



LIVING & MOTIONS

Emotional education through
visual storyliving

PORTFOLIO

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TELL IT OUT! PORTFOLIO

INTRODUCTION

This portfolio intends to give a clear overview about the benefits of knowing, recognizing, analysing and sharing emotions related to recovery experiences in mental health. Emotion regulation is an essential, but traditionally underemphasized, feature of mental health. Here, it is included a collection of success stories, thus giving a positive and inspiring vision of the recovery process. These stories, told in first person, have been created using the content of the case studies and learning passports completed with the participants of the Living e-Motions pilot courses in Estonia and Spain during 2020.

This document also includes the *Learning passport: Portfolio of story lives'* competences, guidelines to certificate the improvement or acquisition of soft skills.



WHY TO SHARE STORIES?

The sharing of stories of lived experiences has been closely linked to the development of the recovery approach. Sharing our stories allows us to visualise our experiences over time and to reflect on the long-term journey of recovery with its ups and downs.

Sharing our recovery stories can also help to challenge misconceptions:

- Stories showing very clearly that people can and do recover.
- Stories recognise the fact that people in recovery are experts by experience.
- Stories offer hints and techniques on recovery.

Developing and taking control of your own story can be an empowering experience and is an essential part of the recovery process. By thinking about our experiences, we are able to look for things that have worked and gone well, as well as the difficulties, distress and challenges. This is especially important and powerful, as many people spend time being assessed and assisted by mental health professionals and social services. Naturally, the conversations are often focused on the negative effects of poor mental health.

As a result of repeating these conversations over time, the problems and difficulties begin to define who the person is. For example, the person's 'story' might become *'I have this diagnosis'; 'I am someone with a drug problem' or 'I am someone who has had a traumatic experience'*. While these facts are true, they are not the whole story – or the whole person. The fact is that many people with mental health problems have had to face severe hardships – yet they've survived. So it's clear they have exceptional resilience and strength. But for as long as they stay focused on the negative effects of mental ill health, it is unlikely they will see these positive qualities. And that can hinder recovery.



Thinking through and sharing recovery stories has a lot to offer us. It promotes and supports our recovery and wellbeing and helps to create positive identity and meaning in life, as well as being an empowering experience. We also know that stories of lived experience and recovery are important in changing negative attitudes to people living with mental health problems and in demonstrating that recovery is real. Hearing stories of lived experience and recovery is inspiring to others living with mental health challenges and can help to connect them to others who can support them to take control of their own recovery.

Living e-Motions can support people through this process of understanding and owning their own story of recovery. Through this, they can take control of their journey through life and use their lived story to inspire and support others on their journey.

LIVING E-MOTIONS STORIES: LET'S LISTEN TO THE FEELINGS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

My story

Hello, I am a 45 years old man who attends the psych-social rehabilitation centre run by INTRAS in Zamora. I joined the Living e-Motions course because I want to improve the quality of my life. At the beginning, I enjoyed the course very much. However, as the course went on it was quite difficult for me to talk about some things that made me feel uncomfortable. Nevertheless, I learnt some new and interesting strategies for my daily life.

Mohamed's story

Hello, my name is Mohamed. I joined the Living e-Motions course because my doctors and the trainers recommended it to me. I had good times and also some bad times during the course. Sometimes I felt a little bored and thought that I didn't need to come to the sessions, but I really enjoyed the recording of the recovery story videos. I did learn new things on the course. You can always learn



something new! However, I am not sure if I gained any new skills. I would like to work and to study. I think that the Living e-Motions course can help me in my objectives because I can concentrate better than before.

Candelas' story

Hello, I am Candelas. The staff at INTRAS told me about the Living e-Motions course and I decided to try it. I'm very happy with the decision because I enjoyed it. Sometimes it was difficult because we talked about sensitive topics, but most of the time I enjoyed spending time with my mates and with the trainers. I learnt to relate with other people and talk about things that happened to me. Before the course I didn't talk about this kind of things with anybody. Now, I have started talking a little bit more. I liked the learning and my plan for the future is to continue learning more things.



<https://vimeo.com/499640859>

Emma's story

Hello, my name is Emma. I joined the course because my doctor felt that I should. I wasn't sure but now I think he was right. I enjoyed the course and learnt different things including that sadness can be a positive emotion. I would like to move forward in overcoming my phobias but also in my life in general.



Luis' story

Hello, I am Luis. I was already in contact with INTRAS and joined the course because I thought it was didactic. I enjoyed the course because everything was very well explained. I learnt to control my feelings, which has been beneficial for me. This is a new skill! I am now joining another course that, hopefully, will continue to help me to control my emotions.

Eliise's story

Hello, I am Eliise. I joined the course because I wanted to share my story and hear the stories of other people. Ever since I was a child, I've wanted to be someone who talks about myself to others and they might find it helpful. I think that someone else is learning something from your story. I myself know that many of us have been in the similar situation. In our difficult times we can support each other.

The course was what I thought it would be. The group was very nice and I was able to open myself up more to other people. It was good that we had different types of people together. What I liked most, was making my video and watching stories of others. I learned the consistency not to give up. There are people who have had even more difficult situations in their lives than me. But they still live their lives and don't even think about their situation.

I remember someone saying that in difficult moments it helps them to be surrounded by people, even just to go out in the fresh air and not to be alone. I'm starting to go out a lot more now. I'm taking a longer walk to go home after school. And on the weekend, I go to Kehra or Jarva-Jaani where I can be with my boyfriend and his cat.



<https://vimeo.com/480301678>

Kaidi's story

Hello, my name is Kaidi. I was hesitant to join the course, but I made a deal with the facilitator that I'd try to attend the first session at least. The atmosphere of the first session was nice and inviting. I felt I could talk to young people who were just like me, so I decided to join the course.

I think it was a good course. You can have the same worries, but each person's background is different. You don't have to tell your life's biography in front of others for them to understand you. I liked the training course. I got to talk to others who had experienced hardships and I did different worksheets and exercises and I could listen to the advice of others and give others my advice based on my experiences.

It was hard to open up, because I knew other people from the course beforehand, but we didn't communicate on a daily basis. I was worried about what they would think of me or how they would look at me after hearing my story. However, I enjoyed that the course was without prejudice - I could talk freely and by myself.

I learned how to start a conversation with people I don't know yet. I'm a bit more courageous to go up and talk to strangers. Now, I feel freer and more open-



mindful when I talk about my experiences. As a result of the course, I dare to talk about my feelings. I feel I have the courage to ask for help, my initiative has increased and my will to communicate has grown stronger. I've also made new friends.

I don't have any plans at the moment but would like to study further at Astangu, maybe the assistant baker or chef's assistant courses. I will use my learning and skills to communicate better with people and ask for help more quickly and clearly.

Martti's story

Hello, I am Martti. I joined the Living e-Motions course as I had previously had a lovely experience with people who work at Astangu and wanted to go back there. The Living e-Motions course was helpful. I liked that there were many topics and my expectations about the course were exceeded. Each time I got home after the session, I thought about the topic that was discussed. I gained more confidence that I can handle everything life throws at me. I faced different feelings - anger, joy, sadness, depression. Living e-Motions made me think about what happened in the past and life in general. Making a video was also a necessary experience. Telling your story to a person you trust, makes it easier to tell it on camera.

Living e-Motions also changed my horizons - I can see the problems and difficulties of others better. At my clubhouse I noticed that one of my companions was having problems and tried to help by listening to him and offering help. It made me feel good.

My social skills developed. I also made many new acquaintances and friends and still talk or message some members of the group. My self-esteem grew because I had the courage to be an open-minded communicator in my group. The training gave me inspiration to do things I have not done before - to get married, to attend bachelor parties and get a driving licence. The listening skills I learned, help me in all my different relationships.



I think that the Living e-Motions group should meet after five years and watch the videos again. I would like to know how the lives of the group members have changed.



<https://vimeo.com/480302581>

Siret's story

Hello, my name is Siret. I had been at Astangu and it was what helped me to get my job as a personal assistant for people with special needs. I was back in Astangu one day and found out about the Living e-Motions course. I wasn't sure about it, but thought I would give it a try. I was hoping to learn more about myself, to learn to think a little bit differently, to see things from a different angle.

The course had a very warm atmosphere. Everyone felt comfortable and on-one launched at or put others down. It was very important to me - very supportive and friendly. It was always nice to participate. There was never a feeling that "Arghhh! I have to go to the course again! I got to know new people and keep in touch regularly with some of them.

Living e-Motions was a good experience for me. I learned how to relate to different types of problems that are not familiar to me. A lot of the self-analysis and self-reflection has come in handy. I learned to love myself as I am. I know that I still



have difficulties in reconciling my health problems. I hope one day it gets better, as I want to live independently.

I went to school again, as I want to get a secondary education. I'm on a second try, but this time I'm thinking that I am not giving up. I have become stronger now and if its gets difficult I will ask for help.



<https://vimeo.com/484432374>

Taavi's story

Hello, my name is Taavi. I feel like my knowledge of mental health is quite high, but it can be very difficult for me to care about my own mental health and pick myself back up. I joined Living e-Motions as I've attended similar courses before and experienced a sense of belonging. You have a purpose and an opinion, and it feels nice to be listened to. It means a lot to me.



The training course was nice. It was positive and I felt I belonged. It was more awesome when I started to interact with other participants even more. I made new friends who I socialise with, but I don't think I learned much about mental health or emotional coping strategies. However, I enjoyed analysing different topics and subjects as a group and expressing my opinion.

I would like to live on my own - ideally with someone special at my side. I think I would like to have a job or some kind of regular activity.



<https://vimeo.com/484433703>

LEARNING PASSPORT: PORTFOLIO OF STORYLIVERS' COMPETENCES

Madli's story

Hello, my name is Madli. I feel that one gained knowledge from this training course is that you have to trust the group to guide themselves in their own learning process. As a facilitator, I can lay their foundation, but I won't build their house



and if the house doesn't look like I had planned it would, then it's okay, it's theirs not mine. So, trust the group and let them go to walk their own journey.

Also, as a facilitator, it is acceptable to remind the group members if they drift away from the topic, become too loud, or act inappropriate, to follow the group agreement. At the start, I was a bit afraid that, if I pointed out that someone was breaking the agreement, they would get offended or start to act defiant with me but, to my surprise, it didn't happen.

So, I learned that you don't have to act as a teacher to get discipline, you could just remind the group by pointing out what they agreed on and respect each other. By indicating to the agreement, the unwanted behaviour stops and participants starts to act accordingly.

Also, I want to graduate myself for finishing this training course and keeping in touch with the group although COVID-19 wanted to intervene. I am happy that I inspired our group to finish the videos on their own and I couldn't be prouder. I would like to organize another training course, so I could compare those two experiences, and see myself grow as a facilitator, making sure that this projects lives on and helps young people with mental health issues to find and support one another. Also, it is important to pass my knowledge to fellow specialist who want to work towards destigmatizing mental health problems, so probably I will try to talk as much about the project as possible, thus organizations all over Estonia can implement this story-sharing approach.

Anni's story

Hello, my name is Anni. I felt really happy to connected with the group so well that, at the end of the course, almost everybody was ready to make their recovery story video. I think it was our lack of pressure that gave them the confidence that, despite their decision to make or not to make the videos at the end of the course, we would support them anyway.

I also think I learned to use the strengths of the participants in the group. Our participants started to look after each other with every session and it also helped them to cope with their emotions. The ones who had the tendency to



be overwhelmingly loud, learned to listen more to the others. And the ones with quiet opinions, learned to express them a little bit louder.

I really saw how they became young adults in front of our eyes, we just created the right environment for them to grow.

I see the benefits of the course for people with mental health issues and I really hope we can carry out new courses next year as well. I also hope we can disseminate this initiative thus letting more people know about the use of these practical skills provided by Living e-Motions.

Susana's story

Hello, my name is Susana. Living e-Motions is created on the basis of the Recovery model, leaving behind the medical and biologist model, and focusing on the person and the potential that their own experience has in his/her recovery process. This concept fully fitted into the work methodology of our centre, which allowed us to work with the contents of the project with few modifications. This is a great advantage for professionals, since we could use the program directly.

Another interesting aspect I realized during the course, is that all sessions have dynamics and practical exercises, which is very important to generate a practical application of the content taught. In this sense, the participants are proposed from a very flexible position, in which they can be adapted to the characteristics of the people or the facilitators, which highlights that the program is flexible to the different environments in which it is taught. The sharing of the different exercises carried out generated moments of listening, of dialogue, of expressing ... that are very powerful in the process of people's recovery. We had the opportunity to see that building life stories is a technique that can improve personal self-knowledge capacity and detect the tools that can help us to overcome difficult moments.

Natalia's story

Hello, my name is Natalia. For me, the Living e-Motions program fitted perfectly with the methodology and work approach that we follow at INTRAS foundation. As it is a therapeutic intervention, the contents of the sessions are in tune with



the working objectives with the participants. For this reason, it is a program that we intend to incorporate into our portfolio of services to be able to implement it on a recurring basis among the programs we deliver. It is very valuable for us to have this new tool for our work.

As a recommendation, I can say that facilitators are worth joining the group, that they participate actively in the exercises and dynamics through their own personal experiences, and I believe that this favours equality and a climate of trust among all.

LEARNING PASSPORT: PORTFOLIO OF STORYLIVERS' COMPETENCES

The aim of the Learning Passport is to identify and certificate the improvement and/or acquisition of soft skills by the participants thanks to the Living e-Motions training course. This recognition system tries to support and enhance the empowerment process of the participants.

The trainer/facilitator may decide to hold a short meeting with each participant between the final two sessions to ensure they are ready to share their story and also to discuss their Learning Passport. This is an opportunity for the trainer/facilitator to provide strengths based feedback on an individual basis which will assist the participants in drafting their Learning Passport.

A template for the Learning Passport is provided below, including some explanations to complete it. The self-evaluation template, provided as well, can also help the participants to think about the experience lived and to identify the new competences acquired or improved during the training course.



THE LEARNING PASSPORT

NAME:

This space is for your name and any contact details you want to include, or maybe a photograph.

I AM...

This space is for a short statement about you - something like 'I am a passionate and enthusiastic person who likes to work with others to achieve change'.

MY QUALITIES

This space is for a list of your key qualities - skills, aptitudes, things you are good at. Lots of CVs have this as it is good for there to be a summary of you. It should be concise and include statements such as:

- Good communication skills in writing and in person.
- Able to inspire and motivate people.
- Good attention to detail.

MY NEW LEARNING AND SKILLS

This is a space for you to list the key things you have learned and the skills you have gained during the Living e-Motions course. Look back at your thoughts during Session 7 as a basis.



HOW I WANT TO USE MY NEW LEARNING AND SKILLS

This space is for a short statement about how you want to use your new learning and skills. Examples could include:

- Use my lived experience to support others in their recovery journey.
- Move into a job where I can support others to reach their goals.
- Look for opportunities to continue my education by going to College to study...

COMMENDATION

This space is for a short comment from a fellow student or trainer about you focusing in on your qualities, learning and skills. An example would be...

“[name] is a motivated and enthusiastic learner who can also support others in their learning”.



SELF-EVALUATION TEMPLATE FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE COURSE

1. Your experience of the course

The following questions use a scale to 1 to 5 where 1 is agree very much and 5 is do not agree. Circle the number which most fits with your experience.

1.1. The *Living e-Motions* course was enjoyable.

1 2 3 4 5

1.2. I learnt a lot on the *Living e-Motions* course.

1 2 3 4 5

1.3. The content of the sessions and the exercises were interesting.

1 2 3 4 5

1.4. I feel more confident about my lived experience and future learning.

1 2 3 4 5

2. What did you enjoy most about the course?



3. What do you think should be changed or improved?

Tell us about anything about the course (contents, exercises, group) that has been of benefit to you

4. How has completed the *Living e-Motions* course benefited you?

Tell us about anything about the course (contents, exercises, group) that has been of benefit to you

5. What do you plan to do next?

Tell us a little about your future plans and how you will use the earning from the course

Thank you for completing this evaluation form



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