

Exercise No. 1.1.

MODULE I	Introduction to supporting persons with disabilities. The role of an informal advisor
Topic	Communication with the parent of a child with a disability
Activity title	"A conversation that supports"
Educational objective	Developing empathic communication skills, active listening and providing emotional support to parents of children with disabilities.
Target group	Informal counsellors for parents of children with disabilities
Duration (minutes)	90 min.
Venue	Workshop room with space for working in pairs and at a round table.
Number of participants	5-10 people
Method	Conversation simulation, role-playing, mini-lecture with elements of reflection.
Tools	Cards with scene descriptions, stopwatch, reflection notebook, board.
Description of activity	
1. Introduction (10 min) – the instructor discusses the importance of communication in the counsellor–parent relationship: listening, accepting emotions, avoiding giving unsolicited advice. 2. Workshop part (60 min): - Participants work in pairs to act out short conversation scenes (e.g. a parent after their child's diagnosis, a parent burnt out from caregiving, a parent looking for information).	

- One person plays the role of an informal counsellor, the other plays the role of a parent; after a few minutes, the roles are reversed.
 - The facilitator observes and points out effective communication techniques: paraphrasing, empathetic questions, supportive silence, avoiding judgements.
3. **Group reflection (15 min)** – discussion about what helped and what hindered the conversation.
 4. **Summary (5 min)** – discussion of the importance of presence and mindfulness in the helping relationship.

Instructions for participants:

- Do not judge the other person, focus on listening and emotions.
- Use paraphrasing ("I understand that you feel..."), avoid "you should".
- After each scene, note down what emotions arose on both sides.

Summary (questions):

1. **What emotions did the conversation with my parent evoke in me?**
2. **Am I able to listen without immediately giving advice?**
3. **Which words in my communication are supportive, and which could be hurtful?**

Summary – self-reflection

1. What did I learn during this module? What new insights did I gain about supporting parents of children with disabilities?
2. What will I take away from this module in my role as a peer counsellor?
3. How might this influence the way I support parents now and in the future?
4. What is one practical step I can take tomorrow based on what I have learned?

Exercise 1.2.

MODULE I	Introduction to supporting people with disabilities. The role of an informal advisor
Topic	Communication with the parent of a child with a disability
Activity title	"Parents in crisis – how to support them without taking on responsibility"
Educational objective	Developing skills in recognising emotions and phases of adaptation in parents after their child has been diagnosed with a disability, and shaping appropriate forms of support.
Target group	Informal counsellors for parents of children with disabilities
Duration (minutes)	90 min.
Venue	Workshop room with access to a blackboard and space for group work.
Number of participants	5-10 people
Method	Case study analysis, small group work, brainstorming, mini reflective lecture.
Tools	Cards with descriptions of parents' situations (e.g. denial, anger, grief, acceptance), sheets of paper, markers.
Description	
1. Introduction (10 min) – the instructor discusses the psychological model of parents' reactions to diagnosis (shock – denial – rebellion – grief – acceptance). 2. Workshop part (60 min) - Participants divide into groups and analyse case studies, e.g. - A mother in denial who refuses to accept her child's diagnosis. - A father blaming doctors and the school. - A parent with symptoms of emotional burnout.	

- Task: develop a proposal for an informal counsellor's response – what to say, what to avoid, how to show support.
- 3. **Presentation and discussion (15 min)** – groups present their solutions, the facilitator comments and relates them to the principles of counselling ethics.
- 4. **Summary (5 min)** – indicating the limits of the counsellor's responsibility: I support, but I do not do it for them.

Instructions for participants:

- Try to understand the parent's emotions, do not judge them.
- Consider what attitude a counsellor should adopt at each stage of the crisis.
- In your presentation, include both words of support and silence as a tool for empathy.

Summary – (questions):

1. Which emotions of parents are the most difficult for me to accept?
2. Can I provide support without taking responsibility for the parent's decisions?
3. What strategies help me maintain a balance between empathy and distance?

Summary – self-reflection

5. What have I learned during this module? What new insights have I gained about supporting parents of children with disabilities?
6. What will I take away from this module in my role as a peer counsellor?
7. How might this affect the way I support parents now and in the future?
8. What is one practical step I can take tomorrow based on what I have learned?

Exercise 1.3.

MODULE I	Introduction to supporting people with disabilities. The role of an informal advisor
Topic	Building a support network around the family
Activity title	"The power of cooperation"
Educational objective	Developing the coordination and social skills of informal advisors in terms of cooperation with institutions, schools and other parents.
Target group	Informal advisors for parents of children with disabilities
Duration (minutes)	75 min.
Location	Workshop room with space for teamwork.
Number of participants	5-10 people
Method	Group work, simulation game, social network analysis.
Tools	Flipchart, coloured markers, sticky notes, string or thread (to visualise connections), role cards.
Activity description	

1. **Introduction (10 min)** – the facilitator discusses the concept of a "support network" – formal and informal.
2. **Practical exercise (50 min)**
 - Each group receives a scenario, e.g.:
 - A single parent raising a child with autism.
 - A family with financial difficulties and a child with a physical disability.
 - Task: draw a support network around this family (institutions, people, programmes, counsellors, school, community).

- Next, each group simulates a round table meeting – each participant takes on a specific role (advisor, teacher, parent, official, neighbour). The aim is to develop a joint plan of action.
3. **Group reflection (10 min)** – analysis of what facilitates and what hinders cooperation.
 4. **Summary (5 min)** – discussion of the importance of shared responsibility and cross-sector communication.

Instructions for participants:

- Everyone should actively participate in the simulation.
- Remember that effective support is not a solo effort, but a team effort.
- During the game, write down at least three conditions for good cooperation.

Summary – (questions):

1. What difficulties arise in building a support network for the family?
2. Which aspects of cooperation with institutions require me to develop my skills?
3. What can I do in my community to better integrate different forms of assistance?

Summary – self-reflection

9. What have I learned during this module? What new insights have I gained about supporting parents of children with disabilities?
10. What will I take away from this module in my role as a peer counsellor?
11. How might this affect the way I support parents now and in the future?
12. What is one practical step I can take tomorrow based on what I have learned?