

## Mindfulness Exercises

1. Blowing Bubbles
2. What's Different?
3. Check the Chip
4. Thumpeta- Thump Heart Rate
5. Not Being Mindful
6. Observe Thoughts
7. "Snap-Crackle-Pop"
8. Observe Your Emotions
9. Mindful to Music
10. Guess What it is: Observe & Describe an Object
11. Observe & Describe Object
12. Balance
13. Mindful Eating
14. Observe the Urge
15. Focus on Your Face
16. Finding Humor When It Happens
17. Sound Ball
18. Breathe
19. Listening Mindfully
20. Minding Personal Space
21. Let's Dance
22. Sandpaper and Softness



## Mindfulness Exercise: Blowing Bubbles

- ▶ Distribute bubble liquid and wands
- ▶ Group leaders should model 3 tasks during mindfulness exercises:
  - ▼ Fully participate in the moment
  - ▼ Observe their experience
  - ▼ Describe their own experience to participants before asking participants to describe theirs
- ▶ Mindfulness is hard: by modeling it for members, leaders show that the act of becoming mindful is a process and takes practice
- ▶ Blow bubbles for 2 - 3 minutes- give the following instructions:
  - ▼ Practice focusing on your bubbles
  - ▼ Where they go
  - ▼ What they look like
  - ▼ Size, shape, number, color
  - ▼ OK if distracted by someone else's bubbles-
    - ▼ don't judge yourself if you get distracted
    - ▼ bring yourself back to the task- mindfully blowing own bubbles
- ▶ Stop after about 2-3 minutes
  - ▼ Describe your experience as group leader to the group
  - ▼ Ask: Did you throw yourself into blowing bubbles?
  - ▼ Ask: Were you focused on other people? Their bubbles?
  - ▼ Ask: Were you able to bring yourself back to the bubbles when you got distracted? What was it like trying to bring yourself back?
  - ▼ Ask: Did you find yourself judging (your distraction, your bubbles, other people's bubbles, etc.)?
- ▶ Rationale:
  - ▼ Focusing: staying focused even with distractions, is good practice for figuring out options in tough situations- helps get what you want and need in the moment
  - ▼ Redirecting: distractions are everywhere, getting distracted is a part of life- when that happens, just bring yourself back to the task at hand
  - ▼ Doing things non-judgmentally: notice when you judge, don't judge your judging
  - ▼ Judging is more likely to put us in emotion mind

## Mindfulness Exercise: What's Different?

- ▶ Ask for two volunteers. Ask them to stand and tell the group to take a good look at them, to be observant. Next, one of the group leaders and the two volunteers leave the room. The 2 group members change 2-4 things about their appearance. E.g., switch shoes, take out shoelaces, remove a watch, switch or take off a piece of jewelry, roll up a sleeve, etc. They return to the group and group members try to guess what is different.

▶ **Rationale:**

- ▼ It is easier to recognize the things that stress us out if we notice details about what we are thinking and feeling inside of us as well as things that are happening outside of us.
- ▼ If we recognize what the triggers are, then we can deal with them more effectively. That's what this mindfulness exercise is about—noticing, being aware or mindful.

### **Mindfulness Exercise: Check the Chip**

- ▶ Give each group member one potato chip and instruct them to NOT eat the chip
  - ▼ Instruct them to look at it carefully and mindfully
    - ▼ What does it look like? Notice details
    - ▼ Smell like?
    - ▼ Feel like?
  - ▼ Allow 1-2 minutes for them to examine the chip
- ▶ Ask group members to describe what they noticed as they were fully participating in the moment
- ▶ **Rationale:** Paying attention to information, what's going on around you, can help you cope better with stressful situations. The more information you have, the better you can problem-solve. You get more information when mindful of what's going on around you.

### **Mindfulness Exercise: Thumpeta-Thump Heart Rate**

- ▶ Heart is more than just a pump, it communicates all kinds of information to the brain
- ▶ Quiet yourself, find your pulse (either at their wrists or neck).
- ▶ Be sure all members have located their pulse before continuing.
  - ▼ Pay attention *mindfully* to your pulse, feel it beating, pay attention to the beat
  - ▼ **Ask:** Is it even? Strong? Are the beats the same length? Is the time between the beats the same?
  - ▼ Allow 1-2 minutes
- ▶ Members share observations
- ▶ **Rationale:**
  - ▼ Paying attention to your body's reaction, like your heart rate, can give you important information. It can give you clues about what might be triggering/stressing you. Having this information can help you cope more effectively when your body's alarm system is on all the time.
  - ▼ When you pay attention to your pulse, you are focusing all of your energy on it. You can focus in on your life the same way. You can direct your life by directing how you think. This makes you more able to cope and handle life.

## Mindfulness Exercise: Not Being Mindful

- ▶ Group participants pair up for this exercise
  - ▼ Speaker talks about neutral topic (1-2 minutes)
    - ▼ E.g., How their day went at school/work, dinner last night, news about a friend, etc.
    - ▼ Not heated topic or current conflict between pair
  - ▼ The listener acts distracted, insensitive, not mindful
    - ▼ Look around the room, write, whistle, etc.
  - ▼ Switch roles- the listener becomes the speaker (1-2 minutes)
  - ▼ The listener is again distracted and not mindful of the speaker
- ▶ Ask: What is it like to talk to someone who is not being mindful?
- ▶ Ask: If we look like we're not paying close attention to what the other person is saying are we more or less likely to get what we want?
  
- ▶ Rationale: If the other person understands that you are listening, s/he is more likely to listen to you when you talk or ask for something. You have been a great listener if the other person knows that you were listening and knows that you understand his/her point of view. This is important, both in close relationships and even casual ones. For example, in the case of a cashier who isn't so sure about taking back a CD without the receipt. How you present yourself may make him or her more or less likely to permit you to return the merchandise. If you are not mindful in your interactions with others, your relationships will remain superficial.

## Mindfulness Exercise: Observe Your Thoughts

- ▶ Instruct members to notice thoughts as if...
  - ▼ Scrolling by on a lighted sign/message board
  - ▼ Floating by like clouds or
  - ▼ Moving across a conveyer belt & landing in a box for you to examine later
- ▶ Notice them without judging or getting caught up in them, believing them or reacting to them
- ▶ Notice them without holding on to the thought, without pushing away
- ▶ When you become distracted, bring yourself back to the next thought
  
- ▶ Rationale:
  - ▼ It is easier to recognize the things that stress us out if we notice details about what we are thinking and feeling
  - ▼ If we pay attention to what we are thinking and what is bothering us, without judgment and without acting impulsively, then we can deal with it more effectively.

## Mindfulness Exercise: "Snap-Crackle-Pop"

- ▶ Group members stand and form a circle
  - ▼ Identify the starter
  - ▼ Starter points **over** his/her head to person to the left or right &
    - ▼ says "SNAP"
  - ▼ Recipient points to someone **across** his/her own chest (to the left or right) and
    - ▼ says "CRACKLE"
  - ▼ Second recipient points **straight** at anyone in the circle and
    - ▼ says "POP"
  - ▼ "POPPed" person starts the cycle again with SNAP
  - ▼ Each person has 3 seconds to respond (or they are out)
  - ▼ Members who mis-gesture, use the wrong word, or take too long to respond, leave the circle & distract remaining players:
    - ▼ E.g. by yelling "snap, crackle, pop", clapping, singing, gesturing, making noises, etc.
- ▶ Play for 3-5 minutes nonstop or until only two players are left
- ▶ Ask for volunteers to share thoughts, feelings, or observations
- ▶ Ask: Did you ever have a fight with someone when s/he kept bringing up other things? Maybe other things they were angry about or other things you did in the past (not related to current conversation)?
- ▶ Ask: Generally, does that make things worse or help resolve things?
  - ▼ E.g. Maria asks her sister if she can borrow her sweater. Her sister immediately yells and reminds Maria how she spilled soda on the pants she borrowed last week. Instead of getting caught up in her sister's insults, Maria remains focused and proceeds with MAKE A LINK. She is successful because she is able to stay in the *present* moment (instead of fighting about what happened last week), and she is able to let go of distractions (e.g. like bringing up all the things her sister has done wrong too).
  - ▼ There are many distractions that can come up when people try to "MAKE a LINK."
    - ▼ E.g. Changing the subject, bringing up previous conflicts, saying things that make you feel bad, interrupting, attacking, criticizing
- ▶ Rationale:
  - ▼ The more mindful you were during "snap, crackle, pop" the more likely you were to stay in the circle. Being mindful means being present in the moment and letting go of distractions. The more mindful you are when talking to people and trying to MAKE a LINK, the more likely it is that you will be successful.
  - ▼ One of the core skills of mindfulness is being able to *fully participate* in the moment. This means not thinking about the next move (e.g. should you snap or crackle?). It means just participating. Mindfulness takes *practice*. Don't get discouraged. The more practice you get, the easier it is.

- ▼ When we first learn to ride a bike, play an instrument or learn a dance it's difficult and we have to think about each little step. Later, we can fully participate without feeling as self-conscious and the skills flow without much thought.

### **Mindfulness Exercise: Observe Your Emotions**

- ▶ Notice emotions you are having for next 2 minutes
- ▶ Label emotions to yourself as you notice them
- ▶ Describe to yourself where emotion is felt
  - ▼ E.g. I have a knot in my stomach, my head is starting to pound and I'd label this as feeling anxious.
- ▶ After 2 minutes (or less if needed), leaders model describing their experience. Participants who are comfortable volunteering explain what they noticed.
- ▶ **Rationale:** Observing, describing emotions that you feel is an important step for getting into wise mind.

### **Mindfulness Exercise: Mindful to Music**

- ▶ Play musical selection
  - ▼ Notice:
    - ▼ Urges to move
    - ▼ Thoughts and associations
    - ▼ Feelings
  - ▼ Try not to judge the music as good or bad
- ▶ After 2-3 minutes, discuss observations of and thoughts and feelings about the exercise
- ▶ **Rationale:**
  - ▼ To get into wise mind, let go of judgment
  - ▼ Judging makes people feel more emotional (i.e., notice the difference between saying, "she's a \*#@," or saying, "she didn't answer when I said hello.")

### **Mindfulness Exercise: Guess What it Is: Observe & Describe an Object**

- ▶ Prior to start of session, leaders fill paper bag with small objects
  - ▼ Items may be those commonly found in the room (e.g. pencil, keys, eraser, water bottle)
  - ▼ Can also use items from elsewhere (e.g. batteries, sponge, bag of rice)
- ▶ Provide instructions:
  - ▼ Group members take turns reaching into the paper bag without removing the item they've chosen.

- ▼ Ask for 2-3 volunteers to take turns
  - ▼ Time allowing, have each member take a turn
- ▼ They are going to give the group clues
  - ▼ Do NOT tell members what the object is
  - ▼ Do NOT tell members what the object is used for
  - ▼ Pretend you are describing it to someone who can't hear or can't see.
  - ▼ How would you describe it to someone so they could draw it?
- ▼ Once the item has been guessed (or if enough time has passed), take it out of the bag. (If unable to guess, leader can help by modeling "describe").
- ▶ Instruct members to **observe** what they are holding & **describe** it to the other group members. Leaders assist by asking questions:
  - ▼ Notice the texture:
    - ▼ Is it soft? Hard? Squishy? Rough? Smooth? Fluffy?
  - ▼ Notice the size:
    - ▼ Is it large? Small?
  - ▼ Notice the weight:
    - ▼ Light or heavy?
  - ▼ Notice the shape:
    - ▼ Is it round? Oval? Square? Triangular? A combination of different shapes? Does it have clearly defined edges? Etc.
- ▶ Once members have gone, ask them to share observations
  - ▼ Point out how much information they were able to get and provide without even being able to see the object
  - ▼ Imagine how much more information they would have had using all 5 of their senses.
  - ▼ They got a lot of information by really paying attention.
  - ▼ It's not that easy to observe and then describe something. Observing and describing might sound simple, but it takes practice.
- ▶ **Rationale:**
  - ▼ A lot of times we have more information around us than we realize. We just need practice in *noticing* it. By practicing how to **observe** what is around us, we will get more information and learn more about a situation.
  - ▼ With more information, we may be able to deal with a situation better; we may have more choices and therefore may be more likely to get what we want. Observing will help you get the information you need.
  - ▼ **Describing** helps you organize the information you get. It helps you think clearly. Leads you into Wise Mind.



## Mindfulness Exercise: Observe & Describe Object

- ▶ Instruct group to observe & describe something outside of them
- ▶ Members choose an item in the room to observe and describe
  - ▼ Item can be something they can hold: e.g. pencil, keys, eraser, water bottle
  - ▼ Item can be something they can't hold: e.g. picture on the wall, the blackboard, window, tree outside the window
- ▶ Provide following instructions:
  - ▼ Observe the object. As appropriate, what does it feel like? Smell, sound, taste, and look like?
  - ▼ Describe the object. Use words.
    - ▼ Pretend you are describing it to someone who can't hear or can't see.
    - ▼ How would you describe it to someone so they could draw it?
  - ▼ Don't use words that judge:
    - ▼ Avoid words like "pretty", "ugly", "good", and "bad"
- ▶ Allow 1 minute of observing and describing (to themselves)
- ▶ Members share observations
- ▶ **Rationale:** In order to make a decision, you need as much information as you can get. Observing will help you get that information. Describing helps you organize the information you get. It helps you think clearly. Leads you into Wise Mind

## Mindfulness Exercise: Balance

- ▶ Ask group members to stand up behind their chairs and try to balance on one foot. (If they need to, they can touch the back of the chair in front of them momentarily.)
- ▶ Mindfully focus on standing up straight and tall and holding your balance
  - ▼ Notice what it feels like when you have obtained balance.
  - ▼ Notice what it feels like when you feel yourself tipping to one side or the other and what it feels like to right yourself.
  - ▼ Even if you keep tipping, try not to judge yourself and continually try to bring yourself to a balanced position in the center.
- ▶ **Rationale:**
  - ▼ This activity represents a metaphor of getting into wise mind—maintaining a balance between emotion and reasonable mind.
  - ▼ Balancing takes practice—on your feet or in wise mind. The more you do it, the easier it gets
  - ▼ Try not to judge; makes it more difficult

## Mindfulness Exercise: Mindful eating

- ▶ Distribute different types of food (e.g. candy, fruit, snacks) (see list of materials for examples)
- ▶ **Ask:** Has anyone ever devoured a whole bag of potato chips or a meal without really stopping to appreciate it?
- ▶ Instruct everyone to pick 1-2 items. Members should:
  - ▼ eat the item mindfully
  - ▼ pay attention to each of your 5 senses- not just taste
  - ▼ ask yourself "what does it smell like? Feel like? Sound like? Look like? And taste like?"
- ▶ Group shares observations
- ▶ **Ask:** \_what was that experience like? What did you notice?
  
- ▶ **Rationale:**
  - ▼ Turn off "automatic pilot"- You get more from a situation when you stop and focus on the experience. Usually we go through life on "automatic pilot"- we do things automatically, without thinking. When we do that, we miss out on a lot. We don't notice things (good or bad) and we don't appreciate things as much. By doing something- just *one* thing (like eating)- mindfully, you notice a lot more than if you do it automatically.
  - ▼ You learn more, get more information when do things mindfully

## Mindfulness Exercise: Observe the Urge

- ▶ Sit straight-up in chair, shoulders back, arms in lap or folded
- ▶ Notice urges to move (e.g. to stretch, change position, scratch)
- ▶ Resist urges to move
  - ▼ **Say:** "Notice where you feel the urge, observe what it feels like"
    - ▼ Does it tickle or feel tight
    - ▼ Is it intense?
    - ▼ How long does it last?
  - ▼ **Say:** "Resist the urge and instead describe it silently to yourself in words"
  - ▼ Urges may come, go, like waves
- ▶ Share observations, thoughts, feelings about exercise after 2-3 minutes
  
- ▶ **Rationale:** We often act on urges to do, say things that make situations worse
  - ▼ Practice noticing urges
  - ▼ Demonstrates that one can have urges without acting on them, even if uncomfortable. You can observe without acting, and eventually it goes away.

## Mindfulness Exercise: Focus on Your Face

- ▶ Ask group participants to focus on their faces and their facial expressions
  - ▼ Notice without action:
    - ▼ Forehead
    - ▼ Eyebrows
    - ▼ Nose
    - ▼ Cheeks
    - ▼ Mouth
    - ▼ Chin
  - ▼ Identify tension and other physical sensations in each part
  - ▼ Try to notice each part without *changing one's expression*
  
- ▶ Rationale:
  - ▼ We all guess what other people are thinking and feeling by the looks on their faces
  - ▼ We may have expressions on our faces that we are not aware of but that people are interpreting
  - ▼ Paying attention to one's own face will provide information about one's thoughts and feelings
  - ▼ Becoming aware of one's face is a step toward *Wise Mind*

## Mindfulness Exercise: Finding Humor When It Happens

- ▶ Complete self-check
- ▶ Show 8-10 minute funny video clip
  - ▼ Mindfully practice noticing the experience of watching the clip
- ▶ Do another self-check
- ▶ Discuss the emotions that group members felt during the film clip
  - ▼ Ask group members to label their emotions (refer to Handout 4.2, "Emotional Vocabulary")
- ▶ Discuss the experiences the group members had
  - ▼ Ask: Did you enjoy the video clip more while being mindful?
  
- ▶ Rationale:
  - ▼ Sometimes people engage in pleasant activities on automatic pilot—to live "in the now," be aware of experiences as they occur.
  - ▼ This exercise is helpful to those who sometimes do fun things without being mindful as well as to those who tend to withdraw

## Mindfulness Exercise: Sound Ball

- ▶ This activity involves the "how" skill of "don't judge". Leaders should be very familiar with the rationale prior to beginning exercises-
- ▶ Leaders should be very familiar with the rationale prior to beginning exercises-
  - ▼ Leader should model the use of the "what" and "how" skills throughout the activity
    - ▼ E.g. observe and note judgments by the group as they occur (do so in a non-judgmental manner)
    - ▼ E.g. verbalize own judgments - "this is hard", "I feel silly but I'm trying not to judge", "I'm having a hard time with what to do next", etc.
    - ▼ E.g. remind members to stay focused
    - ▼ E.g. remind members to fully participate - "the more you do it, the easier it gets, don't have to think about it as much"
- ▶ Instruct: Practice what and how skills together
  - ▼ What: try and "fully participate" in this activity
  - ▼ How: "stay focused"- don't think about anything else, e.g. what happened yesterday, what you're doing after group, what's for dinner, etc.
  - ▼ How: "stay focused" - don't get distracted by someone else
  - ▼ How: "don't judge" - don't judge yourself, don't judge others. If you find yourself judging, just notice it - don't judge it- and move on
- ▶ Instruct participants to stand in a circle
- ▶ One person throws a pretend, or real ball to someone else in the circle while making a noise or a nonsense word (e.g. gersnibble). Leaders demonstrate.
  - ▼ catcher makes same sound, then
  - ▼ throws to someone else, making a different sound
  - ▼ catcher repeats sound, then throws to someone else, repeating the cycle
- ▶ Stop after 1 minute and ask:
  - ▼ How was it? What was it like? Some people were smiling, giggling. What were you thinking?
  - ▼ Did anyone think "I'm not doing this right", "I look stupid", etc.?
  - ▼ When we are worried about how to do something or what we look like is it easier or harder to fully participate?
- ▶ Repeat Sound Ball (2 minutes):
  - ▼ Instruct: Let's try again, but really get into it, fully participating
  - ▼ Instruct: Throw yourself into it, without fear, without feeling self-conscious.
- ▶ Members share observations
  - ▼ Discuss: contrast between the first and second time, & what they observed, described, judgments, etc.

▶ **Rationale: for group members**

- ▼ It's hard not to judge - it takes practice. When you don't judge, you feel better about yourself. Have more fun.
- ▼ It's hard to stay focused - when you are thinking about other things or other people, it's easy to get distracted- you're not fully participating in the experience and you miss a lot of information
- ▼ People can enjoy things more when they are fully present and in the moment, fully participating in what is going on. If you're trying to get something done, or cope with lots of stuff, you will be more successful if you can fully participate in the moment

▶ **Rationale: for leaders**

- ▼ These exercises involve the "how" skill of "don't judge"-
  - ▼ In order to fully participate (a "what" skill)- you have to be able to let go of judgments
  - ▼ People will often feel self-conscious making funny sounds in front of others
  - ▼ The experience of self-consciousness occurs when you judge yourself (e.g. "I look silly", "I'm no good at this")
  - ▼ These judgments frequently stop us from acting in a particular way- they inhibit us. Prevent us from the "what" skill of fully participating.
  - ▼ Judgments make us feel badly about ourselves or others- throw us into Emotion Mind
  - ▼ Judgments can keep us from fully enjoying the moment
  - ▼ Life can be less restrictive and more rewarding if we let go of judgments
- ▼ This exercise also involve the "how" skill of "stay focused"-
  - ▼ In order to fully participate (a "what" skill)- you have to be able to stay focused
  - ▼ It is difficult to do either of these activities well while doing or thinking about something else- in order to fully participate, you have to concentrate entirely on the exercise at hand
  - ▼ If you are able to focus all of your attention to one thing only, you will become better at it

## **Mindfulness Exercise: Breathe**

- ▶ Ask participants to practice focusing on just the present moment, the here-and-now by noticing:
  - ▼ Each breath as it goes in and out
  - ▼ Their lungs expanding
  - ▼ What it feels like to exhale

- ▶ Remind them that thoughts may drift to what happened at school or at home or what might be for dinner tonight. That's okay and to be expected- just bring yourself back to the present and back to your breath.
- ▶ Ask volunteers to describe their observations after 1-2 minutes.
- ▶ **Rationale:**
  - ▼ Being mindful, aware of what is going on right now without judging is the path to wise mind.
  - ▼ Being able to stop and focus on the present moment, on what's happening right now, is essential for figuring out what you are feeling and what's needed in the moment.

### **Mindfulness Exercise: Listening Mindfully**

- ▶ Group participants pair up for this exercise
  - ▼ Speaker talks to the listener about an upsetting situation
  - ▼ Listener is mindful and focuses on the speaker and what he/she is saying
  - ▼ Remind listeners to have good eye contact, notice speaker's face and tone of voice & let speaker know you understand his/her point of view
- ▶ After 1-2 minutes, **Ask:** What is it like to talk to someone who is listening mindfully? How is it different from the exercise we did a while back when the listener wasn't mindful?
- ▶ **Ask:** If you are communicating and paying close attention, focusing on what the other person is saying, are you more or less likely to establish or improve a relationship?
- ▶ **Rationale:** If the other person understands that you are listening mindfully to him/her, s/he is more likely to listen to you. You have been a great listener if the other person knows that you understood his/her point of view. Mindful listening improves relationships, both close relationships and those that are not so close.

### **Mindfulness Exercise: Minding Personal Space**

- ▶ Separate participants into two groups (A and B) and ask them to line up on opposite sides of the room
- ▶ Assign a partner from Group B to each member of Group A (preferably the person standing directly opposite him or her)
- ▶ Instruct Group B members to pay mindful attention to their comfort levels during the following exercise:
  - ▼ Group A members walk slowly toward their partners
  - ▼ Group B members say "Stop!" when their partners are too close
- ▶ Group members then exchange roles and repeat the exercise
- ▶ Ask/discuss the following:
  - ▼ What was it like when your partner got too close to you?

- ▼ How did you know when you started to feel uncomfortable?
  - ▼ Discuss how people have the right to maintain comfortable boundaries
- ▶ **Rationale:** By paying attention to your reactions in the moment, your wise mind can give you important information about your boundaries and what you are comfortable with and not comfortable with. Don't forget to listen to your intuition.

## Mindfulness Exercise: Let's Dance

- ▶ This activity is recommended because participants often feel self-conscious. Therefore it provides an opportunity to practice the "how" skill of "don't judge" as well as the "what" skill of "participate"
- ▶ Leaders should be very familiar with the rationale prior to beginning exercises-
  - ▼ Leader should model the use of the "what" and "how" skills throughout the activity
    - ▼ E.g. observe and note judgments by the group as they occur (do so in a non-judgmental manner)
    - ▼ E.g. verbalize own judgments - "this is hard", "I feel silly but I'm trying not to judge", "I keep forgetting where to step next", etc.
    - ▼ E.g. remind members to stay focused
    - ▼ E.g. remind members to fully participate - "the more you do it, the easier it gets, don't have to think about it as much"
- ▶ **Instruct:** Practice what and how skills together
  - ▼ **What:** try and "fully participate" in this activity
  - ▼ **How:** "stay focused"- don't think about anything else, e.g. what happened yesterday, what you're doing after group, what's for dinner, etc.
  - ▼ **How:** "stay focused" - don't get distracted by someone else
  - ▼ **How:** "don't judge" - don't judge yourself, don't judge others. If you find yourself judging, just notice it - don't judge it- and move on
- ▶ "Sequenced Dance" (4 min.)
  - ▼ Instruct members to stand in a circle
  - ▼ Members can keep hands at their sides, or place hands on shoulder of person on either side. (Some groups may not feel comfortable with any physical contact).
  - ▼ Practice first: Go through sequence twice (1-2 minutes).
  - ▼ Give instructions
    - ▼ Tap right foot:
      - ▼ in front of you to beat of 1-2-3-4
      - ▼ to the side to beat of 1-2-3-4.
      - ▼ behind you...1-2-3-4
    - ▼ Bring right foot back in place. Feet together.
    - ▼ Repeat sequence with left foot. Tap left foot:

- ▼ in front of you to beat of 1-2-3-4
      - ▼ to the side to beat of 1-2-3-4.
      - ▼ behind you...1-2-3-4
    - ▼ Bring left foot back in place, feet together.
    - ▼ Take two steps to the right
      - ▼ Step to the right with right foot.
      - ▼ Follow with left. Feet together.
      - ▼ Step to the right
      - ▼ Feet together
    - ▼ Repeat sequence from beginning- tap right foot in front, to side, in back, back in place, feet together
  - ▼ Begin activity with music (2 minutes).
    - ▼ Use music with rhythmic beat- e.g. Irish march
- ▶ Ask (after 2-3 minutes): How was it? What was it like?
  - ▼ **Comment:** some people were smiling, giggling. What were you thinking?
    - ▼ **Ask:** Did anyone think "I'm not doing this right", "I look stupid", etc.?
    - ▼ **Ask:** When you are worried about how to do something or judging what you look like are you fully participating?
    - ▼ **Ask:** When you worry about looking silly, do you feel more or less self-conscious? How do judgments make you feel about yourself? Do these judgments keep you from having fun?
    - ▼ When you are judging yourself or others you are concentrating on what you *look like* and not on what you are *doing* - this means you are not staying focused and not fully participating
- ▶ Repeat (2 mins):
  - ▼ **Instruct:** this time, let's try again, but let's fully participate
  - ▼ **Instruct:** really throw yourself into it, without fear, without feeling self-conscious.
- ▶ Members share observations
  - ▼ **Discuss:** contrast between the first and second time, & what they observed, described, judgments, etc.
- ▶ Rationale: for group members
  - ▼ It's hard not to judge - it takes practice. When you don't judge, you feel better about yourself. Have more fun.
  - ▼ It's hard to stay focused - when you are thinking about other things or other people, it's easy to get distracted- you're not fully participating in the experience and you miss a lot of information



- ▼ If you are able to focus all of your attention to one thing only, you will become better at it
- ▼ The more you practice something - the better you get at it. Pretty soon, you don't have to think about it as much, you just do it. Let's Dance is like learning to ride a bike - at first you have to concentrate on the steps, but eventually with practice, it becomes automatic. That's what mindfulness is like.
- ▼ People can enjoy things more when they are fully present and in the moment, fully participating in what is going on. If you're trying to get something done, or cope with lots of stuff, you will be more successful if you can fully participate in the moment

▶ **Rationale: for leaders**

- ▼ Practice "what" and "how" skills together
- ▼ This exercise involves the "what" skill of "participate"-
  - ▼ At first you have to really concentrate, however, the more you do it, the better you get at it.
  - ▼ The goal is to experience the activity fully- really get into it.
  - ▼ The more you practice, the less you have to think about it, and the more you can become one with it & experience it fully (e.g. like learning to ride a bike)
- ▼ This exercise involves the "how" skill of "don't judge"-
  - ▼ In order to fully participate (a "what" skill)- you have to be able to let go of judgments
  - ▼ People often feel self-conscious doing a new dance in front of others or making funny sounds
  - ▼ The experience of self-consciousness occurs when you judge yourself (e.g. "I look silly", "I'm no good at this")
  - ▼ These judgments frequently stop us from acting in a particular way- they inhibit us. Prevent us from the "what" skill of fully participating.
  - ▼ Judgments make us feel badly about ourselves or others- throw us into Emotion Mind
  - ▼ Judgments can keep us from fully enjoying the moment
  - ▼ Life can be less restrictive and more rewarding if we let go of judgments
- ▼ This exercise involves the "how" skill of "stay focused"-
  - ▼ In order to fully participate (a "what" skill)- you have to be able to stay focused
  - ▼ It is difficult to do either of these activities well while doing or thinking about something else- in order to fully participate, you have to concentrate entirely on the exercise at hand
  - ▼ If you are able to focus all of your attention to one thing only, you will become better at it

## Mindfulness Exercise: Sandpaper & Softness

- ▶ Hand out small pieces of sandpaper and instruct to mindfully touch the sandpaper:
  - ▼ Observe and describe quietly for approximately one minute
- ▶ Share observations:
  - ▼ What do you notice about the sandpaper? What was it like touching it?
  - ▼ Did you notice anything else? Did it affect the way it made you feel? How?
- ▶ Hand out small pieces of soft fabric and instruct to mindfully touch the fabric:
  - ▼ Observe and describe quietly for approximately one minute
- ▶ Share observations:
  - ▼ What do you notice about the fabric? What was it like touching it?
  - ▼ Did you notice anything else? Did it affect the way it made you feel? How?
  
- ▶ Rationale:
  - ▼ Focusing and being mindful can enhance experiences and highlight differences. Notice how different tactile experiences can affect how you feel.
  - ▼ The more information you have about what you notice and how you react, the more choices you'll have for how to cope.
  - ▼ Touching the soft fabric can also be a way to use touch to self-soothe.

