# Myths vs. reality - moving debate

## Learning objectives

- Raise awareness about mental health problems
- Deconstruct stereotypes
- Educate young people about mental health problems
- Reduce the same about mental health problems
- Promote empathy
- Enhance communication skills and encourage open dialogue
- Cultivate critical thinking.
- Promote self-reflection
- Inspire advocacy

## Participants

This workshop can be an entry-level activity to discuss mental health with young people and deconstruct the stereotypes. It works well with any age group, but adjusting the statements to suit the specific age group is important. We recommend using it in larger groups, ideally with at **least 8 participants**, though it can also be effective with up **to 30 people**. The depth of the discussion may vary based on the number of participants.

## Needed tools and resources

Depending on the number of participants, you might need a larger room, or you can even facilitate the activity outside. Make sure there's enough space for everyone to share their opinions by moving around. Besides finding the right place, all you need to do is come up with some statements about stereotypes related to mental health for the workshop. Don't be afraid to use statements that might provoke thoughts or encourage sharing to engage young people. Covering different topics and having more statements than you plan to use is a good idea.

## Duration of the workshop

The workshop duration can range **from 30 to 90 minutes**, taking into account factors such as the number of participants, the statements used, and the level of engagement from the young people. It is recommended to allocate time for both preparation and debriefing. Ideally, setting aside at least an hour for the entire workshop works best.

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# Description of the workshop

## 1 Energiser: A quick game to energise and engage participants.

Example: “Clap-circle” - Form a circle and take turns clapping, aiming for speed. Use a timer to set a new record.

## 2 Warm-up activity

Consider selecting an activity that involves movement and encourages participants to focus on themselves and others.

Example: Instruct participants to move around the room, exploring corners and interesting areas while reflecting on their feelings. After a few minutes, prompt them to interact with high-fives, waves, or polite smiles before continuing their individual paths.

## 3 Moving debate

Organise participants into a line in the middle of the room (standing behind each other).

**Describe the activity as follows:**

“I will present various statements about mental health. I invite you to express your opinion by moving to the left or right. Move to the right if you agree with the statement and to the left if you disagree. You can also indicate the strength of your agreement by your distance from the midpoint, but please try to avoid staying in the middle if you can. “

Once the participants understand the instructions, introduce the first statement, starting with an “easier” one as a trial.

After each statement, once participants have positioned themselves, encourage them to share their opinions. Ensure at least one person from each side, including those closer to the middle, expresses their thoughts. Allow for reactions and discussions, but manage time efficiently to cover multiple topics in one session.

If participants are engaged, inform them they can move if someone shares a convincing argument that influenced their opinion. Ask those who move to explain their decisions.

## 4 Debriefing

Conclude the workshop with an evaluation activity to monitor participants’ feelings and takeaways from the session.

Example: Evaluation discussion - Have participants sit down and ask the following questions, allowing them to share:

1. How did you feel during the activity?
2. Were there any surprises for you?
3. What did you learn, and what will you take home from this experience?

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