



Session 4: Mindfulness

Objectives

- To continue to develop the ability to engage with the immediate environment through mindful concentration of the senses.
- To understand the concept of attaining an 'attitude of gratitude', and the subsequent benefits this can have upon emotional well-being.

Equipment: Small drum, Yoga prompt cards, small box, felt tips, paper, ribbons, mindfulness music (or tranquil sounds), 'box' or other container to be used as a time capsule.

Introduction

Gratitude groove: Pupils will pass around a small bongo and reciprocate a simple beat. They will chant '1-2-3-4, _____ is what I'm grateful for' before saying the name of a fellow pupil who must start the beat on time. This will encourage students to both reflect on a positive area, whilst encouraging concentration and focus upon the immediate moment.

Gymtherapy warm-up routine: The facilitator will lead the pupils into a full body stretch, encouraging pupils to contribute suggestions to this activity. Following this, the facilitator will ask pupils to walk around the hall, being mindful to walk according to the pace of their drum (or other percussive instruments). The facilitator will ensure that the speeds are varied. In addition, the facilitator will make 'loud' or 'soft' sounds, which pupils should respond to by stamping or tiptoeing respectively.

Physical activity

Yoga poses: A set of yoga pose prompt cards will be set about the hall. Pupils will be given 30 seconds at each station to 'master' the poses. On the back of each prompt card will be a 'visualisation' theme. Pupils will then be given a further 30 seconds to attempt to visualise the suggested theme whilst in the position of the yoga pose. This will be followed by a reflective discussion, whereby pupils will be given the opportunity to share any insights they may have developed regarding this experience.

Mirroring: The facilitator will communicate that being mindful means adopting an awareness of the environment around oneself, extending to other people. Pupils will then be divided into pairs, whereby they will be labelled 'A' or 'B' respectively. The facilitator will then say 'A' or 'B' depending on who they want to lead or copy, followed by an emotion. This exercise will provide children with the ability to recognise their own emotions in others, and therefore develop a





Choreography: Pupils will be divided into pairs, and will be provided with two yoga prompt cards. Pupils may use ribbons if desired. Each pair will be given the task of creating a short routine, which must incorporate the two suggested yoga poses, to illustrate a journey from stress to mindfulness. If pupils require further inspiration, the facilitator may suggest that a storyline is based on the experiences of an animal in their habitat.

Cool-down activity: Pupils will play a game named 'silent starfish'. Here, pupils will find a space in the hall and lie down imitating a starfish. The facilitator will then read out the following paragraph, whilst walking among the starfish, in order to encourage a mindful response. If pupils 'move', they will be tapped lightly on the shoulder and will be asked to move to the side of the hall. The last 'remaining' starfish is the winner.

Once upon a time deep in the heart of the ocean, lay a school of starfish. Like the stars in the sky, they stood out brightly against a blue backdrop, the backdrop of the sea. One day, a deep-sea diver dived down down down, to check how the starfish were doing. He knew that if the starfish wiggled, even a little bit, that they were not having nice and pleasant dreams. But, if the starfish were perfectly still, he knew that they were having nice and pleasant dreams. As the diver walked amongst the starfish, he could tell they were having wonderful dreams. He could see that they could feel the sand beneath their arms, the waves above their heads and the seaweed rustling about at their feet. Content that all of his starfish were having good dreams, he swam back to his boat, ready to return tomorrow.

[If pupils move during this game and need to be tapped on the shoulder, the facilitator should say 'this starfish looks like he/she isn't having such a good dream. Go and stand over by the sea wall and wait for the other starfish nicely.']

Reflective craft

Attitude of gratitude: Pupils will contribute to a 'time capsule' containing things to be grateful for in the current year. Pupils will be provided with a felt tip and some paper, and will be asked to draw around their hand. In each finger, the pupils should write what they are grateful for, and may illustrate this if desired. Dependent upon resources and availability, the facilitator could encourage the wider organisation/school to become involved with this task, and small items representing the current year may be added to the capsule. At the end of the session, pupils will be encouraged to share what they are grateful for. The facilitator should make an effort to highlight suggestions relating to the 'free' things of life.



Warrior pose – What to look for: Front foot forward, back foot at 90-degree angle, wide lunge, shoulders down.