



mieli

Supporting Mental Health of Immigrant Students

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Expert

MIELI Mental Health Finland

MIELI Mental Health Finland

- Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) www.mieli.fi
- Est. 1897 – the world's oldest mental health association
- 150 employees

To **promote** mental health, to **prevent** problems, to **reduce** stigma towards mental health problems

Promoting mental health by:

1. **Politics, policies, curricula**
2. Mental health **training and material** for all age groups 0-100
3. **Help and support**; national crisis help line 24/7 and chat, crisis chat for young people, suicide prevention, support groups, crisis help for immigrants
4. **Volunteer**-based work and active citizenship

MIELI supports mental health of immigrants

Some examples:

Crisis services (FI, SVE, EN, RUS, UKR)

Coaching for traumatised immigrants

Projects like preventing radicalisation and well-being groups for young adults

Trainings and materials for professionals and for immigrants

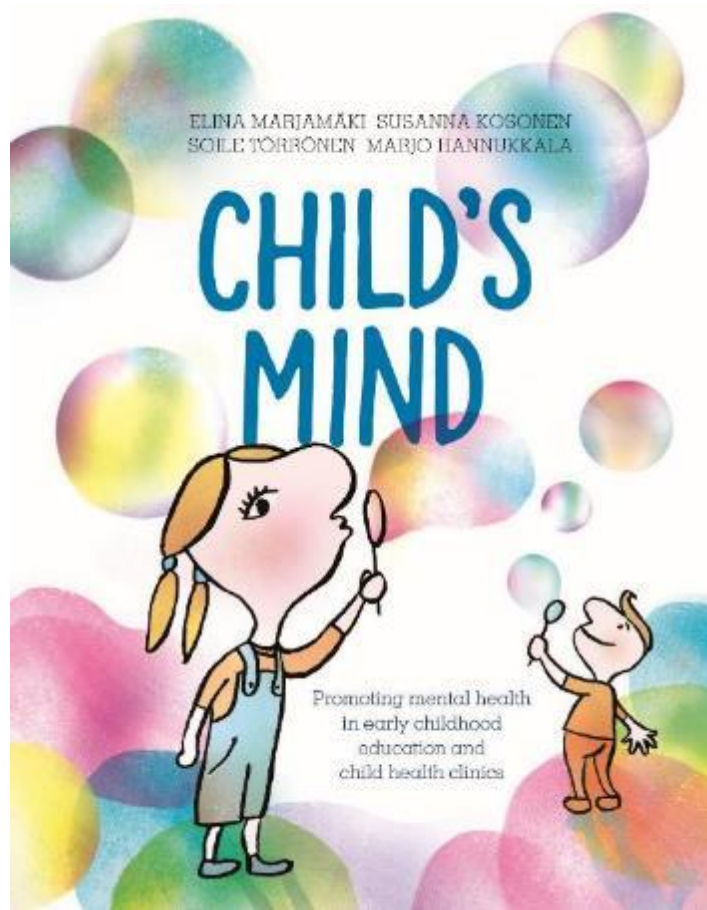
Self-care website "Oma mieli" (FI, EN, AR)

Association MIELI without borders

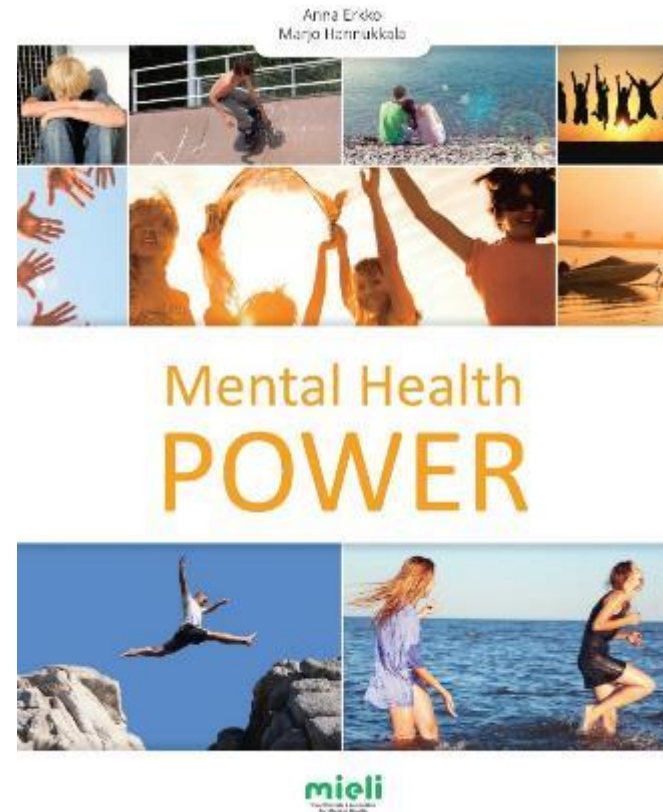
Project for Anti-racism: peer groups

Influencing in national integration policies

You can download the books on MIELI website



<https://mieli.fi/en/materials/chlds-mind-mental-health-promotion-in-early-childhood-education-and-child-health-clinics/>



<https://mieli.fi/en/materials/mental-health-power-book/>

Mental Health Promotion of Children and Young People

Knowledge and understanding of

- mental health as a positive resource and skill that we can teach, learn, support and strengthen
- risk and protective factors of mental health
- different ways to strengthen mental health
- reducing stigma towards mental health problems

Skills and motivation

- to teach and strengthen mental health skills of children and young people
- to listen
- to raise a concern
- to find help and support



Let's learn to know each other!

Please,

- greet us in the language of your choice,
- tell us your first name and
- tell us the town and the country of your working place!



Content of the workshop

Promoting the mental health of immigrant students:

- Protective and risk factors, resources and challenges
- Me, us and others - a supportive community
- The mental process of immigration and trauma background

Immigration and mental health

- The impact of immigration on mental health cannot simply be generalised as a cause of mental illness.
- However, it can be said that immigration is a stressful and major life change.
- Unmanageable prolonged stress can increase the risk of illness. The various permit processes are perceived as particularly stressful.
- Mental health disorders and problems are more common among asylum seekers and refugees than among other migrants or the native population. These include in particular post-traumatic stress disorder (around 9%) and severe depression (around 5%).

Suvi Purhonen, MIELI Kriisikeskus

Young people of foreign origin are a heterogeneous group

Children and young people of foreign origin (13% in Finland) are not a homogeneous group. Within this group, there are significant differences in well-being between boys and girls, for example.

Children and adolescents of foreign origin born abroad (4%) have the most difficult situation.

- A quarter experience moderate or severe anxiety.
- A third have experienced discriminatory bullying.
- One in three boys and one in five girls are without a close friend.
- Around half of refugee children experience psychological symptoms.

Things that may challenge learning

- Developmental factors
- Lack of mastery of study skills
- Poor or no previous school history
- Poor Finnish language skills
- Learning difficulties
- Family and social situation
- Integration and new things, such as different school culture and customs
- Health problems
- Trauma and other emotional stressors

Source: Arvonen 2011;

Helsingin diakonissalaitos 2014

PERUSOPETUKSEN PÄÄTTÖTODISTUS

On suorittanut perusasteen koko oppimäärän seuraavin arvosanoin:

Oppiaineet	Opiskeltujen kurssien määrä	Arvosana	
Suomi toisena kielenä ja kirjallisuus	11	erinomainen	10
Englanti A1-kieli	9	erinomainen	10
Matematiikka	8	erinomainen	10
Uskonto/elämänkatsomustieto	1	suoritettu	S
Yhteiskuntaoppi	2	erinomainen	10
Historia	2	erinomainen	10
Fysiikka	2	erinomainen	10
Kemia	1	erinomainen	10
Biologia	1	erinomainen	10
Maantieto	1	erinomainen	10
Terveystieto	1	erinomainen	10
Opiskelijan ohjaus	3	suoritettu	S
Suomi toisena kielenä (kirjoitus)	1	suoritettu	S
Suomi toisena kielenä (keskustelu)	1	suoritettu	S
Tietotekniikka	1	erinomainen	10
Kuvataide	1	hyvä	8
Liikunta	1	kiitettävä	9
Kotitalous		erinomainen	10
Käsityö		kiitettävä	9

How to strengthen these protecting factors of mental health?

A group discussion



Emotional safety



Inclusion



Mental health skills



Supporting identity



EM-mitalisti Naiimo Bulhan, 22, paukuttaa ennakkoluuloja rikki nyrkkeilykehässä – "Todellakin ajattelen nyt, että kaikki on mahdollista"



Naiimo Bulhanin ura on nousukiidossa. Hän treenaa 5-7 päivänä viikossa. MISKA MIETTINEN

Immigration as a life change

Moving to another country is always a big life change that changes many basic things:

- Environment
- Social relationships: experiences of loss
- Roles: in the family, at work and in society
- Language: different linguistic development, for example within the family
- Behaviours: one's own previous patterns of behaviour may no longer work

Experiences of failure trigger insecurity, sadness and disappointment, while successes reinforce a sense of empowerment, self-confidence and a belief in the future.

Source: Suvi Purhonen, MIELI Crisis Center

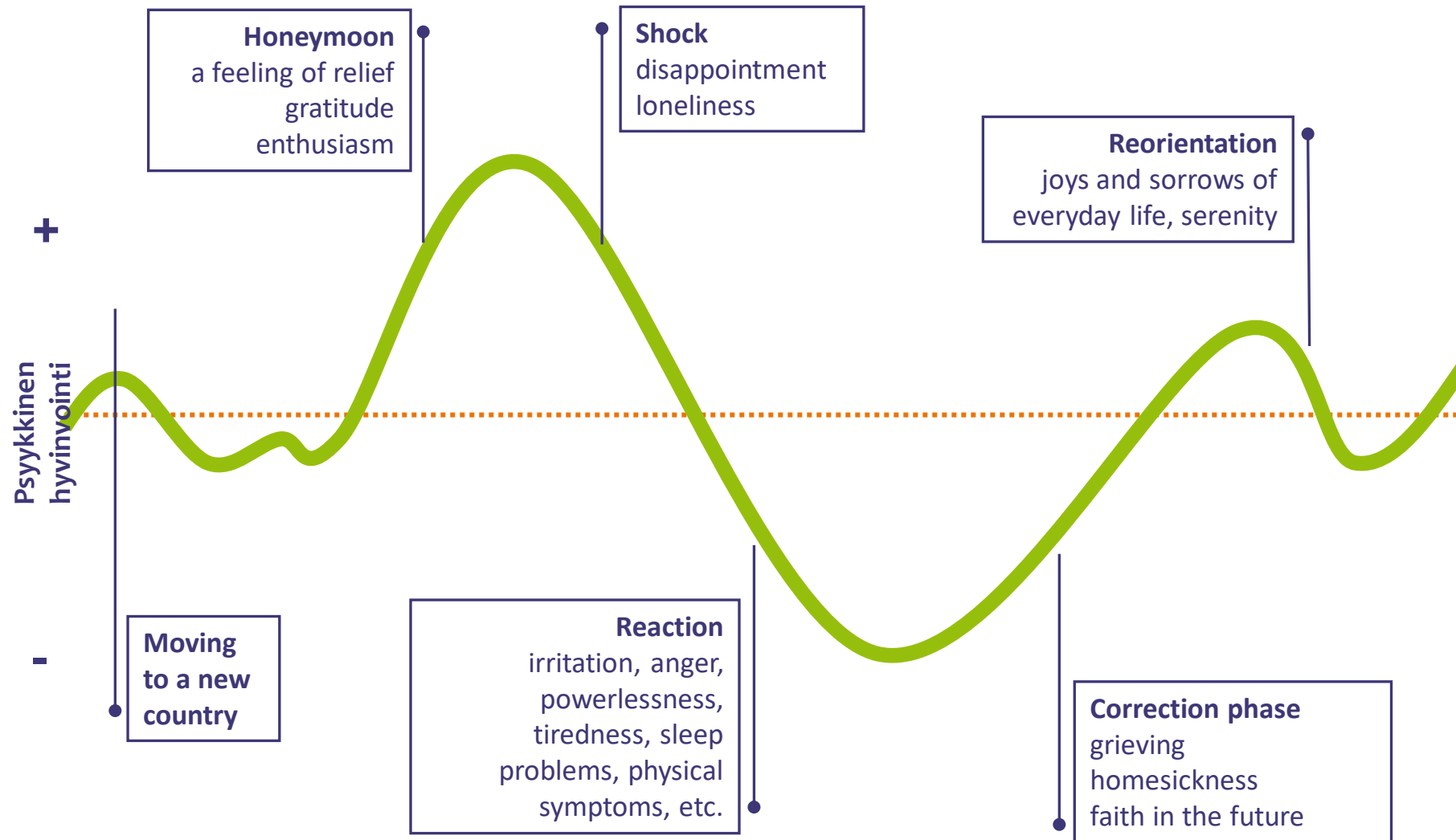


The mental process of immigration



[Animation:](#) Immigration and Mental Health

Mental Process of Immigration



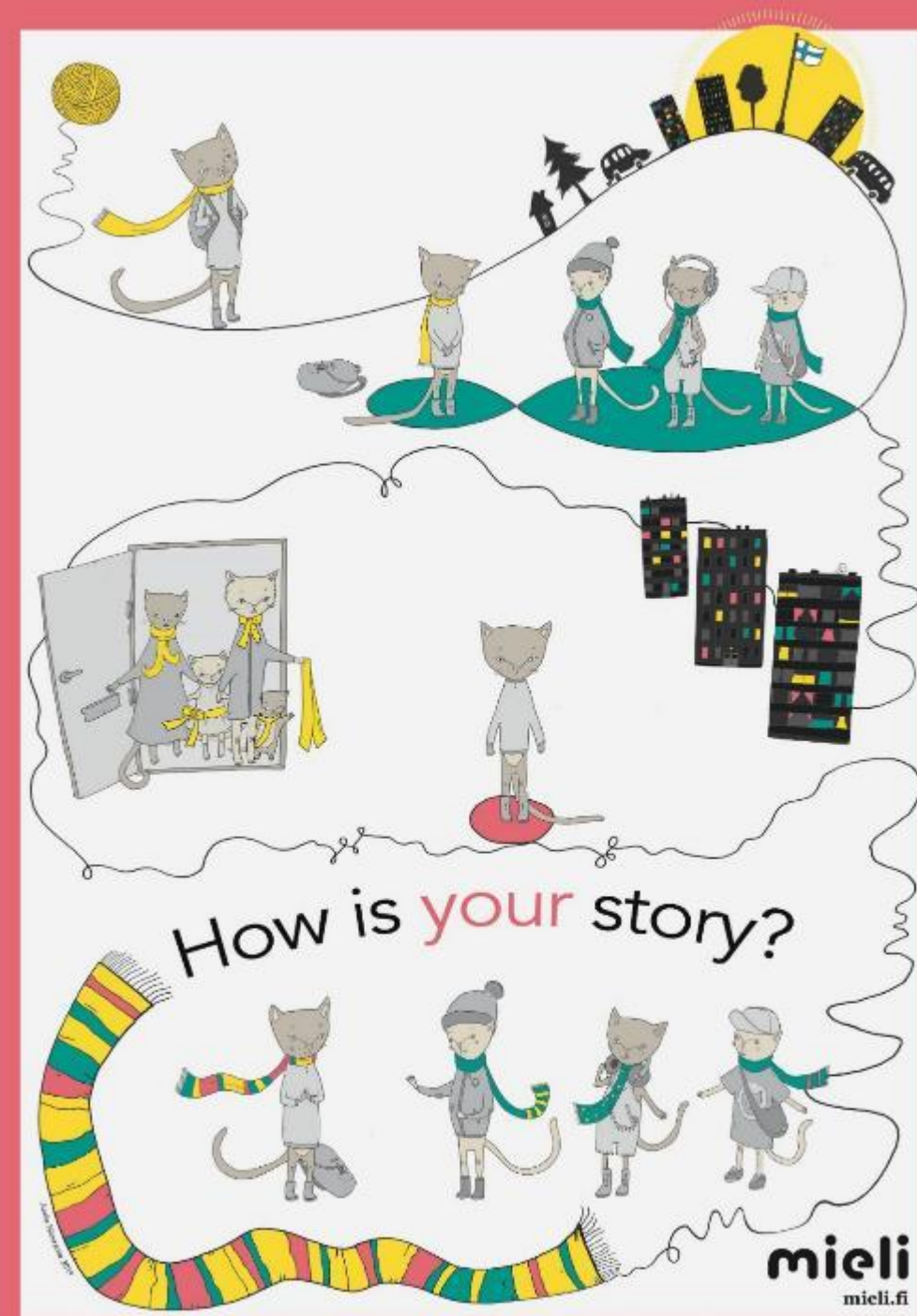
Lähde: Bremer L. & Haavikko A.: Ulkoisesti erilaisia, sisäisesti samanlaisia. Opas mielenterveytyöhön yli kulttuurirajojen. SMS-Tuotanto Oy 2009.

A group exercise

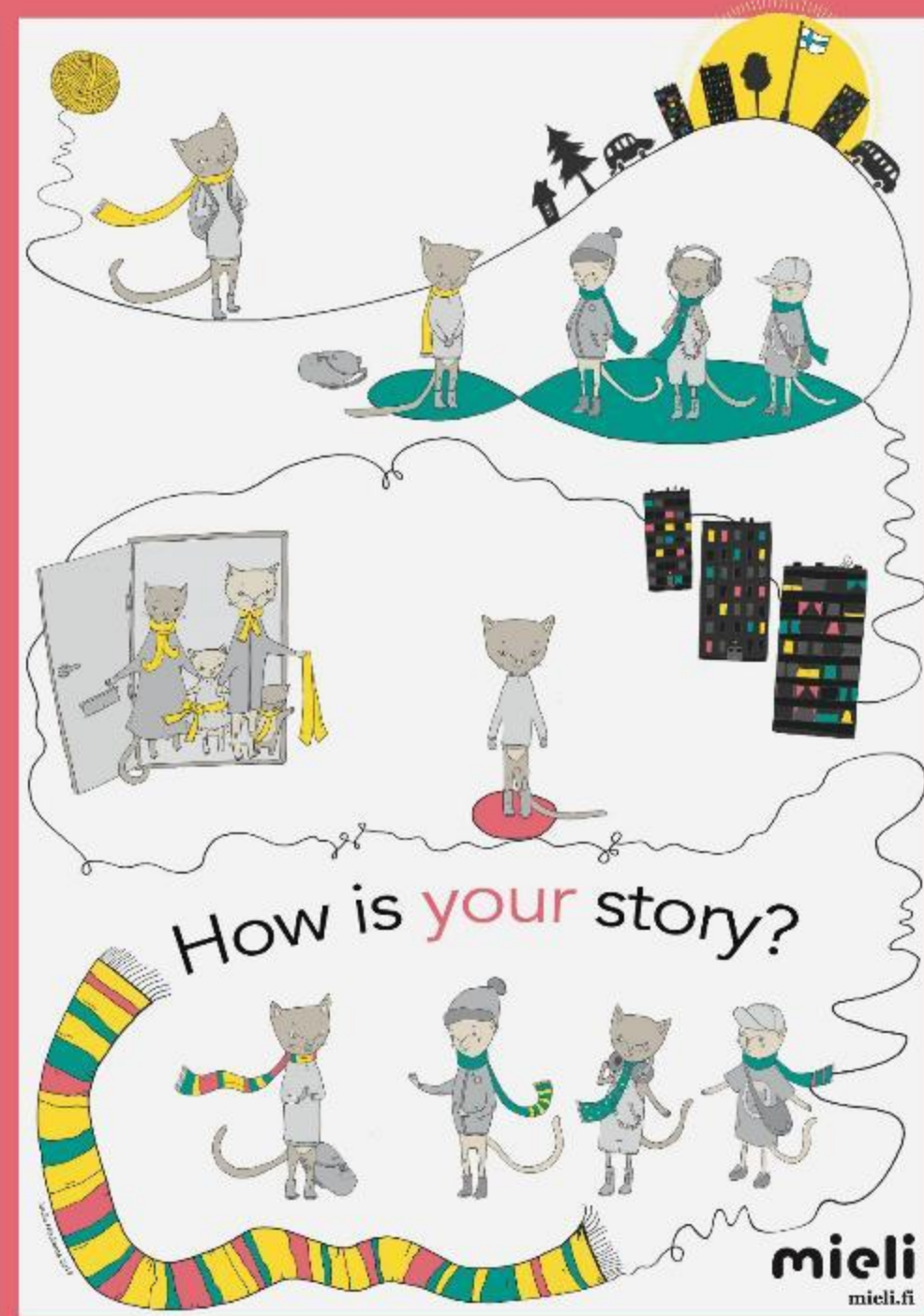
Be free to make up a story!

- Please give a name to the main character.
- What does the main character want from life? What do the different stages feel like? What kind of expectations does one face? Please add
 - feelings
 - thought bubbles and
 - speech bubbles!

[Print the poster](#)



- Which stages do you recognise from your own life? What about the lives of your relatives or acquaintances?
- What do you think the different colors of the poster represent?
- What did you find strange when you first moved to a new place? What did you find funny at the time?
- What things disappointed you? What helped you when you were upset, anxious or in a bad mood? What did you do then?
- What helped you to make friends?
- How did your family support you in finding your story?
- What things do you now appreciate about your family's customs and culture? What do you want to keep?
- What things do you value in the culture of your current environment? What do you want to adopt?



[Print the poster](#)

Me, us and them –
or just "we"



Bullying and loneliness

- Young people of foreign origin who were born abroad are more likely than other young people to live in an unsafe environment. They are more likely to experience repeated bullying and physical violence at school.
- Around half have experienced discriminatory bullying.
- One in five foreign-born boys and one in five foreign-born girls are without a close friend.

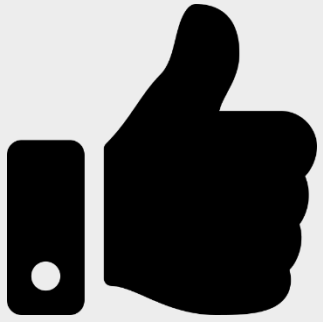
School Health Survey

What does it feel like to experience racism?



Immediate symptoms: anxiety, stress, rapid heartbeat, sweating, nausea, confusion and shame.

Over time: depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder, difficulties in relationships.



Thumbs up when you think you've got it under control!

Our school recognises and admits that we have racism.

We have discussed how staff should treat students as complete equals and not as representatives of their ethnic background or a particular ethnic group.

Diversity is reflected in the examples I give in my teaching, such as the pictures and the stories I tell.

I am aware of my own micro-aggressions and try to avoid them..

I know exactly what to do when I see or hear about racist bullying such as exclusion, name-calling or violence.

Students are involved in developing practices that support equality and equity.

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Kiitos

Thank you!

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