

# **KS2 mental wellbeing**

Activity Pack



# Session Aim: To explore the art of noticing



## Preparation

This activity is designed to make use of the outdoors on a rainy day.  
Identify an area where puddles form

## Resources

- A rainy day!

## Top tips!

Ensure everyone is well dressed to keep them comfortable (waterproof coats/ umbrellas). Consider where pupils could shelter if the rain is heavy when completing this activity.

## Session Context

For you own reference:

- This activity is designed to bring pupils to the present moment by engaging their senses
- Taking part in an activity in the rain also teaches resilience and learning to accept circumstances we perhaps don't want.
- Use this activity calm a busy or anxious class when the weather doesn't allow for free time outdoors.



# Session Aim: To explore the art of noticing

## First sense - sound

Ask the children to find a spot next to a puddle. Begin by asking the whole class to be silent and ask them to see if they can hear the rain drops splashing into the puddle as they land. Give the children a few quiet minutes to listen in - encourage them to then close their eyes and see if they can visualise the raindrops splashing into their puddle as they hear the sounds.

## Second sense - sight

Remaining quiet, softly ask the children to open up their eyes and now watch the rain drops as they splash into the puddle. Ask them to look for ripples and notice how far they spread, whether they cross with other ripples and give the children a few minutes to quietly watch.

## Third sense - touch

Ask the children to hold their hands out, palms facing upwards and then close their eyes. Ask them to notice each rain drop as it falls into their hands, noticing how heavy or how light each one feels, whether the rain drops are similar or different from one another.

## Reflection

Ask the class to gather back together and share with one another which interaction they enjoyed the most with the rain. Ask whether they have ever slowed down to notice the rain in this way before and how it made them feel. Reflect on the benefits of slowing down and noticing on our mind.



# Session Aim: To express emotions using nature



## Preparation

Ensure there are enough natural materials available for the class. These can either be foraged from your outdoor area (share responsible foraging) or provided.

## Resources

- Natural items - petals (you may need to buy a small bouquet), leaves, sticks, shells, pebbles etc.

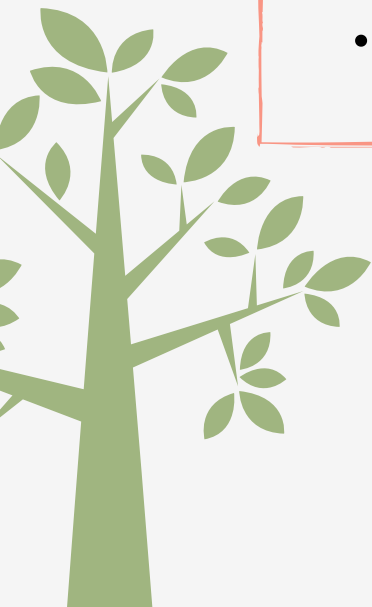
## Top tips!

Have a variety of coloured natural items available for this activity. If you are struggling you can use loose parts from the classroom too - ask your Early Years classes if you can borrow some!

## Session Context

For you own reference:

- The tactile element of this activity helps children to reconnect with themselves.
- Encourage discussion, collaboration and creativity to get the most from this activity!



# Session Aim: To express emotions using nature

## Nature Mandalas

Model making a nature mandala. Begin with a central item. Then create concentric circles using different patterns. You could make patterns with different colours and items in each circle or make patterns similar to one another.

Ask:

- Which emotions do you think my patterns are displaying?
- How do you know? What makes you think that?

Alternatively you could make each circle a 'journey' using different natural items to display what happened. E.g. begin with soft, fluffy dandelion clocks to represent waking up early in the morning, followed by yellow dandelions to represent the sun coming up, then using prickly holly leaves to represent the rush of getting ready for school etc. Each circle could tell a story.

Allow children to choose whether to work in pairs or individually to make their mandala patterns.

Gather back together to discuss one another's patterns and what they think they are trying to express.



# Session Aim: To explore using the breath and observing it's effect



## Preparation

Blow up the balloons and store them off the grass to prevent popping

## Resources

- Wide blades of grass
- Dandelion clocks
- Balloon

## Top tips!

Have a variety of coloured natural items available for this activity. If you are struggling you can use loose parts from the classroom too - ask your Early Years classes if you can borrow some!

## Session Context

For you own reference:

- You could leave these activities out for children to explore independently or deliver them as a whole class discussing how each one felt afterwards.



# Session Aim: To explore using the breath and observing it's effect



## Grass trumpets

Make grass trumpets by choosing a wide blade of grass, placing it taut between your thumbs, then blowing between your the gap below your knuckles to make the grass vibrate and make a noise. Give the children some time to have a go at making lots of noise!

## Dandelion clocks

Pick some dandelion clocks (perhaps share in pairs if there are not quite enough for one each). Ask the children to make a wish & blow the seeds gently.

## Keepy-uppy

Provide each pair with a balloon, sit down on the ground. Partner 1 uses their breath to blow the balloon into the air, partner 2 blows it back towards them. Keep the balloon up using their breath

## Reflection

After carrying out each of the activities have the children lay down on the ground, place their hands on their ribs and just observe the rise & fall as they breath normally. Then gather back together to discuss how different their breathing felt in each of these activities, how it made them feel emotionally & discuss which was their favourite. You could use this discussion to talk about how they can use their breath to calm themselves during their SATs papers.



# Session Aim: To observe nature

## Preparation

Choose a suitable location for the class to lay down on the ground - ensure ground conditions are suitable.

## Resources

- A blue sky with some clouds around!



## Session Context

For your own reference:

- This activity can be as long or short as you prefer - you could include some paper and clipboards for recording cloud shapes too.



## Safety

Ensure everyone knows not to look directly into the sun when cloud watching.



# Session Aim: To observe nature



## Cloud watching

Before beginning ask the children to close their eyes for a moment and notice how they're feeling in their bodies, how they feel in their emotional selves and also any thoughts swirling in their minds. Ask the children to lay down and look at the clouds seeing what shapes they can see. Encourage them to discuss what they can see with the people laid near them. Give them some time to watch the sky.

Afterwards ask the children to close thier eyes again and check in with how they feel both physically & emotionally, ask if they notice a difference in how busy their brain feels. Ask them to share what they notice.



# Session Aim: To explore textures in nature

## Preparation

Complete a thorough risk benefit assessment of your outdoor area before taking part in this activity. Make the children aware of any plants that aren't suitable to be touched. Use a plant ID app to help you identify any toxic plants.

## Resources

- Curious children!



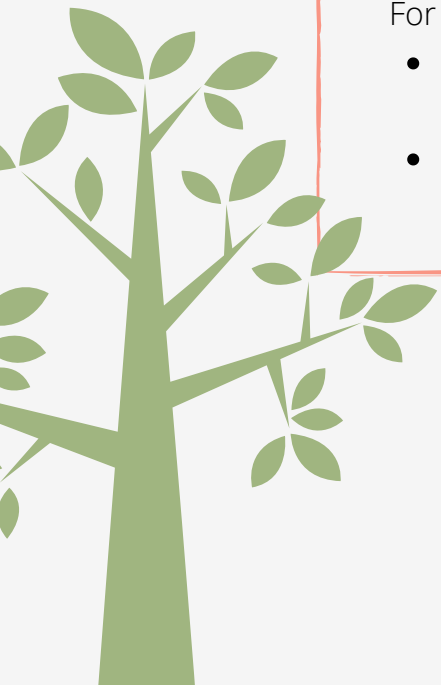
## Top tip

Teach responsible foraging!  
Taking no more of a plant than the size of your knuckle to the end of your finger.

## Session Context

For you own reference:

- Break this activity down into short and snappy brain breaks by giving the children one adjective and asking them locate a plant that represents it!
- Getting children focused on touch helps anxious children become more present in the moment and less focused on future worries.



# Session Aim: To explore textures in nature



## Texture hunt

Challenge children to work in pairs and find as many different textures around the outside space as possible. Encourage them to get really stuck in and pay attention to things that look similar but feel completely different e.g. bark on different species of trees, different length grasses, leaves on different species of plants.

Have the children collect all of the different items up and discuss together the adjectives to describe each one.

Ask each child to pick a favourite texture and share it with the class, passing them around to experience them.



# Session Aim: To notice sensations and sounds

## Preparation

Choose a suitable location for the class to lay down on the ground - ensure ground conditions are suitable.

## Resources

- Nothing!

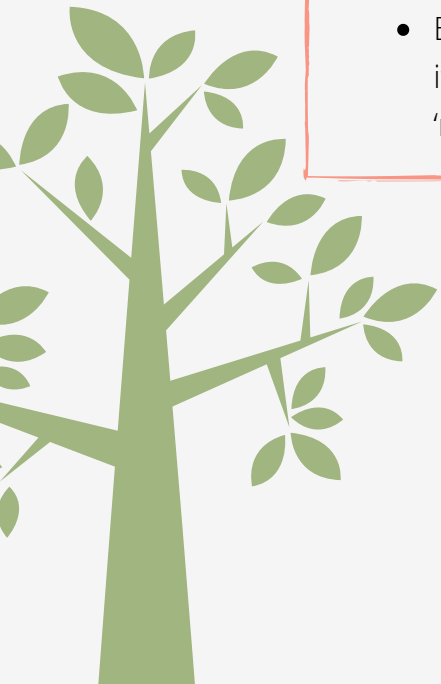
## Session Context

For you own reference:

- Body scanning is a meditation technique that works well for children as it gives their mind a focus rather than expecting them to focus on 'nothing' like traditional meditations.

## Top tip

Repeat this activity, extending the amount of time you do it by a couple of minutes each time as the children develop their ability to focus.



# Session Aim: To notice sensations and sounds



## Body scan

Ask the children to lay down on the ground, each in their own space. For this activity they can move but only within their own space and must not disturb anyone else. They are aiming to stay as settled and still as possible though!

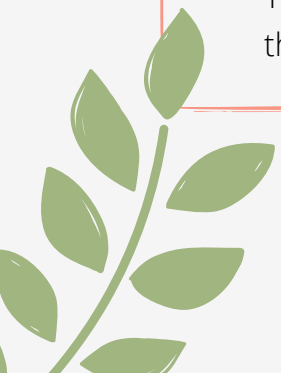
Ask the children to lie down and close their eyes, follow this script, taking pauses where you feel it is appropriate for your class:

Ok so begin with a big breath in and sigh it back out (sigh), now do that once more but as you do feel your body turn heavy and press into the ground. Breath in, and sigh it back out (sigh).

Think about your toes, give them a wiggle inside your shoes, now the next time you breath out let them go loose. And with your next breath out let your feet feel heavy, notice your heels pressing against the ground. Relax your ankles and lower legs letting them get heavier with every breath. Now let your knees go floppy and your thighs relax. With your next breath out let your hips relax. Now imagine all of your spine relaxing one vertebrae at a time, notice how heavy your shoulders are on the ground now. Next relax your neck. And with your next breath out, relax your jaw, let your tongue turn heavy inside your mouth. Relax the muscles in your cheeks, around the eyes and your forehead. Notice how the ground pressing against the back of your head.

And as you lie there feeling heavy, tune into your ears, see what sounds surround you. (Give them a couple of minutes - extend this part each time you repeat the activity).

To bring the children around safely, revisit each body part in reverse of the script getting the children to wiggle and move those body parts to wake themselves back up!



# Session Aim: To eat mindfully

## Preparation

Find a place for children to sit comfortably as a class.  
Allow friendship groups to sit together - discussion is key in this activity!

## Resources

- Healthy fruit snack



## Session Context

For you own reference:

- Mindful eating can feel strange at first! If any children find paying attention to the sensations whilst eating overwhelming, listen to them and pause the activity.

## Top tip

This is an activity children will often repeat independently - again tuning in with the senses



# Session Aim: To eat mindfully



## Mindful snack!

Ask each child to sit down, holding their snack in their hands. Before they eat it ask them to close their eyes and feel their snack in their hands, noticing the texture, any bumps or notches. Then ask them to smell their snack.

Ask them to open their eyes and take their first bite, taking their time to notice the texture and taste as they chew. Ask them to repeat this for the next couple of bites before sharing what they noticed with friend. Then let conversation flow from there.

Beginning a snack in this way is a great way to reset the children's nervous systems after a test paper before engaging socially and unwinding outdoors with friends!



# Session Aim: To mix natural materials

## Preparation

Ask your Early Years team if you can borrow items from their mud kitchen or look in the maths cupboard for capacity containers (make sure to wash before returning!). Don't overlook everyday class items such as pencil pots & trays too.

## Resources

- A range of containers
- Sticks or spoons
- Water for mixing

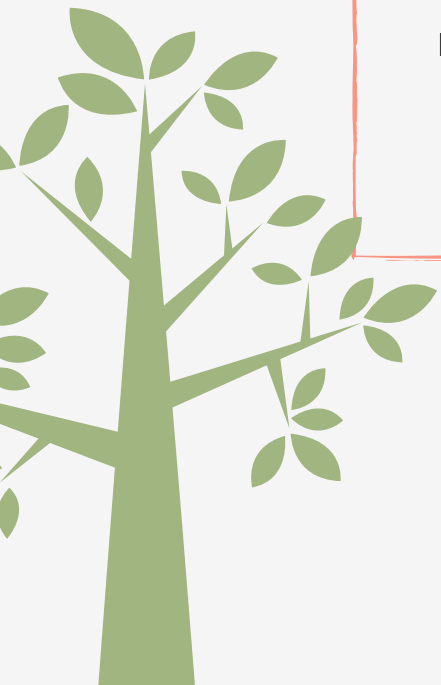
## Top tip

Teach responsible foraging - discuss appropriate amounts for this activity based on what's available in your outdoor space. You should aim for spaces to look unchanged after foraging!

## Session Context

For you own reference:

- The purpose of this activity is to give the children a focus whilst they explore a natural space - harnessing the benefits on nature for their brain whilst keeping them busy!



# Session Aim: To mix natural materials



## Mixing materials

Put the children into small groups. Ask them to choose whether to make a potion that smells beautiful, looks beautiful or feels interesting.

Have the children collect varied natural items into their containers, mixing them, adding water and aiming to fulfil their objective. Encourage group work and collaboration.

Review the children's mixtures at the end and judge whether they met their objective or not by observing and interacting with their mixtures!



# Session Aim: To experience textures in nature

## Preparation

Set up an obstacle course that focuses on balancing. Consider walking along skipping ropes one foot in front of the other, spots to step on and balancing beams.

## Resources

- Paper towels
- PE equipment - balancing beams, skipping ropes, spots



## Session Context

For you own reference:

- Walking barefoot on natural surfaces improves blood circulation and is proven to lower cortisol levels - perfect for a SATs week calming activity!

## Top tip

Ensure surfaces are suitable for walking barefoot. Be mindful that some children will have more sensitive feet than others and may not be comfortable on certain surfaces.



# Session Aim: To experience textures in nature



## Barefoot walk

Ask the children to stand still and notice the sensations they can feel inside their shoes with their feet. Then ask them to remove socks & shoes and step gently onto the ground (choose a comfortable surface to begin). Again ask them to notice what they can feel.

Ask the children to move slowly around the outdoor area experiencing the different textures with their feet. Challenge them to find as many different textures as possible.

After a while you could set up a balancing obstacle course using PE equipment and challenge the children to walk along it barefoot and notice whether they find it easier or harder than wearing shoes.



# Session Aim: To observe nature mindfully

## Preparation

You may want to gather cushions or blankets, spare jumpers or other soft items for the children to lay on.

## Resources

- A natural space



## Session Context

For you own reference:

- This activity can be done individually and quietly to promote mindfulness or in pairs and small groups to promote connection.

## Top tip

You don't need expansive areas of nature for this activity, small flower beds, the base of tree trunks & planters all provide a wide range of plants and wildlife to explore!



# Session Aim: To experience textures in nature



## Zoom in

Ask the children to sit in pairs and find a spot in the outdoor space, lay down on their fronts and get really close to the plants and wildlife in front of them. Guide them through noticing small details, textures & movements.

The children will start to discuss what they see in their pairs, challenge them to spot details they haven't noticed before.

Once they've noticed everything there is to notice in that spot the pair move to find another different location, this time aiming to find minibeasts to observe moving around.

