dropped water containers, enough for everybody for two days. We also dropped beforehand a fire extinguisher for safety when making a fire.

Two people were selected (voluntarily) to establish the route and guide the group. They were provided with the coordinates of the destination and they had to decide which way to go. They were asked not to provide any instructions to the rest of the group about the decision making process or the route itself. The purpose of this is to create a situation of uncertainty for the rest of the participants. By doing so, the rest of the participants will be hiking without having the sense of control under the circumstances that were given to them. It is important to process the feelings and thoughts

triggered by this circumstances and to provide a space for analyzing how the attitude that you had during the hike represents the attitude that you have in your life while facing challenging situations. We don't always have a choice about the situation where we are at but we always have a choice with the attitude we have towards the situation.

Some examples of questions that could be used to process with the group afterwards:
 How did you feel during the hike? Was it challenging for you? What kind of thoughts did you have? Did these thoughts help you face the challenge? How do you think these thoughts affected your way to cope with the challenge? How not having knowledge of how long the hike was made you feel? How was it like for you not have control over the situation? How do you relate this situation to your life?

It is important to keep in mind safety issues during the hike, such as hydration level, no gaps between participants, and safety while hiking on a road (walk on the left, one at a time, wear fluo vest and headlamp for visibility, etc.)

- Fire Experience

Fire making is one of the main components of wilderness therapy. Making fire is a long and tedious process and all the steps must be followed carefully in order to be able to busting a coal with primitive tools. You have to gather the appropriate materials with certain characteristics, shape them or work on them until they are ready to use, learn the technique and how to use them, be patient, perseverant, learn to manage your frustration when you see that is not working regardless the effort that you are putting into it. It is crucial to teach participants to relate the feelings that could trigger during the process with their life.



During the wilderness experience in Sardinia we used primitive tools: bow and drill, and flint and tinder. Several participants tried these two methods several times until they got a flame. After the fire making, we performed a group process activity around the fire using some "Native American" rituals. The fire and the rituals help create a magical atmosphere that allows participants to feel emotional safety to share their thoughts and feelings regarding certain topic (it can be a specific topic or just an opportunity to open a discussion or express yourself). This time around the fire is also an opportunity to bond as a group and with other participants.



- Camping – Night out

Once we get to the place, we found a spot to set up a tent or your sleeping bag in case that you slept without a shelter. Regardless the sleeping arrangements (it could be in small groups or as a whole group), it is recommended that each participant find their own personal spot to leave its things and be on its own in case he/she wants.



- Some Research

Some interesting articles regarding wilderness therapy:

- Russell, K. What is Wilderness Therapy?
<http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/wrc/Pdf/jeev24-2.pdf>
- Russell, K & Hendee, J. Wilderness Therapy as an Intervention and Treatment for Adolescents with Behavioral Problems
<http://www.strugglingteens.com/opinion/wildernesstherapy.html>

- Meta-Analysis

Wilderness Experience	Fire Experience	Sleeping outside	Hike
What was useful?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making your own equipment - Metaphors - Deal with your fear- Nature as a place where you can deal with your fear - Connect with nature - Become one with environment and link it with your feelings and experiences - Use wilderness to grow, learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use fire (and how to make it) as a metaphor - Read poems to open up a discussion/ introspection - Use the fire just as a way for everyone to talk and to be heard, with a topic. For instance, the high moment of the day, expectations for tomorrow... - Using the flames to look "away" and make a safe environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alone in your tent. Making your own home. - Physical challenge - Care for your own shelter/wellbeing - The challenge of setting the tent at night in a group - The experience off sleeping in "the open sky" was very strong. - Good to face your fears (darkness) with group support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To hike and being in nature as kind of "therapy" +solo - Using the environment to grow - Finding your own way, exploring, searching, discovering, taking the lead, follow - Sit with the feelings that you are having - Having time with my thoughts and with the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be self-sufficient for your own life - Sometimes there is not "challenge by choice" in life. You can only choose your attitude towards the circumstances - Good approach to the primitive human condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I like the rituals: flame the fire, take off necklace before talk, clear start and closing... - Natural, very human getting around the fire together - "The fire was the breaker with my oppressor" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to deal with my own fear 	nature
What would you change/add/remove when working with youngsters?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare the kids for some of the challenges - Work on expectations - Work on expectations and fears to make the group useful for them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using as a daily ritual with a review of the day - Doesn't always have to be a formal talking moment. Sometimes great personal stories can come unexpectedly. - Youngsters facilitate it/bring up the topic or story. Let it happen. Make a fire and 'wait'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare: What do you need? - If there is time making your own shelter (wood) - Talking with the kids at night about their fears, related with a different and non familiar environment. - Non using a tent if weather is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Process about the power of your thoughts and how to deal with that - Uncertainty about where to go: just like in real life. How do you cope when you don't have control?
Not to do with youngsters			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less time at the fire. Too long and too late. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Go without knowing the trail - Each one on his/her own taking care of his own shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only tell people where to be and what time - Give room for making it your own project/way.

4. WEDNESDAY

4.1. Expedition: Wilderness Therapy (2) (Natalia)

"Feelings check": sometimes during the day before or after doing an activity that could be intense for the participants, it is a good idea to check with one word or sentence how each person is feeling. This gives you the awareness of where the participants are, emotionally and physically.

"Goal of the day": At the beginning of the day (most of the times before hiking) all participants share the goal that they want to set for themselves during that day. In addition, they can tell the group how they can help him/her to achieve it.

4.2. Expedition: Solo experience (Katia and Nadia)

The SOLO Experience creates a breathing space to get things into perspective and where we can replenish, restore and rejuvenate ourselves from the inside out...

SOLO Experience: Simple Original Limitless Opportunity. Solo experience = preview + solo + review

- Preview

"The Tree exercise"

To connect to the here and now. To get in contact with yourself and your feelings to prepare for the solo:

“Close your eyes-Focus on the breathing and your body. Imagine you are a tree (you can choose the tree you want to be) with roots that are getting deeper and deeper into the ground. With every breathing they go deeper into the center of the earth. Focus on the heat that is coming from the center of the earth. You have a strong bark where the energy goes through. If you want you can put your arms in the sky. Your arms are branches with leaves. They pick up the energy off the sun. Feel how the sun shines on your leaves....”

“The story of the two wolves” (Cherokee Legend)

One evening, an elderly Cherokee brave told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people.

He said "my son, the battle is between two 'wolves' inside us all. One is evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is good. It is joy, peace love, hope serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

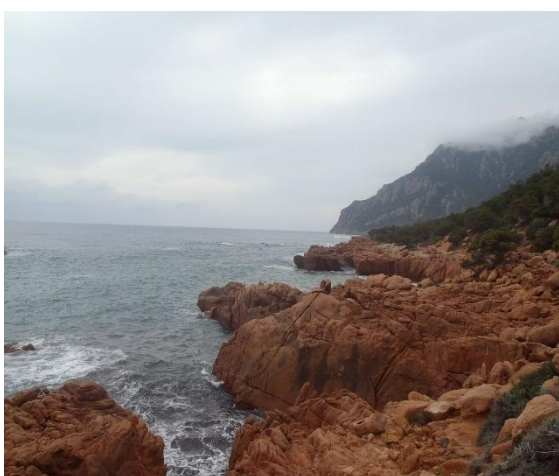
The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "which wolf wins?..." The old Cherokee simply replied, "the one that you feed"



- Solo

Look back at yesterday and today. A lot happened. Questions to take with you on the Solo hike:

1. -What were the feelings you had and went through? (connect with feelings)
- What was your way of acting in that situation? What did you do? (Connect with behavioral patterns)
2. What would you like to do with them now? (opportunity to do something different with the feelings and situation)
3. During the solo, look for something – an object, an image... - that in some way represents your experience. Something that can be used as a metaphor for your solo experience.



- Review

After the solo hike we gathered by the beach. In the circle we created together a space to share how the solo was, and to speak from the heart about things that happened in the group and the feelings and contemplations people of the group had/have. (Focus on the process!!!).

Everyone was given a chance to share, to be listening and to listen to others.

The idea was to end doing a jump in the ocean. But because the sea was too wild to be able to jump safely off the rocks we didn't do it. It's a pity that we couldn't do it because it is a strong opportunity for a closure and turning point of a process...

Anyway, we took the idea and how important it is to closure with a goal we can bring to our daily lives – something to fight for or against, to accomplish or complete. Instead some of us couldn't help it and jumped into the water anyhow! It was a perfect end of a fantastic day and solo experience!



Extra reflection questions:

- Think about the object, image you've found during the solo experience. Please share with the group its meaning and how it connects to your thoughts and feelings.
- How are you feeling right now?
- How can the group help you?

- **Meta reflection**

What do we take with us?

- a very strong activity to do
- the whole idea
- I like that we had a group moment before leaving
- challenge of starting the solo with some people
- a strong way to take contact with your feelings
- create a space for yourself and your feelings while being in nature
- catalyzer of change

What would I adapt/change/improve for YE?

- add a strong ending moment: jump (what are you leaving behind, what are you taking with you)
- create an extra challenge by finding your own way
- solo could start when we are actually alone

What I don't take to YE?

- explore and prepare the path in advance in order to provide safe alternatives for the group
- the unknown place where to end.

- **Additional information about the solo experience**

The SOLO Experience is ideal for:

- For anyone wanting a deeper connection with, and understanding of, themselves.
- For alcoholics or addicts who have at least 3 months continuous sobriety
- For family members/ significant others, who struggle with their own issues, related to having an alcoholic / addict in their lives.
- For people who are tired of all the drama of failed relationships, jobs that do not fulfill them, problems with their partners, children, spouses, family and stress with co-workers.

The SOLO Experience creates a breathing space to get things into perspective and where we can replenish, restore and rejuvenate ourselves from the inside out. It can be structured over a period of a few hours to several days and it provides a safe space where you are supported throughout the experience. Even though the process is challenging at times, we discover a profoundness of feeling of who we are.

- **Readings:**

Re-Thinking the Solo Experience - <http://jee.sagepub.com/content/12/3/28.extract>
 an investigation of the solo in a wilderness experience -
www.nols.edu/nolspro/pdf/2009_WRMC_Solo_Fina_Presentation.ppt

4.3. Dinner and meeting with the community of Ulassai





5. THURSDAY

5.1. Existential Approach about 'losses' (Alexander Rose)

Existential Adventure Therapy, theory to put in practice with youth at risk. Adapted from Alexander Rose and Luk Peeters (Hungary, EEE 2013)

- You will need:

- Individual materials in order to form a line and to put some “milestones” on it (sticks and stones, paper and post-its, rope and karabiners – can be used metaphorical as well - ...).
- Silent and “isolated” place to gather, preferable in nature

- Summary

- *Create the safe environment*
Ask the participants to make a circle, looking outside (the facilitator is in the middle, with no eye contact to the participants)
- *Connect to the here and now*
Ask the participants to breathe deeply, contact with the sunshine, wind, sounds of nature
- *Create a time-line*
Ask each and every person to build a line in front of him/her. This line represents his/her life
- *Losses - individually (adapted)*
Ask the participants to stand still at the inner end, looking towards their life-line

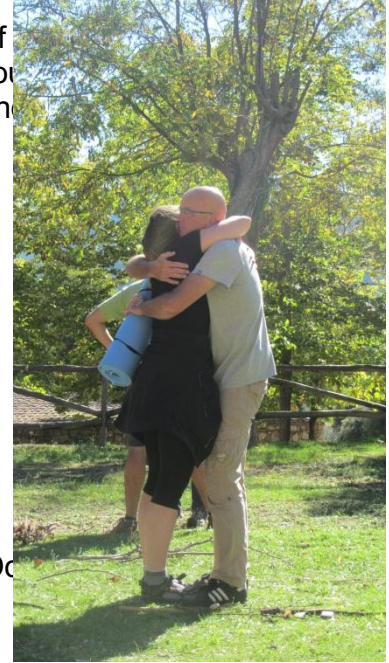
“Concentrate on the first moment in your life you can remember, here you are right now. You are in front of your life. You can see the end, but you do not know when it will come”.

“Think about major changes in you, learning to walk, first day at school, first big present, memories of your parents, first kiss...”

“Now I would like to ask you to think about your losses. If in childhood, if you had to move and lost some friends, if you lost your friends since you left school, or if a relative or a friend died, ask you to place stones (or other materials) along this life line, representing each and every major loss you can bring up in mind. Please think about the loss, connect with your feeling, think about what this represents to you”

[...]

“...now you stand on the here and now, (depending on what you want to work on, you ask questions as) How was your life? [...] What have you learned from the persons and situations? [...] Are you aware of your life or is it a simple sequence of moments? [...] Do you find meaning? [...] Are you ready to die?”



- *Non structured sharing (sitting down in a circle)*
Leave time to calm down and respect the silence. Invite the participants to share.
- *Move forward*
Depending on the goals of the activity, deepen in questions regarding the 4 givens of existence: Inevitability of death, Freedom and responsibility, Existential isolation or Meaninglessness (Yalom).
- *Closure and Invitation*
Thank you very much for showing and sharing deep feelings and being vulnerable. Take some time on your own, reflect, write, share with others in needed. I am here if you feel the need to talk.
- *...to be aware of....*
Grief: explain a bit about what we are going to deepen in, and ask permission or invite not to take part to participants
Time: powerful activity, take time for individuals afterwards, for time one on one if needed
Attitude: be aware of your attitude guiding the activity, echoing participant's feelings and being open to show yourself vulnerable
Humility: if you do not feel prepared to handle sad and deep emotions and situations in a group setting, do not open Pandora's box

- Theory



6th INT. ADVENTURE THERAPY CONFERENCE
September 26th - 30th 2012 - CZECH REPUBLIC



Importance

Adventure therapy through Existentialism

Alexander Rose
Enfoca: Research and Training Centre on Drugs and other addictive behaviours. Faculty of Psychology
Catholic University of Valencia



- Theory-based practice ¿?
- Our major guides* do not refer to Existentialistic approaches, in comparison to Psychoanalysis, Transpersonal theory, Gestalt, CBT, Systemic...

* Davis-Berman & Berman, 2008; Gass, 1993; Gass, Gillis, & Russell, 2012

1



What is for sure in this life?
 Life has an end - we are going to die...
 About what fact haven't been written any
 doctoral theses?
 Does death really occur???



With the only **certainty of death**, both to the
 life experiences and at the end of our life,
one is destined to be (here and now).

“Da-sein“ (to-be-there, in the world)
 “Geworfenheit“ (“thrownness”, thrown into the
 world)



*“If I take death into my life, acknowledge it,
 and face it squarely, I will free myself from
 the anxiety of death and the pettiness of
 life, and only then will I be free to become
 myself“*

Heidegger, 1962



Existentialism

The starting point of philosophical thinking
 must be the experiences of the individual

It is the individual who is exclusively
 responsible for giving meaning to his life
 and for living life passionately and
 sincerely ("authentically")



Existential Psychology

“stems from a life-issues therapy”, and

*“...operates on the belief that inner conflict
 within a person is due to the individual's
 confrontation with the givens of existence:
 the inevitability of death, freedom and its
 attendant of responsibility, existential
 isolation and meaninglessness”*

Yalom, 1980



Givens	Dimensions of human existence	Concept
inevitability of death	physical	Umwelt
freedom and its attendant of responsibility	social	Mitwelt
existential isolation	personal	Eigenwelt
meaninglessness	spiritual	Überwelt



Schools & influenced...

Specific schools:

- Logotherapy (Viktor Frankl)
- Existential psychotherapy (Irving Yalom)

...influenced:

- Basic psychological and medical paradigms (Karl Jaspers)
- Psychotherapies Gestalt (Gary Yontef)

Gonzalo Pardo &
 Pérez Álvarez, 2007



Logotherapy

Viktor E. Frankl
 (1905-1997)

Logos





Logotherapy

The man is a being, constitutively conscious of himself, free and responsible
 Oneself is always being able to decide
 Usually concerned with the choices to be made in present and future
 Authenticity



Logotherapy

“will to pleasure” – “will to power” – “Will to mean”

Meaninglessness - Noogene neurosis
 (Anxiety/Depression – Symptoms)



"Frankl has devoted his career to a study of an existential approach to therapy, and has apparently concluded that the lack of meaning is the paramount existential stress. To him, existential neurosis is synonymous with a crisis of meaninglessness"



Yalom, 1980



Main intervention aims

Self-distancing (stop fighting the symptoms and redirect life to other values)

Self-transcendence (stop being self-centred - community) in order to find meaning of life



Principal procedures and techniques

Specific therapy for Noogenic neurosis

Unspecific therapy for psychogenic neurosis:

- Paradoxical intention for self-distancing
- De-reflection for self-transcendence

Socratic dialogue / Metaphors / Paradoxes



Adventure (logo)therapy?

- Paradoxical intention
 - Clients are encouraged to carry out the behavior that are preventing, reducing anxiety
- De-reflection
 - Stop hyper-reflection. Stop + think correctly
- Socratic dialogue
 - What for? not Why?



- **Metareflection**

What was useful?

- Deep. Real and raw. Shows vulnerability.
- Powerfull, good exercise in dealing with your own emotions and feelings.
- Very powerfull. Good timing (when safety in group)
- Good job doing the combination between life and death starting with life (and memories)
- Clarified myself

What would you change for youngsters?

- Other focus: on the strengths, resilience.
- What were your feelings? What are your feelings now? How you managed it? What helped already? What did you do? Who was helpful for you? Who supported you? What can you take to the future to manage with other difficulties?
- Think of moments of “change”; when you jumped.
- Very delicate exercise. When you do it in the program?

- **Background: theoretical frame, articles**

Adventure therapy drinks from very varied sources, being Existentialism one of them. Existentialism is a philosophical - psychological approach to psychotherapy putting in the center of the intervention the freedom of each and every person and the responsibility linked to it, stressing on the person's attitude in the present moment.

Good articles to read are:

Glass, J. S. (ND): Connecting Theory to Programming: Using Existentialism and Adventure Based Counseling with Adolescents

http://www.meaning.ca/archives/archive/art_existential_abc_JS_Glass.html

Adams, A. (2010): Existential Psychology: How Does It Influence Wilderness Therapy?
http://www.aee.org/assets/docs/4iatc_procdgs_connecting_w_essence_2010.pdf#page=170

Passmore, H.-A. & Howell A. J. (2014): Eco-Existential Positive Psychology: Experiences in Nature, Existential Anxieties, and Well-Being

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/08873267.2014.920335>

Other articles provided will be: Adams, A. & Sveen, R. (2000): An Holistic Model of Bush Counselling: Cornerstones of Practice and Rose, A. (2015): Adventure therapy through Existentialism

6. FRIDAY

6.1. Theatre of the oppressed (Silvia and Roberta)

- Summary: what you want to do

During the workshop, we have worked on trust and sense of possibility to act on our life. Often, young people in disadvantage situations feel themselves powerless on their life and without possibility to express their will or needs. These feelings make low their self-esteem, create hostile behaviours and make them resistant to create a trust relationship. We are convinced that self-esteem and trust are fundamental for growing up and having a role in own life.

In our experience with young people, we has noticed their difficulty to having trust in themselves and in the other; lack of trust made more difficult to work on personal development or changement: in order to create condition for an effectual work with the group, it is necessary to create a comfortable and trust setting.

Theoretical References: Literature made by / on Augusto Boal.

- What is theatre of oppressed?

Theatre of Oppressed is a system of theatrical games and techniques that examine and dismantle dynamics of oppression.

What happens in the theatre on emotional and cognitive levels is a metaphor for what happens in real life. The secret is to be able to elaborate emotions, feeling, thought in the theatre and transfer what have you learnt on real life.

Theatre of oppressed is a system that train people to act in the fiction of theatre to become protagonist, active subject, of their life.

Theatre of oppressed offers everyone a method to analyse their past, in the context of their present, to invent their future.

Theatre of oppressed was created to teach people how to change their world. In this process the actors or audience members can stop a performance, often a short scene in which a character is oppressed in some way.

In this sense, this kind of theatre can be an instrument of concrete social transformation, can develop sense of possibility and trust in own capabilities.

The theatre of oppressed is based on principle that human relationship should have a dialogic nature. A relationship without dialogue create monologue that incentive oppressed situation in which one person decide in stand of the others without any exchange. Dialogue is a freely exchange with others as a person and as a group to partecipate in the society as equal, to respect differences and to be respected.

Dialogue should prevail in order to avoid inequality and to improve healthy relationship between human beings.

- Structure of workshop

Workshop has foreseen two part, one propedeutical to the other one. Our aim was not to create actors but to give us an opportunity to experiment a method. For this reason was not requested acting skills. It was not a theatrical performance

PART 1: Warm up/energizer - Trust exercises

- SHEKERAMO STU CAFFE
- PASS THE SQUEEZE and THE CLAPS. Everybody hold hands and pass own “squeeze” / own “claps” to the next persons
- SHAKE! Move every part of your body, one by one, counting from 1 to 8.
- INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP MASSAGE.

- WALK THE SPACE –Not in circle. Freely. Occupy all the space, all angles with your feet.
 - speed of steps: from 1 to 10, considering that 1 is slow and 10 is very fast.
 - follow instruction of the trainer: STOP → all stop themselves; GO → all go; JUMP, all jump; CLAPS → all claps. In a second moment, follow same instruction with different significant: STOP → all GO; GO → all STOP; JUMP → all CLAPS; CLAPS → all JUMP.
 - look into the eyes of person that you meet, for few second
 - squeeze the hand of person that you meet.
 - hug the person that you meet, for 10 seconds.
- BOMB AND SHIELD. Choose two person in the group and walking silently: one person is a bomb (you have to escape from it) and other one is a shield (it have to stay between you and the bomb). *Some question about the act: Who is your bomb/shield? How was it?*
- OXYGEN. Create couple. One person lead the other one without contact. His/her hand is open with the palm in front of the nose of the companion. Keep always same distance between hand and the nose. As hand is moved, nose follow it Move in the space. Change the role and at the end try in the same time to lead with hand and follow with the nose.



- TRUST FALL IN DUO/TRIO. Create trios/duo One person in the middle of the trios, who fall in front, come back in the middle and fall behind. Close eyes, feet together, firm and stable body, don't relocate feet.
- THE SEA. One big group in circle (the sea). One person in the middle with closed eyes and hand cross on the chest. Person in the middle have to let himself in this big sea. The others have to receive the person and pass to the others. *Some question about the activities: How was it? Which role did you prefer ? Why ? What do you learn from this activities about you?*
- RAIN FOREST. Everybody copy this progression of movement/sound. Rub hands - Click fingers - Slap thighs - Stamp feet - Slap thighs - Click fingers - Rub hands



Break: 10'

PART 2: Imaging Theatre

- ANIMALS AND ELECTRIC APPLIANCE.
- OBJECTS. Group of 5/6 person. Make object with our body. Clock, table, pair of jeans. All together create Tour Eiffel
- IMAGE THEATRE IN COUPLE. In couple. One person strike a pose; partner adds some gesture. After few second, first one change position, adding another gesture and so on.
- HANDSHAKE. Everibody sit down. Two people in the middle, on the stage, in silent, make a static position. After few second, one of the "actors" sits down, somebody else goes on the stage and adds another pose for creating a new photo. *What do you see and what situation represent. (quickly sharing)*
- IMAGE THEATRE ON OPPRESSION.
 - Introduction on oppression: little brainstorming on oppression. What is oppression? In which context should be oppression? Who is the oppressor?
 - In three groups: each group have to sharing a situation of oppression from real and daily life. It can be a personal situation which engaged me directly or not. After



sharing, each group choose one situation to represent with three different photo: the start one, the evolution of situation and the end.



Some question for each photo:

1. what do you see?
2. what does the situation represent? Who is oppressor? Who is oppressed? What's happen in this photo?
3. who believe it is possible change something in the situation ? How? Who want to try change position of oppressor for making something different?

- **Metareflection: comments from participant**

- The beginning is really important, help to feel contact with us and the group. The combination of the first part (bodywork) and the second part (theatre) was very powerful and create an holistic experience.
- It is useful for the youngsters the principle that the solution of oppressive situation is in ourself, as active protagonist of the situation. This approach give to all the opportunity to express yourself and decide what is the role they can have.

7. EXTRA BOOK TIPS

- Borderline Times, Dirk De Wachter
- Antidote, O. Burkeman
- The Seven paths, changing one's way of walki in the world, AnaSazi Foundation (used at campfire)
- Resilience ...
- Shouting at the sky, Ferguson
- Man's search of meaning, Victor Frankl
- The fax agreements
- Theatre of the oppressed, august Boal/ Friere
- Mutant message down under: about aboriginal Australians and how they relate with earth
- The promise of Wilderness Therapy, Berman and Davis-Berman



8. MUCH THANKS TO ...

The community of Ulassai for their hospitality. We will surely be ambassadors for Ulassai.



All participants for their contribution to the program, their enthusiasm, warmth, wisdom, courage, personal sharing, drive, ...

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