



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Emotional Safety Academy

Erasmus+ Training Course

Program dates: 17.08. - 25.08.2024

Arrival date: 17.08.2024 by 6pm in Radomir

Departure date: 25.08.2024 after 9 am

Drugan, Bulgaria

[Apply](#) before **27.07.2024**

Summary

A 7-day experiential training to explore creating emotional safety for ourselves and others, and grow as human beings and change-makers through practicing authentic relating, radical compassion, awareness, and somatic-oriented communication tools in the company of international youth workers and activists.



Context

Emotional safety is an empowering sanctuary, nurturing the mind and soul. It weaves a tapestry of well-being, where positive development and healthy relationships bloom. In the context of youth work emotional safety eases the burdens of anxiety and stress, allowing young hearts to grow, learn, and express their innermost feelings freely. In such an environment trust takes root, social skills flourish, and the courage to take risks and embrace growth emerges, fostering self-esteem, confidence, and resilience. When young people experience emotional safety, focus sharpens, engagement deepens, and creativity flows, inviting youth to explore their identities with authenticity.

For teachers and youth workers emotional safety is a cornerstone of well-being and growth. It serves as a shield against stress and burnout, promoting mental and emotional health. The ability to cultivate emotional safety for oneself and others strengthens bonds, enhances collaboration, and builds a cohesive, effective work environment. Thus, emotional safety is not just a protective layer but a foundation upon which the entire community of learners and educators can thrive.

As loneliness spreads far and wide, cultivating authentic and compassionate relationships has become challenging for many. There seem to be so many conditions and obstacles interfering with our basic human need for connection. We want to be known, and yet we are scared to reveal ourselves. We crave contact outside of the virtual world, and yet we rely on likes, swipes and follows instead of direct, face-to-face communication. We try to “turn off” our emotions as a way to protect ourselves from hurt and ridicule, thereby giving up our aliveness and our humanity.

Imagine a world where you are empowered to notice and feel what’s going on inside of yourself without having to hide it. A world where you don’t need to pretend and are welcome as you are. Such worlds exist, and it is humans like us who create them.

Program Goals

We invite you to join us in exploring and growing our power to create and sustain emotional safety by showing up authentically in communication through the courageous acts of vulnerable sharing, allowing ourselves to fully experience whatever is, and supporting each other in the process. To this end we invite all program participants to commit to stay in contact especially when difficult emotions emerge, and to maintain respectful acceptance of different experiences and realities.

In this experiential program, we will explore authentic relating, radical compassion, awareness, and somatic-oriented communication tools in order to:

- Welcome our whole selves into relationships and let our guards down
- Connect to ourselves and others in a deep, honest, and compassionate ways
- Learn and test tools to encourage deeper intimacy and grow our capacity to be vulnerable
- Practice taking emotional risks in a safe environment
- Have difficult conversations without falling apart
- Discover healing in relationship and community



- Attune to our body senses and express whatever arises in the moment: excitement, attraction, anger, fear, etc.
- Experience being fully present and grounded in the moment
- Co-create cooperative environments by making clear agreements based on consent and honesty
- Create and sustain Emotional Safety in our communities.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Creating a habit of checking-in with our bodily sensations
- Being at ease with the uncomfortable - expanding our comfort zones
- Asking for what we want; expanding our ability to give & receive
- Living out loud - laughing, crying, yelling, smiling, and getting inspired to transform our lives
- Learning tools to create and sustain emotional safety in oneself and others
- Enhancing and enriching our leadership, communication and conflict navigation skill sets.

Daily Flow

We will start every day with movement and meditation to gently awaken our bodies and minds. During the morning and afternoon sessions we will engage in group and paired exercises, sharing circles and other experiential activities. This way of learning relies on personal sharing and requires our willingness to be vulnerable with each other.

During lunch break we will have time to relax and explore the village and nearby nature, as well as engage in experiments outside of our group space. After dinner we will continue to get to know each other and our cultures through activities organized by the participants.

8.45 - 9.15 am	Body Awareness Session
9.15 - 10.15 am	Breakfast
10.30 - 1pm	Morning Session
1:30 - 4.30 pm	Lunch Break
4.30 - 7pm	Afternoon Session
7 - 7.30 pm	Community Service
7.30 - 8.30 pm	Dinner
8.30 pm	International and Participant-led evenings



Commitments:

In order to create a safe and effective container for sharing and learning, all participants and facilitators will be asked to keep several agreements for the duration of the training. Agreeing to them is a requirement for participating. The two crucial agreements are:

I agree to tell the truth.

I agree to support others in telling the truth.

Agreeing to tell the truth means that you agree to honestly speak about the thoughts and feelings that arise for you during the workshop. The facilitators will support you in doing so. By “telling the truth” we understand on one hand - no straight out lying, and on the other - no withholding or hiding things you’d rather not share.

Supporting others in telling the truth means that you agree to stay physically present while other people tell their truth, and doing so without trying to comfort them or get them to change. This also means participating in all sessions and not walking away even in “difficult” moments.

Additionally, we are envisioning this experiential program as a **no alcohol and drugs** space (excluding nicotine).

If you want to join the training, but have questions or resistance regarding these agreements, you can contact us at hello@solidarityworks.eu

Profile of participants

Participants in the workshops will be:

- Youth or social workers, young leaders, activists, community organizers working with disadvantaged communities
- Residents in an Erasmus+ program countries (EU Member States, as well as Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Turkey, Serbia), and neighboring countries
- Highly motivated to apply their learning in their work back at home
- Willing to further disseminate the project results and participate in the follow-up phase
- Comfortable with shared accommodation (participants will be accommodated in shared rooms with 2 - 5 other people) or may choose to stay in a solo black-out tent provided by SolidarityWorks

In accordance with the inclusion and diversity aims of Foundation “SolidarityWorks” 7 of the 14 available participant spots will be filled with participants who are low-income and disadvantaged participants in Erasmus+ mobilities.



Trigger Warning

The kind of work we will do during the training often has therapeutic impact. This means you might have the opportunity to work with personal triggers, access childhood wounds, or go into deep interpersonal processes. Still, the workshop is not designed to substitute personal therapy and does not replace it.

Due to the agreement that we will all tell the truth and stay present with each other, you might witness other people speaking about difficult events from their life, such as war experiences, abuse, suicidal thoughts, trauma, and intimate aspects of sexuality. If you think hearing about such topics might trigger you deeply, please reconsider attending the training.

Please be aware that this workshop might not be suitable for you if you have major untreated trauma. Also, if you have an acute mental health challenge, please first discuss it with your therapist/doctor and then with us upon applying.

Project team



Maggie Nazer (Project coordinator and Facilitator) is a social entrepreneur and a domestic violence prevention activist. Maggie studied Sociology in the United States, as well as History of Women and Gender at Sofia University, and is undergoing training to become a Gestalt therapist. Maggie cares about creating bridges between individuals and groups from different backgrounds, nurturing solidarity, learning and teaching healthy and authentic communication and relationship skills.



Silvana Paneva (Facilitator of day 3) is a clinical psychologist, trained in Compassionate Inquiry (CI), the body-oriented and trauma-healing approach by Gabor Maté. Silvana believes that we are interconnected, and that when we are kind and compassionate to ourselves, we are more capable of compassion towards others, towards animals and plants, and towards the Earth itself. Thus when we take care of ourselves, we are ultimately contributing to a world filled with solidarity and love.



Teodora Zareva (Facilitator of days 5 & 6) is a body psychotherapist with a rich personal journey that has taken her through several countries and professional fields. She has a love for science and business as well as art and spirituality. She writes poetry, takes photographs, and dances. Her interests also include psychedelic-assisted therapy, which is currently a subject of active scientific research worldwide. Teodora recently finished her fourth year of specialization at the Bulgarian Institute for Neo-Reichian Analytical Psychotherapy.



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Venue & Accommodation

The project will be hosted in SolidarityWorks' Center for Learning, Sharing, and Exchange (CLSE), located in the village of Drugan¹, 10 kilometers away from the town of Radomir. CLSE consists of a newly renovated rural house transformed with the help of countless volunteers. The house has two bathrooms with access to hot water through water boilers.

The house has 3 bedrooms with shared sleeping arrangements, fit to host 14 people. Sleeping assignments in the hostel house will be done according to the gender of the program participants with females and males sleeping in separate rooms to ensure everyone's comfort. Bedsheets, pillows, and blankets will be provided.

There will also be an option to sleep in tents in our spacious and birdsong-filled garden. Each camping participant will receive a 2-person blackout tent, equipped with a mattress, a tent lamp, a pillow and an extra warm sleeping bag (as well as additional blankets if needed). If you desire to be placed in a tent, please, let us know in the application form. We encourage participants who value privacy and alone time to select the camping sleep arrangement.

Please review our [SolidarityWorks Values and Rules](#) document which covers important information about our expectations from you in relation to the use of our Hostel House (we request that you familiarize yourself with the document even if you will be camping in the garden).

!!! You are expected to arrive in Radomir on August 17th by 6pm the latest. We will have our first group dinner and an introductory circle to get to know each other and get started on our advanced somatic awareness immersion journey together.

You can follow these [directions on how](#) to reach the town of Radomir from Sofia (the bus ride takes about an hour). If you arrive by bus or train, we will pick you up from Radomir and bring you to Drugan. However, if you arrive late and don't manage to get on a bus or train to Radomir, your only option will be to come by taxi (= around 120 Leva, non-reimbursable).

On August 25th after 9 am we will take you back to Radomir from where you can take a bus or train to Sofia. **Please, coordinate your travel and don't buy tickets before discussing your travel options with Maggie Nazer (magi.nazer@gmail.com).**

¹ The Village of Drugan is located in the South-Western region of Bulgaria. The permanent population is about 280 people. [Google maps link](#)



Food

We will have breakfast at the house, and home-cooked meals two times a day. The food will be vegetarian, but we'll also be served fish. All vegetables and fruits we will consume will be organic and obtained from local farms. If you know that you like late-night snacks, or have a sweet/salty tooth, you can buy snacks from the nearby shop during your free time every day. Local shops in the village work daily until 10 pm.

Financial conditions

Food, accommodation, international and local travel costs (only during the workshop dates) will be covered by Foundation "SolidarityWorks" through the support of the Erasmus+ Programme.

See the maximum travel allowance depending on the distance between your home town and Drugan, Radomir, Bulgaria using the [Erasmus distance calculator](#):

Distance band	Max Travel allowance
100 - 499 KM	180 euro
500 - 1999 KM	275 euro
2000 - 2999 KM	360 euro



Reimbursement

Foundation “SolidarityWorks” will reimburse **90% of participants' travel costs** (using cheapest means of transportation, economy class within the limits set by the Erasmus+ Programme. No taxi.) upon presentation of original tickets, invoices and boarding passes. All documents should have the price, currency, name of the passenger and date of purchase clearly visible on them, otherwise we will be unable to reimburse the costs.

If you want to explore Bulgaria, you can arrive/leave up to two days before/after the official dates of the workshop. Please, consult with us prior to buying your tickets, so that we are able to reimburse you afterwards!

Participants will receive reimbursements by bank transfer **after the training** and upon sending of return travel documents, international bank details, and dissemination activity reports. Exception to this rule may only be done for participants coming from non-EU member states in order to avoid high bank fees. Any tickets purchased in a local currency other than EUR, will be converted and calculated according to the exchange rate of the official European Commission website². SolidarityWorks is not responsible for, and will not cover bank charges administered by receiving banks.

Health insurance

Health insurance for participants from non-EU countries has to be provided by the participants themselves. Participants from EU-countries are encouraged to use their [European health insurance card](#).

² www.ec.europa.eu/budget/inforeuro/index.cfm?Language=en



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**Foundation “SolidarityWorks”
Drugan, Radomir municipality, Bulgaria**

[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Youtube](#) | [Website](#)

Our goal is to promote, encourage and support the sustainable development of individuals and communities through solidarity and collective action for social change.

At SolidarityWorks we work tirelessly to promote intergenerational and intercultural dialogue, empower marginalized groups, as well as youth, women and the elderly. We use art, storytelling, advocacy and self-development to prevent domestic and intimate partner violence, and are continuously learning how to create healthy and fulfilling interpersonal relationships as well as nurture solidarity between and among diverse groups of people.

Reach us at: hello@solidarityworks.eu