45⁺

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EMPOWERING LTUs

Empowering long-term unemployed older workers through coaching & personal branding

Part 2: Handbook on empowerment strategies and training tools to motivate and activate tong-term unemployed workers back to work.

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TOPIC 4

Competences, Soft Skills, Team Working and Self-Confidence

"*Feed your dreams so that your fears die of hunger*"

Anonymous

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INTRODUCTION

This module aims to provide specific guidelines and tools to work on developing the core competences of unemployed people aged over 45. As opposed to the classic, traditional approach of individualized employment orientation sessions, we seek to communicate the need for teamwork in sharing knowledge and developing key competences to improve this group's employability.

This manual is intended to serve as a guide to provide a quality intervention for unemployed people aged over 45, acknowledging their traits and characteristics through training in four core competences, and offering specific actions so members of this group can get back to work. These competences are: Teamwork, Self-confidence, Motivation, Job Search Organization and Planning, and Flexibility.

For every competence, a definition is given and specific resources are provided for training each of them with people aged over 45. A discussion is presented about why development of these competences in this group is different and each competence ends with conclusions and recommendations for further study.

1. PROFILE OF THE UNEMPLOYED AGED OVER 45

The unemployed aged over 45 are more vulnerable than other groups in the same circumstances. Industrial innovations, the restructuring of jobs, employment instability and the trend towards temporary work instead of stable work are causing some people with a long work history to lose their jobs and making it harder for them to reenter the labour market.

While we cannot speak of a clear-cut profile of the unemployed aged over 45, there are some prevailing characteristics identified by the Vives Emplea[1] team of Acción contra el Hambre.

The main characteristic is that they are people who have worked all or most of their professional lives at the same company, doing the same jobs and functions, and that they are low-skilled with little or no use of IT tools, and little initiative to receive continuous or vocational training.

Once unemployed, they face a new reality about the labour market unknown to them, and they show a certain reluctance to accept these changes. Furthermore, they adopt beliefs or stereotypes about job access for other groups (e.g., youth) who also compete in the job search.

Once they have lost their jobs, unemployed people aged over 45 go through **different phases**:

1. **Uncertainty after job loss**: Job loss is often experienced as something traumatic due to their family or economic responsibilities. Despite this, their degree of alarm at this time is low, and they can even consider not seeking employment in the short term. In this first phase, their attitude is positive and upbeat.

2. **Awareness and rejection**: The feeling of frustration starts to become evident as they realize the difficulties and complexity of access to employment due to lack of training, job offer requirements, the temporary nature of the contracts, etc. They get overwhelmed with a feeling of rejection by the labour market, and so begins their discouragement.

3. **Acceptance and frustration**: As access to the labour market becomes increasingly complicated, they don't know how to search, and there is a loss of purchasing power that can trigger family problems. They find themselves in a situation of prolonged unemployment which increasingly hampers their labour reintegration with every passing day.

4. **The situation becomes chronic**: In the last phase, they experience pervasive discouragement, loss of social skills, dependence on financial aid, and in many cases depression, which can lead to withdrawal behaviours.

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[1] https://www.accioncontraelhambre.org/en/node/1795

For the unemployed person, this whole process involves loss of self-esteem, lack of motivation which prevents action, self-perception as little able, insecurity and guilt.

TO SUM UP:

The main characteristics of the unemployed aged over 45 are:

- Long work experience, always performing the same functions;

- Lack of knowledge about current labour market;

- Low flexibility to adapt to new production processes;

- Long-term unemployment (over one year);

- Lack or little knowledge of IT tools;

- Lack of knowledge about current job search tools;

- Low motivation;

- Low self-esteem;

- Limited analytical ability to establish an action plan;

- Low frustration tolerance.

Low qualification level.

2. COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT WITH PEOPLE AGED OVER 45

The unemployed aged over 45 are at the midpoint of their careers and are therefore key elements in the workforce that can add value to companies with their knowledge and experience from previous jobs.

It is essential to reintegrate these people in the labour market by analyzing the obstacles to their reintegration, and giving them the tools to improve their core competences.

As we have seen in the previous subsection, on becoming unemployed, the person becomes vulnerable, loses self-confidence, with a significant decrease in their motivation and self-esteem, paralyzing their job search. In addition, we must add that in many cases the person does not know how to search for jobs and is not aware of the need for personal and work analysis to determine a career goal or deal with job interviews. They do not know how to transfer their competences because they are not aware that they have them.

The core competences to be developed with the unemployed aged over 45 in relation to the profile seen in the previous section are:

- **Teamwork**: This competence is important in two areas:

    1. Understanding job search as teamwork, involving their family, contacts and friends in the search.

    2. This competence has a very positive value for companies.

- **Self-awareness**: Learning to determine what accomplishments they have made throughout their lives, what goals they want to achieve and how is essential to establishing a plan of action that translates into opportunities.

- **Motivation**: Without motivation there is no action which is why the person remains passive, standing by assumptions of failure. The motor powering the job search is motivation, and that is why it is critical to promote motivation from the beginning of the intervention.

- **Job Search Organization and Planning**: It is the key to achieving the desired objective. The unemployed aged over 45 don't usually lend importance to this competence, either because they have never sought employment (wide professional experience at the same company), or because they have long been unemployed and have got out of the habit, or because in the past it wasn't necessary and they have yet to come to terms with the needs of the present (lack of adaptation to labour market changes).

- **Flexibility**: This competence is highly valued by companies in their selection processes, especially when the candidate takes a job interview where they have to demonstrate their

ability to adapt to potential changes in the company. Moreover, it is imperative that participants accept labour market changes by adapting their way of seeking employment and accepting the new labour scene and working conditions.

TEAMWORK

Teamwork is the ability to coordinate and communicate with different people performing different tasks to achieve together the same goal. In this competence, communication, proactivity, decision-making and leadership also play a big part.

LERANING ACTIVITY

CREATING OUR COMPANY

Description:

This activity helps us to understand what teamwork is and to coordinate with others to achieve a specific goal together.

Phases:

1. *Activity presentation*: Tell the group they are successful entrepreneurs who have decided to take part in the creation of a large company. Split the group into smaller groups of 6-10 people. Ask them to create a company where each participant has a job.

2. *Development:* Ask participants to establish the company's name, line of business, slogan, logo design, and description. Each participant must define their own position according to their personal and/or professional competences. Give them 45 minutes to complete the activity (it is recommended that participants consider and write down their competences on a sheet of paper before starting the activity).

3. *End*: When the time is up, the companies created are presented as if to a prospective investor.

Possible questions to guide the activity:

- Was it easy to come to an agreement?

- What was the most complicated part?

- Are you comfortable with your job position?

Materials and resources:

Pens and paper

Description:

The group is split into teams of four. Using a pen, participants will write a word (motivation, community, team, empowerment). Four strings are tied to the pen. Participants will write the word in question holding one of the strings (one per participant). Participants cannot grab the pen and will write the word by coordinating the four strings.

Phases:

1. *Activity presentation*: Tell participants that they are about to carry out an exercise to build teamwork where they will have to write a word on a sheet of paper using a pen without holding it, using only the four strings that are attached.

2. *Development*: In teams of four, each team gets their own word and will start to try and write it on the paper. The career advisor must keep an eye on every team so that no one holds the pen at any time.

3. *End*: The quality of the writing is valued, as well as if any team has managed to write the word fully and understandably.

Possible questions to guide the activity:

- How did you feel at first?

- Did the group establish any criteria to write the word?

- How did you decide to write the word?

- How did you feel throughout the exercise?

- Was it easy for you to coordinate?

- Why do you think that you succeeded or failed in writing the word?

Materials and resources:

String, pen (normally one larger than usual, e.g. an Edding 500 marker pen), continuous stationery or a flipchart, and adhesive tape.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BRAINSTORMING

This is a very valuable method where the Employment and Social career advisor proposes a topic and all participants must provide ideas on it. The career advisor can write these ideas down on a blackboard. This allows him/her to wrap up the session summarizing all the contributions by the participants, and to correct or reflect on stereotyped or limiting beliefs.

This tool is useful for both participants and the career advisor. Participants are presented a specific topic they will later explore in depth while the career advisor can determine how much the group knows about a specific competence (limiting beliefs, misconceptions, correct assumptions, etc.), and this way he or she can adjust the programme contents and activities to the needs of the group.

FILMS

Films or short videos are a resource to expose participants to models and ways to build teamwork. They are thought-provoking, facilitate content assimilation and allow participants to follow suitable models. Some films related to teamwork are:

- *The Imitation Game*

Famous mathematician Alan Turing is hired by the British Government to create a machine to decipher the messages sent by the Nazi army. Although initially Turing is reluctant to interact with his colleagues, teamwork ends up being decisive for the success of the project.

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- *Invictus*

In this Clint Eastwood film based on real events, teamwork is everything. The story takes place in Nelson Mandela's South Africa and is a clear example of a group's extraordinary power when they believe in reconciliation based on forgiveness and tolerance.

- *The Goonies*

The Goonies is a 1985 American adventure film directed by Richard Donner, with screenplay by Chris Columbus from a story by Steven Spielberg. It was produced by the latter with Donner, Harvey Bernhard, Kathleen Kennedy and Frank Marshall. The film chronicles the journey of a group of friends children in search of a lost treasure, and it has become one of the cult films from the 80s.

SOME YOUTUBE VIDEOS/SHORT FILMS

Like films, short videos offer real-life models and examples of teamwork behaviours. Their advantage over films is that they have a shorter duration and can fit in a session programme and serve as support for the theoretical part, either at the start of the session or at the end to wrap up a topic. Some short videos about teamwork are:

- Teamwork 1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtXKQOtNWPg

- Teamwork 2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohO-sN8vk7Y

- Teamwork 3

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEDpfJ1PApI

SOME KEYS TO WORK WITH VIDEOS OR FILMS:

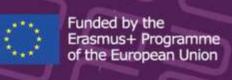What is the mission of team members?

What can they win or lose?

What would have happened if they had acted otherwise?

What would happen if a single member of the team acted otherwise? How do you think the team would react? What would you do if that happened?

CONCLUSIONS

In many cases, people aged over 45 who are unemployed, especially long-term, have lost their **social support network** and have **become completely disconnected from the job market**.

They have lost their **ability to relate and communicate** either because they never needed it in their previous jobs or because of prolonged unemployment. In addition, it must be added that they misunderstand the meaning of teamwork, approaching work in a more individualistic way.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THIS COMPETENCE

- **Locate/place**: Brainstorming is recommended to place participants in the topic – this allows the career advisor to know what knowledge and training each person has regarding this competence and adjust sessions to the needs that arise.

- **What is this activity for**: It is essential for participants to understand why an activity is being carried out or why different strategies are being used in the classroom; otherwise they might lose interest. In many cases, persons aged over 45 disconnect from the exercises because they don't understand their purpose or do not relate with the competence – they consider them games and, therefore, a waste of time.

- **Announce the purpose of every activity**: The purpose to be attained in every activity, video screening, etc., must be *clear and defined from the start*. Also, the career advisor shall assess the potential impact of the proposed exercise on the participants. Therefore, exercises are suggested where lessons can be learned once they are finished.

- **Wrap up sessions with lessons learned**: Wrapping up the session by summing up the most important aspects of the subject, revisiting the objectives covered and finding out the participants' perceptions and emotions will facilitate learning. Participants can also be asked to write on a post-it or express verbally what their takeaway is at the end of the session.

- **Visual examples**: Rely on visual, concrete examples such as videos or movie clips.

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SELF-CONFIDENCE

Self-confidence is the ability to rely on the abilities that we have to develop a project or activity successfully. This competence is closely related to the perception of our achievements, our personal assessment and the assessment by others of ourselves.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

SELLING MY HOME

Description:

In this activity, every participant speaks of himself or herself as if they were a property for sale. The purpose of this activity is that participants get to know each other better and say positive things about themselves

Phases:

1. *Activity presentation*: The session is presented explaining the competence to be trained. A piece of letter-sized cardboard is given to each participant. Participants are told each has to make a sign selling a property that represents themselves. They must try to make the property attractive, highlighting its best features. Participants must come up with positive things about themselves and speak it out to others.

2. *Development*: Give participants 20 minutes to draw and decorate the sign.

3. *End*: Each person will present their property, with the features they deem fit. Questions can be asked, trying to keep the pretend "sales pitch" tone.

Possible questions to guide the activity:

- Are we easy to live with?

- Do we make it easy for anyone wishing to know us?

- Do we need renovations? Are there any levies on the property?

Materials and resources:

Drawings can have more or less detail, individual pieces of furniture can be named, the exterior can be drawn, etc., always keeping the symbolism that the game offers.

THE TREE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Description:

With this technique, participants will be able to gather visually all the positive qualities and the achievements they have made in life, in a way that they can get a positive image of themselves at a glance.

Phases:

1. *Activity presentation*: Explain the activity to the participants, making them focus on the positive things we all have. Paper and pencils will be distributed.

2. *Development*:

a) First, participants will draw up a list of all their positive qualities, either personal (patience, courage), social (friendliness, ability to listen), intellectual (memory, reasoning), or physical (good looks, agility). The list should be as long as possible.

b) Once finished the first list, they will make another with all the accomplishments they have achieved in life. It doesn't matter whether those accomplishments are big or small, what matters is that they feel proud to have achieved them.

c) When the participants have the two lists ready, they will draw their "tree of achievement". They will draw a large tree, taking the whole sheet. Then they will draw its roots, branches, and fruits. Roots and fruits should be of different sizes. In each of the roots, they will place one of their positive qualities (from the first list). If they feel that quality is very important and has helped them to achieve great goals, they should place it in a thick root. If, on the other hand, it hasn't played much of a role, they should place it in one of the small roots. In the fruits, they will start to place their accomplishments (from the second list) in a similar fashion. More important achievements will go in the bigger fruits, and less significant achievements in smaller fruits.

d) Once they are finished, they should observe the tree and reflect on it:

   ✓ The participants are the tree.

✓ The roots are the motivations, qualities and identity to take that path.

✓ The trunk is the way, those qualities and supports that helped the trunk grow strong to achieve those goals.

✓ The fruits are the accomplishments or goals.

3. *End*:

a) Trees will be posted on the wall, creating a **Corner of Achievement**, which will help them remember at times they might feel down the many good qualities they have and the many goals that they have achieved in their lives when they set their minds to it.

b) Next you can watch an excerpt from the movie Rocky Balboa (Rocky VI), in which Sylvester Stallone tells his son about the importance of fighting when life hits you hard and bad moments happen (for example, losing your job): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkJLTGweKl0

Possible questions to guide the activity:

- Feelings and emotions experienced.

- Discuss the number of qualities and important things that each person has and the achievements made so far in their lives.

Materials and resources:

Sheet of paper, ballpoint pen, marker pens, crayons.

JOHARI WINDOW

Description:

It is a very useful tool for personal analysis, with the great advantage that it can be applied in any area of life (family, friends, work colleagues, classmates, etc.). It is a simple model that helps us to understand the way in which we process information and how the perception we have of ourselves and the others changes.

It is recommendable that the people that form the group, should know each other in advance.

Phases:

1. *Activity presentation*: The following figure is presented to the participants, explaining its meaning:

   a) **Open Area**: It is the part of ourselves that others also see. It consists of the behaviours we display, whether good or bad. We are moving in this area when we share information with others.

   b) **Blind Area:** This is the part that others see, but we don't, in other words, what other people know about us and don't tell us. What we communicate without knowing it. In many instances, this area is the source of our communication problems with others.

It is not easy to accept this type of information about ourselves when it concerns a negative trait that we do not recognize. Still, we should be open to learn more about the impression we make on others.

   c) **Hidden Area**: This is our personal private space. What we know about ourselves, but do not want to share. In reality, this consists of ideas, feelings, fears, secrets... anything we want to hide from others. And we hide it because we think that they won't understand us or support us, or that the group won't accept it.

   d) **Unknown Area:** This is the most mysterious part of the subconscious, which neither oneself nor the others manage to perceive. An area where skills or abilities lie hidden. A window from where we can explore new things.

2. *Development of the role play*:

   A) Participants are asked to make a list with 5-6 traits deemed to best represent them (capable, tolerant, flexible, brave, logical, assertive, affectionate, calm, etc.).

   B) The group is given several traits that, according to them, best represent another person in the group.

   C) With this information (his or her list of traits and that of the other members of the group), the person can construct his/her Johari window:

   - Those traits identified by the person should be classified as "**Open** ".

   - Traits identified by others but not self-attributed by the person should be classified as "**Blind**".

- The traits listed by the person but others did not recognize in him or her should be classified as "Hidden

- The remaining traits will be classified as "**Unknown**". They are entered into this classification by default, but that does not mean that they are necessarily part of the subconscious of the person.

3. *Conclusion*: together with the group, the results are obtained and the classification of the different traits perceived by themselves and others will be discussed.

Possible questions to dynamics guidance:

- "What do you think about the traits that the others have attributed to you?"

- "Why do you think the others have attributed to you those traits and not other ones?"

- "How did you feel when others attributed those traits to you?" "Do you agree with them?"

- "After this exercise, has your perception on yourselves changed?"

Materials and resources:

Paper, pen, chairs and tables.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FILMS

- *Labyrinth*

One afternoon, Sarah is in the park with her dog Merlin. She is rehearsing a sentence from the book "Labyrinth". The book describes how the King of the Goblins has kidnapped her little brother. She only has a few hours to find him and repeat the words that will help her get her brother back, otherwise, he will turn into a goblin.

- *Billy Eliot*

Billy Eliot is about the decision of a child, Billy, who wants to reaffirm his personal tastes over what the society he belongs to considers "normal".

- *Amélie*

Overcome the fear of rejection and learn to love yourself by helping others. "Amélie feels suddenly in perfect harmony with herself. Everything is perfect, the lightness of light, that tiny essence in the air, the peaceful sounds of the city."

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SOME SHORT FILMS / YOUTUBE VIDEOS

- "Confidence":

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEeBgKXHzT8

- "Will Smith: And what are you afraid of?":

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6ortG1dMBI

- "Self-confidence":

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLtxKNgBzUg&t=33s

SOME TIPS TO WORK WITH THE VIDEOS OR MOVIES:

- How do you think people feel at the beginning of the video? How do they act?

- How do these people feel at the end of the video?

- How can you apply the actions these people take to your personal situation? What can you do?

- What do you think is key for people to make their own decisions?

CONCLUSIONS

Long-term unemployment, lack of qualifications and the feeling of rejection that may affect jobless adults over 45 years of age while searching for work worsens their self-confidence and generates automatic thoughts that are negative and defeatist. These tend to predict a failure to secure employment and the search for work is stalled by thoughts of events that have not yet happened.

Routine work in the same role or a period of unemployment avoid people carrying out a personal analysis, something that would enable them to recognize or communicate their achievements, their skills, their strengths and weaknesses. Not being aware of one's own achievements damages self-esteem and limits the search for employment.

The concept of "success" is a very ambitious one for these people. They do not identify as successful, for example, the act of getting up every day and getting to work on time. They must seek small goals achieved throughout their personal or professional life that demonstrate the value they can bring to the company.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THIS SKILL

- **Treat the skill in a cross-disciplinary manner**: once this skill has been developed, it needs to be exercised continually through other skills such as communication, self-esteem and self-awareness to reinforce it and to emphasize self-reflection.

- **"Duties":** while working on developing this skill, the participants are **asked** to reflect on it outside of the project or perform some simple exercises that can be presented at the next session. In this case, one example is that they ask those around them to list their positive traits and what makes them special, and then share these with the rest of the group at the next session.

- **Individual sessions**: in some cases, it will be necessary to work on an individual basis due to the complexity and distinctive features of the skill. In this case, it is recommended to ask the participant to think about small successes that he or she had throughout life (similar to the dynamic of the tree of success), reinforcing the idea that those things that may seem small to us, are what make us great professionals.

- **Control of distorted thought**: during the sessions, the Inclusion Officer will have to stay alert to control those people who present an elevated distortion of thought. We should understand that this occurs because they have not learned how to manage their experiences in a positive manner. We should listen to their requirements and maintain an assertive stance so as to not let the distortion or negativity affect the rest of the group.

- **Visual examples**: supporting with specific examples such as videos or film clips will help individuals understand and remember the importance of this skill.

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MOTIVATION

Motivation is a mix of passion, purpose, decision-making and engagement. It is a deep level that generates energy and enthusiasm to engage properly in the activity that one loves.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

MOTIVATION SURVEY

Description:

Learn about the motivations of the members of a group and be aware of what drives us to act in a certain way. May be carried out with a large group (more than 10 persons).

Phases:

1. *Presentation of the role play*: The Inclusion Officer contextualises, as an introduction, that whenever we begin a new activity, we do it for a specific reason. The Inclusion Officer will ask the members of the group their motivation to be there.

2. *Development*: A member of the group will answer a series of questions along these lines: "Why did I come to this activity?", "What was my state of mind today?", "What do I hope to achieve today?", "What am I prepared to do today to reach my goal?", "How close am I today to reaching that goal?"

3. Conclusion: Everyone shares their concerns with the rest of the group, and what they have answered to the questions presented by the Inclusion Officer.

Possible questions to dynamics guidance:

- "How did you feel?"

- "What do you think you can do today to get closer to your goal?"

- "Who can support you in reaching your goal?"

- "What strategies will you use when you feel defeated?"

Materials and resources:

Paper and pen for each person.

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LIFE HIGHLIGHTS

Description:

This is a roleplay which should make us reflect on what moves us in our day-to-day life, on why we have the life that we have and what we can do to change our situation.

Phases:

1. *Presentation of the roleplay*: The group's Inclusion Officer will ask that everyone to think of which 30 seconds of his or her life they would want to live again in the hypothetical case that they have only that amount of time left to live.

2. *Development*: Group reflection. If the thought is private and the individual does not want to share it with the rest of the group, he or she should not feel obliged to do so.

3. *Conclusion*: The Inclusion Officer can guide the group reflection with the following questions: "What does your choice say about you as a person?", "What talents or passions are you neglecting?"

Possible questions to dynamics guidance:

- "What does your choice say about you?"

- "What skills or passions are you neglecting?"

- "What can you do to get closer to what you really want?"

- "Are you doing what you need to get closer to your goal?"

Materials and resources: None.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FILMS

- *The Pursuit of Happiness*

This film is based on the story of Christopher Paul Gardner, an American entrepreneur who went from being a homeless, single father to a multi-millionaire through hard work and perseverance.

- *A Beautiful Mind*

The film describes how John Forbes Nash began his successful academic and research career in the field of mathematics and geometry, dealing with his mental health problems and adapting to society.

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- *The King's Speech*

This feature film narrates the story of King George VI, who inherited the British throne in the mid-1930s and had to face the challenge of meeting the expectations of the House of Windsor, despite his stutter. The monarch is not alone in his struggle against his impediment during the speeches: he receives help from a brilliant speech therapist named Lionel Logue.

SOME SHORT FILMS / YOUTUBE VIDEOS

- "Follow your goal":

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4O0q8qu6mw

- "Disabled Chinese ballet dancers":

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-KH8yYY0UE

SOME TIPS TO WORK WITH THE VIDEOS OR MOVIES:

- "Do you identify yourself with any of the situations seen in the videos?"

- "Why do you think that you cannot achieve your goal?"

- "What do you think you can do to get closer to your goal?"

"Do you think that these people ever thought of giving up?" "What do you think they did?"

MUSIC:

Songs are a valuable resource to develop motivation during the beginning or the end of a session. Some inspiring songs:

- ✓ "Tal vez lo que te hace grande" ("Perhaps what makes you great") by Vetusta Morla - Spanish

- ✓ "Valiente" ("Brave") by Vestusta Morla - Spanish

- ✓ "Ella" ("She") by Bebe - Spanish

- ✓ "Manifiesto Delirista" ("Delusional Manifesto") by Love of Lesbian - Spanish

- ✓ "We are the champions" by (Queen) - English (US)

- ✓ "I will survive" by Gloria Gaynor - English (US)

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CONCLUSIONS

Motivation is the key component that prompts action. Unemployed individuals over 45 have very low levels of motivation due to the difficulty to access the job market.

Most of them had negative experiences which had an impact on all of their options to access jobs, so they tend towards inactivity and boredom.

The requirements of the labour market cause disorientation and anguish since these are not connected in any way to past experiences.

In order to develop the rest of a person's core skills, it is essential to direct this person's energy to the achievement of a goal and awaken self-confidence.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THIS SKILL

- **Define a clear and manageable target**: Establish where to go and how. A strategy of planning small goals and practical actions is essential to maintain an adequate level of motivation.

- **Focus on the present**: Forget how things were in the past or how you would like them to be in the present. They must be aware of the current situation, analyse their achievements, skills, successes and generate a strategy adapted to these two realities. Break with the past.

- **Visual examples**: Supporting with specific examples such as videos or film clips will aid them in understanding and remembering the skill.

- **Songs**: This helps opening or closing a session. At the start of a session, a song can be used to initiate a brainstorming exercise, while one at the end can set up an environment open for debate and/or reflection.

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ORGANISATION AND PLANNING IN THE SEARCH FOR A JOB

Organisation and planning is the ability to effectively set the goals and priorities of your task or project, analysing the action, deadlines and the required resources. It includes the set-up of mechanisms for monitoring and verifying information.
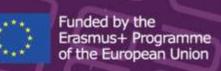
LEARNING ACTIVITY

SCOPING

Description:

This is used when a project needs to be planned, or even for day-to-day work. It is an exercise to practice planning and prioritisation.

Phases:

1. *Start*: ask the participants to choose a project or large task that they need to perform in the next few months or weeks.

2. *Development*: ask them to write down the project's tasks on a post-it. These must be very specific tasks, and the more the better. Once they wrote these down, they should classify the tasks by topic (eg. communication, marketing, logistics, etc). Once these are grouped, they should check if any tasks are missing that ought to be added.

3. *End*: in a space or large sheet of paper, outline a timeline divided by weeks and place each of the tasks according to the time in which they must be done. When completed, review the workload for each of the weeks and redistribute if necessary. Afterwards, schedule and keep track of the task- fulfilment.

Possible questions to dynamics guidance:

- What do you believe is the easiest way to reach the goal? Listing the tasks in a post-it or grouping them?

- Is it useful to set a time for each task? Why?

- Do you have any similar plans for the organization of the job search? How are you grouping the tasks?

- Do you think that it is useful to generate a schedule of tasks for the job search? How could you do it?

Materials and resources:

Tables, chairs, paper, pens.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SOME SHORT FILMS / YOUTUBE VIDEOS

Planning, organization, direction and control: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lIn2GuZb3og

Material for individual work: calendars, diaries or other tools to generate the habit of planning.

SOME KEYS TO WORKING WITH THE VIDEOS OR MOVIES:

- How can you apply what we have seen in the video to your job search?

What tools could you use to carry out good planning?

CONCLUSIONS

For unemployed persons over the age of 45, there are aspects of their job search that they cannot control such as the scarcity of jobs, the number of other applicants to the process of selection, etc.

Planning allows one to control the situation and be able to evaluate it. Organizing the job search will provide greater security, enabling people to guide their actions and be able to look back when something has not worked as they hoped. This will allow them to analyze and change their strategy of action.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THIS SKILL

- **Use of Agenda:** Recommend the use of an agenda or other devices in planning and tracking individual or group job search process.

- **Generate routines:** Generate routines in the classroom where you compel people to use them. For example: set key dates (visible calendar) sessions, inviting them to temporalize small goals to share the advances or changes in their search strategy, etc.

- **Individual support**: You may need to assess the need for individualized follow-up to assist in the planning and organization of the actions run in search of employment.

- **Motivation**: The process of planning is one of the toughest since the participants do not give it the recognition that it deserves, but is key to achieve the ultimate goal so as to maintain a constant motivation in the development of this skill in order to achieve the habit of planning and organization.

FLEXIBILITY

Willingness to adapt easily. This is the ability to adapt oneself and to work in different situations and with different persons or groups. It means understanding and evaluating different positions or conflicting views, adapting one's own approach to the changed situation as required, and promoting the organisation's changes or responsibilities of one's office.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

THE CAMP

Description:

The presentation format is roleplay. Vives Emplea[2] are going on tour, and they have to organize into different groups that they are taking to spend a week in the Pyrenees. Subsequently, problems arise unexpectedly and the participants have to solve them. (A bear appears, they are left without water, someone breaks a leg...).

Phases:

1. *Start*: They form groups of 4-5 people. Set the scene: the group goes camping. At last we are going on the trip that we have talked about so much. We're going to Benasque (Huesca Pyrenees). To make organising easier, each camp tent group will arrange to take all they need for a week. Yes, we are going to the mountains, you must remember to wear appropriate clothing, we have to take a tent, we have to put everything in the backpack, etc. Make a list of what each person carries.

2. *Development*: Once they have done this and are organized, the leader poses different scenarios, each more unexpected than the last :

   a) A bear appears.

   b) They run out of drinking water at 22:00h. The nearest town is about an hour.

   c) Someone from the team breaks a leg.

   d) The partner of someone from the team turns up very angry, because his partner had not told him about the excursion and he had been looking for her for four days. He says that he will not be there without his partner. He has a very aggressive attitude.

   e) It is the departure. It starts to snow and the road is cut off.

   f) With so much trouble with the snow, we did not realize that we ran out of gas half an hour from the village.

3. *Final:* The reactions and attitudes that have been adopted by the participants are discussed.

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[2] https://www.accioncontraelhambre.org/es/encuentra-trabajo

Possible questions to dynamics guidance:

- What roles did you each take to resolve situations?

- Have you let yourself be carried along or have you been an active part of the solution?

- How have you reacted to the changes?

- What did you think about the reactions of others?

- Would you have liked to react as someone on the team? Why?

Materials and resources:

Tables, chairs, paper, pens.

EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

Description: This is an individual or team dynamic to generate reflection and breaking of schemes becoming aware of what we do to achieve our goals.

Phases:

1. *Start*: A paper and pen are given to the participants and the following questions are raised:

a) What do I want to achieve?

b) What am I doing to get it?

c) What have I achieved so far?

d) Why have not I achieved more?

e) Could I change anything I'm doing? How?

f) What can I do to achieve more or to get closer to my goal?

g) What will I do to be closer to my goal?

2. *Development:* Leave time for each participant to respond to the questions that have been asked.

3. *Final:* When the discussion is done in the team, the participants will present their answers to the rest of the group, who can contribute ideas or solutions to achieve the proposed objectives. When the dynamics is done individually, the participants will recite to the Inclusion Officer their answers and this will accompany them in their reflections by raising awareness of their situation and posing questions about their own answers in order that they become aware of their own actions.

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Possible questions to dynamics guidance:

The questions to guide the dynamics will be formulated according to the participants' answers to the questions formulated in the exercise. The goal is to make the person or group aware of what they are doing and are able to understand that making small changes can achieve great results.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SOME SHORT FILMS / YOUTUBE VIDEOS

- Motivational: Obstacles in the process of change:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxeR95aYer0

- Resistance to change:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60P34vfBAiI

- Change your way of thinking and change your world:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Udgjd5y9xIc

SOME KEYS TO WORKING WITH THE VIDEOS OR MOVIES:

- What happens to people when they try to change something?

- Why do you think people resist changing or accepting a new situation?

Do you identify with any of the situations shown in the videos? With which characters? Do you think they do the right thing? What consequences would a change make or accept a new situation?

CONCLUSIONS

Flexibility is an essential skill for access to employment, either in the job search itself or in the maintenance of the job.

In general, unemployed people over 45 do not usually have this highly developed skill and it is essential to cover it from the beginning of the intervention. This lack of flexibility and lack of acceptance of new conditions in the hiring and functioning of the labor market generates stagnation, frustration and failure in the search for employment that in turn causes the person to freeze and not develop a vision for the long or medium term.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THIS SKILL

- **Work on planning from the beginning and progressively**. We will try to show people the need to be flexible through concrete examples and situations and even through the experiences of failure that they have had in the search for employment and which they tell us about in the classroom.

- **Work market information**. Providing information on the current situation and generate discussions about how access to employment was in the past and how it is today can help them to understand and accept the changes.

- **Offer real examples**. The impact is very positive when the participants can identify with any other participant who has passed through the project or another external person who is in the same starting situation as them. These people narrate their experience by focusing on how they initially faced their job search and what results they obtained, and how, after changing their thinking and being more flexible, they managed to reach first one goal, and little by little the others, and ow that brought them closer to their final goal.

- **Audiovisual support**. Videos on You tube with examples on the need for flexibility and change generate reflection and invite people to analyze their actions and possible modifications to obtain other results.

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