

## **GROUP 3:**

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## **Our impressions of the social practice**

### **First meeting**

As a part of our social practice we worked with the St Andrew's Foundation in Uryupinsky PNI on Fridays at 11:00.

12 May. The first online meeting was good. We got acquainted with the mentees, each of us told a lot of interesting things about ourselves. They listened enthusiastically to our stories and then asked questions, which we were happy to answer. Then we talked about how people greet each other in different countries of the world, and also shared the peculiarities of greetings in our hometowns.

Emotions from the first meeting were contradictory. First we were assigned to another group where we had to work with adults, and we prepared a programme on request to make it interesting for them. Then we were told that there were already too many volunteers for that group, so we were told that we would have a group of children. The meeting was unexpected for us. But we quickly orientated ourselves and it didn't affect the meeting in any way. It was scary, as we realised that we had a big responsibility and, as it turned out, we were not prepared morally. However, both we and the mentees were satisfied with the meeting.

### **Second meeting**

We had our second meeting with the group on the 19th of May, where we talked about the influence of women on the world of fashion. We are very close to this topic and it was in line with the initial request, so we were happy to dedicate a talk to it at our meeting. On that day we saw completely new faces with whom we had to build communication anew. The fashion talks were quite short and we realised that our mentees weren't really interested in what we were talking about, so we tried to get the information across quickly and clearly to get on to the more exciting part of our presentation - the interactives, where the group had to identify which woman out of the three we were talking about had been asked a question. There were few tasks,

they were of different formats - attention, association, memory, textual questions or pictures to be associated with the heroines, but the group did not do well with the task, we could see that they were not at all engaged in the process and almost did not answer the questions. We noticed that the mentees were tired after the game and the huge flow of information and dispersed, thanking us for the presentation.

It was very important for us to treat the mentees with respect and empathy, so we controlled our emotions so as not to hurt their feelings. Volunteering can be emotionally challenging and requires patience and emotional control, especially when you are working with people who are vulnerable. However, we were able to remain calm and show empathy. We hope we helped people and were able to contribute to the activity.

At the end of the first two meetings we received 9 points each for the criteria "degree of involvement" and "responsibility" from our coordinator, all the other indicators ("following the rules", "tactfulness, sensitivity", "helpfulness" and "politeness") he gave us a maximum score. Ilya left us this comment: "Students are diligent in preparing material for the meeting. They listen to recommendations. The materials used are informative and colourful, which is important when communicating with PNI wards. Trainees interact confidently in their trio. There are some shortcomings - in communication, slides, prepared text, but this, based on my many years of practice, no one gets it right away; it is corrected only through experience of communication. In general, I am satisfied with the trainees. In a five-point system, I would rate the work a confident "five"". It was valuable for us to receive such a high evaluation, but we realised that we have a lot to strive for, so we continued to work.

### **Third meeting**

At the request of the curator the meeting was postponed from 26 May to 2 June, however, on 2 June PNI could not get in touch, so we held the third meeting on 6 June.

For the third meeting, our team prepared for our discussion topic "financial literacy" at the request of the facilitator. We created a game with different types of tasks of varying complexity, starting with questions about the professions of cartoon characters and ending with tasks and rebuses on the topic of financial literacy. The team of mentees was very involved in the conversation and interested in the topic. We were very pleased to see how the group participated in our interactive activities and what knowledge they had about the topic of finance, however, rebuses and tasks

on the order of letters in a word proved to be very difficult for them, so we often had to give hints.

By the third meeting we had already got used to our mentees, began to understand their psychology and how to communicate with them, compared to our first meeting, where we were psychologically a bit unprepared for such communication. We are very grateful for such an interesting experience that our social practice provided us with, as we realised that there are also such people who need help and support. Our team hope that we have helped the group on an intellectual level to develop and enjoy their time with us.

#### **Fourth meeting**

We had an exam on the 9th of June, so we arranged in advance to reschedule the meeting. In the end, the meeting was held on the 8th of June. It turned out that the 3rd and 4th meetings were very close to each other, which played to our advantage, as their topics were related - we played one game during two meetings.

At the fourth, i.e. final, meeting we continued to fulfil the tasks of our game, which had taken too long the previous time, and we were very surprised, because the mentees solved complex rebuses and tasks very quickly, actively participated in the discussion and named the correct answers! It was very pleasant to see that we did not do such work in vain, that everyone liked what we had prepared. It was much easier to communicate, we felt calmer and more confident compared to the first meetings. The changes in the atmosphere at the meeting and the special activity of the mentees were not unnoticed by our coordinator, who was very emotional about our "success".

After the third and fourth meetings we also received feedback from the coordinator and found that Ilya gave us 10 points on all indicators, which shows that we appreciated the work we had done and that we were able to overcome the difficulties we faced at the first meetings. This is the comment we received: "Due to objective circumstances we had to postpone the dates and numbers previously set in the schedule of practice. However, this was beneficial. At the request of the staff of Uryupinsk PIU, the topic for the meetings was determined - financial issues.

A whole educational programme has been developed on this topic for the NSP wards. This programme is implemented by the NSP staff. Therefore, we, as an external factor, additionally promoted the learning of this topic in a simple game form (quizzes, riddles, rebuses). The topic lasted for two meetings. The trainees prepared excellent material, the second session they practically corrected it on their own, I repeat - they interacted confidently in their trio".

At the final meeting, the coordinator also spoke positively about our work, saying that we had done something that no one else had done. We are happy with the practice and this co-operation, glad that we were able to build a good rapport with the mentees despite the various troubles. Each of us was responsible for the meetings, preparation for them and visits, so we hope that our contribution was not in vain.