



Resource A

Mindfulness exercises

These exercises can be used within any of the mindfulness components in the manual. There may be specific exercises that you wish to include within the different modules that can enhance the concepts being explored.

Questions to ask about the experiences

- ▶ Did you notice any sensations in your body?
- ▶ Did you notice anything new that you had never noticed or experienced before? Did you say anything to yourself about what was happening?
- ▶ Was it easy to be mindful at this time?
- ▶ Did you notice yourself drifting away from what you were doing? If you did, did you tell yourself off, make a judgement about it or get angry about it?
- ▶ Was it easy to bring yourself back to the activity/experience? Was there anything bad about it?
- ▶ Did it trigger memories or thoughts that were unpleasant? What did you do with them?
- ▶ How do you feel right now?

Breath

Sit or lie in a comfortable position. You may choose to close your eyes or keep them open, if you are feeling tired it may be useful to allow some light in to keep you alert. Begin by gently moving your attention to your breathing. Simply notice each breath as it happens, whether you focus on the rise and fall of your chest or stomach, or on the sensation of the breath at the nostrils or over the lips. Really feel what it is like to breathe, without feeling the need to alter your breath, just noticing it as it happens. As you engage in this exercise you may find that your mind wanders, caught by thoughts or by noises in the room, or body sensations. When you notice that this happens, remember that this is okay, and simply notice the distraction but gently bring your attention back to the breath. You may find it easier to stay focused by counting each breath. Count them from one to 10, either on the in breath or the out breath, and then start from one again. If you get distracted and forget which number you are on, just bring your attention back to the breath and begin counting from one.

Bubbles (prop required)

Make sure you are comfortable and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. When you are ready take the lid off the bottle of bubbles. Notice how it feels and the sensations in your hands as you undo the lid. Notice the sensation and feel of bringing the bubbles up to your mouth. Notice the air flowing past your lips and the bubbles forming. Notice the size and the shapes they make, notice the different colours you see and describe those colours to yourself. Follow the

bubble's journey from the beginning to the end. Notice which way it goes, how long it lasts and where it finishes. Notice any thoughts that come into your mind and place them into a bubble and watch them float away then disappear. Again and again relive the journey of the bubble.

Sounds

Make sure you are comfortable and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. Close your eyes if you feel able to do so. Once you have spent some time focusing on your breathing, shift your awareness to your ears. Then allow this awareness to expand from your ears and become aware of and open to all the sounds around you. Do not go searching for sounds or holding on to certain sounds. Notice the awareness of all the sounds around you, sounds that are close, sounds that are far away, sounds that are soft, and sounds that are loud. Notice if you are labelling the sounds that you hear. If you notice that you are getting distracted by a thought, notice what distracted you away from the present moment and bring your attention back to the sounds around you.

Sights

Make sure you are comfortable and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. Observe what is around you or take note of one particular object. Observe it closely. Notice what you see. Observe its shape, colour, size. Notice the small details and observe anything that you have not seen or taken notice of before. Notice how this makes you feel. Notice if you are labelling the sights that you see. If you realise that you are getting distracted by a thought, notice what distracted you away from the present moment and bring your attention back to just observing.

Taste (prop required)

Take time to observe what you are experiencing before you begin to eat mindfully. Pay attention to how your body feels. Do you notice that you are hungry? Are you anticipating the experience of eating? Notice how this feels for you. Experience the sight and smell of what you are about to eat. As you take a bite notice the texture of it, the taste of it and how it feels in your mouth. Notice what happens in your mouth when you put the food in, any tingling that you experience, any salivation, the urge to chew and swallow. If you notice that you are getting distracted by a thought, observe what distracted you away from the present moment and bring your attention back to eating mindfully.

Touch (prop required)

Make sure you are comfortable and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. Choose an object to interact with and notice the texture of it in your hands. Focus on the sensations of it and experience how this makes you feel. Notice the emotion it brings forward. Don't judge the experience as pleasant or unpleasant, just notice that it is what it is. Notice if it is heavy or light, if it is soft or firm

and if you feel any other sensations, observe them and experience them mindfully. If you realise that you are getting distracted by a thought, notice what distracted you and bring your attention back to the present moment.

Smell (prop required)

Make sure you are comfortable and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. Focus on what you smell. Notice if it is a familiar smell. Can you place it or is it something unusual? Notice how much you can smell it. Is it strong or subtle. Notice if it is sweet, woody or flowery for example. Explore if you are comfortable with the smell. If it is something you feel that you do not like don't push it away, just experience the smell as it is without making any judgements about it. If you notice that you are getting distracted by a thought, observe what distracted you away from the present moment and bring your attention back to experiencing what you are smelling.

Thoughts

Make sure you are comfortable and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. Close your eyes if you feel able to do so. Move your attention to your thoughts. Bring awareness to whatever thoughts enter your mind. See your thoughts as only objects in or events of your mind. You might imagine them as clouds passing through the sky, as leaves passing down a stream or as bubbles floating by. Notice them enter your consciousness, develop, and then float away. There is no need to look for, hold onto, or follow your thoughts. Just let them come and go on their own. If you notice that you are getting pulled in by a thought, notice what distracted you away from the present moment and bring your attention back to just being aware of your thoughts.

Physical sensations

Make sure you are sitting comfortably and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. Close your eyes if you feel able to do so. Move your awareness to the parts of your body that are touching your chair, noticing what it feels like to sit in the chair. Allow your awareness to move to the whole of your body, simply allowing your awareness to expand to any physical sensations in your body. Notice if you are feeling any tension or pain in your muscles. Notice if you are experiencing any hunger.

Bring awareness even to what the air feels like against your skin. If you notice that you are judging or labelling any bodily sensations, bring your awareness back to the sensation as it is instead of how our mind tells us it is. Do not go hunting for sensations or hold on to them, just notice any sensation as it arises. After a while, shift your attention back to what it feels like to sit in your chair and then back to your breathing.

Walking

Start walking and as you are walking pay attention to your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out and pay attention to what parts of your body move as you breath.

Move your awareness to the physical sensations in your body. Notice what it feels like on the bottom of your feet with every step you take. Pay attention to the tightening and easing of muscles in your legs as you walk. Increase your awareness to your body and the physical sensations you notice when walking. Notice how your arms feel, and how your clothing feels as your body moves in different ways. If you observe that you are getting distracted by a thought, notice what distracted you away from the present moment and bring your attention back to just observing the sensations of walking.

Mindful to emotion

Make sure you are sitting comfortably and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. Close your eyes if you feel able to do so. Move your awareness to the whole of your body. Explore and notice how you are feeling and describe it to yourself. Put a name on the feeling if you can. Now move your attention to your face and relax all the muscles around your mouth. Begin to smile, noticing the stretch across your cheeks, the crinkles at the corner of your eyes, the movement of your lips. Keep on smiling, maintaining your awareness of your smile. If you realise that you are getting distracted by a thought, notice what distracted you away from the present moment and bring your attention back to just observing the sensations of smiling. Observe any changes that arise in other parts of your body. Do not go hunting for these or hold on to them, just notice other sensations if they arise.

Colours (prop required)

Make sure you are sitting comfortably and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. When you are ready choose a picture card from **Resource B9** and notice the sensations you experience while observing the card. Just see what you see without making any judgements about what you see or about yourself. Notice the different colours or shades. Observe how the picture card makes you feel, try to describe and name this feeling to yourself. If you notice that you are getting distracted by a thought, notice what distracted you away from the present moment and bring your attention back to just observing the colours. (You can use the picture cards in **Resource B9**, or other images such as a scene which might elicit a certain feeling, or a block of colour to try and depict a particular mood or feeling.)

Mindful to senses

Make sure you are sitting comfortably and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable to do so. I am going to read a list of questions. Listen to each one and notice any sensations that you experience.

- ▶ Can you feel your hair touching your head?
- ▶ Can you feel your belly rising and falling as you breathe?
- ▶ Can you feel the space between your eyes?
- ▶ Can you feel the distance between your ears?

- ▶ Can you feel your breath touching the back of your nose and throat while you inhale?
- ▶ Can you notice your arms touching your body?
- ▶ Can you feel the bottoms of your feet?
- ▶ Can you notice the space within your mouth?
- ▶ Can you notice the position of your tongue in your mouth?
- ▶ Can you feel the air against your cheek?
- ▶ Can you feel the temperature in the air around you?
- ▶ Can you feel how warm your body is?
- ▶ Can you feel the end of your nose?
- ▶ Can you feel your nails?
- ▶ Can you feel your clothes on your skin?
- ▶ Can you feel your shoes on your feet?

Loving kindness

Make sure you are sitting comfortably and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. If you feel comfortable to do so, close your eyes.

Now move your attention to the area in the middle of your chest, around your heart. Think about what it means to be warm, gentle and friendly. Imagine being warm and kind. Try to develop a compassionate and kind expression on your face. Imagine yourself speaking to someone kindly and gently and imagine the tone of your voice as you are doing that. Imagine reaching out to someone with warmth and kindness and what that might be like. Notice and experience this feeling of warmth and kindness through your whole body.

Now think of someone who you feel positive toward. This can be yourself, a friend, a family member, a religious figure, all human beings, or anyone who you have ever had a positive relationship or interaction with.

Now imagine sending out feelings of love and kindness toward this person. As you imagine this, say to yourself:

- ▶ May they be happy.
- ▶ May they be loved.
- ▶ May they be well.
- ▶ May they be safe.

Continue to repeat this as you think about this person while repeating:

- ▶ May they be happy.
- ▶ May they be loved.
- ▶ May they be well.
- ▶ May they be safe.

If it feels too difficult to remember these, just repeat 'may they be loved' or a preferred statement of your own.

If individuals feel ready to advance this mindfulness practice then the remainder may be used as an addition or alternative to the positive relationship above. If they do not feel comfortable to do this, remain with the initial choice until they have practiced this further.

Now try to bring to mind someone you feel neutral towards. Imagine sending out feelings of love and kindness toward this person. As you imagine them say to yourself:

- ▶ May they be happy.
- ▶ May they be loved.
- ▶ May they be well.
- ▶ May they be safe.

Now try to bring to mind someone that you feel negative emotions towards. Imagine sending out feelings of love and kindness toward this person. As you imagine them say to yourself:

- ▶ May they be happy.
- ▶ May they be loved.
- ▶ May they be well.
- ▶ May they be safe.

Now bring your attention back to yourself and notice and experience feelings of warmth and kindness through your whole body. Now bring your attention back to your breathing. When you are ready, return your focus to where you are now.

Listening to nature sounds

Make sure you are comfortable and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath going in and out. Close your eyes if you feel able to do so. I'm going to play some sounds and try to focus on the noises when they start. Notice any thoughts or images which come into your mind and try to let them go. If you get distracted try to bring yourself back to the sounds. When you are ready bring your attention back to the room and open your eyes.

Listening to music

Make sure you are comfortable and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath going in and out. Close your eyes if you feel able to do so. I'm going to play some music and try to focus on it when it starts. Notice any thoughts or judgement you are having about the music and try to let them go. Just listen to the music. If you find yourself getting distracted, try to bring yourself back to the music and listen out for a specific instrument or tune. When you are ready bring your attention back to the room and open your eyes.

Noticing circles

For this mindfulness exercise I'm going to invite you to notice how many circle shapes there are in the room. It doesn't matter how many circles you notice, try not to keep count, just take note of the circle and move your attention onto the next one. Try not to go searching for circles, just notice them as you see them. If you find yourself becoming distracted, try to bring yourself back to the task gently. It might help if each time you notice a circle, say the word 'circle' to yourself in your mind.

The pebble

Make sure you are comfortable and begin by focusing on your breathing. Think of yourself as a pebble that is falling through a clear stream. While sinking, just let yourself sink downwards making no attempt to change your movement. Fall towards a spot of total rest on the gentle sand on the bottom of the riverbed. Continue concentrating on the pebble until your mind and body are at complete rest: a pebble resting on the sand. Keep this feeling of peace while watching your breath. No thought about the past or future can pull you away from your present peace. Just try to experience this moment; as a pebble on the sand, at the bottom of the stream.

Beginner's mind

Beginner's mind means looking at things as if you are seeing them for the first time. It can help us see things in a new way, rather than respond to them automatically with the same patterns of old behaviours.

Look around your room and find an object that is always there – something that is very familiar to you. It may be a book, a door frame, a window, a chair or even a piece of clothing. Close your eyes if you feel able to do so, and take a few deep breaths. Open your eyes and look at the object you have chosen. Imagine you are from another planet and have never seen anything like it before. Really look at the object without judging it. Notice the unique qualities of the object. What does it look like? What does it feel like? Where does the light hit it and where are the shadows? Keep looking at the object. Do you notice anything about it that you hadn't noticed before? If you find yourself becoming distracted, try to bring your attention back to the object. When you feel ready bring your attention back to the room.

Mindful to smiling

Make sure you are comfortable and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath going in and out. Close your eyes if you feel able to do so. Bring your attention to your face, try to relax all the muscles in your face, be aware of the feeling of relaxation. Now slowly bring the corners of your mouth up into a small smile, hold it there for one, two, three seconds. Notice any judgement you may be having about this activity, and try to let them go. Now make the smile bigger, noticing the crinkles in the corners of your eyes and the tightness in your cheeks. Hold it for one, two, three seconds. Now I want you to completely relax your face

again, be aware of the feeling of relaxation and how this is different to the smile. Focus again on your breathing, and when you are ready bring your attention back to the room and open your eyes.

Counting

In this exercise, rather than focusing on your breath, you just close your eyes and focus your attention on slowly counting to ten. If your concentration wanders, start back at number one. This may be harder than it sounds but if you find yourself getting distracted, just start again at one. The aim isn't to get as high as possible but just to focus upon counting.

Flake of stone

Imagine that you are seated next to a clear lake on a beautiful sunny day. Imagine that you are a small flake of stone that has chipped off from a much larger rock, which someone has gently thrown out into the middle of the lake. You are gently floating there on the still surface of the calm water. Now you begin to gently and slowly float downward in the cool water toward the smooth, sandy bottom of the lake. Notice the look and feel of the water as you gently float to the bottom. Notice the feel of the smooth sand as you lightly rest upon it. Become aware of the peace and calm at the bottom of the lake. This deep stillness and quietness is the calm centre of yourself. Allow your attention to settle into this calm, centred place within your mind.

Throwing the imaginary ball

Everybody stand in a circle and focus your attention on this imaginary ball in my hands, it's this big [demonstrate size], round, smooth and bounces like this [demonstrate bouncing]. I am going to throw this imaginary ball to someone in the circle and you have to try to catch it and throw it on to someone else in the circle. Try to remain focused on the task, noticing who has the imaginary ball and who they are throwing it to.

Mindful to physical discomfort

Make sure you are comfortable and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. Close your eyes if you feel able to do so. Bring your attention to your physical sensations. Notice what is happening in your body. What feels comfortable and what feels a little bit uncomfortable? Bring your awareness specifically to a part of your body where you are aware that you have an itch, or a slight discomfort. It might be a sense that you want to shift your body weight, to scratch or rub, to wriggle into a more comfortable position. Try not to give in to that urges and just allow your awareness to sit with that sensation – don't act on it. Notice the thoughts and notice the feelings in your body. Notice how the feelings shift and change; they might get bigger or smaller. Stay with this feeling for a while if you can. When you are ready bring your attention back to the room and open your eyes.

Alternate nostril breathing

Sit comfortably and gently put your lips together. Take your right hand in front of you with palm facing you. Use your thumb to close your right nostril and take three gentle normal breaths in this position. Relax your shoulders. Don't force your breath and if you need to take a break and breathe through both nostrils, then do so.

This exercise should feel refreshing and balancing. Now close your left nostril with your finger. Breathe in and out through your right nostril, repeat three times. Then release your left nostril and close your right nostril with your thumb. Breathe in and out through your left nostril, repeat three times. When you have finished these nostril breaths, rest with your hands down, taking normal natural breaths through both nostrils and being mindful of any subtle changes in your energy, your mind, your balance.

Quick whole body tense and relax – using it to get out of 'hot mind' quickly

Once you have practiced the progressive relaxation a number of times, you can learn to tense all of the muscles in your body and face at the same time and then to relax them. This means that you can become relaxed more quickly at the times when you need to.

Eventually, with enough practice, you can begin to try to just do the relaxing part on its own. Relaxing all of the muscles in your body and face and saying the word, relax, to yourself can be used in crisis situations when you need to act fast to reduce 'hot mind' quickly.

Remember; practice, practice, practice!

Memory game

This game helps to train attention and memory and focuses the mind.

Put a few random items such as pens, plastic cups, stress balls, screwed up paper, hair bobble etc. onto a tray.

Tell the group members they have one minute to try to remember as many items as they can.

Cover up the tray with a towel and ask them to recall the items.

Body scan

Make sure you are sitting comfortably and begin by focusing on your breathing. Notice your breath coming in and out. If you feel comfortable doing so, close your eyes. Using your imagination, picture a narrow band of white light circling the top of your head like a halo. As this exercise progresses, the band of light will slowly move down your body, and as it does, you will become aware of different physical sensations you're feeling beneath the band of light.

As you continue to breathe with your eyes closed, continue to see the band of white light encircling the top of your head and notice any physical sensations you feel on that part of your body. Perhaps you will notice your scalp tingling or itching. Whatever you feel is okay.

- ▶ Slowly the band of light begins to go move down your head, passing over the tops of your ears, your eyes and the top of your nose. As it does become aware of any sensations you feel there, even the small sensations.
- ▶ Notice any tension you may be feeling on the top of your head.
- ▶ As the band of light goes over your nose, mouth and chin, continue to focus on any physical sensations you might be feeling there.
- ▶ Pay attention to the back of your head where you might be having sensations.
- ▶ Notice any sensations you might be having in your mouth, on your tongue or on your teeth.
- ▶ Continue to watch the band of light in your imagination flow around your neck, and notice any feelings in your throat or any muscle tension on the back of your neck.
- ▶ Now the band widens and begins to move down your body, across the width of your shoulders.
- ▶ Notice any sensations, muscle tension, or tingling you might be feeling in your shoulders, upper back, upper arms and upper chest area.
- ▶ As the band of light continues to travel down around your arms, notice any feelings you're aware of in your elbows, forearms, wrists, hands and fingers. Become aware of any tingling, itching, tension you might be holding in those places.
- ▶ Now become aware of your chest, the middle of your back, the sides of your chest, your lower back and stomach. Again, notice any sensations or tingling, no matter how small they may be.
- ▶ As the band continues to move down your lower body, become aware of any sensations in your hips, bottom and upper legs.
- ▶ Be sure to pay attention to the backs of your legs and notice any feelings there.
- ▶ Continue to watch the band of light move down around your lower legs, around your calves, shins, feet and toes, notice any sensations you are feeling there.
- ▶ Then as the band of light disappears after completing its descent, take a few more slow, long breaths, and when you feel comfortable, slowly return your focus to the room.

Mindful stretching

These stances can be worked through in sequence as a single stretching experience or individually repeated mindfully experiencing one movement.

Earth

Stand with feet hips width apart. Place your hands down by your side. Bow to the floor then return to a standing position.

Worship the sun

Raise your hands to the sky, push them open and outwards, look upwards to the sun.

Courage

Start with both hands on your hips and push the shoulders back. Keep feeling the tension.

Warrior

Start with the right foot forward with the knee slightly bent and keeping the left leg straight. Put your hands together in prayer position in front of you and push forwards and upwards until the hands are straight and above your head. Slowly lower your hands down by your side and return the right foot back to a standing position. Repeat this movement with the left leg forward.

Four-way pointing

Standing with your feet at hip-width apart, place your hands in prayer together and bow down to the floor. Come back to the upright position, place your hands on your hips and push the shoulders back. Move your hands to rest on the lower back and lean back as far as is comfortable. Slowly return to an upright pose moving your hands back to rest on the hips.

Turn the right foot facing sideways out from the body. Turn the hips to face the right foot and bring your left arm slowly down towards the right foot with the right arm rising. Look upwards towards right arm.

Gently return to the upright standing position, turning the right foot back to the front. Turn the left foot facing sideways out from the body. Turn the hips to face the left foot and bring your right arm slowly down towards the left foot with the left arm rising. Look upwards towards left arm. Gently return to the upright standing position, turning the left foot back to the front.

Four-way turning

Starting in an upright position. Place your hands on your hips and turn the left foot outwards. Twist the hips to facing the left foot and slowly bend the left knee and upper body towards the knee. Gently return to an upright position turning the hips and left foot to facing forward. Move the right foot to face outwards and twist the hips to face right foot. Bend the right knee and upper body forwards towards the knee. Return to the upright position and turn your hips and right foot to forward position.

Forgotten bird

Stand with feet shoulder width apart and your arms stretched outwards to each side. Move the left hand down towards the left ankle while raising the right arm upwards. Gently return to the starting middle position and move the right hand down towards the right ankle while raising the left arm upwards. Gently return to the starting middle position and lower your arms down to the side.

Gathering

Begin in the courage stance and slowly move your hands upwards to the sky, bringing the hands together in prayer and gently bringing them down towards the chest. Drop your hands to the waist in open posture then gently bend forwards, allowing your arms to flop forwards towards the floor. Slowly rise to a standing position with hands on the hips and stretching the shoulders back. Keep feeling the tension.

Soles of the feet (Singh et al, 2003)

If you are standing, stand in a natural rather than an aggressive posture, with the soles of your feet flat on the floor. If you are sitting, sit comfortably with the soles of your feet flat on the floor.

- ▶ Breathe naturally, and do nothing.
- ▶ Cast your mind back to an incident that made you very angry. Stay with the anger.
- ▶ You are feeling angry, and angry thoughts are flowing through your mind. Let them flow naturally, without restriction. Stay with the anger. Your body may show signs of anger (e.g. rapid breathing).
- ▶ Now, shift all your attention to the soles of your feet. Concentrate only on the soles of the feet and on no other thoughts.
- ▶ Slowly, move your toes, feel your shoes covering your feet, feel the texture of your socks or tights, the curve of your arch, and the heels of your feet against the back of your shoes. If you do not have shoes on, feel the floor or carpet with the soles of your feet.
- ▶ Keep breathing naturally and focus on the soles of your feet until you feel calm.
- ▶ Practice this mindfulness exercise until you can use it wherever you are and whenever an incident occurs that may upset you, make you angry, or lead to you being verbally or physically aggressive.

Note: The focus on anger in this exercise may be substituted with other emotional responses such as anxiety and sadness. The exercise can alternatively be conducted with no emotional focus with the emphasis placed directly on focusing on the soles of the feet.

Visualisation exercises

Safe place visualisation script

Sit comfortably with your feet on the floor and your hands resting. If you feel safe enough, close your eyes.

Take a deep breath and hold it for a count of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, then let it go slowly. Feel your body respond – the rise and fall of your belly as you breathe in and out. (Repeat the breath three times).

Begin to take slow, long breaths and continue to breathe smoothly.

Imagine there is a door in front of you. Notice the door colour, its style and size. Imagine that you open this door and enter your safe place using all of your senses to place yourself into the scene. Close the door behind you.

This is your safe place. No one else is allowed in and no one else can get in. You alone will be the only person allowed through the door or in your space.

First – use your imaginary sense of sight to notice what it looks like. Notice if it is daytime or night-time in your safe place. Notice what the weather is like. Notice what is around you.

This may be a familiar room or a blank space in which you can place different objects or furniture into.

Notice the size of your safe place. Notice what you have placed in the space. Notice the whole scene of where you are.

Next – use your imaginary sense of hearing. Notice any sounds you hear – music, birds chirping, the wind, the ocean. Choose something soothing to hear and listen for a few seconds.

Next – use your imaginary sense of smell. What can you smell – something nice cooking, your favourite food, scented flowers, fresh grass, perfume. Choose something soothing to smell and notice this for a few seconds.

Next – use your imaginary sense of touch. Notice what you are sitting or standing on. Notice the sensations of your body in the chair, or your feet on the ground. Feel these sensations for a few more seconds.

Lastly – begin to move around your safe place and use all of your imaginary senses to guide you around and explore it.

You can remain in your safe place for as long as you want to.

When you are ready to leave, imagine yourself turning around to face the door that you closed behind you. Imagine yourself opening the door, stepping back through and gently closing it behind you.

Focus yourself back to your breathing. Notice your breaths as slow and long. Notice your body respond as you breathe in and out.

When you are ready, return your focus to where you are now.

Guided safe place visualisation script – hillside

Sit comfortably and take a deep, slow breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Keep breathing in and out, focusing on how your body feels at this moment.

Imagine it is a bright sunny, summery day. The sun is shining warmth and comfort. The sky is crystal clear without a cloud in sight. It is late in the day. You decide to go for a

walk up a hill. The grass shines from the sunlight and you can feel the warmth of the ground on the soles of your feet. You notice the sound of the wind rustling through the trees at the bottom of the hill.

You feel the warm, light breeze brush against your face as you walk onward. Far off in the distance you can hear the chirping of birds... You watch them fly through the sky, swoop down behind the hill, and then fly up again.

As you walk further along up the hill, you decide to have a sit down and rest. You sit down on a tuft of grass and gaze out at the surrounding hillsides, rolling into the distance.

You can see the clouds floating in the sky, so slowly you can hardly notice their movement across the sky. As you see the clouds gently floating across the sky, you find yourself feeling more and more relaxed. There is a sense of calmness and peace.

As you look off into the distance, you see that the sun is beginning to sink into the horizon. The sky is turning bright colours of red... orange... yellow... while the sun sets, sinking down... down into the horizon. You feel very relaxed and soothed. You continue to watch the sun as it descends.

The movements of the clouds, the smell of the grass, the sounds of the birds... the warmth against your body – all of these sights, sounds and smells leave you feeling very calm, refreshed and relaxed.

For a moment let yourself drift... for a moment be aware of how deeply relaxed your mind and body feel right now... remind yourself that you can create these feelings on your own whenever you want.

Remember that at any time during any day you may scan your body, discover any tension you are holding and then breathe in relaxation and breathe out the tension and tightness. Come back to this place as often as you like or create your own getaway. Relax your mind and body.

When you are ready, bring your attention back to the room and open your eyes.

Guided safe place visualisation script – seaside

Sit comfortably and take a deep, slow breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Keep breathing in and out, focusing on how your body feels at this moment.

Imagine it is a bright sunny, summery day. The sun is shining warmth and comfort. The sky is crystal clear without a cloud in sight. It is late in the day. You decide to go for a walk along the beach. The grains of sand beneath your feet shine from the sunlight and feel warm on the soles of your feet. The sound of the waves beating against the shore echoes in the air.

You feel the warm, light breeze brush against your faces as you walk onward. Far off in the distance, you can hear the cries of sea gulls... You watch them fly through the sky, swoop down into the sea, and then fly off again.

As you walk further along the shore, you decide to have a sit down and rest. You sit down on a mound of pure white sand and gaze out at the sea, looking at the waves rolling into shore.

Each wave breaks against the coast, rising slowly upward along the beach, leaving an area of white foam. Slowly the wave goes back out to sea, only to be replaced by another wave that breaks against the shore... working its way up the beach... then slowly retreating back out to sea.

With each motion of the wave as it glides in and then out, you find yourself feeling more and more relaxed. There is a sense of calmness and peace.

As you look off into the distance, you see that the sun is beginning to sink into the horizon. The sky is turning bright colours of red... orange... yellow... while the sun sets, sinking down... down into the horizon. You feel very relaxed and soothed. You continue to watch the sun as it descends.

The beating of the waves, the smell and taste of the sea, the salt, the sounds of the birds... the warmth against your body – all of these sights, sounds, and smells leave you feeling very calm, refreshed and relaxed.

For a moment let yourself drift... for a moment be aware of how deeply relaxed your mind and body feel right now... remind yourself that you can create these feelings on your own whenever you want.

Remember that at any time during any day you may scan your body, discover any tension you are holding and then breathe in relaxation and breathe out the tension and tightness. Come back to this place as often as you like or create your own getaway. Relax your mind and body.

When you are ready, bring your attention back to the room and open your eyes.

Scripts

Paced breathing script

1. Make sure you are sitting comfortably.
2. Begin by just noticing your breathing.
3. Try breathing through your nose rather than your mouth if you can.
4. Try to make your breathing smooth and steady if you can.
5. Now look at the clock in front of you and begin to count how many seconds your in breath takes and how many seconds your out breath takes. (It would be helpful to demonstrate this e.g. one facilitator demonstrate the breathing and the other count aloud with the clock.)
6. Once you are able to count your breaths, begin to try to slow your breathing a little. For example, breathe in for 4 seconds and out for 5 seconds.

7. Work to whatever pace feels comfortable for you.
8. Try to practice this for a few minutes each day.

Paired muscle relaxation scrip

Before you begin, make sure you are in a comfortable place without too much distraction.

1. We are now going to work through instructions of how to tense and relax your whole body. We are going to start at the bottom of our bodies and work up. Get your body into a comfortable position. Make sure that all of your body parts are uncrossed and that you are not leaning on anything. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable to do so.
2. Now we are going to start with our feet. Scrunch up your toes and feet as though you were trying to pick something up with your foot. Notice all of the muscles tense in your foot. Hold the tension and breathe in for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and then release. Breathe out and as you do so, say in your mind very slowly the word 'Relax'. Notice the changes in your feet as you relax for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
3. Now we are going to tense our legs. Pull your legs off the floor and point your toes up towards your legs as far as you can, as though you are trying to make your toes touch your shins. Notice the muscles tense in the bottom and top of your legs. Hold the tension and breathe in for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and then release. Breathe out and as you do so, say in your mind very slowly the word 'Relax'. Notice the changes in your legs as you relax for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
4. Now we are going to clench our bottoms. Tense the muscles in your bottom as though you are trying to sit up straight. Hold the tension and breathe in for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and then release. Breathe out and as you do so, say in your mind very slowly the word 'Relax' for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
5. Now, pull in your stomach muscles. Imagine that you are trying to make your belly button touch your back and suck in and tighten all of the muscles in your stomach. Hold the tension and breathe in for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and then release. Breathe out and as you do so, say in your mind very slowly the word 'Relax.' Notice how your stomach muscles feel as you relax for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
6. Now let's move on to your arms. Imagine that you are holding up a heavy bag on each of your arms. Tense all of the muscles in your arm. Hold the tension and breathe in for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Now release and let your arms flop beside you as though you are letting the bags fall off your arms. Breathe out and as you do so, say in your mind very slowly the word 'Relax'. Notice the changes in your arms as you relax for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
7. Imagine that you are holding a small orange. Squeeze your hand tight as though you were squeezing the juice out of the orange so that all of the muscles of your hand are tense. Hold the tension and breathe in for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and then release as though you are letting go of the orange. Breathe out and as you do so, say in your mind very slowly the word 'Relax'. Notice the changes in your hands as you relax for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

8. Now let's move to your shoulders. Pull up your shoulders as though you are trying to make them touch your ears making the shoulders tense. Hold the tension and breathe in for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and then release. Breathe out and as you do so, say in your mind very slowly the word 'Relax'. Notice the changes in your shoulders as you relax for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
9. Finally, wrinkle up your face as much as you can. Wrinkle your nose, mouth, eyes, forehead and cheeks. Push your tongue against the roof of your mouth. Notice how tight the muscles in your face feel. Hold the tension and breathe in for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and then let all the muscles in your face go limp. Breathe out and as you do so, say in your mind very slowly the word 'Relax'. Notice how relaxed your face feels for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
10. Now try to tighten all of the muscles in your body and face together. Tense your whole body and hold the tension 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Now let go of the tension. Let your whole body relax like a rag doll. Relax all of the muscles in your body, breath out and say the word 'Relax' to yourself. Now take one final breath and hold it for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and breathe out for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Notice how relaxed your whole body feels. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes.

Ice-breakers

Which would you choose?

Ask participants to sit in a circle facing each other. Tell them that when asked 'Which would you choose?' they either have to stand up or stay seated. If they choose the first option in the statement they must stand up, and if they choose the second one they must remain seated. You may need some hand signals or a reminder of which option is which as the game goes on.

- ▶ Go without television or takeaways for a year? Visit the doctor or the dentist?
- ▶ Eat broccoli or carrots? Watch TV or listen to music? Be a cat or a dog?
- ▶ Have a beach holiday or a mountain holiday? Be an apple or a banana?
- ▶ Be invisible or be able to read minds? Be hairy all over or completely bald?
- ▶ Be the most popular or the smartest person you know? Always be cold or always be hot?
- ▶ Not hear or not see?
- ▶ Be stranded on a deserted island alone or with someone you don't like? See the future or change the past?
- ▶ Be three inches taller or three inches shorter? Wrestle a lion or fight a shark?

Never have I ever...

Instruct everyone to sit in a circle. To start each round, each player holds out all 10 fingers and places them on the floor. Go around the circle and one at a time, each

person announces something that they have never done, beginning the sentence with the phrase 'Never have I ever...' For example, a person could say, 'Never have I ever climbed a mountain'. For each statement that is said, all the other players drop a finger if they have done that statement. So, if three other people have climbed a mountain before, those three people must put down a finger, leaving them with nine fingers. The goal is to stay in the game the longest (to be the last person with fingers remaining). Explain that to win it's a good strategy to say something that most people may have done, but you haven't.

Link it together

Ask the group to sit in a circle. The first person starts with any word they wish e.g. finger. The next person repeats the first word and adds another word which links to the first e.g. nail. The next person repeats the previous word and adds another word link e.g. file, and so on. To keep this moving, limit the time to think of the link word. Explain that if they do not beat the time limit they are out of play and the word moves to the next player.

Who am I?

Prepare a self-adhesive label or Post-it note for each person in your group. Write on it the name of a well-known or famous person. This can be an historical character or current sportsman, musician, TV personality, celebrity etc. Have a good mix of men and women. Keeping the names hidden, stick the Post-it notes on the foreheads of everyone in the group. Participants must then ask questions of the others to find out their identity.

Each person takes a turn to ask questions and figure out who they are. For example, 'Am I alive?' 'Am I female?' 'Am I in a band?'. Only yes or no questions can be asked. If the answer is no, their turn is over. If the answer is yes, they can ask another question and keep going until they get a no, or guess who they are. Keep playing until everyone has guessed, or if time is short, stop after the first few correct answers.

20 questions

This is a game which encourages logical reasoning and creativity. One player is selected to think of an item. The rest of the group tries to guess the item by asking a question which can only be answered with a simple 'Yes' or 'No'.

Coloured candy

Use a bag of different coloured sweets and ask the group members to each take a few. For each colour decide on a different question e.g. red might be their favourite film and yellow the pastime they enjoy most. Go around the group asking each person a question for each sweet they have.

Ice breaker questions

A good way to help people get to know each other is to ask them fun questions that allow them to convey interesting things about themselves. Use the list of questions to help break the ice.

- ▶ If you were a cartoon character, who would you be and why?
- ▶ What thought or message would you want to put in a fortune cookie?
- ▶ If you had to give up a favourite food, which would be the most difficult to give up?
- ▶ What is one food you'd never want to taste again?
- ▶ If you won a lottery ticket and had a million pounds, what would you do with it?
- ▶ You've been given access to a time machine. Where would you travel to and when?
- ▶ If you could be any superhero and have super powers, which one would you like to have and why?
- ▶ If you could transport yourself anywhere instantly, where would you go and why?
- ▶ In your opinion, which animal is the best (or most beautiful) and why?
- ▶ What is one item that you really should throw away, but probably never will?
- ▶ Growing up, what were your favourite toys to play with as a child?
- ▶ What is your favourite time of the year and why?

Plates

Everyone puts a paper plate on their head and moves about the room. If their plate falls off, then they are frozen and someone else has to bend down without having their plate fall off and put it back on their head. The object is to keep everyone in the game.

Stop the bus

Ask everyone to stand up and remove one chair from the circle. One person is designated as the conductor. Get everyone to snake in and out of the chairs until the conductor shouts out 'Stop the bus!' Everyone has to find a chair and the last person standing is out. Another chair is removed and the last person out takes on the role of conductor and is in charge of when to 'Stop the bus!' This continues until two people and one chair remain and the first one seated is crowned the driver.

Trading places

Ask everyone to stand up by their chairs. Call out a specific commonality and everyone who has that feature must change places with someone else (those who do not have the feature stay where they are). For example, 'Everyone with brown hair', 'Everyone who ate toast for breakfast', 'Everyone who is wearing stripes'.

Buzz 7

Ask everyone to stand up. Proceeding in a circular motion, start counting. Choose a number and explain that when the count gets to that number the person whose turn it is next has to state 'BUZZ!' instead. For example, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, BUZZ ... and explain that participants can't say 7, any multiple of 7, or any number with a 7 in it (ie. 17), instead they must say BUZZ. This causes the person to your left (the next person to count) to be out. They sit down. If you miss your BUZZ you are out and the count continues with the next number. This game works with any number, but 6–9 seem to work best.

Movement songs

Sing a song with whole-body movements such as Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes; Father Abraham; Superman; The Music Man; Grand Old Duke of York; Old Macdonald Had a Farm etc.

5-4-3-2-1

Engage in five different movements in descending order. These can be nominated by one person or by a number of participants in the group. For example, 'Do five jumping jacks, followed by 'spin around four times', followed by 'hop on one foot three times', followed by 'walk all the way around the room two times', followed by 'give your neighbour one high-five'.

Bilateral movements

Ear to ear

Have your left hand touch your right ear lobe and then your right hand to touch your left earlobe. Repeat five times.

Nose to ear

Have your left hand touch your right ear lobe and then have your right hand touch the tip of your nose. Then swap positions so that your left hand touches the tip of your nose and your right hand touches your left ear lobe. Repeat five times.

Ear to knee

Have your left hand touch your right ear lobe while getting your right hand to touch your left knee. Then swap positions so that your right hand touches your left ear lobe while your left hand touches your right knee. Repeat five times.

Learning games

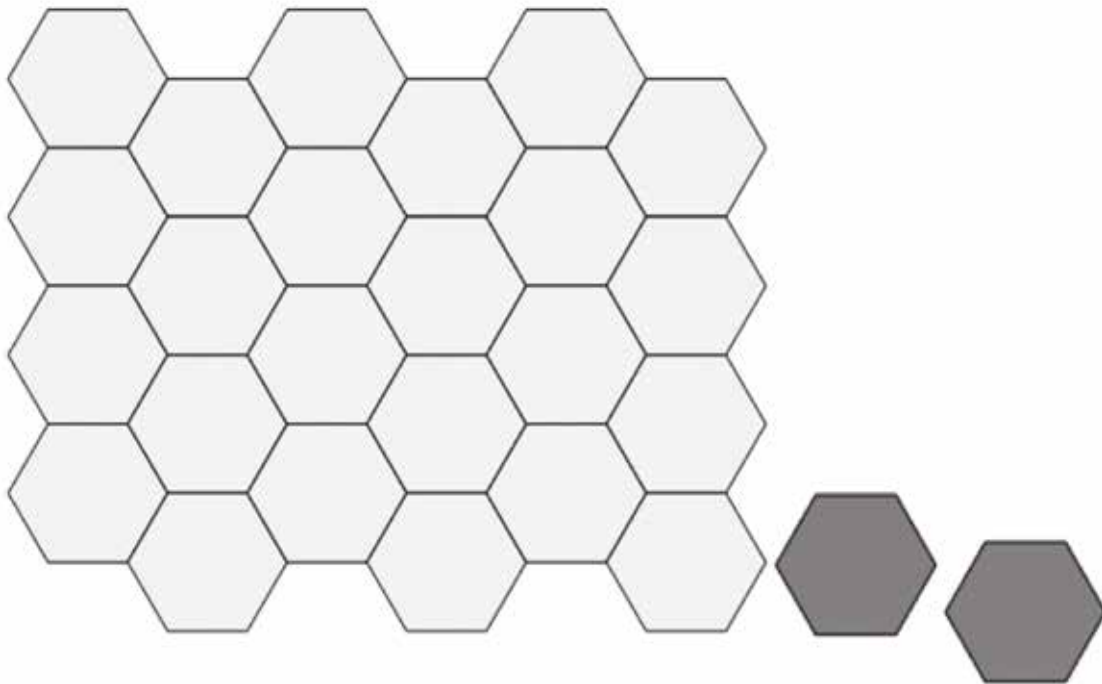
Blockbusters

Note: You will need to prepare some quiz questions for this game.

Draw a board with 24 hexagons on a whiteboard or flip chart paper. Create a set of coloured hexagons for each player or team and have some Blu Tack available to use to stick the hexagons onto the board. Write a list of questions, with numbers corresponding to those on the board. Write some additional questions in case both teams have to 'pass' on some.

Ask Team 1 to pick a number and read them the corresponding question. If they get it correct, stick their coloured hexagon up on the board to cover that number. If they get it wrong, pass it to other team to have a go and if they get it right, stick their hexagon on. If no one's right, move on. It will then be Team 2's turn to choose a number.

Teams need to make a continuous line from the left side of the board to the right (not up-down) – they don't need to do this in order (i.e. can choose any number each time, not just the next in their line).



Who wants to be a millionaire?

At the end of a module write some quiz questions with four options from which to choose an answer. Get participants to work individually or in teams. Also have 'Ask the audience (facilitator)', '50:50' and 'Phone a friend (ask another group member)' cheats to use.

Skills stacking

Use a wooden stacking game like Jenga, with some blocks coloured red and some green. (Some blocks can be plain to shorten the length of the game.) Place all the blocks in a bag/hat. Take it in turns for participants to choose a block at random. If red is chosen, the person must give a situation where they might need to use a coping skill. If green is chosen, they must demonstrate an appropriate coping skill from the module. The aim is to build a tower (starting from nothing).

This is a useful evaluation game that can be played at the end of a module to reinforce the skills taught.

Runaround

Use this game for livening up an exercise where participants have to make a choice. Place some options around the room on the floor. Ask an appropriate question relating to the material being learnt. At the shout of 'Runaround', participants run to the appropriate option and stand next to it. Count how many people chose each option and discuss the pros and cons of each.

One example may be in exploring 'what is a good way of keeping up the feel good factor' where both positive and negative statements are displayed, eg. not taking drugs, sleeping all day, eating a healthy diet etc.

Snakes and ladders

Using a conventional Snakes and Ladders game board, or devising your own, the participants take it in turns to roll a dice. This can be played as a team or on an individual participation basis. At the point of landing at the top of a snake or the bottom of a ladder, a situation scenario card is chosen. If the scenario is answered using an appropriate skill, then they either move up the ladder or do not fall down the snake.

Situations should be identified to fit the individual circumstances and settings of the group i.e. community or inpatient settings and gender-specific.

Singh NN, Wahler RG, Adkins AD, Myers RE, Winton ASW, Strand PS, Hill OW, Singh J, Barber JW, Sabaawi M & Dumas J (2003) Soles of the feet: a mindfulness-based self-control intervention for aggression by an individual with mild mental retardation and mental illness. *Research in Developmental Disabilities* **24** (3) 158–169.