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CommunityBased Safety Training

A joint training module for safe, inclusive community learning spaces developed by the participants of the Erasmus+ staff mobility "Women's Leadership in Health & Safety Education"

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1. About this module

Origin

This module is the joint output of the six Femina ry staff members who took part in the eight-day training course "Women's Leadership in Health & Safety Education" at KCMC in Riga. The course combined classroom sessions on occupational health and safety, gender-sensitive leadership, inclusive learning and digital tools with study visits to FNSERVISS, the Jūrmala Youth Initiatives Centre and the Jūrmala Welfare Administration. Each participant developed an individual project concept during the week; this module is the piece of work the group built together, drawing on all six.

The starting question was practical. Femina's work happens in community settings: rented rooms, youth centres, libraries, online groups, with learners who are mostly women, many of them migrants, some with limited Finnish or digital skills, and a large proportion of the delivery done by volunteers. Standard workplace health and safety training assumes an employer, a fixed workplace and a workforce that can read the manual. None of those assumptions holds. The group set out to write the safety training that Femina's context actually needs.

Purpose

To equip trainers, volunteers and community leaders to make community learning spaces safe physically, psychosocially, socially and digitally with the people who use those spaces as co-designers rather than as an audience.

Target group

- Trainers, facilitators and volunteers in civil society organisations and adult education
- Coordinators of community centres, youth centres and low-threshold services
- Adult learners taking a peer leader or volunteer role in their community

Format

- Four sessions of 2.5 hours, delivered over two to four weeks, or as a twoday intensive
- Group size 8–16; multilingual delivery with peer interpreters is part of the design, not an adaptation
- Each session ends with a piece of the group's own Community Safety Plan (section 7); by the end of session 4 the plan is complete

Learning outcomes

After the module, participants can:

1. Describe the four dimensions of community safety and map them for their own space and group.
2. Carry out a basic physical safety check of a community venue and know when to escalate to the venue owner or authorities.
3. Recognise genderbased, psychosocial and social risks in a mixed community group and apply a lowthreshold response and reporting route.
4. Apply basic digital safety practice in the group's online communication and learning platforms.
5. Produce, agree and review a Community Safety Plan with the people who use the space.

2. What "communitybased" safety training means

The term is used deliberately. It describes both where the training happens and who owns it.

Community as setting. The venues are shared, temporary or borrowed. Nobody in the room is the building's safety officer. Exits, extinguishers, firstaid kits, lighting and locks have to be checked each time by the person running the session and that person must know how.

Community as codesigner. Safety rules written by an organisation and handed down are followed only as far as they are understood and trusted. Rules that the group has written, in its own languages, about its own space, are followed because they belong to the group. Every session in this module therefore ends with the group deciding something, not being told something.

Safety in four dimensions. Physical (fire, evacuation, first aid, ergonomics, travel to and from the venue); psychosocial (stress, overload, distressing content, burnout of volunteers); social (harassment, discrimination, exclusion, genderbased risks, conflict within the group); digital (data, accounts, online harassment, safe use of platforms used for learning). A space that is safe in one dimension and unsafe in another is unsafe.

Gender as a lens across all four. The mobility's theme was women's leadership in health and safety education. In practice this means asking at every step who is exposed, who is heard and who decides. Womendominated community work carries risks that standard checklists miss travelling home alone after evening sessions, emotional labour with distressed learners, harassment inside mixed groups, and the assumption that volunteers' time and resilience are unlimited.

Five design principles

1. Low threshold: no prior knowledge, no literacy requirement, no obligation to disclose personal experience.
2. Peerled where possible: learners who complete the module can cofacilitate the next round.
3. Multilingual by default: key materials in Finnish, English and Russian; picturebased checklists; peer interpreters recognised as a role.
4. Decide and record: every session produces a written, shared decision.
5. Escalate honestly: the module teaches what a community group can handle and what it must hand to the venue owner, the organisation's board, occupational health, police or emergency services.

3. What the mobility contributed

The module was not written from theory. Each part of the Riga programme left a specific mark on it.

KCMC course sessions. The sessions on occupational health and safety fundamentals and on genderspecific workplace risks gave the group the fourdimension structure and the insistence that psychosocial and social risks are safety risks in the legal sense, not "soft" issues. The sessions on inclusive learning and digital tools shaped the multilingual, lowthreshold delivery format and the choice to run session 4 on digital safety.

Study visit: FNSERVISS. A practical safetytraining and equipment provider. The visit shifted the group's view of physical safety from documents to practice: a fire extinguisher nobody has held is decoration. Session 2's handson venue check and the principle that every facilitator must have physically walked the evacuation route come from this visit.

Study visit: Jūrmala Youth Initiatives Centre. A youthled community space. The visit demonstrated how a group's own agreements written by users, visible on the wall, revisited regularly carry more

weight than external rules. The Community Safety Plan format in section 7 and the "community as codesigner" principle are drawn from what the group saw there.

Study visit: Jūrmala Welfare Administration. Municipal social and welfare services. The visit clarified where a community organisation's responsibility ends and the public system begins, and how to refer a person in distress without dropping them. Session 3's escalation map and referral practice come from this visit.

The six individual concepts. Each participant's project concept fed a specific element: inclusive and accessible design of physical spaces and mobility to and from the venue; psychological resilience and wellbeing of volunteers; activities that give women a productive, lowstress entry point into the group; community programmes for older adults as a test of accessibility; the safety of people who face institutional or legal threat; and outdoor and environmental activities as safe, lowthreshold group formats. None of the concepts is reproduced here; their thinking is.

4. Module structure

Session	Title	Output
1	Mapping our community's safety	Safety map of the group's space and situation, four dimensions, agreed priorities
2	Physical safety in shared spaces	Completed venue check; named facilitators who have walked the evacuation route; firstaid and emergency contact card
3	Psychosocial and social safety	Group agreement on respect and reporting; escalation map with named contacts
4	Digital safety and the Community Safety Plan	Digital practice rules; completed Community Safety Plan, signed by the group, review date set

5. Session plans

Session 1 Mapping our community's safety

Aim. Establish the group, the four dimensions and a shared picture of where the risks are.

Plan (2.5 hours):

- 0:00 Welcome, group agreement for the module itself: confidentiality, voluntary sharing, right to step out (20 min)
- 0:20 Input: what communitybased safety means; the four dimensions with one example each from the group's own context (30 min)
- 0:50 Safety walk in pairs: participants walk the venue and its approaches with a picture checklist and mark what they notice good and bad (30 min)
- 1:20 Break (15 min)
- 1:35 Mapping: on a large sheet, the group places each observation in one of the four dimensions; anonymous cards for things people prefer not to say aloud (40 min)
- 2:15 Priorities: the group votes on the three issues to address first; these go on page 1 of the Community Safety Plan (15 min)

Facilitator notes:

- Use the group's languages on the map; do not translate everything into Finnish
- Anonymous cards are essential for the social and psychosocial dimensions; expect the most important observations to arrive that way
- If a serious risk emerges (unsafe wiring, an ongoing harassment situation), name it, take responsibility for escalating it, and say what you will do by when

Session 2 Physical safety in shared spaces

Aim. Make every facilitator able to check a venue, respond to a basic emergency and know when to stop a session.

Plan (2.5 hours):

- 0:00 Recap of session 1 priorities (10 min)
- 0:10 Venue check, hands-on: exits and locks, evacuation route walked by everyone, extinguishers located and (where permitted) handled, firstaid kit checked, lighting, heating, trip hazards, furniture and ergonomics for the activities planned (50 min)
- 1:00 Emergency basics: calling 112, giving a location, what to do until help arrives; assigning roles for the group (who calls, who leads people out, who counts) (30 min)
- 1:30 Break (15 min)
- 1:45 Travel to and from the venue: evening sessions, lighting, public transport, going home alone; the group decides its own practice (buddy system, end times, checkin messages) (30 min)
- 2:15 Output: venue check sheet completed and filed; emergency contact card printed and posted; page 2 of the plan (15 min)

Facilitator notes:

- Invite the venue owner or caretaker; many issues are theirs to fix and the meeting is the fastest way to get them fixed
- Where an external provider can offer a short extinguisher or firstaid demonstration, use it; the FNSERVISS visit showed the difference practice makes
- The travel discussion is where gender becomes concrete; do not skip it for lack of time

Session 3 Psychosocial and social safety

Aim. Give the group a shared standard, a reporting route people will use, and a clear map of when to refer outside the group.

Plan (2.5 hours):

- 0:00 Input: psychosocial load for volunteers and facilitators; emotional labour; signs of overload in oneself and others (25 min)
- 0:25 Scenarios in small groups: a participant is repeatedly interrupted and mocked; a volunteer is exhausted but will not stop; a learner discloses a threat at home; two group members are in conflict. For each: what is the group's response, what is the organisation's, what goes outside (45 min)
- 1:10 Break (15 min)
- 1:25 Group agreement: respect, no harassment, how disagreement is handled, how a concern is raised in the group's own words and languages (35 min)

- 2:00 Escalation map: for each type of situation, a named person, a phone number and a stated response time; organisation contact, occupational health where applicable, crisis line, police, social services (25 min)
- 2:25 Output: agreement and escalation map posted; page 3 of the plan (5 min)

Facilitator notes:

- Two reporting routes minimum, one outside the facilitator's own line
- Disclosures of violence, abuse or threat are not handled in the group; the facilitator's task is to believe, ensure immediate safety, and refer the same day the Jūrmala Welfare Administration visit is the reference for how referral works without abandoning the person
- Build debriefing for facilitators into the calendar after this session; the scenarios are demanding

Session 4 Digital safety and the Community Safety Plan

Aim. Extend safety to the group's online life and complete the plan.

Plan (2.5 hours):

- 0:00 Input: what the group uses online (messaging, learning platforms, social media) and what can go wrong: leaked contact details, accounts shared, screenshots, online harassment, scams targeting migrants (25 min)
- 0:25 Handson: privacy settings on the group's actual platforms; what is shared in the group chat and what is not; who administers accounts and what happens when they leave (45 min)
- 1:10 Break (15 min)
- 1:25 Assembling the Community Safety Plan: pages 1–3 reviewed; digital rules added as page 4; roles, review date and where the plan lives (45 min)
- 2:10 Signing and closing: every participant signs; evaluation (section 8); who will cofacilitate the next round (20 min)

Facilitator notes:

- Use the platforms the group really uses, not a demonstration platform
- Keep digital rules to five lines; a long policy is not read
- Photograph the signed plan; store it where the organisation's coordinator can find it

6. Facilitation and adaptation for Femina's learners

- Language: run each session with one facilitator and at least one peer interpreter; prepare the checklists and the plan template in Finnish, English and Russian; use pictures for the venue check
- Digital skills: session 4 assumes some participants have never changed a privacy setting; pair them with a confident peer and go slowly
- Trauma awareness: some learners have experience of violence, war or persecution; keep the scenarios generic, never ask for personal disclosure, and make the right to step out visible
- Volunteers: treat volunteers as staff for the purposes of this module; their safety is the organisation's responsibility even where the law is silent
- Older adults and people with reduced mobility: the venue check in session 2 must include them; the accessibility findings from the group's own concepts apply

- Online delivery: sessions 1, 3 and 4 work in breakout rooms; session 2 cannot be delivered online and must be held in the venue

7. Community Safety Plan template

One page per session output. Filled in by the group, in its own words. Reviewed every six months or after any incident.

Section	Content
Page 1 Our map	Group name and venue(s); the fourdimension map summary; three priority issues; who raised them (roles, not names); date
Page 2 Physical safety	Venue check sheet (date, checked by); evacuation roles (who calls, who leads, who counts); first aid kit location and checker; emergency contact card; travel practice for evening sessions
Page 3 Respect and reporting	Group agreement (in the group's languages); two reporting routes with names and response times; escalation map: situation → who → number → when
Page 4 Digital practice	Platforms used; five rules; account administrators and handover rule; what to do about online harassment
Signatures and review	All participants; facilitator; organisation contact; next review date; where the plan is stored

8. Evaluation

Keep it short so it gets done.

- End of session 4, anonymous, three questions: What is safer now than before the module? What did we not address? What will I personally do differently?
- Facilitator record: attendance per session; issues escalated and to whom; plan completed yes/no
- Three months later: has the plan been used or reviewed? One conversation with the group's coordinator, recorded in two sentences

The module does not claim measured outcomes it has not measured. If a numerical indicator is needed, use plan completion and the three-month review as the two verifiable points.

9. Implementation at Femina ry

The module was presented to Femina's management at the internal sharing session on 26 March 2026 and added to the organisation's resource library. Elements of it, the group agreement, the venue check and the escalation map, were used in the post-mobility workshops on safe and inclusive spaces and on gender-sensitive health and safety practice in June and July 2026. The full four-session module is intended as a standing part of Femina's volunteer and peer leader training, delivered once a year and co-facilitated by learners who have completed a previous round.

Future use with partners: the module is written so that KCMC, the Jūrmala organisations and other European adult education partners can deliver it in their own context by replacing the legal references and emergency numbers in sessions 2 and 3.

10. Sources

- Occupational Safety and Health Act (738/2002), Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986), Nondiscrimination Act (1325/2014), Finland
- Rescue Act (379/2011), Finland: obligations regarding fire safety in premises used for public events
- ILO Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment (2019)
- European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EUOSHA) publications on psychosocial risks and on women and occupational safety and health
- Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (Työterveyslaitos) guidance on psychosocial load
- Training programme and study visits, KCMC, Riga, October–November 2025: FNSERVISS; Jūrmala Youth Initiatives Centre; Jūrmala Welfare Administration
- Individual project concepts of the mobility participants, Femina ry, 2025