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Bachelor of Social Services  
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# **A SAFER ROOM OF ONE'S OWN: A VOLUNTEER'S WORKBOOK**



## ABSTRACT

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This development-based thesis addresses the need of Safer space training for volunteers. Volunteers often work directly with service users, creating events and services, so they require the knowledge and skills to create Safer spaces. There is a need for volunteers to have an understanding of how interacting factors such as combined identities and systems of power impact us all. As volunteers come from varied professional and educational backgrounds, there is a need for volunteer training that supports volunteers' learning and reflective process and that is motivating.

The subject of Safer space was chosen to meet the needs of our thesis partner MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association and to contribute to a change within the social field that recognises the importance of Safer space considerations. The objective of this thesis is to support MONIKA in the incorporation of Safer space approach into their volunteer training by creating a reflective workbook on the topic of Safer space.

The final output of this thesis was a self-reflective workbook on Safer space approach for volunteers. The workbook is written from an intersectional perspective as research of related materials showed intersectionality to be the foundation of the Safer space approach. Key concepts related to Safer space including power and privilege, anti-racism, anti-discriminatory practice, and anti-oppression are introduced in the workbook. A reflective approach is used to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the topics, deepen understanding, and support volunteers in analysing their own experiences and methods of working with service users. Reflection of the topics as not just theories but factors that affect us all in varied ways gives them more importance, so several different opportunities and methods for reflection have been included in the workbook.

This thesis and accompanying workbook are intended to provide information, reflections, and understanding for volunteers, organisations, and all readers. All organisations and readers are invited to examine their services from a Safer space perspective and to make a Safer space approach the basis of training, policies, and procedures with an overarching goal of improving the inclusivity of volunteer services.

**Keywords:** Safer space, volunteer training, reflective practice, intersectionality.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Safer space has developed as an approach from many influences including Kurt Lewin's sensitivity training and through the work of Black feminists, activists, and legal scholars such as Kimberle Crenshaw, on the topics of intersectionality, anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and anti-oppression (Potter, 2019).

In the Finnish context, many organisations such as those discussed below, are now addressing the subject of Safer space as part of their diversity and inclusion plans or by creating and publishing Safer space guidelines on their websites. However, the depth of their approach to Safer space varies. There are short lists of principles, such as those published by Helsinki University that advise open-mindedness, respecting diversity, and avoiding making assumptions (*Principles for a Safer Space | Instructions for Students*, n.d.). Some organisations engage in more in-depth discussion of the topic, such as Culture For All Service (Kulttuurikaikille) that take the discussion of Safer space further by prefacing their Safer space policy with an explanation of their choice of "safer" over "safe," suggesting that the creation of a space absolutely safe for everyone is not possible (Kulttuurikaikille, n.d.).

There are also more detailed policies and guidelines such as those published by Anti Racist forum which states that "the safer space policy intends to ensure that collaborators and participants feel that they can learn, share, grow and contribute in spaces where they experience respect, dignity and safety." (*Safer Space Guidelines — Anti-Racist Forum*, n.d.) and diversity and inclusion documents created by a student initiative at Academy of Fine Arts that lists in detail the factors that influence Safer space and inclusivity such as language, course content, teacher's roles, as well as what to do if mistakes are made (*Student Initiative: Creating Safer Spaces | Uniarts Helsinki, 2020*).

The subject of this project-based thesis is the development of a reflective Safer space workbook for volunteers. We have chosen this subject to meet the needs

of our thesis partner Monika-Naiset liitto ry (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland in English and abbreviated to MONIKA for the duration of this thesis), and to contribute to a change within the social field that recognises the importance of Safer space considerations.

## 2 BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND NEED OF THE PROJECT

In this chapter, we discuss the background of our project, including the context of voluntary work in Finland, and define who are our work-life partner and target group. We discuss how these factors influenced our goal, purpose, and aims, as well as the objective we set to achieve them.

### 2.1 Work-life partner

Our work-life partner for this thesis is MONIKA. MONIKA is an NGO that aims to improve immigrant women's status in Finnish society. There are two main aspects of its work, supporting integration and supporting women who have experienced violence. Crisis Centre Monika and Shelter Mona serve those experiencing or at threat of violence, while its integration work takes place at Integration Centre Monika (*MONIKA - Multicultural Women's Association, Finland - Monika-Naiset Liitto Ry, 2023*).

MONIKA is based in Kalastama, Helsinki, and provides low-threshold support to women living in the capital region. Both the service users and the volunteers come from a multitude of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and use a variety of languages (*Volunteering - Monika-Naiset Liitto Ry, 2023*). Furthermore, MONIKA also acts as an umbrella organisation for other multicultural women's NGOs in Finland. It provides support in organisational, and advocacy work as well as providing a forum for networking. Because of this, MONIKA is in contact with not only its own volunteers, but it is also attached to a larger network of other volunteers in the field (*Member Organizations - Monika-Naiset Liitto Ry, 2023*).

MONIKA is funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health with profits of Veikkaus Oy/ (STEA), Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare (THL), the Ministry of Education and Culture, the City of Helsinki, and the City of Vantaa (*About Us - Monika-Naiset Liitto Ry, n.d.*). Any work that MONIKA does not receive funding for is done by volunteers, therefore volunteers are essential to the running of MONIKA, as they run language classes, digital and employability skills

workshops, and provide free onsite childcare for parents attending the groups. Volunteers also act as employment mentors assisting with job search and giving information about Finnish work-life, language mentors who help service users to practice Finnish, and also as digital mentors (*Mentoring Monika-Naiset Liitto Ry*, 2021).

Through our partnership with MONIKA, we were able to utilise their knowledge of training and motivating volunteers. We were also able to benefit from their professional knowledge and expertise in order to gain feedback during the development of the workbook. This expert feedback helped us to develop the workbook to ensure it is a functional and useful tool that meets the needs of the volunteers and the organisation.

In discussion with the work-life partner, it has been decided that we as a thesis group will retain the ownership and rights to develop the product in the future. As the creators of the workbook, it will remain our academic property. Because of this we also retain the opportunity to develop and adjust the workbook in line with changing developments on the topic of Safer space. We also retain the right to adjust the material to meet the needs of other organisations and target groups we potentially work with in the future.

## 2.2 Target group

The primary target group of the thesis is the management of MONIKA. This is because we have implemented a top-down approach to the project and evaluation which we will discuss in more detail later on in this thesis. The workbook aims to meet the needs of MONIKA in regards to incorporating Safer space into their volunteer training. The workbook must reflect the values and aims of MONIKA and be suitable for their volunteers. This includes volunteers from both Shelter Mona and Integration Centre Monika. Although the primary target group is MONIKA's management, to successfully meet their requirements we have also had to carefully consider the needs of the volunteers themselves. Our aim is that the workbook will be suitable and motivating for the volunteers, since studies



show the importance and benefits of keeping volunteers motivated (Connors, 2011).

As discussed, the group sees a potential for a secondary target group that could include the MONIKA volunteers themselves however we additionally believe this target group could also expand to include other NGO's volunteers. We believe that the workbook could be suitable to be used as a training tool for volunteers in other organisations that want to establish guidelines or initiate discussions on Safer spaces in a collaborative way with their volunteers.

### 2.3 The need of the project

When our thesis was in a very initial state, the need for this project was identified by having an open conversation with MONIKA. We were at a stage when our partnership was still not formal, and we were trying to see if we could develop a product that would bring professional development for our team and would answer a need within the organisation.

In said conversation, it was mentioned that the organisation tends to identify needs with the volunteers, especially on how to give them tools to respond to sensitive topics, such as trauma. Since the organisation offers themed trainings to their volunteers, it was decided that our product was to be a workbook.

After conducting a preliminary research based on that conversation, we noticed how tackling sensitive topics was related with the establishment of guidelines on Safer spaces. Establishing safer spaces guidelines helps us be mindfulness about other's sense of safety (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2019) and as discussed previously, there is a growing tendency of establishing them in Helsinki, especially in an educational, political, and non-governmental context.

It was identified that Safer space approach is not currently a part of MONIKA's volunteer training. Furthermore, that there is a need to explore Safer space with volunteers beyond simply setting Safer space guidelines. The need was identified for an active and practical solution to adapting a Safer space approach to work

with service users, that could be incorporated into their current volunteer training program. Therefore, it was decided to develop a workbook that can be used in volunteer training sessions or as a stand-alone reflective tool, that discusses key topics related to Safer space. These topics include intersectionality, oppressive practices, and discrimination.

Although MONIKA's professionals have extensive training relating to these topics, much client work is also done by volunteers who are not social field professionals, so MONIKA have been unsure how to address these topics in volunteer training. This has caused some unfortunate difficulties between volunteers and service users. For example, discussing home and family in Finnish class or during small talk can have a distressing impact on service users that are separated from or have lost their families. What can seem like an innocuous everyday topic can trigger a strong reaction.

When the idea was brought up in conversation with MONIKA, the organisation thought that it was a relevant topic that would benefit their volunteers. Both the organisation and our team agreed that the workbook we created could not just be an explanation on how to set Safer spaces guidelines, but a tool that encouraged discussion and self-reflection, since it would be used in a training. Once the key topic of our product was found, we started a research process to understand the deepness and layers of the topic and find the right way to turn it into a workbook.

#### 2.4 Inspiration from other projects

While our workbook has been inspired by a couple of different projects, we still feel that ours is a very unique and necessary creation. It stands out the most in its unique approach to engaging volunteers. Our workbook tackles a lot of important issues that volunteers might encounter. We have managed to narrow these issues down and explain them in a relaxed, reflective, and interactive way. We have collated and summarised the research, making a compound version to share our findings with the volunteers. This specialised focus makes our workbook not just an addition to existing resources, but a necessary tool for enriching the volunteer experience. It meets a need that is not addressed in other

workbooks, offering a more personalised and effective approach to creating safer and more inclusive spaces. However, here is some of the projects we have found that we took inspiration from.

The first one, “Sassy Jessy: Parent’s guide,” is a guide on how to explore children’s emotions. This product incorporates practical examples like dialogues of real-life scenarios and how to handle them. It is a very compact tool, and it has made us think about including a role-playing activity in our workbook. We have referred to this product quite a lot during our own process. We have learned how important it is to understand and deal with feelings. This guide uses stories and examples from everyday life, and this inspired us to create a case study in our workbook that we would be following to navigate complex situations.

The second one, “Rethinking International Volunteer Management,” exposes relevant aspects of volunteer management such as making sure that the training material matches all core values and mission of the organisation. Certain aspects of this thesis have been considered when designing our product. We have reflected on this and have been in contact with our work-life partner regarding the process of the creation of our workbook.

The third and last handbook, “Tackling discrimination, my learning diary,” is a handbook dedicated to making schools safer spaces. It is a reliable source that has supported our designing process, since it introduces oppression, anti-racism, and intersectional concepts in a succinct way and includes self-reflection activities. Our inspiration for creating our workbook using self-reflective tools came from this handbook.

By taking inspiration from the best parts of these projects, we made our workbook a useful tool for MONIKA. It guides how to handle difficult situations by staying true to what the organization stands for in a way that’s easy to understand and put into practice. This could make our workbook not just another resource, but a potentially useful tool for creating Safer spaces.

## 2.5 Volunteer work in Finnish context and demographic of MONIKA volunteers

Before setting our goal, aims and objective we first considered the context of voluntary work in Finland and as a phenomenon. According to a Study on Volunteering in the European Union by the European commission (n.d.), Finland has a rate of volunteering of between 36-50%. Finland also ranks as having the sixth highest rate of volunteering in Europe (50%). The three most popular voluntary sectors are sports (30%), then social and health (25%), and thirdly children and youth (22%). The study also found that women are more active at volunteering in social and health sectors, whereas men were more prevalent in sports volunteering. All age groups are well represented in the demographic of volunteers; however, the number of older volunteers has been increasing.

To better understand the need of our project we considered what voluntary work is, what motivates people to volunteer, and volunteer's role within the third sector. Voluntary work has three characteristics; it is voluntary, not for profit, and is a meaningful activity. Furthermore, it can be defined as non-profit activity designed to serve the common good. Volunteers mainly serve the common good by contributing the non-renewable resource of time, which is an especially essential resource in the third sector (Güntert et al., 2022). When volunteers contribute their time by taking on roles that address the more everyday aspects of work in the third sector, it free's up more of professional's time to focus on the aspects of client work that require more social field expertise.

Some volunteers use voluntary work to seek meaning. Meaning can be described with four characteristics: significance or the perceived impact of personal actions, purpose or direction for making decisions and choices, coherence or a sense of consistency, and belonging to something larger than oneself (Güntert et al., 2022).

Related to seeking life meaning is the concept of generativity, a developmental task with the desire to leave a permanent and worthwhile impact on future generations. Many volunteers seek to enact a positive civic change, or to do acts that

address needs not just in the present but also aid in the care of generations to come (Güntert et al., 2022).

For some volunteers, part of the motivation process entails developing new skills and abilities. The ability to take part in trainings and learn about new topics gives meaning to the work and increases motivation, especially for those looking to use their voluntary work to prepare for professional roles, or for former professionals that wish to stay up to date with the field (Connors, 2011).

We considered the demographic data of Finnish volunteers, and the different reasons people take part in voluntary work to help us frame our project. By learning about the different motivating factors, we realised that we would need to consider these motivations when creating our project and setting our goals and objectives. To better understand the context of volunteers at MONIKA we examined data provided to us by MONIKA about their volunteers that they supply as part of their STEA reporting.

In 2023 MONIKA had 47 volunteers in total, a decrease of 13% from 2022 when they had 54 active volunteers. Since 2022 there have started 10 new volunteers. In 2023 the total hours of work done by volunteers decreased by 24 % from 711 hours to 543 hours. Most volunteers live in Helsinki, Espoo or Vantaa and in total they speak 28 different languages. Information about age and educational background of the volunteers is not provided to STEA and MONIKA were unable to provide this information. Several of the volunteers have been long term volunteers, exact start date was not specified but reported as since before 2016. This data shows us that vast amounts of volunteer time contributes to the running of MONIKA's activities so it is essential that the workbook we create is motivating to volunteers so that MONIKA can better ensure the retention of their existing volunteers and attract potential new volunteers.

## 2.6 Project goal, purpose, and aims

After considering the background of Safer space, its need within the social field, and within the context of voluntary work in Finland, as well as the needs of the

target group, we were better able to set our goal, purpose, and aims. Our overarching goal for this project was to improve the inclusivity of volunteer services. As inclusivity is at the core of Safer space, we set the creation of a reflective workbook on Safer space for volunteers as the purpose. The workbook's aim is to make Safer space approach an intrinsic part of volunteer's work. The workbook aims to give the volunteers enough information to implement Safer space approaches in their work and services and to motivate them to make Safer space the foundation of their work. Through informed and reflective practices, we hope to improve the quality of services provided by volunteers and support a safer, more inclusive environment for both volunteers and service users.

By creating the workbook, we aimed to provide volunteers with not only the necessary knowledge but also the opportunity for self-reflection. Through self-reflection we hope that they will better understand the impact varied factors have on themselves and the service users they work with. Kishimoto (2016), raises the importance of self-reflection about positionality in educational settings. Kishimoto (2016) insists that self-reflection must start before entering the classroom in order to effectively integrate anti-racist pedagogy into courses, and furthermore, that these issues must be continually revisited. Many volunteers work as teachers or group facilitators so this self-reflection in advance of implementing activities will form a key part of supporting Safer space principles. The workbook aims to support this reflection by explaining the systems that influence society and behaviour, individual's role in those systems and how to consider these factors to create Safer space.

Service users from many diverse backgrounds and in various settings may be impacted by issues such as homelessness, residency issues, trauma, violence, persecution, discrimination, physical and mental ill health, and financial insecurity. As people often occupy multiple identities, they may also be impacted by several factors simultaneously. Because of this, volunteer training should address issues raised by research to ensure that processes and services continue to meet the needs of service users. MONIKA have a responsibility to provide volunteer training on topics relevant to work with service users, and this project aims to support MONIKA in developing their current volunteer training.

## 2.7 Objective

To ensure that our project was successful we condensed the overall goal and aims into a smaller part by setting an objective. We set our objective using the SMART technique. SMART is an acronym for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound (Stirk & Sanderson, 2012).

The objective of our thesis is to support MONIKA in the incorporation of Safer space approach into their volunteer training by creating a reflective workbook on the topic of Safer space.

Our objective focuses on addressing the specific need for volunteer training on Safer space approach. To address this, we took the specific action of creating a workbook on Safer space approach. The objective was measured through feedback, during and after the development process. As part of our planning, we ensured the objective was achievable based on our resources, both fiscal and time based. We ensured the relevance of our objective through discussion with the work-life partner and also through thorough research of the related topics. Finally, we ensured that the objective was timebound by setting a timetable of the entire project and broke the objective into individual tasks so that we could measure progress towards our goal and final deadline.

TABLE 1. SMART analysis of objective

Specific	<p>The objective is met through a specific purpose- create a reflective workbook on Safer space for volunteer training. We researched the different approaches and topics related to Safer space through an extensive literature review to make decisions on specifics of the workbook. It was decided that the workbook would be written from an intersectional perspective and would use a reflective approach to support learning. The concepts were defined and justified.</p>
Measurable	<p>The success of the objective was measured by MONIKA's feedback on whether the workbook is suitable to be incorporated into their volunteer training. Feedback was gathered during the development and evaluation phases of the project. We created a survey to request feedback on the workbook from the workers responsible for volunteer coordination at MONIKA to assess the need for further development of the product (workbook) and its suitability for use in volunteer training.</p> <p>We kept detailed records of all internal meetings as well as discussions with the work-life partner to monitor our progress towards the goal.</p>



Achievable	During the planning stage we analysed our knowledge, resources and timetable to ensure our objective was achievable. Throughout the process we had regular meetings and documented our progress to ensure our goal was still achievable.
Relevant	The relevance of the project, the workbook and its contents were agreed through discussion with the work-life partner. The relevance of the content was ensured through research of the related topics, taking care to seek sources from different voices. We examined current approaches to Safer space by other organisations and adjusted them to the needs of the work-life partner.
Timebound	The objective was broken down into individual tasks and the timetable for all stages of the project was established during the planning stage. The tasks were distributed between the group members and time specific deadlines were agreed upon.

### 3 KEY CONCEPTS USED IN THE PROJECT

In this section, we expose our process of gaining an understanding of Safer spaces and discuss our definition of Safer space. We also introduce the key concepts that formed the intersectional perspective the workbook is written from and justify why they feature in the workbook.

We also reflect on the benefits of creating the workbook as a self-reflective pedagogical tool and how a reflective approach helps to serve our goals, the needs of our work-life partner, as well as the needs of volunteers.

#### 3.1 Understanding Safer spaces

As previously discussed, to gain an understanding of Safer space we first examined how different organisations and institutions approach Safer space. Through this we decided to define what we mean by Safer spaces, for this we will use a definition from Saferspacesnyc (2010):

“A safer space is a supportive, non-threatening environment that encourages open-mindedness, respect, a willingness to learn from others, as well as physical and mental safety. It is a space that is critical of the power structures that affect our everyday lives, and where power dynamics, backgrounds, and the effects of our behaviour on others are prioritized.”

This definition forms the basis of what we set out to achieve in our workbook and for this development project in general. Throughout the research and development stages we retained an awareness of dominant power structures, actively seeking references from varied sources and perspectives.

To develop our understanding of Safer space further, and to develop further our definition of Safer space we examined related theories. As we wanted to produce a product that examined Safer space in an in-depth way, we selected key theories to form a solid theoretical foundation to build our workbook upon.

## 3.2 Safer space theories

From the definition provided earlier, we can grasp the idea that there are many theories behind the creation of Safer spaces. After exploring much literature on the different theories related to Safer space we decided to focus on the following six topics; reflective practice, intersectionality, power and privilege, antiracism, anti-oppression, and anti-discriminatory practice.

### 3.2.1 Reflective practice

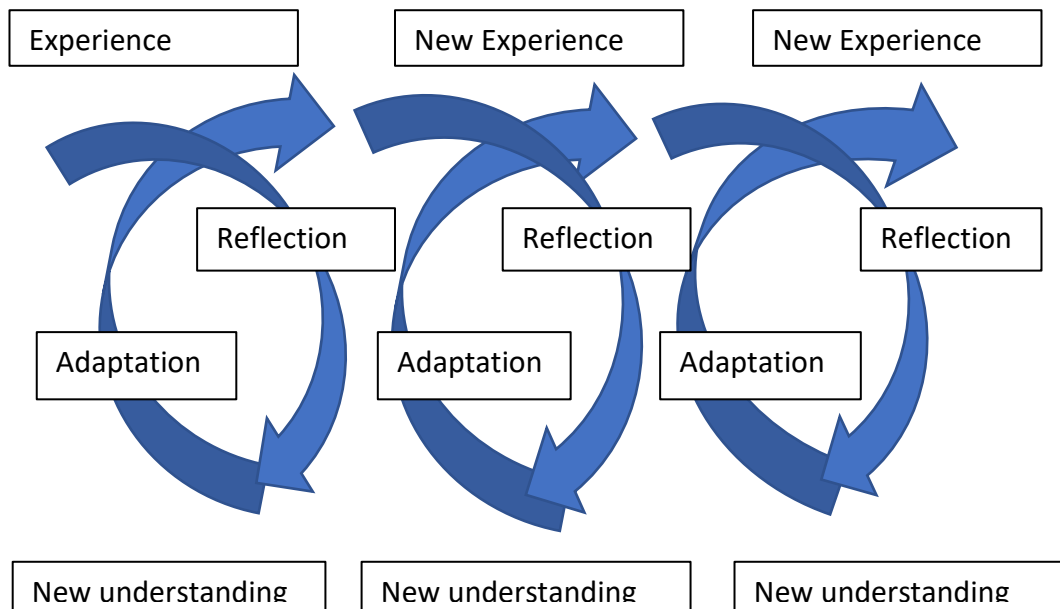
As we reviewed literature related to Safer space, we noticed frequent discussion of critical self-reflection and reflective practice. Kendi (2019) stresses that critical self-reflection of one's own biases is essential in the work towards anti-racism. Butler-Mokoro & Grant (2018) continues this idea, describing reflection as applying intersectionality. They also raise a link between reflective practice and empowering practice, that through reflection on our own social location we can better identify and address power imbalances.

Deciding to pursue the concept of reflective practice further we explored current theories of reflective practice in the social field. Our definition of reflective practice comes from Thompson & Thompson (2023) who believe that through reflective practice we become aware of the theories and knowledge that inform our work. Thompson & Thompson also build upon Schön's principles of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, or the reflective processes that occur while performing a task, and the reflective process that comes after action. They add the importance of a third stage; reflection- for- action or anticipating what might occur in advance and planning accordingly using the knowledge gained through reflection.

We further deepened our understanding of reflective practice through Bruce's (2013) comparison of Schön's theory to John Dewey's philosophy of learning. As illustrated in Figure 1 the steps towards professional development are to first reflect on a new experience, then conceptualise new solutions, then to try out new adaptations based on the knowledge gained from the new experience. The spiral

continues through more new experiences, new theories tested, and new knowledge gained.

FIGURE 1. Learning spiral



*Note.* Adapted from “Reflective Practice for Social Workers: a Handbook for Developing Professional Confidence”, by L. Bruce, 2013, McGraw-Hill Education. P.35. Copyright 2013 by McGraw-Hill Education

As the importance of reflective practice became apparent, we decided to make a reflective approach an intrinsic part of the workbook. It is our conclusion that reflection is the connecting force between the different topics. By connecting the different topics through reflection, we believe it will assist the volunteers in deepening understanding and encourage a comprehensive approach to Safer space. As our goal is to improve inclusivity of volunteer services, we believe that taking a reflective approach helps to demonstrate how Safer space and it’s related topics can be considered together to develop a way of working with service users that supports inclusivity. This helps to meet the needs of MONIKA as inclusivity is one of their core values.

### 3.2.2 Intersectionality

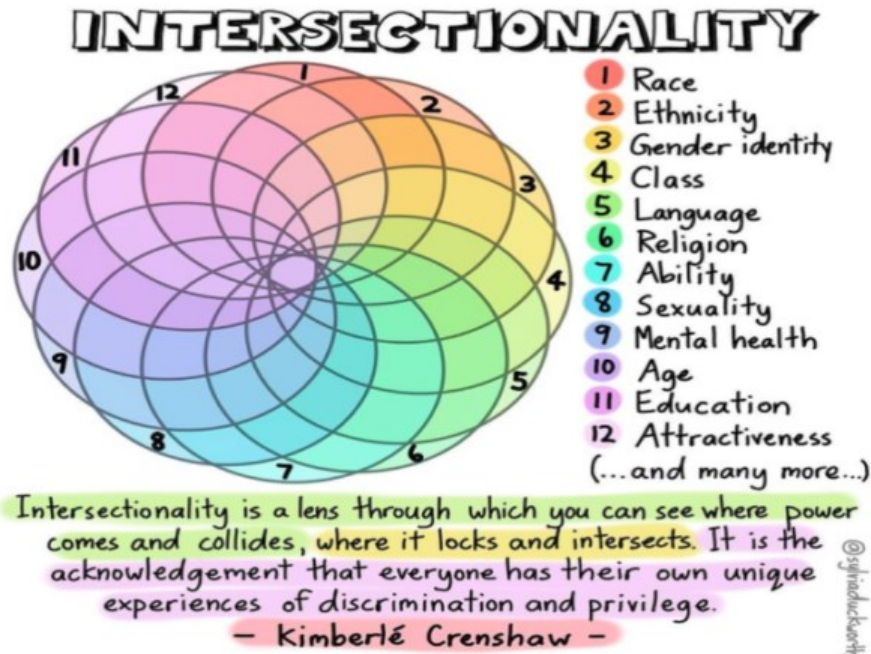
It became clear from the literature we read that our workbook should be written from an intersectional perspective. This is because the impact of many of the other related topics such as power and privilege, discrimination and oppression is best explained through the theory of intersectionality. Legal scholar and feminist theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw first created the term “intersectionality” in their 1989 exploration of race and gender in the article “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics”. Since then, intersectional theory has been developed and applied to other disciplines to recognise the impact of the many and intersecting factors of identity and society (Crenshaw, 2019).

Intersectionality recognises the complex and intersecting nature of large-scale systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, and heterosexism. The theory acknowledges that people hold multiple identities based on characteristics such as gender, race, and ability which can have a combined effect upon their experiences of inequality, privilege, and oppression as well as their own sense of self identity. Furthermore, those with multiple marginalised identities are at risk of experiencing “multiple jeopardy” where multiple systems of oppression, such as racism and sexism disadvantage them simultaneously. The different characteristics can also interact so that individuals can occupy positions of privilege and oppression simultaneously, with some social systems working to oppress them and others to benefit them (Butler- Mokoro & Grant, 2018).

Figure 2 shows a graphic representation of intersectionality which we chose to use in the workbook as it shows in a clear and visual manner how different identities fall within societies systems. We chose to include discussion of intersectionality in the workbook as we believe it to be a theory that underpins many of the other topics. Using the “lens” of intersectionality also helps to view service users in a more holistic way and to question what are the invisible factors that impact on behaviour. Taking an intersectional approach helps to better understand the complexity of experiences of those who occupy multiple marginalised identities. Using an intersectional approach when planning services helps to ensure

solutions are more inclusive and thereby helps to create services that better address service users' needs.

FIGURE 2. Intersectionality



Note. Adapted from Sylvia Duckworth [@sylvia duckworth]. (2020, August 9). “Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to help explain how one’s identity markers intersect and effect one’s life [Photograph]. Instagram.

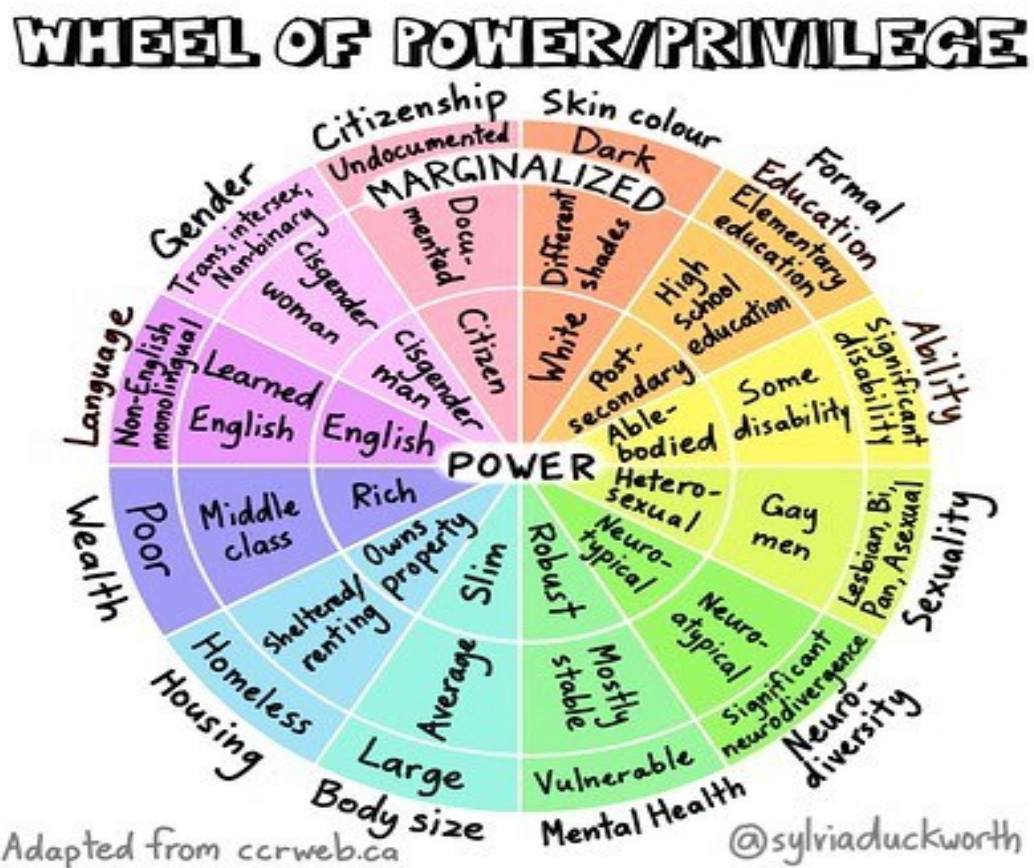
### 3.2.3 Power and Privilege

Privilege can be described as unearned advantages and power given to some people because they belong to a certain group in society, often based on characteristics like race, gender, or socioeconomic status (Glass, 2018, p.11). Understanding power and privilege in everyday life is important so we can all work towards a more equitable society. To do this, we should all discuss and acknowledge our own privileges and start using it to advocate for those who are less privileged than us.

To help us and the volunteers discuss our own privilege further, we have inserted a wheel of power and privilege by Sylvia Duckworth into our workbook which we

believe will be a great tool for us (Figure 3). It can offer a visual representation of various categories of privilege and power. The visual aid can be more beneficial than text alone and it helps us in achieving our goal of creating our workbook to be very interactive. We are aiming for this graphic wheel to also serve as a tool for self-reflection, suggesting that the volunteers consider their own positions within the categories. Finally, we believe that this wheel is an excellent starting point for a discussion in a workshop within the organisation. It provides a structured way to approach a very sensitive topic, creating an environment where volunteers can engage in meaningful conversations about power, privilege, and social justice. As topics are exposed, it can be seen that they are linked together.

FIGURE 3. Wheel of Power/Privilege



Note. Adapted from Duckworth, S. (n.d.). Wheel of Power and Privilege [Image]. ResearchGate. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Wheel-of-Power-Privilege-and-Marginalization-by-Sylvia-Duckworth-Used-by-permission\\_fig1\\_364109273](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Wheel-of-Power-Privilege-and-Marginalization-by-Sylvia-Duckworth-Used-by-permission_fig1_364109273) (Original work published at ccrweb.ca).

### 3.2.4 Antiracism

Ibram X. Kendi (2019) defends that being antiracist is more than just “not being racist”, but it requires to actively try to eliminate the racial prejudices we have. On the same note, Diangelo (2018) affirms that to be antiracist we need to see racism as a societal structure instead of an individual act.

To actively be antiracist, both Kendi (2019) and Diangelo (2018) suggest that educating oneself is vital to identify own biases and a way to incorporate this idea in this project can be by adding a suggested reading list in the workbook. Another way to be actively antiracist according to Kendi (2019) is to learn to identify microaggressions and challenge them. A common aspect about microaggressions is that they are often unintentional, but reacting to them creates an environment of respect and inclusivity. Lastly, cultural awareness is another antiracist active practice that can benefit communication between volunteers and the service users they interact with (Wonder Foundation, 2022). The goal of cultural awareness is to identify cultural differences and respect them, and it helps us reflect on how our own cultural background influences us (Wonder Foundation, 2022).

Because of all exposed above, we believe that a comprehensive definition of antiracism and how active antiracist practices can benefit volunteering activities should be included in our workbook. This topic feels fitting because MONIKA’s volunteers interact in a multicultural setting, that includes different backgrounds, traditions, and norms.

### 3.2.5 Anti-oppression

Anti-oppression is a practice aimed at recognising, addressing, and getting rid of oppression in its various forms. It shows us that society is structured in some ways that benefit certain groups at the expense of others based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and ability just to name a few. Anti-oppression seeks to challenge these systemic inequalities and to promote fairness and equality. It is an active practice because it involves both an awareness of oppressive structures and an active effort to change them. This approach is intersectional, recognising



that different forms of oppression can intersect and compound the experiences of marginalised individuals (Feagin, 2014).

It is important to always actively try and work towards anti-oppression and it involves several key practices. Education and awareness are the most fundamental aspects because understanding the mechanisms of oppression is extremely important in combating them. This includes acknowledging one's own privileges and biases and understanding how they contribute to systemic inequalities. In the book 'White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism,' the author emphasizes the critical role of self-awareness, particularly in the context of white privilege. They argue that recognising and confronting our own biases is an important step in addressing systemic racism and creating a more equitable society (DiAngelo, 2018).

Regarding volunteer work, particularly within NGO's, there seems to exist a very delicate balance between care and control in the dynamic between volunteers and service users. Thompson argues that this is a crucial balance to have. They mention that one must have a deep understanding of oppression or there might be a risk of oppressive practice instead of empowering the service users as intended. This risk arises especially when volunteers might not be aware of their own privilege and therefore impose their perspectives and solutions on service users, thereby reinforcing a power imbalance (Thompson, 2016). This could potentially make a service user feel very vulnerable and unheard. It is especially important to recognise that service users are experts of their own experiences and that we should support them collaboratively and respectfully. This understanding will create a relationship based on mutual respect and empowerment rather than one defined by dominance and control.

Including anti-oppression as a key topic in our workbook is beneficial for many different reasons. Firstly, it teaches volunteers the knowledge and skills to interact respectfully with users from diverse backgrounds. This is vital in a multicultural setting like MONIKA where the service users come from different cultures with different types of experiences. Secondly, promoting anti-oppression is an ethical responsibility that NGO's have.

### 3.2.6 Anti-discriminatory practice

Neil Thompson (2016) describes Anti-discriminatory practice (referred to from now on in this thesis as ADP) as a commitment to diversity, equality, and social justice. Thompson goes on to say that ADP should be holistic and that it should appreciate the potential interacting identities and experiences that impact individuals (see section 3.2.2 Intersectionality for more on interacting identities). We use these perspectives as the basis for exploring ADP in the workbook while also leaving space for self-reflection so that volunteers can apply the concepts to their own work.

Although Thompson proposes that focusing too much on describing what discrimination is risks oversimplifying an anti-discriminatory approach, we thought it pertinent to provide volunteers with clear definitions to base their understanding on. In Finland discrimination is prohibited under the Non-Discrimination Act which states that;

“No one may be discriminated against on the basis of age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics (Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014, Chapter 1, Section 8.1)”.

The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman works to prevent discrimination and promote equality based on the Non-Discrimination Act. So as to provide accurate information, the definitions of discrimination in the workbook are based on the descriptions in the Non-Discrimination Act and the website of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman.

By giving a broad description of different forms of discrimination we intend to help the volunteers to firstly develop their approaches to working with service users, and then to go beyond the given definitions and reflect on what other factors related to discrimination need to be addressed. We believe the inclusion of discussion of ADP helps serve the needs of our primary target group, ( MONIKA's management) as it helps to incorporate Safer space approach as a best practice

within MONIKA's voluntary activities. Thompson (2016) suggests ADP can be equated with good practice as it seeks to address not just the definitions in legislation, but to consider all the forms of unfair discrimination that can lead to oppression, adversity, disadvantage, and disempowerment. This is inline with MONIKA's values as an organisation of non-discrimination and inclusion (About Us - Monika-Naiset Liitto Ry, n.d.).

## 4 CREATION PROCESS OF THE WORKBOOK

The following chapter will explain how our workbook came to life and the process we went through to reach our goal. We will explain in detail the division of labour, the different phases we went through to create this project, our risk assessment, and some of the ethical challenges that we encountered along the way. We will also discuss the design of the workbook and why we made certain choices on the way we wanted the workbook to look and the contents we wanted to include inside of it.

### 4.1 Planning phase

The first step we wanted to do was to create our title. Choosing the title "A Safer Room of One's Own: A Volunteer's Workbook" was quite easy for us. We were immediately inspired by Virginia Woolf's book from 1929 "A Room of One's Own." Our workbook aligns with the principles of safety and inclusivity, and just like in her book, we aim to emphasise the importance of creating a safer space for personal and collective growth.

The next important step was to choose which topics we would like to cover in our workbook. We recognised the need to cover a variety of broad topics, however it was also clear from the start that we had to focus our efforts on the most relevant ones. Initially, the process of narrowing down the topics seemed difficult as each topic appeared to be significant. This is a common challenge in project planning, where identifying and prioritising objectives is crucial for success (Project Management Institute, 2021). To help us with our decision-making, we discussed about our work-life partner, considering which topics would be most applicable in their organisational context. By aligning our workbook contents with the specific needs and objectives of the organisation, we ensured that the topics we had chosen would be not only be relevant but also practical. This approach corresponds to the principles outlined in the PMBOK Guide, which emphasizes the importance of tailoring project management processes to the needs of each project (Project

Management Institute, 2021). In doing so, we have managed to create a customised and comprehensive workbook that we believe will be a valuable resource.

#### 4.2 Schedule for the project

The whole creation of the project has been divided equally between all three group members. Each group member has their own unique set of skills and knowledge that has contributed greatly to this project, and we have found ways to put all these skills into practice. We had set clear deadlines and goals for each other, and we were all equally responsible for our own parts. We have trusted each other that the schedules and deadlines will be respected. We have divided the creation of the project into three different phases which will be described below.

Phase one was the initial phase which happened in January – March of 2023 and this is when all the planning occurred. All three members were involved in regular meetings to discuss the project topic, scope, and progress. This is also when we had our first meeting with a representative from MONIKA to understand the target group and its needs and expectations. The outcome of this phase was a clear project concept and a detailed plan for the workbook's development, including its aims and objectives.

During phase two we focused on the development and design of the workbook which happened in April – December of 2023. During this phase, we all took part in developing the contents of the workbook, ensuring that everything aligns with the needs identified during the discussion with MONIKA. It was also crucial to ensure that the key concepts we had chosen were justified and that they aligned with the values of the organization. This phase took the longest time, but it was also the most important one as it was the core of our project.

Phase three included reviewing the workbook and sending it out to MONIKA's representatives to gather some initial feedback and this was completed in January – February of 2024. Feedback was gathered by sending a survey to MONIKA's representatives along with a digital copy of the workbook. After initial

feedback was received, we reviewed it together as a team and made all necessary changes that we believed would improve the workbook which will be explained in the other chapters.

#### 4.3 Structure, contents and design of the workbook

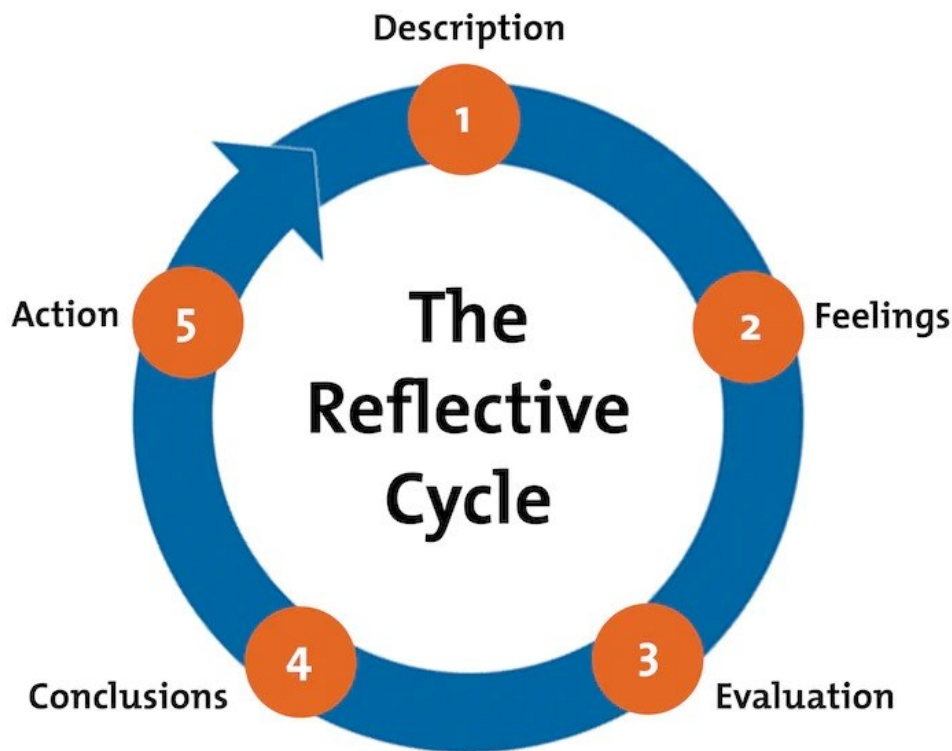
The structure and contents of our workbook are justified by academic concepts related to creating Safer spaces. It encourages volunteers to think critically about creating supportive and non-threatening environments that promote open-mindedness, respect, and physical and mental safety. The content we created aims to understand and address very complex social concepts and to equip the volunteers with the knowledge and tools to create Safer spaces for all individuals they will work with in the future.

The workbook begins with a letter from the authors, emphasizing the critical importance of volunteers in creating Safer spaces for service users. We believe that adding this letter in the beginning was crucial to form a bond with the readers and can contribute to a more enriching and effective educational experience. It is also a great way to provide context, motivate, address possible concerns, encourage ownership, and build trust.

Throughout the workbook, there are several ways to reflect on what the volunteers have just learned. Reflection is crucial for volunteers because it helps them generate new ideas, gain new perspectives on things, and grow as individuals. It also allows them to put their volunteer assignment into the context of the larger picture and understand how their contributions make a difference (United Nations Volunteers, 2015). We also believe that this is particularly important in any learning process. We have been inspired by the Gibbs Reflective Cycle Model that was originally introduced by Graham Gibbs in 1988. The cycle is designed to support experiential learning and consists of six stages: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan (Gibbs, 2013). The reason why we were inspired by this model while creating our workbook was because it facilitates a deeper understanding and personal growth by guiding the readers through a structured sequence of reflection, from describing experiences to

planning future actions, ensuring that whatever they have learned are effectively integrated into their own work and applied.

FIGURE 4. Gibbs Reflective Cycle



*Note.* Adapted from Gibbs, G. (2013). *Learning by Doing, A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods* by Graham Gibbs (1988). Oxford Brookes University.

This workbook is intended to be a useful tool that the volunteers can always come back to. The interactive nature of the workbook, along with the case study and reflective exercises, helps volunteers internalise the academic concepts and apply them in their own workshops, ultimately contributing to the creation of safer and more inclusive spaces for the individuals they will encounter. It is believed to be essential to allow participants a protected space to practice and reflect. It is important to talk about what went wrong, why things did not work out and what it has to do with them and their cultural imprint (Holmes, 2022). All of this creates awareness, and it is exactly what we aim to achieve with our workbook.

Regarding the design, we have created our workbook in English as not all members of the group speak Finnish and it also aligns with the language of our

academic studies. This decision was reached after a lot of debate between the members and also a consultation with our work-life partner. We recognise the importance of inclusivity, and therefore are open to translating the workbook into Finnish in the future, if the initial implementation is proven to be successful.

During the training programme, volunteers will be provided with a printed version of the workbook. With this approach, we are aiming for a more engaging and interactive learning experience. By physically interacting with the workbook, volunteers can personalise it, making scribbles and reflections on each topic, enhancing their connection to the material, and reaching a deeper learning of the complex topics.

We did not require a budget for the creation of this workbook because it was written completely by the three members of the group. However, later when we need to print the hard copies and possibly translate it into Finnish, the budget should be discussed clearly and transparently with our work-life partner to ensure a smooth project progression.

The whole workbook was completed using Canva. After the initial feedback form was received and evaluated, we decided that it was important to use the Canva design accessibility tool to ensure that our font and design are accessible to everyone and are easy to follow and read. A significant design adjustment we implemented was the redistribution of content across additional pages to help with the visual density of the text. We have also used a neutral colour for the overall design of the workbook to contribute to the workbook's approachability and clear presentation.

The overall aesthetic of the workbook represents a scrapbook, providing a relaxed and visually appealing format that encourages volunteers to form a personal connection. To further enrich the workbook's interactive nature, we have included different reflective tools such as a mirror image, encouraging volunteers to reflect and think about themselves. Through these thoughtful design decisions, we believe that our workbook demonstrates our commitment to creating an inclusive, engaging, and accessible educational tool.



#### 4.4 Risk assessment

The development project carried some risks that needed to be addressed in advance to mitigate any adverse impact on the project's success. One of the significant risks is related to the potential lack of interest or commitment from the volunteers in using the workbook. To mitigate this risk, we focused on developing easy-to-use and engaging material that addresses the volunteers' needs. Additionally, we will provide guidance and support to ensure that volunteers understand the importance of the workbook and how it can contribute to MONIKA's service users experience of events and services.

Table 2 is a SWOT analysis to further show the risks we have encountered during the creation of this project. We chose to use this analysis because it is easy to read and really puts everything into perspective.

TABLE 2. SWOT risk analysis

STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong connection with the work-life partner. This relationship was utilised for continuous feedback and collaboration, ensuring the workbook met the partner's needs and expectations.</li> <li>• All three members of the group shared very similar thoughts and feelings. This unity helped with decision-making processes and facilitated a smooth project development.</li> <li>• Will be combined with the course Project Management and Innovation (PMI) so we can fully indulge in this project and put a lot more time and effort into it so the full potential will be reached.</li> </ul>
WEAKNESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar projects already exist. A thorough analysis was necessary to identify how our workbook is different and unique. We identified and analysed content not covered by existing materials.</li> <li>• Scheduling conflicts and a limited timeline had to be navigated by being flexible and using online tools such as Zoom and WhatsApp. This minimized the impact of conflicts on the project process.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The workbooks potential to address difficult and sensitive situations. Increasing its appeal to our target group.</li> <li>• Can be shared to other organisations and their volunteers which helps raise awareness on the topic of Safer space.</li> <li>• The viability of product commercialisation can be explored.</li> </ul>
THREATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work-life partner not actively using the workbook. We had to ensure that the topics included were relevant and met the needs and interests of the organisation.</li> <li>• The language of the workbook is available only in English. Plans for future translations were discussed to make sure the workbook reaches its full potential.</li> </ul>

#### 4.5 Ethical challenges

As our work relates to sensitive topics, we had to take particular care to ensure that we considered and addressed all possible ethical challenges. Firstly, when developing the workbook, we had to ensure that all information contained in it was accurate and we were adequately familiar with our subject of study (Lib-Guides Diak, 2023).

When discussing case studies or sensitive topics, we made sure that it was clear that everything was just an imaginary scenario, and no real names or people's stories were used. The workbook also addressed topics related to race, gender, and other identities. It was important to approach these subjects with cultural sensitivity, avoiding stereotypes and generalisations, and ensuring that the workbook respects and reflects the diversity of experiences. Effective diversity education should never rely on or reinforce stereotypes. Instead, it should challenge the oversimplified assumptions about certain communities. By presenting a variety of perspectives, educators can help in recognising and respecting the diversity of experiences in our society (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2016).

The workbook also covers some challenging topics that are crucial such as discrimination and oppression. It is important to create a safe and supportive environment for participants, acknowledging the potential emotional impact of the material and providing appropriate support and resources for those who may need it.

According to The Rector's Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences Arene (2020), there are multiple considerations the students need to pay attention to in their thesis process to avoid ethical challenges that could have a negative impact. After reading the student's checklist ethical guidelines for thesis work, we could affirm that we understood the responsibility we held from an intellectual work and legislation perspective.

A key part of our method was empowering practices, so we ensured that the rights and needs of the service users were emphasized and advocated for in the

workbook. We avoided using language that promoted imbalanced power relationships between the volunteers and service users or otherwise supported oppressive practices.

To further ensure that ethics and values were properly considered in all stages of the development process, we applied a reflective approach to our working. During our meetings we frequently engaged in group reflection of the topics, comparing our different perspectives, and understanding. Throughout the literature review we actively took part in self- reflection to analyse how our own experiences, perspectives and preconceptions relate to the topics and to consider how our positions of power and privilege influence our work.

## 5 PRODUCT EVALUATION

In this chapter, we will justify the chosen evaluation methods for the product, and we will analyse the results of the feedback form that our work-life partner has answered. We will also tackle how the results of the feedback have impacted our product.

### 5.1 Determining product evaluation

Once the product had been created and had been preliminarily presented to our work-life partner, it was time to proceed to the evaluation of it. The team of students had a discussion to decide what would be the parameters that would be evaluated and narrowed down who should be evaluating the product. It was then established that the evaluation would have three purposes: firstly, rate how relevant the topic is to the organisation and if it has been well presented in the product. Secondly, gather suggestions to be able to improve the accessibility of the product and better adjust it to the needs of the volunteers and thirdly, approximate if the product could be incorporated as a permanent training material for MONIKA's volunteers.

When the evaluation content was established, it was clear that the evaluation of the product had to be directed to our work-life partner. As per MONIKA's suggestion, the workers that carried out the product evaluation were selected based on two indicators: the worker was involved in volunteer coordination within the organisation and had been following the progress of the project. The total number of workers that matched both indicators was four.

In order to carry out an effective evaluation tool the team of students created a feedback form, since it allows the respondents to fill it out in their own time and it is less consuming than an interview (Liu, 2021). The form was shared online with the respondents and the team of students believed this to be a positive aspect since the group of respondents was rather small and this way, they were able to remain anonymous.

## 5.2 Feedback form analysis

As can be seen in Appendix 1, the feedback form had a total amount of 7 questions, and it was a mix of numeric, closed, and open questions. In general terms, the numeric questions helped us rate the product and the open questions gave us more insightful feedback.

The feedback was sent to the four selected workers in MONIKA and responded to by three workers by the agreed deadline. The results show a positive disposition towards the relevance of the topic as well as satisfaction with the design of the product. As can be observed in Figures 5 and 6, the relevance of the topic was rated at 4,67 out of 5, and the design of the product at 3,67 out of 5.

FIGURE 5. Feedback form, question 1 results.

1. On a scale from 1 to 5, how relevant do you think the topics tackled in the workbook are? (0 punt)

[Més dades](#)

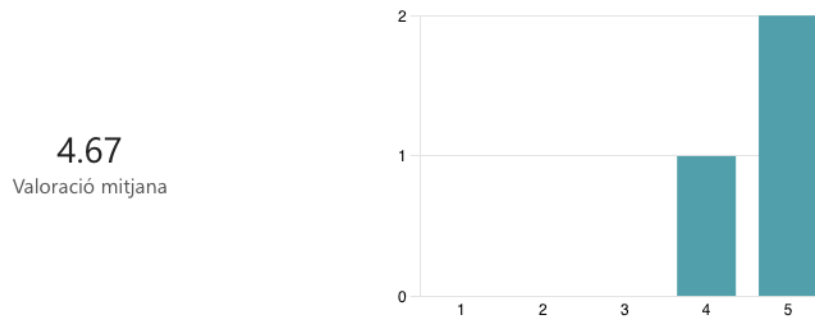
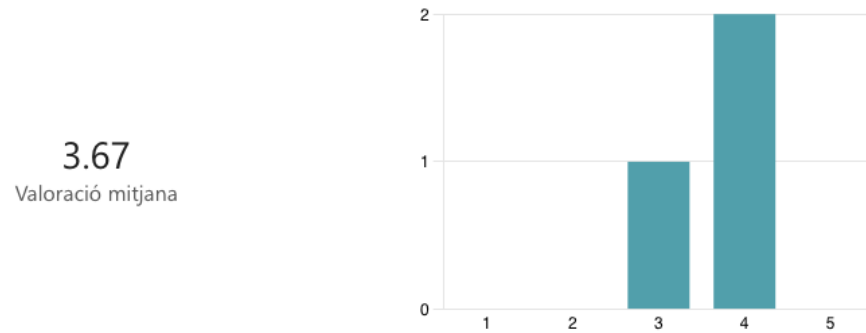


FIGURE 6. Feedback form, question 5 results.

5. Please rate the overall design and layout of the workbook on a scale from 1 to 5. (0 punt)

[Més dades](#)



Another key aspect of the evaluation was to ascertain how well adapted to the volunteers' needs the product was and if there were possibilities for improving its accessibility. In terms of the language used, as represented in Figure 7, two workers considered that the product was easy to understand and engaging and one considered that it wasn't.

FIGURE 7. Feedback form, question 4 results.

4. Did you find the language and presentation of the workbook easy to understand and engaging? (0 punt)

[Més dades](#)



Additionally, when reading the feedback in the open questions, there were comments such as: "Maybe you can explain the words with easier examples?", "Maybe it would be good to have another version of this that takes into account

accessibility (accessible font, colors, text, etc. to really highlight also intersectionality and different needs of people)”.

The conclusion regarding the accessibility of the product, in terms of design, font, or language used, was that it could be improved. Because of that, the team decided to review the concepts presented and apply an accessibility filter from CANVA to the product, as it has been discussed in the design in more detail while describing the creation of the workbook.

Lastly, the third purpose of the evaluation was to approximate if MONIKA workers would consider using the product in future volunteer training outside of this project. As is shown in Figure 8, two of the workers answered “yes” and one answered “maybe”. This aspect was relevant to the project because the team of students believes that if the organisation is willing to use it in the future it manifests that the product is of high quality.

FIGURE 8. Feedback form, question 3 results.

3. Would you recommend using this workbook for future volunteer training sessions? (0 punt)

[Més dades](#)

● Yes	2
● No	0
● Maybe	1





## 6 OVERALL THESIS EVALUATION

In this chapter, we will evaluate the overall thesis project from a project management strategy, and we will determine if our goals, aims, and objective have been achieved by analysing the feedback of our work-life partner and conducting a SOAR analysis.

### 6.1 Project management strategy

In the planning phase of the thesis, the team identified some challenges, such as time availability from both parties and changes within the structure of volunteer coordination within MONIKA, so it was then observed that a solid management strategy was required in order to accomplish our objectives in the set timeline.

We determined that the best approach for this scenario was a top-down approach (Asana, 2023), which allowed the team to have more freedom in the planning process and to keep an overall clearer communication with MONIKA. The chosen management strategy and the execution phase of the project were discussed with our work-life partner, and we agreed that it was mutually beneficial.

Once the product had been created the team identified certain benefits of using the top-down approach, such as having easier communication with our work-life partner, identifying problems at a faster pace, and being able to stick to the project's timetable, which resulted in an effective way of executing our thesis. On the other hand, a different approach that would have included more constant communication with our work-life partner or with the volunteers could have increased the creativity of the final product or given more room for change, as will be further explored.

Even though the team has identified positive and negative aspects of the top-down approach management strategy, the overall evaluation of it is positive, as it shows the set objectives and timetable have been achieved.

## 6.2 Final evaluation of goal, aims, and objective

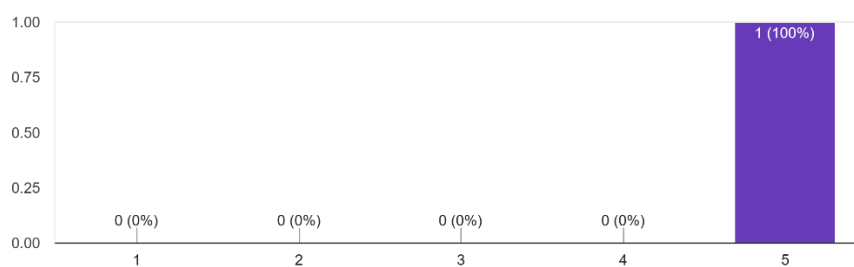
To ensure that the workbook had effectively met the needs of our work-life partner as well as what we set out to do at the beginning of this thesis process, we gathered data by creating a survey. This method of evaluation in partnership with stakeholders is referred to as collaborative evaluation and has been found by evaluation theorists to be very effective (Thomas, 2011). The survey consisted of four statements related to our goal, aims, and objective. The statements were assessed using a scale of 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree 3= neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree. The results from the survey showed strong agreement, with all statements receiving a response of 5 (strongly agree).

The first statement relates to our goal which was to improve the inclusivity of volunteer services. The statement reads “The workbook supports the inclusivity of volunteer training and services.” The question received a rating of 5 (strongly agree) which strongly suggests that this development project has achieved its goal in the view of MONIKA’s management.

FIGURE 9. Final evaluation form, question 1 results

The workbook supports the inclusivity of volunteer training and services. ( 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree 3= neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree)

1 response



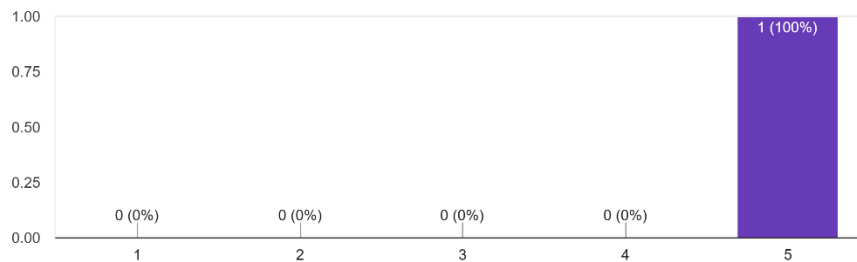
The second statement relates to our aim that the workbook would give the volunteers enough information to implement Safer space approaches in their work and services and to motivate them to make Safer space the foundation of their work. The statement reads “The workbook provides enough information about how to apply Safer space approach in volunteer work.” This question received a rating

of 5 (strongly agree) therefore it can be concluded that this aim has been achieved.

FIGURE 10. Final evaluation form, question 2 results

The workbook provides enough information about how to apply Safer space approach in volunteer work. (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree 3= neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree)

1 response

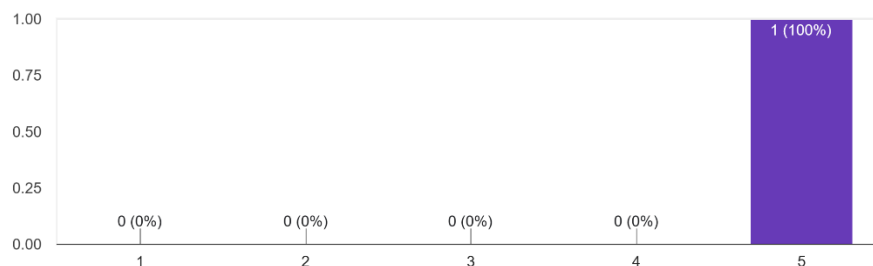


The third statement also relates to our aims, in this case the aim was to provide volunteers with knowledge of the benefits of reflective practice and the opportunity for self-reflection. The statement reads “The workbook explains and supports reflective practice.” This question received a rating of 5 (strongly agree) which suggests that the created workbook has effectively met this aim.

FIGURE 11. Final evaluation form, question 3 results

The workbook explains and supports reflective practice. (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree 3= neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree)

1 response



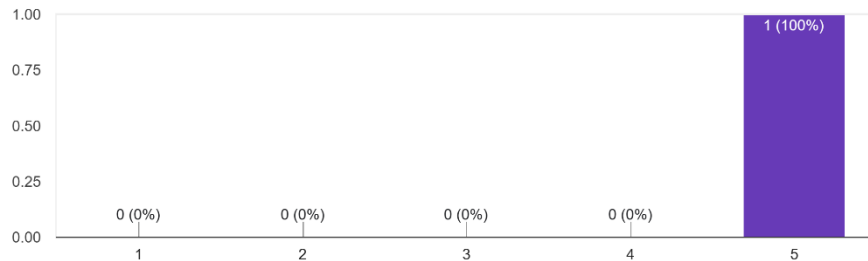
The final statement relates to our objective to support MONIKA in the incorporation of Safer space approach into their volunteer training by creating a reflective workbook on the topic of Safer space. The statement reads “The workbook effectively supports MONIKA in the incorporation of Safer space approach into its volunteer training.” This question achieved a rating of 5 (strongly agree) therefore it

is clearly demonstrated that we have achieved the objective for this development project.

FIGURE 12. Final evaluation form, question 4 results

The workbook effectively supports MONIKA in the incorporation of Safer space approach into its volunteer training. (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree 3= neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree)

1 response



As the results of the survey show strong agreement with all of the statements, it can be concluded that this development project has successfully met its goal, aims, and objective. Due to the successful implementation of the project goal, aims, and objective, it can be concluded that the results demonstrate that this development project has delivered a workbook that is suitable for the needs of MONIKA as an organisation to train volunteers on Safer space.

### 6.3 SOAR analysis

The team of students has used the SOAR analysis as part of the overall thesis evaluation since it is an analysis focused on results and projection, rather than threats or weaknesses of the project (Roadmunk, 2024).

TABLE 3. SOAR analysis

STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been no exact products found, hence the product created is singular.</li> <li>• The product has received overall positive feedback from the work-life partner and their suggestions have impacted the final product.</li> <li>• The team of students has demonstrated to possess great skills in time management and communication.</li> <li>• The team of students have identified beneficial aspects of using a top-down approach management strategy.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our work-life partner will consider the translation and incorporation of the workbook as permanent voluntary training material.</li> <li>• Due to its singularity, the product can be commercialized.</li> </ul>
ASPIRATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team of students aspires to keep developing this product, especially after it has been tested with volunteers and more feedback is gathered.</li> <li>• We aspire to reach other organisations and support them in incorporating Safer space approach in their volunteer activities.</li> </ul>
RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The creation of this product has supported our work-life partner with the introduction of Safer space approach in their volunteer activities.</li> <li>• The product is ready to move on to the next phase, which will include the creation of a workshop to complement the workbook.</li> </ul>

As shown in the SOAR analysis, the overall thesis evaluation can be considered successful from a product, team, management, and professional relationships perspective.

The team's set of skills have played a key role in the completion of this thesis in a successful and efficient manner. Additionally, we have gained new skills and learned to look at projects in an innovative way.

The singularity of our product and having the certainty that it has supported our work-life partner has reaffirmed that we have created a relevant and valuable product and has given us the chance to explore a strategic direction for this project, as it will be further explored in the conclusions chapter.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we discuss what we have discovered through this development project and make our final conclusions. We discuss our professional development throughout this process and our recommendations. Finally, we discuss possible future developments.

### 7.1 Achieving the project goals and objectives

The goal of this project was to improve the inclusivity of volunteer services. As the results of the final evaluation survey showed strong agreement that our output supports the inclusivity of volunteer services, we believe that it demonstrates that our goal has been achieved (See Appendix 2). The long-term impact of the workbook on inclusivity is not yet known, but the results of the evaluation suggest that it may have a meaningful impact on the ongoing development of volunteer services.

The objective of our thesis was to support MONIKA in the incorporation of Safer space approach into their volunteer training by creating a reflective workbook on the topic of Safer space. To ensure this objective was achieved we were in constant communication with our work-life partner to discuss the needs, get feedback, and make changes accordingly. Our progress towards the objective was monitored in all stages of the planning and implementation by using the SMART technique, applying Gibb's reflective cycle, performing a thorough SWOT analysis, analysing the feedback survey, a final evaluation survey, and SOAR analysis.

Attention was given to ethics and risk during all decision-making and was supported by applying the reflective approach and intersectional perspective of our workbook also to our thesis process. As the results of the final evaluation show strong agreement that the workbook effectively supports MONIKA with the incorporation of Safer space approach into their volunteer training, we believe that this objective has been achieved.

The result of the project is a workbook that aligns with the organisation's values and brings new knowledge that affects positively the everyday lives of the volunteers. We have confidence in the potential of our product to give resources and practical solutions to improving the cultural competence of the volunteers, and ultimately, creating Safer spaces by mitigating unintentional harm to service users.

## 7.2 Professional development

In order to evaluate our existing and developed competencies as professionals throughout the thesis project, the team of students has taken the competence requirements for a Bachelor of Social Services from Diaconia University of Applied Sciences and conducted a collaborative analysis of them.

Throughout the creation of our workbook we engaged deeply with the competencies and, emphasised the ability to apply knowledge and skills in various multidisciplinary environments, to encourage inclusive and ethical practices, and to engage with diverse communities in a culturally responsible manner (Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, 2024). Developing and integrating these competencies not only provided a theoretical framework but also offered practical insights and proved essential in addressing the specific needs of our work-life partner and its volunteers. We were able to directly apply these competencies in a professional context which boosted the team's motivation.

The thesis process has allowed our team to gain a deeper understanding of the chosen topic and why it is relevant to introduce it in the everyday life of our work-life partner and its volunteers. We conclude that believing our topic is relevant has also influenced the motivation we have felt toward the project.

We have kept a focus on to whom this product is directed, and we have identified how a need to continuously develop our knowledge of volunteer management. Thanks to this thesis we have learned a considerable amount on the topic, and we feel that the learning process will continue with the next part of this project in connection with Project Management and Innovation (PMI). We believe that



possessing volunteer management skills will be very helpful, especially to those of us who might work in the third sector.

Another great professional development accomplished during this project has been doing collaborative work with an NGO, learning how to work in multidisciplinary teams and work communities as well as working as a foreperson and member of the work community in a socially, ethically, ecologically, and economically sustainable manner (Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, 2024). Even though sticking to the timetable of the project has been at times challenging, the team has shown a great sense of adaptability and flexibility with the work-life partner and within the team. The team has worked on principles such as solidarity and equality, referring to the division of tasks, and all the members have stood by it.

Lastly, a valuable professional development from this project is understanding the importance of setting ethical considerations throughout the whole thesis process and acting in accordance with human and fundamental rights regulations, social values, and professional ethics (Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, 2024). We have identified that the team has experienced a shift during the thesis process and has gone from viewing the ethical considerations as a last “check”, to incorporating an ethical perspective as a core approach applied to all decisions taken in the project.

### 7.3 Recommendations

To further enhance our workbook's impact, reach, and engagement, we have proposed a few recommendations to consider in the future if the implementation of the training will be successful based on the volunteer's feedback.

The first recommendation that we have is the translation of the workbook into Finnish and other relevant languages. As discussed in the identified challenges, currently our workbook is limited by a language barrier because not all members of the thesis group speak Finnish, which is unfortunate as it restricts its accessibility and usability among the non-English speaking volunteers at MONIKA. If the

workbook will be translated into other languages in the future, it is important to consider that in undertaking translation, it is vital to ensure that the cultural sensitivities of the original material are accurately conveyed.

Another recommendation is the active involvement of other organisations in using this workbook for training their own volunteers. While creating our workbook, we have discussed that it is important that we cover a broad range of topics that can fit different types of organisations and not only MONIKA. Partnerships and collaborations with different organisations can increase the workbook's impact. This could be done in different ways such as co-hosting training sessions, integrating the workbook into already existing volunteer training materials, or adapting the workbook to further fit specific organisations.

Lastly, we believe that Safer space approach should form the basis of volunteer training and policies in all organisations so our general recommendation to organisations is to examine their services and environments from a Safer space perspective with an overarching goal of improving accessibility and reducing discrimination and oppression.

#### 7.4 Future development

The product we have developed in this thesis will be used in a training session with MONIKA volunteers during the spring of 2024 in connection with the subject Project Management and Innovation (PMI), where we will take into consideration if the product needs any more adjustments to be integrated into the training session.

After we have facilitated the training session and used the product, further evaluation of the whole project will be carried out, and the target group to whom the evaluation will be directed will be the volunteers. Once we have gathered said feedback, we will see what further changes could be included in the workbook and our work-life partner will consider if the workbook will be included as a permanent training tool for new volunteers.

We look forward to this product being part of the permanent volunteer material at MONIKA and aspire to reach other organisations and support them in incorporating Safer space approach into their volunteer work. We strongly believe that this could be an impactful and necessary product that advocates for quality services that ensure the physical and mental safety of service users in the social field.

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## APPENDIX 1. Feedback form

Feedback form

23.3.2024 15:42

## Feedback form

**A safer room of one's own: A volunteers workbook**

1. On a scale from 1 to 5, how relevant do you think the topics tackled in the workbook are?

1	2	3	4	5
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2. Can you mention any specific section or activity from the book that you found particularly effective or ineffective and explain why?

3. Would you recommend using this workbook for future volunteer training sessions?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

4. Did you find the language and presentation of the workbook easy to understand and engaging?

- Yes
- No

Feedback form

23.3.2024 15:42

5. Please rate the overall design and layout of the workbook on a scale from 1 to 5.

1	2	3	4	5
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6. Do you have any suggestions for the training session, where we will implement the workbook?

7. How do you feel this workbook could be improved to better suit the needs of the volunteers?

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 Microsoft Forms

## APPENDIX 2. Overall evaluation form

### Final evaluation of Safer Room of One's own workbook

To assist us in our final evaluation of the thesis, please answer the following statements. 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree 3= neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree

\* Indicates required question

1. The workbook supports the inclusivity of volunteer training and services. ( 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree 3= neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree) \*

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. The workbook provides enough information about how to apply Safer space approach in volunteer work. (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree 3= neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree) \*

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. The workbook explains and supports reflective practice. (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree 3= neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree) \*

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. The workbook effectively supports MONIKA in the incorporation of Safer space approach into its volunteer training. (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree 3= neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree) \*

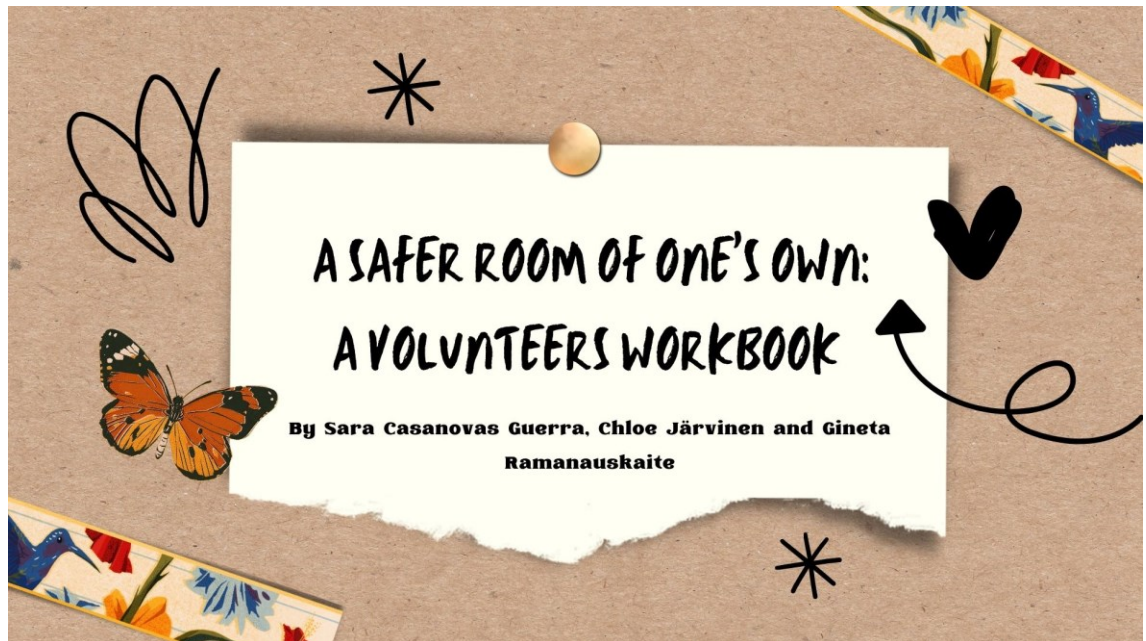
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Google Forms

## APPENDIX 3. Extracts of "A Safer room of one's own : A volunteers workbook"





# SAFER SPACE

“

**“A safer space is a supportive, non-threatening environment that encourages open-mindedness, respect, a willingness to learn from others, as well as physical and mental safety”**

”



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01	Letter from the authors	04	Antidiscrimination	07	Trauma-sensitive practice		
02	Case study	05	Antioppression	08	Intersectionality	10	Self reflection
03	Power & Privilege	06	Antiracism	09	Safer Space checklist		



## 01 LETTER FROM THE AUTHORS

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Hi there! If this workbook has ended up in your hands, it means you are a volunteer and an essential part of an organisation. We appreciate the unique skills and knowledge that you bring to your work! We invite you to apply the topics in this workbook to your own work and experiences, so that you can gain deeper understanding and new perspectives. The main goal of this workbook is to think critically about who we are, how we influence the spaces we are in and how we can create safer spaces for all service users that we work with. To do so, we will follow Amina's case, a made up case, and consider different aspects of it. We hope that you enjoy this learning process and that this too, is a safer space for you. Feel free to write, highlight, and use the workbook however you want. Hopefully this will be a useful reflective tool for you and a great source of information that you can always come back to.

**Chloe, Gineta and Sara**



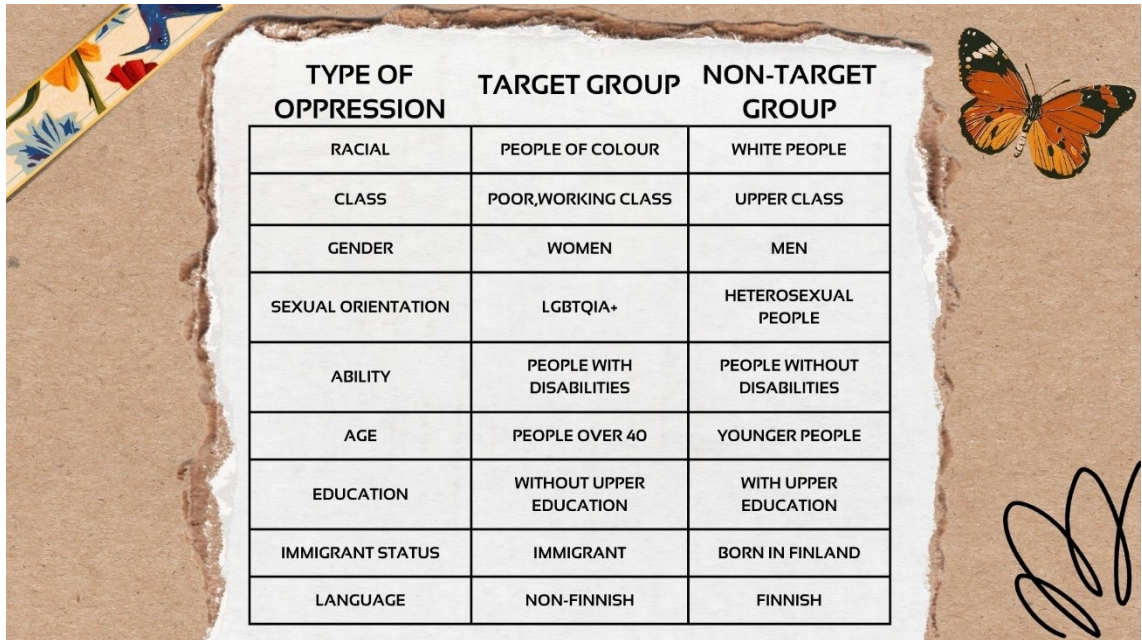
## ANTIDISCRIMINATION IN YOUR WORK

Consider what you have learned about the different forms of discrimination. Are there other forms of discrimination not covered here?

Have you witnessed or experienced discrimination?

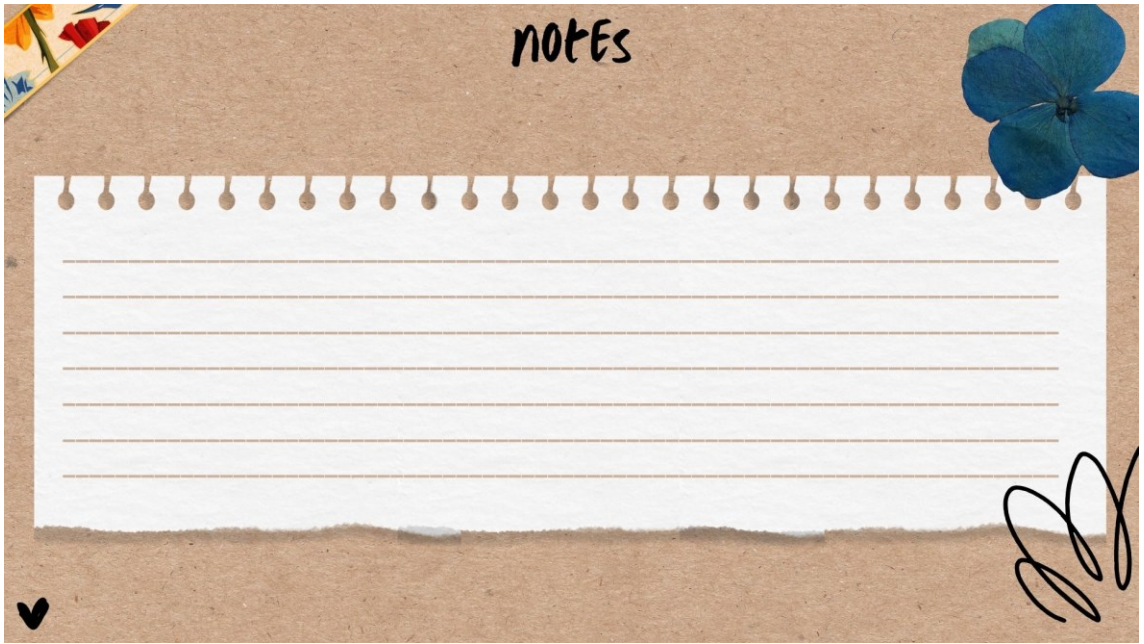
Reflect on how can you incorporate anti-discriminatory practice into your work.

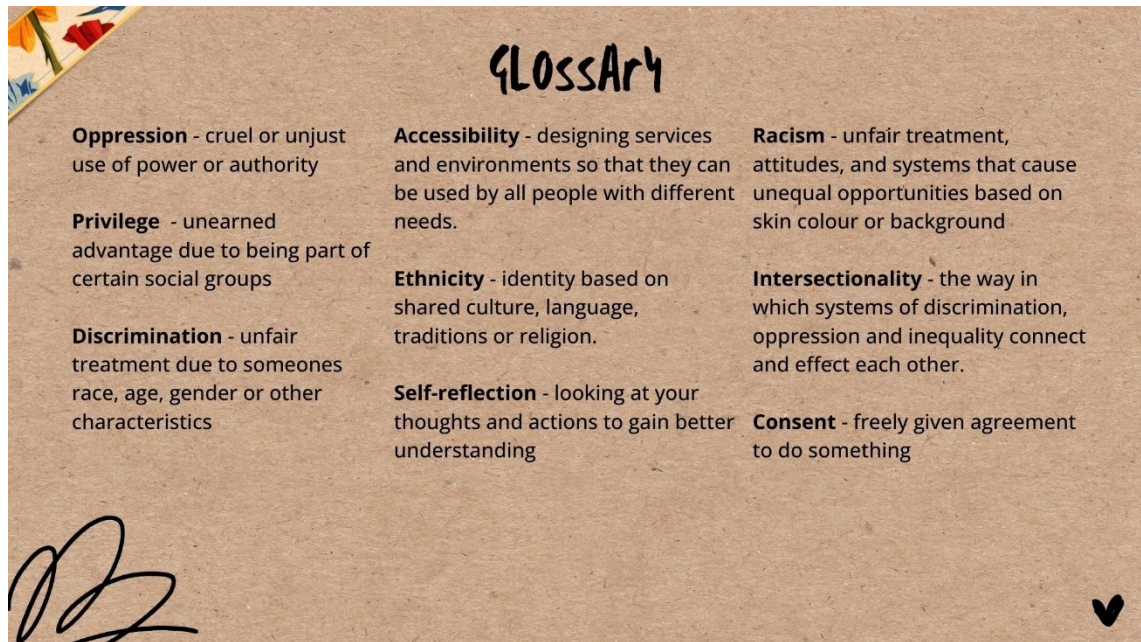




TYPE OF OPPRESSION	TARGET GROUP	NON-TARGET GROUP
RACIAL	PEOPLE OF COLOUR	WHITE PEOPLE
CLASS	POOR,WORKING CLASS	UPPER CLASS
GENDER	WOMEN	MEN
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	LGBTQIA+	HETEROSEXUAL PEOPLE
ABILITY	PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	PEOPLE WITHOUT DISABILITIES
AGE	PEOPLE OVER 40	YOUNGER PEOPLE
EDUCATION	WITHOUT UPPER EDUCATION	WITH UPPER EDUCATION
IMMIGRANT STATUS	IMMIGRANT	BORN IN FINLAND
LANGUAGE	NON-FINNISH	FINNISH







This workbook has been developed in cooperation with MONIKA - Multicultural Women's Association, Finland. MONIKA is a multicultural association that supports and helps women in different languages at Crisis Center Monika, Shelter Mona and Integration Center Monika. For more information, you can visit the organisation's website: <https://monikanaiset.fi/en/>



A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

