



Mindful Managers Training Programme

Trainer's Manual

July 2019



Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. [Project Number: 2017-1-UK01-KA202-036546]

Mindful Managers Project

Work-related stress is among the most commonly reported causes of work-related illness, affecting millions of individuals across the European Union. It has been found that 53% of workers believe stress is the main health and safety risk they face in the workplace and 27% of workers reported experiencing 'stress, depression, anxiety' caused or worsened by work during the last 12 months (EU-OSHA, 2016). Whilst employment has many benefits for our physical and mental health, the pace and nature of work is changing which can lead to pressures on mental health and well-being.

Mindful Managers is a three-year long (2017–2020) Erasmus+ project funded by the European Union and it aims to de-stigmatise the discussion around mental health at work; to give managers tools and resources to actively support positive wellbeing at work for themselves and their teams. The project also aims to train managers to recognise mental health issues and talk openly about these issues at work with a view to avert more serious health problems. By adapting a more mindful approach and encouraging this amongst their teams, managers can support the development of a more resilient workforce and also identify when a team member may need signposting to additional support, ensuring more long-term stress related illnesses can be avoided. In addition managers will increase their own self-awareness with regards to their stress levels and needs and thus ensure their needs are met and strategies are in place to ensure mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.

Four project partners across Europe; Inova Consultancy (UK), VAMK (Finland), Obelisk (Belgium) and CARDET (Cyprus) have gathered to develop a new training programme supporting public sector managers in becoming more mindful at the workplace. All of the partners in this project recognise the stress which staff and managers experience in the workplace.

As part of the project (Intellectual Output 2), the Mindful Managers Training Programme was developed by the transnational project team to support public sector managers and their teams with mental health and wellbeing at work.

Mindful Managers Training Programme

The Mindful Managers Training Programme is innovative in its multi-disciplinary approach. It consists of 5 training modules:

1. Connect
2. Be active
3. Take notice
4. Keep learning
5. Give

These 5 modules were developed and adapted from the themes of the UK Government project ‘Mental Capital and Wellbeing’ (2008). The modules follow the ‘5 a Day’ habits for wellbeing.

During each module participants will explore two topics, outlined in the table below.

Modules	Topics
1. Connect	Self-awareness: connect with yourself
	Taking up roles
2. Be active	Team building through physical exercise
	Relaxation techniques
3. Take notice	Self-awareness and interpersonal awareness
	Asking the right questions
4. Keep learning	Work management
	Life-long Learning
5. Give	Give through positive coaching
	Non-violent communication

These topics were identified based on partners’ existing knowledge and research outcomes collected in the first phase of the Mindful Managers project.

Kolb Learning Cycle

During the development of the Mindful Managers Training Programme, project partners used David Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle (1975) as theoretical framework. In each module the four phases of the Kolb Learning Cycle are included:

Concrete experience

At this point, a learner will physically and consciously encounter a new situation or experience, or they may reinterpret a previous experience they have had. This experience will have a domino effect, instigating the learner to interact with the other stages of the cycle. This can be understood as the feeling stage of the learning cycle; therefore, certain learning styles will flourish at this point whilst others may flounder.

Reflective observation

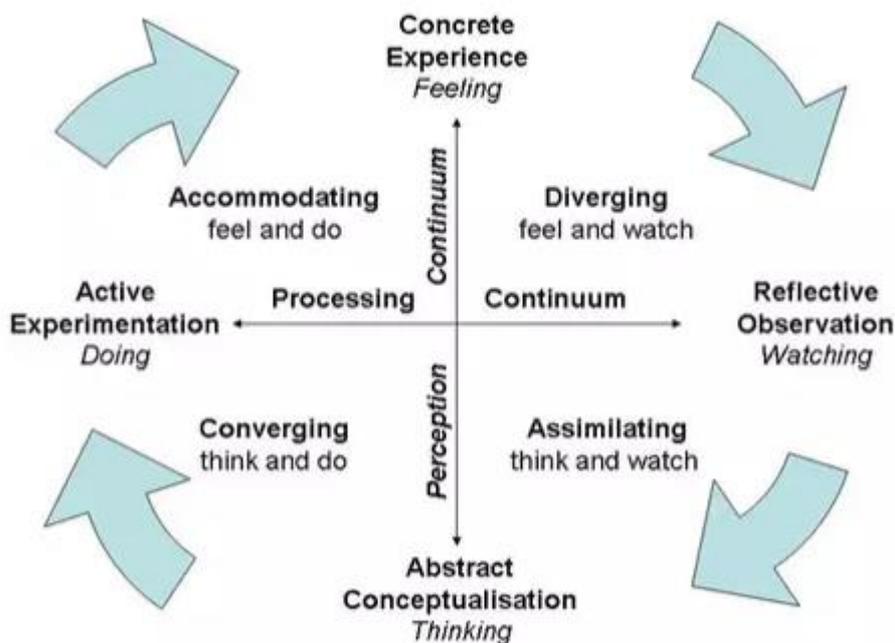
During this phase, learners will reflect on the significance or contradictions between the new experience and their own understanding. Consequently, the individual will step away from doing in order to review and evaluate what has occurred; learners may ask themselves questions to aid their reflection. This can be construed as the watching stage of the learning cycle.

Abstract conceptualisation

Due to the reflective observation, the learner will now compose a new concept or modify an existing idea; therefore, they have learnt from their initial experience. Learners will attempt to make sense of what has occurred in order to find alternative ways and new strategies to handle this and future situations. This can be interpreted as the thinking stage of the learning cycle.

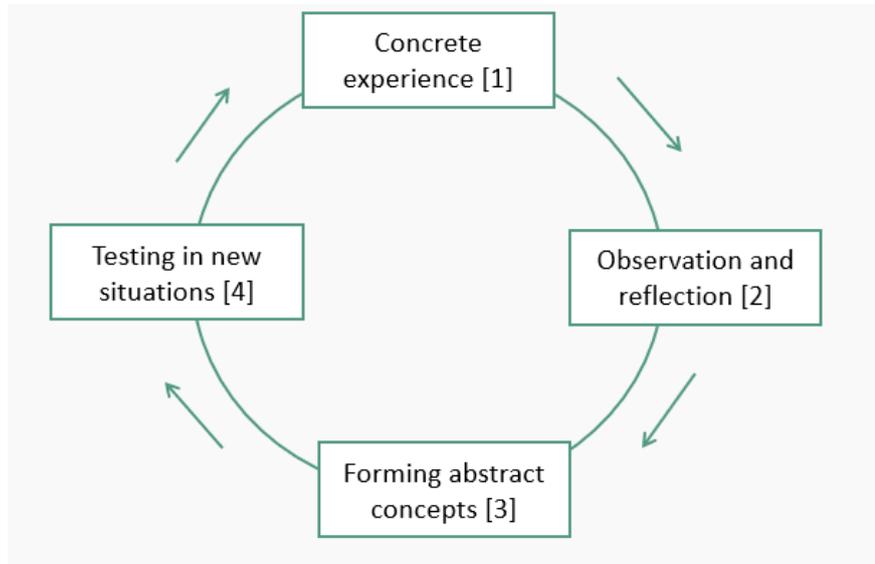
Active experimentation

At this point, the learner will apply the new concept to the world around them in order to gauge the response and test their hypothesis. As the learner practices the newly acquired knowledge, they will realise what works and the aspects that do not; therefore, a new cycle will be instigated as they grapple with this reinterpretation. This can be understood as the doing stage of the learning cycle.



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¹ Saul McLeod, 'Kolb's Learning Styles and Experiential Learning Cycle', *Simply Psychology*, (2017), <https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html> [accessed on 29th May 2019].



According to Kolb’s theory participants need to go through these four phases of learning in order to achieve effective learning. Therefore partners have included the full learning cycle when introducing theories and exercises in the training programme. In the Annexes to this Trainer’s Manual trainers can find a table with all the exercises in each module and topic. Please see example below from Module 1 (Connect) Topic 1 (Self-awareness: connect with yourself):

Module 1/Topic 1

Kolb cycle A	• A/1 – Blind Square
	• A/2 – Observation Form
	• A/3 – Model of Social Roles
	• A/4 – The Mountain Exercise
Kolb cycle B	• B/1 – Match Belbin’s Team Roles
	• B/2 – Collecting a team
	• B/3 – Team Exercise the Desert
	• B/4 – Questionnaire
Kolb cycle C	• C/1 – Quality Mind map
	• C/2 – Theory core quadrants
	• C/3 – Combine to form the right quadrant
	• C/4 – Cases to guess what the core quadrant is

This table indicates that exercises from A1 to A4 represent a full cycle of the Kolb learning cycle and when a trainer wants to deliver A2, they need to deliver the full cycle in order to achieve the learning outcomes.

Trainers are free to choose which cycles they want to deliver depending on the available time during the training and it is up to them with which phase of the Kolb learning cycle they want to start delivering the exercises.

Each module will be piloted with 40 public sector managers in Belgium, Cyprus, Finland and the UK in 2019-2020. Each module will be delivered over half day sessions.

Notes for the facilitators

Your role as the trainer is to facilitate the involvement and learning of the Mindful Managers training participants. As a reminder, you will be expected to share the values of effective facilitation which include:

- Listening – effective and active listening
- Asking - Ensuring each stage is introduced and that learners are ready for the next stage
- Challenging – challenging stereotypes and discrimination
- Sharing – encouraging discussion, sharing of experiences and group dynamics
- Valuing – appreciating each participant and valuing what they bring to the group

There needs to be consistency with the training with some flexibility given to certain exercises, for example the icebreaker exercises. The learning outcomes for the 5 modules and the competences covered should be the ones agreed by the Mindful Managers project consortium. The modules are a mix of written work, creative tasks and the use of technology.

Structure of the training sessions:

- Step 1: contacting and contracting
- Step 2: breaking the ice
- Step 3: training content
- Step 4: Evaluation of the training

Annexes

The content of each module is included in the respective annexes.

- Annex 1 – Module 1: Connect
- Annex 2 – Module 2: Be active
- Annex 3 – Module 3: Take notice
- Annex 4 – Module 4: Keep learning
- Annex 5 – Module 5: Give