



Activities Manual



FRESH
Fostering Resilience Educating for Shared Harmony

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The **Fresh Little Minds** Team had so much fun creating this manual for you!

We wanted to share the benefit of our combined years of experience facilitating childrens fun and learning. Here we have the cream of the crop, the games and activities we know never fail to energise and engage a shy or sleepy group, as well as those we use to reconnect, settle or refocus a lively, energetic bunch.

Every game and activity has earned its place here because we know kids love it!

It's important for you to know that the choice of activities and games for each session of your **GROW** programme can't be prescriptive. Facilitators will want to develop an instinct and feel for the group, and the environment, to choose just the right energy level and type of engagement.

To help you see at a glance what activity might be right for your group, we have ranked each with a traffic light signal. **RED** indicates a slower, lower energy game, **YELLOW** is a medium energy level, And **GREEN** indicates a high voltage, high energy activity. We have also indicated where our FLM resources will be required.

Remember – **HAVE FUN !**



1

ANCHOR ACTIVITIES



Release....

Fear, judgement, criticism,
distraction and loneliness

Nurture....

Security, safety and resilience, to enable
children to learn in relationship to others

Name of Activity: **John John John**



How to do this activity:

With everyone in a circle, stand in the centre to explain that you will choose someone's name to say three times e.g. John, John, John.

John must listen carefully and shout his name out ONCE before you have finished saying it three times.

If John is quick enough to say his name before you have finished, you call another name from the group three times, and they try to get one name called out before the their name is said once.

If John is too slow, and you get to the third 'JOHN' before he says it once, then John takes your place in the centre of the circle. Then John can choose another group member name to call three times.

Repeat the game so a succession of players gets to go into the centre of the circle.

CAUTION:

Great way to learn names but if the group all know each other already, the facilitator will have to learn quickly to keep up!

Shy and introverted children may find it difficult to speak out loudly and quickly.

Name of Activity: **Name and Action**



How to do this activity:

With everyone in a circle, the facilitator explains that each person will say their name out loud " I am Adam" and make a movement to accompany their name. The entire group then repeats their name " You are Adam" and copies the movement back to them.

In turn, this moves round the circle until everyone has taken part.

NOTES:

The movement should use as many parts of the body and be a big and active as possible. The facilitator should physically demonstrate this as an example prior to beginning the game.

Name of Activity: **My Name is and I like**



How to do this activity:

With everyone in a circle, each person will say their name out loud to the group and something they like, for example 'My name is John and I like football'. Likes can be activities, hobbies, animals, food...

The game is completed when everyone has said their name and something they like.

NOTES:

Variation: Ask the group to perform the action of the thing that they like doing as they say this to the group.

Variation: Once completed the facilitator attempts to remember and list out loud all the names and what each person likes. The facilitator can also ask a group member to do this.



Name of Activity: **Cross the Circle**



How to do this activity:

With everyone in a circle, ask them to imagine their feet are anchored to the floor. Ask them to look at all the people in the group, particularly those opposite them and make sure they know everyone's name! If they don't know, they'll need to find out by asking, and be sure to remember!

To cross the circle, Adam must make eye contact with someone, then call their name out loud. Adam can then move **SLOWLY** towards the person whose name he called, eg Jill.

Jill must then call a chosen person's name out **LOUD** – only then can Jill cross the circle towards the person whose name she called (eg Sandra), leaving her space in the circle empty. Adam will have taken her place

The process repeats with each person whose name is called looking round the group to choose a new name to say out loud!

The game will end when the facilitator judges the group is ready.

NOTES:

1. *Remind the group to anchor their feet to the ground – they cannot cross the circle until they have called someone's name. Discourage wandering around the circle looking/thinking for a name*
2. *Encourage crossing the circle **SLOWLY** – this also adds to the anticipation.*
3. *The facilitator may need to jump in by calling a group members name if the games slows.*

Extension: *Facilitator will call two names! This add to the excitement as the group has to listen very carefully for their name to be called.*

Name of Activity:

**I am John and I love Jumping,
This is Rosie and she loves running**



How to do this activity:

With everyone in a circle explain that each person will say their name out loud to the group and something they like, which **MUST** begin with the first letter of their name e.g. John likes Jumping, Mary likes Marshmallows. Likes can include activities, hobbies, animals, food...

The group in turn will perform an action to show the thing that they like as they say their name.

For example if John likes Jumping he will jump up and down as he says "My name is John and I like jumping" or "I'm Rosie and I like Reading (pretends to read)"

The game is completed when everyone has taken part saying their name and something they like.

NOTES:

Variation: *Repeat the previous person's name, like and movement – then do their own. E.g. 'This is John he likes jumping (they jump) I'm Rosie and I like Reading (pretends to read). The next person must first introduce Rosie and say, "This is Rosie and she likes reading" (with the movement) then introduce themselves and their like and action.*

Variation: *Each person must list in turn ALL the people who have said their likes and movements so far before they can introduce themselves. The last person in the circle will have to go through the entire group (with Help!) before they do their own.*

Name of Activity:

About my name



How to do this activity:

Sit in a circle with the group, explain that each group member will tell the group their name and a bit about it. Things they can tell the group include:

Why they think their parents gave them this name?

Do they have a nick name – how did they get this? Do they like it?

What are their full names with any middle names?

Were they named after someone?

What do they like about their names?

What does their name mean?

If they could change their name to another, what would it be and why?

NOTES:

The facilitator may need to ask 1-2 prompt questions if children are shy or can't think what to say.

Name of Activity:

Group Name Juggle



How to do this activity:

With everyone in a circle, the facilitator will have something soft and easy to catch but big enough to throw across the circle (eg bean bag, soft ball) Calling a group members name OPPOSITE them, they GENTLY throw the ball towards them, so they can catch it.

The person who now has the ball calls a different group member OPPOSITE them and GENTLY throws the ball to them.

Once you have caught the ball and called a new group member you cannot be called again. Ask the group to REMEMBER who you received the ball from and who you passed the ball too

Repeat until everyone has caught and called, with the facilitator catching the final throw.

Explain that you are going to repeat the game – in the same order, so the people you caught from and the people you called and threw the ball to. This time when the round is complete the facilitator will immediately start again: Challenge the group to complete the round without dropping the ball/ speed up, add a second and third/ fourth ball/ bean bag etc.

NOTES:

It can help to ask each group member to sit down/ fold arms/ etc once they have caught and called a new group member, so everyone can see who is available to catch.

Take care with the object you choose to throw – tennis balls and large/ hard objects can cause injury or damage when speed and enthusiasm builds!



Name of Activity:

Name and Clapping Rhythm

**How to do this activity:**

With everyone in a circle the facilitator will start clapping a simple slow rhythm and ask the group to clap and follow, keeping the rhythm slow and steady.

Introduce your name to the group using the rhythm on each syllable eg 'I am Patrick'. Ask everyone to copy/respond. Practice this a few times until the group get the hang of speaking with the rhythm of the clap. Move around the circle with each person in turn saying their name "I am _____" and getting the group to respond with "you are _____" with the rhythm. There can be pauses between participants as they get ready to say their name and find the beat.

NOTES:

***Extension:** Repeat the game challenging the group to say their names, with a response without a pause in the rhythm & gradually speed up the rhythm.*

Name of Activity:

Hand and finger

**How to do this activity:**

In a close circle ask everyone to take their LEFT hand and point their first finger. Then ask everyone to take their RIGHT hand and place it palm up next to the person to their right. Then the left hand's pointing finger is placed gently on the upturned palm of the person to the left. Each person should have a person's pointing finger on the palm of their right hand and their own pointing left finger on their partner's palm.

At the count of three. Each person must try to grab their partner's finger while lifting their own finger away to not get caught. You can demonstrate this.

1. Count down 3-2-1 and try to grab the finger while lifting your own.
2. See who caught a finger and you got caught.
3. Repeat a few times.
4. Change hands - Right hand as the pointing finger - left hand palm up.

Name of Activity:

Clumps & Lines

**How to do this activity:****CLUMPS**

Ask the group to move around the room slowly using all the space as you explain the rules of the game. The leader will instruct children to assemble into mini groups (Clumps) according to things they have in common; hair colour, eye colour, shoe colour, short hair, long hair as quick as they can! After each successful clump, go back to moving around the room. Repeat this and introduces likes, dislikes and experiences they have in common - get into favourite food clumps, football teams, TV shows, Super Heroes, Films, sweets etc

LINES

Ask the group to assemble into lines (shoulder to shoulder) in ascending or descending order according to height, size of feet and oldest to youngest. For older groups try order of birthdays (Jan-Dec) of birth and when confident, try completing these tasks in silence. The leader can assess how well they have done and let the group rearrange as necessary.

Name of Activity:

The Sun Shines On



How to do this activity:

With everyone in a circle on chairs, and the facilitator standing in the middle, explain that if the sun shines on you, you must get up and find another empty seat. The person in the middle can 'steal' a seat while the group are swapping places - there is always one chair less than group members.

The person in the centre chooses something that the Sun will shine on. This might be blonde hair, long hair, blue eyes, wearing trousers, wearing trainers, has ear rings etc, and will call:

'The Sun Shines On anyone wearing trousers'. If any of the sitting group members are wearing trousers they MUST stand and move to a free seat.

Whoever is left without a chair is the new player in the centre and will call a different feature as 'Sun Shines On...' Once you have stood, you cannot return to your seat, you must always be in a different seat.

NOTES:

If you qualify under 'The sun shines on....' you MUST find a new seat or you become the new player in the centre.

As confidence builds, encourage the group to consider things they can't see as new qualities for the sun to shine on e.g. The Sun Shines on everyone who likes football, loves holidays, has been in trouble with a teacher, has been on a plane, likes Pizza etc.

Name of Activity:

Switch



How to do this activity:

With everyone in a circle watching closely, you begin a slow, steady, rhythmic clap by tapping with both hands on a body part or the floor. Explain that when you shout "SWITCH!" everyone must tap where you were tapping before the change. EG start by tapping your shoulders.

When you shout SWITCH and start tapping your knees, the group will tap their shoulders, when you shout SWITCH and start tapping your head, the group will tap their knees. When you shout SWITCH and tap your ears the group will start tapping their heads and so on.

NOTES:

A great activity to refocus a group - promotes concentration and requires close attention on the facilitator.



Name of Activity: Zip Zap Boing**How to do this activity:**

With the group in a circle, explain the rules of how to pass Zips, Zaps and Boings!

To ZIP, hold the palms of your hands together and point to the person to your right and say ZIP. To ZAP, hold the palms of your hands together, point at someone across the circle and say ZAP. To BOING, hold your arms above your head, jump up and say BOING!

The game starts with a ZIP going around the circle, being passed to the right. When you receive the ZIP you can pass this on to your right OR you can ZAP it across the circle to someone else. It is important to make eye contact with the person who you ZAP. If you receive a Zap you can Zip to your left or right OR Zap it to another person (not the one who Zapped you originally) across the circle.

If a ZIP comes to you can also choose to BOING it back to that person. If you ZIP someone and they BOING you, your ZIP changes direction OR you can ZAP it across the circle.

However, you CANNOT **BOING** a **ZAP**!

NOTES:

Play the game first with ZIP and ZAPs to get used to changing direction and crossing circles, then add in a BOING, remembering you can only BOING a ZIP!

The confusion creates lots of laughter, and it is fun to get it wrong as you learn!



2

MOVE ACTIVITIES



Release....

Excess energy and disempowering memories held in the physical body

Nurture....

Connection with the body and a sense of aliveness. Produces helpful endorphins promotes a body chemistry which restores equilibrium

Name of Activity: **Shake it Out**



How to do this activity:

Ensure children have enough space around them to extend arms & legs.

Raise their right arm first and shake it counting down from 10 (or begin from a lower number) Repeat this action with left arm, then right leg and then left leg. Repeat working through 9, 8,7,6,5,4,3,2 and finishing with 1 right arm, 1 left arm, 1 right leg, left leg.

Your group will feel warm, awake, excess energy will have shifted and they will be more able to focus on your session

Name of Activity: **Movement and Stretches**



How to do this activity:

Use your FLM movement cards in new, fun and interesting ways: Get creative, and as silly as you like! Here are a few variations we use...

Hide several cards and when one is found, everyone freezes then practices the movement on the card. You can use music while looking for cards eg play a lion king sound track and walk like a giraffe / slide like a snake / crawl like a crab while looking

Each week several different children get to pick the cards (keep track of who has had a go, that helps a more shy or introverted child participate)

Group 1 create an animal movement and group 2 guess what the movement is

Add a positive affirmation to a movement and have your group repeat the affirmation after you.

RESOURCES:

- FLM Movement Cards
- Background Music & Speakers
- Rubber Mats (to hide cards under)



Name of Activity:

Caterpillars



How to do this activity:

1. Ask your group to stand in a line facing forward, they widen their legs and raise their right hand up into the air.
2. Ask them to take their extended hand and to reach it in-between their legs. Using their left hand they should hold the hand of the person in front of them that is in-between their legs.
3. Now the group are all connected and ready to go.
4. The person at the back has to make their way between all of the legs – to avoid breaking connection, each person must follow.
5. The caterpillar will eventually turn itself inside out.
6. You can turn this into a race if you have multiple groups
7. Your group have a lot of fun and feel connected as they work together.

PROPS:

None

Name of Activity:

Freeze, Jump, Change



How to do this activity:

This is a great energiser and is also useful in teaching the group simple commands that you can use throughout the programme. Ask the group to move around the space, using all the available room at a walking pace, making sure they don't bump into each other! Tell them that when you shout CHANGE they are to immediately change direction but keep on walking – making sure not to bump into anyone!

Keep this going and then tell them there is a new command – when you call FREEZE – they must keep totally still until you say they can move again. You can call 'ok let's move' for them to unfreeze their position. Try this combined with CHANGE command to challenge the group

Your final command is JUMP – try this combined with FREEZE and CHANGE – keep the group moving and play until they are all warmed up.

NOTES:

***Extension:** Turn the instructions into claps 1 clap = Freeze 2 claps = Change direction etc.*

Add in new familiar movement commands CROUCH, HEIGHT FIVE, TWIST each week to challenge the group.

Name of Activity:

This is a Pen, this is not a pen...



How to do this activity:

Gather the group in a circle to play this mime game. Take a pen from you pocket and show it to the group explaining that you are going to transform this pen into something else.

Announce 'This is a Pen... This is NOT a pen, this is a ...' at this point you mime (actions with no words) what you want the pen to become –you use the pen or physically become the object. For example it could become a bow and arrow, a spade, a bicycle, a saw, a car, a horse, an aeroplane etc. Make the object a big and as un-pen-like as possible to spark imagination and show children what is possible – challenge them to turn the pen into something large unexpected.

Let the children guess what you have turned the pen into then pass the pen onto someone else ensuring that everyone has had a turn.

PROPS:

A Pen

Name of Activity:

Triple Scramble



How to do this activity:

Split into groups of 4, each person labelled 1, 2, 3, & 4

Person 1 will start in the middle, Person 2 will stand to their right, person 3 to their left and person 4 in front of them.

Person 1 will have three tasks;

First they must copy the actions of person 4 - who will make interesting movements for person 1 to copy

Second they must answer the logical questions that person 2 will ask them - simple maths, spelling or general knowledge questions like $1 + 1 = ?$ or spell London? or what is the Capital of Spain? Name 3 planets?

Third they must answer the abstract questions that person 3 will ask them - tell me about your favourite holiday? what is it about the sky that makes it so interesting? Why are dogs so loveable to humans?

Time the task for 1 minute, then change places so that each has had a go at each activity.

The group will have experienced an awakening of each part of their brain and will be able to talk about how difficult it is to engage all the different parts of the brain at the same time. When logic was in charge, the part that was more abstract will have found it difficult to be active. You will be able to refer to this activity throughout the brainzotic workshop, to illustrate the theory.

PROPS:

None



Name of Activity: **Nose and Ear**



How to do this activity:

1. In a circle ask everyone to raise their right arm into the air, then cross it over in front of their faces and hold their left ear.
2. Now ask everyone to raise their left arm into the air and hold their noses.
3. The leader will demonstrate what happens next.
4. Ask the group to swap sides - so their right arm should now hold their nose and their left arm hold their right ear.
5. Repeat for fun

PROPS:

None

Name of Activity: **Pass the Clap & Catch the Clap**



How to do this activity:

With everyone in a circle, teach the concept by getting everyone to watch you and clap at the same time – vary the speed and delay. Then, begin passing by turning to face the person to your right, and try to clap at the same time as them. They then turn to face the person on their right and try to clap at the same time, so passing the clap round the circle till it reaches you again.

NOTES:

As the group's confidence builds, you can encourage them to increase the speed, or add another clap when the first reaches halfway round the circle, then another! You can change direction and vary the speed until everyone is concentrating and working together – Remember to high five when the last clap comes home!



Name of Activity:

Little Clap/ Finger Clap



How to do this activity:

Demonstrate a little clap and ask children to give it a go without making any noise. Encourage the children to notice the feelings in their hands as they clap very gently and quietly. Demonstrate clapping fingers and ask everyone to join in. As they are finger clapping, ask them to notice what they are feeling in their fingers, minds and bodies.

Remind children they can do little clapping and finger clapping at anytime, even in school if they are feeling worried, frustrated or agitated.

NOTES:

Extension: Take the role of a conductor, raising and lowering your hand you help the group gradually increasing the clapping noise then gradually lowering the volume of the clapping until it is silent once again. Keep in mind little hands can get sore/ tired.

Name of Activity:

Icelandic Clap



How to do this activity:

Gather the children in a circle, ask them to copy/follow you. You will mimic the Icelandic soccer chant, clapping, while making the HA! sound at the same time. Repeat the clapping, breathing and chanting, varying the volume and speed. You can even combine with movement eg. walking and stamping.

Repeat as many times as you feel required then end with some little clapping or finger clapping to lower the energy and return focus to you. You will have generated energy within the group, practiced diaphragmatic breathing and moved out any excess or stuck energy whilst having fun.

NOTES:

This game works best when it follows Catch My Clap or Copy My Clap, you need to have already practiced little clap or finger clap in advance too.

If you aren't familiar with the Icelandic Soccer chant, there are lots of videos on the internet.



Name of Activity:

Have you brought...



How to do this activity:

Establish a chant rhythm and ask in chant... "Have you brought your toothbrush?" And make the action of using a toothbrush

Group: Yes I've brought my toothbrush... whole group act out using a toothbrush

Mix it up - here are some ideas

Have you brought your...

- Happy hands
- Itching powder
- Crazy Hair
- Air Guitar
- Jazz Hands
- Stampy feet
- Monkey moves
- Ninja moves

NOTES:

By the end of this exercise the group will be focusing on you, they will feel enlivened and joyful

Name of Activity:

Voice Exercises



How to do this activity:

All voice exercises are coded YELLOW, because although there isn't much physical movement, they are energising

Chewing Toffee warm up

Ask your group to imagine that in their mouth was a huge piece of sticky toffee that they are really enjoying chewing. Exaggerate the movements of the jaw and face muscles so they are now ready for a vocal work out.

AEIOU warm up

The group follow you saying the vowels of the alphabet. Sing AEIOU - repeat and each time raise the pitch. You can play around with this - try it backwards as the voices in your group are warming up.

Rainforest

Ask the group to copy you as you introduce sounds from the rainforest eg clicking fingers, blowing wind, whistling storms, stampy feet thunder, chirping birds, playful monkeys, roaring lions, dripping water. Introduce each sound and let it travel around the group - notice how the sounds increase. When the first sound reaches you, change it for a new sound.

Orchestra

This works best after the Rainforest activity has created some confidence with their voice work. Pick a theme eg forest, a city, school, a football stadium, a beach, emotions. Break into smaller groups which each choose theme and sounds associated with the theme. The conductor (you) signals a group to make their sound with gusto by raising their hands. Practise this and then sit in the middle of the group and raise and lowers your hands with each of the groups in turn, as though conducting an orchestra. Experiment with combinations and sequences. This is a wonderful way to begin to introduce vocal activities into a group.

Tongue Twisters

Use a variety of tongue twisters to get the children using their voices and brains, try these as call and response:

- She sells sea shells on the sea shore
- Red lorry, yellow lorry
- Unique New York
- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers
- Betty bought a bit of butter
- Nine nimble noblemen nibbling nuts
- Four fine fresh fish for you
- A proper cup of coffee from a proper copper coffee pot
- Six sticky skeletons
- Mommy Made Me Mash My M&Ms

Name of Activity:

Body Percussion (call and response)



How to do this activity:

Using your body parts as your percussion kit you can tap/slap/clap out simple rhythms on specific parts of your body and get the group to copy you. You can begin with simple sequences gradually getting more complex! You can use arms legs, head, chest, side of foot, cheeks etc. For example:

With both hands slap thighs twice then clap hands once – (works well to the rhythm of Queen’s ‘We Will Rock You’)

PROPS:

None

Name of Activity:

Hoeing Game



How to do this activity:

This is a call and response voice exercise, best understood by playing it. Imagine you have a hoe or shovel in your hands and you are gently digging the soil beneath you in a rhythmic manner – your arms will be swinging forwards and backwards in rhythm, whilst your weight shifts from one foot to the other in a back/forward rocking manner. This gives you the foundation rhythm for your game. As the group copy your movements, you will all be rocking in unison to the steady rhythm.

You will make a CALL and you want them to copy it as a group. Start with a simple two part call using different tones of your voice (The first part high the second low) to the back forward rhythm EEHH – OHH, OOOO – LAA, DAY – OH, BING – BONG etc. The group should respond in rhythm.

As get more confident, try more complex three parts call over the rhythm e.g. Cha-Cha-Cha, Bing-Bang-Bong, HE-HA-HO, Hey-Hey-Hey, Tic-Tac-Toe, O-PEN-UP, Cup-Of-Tea, We’re-The-Best (Any 3 one syllable words) etc.

You then call anything – as long as it keeps the back forward rhythm.

Extension: for confident groups you can pass the call on so everyone takes a turn to call with the group responding back to them.

PROPS:

None



Name of Activity:

Bong- a – low



How to do this activity:

Gather your group into a big circle, establish a happy, rhythmic chant through tapping your knees and clapping your hands

Then invite a call and response to your words:

Bong - A- Lo, Bong bong - a lo (children repeat/respond after you and you repeat this again)

You the leader will then invites a volunteer, when we know who will be volunteering we continue with call and response.

Hey Tara (children repeat Hey Tara)

Let me see your bong - a lo (children repeat)

Tara then says with actions: My hands are high (reach up), my feet are low touch your toes) and this is how I bong-a-lo" (Tara will demonstrates her move)

The group repeat back with the actions: Her hands are high (stretch) her feet are low (touch toes and this is how she bong-a-los (copy action)

You will repeat as many times as it is fun for the group. As the weeks progress, more and more children will want to lead and in Fresh Little Minds we support the little person who would love to volunteer themselves but can't, by inviting them to have a go, and helping them find their voice and action.

Name of Activity:

Gibberish Talking Circle



How to do this activity:

Gibberish is talking in made up words with no meaning, where the emphasis is on your expression, tone, speed and body and hand movements to convey meaning and emotion! Gather everyone into a circle and tell them you are going to teach them a new language in a matter of seconds and it's called Gibberish and EVERYONE can speak it! The only rule is that once you start you can only speak in Gibberish to each other. The leader must begin with caricatured gusto making up lots of words and acting out lots of physical expression to show the children how to communicate without verbal language. Instruct the group in gibberish to copy you doing some simple tasks like sitting, truing 360 degrees on the floor or jumping up and down. Praise them when they understand with lots of gibberish enthusiasm!

Now you can get the group to speak gibberish to you – you'll need to encourage them – so in gibberish ask them nonsense questions, try call and response in gibberish – you'll need to be persistent repeating the same phrase as question until you get a response – and praise enthusiastically when you do. The game is over when everyone has said something or people are laughing too much.

NOTES:

Extension: once familiar, you can start talking gibberish at any point in a session to begin a gibberish game, rather than announce it!

Name of Activity:

Simple Songs in rounds



How to do this activity:

Practice some simple, fun songs and teach these to the children. Lots of examples can be found online through youtube.

These are a few:

UN AHH Went the little green frog

London's Burning

I like the flowers, I like the daffodils

Extensions: When confident teach the group rounds where you can split the bigger group into two or three and get them to start at the song a line after each other.

PROPS:

None

Name of Activity:

I want a Nea Nea



How to do this activity:

With everyone standing in a circle, explain that you want a nea nea and since no one knows what a nea nea is, you will have to show them!

Sample script: Leader: "I want a nea nea!"

Josh: 'What's a nea nea?'

Leader (Makes a wacky large movement) 'That's a nea nea!'

All children copy the movement and say 'That's a nea nea!'

Repeat this numerous times using your voice to make the exercise silly, playful and fun.

NOTES:

Encourage the Nea Nea movements to be big and involve the whole body. The game finishes when everyone has had a turn.



Name of Activity:

Laughter Activities

**DEFINITELY GREEN!**

We love Laughter Therapy Exercises so much, we gave them their own pages!

A **MOVE** and a **BREATHE** activity.

Used in sequence or integrated throughout a workshop, they are a wonderfully positive way to reconnect and energise your group

With frequent use the "Very Good, Very Good, Yay" and "Ha Ha, Ho Ho Ho" Chant and clap movements can become a tribal call, to signify the end of an activity, return the group to a specific place (eg cushions/ in circle) and focus group attention back to you.

We have included a list of our favourite laughter exercises, but as your confidence grows, we encourage you to get creative, and use the creativity in the group to design unique and personal laughter activities – "laugh at the bully" or "I forgot my homework" laughter – we love to hear about new laughs.

How to do this activity:

Airplane Laughter Spread your arms out like an airplane and fly around laughing.

Aloha Laughter Put your arms overhead and say an elongated "Alo..." then drop forward while saying "ha ha ha ha ha..." This can be done standing and put hands on knees to really brace yourself for the "ha ha" part. Otherwise, kneel before a pillow and bury face into it on the "ha ha" part.

Ants in Your Pants Laughter Run around shrieking and laughing as if your pants were filled with ants!

Appreciation Laughter Walk around giving each other the sign of two thumbs up while laughing to express enthusiastic appreciation.

Balloon Laughter Use real balloons and bat them, kick them, bounce them on your knees like a hacky sack. Every time someone makes contact with the balloon, they must laugh. This is a real workout and can keep you laughing a while.

Balloon Popping Laughter Pretend you have balloons attached to your ankles. Try to pop each other's balloons and laugh.

Beauty Pageant Laughter Have the group stand as if they're all finalists for a beauty pageant and then call each person's name (or have them call their own name) and let them react and carry on as if they're the winner.

Bowling Laughter Pretend to throw a laughing bowling ball and cheer if you get a strike. Do it all in unison for the biggest impact.

Bunny Hop Laughter Stand in a line with arms on the person's shoulders in front of you and laugh the bunny hop. Ha ha ha!

Car Laughter Pretend these scenarios are happening with the car while laughing: Start up car with four starts in belly. Drive around and laugh and wave at other people Car stops, argue in gibberish with it. Check oil dip stick that has no end, laugh about it Pump up tire with laughter. Drive away happy.

Celebration Laughter Everyone huddles in a small circle then the leader tells them a "secret" and everyone cheers & laughs wildly. Ask for other volunteers to share a secret.

Cell Phone Laughter Hold an invisible cell phone to your head (or use your real ones). Walk around pretending that someone on the other line is making you laugh with funny stories.

Chicken Laughter Impersonate chickens until you crack one another up!

Closed-Eye Laughter Close your eyes and walk around slowly with arms in front of you. When you bump into someone, laugh together and try to figure out who it is.

Conga Line Laughter Make conga line by placing hands on the shoulders of the person in front of you. Dance around with the conga tune, singing with a "ha" sound. Be sure to kick your legs out at the end of each measure.

Crack Up Laughter Walk around and look someone in the eyes with a serious, scowling face. Then, at the same time, crack each other up. Your scowl will give way to happy laughter. This can also be called the "turn that frown upside down laughter."

Crowded Elevator Laughter Stand really close together as if you're on an elevator and laugh.

Crying Laughter Do an exaggerated crying sound as you bend forward at the waist, then stand back upright while laughing (thus demonstrating how crying and laughing are similar and both part of life).

Doggie Leg Lift Laughter This is only for the adventurous! Get on all and pretend to be a dog, and then lift your leg as if you are peeing on others and laugh about it.

Double Handshake Laughter To greet one another with great enthusiasm, hold both hands and bounce up and down laughing!

Duck Waddle Laughter Tuck your arms up like wing and waddle around like a duck, quacking and laughing.

Echo Laughter Divide group into two. Have first group do a big hearty laugh and the second group will echo it. Groups love to run forward at each other for this.

Electric Shock Laughter Pretend you are giving one another static electricity shocks that cause a jump and a laugh.

Evil Laughter Do your best impersonation of an evil character's laugh. The more over-the-top, the better.

Find your Laughter Centre Find the place in your abdomen from whence your laughter comes and hold it while laughing. See if you can laugh even deeper now that you've



found your centre.

Food Fight Laughter Pretend to throw cheesecake and other yummy food at one another, laughing. Simulate a pie fight!

Forgiveness Laughter Gesture as if offering forgiveness to one another, while laughing.

Full Moon Laughter Howl at the moon together until it cracks you up.

Gibberish Punch line Have one person tell the punch line of a joke using gibberish instead of real words. When they finish, everyone bursts into laughter as if it is the best joke they have ever heard.

Greeting Laughter Shake hands with one another, make eye contact and laugh. This is a great warm- up exercise.

High-Ten Laughter Give each other high tens (slap both hands) and laugh.

Hot Potato Laughter Sit in a circle and pass an invisible hot potato around as fast as you can, laughing when it is in your possession.

Hot Sand Laughter Tiptoe around like you are walking on hot sand and react to the heat by laughing, running and carrying on.

Jack-in-the-Box Laughter Squat down and pretend to wind up your crank. Sing the tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel." Spring up on the pop part and laugh like a wild jack-in-the-box!

Laughter Cream Rub imaginary laughter cream all over yourself and laugh.

Laughter Explosion Stand in a clump and whistle like a laugh is heading your way, then throw arms up and "explode" with laughter all at once.

Laughter Snacks Hold your hand out like it is full of invisible laughter snacks. Pop one into your mouth, chew it and laugh. Try one another's laughter snacks and laugh.

Magnet Laughter Pretend a giant magnet is pulling you all across the space. Laugh as you try to resist it but it will eventually pull you all to the other side. Play with having it pull certain body parts—head, foot, arm, backside, etc.

Monster Laughs Laugh like one or more of these famous monsters: Cookie Monster - eat cookies wildly and laugh Dracula - show teeth and put cape up by face, laughing Frankenstein - put arms out of you and walk around making laughter grunts Godzilla - take big steps and laugh like a giant.

No Money Laughter Pull your pockets inside out if you've got them to show how you have no money, laugh and show each other your empty pockets.

Lawnmower Laughter Pretend you're pushing around a lawnmower with a laughing motor. Have fun starting the mower by laughing as you pretend to pull the pull cord.

Library Laughter Pretend you have a case of the giggles but you are in the library so try to keep it down, steal around and laugh quietly then shush each other.

Phantom Tickle Imagine a phantom is tickling you. Wiggle, giggle and try to get away from your invisible tickler.

Regal Laughter Take turns playing royalty and walk between two rows of applauding subjects, waving like the queen or king.

Roller Coaster Laughter Sit on the ground (or stand) in a double line like a roller coaster and pretend you're ascending. Bring arms up and say "oooooh" then scream and laugh as if you're going down the hill and loving it. If you are seated on the floor, or down onto the floor as you come down the hills. If you are standing, try running around to simulate the hills.

Rowing Laughter Stand or sit in a row on chairs or on the floor as if you're in a big boat and row together with laughter sounds. You may also sing "Row Your Boat" with "ha" instead of words. Do it in a round.

Shy Laughter Put hands in front of face as if you are really shy, then peek out and people, laugh and hide face again.

Sneezing Laughter Instead of bursting into a sneeze, burst into laughter: "ah ah ah... ha ha ha!"

Puppet Laughter Pretend you have a funny sock puppet on your hand and have it laugh and make funny faces at others' sock puppets (or use real sock puppets if you have them).

Static Electric Laughter Pretend that everything you touch gives you a tiny shock of electricity and makes you laugh. Run around playfully shocking one another and laughing.

Stress Release Laughter Cup your hands together and imagine that all your problems, worries, anxieties and stresses are trapped inside your hands. Now, release them by opening and closing your hands quickly. A burst of laughter will come out with each opening. Move around releasing your problems until they are all laughed out, then open hands and shake off all remaining stress.

Weight Lifter Laugh Pretend you are a champion weight lifter. Grab an imaginary set of heavy weights and lift it in increments, grunting with each movement. When you get it overhead, laugh out loud.

Wipe On/Wipe Off Laughter With a hand gesture, put laughter on your face, and laugh. Then wipe it off and look very serious. Gesture and put laughter back on.



Name of Activity: **Group Sitting**



How to do this activity:

In a large circle, ask your group to turn 90 degrees to face forward, then slide towards the middle of the circle, making the circle smaller and tighter

When tightly squeezed together, instruct the group to slowly sit down on the person behind you knees, so that the full group stays balanced.

Your group will fall over a few times but they will get there in the end.

Expect your group to have fun and a laugh together - this is a safe classroom type of rough and tumble which is fabulous for developing positive relationships.

VARIATION:

This can be done in pairs, or in smaller groups. Encourage children to recognise how the support of others is helpful



Name of Activity: **Parachute Games**



How to do this activity:

When using a parachute, establish strong ground rules. Children love to go wild with the parachute. Try to hide your parachute until you need it and always put it away after you have used it - this helps the group with distraction we find that large colourful parachutes are very distracting:))

Warm up by gently lifting the parachute up and down - keep everything controlled and slowly allow the parachute to channel the energy of the group through a Mexican wave or other activity that enables the children to flap the parachute with connection and cooperation

VARIATIONS:

Form a tent - sit on its edges - good for a short story or to calm the group

In the tent, gently rock

Try everyone changing places before the parachute catches them

Call out letters of the alphabet when your initial is called out you can to run around in the parachute

Lie still under the parachute

Soft balls - control the ball as it rolls round and round

Sharks and crocodiles - volunteers put hands up underneath pretending to be sharks - the catcher pulls the hands down - people up top guess which one will be next

PROPS:

Parachute

Any props you wish to use with your parachute eg puppets, balls etc

Name of Activity:

Big Rope Challenge



How to do this activity:

1. Ask your group to all assemble at one side of the hall
2. Their challenge will be to make it from one side of the hall to the other through the skipping rope without touching it. The rules are that if someone touches the rope that they must go back
3. Two leaders turn the rope (directionally towards the group) Note that those who are turning the rope have some control and can make it easier for participants who are finding it harder without the group noticing, you can simply slow down the turn.
4. Each person runs through the rope to the other side
5. To get back they have to get in pairs - same rules apply
6. Then ask the pairs to get into 4's and then into 8's and onwards until the whole group is able to get through in one turn without touching the rope.
7. Your group will be elated having completed this exercise - debrief with them what it feels like to achieve something as a team.

PROPS:

A large rope (skipping)

Name of Activity:

Kindship Bucket



How to do this activity:

Divide the group into at least 2 groups. This team game is all about team work and working together. Label two buckets for each group, one with the label "Filler" the other with the label "Dipper".

Each child in turn takes an Emoji ball from the container and decides if this ball belongs in the "filler" or "dipper" bucket. Where space allows, buckets can be placed a distance away so that each group can work as a relay team. Encourage children to help each other work out the word, picture, intention or effect on the ball.

When all balls are placed, discuss them as a group: Are they in the right bucket? This can facilitate a discussion of experiences of bucket filling and bucket dipping.

The last ball that you discuss together can be "Saying Sorry"

NOTES:

It is important to normalise bucket dipping, which is part of being human.

Words for your balls (an alternative to Emoji balls – written on with a sharpie) can include:

Bucket Filler balls: Being Kind, Sharing, Friendly, Saying "I love you", Helping, Saying "Thank you"

Saying "Sorry", Smiling, Laughing, Playing together, Giving a hug, Giving a compliment, Taking turns, Listening

Bucket Dipper Balls: Bullying; Name calling
Fighting; Arguing; Leaving people out;
Shouting at someone; Kicking; Being rude
Stealing; Telling lies; Making fun of someone
Ignoring; Pushing, Cheating, Saying unkind Words.



RESOURCES:

4 Buckets (2 each team), Emoji balls, Bucket Filler/ Bucket Dipper Labels for buckets



Name of Activity:

People Time: Mirror Me



How to do this activity:

1. Form a circle with the group with a bit of space between each person, feet firmly on the floor. The facilitator explains that the group act as a giant mirror copying my movements, starting off with small simple movements and gradually getting more complex.
2. Facilitator starts by asking the group to look at them and copy their movements at exactly the same time as if they were the reflection in a mirror. Start with simple slow arm and hand movements, then introduce upper body movements and head movements, keeping your feet firmly on the floor. The aim is to get the whole group moving as one person smoothly and in silence.
3. Gradually begin to introduce more complex full body movements using high and low levels, arms, legs and upper & lower torso, facial expressions and 360 degree rotations. The aim is to get the whole group moving as one person smoothly and in silence.
4. Pause your movements and ask for a volunteer – then as a group copy that child’s movements reminding them the aim is to have the group move as one, repeat with other volunteers. Imagine if a stranger walked into the room – could they tell who was the person leading and who were copying?

VARIATION:

Children can mirror each other in pairs. The aim is to get the pair moving as one person smoothly and in silence. Select some pairs and get the rest of the group to watch their movements – can they tell who is copying who?

Name of Activity:

People Time: Blindfold pair work



How to do this activity:

1. Split the group into pairs, one with blind fold one without. Ask the sighted partner to guide their blind folded partner around the room, the sighted partner has the blindfolded partners hand on their shoulder and leads (never pushing the blindfolded partner) around the room, not letting them bump into anyone.
2. The sighted partner leaves the blindfolded partner in a safe part of the room ensuring a clear walkway towards them and they won’t bump into furniture or other partners. They move 2-3 meters away and call and repeat their name – the blindfolded partner then slowly walks towards them until they are close
3. Repeat the above exercise but this time make a noise and repeat it, then blindfolded partner walks towards them
4. Repeat swapping roles
5. Debrief – what was it like? What senses did you use? etc

PROPS:

Blindfolds

VARIATION:

Each member of the group is blindfolded and linked together by holding hand of someone next to them and shoulder of person in front, like a long snake. The leader then takes the group for a walk. The aim is for the group to learn that they can trust the people they are connected to and that the leader will make sure that no one bumps into anything and that the group move a steady careful pace.

Name of Activity:

People Time: Sticks in pairs



How to do this activity:

Split the group into pairs, each with a short stick (40-50cm). Balance the sticks between the tips of the forefingers of each person on both hands so the pairs are connected. This will require each person 'pushing' the stick towards their partner so that it does not fall. They should feel and control the resistance between the sticks

1. Ask them to experiment while balancing the sticks – try kneeling, moving in circles, raising their arms, moving around the room etc. always keeping the sticks balanced between them.
2. Connect the Pairs into Fours – rebalance the sticks between all their forefingers, repeat the above activities. Keep connecting to pairs until the whole group is connected as one and repeat the above activities.



PROPS:

Small sticks (30-50cm) one per participant

Name of Activity:

Trust in pairs



How to do this activity:

Pairs face each other with toes together and hold hands with a strong grip. The aim of this trust exercise is to be able to smoothly sit down together. Let each pair try to do this by leaning backwards at the same time, each partner both giving and taking the weight of the other.

To achieve a sitting position, you must first lean backwards and trust that the other person will hold and support your full weight. Leaning backwards you can lower yourself slowly by bending your knees until you are sitting on the floor.

Once you have achieved this, get back to standing position by leaning backwards and straightening legs

WARNING – make sure that each pair is supervised as if one partner lets go the other is vulnerable to falling backwards.

PROPS:

None



Name of Activity:

People Time: Circuits



How to do this activity:

1. Place a question at each station with a FLM Movement card. Using rubber mats can help the workspace feel interesting, it is helpful to have an adult at each station to facilitate discussion and manage the group.
2. Create the required number of smaller groups, each group start at a station and spend a limited amount of time exploring the question and doing the movement on the card. They start when they hear the bell and they finish when they hear the bell.
3. Rotate the groups ensuring that each group has had a chance to be at each question.

Vary the amount of time you allow per question to respect ages and abilities

PROPS:

Rubber Mats
FLM Movement Cards
Question cards (see suggestions below)

NOTES:

Questions for your Stations - adapt questions to work for your group
Where do we spend alone time?
What's great about alone time & What's not great about alone time?
Where do we spend time with others?
What's great about time with others & What's not great about time with others?
How does spending time with others affect our thoughts and feelings?
Best things about spending time with actual real people?
When I'm on my device I feel... Hardest thing about plugging out of devices is...

Name of Activity:

People Time: Group Art Challenge



How to do this activity:

1. Prepare this exercise by imagining what it is that you would like to display at the end.
2. Prepare a backdrop for the childrens small pieces of art work to integrate into. This can be as simple as a piece of coloured/textured card or something you have created yourself that will complement their art work.
3. Ask each member of the class or group to complete their own small piece of art work e.g. Mandela's or hand prints.
4. Organise them on the pre prepared backdrop and complete the display.

PROPS:

Mandela's or handprints
Scissors
Glue
Markers / Crayons / Pencils / Paints



3

BREATHE ACTIVITIES



Release....

Tension, worry, anxiety, stress and over stimulation.

We also release toxic energy held in our
minds and bodies

Nurture....

Calmness, restorative rest and improved sleep,
physiological and mental health benefits

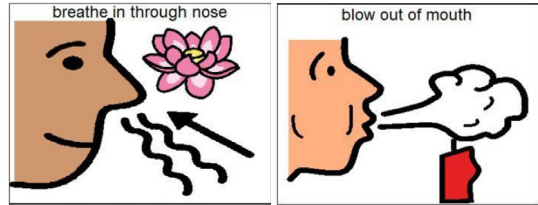
Name of Activity:

Flower and Windmill Breath



How to do this activity:

1. Give each child a flower and a windmill. If the group is large share the flowers and windmills asking the children to work in groups/teams.
2. Holding the flower in front of their faces they "smell" the flower, taking a big breath in through their noses.
3. They then blow the windmill. Repeat the flower breathing in through their windmill, breathing out through their



RESOURCES:

Windmills and Flowers

NOTES:

See if they can take the biggest smell of the lovely flower, and keep the windmill moving for as long as possible to make the breath deep – how do they feel now?



Name of Activity:

Sphere Breathing



How to do this activity:

Give each child a Hobermann Sphere: Have students slowly inhale while you slowly expand the Hoberman sphere and then exhale as you slowly shrink the sphere back to its original size. This is also a great way to demonstrate the expansion of the lungs.

PROPS:

Hobermann Sphere



Name of Activity: **Feather Breath**



How to do this activity:

1. Hand out a feather to each child. (Remember that some children may not like feathers and in some cases may be afraid of them)
2. If there is space ask the children to lie down, holding their feather above their face, get them to drop it and then blow their feather, trying to keep it up in the air. They can also sit in a circle.
3. This can be done in pairs also with one child dropping the feather and the other child trying to blow it.

PROPS:

Feathers



Name of Activity: **Windmill**



How to do this activity:

1. In a circle ask everyone to stand arm span apart.
2. The group will scoop their right arm up - breathing inwards
3. When their right arm is above their heads they will begin to lower it breathing out whilst at the same time raising their left arm up
4. By now your group will be mimicking the flow of a windmill or wind turbine
5. Then you change direction (this is the tricky part). The in breath will now be when your left arm scoops upwards.
6. By now your group will have benefited from rhythmic breathing together alongside waking up the right and left parts of their brain.

PROPS:

None

Name of Activity:

Finger Rollercoaster Breath



How to do this activity:

1. Ask the children to hold up one of their hands with the fingers spread apart.
2. Using a finger from their other hand they trace their finger up and down between each finger like a rollercoaster car going up and down the hills on the track
3. Then introduce the breathing with the movement. Breathe in as finger goes to the tip of the thumb, pause at the top, then breathe out as finger slides down in to base of first finger. Breathe in finger slides up to the tip of the first finger, pause at the top then breathe out as finger car slides down to base of middle finger. Repeat to base of little finger.

NOTES:

Remind children they can use this clever trick anytime they need to feel calm - under their desk, in the car, in their pocket... ask when they think it might be useful for them...

Name of Activity:

Powerball breath



How to do this activity:

1. Give each child an emoji ball and a straw.
2. Ask the children to blow the emoji ball using the straw from one side of the room to the other.
3. This can be done in pairs or in a group or in a circle asking all the children to try to blow their emoji ball into the centre of the circle.

RESOURCES:

Emoji balls and straws



Name of Activity: **Alternate Nostril Breathing**



How to do this activity:

1. Sit comfortably on the floor or a chair with feet flat on the floor. Support the right elbow with left hand. Place right thumb over right nostril. Rest middle finger on nose/above nose. Use little finger over left nostril.
2. Breathe in through the nose. Close right nostril with thumb. Breathe out through left nostril. Breathe in through left nostril. Close left nostril with little finger. Breathe out through right nostril. Breathe in through right nostril. Close right nostril with thumb. Repeat.
3. Close eyes if comfortable and continue to breathe in the rhythm we have established. If children are younger they may find it easier to use both hands. Using thumb/finger on the right hand to close right nostril and thumb/finger on left hand to close left nostril.

RESOURCES:

Tissues

NOTES:

It's always a good idea to invite children to blow their nose before you begin – this exercise is much easier with a nice clear airways!

Name of Activity: **Back to Back Breathing**



How to do this activity:

Have children sit on the floor back to back in pairs. One person begins by inhaling deeply. The other partner should feel the expansion in their partners back as they breathe deeply.

Take turns back and forth.

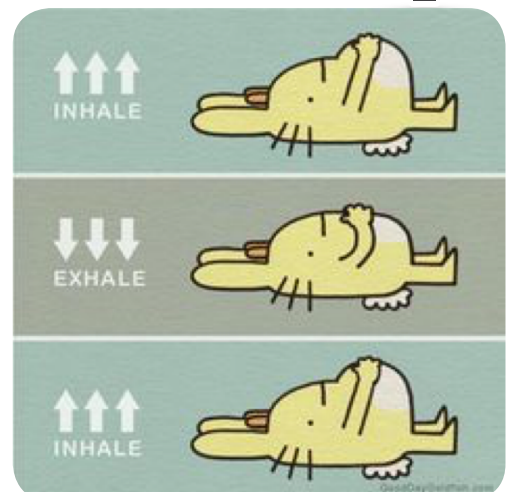
Encourage children to be still so they can feel their partners breath, and to join the rhythm.

Name of Activity: **Trampoline Breathing or Belly Bouncing**



How to do this activity:

1. Objects on the stomach: Have your participants place a finger puppet on their stomachs. As they breathe deeply, they should feel the little animal puppet rise and then fall when they exhale. For younger children, you can tell them their job is to rock the stuffed animal to sleep using the rise and fall of their stomachs.
2. Have some extra fun by asking the group to bounce them off their tummies as if their tummy was just like a trampoline.



PROPS:

Finger puppets

Name of Activity:

Cotton Ball Breathing



How to do this activity:

This game demonstrates that breathing takes practice, control, and focus.

Partners stand arm's length apart. With a cotton ball on their palm, they take turns to try to blow the cotton ball to hit their partner using only their breath.

Then, stand with feet apart and take turns trying to score a goal by blowing the cotton ball through their partner's feet.

With the cotton ball on the palm of their hand, challenge children to slowly blow the cotton ball to the tip of their index finger without blowing it off the hand.

PROPS:

Cotton Balls

Name of Activity:

Colour Breathing



How to do this activity:

Breathe while visualising with colour, can be linked to affirmations.

With the group comfortable, bring their attention to their breathing. Suggest that when other thoughts, images, sounds or sensations come to mind, we can just notice them, and then gently bring your attention back to your breathing and the colour.

1. Breathe in red from the earth, imagine it rising from the ground through your whole body giving you strength and courage. Visualise a deep rich red, perhaps in the form of light, or mist. Allow the colour to travel up through the body and out of the top of the head and then back down again to the earth.
2. Breathe in orange and feel all its creativity and liveliness come through your body.
3. Breathe in yellow, filling your body with strength and energy, with warmth and vitality.
4. Green goes straight to your heart, surrounding you with calm, like a loving hug all over your body.
5. Blue is absorbed from the sky, breathe this peaceful blue deeply and feel it move through your mouth and into your throat releasing you of any heavy feelings leaving content and calm
6. Indigo light purple allows you to see for miles and miles, seeing your dreams and your future. Let the indigo mist travel into, through and all around your body and float out through the top of your head.
7. Deep Violet purple surrounds you with warm feelings for all the people and animals, plants and trees and places on the earth you love, it fills your arms and your fingers with tingles of magic.
8. Finish by seeing yourself being surrounded by and floating in a sea of pure white light, this gives you protection, breathe it deeply into your belly to feel cleansed and settled, ready for anything!

PROPS:

None



Name of Activity:

Mindful Breathing

**How to do
this activity:**

With children sitting comfortably, they can place their hands on their belly. We will be using breathing as an anchoring point to be fully aware in the present moment and become focused on the senses.

Invite children to breathe in through the nose for a count of three and out through the mouth for a count of four. As breathing relaxes and deepens, suggest we are going to be like a super hero, our super power is our magical 'Super Senses' which allow us amazing extra strong smell, sight, hearing, taste, and touch.

Now we focus for a few moments on what our super senses are showing us right now. Bring their awareness to their hearing, and really tune into all the tiny details you can hear in the room, and from outside - what can their superpowered ears show them?

Return awareness to the breath and change to the next super sense - move slowly through touch (clothes, support of the floor/ chair, temperature, etc), sight, smell and taste. Take plenty of time for each sense, encouraging them time to widen and deepen their awareness

PROPS:

You can use cushions or chairs to sit on



4

EXPRESS ACTIVITIES



Release....

Built up and repressed emotions,
feelings and stories

Nurture....

Self-awareness & acceptance, self-efficacy &
expression. We unlock limiting beliefs and cultivate
the confidence to thrive

Name of Activity:

My Animal Brain



How to do this activity:

Amber the puppy is great at introducing this by asking the group a question like... What does a puppy do when it flips its lid? How do we help puppies settle and calm down?.... what do they need?

What about people, are we like puppies? - Do people ever flip their lids? What do we need when that happens?

Working with Dan Seigals hand brain analogy: Pick a little animal puppet and put it on your thumb - I have a little hippo and tell the group when life is not going well or I'm feeling excited or scared or angry - this is some of what my little hippo says and does.... "I don't want too! No! I can't sit still! Sometimes it kicks bins and thumps things"

- » What does your little animal say and do when life is not going their way? When life's not fair, when you're feeling yucky inside?
- » What do our little hippos need to help us feel better? If you flip your lid maybe your little Hippo needs a hug.

Imagine this hand is your brain -hold up your clenched fist. The thumb is like the bit of the brain where our feelings live, our Hippocampus. When that bit gets all excited and jittery, we flip our lids (the four fingers). Our lid is the bit of brain in charge of remembering and talking to people and thinking what's best to do next - our Prefrontal Cortex. When our lid flips off, we need to calm our little hippo to get it back before we can do those things

How can we calm our Hippo? With a Hug!

Then wrap your fingers over the little puppet on you thumb giving it a "brain hug". Then chat to the children about what ways they can give their brain a hug if they are very excited, upset or angry.

We need to know that when we flip our lids, our brain sends out stress chemicals into our bodies which attack and really harm our bodies and stop our brains from growing fully. Two of these are called Adrenaline and Cortisol.

In Fresh Little Minds we look at ways of helping our bodies to feel better, because it's how we keep healthy and our brains grow well when we feel better.

Our big poster is all about learning new ways to hug our hippos.

What times in life do you flip your lid?

Finger Puppets

Parachute



PROPS:



Name of Activity:

All Bottled Up: Emotion Mapping



How to do this activity:

1. Put together large sheets of paper to fit the size of a body lying on the floor. Lie down on the floor and ask the children to draw around you. (If you are on your own it may be better to have one prepared earlier) If there are lots of children ask them to draw in smaller groups so everyone gets a chance.
2. Then ask all the children to gather around the "body" drawn on the floor and bring emoji images or emotion words. If the children are young use the emoji images and if they are older you can use the words or use a combination of both.
3. Ask the child to place the word or emoji on the place in the body where they "feel" that emotion. It may be in more than one place but they can pick the main one. Younger children may instinctively know where they feel the emotion in their body, older children may think everything is in their head and may need more encouragement to discuss where they "feel" the emotion.

PROPS:

Emoji's and words.

| Word/Emoji | Where in body |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Angry | Hands, feet, chest, face. |
| Scared | Tummy, legs, face |
| Frustrated | Hands, head, chest |
| Happy | Heart, hands, legs, face |
| Loved | Heart |
| Sad | Heart, face, shoulders |
| Hungry | Tummy |
| Worried | Tummy |
| Nervous | Tummy, hands, legs |
| Excited | Tummy, hands, legs |



Name of Activity:

All Bottled Up: Weather/Emotions



How to do this activity:

1. Show pictures of the emoji's and ask the children to say which each emotion is. Discuss with the children how our emotions can be like the weather, a little windy or very windy etc. Demonstrate frustration as an emotion as a small rumble of thunder by clapping hands gently. Then the clapping gets louder as the thunder gets nearer and storm gets greater. Demonstrate anger as the volcano, bubbling underneath then finally exploding.
2. Ask the children to gather in a circle around and look up to the ceiling or sky if outside. See how when we are calm all looks clear. Bring the net over the group and look up now, see how if our brain is a little foggy can make it difficult to see clearly. Then bring the parachute over the group and ask them to look up, when our tricky emotions take over we can find it difficult to see anything at all.
3. Activity with the parachute. Staying in the circle ask the group to hold part of the parachute. Begin very gently by moving it very slowly saying that it is a little stormy and gradually build up the movement until the parachute is moving very fast and almost out of control. Finish by slowing the movement of the parachute down again until the children are seated on the floor around the parachute.

PROPS:

Parachute, net, emoji cards



5

RELAX ACTIVITIES



Release....

??

Nurture....

??

Name of Activity:

Gratitude Tree



How to do this activity:

First explain what we mean by gratitude and being thankful. Then invite the group to write/draw what they are grateful for from today's session and hang or attach that note to a 'group gratitude tree'.

We can explain to children that the tree represents them. Trees have roots and are connected deep into the centre of the earth but they also have branches just like you that stretch up into the sky. Just as the leaves on this tree grow week after week so do you.

We can ensure weekly ceremony/ritual around this activity and demonstrate the tree filling up week after week.

LED trees can be turned on ceremoniously which children enjoy and add to the ritual.

PROPS:

Children will now see that the programme is more than simply fun activities it is about new learning, enjoyable experiences and having many thankful moments.



Tree & Extension Lead

Name of Activity:

Meditation (Getting Started)



How to do this activity:

Children love to be snuggled into a blanket with their cushion as a pillow. This creates feelings of safety and comfort, reduces sensory distraction and encourages awareness to drop within: We begin to reduce awareness of external distractions.

- » Start with a meditation that will simply support your group to focus on their breath. Aim for about 1-2 minutes, depending on the age and readiness of the children.
- » Ring a resonating Tibetan bell or similar which, when repeated each session, can act as a signal to the brain to focus.
- » As your group progressively improves their ability to focus you can slowly reduce the amount you say. We aim to lead a group to progressively reduce their need for verbal support with stillness and focus.
- » After each instruction give a few moments of silence, increase the space between your vocals for up to 30 seconds, with time and practice.
- » Choose appropriate music, ensure that the volume allows everyone to hear both you and the music.

PROPS:

Background Music

Cushions

Blankets



Name of Activity:

Guided Meditation and Relaxation

How to do this activity:

Using a softly spoken guided visualisation within relaxation supports children through the imagination to become more mindfully in tune with their innate wisdom and inner strengths. Children can unlock their unconscious desires for their health and wellbeing and are able to find ways to support themselves. The inner guidance that children learn can be used to cultivate inner strength, wisdom and hope for the future.

When children's minds and bodies are working together physical, emotional and mental health benefits are achieved and equilibrium is restored. Through restorative relaxation children can engage the immune boosting cycles of calm and are supported to feel more balanced, focused and ready for their day.

At Fresh Little Minds we construct guided meditations and restorative relaxation practice in following steps.

STEP 1: Prepare children

- **Preparation:** Before you start it is a good idea to start show children how to 'clench', demonstrate this using a hand clenched into a fist. If they have had their socks off, now is a good time to put them on and to wrap up.
- **Position:** Then ask children to lay down ideally on the backs with palms facing up, but comfort is the key, so if it's more comfortable for them to lay on their side that is fine. Do this group need to be separate to ensure concentration or are they better in a huddle? Older children generally require personal space to receive the benefits.
- **Comfort:** Cushions, blankets and mats are perfect. Placing an extra blanket if you have it over a child struggling to settle can help them feel cared for and safe, 'mothered'. The weight of the additional blanket will also support the body to relax and calm. Where available, blindfolds can support children to let go of what is around them and attune to themselves. Blindfolds are always a choice. It is useful to have tissues available for runny noses, colds and tears.
- **Essential Oils:** The use of appropriate essential oils has been shown to have a positive impact on brain and body. At Fresh Little Minds workshops we use therapeutic grade essential oils. We will anchor a relaxation by providing a spray for the room, or if we have extra time we will pass a roller ball or range of roller balls around giving some choice over the oil needed. Essential oils can also be used to support children with transitions, for example to return to awareness after meditation. If they are moving onto a class then we might use an uplifting blend or if it is just before bedtime a relaxing blend. Always follow safe practice.
- **Music:** Music can be used on a low background volume throughout, or towards the end of guided visualisations as a bridge. Music is generally faded out as your voice supports children to return to the room.
- **Listen to the Bell:** A tonal bell like a singing bowl or chime helps children focus. It is the signal we are about to experience a change. When working with children, the key is to use it consistently:

"when you hear the sound of the bell you will listen carefully until you can no longer hear the sound, and when you hear it again at the end of our relaxation you will know it's time to open up your eyes again".

STEP 2: Body Scan

- A body scan systematically teaches children to locate different parts of their body and to pay attention to how each is feeling. By becoming attuned to the physical sensations that arise within the body children learn to focus their attention, are grounded and can begin to relax. See example provided and adjust/ shorten appropriately for age and ability.

STEP 3: Guided Visualisation

- The meditation you choose will tie in with key messages or themes of your workshop that you would like to explore or further embed. It is important that meditations work within your allocated time frame and incorporate language appropriate for your group. (see examples provided). We suggest that you re-read the AMBER story relevant to this setion.

STEP 4. Restore

- Restorative practice will usually involve music with or without lyrics with your words spoken over it in a soothing manner. The lyrics or your wording will always be aligned with the intentions of the programme and perhaps be tied into the messages of the workshop. In this space your group can let go and feel safe, comforted, valued and deeply relaxed.

STEP 5: Return

- When it is time for your group to return their awareness to the room, we can ask the group to wiggle their fingers, feel their backs on the ground, wiggle their toes, clench their legs and let go. Support them to feel sensations in their body in the here and now, to help them engage with the present.
- *“ Keep your eyes closed for now . Your relaxation time is coming to an end and it will soon be time to return to your usual activities in the classroom. Keep your eyes closed for a little longer while you wake up your body and your mind by wiggling your fingers and toes..... slowly moving your arms and legs..... Now if you like, you can roll onto your side, keeping your eyes closed. Cover your eyes with your hands and blink your eyes a few times to let light in. When you are ready, push yourself up to sit, keeping your eyes closed and slowly open your eyes. Feel your body awake, relaxed and calm”.*

STEP 6. Reflecting & Sharing

- Creating the opportunity for reflecting, sharing and listening helps children retain the teachings they became aware of during their guided visualisation. It is a lovely gift when facilitators are interested and find time for all the children. If you have more than one facilitator and a talkative group you might like to use this opportunity to break into smaller groups for this part of your exercise. You might start by simply asking them “So, how was that for you?”



Name of Activity:

Body Scan Breathing Meditation

**How to do
this activity:**

1. Allow your legs and your arms relax and fall to the sides. Settle yourself in a comfort-able position and close your eyes.
2. Start by taking a few breaths and notice how that feels. Place your hand on your belly and notice your belly rising and falling. You are breathing perfectly today.
3. Now notice your feet. They might feel warm, cold, wet or dry, relaxed or restless or they might feel nothing at all and that all okay. You might feel your socks or you might feel the weight of the blanket. Take a moment and notice how your feet feel.
4. Just be still and pay attention as best you can and when your mind gets busy, gently bring your attention back to your feet again.
5. Now move your attention to your lower legs, noticing whatever is there. Do they feel heavy, light, warm, cold, or something else? Let go of frustration and trying to do anything. Just do your best and give yourself a few moments of rest.

Next, move your attention next to your knees and relax them. Feel the front, back, and sides of your knees.

6. After a few more breaths, move your attention to your upper legs. Whatever you feel, or don't feel, is fine. Notice your legs and let them relax. If you feel restless or wiggly, that's okay too. That happens.
7. Now move your attention to your belly. It always moves when you breathe, rising and falling, like waves on the sea. You might feel something on the inside, like full or hungry. You might notice the touch of your clothing or a blanket. You might even feel emotions in your belly, like happy or sad or upset.

If you feel that it's hard to focus, that's normal. Gently practice coming back again and again to how your chest feels when you breathe.

8. Next, bring your attention to your chest. Notice it rising and falling as you breathe. If you feel that it's hard to focus, that's normal. Gently practice coming back again and again to how your chest feels when you breathe.
9. Now turn your attention to your hands. There is no need to move them or do anything with them. They may be touching the bed, or the floor, or somewhere on your body. Relax them if you can, and if not, simply paying attention to your hands for another moment.
10. Move your attention up into your arms. Maybe notice if you can find a moment of stillness inside you, like the pause at the end of each breath.
11. Next, move your attention around to your back. How does it feel against the bed or the floor? Notice how it rocks with each breath. When your mind gets busy or angry or scared, you can always come back to how your body feels in this way for a moment.
12. Now move attention to your neck and shoulders, letting go and relaxing them. If your mind wanders, that's fine. No one can pay attention all the time. Just keep returning to noticing your body whenever you find yourself thinking of something else.
13. And now feel your face and head. What expression do you have right now? What would it feel like to smile? What else do you notice in your face, your head, and in your mind?
14. Finally, spend a few moments, paying attention to your whole body. If it is easier, continue to pay attention to your breath. If it's time for sleep, let that happen, remaining still and continuing to pay attention to your breath or feelings in your body. And if it's time to wake up, open your eyes and sit for a few moments before deciding when to move again.

