

Guidelines for Youth Workers: Using the “Story Playground” Model within “InGameGration” Project

Aim of the Session

To support young people with migrant background in **opening up about their personal journey**, discovering **elements of identity, culture, and integration** through the metaphor of a **playground**, using the **Neurographica drawing method** as a safe and non-verbal storytelling tool.

Materials Needed

- A4 or A3 white drawing paper
- A pen
- Black fine-liner or marker
- Colored pencils or markers
- Timer or stopwatch

Ethical Guidelines & Emotional Safety

- **Voluntary participation**
- **Inform that we are collecting the personal stories, but agree on the format to be recorded** – either audio recording, video recording, just notes, or no record at all
- **Safe space for self-expression**: each participant decides how much he or she wants to share and what he or she allows to record or not.
- **No strict drawing rules** – the participants do not have to be painters, **nobody is judging** their drawings, it is important what are their reflections during the drawing process.
- Be sensitive to **trauma triggers** — avoid pushing for deep verbal sharing unless initiated by the participant.
- Ask if it is ok to **keep the drawing** or make a picture of the drawing in the end.

Step-by-Step Process

1. Warm-Up (Tuning In)

Ask participants to take **2 minutes** to quickly write down a **list of words** that come to mind when they think about:

- **"Story Playground."**
Encourage free-flowing associations — emotions, memories, symbols, places, people.
- Ask to count down the written words and evaluate if the list of the words is rather positive or negative.
- Ask to highlight any word that looks “strange”.

2. Drawing the Story Playground (Neurographica Process)

A. Composition Setup (*use black line marker*)

Introduce the 3 parts of the drawing:

- **Past Playground** (childhood): Draw a **shape** (circle, square, etc.) that represents Your childhood playground. Add **toys (small circles)**, **players - people (circles)**, and **Yourself**.
- **Present Playground** (current life): Adjust the sizes, shapes and elements to the “playground” of Your current life.
- **Future Playground** (dream life): Show desired changes, new connections, wishes – express with shapes, lines, sizes.

 Ask:

- Describe the shapes, their sizes and distance from each other.
- Where are you and how are you in each space?
- What has changed?
- What were the important turning points?
- What did you keep from the past?
- What do you wish for?

B. Rounding & Connecting

Use Neurographica technique:

- Round all intersections with curved lines.
- “Scan” Yourself by 4 points of attention: 1) thoughts, 2) feelings, 3) body sensations, 4) visions.

C. Coloring

- Add colors to unite smaller parts of Your drawing.

D. Field Lines

- Add **field lines** (free flowing curves around the whole drawing) to **contain the energy** and feeling following the way to the better future.

E. Fixation

- Mark the **final most important figure** in Your drawing. Make it a circle – either with eyes opened or closed.
- **Analyze** which elements of Your drawing got inside Your fixation shape.

3. Final Reflection (Word List Again)

- Ask participants to now take **2 more minutes** and write a **new list of words about the same topic**.
- Ask to count down the written words and evaluate if the list of the words is rather positive or negative.
- Ask to highlight any word that looks “strange”.
- Compare the first and the second lists. What has changed?

Closure

- Ask the participants about their reflections about today’s drawing journey – what they liked, how they felt, what was any turning point for them, if they had any insights.
- Thank participants.