



Inclusion of Resilient Minds

Skills for Refugees and Youth

A practical training guide to support
employability, entrepreneurship and
personal development.



EMPLOYABILITY



SKILLS



ENTREPRENEURSHIP



GROWTH



INCLUSION

*Building skills.
Creating opportunities.
Empowering futures.*



Co-funded by
the European Union

Psychosocial Empowerment, Adaptation, and Healing Guide for Refugees and Disadvantaged Youth

İçindekiler

1. Introduction to the guide	4
1.1. Purpose of This Guide and What You Will Gain	4
1.2. Target Audience: Youth, Refugees, and Those Making a New Start	4
1.3. Project Context	5
1.4. How to Use This Guide	6
1.5. Learning Approach	6
1.6. The Individual and Social Path of Psychological Empowerment and Psychosocial Resilience	7
2. Laying the Groundwork: Self-Awareness and Inner Strengths	7
2.1. Why Is Self-Awareness Important?	7
2.2. Understanding Psychosocial Resilience and Mental Health	8
2.3. Recognizing Your Inner Strengths and Hidden Resources	9
2.4. Pathways of Expression and Healing: Art Therapy, Nature Walks, and Group Sharing	9
2.5. Discovering Life Purpose and the Inner Compass	10
2.6. Making Sense of Your Personal Life Journey	11
2.7. Creating a Safe and Supportive Space for Learning and Healing	11
2.8. Key Takeaways	12
3. Adaptation to a New Society, Social Connections, and a Culture of Living Together	12
3.1. Understanding Social Dynamics and the Impacts of Societal Crises	12
3.2. Social Support Networks and Areas of Social Participation	13
3.3. Social Expectations, Language Barriers, and Maintaining Boundaries	13
3.4. Dynamics of Living Together and Cultural Interaction	14
3.5. Psychosocial Support and Healing-Oriented Communication	14
3.6. Actionable Steps in the Field and Understanding the Ecosystem	15
3.7. Key Takeaways	15
4. Access to Healthcare, Mental Health, and Legal Rights	16
4.1. The Multifaceted Challenges of Migration and Natural Disasters	16
4.2. How to Access Healthcare Services? Healthcare Rights and Preventive Services	16
4.3. Protecting Your Mental Health: Psychological First Aid and Self-Support Strategies	17

4.4. Mental and Physical Well-being: Harmony through Sports, Yoga, and Gastronomy	18
4.5. Your Legal Rights and Guidance on Legal Procedures.....	18
4.6. Practical Reference Guide: Support Mechanisms and Checklist.....	19
5. Stress Management, Emotion Regulation, and Psychological Flexibility: Building Your Inner Balance	20
5.1. Psychological Flexibility and Mental Resilience	20
5.2. Emotion Regulation and Cognitive Reframing	21
5.3. Grounding in Crisis Moments and Sustainable Self-Care	21
5.4. Practical Tool: Individual Mental Health and Self-Care Plan Canvas.....	22
6. Healing and Future Design: Micro-Goals and Psychosocial Action Plan	22
6.1. Safe Future Projection and Rebuilding Hope	23
6.2. Non-Pressuring "Micro-Goals" (Compassionate Goal Setting)	23
6.3. Obstacle and Relapse (Setback) Management: Bad Day Protocol	24
6.4. Practical Tool: 30-Day Psychosocial Healing and Self-Care Plan	24
7. Implementation Guide for Youth Workers, Mentors, and Trainers	25
7.1. Trauma-Informed Approach and Mentoring Coaching	25
7.2. Workshop Designs, Session Plans, and Facilitation Techniques	25
7.3. Institutional Collaborations for Inclusive Integration	25
8. Closing, Support Networks, and Annexes	26
8.1. Outlook on the Future and Inspirational Messages	26
8.2. Useful Links: Map of Support Networks.....	26
8.3. Individual Worksheets, Templates, and Forms	26
References	31

1. Introduction to the guide

1.1. Purpose of This Guide and What You Will Gain

This guide was developed within the framework of the Erasmus+ project "Inclusion of Resilient Minds: Skills for Refugees and Marginalized Youth," a small-scale partnership in the field of youth that brings together organizations from Spain, Greece, and Türkiye. The project aims to support the social, economic, and psychological integration of young refugees and migrants by strengthening their psychosocial competencies, emotion regulation skills, and psychological resilience.

This guide is designed as a practical and accessible resource that brings together information, tools, and activities to support their inner healing and social integration processes. It adopts a holistic approach, recognizing that successful integration depends not only on vocational skills but also on personal development, mental health, and social inclusion.

Upon completing this guide, you will:

- Gain the skills to cope with the anxiety and uncertainty you may face while adapting to a new social environment,
- Learn to maintain your psychological well-being in the face of challenges by enhancing your emotional resilience,
- Take practical steps to discover your true potential and strengthen your social connections,
- Rebuild your self-confidence, achieving a more peaceful and active presence both in your personal life and within the community.

1.2. Target Audience: Youth, Refugees, and Those Making a New Start

This guide is primarily designed for:

- Refugee and disadvantaged youth (aged 18-35) who want to strengthen their mental health and psychosocial resilience.
- Youth workers, trainers, and mentors supporting the learning and integration of young people.
- NGOs, educators, and community organizations working in the fields of inclusion, employability, and youth development

Furthermore, it can also be useful for employers, local authorities, and support organizations seeking to create more inclusive labor markets and foster diverse talent.

The content is written clearly and accessibly to ensure it can be utilized by individuals from various educational and professional backgrounds.

At its core, this guide focuses on young refugees from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds trying to build a life in a new country or city, young individuals struggling with social and economic disadvantages, and anyone forced to make a fresh start from scratch.

Regardless of the challenging experiences, losses, or adaptation processes you have faced in the past, this guide meets you exactly where you are. Knowing that you are not alone and finding common emotional ground with young people who have walked similar paths or share similar anxieties is the most crucial part of this journey.

1.3. Project Context

In Europe and neighboring regions, many young refugees and migrants face significant challenges when trying to access education and employment opportunities. These challenges may include:

- Language barriers that can hinder communication and learning
- Limited access to education and training, often due to interrupted learning pathways
- Social exclusion and discrimination, which can negatively impact self-confidence and opportunities
- Psychological stress, typically associated with displacement, uncertainty, or past experiences

At the same time, these young people bring valuable strengths with them, such as adaptability, resilience, and an intercultural perspective.

This project responds to these realities by promoting integrated learning pathways that combine the following elements:

- Language development to support communication and integration
- Skill-building workshops to foster emotional regulation and coping mechanisms
- Psychosocial support and self-care strategies to protect mental health and cope with trauma.
- Psychosocial resilience building to strengthen self-confidence and well-being

This partnership brings together complementary areas of expertise:

The partner from Türkiye, the International Defne Youth and Education Association, focuses on psychological empowerment and the development of psychosocial resilience.

1.4. How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to be flexibly adapted to diverse needs and contexts within the processes of psychological empowerment and psychosocial resilience building. You can use this guide in the following ways:

- As a resource for individual self-guided learning, inner exploration, and mental health support,
- In group workshops, safe space sessions, and support trainings conducted by youth workers, psychosocial support professionals, or educators,
- As a practical toolkit and roadmap for peer mentoring and one-on-one guidance programs,
- As a primary reference source for local organizations, associations, and projects supporting the social integration of refugee and disadvantaged youth.

Each chapter includes a combination of the following elements:

- Simple theoretical explanations introducing core concepts such as mental health, emotional resilience, and stress management,
- Practical tools, breathing exercises, and step-by-step activities that can be easily applied in daily life,
- Real-life examples and reflection spaces that connect learning and inner healing with experiences of overcoming challenges.

Users are encouraged to actively engage with the content, complete the activities at their own pace, and reflect on their own experiences. Learning and healing become much more meaningful and lasting when they are directly connected to personal goals, emotional needs, and real-life situations.

1.5. Learning Approach

The methodology of this guide is rooted in non-formal education principles that center on active participation, practical learning, and personal development.

Key elements of this approach include:

- **Learner-centered approach** – adapting to the needs, experiences, and pace of each participant
- **Experiential learning** – learning by doing, reflecting, and applying knowledge

- **Trauma-informed and culturally sensitive practices** – creating safe, respectful, and inclusive environments
- **Practical orientation** – focusing on real-life skills and situations

Special attention is given to the development of the following areas:

- Self-confidence and self-belief
- Autonomy and decision-making skills
- Psychological resilience and the ability to overcome challenges

These elements are of fundamental importance for individuals' integration into social life and society, as well as for their future pathways in employment and entrepreneurship.

1.6. The Individual and Social Path of Psychological Empowerment and Psychosocial Resilience

In the face of life's sudden shocks, migration processes, losses, or profound changes, an individual's ability to get back on their feet primarily requires a process of inner transformation and psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment and psychosocial resilience, which form the core axis of this guide, provide more than just momentary relief; they also support the individual in:

- Recognizing their own inner resources, self-worth, and hidden potential,
- Gaining flexibility (resilience) to bounce back in the face of emotional storms and uncertainties,
- Taking control of their life and renewing hope for the future.

Simultaneously, this process enables the individual to build healthy bonds with their surroundings and their new community, distancing themselves from feelings of loneliness and isolation by strengthening their social integration.

This guide treats the dimensions of self-awareness, emotional regulation, post-trauma coping strategies, and psychosocial resilience as a complementary and holistic journey. Developing these elements together allows the individual to find peace and balance in their inner world while confidently participating in social life and becoming the author of their own life.

2. Laying the Groundwork: Self-Awareness and Inner Strengths

2.1. Why Is Self-Awareness Important?

Before taking any step toward healing, adaptation, or personal growth, it is essential to understand who you are, what you feel, and what you need.

For many young refugees and disadvantaged youth, personal and life journeys do not always follow a straight line. Moving to a new country, adapting to a different culture, or experiencing disruptions in education can create uncertainty. However, these experiences also build invaluable inner strengths, such as psychological resilience, adaptability, and coping skills.

Developing self-awareness helps you:

- Recognize your skills, talents, and life experiences, including those gained outside of formal education
- Understand your values and motivations that shape your decisions and goals
- Clarify your choices by identifying your interests and emotional inclinations
- Build self-confidence and belief in your own abilities, even if you are making a fresh start in life
- Take conscious steps toward your future by making decisions that truly align with who you are

Self-awareness is the first step toward psychological empowerment and inner healing. It enables you to move forward on your life journey with clarity and a sense of purpose.

2.2. Understanding Psychosocial Resilience and Mental Health

Mental health and psychosocial resilience do not simply mean living a problem-free life; they mean being able to stay flexible, bounce back, and maintain inner balance in the face of life's challenges, changes, and stressors.

This process involves a combination of the following:

- The ability to recognize your emotions and express them safely,
- The capacity to utilize coping strategies (coping mechanisms) in challenging situations,
- The flexibility to adapt to changing environmental conditions,
- Practicing self-compassion and being able to seek support during difficult times.

Core Psychosocial Skills: These skills are essential for protecting and strengthening your mental health:

- **Communication:** Clearly expressing your thoughts and emotions, and actively listening to others. This prevents misunderstandings and helps build strong connections.

- **Peer Support and Coexistence:** Working in harmony and finding common ground with people from diverse backgrounds.
- **Adaptability (Flexibility):** Adapting to new environments, tasks, or challenges. This is your greatest asset during times of uncertainty.
- **Problem-Solving:** Remaining calm in difficult or unexpected situations to search for solutions.
- **Self-Care:** Taking small but consistent steps in daily life to protect your mental and physical health.
- **Taking Initiative:** Taking action for your own well-being and keeping your motivation high.

Tip: Many of these skills are learned not just in formal education, but gathered from life itself, lived experiences, and migration journeys. Even ordinary daily moments can hold valuable lessons.

2.3. Recognizing Your Inner Strengths and Hidden Resources

Everyone possesses inner strengths—even if they may not be obvious at first. When people enter a new environment, they often tend to focus on what they lack or what they have lost. However, recognizing your strengths is vital for building self-confidence and looking to the future with hope.

Your strengths can be drawn from:

- Your past life, work, or volunteering experiences
- Formal or non-formal education you have received
- Daily life activities and the responsibilities you take on
- The challenges you have braved during the migration and adaptation process

Examples of Hidden Strengths

- Speaking or understanding multiple languages
- Adapting to brand-new systems, languages, and cultures
- Supporting family members or individuals within your community
- Remaining calm or stepping up to take responsibility in difficult or stressful situations

These experiences are exceptionally valuable and can be transformed into inner resources that guide you across all areas of your life.

2.4. Pathways of Expression and Healing: Art Therapy, Nature Walks, and Group Sharing

ACTIVITY: “My Inner Strengths Map”

This activity helps you recognize and organize your hidden strengths and psychological resources.

- **Step 1: Reflect on your experiences**

Reflect on the following: What have I achieved in the past? What challenges have I overcome? What aspect of myself am I proud of?

- **Step 2: Identify your skills**

Note down the following: What am I good at? What qualities of mine do people around me appreciate? Which skills do I use in my daily life?

- **Step 3: Categorize your strengths**

Group them as follows:

- **Personal strengths** (e.g., patience, resilience, determination)
- **Social skills** (e.g., empathy, communication, active listening)
- **Practical abilities** (e.g., organizing, problem-solving, creativity)

- **Step 4: Connect with your life**

Ask yourself: How can I use these inner strengths more actively in my daily life and to protect my mental health?

ACTIVITY: Safe Place Imagery (Visualization)

- **Objective:** To build a peaceful, safe, and calm sanctuary in the mind to retreat to during moments of stress.

- **Steps:**

1. Close your eyes and imagine a place where you feel completely safe, peaceful, and protected.
2. Keep the colors, light, sounds, and smells of this place alive in your mind.
3. Feel how your body relaxes while in this space.
4. Determine a "keyword" for this safe place (e.g., Peace, Shore, Safe). When you feel intense stress, repeat this word to invite your mind to this safe space.

2.5. [Discovering Life Purpose and the Inner Compass](#)

Finding direction and meaning in your life after going through challenging times is invaluable for your mental health. Having a "why" in life is one of the most powerful elements that enhances psychological resilience.

This journey of discovery takes shape by bringing together the following elements:

- What do you love doing, and what nourishes your soul?
- In which areas do you have a natural talent or strength?
- What does your environment, community, or world need?
- What brings you peace and fulfillment?

When these areas intersect, you can discover your inner compass and give your life a more meaningful direction.

Activity: “My Inner Compass Reflection”

- Draw or write four sections on a piece of paper:
 - Things you enjoy and that feel good to you
 - Your strengths and skills
 - The needs of the people around you or your community
 - Your hopes and dreams for the future
 - Then, observe where these areas intersect.

2.6. Making Sense of Your Personal Life Journey

Your personal life journey is an integral part of your identity and, at the same time, your greatest source of resilience. Honoring and making sense of your past allows you to live the present more peacefully.

While reflecting on your life journey, focus on the following:

- Where did I start from?
- What were the key moments or turning points that brought me to where I am today?
- What challenges did I face?
- What did I learn from these challenges, and what inner strength did I awaken?
- Where do I want to go now?

Tip: There is no such thing as a "wrong path." Whether positive or challenging, every experience can transform into a source of learning for your future.

2.7. Creating a Safe and Supportive Space for Learning and Healing

When coming together in a group or community, it is crucial to create an atmosphere where everyone feels safe and respected. A safe space allows participants to share their experiences and learn from one another without the fear of being judged.

Participants should experience the following feelings:

- **Respect:** Their ideas and life stories are valuable.
- **Being Heard/Understood:** They have equal space to speak and be heard.
- **Feeling Safe:** They can open up their inner worlds without the fear of judgment.

Sample Group Rules

- Listening to each other without interrupting,
- Respecting different opinions and life stories,
- Committing to the confidentiality of shared personal stories (confidentiality principle),
- Supporting each other during difficult moments.

This approach is essential, especially when working with individuals who have gone through traumatic or challenging transition processes.

2.8. Key Takeaways

In this section, you have explored the importance of self-awareness, which serves as the foundation of your psychological empowerment:

- **Self-awareness** helps you understand your inner strengths, goals, and emotional needs.
- **Past challenging experiences** and your migration journey can transform into the strongest psychological resources you possess today.
- **Psychosocial resilience** encompasses not only technical skills, but also flexibility, self-care, and coping strategies.
- **Hidden strengths** exist within everyone, waiting to be discovered.
- **Reflection** is the most powerful tool on the path toward personal growth and finding inner balance.

Building self-awareness and psychological resilience is the first and most crucial step toward taking ownership of your own life and looking to the future with hope.

3. Adaptation to a New Society, Social Connections, and a Culture of Living Together

3.1. Understanding Social Dynamics and the Impacts of Societal Crises

Sudden population movements, such as the mass migration from Syria to Hatay, can create deep crises in education, healthcare, the economy, and social life. Compounded by

major disasters like the 2023 earthquake, these events have led to a severe psychological and economic collapse for both local residents and refugees.

For instance, in severely affected regions like Antakya, 70% of refugees show symptoms of anxiety and depression. Adapting to a new society is not merely about learning the rules; it is about rebuilding trust by overcoming the social divides and prejudices created by such traumas. As you come to understand the dynamics of society, feelings of exclusion diminish, and your psychological resilience increases.

3.2. Social Support Networks and Areas of Social Participation

Engaging with social support networks is the most critical step toward feeling safe in a new environment. Fieldwork conducted by organizations such as the International Defne Youth Education Association plays a major role in the mental integration of migrants into society.

Social Support and Participation Tools You Can Join:

- Participating in joint projects and cultural events designed to increase interaction between local residents and refugees fosters a sense of belonging.
- Mentorship programs conducted through one-on-one pairings build strong social bridges between local youth and refugees.
- Activities such as yoga, sports, and drama training serve as effective tools in protecting mental health and accelerating social integration.
- Psychosocial empowerment and peer-sharing workshops enable individuals to realize their own potential and inner resources.

3.3. Social Expectations, Language Barriers, and Maintaining Boundaries

One of the greatest obstacles to social integration is the inability to communicate. For example, observations conducted in the Sparta region show that 40% of refugees cannot integrate into society solely due to language barriers, which increases social exclusion.

Key Considerations for Adaptation:

- Participating in courses and language development activities offered in local languages enables you to express yourself more comfortably and facilitates your social adaptation.
- Being informed about migrant rights and international legal rights helps you protect your boundaries and rights in the face of legal gaps.
- Benefiting from psychological first aid training when necessary and practicing these skills through role-playing games enables you to maintain your composure during moments of crisis.

3.4. Dynamics of Living Together and Cultural Interaction

Cultural interaction means viewing differences as an asset and coming together on common ground. If you struggle to build these connections, you can lean on universal languages for support.

- "Cultural kitchen" events, where refugees and local residents cook traditional dishes together, create a safe space for strengthening social bonds and sharing stories.
- Gastronomy and tourism activities positively impact migrant health while contributing directly to social and economic well-being.
- Participating in nature-based group activities and ecological awareness helps you embrace your new living space.

3.5. Psychosocial Support and Healing-Oriented Communication

The post-trauma recovery process is not a journey that needs to be walked alone. Participating in mental health support and psychological resilience programs significantly reduces issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress.

Practical Steps to Support Healing:

- Practicing breathing techniques and engaging in mindfulness exercises to achieve mental relaxation facilitates stress management.
- Sharing your story in group discussions and group therapy makes you feel that you are not alone and supports collective recovery.

ACTIVITY: Emotion Pool and Expression Box

- **Objective:** To safely express suppressed emotions (anger, grief, helplessness) through artistic or written expression.
- **Instructions:** Use colored pens or a notebook to express the emotions you felt today but couldn't let out. Complete these two sentences:
 - *"The emotion I feel inside right now gives me the message of"*
 - *"The smallest gift I can give myself today to cope with this emotion is"*

3.6. Actionable Steps in the Field and Understanding the Ecosystem

To put theoretical knowledge into practice and feel safe, it is important to understand how the institutions and support mechanisms around you function.

- Crisis desks established by public institutions (Provincial and District Health Directorates, Migrant Health units) and NGOs generate solutions at both local and national levels. Do not hesitate to reach out to these centers whenever you need support
- You can express your inner emotions through art therapy and achieve mental relaxation outdoors through nature walks.
- By actively utilizing the region-specific "Refugee Integration Toolkit" and mental health guides, you can manage your adaptation process at your own pace and in a healthy manner.

3.7. Key Takeaways

In this section, you have explored the healing power of social cohesion and a sense of belonging on your mental health:

- **Major disasters and migration waves** can deeply impact mental health; however, psychosocial support networks play a key role in overcoming these traumas.
- **Overcoming language barriers** and participating in cultural activities (such as culinary workshops) breaks down prejudices between you and the local community, building social bridges
- **Practical methods** such as art therapy, nature walks, yoga, and sports make it easier to find mental balance and manage stress.

- **Sharing your story** by participating in mentorship programs and group therapy boosts your self-confidence and strengthens your social integration.

4. Access to Healthcare, Mental Health, and Legal Rights

4.1. The Multifaceted Challenges of Migration and Natural Disasters

Sudden and mass migration waves from Syria to Hatay created severe crises in education, healthcare, the economy, social life, and urban infrastructure. Immediately following this, the catastrophic 2023 earthquake centered in Hatay—which affected 11 provinces, claimed over 50,000 lives, and displaced hundreds of thousands of people—further deepened this psychological and economic devastation.

Particularly in heavily affected areas like Antakya, 70% of refugees exhibit symptoms of trauma-related anxiety and depression. Protecting mental health in the face of these combined crises requires engaging with the social, economic, and physical environment holistically while strengthening inner resilience.

4.2. How to Access Healthcare Services? Healthcare Rights and Preventive Services

Access to basic healthcare services is an indispensable part of feeling personally safe and achieving psychosocial recovery. Healthcare mechanisms are operated continuously through public crisis desks and European Union-supported projects.

Healthcare Institutions and Service Mechanisms

- **Provincial and District Health Directorates:** Newly established units within the Hatay Provincial Health Directorate provide direct integration and healthcare services tailored to migration crises
- **Migrant Health Centers:** In line with the migrant epidemiology and public health efforts of the Hatay Public Health Presidency, refugees are provided direct access to basic health screenings and preventive healthcare services.
- **Field and Tourism Zone Healthcare Services:** Local units, such as the Arsuz District Health Directorate, carry out healthcare access models adapted to the population mobility in the region.

Healthcare Rights Reminder: Applying to healthcare institutions and benefiting from preventive medical services is your most fundamental legal right; securing your physical health is the first step toward reducing uncertainty and anxiety.

4.3. Protecting Your Mental Health: Psychological First Aid and Self-Support Strategies

Traumas caused by both migration processes and natural disasters can be managed with appropriate psychosocial support approaches.

- **Psychological First Aid (PFA):** The initial intervention method applied to soothe panic and shock during moments of crisis. Crisis scenarios simulated through role-playing games enhance your ability to cope with immediate stress.
- **Migrant Psychology and Drama Training:** Drama workshops and expression-focused activities help you externalize adaptation challenges and accumulated emotions in a safe space.
- **Scientific Tracking and Self-Assessment:** Clinically-based scales such as PHQ-9 (Depression) and GAD-7 (Generalized Anxiety) make it easier to monitor changes in your emotional state and identify moments when you need professional support.

Tracking your mental health is a great way to recognize your emotional fluctuations and seek professional support when necessary. The underlying rationale of clinical scales such as the PHQ-9 (Depression Screening) and GAD-7 (Generalized Anxiety Screening) is based on observing the frequency of symptoms experienced over the past two weeks (*Not at all, several days, more than half the days, nearly every day*).

You can draw the following sample **Daily Emotion and Mood Tracking Chart** in your own notebook and fill it out regularly:

Day / Date	How Did I Feel Today? (Primary Emotion)	Energy Level (1–5)	Most Challenging Moment / Event	What Did I Do to Feel Better?
Monday	Anxious / Tired	2	Sense of uncertainty	Practiced a 4-second breathing exercise

Day / Date	How Did I Feel Today? (Primary Emotion)	Energy Level (1–5)	Most Challenging Moment / Event	What Did I Do to Feel Better?
Tuesday	Calm / Hopeful	3	Busyness / Overwhelm	Took a short nature walk
Wednesday	Sad / Lonely	2	Memories of the past	Talked it out with a friend

Note: If you notice on this chart that feelings of anxiety, sadness, or burnout have persisted "nearly every day" for more than two weeks, this is a gentle sign that you should seek support from a professional (such as a psychologist or psychiatrist).

4.4. Mental and Physical Well-being: Harmony through Sports, Yoga, and Gastronomy

The body and mind are an inseparable whole; physical activities are the most natural way to release accumulated stress hormones.

Tools for Healing

- **Mental Impact of Yoga and Sports:** Regular yoga and sports practice directly calm the nervous system, reducing post-trauma anxiety levels.
- **The Healing Power of Gastronomy:** Shared culinary workshops and gastronomy activities accelerate intercultural integration, strengthen social bonds, and provide the satisfaction of creating together.
- **Nature and Outdoor Mindfulness:** Nature walks and outdoor mindfulness exercises provide mental relaxation, making it easier to stay focused on the present moment.

4.5. Your Legal Rights and Guidance on Legal Procedures

Not knowing official procedures or being unable to follow them due to language barriers can lead to a loss of rights in job interviews, education, and social life. Knowing your rights

eliminates the psychological pressure stemming from fear of deportation or legal uncertainties.

- **International Legal Rights:** Within the framework of migrant rights, the rights to housing, education, healthcare, and non-discrimination are legally guaranteed
- **Legal Gaps and Self-Advocacy:** You are not alone when facing legal obstacles. Refugee rights centers of bar associations and non-governmental organizations provide legal counseling to help you protect your rights.
- **Institutional Collaborations:** Joint fieldwork by public institutions and non-governmental organizations—such as the International Defne Youth Education Association—supports the mental and legal integration of refugees into society.

4.6. Practical Reference Guide: Support Mechanisms and Checklist

You can use the checklist and contact guide below as a roadmap whenever you need it:

Support Area	Institution / Channel	Nature of Provided Support
Basic Healthcare & Epidemiology	Provincial/District Health Directorates, Migrant Health Centers	General examinations, vaccinations, preventive healthcare, and medical services
Mental Health & Psychosocial Support	NGO Psychosocial Centers, PSS Workshops	Psychological first aid, group therapy, drama, and stress management
Legal Counseling	Bar Association Refugee Rights Centers, Migration Lawyers	Legal rights, procedural tracking, and legal information
Physical & Social Well-being	Youth and Sports Centers, Association Culinary Workshops	Yoga, sports, gastronomy, and intercultural integration activities

Step-by-Step Legal and Health Protection Checklist:

1. Save the location and contact number of the nearest Migrant Health Center in your area of residence.
2. Keep your identity and registration documents in a secure, easily accessible place at all times.
3. When you feel psychologically overwhelmed, guide yourself using the GAD-7 / PHQ-9 scales and do not hesitate to consult a mental health professional.
4. If you experience legal uncertainty or discrimination, apply to the support desks established by associations or public institutions.

5. Stress Management, Emotion Regulation, and Psychological Flexibility: Building Your Inner Balance

Protecting mental health amidst life's challenges, migration processes, uncertainties, and losses is not a passive wait, but an active building process. The social and economic difficulties encountered while stepping into a new life can sometimes create overwhelming stress. However, remember that simply having made it this far is the greatest proof of the immense resilience potential you carry within you. This section aims to provide you with practical and science-based tools to calm the storms in your mind, transform negative thought patterns, and become your own greatest supporter in times of crisis.

5.1. Psychological Flexibility and Mental Resilience

Psychological flexibility (resilience) does not mean not suffering or never struggling; on the contrary, it means being able to bend without breaking in the face of difficulties and standing back up when you fall. Refugee and disadvantaged youth often develop this flexibility out of necessity due to facing major crises early in life. The most important key to maintaining mental resilience is being able to be a compassionate friend to yourself rather than a harsh critic.

★ PRACTICE BOX: Self-Compassion Letter

Objective: To step out of the harsh critic role during difficult times and approach yourself like a loving and supportive friend.

Steps: Think of a moment when you felt very helpless, tired, or alone. Now, write a fictional letter to yourself from the perspective of a very understanding friend who loves you, values you deeply, and accepts you unconditionally. Try to include phrases like: *"This difficulty you*

are experiencing is not your fault... I know exactly what you have overcome so far... I believe in you, I am with you no matter what, and you will get through these days."

5.2. Emotion Regulation and Cognitive Reframing

Traumatic experiences and constant stress cause our brains to operate with a continuous "threat" perception. This can lead us to interpret events as worse than they are (catastrophizing) or to label ourselves negatively. Emotion regulation is not about suppressing intense emotions (anger, anxiety, sadness), but recognizing and managing them.

✦ PRACTICE BOX: Thought Detective

Objective: To catch automatic thoughts that make you anxious or helpless and develop alternative, healthy perspectives.

1. Triggering Event (What happened?)	2. Automatic Thought (What first crossed my mind?)	3. Evidence Check (Is this thought 100% true?)	4. Alternative & Compassionate Thought (More realistic perspective)
<i>Example 1: I missed the bus and was late for my course/job interview.</i>	<i>"I ruin everything. I can't do anything right anyway."</i>	<i>I have been on time for many places in the past. Today was just a mishap.</i>	<i>"I'm a little late, but it's not the end of the world. I can take a deep breath and keep going."</i>
<i>Example 2: I mispronounced a word in class while learning the language.</i>	<i>"I will never learn this language; everyone thinks I am inadequate."</i>	<i>I have learned many new words so far. People generally understand my effort.</i>	<i>"Learning a new language takes time. Making mistakes is the most natural part of learning and courage."</i>
<i>Your Turn:</i>			

5.3. Grounding in Crisis Moments and Sustainable Self-Care

Sometimes, when a traumatic memory is triggered or anxieties about the future become uncontrollable, your body reacts with a "fight, flight, or freeze" response in panic. The most effective way to bring the mind back to the "here and now" is to use our senses. In psychology, this is called "grounding."

✦ PRACTICE BOX: 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise

Objective: To anchor the body to the safe present moment via the senses during sudden intense anxiety, panic, or flashbacks.

Steps: Sit in a comfortable position, feel the soles of your feet touching the ground, and take a deep breath. Look around and identify:

- 👁 **5 Things to See:** (e.g., the door handle, a spot on the wall)
- ✋ **4 Things to Feel:** (e.g., the texture of my sweater, the coolness on my face)
- 👂 **3 Things to Hear:** (e.g., the wind outside, the ticking clock)
- 🪄 **2 Things to Smell:** (e.g., the smell of tea, detergent, or soil)
- 🍷 **1 Thing to Taste:** (e.g., the freshness in your mouth)
-

5.4. Practical Tool: Individual Mental Health and Self-Care Plan Canvas

Every individual's stress triggers and healing resources are different. Transforming these coping strategies into a personalized "Emergency and Self-Care Plan" provides the confidence of knowing what to do in difficult moments.

✦ PRACTICE BOX: Individual Mental Health and Self-Care Canvas

- 1. MY STRESS TRIGGERS:** (What makes me most anxious, what drains my energy?)
- 2. MY INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RESOURCES:** (What are my traits that have kept me strong so far, and who are my supporters?)
- 3. MY DAILY SELF-CARE ROUTINES:** (3 small things I can do every day that are good for my mind and body)
- 4. MY SAFETY NET FOR DIFFICULT MOMENTS:** (People or institutions I can call when I cannot cope on my own)
- 5. MY POSITIVE PHRASE TO REMIND MYSELF (My Motto):** (That powerful sentence I will tell myself in hard times)

6. Healing and Future Design: Micro-Goals and Psychosocial Action Plan

Planning for the future is the most powerful way to regain a sense of control amidst uncertainties. However, the process of healing and building a new life does not proceed in a straight line; fluctuations, fatigue, and pauses are highly natural parts of this journey. This

section is designed to help you set "micro-goals" that allow you to progress at your own pace without the pressure of unattainable expectations.

6.1. Safe Future Projection and Rebuilding Hope

To rebuild hope, we must approach the future not as large blocks we cannot change, but as small timeframes (today, this week, this month) that we can influence. Even the smallest positive step you take regarding the future sends the message to your mind: "I am at the steering wheel of my life."

★ PRACTICE BOX: Visualizing Hope

Instructions: Answer these 3 questions:

1. What is the smallest change in the next 3 months that would be good for my mental health?
2. On what issue should I give myself more time and understanding while adapting to a new society?
3. What are 2 things I can control right now, and 2 things I cannot control (and must accept)?

6.2. Non-Pressuring "Micro-Goals" (Compassionate Goal Setting)

Classic goal-setting methods (e.g., "I will learn the language fluently in 3 months") can create a feeling of inadequacy. Instead, a psychological flexibility-oriented approach suggests breaking goals down into "Micro-Steps (1% Changes)."

Traditional Oppressive Goal (May Create Anxiety)	Compassionate Micro-Goal (Sustainable & Healing)
"I will study the language for 3 hours every day."	"I will look at new words or listen to a song for just 10 minutes every day."
"I will immediately build a large network and make friends."	"This week, I will attend an event at the community center and say hello to one person."

★ PRACTICE BOX: Micro-Goal Pyramid

- **BIG GOAL (Peak):** Speaking the local language more comfortably in daily life.
- **Medium Step (This Month):** Going to the language practice circle at the community center once a week.
- **Small Step (This Week):** Listing 10 vocabulary words expressing daily needs.

- **◆ MICRO STEP (Today/Now):** Downloading a language app and browsing for just 5 minutes.

6.3. Obstacle and Relapse (Setback) Management: Bad Day Protocol

On the mental health journey, some days you may feel very strong, while other days you might not even want to get out of bed. This is not a "failure" or "regression"; it is a very natural wave of the healing process.

★ PRACTICE BOX: My Bad Day Protocol

1. My Acceptance Sentence: *"My energy might be low today, this is very human. I don't have to push myself."*

2. My Minimum Self-Care: The only thing I will do even if I am having a bad day (e.g., Drinking just 1 glass of water or opening the window for 1 minute).

3. Things to Avoid: Things that make me feel worse when I'm having a bad day (e.g., Scrolling on social media for hours, watching negative news).

4. My Safe Haven: The activity I will allow myself to relax (e.g., Wrapping up in my favorite blanket and listening to calm music).

6.4. Practical Tool: 30-Day Psychosocial Healing and Self-Care Plan

★ PRACTICE BOX: 30-Day Personal Healing Canvas

Life Area	Small & Realistic Goal for Me	My First Micro-Step This Week	Person / Resource to Support Me
Emotional & Mental Health (Stress management, self-compassion)	<i>e.g., Doing breathing and grounding exercises 3 days a week.</i>	<i>e.g., I will set a breathing exercise reminder on my phone.</i>	<i>e.g., The 5-4-3-2-1 Guide in Section 5.3.</i>
Physical Health & Self-Care (Sleep, movement, nutrition)	<i>e.g., Walking outdoors for 20 minutes every day.</i>	<i>e.g., I will put my shoes in front of the door for a walk tomorrow afternoon.</i>	<i>e.g., The park in the neighborhood / A friend.</i>

Life Area	Small & Realistic Goal for Me	My First Micro-Step This Week	Person / Resource to Support Me
Social Relations & Adaptation (Connection, peer support)	<i>e.g., Chatting with a friend when I feel lonely.</i>	<i>e.g., I will text "How are you?" to a trusted friend tonight.</i>	<i>e.g., Close friend / Community Center staff.</i>
Personal Development & Skills (Language, hobbies, art)	<i>e.g., Expressing my emotions through drawing or music.</i>	<i>e.g., I will buy myself a sketchbook and a pen.</i>	<i>e.g., Youth Center workshops.</i>

7. Implementation Guide for Youth Workers, Mentors, and Trainers

7.1. Trauma-Informed Approach and Mentoring Coaching

The role of youth workers and trainers using this guide to support the integration of refugee youth is highly critical. The group you are working with may have a history of interrupted education processes, discrimination, and deep psychological stress. When making one-on-one matches in mentorship programs, providing a safe space and listening without re-traumatizing the participants is the most fundamental rule.

7.2. Workshop Designs, Session Plans, and Facilitation Techniques

Within the scope of Learning, Teaching and Training Activities (LTTA), workshops shaped according to regional needs are organized in Antakya, Sparta, and Las Palmas.

- **Interactive Techniques:** Role-playing games, cultural culinary workshops, and psychological first aid simulations should be used to support learning.
- **Evaluation Tools:** Language proficiency tests in accordance with CEFR standards and clinically-based psychological surveys (PHQ-9, GAD-7) must be included in session plans to scientifically document progress.

7.3. Institutional Collaborations for Inclusive Integration

Field applications are possible not through the effort of a single institution, but with a strong network. Establishing coordination with Provincial Health Directorates, District Health Directorates, Migrant Health Centers, and local crisis desks provides rapid solutions in crisis situations. It is targeted that project outputs will be used by NGOs and educators in at least 5 different countries via the EPALe and eTwinning platforms.

8. Closing, Support Networks, and Annexes

8.1. Outlook on the Future and Inspirational Messages

The "Inclusion of Resilient Minds" project believes that every individual possesses a hidden strength within to overcome adversity. Past traumas or migration journeys cannot limit your future potential. While building your own inner resilience, remember that you are also a valuable part of an expanding support network across Europe.

8.2. Useful Links: Map of Support Networks

Key local and international networks you can safely turn to whenever needed:

- **Hatay/Antakya Region:** Hatay Provincial Health Directorate Migrant Health Units, Arsuz District Health Directorate Tourism and Migrant Health Desk.
- **Psychosocial and Legal Counseling:** International Defne Youth Education Association Support Networks, Bar Association Refugee Rights Centers.
- **European Network:** Spain (Las Palmas) and Greece (Sparta) youth center employment desks.

8.3. Individual Worksheets, Templates, and Forms

(Note: Full-page, fillable blank templates will be added to the end of this section in the printed or digital version of the guide.)

1. Emotion and Mood Tracking Chart (For daily stress management)
2. 6-Month Personal Development and Mentorship Tracking Form (For social integration and personal growth)
3. Inner Strength Map (For discovering your own skills)
4. Emergency and Psychological First Aid Contact Card

ANNEX 1: Daily Emotion and Mood Tracking Chart

Instructions: Use this chart to monitor your emotional fluctuations over a two-week period. If you notice symptoms of anxiety or sadness persisting nearly every day for more than two weeks, consider consulting a professional.

Day / Date	How Did I Feel Today? (Primary Emotion)	Energy Level (1–5)	Most Challenging Moment / Event	What Did I Do to Feel Better?
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Weekly Reflection Note: Are there recurring triggers? What coping strategy worked best for you this week?

ANNEX 2: Inner Strength Map

Instructions: Reflect on your past experiences, challenges overcome, and migration journey to uncover your hidden resources.

1. Personal Strengths & Resilience

What challenges have I successfully navigated? What personal traits (e.g., patience, determination, adaptability) helped me survive and grow?

*

*

2. Social & Communication Skills

How do I connect with others? What qualities do people appreciate about me (e.g., empathy, active listening, multi-lingual ability)?

*

*

3. Practical Abilities & Life Competencies

What hands-on skills do I use in daily life, work, or education (e.g., problem-solving, organizing, creative expression)?

*

*

4. Action Plan: Putting Strengths to Work

How can I use these inner resources to support my current mental health and pursue my goals?

*

*

ANNEX 3: 6-Month Personal Development and Mentorship Tracking Form

Instructions: Complete this form in collaboration with your mentor or youth worker to track your integration, language learning, and personal growth milestones.

Period / Milestone	Focus Area (Language, Social, Well-being, Career)	Specific Micro- Goal	Action Steps & Resources	Status / Mentor Notes
Month 1–2				
Month 3–4				
Month 5–6				

EMERGENCY & SUPPORT CONTACT CARD	
PERSONAL INFO	• Name: _____ • Emergency Contact: _____ • Phone: _____ • Relationship: _____
LOCAL HEALTH & SUPPORT UNITS	• Nearest Migrant Health Center / Clinic: _____ • Phone / Address: _____ • Local NGO / Psychosocial Support Desk: _____ • Bar Association / Legal Rights Center: _____
QUICK GROUNDING REMINDER (5-4-3-2-1 Technique)	1. See: Acknowledge 5 things you see around you. 2. Feel: Touch 4 things you can physically feel. 3. Hear: Listen to 3 sounds in your environment 4. Smell: Notice 2 things you can smell. 5. Taste: Identify 1 thing you can taste <i>Take a slow, deep breath. You are safe in the present moment.</i>

References

- European Commission (2020). Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027. Brussels: European Union.
- OECD (2016). Making Integration Work: Refugees and Others in Need of Protection. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- International Labour Organization (2022). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022. Geneva: ILO.
- UNHCR (2019). Global Strategy for Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion. Geneva: UNHCR.
- World Bank (2018). Forcibly Displaced: Toward a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Cedefop (2020). Skills forecast: trends and challenges to 2030. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Training Foundation (2019). Skills for Migration and Employment. Turin: ETF.
- UNESCO (2021). Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education. Paris: UNESCO.
- European Commission (2021). Digital Education Action Plan 2021–2027. Brussels: European Union.
- International Organization for Migration (2019). World Migration Report 2020. Geneva: IOM.
- SALTO-YOUTH (2020). Inclusion and Diversity Strategy in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.
- World Health Organization (2011). Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers. Geneva: WHO.
- UNHCR (2013). Operational Guidance for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Programming for Refugee Operations. Geneva: UNHCR.



Inclusion of Resilient Minds

Skills for Refugees and Youth

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 Spanish National Agency (INJUVE). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.