



Guide for psychological *well-being* during online *trainings* with recommendations



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Contents



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Introduction



The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly altered the daily lives of people all over the world. While country responses, rates of infection and mortality vary across regions, nearly all can agree that this is a pandemic of unprecedented dimensions [1]. Although Covid-19 primarily has physical effects, the pandemic as a whole importantly affected people's mental health as well. Global levels of generalized anxiety and depression worsened during the pandemic, with 20–40% of young people, aged between 18 and 29 years reporting suffering from anxiety, and 30–43% reporting suffering from depression [1,2,3]. While the pandemic and related safety measures have undoubtedly

affected the entire world, some populations seem to have been hit especially hard; among them young people, aged between 18 and 29 years [4], sex workers [5], lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) people [6,7], and people living with HIV [8]. Many of these social groups were considered vulnerable even before the pandemic [3,8], however, the Covid-19 crisis has deepened their vulnerability [10]. As in past emergencies, crisis responses typically lack intersectional approaches, which only further amplifies existing inequalities [10].

The better part of the last two years has been defined by social distancing, closure of educational

institutions, and the move from in-person working to working from home. Most aspects of our lives have been shifted into the online space, which has its own particularities. Videoconferencing, for example, was one of the critical tools that allowed businesses and schools to continue working during government-mandated lockdowns [11]. While incredibly useful, many found long videoconferences exhausting, with the term "Zoom fatigue" (named after one of the most popular videoconferencing tools) quickly coming into general daily use [11]. Some studies found that school closures and shifting to online learning has interacted with other Covid-related issues to

disproportionately affect students from marginalized social groups, such as those with lower socioeconomic backgrounds, racialized children and youth, newcomers, and students with disabilities [12]. For example, groups designated as minorities, recent immigrants and people with disabilities are overrepresented among those with low incomes and are therefore more vulnerable to infection and to the economic impacts of Covid-19 [12].

However, it is important to also highlight the advantages of using videoconferencing tools and other online platforms. It's thought that if the practice of working and carrying out meetings online endures after the pandemic, fossil fuel consumption should decrease due to a reduction in physical commuting [11,13,14]. This enables us to meet and work with people from around the world without the financial and environmental costs related to travelling. Online tools have not only helped bring

people together but also provided many young people the opportunity to engage in (digital) activism. Young people have been using digital media to connect with each other, promote social change and provide their own counter-narratives of the world around them [15]. They have also used different digital platforms to engage in informal learning; which itself is not a new concept, however, digital platforms and tools enabled new opportunities for learning that were not available in the past [16].

Studies show that youth from marginalized groups are more likely to engage in online learning and enrol in online courses [17]. It has also been shown that a positive correlation exists between the use of digital tools and student engagement [17]. Research supports the idea that online courses facilitate an engaging environment for marginalized youth, while also creating a strong sense of community within the online space. The most important aspect of

distance learning is its accessibility [18]. Students do not have to travel to a fixed location, do not need to find accommodation, and can study mostly at their own pace [18]. In addition, distance learning is not only more accessible physically, but also socially and psychologically. Young people can engage in learning privately, without their immediate family needing to know about it [18]. This could, for example, be potentially very helpful for LGBTQIA+ young people who wish to learn more about LGBTQIA+ topics, but do not wish to disclose this to their parents for different reasons. As mentioned earlier, many students battle with anxiety and depression, and for some, distance learning can drastically help improve their quality of life [18]. Of course, it is important to note that even with all of this, distance learning remains inaccessible to some with significant parts of the world's population not having adequate access to the internet [18].

The Guide

This guide was written as part of the e-MPOWER project and aims to describe the importance of online learning and well-being of youth activists. During the pilot sessions carried out by e-MPOWER peer trainers, we collected data from the participants as well as the trainers about their psychosocial well-being. We present this data, and its analysis, and provide some key guidelines for ensuring psychosocial well-being during online training.

The e-MPOWER Project

The e-MPOWER project (*officially the Partnership to overcome challenges of online learning and to empower youth actors in the field of sexual health promotion, in the COVID-19 era*) focused on adapting training activities for young advocates/activists, offered by organisations working in the field of sexual health (HIV and coinfections, sex workers, LGBTI) to the new virtual reality brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. The project emphasized mental health, as the training sessions not only provided knowledge but also personal growth for its participants. The project developed a freely accessible online toolbox of guidelines and resource materials highlighting good practices for online youth-focused sexual health training programmes.

The project was led by the European AIDS Treatment Group

(EATG) in partnership with the European Sex Workers Rights Alliance (ESWA) and Association Cultural, Informational and Counseling Center Legebitra, and received funding from the ERASMUS+ programme.

EATG is a patient-led NGO that advocates for the rights and interests of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS and related co-infections within the WHO Europe region. ESWA is a network of sex worker organisations and allies supporting the development of national and international law, policy and practice, which respects and upholds the human and labour rights of sex workers throughout Europe and Central Asia. Legebitra is the largest Slovenian LGBTQIA+ NGO that provides support and empowerment for individuals, the LGBTQIA+ community, and people living with HIV.

Framework Methodology

A black arrow pointing right, with radiating lines above it, positioned to the right of the title.

The e-MPOWER training pilot was led by 4 peer trainers (also referred to as *trainers*) who took part in four preparatory training workshops before leading the sessions with participants. The pilot peer-training programme consisted of 16 unique 90-minute sessions carried out via Zoom between 8 February and 30 March 2022. It was divided into 4 modules: (1) *History & Terminology*, (2) *Mental Health*, (3) *Human Rights & Censorship*, and (4) *Activism & Advocacy*. The first session was intended as an introduction to the

project and the last session as a closing session, with the 9th session (at the end of the second module) intended as a reflection/assessment session. Within each module, the individual sessions addressed key topics pertaining to LGBTQIA+ people, sex workers and people living with HIV. 23 participants were enrolled in the training with a different number joining each individual session (at the least there were 9 attendees).

Participants were always given content warnings before sessions

where sensitive topics were discussed. One project partner and one supporting peer trainer were present at each session in addition to the peer trainer leading the session. Participants were made aware that they could contact the support peer trainer who was deemed a 'safe person' to discuss and help participants dealing with any negative feelings they might experience. Participants were also able to leave the session at any point if they felt uncomfortable and felt leaving to be the best option for them.

Assessing the Well-being of Participants

Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire at the beginning and end of every session. This was to compare the participants' subjective well-being before and after each session to find any possible effects the session might have on how they felt. The data was collected using an online survey tool (1KA; <https://www.1ka.si/d/en>).

The questionnaire used was the international 10-item form of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (I-PANAS-SF) [19,20]. As its name suggests, PANAS measures general negative and positive affect, constructs that are shown to be universal across cultures [19]. At the beginning of the sessions the participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale (1 - very

slightly or not at all, 5 - extremely) to what extent they felt *determined, attentive, active, inspired, and alert* (positive affect); and *nervous, afraid, upset, hostile, and ashamed* (negative affect). In addition to this at the end of the session, participants were asked to rate the following statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1 - *completely disagree*, 5 - *completely agree*): *There were enough breaks during the session; The breaks were long enough; The session was tiring; The session was too long; and Compared to before the session, how would you describe your overall mood now?* Participants were provided space to write additional general comments on both the pre- and post-session questionnaires.

Throughout the training, we received 167 valid responses to the pre-session questionnaires and 126 responses to the post-session questionnaires. Evidently, not everyone who filled out the questionnaire before the session did so afterwards, which represents one of the major limitations of our analysis. The number of participants filling out the questionnaire at each session also decreased throughout the course of the training programme, presenting another limitation.

Assessing the Well-being of Trainers

The four peer trainers delivering the training were also asked to fill out a questionnaire after each of the four modules. Besides the I-PANAS-SF questionnaire described above, the survey for the trainers also included the following statements that were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 - strongly disagree, 5 - strongly agree):

- *There was a feeling of trust, honesty and fairness.*
- *Everyone was respectful and considerate of each other.*
- *There was a sense of acknowledgement and appreciation.*
- *Responsibilities could be accomplished successfully within the time available.*

- *Appropriate action was taken to protect the psychological safety of participants.*
- *There was encouragement and support of interpersonal, emotional and professional skills.*
- *I felt like I had enough support before the session.*
- *I felt like I had enough support during the session.*
- *There were enough breaks.*

The trainers were also asked to write 5 words that would best describe what they think is important for their mental well-being as a trainer. These words then appeared on the list of statements mentioned above and were rated on the same 5-point Likert scale as well. The questionnaire also included the following two open-ended questions:

- *Please describe how you communicate your needs and to who in the training. If you don't, what would you need to be able to communicate it?*
- *Please describe what you would need at the online trainings in order for you to rate your mental well-being as good?*

We received complete answers from two out of the four peer trainers solely for the first, second, and last module. This is a big limitation and while we cannot generalize the findings, the data is still valuable and presented in the following chapter.

Results & Findings



Participants

Table 1

Means and standard deviations for results on I-PANAS-SF

	BEFORE SESSION		AFTER SESSION	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
AFFECT				
Determined	3,31	1,07	3,43	1,17
Attentive	3,24	0,96	3,40	1,09
Active	3,07	1,15	3,17	1,19
Inspired	2,96	1,00	3,44	1,17
Alert	2,61	1,07	2,69	1,22
Nervous	1,63	0,93	1,57	0,86
Afraid	1,34	0,72	1,37	0,72
Upset	1,43	0,77	1,46	0,81
Hostile	1,19	0,50	1,26	0,58
Ashamed	1,18	0,48	1,18	0,40
<i>Positive affect</i>	15,20	4,05	16,18	4,48
<i>Negative affect</i>	6,73	2,44	6,80	2,51

Note: M = mean, SD = standard deviation. Participants could reach a maximum of 25 points on the scale of Positive affect. The same is true for the scale of Negative affect.

The above table presents the means and standard deviations for ratings of the I-PANAS-SF across all sessions. On average participants' negative affect did not change when we compared their answers before ($M = 6.73, SD = 2.44$) and after ($M = 6.80, SD = 2.51$) the sessions, however this finding was not statistically significant.. Participants' positive affect was slightly higher after the sessions ($M = 16.18, SD = 4.48$) when compared to before the sessions ($M = 15.20, SD = 4.05$), although this change was not statistically significant.

The following table illustrates how participants' ratings of their positive and negative affects varied between different sessions.

Table 2

Means and standard deviations for scales of positive and negative affect for each session

	BEFORE					AFTER				
	PA		NA		<i>n</i>	PA		NA		<i>n</i>
	<i>MD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>MD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>SD</i>	
LGBT basics	17,29	3,20	6,93	2,06	14	18,42	3,65	8,17	3,27	12
HIV history and science	17,95	3,70	6,63	2,09	19	16,11	5,16	5,56	1,13	9
Sex work basics	15,85	4,45	6,92	2,81	13	17,30	3,80	8,80	3,01	10
Intersections: HIV, LGBTI, sex work	14,21	3,19	6,86	2,14	14	18,36	4,16	6,64	2,79	14
Mental health: HIV	14,29	3,85	8,14	2,74	14	15,92	4,60	7,25	2,60	12
Mental health: LGBTI	15,54	4,03	5,69	0,85	13	15,85	4,34	5,85	1,34	13
Mental health: sex work	15,70	2,45	6,10	1,45	10	14,40	5,27	7,80	2,68	5
Reflection/assessment session	15,33	3,81	5,33	0,71	9	14,71	4,46	5,29	0,49	7
Freedom of expression & censorship	15,08	4,59	6,85	2,85	13	15,80	3,58	7,00	2,71	10
Online privacy and safety	14,08	3,15	7,00	3,32	13	13,57	4,86	6,14	1,86	7
Activism and advocacy: LGBTI	13,09	4,39	7,27	3,55	11	13,13	5,99	5,75	1,39	8
Activism and advocacy: Sex Work	15,20	4,82	6,40	2,19	5	17,60	2,07	7,20	3,35	5
Activism and advocacy: HIV	14,89	4,01	7,44	3,57	9	17,50	4,85	6,17	2,40	6
Closing session	11,70	4,72	6,60	2,50	10	14,71	4,31	7,14	2,73	7

Note: M = mean, SD =standard deviation, PA = positive affect, NA = negative affect

Here we present some of the answers to the open-ended questions:

[...] Will there also be black folx or people of colour presenting the classes?

[...] as much as i loved the presentation and research, i felt a bit as though, i could read through a detailed presentation like that before or after the meetings. and that the time together could be better spent focusing on 2-4-6 key areas statements or points, that could be engaged a bit more dynamically.

[...] sometimes it gets heated but it feels like it happens in a safe and respectful way, which I\'m not usually used to.

[...] enjoyed the engaged elements of adding words and recounting experiences, as well as breakout room discussion. think 90 min is maybe short for discussion and ppl being heard and networking, id really enjoy more of these elements [...]

[...] first half was a bit difficult to engage due to the format of reading slides aloud, second half was interesting to hear about experiences.

The audio is sometimes crackling or popping and makes it hard to follow, if you could ask the speakers to use headphones when possible that\'d be ideal! Thank you so much!!

Participants were asked to evaluate the structure of the sessions on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree). Findings demonstrate that participants felt that there were enough breaks (M = 4.70, SD = 0.77) and that they were long enough (M = 4.68, SD = 0.78). The results also show that the sessions were not too long (M = 1.26, SD = 0.61) and were not tiring (M = 1.26, SD = 0.61). When asked to compare their overall mood to before the session, on average participants rated their mood as slightly better (M = 3.53, SD = 0.88). Participants rated their mood on a scale, where 1 represented the answer "worse", 3 represented "same", and 5 represented the answer "better".

Trainers

Table 3

Means and standard deviations for results on I-PANAS-SF

AFFECT	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Determined	3,8	0,4
Attentive	3,6	0,5
Active	3,4	0,5
Inspired	3,6	0,5
Alert	2,8	0,8
Nervous	2,0	1,0
Afraid	1,2	0,4
Upset	1,2	0,4
Hostile	1,0	0,0
Ashamed	1,0	0,0
<i>Positive affect</i>	17,2	1,9
<i>Negative affect</i>	6,4	1,7

Note: M = mean, SD = standard deviation

The above table presents the means and standard deviations for ratings of the I-PANAS-SF after the first, second, and last module. We can see that the trainers on average experienced more positive feelings ($M = 17.2$, $SD = 1.9$) than negative ($M = 6.4$, $SD = 1.7$).

Trainers were also asked to indicate their agreement with the statements presented in Table 4, using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). As can be seen, trainers agree with all the statements, with a slightly lower agreement to the statement *Responsibilities could be accomplished successfully within the time available*.

Table 4

Means and standard deviations for answers to statements regarding the training

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
There was a feeling of trust , honesty and fairness	4,4	0,5
Everyone was respectful and considerate of each other	4,0	1,0
There was a sense of acknowledgement and appreciation	4,2	0,4
Responsibilities could be accomplished successfully within the time available	3,8	1,1
Appropriate action was taken to protect the psychological safety of participants	4,4	0,9
There was encouragement and support of interpersonal, emotional and professional skills	4,4	0,9
I felt like I had enough support before the session	4,4	0,9
I felt like I had enough support during the session	4,4	0,9
There were enough breaks	4,6	0,5

Note: M = mean, SD = standard deviation, and a 5-point Likert scale was used: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.

The trainers were asked to write 5 words that best described what they thought was important for their mental well-being. Trainers pointed out the importance of *support, boundaries, safe space, flexibility, structure, and timeliness*. They also believed that receiving feedback, having good communication, and being listened to were important. The importance of debriefing was mentioned once as well.

When asked to describe how they communicate their needs, most answered that they communicate with the project coordinator and that they would communicate this confidentially outside the sessions. One respondent indicated that they communicate with the assigned project partner organisation and peer trainer that are attending the session. When asked about their needs for well-being, trainers pointed out the helpfulness of the brief preparatory meetings before sessions and the importance of structure.

Conclusion

We found that participants consistently experienced more positive than negative feelings throughout the course of the training. Generally, participants experienced more positive feelings after the sessions when compared to the beginning of the session; and while there was a slight rise in negative feelings experienced after some sessions, this rise is not significant. As can be seen in Table 2, there are only 4 sessions where the average positive affect rating was lower after the session (compared to before the session), however, the differences are minimal. It is also important to take into account the different number of responses collected before and after each session. In almost all the cases, fewer people completed the questionnaire after the sessions (compared to how many filled it out before the session). In response to the open-ended questions, participants indicated they felt safe and enjoyed the interactive elements of the sessions (breakout room

discussions). Some expressed their disagreement with certain presentation styles (reading slides aloud, too much detail) and felt that time would be better spent focusing on fewer topics and having discussion. One participant pointed out the need for trainers/guest speakers to use better audio equipment for them to be heard more clearly. One participant also expressed their wish to see more people of colour being invited to the training. The participants were content with one 10-minute break in the middle of sessions and felt that the 90-minute long sessions were not too long or tiring.

As with participants, the trainers experienced more positive than negative feelings throughout the training. They believe that during the training there was a feeling of trust, respectfulness, and a sense of acknowledgement and appreciation. The trainers agreed that appropriate action was taken to protect the psychological safety of participants & that they received enough support

before and after the sessions. The lowest average score was for the statement *"Responsibilities could be accomplished successfully within the time available"*, which could indicate the need for more time regarding the preparation of trainers' presentations. Trainers believed that support, boundaries, safe space, flexibility, structure, timeliness, receiving feedback, having good communication, and being listened to were important for their well-being. They believed that short meetings that took place 15–30 minutes before the beginning of each session were very helpful and contributed to their well-being.

It is important to note that all findings should be considered cautiously since none of the differences (positive and negative affect before and after each session) were statistically significant and the number of participants completing questionnaires varied between sessions.

Recommendations

Designing Online Trainings and Ensuring the Well-Being of Participants and Trainers



The following section contains recommendations for online trainings and ensuring the well-being of everyone involved. These guidelines are based on a combination of our own desk research and findings from our own study carried out during the pilot training.

Technical Aspects

1 Ensure a stable internet connection.

When doing online trainings and workshops, a stable internet connection is vitally important. If your Wi-Fi connection is not the best, consider connecting your computer to the internet via an Ethernet cable if possible. If your internet connection becomes weaker during your presentation, consider turning off your camera; this can reduce the quantity of information relayed from your computer and may help participants to hear and see your presentation better.

2 Ensure a working camera and microphone.

The most important part of giving a presentation is to ensure the participants can hear you clearly. Consider using a headset with a microphone and in any case, test your microphone beforehand.

3 Try to speak slowly and clearly.

It is likely that for most participants English will not be their native language. It is therefore important to make sure you speak clearly and slowly to make sure everyone can understand you.

4 Include graphics (animations, pictures, photos, graphs, etc.) on your slides and restrain from including too much text. It is best if you only include graphics and provide the information verbally. Present the information only verbally rather than presenting it in both spoken and written form.

Research shows that people learn better when presented with animation and narration than when presented with animation, narration, and on-screen text [21].

Designing the Training

1 Establish a safer space.

A safer space is a space in which everyone can be their true selves and feel comfortable. This is always necessary and especially crucial when working with marginalized groups. At the beginning of the training, ask participants to share what they consider to be a 'safe space' and what they would need in order to feel safer during the course of the training. This can be done in smaller groups or within the main group. Compile a list of everything the participants share and make this list available to everyone. It is recommended to take a moment at the beginning of every session to revisit this list. Some important aspects of establishing a safer space that were identified by the e-MPOWER trainees include:

- *inclusivity* – everyone is welcome and will be accepted
- *be mindful of individual differences* – people have different views and different backgrounds and experiences which influence the way we act and interact with others; keep this in mind, especially when disagreements happen
- *respectfulness* – be respectful to everyone (even if you disagree with them)

- *judgement-free zone* – no one will judge others for what they do or share with the group
- *confidentiality* – what happens during the training is not to be shared with people outside the training (unless explicit consent is given)
- *consent* – always ask for consent when taking group pictures or similar
- *privileges* – explore your privileges and be aware of them
- *boundaries* – respect each others' boundaries and be aware of your own
- *respectful language* – use bias-free and avoid gendered language whenever possible
- *zero tolerance towards discrimination, harassment, violence, and hate speech*

In addition, consider asking participants to identify any possible topics they find severely distressing (it is preferable to do this anonymously via a survey) so you can provide content warnings in advance if said topics are going to be discussed in upcoming sessions.

2 Set the ground rules.

At the beginning of the training ask participants to create and agree on ground rules for interacting that will be implemented during the training. You can form smaller groups in which participants discuss what ground rules are important for them and then report to the others. Compile a list of ground rules and share them with everyone. Some examples of ground rules may include:

- turn on the camera if possible
- raise your hand when you would like to speak and wait for your turn
- do not interrupt each other
- if possible use headphones and be alone during the sessions to ensure everyone's privacy

3 Incorporate interactivity into your presentation.

Interactivity is one of the most important effective online learning features [23,24]. The participants in our pilot expressed desire for more interactive activities where they could discuss the topics presented and form connections with the other participants.

4 Form smaller groups for discussions/teamwork.

When coming to the group work part of your session, make sure to form smaller groups of participants with 3 to 4 people per group. If the participants will be discussing a topic, personal to them, groups should consist of no more than three participants [22].

5 Invite guest speakers.

You can make the training more engaging by inviting guest speakers with personal experience on the topic you will be discussing. You can invite guests that work in the field or guests with lived experience. Whenever possible invite guest speakers that are part of different minorities and provide them with an adequate briefing of expectations and group dynamics before the session.

6 Use content warnings when needed.

Whenever you will be discussing a sensitive topic that could be emotionally upsetting, make sure to inform the participants about the content in advance. Such topics include (sexual violence and mental disorders (eating disorders, depression, self-harming behaviour). In addition, make sure to check the list of topics participants find distressing that you compiled at the beginning of the training. During the session in which you will be discussing sensitive topics, make participants aware that they can always turn to a chosen 'safe person' who is there to discuss and help people deal with any negative feelings they might experience. In cases where a person finds certain content triggering due to past trauma, you should allow them to leave the session if they so choose.

7 Inform the participants about the content of the upcoming session.

Offer the participants a brief overview of the contents of your upcoming session. Research shows people learn better when they already know about the components of the presentation [21]. When suitable, you can offer participants to read a short text in advance of the session to prepare them for the topic; during the session, ask someone to summarize the text as this has been found to enhance comprehension and recall [25].

8 Ensure everyone has time and space to speak.

Inevitably, every training includes some participants, who take up more space and time, and others who stay quiet [22]. Raise this issue at the beginning of the training and ask participants to keep in mind that everyone must get a chance to speak and offer their opinion. Ask people to raise their hands when they would like to speak and then offer them the space to do so. Make sure to give turns to different people; if someone is speaking more than others, try to politely ask others first (for example, ask, "*Who has not yet had a chance?*"). When inviting guest speakers, inform them of the observed group dynamics during session discussions, so they can be better prepared to present and facilitate [22].

Well-being

1 Connect: Set up a platform where participants can discuss and connect with each other and/or with trainers.

One of the most important aspects of well-being is positive relationships, which can help build a sense of belonging [26,27]. Set up a platform (when working with minorities and marginalized groups, we recommend using more secure platforms, such as *Discord, Telegram, WhatsApp, and Signal*) where participants and trainers can freely chat with each other and share their thoughts and experience. Note that some platforms may be preferred over others based on encryption and privacy. Make sure to moderate the platform to ensure no hateful/inappropriate language is used. Keep the platform active by posting and starting discussions.

2 Notice what is happening within yourself and check in with others.

Take a moment at the beginning of every session to check in with participants and yourself [27]. This can take the form of a 'minute for mindfulness' where everyone takes a minute to reflect on how they feel, noticing and accepting their feelings without judgement. You can then ask participants how they feel at the moment, and ask them to share it with the group if they feel comfortable. There are different ways of doing this; you can ask participants to describe how they feel in one word (if participants come from different countries it could be interesting for everyone to say this word in their native language and then in English or any language the training is in). You can also ask everyone to react with an emoji that represents how they feel. Different tools can be used for this – participants can share within the videoconference or by using tools such as *Mentimeter* to remain anonymous.

3 Appoint a 'safe person'.

At every session, it is important to have a fellow trainer/colleague, who is in the role of the 'safe person'. This is someone participants can reach out to during the session if they feel overwhelmed, unsafe, or are experiencing any negative emotions. Participants can contact this person via the videoconference platform the session is hosted on or using a different tool/app; you should enable them to stay anonymous if they so wish. It is important to state explicitly that this person is not formally trained in counselling (if that is the case) but that they will do their best to help any participant. It is useful to compile a list of emergency hotlines and organizations participants can turn to in case the issue reaches beyond the limits of your training. You can make this list available to everyone or have the safe person keep this list in case they need it.

Make sure you have some time available after the end of the session and inform the participants that they can stay on the call after others leave if they would like to discuss anything with you.

4 Take breaks & be active.

Ask the participants at which point during the sessions they would prefer to have a break. During the pilot training, we found that a 10-minute break roughly in the middle of the session is optimal. When making a break also take into account the content of your presentation so the break will be taken at an appropriate point (design your presentation so that the break and content will make sense).

Being active is also very important for our psychosocial well-being [27]. Therefore, try to encourage the participants (and yourself!) to do some stretching, and walking, during your break.

5 Reflection.

After each session take a couple of minutes to talk to your fellow trainers/facilitators who were present at the session. Discuss how they saw the session; how you experienced it, and what were the positives and negatives. If you are leading the session alone, do this by yourself; take a piece of paper and take around 10 minutes immediately after the session to reflect on it and write down what you thought was good and what you think can be improved in the future.

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