

EJO4YOUTH

Fundamental Framework for Quality Assurance



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1 Fundamental pedagogical approach

The practitioner's fundamental pedagogical approach is crucial for the successful implementation of Symbol Work sessions. Therefore, you will find the description of this approach in the beginning of the handout.

1.1 Basic systematic approach in developmental pedagogy

EJO4Youth assumes a belief in a client's developmental capabilities and aims at reinforcing the client's personal strengths. Development is possible in any situation, and clients are capable of assuming responsibility for their own development.

Systemic-oriented counsellors assume the autonomy of the person seeking help and advice and view this person as a 'self-expert'. The unique experience of the individual is understood to be the subjective processing of his personal history and emotional and cognitive experiences of relationships. In the fields of therapy and counselling, systemic practice is oriented towards the concerns of the client (customer) and dispenses with pathologizing and setting normative goals. Within the framework of care-oriented, social-pedagogical procedures, systemic practice links into the resources of the individual involved in order to achieve ethically justifiable conditions.

<https://systemische-gesellschaft.de/systemischer-ansatz/was-ist-systemisch/>



1.2 An open, client-centric basic attitude

Throughout the entire counselling process, the young people decide on the content of the work carried out together. They define the subject matter, together with the goals, objectives, and pace of the work, with the support of their counsellor and peers. The practitioners run the risk of judging, categorizing, and failing to listen and perceive with an open mind. This causes them to focus on their own issues, hypotheses, value systems or goals, and force their ideas upon the clients. A specific time is, therefore, planned into the counselling for them to express their own theories, ideas and suggestions. The client listens to these and can decide which ones he will take on board and heed. He retains the responsibility for the content of the counselling.

1.3 An accepting, appreciative basic attitude

The young people are first and foremost to be accepted and valued for who they are – with their own stories and personal backgrounds, character traits, unique characteristics, skills, strengths and weaknesses. This may initially sound banal or simple, but happens to be a great challenge in practice. In addition to the accepting and supporting aspects, value also involves fostering and challenging independence and assumption of responsibility. The purpose of the counselling is not to relieve young people of their struggles or carry them through life, but to empower them to take the necessary steps themselves. At times, clients tend to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. They try to get the counsellor or the group to do the work for them. In such cases, it is important to push the ball back into the client's court and to motivate him to work. Resource- and solution-orientated as well as unpleasant, provoking, or confrontational questions can sometimes be helpful here.

When a young person violates the rules, or exhibits asocial behaviour or behaviour that is not conducive to achieving the goals, the person should still be valued, but his behaviour should be questioned. The person should be confronted with the existing agreements, rules, the opinions of others, and the consequences of his behaviour. This technique is part of an approach that values the client and takes him seriously.



1.4 A resource- and solution-oriented basic attitude

One of the goals of EJO4Youth is to help young people to discover (or rediscover) their abilities and skills and to expand on these. EJO4Youth begins with these personal competencies and personality traits and brings in social, material, and infrastructural resources. Social resources include people from the client's family, friends and acquaintances, and people from his school, work and social environment; infrastructural resources include people, institutions, associations and public spaces from his living environment.

The basic assumption is that all behaviours make sense and are advantageous to the person exhibiting them. It is important to continue to appreciate the person even in the event of supposedly incomprehensible or 'negative' behaviours. The counsellor should address the utility of these behaviours, and identifying and fostering any resources.

Symbol Work counselling primarily focuses on solutions, not the young people's problems. Biographical research serves to form a case history and highlights the resources listed above, which are helpful in defining and achieving goals.



2 EJO4Youth practitioner skills

The fundamental condition to become a EJO4Youth practitioner is the high interest in Symbol Work and the readiness to try out different roles within various sessions. Because of the effect and the power, Symbol Work can develop, it is important to have experienced all different roles, before applying and teaching the method:

- the person being counselled
- the observer
- the counsellor

The description of EJO4Youth practitioner skills distinguishes between the following:

- Basic skills for counselling and coaching,
- key skills required for counselling and coaching, and
- specific skills required for Symbol Work.

2.1 Basic skills for counselling and coaching



The ability to assume the basic pedagogic attitude as described above.



The ability to reflect on one's own work: the practitioner should be willing and able to reflect on his/her work – his/her own approach, the precise wording of the questions, the proportion of the time he/she spent talking, body language (facial expression, posture, hands) and distance from the client.



The ability to act as a moderator for group processes – see special abilities.



The ability to think holistically, to consider people's situations holistically, and provide goal-oriented counselling.

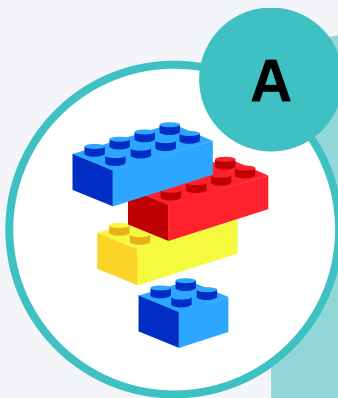
2.2 Key skills required for counselling and coaching

The International Coach Federation (ICF) defines coaching:

“... as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential”.

(see <https://coachfederation.org/about>)

The description of the core skills of a EJO4Youth practitioner (trainer) is based on a list of skills issued by the ICF, modified with regard to the requirements of EJO4Youth trainers as coaches and counsellors. The core skills are grouped in four clusters. The groups themselves and the individual skills are not weighted, i.e. are not ranked in any way.



A

Setting the Foundation

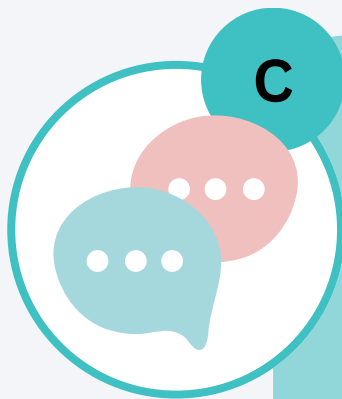
1. Compliance with ethical guidelines and professional standards: Understanding of coaching and counselling ethics and standards and the ability to apply them appropriately in all situations.
2. Establishment of an agreement: this includes a clear understanding of roles, a professional level of intimacy with the client, and clear goal agreements. At the beginning of a counselling session, opportunities and limits, as well as the role of the trainer, should be clearly identified.
Clear goals should be agreed while maintaining an appropriate level of intimacy throughout the counselling session.

Co-Creating the relationship

3. The ability to establish a trusting relationship with the client and create an appropriate group atmosphere: it is important to establish a safe, goal-oriented framework and to ensure respectful, trusting interaction.
4. Coaching presence: The ability to act consciously and remain mindful throughout the entire counselling process: it is important to observe, listen, and feel what the client is communicating and to feel one's own resonances and, if necessary, integrate these into the counselling process.

B



**C****Communicate effectively**

5. Active listening: The ability to concentrate entirely on what the client is saying and not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's goals and desires, and to support the client's expressive ability.

6. Open, resource- and solution oriented, goal-focused questions: The ability to pose appropriate questions depending on the circumstances and phase of the counselling. Openended questions serve to facilitate understanding and foster productive work with the client; resource-oriented questions support the client in discovering skills and abilities, and solutionoriented, goal-focused questions allow solutions to be found.

Facilitate learning and goal achievement

7. Establish awareness: The ability to integrate several sources of information, assessing and interpreting these in such a way that it helps the client to achieve awareness, thus to enable him or her to reach his agreed goals.

8. Planning and setting goals: The ability to develop an effective plan of action together with the client, assign responsibilities to peers, and, if necessary, agree deadlines.

An extensive description of the core competencies can be found at:

<http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/core-competencies/>

D**2.3 Specific skills required for Symbol Work**

1. **Well-grounded methodology:** personal experience in the role of counsellor, client and observer, as well as in counselling clients using Symbol Work methods.
2. **The ability to moderate the counselling processes** in Symbol Work sessions: this means introducing the individual phases of counselling, involving the group and peers, supporting the young people as they establish their own ideas and hypotheses, leaving the client with primary responsibility for the process, summarizing, helping to develop a tangible action plan, distributing responsibilities among peers, and wrapping up the process. Experience in group work is an advantage.

3 Ethical guidelines for practitioners

Background:

Like any effective guidance methodology, the use of EJO4Youth tools must be underpinned by ethical considerations and guidelines in order to safeguard those involved in its use. The ethical guidelines outlined below derive from both the Code of Professional Ethics of the Psychological Society of Ireland (2010), and the Code of Ethics of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (2012). As a European partnership, these guidelines should be used in conjunction with each country's own national ethical codes and practices of professional conduct.

The Code of Ethics of the PSI (2010) and the Code of Ethics of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (2012) categorize ethical conduct into four distinct domains which can help to inform and guide the practice of EJO4Youth practitioners:

- Respect for the rights and dignity of the person
- Competence
- Responsibility
- Integrity

3.1 Respect for the rights and dignity of the person

General respect:

- Practitioners of the EJO4Youth methodology should have an awareness and respect for their clients' moral and cultural values, and not allow their service to be diminished
- due to factors such as gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, race, ethnicity, age, national origin, party politics, social standing or class.
- EJO4Youth practitioners should always use respectful language in written/verbal communication and act to protect the dignity and wellbeing of clients at all times throughout the EJO4Youth process.

Privacy and confidentiality:

- EJO4Youth practitioners should, to the best of their ability, ensure that sessions occur in a private environment and that only essential and relevant information needed for the purpose of the EJO4Youth methodology is collected.

- Practitioners should avoid unjustified intrusion of the clients' psychological boundaries. EJO4Youth practitioners should ensure that information regarding the client, is shared only with the client's informed consent and that client files and documents are stored confidentially for an appropriate amount of time (determined by law and national professional requirements) and then destroyed.
- All clients should be informed of the confidentiality of their participation in the EJO4Youth methodology, and the situations (determined by law) in which this confidentiality may be broken (e.g. in the case of danger to oneself).

Informed consent and freedom of consent:

- EJO4Youth practitioners must take all reasonable steps to receive informed consent (via written consent forms), free from coercion or in situations where the client may feel obligated or under pressure to consent. In the case of a child/minor, practitioners must receive the informed consent of a parent/guardian.
- Clients should be provided with enough accurate and detailed information to depict the activity for which they are participating, prior to their agreement to participate.
- Clients should also be informed of their right to withdraw from participation, even after the beginning of the process.
- Consent must be provided prior to any video, audio or written recording of the client, and the client must give permission for any third party to be present for the given activity.
- Information regarding the client must only be published or shared with others with the client's informed consent.
- External ethical reviews should take place for any client of a vulnerable group or of diminished capacity to provide informed consent, prior to the participation of the client.

Self-determination:

- EJO4Youth practitioners should aim to achieve as active participation as possible of the client in decisions which affect them.
- EJO4Youth practitioners should respect the right of clients to protect their own dignity, and to withdraw their participation at any time. Practitioners should also be aware of and responsive to non-verbal indicators of the desire of the client to withdraw their participation.

3.2 Competence

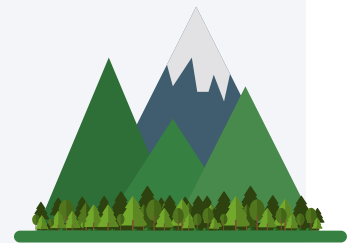


Ethical awareness:

- EJO4Youth practitioners must accept their professional responsibility to be aware of ethical guidelines, in order to ensure their practice is safe and beneficial to all parties involved.
- EJO4Youth practitioners should avoid engaging in professional activities which may conflict with professional ethical best practice.

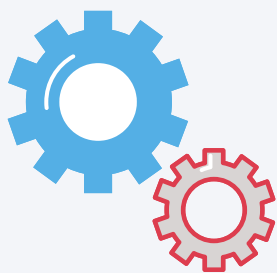
Limits of competence:

- Practitioners must be mindful of how their own attitudes and beliefs may impact upon a client and act to prevent this having a negative effect on clients.
- Practitioners must be aware of their own limits, and not exceed the limitations of their education/training or experience when engaging professionally with a client.
- EJO4Youth practitioners should act to refer a client to a more appropriate service or professional if they deem this service would be of greater benefit to the client.



Limits of procedures:

- EJO4Youth practitioners must be aware of both the strengths and limitations of the tools they use with clients and communicate these with clients and relevant third parties.
- Practitioners should base their interventions on clear objectives and cease intervention if the objective has been met or is impossible to meet.
- Practitioners should carry out pilot studies prior to the implementation of new processes, and withhold from engaging in any activity in which the harm caused to a client may outweigh the benefit.



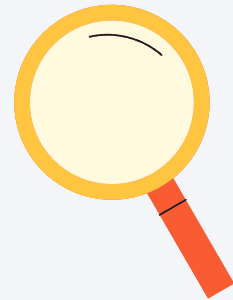


Continuing Professional Development:

- EJO4Youth practitioners have a responsibility to continuously maintain their professional competence through individual education, training and supervision.
- EJO4Youth practitioners should engage in self-care to avoid the development of conditions (e.g. burnout) which might reduce their own wellbeing or impact negatively on the client, and to seek support from colleagues or supervisors should they need it.
- Practitioners should remain up-to-date with recent research methods, techniques and progress, and ensure that the tools they use or train other practitioners in, meet the theoretical developments of the most recent research in the field.

Incapacity for practice:

- EJO4Youth practitioners should recognize and refrain from engaging in professional interactions in which their ability to benefit the client is impaired (e.g. a significant physical or psychological condition which may harm a client).



3.3 Responsibility

General responsibility:

- EJO4Youth practitioners have a responsibility to act in a professional and reputable manner, befitting the behavior of their professional field, and to promote the best practice of this field where possible.
- EJO4Youth practitioners also have a responsibility to report or make known policies, procedures or regulations which ignore or oppose their professional code of ethics.



Promotion of high standards:

- EJO4Youth practitioners have a responsibility to maintain high standards in their professional practice and to act in a way that does not undermine the principles or reputation of their professional field.

Avoidance of harm:

- EJO4Youth practitioners have a responsibility to prevent or avoid activities which may cause harm to a client.
- Practitioners should avoid engaging with clients who are likely to be harmed or negatively impacted by their participation.
- Practitioners should postpone or stop activities as soon as harm to the client is observed.
- Practitioners must ensure that tools are only used by professionals who are trained to use them.
- Practitioners must ensure that client information is stored in a confidential manner and cannot be used to inflict harm or loss of dignity/integrity.

Continuity of care:

- If the practitioner deems the referral of a client to be necessary, contact and support should be maintained with the client until the contract has ended and the client has contacted the recommended professional.

Resolving dilemmas:

- All arising conflicts should be resolved in accordance with the EJO4Youth Ethical Guidelines and each partner's national ethical codes and professional guidelines.

3.4 Integrity

EJO4Youth practitioners should honestly and accurately portray their own education, training and experience, and act to avoid distortion or exaggeration of their own competence, the capacity of the tools being used or other relevant factors.

**Honesty and
accuracy**

Practitioners should be careful to differentiate their own views and opinions from that of research findings when communicating with clients or other professionals.

**Straightforwardness
and Openness**

Practitioners should provide clients with a clear understanding of any results or observations of their session in language they clearly understand.

Actions of colleagues

EJO4Youth practitioners have a responsibility to stop, make known or report the behavior of a colleague which is deemed to be harmful or unethical.

Practitioners should offer appropriate support or supervision to colleagues who request it.

For more information regarding ethical best practice see:

<https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/footer/PSI-Code-of-Professional-Ethics-3>

<http://www.igc.ie/about-us/our-constitution/code-of-ethics>

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