

HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

NAMES & COLOURS

Good for	Introducing people to one another Checking in with mood / emotions Group building – groups of 8 – 15 - see Tip for a class of 30
Length	5 mins (depending on group number)
Resources	Large Room / Outdoors
Actions	• Stand in a circle • Invite everyone to introduce themselves, and pick and share what colour they feel like at this moment • Go around the circle, each person introducing themselves and stating a colour to describe their mood
Tips	If someone can't think of a colour, continue on and come back to them at the end If you have a class of 30 consider using concentric circles
Variation	Instead of colours, ask each person to share an interesting fact about themselves Use this to end a group too, see if participants' choice of colours has changed If you do the circles within one another, visibility will not be very good.



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ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

PASS THE CLAP

Good for	Building a Group Focus Group of 10-15 people
Length	10 mins (depending on group number)
Resources	Large Room / Outdoors
Actions	• Stand in a Circle • Explain we are passing a clap around the circle. • Clap to the person to your right • They pass it on to the next person, and so on until it comes around full circle • Take the clap around the circle to the left. Pick up a rhythm. • Next, pass it around the circle again, but each passer and receiver should clap at exactly the same time. • Next, pass it across the circle. Everyone should be focused on where the clap is. Passers and receivers continue to clap simultaneously.
Tips	This might take some concentration. If people clap out of time, ask them to focus hard on each other and repeat until they clap at the same time.
Variation	-



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

NAME, ACTION, COPY

Good for	Fun Group building for 10 -15 people Imagination A group that has gained confidence
Length	10 – 15 minutes
Resources	Large Room / Outdoors
Actions	• Stand in a circle • Invite everyone to introduce themselves through walking into the centre of the circle and performing any action of their choice. • Once the person has returned to their place, everyone else copies the action and speech together. They return to their places
Tips	Lead the first few introductions so that everyone keeps time together. Make sure each 'performer' has returned and settled in their place before the group copies.
Variation	Go around a second time and ask them to exaggerate their movement / voice. Shy children may not want to do this, you can invite them to pass. It is good to demonstrate that small actions are as valuable as big ones. Small actions require the group to observe each other more closely.



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

SILLY WALKS

Good for	Fun, imagination Body and movement confidence Group building for up to 30 people
Length	10-12 minutes
Resources	Hall / Outdoors
Actions	• Line up the group in single file • Invite them to follow each other around the space • Invite them to copy the walk of the person in front of them. • When everyone is doing the walk in time together, the leader goes to the back of the queue. • Invite each leader to think of a silly walk that they like. • The leader does their silly walk and everyone follows in single file, until everyone has had a go and then stop.
Tips	Don't go too fast
Variation	-



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

THE ORCHESTRA

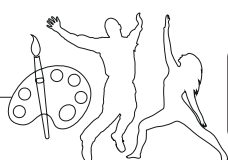
Good for	Fun, vocal confidence Group building for 10-15 people
Length	20 minutes
Resources	Large Room / Outdoors
Actions	• Group to stand up in small rows, like a choir • Settle the group and invite each person to create a sound of their choice. It can be vocal or body percussion, a continuous sound or a repeated beat / lyric. • Explain you are the conductor and they are the instruments in an orchestra • When they are quiet and focused on you, point at each person and invite them to share their noise • Now try bringing in different children, building the musical piece up. • Use your arms to crescendo and diminish the sound. • Use arm movements to control different instruments • Use your body to create mood and rhythm and see what happens. • Eventually fade instruments out until you have one left and then fade that out too. • Once you have done this a couple of times, invite children up to be the conductor.
Tips	This can get very noisy and out of hand! It is better to start slowly with focus. The conductor has to be very clear with eye contact and movement. If you have shy children invite them to participate by drawing in response to the sounds, you can use flipchart paper and crayons.
Variation	-



ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

EXPLORING COMMON EXPERIENCE –
TREE WHISPERING

Good for	Sharing Reducing anxiety and isolation following an unusual group experience Group cohesion, empathy Group of 10 -12 people
Length	60 – 90 mins
Resources	Hall with a hard floor Foam mats (if you have them) White ribbon (50m) Post it notes (4 different colours i.e. green, blue, pink, yellow) Ribbons of different colours (4 colours x 50m, green, blue, pink, yellow) Pens to write on post its Blue tack (2 packs) Extra paper (A4) for notes as needed by the group
Preparation	- Pre-cut the ribbon, each piece 2-3m long. You need 1 piece of the 4 colours per person. Two pieces of 2m white per person - Before you start think of 4 themes the group can explore. Connect each theme to a colour (for example, pink for home and family, blue for school and learning, green friendship, and so on). - Split the blue tack up before the session so each person has the same amount.
Actions	- Stand in a circle - Everyone to shut their eyes and imagine we are all trees in a forest. Action: stretching branches out towards the sun, swaying in the wind. Explain that below the ground our roots are interwoven and connected. Through this hidden network we are sending nutrients to support one another. This is done through Whispering (make a group sound). - Take the white ribbons and mark out a tree trunk for themselves on the floor, as in the photo below. - Explain that an unusual event (i.e. covid) comes to the forest, entering it like a storm. - Everyone to open their eyes and do 'Calling the Storm' (see Number 7) - Explain that although the storm has blown our branches around and caused leaves to fall, our roots below the ground remain strong and connected. - Give each person 4 post its, different colours



ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

EXPLORING COMMON EXPERIENCE – TREE WHISPERING

Actions	• Ask them to write the theme at the top of each post it • Stick the post its to the floor at the base of their foam mats • Give out the ribbons and ask the group to stick them onto the floor using blue tack just below the post its (see image below) • Group members now look immediately across the circle and whoever is there they will partner with. • Each pair will work together quietly, addressing how they experienced each theme during the event / experience in question. They should take note of their common experiences. They should write notes on their post its, or on paper. This can take around 10 minutes • Everyone to return to their places. Add notes to post its as needed. • Then, taking their coloured ribbons, where there are shared experiences they can tie their ribbons across the circle to their partner's. • Take 10 minutes at the end to sit in a circle and share findings. • 'Popcorn' before ending the session. (Go around the circle asking for one word from each person that describes their experience.)
Tips	• We have used this activity to share experiences of Covid, but you might use it for looking at something that has happened to a class, or community. • It could also be used to evaluate an experience or project • For older groups you might want to create a series of questions around the theme for them to discuss in pairs • Encourage the group to use the blue tack sparingly as it runs out quickly • Don't use blue tack on carpets, it's impossible to get out.
Variation	• -



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

CALLING THE STORM

Good for	Ending a group Body and voice confidence
Length	5 minutes
Resources	Room / Outdoors
Actions	Stand in a circle. Say: <i>"Let's imagine we are all trees in a forest. It's the middle of a hot summer's night and it's very still... The air is charged with electricity... There's a sense of expectation in the air..."</i> Get the group to copy your actions in silence: First, there's a breeze. It starts to rustle our leaves (Rub your fingers - listen) Then it moves our branches around (Rub your palms together - listen) Animals run to their holes deep in the forest floor (Shuffle your feet and start pounding the ground) The wind gets up (All make swishing noises) The rain is coming hard down (All clap hard and fast, stamping feet, running on the spot for 15 seconds...) Then the storm starts to retreat... reverse the actions one by one to quieten the storm... Stop stamping, stop clapping, just rub hands, stop swishing, rub palms then fingers, then cease all actions and stand in silence together for a moment. Close the group.
Variation	You can add 'tingling' at the end by rubbing palms together until hot and opening arms. A good way to illustrate energy within a group.



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

DEEP BREATHING AND STRETCHING

Good for	Starting a focused group Whole class / group of 10-15 people
Length	2 -3 mins
Resources	Large Room / Outdoors / Classroom
Actions	• Stand in a circle, wait until everyone is focused and quiet • Invite the group to shut their eyes and focus on their breathing: • Explain This is an exercise for relaxation • Take a deep breath in, hold your breath... 1,2,3,4, and breathe out slowly... 1,2,3,4,5 • As you breathe out release any tension or worries. • Repeat this three times • You can mention that deep breathing helps us relax and is good for us • Take another breath in, and raise your arms to the sides • Breathe out and raise your arms high towards the sky • Stretch one arm and then the other, hold 1,2,3 • If you feel like it, you can stand on tip toes and stretch higher still • Release your arms slowly to your sides • Shake out your body starting from your feet and working upwards • Separate and move each part as you go - first feet, ankles, knees, thighs, bum, tummy, chest, shoulders, arms, hands, then neck. • Open your eyes and come back to the room. What can you hear? Feel the floor solid beneath your feet. Relax • Now you are ready for the next activity.
Tips	This works better with smaller groups
Variations	Meditations and visualizations can be read to a group. Make sure the group is lying down comfortably. Foam mats are helpful.
www.innerhealthstudio.com/kids-relaxation-downloads.html www.innerhealthstudio.com/visualization-scripts.html	



ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

PAINTING TO MUSIC

Good for	Starting a session after a busy playground break Starting the day Calm Visual meditation Individual focus Experimentation / imagination Confidence with art materials
Length	10-15 mins
Resources	Room – sitting at desks Watercolour paint tins – 1 between 2 children is ok but a tin each is better. You could try working with water soluble graphite sticks instead of paint. Water pots Smallish brushes Sheets A4 card / paper Music – try the following: Alexandra Stréliski youtu.be/4QhAt3vXKM8 youtu.be/9MwPDWsmPQ Max Richter youtu.be/eAx5KeJ_5-s Philip Glass youtu.be/RjAsWWEIMcA Tchaikovsky - Sugar Plum Fairy youtu.be/B9zRTToy-mwk



ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

PAINTING TO MUSIC

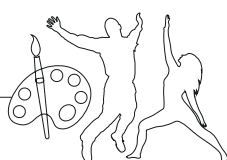
Resources	More fun, less meditative, World Music is nice to explore sounds and images Scott Joplin youtu.be/rBlnnwV21DM Ali Maulaah – youtu.be/4R-SoWzefig Exploring movement / feelings Prokofiev - Romeo and Juliet Opus 64 youtu.be/XX6GHIFKovw
Actions	• Set up the room before the group come in (I prefer to space them out) • Once seated, explain that you're going to play 2-3 different pieces of music. Invite the children to use their paint brushes as if they are musical instruments, making marks rather than doing a painting of something. They should have no preconceived ideas of what they are going to paint. • Ask them to listen to each piece of music for a few seconds before starting, so they can get a feel for it. • Let them paint and go straight from one piece of music to the next without any talking in between. • No need for any sharing, they can keep / dispose of their paintings.
Tips	You might want to demonstrate what can be achieved with the materials before the session starts (i.e. water colours with lots of water)
Variations	Choose 2-3 different pieces of music to explore different emotions.



ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

GROUNDING EXERCISE

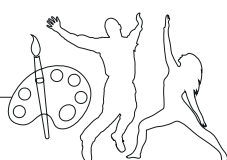
Good for	Grounding exercise Checking in with yourself Relaxation, freeing up mind and body Building individual, partner, and group sensitivity Whole class / group of 10-15 people
Length	10-15 mins
Resources	Large space
Actions	• Stand in a circle. Wait until everyone stops fidgeting. • Exercise - Check in with ourselves and how do you feel today? We will do a body scan and notice where you might hold any tension. • Get yourself settled. Let's start by becoming present in your body. • Notice how does your body feels today. Are you feeling tired, relaxed, tense, nervous, fidgety? How is your concentration? Are you calm, thinking of breaktime/home time, worried, distracted? • Close your eyes, focus only on your breathing. Breathe in slowly and notice your chest and tummy slowly filling with air and gently breath out, breathe in gently for the count of 4, hold for 4 counts, breathe out slowly, count of 5. • Notice where your body might hold some tension, focus on this area whilst breathing in and out. On the out breath relax muscles. • Roll your shoulders, backwards. Hunch your shoulders up then release. Release your knees. • If you are thinking about something, about school, home, something you have been doing today, observe it, acknowledge it, then go back to focusing on your breath, breathing in and out slowly. Let your thoughts come and go. Always return to your breathing exercises.



ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

GROUNDING EXERCISE

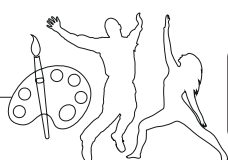
	• Imagine a thread coming out of the back of your head at the top of your spine, and it is pulling you up. Relax all the muscles from the head and shoulders downwards. • Place your feet a hip width apart. Gently swing your arms around your body. Reach out as you swing your arms around your body. Reach out to the horizon. Look beyond your fingertips to the furthest point. Stay balanced on both feet, keep your hips still and twist from the waist upwards only. • Stand on one foot, point toe and flex foot repeat 10 times. Shake out leg muscles repeat on other foot. • Shake out whole body. We use breathing exercises in meditation to help calm the mind and body. What did you notice? How was that for you? What did you find interesting? Were you able to focus and concentrate on your breathing? Did you notice where you hold any tension? • Invite the group to 'popcorn' – in a circle each person says one word to describe their experience.
Tips	Children need to be in a relaxed quiet space. Play pass the clap (Section 1, Activity 2) first to focus their attention.
Variation	Breathing exercises can be done sitting down. They help children learn to release tension from head to waist. Keep a circle formation, if you are in a classroom re-arrange the chairs. Consider using concentric circles.



ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

PERSONAL BALANCE – BREATHING MEDITATION

Good for	Focusing a group Group cohesion Getting to know each other Feeling relaxed and freeing up mind and body Using the imagination Building individual, partner, and group sensitivity Linking to nature, home, and place Whole class / group of 10-15 people
Length	10-15 mins
Resources	Hall / Outdoors (set boundaries – 20m), in PE lessons If space is limited groups can sit on chairs in concentric circles, facing inwards Music (forest music) Mats to lie on Sketchbooks, paper, pencils Peacock feathers / juggling beanbags
Actions	The leader sets up the room – the group can sit on the floor or on chairs in a circle. If engaging a class you can arrange inner and outer circles. Invite the group to: • Lie down in a circle on mats, feet towards the centre of the circle. We will check in with ourselves and how we feel today, close your eyes. • Forest Music - Imagine you are lying on the forest floor, there is a gentle breeze, and you can hear sounds of the breeze through the trees. Notice how your body feels today. Are you feeling, tired, relaxed, nervous, fidgety, or calm? • Close your eyes. Focus on your breathing. Breathe in slowly and notice your tummy slowly filling with air, and gently breathe out. Breathe in gently for the count of 4, hold for 4 counts, breathe out slowly, count of five. • Notice where your body might hold some tension, or perhaps you may have had an accident; sprained your ankle. Focus on that area and do the breathing exercise again (1min) • Notice the sounds in the room (1min) • Notice the sounds you can hear outside (1min)



ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

PERSONAL BALANCE – BREATHING MEDITATION

- Notice the sounds in your body, focus on your breathing. When you listen to your body you might hear a ringing in your ear. If you are thinking about something, about school, home, something you have been doing today, a worry, just notice it, observe it, then go back to focusing on your breath, breathing in and out slowly and listening to the sounds around you.
- Imagine your bellybutton is the centre of your body. Continue to breathe slowly in and out focussing on your bellybutton going up and down. This is your centre of your body. When a thought comes into your head notice it, then concentrate and focus back to your breathing, again, focus on your belly button, your centre. Breathe into your centre, into your tummy and feel your chest filling your lungs and tummy and breathe gently out. (20/30sec)
- Take a deep breath in and hold 123 – breath out 123. Repeat once more
- Slowly open your eyes and come back into the room.

We use breathing exercises in meditation to help calm the mind and body.

Turn to your partner and share your experience with your partner what did you hear?
What did you notice? Were you able to focus and concentrate on your breathing?
How did it make you feel?

Draw an image of a tree in a forest. Draw you in the forest. Write some words to describe your experiences and what you have learnt about yourself from the last exercise.

- Share in a group and write 1- 3 words in your sketch book of common experiences

Tips	Quiet focused place is needed. Play pass the clap game first (Section 1 Activity 2) to gain focus, or a name game (Section 1). Set an intention to listen carefully.
Variation	For fun and play you can use objects. Try balancing feathers on hands / juggling beanbags on heads. • Balance a feather on your fingertip. Focus on the top. Move your hand to under the top of the feather. (2min) Notice how you control the feather and your movements. Direct yourself around the room. Avoid bumping into each other. (1-2min)

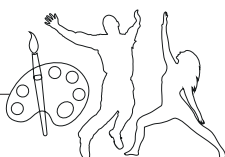


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ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

BALANCE THE SPACE

Good for	Exploring solo, duo and group movement Connecting with others Whole class / 10 -15 people
Length	15 mins
Resources	Need a large, open space
Actions	The leader invites the group to listen carefully to her instructions: • You will be moving around this space in different directions. • Begin walking around. Don't look at anyone else. • The leader claps, and says "Change direction". • If you see that everyone is going in the same direction, clap again and say change direction. • Weave in and out. Keep moving, be aware of each other. • Don't touch, connect with, speak to, or make eye contact with anyone. • Keep at equal distance from each other Then try... • Move slightly faster! Pick up the pace. You are late! Be aware of others in the room. You need to get around them. Remember not to touch or look at anyone. • Now slow your walking down. Begin to walk at your own natural pace. Notice how different you feel when you are not rushing. You want to keep moving forward, but you don't have to worry about being late. Notice how it feels not to be worried about being late.
Tips	If the space is very big set some boundaries
Variation	-



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

HEALTHY SLEEPING TREASURE HUNT

Good for	Healthy sleep, concentration Self-care Group of 30 or less (depending on the space you have) Yrs 4 - 7
Length	15 mins
Resources	Room Blue tack Children's sketchbooks pencils
Actions	• Print out the following sheets and cut out the Sleep Tips: www.cypsomersethealth.org/resources/Sleep_Resources_KS2.pdf • Put them up around the room • When the group come in share some facts about sleep: • The average person lives to be 80 years old. Guess how many years they spend asleep? A: 26. • Q: Why is sleep important? • A: It improves our concentration. Helps us fight disease. Makes us better at sport and more active. Helps us keep a healthy weight. Allows the brain and body to replenish itself. • Ask if anyone has problems sleeping, and do they know why. • Invite the group to go around the room collecting all the tips for healthy sleeping. They can do this in pairs. • They can write them down in their books • Gather in a circle and ask them to choose one sleep improvement they can easily bring into their lives • Go around the circle, each child stating an intention for better sleep.
Tips	-
Variation	-

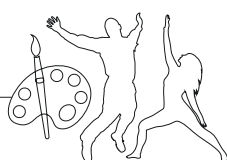


HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

MIRRORING IN PAIRS

Good for	Relating to others Observation skills Concentration Fun
Length	10 mins
Resources	Big room / Outdoors
Actions	• Pair the group, standing opposite each other • Invite them to mirror one another's movements • Start with slow, simple movements • After a while swap them around
Tips	Follow with the next activity
Variation	-



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

FOLLOWING AND LEADING

Good for	Relating to others Exploring power dynamics Concentration Fun Movement skills Group 10 -30
Length	10 mins
Resources	Big room / Outdoors
Actions	• Put the group into pairs, standing • In each pair one person is the leader and the other person will follow • Leaders hold out an arm with a flat palm • Followers to stand with their face 20- 30cm from the leader's hand • Leaders to move around the room slowly, followers follow • They can go high, low, around other pairs, obstacles • When finished, ask the group how it felt to be leading / following • Ask them to consider the responsibility of being a leader – caring for the person you are leading. How did it feel to follow? How did it feel to trust the other person?
Tips	Demonstrate before handing it over to the group Try it with the previous activity
Variation	-



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

TOTEM TO A FRIEND

Good for	Getting to know each other Social skills Giving and receiving Manual and creative skills (drawing, cutting) A whole class working in pairs
Length	90 mins
Resources	Classroom with tables and chairs, children will sit in pairs Coloured card (have a range of colors available, approx. 4 A5 sheets per person) Green flower sticks (1 per person) Coloured pencils / Oil pastels Scissors Sellotape
Actions	• Pair the group, children should not be working with best friends • Start with portraits, these will go at the bottom of the totems. Choose whether they draw each other in pairs, or they draw themselves. Find out favorite colours, then choose card and oil pastels for each other / themselves • Portraits 5 mins. If drawing each other, these are quick portraits sitting opposite, both draw at the same time. <i>Aim to capture an essence of the person, their expression, for example. There is no need to worry about what it looks like, just enjoy the flow of looking and drawing.</i> • Cut out the portraits before moving on to step 2 • Find out each other's favourite animal, draw this and cut out • Favorite thing in nature, draw and cut out • Find out a goal, this could be something they want to be good at in school? Draw, cut out. • Find out what do they want to be in 20 years time, draw, cut out. • Keeping all the artwork together for each child, assemble it on a stick, like below. Use sellotape on the back. • When all are ready, make a circle with the group and gift the totems. • Each child could introduce their partner, and share 2-3 facts about that person with the group • Ask how it feels to give and receive • Close the group
Tips	NB if they draw each other they may not like the portraits done for them. Encourage the group not to be fussy about the drawings, they are just sketches.
Variations	Vary the questions as you like



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

AFFIRMATIONS

Good for	Confidence Positive self-image Replacing negative thinking patterns with positive ones
Length	20 mins
Resources	Information and List of Affirmations www.clevelandmetroschools.org/cms/lib/OH01915844/Centricity/Domain/7278/101FreePositiveThinkingAffirmations.pdf A3 card / fabric Oil pastels / coloured pencils / felt tips etc Any other colours / collage for decoration etc
Actions	• Select a number of affirmations from the list and print them out, one copy for each child. (We chose 15 that related specifically to our groups) • Explain what an affirmation is - A positive statement you can use to build confidence, face challenges. If you repeat it again and again it can replace worries. • Children can think of an affirmation for themselves that they feel will help them. Or they can choose from the list. • Each child to write their affirmation onto the card / fabric with oil pastels / felt tips etc • Decorate around it • Share affirmations around the circle • Close the group
Tips	If you use fabric you can create a Wishing Line of Affirmations strung across the classroom on rope
Variation	If they would like to choose a second affirmation this can be written on a postcard, and maybe sent to them through the post



ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

PERSONAL TOOLS FOR ANXIETY

DEEP BREATHING / FINGER PULSING / 5 SENSES

These are excellent tools for all children to learn.
They can use them as and when needed.

Good for	Reducing anxiety/ nerves Coping with persistent worries Resilience Before tests / exams
Length	As long as you want / personal preference
Resources	None needed
Actions	Sit in a circle Maybe ask if anyone struggles with worries. Here are some tools you can use to cope with them: 1. Deep Breathing Invite the group to <i>Shut Your eyes...</i> <i>Feel the ground solid beneath your feet</i> <i>Focus on your breathing – breathe in, feel your tummy expand, hold 1,2 3 – and breathe out... 1,2,3.</i> <i>As you breathe out feel any tension you have leaving your body.</i> Repeat for as long as you need. This can be accompanied with stretching / body scan. Sit in a circle Maybe ask if anyone struggles with worries. Here are some tools you can use to cope with them:



ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

PERSONAL TOOLS FOR ANXIETY

DEEP BREATHING / FINGER PULSING / 5 SENSES

Actions	2. Finger Pulsing Start with first finger Tap 5 times and count to yourself Repeat with the other 3 fingers, Do it again counting to 10 with 10 taps Do it again counting to 15 with 15 taps Repeat as much as you like 3. Five Senses Wherever you are go through the 5 senses: <i>What can you see?</i> <i>What can you hear?</i> <i>What can you smell?</i> <i>Can you taste anything?</i> <i>What can you touch?</i>
Tips	-
Variation	-



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ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

IMAGINE DOING SOMETHING AMAZING

Good for	Coping with Worries and Anxiety Building resilience Whole class / smaller group Yrs 1 -5
Length	10 mins
Resources	A room Sketchbooks and pencils Book: The Knot by Helen Cousins Helen reads the Knot here: www.facebook.com/watch/?v=245116536736263 (but it is not a great recording)
Actions	"The Knot" by Helen Cousins, is a book of verse, written for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 to help them acknowledge their own anxieties and to understand that it is quite normal to have worries. In The Knot a small boy called Trevor experiences anxiety in school, which prevents him from doing his school work, and makes him fidgety and cross. His teacher shows him how he can imagine doing something 'really brilliant' instead. Trevor imagines he is an astronaut floating in space. After that he is able to calm down and focus on his school work. Read out the first few verses of The Knot to a group Invite them to think of something they would love to do, something very special, even if it is unrealistic Children to write down their imaginary activity Share in the circle Make notes in their books, as others' ideas may also be helpful.
Tips	-
Variation	Thrive have wonderful resources www.thriveapproach.com/search?s=Wellbeing



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

EXCITEMENT OR ANXIETY?

Good for	Understanding anxiety and its impact Group discussion Yrs 3-6
Length	25 -30 mins
Resources	Group to sit in a circle with sketchbooks for note taking
Actions	Scenario to discuss – Tea with the Queen – Let's Suppose.... <i>I've been invited to Buckingham Palace, but I am anxious about having tea with the Queen.</i> Q: What are my thoughts? How do I feel? A: I am excited <i>BUT I am anxious. I might spill something, I might trip up. I might burp at the table!</i> Q: Think of other words for Anxiety? A: Nervous, afraid, worried. How do we feel inside? A: Tense, tight, knotted up, wound up, jumpy. We have butterflies, collywobblers. Q: What is the opposite of anxious? A: Calm, focused. Q: Are my anxious feelings good? A: They a nuisance. Stop me focusing, can't relax. They make me tense, I fidget, I can't keep still. I am frustrated that I feel this way. I can't focus on my work, can't relax, can't sleep. Not much interested in anything else. Butterflies over a few days give me stomach ache and make me feel ill. Conclusion – We all feel anxiety from time to time. It is good to develop personal coping skills for Anxiety. Write down thoughts in sketchbooks. Do a drawing if you want to.
Tips	Include Activity 6 to demonstrate how anxiety feels through objects.
Variation	-

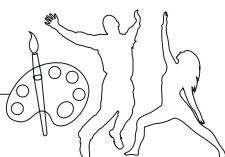


HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

WORRY CIRCLES

Good for	Coping with Worries Individual work Reducing stress
Length	10 – 15 mins
Resources	Sketchbooks Pencils / pens Whole class / small group Any age
Actions	• In sketchbooks, draw a big circle • Draw a smaller one inside the big one • In the smaller circle write down the worries you can control • In the bigger circle write down the worries you can not control • Looking at the inner circle – find and write down solutions for these worries
Tips	



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

EXPLORING ANXIETY WITH OBJECTS

Good for	Releasing tension Fun Concentration
Length	10 mins
Resources	Peacock feathers 75- 90cm (1 per child or 1 between 2) Beanbags. Hall / large empty room
Actions	• Demonstrate how to balance a peacock feather on your fingertip. Ask the group to treat them very gently as they break easily. Store these in a cardboard tube. • Invite the children to stand in a space with approximately 1 - 2m distance between each other and equal distance from each other. Hand out the feathers. • If the top of the feather moves forward or sideways bring your hand underneath the top of the feather to balance it. Try to stand still and hardly move the feather. • Once you have mastered balancing the feather try to slowly direct the feather in the direction you wish it to move in. Then stop. • This exercise can be repeated with a beanbag balanced on your head. Walking around the room slowly. Explore standing > sitting > standing again.
Tips	Practice the balancing before you run the activity Avoid any draughts or gusts of wind. Close windows if needed as this will blow the feathers off balance. Are you controlling the direction of the feather or is the direction of the feather controlling you and the direction you are travelling? Store feathers in a cardboard tube.
Variation	Once you have mastered balancing the feather you can explore moving slowly around the room very slowly. Feathers are the best object for balancing for beginners and every child achieves a sense of achievement whilst having fun doing this exercise.



RELEASING TENSION WITH OBJECTS

Good for	Releasing tension with stretch bands - fun activity Calm, focus, grounding Trust Movement
Length	10 mins
Resources	Stretch /Exercise bands
Actions	• Demonstrate how stretch a band works. • Wrap the stretch band around your hand once and hold tightly. • Explain there are different colours/ lengths for different tension strengths. • Children can explore expanding the tension bands across their chest, ground to floor by putting 1 foot on one end and stretch upwards with your hand. • Explore different shapes and movements. • Find a partner and use one stretch band between you.
Tips	Explain how to work with the bands - When working in partners wrap it once around your hand and hold onto it tightly. Do not let go. Explain the use of tension and how to relax tension.
Variation	Children can invent their own movement shapes



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

NATURE OBSERVATION

Good for	Calm and Focus Using nature for good mental health Observation Whole class or smaller group Any age
Length	1-2 hours
Resources	Outdoor location Each person will need: sketchbook, pencils, rubber and sharpener, a small piece of white card double-sided tape, small scissors, hand sanitizer, magnifying glass, crayons for rubbings coloured inks for mark making with grasses, sticks
Actions	This workshop by Emerald Ant helps children explore form, colour and light in nature. It relates this work to famous artists such as Monet, Seurat and Van Gogh. You can find a downloadable worksheet here: www.emeraldant.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ws1.pdf
Tips	Could be done as part of Forest School in several sessions
Variation	Check out the rest of Emerald Ant's outdoor workshops at www.emeraldant.com/bluebell/creative-activities-in-the-woods/



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

WORRY TANGLE – VISUALIZING WORRIES

Good for	Externalizing worries and anxiety Sharing and Supporting one another Any age Group work (8-10 people). Split a big group into groups of 6 -10 people.
Length	20 mins
Resources	Room, tables and chairs Pencils Coloured pencils / oil pastels /paints Large paper 1 m x 2 m pieces, one per group, prepare this in advance Masking tape to stick paper down
Actions	Everyone to sit around the table <i>Make a point on your right with your pencil</i> <i>Make a point on your left with your pencil</i> <i>Now make a big squiggle between the 2 points</i> <i>Join it up with your neighbours' squiggle. The whole paper should be filled up with a big squiggle</i> <i>Now, shut your eyes...</i> <i>Focus on yourself and your breathing...</i> <i>Think of a worry you have. It could be a small niggle that's is on your mind.</i> <i>If it was an object what would it look like?</i> <i>Would it be big or small? What shape would it be? Curved or straight? Does it have a colour?</i> <i>Open your eyes. Find a suitable shape for your worry in the big squiggle and draw your worry into it. Add colour or details as you like (5 -7 mins)</i> <i>Now, what shall we do with these worries? The group can choose whether to destroy them, or to cut them out and put them in your books.</i> <i>Around the table – Ask how it felt to do this.</i>
Tips	Offer children one to one support afterwards Roby's Worry is a book you could use with this activity
Variations	-



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

WHAT DOES ANGER LOOK LIKE?

Good for	Externalizing and understanding feelings Art skills Individual work Sharing Group 10 -15 / whole class but split into groups for discussion
Length	15 mins
Resources	Sketchbooks Pencils, coloured pencils Or use clay to sculpt
Actions	Sit at tables / on the floor - Build up a picture in your minds: <i>If anger was a colour, what would it be?</i> <i>If anger was a shape, what would it be?</i> <i>If anger was an animal, what would it be?</i> <i>Or if anger was an object, what would it be?</i> Take 5 minutes for the children to draw anger in their sketchbooks. You can give the object / creature a name... - Ask: <i>What does it sound like? If it talks, what does it say?</i> <i>What makes the object / creature scared?</i> <i>What makes it stronger?</i> <i>Is there something that calms it down?</i> In a circle, invite children to share their drawings. They don't have to. Make sure they know it is fine and natural to feel angry, but not fine to become violent and abusive. Ensure they know there are adults they can talk to if anger is directed at them.
Tips	-
Variation	-



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

STORY – A PAINTING FOR THE QUEEN EXPLORING FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOUR

Good for	Separating feelings from behaviour Group 10-15 Years 3-6
Length	30-40 mins
Resources	Room (enough space for a circle) Sketchbooks, pencils Download the story 'A Painting for the Queen' www.emeraldant.com/learning-tools/
Actions	Sit in a circle, or lie down comfortably. <i>Q: What has Eliza allowed to happen?</i> <i>A:</i> Her feelings of anger turned into violence. Someone got hurt. She was in trouble. Her painting was ruined. <i>Q: What could she have done instead?</i> <i>A:</i> She could have: - Taken 3 deeps breaths. - Accepted and learnt: I cannot give the Queen my painting in person. - Accepted she feels disappointed. - Gone away and talked about her feelings with a friend or adult she trusts. - She could have seen she had other choices: She could give it a gallery / sent it through the post to the Queen / give it to her Mum / put it on the wall at home. <i>Conclusion:</i> It was ok for her to feel angry. But she chose to be violent. She could have taken a moment to think and make a better choice.
Tips	-
Variation	• As a follow up, invite the group to think of something that makes them angry. Ask them to write down the scenario. • Invite them to consider alternative actions could they take next time this situation arises. • Invite them to share with the group • Make notes • End the session • Draw a picture of yourself when you are angry. • Think of something you say only when you're angry



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

ALL BOTTLED UP

Good for	Exploring untreated anger Verbal skills Whole class Any age
Length	20-40 mins
Resources	Classroom Plastic bottle / glass jar Slips of red / orange paper to write on Pencils
Actions	• Remind the class of the differences between feelings and behavior. You can ask them to list emotions and behaviours. • Bring out the bottle • Ask them what they think Bottled Up Anger is? • Explain it is when people do not express their anger and keep it inside until they feel like exploding • Ask the group to write things that make them angry on the pieces of paper, and put them in the bottle • Ask how it would feel if we kept that amount of anger inside us? • Discuss ways of releasing anger safely (See Activity 4)
Tips	-
Variation	• Draw a big bottle on A4 paper and photocopy it for your group • Invite them to write situations that make them feel angry on the bottle • They can keep it in their sketchbooks • Next time they could explore what it feels like to have explosive anger • Draw a volcano. Think of what happens during an explosion of anger and write on the volcano. • Discuss the aftermath of the volcano. • Discuss how a volcano can be avoided



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

COPING WITH ANGER – THE THERMOMETER

Also see anxiety exercises at Section 4 Activity 1 – Deep Breathing etc

Good for	Releasing anger safely Any age
Length	15 mins
Resources	Room Blackboard / whiteboard Chalk Sketchbooks, pencils
Actions	• On the board draw a thermometer with 10 points on it • Name each point on the Anger Thermometer, i.e 1-noticing it, 2 irritated, 3 – annoyed, 9 – ready to explode... • Invite children to draw their own thermometers in their sketchbooks • <i>Put your own measurements on it and name them</i> • <i>In your head think of a scenario that has made you angry. How angry did it make you feel?</i> • <i>Put the thermometer in your head, breathe out</i> • <i>Every time you breathe out, the temperature comes down</i> • <i>Keep going until you reach the bottom and are cool</i>
Tips	-
Variation	www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/coping-skills-anger/anger/none



HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

ANGER TRIGGERS

Good for	Self- awareness Managing emotions Year 5 / 6 upwards
Length	-
Resources	-
Actions	• Explain that often there are 'triggers' in our lives that affect the way we think. They can make us react in angry ways. • Everyone has different triggers. They depend on your own experience. Often they are stress, anger or worries. • We may not always be aware of our triggers • Sometimes these triggers mean something small can make us explode. • List 4 things that especially annoy you (could be a name, a person, a scenario, something unfair.) • Think of a time when you exploded over a small thing – What was your trigger?
Tips	-
Variation	For Year 6 upwards: www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/anger-iceberg

