GATE program

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| DAY 1 – 19.06. | | |
| 08:00-9:00 | Breakfast | |
| 9:00-10:00 | Registration | |
| 10:00-11:30 | Grand opening | |
| 11:30 -12:30 | **Key-note speaker: Alexander Rose**  Clinical and Health Psychologist, Gestalt psychotherapist, and Sports Scientist, and holds both a master's in Clinical and Health Psychology and Drug counseling. He currently combines his work as CEO of Terapia Aventura (Spain) and in Germany at the Adventure Therapy Institute (ATI). He formally introduced Adventure and nature-based therapy in Spain by developing several programs (youth at risk, adults with drug abuse problems, severe mental health problems, cancer survivors, and mental health professionals with burnout) and writing the first academic articles and books. | **Old wood or young shoots? A provocative conversation about nature and therapy.**  Is nature therapy something new? Is a rite of passage a clinical intervention? What are the paradigms that are behind your interventions? Has Adventure and Nature therapy an evidence-based approach? Let's explore together new and old concepts in clinical psychology, and integrate a philosophical and anthropological view of adventure, nature, and therapy. Still to be defined, will emphasize professionalization in our field, the main competencies as an outdoor therapist, and the ethical aspects of our interventions. |
| 13:00-14:00 | Lunch | |
| 14:00 – 18:00 | **Carina Ribe Fernee -** senior researcher at the Department of Child and Adolescent Mental Health at Sørlandet hospital HE in Kristiansand, Norway, and affiliated with the Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences at University of Agder. She has been instrumental in the development of friluftsterapi for youth over the last decade, and is presently involved in several clinical research projects, including Where Wild Things Grow.  **Gunnar Oland Aasen** – specialist psychologist and outdoor therapist at the Department of Child and Adolescent Mental Health at Sørlandet hospital HE in Kristiansand, Norway.  **Markus Mattsson** - psychologist and researcher, member of the outdoor therapy team at the Department of Child and Adolescent Mental Health at Sørlandet hospital HE in Kristiansand, Norway. | **Where wild things grow: Friluftsterapi as a preventative, health promoting, and sustainable method for children with neurodivergence in school, health care, family and leisure settings in Southern Norway.**  Over the last few years, referrals to specialist mental health care related to neurodivergence has increased immensely in Norway, presently accounting for about 40 percent of all referrals to Sørlandet hospital. At the same time, public discourse, parents, teachers and surveys express concerns regarding the well-being of the young population of Norway today. Every child is different, where neurodiversity as a concept refers to the natural variety of mental functions, including particular strengths and challenges. Neurodivergence is a non-medical umbrella term, which includes identified conditions such as autism, dyslexia and ADHD, among others. Neurodivergent children indeed have certain superpowers; however, a higher incidence of mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depression, as well as troubles in school, are generally reported amongst this population. We hypothesise that nature-based solutions can contribute to stress reduction, attention restoration, time-outs, enhanced self-efficacy, renewed motivation and connectedness for children and adolescents. Through the five-year (2023-27) project "Where Wild Things Grow", Sørlandet hospital collaborates with schools, community-based health services and volunteer organisations in the local municipalities to establish a continuum of nature-based strategies to prevent mental ill-health and marginalisation of neurodivergent youngsters. Through developing and implementing modified versions of friluftsterapi as community-based interventions in school, health care, family and leisure settings, the overall aim is to promote inclusion, mental well-being and self-efficacy for these children. In this workshop, we present the foundation and the research design of this collaborative project, as well as sharing preliminary experiences from the pilot phase of the project. |
| **Nevin J Harper** - a professor, clinical counsellor, and outdoor educator. Lecturer and trainer for Forest Therapy Hub, Outdoor Council of Canada, and City University’s counselling program. School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education at University of Victoria, Canada.  **Markus Mattsson** - psychologist and researcher, member of the outdoor therapy team at the Department of Child and Adolescent Mental Health at Sørlandet hospital HE in Kristiansand, Norway.  **Pekka Lyytinen** - psychologist in Developmental Psychology and psychotherapy trainer in Dialogical Family and Couples Therapy. Therapist and family rehabilitation coordinator in the Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Children and Young People in the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare in Finland.  **Carina Ribe Fernee -** senior researcher at the Department of Child and Adolescent Mental Health at Sørlandet hospital HE in Kristiansand, Norway, and affiliated with the Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences at University of Agder. She has been instrumental in the development of friluftsterapi for youth over the last decade, and is presently involved in several clinical research projects, including Where Wild Things Grow. | **Beyond the stories we tell ourselves: Implicit theory and a proposed research agenda for outdoor therapies**  We often rely on our personal experiences and the stories we tell ourselves about how outdoor therapy works. We also draw on research and evidence from related fields to make claims for our own work. Outdoor therapies research, much like psychotherapy research in general, lags behind in process and theory-generating research. Less articulated aspects of outdoor therapy is the tacit knowledge that is largely sensed, embodied, and intuitive, hence therefore also much harder to grasp and describe. This presentation draws our attention to the insights that could emerge through intentional explorations and attempted articulation of implicit theories in outdoor therapies. Moving forward as a field, we propose a research agenda into the more implicit landscapes of our practice via three possible pathways, including: (a) initial surveys to map practitioners’ guiding theories, (b) context-sensitive case studies that embrace the complexity of outdoor therapies, and (c) in-depth inquiries into microprocesses of change, perhaps not yet articulated in the outdoor therapy literature. In this presentation, we will share an example of the first proposed pathway, having recently carried out an international survey including 75 outdoor therapy practitioners from a total of x nations. We applied a grounded theory methodology in our exploration, mapping and analysis of the guiding theories represented across this diverse sample. Finally, we propose implications for future practice and research. |
| **Chiara Borelli** - Ph.D. in Education Sciences at the University of Bologna during which she has been investigating issues related to nature-based experiential education. Italy. | **The combination of walking interview and image-elicited interview to monitor an Adventure Education program with at-risk adolescents**  The aim of this presentation is to expose some results of a case study, specifically regarding the combined use of two innovative types of interview to monitor the effectiveness of an Adventure Education program with at-risk adolescents in Italy. This program (called “Long Educational Walks”) is aimed at adolescents who are facing a period of difficulty and/or issues with justice and it pairs each teenager with an adult guide for a one-to-one relationship during one to three months of walking.  The study focused on two such programs along Italian pilgrim routes, employing innovative interview methods: the walking interview (Kinney, 2017; Lynch, 2020), conducted amidst the act of walking in the natural environment, and the image-elicited interview (inspired – though modified – from the photo-elicited interview: Loeffler, 2005) for post-walk conversations using evocative and metaphorical images to stimulate conversation and to arouse emotions and memories of the experience. The presentation delves into the strengths and weaknesses of these methods.  It is deemed useful to share the results of the use of these unusual types of interviews, as these can be fruitfully used not only by the researchers, but also by the practitioners themselves as ways of monitoring and evaluating the experience. |
| **Shai Shorer** - clinical social worker (MSW & PhD.), lecturer, therapist, and clinical supervisor. Served as a head of an Israeli Defense Forces veterans treatment unit at a public hospital in Israel. Currently Shai is a faculty member at the School of Social Work in Haifa University in Israel, and a group facilitator and the head of research of B’Shvil - a non-governmental organization which specializes in Nature-Assisted Group Interventions for processing combat related traumatic experiences, within a nature surroundings.  **Doron Marom** - a clinical and organization psychologist (MSW), the founder and professional supervisor of B'Shvil - a non-governmental organization which specializes in Nature-Assisted Group Interventions for processing combat related traumatic experiences, within a nature surroundings. Israel.  **Rotem Yanai** - a group facilitator (MA) who specializes in combining arts and nature. An outdoor and resilience educator, adventure therapy facilitator and certified trainer in the science of happiness. Israel. | **Processing combat-related experiences through reconnecting veterans to personal and interpersonal resilience sources within nature surroundings**  ‘BShvil’ is a non-profit organization which provides veterans’ group interventions for processing combat experiences, where participants' resilience is enhanced through individual and group work in nature surroundings. The intervention is delivered as a 5-8 days retreat, in groups of 10-15 veterans. The theoretical model follows an ecological understanding of trauma and its effects, BASIC PH model of resilience, and promotes recovery through body, mind, and interpersonal interventions. During this group nature-assisted intervention participants learn and practice emotional and cognitive skills, along with mind-body practices, such as yoga, balancing, connecting to the healing powers of being in nature, and more. During this combo presentation we will present the theoretical and clinical model of this intervention, along with empirical data which supports its implementation. In light of this, we will discuss the relations between exposure to trauma, post-traumatic distress symptoms and resilience resources. To strengthen the understanding of the theoretical guidelines we will practice a sample of this intervention, for the participants to experience the power of this nature-assisted group intervention model. Learning objective: Participants will learn how to use group interactions and being in-nature, to promote and enhance the connections of veterans with their personal and interpersonal resilience resources.  Our proposed presentation presents an evidence-based group intervention that helps people who deal with post-traumatic emotional distress reconnect with their own strengths, and with others in their social environment. By learning about and practicing the use of their dormant resilience resources, participants of this group nature-assisted intervention connect with their natural healing powers, and experience a meaningful connection to both nature and human-nature. |
| **Magdalena Stempska** - mentor and a facilitator of outdoor programs for people with disabilities using Adventure and Wilderness Therapy methods. Imago Foundation, Poland.  **Magdalena Kowalska** - psychologist, street worker, assistant for people with disabilities, social skills trainer and hand therapy trainer. She facilitates empowerment training, personal development workshops and runs motivational support. Imago Foundation, Poland.  **Agata Włodarczyk** – Bucharowska - socio- and art therapist, interpersonal training trainer, street worker, social skills and hand therapy trainer as well as sports and therapeutic climbing instructor. Imago Foundation, Poland. | **(Dis)Connect to better understand - Adventure and Wilderness Therapy for youth with disabilities.**  We would like to share with the audience our good practices based on Adventure and Wilderness Therapy programs that are planned inclusively and in an accessible way so everybody can benefit as much as possible from what we invite people to participate in. We organize all of the activities at the Outdoor Activity Center – BASE CAMP, which supports people (mostly youth and young adults) with disabilities and their carers (through contact with nature and outdoor activities using Adventure Therapy and Wilderness Therapy). The center is located in Wrocław, but we believe that respite care can be active and fun, so we don’t spend much time indoors. We have grown a community of young people with different types of disabilities, their parents and carers, and also assistants and volunteers.  Our activities essential assumption is that contact with nature strengthens healing processes and emotional development, and at the same time it is a fun form of rehabilitation itself. What is important, these changes are made simultaneously on two levels: physical and emotional. To level the activities, we start with several-hour trips to the nearby forest, field games and cooking on a fire, and one-day trips on kayaks and rafts. The next stage is summer expeditions to continuously-higher mountain peaks. Finally, we move on to winter expeditions to the mountains, learning how to survive in winter conditions, climbing rocks, and sleeping in tents.  Participants are facing real challenges, taking real risk and broadening their comfort zone through development adjusted to diagnosed individual and group needs. |
| **Lynn Van Hoof** - Belgian clinical psychologist with a degree in Adventure Education, Client-Centered, Group and Emotion Focused Therapy. | **You can run but you can't hide - The effect of our different roles as outdoor group therapists**  In comparison to group therapists in a classic indoor setting, outdoor group therapists have some extra ‘hats’ to wear. During the course of an outdoor program we switch between multiple roles in a flexible and almost fluent manner. Not only are we facilitators, therapists, hosts and timekeepers, very often we are also the outdoor experts, first aid nurses, caterers, persons who are in charge of logistics while at the same time being ‘co-adventurers’ to the participants. Boundaries between roles are less clear and qualities like flexibility and transparency are far more necessary than in a classic indoor setting. What I am interested in (and have researched/ experimented a bit with in the last year or so) is how these extra roles impact the therapeutic group process. What is the effect of having to put on different ‘hats’ and having to switch constantly between these different roles as a group facilitator? During this workshop we will definitely talk about processes such as projection, transference and role fixation but I will also invite you to look into your own strengths and pitfalls as a facilitator. What roles are you more comfortable with? Where does this come from? And how do YOU handle the ‘switching between hats’ and what has been the effect on your groups? The aim is to co-create an experiential workshop, link experiences with small pieces of theory and to create a better common understanding of ‘our roles’ and the effect they might have. |
| **Rei Ugarte** - From Venezuela extensive experience with kids & teens, from recreation to wilderness therapy. With high interest on human behavior and healing capabilities, focused on native american traditions and experiential learning through nature. | **Emotional Availability**  For change we must lead by example, to put in someone else shoes is to understand empathy. Sometimes our own Ego gets in between our opportunity for connection, in nature we all heal, students and facilitators will be put into the challenging emotional scenarios. We will learn practices in nature of the self understanding to be available for others. |
| **Nina Alida Nordbø -** deputy chair woman at the Norwegian Association of Forest Therapy, graduated as a Nature interpretation guide by The Norwegian University of Life Sciences. | **Awaken creativity with forest bathing for everyone**  Forest bathing is a nature practice based on research on how the outdoors can improve our health. Developed in Japan, where it is a part of the public health program - as in many other countries by now. The practice has spread around the globe, both for well being and as a tool to relieve stress and to re-connect to nature. Nina Alida is a certified forest bathing practitioner, and she will share her experience from exploring nature connectedness as a creativity tool. It works great with kids, youth - and grown ups!  This forest bathing experience will focus on including participants who cannot go for regular walks. The Norwegian "friluftsliv" is very walking / hiking orientated, and Nina's mission has partially been to contribute to re-define this tradition of walking in nature - to be more inclusive, so that people with physical health issues like chronic pain, physical disabilities and mental health challenges, anxieties i.e. can join.  We use our voices, we move, we create land art and we write - with nature as our source of inspiration. When there are no achievements to strive for, there is only honest presence and play.  First we explore nature, then we share. |
| **Esther Milh** – nurse, educator in Vleugel K, a residential psychiatric unit in Leuven, Belgium.  **Sarah Walgrave** - clinical psychologist, educator in Vleugel K, a residential psychiatric unit in Leuven, Belgium. | **Challenges and possibilities of adventure within different age groups**  In Vleugel K, a residential psychiatric unit in Leuven, Belgium, we work as educators for primary school children (6-12 years) on the one hand and young teenagers (11-15 years) on the other. They stay with us for eight weeks and we work with them individually, in groups and also with their family or guardians. We try to build in adventure as a therapy in subtle and more obvious ways: rock climbing, sleeping in tents, cooking on a fire,... In Vleugel K we call this experience-oriented learning. In these two groups, we work with children or youngsters who may or may not have a psychiatric diagnosis or problems in their context which threatens to stall their further development. We work from the ARC-model (where attachment, regulation and competence are the building blocks) which goes hand in hand with a trauma-sensitive approach (focusing on regulation and a feeling of safety). Both groups benefit from experience-oriented learning. We experience that some aspects like self-reflection, taking responsibility and self-regulation are easier for young teenagers than for primary school children. In this workshop, we would like to share our experiments with experience-oriented learning in both groups. In a couple of group activities, we will let you experience possibilities and limitations we stumbled upon. How can we introduce more adventure in a children's-group without minimizing our primary task of regulation? And how can it be helpful to look beyond our own experiences and exchange ideas with different age groups? Afterwards we would like to take time to listen to your feedback through active reviewing. This workshop is an invitation to think critically about further dreams and more adventure on the horizon for young and old(er). |
| **Tanja de Jong** - social worker in a child psychiatric hospital in Belgium. | **To grow; a tree needs the forest. Working with metaphors. The connection between your own tree and the forest**  This workshop is about the integration of AT (Adventure Therapy) in 2 working models. The ARC model: Attachment, Regulation and Competence (M Blaustein) and NVR: non-violent resistance (H Omer).  The adolescents (and their parents/caregivers) admitted to our youth  psychiatric clinic that they have often lost confidence in themselves and each  other. Failure, loneliness, hopelessness are central concepts. Language  is often a contaminated domain in this. Speaking equals conflict  and/or risk. Therefore AT can provide an answer or sometimes be a first  step. Climbing where we practice responsibility and trust (in yourself and the other), hikes where we feel the body and its strengths, making fire together and cooking with sharp knives. Where risk materials are used functionally and bind us together. Often we have to redefine relationships and perceptions. “Certain adults can be trusted, I can handle that well, people believe in me, I don't have to do it alone....”  Blaustein talks about attachment, regulation and competence.  Omer talks about connection (and resistance) and responsibility in which there is an eye for presence, (self)control and network. In this workshop, we will connect the models through exercises. |
| 18:30 – 20:00 | Dinner | |
| 20:00 - … | GATE Talent show & party | |
| DAY 2 – 20.06. | | |
| 08:00-9:00 | Breakfast | |
| 9:30 – 10:30 | **Key note speaker prof. Denise Mitten**  Professor Emerita, Education for Sustainability Doctoral Program, Adventure Education MA, Counseling MS, USA | Promise of adventure therapy 4.0: Gifts and reciprocal relationships  As a therapy (clinical) or therapeutic approach, adventure therapy has huge potential to help people and communities. Practitioners make promises to clients or participants and their families and regulators, either implicitly or explicitly about the efficacy and safety of this approach. Through creating reciprocal relationships and sharing information members of ATE and the global adventure therapy community can create sustainable systems of support to help ensure promises are kept. How we forge networks of trainers, educators, youth workers, mental health professionals and therapists to share knowledge, experiences, and resources regarding adventure therapy creates the systems. As importantly, how might our cooperation and gifting to each other as professionals influence our clinical and therapeutic work with participants? Do we value cooperation, mutual aid, and the well-being of the collective over individual gain? Through gifting and reciprocity, we might foster cooperation and sharing of resources, which may create systems that can adapt to challenges and provide ongoing support to members. |
| 10:30 – 13:00 | **Rebecca Pearson -** a PhD student at Edge Hill University in the UK. She has a background in counselling and psychotherapy and has predominantly worked with children and young people.  **Dr Nicola Relph** - a senior lecturer at Edge Hill University in the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine. Her current research focus is musculoskeletal injuries in inactive populations. | **Using Outdoor Adventure Activities (OAA) as a resilience building intervention with female youth: building new theories and framework using a Realist Approach**  Outdoor Adventure Activities (OAA) can positively impact youth resilience, and female youth have shown more enduring and functional improvements in resilience than their male peers following participation in OAA programmes (Allan and McKenna, 2022). Promoting resilience is important as pressures on young females increase the risk of depression and anxiety (Manner et al., 2020). Therefore, using adventure therapy to promote female youth resilience may be a worthwhile endeavor.  There remains a lack of consensus and robust theories on which to build effective OAA interventions (Allan, 2021). Existing theories have received criticism due to the lack of contextual and cultural specificity (Pomfret et al., 2023), a dearth of evidence supporting the underpinning beliefs, and little empirical research verifying their usefulness with specific populations (Pollock and Harper, 2022). To address this, a realist review of the evidence was completed. Findings from academic papers, grey literature, and expert consultations were combined; to support the construction and refinement of six theories which propose important aspects of context, intervention architecture, mechanisms, and outcomes. These were developed into an overarching model to show how the findings could be used in practice.  This presentation will discuss of; the process of developing the theories; presentation of the six theories; an explanation of the overarching model and how it could be used; theories from other disciplines which support this work and may be useful to consider in practice. Following this, recommendations of how this research may be applied in adventure therapy, and suggestions for future research will be highlighted. |
| **Joshua Anderson -** an aspirant Adventure Therapist, Outdoor Instructor/ Coach/ Guide and Counselling Psychologist. UK  **Dr Stephan Natynczuk**  - Solution focused psychotherapist, supervisor, researcher. Spare Krab. UK  **Heidi Shingler** - Lecturer and Researcher in Outdoor and Adventure Therapeutic Practice for the School of Adventure Studies at the University of the Highlands and Islands and is a qualified integrative and humanistic counsellor and outdoor therapist based in the Scottish Highlands. | **An Exploration of Practitioner Identity**  Following on from the Adventure Mind conference in the UK we created a directory with Belinda Kirk (Adventure Mind) to identify practitioners from diverse occupations offering mental health services outdoors. We have been asking practitioners to identify their outdoor and therapeutic competence so that we can map their “zone of practice” using the Outdoor Mental Health Interventions Model (Richards et al., 2023). We are curious to see the correlation between self-identified occupation and perceived competence in outdoor therapeutic practice, and how clients and aspirant practitioners select the service they require. This study aims to grow awareness of outdoor therapeutic practices and ensure that those who are running it are safe, qualified and provide the quality that service users deserve. |
| **Graham Pringle** - Outdoor Therapy Centre for Research and Practice, Griffith University, academic in Charles Sturt University, Australia | **A complex trauma informed adventure therapy checklist**  Detailed findings of two scoping reviews and 30 interviews are provided as a checklist for adventure therapy practitioners and program managers. A scoping review of the complex trauma and another of the adventure therapy literature (2014-2022) were critically analysed. Interviews with 13 adventure therapy, 10 complex trauma and seven young participant experts were themed. Main findings were compiled for each study; including the importance of voluntary participation, dignity, care, and the sense of self. The study's findings provide a concise three-part checklist for practitioners to reflect upon when reviewing their work. A summary of the four core themes provides background material for applying the checklists. A stand-alone theory and practice framework are separate research products and are not included in this presentation. Limitations include that the participants were all Australian and diversity was limited. Practitioners and managers might use the checklists to make a rapid judgment of program features and professional development needs. |
| **Zoë Van Winckel** – psychomotor therapist (physiotherapy in mental health), works in psychiatric hospital Multiversum, specifically for the department mArquee, which offers help for young adults, aged 16-25.  **Eline Raedschelders** - psychologist and systemic therapist, psychiatric hospital Multiversum, department mArquee. | **Searching for connection within boundaries, working with adolescents in a psychiatric context**  At mArquee, We believe that adolescents not only grow by talking about themselves but mainly by experiencing and by learning from each other. We therefore offer them as much experiences out of their comfort zone, in group. Every few months we get out into nature, where we focus on the outdoors, on responsibility and teamwork. As of 2024 we will expand these day trips into multi-day trips in the Belgian Ardennes, offering new experiences like camping, cooking and outdoor life.  In this interactive presentation, We will focus on our search for a balance between connection and boundaries. Adolescents learn about themselves through others. During our hiking days, we therefore aim for a sense of connection between a group of 9 youngsters. Every individual struggles with their own psychiatric problem, such as anxiety, depression, trauma, etc… Finding connection (with themselves and others) is therefore a challenge, because everyone has their own distinct needs. On the other hand, we aim to help youngsters to set boundaries, or try to manage boundaries set by their bodies or by others. In this interactive presentation we propose a conversation through dilemma’s grown by our own experiences in the outdoors, but also by the experiences of our youngster. Dilemma’s like, ‘a youngster chooses to walk with their headphones on, clearly communicating to be let alone’, will be reviewed. A conversation will be facilitated by positioning yourself in space where different opinions and possibilities can be discussed. |
| **Christiane Thiesen** - ATI | Adventure Therapy Institute in Germany.  **Alexander Rose** - Clinical Psychologist and Sports Scientist, he holds both a master's in Clinical and Health Psychology and in Drug counseling. Lecturer at different universities since 2000, he currently combines his work as CEO of Terapia Aventura (Spain) and in Germany at the Adventure Therapy Institute (ATI). | **Pathfinder: an individual long-term Adventure and Nature therapy program for young adults**  PATHFINDER is an individual long-term Adventure and Nature Therapy (ANT) program for young adults with mental health problems, developed between the Adventure Therapy Institute (Germany) and Terapia Aventura (Spain). This collaboration guarantees a comprehensive psychological intervention, with the highest ethical and quality standards. The intervention is planned after exhausting assessment, and implemented during the necessary days or weeks. The participant is accompanied at all times by a mental health professional with outdoor sports capacitation and specific ANT training who will guide the experience in nature, and a clinical and logistics team standing nearby. Supervision of the therapeutic program and parallel family interventions will be implemented, guaranteeing an effective monitoring program. At the time of the abstract presentation, we are carrying out our first program, and during the presentation we will share the learnings, difficulties and benefits of the program. |
| **Luk Peeters** - master in educational sciences, Gestalt and Person-Centered therapist with specializations in Existential and in Group Psychotherapy. Belgium. | **Connecting with oneself as a first and necessary step in growth and change**  Connecting with oneself is the process of raising awareness of oneself. It is the first step in experiencing self and surroundings. And experiencing lies at the core of experiential therapy. It is why we invite participants tot take part in activities.  But being involved in an activity does not automatically generate experiences. Sometimes they just do not seem to lead to any learning outcomes and remain on the level of having done something in a certain way. So the reflection after the action remains superficial and somewhat empty.  Being able to connect with oneself is the entrance to be able to experience oneself and the outer world. Within this workshop I want to engage you in exploring different ways in which we, as facilitators and therapists of groups, can facilitate and heighten the connection with oneself and thus the experiencing capacity of our participants. |
| **Tara Crank** - University of Wales Trinity Saint David, PhD student exploring the ways that digital technologies can support nature connection within the context of a community green health hub. | **Exploring Digital Technology as a Tool for Nature Connection in Outdoor Therapeutic Engagament**  This combined theory and practice workshop addresses tensions regarding use of digital technologies (DTs) in an outdoor therapeutic engagement context (Richards, Hardie and Anderson, 2023; Cuthbertson et al., 2004), and presents DTs as a horizon/new perspective to support connection with nature through sensory engagement.  There is a need to address cultural issues surrounding overuse of technologies and health issues; and to address our cultural abstraction from nature that has led to the current environmental crises. Research has shown that DTs have been effective for increasing sensory engagement with nature (Van Kraalingen, 2023; McClain and Zimmerman, 2016), one of the elements highlighted in the Pathways to Nature Connection, a concept associated with increased wellbeing and pro-environmental behaviours (Lumber, Richardson and Sheffield, 2017). During the workshop, I will examine the cultural challenges presented by ubiquitous DTs and how these can be navigated in an outdoor therapeutic context; I'll present my PhD study design as I start the process to explore how digital technologies can be used to support nature connection. Moving into the practical phase of the workshop, I'll share my professional experience in using DTs and primitive technologies; invite the audience to get hands-on with DTs like digital microscopes and parabolic sound reflectors to enhance their sensory experience of nature; and discuss the experience for further considerations to take forward. |
| **Marie-Eve Langelier** - family physician, psychotherapist, and mindfulness meditation guide, University of Quebec in Chicoutimi. An associate professor at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences of the Université de Sherbrooke. Canada. | **Combining experience with evidence - appreciating the benefits of nature to better protect it**  More and more studies are reporting the benefits of contact with nature on physical, psychological, and social health. Many authors recommend integrating this practice into health care and nature prescription programs supported by health professionals have emerged around the world in recent years, intending to contribute positively to physical and psychological health through low-cost, easily accessible, nature-based solutions. In both English and French-speaking Canada, a nature prescription platform is available for any healthcare provider willing to encourage connection to nature for improving health.   In this workshop, participants will be invited to experience some mindfulness activities in nature and learn about inspiring research results. In addition, a reflection on ecological reciprocity in health care and equitable access to nature will be initiated.  At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:  1. Testify to the effect of mindfulness activities in nature   2. Demonstrate the role of contact with nature in promoting health, and even healing, based on the scientific literature   3. Recognized the interdependence between environmental and human health. |
| **Leonardo Frontani** - degree in Economics, Masters’ Degree in International Cooperation and Development, a Master’s Degree in Future Studies, and an international certificate in Experiential Learning. Running a Summer School in System Thinking. WILD Nature and Leadership.  **Rocco Scolozzi -** previously environmental educator, working as a Strategic Foresight Pratictioner, facilitator with a PhD in environmental engineering. Lecturer at the Trento university. | **FUTURE-LAB, what desired possible futures?**  Literacy about future studies and system thinking,  knowledge about mega-trends and observation bias. Get into the adventure of the Futures. Exploratory future studies are focused on identifying and exploring a wide range of potential future scenarios and their implications. It is about Horizons, we might observe in our path using System Thinking tools and methods. Nature is the System of Systems therefore is the right place to discover the difference between possible and probable. In this workshop participants, might gain a new perspective in observing what we call “reality” and facts, therefore a new approach to problem solving in different situation, as facilitators, teachers, social educators, consultants, coaches. |
| **Jorn Vetter** - Adventure Therapy Practitioner, organisation - Mountain Medicine. Specialises in addiction treatment, attachment psychology, and the application of adventure therapy practices in working with youth at risk. | **Addiction, Attachment & Adventure - Exploring the potential of residential adventure/wilderness therapy programs in the context of addiction treatment**  Addiction is a ‘‘complex and multidimensional phenomenon’’ (Larkin et al. 2006, p. 210). Individuals with substance disorders seek out and use drugs with impaired control, at the expense of other aspects of their lives, and negative consequences arise from this behavior (Durrant et al. 2009).Kohut (1977) postulated that all addictions pathologies share one underlying similarity: they are misguided attempts to self-regulate or self-repair through external means, due to the absence of sufficient, adequate psychic structures and/or internal working models (IWM) related to self and others. Until such IWM’s have formed, those living in the grip of addiction, will have continuous difficulties establishing intimate relationships, and be inclined to substitute interpersonal connections with substances and compulsive behavior (Flores, 2004; 2006). In response to this specific relational aspect of substance abuse disorder (SUD) and treatment, attachment theory has received an increased interest (Flores, 2004; 2006). This paper takes a closer look at the relationship between addiction issues and attachment patterns, and investigates the implications of attachment theory for SUD treatment. In particular, this contribution explores one particular treatment modality that offers attachment-specific interventions, relevant to the case of substance use disorders; residential adventure/wilderness therapy. The aim of this paper is not to offer an in-depth analysis of the entire field or therapeutic effectiveness per se, but instead demonstrate the potential for future application of adventure/wilderness therapy modalities in the context of addiction pathology. One particular element highlighted in this paper, is how residential wilderness therapy program may offer attachment-specific solutions to participants, both on the level of interpersonal attachment by providing avenues for personal growth in a safe place with community context supported by secure attachment figures in the form of mentors and therapists (Bettman, et. al, 2007; Gass et. al, 2020); as well as on the level of place attachment through the establishment of a relationship with the natural environment, which in itself holds benefits for self-regulation, recovery and restoration (Scannell & Gifford, 2013; Bragg & Atkins, 2016). |
| **Stijn Brenard** - nurse in a child psychiatry.  **Annelies Van De Moer** - family therapist in a residential facility of child and adolescent psychiatry. | **Supporter days' - How to use nature in the psychiatric treatment of a child and his context.**  In the two residential treatment groups of Vleugel K (children psychiatry) we try to involve the caregivers of the children/young adolescents as much as possible in the treatment process. For example, we organize regular ‘supporter days’ where we invite the caretakers or other people who are important for the children/young adolescents to join the program. We operate and organize these supporter days around specific themes (e.g. connection, strengths,...) and provide an environment to take action together and gain new experiences through hands-on exercises and assignments. We try to go outside the walls of the hospital on these days and often seek out nature. Spending time together in another environment can already create new experiences and different dynamics. In addition to the activities, we dedicate time to reflection moments providing room for new personal and interpersonal insights. These insights are further incorporated in the treatment process of the child or young adolescent. In this 2-hour workshop we invite you to and include you in one of our supporter days and let you experience how we bring our children and young adolescent together, in an action oriented environment, with their caretakers. We focus on how such an environment positively impacts the overall treatment process. |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch | |
| 14:00 – 18:00 | **Dr Kaye Richards** - Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Chartered Psychologist at Liverpool John Moores University. Her specialist areas are outdoor and adventure therapies, the psychology of outdoor adventure and nature-based experiences, outdoor education, counselling and psychotherapy, and mental health and well-being. | **Developing Horizons: Fostering Sustainable Practices in Outdoor Therapy and Nature for Mental Health**  The emergence of outdoor and adventure therapies has seen a rapid expansion in recent years. For example, in the UK the movement of taking therapy practices outdoors is now a more accepted phenomenon in mainstream psychotherapeutic approaches, along with national government health initiatives such as ‘green prescribing’ that are embracing the mental health benefits of accessing natural environments (Haywood, 2023). Given this backdrop there are both opportunities and challenges for the development of sustainable practices that maintain long term benefit and access to quality outdoor and adventure therapy provisions. Drawing upon a recently published research informed practice guide for the development of nature for mental health (Richards, Fullam & Anderson, 2023), along with the underpinning Outdoor Mental Health Interventions Model (Richards, Hardie & Anderson, 2020) this paper will consider the relevance of these for informing emerging research directions and practice agendas. The paper will critically consider how we position emerging landscapes of outdoor mental health initiatives and pose questions in the ongoing development of ethical and effective outdoor therapy practices both in the UK and beyond. |
| **Maria Zięba** - manager and social animator, advisor to non-governmental organizations, fundraiser, researcher and evaluator, social activist, educator. Fundacja Ładne Historie / Nice Stories Foundation.  **Anna Gerus** - member of the Board of the Nice Stories Foundation, cultural animator, social activist in the field of accessibility, coordinator of cultural projects related to accessibility, animation and cultural education as well as the historical and cultural heritage of the region. | **United by the Mountains - from a short break to independence**  The impact of active forms of respite care on changing leisure time habits of people with disabilities and their families. As part of the presentation, we want to present our own conclusions on the conditions that must exist as part of the respite services we provide, so that not only provide care, but also contribute to increasing the possibilities of the persons with disabilities of organizing their free time on their own - on the basis of our experience resulting from the implementation of the project "Connected by the mountains", under which we organize mountain tourism for people with disabilities and their families. Since we organize mountain expeditions in the Sudetes - full of emotions, warm gestures, but also heroic deeds, in which people with disabilities and healthy people take part together. The idea is simple and at the same time unique: it involves organizing trips in which entire families can participate - this principle applies to both: people with disabilities and our volunteers. We also want to raise the topic of respite care as a service that should be designed for the whole family. |
| **Harpa Ýr Erlendsdóttir -** trauma and attachment based Occupational therapist. 19 years of experience working with youngsters and young adults at a rehabilitation center for children and mental rehabilitation departments at the University Hospital of Iceland.  **Alda Pálsdóttir** - an Occupational Therapist with a decade of experience in the mental health field, working with kids, families and adults. She specializes in somatic approaches to foster self and interpersonal connection, focusing on trauma and attachment. | **The practical use of natural elements to regulate the nervous system-from theories to action**  Explore how we can consciously harness the power of natural elements in our therapeutic settings to regulate our clients' nervous systems. While Adventure Therapy can be transformative, pushing clients to their limits, it's crucial to consider the state of their nervous system during sessions. Are we equipped with the tools to ensure we operate within the "window of tolerance," empowering clients to regulate and derive maximum benefit from the activities?  This workshop delves into the intersection of the Polyvagal theory and the model of Sensory Integration. The Polyvagal theory provides a valuable framework to heighten client awareness, enabling them to map and access different states of their nervous system for self-regulation. Concurrently, the Sensory Integration model supports clients in understanding their sensory systems, identifying stimuli for up or down regulation, and enhancing overall well-being.  Join us in this workshop to gain insights into how the Polyvagal Theory and Sensory Integration model can be applied to map clients' nervous systems. Explore the incorporation of various natural elements as tools for self-regulation in therapeutic sessions, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of Adventure Therapy. |
|  | **Lina Leitane** – adventure therapy practitioner at Diamond Harbour Youth and Community Trust- running various adventure based programmes for youth and community, Co-founder of Adventure Therapy Latvia. New Zealand.  **Unda Avota** – an occupational therapist and a social worker. Lecturer at Riga Stradins university. Co-founder of Adventure Therapy Latvia.  **Valdis Vanags** - graduated Latvian Academy of Sport Education. Adventure Therapy practitioner in Latvia, Co-founder of Adventure Therapy Latvia. | **Adventure Therapy Latvia - network story** This session will be about the journey of Adventure Therapy Latvia- how from a quiet dream and idea in 2019 we have grown in 5 years into a flourishing national network, facilitator of GATE2024.  We'd like to take time to reflect and celebrate, share and acknowledge how much awesome stuff has happened in the last five years. We'd like to share what has worked and what hasn't in our journey of growing the adventure therapy field in Latvia. Come along, listen and join in conversation about how we can support each other in growing adventure therapy practice nationally and worldwide. |
| **Patricia Kennie -** former environmental scientist originally from Canada, instructor and guide of outdoor nature sports and adventure therapy in Norway. | **Animal Assisted Interventions in Norway in 2024: Adventure cats as therapy animals, for public health**  Animal-assisted interventions and outdoor therapy or rehabilitation in nature with outdoor activities have become more common in recent years in many countries, including Norway. It can be anything from the use of dogs and cats as visiting animals or "reading animals" in nursing homes, old people's homes, rehabilitation centers and schools, equestrian therapy and farming as an alternative learning arena. Or arranged forest walks or other physical therapeutic activities for rehabilitation in nature, also together with animals and approved health personnel, for example cat yoga in a park or cat walks in the nearby forest. Here we focus on a less common but growing phenomenon both in Norway and abroad, adventure cats as therapy animals. That is to say cats that have been trained to enjoy low-threshold outdoor nature-activities and sports with groups of different people, also who have been approved as visiting friends and therapy animals through personality assessment and a practical test, where the owner has also taken the necessary competence course in this. Cats can bring a lot of joy and cuddles and help with loneliness and depression and more, and can also be a motivation to get people with different health or life challenges or disabilities to participate more in outdoor life. |
| **Sanne Detrez** - alternative day care supervisor. Resilience trainer for youth and families. Alba vzw.  **Heidi Defever** - Supervise experience-based activities for families and groups. | **A resilience supervisor attitude using ''Rock and Water''**  During a Rock and Water training you become more confident, protective and able to express yourselves in a lot of situations. Focusing on kinesthetic learning patterns practised through a series of physical exercises and games, some of which are based on martial arts, evoke a physical and psychological response. Participants learn to feel how their bodies respond to situations and develop skills to control how their bodies react by recognising the signals. They become aware of how others react and have the opportunity to discuss how to improve their social competence by following a set of steps to promote open and honest communication. |
| **Napsugár Trömböczky** - a transdisciplinary artist, working at the intersections of participatory theater, socially engaged performative artforms and ecofeminism. Founding member of SVUNG Research Group. Hungary.  **Luca Borsos** - freelance performer and drama instructor. Founding member of SVUNG Research Group. Hungary. | **Geodiverse**  Our proposal is a 2-3 hour site-specific project, Geodiverse. Geodiverse is an immersive hike, in collaboration with a local geologist. A non-anthropocentric participatory performance in public space and in deep time to connect with the world of rocks. We offer a slow walk, together with the participants, dedicating special attention to the landscape, including the bodily sensations that it provokes.  Our objective is to invite people to step off the usual path they walk on and offer a sensitive and practice based experience to connect with nature.  Unlearn human superiority, and discover the joy of our kinness with more-that-human societies. We are practicing eco.somatic activism by training to hypersensitize the individuals to help in recognizing, deconstructing norms residing in the body, and strengthen empathy towards the other. We believe that getting closer to understanding our place within geological time, our role within the history of Earth can offer new perspectives to understand human society ans oppressive systems. To actively seek and experience this connection is necessary for cultivating a healthy long term relationship with our environment. The project was presented in and created for the program of European Capital of Culture, Veszprem, in the Bakony-Balaton National Park and Geopark, with geologis Barnabas Korbely. |
| **Natalia Rubio Miralles** – psychologist. certified Forest Bathing guide and Nature Therapy practitioner, currently studying a masters in Outdoor Environments for Health and Wellbeing. | **Forest bathing and wellbeing**  Forest bathing embodies a holistic healing journey amidst nature, offering countless benefits to mind, body, and spirit. This therapeutic immersion in the lush forests and the symphony of natural sounds acts as a medicine for the soul.  Mental rejuvenation takes center stage as forest baths alleviate stress and anxiety, fostering mental clarity and emotional resilience. The presence of phytoncides, natural compounds emitted by trees, fortifies the immune system, amplifying overall health and vitality. Enhanced sleep quality and mood regulation are other byproducts, aligning with a profound sense of inner peace. Also, physical wellness increases through lowered blood pressure, reduced cortisol levels, and increased cardiovascular health. Engaging in mindful walking amidst the green surroundings cultivates mindfulness, sharpening attention and creativity. Nature's intrinsic ability to restore attention fatigue makes forest baths an invaluable remedy in combating the digital-age era. Moreover, fostering a profound connection with nature sparks ecological awareness and stewardship, nurturing a deeper appreciation for the environment. Therefore, embracing forest baths and nature therapy emerges as a vital practice, fostering harmony between individuals and the natural world, and promoting holistic health and well-being. |
| **Liene Salmina**  - educator in different education projects. Latvia. | **Happy teacher**  Along with changes society experiences, especially during last years with Covid -19, global political and economical tremors, teacher's daily life rapidly changes. It's been a while since a teacher is not only responsible for leading and organising learning process and assessments but also facing consequences from stress caused by outer obstacles in both students, their parents and least but not last in themselves. Stress management appears in the top rows in the teacher's professional skills list. |
| **Rebecca Pearson** - masters degree in child and adolescent mental health, currently a PhD student at Edge Hill University in the UK. Worked as a child and adolescent counsellor and psychotherapist, specializing in working with survivors of abuse. | **Collaborating with Female Youth and Practitioners to Co-Design an Outdoor Adventure Activity (OAA) Intervention**  Female youth who participate in Outdoor Adventure Activity (OAA) programmes have shown more enduring and functional improvements in resilience than their male peers following participation (Allan and McKenna, 2022). Promoting resilience is important as pressures on young females increase the risk of depression and anxiety (Manner et al., 2021). Therefore, using adventure therapy, as a preventative intervention, to build resilience with female youth may be a worthwhile endeavor. Co-design is effective when creating youth mental health interventions (Thorn et al., 2020), therefore, this approach is being utilized to co-design an OAA intervention to promote resilience in female youth. This presentation will discuss the findings and propose how this research could be used to inform adventure therapy practice. Workshops and consultations were conducted with female youth and OAA practitioners to co-design an OAA intervention. Participants completed activities such as drawing, mind-mapping, photo/video tasks, and discussion to explore and communicate their ideas, preferences, and perceptions. The research is ongoing (due for completion April 2024); however, preliminary findings suggest that the young women would prefer to work with strangers, value variety, and want opportunities to make decisions and feel in control. When and where an intervention takes place impacts how accessible it is perceived to be, and an inclusive approach which builds new connections is key.   The presentation will cover the findings of the co-design project and discuss how this research can be applied to adventure therapy practice to inform a more proactive and preventative approach which is accessible, accessible, and effective. |
| **Zulma Y. Terrones -** an entrepreneur and interdisciplinary professional at the intersection of outdoor health, behavior psychology, organizational leadership, and human potential. CEO & Founder of Life Stages + behavioral health research-practitioner. Education: UChicago AB’12; University of Cambridge, PhM’18. Canada. | **Using Boundaries to Manifest an Aligned and Authentic Life**  Personal boundaries help maintain one’s psychological, physical, and socioemotional safety and wellbeing. When one’s boundaries are violated, the body and mind respond in a multitude of ways to signal the violation. From cognitive dissonance to physiological symptoms of distress and even mental health concerns, the body will signal the need to re-align oneself into a safer, more authentic environment. Using an intersectional approach to personal boundaries this poster explores how one can use psychology-based tools and concepts to enforce boundaries in a healthy way that supports individual alignment and authenticity. |
| 18:30 – 20:00 | Dinner | |
| 20:00 - | GATE “FuckUP NIGHT” – stories about professional mistakes. | |
| DAY 3 – 21.06. | | |
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Breakfast | |
| 9:30 – 10:30 | **Key-note speeker Krists Zeltiņš –** Latvian traditional Pirts master, vibro acoustic massage practicioner and hot and cold stress enthusiast. Latvia | **Using Latvian traditional sauna rituals as a form of adventure therapy - a fascinating and culturally immersive approach to mental and emotional healing.**  In Latvia, the sauna is more than just a place to relax and unwind—it is a sacred space for physical, mental, and spiritual purification. For centuries, Latvian people have gathered in saunas to cleanse their bodies, minds, and souls, drawing upon the healing properties of heat, cold, and water. I want to share with you my insights into how adventure therapy and Latvian traditional sauna rituals can go hand in hand, weaving together the exhilaration of outdoor adventure with the ancient wisdom of cultural tradition. And you can explore with me how the contrast between intense heat and cooling waters mirrors the challenges and triumphs of life, and how the communal experience of the sauna fosters connection, empathy, and support. |
| 10:30 – 13:00 | **Zane Rudzīte -** Student of University of Islands and Highlands (studying for PGcert Outdoor and Adventure Therapeutic practice, member of Adventure Therapy Latvia, running individual/small group adventure therapy programmes by own company. | **The role of adventure therapy in bridging together indigineous wisdom and better mental health**  From talking circles to canoes – there are almost countless examples of practices and ancient skills that are a part of the modern world as well as utilized in Adventure Therapy. Indigenous traditions, in the therapeutic sense, extend beyond that – for purposes of wellbeing, also plant medicine, totemism and other shamanic traditions and rituals are practiced. We have to be careful with how we use those practices – AT programmes with indigenous elements should be respectful and avoid cultural appropriation at all costs, as, among other issues, without a proper context therapeutic effect would be lost (Skidmore, 2017). In contrast – using ancient methods in a form of healthy cultural exchange could benefit both modern society and indigenous people. The world view and the values of the dominant western culture in many ways are nowhere near alignment with the age-old thinking (Drew, 2022), which in modern day proves to be a great disadvantage to western society itself. The author believes much of the old ways have been wrongfully neglected and therefore caused a serious decline in mental health nowadays (Abramov, Peixoto, 2022). It is also clear that humankind will not ever return to hunter-gatherer society, however it might benefit greatly, if we learnt to implement old wisdom in our current century. This way not only the mental health of modern society would be positively affected, but also the voice of indigenous cultures recognized and respected, creating an overall more inclusive dynamic between different communities (which, again, leads to better mental health!). |
| **John Fortune**  - After careers in outdoor education, tree surgery and youth work, John has been working in social care and adventure therapy since 2015. Since 2020, John has been building and leading the RISE project, a new community adventure therapy project in Gorey in the southeast of Ireland. The RISE project provides 1-to-1 sub-clinical Adventure Therapy and Social Care interventions for teenagers referred by local Social Workers. | **The Discovery Project**  With funding from the Department of Justice, The Discovery Project was a multi-agency collaboration between local police, youth justice workers and helping professionals, led by the RISE project, the local Adventure Therapy project. Aimed at improving community safety, the agencies involved targeted teenagers who do not meet thresholds for social work or youth justice interventions and gave them opportunities to engage with a group of peers and with local police, youth justice workers and helping professionals. Participation was voluntary and the participants involved were 95% male. Participants were divided into a 12-14 year old group and 15-17 year old group. The program ran in 3-day blocks on school holidays and included adventurous and engaging activities and First Aid training, which was an opportunity to give back to their community.  Preliminary results are very positive and full reporting is due in early 2024. |
| **Alessandra Gigli -** Associated professor in Social and General Pegagogy , at the Department of Educational Sciences of the University of Bologna, scientific director of CREIF (Centre for educational research on childhood and families) and Founder of CEFEO. Italy  **Giannino Melotti -** Associate Professor in Social Psychology, Department of Education Studies, University of Bologna, ItalyUniversity of Bologna.  **Chiara Borelli** - Research Fellow, Department of Education Studies, University of Bologna, Italy. | **Just like an “Hymn to life”: preliminary results from the evaluation questionnaire of an Adventure Therapy program for patients with pathological addictions**  This contribution presents initial findings from an Adventure Therapy program with adult patients attending the addiction assistance services in Ancona (Italy).  Launched in 2023 with public funding, the program aims at improving socialization, physical wellbeing, empowerment, coping strategies, and promoting healthy recreation. Six participants with double diagnosis and on psychiatric medications were involved to participate voluntarily and for free to 32 activities (horse riding, sailing, yoga, hiking) from March to December 2023, along with 2 street workers/educators and activity-specific instructors. Data were collected both through qualitative documentation (interviews, photos, videos) and through a specifically designed questionnaire ensuring accessibility and inclusion through facilitated and engaging graphics and content. The items cover emotional states, perceived abilities, group dynamics and relationships with instructors. Preliminary results from 8 pre- and post-activity questionnaires provide valuable insights for adventure educators and therapists, highlighting the potential impact of AT on individuals undergoing addiction treatment in public services. |
| **Agata Włodarczyk – Bucharowska -** socio- and art therapist, interpersonal training trainer, street worker, social skills and hand therapy trainer as well as sports and therapeutic climbing instructor. Imago Foundation, Poland.  **Magda Kowalska** - a psychologist, street worker, assistant for people with disabilities, social skills trainer and hand therapy trainer. Imago Foundation, Poland.  **Magdalena Stempska** - mentor and a facilitator of outdoor programs for people with disabilities using Adventure and Wilderness Therapy methods. Imago Foundation, Poland | **Different way of doing - Climbing as a support for therapy for people with disabilities.**  We would like to present a support for people with different kinds of disabilities using the therapeutic climbing classes - both indoor (on artificial climbing walls) and in the rocks, close to nature. Therapeutic climbing is a part of a bigger project of ours - Outdoor Activity Center – BASE CAMP, which supports people (mostly youth and young adults) with different types of disabilities and their careers through contact with nature and outdoor activities using Adventure Therapy and Wilderness Therapy methods.  We run therapeutic climbing classes for people with movement, visual, and intellectual disabilities, developmental disorders and for neurodiverse persons. Classes have inclusive character and are accessible for everybody who would like to give it a try. Classes consist not only of climbing but also elements of social skills training, hand therapy and Adventure Therapy methods. We would like to share our view on challenges that every person experiences in an individual way while climbing and how to manage risk as a participant and as an instructor. We would like to give a better insight on how regular climbing can affect both mental and physical health in a holistic way - because for us it is a process where the most important is the way of negotiating with our fears, bodies and beliefs having professionals on one’s side (instructors, personal assistants and psychologists). We believe that building self-agency through climbing may broaden our horizons and make us believe that we can manage any future challenges. |
| **Pekka Lyytinen** - special psychologist in Developmental Psychology and psychotherapy trainer in Dialogical Family and Couples Therapy. Finland. | **One Step Behind - On Dialog and Dialogical Adventure Therapy**  The conflict between people and the environment, unsustainable use of natural resources together with political and ideological conflicts causes increasing friction and the need to create conditions for dialogue. On the other hand, when dialogue between people, groups or nations collapses, a humanitarian crisis arises, as is now seen worldwide. The same applies to damaging the dialogical relationship between man and the environment. Open Dialogue practice has been developed in Finland at the Keropudas Hospital in Tornio since the 1980s, with the aim of creating a new type of need-adapted treatment to help patients suffering from serious prolonged mental health crises (Seikkula, 2011). It has proven to be useful for clients and has also been accepted as a working method recommended by the WHO (World Health Organization, 2021). This workshop focuses on the dialogic work as a method to prevent or resolve the conflicts on a small scale, in close contact with people and nature (Mattsson et al., 2022). The active use of the clients' own expertise is central to the dialogic way of working. In the workshop, the participants get first-hand experience of dialogic discussion in a way that follows the dialogic practice described by Olson et al. (2014). In addition, they get basic information about Open Dialogue and its application in crisis and conflict situations. The application of dialogic practice in adventure therapy is described with case examples. The participants have the opportunity to reflect on the application of dialogical practices to their own work. |
| **Frank Dejonghe** – occupational therapist,  works with children and adolescents with psychiatric problems.  A lecturer at University of Applied Sciences, Howest. Belgium.  **Ellen Cruyt**  - Howest, Researcher in Occupational Science/Therapy, PhD in Health Sciences. | **Experiential learning in and with nature**  Experiential learning in and with nature (ELNA) is a potent approach for enhancing individual well-being and resilience (Butler, 2022; Walsh et al., 2020; Sze Nga Fan et al., 2023). This holistic approach can be applied both preventively and therapeutically, addressing the increasing demand within the sector and society for strength-based and recovery-oriented interventions across diverse contexts (Pijpker et al., 2022). However, despite its potential, experiential learning in and with nature remains limited in availability, often met with hesitancy. Various barriers have been identified.  The ELNA project has been enrolled in Belgium aiming to gain enhanced insight into these barriers and facilitators for the sustainable implementation of experiential learning in and with nature across diverse contexts, as well as to identify strategies for mitigating barriers and reinforcing facilitators. Ultimately, these insights will be translated into high-quality solutions developed through an iterative process.  In this presentation and active combination of the workshop, we introduce experiential learning by doing exercises and shortly present the results of the facilitators and barriers and let the GATE participants experience the method of KAWA to facilitate the discussion about barriers and facilitators in their working environment as regard implementation of nature or/and experiential learning. |
| **Stephen Javorski** - a professor in the Child and Youth Care department at Vancouver Island University. Master’s degree in Transpersonal Counselling Psychology with a Wilderness Therapy specialization from Naropa University. Currently completing PhD in Outdoor Experiential Education. Canada. | **Place-Based, Interdisciplinary Learning as pedagogy for training developing nature and adventure-based therapists**  The pedagogy and content of training for developing nature and adventure-based therapists and facilitators has been frequently discussed in the International Adventure Therapy community for decades. Drawing on the proceedings from the 2018 Cave Think Tank in Australia, the further explorations of key elements of training in and practice of Nature and Adventure-based therapies from 9IATC in Norway, North American and European facilitation theory, and Place-Based Learning pedagogy, a pilot program was created to offer a two-week, wilderness based, international field school providing training in facilitation of nature and adventure-based interventions to a group of interdisciplinary undergraduate students built around GATE 2024. The intent of the training was to provide an immersive opportunity for students from social work, child and youth care, education, kinesiology, and women and gender studies programs to experience a range of therapeutic nature and adventure-based interventions and consider how they may be applied to support health and well-being across their respective professions.  Workshop participants will learn about the collaborative efforts of Adventure Therapy Latvia, Vancouver Island University, and Canada's Global Skills Opportunities fund in the creation of this training opportunity. The pilot curriculum will be presented with opportunities for discussion between the lead instructor, students engaged in the training experience, and workshop participants. The goal of the workshop is to gather feedback about the unique training format and explore the potential for refining and expanding the training format for future international and domestic applications. |
| **Julia Kosztka** – social worker, Eötvös Lorand University Doctoral School of Sociology. | **River of life - A tool to help social work students?**  I have been teaching a course on Wilderness and Adventure Therapy to social work students at Eötvös Loránd University for four years. The aim of the course is to introduce future social workers to outdoor methods and the positive effects of being in nature. The aim is to give them the opportunity to gain first-hand experience and learn professional tools that can be used in the future, as well as to develop their professional self-awareness. Each course is a little different, but there is one constant element that tends to have a big impact on students: the "River of life" exercise. The exercise is based on natural elements and metaphors found in nature and focuses on the professional life journey, providing an opportunity for reflection and professional personality development. In this combined workshop, participants will have the opportunity to experience first-hand my version of the River of life exercise and reflect on their own professional journey. We will then discuss the issues raised by the participants about the exercise and its application in university education and professional training. Finally, I will briefly present my teaching experience with the practice and the results of my research on the adventure therapy course. The planned workshop will thus start with a first-hand experience of a wilderness therapy exercise, followed by an interactive professional discussion and a short presentation. |
| **Jessica Pimentel -** Psychologist and Family Mediator, Research Assistant. Spain.  **Miquel Alberti -** Adventure guide. Spain. | **Expanding Adventure Therapy: Helping Relationships Thrive**  This practical workshop aims to explore the transformative potential of adventure therapy in enhancing conflict resolution within families and couples. Titled "Expanding Adventure Therapy: Helping Relationships Thrive," our workshop uniquely utilizes the metaphor of a slackline to guide participants through the stages of a relationship.  The metaphorical journey mirrors the stages of a relationship: the initial stability, the inherent instability of the middle, and the eventual return to stability. Participants will engage in hands-on activities involving the slackline, symbolizing the challenges faced in relationships. The workshop emphasizes the crucial role of effective communication in navigating these stages and resolving conflicts during critical junctures.  Attendees will gain practical insights into using adventure therapy techniques to foster trust, improve communication, and promote resilience within relationships. By combining experiential learning with theoretical frameworks, this workshop offers a dynamic approach to understanding and addressing relationship dynamics. |
| **Uģis Čakars** – member of Adventure Therapy Latvia, Slackline.lv leader. | **Slackline as a tool for Adventure Therapy**  Slacklining, as a sport and physical practice, is gaining global popularity. As one of the pioneers in Latvia and having trained a substantial number of people, I've discovered that slacklining transcends mere physical activity. The act of balance on the slackline is not only physical but also holds philosophical and emotional significance. |
| **Maarten Janse** - psychomotor therapist Universitary psychiatric Center Leuven. Belgium  **Freija Rchaidia -** Head Nurse Universitary Psychiatric Center Leuven. Belgium | **We are the stick, you set the bar.**  We offer you a workshop which includes a variety of exercises, built from individual, in duo and group exercises. How can we provide an accessible, yet adventurous therapy session in a clinical practice (and can we take it outdoors)? Moving our bodies and connecting with each other while keeping a safe distance. Different experiences are the topic of debriefing, for example: coping with fear, bodily experience, working together, connection, being able to lead or to follow,… At the end of the workshop we provide an exercise where participants set the bar. How high does your group set the bar? Do you aim high or keep it safe? |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch | |
| 14:00 – 18:00 | **Katarina Horrox** - Clinical Practice Manager of Venture Trust. An art psychotherapist. Association of Outdoor Therapy. UK  **Rich (Tilly) Tildesley** - an Outdoor Therapist at Venture Trust in Scotland . BSc (hons) in Conservation and Countryside Management an MSc in Outdoor, Environmental and Sustainability Education, a PGDip in Human Relations and Psychodynamic Counselling and is an experienced MTA Mountain Leader. He is a MBACP registered counsellor and is a Senior Associate Member of the Association for Psychodynamic Practice and Counselling in Organisational Settings. UK | **Outdoor Therapy in Scottish Areas of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)**  This two-part presentation will start by exploring the development of the Venture Trust Outdoor Therapy service, including consideration of the boundaries, challenges and benefits. This multi-modality clinical service works with clients from communities identified as "deprived" in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Clients living in SIMD areas can face issues such as unemployment, lower incomes, less access to nature, higher rates of crime, substance use etc. For clients that have experienced institutional power dynamics, like being taken into social care, it can be hard to step into clinical settings. The Outdoor Therapy service attempts to address some of the barriers faced by clients through offering a service that meets them 'where they are at', within green and blue spaces in their own communities. The rationale for this work will be explored in depth. The second part of the presentation will bring the work to life through a comprehensive case study of a young, therapy-resistant and socially isolated client, Mr C, and his journey within the service. This will be considered through a psychodynamic lens, exploring concepts such as projective identification, transitional objects etc. in the outdoor therapy context. More general therapeutic principles like safety, therapeutic alliance, boundaries and containment will also be discussed. |
| **Rebecca Pearson** - a PhD student at Edge Hill University in the UK. Background in counselling and psychotherapy and has predominantly worked with children and young people. | **Collaborating with Female Youth to Co-Design an Outdoor Adventure Activity (OAA) Intervention: Increasing Acceptability, Accessibility, Feasibility, and Effectiveness.**  Co-design is effective when creating youth mental health interventions (Shah et al., 2020; Morote et al., 2022). However, examples of using co-design to construct preventative Outdoor Adventure Activity (OAA) interventions are absent from the literature. Adventure therapists often support young people to make decisions about their therapy and believe that the client is the expert on themselves (Dobud and Natynczuk, 2023). Therefore, co-designing OAA interventions with participants could be a fitting approach to adopt. However, connecting with youth to create interventions requires considering how co-design can be done in a way that feels safe, engaging, accessible, and empowering to youth (Thorn et al., 2020; O’Reilly et al., 2022).    This presentation will use an example of how co-design is being used to create an OAA intervention, which aims to promote female youth resilience, to demonstrate how this approach can be employed. Female youth participated in workshops and consultation sessions which incorporated: worksheets, drawing activities, picture/video tasks, and discussions. The participants were engaged throughout and shared that this was an enjoyable experience. They made friends through the process and provided valuable insights which informed the co-design.   The rationale for using co-design will be enunciated before the process is described and discussed. Planning, recruitment, ethical considerations, activity construction, conducting workshops, analysis, consultation, and intervention creation will be explored. Following this, insights from engaging in the process of co-design, and ideas for how this approach can be applied to adventure therapy practice, to increase efficacy and connections with clients, will be shared. |
| **Gunnar Oland Aasen** - specialist psychologist and outdoor therapist at the Department of Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Sørlandet hospital HE, Kristiansand, Norway.  **Andreas Koksvik** - clinical social worker and outdoor therapist at the Department of Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Sørlandet hospital HE, Kristiansand, Norway.  **Halvor Vaaje** - social worker at the Department of Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Sørlandet hospital HE, Kristiansand, Norway.  **Vetle Aasen Brunner** - psychology graduate from University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark | **The importance of involving fathers of neurodivergent boys in nature-based treatment – and how to do it!**  This workshop will present the theoretical background for why fathers should be involved in the treatment of their sons, who struggle with neurodivergence (ADHD/ADD/ASD/Tourette), and why we have developed nature-based father-son interventions. We will present three different formats that we have applied in this innovative work so far and clinical examples will illustrate our experiences. Following an introductory session indoors (45 mins), we will move outside where the workshop participants will be divided into four groups to experience exercises that are used in our clinical interventions for the remaining 45 mins. In this workshop, we will share some interesting observations from the father-son interventions: - Fathers validating their sons by joining their activities during the group sessions, supported by nature’s rich potential for diversity and uniqueness. - Fathers recognising behaviour they might have expressed in their own childhood due to their own experience with neurodivergence. - Sons showing their troubles “in vivo” and fathers coping with this, supported by therapeutic supervision or by modelling the behaviour of other fathers. - Sons receiving support from their fathers through shared nature-based activities aimed at building self-efficacy. - Fathers and sons gaining insights into their reactions when feeling stressed and their shared possibilities for seeking out nature to reduce stress, restore attention, and experience connectedness to nature and each other.  Furthermore, this workshop will present a model for linking these clinical experiences to the local communities, schools and networks where the child grows up. |
| **Dr Stephan Natynczuk**  - Solution focused psychotherapist, supervisor, researcher. Spare Krab. UK  **Dr Will Dobud –** social worker,researcher and lecturer at Charles Sturt University. Australia | **Being at our best: practitioner and practice wisdom in Adventure Therapy**  This session is about the values we bring to our prosocial work outdoors and especially with adventure, and the values we draw on to be our best on behalf of our co-adventurers. Distinctions between practice wisdom and practitioner wisdom will be explored to help us identify what makes the biggest difference to the effectiveness of our work, especially with regard to working with clients who are changing the ecology of their existing social behaviour. |
| **Valdis Vanags** - graduated Latvian Academy of Sport Education. Adventure Therapy practitioner in Latvia, Co-founder of Adventure Therapy Latvia. | **Therapeutic intent in adventure expeditions**  Last five years I have been diving in Nepal Himalayan expeditions/ trekking with therapeutic intent on a solution focus basis. With cultural richness and simplicity in social norms, there are opportunity to find ways and come back for "easy life" in our daily routine. After urban environment we are going for less or more remote trekking to see ourselves in different, even difficult situations - as physically, as mentally... Usually expedition takes 15 to 30 days with wide opportunities to learn and reflect upon ourselves - in cities, villages, mountains and trails to discover personal believes, limitations and possibility to see unknown situations from different angles. Evening reflections and personal talks are ones, who makes sense when participants apply new experience to daily situations and benefit from them. I will share my approach and techniques on how to create a safe, non competition environment in a group, what will lead to sharing and interpersonal gain. There will be practical examples from last expeditions to Kanchenjunga, Langtang and Gosaikunda treks.  Workshop will be especially useful for those who work with groups in adventure setup, but do not have special therapeutic education or basics.  There will be a combination between theoretical and practical work in small groups. |
| **Dr Denise Mitten** - Professor Emerita, Education for Sustainability Doctoral Program, Adventure Education. USA | **Language About the Natural Environment**  Language about nature helps shape how people think about and relate to nature. Language can encourage or discourage healthy relationships with the more-than-human worlds (another way to refer to nature or natural environments). Much of the common language used to describe natural environments and humans’ relationships to them in adventure therapy outdoor programs comes from Eurocentric approaches to understanding human connections to nature. I encourage practitioners to explore repairing estranged human relationships with more-than-human worlds in part by changing the language used from Eurocentric approaches and attitudes to a more relational and reciprocal ideology. This includes understanding how Eurocentric ideology has caused many people to have power over and estranged relationships with the natural worlds and ways to change this. |
| **Emma Knight** - outdoor educator, University of Wales, Trinity Saint David. Primary school teacher with specialisms in science, music and outdoor education. Studied biomedical science, professional certificate of education and a masters in outdoor education at three different English universities. | **How do you use the pathways to nature connection?**  Having recently successfully completed a Masters dissertation to answer the question "how does experiential learning impact a child's connection to nature?", this workshop will share findings and consider how they are similar and different across our borders, with a particular focus on introducing the new tool created to measure a connection to nature state in children.   By the end of the workshop we will: - understand how the use of nature connection pathways differs across cultures and countries - have discussed and enhanced the tool to make it more effective across cultural differences |
| **Max Prieto** – psychologist, Masters in Outdoor Education at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. certified Wilderness First Responder, a qualified Mountain Guide (UIMLA). Spain.  **Mache Treviño -** UWTSD - lecturer at University of Wales Trinity Saint David / Crecimiento y Aventura. Spain. | **Navigating Choice in Outdoor Therapeutic Contexts**  In adventure education and outdoor therapeutic contexts, the concept of choice plays a significant role. It encompasses various aspects, ranging from the decision to participate and the level of engagement in specific activities, to choices regarding meal preparation and conflict resolution within a group. We firmly believe that offering choices empowers participants to actively and meaningfully engage in adventurous learning experiences that are both authentic and significant.   Ideally, participants should have the opportunity to make real choices that have tangible consequences, allowing them to gain insights into their own decision-making processes. However, it is important to be mindful of various factors that can influence participants' choices and overall experience. Power imbalances, past experiences, social pressures, and societal expectations are all potential influencers on decision-making. It is crucial to avoid giving pseudo-choices, as this can undermine participants and disrupt therapeutic relationships. |
| Adeena Gerding – psychologist, teacher, writer. Portugal. | **Play School**  In short: Sending grownups back to kindergarten. Adults have become mundane, ritualistic, boring and far too serious. Most would rather sit on the couch watching other people live and have adventures rather than going out and doing it for themselves. We have stopped taking chances and have instead downloaded an app that will minimize every risk in our lives. We numb discomforts and fear with busyness, technology and substances. We over-analyse. We think so much that we seldom break the turbulent cycle our life is spinning through. Or we turn our brains off and simply coast through life on the path society has sent us down. We need to go right back to the basics in order to change. Back to Kindergarten. In line with my new project of combining Adventure and Play Therapy, I would like to run a workshop at GATE, taking the participants through a sector of “Play School”. Using nature as the classroom, there will be an emphasis on how the mind can be rewired through fun, sociable and creative activities and adventures. My work emphasises the value of tackling challenges as games, the benefits of play, and breaking down barriers through fun.  “Play School” is an asset to prove that we are never too old to learn, change, have fun or try new things. |
| **Kimberly Knight** - certified by the ANFT as a nature therapy guide, founder of Wildwood Wisdom and Our Sacred Nature Retreat. Netherlands. | **Forest Bathing for LGBTQIA+ People and Our Allies**  Queer lives are a luminous tapestry, with radiant and diverse lived expressions that harmonize with the vibrant mosaic of life. Through intentional, guided time spent in nature we can find a profound communion with the Earth, nurturing our hearts and minds and guiding us towards a compassionate coexistence with our planet and the allies who stand at our personal boundaries ready to support us on our journeys.  One of the first steps to healing in our fractured world is to reconnect with nature and remember our place in the kinship of all beings. Participants are invited to join ANFT Certified Nature Therapy Guide Kimberly Knight, Mdiv for a gentle, forest bathing walk on the grounds of our beautiful conference site. Forest Bathing is a gentle, mindful, walk in nature inspired by the Japanese practice of Shinrin-yoku, an intentional practice of mindful nature immersion developed to treat stress-related illnesses.  For our immersive walk with the land, we will slow down, awaken our senses, and nourish our relationship with the more-than-human world through a series of gentle, sensory invitations. As we saunter, we will open ourselves to interdependence n by connecting with the sights, smells, sounds, textures, and tastes of the earth. A good portion of our time together will be in silence. This offers you the opportunity to experience the forest and to connect with others who want to experience nature fully and deeply. By choosing to stay away from friendly chit-chat and exploring what it’s like to walk in nature without speaking, we have a chance to engage our senses more fully and to truly connect with the natural world. |
| **Heidi Defever** - working since 1999 with youngsters (schools, residential youth care, psychiatry) through experiantal learning and restorative justice. Organize victim offender mediation and other restorative justice practices for young offenders, youth care settings and families. | **Meditative archery - Japanese Kyudo**  Kyudo means "the way of the bow", when we practice it here, we also call it "archery from the heart". It is a way to reach the connection between arrow, bow, target and archer. I use it in my work with youngsters and families who face multiple struggles in their lives. It is a way to experience oneselves strength. It requires a combination of grounding (standing strong), conscious breathing and focus.  I combine it with principles of Rock and Water training from the Gadaku Institute. Someone named these 5 good reasons to do it: 1. Good for body and posture One uses its whole body to shoot. Although not moving a lot, to hold the bow and to tighten the string, you need muscles from back, shoulders, belly, arms and legs. It improves your balance. 2. One with nature I prefer to do archery in the open air. Nature and fresh air have a calming down effect and because of the awareness of the breathing, the nerve system relaxes too.  3. Good for your concentration Because of the combination of actions : being aware of your posture, bow and string firmly tightened, aiming the arrow to the target. That last one isn't the most important if practicing Kyudo for personal development. It needs self control and patience, features that serve taking difficult decisions and dealing with obstacles in life. 4. It changes your perspective on yourself and your context. One becomes more aware of its behavior and learns how to be present in the 'now', and how to deal with frustration and resistance when reaching out for new horizons ? 5. Good for your self confidence By tightening the bow, you open your chest. Not only in your posture, but it can also open deeper layers within yourself. It can free emotions that have been oppressed. |
| 18:30 - … | Final dinner | |
| DAY 4 – 22.06. | | |
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Breakfast | |
| 9:30 – 10:30 | **Panel debate: Beyond adventure therapy.** Facilitator: Dr Will DobudParticipants: Tanja de Jong, Kristīne Vilcāne, Carina Ribe Fernee, Harpa Ýr Erlendsdóttir, Max Prieto | |
| 10:30 – 13:00 | Un-Conference: professional, structured pop-up discussions and presentations from speakers and conference participants. | |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch | |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | Closing ceremony | |
| 16:00 – 17:00 | GATE Round table | |