

Session 09

Social relationships

Material/wall

ca. 2m long bands/ropes

traverse with enough holds and footholds, easy individual routes

Goal of the day

Reflecting one's own pattern of relating, recognise own behavioural patterns, foster social skills (communication, cooperation), experience positive consequences of social interaction, perceiving the other, body sensation

Exercises

Breathing meditation, Warm-up, Connected traverse, The conductor, The mountain

Alternative exercises: Yurtcircle, Shadow climbing

Starting phase

00:00	Mindfulness exercise	Breathing meditation
00:10	Checking in	How am I today?
00:30	Topic: Social relationships	Function of relationships: basic need, support during challenges, feeling cohesion benefits mood. Maintaining relationships requires: balance of giving and taking, communication and cooperation; being able to change perspective and mind boundaries.

Active phase

00:35	Warm-up	Warm-up in the group, group ritual optional
00:45	Group exercise	Connected traverse In pairs Working in teams requires agreement and consideration.
01:10	Bouldering exercise	The conductor In pairs To take another person's viewpoint/ perspective is often difficult: "Do not judge somebody, before you have not bouldered in their shoes."

Final phase

01:35	Final round	What are you taking with you today? What experiences have you made with teamwork?
01:50	Relaxation exercise	The mountain or The tree

Breathing meditation

Therapist version

Preparation

Self-responsible "arrival" of the participants:

If you are still stuck in your daily routine, please quietly do the [5-4-3-2-1 exercise](#) for yourself to fully arrive here.

Description

This exercise is performed in a sitting position.

Find a comfortable, upright seating position.

Feel the points of connection to your chair.

Feel your feet firmly on the ground.

Take your time to settle into your seat.

Relax all muscles that you do not need to sit upright (shoulders, your face, etc.).

Close your eyes or set your gaze to be in front of you.

Thus prepared, now turn your concentration inward and bring your attention to the breath.

Breathe in deeply and out again. Observe the breath without influencing it.

Feel how the breath flows through your nose into your lungs, and how your chest rises and falls. Breathe deeply into your belly, and feel it rise and fall.

Some breaths may be shallow, others deep. Remain in non-judgmental observation.

Notice each breath from beginning to end.

Repeat in your mind "in" when you inhale and "out" when you exhale.

Whenever you notice that your mind is somewhere else, kindly but firmly bring your attention back to the breath.

Whatever else is perceptible may be there.

You don't need to do anything with it at all, pure observation.... (5 min.)

Now finish the exercise by slowly deepening your breath and moving your body again. Notice your surroundings and give yourself a smile :)

Topic - Session 09

Social relationships

Background information

Social relationships fulfil many key (survival) functions, making the biological basic need for attachment and connection deeply rooted. Relationships can support us to deal with demands and challenges. Mutual activities and the feeling of cohesion and being together with another person and/or a group evoke positive feelings and can improve mood. Further, relationships make it possible to receive interpersonal feedback, and thereby learn and adapt one's own behaviour.

To maintain healthy relationships, a balance of giving and taking is key, both being able to take back one's own needs and accept the help of others. One-sided relationships are unhealthy and have a lower chance of survival.

The goal of this session is to recognise one's own patterns within relationships, for example whether it feels easier to mind oneself or mind others, or whether it is easier to accept or to give help. Further this session offers the opportunity to try out and reflect on strategies to maintain relationships, for example a mindful perceiving of the other, empathy and boundaries (taking an other's perspective is difficult and does not always work), as well as negotiating and being considerate to each other – this can only be achieved through communication and cooperation.

Key questions

Why do we need relationships at all? What is the function of a social network?

How are social relationships maintained? When and why do relationships break?

How was it to boulder together with your partner/your team? Would you have preferred to boulder on your own? Why? What does it take, to boulder well together?

How do you feel about accepting help from others/when someone is taking your needs into consideration? Is it easier for you to support others/help, or to receive support and help?

Do you know the feeling that it can be hard to put yourself into someone else's shoes? What could help with that?

Learning goals

Conscious awareness and acceptance of (positive) social feedback.

Give and Take as part of social relationships (to mind oneself – to mind the other).

Avoiding misunderstandings through communication.

Taking perspective and consideration from outside: subjective interpretation of another person's actions do not necessarily represent reality.

Warm-up and cool-down

Individual exercise

Description

Participants are inducted to warm-up before starting to boulder and cool-down at the end.

The warm-up consists of 3 parts:

1. Cardio warm-up: starjumps, jumping jacks
2. Mobilisation: open and close fists (with arms outstretched or at an angle), wrist turns, move arms to side and flip palms up and down, move head to each side, circle arms back and forth, cat-cow pose on all fours, stretch sideways, stretch hands down to the toes while standing, twist and stretch ankles.
3. Warm-up climb: climb 3-4 easy routes below your own level to warm-up.

Cool down consists of stretches to all muscle groups that were used.

Material/wall

Free room or space on mats

Key questions

Which exercise did you like last time? How did it go?

Variations

Due to time constraints and depending on the content of the lesson, the warm-up climb may be omitted.

Tips

Increasingly involve participants to encourage initiative.

Connected Traverse

Partner exercise

Description

In this exercise two participants climb a route together, while being tied together by a band/ribbon, which is loosely put into a trouser pocket or into the waistband. It should be possible for the ribbon to come out easily, it should not be tied. At the end of the exercise participants are invited to reflect briefly on their experience. Afterwards positions are swapped.

Material/wall

2m long rope/band/ribbon

Traverse with enough holds and steps, so that two people, who are tied to each other by the band, can manage it

Therapeutical themes

Empathy, expectations and demands, body sensation/body core, cooperation, communication, social comparison, dealing with success/failure, responsibility/dependence

Key questions

How do the two of you deal with each other? Do you communicate and if so how? How does it feel to be in the leading/following role? Who takes "responsibility" for the success of the task? How?

Variations

In a more difficult variation, the rope is tucked into the shoes instead of the pants.

Tips

It is important that the ribbon/rope is not too tight, so that it can slip out easily. The exercise is particularly suitable (but not only) for people who already have a good rapport.

The conductor

Partner exercise

Description

In pairs participants select an easy route. One of the participants boulders, the other person conducts, by announcing the next hold/step. Then participants swap.

Material/wall

An easy route with many holds and steps, not too strength focused

Therapeutical themes

Social relationships, responsibility/dependence, empathy/sensibility

Key questions

How well could it be recognized what the other person needs, what works for him/her and what does not? Transfer to everyday life: Do others give "good advice"? Does one perhaps also sometimes give advice oneself without knowing what the other person really needs? How easy is it for the person doing the bouldering to become completely dependent on the person conducting the bouldering? Does he/she try with all his/her strength to do it as instructed, or does he/she take responsibility him/herself and say what works for him/her and what doesn't?

Variations

As a variation, only grips, footholds or both and additionally the shift of the centre of gravity can be announced.

Tips

The exercise is especially useful in pairs that already have established a relationship (but not only), as it makes typical patterns of the relationship transparent.

The experience of receiving 'bad' advice is known to many. Participants can be additionally invited to consider when they give 'bad' advice themselves.

The mountain

Therapist version

Additional tips

This exercise is done while sitting. Leave enough time between paragraphs and read slowly in a meditative voice.

Description

Close your eyes and let the image of the most beautiful mountain you can imagine arise in your mind's eye. It can be a mountain that you already know or a mountain from your imagination. Now let this image become clearer and clearer.

Look closely at the shape of your mountain - its rock, its peak rising into the sky, and its foundation resting in the earth.

Consider its steep or gently sloping sides. Also notice how massive your mountain is - how solid - how motionless and how beautiful! Seen both from a distance and up close - a beauty that comes from its unique shape and form.

Perhaps the top is covered with snow; and its lower slopes are forested; perhaps it has a particularly lofty peak or even several peaks or a high plateau.

The mountain is deeply anchored in the earth, standing firm and secure. And even when clouds obscure it, when a storm rages around it, the mountain is always the mountain. Just sit here and breathe and become aware of the qualities of this mountain.

And you are the mountain.

You are the mountain with all its features and characteristics - with all its beauty! Sit like a mountain! Dignified and silent. Your head becomes the towering peak or the vast plateau, just as you imagined your mountain peak. Your shoulders and arms, your front are the slopes, your buttocks and legs form the solid base - rooted to the chair, cushion or ground.

Deep within your own body along the spine, experience the ascending quality of the mountain. And now, as you sit here, with each breath become a little more like this breathing mountain. Centered, present and unshakably resting in your stillness - completely what you are - beyond words and thoughts.

Become aware that the mountain is simply sitting there as the sun moves across the sky and light and shadow and color change from moment to moment. Day is followed by night and night is followed by day again! The mountain experiences constant change and yet always remains itself. It remains still while the seasons merge and the weather changes from day to day and from moment to moment.

See how the mountain embodies the stillness that outlasts all change. It just sits there and is itself.

Its magnificence and beauty are not dependent on whether or not it is seen or what the weather is like. The mountain doesn't care whether it is in the sunlight or enveloped in clouds - whether it is blazing hot or freezing cold. It just sits there and is itself.

Sometimes the fiercest storms and thunderstorms of unimaginable strength roar on it; and then spring comes - the birds sing again in the trees and flowers bloom in the mountain meadows, and huge amounts of meltwater shoot down into the valley in the mountain streams. While all of this is happening, the mountain just sits there, not really being impressed by what is happening on its surface.

Despite the constant changes in our own lives, we can embody the same unwavering stillness and a sense of being rooted - just like the mountain.

You can relive this image of the mountain from time to time - whenever you need its qualities. You can become this mountain again and again, you can sit like a mountain again and again in between. Mindful, dignified, present and deeply rooted with the earth in true stillness.

Now you say goodbye to your mountain and become yourself again. But you take a piece of it with you into your life, which you now re-enter with all your attention.

You consciously breathe in and out deeply, stretch your arms and legs and come back to the here and now.