

# RETURN FROM HOSPITAL: HOW CAN I SUPPORT MYSELF

## MODULE 2: COMMUNICATION

Meeting 1: basic structure

### BODY LANGUAGE AND HOW TO UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR (NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION)

**Objective:** Convey the message about importance and complexity of communication. How communication works? What is non-verbal communication and which role and importance it plays in communication.

Programme	Instructions	Time schedule	Conditions and equipment, notes
<b>Welcoming</b>	Welcoming, introduce the trainers and context of the group (see recommendations for the opening of the session in the Guide for trainers).	5-10 min	
<b>Group agreements</b>	Recall and add if necessary (see recommendations for creating safe atmosphere and group agreements in the Guide for trainers).	5-10 min	



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CENTRUM PRO ROZVOJ PÉČE O DUŠEVNÍ ZDRAVÍ  
CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE DEVELOPMENT

**Warm up  
and  
introduce  
each other**

Introduction of each participant with a ball – throwing a ball to each other and saying our first name.

5-10 min

Soft ball

1. What is your name? Were you present the last time?
2. If the weather could express, how do you feel? What weather would you be (sunny, stormy...)? Do you feel this way in your body? Does this image show you?
3. What is your way of greeting?

Option: Use the exercise as a description of the mood, not only a part of exercise.

**Main topic  
1. part**

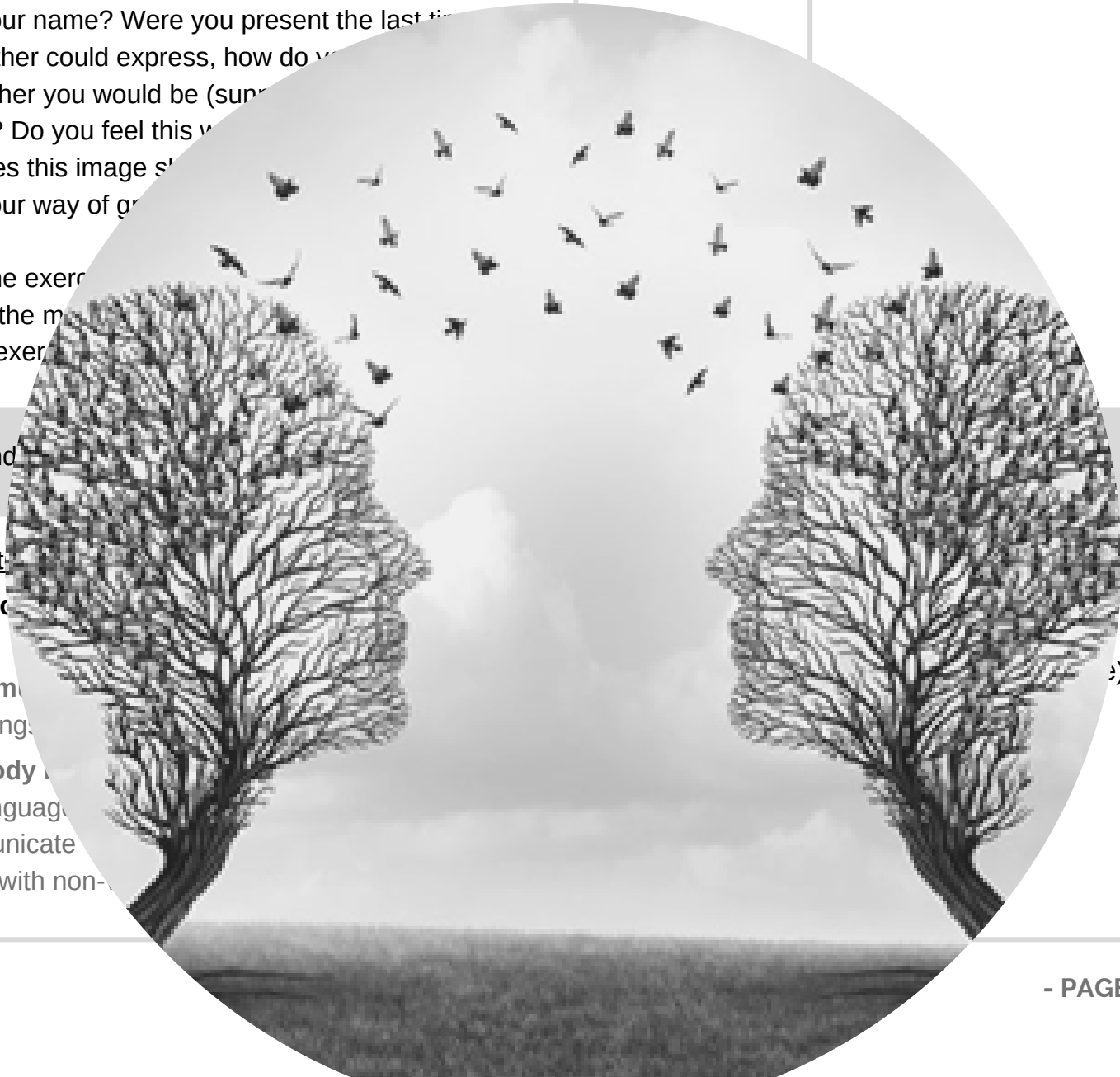
**Objective:** Understanding

**Introduction to**

**Option 1: Introduction to workbook:**

**Why we communicate:** thoughts, feelings, emotions

**The use of body language:** indeed pre-linguistic, how to communicate, how to communicate with non-verbal



Some signals are universal. Everyone around the world understands that smiling suggests happiness, satisfaction or when you want to show that you don't mean any harm. Crying is taken for sadness or pain. How come these facial expressions **are universal**? How come we can understand each other through body language? There are indeed some cultural differences, but there are also many similarities. Despite various racial differences in body shape and colour around the world, there is still a lot of similarity among humans which directly leads to comparable uses for body language.

The idea that we communicate not just through words, but our entire body is called body language. It consists of non-verbal communications including **gestures, body posture, facial expressions, eye movements, touch, voice and physical space**.

The most of it goes through face, though people with diff kind of disabilities use different strategies (touch, silent language ...).

Yet, many things could go wrong. We still need to check if we are ,reading' body signals right.

#### **What Does Body Language Tell You About a Person?**

Body language can tell you when someone feels anxious, angry, excited, or any emotion. It may also suggest personality traits (i.e., whether someone is shy or outgoing). But body language can be misleading. It is subject to a person's mood, energy level, and circumstances.

**Note 1:** Skip the lecture in the acute ward or hospital. Focus the meeting more on participants themselves (their non-verbal communication, the non-verbal communication of others. Use directly exercises bellow or option 2 of introduction.

**Option 2: Cards Život je život**

<https://www.b-creative.cz/terapeuticke-pomucky-b-creative-zivot-je-zivot-life-is-life-cards>

Participants could choose on card and discuss with trainers how we can recognise emotions of penguins. Example: How do you recognise that penguin is happy, said etc.?

**Note 2:** Lead participants in the meeting to focus primarily on how they feel, think about how we show emotions, how we can take inspiration from others (what nice gestures people around me do that I feel comfortable with), etc. It is not so important to know what communication is like (theory).

**Exercise: Main forms of body language (worksheet 1, workbook)**

Possible discussion (after the work with worksheet):

*How we signal to other people that we want to communicate?  
Smiling, waving. When we don't want to? Turn your head, and avoid eye contact.*

**Experiences from peer lecturer connected with the topic**

How he/she recognised signs of behaviour from others during the stay in hospital and later on, how he/she was in contact with how he/she can be perceived by others (meaning body gesture, posture etc.). We want to address common situations in the hospital (people might not respect my personal space, I do not recognise the borders of others, I misinterpret the facial expression, or I do not understand it or I think it is all about me etc.)

It is possible to show on the body and face during telling the story, how peer lecturer felt and looked (when was in deep depression, was full of inner thoughts, anxiety etc) – to accompany telling the story with the expression in the body and description how it was to feel – be like that and how he/she felt understood or not, and if he/she started to work with consciously later on.

**Story of peer trainer** (see the workbook: story of Tomislav/Tibor).

**Exercise: How would you understand/recognise these facial expressions (worksheet 2, workbook)**

At first each person work independently – how he/she understand photos of the face – which “emotion they read in it”.

Then group sharing and discussion, how they were thinking about it, that there might be similarities, common understanding of faces, but it does not mean the people really feel like that (many comics smile and laugh but suffer from deep depression and you might not see it). Sometimes the understanding of expressions can be different, and the answers are therefore ambiguous – use it to point out that it may not always be clear and there may not be one right answer.

Make short reflection, how is my body right now, how is my facial expression, how do I feel at this moment. How might others understand my body language now? How can they perceive it? How I can express how do I feel – next module we will have on verbal communication)

**Conclusion:** It's better to ask what others means, than read the body language and have precise meaning of that in our head.

BREAK



**Main topic**  
**2. part**

**Objective:** Body awareness and boundaries.

Understand complexity of communication due to many layers (like onion) and our own differences.

How we communicate? (words, gestures, face, voice, body postures)

Some people communicate easily, others have difficulties in that area. Luckily, we can all learn to communicate better.

**Option 1**

**Exercise: Boundaries**

**Instruction:** Find a place in this room for yourself where you feel good and put boundaries with crepe tape around your chair. The boundary could be as big as you like, it could cross with others or not... as you wish.

After everyone put boundaries, observe how big/wide they are, or narrow. The trainer could walk near boundary of some person; try to step on it or maybe even jump inside.

**Discussion:**

- *How they felt during the taping (thinking/feeling how much space they need)?*
- *Did they need more space but someone else was nearby?*
- *How they felt when trainer was walking nearby? Step on the border? Break within the borders?*

20 min

Crepe tape

## Option 2

### **Exercise: Spatial proximity.**

Participants are asked to choose a place where they are comfortable in space right now without words or eye contact with each other (define, e.g., the room where the course is taking place). They can sit, stand, climb on a chair. They can experiment for a while - change places and try out how do they feel, try turning in different directions etc. After a while they are asked to settle in one place and position and experience how they feel. Next, they are asked to stay in place and look at the other participants - how far/close is who, what position have they taken in relation to others, etc.

### **Discussion:**

*How did you feel in your chosen place? When you looked at others in space, what did that tell you about your place? How did you feel near or far from other people? Did you feel safe in your chosen place? What made you feel safe?*

It's good to be aware of space and our body. **Distance between people as they interact is also non-verbal message.** Just as body movements and facial expressions can communicate a great deal of nonverbal information, so can the physical space between individuals.

**Space:** intimate (0,5 m), personal (1,2 m), social (3,6 m), public (7 m)



	<p><b>Possible discussion:</b></p> <p><i>How I feel in my body when I'm overwhelmed?</i></p> <p><i>What helps to find connection with my body? (It blocks communication when I'm not connected to my body).</i></p>		
<b>Closing the topic</b>	<p>In this intro session regarding communication, we tried to show practically that communication (verbal and non-verbal) is something that <b>connects</b> (and divide sometimes though we shall address that later in the following sessions).</p> <p>Final thoughts from group members.</p> <p>Thanks to the group for cooperation and looking forward to the next one (state when ant the next topic).</p>	5-10 min	
<b>Evaluation</b>	How did you find this workshop?	5-10 min	Evaluation sheets
<b>Goodbye</b>	What is your way of saying goodbye? How do you do it? (hug, handshake, touch, word, sign, signal).	5 min	

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