Art4Wellbeing

SESSION 2

Self-Confidence: My Voice, My Story

Project nr. 2025-2-NL02-KA210-YOU-000368916

ART FORM USED	Storytelling + Creative Self-Expression

TOTAL DURATION	MAIN OBJECTIVE	SESSION PURPOSE
90 minutes	To strengthen self-confidence by helping participants recognise that their experiences, perspectives and voices have value, and by giving them a safe structure for expressing these through storytelling.	To move from playful voice activation to symbolic story creation, supportive witnessing and reflection, so participants can practise being heard without pressure to disclose deeply personal experiences.

Materials

A selection of visual/image cards; A4/A3 paper; pens and coloured markers; post-it notes; large sheets of paper; optional calm background music; optional simple objects or symbolic cards that can serve as story prompts.

Session at a Glance

NO.	ACTIVITY	TIME	FOCUS
2.1	My Voice Has a Shape	10 min	Warm-up: activate voice, body and presence
2.2	A Symbol That Speaks for Me	15 min	Choose an image/symbol and find a personal point of connection
2.3	My Voice, My Story	35 min	Main storytelling activity: build and tell a short symbolic story
2.4	The Echo of Strength	20 min	Supportive witnessing: hear strengths reflected back
2.5	Session Evaluation & Closing	10 min	Integrate learning and close safely

Methodological Basis

This session is adapted from the experiential logic of the Stage Your Confidence booklet: warm-up → main activity → reflection; voluntary participation; symbolic/visual prompts; shared story-making; mirroring and strength-based reflection. In particular, it draws inspiration from The Story of Emotions, collective story creation, The Voice of the City, and mirroring practices.

2.1 WARM-UP: MY VOICE HAS A SHAPE — 10 MIN

Purpose

To reduce inhibition, connect voice with body and presence, and introduce the idea that a voice can be expressed in many ways—not only through perfect words.

Instructions

1. Participants stand in a circle and take a comfortable breath together.

2. One by one, each person says their name using a voice quality of their choice: soft, strong, slow, rhythmic, playful, calm, etc.

3. They add one gesture that matches the voice. The group echoes the name, voice quality and gesture.

4. In a second quick round, invite each participant to complete: *"Today my voice feels…"* with one word, sound or gesture.

5. Passing is always possible.

Facilitator Prompt

"There is no correct way to use your voice here. Your voice can be quiet, strong, playful, uncertain or anything in between. Let your name have a sound and a shape, and we will echo it back to you."

2.2 A SYMBOL THAT SPEAKS FOR ME — 15 MIN

Purpose

To provide a symbolic bridge into storytelling so participants can begin from an image rather than being asked to disclose a personal story directly.

Instructions

1. Spread visual cards face up on the floor or tables.

2. Invite participants to choose an image that attracts them or seems to say something about them today.

3. Ask them to identify one **symbol, character, object or detail** in the image that catches their attention.

4. In pairs, each person shares only the symbol they chose and completes: *"I chose this because…"* or *"If this symbol had a voice, it might say…"*

5. Tell participants that this symbol will become the starting point for the main story.

Facilitator Prompt

"Do not search for the most beautiful image or the easiest one to explain. Choose the image that attracts you. Then find one detail inside it that seems to have a voice. If that symbol could speak, what might it say?"

2.3 MAIN ACTIVITY: MY VOICE, MY STORY 35 MIN

Purpose

To strengthen self-confidence through storytelling by helping participants create a story in which their chosen symbol has agency, encounters a challenge, discovers or uses a resource, and moves toward a meaningful next step.

Story Structure

1. BEGINNING	Who or what is my symbol? Where is it? What does it want or need?
2. CHALLENGE	What makes it difficult for this voice to be heard or to move forward?
3. RESOURCE	What strength, person, memory, quality or inner resource helps?
4. TURNING POINT	What does the character realise, choose, say or do?
5. MY VOICE	What sentence does the character finally want the world—or itself—to hear?

Instructions

1. Give participants 10–12 minutes to create a short story using the five-part structure. It may be realistic, fictional, symbolic or fantastic.

2. Participants may write full sentences, make a story map, draw scenes, or combine words and images.

3. Form groups of three. Each person has up to 3 minutes to tell or show their story. Reading directly from the page is allowed.

4. Listeners do not interpret or advise. Their task is simply to witness and listen.

5. After each story, listeners identify one strength they heard or noticed in the story.

Facilitator Prompt

“Your story does not have to be autobiographical. Let your symbol become the storyteller. Give it a challenge, a resource and a turning point. At the end, let it say one sentence that deserves to be heard.”

Safety Choice

Participants may fictionalise, change details, tell the story in the third person, show it visually without reading it aloud, or pass. Do not ask whether a fictional story is ‘really’ about them.

2.4 THE ECHO OF STRENGTH 20 MIN

Purpose

To help participants experience being heard and to strengthen self-confidence through respectful, strength-based mirroring from peers.

Instructions

1. Keep participants in their groups of three.

2. After one person shares, each listener offers **one strength or quality** they genuinely noticed in the story or in the way it was told.

3. Use observation language rather than interpretation: *“I heard courage when…”*, *“I noticed persistence in…”*, *“The part that stayed with me was…”*

4. The storyteller listens without needing to explain or reject the feedback.

5. Give each storyteller a post-it. They write one word or sentence from the feedback that they want to keep.

6. Return to the full circle and invite volunteers to share the strength they are taking with them.

Facilitator Prompt

“We are not analysing the person or deciding what their story means. We are reflecting back a strength we genuinely heard. Start with: ‘I heard…’, ‘I noticed…’, or ‘The strength that came through for me was…’”

2.5	SESSION EVALUATION & CLOSING	10 MIN

Purpose

To integrate the storytelling experience, check participants' sense of confidence and safety, and close with a clear recognition of personal voice.

Reflection Questions

1. What was it like to give your symbol a voice?

2. Was there a moment in your story when the character became stronger or clearer?

3. What was it like to have other people listen without interrupting?

4. What strength did someone reflect back to you?

5. Complete the sentence: *"My voice matters when…"*

Facilitator Closing Prompt

"You did not need to tell your whole life story today. You chose what to express and how to express it. Before we leave, keep one word, one strength or one sentence from today that you would like to carry with you."

Facilitator Principles

Voluntary participation	Sharing is invited, never required. Passing remains possible at every stage.
Story ownership	Do not interpret, diagnose or search for hidden meanings in participants' stories.
Creative distance	Fiction, metaphor and third-person storytelling are valid and can increase safety.
Strength-based witnessing	Peer feedback should name observable strengths rather than give advice or evaluation.
Cultural inclusion	Allow participants to tell stories in the language or form that supports expression where feasible.
Emotional boundaries	If strong emotion emerges, slow down, offer choice and grounding, and follow safeguarding procedures where necessary.

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