

Creative Activity:

The purpose of this session is to bring mindfulness through movement, a walking meditation, to everyday life.

Epstein reminds us, “(w)hen we think of our bodies as “things” that are separate from us and our minds as “places” where we think, we foster our own sense of alienation or remove. Mindfulness practice begins, for this reason, with the awareness of the breath and the body ... it is quite literally a coming to one’s senses” (1995, p. 144).

For this exercise, you will need to prepare a quiet place. Gather your journal, [mandala pages](#) (click the link to download), coloured pencils and a pen. Mandalas are circles, used in many cultures, to focus attention on wholeness, and the unity of life (see Appendix 1: Mandalas Explained).

This exercise can be divided into four phases. You can complete them at your convenience, but we recommend that you do them sequentially. The phases are 1) writing, 2) walking, 3) colouring, and 4) returning to reflective writing.

Choose a time where you can be uninterrupted for at least 90 minutes. The activity is meant to be undertaken by you in quiet solitude. The walking can be done inside or outside. The important thing is to have some time to write and space to wander/walk.

Phase 1: Individual

Begin by writing in your journal – write down anything that may be on your mind and any questions you may have about your work that could be related to person-centred care/practice. When you feel ready, put your journal aside; you will come back to it later.

Phase 2: Individual

Allow 10-15 minutes (more if you wish) for this phase of the exercise.

Dressing comfortably for the weather and for walking, begin by standing with your feet solidly on the ground. Look around at your surroundings. Take in your environment through your senses: what are you seeing, smelling, and hearing? Hold your arms naturally and start to walk, feeling your feet touch the ground. Walk more slowly than you normally would.

Try to move your energy down from thinking in your head to feeling in your body: feel your toes and heels in contact with the ground. Pay attention to the sensations of

moving through space. Be attentive to the present moment. As thoughts of the past or future come into your mind, let them go like waves on a beach: there they are and there they go. Bring your awareness back to the sensations of being in your body walking.

There is no destination, no errands, just walking. Walking with mindfulness is a kind of concentration, attentiveness to feeling each step. When your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your feet touching the ground. Walk in silence. "Walk with your whole body and mind. Don't think" (Hanh, 2013, p. 95). It is normal for our minds to wander, each time you notice it, you can bring your attention back to the movement of walking.

You will walk more slowly than normal and may find your steps and breathing attune to one another. There is no other place you have to be, there is nothing else you have to do.

Phase 3: Individual

- After the walk, return to your quiet place and the art materials.
- When you feel ready, choose one of the mandalas (or draw your own) and colour it as you feel moved to do so.
- Observe what is rising up in you as your eyes take in the shapes and your hand colours them.
- Be aware of your thoughts and feelings; then let them go.
- When you feel finished with your mandala, sit quietly and consider what you have created.

Phase 4: Individual/Circle

Write in your journal about the experience of walking while being present, as well as the experience of colouring your mandala. Revisit any questions you wrote down before walking.

Think about:

- How did it feel to walk slowly and in awareness?
- How did it feel to allow thoughts to come and go as you walked mindfully?
- How were you aware of your environment? Did you notice anything you were not aware of before?
- How is this activity helping you to think further about Person-Centred Care?

- Could you share any part of this activity with your colleagues or with people in your care?

Keep journaling!