

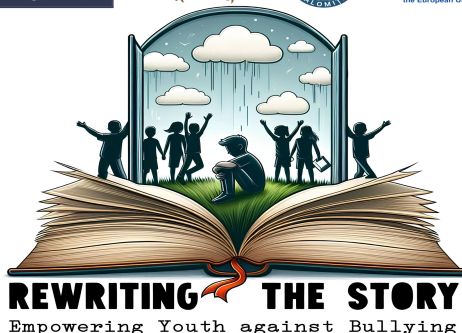
Safe ZONE

SAFE ZONE

A game that starts the conversation

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Version 2.0 · For young people over 13 · Basic Mode and Standard Mode



Proyecto Erasmus+ KA2 · Rewriting the Story

Empowering Youth against Bullying · www.promesas.eu

1. Welcome, Facilitator

OPENING NARRATIVE — read aloud before starting

"Every day, in schools and digital spaces, young people face invisible battles: rumours, isolation, mockery, rejection. Sometimes it starts with a comment. Other times, with silence. But it always deeply affects someone.

In this game, you are part of a team of peers. Each of you brings a unique strength. Your mission is to keep your school as a safe zone. You will face real situations that other young people have lived through. Some are subtle. Others are painful. But all of them are real.

You will use empathy, teamwork and strategy to respond before things get out of control. And at the end of the game, you will take a moment to reflect, because what you discover in this game could help someone in real life.

"It's not about being perfect. It's about being present. Let's begin."

Safe Zone is a cooperative non-formal education tool designed for young people over 13 years old. Based on over 60 real anonymous testimonies of bullying collected during the Rewriting the Story project, the game invites participants to explore, debate and respond together to bullying situations.

As a facilitator, your role is not to give answers. It's to make the conversation happen.

WHAT MAKES SAFE ZONE SPECIAL?

- Situations are based on real, anonymous stories from young people across Europe.
- It is cooperative: the group wins or loses together. There is no competition.
- It combines strategy, empathy and team decision-making.
- The final reflection (debrief) is where real learning happens.

2. Game Components



CARDS

- 6 Player Role Cards
- 32 Real Situation Cards
- 8 Special Power Cards (purple)
- 6 Major Crisis Event Cards (dark red)
- 9 Positive Event Cards (green/teal)
- 8 Negative Event Cards (dark red)



BOARD AND TOKENS

- 1 Main Board with 7 Zones
- Support Network Board (10 hearts)
- Impact Tokens
- 6 Player Pawns (1 per role)
- 1 Timer (3–5 minutes)



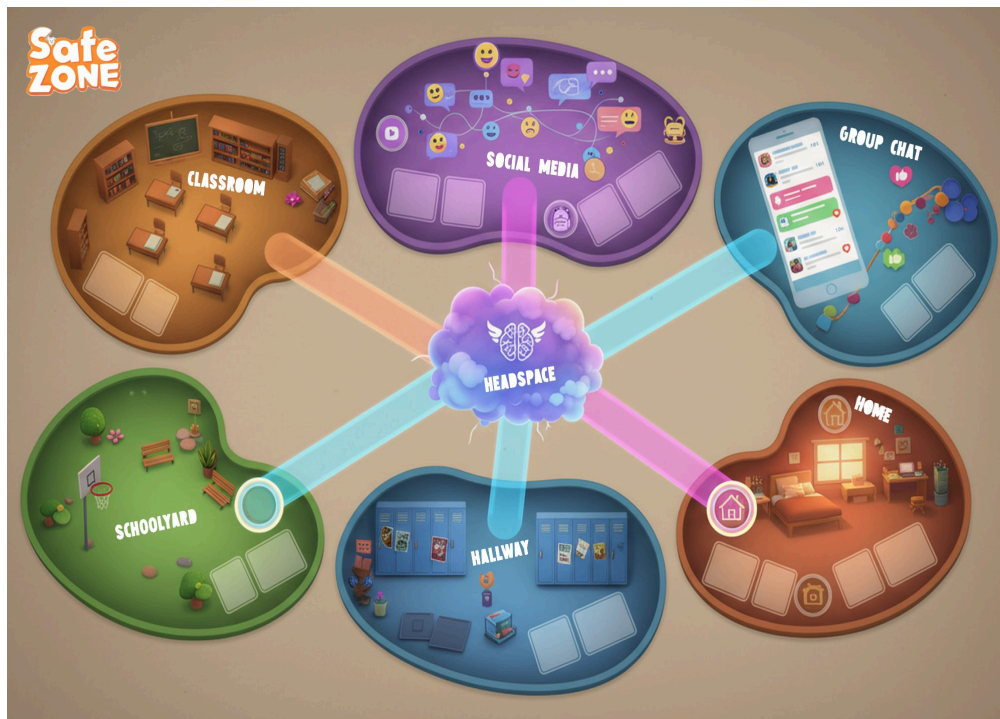
HOW TO PREPARE THE SUPPORT DECK

Basic Mode: Mix only Positive Events + Negative Events. Leave out Special Powers and Major Crises.

Standard Mode: Mix all 4 types: Special Powers + Major Crises + Positive Events + Negative Events.

3. The Game Board

The board represents the physical and digital spaces where bullying occurs. Players move through zones to intervene. Headspace (centre) is the collective emotional space: it is connected to all zones.



Headspace connects all zones and represents the group's emotional wellbeing.

ZONE	DESCRIPTION AND TYPE OF BULLYING
 Classroom	The classroom. In-person bullying, exclusion, mockery in class, intimidation in front of the group.
 Hallway	The hallway. Shoving, insults on the way to class, encounters without witnesses.
 Schoolyard	The playground. Exclusion from games, physical bullying, closed social cliques.
 Social Media	Social media. Humiliating posts, photos without consent, viral harassment.
 Group Chat	Group chat. Expulsions, rumour chains, leaked screenshots.
 Home	Home. Isolation, night-time cyberbullying, impact on private life.
 Headspace	Emotional centre. Connects all zones. If overloaded, it blocks the group's capacity for reflection.

4. The 6 Player Roles

Each player receives a Role Card at the start. The roles are complementary and no single one can resolve situations alone. The key to the game is combining them.

ROLE	SPECIAL ABILITY · DESCRIPTION
 The Upstander  Classroom	<i>Brave and visible. Acts in face-to-face situations. Inspires others.</i> Ability: Once per turn, can intervene in a zone without spending an action, if another player is already there.
 The Empath  Home	<i>Connects with emotions. Essential for isolation and sadness situations.</i> Ability: When playing a Support card, may remove 1 extra Impact Token from their zone for free.
 The Quiet One  Headspace	<i>Observes before speaking. Helps the team anticipate what is coming.</i> Ability: Once per round, may look at the next Real Situation card and place it on top or bottom of the deck.
 The Connector  Group Chat	<i>Digital expert. Prevents online escalation before it happens.</i> Ability: When a Situation affects a digital zone, may prevent 1 Impact Token from being added, once per turn.
 The Artist  Social Media	<i>Creativity as a tool for change. Turns pain into expression.</i> Ability: Once per game per player, may transform any Headspace card into a Support card.
 The Mediator  Hallway	<i>Calms conflicts. Unites the team and facilitates coordination.</i> Ability: Once per turn, may move another player one connected zone for free.



NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR

With fewer than 6 players: use Upstander + Empath + Quiet One + Connector (4 players), or Upstander + Empath + Connector (3 players). With 2 players you can assign 2 roles per person.



Example role card

HOW TO READ A ROLE CARD?

- Role name in large text (e.g. The Empath).
- Character profile: who they are and how they think.
- Special ability: the specific mechanical effect they can use.
- Starting zone: where their pawn is placed at the beginning of the game.
- Each player keeps their role card visible throughout the game so others know what they can do.

5. The Support Network

The Support Network represents the collective emotional health. It starts with 10 hearts (plus 1 you wear). If all are broken, the group loses. Place 10 tokens on top of the hearts which you will remove as they are broken or not.

- ♥ **10 hearts at the start**
- ♥ -1 heart for each failed Situation
- ♥ -1 or -2 from some Negative Events or Crises
- 🏆 **≥1 heart at the end → VICTORY**



6. The 4 Types of Support Deck Cards

The Support Deck combines four types of cards that create the game's tension and cooperation. Each type has its own colour aesthetic for easy identification.

6.0 Real Situation Cards (brown)

The educational heart of the game. Each card describes a real bullying situation based on anonymous testimonies collected during the project. They include the name of the situation, the zone where it occurs, the initial number of Impact Tokens, and a direct quote from the person who experienced it.

HOW TO USE SITUATION CARDS

Read the card aloud slowly. Let the situation resonate. A 10–15 second silence before acting is pedagogically more valuable than moving straight to debate. The quote on the card is a real voice: treat it with respect.

NAME / ZONE

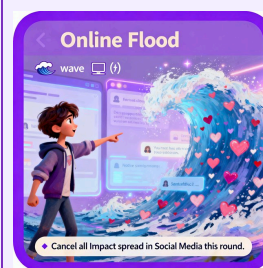
NAME	ZONE	NAME	ZONE
Invisible Shoves	Hallway	Body Shaming	Hallway
The Accent	Classroom	Unseen Crying	Home
Viral Edit	Social Media	No Seat for Me	Classroom
Ghosted	Classroom	My Lunch Wasn't Welcome	Schoolyard
Nickname	Hallway	Laugh Track	Classroom
Kicked from the Group	Group Chat	A Fake Profile of Me	Social Media
They All Knew but Said Nothing	Classroom	Cry for Attention	Social Media
Defender Becomes the Target	Hallway	Screenshots and Whispers	Social Media

6.1 Special Power Cards (purple)



Cards that players keep in hand and use at the strategic moment they choose. They provide unique tactical advantages that can change the course of a round.

Ej.: *Team Shift* (swap positions), *Zero Gravity* (ignore movement rules), *Hold Space* (stop escalation in 2 zones), *Online Flood* (cancel impact in Social Media), *Flashback Resistance* (prevent Headspace Crisis), *Chain of Care* (a player acts immediately), *Double Down* (5 actions instead of 4), *Safe Word* (block a Negative Event)



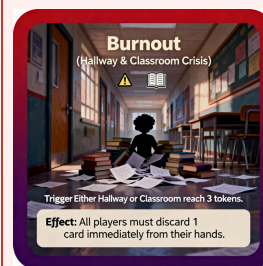
6.2 Major Crisis Event Cards (dark red)



MAJOR CRISIS

Automatically activated when drawn. They are the most disruptive events in the game. They generate serious consequences for the whole team. Only include them in Standard Mode.

Ej.: *Shutdown Mode (no one can enter Headspace), Can't Get Out of Bed (a player loses all actions), Hopelessness (lose 2 hearts + new Situation), Nobody Gets It (cancel next Action card), Burnout (everyone discards 1 card), Spiral (add 1 token to all active zones)*



6.3 Positive Event Cards (green/teal)



POSITIVE EVENT

Activated immediately when drawn or played at the indicated time. They ease the board, recover hearts and give temporary advantages to the team.

Ej.: *School Assembly (all remove 1 token), Community Workshop (+2 hearts), No One Eats Alone Day (prevent escalation in Schoolyard and Hallway), Mental Health Workshop (recover 2 hearts), Unexpected Ally (clear a zone completely), Art Festival (remove 1 token from Headspace/Home/Classroom), Peer Support Training (+1 action for all)*



6.4 Negative Event Cards (dark red)



NEGATIVE EVENT

Activated immediately when drawn. They add pressure to the board, block movements or reduce Support Network hearts.

Ej.: *Rumor Storm (+1 token in Hallway and Social Media), Viral Rumor (+1 token in Social Media and Group Chat), Fire Drill Chaos (players in Hallway/Schoolyard move randomly), Locked Out (no one can enter Group Chat), Backfired Message (cancel last Action card), Bad Joke by a Teacher (-1 heart), Power Cut (no one can use role abilities), Trigger Video Circulates (-1 heart)*



7. Session Preparation

7.1 Before participants arrive

- Place the board in the centre of the table, accessible to all.
- Shuffle the Situation Cards and prepare a face-down deck.
- Prepare the Support Deck according to the chosen mode (see section 2).
- Place the Support Network Board visibly with 10 hearts.
- Distribute Role Cards (or select appropriate ones based on number of participants).
- Each player places their pawn in their role's starting zone.
- Have a 3–5 minute timer ready.
- Read all Situation Cards before the session: some may be emotionally intense.

7.2 Number of players and adaptations

PLAYERS	RECOMMENDED ROLES	ADAPTATION
3 players	Upstander · Empath · Connector	Reduce initial impact tokens to 1
4 players	Upstander · Empath · Quiet One · Connector	Balanced game
5 players	Upstander · Empath · Quiet One · Connector · Artist	No adjustments needed
6 players	All roles	Full experience

8. How to Play

● BASIC MODE

For new groups or short sessions.

- Deck: Positive + Negative Events only
- No Major Crises
- Focus on dialogue and reflection
- Duration: 60–90 minutes

● STANDARD MODE

For groups with prior experience.

- Full deck: all 4 card types
- Major Crises activated
- Greater tension and tactical complexity
- Duration: 90–120 minutes

8.1 Structure of each round (same in both modes)

1. REVEAL THE SITUATION

The facilitator draws the top Situation card and reads it aloud. Place the card in the corresponding zone on the board and add the indicated Impact Tokens.

2. PLANNING PHASE — no timer

Each player states aloud:

- **Where do I move?** Move your pawn to the zone where you want to intervene.
- **What would I do in this real situation and why?** This is the key educational phase: the player argues their response from empathy.
- **What cards or abilities do I use?** The group can discuss strategy with no time limit.

3. ACTION PHASE — timer on (3–5 minutes)

The facilitator starts the timer. The group executes the plan: moves pawns, uses role abilities, plays cards. The goal is to eliminate all Impact Tokens from the zone before time runs out. No planning in this phase: only execution.

4. RESOLUTION

- ✓ If all tokens are eliminated before time runs out → Situation resolved. Continue the game.
- ♥ If not → The group loses 1 heart from the Support Network. Move to the next Situation.

5. DRAW SUPPORT CARDS

After resolving (or failing) the Situation, each player draws 1 card from the Support Deck. If an Event is drawn (positive or negative), resolve it immediately. If a Special Power or Major Crisis is drawn (Standard Mode), keep it in hand.

6. NEXT ROUND

Repeat the process with the next Situation Card. The game ends when all Situations have been played or the Support Network loses all hearts.

ROUND SUMMARY

REVEAL → **PLAN (no timer)** → **ACT (🕒 timer)** → **RESOLVE / FAIL** → **DRAW CARDS**

9. Available Actions per Turn

In the Action Phase, each player has 4 actions per turn (5 if the Double Down card is used). The possible actions are:

ACTION	DESCRIPTION
 Move	Move to any zone connected on the board. Costs 1 action.
 Reduce Impact	Remove 1 Impact Token from your current zone. Costs 1 action.
 Use role ability	Activate the special ability on your role card. Free depending on each role's conditions.
 Play a card	Use a card from your hand for a special effect. Costs 1 action (unless the card states otherwise).
 Intervene with another player	If you share a zone with another player, you can combine actions to remove more tokens that turn.

10. Victory and Defeat



VICTORY

The group wins if it resolves all Situation cards while keeping at least 1 heart in the Support Network.

✅ **All Situations resolved + ❤️ ≥1 heart**



DEFEAT

The group loses if the Support Network reaches 0 hearts, regardless of how many Situations were resolved.

💔 **0 hearts in the Support Network**



DEFEAT IS ALSO LEARNING

If the group loses, it is not a failure: it is the perfect trigger for reflection. Ask: What could have changed the outcome? Were there moments when cooperation failed? The debrief is where the game gains its full value, regardless of the result.

11. The Support Network: Why It Is Hard to Act

"I knew it was wrong. But if I said something, I would be left alone."

This sentence, collected in the project testimonies, sums up one of the biggest obstacles to bullying: not indifference, but fear.

The bystander effect

When someone witnesses a bullying situation, not acting does not mean they do not care. Most bystanders feel uncomfortable, but are paralysed by specific fears:

FEAR	THE INNER VOICE
😬 Fear of becoming the target	"If I get involved, I'll be next."
😬 Fear of group rejection	"If I defend that person, I'll be left out of the group."
😬 Fear of being wrong	"Maybe I'm overreacting. Maybe it's not that bad. Maybe I'll make it worse."
😬 Fear of others' silence	"Nobody else says anything. Maybe it's normal and I'm the weird one."
😬 Fear of not knowing what to do	"What if I make it worse? I don't know how to act."

The support network as an antidote

The game Safe Zone is built on a central premise: no player can resolve a situation alone. The mechanics are designed so that cooperation is not optional, but necessary. But beyond the game, this principle reflects reality:

The key is not waiting to be brave. The key is not being alone when you decide to act.

Research on prosocial behaviour shows that the probability of intervention multiplies when at least one other person in the environment also acts. The first step is the hardest, but if someone takes it, others follow.

In Safe Zone, this is represented by the Support Network (the collective hearts) and by the role abilities, designed so players cover each other. Alone, each role has clear limits. Together, they become much more powerful.

How to use this in facilitation

This is one of the most valuable lessons the session can leave. Use the debrief to connect the game experience with this reality:

Key questions for the facilitator:

- Was there a moment in the game when someone wanted to act but waited for someone else to move first?
- What would have happened if a single role had tried to solve everything without asking for help?

- In real life, do you know situations where someone did not intervene out of fear of being left alone? What would it have taken for them to act?
- What small gesture (a look, a message, sitting next to someone) can already be a form of support?

You don't have to be the main hero. Sometimes it is enough to be the second person who takes a step.



PEDAGOGICAL NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR

If the group lost hearts because they did not coordinate, this is the moment to point it out without blame: "We lost this heart because everyone acted on their own. How could it have been different?" Partial defeat is often the best starting point for talking about what it really means to support each other.

12. The Debrief — 4F Model

The debrief is the most important part of the session. Allow at least 20–30 minutes. Form a circle where everyone can see each other's faces. The facilitator guides the conversation with questions: they do not give answers.

PHASE	MAIN QUESTION	SUPPORT QUESTIONS
 FEELINGS	How did you feel during the game?	- Was there a particularly tense or difficult moment? - How did you feel working as a team?
 FACTS	What happened in the game?	- Which situations were hardest to resolve? - What strategies did the team use?
 FINDINGS	What did you learn or discover?	- Did you recognise any game situations in real life? - What surprised you about the group's reactions?
 FUTURE	What would you do differently in real life?	- What small action could you take this week? - How could you be an Upstander in your real environment?

13. Tips for the Facilitator

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Play a full game before facilitating, even alone or with a colleague.
- Read all Situation Cards: some may resonate personally with certain participants.
- Decide on the mode (Basic or Standard) based on the group and time available.
- Prepare the physical space in advance. A circular layout helps the debrief.

DURING THE GAME

- Do not intervene in the group's decisions. Your role is to manage time and clarify rules.
- If the debate stalls: "Does anyone have a card that could help here?" or "What if...?"
- Observe internal dynamics: who leads, who holds back, who gets emotionally involved. These are data for the debrief.
- Adapt the timer to the group: more time if they need more debate, less for faster-moving groups.
- If a Situation stirs strong emotions, pause the game and create space for those who need to speak.

DURING THE DEBRIEF

- Silence is valid and powerful. Do not fill every pause.
- There are no right answers. Your role is to ask questions, not evaluate responses.
- If someone shares something personal: thank their courage and keep the safe space without pushing further than they want to go.
- Always end with something positive: a lesson, a possible concrete action, recognition of the team.
- The most powerful question in the 4F model is the last: What would you do differently in real life? Leave time to answer it well.

TIME MANAGEMENT — full session

- Preparation + opening narrative + role presentation: 15–20 min
- Game (8–10 Situations, Basic Mode): 45–60 min
- Game (8–10 Situations, Standard Mode): 60–90 min
- Recommended break between game and debrief: 5–10 min
- Debrief (4F Model): 25–35 min

TOTAL: Basic Mode 1.5–2h · Standard Mode 2.5–3h



REWRITING THE STORY

Empowering Youth against Bullying

