

Making  
SPACE  
for  
Learning

Trauma  
Sensitive  
Practice in  
Schools

*Activities Booklet*



Australian  
Childhood Foundation  
Protecting Children

[www.childhood.org.au](http://www.childhood.org.au)

## Building a House

Work in pairs so that one person is the child and the other the teacher – ‘teacher’ gives the following prompts to guide the ‘child’ to build a Lego House from the bottom up:

- Let’s call the foundations, all the important people in your life – who are they?
- Let’s call the walls all the things that make you feel strong – what are they?
- Let’s call the rooms, all your wishes – what are they?
- Let’s add something special to your house that shows all things you are good at – what will it be?



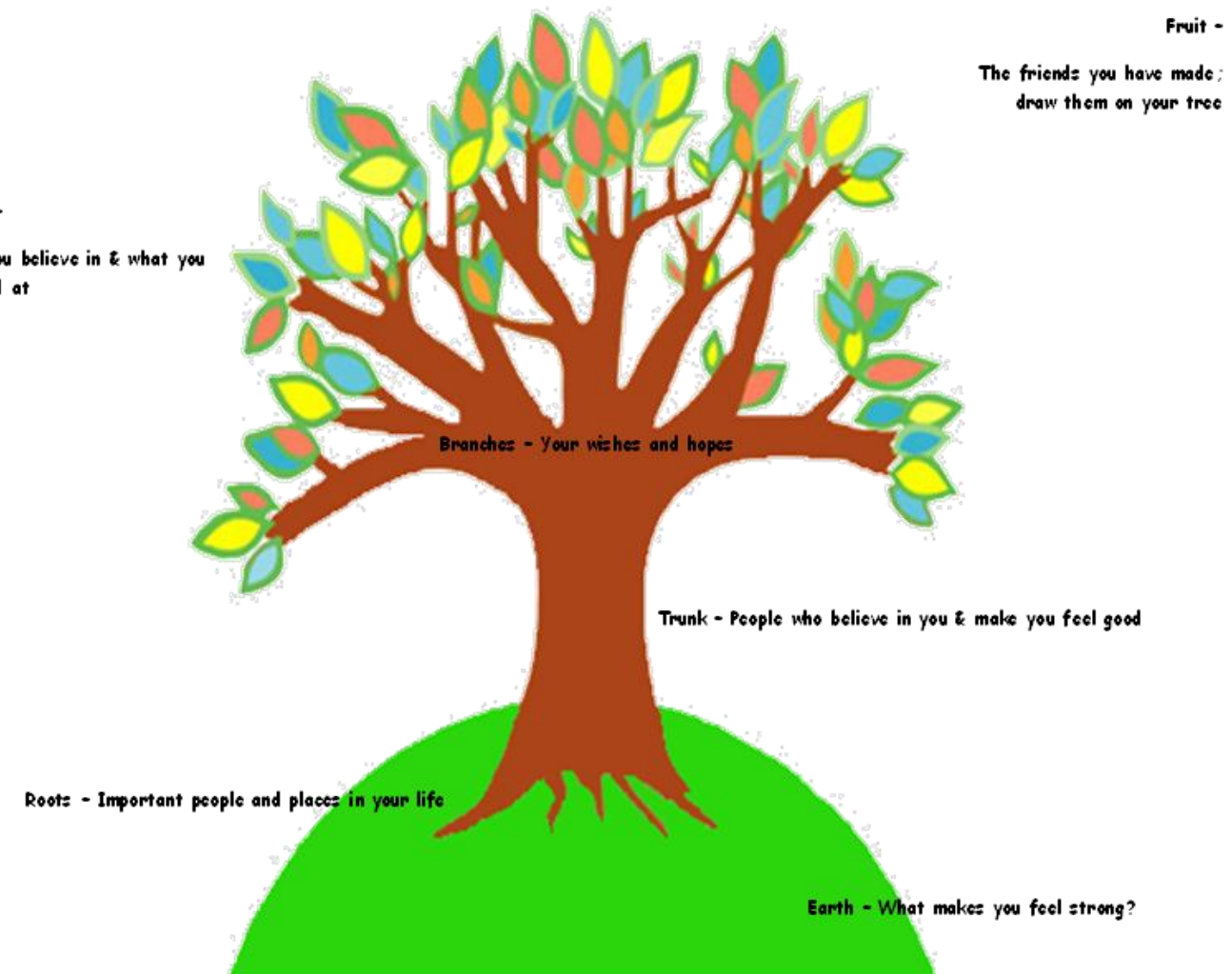


## Growing a Tree

Work in pairs so that one person is the child and the other the teacher – ‘teacher’ gives the following prompts to guide the ‘child’ to grow a Tree from the bottom up:

- Let’s call the roots, all the important people & places in your life – who & where are they?
- Let’s call the Earth all the things that make you feel strong – what are they?
- Let’s call the Trunk – People who believe in you & make you feel good
- Let’s say the Branches are – Your wishes and hopes
- Let’s say the Leaves are – What you believe in & what you are good at
- Let’s say the Fruit is – The friends you have made; draw them on your tree

Use the template & whiteboard markers provided, wipe them clean when you are finished



## Excursion

- **Plan an outing, excursion or overnight camp for a group of children/young people keeping in mind two children in the group who have experienced relational trauma**
- **The objective of your plan is to optimise the potential for the traumatised children to attend the outing, to enjoy the experience and to join in the outing activities peacefully with the other children**



## Ransom Identity:

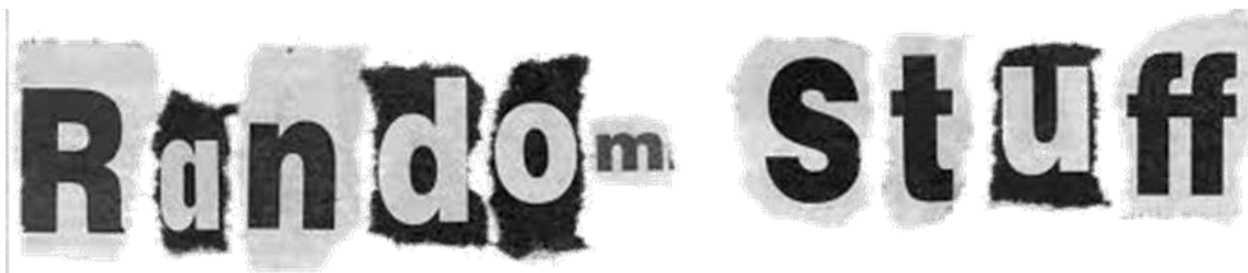
- Take the A4 paper and fold it in half then half again.
- You now have 4 quadrants.
- In each quarter place the headings:

- *I'm good at.....*
- *I love.....*
- *I want.....*
- *I will be.....*



practice  
RANDOM  
kindness

- Using the newspaper provided you are to cut out words to represent yourself -finishing the sentences in each quarter of the page with cut out words, letters and pictures



Random Stuff

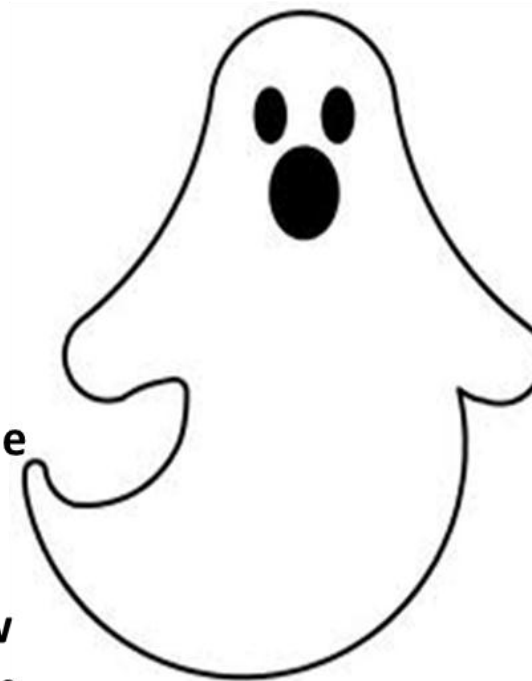
- This is an adolescent version of the identity web or identity shield. It provides a discussion point for individual or group work with an adolescent and provides a focal point for discussion with out having face to face interaction where this can sometimes be a challenge. This can be posted out to the young person once completed or framed as a piece of art work. Each quadrant could be framed separately in small cheap colourful frames

- Materials: A4 or A3 paper, newspapers, magazines, comics, scissors, glue sticks, coloured markers, envelopes, frames



## Ghosting:

- In pairs start a brisk walk around the parameter of the room.
- As you find a steady rhythm find a movement that you both can do simultaneously whilst walking around the parameter of the room.
- Once in your pair and in rhythm you now need to start to follow and fall in rhythm with another pair walking around doing their walk.
- They must not notice that you are following them. The closer you can get to them without them noticing the better.
- If you can follow in rhythm another pair for half the length of
- the room without them knowing – you win!



*With this activity we want to encourage adolescents to focus on attuned subtle connection using a fun and rhythmical method. This can be done more effectively out in a yard or public space*



## Storying emotion:



- Take one of the laminated cartoon pages
- In pairs decide what is happening in this story and fill in the talk and think bubbles with the whiteboard markers
- Swap your comics and see what stories you have each created from the images alone.
- When finished this activity please wipe the page clean for the next participants.



*Young people who have not had adequate attuned connection with their significant carers miss out on the vital experience of attuned interaction and have significant difficulties reading facial expressions and understanding emotions in others. We need to give these young people lots of opportunities to practice reading and understanding emotions and facial expressions in fun and low stress ways. Cartoons & comics are great for showing expressed emotions. There are many comic strip templates on the internet that can be utilised for the more creative young people you work with who might like to create their own comics*



## Tips to Teach By –

(Child's Mind, Christopher Willard)

### Practicing Mindfulness with children

- \* Create as quiet and comfortable space as possible
- \* Introduce the activity, setting clear expectations
- \* Remain aware of your own intentions and goals before and during teaching, letting go of expectations
- \* Smile and breathe
- \* Speak in a calm but strong voice, remaining aware of your non-verbal communication
- \* Consider age-appropriate language and metaphor
- \* Remain connected, trusting, empathetic and non-judging, of self & children
- \* Keep your sense of humour & patience
- \* Have at least a Plan B
- \* Cultivate curiosity & creativity
- \* Start small and build up
- \* Stay positive, engage the positive
- \* Practice and encourage practice whenever possible



**“Tell me, and I will listen. Show me,  
and I will understand. Involve me, and  
I will learn”  
- Lakota Proverb**



## Happiness in Four Pebbles

(A Handful of Quiet – Thich Nhat Hanh)

**“The pebble practice is very simple. It is a little meditation you can do anywhere or anytime. To meditate is to think quietly about something. You can practice pebble meditation at the foot of tree, in your living room, or wherever you like, but the place should be quiet”**

- **For this meditation, each of the pebbles represents a different image in nature – a flower, a mountain, calm water, space**
- **Each pebble embodies a particular quality. After practicing pebble meditation, you might find other qualities that you want each pebble to represent – love, compassion, joy and inclusiveness, the four qualities of true love**

- **The pebbles could also represent loved ones – holding each pebble, we can send our love to that person as we breathe 3 times**



- **You will need a copy of “A handful of Quiet” or “Planting Seeds, which includes the CD meditation” by Thich Nhat Hanh**
- **Pebbles, pouches, mats(optional), quiet**

## Still quiet place

### A Still Quiet Place

The Still Quiet Place is a place of peace and happiness that is alive inside of you.

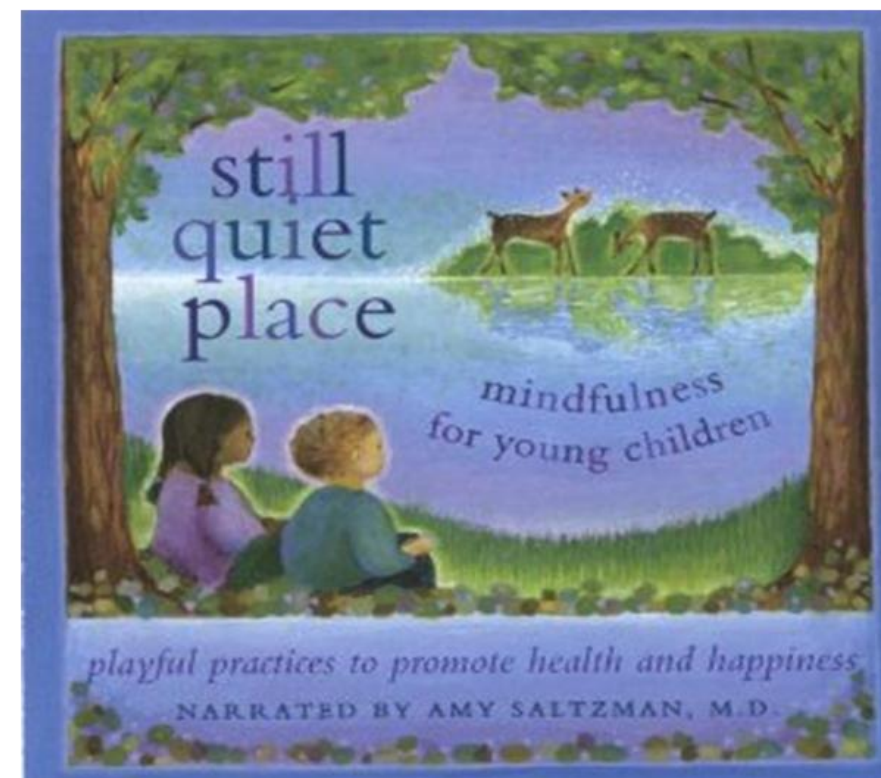
You can find it just by closing your eyes and breathing.

The Still Quiet Place is a comforting place to visit, especially if you are having a bad day – feeling angry, sad, scared, or lonely. As you learn to meet your thoughts and feelings in the Still Quiet Place, you may discover that they are not as powerful as they seem.

Children, teens and adults who visit the Still Quiet Place frequently, find life is more enjoyable; they are kinder to themselves, and calmer and more creative when they are having difficulties with friends, family, school, sports and other activities.

One of the easiest ways to find the Still Quiet Place is to practice Mindfulness. Mindfulness is simply paying attention to your life experience here and now with kindness and curiosity. Try it; close your eyes and just listen to the sounds around you –

You can learn to bring this same type of pure listening to your thoughts and feelings. And when you listen to your thoughts and feelings with kindness you may naturally discover more peaceful ways to live your life.





# Origami

- Origami is a great way to calm the mind and engage in a tranquil movement
- Origami is the ancient and traditional Japanese art of paper folding popularized in the 17th century
- The folding of paper into artistic designs is a form of active meditation; the concentration on the art and the letting go of bothersome thought allows for mindfulness



### You will need:

- Several pieces of 4x4 inch origami paper
- Black crepe paper
- Heads and Necks pattern cut out
- Scissors
- Glue



## CALMING

# Mindful Chocolate Eating

- Steps to mindfully eating chocolate: Use one smartie.
- As you tip the smartie out of the box, listen closely to sound the of it.
- Notice the weight of a piece of chocolate in your hand. Is it heavy? Light? Can you think of something lighter!
- Look at it closely. Observe the shape and color. Use at least three words to describe it to yourself.
- Bring the chocolate up to your nose, and inhale deeply. Notice what thoughts come in your mind as you do this. The smell of chocolate can bring up some powerful feelings and memories. Deeply Inhale.
- Do any critical thoughts come up like, "I shouldn't eat this"? If so, let the thoughts come and go as if you are letting go of a balloon.
- Place the chocolate in your mouth. Don't bite it! Notice the texture as it rolls across your tongue.
- As the chocolate melts notice the flavor, richness, and texture. Pay attention to how the sensations change as it melts and molds to your mouth.
- Follow the sensations as the chocolate slips down your throat into your stomach.



# CALMING

## Drumming Lesson Plan

### Aims

- To explore the use of non-cognitive measures to work on self calming techniques.
- To assist children to recognise the experience of calm.
- To promote tuning into others and working as part of a team
- To provide a non verbal outlet for emotion

N.B. Drumming can be on drums if you have them, or on books, on tables, on laps or in any way children feel comfortable.

### Strategies

- Give some “free time” to drum as the class want to. Start by finding a single rhythm that all the group/class can follow
- Slowly pick up the pace of the rhythm until it gets really fast!
- Then start fast drumming and slowly bring the pace down. Keep at the slow pace until the group start complaining or stop!
- Ask each person to drum at the best speed for them- the speed that feels most comfortable.
- Focus again on a slower beat- look for something between 70 and 80 beats per minute.
- Give some “slow drumming free time” to end the session





## CALMING & ENGAGING Paper Magiclay

**Clean** - No water required. No dirty stains or messy clean ups  
**Fast air drying** - No kiln or oven required  
**Non toxic** - Safe & easy to use by all ages. No harmful odours  
**Pliable** - Soft malleable for all ages to use with ease, embosses with ease  
**Modelling ease** - Easy to bend, manipulate roll, coil & stretch  
**Paper like** - May be rolled into thin sheets



[www.magiclay.com.au](http://www.magiclay.com.au)

For this activity you can make anything you wish – your creativity is the limit! Should you wish to have some guidance you may follow the directions below:



### How to Make a Paper Magiclay Flower:

1. Take a small amount of the Paper Magiclay and add a small amount of red color to knead through the clay to colour it.
2. Shape petals by pushing the Paper Magiclay with your thumb or fingers, thinly onto a tabletop or hard surface until you get very thin petal shapes. Allow to sit and stiffen for a few minutes.
3. Start with a small bud in the centre and build up the petals in a circular fashion around the central bud, shaping the petals to open out, as the flower gets larger.
4. When you reach the desired size, allow to dry. You will have a beautiful and delicate hand created flower with paper thin petals, these can even be scented with a few drops of essential oil.



# ENGAGING: Group Machine

### Aim:

- To encourage non verbal connection
- To engage participants in a collaborative, whole group process
- To promote movement and vocal expression
- To establish group cohesiveness

### Description:

Have your participants find a pair to work with and find a space in the room.

In their pairs participants are to develop two movements that they can do together that may reflect part of a machine. Encourage them to use their arms, legs and bodies including their heads. The movement needs to be sustainable and repetitive.

Have two pairs come into the centre of the room and start their movements then invite all pairs to find a space where their particular movement might fit with the movements in the centre. Slowly have all pairs find a space amidst the larger group. The purpose is to end up with a whole group machine.

Once this is done have the pairs find a sound for their movement. It is important to do this quickly as it is easier for all involved if this is done together so no one person is in the spotlight – minimizes embarrassment!

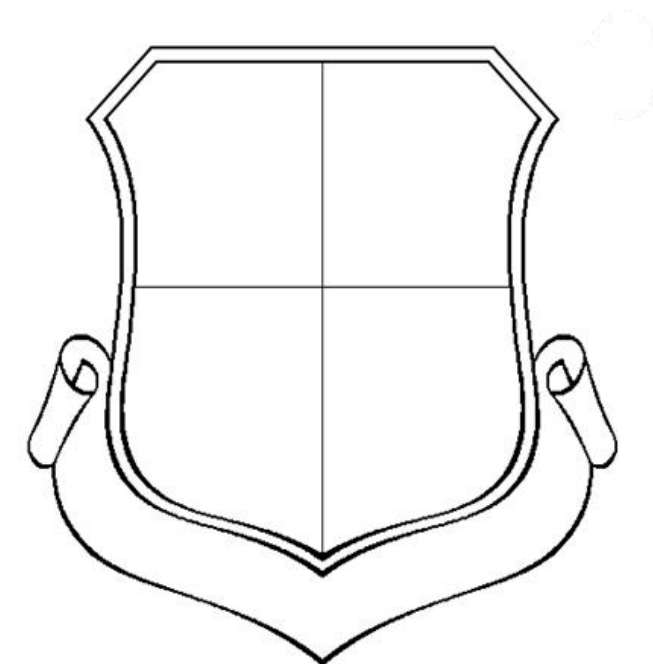
Have the machine start up together with movement and sound.

Play with slowing the machine down or speeding it up.

This can work on developing a sense of group cooperation and cohesiveness.



## CALMING & ENGAGING Identity Shields and Mandalas



Colouring in has been found to be a calming experience for primary and secondary students alike. When making Mandalas and Identity shields from scratch, these activities can be used to explore identity themes as the students place within their shapes elements that they feel symbolise aspects of themselves.



### Here & Now Games

**Activity type:**

Body awareness/sensory awareness

**Materials:**

Nil

**Aim:**

- Here and Now Games are quick, practical activities that have a young person focusing on the present with the direct purpose to keep them focused on your group session or individual session. These tasks are used specifically to provide gentle encouragement for the young person to bring their awareness back into the room.
- Fun activities that provide a collective focus for a group using visual stimulus or body work

**Brain region/s focus:**

Limbic Lobe, diencephalon and cerebellum

**Age range:**

0-100!

**No. of people involved:**

Individual or group

**Description:**

- Have the whole group, at random times across your session (or when you notice a young person seeming not to be present/dissociative) point to something blue in the room or something red in the room. Something plastic or something steel, something soft or something cold etc. It is best to ask to do two of these instructions at any one time and go back to your task then ask two more at another time amongst your session. You will find that competitiveness to be first gets the group acting quickly and enables the young person not present to focus back in the moment without any attention being placed upon them.
- Have your client or group focus on their big toes. Get them to push them hard into the carpet, wood, cushion etc. Have the group/client touch the top of their shoes, feel their socks and tap their favourite ad jingle (or Simpson's theme song etc.) with their toes.

