



Module 1: Understanding the Value of Sports for Recovery and Reintegration



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Module Overview

- Duration: approximately **3–4 hours** (adaptable to training needs)
- Target group: **sports coaches, trainers, social workers**, and professionals working with **victims of trafficking**
- Delivery mode: **face-to-face or blended**
- Methodology: **Constructive Alignment** – learning outcomes, methods, and assessments are fully integrated
- Aim: to understand how **sport can be used as a tool for recovery, empowerment, and social inclusion**

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. **Recognize** the psychological, physical, and social benefits of sport in trauma recovery.
2. **Explain** how physical activity supports mental health and self-esteem.
3. **Identify** the key principles of safe, inclusive, and empowering sport sessions.
4. **Analyse** real-life examples of sport-based reintegration initiatives.
5. **Reflect** on their own professional role and ethical responsibilities.
6. **Design** simple, trauma-informed sport activities tailored to VoTs.

Why Sport Matters

Sport is more than physical exercise – it's a pathway to healing and belonging. For victims of trafficking, it:

- Reconnects body and mind after trauma.
- Builds self-confidence through achievable goals.
- Encourages trust and cooperation in a safe environment.
- Promotes social inclusion and a sense of community.

The Transformative Role of Sport in Recovery

Sport contributes simultaneously to:

- Psychological healing – managing emotions, reducing anxiety.
- Physical restoration – rebuilding strength and body awareness.
- Social reintegration – fostering belonging, equality, and mutual respect.

A holistic approach to sport helps survivors regain autonomy, dignity, and hope.



Psychological Benefits of Sport

- Helps survivors regain a sense of control and agency over their bodies.
- Supports emotional regulation and reduces anxiety or stress.
- Boosts self-esteem and confidence through positive reinforcement.
- Encourages mindfulness and focus, improving overall well-being.

Movement becomes medicine – a safe space where survivors can feel present again.

Case Example – Trauma-Sensitive Yoga (Greece)

- Implemented by KMOP with female survivors of trafficking.
- Gentle, non-competitive sessions twice per week.

Outcomes:

- Improved mood and sleep quality.
- Fewer intrusive memories and emotional flashbacks.
- Greater self-awareness and calm.

Physical Benefits of Sport

Rebuilds strength, coordination, and endurance after physical neglect.

Restores positive connection with the body, free from control or harm.

Promotes healthy routines and regular activity.

Supports overall physical and mental health balance.

Social and Community Benefits

- Encourages teamwork and cooperation.
- Builds trust and helps survivors reconnect socially.
- Reduces isolation and promotes a sense of belonging.
- Strengthens community integration and mutual respect.

In a team, survivors learn that support and connection can replace fear

Case Example – Mixed-Gender Futsal (Portugal)

- Organised by a local NGO to support migrant women survivors.
- Weekly futsal sessions combined with informal peer discussions.

Outcomes:

- Increased self-confidence and social interaction.
- Creation of support networks among participants.
- Strengthened collaboration between NGOs and sport clubs.

Integrating Sport into Recovery and Reintegration Pathways

- Sport must be embedded within broader support systems – psychological, social, and community-based.
- Success depends on collaboration among coaches, NGOs, psychologists, and social workers.
- Activities should be trauma-informed, safe, and adapted to individual needs.
- Focus on process, not performance: recovery > competition.

Four Core Principles of Trauma-Informed Sport

- Safety – Create emotionally and physically secure spaces.
- Choice – Allow survivors to control their pace and level of participation.
- Empowerment – Focus on strengths, achievements, and self-efficacy.
- Connection – Foster positive group dynamics and trust.

Collaboration Makes Recovery Stronger

Sport coaches cannot act alone – recovery requires interdisciplinary teamwork.

- Effective collaboration includes
- Social workers – psychosocial support and referrals.
- Psychologists – trauma management and resilience training.
- NGOs & community centers – safe spaces and integration opportunities.
- Communication and clear referral pathways ensure continuity of care.

Policy and Evidence Supporting Sport for Recovery

This module aligns with key European and international frameworks:

- EU Physical Activity Guidelines – promoting sport for health and inclusion.
- EU Work Plan for Sport (2021–2024) – highlighting sport’s social value.
- EU4Health Programme – connecting physical activity with mental health.
- HealthyLifestyle4All Campaign – ensuring sport access for vulnerable groups.
- WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (2018–2030) – “More Active People for a Healthier World.”

Reflection: What Does Recovery Look Like Through Sport?

Discuss in pairs or small groups:

1. How can sport offer a sense of control, dignity, or connection?
2. What challenges might arise when using sport with survivors of trafficking?
3. How could coaches ensure emotional safety during a session?

Then share one insight with the group.

Case Study – Applying Trauma-Informed Principles

Step 1: Read the case scenario provided by the trainer.

Step 2: In small groups, discuss:

What needs do the survivor(s) show?

Which of the four principles (Safety, Choice, Empowerment, Connection) apply?

What kind of sport session could support their recovery?

Step 3: Share your key points with the group (2-minute summary per team).

Design Your Own Inclusive Sport Session

Goal: Translate theory into practice.
Each group designs a short, trauma-informed activity that includes:

A clear objective (physical, social, or emotional).

Duration and materials needed.

Safety and inclusivity measures.

Expected impact on participants.

Groups then present their proposal for peer feedback.

Key Takeaways from Module 1

- Sport supports healing of body, mind, and social connection.
- Effective recovery requires safe and inclusive practice.
- Collaboration across sectors ensures holistic reintegration.
- Coaches are agents of empowerment and hope.

Recovery through sport begins when trust is stronger than fear

Further Resources for Trainers

- EU Work Plan for Sport (2021–2024)
- EU Physical Activity Guidelines (2018)
- HealthyLifestyle4All Campaign
- EU4Health Programme
- WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (2018–2030)
- RECOVER E-Guide and Toolkit (WP4/WP5)



Congratulations for finalizing Module 1!



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