

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum (ASD) means that a person's brain sees, feels, and thinks in a different way — not better or worse, just different! It's called a spectrum because every autistic person is unique — each one experiences the world in their own special way. Autism can influence how a person experiences emotions, social situations, and everyday life. Autism isn't something that needs to change - it's simply a different operating system - one that experiences the world in its own amazing and individual way.

DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIES

Educational workshops on autism spectrum were conducted to increase students' knowledge and promote empathy and acceptance towards neurodiverse individuals. The session began with a short team-building exercise highlighting individual differences between people. This was followed by a discussion of basic information about the autism spectrum, focusing on the different ways people communicate, perceive stimuli, and function socially. In the workshop, students participated in empathy exercises to better understand the sensory and communication challenges that individuals on the autism spectrum may face. Finally, the students jointly developed principles of supportive behavior toward peers on the autism spectrum and briefly summarized their acquired knowledge.

MODULE 1 AUTISM SPECTRUM





Strategies used during autism spectrum disorder workshops:

- psychoeducation – providing basic knowledge about the autism spectrum,
- activating methods,
- empathy exercises to understand social difficulties,
- modeling appropriate social and communication attitudes,
- learning through experience and reflection,
- promoting inclusive education and acceptance of diversity.



DiverseMind

LEARNING GAMES AND ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED

Game 1 “ SHIFT ”

The children got a simple task to complete (like copying a pattern or drawing from instructions). They took a part through, while the teacher said “SHIFT!” and changed the rules (for example: no talking, switch roles, use gestures only). They kept going and tried their best with the new rules. Afterwards, participants chatted about how it felt, how they handled the changes, and what helped them work together.

Goals: *The game shows how changing rules affects feelings and actions. It teaches empathy, patience, and clear communication, and helps everyone practice adapting to change in a safe way.*

GAME 2 “ INSIDE OUT ”

In this activity, the participants were in a calm and safe space where all the different ways they showed their feelings, were okay. They learned that everyone feels emotions differently, and that’s completely normal. There’s no right or wrong way to express your emotions, and no one judged how they showed them.

Goals: *Students learned how to recognise, name, and regulate emotions - in themselves and others. They learned how to understand that emotions could be visible or hidden, and that different people experience them in different ways.*

During the workshops, students actively participated in educational and integration games that allowed them to better understand the functioning of peers on the autism spectrum. They collaborated in groups, role-played, solved tasks set in the games, and participated in communication simulations. The games fostered engagement, developed empathy, reflected on diversity, and developed ways to support their peers.

AUTISM



RESULTS AND IMPACT

The workshops increased students' awareness and understanding of autism spectrum conditions and the needs of neurodiverse individuals. Students showed active engagement and openness during the activities. The sessions supported the development of empathy, acceptance, and inclusive attitudes while helping to reduce stereotypes. Participants learned appropriate ways to support and interact respectfully with peers on the autism spectrum in the school environment.

CONCLUSIONS

- Educational and simulation games effectively increase students' knowledge about the autism spectrum and help them understand individual differences.
- Students actively engage in practical activities, which supports the development of empathy and acceptance.
- Continuing to use interactive games and exercises in inclusive education helps reinforce knowledge and skills for supporting peers on the autism spectrum.
- Regular integration games can promote collaboration, communication, and the creation of a safe and inclusive school environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- continue educational activities on neurodiversity,
- strengthen attitudes of acceptance and respect for individual differences,
- promote inclusive education practices in everyday school life,
- develop students' communication and collaboration skills,
- respond appropriately to instances of exclusion or misunderstanding among peers,
- organize regular integration and empathy-building activities,
- support the creation of a safe, respectful, and inclusive school environment.