

## **Innovative Environmental Education ECO-COMPASS MODULE 3**

### **Sustainable development in the workplace and work-life balance**

**Educational material for participants**

**KA210-ADU - Small-scale partnership in adult education**

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***Inovatívne budovanie ekologického povedomia a kultúry rozvíjaním environmentálnych zručností a formovaním postojov občanov s mentálnym postihnutím***

***Innovative building of ecological awareness and culture by developing environmental skills and shaping the attitudes of citizens with mental disabilities***



***Innovative Environmental Education ECO-COMPASS – Educational material for participants***

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The main objective of the project is to support social inclusion and lifelong learning of people with mental disabilities by developing their environmental skills and competencies, shaping their environmental attitudes and responsibilities through education based on international experiences. The project specifically focuses on supporting and developing international cooperation of participating organizations, building, and strengthening partnership networks and professionalization of organizations.

*Innovative Environmental Education ECO-COMPASS ensures developing the environmental skills and competences of professionals and people with mental disabilities, shaping their environmental attitudes and environmental responsibility through innovative education based on international experience.*



Coordinated by civic association Spoluprácou pre lepšiu budúcnosť - Veľký Meder and edited by ECO-COMPASS consortium

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## 1. Introduction

In this module, we present the importance of eco-conscious behaviour at work, at the farm and our private life. We will deal with the promotion of eco-aware lifestyle. We will learn about what work-life balance means, and what we can do about our health.

### *1. Sustainable development in the workplace*

In the first topic, we will present the sources of environmental pollution at work, but also the environmentally friendly options. We spend a lot of time at work and often do not pay enough attention to our environment, our unhealthy eating habits and our health.

### *2. Work at the farm*

The development and mechanisation of industrial agriculture, the use of pesticides and fertilisers has accelerated food production. However, shortly afterwards, this caused problems, because it overburdened the environment. Within this topic, we present the opportunity of offering healthy, organically grown fruit and vegetable baskets. We will cover the importance of soil care and organic farming.

### *3. Work-life balance*

The work-life balance, or lack of it, is becoming increasingly important nowadays. You can learn about a balanced lifestyle, which is important because constant stress, overload or lack of motivation can cause physical symptoms.

### *4. Healthy lifestyle*

In our era, we speak more and more about health. You can only meet expectations if you are able to properly interpret the challenges, respond to them appropriately and cope with life. It is important that you are able to adapt to your environment, be involved in the life of your family and other social relationships. You can plan your future appropriately and adjust your plans from time to time.

## 2. Sustainable development in the workplace and work-life balance

### 2.1. Sustainable development in the workplace



#### 2.1.1. What is important to know?

**Make your current job green!**



Is a job change not ideal for you, but sustainability is important to you in your everyday life? Make your own office feel like home, turn it into an eco-friendly workplace!

You can approach it from two directions: what is easy to change and what would have a big impact. Start with the areas where both apply! Then focus on the things that make a big impact, turning them green step by step! There

are green packaging materials, green cleaning products, green clothing, and even green investments.



We can often rearrange an everyday process to make it more environmentally friendly. Choose local products and services for our office. Encourage public transport, introducing office bikes or scooters instead of travelling by taxi. Pay attention to heating and cooling, and consider wisely what temperature we actually need to maintain in the office. The quality of the work may not

even be improved by bright light, excessive heat, the constant buzzing of printers, ...etc.?

### 1. From the table to the pen – let's make everything green!

There is no need to spend a lot of money if we want to make the office green. Nowadays, we can choose from a wide range of products, from biodegradable coffee cups to office furniture made from recycled materials. Printing paper? Post-it? Paper towel? Coffee cup? Choose recycled! These are at most minimally more expensive. But in the long term, they can significantly reduce the ecological footprint of our workspace.

### 2. Energy saving? Start with air condition and heating!

Offices are often over-ventilated in the summer, or even overheated in the winter months. We can make our workspace more sustainable just by not turning the thermostat on all the time. There's no need to cool the office to 18 degrees or heat it to 26 degrees because it's not healthy nor environmentally friendly!

### 3. Natural light is important!

By having the right amount of natural light, workers' mood and therefore also their performance will improve. Besides, we can also cut our electricity bills, because the more light we get into our office, the less lamps we need to turn on. Let's use energy-saving (led) bulbs in our offices at work! Besides that, try to make people keep to the simple habit: let's turn off the lights after ourselves!

### 4. The legend of paper-free office – is it possible?

Is it possible to be paper-free? In the digital age? In the age of cloud hosting? Yes, it is. But first let's have a look at the facts! Instead of document folders, let's use office server or cloud. Instead of invoices, e-invoices. Instead of a paper-based quote, let's have a PDF. We can also do a lot for the environment even by using less new paper and using the backside of documents that are no longer needed!

### 5. Eco-awareness starts by going to work!

We can also do a lot to protect our environment by taking the bus, tram or underground instead of getting into our car. But it can also make a difference if we leave on time, and if the distance is too far, we can walk to work. Physical activity stimulates well-being!



## 6. Selective waste collection in the office

It is also worth mentioning the importance of waste selection. Much waste is generated at work day after day, but fortunately most of it can be recycled. Purchasing a selective waste bin is not a big expense. Let's take advantage of it!

## 7. Green energy use? Nowadays, it's easier than ever before!

Nowadays, energy from renewable sources is more accessible than ever before. For the time being, solar energy is the most suitable solution in the form of roof-mounted solar systems. To a certain extent, it makes you independent of for example the electricity network, which can be an advantage in the event of an unexpected power cut.

## 8. Let's deal with the energy vampires!

At every workplace, whether bigger or smaller, there are several "energy vampires". These devices consume electricity even when they are not in use. Computers, huge multifunctional printers consume power 24/7. It is therefore worth nipping the phenomenon in the bud, starting with the distributors. The cheapest way to do this is to disconnect the distributors or unplug these devices at the end of each day.





### **2.1.2. Questions**

#### **Sustainable development in the workplace**

1. What is the ideal working environment for you like?
2. What are the components of a green workplace?
3. How to be energy efficient at work?
4. What you can do with the waste to make it green?
5. How can you keep your workspace clean?





### 2.1.3. Practical tasks - worksheets

#### Sustainable development in the workplace

Worksheet 1 – Look for treasures at the courtyard of workplace! Find something that is: hard, stinging, soft, bright, round, smelly.



frog



snail

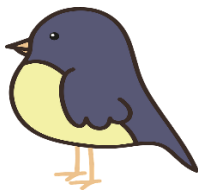


flower



© CanStockPhoto.com

pebble



bird



butterfly



bee



ladybug

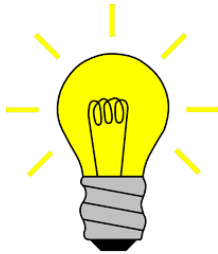


worm

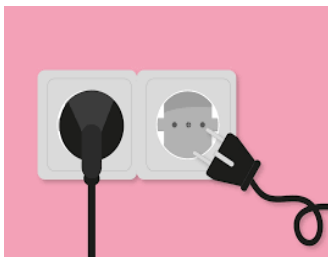


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Worksheet 2 - Look for computer and electronic equipment at work! Check whether your usage habits are correct! Write in the space provided what shortcomings you have identified and what you will do to resolve them.



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## 2.2. Work at the farm



### 2.2.1. What is important to know?

Whether we live in the countryside or in the city, we have to pay attention for our environment.

Thanks to accelerated industrial agriculture, we can quickly access different products. As a result of their production and the control of larger market stakeholders, our consumption habits that support small-scale agriculture and local products are being marginalised worldwide. The variety of products manufactured is decreasing, resulting in the slow disappearance of local characteristics. The (traditional) knowledge needed to produce them is gradually being lost.

Living nature provides the renewable energy sources that we use every day (e.g., soil formation, pharmaceutical raw materials).

- Biodiversity makes it possible to adapt to a changing environment through natural selection, evolution, which also results in the relative stability of living systems at the same time.
- The living world affects the climate, global phenomena that fundamentally determine the quality of human life.
- Without other species, we cannot survive, either!



There is huge potential in organic-based or ecological farming. The idea is that we produce without synthetic pesticides, without fertilisers, that we keep our animals on this kind of feed, and then use this milk to produce organic products. But "organic" can be not only fruit and vegetables, but also cereals, bread made from them, meat, milk, dairy products, honey. The circle can and should be extended. The range can and should be extended.

Organic farming can also be a way of living, an opportunity to be part of the ecosystem. By doing so, we cause less damage to

nature and the human body and help well-being of the animals. Meanwhile, the system supports itself and the family.

## **Community Supported Agriculture**



We can offer healthy, organically grown baskets of fruit and vegetables to the local community through the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model. The beauty of this model is that while we strive to create stability in the economy, raise awareness for the importance of healthy nutrition, raise awareness for the importance of soil care, we also care for the environment. With the help of this model, we reduce the physical distance between producer and consumer. Unlike long supply chains, we build personal contact, trust and many times organic certification into the system as a guarantee of quality.

## **What do we put on our table?**



The Community Supported Agriculture model provides an opportunity for small producers to produce and directly sell local, quality food. It also guarantees consumers convenient access to tasty local products, mostly produced using organic methods.

The landscape, the animals, the creating human being are all valuable together. This is the greatest potential of the earth, and it would be good if more and more people saw it that way. Let's recognize these values and bring them to the surface!



### **2.2.2. Questions**

#### **Work at the farm**

1. What plants do we recognize in the farm?
2. What does each animal eat?
3. What is hay made of?
4. What do we call a Community Supported Agriculture model?
5. What is needed for biodynamic farming?

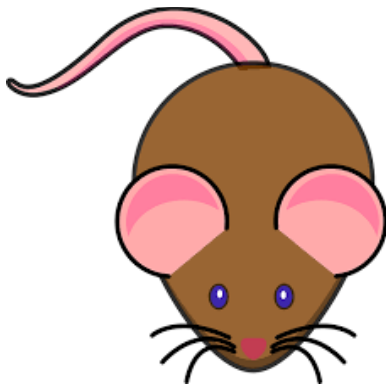


### 2.2.3. Practical tasks – worksheets

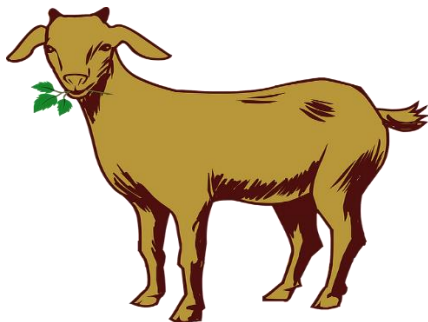
#### Work at the farm

Worksheet 1 – Try to find out what animal we thought of!

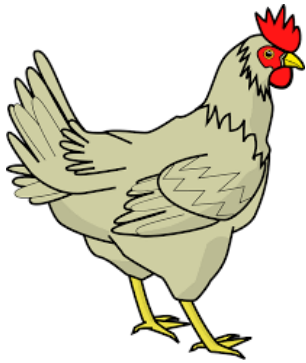
Eating cheese in grey coat, having long, thin tail, if it is caught the cat has a good prey. (Mouse)



Knights, valiant and white, bone forks and bearded knights, grazing, the field is their platter. Barking dogs do make them scatter. (Goats)



Cluck-cluck, cluck-cluck, I cluck, what a cluck am I? (Hen)



I stand at the top of the dump, shouting to the dawn. (Cock)



Going out it's pointing inside. Coming in it's the other way around.  
Coming down and it points at the sky,  
going up and it's pointing at the ground... (Tail of the cat)





Worksheet 2 – Name and tick if you found anything from the list!



## 2.3. Work-life balance



### 2.3.1. What is important to know?

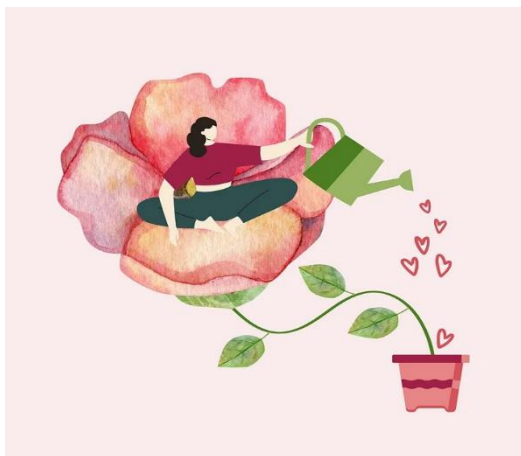
Work-life balance primarily relates to finding individual and healthy balance. Therefore, it is a matter of personal judgement what one considers "self-sacrifice", "duty", stress or quality time. Not only our working, family and social situations are different, but also ourselves and our perceptions. Work-life balance describes the state of equilibrium between our own needs and the distribution of time we dedicate to other areas of our life.

In today's fast-paced world, we need to put a great emphasis on our physical and mental well-being. This is not surprising, as maintaining a delicate balance between expectations at work, family commitments and individual needs is very important for a balanced, yet active life, for building and maintaining relationships that matter to us, and for enjoying the smaller and larger pleasures of everyday life. Of course, it is not negligible from the point of our physical and mental well-being, either. We can only do this effectively if we balance between work and private life.

And this is where the biggest challenge comes in: we have to take on multiple roles, as employees (managers or subordinates), as partners, parents and friends. We feel good when each of these roles is fulfilled in our life to an ideal extent. However, this balance is often broken. Certain roles are given too much emphasis, while others are pushed to the background. In addition to all these, it's important to leave time for sport to protect our health. We have to juggle, and probably the topic was also put into the limelight because more and more people are looking for good solutions.



Change is constantly present in all areas of our lives. It also involves upsetting the established balance. Sometimes there are minor (arrival of a new colleague, filling in a new position, etc.), at other times, more significant (change of job, illness, loss, etc.) changes take place in our lives. Some events we cannot influence, while others we can affect. Change can come into our life as a result of our own efforts. In each case, we have to make sure that we keep a sense of balance. We should not underestimate those programmes that connect us with our families, relatives or friends outside the world of work. Neglecting these compromises a healthy work-life balance and limits our quality of life. Those who make too many sacrifices for their profession or vocation and make compromises in their personal life (for example, because work is supposed to be at risk) will sooner or later reach their limits, i.e., physical and/or emotional exhaustion. Many people are unaware of the fact that personal happiness and overall balance can also be the basis for professional success.



Everyone has their own limits of tolerance to cope with work-life imbalances in the short or long term. In particular, maximalist career starters tend to focus all their attention and energy on their new jobs. They perceive themselves as being under enormous pressure and are trying to keep up with experienced employees. But what many people forget is that a healthy work-

life balance is not only in the interest of the employee. Of course, companies also benefit from a well-balanced, motivated and creative employee, who does not constantly struggle with the risk of failure due to excessive demands.

We need to take time to assess and rethink the order of priorities in our own life, so that we can establish an optimal balance for ourselves again, as a result of the imbalance caused by the changes.



### **2.3.2. Questions**

#### **Work-life balance**

1. What roles do you take in the everyday life?
2. What external and internal expectations belong to these roles?
3. How realistic are these expectations?
4. What are those expectations that you could modify?
5. How would you like to modify these expectations?



### 2.3.3. Practical tasks - Worksheets

#### Work-life balance

##### Worksheet 1 – Estimation of situation

##### Estimation of the current situation

- How much are you satisfied with the balance of work and private life?  
Mark it on a scale from 1 to 10!

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- What balance level would you be satisfied with at your current stage  
of life? Mark it on a scale from 1 to 10!

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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## Worksheet 2 - Values

### **Personal basic values**

- What are the most important basic values for you in the field of work and private life? List the most important 3 in both of them!
  
- How much does your current life reflect the listed basic values?

## Worksheet 3 - Establishing balance

### **What helps me to align my roles and my values?**

- Self-knowledge
- Self-confidence
- Being aware of one's own strengths
- Saying no
- Awareness and overwriting of role models adopted from others
- Time spent on myself
- Supporters



## 2.4. Healthy lifestyle

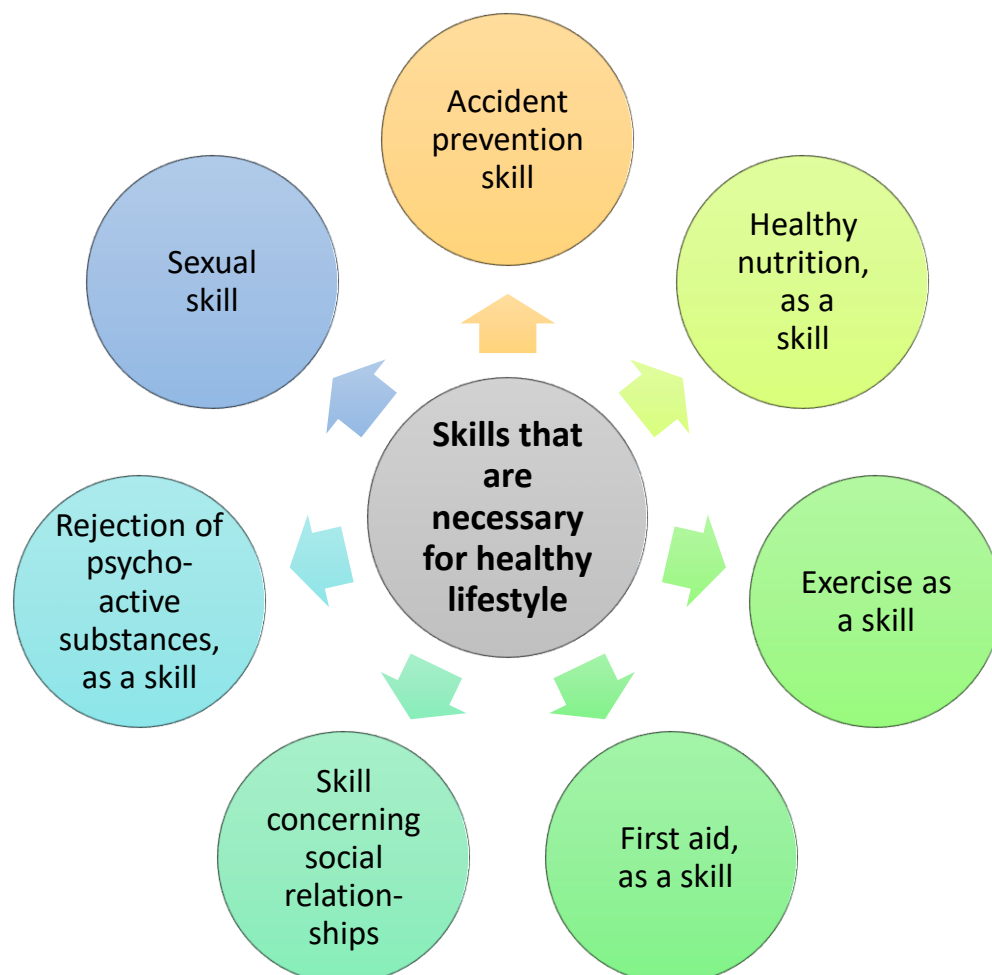


### 2.4.1. What is important to know?

Health is an integral part of our daily lives, we take it for granted, we often ignore it, we don't take care of it, because we have it; it becomes a value when we feel its absence. In our overstressed world, we do not think about the fact that we also have to do something to stay healthy. We don't know how to take care of it, what to do to keep it on the long term.

It is important that we have enough knowledge about the factors harmful to the health. We should be able to say no to the habits destroying health, and be able to make healthy decisions.

Skills necessary for living a healthy life are the following:



They can reinforce the existence of social relationships (supportive community), self-knowledge, self-assessment, the abilities of coping with problems and individual ways of coping with stress. They are also very important in terms of lifestyle, in addition to biological, organ endowments and age factors.

### **Natural components of healthy living:**

Sunshine



Water



Sleep



Fresh air



Exercise, sport



Healthy diet



### **Health and physical activity**

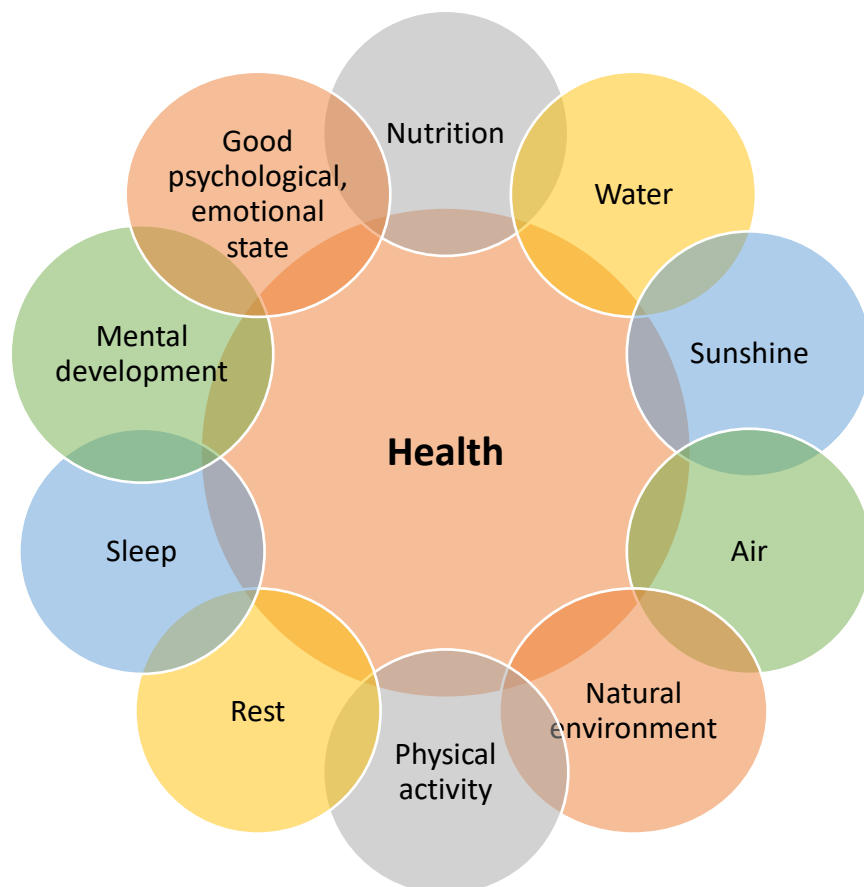
Mental health, which is reinforced by the stable environment, also includes physical health. Many people need (both) enough exercise and a healthy diet to preserve their health. Especially if one works at the office, sit all day long, and just quickly warms up some food during the short break. Exercise can also relieve

a lot of stress and tension, which is no longer in the home of our family. Friends and family can also be involved in such a programme. For example, if we do not manage to do so during the week, then let's cook something fresh at the weekend, preferably with other people. By doing so, we can make sure that our personal relationships, work and physical health are in balance.

In order to develop health-aware behaviour of the population, and to identify diseases and health risks early, it is important to promote and learn about prevention programmes already at an early stage of life. One illustrative form of the diversity of the components of health is the presentation of the health flower model.

### Health flower

**Health = being balanced in body, mind and soul**



The concept of health includes joy of life, well-being, balance, satisfaction, motivation for work, creativity, fitness, physical, psychical and social adaptability. Health includes the ability to solve problems and manage emotions. It is the source of a positive self-image and of maintaining physical and mental well-being. Health is an ever-changing, dynamic concept for the individual, requiring ever-changing behaviour.

One can meet a wide range of expectations if they are able to interpret and respond to the challenges appropriately. Besides this, he can constantly adapt to his environment, engage properly in his family and other social relationships, plan his future, adjust his plans from time to time, in short, cope with life. The aim for all of us is to increase the number of years spent in good health and to protect our immediate relatives and family. Getting the balance right might be a very demanding task. Our ingrained patterns, habits and fears make it difficult to change our routinely, daily practices. Those who tend to be perfectionists or have difficulty saying no to extra requests from superiors, colleagues or family members also have a hard time. It's worth stopping and taking at least a moment to step out of this overwhelmed state. When we feel we don't have time for anything - it's important to prioritise tasks and consider our options, putting our own interests first.





## 2.4.2. Questions

### Healthy lifestyle

1. In your opinion, what does healthy lifestyle mean?
  - physical health (nutrition, movement)
  - physical, psychological health (nutrition, movement, handling emotions)
  - physical, psychological and mental health (nutrition, movement handling emotions, way of thinking)
  - physical, psychological, mental and social well-being (nutrition, movement, handling emotions, way of thinking, human relationships)?
2. What does health mean to you? List 1-2 examples!
3. What skills are needed to develop a healthy lifestyle?
4. What factors can lead to health damage? List 5 examples!
5. What are you currently doing to maintain your mental and physical health?
6. What would you like to do in the next 6 months?



### **2.4.3. Practical tasks - worksheets**

#### **Healthy lifestyle**

##### Worksheet 1

How do you eat? Make a poster entitled "Eating healthy"!

## Worksheet 2

What do I do for myself? Caring about myself.

Make a personal poster entitled ***My Health Flower!***

Recommended videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7bZtffveIY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yao9cA3ucl4>



### 3. Quiz

**1. What can be sources of environmental pollution at work?**

- a) flowers
- b) natural light
- c) mug
- d) cleaning chemicals

**2. What does organic farming mean?**

- a) fertilizing
- b) using synthetic chemicals
- c) composting
- d) building roads

**3. How can work-life balance be established?**

- a) by worrying
- b) by having more money
- c) by self-care
- d) by lots of work

**4. What are the natural components of healthy living?**

- a) eating hamburger
- b) having little sleep
- c) drinking water (2l/day)
- d) solarium

**5. How can we save at work?**

- a) we do not switch off light
- b) we use natural light
- c) we use the printer frequently
- d) we use lot of water

Correct answers:

1. d), 2. c), 3. c), 4. c), 5. b)

## Coordinator



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