



FIELD RESEARCH: FOCUS GROUPS & INTERVIEWS

Italy – April 2021

1 Introduction

The focus group has been held online, via Google Meet, since the actual restrictions did not allow a face-to-face meeting at all.

We have chosen six parents from different social / cultural conditions and from different places (from Bologna to Sicily), to provide a wider range of opinions, not linked to a specific context only.

Every participant had a personal background which was different from any other.

No.	Gender	Profession	Age	Marital status	Children's age
1	F	Accountant	54	Married	21, 19
2	F	Teacher	48	Married	13
3	F	Secretary	34	Divorced, in relationship	6, 4
4	M	Personal trainer	40	Single father	11
5	F	Travel agent	55	Divorced, married	17, 14
6	F	IT programmer	50	Widow, recently married again	14, 12

2 Key findings

Date and Time:	April 16 th 2021, 17:30
Place:	Google Meet
Facilitator:	Elio Bucciantonio
Note Taker:	Fabiana Rocchi
Number of Participants:	6
Questions:	Discussion Contents
1. Do you find time to invest on your self-care? And if yes, what do you do in order to maintain a relatively stable level of good mood / contentment (hobbies, treating yourself, eating out, going for a coffee, gym, spa days, sports, quiet alone time)?	<p>Every participant show a deep need to invest time in self-care. The most common activities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reading / studying / crossword puzzles - music shows, theatre / cinema, thematic TV programs - physical activities (mainly gym, jogging) - cognitive-behavioural therapy (only one participant) <p>Activities at home have obviously become prevalent since the beginning of the pandemic.</p> <p>These activities are essential to keep self-serenity conditions, which directly affect serenity of children and relatives. In this sense, keeping personal wellbeing is a kind of duty towards the whole society, since our behaviour can influence other people's wellness and behaviour too.</p>
2. Which are the most important topics related to your wellbeing you would like to investigate?	<p>Time availability is the key issue for anyone: it is essential to have any kind of self-discipline to find time for ourselves.</p> <p>For example, despite the common opinion, there are no constraints at all in doing physical activities, even if we have medium / small physical issues: the real point is to find the proper way to do them and to fix time slots for.</p>

	<p>Time constraints come from two causes:</p> <p>a) inside the family, due to duties towards children and relatives</p> <p>b) outside the family, due to the social and cultural context which obliges to keep stressful life rhythms</p> <p>for (a), the key factor is that both parents should strongly cooperate in sharing duties and responsibilities, thus letting each one leaving free time for the other.</p> <p>For (b) there are no easy solutions.</p> <p>The lockdown has been / is still a big obstacle to keep self-wellness: every parent had to fix tight rules with her/his children and relatives, but these rules are hard to keep.</p>
<p>3. Any previous experiences with other relevant programmes and/or initiatives? If yes, what did you enjoy the most? And what did you find not so enjoyable and/or significant?</p>	<p>No participant is aware of specific programs or initiatives a wider scale to achieve / keep wellbeing.</p> <p>One participant only mentioned about an association for single-parent families at national level: its name is Gengle (https://gengleonlus.org/) and it looks after:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cultural mediation - parental support - leisure activities for single parents - psychological support for parents - job placement for single parents <p>No other relevant initiative has been mentioned by any participant and no other participant was even aware of this association.</p>
<p>4. Are you aware of any “Psychological Resilience” practices? (prioritising close relationships, cultivating kindness, concentration and “flow”, gratitude practices, investing on your character strengths)</p>	<p>The most known and practiced activities our participant mentioned are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pet therapy (mainly with cats) - gardening - outdoor activities (when allowed by anti-Covid restrictions) - music (playing some instrument, listening) - studying or reading <p>The common factor of these activities is finding time only for ourselves, doing something which gives personal satisfaction.</p>
<p>5. Best practices and methods you utilise in order to improve your emotional and psychological resilience?</p>	<p>Every participant emphasized the importance of talking, communicating with other people, in particular with other parents, to share experiences, problems, good ideas, solutions which could benefit personal wellbeing.</p> <p>Psychological support could help too, but they are all reluctant to use it. Only in case of serious issues, some decided to use it.</p>

<p>6. Any specific – preferred methods you utilise to acquire new information and/or training using technology? (blogs, vlogs, YouTube Channels, Podcasts, Webinars, PDF, Presentations)</p>	<p>Unanimous statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no PDF, no newsletters - interactivity is essential (they all prefer to have ways to add comments or contents from their personal experience) - fixed schedules are indispensable, since they help each participant to find time for him/herself <p>Ideally, blogs / vlogs are preferred, but there should be always be a way to interact with their contents and to enrich them through feedbacks / comments / statements given by each participant.</p>
<p>7. In the quest of finding reliable resources to acquire new information and/or training what do you seek from the providers to verify their credibility/legitimacy? (backed up research, expertise of the providers, word-to-mouth recommendations)</p>	<p>Again, interactivity is the key: this allows a sort of cross-check of reliability of the info / contents given through the training.</p> <p>A one-way information flow is less effective and harder to be verified, unless a third party confirms it.</p>
<p>8. Any specific needs and or areas connected with psychological resilience, efficient parenting and wellbeing you would like to find out more?</p>	<p>Every participant expressed a strong need to discuss and communicate with other parents about similar problems: this would provide good hints and advices to overcome personal issues and (most of all) gives anyone comfort, thus empowering personal psychological resilience.</p> <p>Then, finally yet importantly, discussing with other parents would empower the impact of resilience, moving it progressively to a wider scale.</p>

3 Conclusions

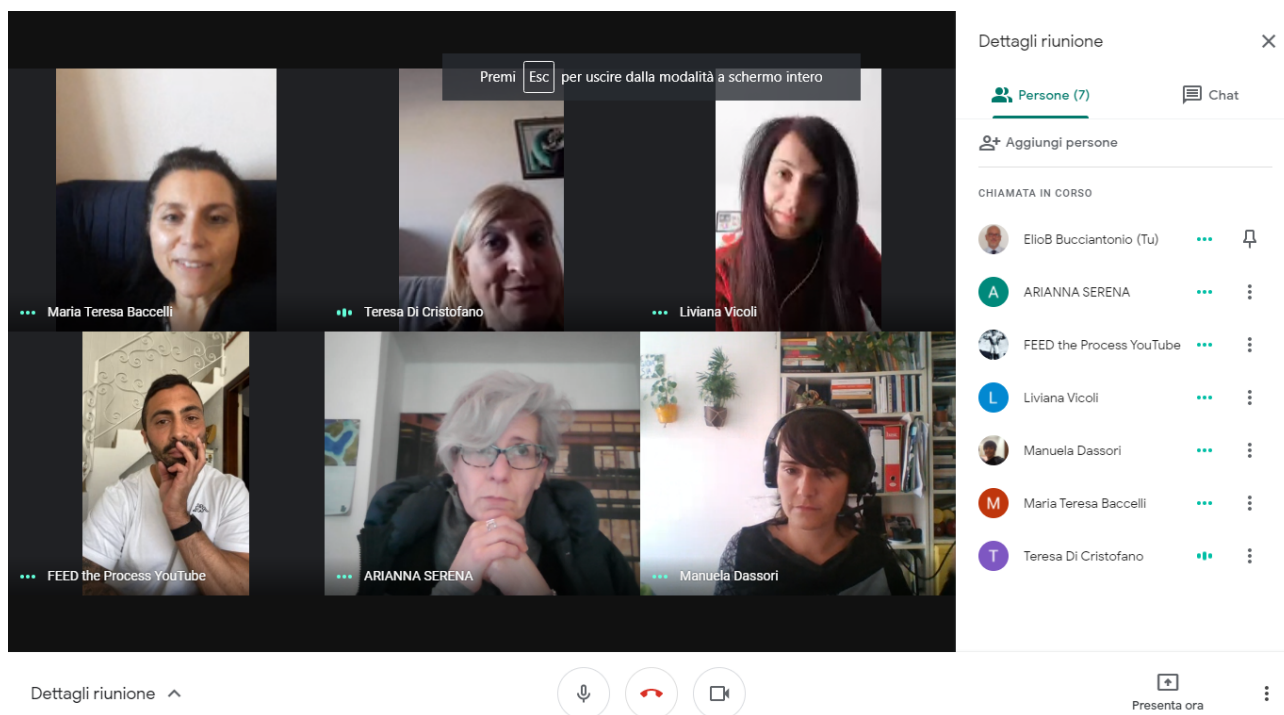
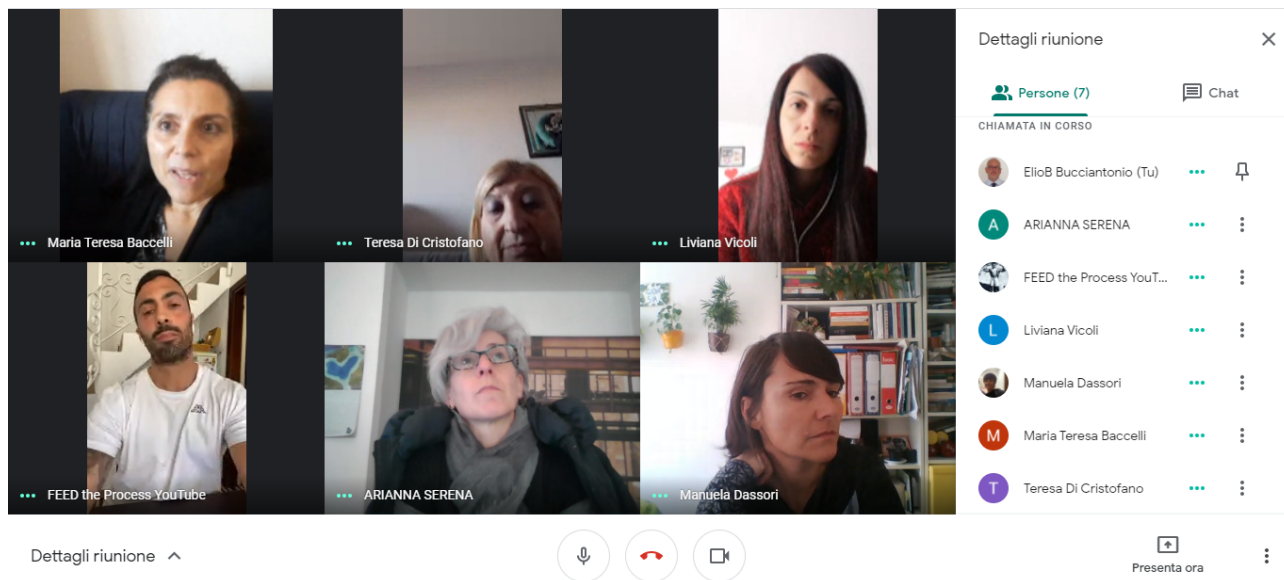
The discussion was very warm and open: every participant was eager to express his/her experience and to share his/her problems to the others; in the end, they mentioned about their very personal background too, providing very private details of their lives.

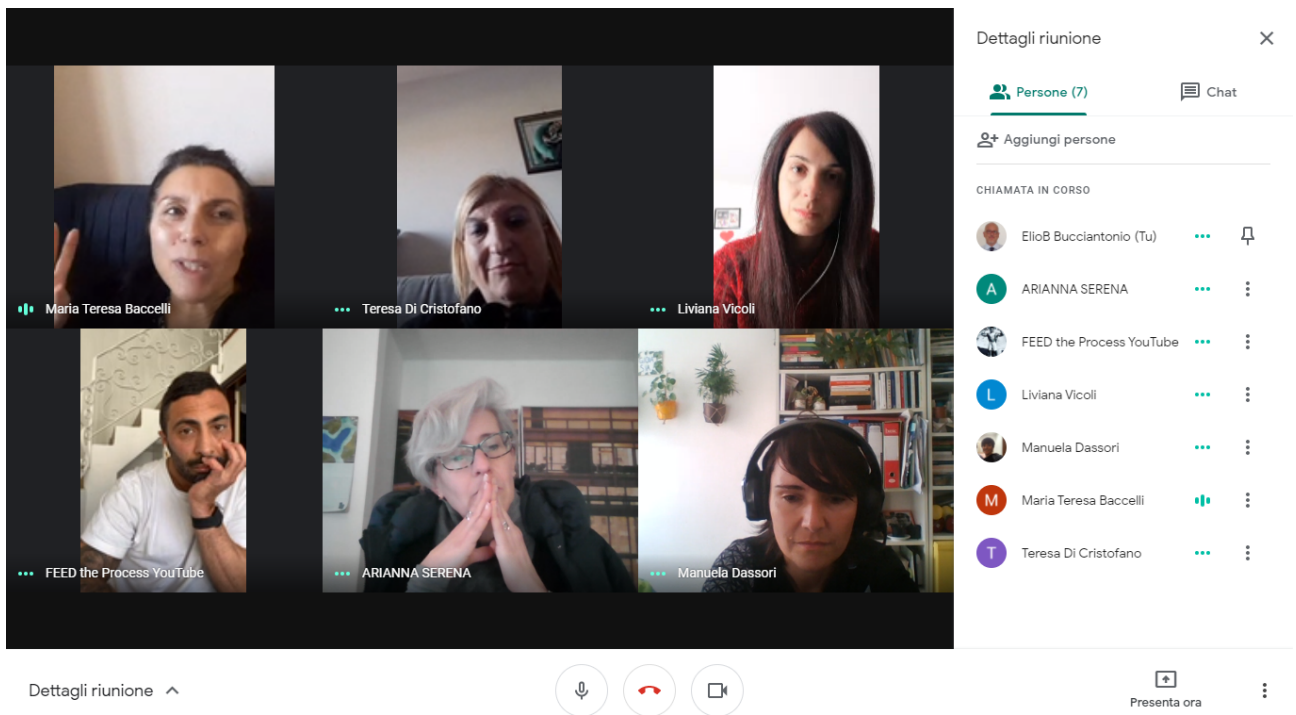
This focus group demonstrated that:

1. psychological wellness is a very sensitive issue for parents
2. there is a strong need of sharing experiences, advices, practices to enhance self-wellness and its impact on the whole society
3. every participant wants to be involved in further and similar activities and wants to be informed of the findings of our research

Psychological resilience is a latent need in many parents: it could benefit not only each single parent, but his/her family context and, at a wider scale, the entire social context where he/she lives in.

4 Screenshots





Dettagli riunione X

Persone (7) Chat

Aggiungi persone

CHIAMATA IN CORSO

- ElioB Bucciantonio (Tu) ... 🔔
- ARIANNA SERENA ... ⋮
- FEED the Process YouTube ... ⋮
- Liviana Vicoli ... ⋮
- Manuela Dassori ... ⋮
- Maria Teresa Baccelli ... 🔊
- Teresa Di Cristofano ... ⋮

Dettagli riunione ^

🔊 📞 📹

Presenta ora ⋮



PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE FOR PARENTS

Project Number: 2020-1-PL01-KA204-081824

FOCUS GROUP

GREECE



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IO1.A1.3 FOCUS GROUP (GR)

Introduction

Six parents took part in this meeting which took place **on 10/04/2021**. It was held on a Saturday when parents often take their children to visit grandparents. It was conducted face to face at the Areadne offices in Kalamata, Greece. An attempt was made to balance male and female partners, as well as have at least one single parent family and one family with many children.

Details regarding the profile of the participants can be found below.

Table 1: *Demographic data of participants at “Resilient Parents” held in Greece*

Num.	Gender	Profession	Marital status	Children Ages
1.	F	School teacher	Married	Girl 2 years old Boy 3 years old Boy 5 years old Boy 8 years old
2.	F	Pharmacy worker	Divorced	Girl 1 year old
3.	F	Secretary	Married	Boy 7 Years old Girl 10 years old
4.	M	Accountant	Married	Boy 8 years old
5.	M	Sales	Divorced	Girl 10 years old Girl 5 years old
6.	M	Interior designer	Married	Girl 4.5 years old Boy 3.5 years old

Discussion results

Question 1

Do you find time to invest on your self-care? And if yes, what do you do in order to maintain a relatively stable level of good mood / contentment (hobbies, treating yourself, eating out, going for a coffee, gym, spa days, sports, quiet alone time)?

Due to COVID-19, what parents try to do is mild exercise like walking and jogging outside and invite / visit very few friends due to current restrictions. Under normal circumstances, although parents ideally would like to do more that has to do with their body, e.g. join a gym, they don't do much. In a way, during COVID they seem to exercise more than before.

To relax, they like spending time on eating out or eating at / cooking for friends and relatives. They have kept cooking for / visiting friends during the pandemic but less than usual. When they go out, they always look for children-friendly places to eat at.

In the summer, going to the beach is also an easy relaxation strategy for those with children over 4-5 years old.

Often they also try to do things without their children, which often is difficult to arrange.

Question 2

Which are the most important topics related to your wellbeing you would like to investigate?

“Where can I leave the children?” seems to be an important question here. They would all like to improve their bodily health and overall mood, and they would like to do it with friends it seems. Sharing what they do with others seems important here.

Question 3

Any previous experiences with other relevant programmes and/or initiatives? If yes, what did you enjoy the most? And what did you find not so enjoyable and/or significant?

Various people had tried various things like yoga and pilates but soon they got tired. They haven't tried any relevant online programmes.

Question 4

Are you aware of any “Psychological Resilience” practices like prioritising close relationships, cultivating kindness, concentration and “flow”, gratitude practices, investing on your character strengths?

It doesn't seem so. Many seemed reluctant to accept that kindness and concentration can be taught and practiced.

Question 5

Best practices and methods you utilise in order to improve your emotional and psychological resilience?

Talking and doing things with friends, spending time away from kids while the children are at a safe environment (e.g. grandparents).

Question 6

Any specific – preferred methods you utilise to acquire new information and/or training using technology? (blogs, vlogs, YouTube Channels, Podcasts, Webinars, PDF, Presentations)

Anything visual, mainly on platforms like youtube.

Question 7

In the quest of finding reliable resources to acquire new information and/or training what do you seek from the providers to verify their credibility/legitimacy? (backed up research, expertise of the providers, word-to-mouth recommendations)

Word of mouth and reviews are mostly important. The status of the provider is also important. Being state-approved seems to be important.

Question 8

Any specific needs and or areas connected with psychological resilience, efficient parenting and wellbeing you would like to find out more?

They would like to know more about how to help their children relax and how to do things with them too.

Conclusions

What seems to be an interesting conclusion from this group is that the activities could be created / marketed / promoted as doable together with friends. Generally peer influence seems to be a powerful force in Greece.

Furthermore, adaptations for doing the activities with partners and as a family / with children might also be helpful.

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE FOR PARENTS: IO1.A2.2: FOCUS GROUP

FOCUS GROUP REPORT PELICAN CZ

1. Introduction

This part of the field research of the project Psychological Resilience for Parents collects data about parents' everyday challenges, struggles and experience using the qualitative method of Focus Group.

The Focus Group was conducted on 1st of April 2021 at 19:00 via Google Meet. The event was held online because the pandemic situation in the Czech Republic was very serious and the whole country was in strict lockdown not allowing more than 2 individuals to meet. The focus group took almost 1.5 hour.

The communication partners were chosen with the emphasis on balanced gender representation and different situations in the family. See below the table with all important demographic data.

No.	Gender	Profession	Age	Marital status	Children ages
1.	F	Language Teacher	26	Single mother	3
2.	F	Journalist	36	Married	7, 5
3.	M	University professor	41	Divorced	3
4.	M	Photographer	45	In relationship	14, 2, 0.5
5.	F	Nurse	34	Married	11, 8

Table 1 - Demographic data of participants

2. Focus group: discussion results

This part of the report will be divided into sections according to the research questions.

2.1 Which are the most important topics related to your wellbeing you would like to investigate furthermore?

First, there was a need to explain the term "wellbeing" as it's not a very frequently used term in the CR. The interviewer was prepared for that and tried to explain the topic without mentioning examples so she could not influence spontaneous reactions.

Parents expressed the wish that they would like to learn how to find time to take care of themselves. Most of them feel like they do not have time to relax, to read a book, to take yoga lessons etc. Some mentioned the problem of procrastination – once they have time to do the things mentioned before, they cannot force themselves to do anything and spend their time watching TV or scrolling Instagram or watching videos on Youtube.

Parents also highlighted the fact that a major part of their feeling of wellbeing relates to their jobs and the time they need to divide into the time with family and time in work.

2.2 Do you find time to invest in your self-care? And if yes what you do you do in order to maintain a relatively stable level of good mood / contentment (hobbies, treating yourself, eating out, going for a coffee, gym, spa days, sports, quiet alone time)

This question was smoothly followed up on the previous question. Parents feel like there is not enough time to do many of these things. If they do, it's not a regular thing and they feel like they should be doing it much more. Two of them said they go jogging every morning but it's at the expense of sleep.

The big part of this conversation was the fact that right now, during the pandemic of Covid-19, it's extremely difficult for parents to find their time off. Firstly, because a lot of their favourite activities are not possible to do (dinner in restaurants with friends, cinema, theatre, sport activities etc.). Secondly, kids in the CR are not going to schools and have distance learning at home which means they often need assistance with homework from parents.

Parents highlighted the importance of having a reliable partner for life. Those who are not in a relationship feel like they have no one to help and rely on. Also, there were differences between parents with smaller children and older ones. The discussion was about the work-life situation of parents as all of them find it very difficult to balance.

2.3 How does your own psychological wellbeing and emotion regulation affect your role as a parent?

Some of the parents expressed the feeling that they try to still be the same to children whether they feel good or not although it's pretty hard for them. One parent said that *"I try but they can tell if I'm sad or exhausted and their mood instantly changes. Then I feel angry at myself."*

The topic of support arose – parents, especially those who raise their children alone, expressed the feeling of lack of support from state or other organizations.

2.4 What is your existing knowledge regarding Positive Psychology applications?

Two of the parents said they know what Positive Psychology is but don't know how to use it. Others were not aware but expressed the interest to know more.

2.5 Best practices and methods you utilise in order to improve your emotional and psychological resilience?

The answers were similar to those in 2.2 as the concept of wellbeing and methods for resilience seem to be overlapping for them. They feel like they don't know enough of these practices and would like to learn more.

3. Conclusion

The Focus Group session had proven to be a useful and important part of the field research. Parents were quite open, although some more than others. The important factor was the form of the meeting as we feel like the meeting would be longer and even more inspirational if it would be possible to meet in person. The interaction was not so strong and open. Because of that we feel like the interviews were more effective and enabled the higher flow of the conversation and possibility for parents to open up more as they hesitated to talk about personal stuff in front of strangers.

However, the Focus Group confirmed the conclusion from the interviews as the parents are struggling with work-life balance and the pandemic of Covid-19 represents a big interference in the lives of their families.



PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE FOR PARENTS

Project Number: 2020-1-PL01-KA204-081824

Focus Group Note Taker's Form

Date and Time: 29.03.2021, 12:00 GMT+2

Place: Online (Google Meeting)

Facilitator and the second author of the report: Aleksandra Mykowska

Note Taker and the main author of the report: Ewa Ilczuk

Number of Participants: 5

Participants:

1. *the participant number 1:* a mother of a 8-month-old baby, on maternity leave, living in a two-parent family
2. *the participant number 2:* a mother of a 2-year-old, an employee in a corporation, living in a two-parent family;
3. *the participant number 3:* a mother of a 11-year-old, a full time employee, living in a single-parent family;
4. *the participant number 4:* a mother of two (2 y.o. and 4 y.o.), a housewife, living in a two-parent family
5. *the participant number 5:* a mother of three children (9-month-old, 3 y.o. and 5 y.o.), a housewife, currently unemployed, in a two-parent family



Main Report:

On the basis of the focus interview conducted we can isolate four main issues, which have been dealt with during the interview. The issues are as follows:

I. Personal methods and strategies of supporting mental wellbeing with regard to parenting	2
II. Programs or methodologies of supporting the mental wellbeing with regard to parenting.	4
III. A preferred form of hypothetical programs supporting mental resilience of parents.	5
IV. What may encourage parents to familiarize themselves with a development program?	7

I. Personal methods and strategies of supporting mental wellbeing with regard to parenting

All answers given by participants of the focus group regarding their own methods of taking care of their mental wellbeing may be divided into four main points, different with respect to a type of an undertaken activity.

In the first point, which can be mentioned here, are relationships and social interactions. A meeting for a coffee with a neighbour, chatting with other parents as well as sharing the experiences with a community were some examples of taking care of the personal wellbeing, which were mentioned during the interview.

In the second point, which can be distinguished here, we can mention activities and connection to nature. The participants have considered sports, e.g. fitness or walks in the fresh air as strongly relaxing and detoxicating activities. There was given an example of a family mountain trip as a perfect opportunity to get relaxed. More importantly, in most of the examples, there was some impact placed on solitude. The participants appreciated the lonely walks, with a dog or a sleeping child, which shows that parents need to get relaxed from parenting and all the everyday duties connected with this role.



The third point has covered a favourite pastime. This may include shopping, an appointment in a beauty salon or spa, a yummy meal in a peaceful place, reading, taking care of your looks or spending time for your hobby such as crocheting, knitting or origami. This point may also consider arranging a nice space around yourself e.g. a house refurbishing or redecorating. In this category there is also a visible need to cut off from one's duties and take care of oneself.

The fourth and the last point includes various *techniques, philosophies and materials supporting mental wellbeing*. We can distinguish three main elements here.

First of them are **some practices or materials dedicated to give you mental peace and insight**. Our participants mentioned here the recorded meditations, which they can listen to during walks or reading the books supporting mental development.

The second element here are **materials, which can be a source of both substantive and practical knowledge** such as books giving you the practical guidance useful in difficult situations.

The last element mentioned in this category were philosophies and attitudes. The respondents indicated some **attitudes, which they are trying to achieve in order to deal with everyday challenges**. They included here the attitude of forgiveness, tolerance, gratitude, acceptance, pragmatism, self-confidence, positive thinking, accepting their own weaknesses, tolerance towards other parents, the ability to let things go in situations, which would demand this.

Talking about issues of supporting their psychological resilience by parents we cannot forget that despite the methods mentioned by them, they admit that in fact they take care of their mental wellbeing to a very small extent. They have a lot on their plate and seldom are able to find time for taking care of their own mental wellbeing. According to a statement of one of the participants parents would often give the priority to taking care of children and the whole family and put their own pleasure or relaxation in the last place.

A comment of the authors of the report:

What is worth noting here is the fact that the most of mentioned practices are little things, which do not require lots of time. A walk, a moment to read a book, a snack, a chat with a neighbour. As a matter of fact such activities are reported to be relaxing and giving some respite and at the same time as difficult to make in an intensive daily routine, which may be the evidence of parents' overwork, which finally is resulting in their lowered expectations.

In the first place there were mentioned the methods of a fast regulation of emotions or mood such as a chat, a walk, or a favourite pastime.

In the same time with further interviewing there were discovered quite a few examples of building the resources of psychological resilience or using mental practices giving some insight and peace as well as an attitude of life acceptance.

II. Programs or methodologies supporting mental wellbeing with regard to parenting.

The participants gave some examples of programs and initiatives, which aim to support parents or adults in general to build their mental wellbeing.

The first initiative that appeared in the discussion were recordings of meditations published online by Klaudia Pingot.

Another participant introduced an Instagram profile of Katarzyna Sawicka, a psychologist and a mother of five children. As her strengths can be considered motivating and supporting energy, versatility, connecting the best parts of varied psychological currents and health skepticism. The other recommended Instagram profile was the one of Zuzanna Skrzyńska – a mother of two, who is strongly engaged in supporting her mental wellbeing as a mother.

During the discussion, there was also the Natuli publishing house, which offers books regarding pregnancy, birth, maternity, all of them judged as being of high value to the participant.

The participants of our research also mentioned a few more Polish bottom-up initiatives.

A comment of the authors of the report:

What is worth stating here basically all the above mentioned examples are sort of the bottom-up initiatives. This may be the evidence showing in the first place a need for support for parents, and in the second place a lack of sufficient support provided by the system or even a lack of sufficient respondents' knowledge regarding the existence of such system projects in Poland.

Possibly, the above mentioned bottom-up initiatives are better fitted to the parental needs compared to other projects or the form of support they offer and promotion of the programs is closer to parents' expectations.

As you can see the respondents did not indicate any specific methodologies such as positive psychology etc. However, the analyses of above mentioned programs would prove the most of them is based on philosophy teaching parents how to become more tolerant, acceptable towards themselves and their children, upbringing with respect etc.

III. A preferred form of hypothetical programs supporting mental resilience of parents.

Together with the participants we discussed what form of programs supporting mental resilience of parents would be the most attractive and adjusted the best to their life. The one of the major conclusions resulting from the interview was the necessity of finding such results which would *fit the intensive daily routine of parents*.

Short pieces of a text: The one of such a solution seems to be sharing substantive information in a form of short, concentrated chapters, which are coherent and would not require lots of time to be read. In our respondents' opinions parents may not get enough time to read a long, continuous text. A good idea here may be short tips or suggestions of solutions related to specific real life situations, which can be applied straight away.

Recordings to listen or watch in the free time: The second suggestion adjusted to parental „live in a hurry” is the option of replaying the content of the program. The form which would enable replaying or rereading the materials was considered as much valuable and helpful also in a situation when a parent may experience some sudden difficulties and cannot follow the recording in the real time. Some of the respondents also considered the recorded form as the best option while babysitting.

An attitude „parents may/should take care of themselves”.

While talking the participants named the specific topics and threads, which they would be happy to see in a program supporting the mental resilience of parents. The one of such topics was seeing a mum not only as a parent but also a woman, who has a right to go beyond her parental role and take care of herself. The participants also drew attention to the fact that the program may include elements dealing with the equal division of responsibilities and mutual support in a relationship or marriage. Quotations from the focus group: „ To stress that we are mums, but also women, and we deserve some time for ourselves”. „ Maybe, if we are in a complete family, the father should get a chance and be able to take over our duties, so that we can share them together.”

Practicalness, guidance, recommendations. Another thread mentioned here was a thread of „a practical change”. The participants would positively judge forms such as: workshops with practical elements of homework given at the end of each chapter of a manual. There was



given an example of a workshop during which a host would perform an exercise so as all the participants and he himself could experience that during the workshop time instead of expecting participants to do an exercise themselves at home. Also mentioned in books practical exercises, homework or checklists that help to come from theoretical level to the real change were highly valued by the participants.

Real life examples: There was also a suggestion of including in project materials not only pure theoretical knowledge but also some real life case studies or statements of other parents, which was indirectly connected with the contact with other parents. Many participants stressed that it is valuable when programs and materials concern real life problems and situations.

Project materials should combine substantive diversity with visual simplicity. Next broad topic was the widely understood *attractiveness of the program*. The participants indicated solutions, which in their opinion would make the project more interesting and a better one. The one of the examples given was usage of diversified forms of communication, regarding both video and audio recordings as well as live broadcast.

Worth noting is also a comment regarding coloring of the project materials. One of the participants drew attention to the fact that parents are mostly overstimulated and tired, so a good solution seems to be choosing some subdued and soothing colours.

Creating a community. Another important idea was increasing attractiveness of the program by the opportunity of interaction with a group, live meetings, experience sharing and getting to know new people. A form, which would enable face to face meetings for parents while the care for their kids is provided in the same time, would be rated especially high.

A comment of the authors of the report:

The respondents stressed the practicality of all the content and form (short, possible to replay in a convenient time and practical examples). At the same time they indicated that important is philosophy, which was mentioned and underlined in the previous question.

On the basis of these statements we may conclude that it would be good if the program supporting the mental wellbeing of parents would give the opportunity of meetings with other parents. The best option would be real life meetings with other people, which give the chance of building a supporting community. However, from other resources (individual interviews), we know that it is important to build the atmosphere of acceptance, support, understanding and mildness because some other parental groups may show too much judgement and criticism.



IV. What may encourage parents to familiarize themselves with a development program?

The last topic in the discussion were the options of encouraging to benefit from a program supporting the wellbeing of parents.

A friend's recommendation: The participants agreed that the factor which both motivates and encourages to benefit from such things is a recommendation by a friend.

A sample, practicality of materials. There was an idea of promoting the program with small samples of it, e.g. short exercises for parents to do, check, see without involving themselves into the complete project. In the one of the respondent's opinion such a form gives parents a chance to familiarize themselves with a new project without feeling a pressure, which may result in their stronger trust and engagement in the future.

A comment of the authors of the report:

There weren't many new answers to a direct question of the things which may encourage parents to familiarize themselves with a new development program. On the other hand the analyses of former statements may suggest that respondents are searching for programs with certain qualities and these qualities seem to be important for them (which may be useful in promotion):

- practicality of materials, contents, recommendations
- practicality of application by parents, practical guidance, exercises etc
- a form adapted to the busy life of a parent, short forms, recordings etc.
- programs based upon scientific research
- programs promoting an attitude of acceptance, tolerance, focused on emotions, difficulties, etc.



FIELD RESEARCH: FOCUS GROUPS

Cyprus Report 2021



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IO1.A2.2 FIELD RESEARCH: FOCUS GROUPS

The **Focus Group** for the needs of the project “**Psychologically Resilient Parents**” in Cyprus, was administrated by the **Institute of Development CY (IoD)**. Due to COVID19 restrictive measures the Focus Group was conducted **Online via ZOOM**, to protect the health and safety of all parties involved.

Georgia Karaoli the Project Coordinator on behalf of IoD was the main Interviewer – Facilitator of the Focus Group, the session was recorded in order for Georgia to be able to review the focus group in detail and note all the important information and notions that were discussed.

The 1 hour and 15 minutes duration online Focus Group in Cyprus took place on **Tuesday 24/03/2021** between 15:45 – 17:00.

Five (5) Parents attended the Focus Group, all of whom stayed to the end. Three (3) of the participants were women and two (2) men were present.

All the participants were currently employed and active in their fields, all of whom stress the importance and emergence of **finding balance** among their professional duties and their parental roles. Moreover all the participants agreed that the aspect of **wellbeing is extremely important** to them as individuals and as a priority that affects each and every one within the family.

All of the participants were keen on sharing their own experiences and stories with the facilitator and embraced RESILIENT PARENTS aims and initiations with great enthusiasm and expressed their intention to become actively involved in any future activities and events connected to PRP project.

Table 1: Demographic data of participants at “RESILIENT PARENTS” held in Cyprus

Participant	Gender	Children Info	Expertise
1.	Male	1 boy - 5 years old 1 girl - 1 year old	Finance – Accounting Specialist
2.	Male	1 boy – 2 years old	University Professor / Pedagogical Science Expert
3.	Female	1 boy – 1 year old	Clinical Psychologist / Researcher
4.	Female	1 boy – 2 years old	Lawyer
5.	Female	2 boys (3,5 years old + 5 months old)	Small Business Owner / Performer – Choreographer



RESULTS

The Focus Group session was conducted and facilitated by the same Researcher – Georgia Karaoli; therefore during the session Georgia took some minutes but set a priority in coordinating the focus group and reassuring the smooth and natural flow of the discussion. To achieve gathering all valuable data efficiently the session was recorded hence Georgia had the opportunity to review the Focus Group session in detail, note down the important notions, analyze the data and prepare the Cyprus’s Focus Group National Report.

Below you can find some indicative responses in each of the questions:

Question 1: Do you find time to invest on your self-care?

And if yes what you do you do in order to maintain a relatively stable level of good mood / contentment (hobbies, treating yourself, eating out, going for a coffee, gym, spa days, sports, quiet alone time)?

- “Unfortunately due to Covid19 bleak situation in Cyprus and the strict restrictive measures we are both (spouses) working from home, thus more often than not putting aside sometime just for self-care and reflection is marginalized”
- “I try to invest at least 1-2 hours weekly for self-development and philosophy lecture – following an online educational programme. It gives me great joy and pleasure to feel that I am doing something just for myself, something that helps me to grow as a person and expand my knowledge”
- “I devote at least 20– 45 minutes daily in doing something fun, a specific preoccupation that gives me joy and lifts my spirits. Sometimes it is doing a puzzle, embroidering or watching a couple episodes of my favorite sitcom. It depends on my mood! But always something fun and creative! When for any reason I neglect doing it, I find myself at the end of the day (or days to come in case several days pass) more cranky, less tolerant with my children, I simply feel that something important is missing”



- “To be frank the only reason I currently overlook investing time on my self-care and wellbeing, is the whole covid19 situation and measures. All that is happening worldwide with the pandemic had a great effect on my mentality and routine. I used to go to the gym or take long walks every day. Lately, I started again putting aside at least 20 minutes daily for a jog. I am not always “feeling it” but I discipline myself to do to it regardless of my current mood. I try to remind myself how great it feels afterwards”
- “I agree with the covid19 and restrictive measures previously stated comments, also had a negative effect on me and my psychological and emotional wellbeing, however I consciously try to do even the minimum for my self-care, like enjoying a nice meal with my wife whilst watching our favorite series or a movie. I try to mindfully enjoy the moment be grateful even for the little joys of life. It’s the least that we can do, but still it has a great impact in the overall quality of everyday life”.

Question 2: Topics related to your wellbeing you would like to investigate?

- “I would like to find out more about activities that combine both physical and psychological wellbeing, like Yoga, walking and connecting with nature, something relaxing that help me reach a state of tranquility and calmness”
- “ Something that combines both mind and body because I believe they are interconnected”
- “ I would like to find out more about topics and practical applications / activities I can do that will help me put my emotions and thoughts in order, to defuse from stress, to reflect on my day-to-day worries, duties, tasks and interactions”

Question 3: Previous experiences with relevant programmes?

If yes what did you enjoy the most? And what did you find not so enjoyable and/or significant?



- “I am not aware of any specific educational programmes or material especially designed for parent’s wellbeing”
- “I try to do some activities that I find through my own investigative research and knowledge, nothing official like a structured programme”
- “I participated in the past in activities of EFFICIENT PARENTING – EU Programme Institute of Development is a partner -. I was especially interested to find more information on how to discipline your offspring and teach positive behaviours through positive reinforcement”

Question 4: Are you aware of any Positive Psychology practices?

(Prioritising close relationships, cultivating kindness, concentration and “flow”, gratitude practices, investing on your character strengths)

- Only 1 participant had some knowledge of Positive Psychology practice.
- “Due the cooperation with IoD in several EU Projects and other relevant activities, I am aware of Positive Psychology approach; which gives emphasis on positive behaviors and investing in your character strengths. I would like to find out more on how to connect the Positive Psychology notions with parenting in particular and wellbeing”

Question 5: Best practices and methods:

Best practices and methods you utilise in order to improve your emotional and psychological resilience?

- ““Agreements” – we make promises in the form of agreements with the kids, it’s like a little push to teach children about the value of consistency and keep both parents and children accountable for their words and actions.”
- “It’s important to always keep reminding yourself that children follow your lead and schedule and not the other way around, so it’s imperial to set proper boundaries as much as a good example for the kids.”
- “We try to do group activities for the whole family that encapsulate a variety of benefits for both parents and the child. For example a walk in the nature good for



as a physical exercise, improves mood and psychological wellbeing and also give us the time and space to observe the surroundings, discuss or encourage the child to ask us questions and share thoughts and concerns.”

- “Keeping a routine with small positive behaviours is the key for me to self-care, like brewing a cup of really nice coffee or using your favourite body lotion after a long shower.”
- “I try to start the family’s day in a positive note, for example I never forget to greet each member of the family and say “good morning” and/or smile. It’s important to remind yourself that more often than not “positive mood is a choice”.

Question 6: Preferred methods to acquire new information and/or training

Any specific – preferred methods you utilise to acquire new information and/or training using technology? (blogs, vlogs, YouTube Channels, Podcasts, Webinars, PDF, Presentations)

- “Since lately due to COVID19 restriction measures we’ve been oversaturated with online – digital media like Webinars, YouTube Channels etc. for the moment being I would like something I could print and read in hard copy form.”
- “I love videos and I find it more practical. Especially when you have young kids and you carry around lots of stuff like diapers, cleaning things, toys, clothes etc. sometimes is hard to even carry a book, instead you can watch a video directly from your phone.”
- “I prefer Webinars and especially short (like 5-10 minutes) YouTube videos with a How-to or Go-to format and a structured outline (like 5 tips or 7 steps to do something etc.)”
- “I like videos with “real” stories, motivational speeches or stories and people or experiences I can relate to as an individual and/or a parent.”



Question 7: Recommending and reliable sources aspect

In the quest of finding reliable resources to acquire new information and/or training what do you seek for from the providers to verify their credibility/legitimacy? (backed up research, expertise of the providers, word-to-mouth recommendations)

- All participants indicated that according to the source and/or nature of all the above to verify the credibility and legitimacy of a source.

Question 8: Other areas for further investigation

Any specific needs and or areas connected with psychological resilience, efficient parenting and wellbeing you would like to find out more?

- “I would like to know more how to deal with parent’s transition from being individuals and/or a couple to becoming parents and responsible for a whole other person.”
- “How to efficiently deal with challenging behaviours, practical tips and applications.”



CONCLUSIONS

Based on the responses and comments the Research team gathered during the Resilient Parents Focus Group in Cyprus, all parents-participants were keen to find more about Positive Psychology applications, especially those designed to be easily applied and adjusted to parents' busy schedules and limited time availability. Additionally, based on their responses regarding Positive Psychology application in particular, they noted that they are not aware of the existence of such resources as of yet.

All participants seem to be aware that it is essential that parents take care of their psychological wellbeing in order to be able to attend effectively to their parental duties as well. Many of whom are already incorporating various practices during their everyday personal and/or family lives, which were keen to share with the RESILIENT PARENTS Research Team and suggested that can be utilised as deemed fit to create the RESILIENT PARENTS material.



ANNEX I: Participants List

	Name	Date	Email
1.	Marios Pitsillides	24/03/2021	marios.pitsillides@cardet.org
2.	Panagiotis Kosmas	24/03/2021	panagiotis.kosmas@cardet.org
3.	Eva Pettemeridou	24/03/2021	epettemeridou@gmail.com
4.	Aprhodite Exinda	24/03/2021	aph@hotmail.co.uk
5.	Sonia Georgiadou	24/03/2021	lunartsonia@hotmail.com



ANNEX II: Consent Forms



Appendix 2: Focus Group Consent Form

I, hereby declare that:

I consent to participate in the Focus Group, organized by Institute of Development CY / Nicosia – Cyprus 24 /03 / 2021, in the context of the Intellectual Output 1 of the European project “Psychological Resilient for Parents. Project Number: 2020-1-PL01-KA204-081824”.

I have been informed about the project and I have understood what the project is about and what it aims to achieve.

I have been informed that in case any photos will be taken, will be solely for internal use by the facilitators and organizers and for dissemination activities.

I may choose not to answer any of the questions that I will be asked and may stop participating in the Focus Group at any time I wish. During the Focus Groups, or at its end, I can ask to modify or remove some of my remarks.

My name will not be published or communicated to anyone outside of the project team.

The information I will provide will only be used for this project and for the exploitation of its results.

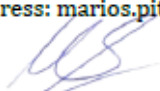
Each participant should respect the personal data of the other team members. I fully understand that any information provided by me or the other members of the group should be kept confidential.

My participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I have received the invitation with the information, I have read it and I understand clearly the process that I will follow.

Full Name: Marios Pitsillides

Email Address: marios.pitsillides@cardet.org

Signature: 

Date: 22/03/2021



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I have received the invitation with the information, I have read it and I understand clearly the process that I will follow.

Full Name: __Panagiotis Kosmas_____

Email Address: p.kosmas82@gmail.com_____

Signature: _____PK_____

Date: _____23 March 2021_____



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I have received the invitation with the information, I have read it and I understand clearly the process that I will follow.

Full Name: EVA PETTEMERIDOU

Email Address: epettemeridou@gmail.com

Signature: 

Date: 24/03/21



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I have received the invitation with the information, I have read it and I understand clearly the process that I will follow.

Full Name: Aphrodite Exinda

Email Address:aph@hotmail.co.uk

Signature: Aphrodite Exinda

Date: 24/3/2021



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I have received the invitation with the information, I have read it and I understand clearly the process that I will follow.

Full Name: Sonia Georgiadou

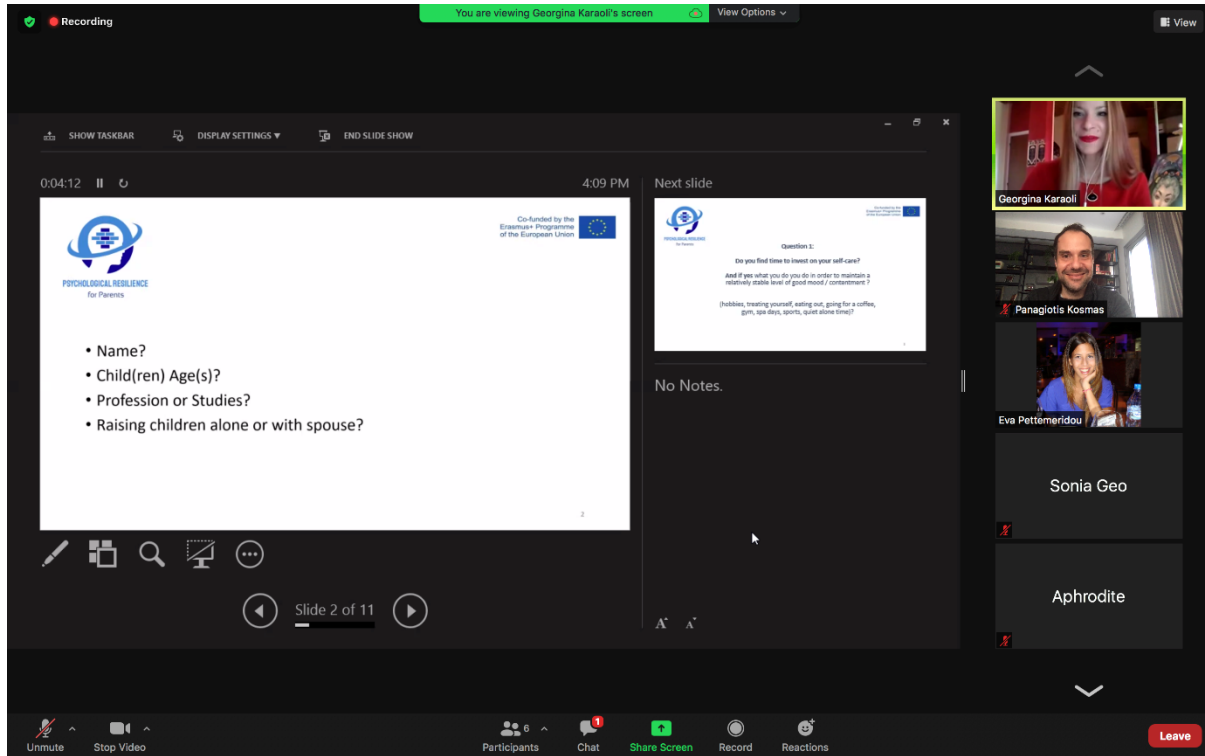
Email Address: lunartsonia@hotmail.com

Signature: S.G

Date: 04/02/2021



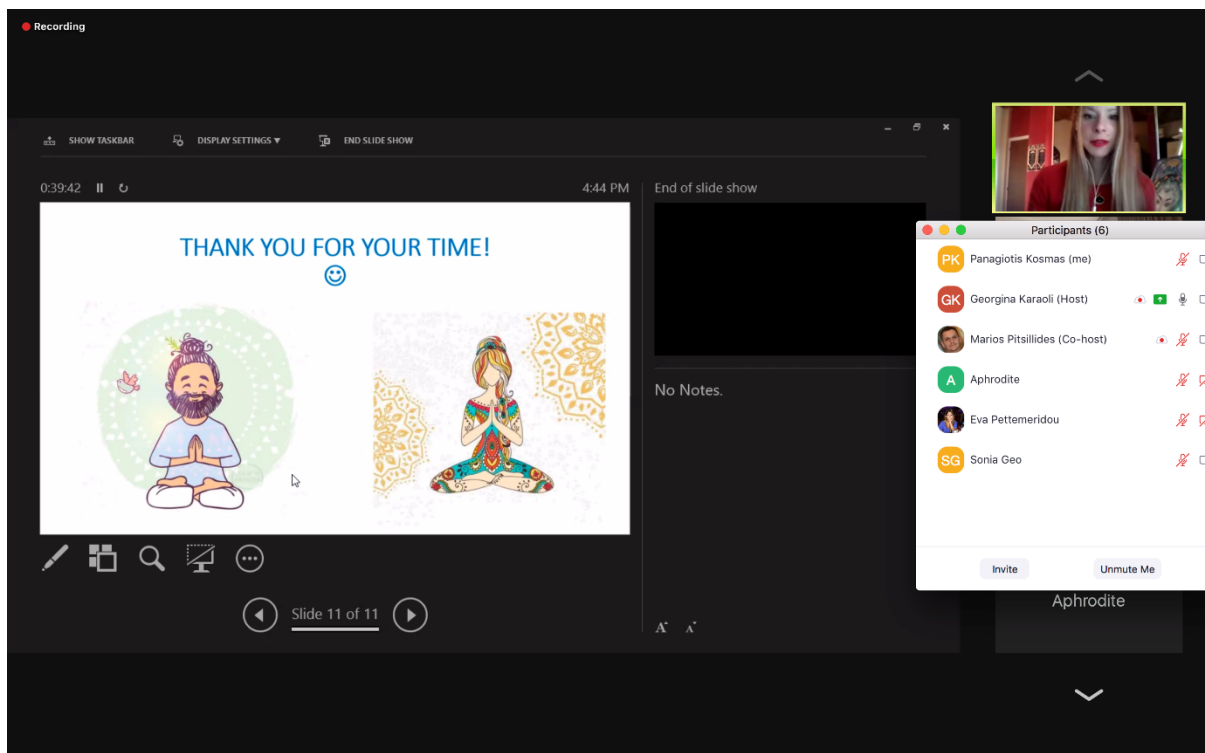
ANNEX III: Screen Shots



This screenshot shows a Zoom meeting in progress. The main window displays a presentation slide with the following content:

- Name?
- Child(ren) Age(s)?
- Profession or Studies?
- Raising children alone or with spouse?

The slide also features the 'Psychological Resilience for Parents' logo and a note: 'Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union'. A 'Next slide' preview is visible on the right, containing a question: 'Do you find time to invest on your self-care? And if yes what do you do in order to maintain a relatively stable level of good mood / concentration? (hobbies, treating yourself, setting out, going for a coffee, gym, spa days, sports, quiet alone time?)'. The Zoom interface includes a top bar with 'Recording' and 'You are viewing Georgina Karaoli's screen', a toolbar with 'SHOW TASKBAR', 'DISPLAY SETTINGS', and 'END SLIDE SHOW', and a bottom bar with 'Unmute', 'Stop Video', 'Participants', 'Chat', 'Share Screen', 'Record', 'Reactions', and 'Leave'.



This screenshot shows the end of a Zoom presentation. The main window displays a slide with the text 'THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!' and a smiley face emoji. Below the text are two illustrations: a man with a beard in a meditative pose and a woman in a colorful sari also in a meditative pose. The Zoom interface shows 'Recording' and 'End of slide show' at the top. The bottom bar includes 'Unmute', 'Stop Video', 'Participants', 'Chat', 'Share Screen', 'Record', 'Reactions', and 'Leave'. A 'Participants (6)' window is open on the right, listing the following participants:

Participant	Role	Audio	Video	Chat
PK Panagiotis Kosmas (me)	Participant	Off	Off	Off
GK Georgina Karaoli (Host)	Host	On	On	On
Marios Pitsillides (Co-host)	Co-host	Off	Off	Off
A Aphrodite	Participant	Off	Off	Off
Eva Pettemeridou	Participant	Off	Off	Off
SG Sonia Geo	Participant	Off	Off	Off