

The Bridge of Mental Well-Being

is a structured discussion group model for older adults who are interested in their mental well-being. The Bridge of Mental Well-Being is based on six building blocks:

- Appreciation of lifecourse experience and individual uniqueness
- Life experience as a mental resource
- Meaning-based orientation
- Resourcefulness-based approach
- Means to change perspective and choice of attitude
- Focus on positive outlook

The Bridge of Mental

The Bridge of Mental Well-Being was developed as a part of the project Meaning in Old Age (RAY 2011–2015). The aim of the project was to enhance the mental well-being of older adults. Research and development has included the application of mental resources, such as sense of coherence, coping skills, resilience and hope.

The Bridge of Mental Well-Being applies a meaning-based orientation. The group process focuses on meaningful activities, relationships and positive experiences of everyday life.

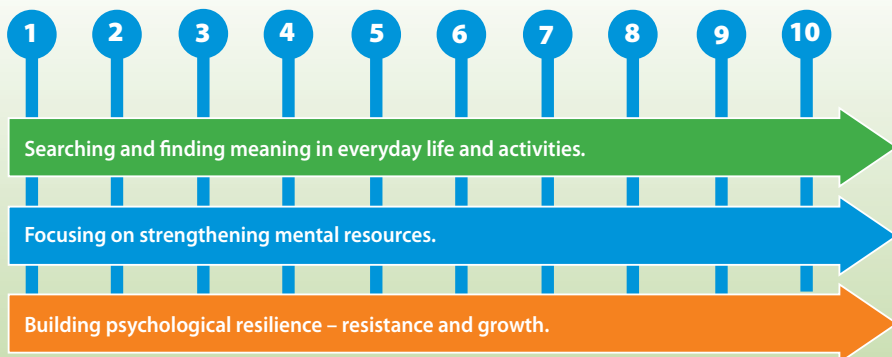
General recommendations for planning a Bridge of Mental Well-Being group:

- Focus recruitment: make sure participants can relate to some shared background topic
- Limit group size to 5–8 participants
- Plan a closed group and explain this to participants
- Plan the group as a process of 10 meetings, with 2–3 weeks interval
- Every meeting has the same structure but the topic of discussion is different
- Journal and individual work in between the meetings supports the group process

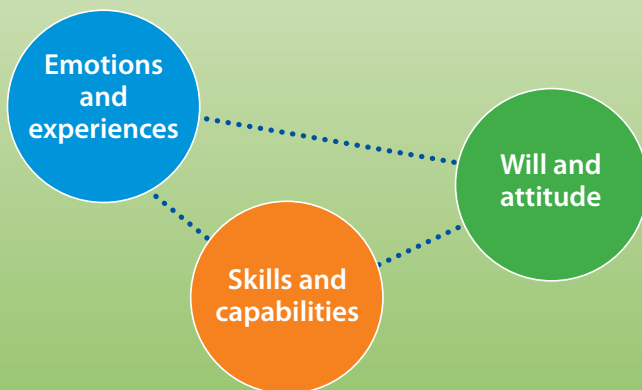
Well-Being¹

The themes of the meetings

1. Welcome and introduction
2. Resources in daily life
3. Freedom of attitude as a resource
4. Life story as a resource
5. Strengthening stories
6. Gratitude
7. Doing what matters
8. Meaningful daily life
9. Future prospects
10. Evaluation and conclusion



Theory
and experiences
combined:
synopsis of
mental well-being
in old age



¹ Fried S & Heimonen S (2015) Structured Group Discussions Help Finding Meaning in Life and One's Own Mental Resources. Poster presentation at 8th IAGG-ER Congress, Dublin.



The Age Institute promotes the significance of evaluating and maintaining functional capacity in older adults. The Age Institute gives voice to older adults, their participation and empowerment. Old people themselves are key actors in the research and development carried out at the Age Institute.

The Age Institute

- studies the everyday lives of older adults
- develops opportunities for participation together with older people
- produces new innovations for older adults and their families
- disseminates information about the results of new studies
- offers training to professionals
- participates in current discussion on age related issues, values and attitudes

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