



# Train the Trainer (TtT) Curriculum

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## 1. SymfoS – Symbols for Success: The Project

SymfoS – Symbols for Success is an Erasmus+ project that promotes an innovative education and career guidance method addressed to young disadvantaged people based on sets of symbols.

Very often the traditional counselling methods are aimed at young people who have advanced writing and reading skills and are already supported by a strong social system. These kinds of interventions can be ineffective with young people who, for various reasons, find difficulties in expressing in words their situation, their needs and their goals for the future. Working with symbols is an opportunity for them to use a universal language to do it.

What does **SymfoS** stand for? On the one hand, SymfoS aims to support young people who encounter difficulties in finding their own pathway within the education system and labor market to set their own goals for their future. On the other hand, SymfoS aims to provide a holistic method to educational guidance and professional operators that improves the overall quality of counselling.

During the lifetime of the project, we developed seven Intellectual Outputs (IOs), to facilitate the implement of SymfoS Method for Career and Job Counselling. In concrete terms, the following project results are available:

**IO1:** Generic Framework for Symbol Work (including National Reports from Partner Countries)

**IO2:** Basic Clearing

**IO3:** Train the trainer Curriculum

**IO4:** SymfoS Counselling Scenarios (Resource- / Competence Pathway, Planning Pathway, Islands of Emotions, Inner Images)

**IO5:** Peer Buddy System

**IO6:** SymfoS Trainer Platform [www.symfos.eu](http://www.symfos.eu)

**IO7:** Transfer Handbook

With the help of this Intellectual Outcomes and by attending the SymfoS Training, a Counselor is able to apply the full SymfoS Methodology with her/his clients.

The full counselling process is shown in the following figure 1:

## Counselling Process

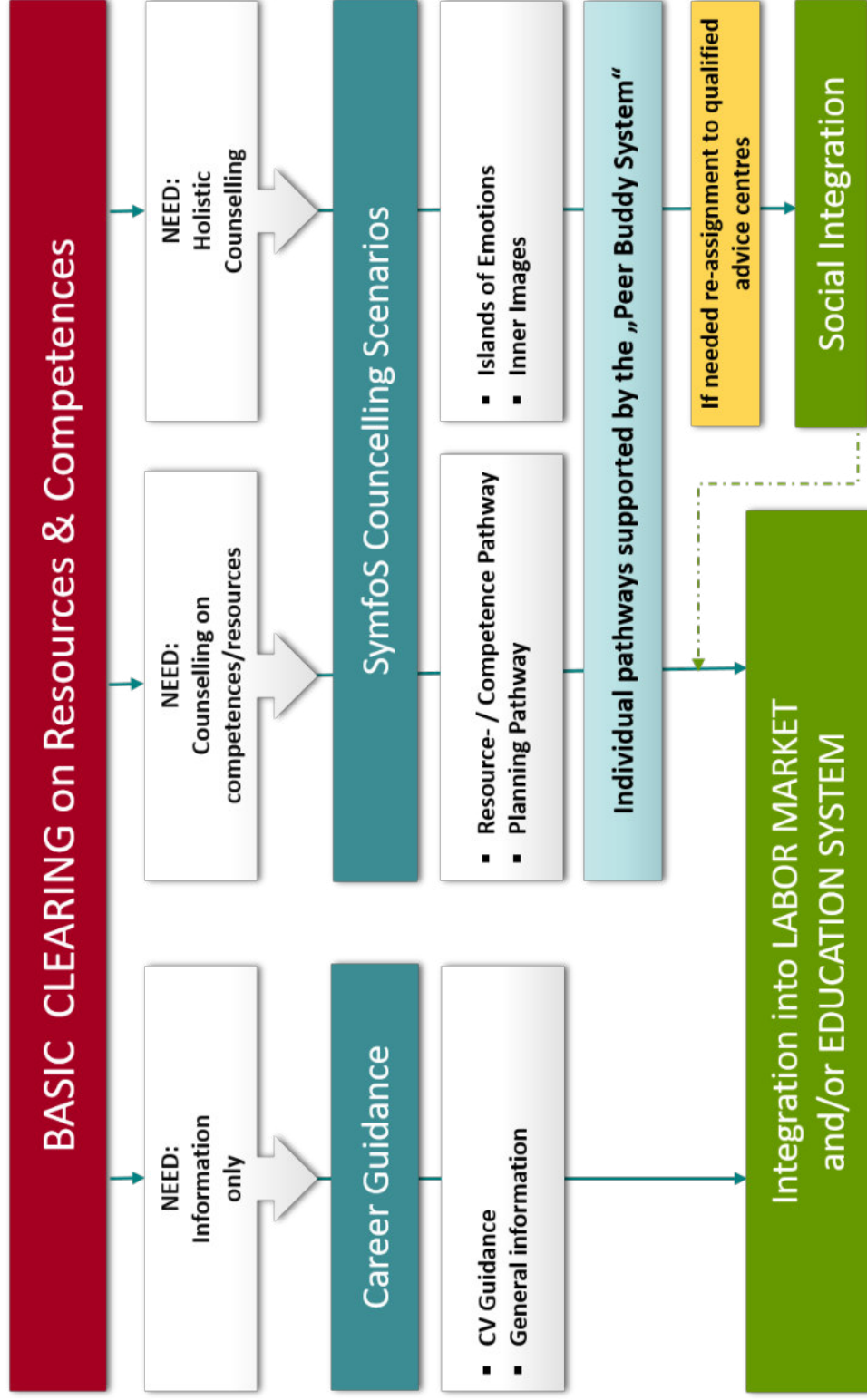


Figure 1: SymfoS – Counselling Process

The SymfoS Counselling Process is mainly based on the following kind of counselling tools:  
(IO stands for “Intellectual Outcome”, which means a concrete delivery of the SymfoS-Project)

- 1) Basic Clearing (IO2)
- 2) Resource- / Competence Pathway (IO4.1)  
Planning Pathway (IO4.2)  
Islands of Emotions (IO4.3)  
Inner Images (IO4.4)
- 3) Individual Pathways, supported by a Peer Buddy System (IO5)

The counselling process starts with a basic clearing that helps to screen appropriate youth for symbol work.

We split up into three groups:

- Young people who only need information will be provided with CV-training and regular job seeking instruments like databases, etc.
- Young people with need of counselling in the field of resources and competences are supported by Symbol scenarios called Resource- / Competence Pathway and Planning Pathway
- For all others, who need additional support on different topics (and also for specific issues on counselling in the field of resources and competences), we work with the whole SymfoS toolkit as f.e. Exploration of inner images and islands of emotions.

SymfoS counselling scenarios will be chosen according to specific needs, aims and objectives of our clients. To assure a successful learning transfer, the outcomes from the counselling process (e.g. job application, choice of high school, etc.) will be defined in a roadmap. This allows the clients to reach their targets more easily and in a structured way.

Finally we also developed a Peer buddy system that delivers support for the difficult transfer from training into daily life (IO5).



## 2. How to become a certified SymfoS-Trainer? – Certification process

The SymfoS-Method is a very successful and powerful counselling approach. To use this in a responsibly way, one has to be an experienced practitioner on Job and Career Counselling as a requirement to apply for our certified training process.

In concrete terms, this means, that all applicants for the training programme have to be aware about our fundamental pedagogical approach (see chapter 0) and the needed SymfoS trainer skills (see chapter 0).

This prerequisites, the Motivation and the Pre-Qualification of the Learners are assessed in the Learning Agreement. This document contains information on the Learner, the issuing organisation, Pre-Qualification and Motivation of the Learner and information about the required qualification to fulfill the SymfoS trainer standard.

This Learning agreement is signed by the Learner and the training Institute and serves as contract for the full training programme.

### **This training programme is divided into 10 Units**

Face to Face training contains 40 Learning Units (LU) in a whole training week or 3x2 (2x3) training days and includes Unit 2-Unit 8.

#### **Unit 1: Preparatory Session for trainers**

To prepare for the face to face training sessions, all participants receive relevant literature about Symbol work in general and the SymfoS approach for directed learning. (10 Learning Units (LU) Self Study)

#### **Unit 2: Basic Clearing**

The basic clearing section of this programme has been established to provide trainers/practitioners with an adequate assessment tool to diagnose the needs of the young person they consult. By the end of the assessment practitioners will have decided, in conjunction with the young person, the need level of counselling that is applicable to their clients.

#### **Unit 3: Resource-/Competence Pathway**

The Resource & Competence Pathway intends to facilitate supported self-reflection on acquired resources and competencies. Resources are seen as sources of supply or support for the clients, all available means to realize the individual aims, in particular to achieve career and educational needs. Competencies are defined as strengths, abilities and skills, already applied and proofed in concrete situations in prior life. Both, acquired resources and competences are key assets, valuable and important to possess, if clients can really trust on them.

#### **Unit 4: Planning Pathway**

The Planning Pathway intends to help the clients to create a detailed action plan and to efficiently use the resources and competencies that have been acquired in their life time and that have become visible

through the 'Resource & Competence Pathway'. The detailed Planning Pathway helps the clients to define their future pathway and to achieve their goals in small and realistic steps. The pathway also serves as an individual “reality check”.

### **Unit 5: Exploration of Inner Images**

The intervention "Exploration of Inner Images" enables young people to visualize inner images with materials that have a more archaic character. The material makes it easier for clients to reduce resistance and get direct access to their relevant topics and feelings. In the course of working unconscious, repressed and hitherto deliberately withheld information is brought to light.

### **Unit 6: Islands of Emotions**

The intervention “Islands of Emotions” is very well accepted by many young people and can treat diverse topics like feelings, characteristics and goals. They can be used for clarification in the sense of 'I do not know what's going on' at the moment, for diagnosis, decision-making, analysis of group situations or relationship aspects.

With the materials, access to the often difficult-to-verbalize theme of emotions is much easier.

### **Unit 7: Peer Buddy System**

Peer buddy system has been developed to support the implementation of learning and career pathways and to make use of the knowledge and the experiences of the peer group. This system aims to have an impact on the social capital of disadvantaged young people to build their own Social Network.

### **Unit 8: Quality Assurance & Documentation**

In the context of SymfoS, the Quality assurance (QA) is an instrument to ensure the quality of the consultations, to continuously improve the interventions for the target group and to adapt the method to the respective conditions in the different organizations. The further development and adaption of the interventions is a very important part of SymfoS project.

### **Unit 9: SymfoS Application / Case Studies (Transfer into practice)**

To transfer the acquired knowledge into practice, the learned and proven interventions must be applied with clients. After the train-the-trainer course the practitioners have to document at least three counselling sessions with the learned interventions. It is recommended to conduct counselling sessions with all learned intervention in practice.

### **Unit 10: Assessment & Feedback**

After successfully completing the training, a personal transcript has to be completed to reflect the personal learning outcomes. This, together with the documented case studies, will be discussed during an expert interview as assessment to become a certified SymfoS trainer.

A detailed description of all Training Units can be found in the Annex of this Curriculum.

# Certification Process

## How to become a Symfos Trainer

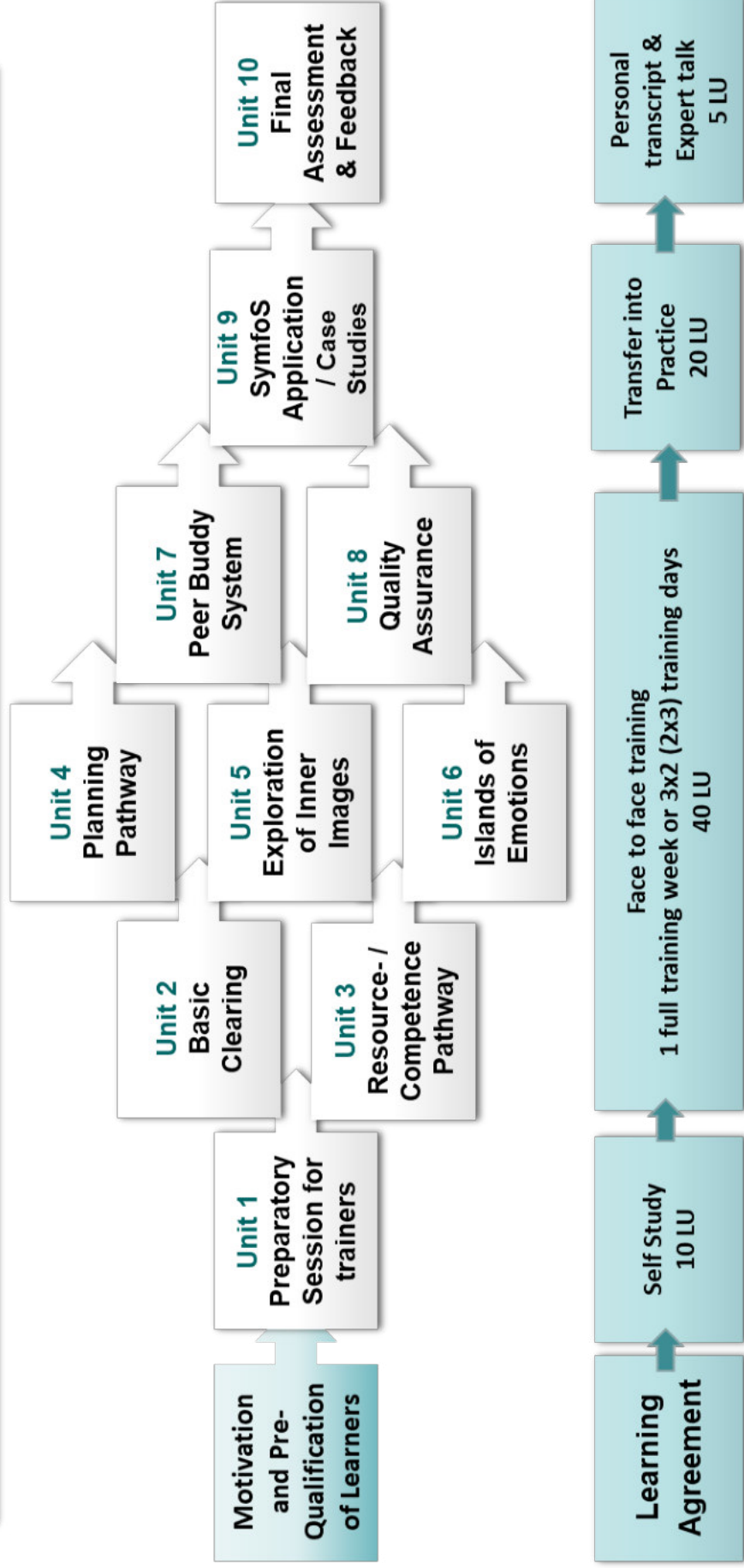


Figure 2: Symfos – Certification Process



### 3. Symbolwork in a nutshell

#### **„The world is a forest of signs and they need to be interpreted”(Umberto Eco)**

With the help of symbols we are able to provide people with an additional language when they cannot find the right words. In this context, symbols work similarly to an interpreter; furthermore, they transmit information one cannot or does not want to share.

What is the meaning of symbols in connection with advisory work?

According to individual experience, a symbol may have many if not infinite meanings and is interconnected with multiple feelings, depending on the matter. From the perspective of interplay between meanings and feelings there are no identical meanings corresponding to a symbol.

Donald Sandner<sup>1</sup> describes a symbol as follows: „A symbol is something that can convey a concept. It can be a word, a mathematical formula, an act, a gesture, a ritual, a dream, a work of art, everything that can transport a concept of linguistic-rational, imaginative-intuitive or emotional-evaluative nature. The key is an effective transfer by the symbol itself. The concept is the meaning of the symbol.“ In his definition, Donald Sandner refers to an extensive and important work by Susanne K. Langer with the title "Philosophy in a New Key - A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art"<sup>2</sup>. In this publication, there is a chapter with the title „The Logic of Signs and Symbols“, which is especially relevant for our work.

In a nutshell, symbol work is about getting a person to reach him- or herself. The main goal is not the achievement of something.

Furthermore, working with symbols is always about “grasping” something, in both meanings of the term. This is the essential and fundamental difference in comparison to other points of view.

Working with symbols means: To do something. I always am what I do. I do what I am.

Any item can be used as a symbol. Items are selected by a person who is working with symbols; the choice is connected to a story or one or more feelings. This way we are able to approach queries and ambiguity and gain a quick understanding.

This is why items, things, objects play a central role in symbol work.

Symbols stand in when there are situations that are hard or impossible to describe through other means of communication such as gestures or mimicry.

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<sup>1</sup> Sandner, Donald: „So möge mich das Böse in Scharen verlassen – Eine psychologische Studie über Navajo-Rituale“, Walter Verlag, Solothurn und Düsseldorf, 1994, S. 22

<sup>2</sup> Langer, Susanne K.: „Philosophie auf neuen Wegen-Das Symbol im Denken, im Ritus und in der Kunst“, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1984

One of the main interests of symbol work is to find out how people can act autonomously right from the beginning and how processes, including solutions and changes, can be accelerated or shortcut. This also refers to the processes and activities taking place during the training course. Participants refer to it as „getting to the point quickly“.

If one is neck-deep in the waves he shall better not hang his head.

In a real situation, this happens surprisingly quickly. There are factors that prevent the participants from becoming emotionally overstrained in such situations.

The single working steps are most successful if certain skills can be detected and experienced at an early stage.

Skills and strenghts (resources) are taken into consideration the same way as understanding a problem and setting clear goals.

Symbol work is constantly demanding the practical and committed use of these elements.

All Interventions and creative media have been created through practical work. These are the tools that can literally be „grasped“ by the participants.

The materials are suitable for all kinds of settings and for the use by people of all ages. They can be used for anamnesis, diagnosis, as therapeutical intervention as well as for supervision, team support/coaching, consultancy, training and prevention.

This introduction on symbol work originates from the working paper **“Grundlagen für die Arbeit mit Symbolen“ (rudiments of symbol work), written by Wilfried Schneider in 2012.**

The materials and interventions used in the SymfoS-Methodology are based on his approach of “Psychologische Symbolarbeit”.

## 4. Fundamental pedagogical approach

The trainer'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.

### Basic systematic approach in developmental pedagogy

SymfoS 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/>)

### 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 trainers 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.

### 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-oriented 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.

### A resource- and solution-oriented basic attitude

One of the goals of SymfoS is to help young people to discover (or rediscover) their abilities and skills and to expand on these. SymfoS 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.

## 5. SymfoS trainer skills

The fundamental condition to become a SymfoS trainer 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 SymfoS trainer 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.

### 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 trainer should be willing and able to reflect on his work – his own approach, the precise wording of the questions, the proportion of the time he 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.

### 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 SymfoS trainer is based on a list of skills issued by the ICF, modified with regard to the requirements of SymfoS 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.

## **B. 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.

## **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. Open-ended questions serve to facilitate understanding and foster productive work with the client; resource-oriented questions support the client in discovering skills and abilities, and solution-oriented, goal-focused questions allow solutions to be found.

## **D. 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/>

### 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.



## 6. Ethical guidelines for practitioners

### Background:

Like any effective guidance methodology, the use of SymfoS 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 SymfoS practitioners:

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

### Respect for the rights and dignity of the person:

#### a) General respect:

- Practitioners of the SymfoS 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.
- SymfoS 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 SymfoS process.

#### b) Privacy and confidentiality:

- SymfoS 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 SymfoS methodology is collected.
- Practitioners should avoid unjustified intrusion of the clients' psychological boundaries. SymfoS 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 SymfoS methodology, and the situations (determined by law) in which this confidentiality may be broken (e.g. in the case of danger to oneself).

**c) Informed consent and freedom of consent:**

- SymfoS 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.

**d) Self-determination:**

- SymfoS practitioners should aim to achieve as active participation as possible of the client in decisions which affect them.
- SymfoS 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.

**Competence:**

**a) Ethical awareness:**

- SymfoS 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.
- SymfoS practitioners should avoid engaging in professional activities which may conflict with professional ethical best practice.

**b) 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.
- SymfoS 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.

**c) Limits of procedures:**

- SymfoS 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.

#### **d) Continuing Professional Development:**

- SymfoS practitioners have a responsibility to continuously maintain their professional competence through individual education, training and supervision.
- SymfoS 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.

#### **e) Incapacity for practice:**

- SymfoS 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).

### **Responsibility**

#### **a) General responsibility:**

- SymfoS 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.
- SymfoS practitioners also have a responsibility to report or make known policies, procedures or regulations which ignore or oppose their professional code of ethics.

#### **b) Promotion of high standards:**

- SymfoS 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.

#### **c) Avoidance of harm:**

- SymfoS 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.

**d) 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 made contact with the recommended professional.

**e) Resolving dilemmas:**

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

**Integrity:**

**a) Honesty and accuracy:**

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

**b) Straightforwardness and Openness:**

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

**c) Actions of colleagues:**

- SymfoS 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>



## 7. SymfoS – Counselling method: Always walk through five steps!

*For the sake of simplicity and easier reading, only the feminine form has been used for the individual categories of people.*

Within about 10-15 minutes time and without spectators, a young person creates/builds the Basic Clearing or other SymfoS Counselling Scenarios ("resource- / competence pathway", "planning pathway", "exploration of inner images", "exploration of islands of emotions") on her own.

When she has finished, everyone sits down around the young woman and her model.

### 1. Presentation

The young woman:

She presents the heading/ topic of her presentation.

She talks about what she has displayed.

The young woman always states which symbol she is talking about. (e.g. "this hand stands for...")

The group (if the group is too big, 3 persons will be selected):

Everyone listens carefully to what is being told.

They are aware of the young woman's presence.

While she is speaking, the group observes her gestures, mimicry, posture, breathing, the pitch of her voice.

Does she show emotions, does she touch a symbol, which one?

### 2. Factual questions

The Group:

The group (or the 3 selected persons) asks factual questions.

These questions only refer to the symbols, to "what is visible". No "why"- or "how come"-questions are asked. This is not about interpretation but understanding only.

The young woman:

She answers to the factual questions.

### 3. Perception

The Group:

The group addresses the young woman directly.

They describe everything they have perceived and everything they have observed while they were told the story. If someone detects emotions, he or she should be able to explain how they were perceived.

(Mimicry, gestures, pitches of the voice etc.) The young woman: Listens attentively.

#### 4. Interpretation

The Group:

The group talks about the young woman.

They are thinking aloud, asking questions like "What is the problem?", "What should be different?", "What would she want to solve, understand, do?", "Where could be difficulties? Where not? "

The young woman: She listens attentively and does not respond for now.

#### 5. Agreement on actions

When the group has finished "thinking aloud", the young woman talks about her thoughts regarding the considerations of the group. What is true? What is not? Where are insecurities? Are there doubts?

What does she like to hear? What does she not like to hear?

What is especially important from the things said? Where would she like to begin?





## 8. Overview on SymfoS Counselling Scenarios

### 8.1. Basic Clearing

#### The material (wooden case #4), work pad “Basic Clearing”

SymfoS Basic clearing has been established to provide practitioners with a quick assessment tool to establish the needs of the young person they meet. By the end of the assessment practitioners will have decided, in conjunction with the young person, the need level of the client and if the use of symbols is applicable to them.

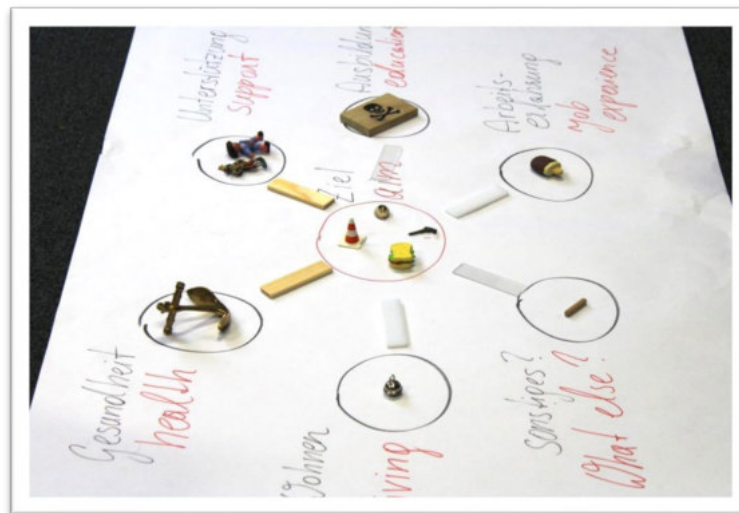


Figure 3: Basic Clearing

## 8.2. Pathways: Resource-/ Competence Pathway and Planning Pathway

### The material (wooden case #4), Work pad “R&C”

Every road is suitable either for a look back, the determination of the current position (like Resource-/ Competence Pathway) and a preview (Planning Pathway), always related to life goals and visions. It is advisable to decide whether to work on short-, medium or long-term goals.

For a future agenda, the year cards can also be transformed into cards for months, weeks, days or even hours. This allows flexibility for planning and reorientation.

### Working surface

Participants and trainers should work on the floor, if possible.



Figure 4: *Resource-/Competence Pathway*

and

*Planning Pathway*

### 8.3. Exploration of inner images

#### The material (wooden case #2)

##### Meanings of the materials

Thorns (barbed wire): Symbolize unpleasant feelings such as fear, guilt, grief etc. Thorns may also stand for pain, injuries etc.

Feathers: Pleasant feelings such as luck, love, happiness and so on. They can also represent protection, warmth, affection.

Gold: All precious or desired things.

Sand: All things that literally "trickle through my fingers, which I cannot get a hold on". A path, beach or similar things can also be represented by it.

Shit (cat litter): Self-explanatory.

Stones/rocks: Stand for hardship, coldness etc. Stones can also symbolize protection, walls etc.

Cotton wool: Fog, ungraspable, unconceivable things.



Figure 5: Exploration of inner images

The young adults will learn only the meanings of these symbols; there will be no further explanations. They can extend these meanings if necessary.

##### Working surface

Participants and trainers should work on the floor or around a low table, if possible. Several white sheets of paper (A4) will be used as a base. That way the materials can be easily put back in the cloth pouches afterwards. At the beginning of the session, the cloth pouches with the materials inside are placed next to each other, wide open. The order is not relevant.

The course of the counselling sessions with the individual steps agrees with those of the above-described interventions.

## 8.4. Exploring the islands of emotions

### The material (wooden case #3)

A piece of blue denim (about 150x150cm) is used as base to symbolize the ocean. There are 22 parts of plywood in the shape of islands.

These islands are marked as follows:

Anxiety, anger, fear, depression, solitude, happiness, fright, serenity, luck, misery, love, lust, power, envy, guilt, worry, pride, shame, pain, yearning, grief, rage.

Their backs are painted in black slate. These sides can be written on with chalk and therefore used to add additional feelings or for the tasks "properties" and "life goals".

Other items of this set include a small wooden ship, 10 tokens, chalk and a buoy in yellow and black. The yellow side of the buoy stands for pleasant feelings and the black side stands for unpleasant ones. The tokens are used to symbolize persons. The ship serves for transport.

The course of the counselling sessions with the individual steps agrees with those of the above-described interventions



Figure 6: Exploring the Island of Emotions

## 9. Case Studies

### 9.1. Basic Clearing

#### Key points

- Date: May 23<sup>th</sup> 2017
- Name of the organization: CESIE
- Name of the project: SymfoS
- Name of the counsellor: Julia
- Name of the client: we call him Abdouh
- Basic data of the client: 17 years old, 3th year of middle school + internship in a restaurant.
- Name of intervention: Basic clearing
- Headline/ question of the intervention: What to do when I will be 18 years old.

#### 1. Presentation:

Abdouh is 17 years old and he is from Senegal. He arrived to Palermo 2 years ago and since this moment he is living in a sheltered housing for unaccompanied minors, but in three months he will be 18 years old and he will have to leave this structure. (Symbol: he chooses a clock because he feels pressure about the time) All his family is in his country of origin, so his support in Palermo are some friends, educators from shelter house and the workers on the restaurant where he is doing an internship, with an employment program.(symbols: an airplane because his family is far away and diamond because he considers his family, friends and new supports like a treasure) He studied a little bit in Africa, but in Europe are not recognized, so he is trying to improve Italian language and studying in an adult's school to have the 3th year of middle school.(symbol: paper and chalk represent the school)

He is doing an internship in a restaurant and he has some experience as a carpenter from Senegal. (Symbols: hamburger represents the restaurant and a piece of wood and the nails represent his carpenter experience) His health is very good, he feels strong and he is a sportive boy. (Symbols: a lion because he feels strong and a ball because he likes to plays football) For what else, he tells us about his religion that is very important in his life and football, because this way he socializes with Italian peers. (Symbols: he chooses a book to represents his religion)

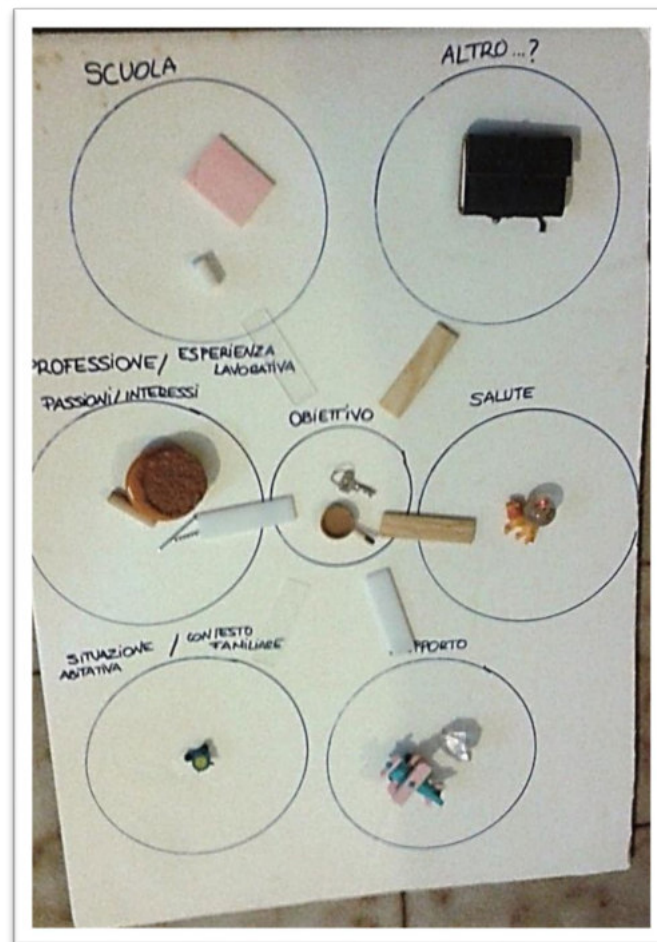


Figure 7: Case Study Basic Clearing

His objective is to have a job and to go to live with other two friends who are in a similar situation, in three months. (Symbols: pan and key to represent his work in the restaurant and his new home.)

- Thick ice stands for: health and what else?
- Medium thick ice is standing: Job experience (because he thinks that there are some possibilities to continuous in the restaurant) and support (because some persons in the restaurant are helping him a lot )
- Thin ice stands for: Education (because he is not really motivated with school, he knows that it is important in Italy, but important for him it's to have a job) and living (because in some months he needs to leave and to have an independent house.)

## 2. Factual questions: Yes

### 3. Perception (without evaluation, interpretation...)

He is calm during the entire tale. He smiles when he speaks about his job and his friends. His voice changes when he speaks about his family and his mother. He is serious when he speaks about his experience as a carpenter in Senegal and he touches his chest when he tells us about his religion. He points with the finger the objective symbol several times.

### 4. Interpretation

He is aware about his situation. He is on the way to be successful in his objectives but he needs the correct support to arrive. He has a good support in the restaurant with his colleagues and his employer and it is good that he wants to work, but he shouldn't forget the importance of the language and of minimum studies license for the future and it is also important that he tries to have a more solid Italian network that can help him in his future and I think playing football it could be a good tool for this.

### 5. Agreement & action-plan

We will meet the next week again. During this week he compromises to speak with his employer to know if the possibilities in the restaurant that he told about are feasible or not. I will put in contact him with an association helping migrants with his studies (Comunità Exodos). Also during this week he will search some telephones from rented houses and I will help him calling together.

## 9.2. Resource-/ Competence Pathway and Planning Pathway

### Key points

- Date: 24.05.2017
- Organization: Sozialwerk Dürener Christen
- Project: Lernpunkt
- Counsellor: Anne
- Observers: Stefan
- Client: we call her Denise (17 years, lower secondary school, ninth grade, lives in a resident group with 7 other girls)
- Intervention: Resource-/ Competence Pathway and Planning Pathway

### **“How do it get to my big dream/aim – to have an own tailor's?”**

#### 1. Presentation

“My aim and my big dream is to have an own tailor’s one day. I’m in an internship in a sewing workshop at the moment and I love it. So I put the sewing thread on the blue card.

At the beginning I choose the black card because I was a little devil in my mother’s belly. It wasn’t a good pregnancy. I don’t remember anything about the first eleven years of my life. The first thing I really remember is that I got in stress with my mother at the age of 12/13. I felt like in a cage and I had to fight a lot (sword). When I was 14 I drank a lot of alcohol so I thought I could fly (plane). With 15 I got pregnant and lost my baby (star). And I got to know some skills I could do to avoid hurting myself (“skills”-suitcase). At the side there is the pearl necklace which stands for my best friend who is always with me – actually not physical because she doesn’t live near but in my heart. Now I am 17 and I am more stable in my personality (lock) and I have to be careful not to give in (cone). There is an approximation to my mother again (clamp) and I am better in school than ever (note with a book on it).”



Figure 8: *Resource-/ Competence Pathway*



## 2. Factual questions

There are no factual questions.

## 3. Perception

The counsellor and the observer tell Denise what they have perceived during her story.

You laughed while you were talking about the difficult pregnancy of your mother.

When you got to the point when you were 12/13 and talked about the stress with your mother you got more serious and didn't laugh anymore. After that point you started smiling and laughing again.

You lifted up the cone several times.

When you were talking about the lock you were calm.

While talking about the clamp you had a more serious voice.

## 4. Interpretation

Now the counsellor and the observer talk about Denise.

Why does she talk about herself as a little devil?

It is remarkable that the road cards are all lying in a line but only at the point of 12/13 the cards are crooked.

In the lock there is much energy.

It is a typical biography: In the age of 12/13 there is a detachment/separation from family, at 17 approximately again.

Instead of the book she could have chosen more symbols for her actual school career.

## 5. Agreement & action-plan

The counsellor asked Denise to put all symbols which are important to reach her aim on the parking spot.

Pearl necklace: Her best friend is important for everything she does.

Book: School is necessary to get the graduation.

Sword: To fight for the aim.

Star: Denise can sew something to remember her lost baby which is not that permanent than for example a tattoo, so she can also put it aside to get more distance.

Cone: Don't give in.

Suitcase: To feel secure to have alternatives to hurt herself.

Lock: All her personality. -> **"I have to be me to do my dream job."**

## Planning Pathway

Now the counsellor asked Denise to make a distance between Parking spot and aim. What has to happen until she can reach her aim?

Denise puts 8 cards (=years) in her pathway.

1. Candles: lower graduation (in lernpunkt)
2. Diamond: higher graduation (on another school)
3. Little button: first year of training
4. Middle button: second year of training
5. Bigger button: third year of training (after that there will be a big party -> disco ball)
6. Little money
7. More money
8. Good money -> stable independence (balloons -> opening party of her tailor's)

Now the counsellor asked Denise to put stones where she thinks there could be difficulties (stumbling blocks).

1. Stumbling block: another big school with many new people can be difficult for Denise
  2. Stumbling block: Again many new people on the professional school
  3. Stumbling block: To reach the final exam
  4. Stumbling block: Finances
- > The size of the stones represents the size of the difficulties.



Figure 9: *Planning Pathway*

Resources again: chain, sword, lock, and cone

### Agreements:

Diagnose and therapy has to be first.

Should Stefan join the next therapy session?

Is the therapist able to make a diagnosis?

What kind of Diagnosis will it be?

Does the diagnosis hinder her to reach her dream job?

Is Denise able to get an own flat/to live alone?

-> This all should be clarified while Denise is in the "secure" lernpunkt.

Next week Denise asks her therapist about Stefan to join the next therapy session (before summer holidays). Stefan asks Anna (a colleague) about the assisted living.

The diagnosis should be when Denise is 18. (She will be 18 in June.)

The "HPG" (help plan talk) will be in June, the move in an own flat can take place in the summer holidays.

Stefan phones to the Youth Welfare Office or to Denise's guardian Hr. Jongen to get to know how the plan is about the own flat.

## 9.3. Exploration of inner images

### Key points:

- Date 21/03/2017
- Name of the organization: Asociación Caminos
- Name of the project: SymfoS Project
- Name of the counsellor: Chiara
- Name of observers: Paul, Virag, Stefan
- Name of the client: we call him Frank
- Basic data of the client: Career guidance
- Name of intervention: Inner images
- Headline/ question of the intervention: She is going to retire next year

### 1. Presentation:

Gold represents to Frank his job, because he likes and feels satisfied with it. He also uses it to talk about past years

Feathers symbolize his work, because he likes it and he feels satisfied.

Stones are his friends and family (he and his brothers)

Cotton symbolizes the future, which is confusing for him because he does not know what he will do when he retires

Sand: Every effort he made to get what he wanted

### 2. Factual questions: Yes

### 3. Perception (without evaluation, interpretation...)

**Paul:** He speaks very low, with pressure in his voice. He cleared his throat several times. In the end the tone of his voice becomes stronger.

**Virag:** He does not touch the stones; he makes circles with his hands above them. He stays at the same place. When he talks about his friends, his tone of voice changes and his shoulders relax.

**Stefan:** When he talks about himself, his tone of voice is low. When he talks about his friends and family, the tone of voice becomes stronger. Tears in his face too.

### 4. Interpretation

**Paul:** For Frank, his job is very important in his life. So when you want something and you feel it is going to end, you need to learn to say goodbye so you can plan the next steps. He starts something

new, and he is worried about the future. On the other hand, he is aware of his resources (family, friends). But he is not able to organize himself to solve the following steps.

**Virag:** He has left the sheet of paper where it represents the near-empty future. He has not touched anything related to the future. It's like he does not know what to do in the future. He's confused.

**Stefan:** It is very emotional. Confusion is in the future. He has to focus on the resources he has.

**Chiara:** He talks about his confusion about the future. It is not easy for him to connect his future with all the efforts he has made to get the job he has now. He seems frightened by the future.



Figure 10: Exploring inner images

FRANK, what do you think about your colleagues have said to you?

**Frank:** I think it is very helpful; I have to think about the future, because I have the resources to face this change.

**Chiara:** Okay, can you stand up and look at your picture from different sides? Do you want to change something? What perspective do you like best?

(Frank stands up and observes his picture. He wants to make a change.)

## 5. Agreement & action-plan

Frank chooses to use three more stones and he puts them in the future. He also uses sand to connect the different possibilities. For him, the stones symbolize the different things he can do in the future.

He thinks that future could be good, if he wants, he has friends and family and now it's necessary build his future. So, he will think in all things he can do in the future, with the resources he has, and make plans for it.

He will try focus not only in the past and in this job that finishes; he will see this like a chance to change.

## 9.4. Exploring the islands of emotions

### Key points:

- Date: 27.03.2017
- Organization: Sozialwerk Dürener Christen
- Project: Jugend Stärken im Quartier – JUST Nord
- Counsellor: Britta
- Client: Jaqueline (21 years; education as children’s nurse / nanny; lives in her own apartment; has been in our consulting office for over a year )
- Intervention: island of emotions

### Case Study “Jaqueline”: I’ll be Mama - Can I do it?

One person is chosen for closer observation.

There are five islands on the water. On one island are three figures. Another figure is placed between two islands.

## 1. Presentation



Figure 11: Case Study – Island of Emotions\_1

I’ve chosen the island of pleasure, because I feel the pleasure of change. And there are joy and happiness. I’m looking forward to the pregnancy. But there are also anxiety and worry. I wonder if and how I will do it all.

## 2. Factual questions

There are factual questions about the figures on the islands.

Question A: “Who are the three figures on the island of happiness?”

Answer A: “These are my three siblings. They are looking forward to the pregnancy with me and will support me.”

Question B: “And who is the figure between joy and happiness?”

Answer B: “This is Peter, the father of my unborn child. He is also happy about the pregnancy. But since he is in the hospital, we did not have time to talk properly about the situation. We'll do it as soon as he's back home.”

### 3. Perception

The selected person and the counsellor tell Jaqueline what they have perceived during her story:

You spoke clearly and slowly, with little emphasis.

While you were talking, you had two figures in your hands and put them from one hand into your other hand. You spoke quietly, with little change in the pitch of your voice. When you were talking about the island of joy and happiness, there was a little smile on your face. At the end, when you talked about worry and fear, you rubbed the figures together in your hand.

### 4. Interpretation

Now the observer and the counselor talk about Jaqueline.

Fear and concern are the closest islands to the place of Jaqueline. Nevertheless she has begun her story with the island of pleasure. I missed a bit of her emotions. Her story sounded a little dry and distant. Beside Jaqueline’s place, on the pile of the unused islands, the island of love lies at the very top. Is not “love” missing here? What changes is she looking forward to?

It is good that Jaqueline with the Island of Joy has three supporters at her side. Maybe a part of her fears and worries can be caught here?

I’m wondering about the figure of Peter. His place between the two islands looks very wobbly. Why is Peter in this place? And does he not also belong to all the other islands on the water? What happens when Peter falls into the water?

### 5. Agreement & action-plan

There are changes in the picture. Jaqueline is now more and more confident about her pregnancy. In a first step, she puts anxiety and worry on the side. In the picture, pleasure, joy and happiness remain. And Peter now appears on all the islands.

Jaqueline tells that she has considered for a long time whether the love belongs to the picture and has decided against it. Now she wants love to lie on the fabric.



Figure 12: Case Study – Island of Emotions\_2

“It is a nice feeling that I am pregnant and will get a big belly. I feel relieved to express this feeling. **I'll be 'fat', but full of love**”. At first she speaks these words quiet and uncertain, but increasingly loud and self-assured. Finally, the island of pride finds its place on the picture.



Figure 13: Case Study – Island of Emotions\_3

Are you satisfied with your picture? Is there anything missing? Do you still need some form of support?

“It feels very good to look at the new image. I'll get my baby. With joy, pride and love, I can do it and my siblings will support me. I'll talk to Peter as soon as he gets well again.”

## 10. Quality assurance

In the context of SymfoS, the Quality assurance (QA) is an instrument to ensure the quality of the consultations, to continuously improve the interventions for the target group and to adapt the method to the respective conditions in the different organizations. The further development and adaption of the interventions is a very important part of the SymfoS methodology.

This is the reason why we made a great effort to assure a high quality delivery of the SymfoS-Method. Below you find a short description of specific quality tools, which must be applied when using SymfoS.

### 10.1 Certification process for SymfoS Trainer

As a first step in our quality approach we defined the process how to become a SymfoS-Trainer.

This process starts with the Learning Agreement, which clarifies prior qualifications and the individual motivation of the learner. Basic Literature on Symbol work and the SymfoS-approach have to be studied before attending the face to face training sessions. They can either take place in one full training week or be split in some 2 or 3 days training modules, depending on the different offers of the training providers. These face to face sessions are followed by a transfer into practice. Future SymfoS trainer should apply the method into their own working field. At least three case studies have to be documented and a reflection on the transfer is needed. Finally the trainers have to complete the personal transcript in order to document the individual learning process. The final expert talk assesses the fulfilment of the SymfoS criteria and is the prerequisite for the certificate.

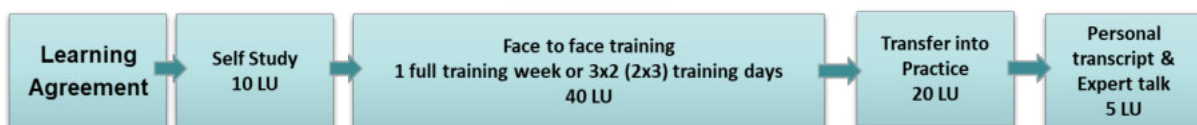


Figure 14 Steps of Certification Process

A detailed description of the Certification Process can be found in Chapter 2 in this document.



## 10.2 Documentation and Evaluation of Counselling sessions

An important step in the individual learning process for all SymfoS trainers is to write Case Studies in order to reflect their own work and to share their experience with colleagues. A sample of these Case Studies can be found on the trainer platform [www.symfos.eu](http://www.symfos.eu) (Trainer Area), which aims to develop a learning community for the SymfoS-Methodology.

Templates for the documentation of this Case Study work can be found in the Annex “Templates for Quality Assurance”.

## 10.3 Quality circle (Intervision)

The SymfoS-Method can be used by single trainers, but unfolds its full effect when it is implemented in an organisational framework. Training and Counselling providers, who want to use the ‘full power of the SymfoS-Methodology’ should set up a quality management system including Quality Circle Meetings for all staff involved. We suggest having at least one quarterly Meeting in each organisation to exchange lessons learned, knowledge and to support each other through this “Intervision-Setting”. This is a form of collegial advice, where a trainer or consultant presents a concrete case study. The colleagues will then reflect on different strategies on how to deliver good practice.

Practical guidance can be found in the Annex “SymfoS-Transfer Handbook” where we describe our key learnings on how to implement SymfoS on an organisational level to Training and Consulting Providers for Youth.

## 10.4 Supervision

Alternatively or additionally to the prior mentioned quality circle, we suggest carrying out supervision with experienced SymfoS-Trainers outside of the own organisation. This method will support practitioners in their application of the SymfoS-Method in order to ensure the implementation on a high quality level.

## 10.5 Continuous Improvement process

Organizations with an advanced Quality Management System should integrate the SymfoS method into their internal Continuous Improvement process. This means, to nominate a responsible person leading the Quality assurance of the SymfoS-Method, aiming to adapt and improve the application of SymfoS within the organisation as a continuous process to optimize client’s satisfaction. More detailed information can be found in the Annex “SymfoS-Transfer Handbook”.

**Recommendation:** All organizations providing their SymfoS trainers with certificates should motivate them to join the various SymfoS networks (via training platform, facebook, linkedin,...) and encourage them to do further training in Symbol work (at least 16 hours in two years).

## 10.6 Trainer Platform

As a final tool for dissemination and quality assurance we developed our website [www.symfos.eu](http://www.symfos.eu) (available in English, German, Italian and Spanish). Here we inform you on current activities of the SymfoS-Project and provide you with various additional material. For trainers and experts, we implemented a forum, where frequently asked questions and answers can be found. Feel invited to place you requests there. In the restricted Trainer Area (available for all certified SymfoS trainer) we provide you with additional templates, training material and other supportive documents.



Figure 15 [www.symfos.eu](http://www.symfos.eu) – Dissemination and Trainer Platform

## 11. Annexes

All annexes can be downloaded on [www.symfos.eu](http://www.symfos.eu).

Annex 01: Learning Agreement

Annex 02: Personal Transcript

Annex 03: IO1 Generic Framework

Annex 04: IO2 SymfoS Basic Clearing

Annex 05: IO4.1 Resource- / Competence Pathway

Annex 06: IO4.2. Planning Pathway

Annex 07: IO4.3. Islands of Emotions

Annex 08: IO4.4. Inner Images

Annex 09: IO5 SymfoS Peer & Buddy Individual Pathways

Annex 10: IO7 SymfoS Transfer Handbook

Annex 11: Templates for Quality Assurance

Annex 12: EQF – Description of Learning Outcomes







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