



Self-assessment Tool

**Annex 4: Self-assessment - Trauma
(print)**



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Self-Assessment for Childcare Professionals: Trauma

Forced displacement, domestic violence, physical abuse or neglect can have a great impact on children and their social and emotional wellbeing. Childcare professionals should therefore be equipped with the knowledge and skills to work successfully with children and families who are experiencing trauma, providing an emotionally supportive environment and a sense of safety.

Below you can find a short self-assessment helping you to identify your strengths or highlight areas needing further improvement to support children experiencing trauma and families in crisis.

Instructions

The self-assessment contains **39 statements**. Please read each statement carefully and rate how much you agree with a statement on a scale of 1 to 5 (*1 – strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 – neither agree nor disagree; 4 – agree; 5 – strongly agree*).

For completing the form, you will need approximately **15 – 20 minutes**.

At the end of the form, you will find step-by-step instructions on how to calculate and interpret your results, as well as recommendations for further reading and competence improvement.

NOTE: The self-assessment is completely **anonymous** and the result will be visible only to you and the person(s) you are willing to share it with (e.g. colleague, mentor, educator, etc.). Try to be objective and honest with yourself to get the most reliable results.

TRAUMA	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
♥ I respect individual differences in children's responses to trauma, e.g. social withdrawal, passivity, lack of interest and motivation, aggressive behaviour, difficulty concentrating, etc. and utilise non-judgemental approach.					
🔗 I can define what trauma is and compare different types of trauma.					
🗣️ While working with children affected by trauma, I can identify and build upon their strengths (e.g. personal skills, persons in their surroundings) that can help them deal with the challenge they are facing.					
🧩 I can make quick decisions in case of emergencies, e.g. when a child poses an immediate risk to themselves or others through aggressive behaviour.					
♥ I acknowledge and respect diverse coping mechanisms (reactions, behaviours) that families use in difficult and stressful situations.					
🔗 I can explain different triggers, common symptoms and categorize patterns of behaviour of traumatised children.					
♥ I can manage my own emotions to maintain professional boundaries in work with traumatised children, ensuring my responses are supportive and non-reactive.					
🔗 I can explain how forced migration (e.g. caused by a war, natural disasters) can affect child's psychosocial functioning.					
🗣️ I am able to communicate my personal emotions and needs with others, for example with colleagues or my family.					
🔗 I can identify resilience factors for children such as secure attachment with caregivers, providing consistent routines, and encouraging positive coping techniques like using deep breathing exercises, to help them manage their feelings.					
🧩 I can support initiatives (e.g. local support programs) that promote the resilience and strength-building of children impacted by trauma.					
🗣️ I can observe non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions, responding to the child's unspoken feelings (e.g., offering a comforting					

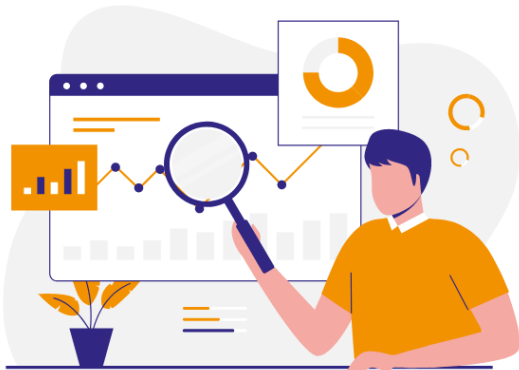
touch if appropriate, or giving space if needed) to support their emotional needs.					
🔍 I can identify community resources and services available to displaced individuals and families, ensuring they can access the necessary support during crises.					
♥ I can care about my own well-being e.g. through regular exercise, hobbies, social support networks, supervision, and professional development opportunities.					
🗣️ I can collaborate with professionals (e.g. therapists, counsellors, support systems for displaced children and families), colleagues or parents, to plan and provide support to the children and families experiencing trauma.					
🔍 I can observe children to identify and document trauma-related behaviours.					
♥ I can seek appropriate support and intervention, e.g. when a situation is overwhelming for me and I need professional guidance.					
🗣️ I can create a space for confidential discussion for children and their family e.g. where they can openly express concerns to encourage a trusting relationship between them and myself.					
♥ I can collect additional information (e.g. through online research, books/articles, etc.) when my knowledge or skills need further improvement to meet the needs linked to working with traumatised children or families in crisis.					
🧘 I can stay calm and mindful, particularly during stressful moments e.g. when a child has an emotional outburst.					
🗣️ I can value the input and perspectives of children and families in crisis by, for example, asking open-ended questions about their preferences and ideas, offering both children and family members opportunity to propose solutions.					
🔍 I can assess information about family history or current challenges to provide appropriate support and guidance.					
♥ I can pay close attention to the well-being of my team members, e.g. by checking if someone is feeling overwhelmed in certain situations and offering support when needed.					

<p>🗨️ I can openly express my own emotions and needs in communication with children, which helps create a deeper connection with children.</p>					
<p>♥️ I can remain open and adaptable to unexpected societal changes, e.g. the arrival of new children due to displacement.</p>					
<p>🔗 I can implement activities for children that strengthen their resilience and coping skills while facing challenging situations e.g. mindfulness or breathing exercises.</p>					
<p>♥️ I can recognise when my expertise or competency is insufficient to deal with certain situations (e.g. I recognise when a child needs further support and guidance from other experts such as psychotherapists or psychologists)</p>					
<p>🗨️ I can use active listening techniques when engaging with families in crisis and traumatised children to understand their concerns and needs (e.g. maintaining eye contact, asking questions for clarification, paraphrasing their words, not judging, etc.).</p>					
<p>🧩 I can take challenging situations as opportunities to improve relationships, e.g. when a child shows withdrawal, I make a point to approach them calmly and offer support.</p>					
<p>🔗 I can describe different strategies and methods supporting children's empowerment e.g. using positive reinforcement and affirming their strengths.</p>					
<p>♥️ I can maintain a healthy work-life balance (e.g. avoid working at home or letting work-related situations personally affect me).</p>					
<p>🔗 I can explain the potential impact of working with traumatised children and families on professionals (e.g. increased stress, reduced empathy, trouble with sleeping).</p>					
<p>🗨️ I can advocate for the necessary resources and support by effectively communicating children's needs with colleagues and families, ensuring timely action.</p>					
<p>🔗 I can identify and differentiate different factors (cultural, socio-economic) that can contribute to a family crisis.</p>					
<p>🧩 I can create an environment for all children to feel safe and supported e.g. by applying trauma-</p>					

informed practices such as providing a quiet space or offering sensory tools.					
🗨️ I can adapt to the needs of traumatized children, e.g. by providing a quiet corner where they can retreat when feeling overwhelmed, instead of forcing them into activities they are not ready for.					
❤️ I can recognize my feelings and needs in response to work-related tasks, such as feeling overwhelmed when managing challenging tasks.					
🔍 I can list signs and effects of crisis experienced by families.					
🗨️ When children have questions about war and migration caused by it, I can answer in a child-friendly language (e.g. using simple words, examples).					

Well done! You have reached the end of the questionnaire and can now move on to the next step - calculating and interpreting the results!

Interpretation of the results



Follow the steps below to get your results!

STEP 1: Calculating the points

First, count the total number of points as follows:

- Strongly disagree = 1 point
- Disagree = 2 points
- Neither agree nor disagree = 3 points
- Agree = 4 points
- Strongly agree = 5 points

TOTAL NUMBER OF
POINTS

The maximum number of points is 195.

STEP 2: Competence level in the topic of Trauma

Now it is time to check your competence level in the topic of Trauma. Based on your score, the table below will tell you whether you are Beginner, Competent or even Expert.

Competence Level	Points
Novice	39 – 56
Beginner	57 – 95
Competent	96 – 134
Proficient	135 – 173
Expert	174 – 195

COMPETENCE LEVEL

STEP 3: Explanation of the competence level

What does it mean for a childcare professional to be *Novice* or *Expert* in the topic of Trauma? Find your answer in the following table.

Competence level	Explanation
Novice	You have minimal awareness of how trauma affects children and their social and emotional wellbeing. You may recognise visible signs of distress or changes in children's behaviours, but lack a comprehensive understanding of the underlying issues. You often follow established protocols in reporting concerns but require further guidance when interacting with traumatized children. Your understanding of family in crisis is limited, making it difficult to provide effective support engaging each family member. When working with children and families who experience trauma, you may find it difficult to remain objective and maintain professional boundaries.
Beginner	You have basic understanding of the concept of trauma and can identify some of its effects on child's social and emotional well-being. You can identify common causes and symptoms of trauma in children, but have difficulties in recognising them when they appear. While you have basic knowledge of family mechanisms and strategies during a crisis, you have difficulties in personalising the approach with respect to uniqueness of family dynamics. You can assist them solving their problem, but the involvement of family members in the problem-solving process may be limited. You develop trust with children and families, but may struggle with maintaining professional boundaries.
Competent	You possess a good understanding of trauma and its varied impacts on children's wellbeing. You can recognise a wide range of causes, symptoms, and behaviours associated with trauma among children and support traumatised children, helping them gain trust and a sense of safety. You may sometimes lack in providing personalised approach, especially in new challenging situations. You are capable in supporting families in crisis while respecting their unique dynamics by involving some family members in the problem-solving process. You are adept at fostering relationships built on trust and empathy with traumatized children and their families while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries, in most cases.
Proficient	You have an in-depth understanding of trauma and its complex effects on children's development. You can quickly recognise subtle signs of trauma and differentiate between various types of traumatic experiences, such as forced displacement or domestic violence. This allows you to implement highly effective, personalized approaches to support different needs of traumatised children. You support families in crisis, actively involving all family members in the problem-solving process. Additionally, you foster strong relationships of trust and empathy with children and families while

	maintaining clear professional boundaries. You actively engage in self-care practices to ensure your own wellbeing while providing support to others.
Expert	You are an expert in working with children experiencing trauma. You have a comprehensive understanding of childhood trauma and its long-term effects on individuals. You can identify visible and non-visible cues of children experiencing trauma and innovate personalized, trauma-informed care approaches that address complex needs of children. You excel at navigating complex family dynamics in crisis situations and serve as a valuable resource for challenging cases. Additionally, you can provide supervision/mentoring to others in their work, ensuring high-quality outcomes, as well as actively train colleagues in maintaining their mental and emotional wellbeing in demanding circumstances. You are able to foster a relationship of trust and empathy, and easily maintain work-life balance, not letting work-related situations affect you personally. Implementing self-care practices is part of your daily routines and you are dedicated in encouraging others do the same.

STEP 4: Competence level in four areas

Go back to the statements and look for the symbols next to them (🔍 🎲 🗨️ ❤️). Now count the points for the statements with the same symbol to check your competence level in different areas: personal (❤️), methodological and professional (🔍), activity and decision-making (🎲) and social-communicative (🗨️) competences.

Competence Level	❤️	🔍	🎲	🗨️
Novice	11 – 15	12 – 17	5 – 7	11 – 15
Beginner	16 – 26	18 – 29	8 – 12	16 – 26
Competent	27 – 37	30 – 41	13 – 17	27 – 37
Proficient	38 – 48	42 – 53	18 – 22	38 – 48
Expert	49 – 55	54 – 60	23 – 25	49 – 55

YOUR SCORE

❤️ = _____




🔍 = _____

🗨️ = _____

🎲 = _____

The table below explains the meaning of each of these areas as related to childcare education and trauma.

Competence Area	Explanation
❤️	Personal competence refers to the ability to be self-reflective, critical, and to act based on one's values, attitudes, and ideals. It involves self-awareness, ethical considerations, and the capacity for personal growth. In the context of trauma, it refers to respecting individual differences in

	<p>responses to trauma, reflecting on and managing own emotions, maintaining healthy work-life balance and supporting others to do the same, seeking for help and support when needed, being open to unexpected social changes and being ready to deepen own knowledge to successfully deal with children and families in crisis.</p>
	<p>Social-communicative competence encompasses the ability to interact effectively with others, communicate clearly, and cooperate creatively. It includes skills like teamwork, empathy, and conflict resolution. For a childcare professional, it means having the ability to effectively communicate with children and families, ensuring a confidential discussion where each person can openly express emotions and concerns; actively listening to children, concerns and needs and adjusting the interaction accordingly; collaborating with other professionals to provide a more comprehensive approach to families in crisis or children experiencing trauma.</p>
	<p>Methodological and Professional competence involves the ability to apply methodological and technical knowledge to solve complex problems. It includes analytical thinking, organisational skills, or ability to share knowledge with others. It refers to having knowledge about the concept of trauma and its impact on children, describe different strategies or methods in supporting children's empowerment, understanding family in crisis, analysing family history to provide appropriate support, etc.</p>
	<p>Activity and Decision-making competence is the ability to perform job-specific tasks effectively using specialised knowledge and skills. It includes expertise in a particular field and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge practically. It means creating a supportive environment for children to feel safe, perceiving challenging situations as opportunities or maintaining calm when they appear and quickly reacting during emergencies. It also refers to supporting initiatives promoting strength building of children impacted by trauma.</p>

STEP 5: Diagram creation

Follow the steps below to create your own diagram illustrating your competence profile in the topic of trauma.

1. Select one of four areas.
2. Go back to Step 4 and check your competence level in the chosen area (Novice – Expert)
3. Find the number on the diagram that corresponds to your competence level as follows: Novice = 1; Beginner = 2; Competent = 3; Proficient = 4; Expert = 5
4. On the chart, mark your competence level (see example on the left).
5. Repeat the steps for each area.
6. Connect the dots.

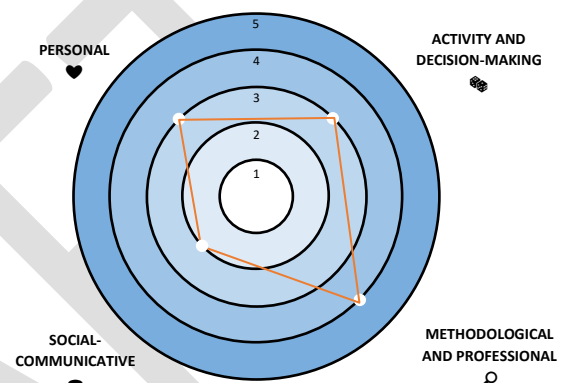
EXAMPLE

♥ = Competent (3)

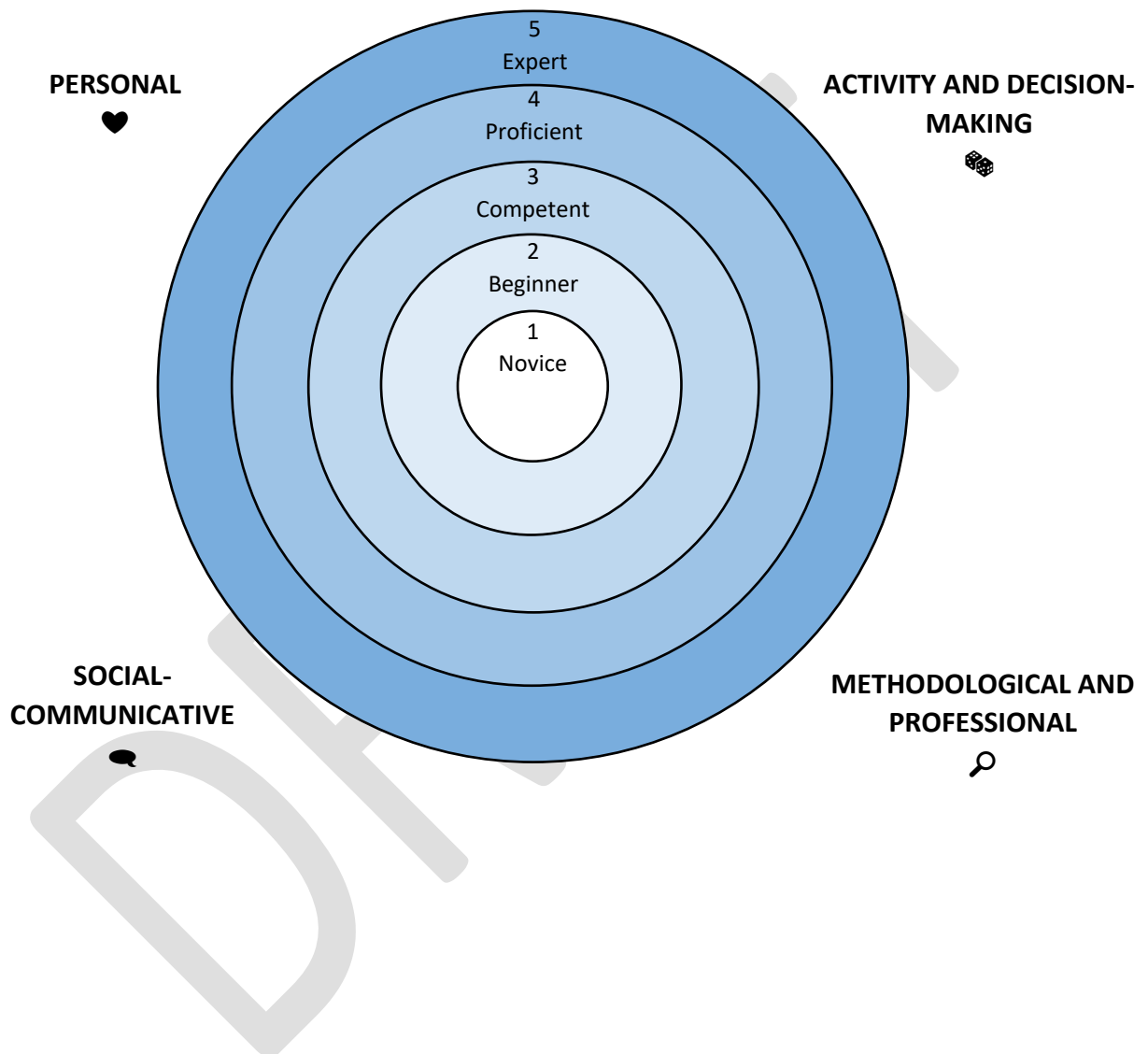
🔍 = Proficient (4)

👤 = Beginner (2)

🧠 = Competent (3)



Create your diagram!



STEP 6: Further recommendation for competence improvement

As you have now created your diagram showing your competence profile in the topic of Trauma you might be interested in improving certain competence areas. In the following, you can find further recommendations:

NOTE: Below is provided an example of recommendations the users will receive. This part will be updated once we analyse collected resources for the upskilling course and self-assessment tool. For each competence level, different recommendations will be given.

Book/Handbook/Article

📖 Myer, R.A., Williams, R.C., Haley, M., Brownfield, J.N., McNicols, K.B. and Pribozie, N. (2014). Crisis Intervention with Families: Assessing Changes in Family Characteristics, *Family Journal*, 22, pp. 179–185. SAGE Publications Inc. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480713513551>

Ready-to-use material

📄 European Commission: Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (2019) *The book of dreams*. Publications Office. Available at: <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2876/425866>

Tips and Tricks

💡 Instead of focusing on the problem, focus on the strengths and opportunities of children or families you are working with. Identify their personal and social resources that can support their personal growth and overcoming the challenge they are facing.



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