



MINDFULNESS

Games and exercises

Exercises to bring participants back to the present moment simply and quickly

1. **Parts of the body**

Touching different parts of the body and focusing on the sensation in that moment. For example rubbing left hand over right arm. The objective is to simply focus on the sense of touch as you vary pressure and speed.

2. **Body Scan**

- Lay down or sit comfortably. Close your eyes, keep still and listen. Check in with your body just as it is right now noticing the sensations that are present, feeling the contact the body is making with the floor/chair.
- Then starting to scan the body, sweeping your awareness through different parts of the body, without judging what you are aware of but as best you can bringing attention to your experience moment to moment.
- Starting with the crown of the head, noticing any sensations here, tingling, numbness, tightness or relaxation. Then including in awareness of each individual body part – enquire any sensations you may be feeling. Scan every single body part: head to toes.

Exercises to help focus the mind on the task in the moment

1. **Pass the clap**

One person starts passing a clap in one direction around a circle. The main objective is to pass the clap as fast as possible. This game can become more challenging by adding an option to reverse the clap or passing it across the circle.

2. **Catch the Squirrel**

Split the group in half, they create two lines and face each other. One participant stands in between the two lines at one end and flips a coin. The two participants at the top of their lines must pass an “electric pulse” if they see the head of the coin. The aim of the game is to send the electric pulse as fast as possible down your line so that person at the end can grab the squirrel (or any soft object you choose) before the other line does.

3. **Fruit Salad**

Participants stand in a circle and everyone is labelled a pear, apple or orange (or any 3 fruit/category you would like to choose). The leader of the game will call out a fruit and anyone labelled with that fruit has to walk to the centre of the circle and then find another space in the circle to stand. Participants must try not to bump into each other and focus on remaining calm when trying to find another

space to stand in. When the leader shouts “Fruit salad” all participants have to leave their spot, walk to the centre and find a space. This can be adapted to the classroom by swapping chairs at table instead.

Exercises/Breathing to bring calm and focus back into a learning environment after breaktime or lunch

1. Counting to 20

The group can sit at classroom tables with eyes closed. The leader will start off the counting with “1” and then the rest of the group must reach the number 20 without two people saying the same number. Important tip is not to rush. This exercise helps to practice patience and helps to be mindful of others and work as a team.

2. Yoga Mountain pose

Participants must find a space by themselves, have their feet hip width apart, knees slightly relaxing, pelvis slightly forward and arms by their side. As the group inhales together, everyone brings their arms up and reaches for the ceiling. Really stretch this out. As the group exhales, arms come back down by their sides. And repeat as many times as you want.

3. Self-Hug

Place one arm across your belly, the other across your chest. Take deep breaths in: Breath in, Breath out. Really focus on the breathing, allow your mind to think of nothing else and let your body sink into your chair.

4. I’m okay

Remind yourself that no matter what emotion or situation you are, you will always be okay. You always have the power to breath. Taking your hand and place it in the okay sign onto your belly, as you breathe in focus on the okay hand moving with your breath.

5. Nose

Place one finger on one nostril, breath in, then place other finger on other nostril and close for a beat. Release, and open the opposite nostril to breathe out. Push the stress away and slowly become present to the moment of breathing.

Exercises to help settle emotions and find clarity in thought

1. **Glitter bottle** Fill an empty plastic bottle with water. Pour in a material that can either float or sink such as glitter or sequins. This represents emotions in your mind. Shake the bottle and watch the glitter as it settles and the water becomes clear again. This acts as a visualisation of the mind settling emotions and finding clarity in decision making or problem solving.
2. **Focus on an object**
Ask participants to focus on an object for 90 seconds. Ask them if their mind drifted to other thoughts. Ask them to focus on the object for another 90 seconds and this time to try to be aware when they lose focus and to make an effort to bring their focus back to the object.
3. **Emotional Blocking**
In partners, face each other placing palms together and push as hard as you can – enquire what you notice about this task. Explain that one partner is the mind and the other is the emotion, if we continue to fight against our feelings we will find it difficult to control our mind. If we keep fighting the emotion it will continue to grow and become difficult to handle.

Spreading kindness to create a positive community

1. Positive papers

Everyone will write their names in the middle of plain paper, they will place their paper on the floor. The aim of this game is to fill everyone's papers full of positive and lovely comments about each person, when each student returns to their own paper they will see how kind everyone can be and how much love everyone has for each other. Make sure everyone has a comment on their paper before asking participants to read their papers.