

# **Mindfulness Exercises to Teach While Teaching Mindfulness Skills to Adolescents/Families**

## **Skill: Observe**

### *Exercise #1: Conveyor Belt*

Instruct clients to get comfortable in their chairs. Have them close their eyes and try to blank out their mind. Tell them, “When I ring the bell three times (or any object you have) I want you to picture a conveyor belt. Picture yourself walking up the conveyor belt, watching everything coming towards you. What you are watching for are your thoughts, urges, emotions or sensations. Watch them come down the conveyor belt. As they come closer to you, I want you to just watch them come and go and get back to watching to see what comes down the conveyor belt next. Try not to attach or push away what you notice on the conveyor belt. Just let it come and go. When the exercise is over, I will ring the bell one time.” Ask the clients if they have any questions. Process the exercise at the end and look for those who had a hard time “letting go” of objects on the conveyor belt.

### *Exercise #2: One Word*

Instruct clients to get comfortable in their chairs and close their eyes. Have them take three deep breaths. With each breath, they are going to relax and clear out their mind more and more. Tell them, “When I ring the bell three times, I am going to say a set of words. I will say a word and then pause for a moment. Then I will say another word and pause for another moment and so on and so forth. Your job is to notice what comes up in you when I say a word. Go with me from word to word to word. I will ring the bell one time to end the exercise.” Ask the clients if they have any questions. At the end of the exercise, ask clients if they had a thought, urge, sensation, image or an emotion with each word. Discuss how you can observe all those without getting “stuck”, just as they did with the exercise. This exercise is good to give them confidence they CAN observe without getting stuck on or reacting to what they observe. Try and throw in some “off-the-wall” words to try and throw the clients off (i.e. camel snot, nose hair, piggy bank, tutu, etc.).

## **Skill: Describe**

### *Exercise: Nit Pickin’*

Get clients to learn how to “describe” using “JUST THE FACTS”. Remind them to describe “just what they know”, “only what they observe”, “add nothing, subtract nothing”. Put objects on the table (a flower, a shoe, a glass with some type of liquid, Mardi Gras beads, a banana, etc.). Instruct clients to describe each object one at a time using their describe skill. If clients feel you are “nit picking”, tell them to just “observe” this, use a “non-judgmental stance” and to get back to using “just the facts”. Tie in the fact about how we tend to assume things as they are and usually our assumptions are wrong. Get them to look at “what is” (reality) and respond from there.

## Skill: Participate

### *Exercise: Animal Sounds*

Have everyone stand up and spread out in the group room. Pass out blindfolds to each person (or have everyone close their eyes). A group facilitator will go around and whisper to each person a name of an animal (bear, horse, snake, frog, duck, pig, etc.). Make sure there are pairs of the same animal sound, because the object of this game is to find the same animal in the group as you are. If there is an odd number left, a group facilitator can be used to make it even. Tell the group, "When I ring the bell three times, you are to start making the sound of the animal I whispered to you. Your goal is to find the same animal in the room with the blindfold on (or with your eyes closed)." Remind clients to slowly move towards the same animal sound so they don't bump into each other too hard. If you have to, make a comment regarding no inappropriate touching. When you process this exercise at the end, discuss how clients had to "throw themselves in" and let go of self-consciousness, fear of failure, judgment, etc.

## Skill: Non-Judgmental Stance

### *Exercise #1: Judging the Media*

Pass out magazines, newspapers, etc. to the clients. Have them identify all the judgments they make about what they are looking at or reading. Instruct them to pay close attention to the emotion(s) they feel as they are judging. Clients should write down what they are judging and how it made them feel. At the end of the exercise, tie in the fact how judging causes unending problem emotions.

### *Exercise #2: Ding the Bell*

Place your bell (or any sound device) in the middle of the group table. As the group progresses, if you or anyone in the group hears a judgment, someone in the group will say, "ding the bell". This is a sign that someone has just made a judgment. This is a good exercise to help clients increase their awareness of their judging.

## Skill: One-Mindful

### *Exercise: Multiple Games*

Bring in multiple games. These games should require clients to use their concentration. Some examples of these games are:

#### **Jenga**

Concentration

Memory

#### **Building houses out of playing cards**

Twister

#### **Simon**

Don't Spill the Beans

Hungry Hungry Hippos

#### **Operation**

#### **Perfection**

I highlighted the games my clients seem to get the most involved in. Talk to your clients about having to get involved in or be "one-mindful" and let go of distractions while playing the game.