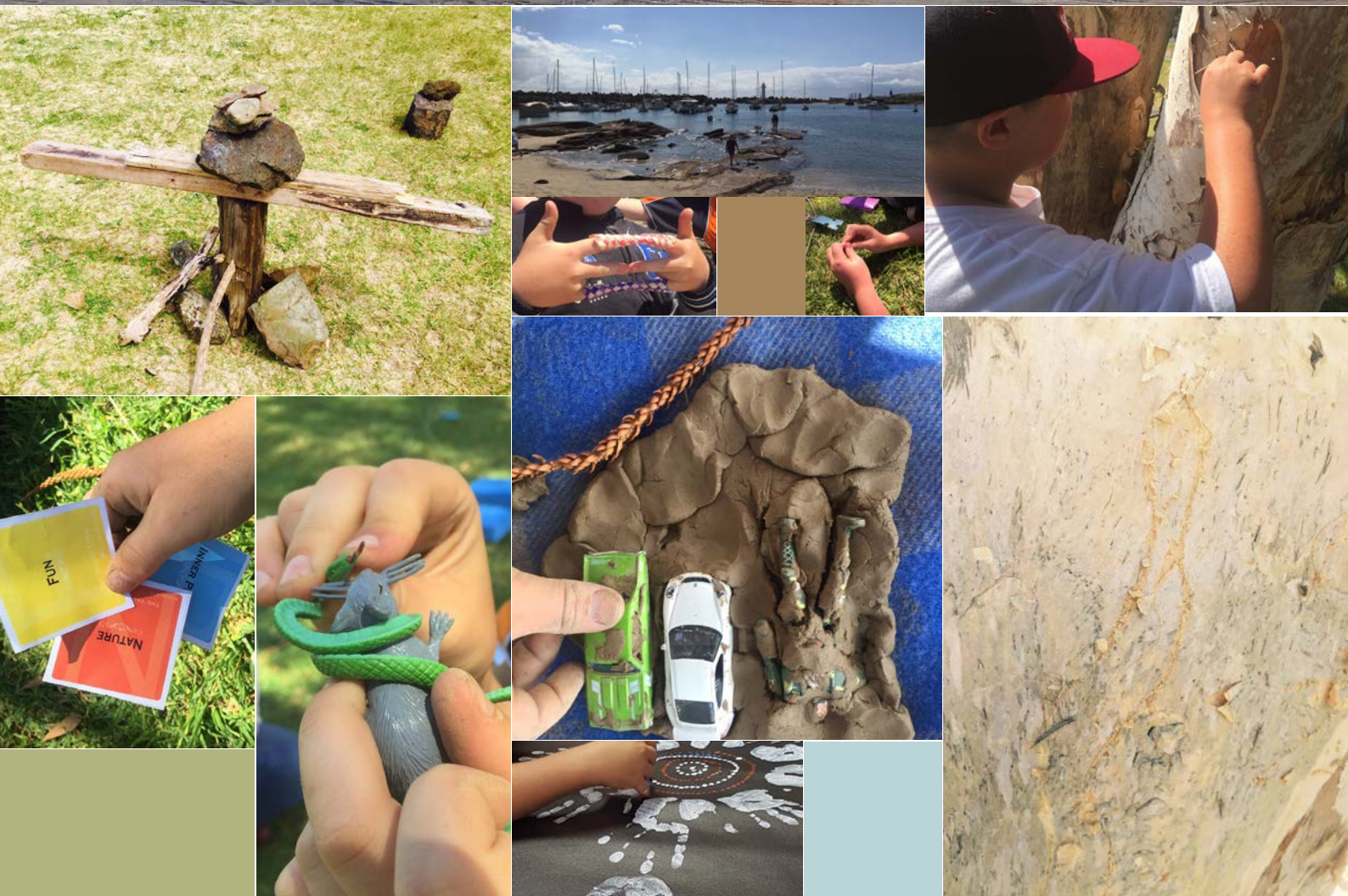


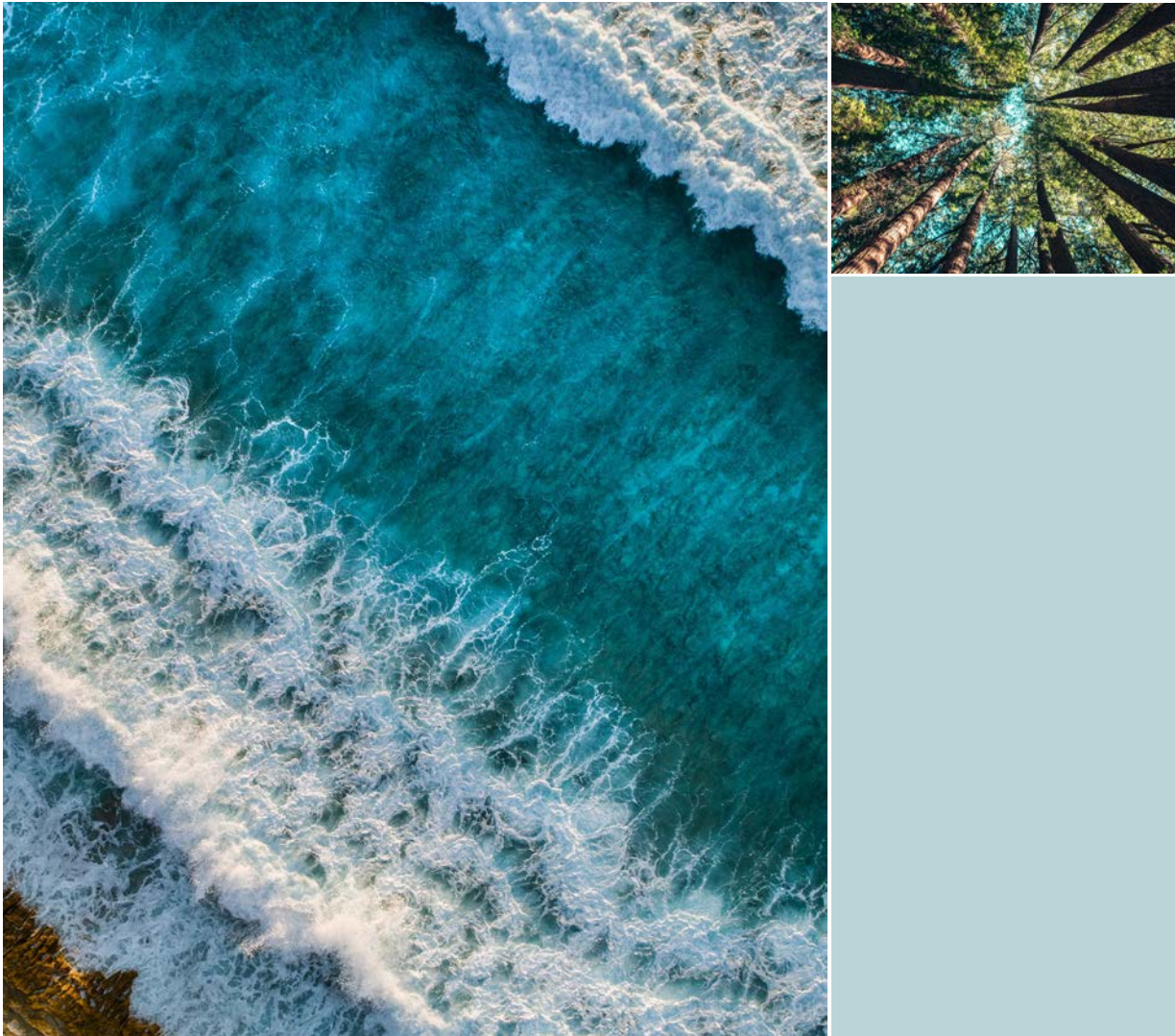


ACT in the Outdoors

**A program based on Acceptance Commitment Therapy,
Adventure Therapy and Outdoor Learning**



Facilitator Manual



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Contents

Introduction.....	1
Using this Manual	3
Session 1	
The Witness	5
Introduction	6
Session outcomes.....	6
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope.....	7
Activity 2: Team Architect	8
Activity 3: Stretch and Breathing Exercise	9
Activity 4: Establishing Group Expectations.....	10
Activity 5: Overview of ACT in the Outdoors.....	11
Activity 6: Awareness of Inner Experiences and Outer Experiences	12
Close.....	12
Session 2	
Who is Driving the Bus?	13
Introduction	14
Session outcomes.....	14
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope.....	15
Activity 2: Stretching and Checking In with How Our Bodies Feel	15
Activity 3: Helium Stick.....	16
Activity 4: Nature Walk.....	18
Activity 5: Sand drawing	19
Close.....	20
Session 3	
Being in the Moment.....	21
Introduction	22
Session Outcomes.....	22
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope.....	23
Activity 2: Stretching and Checking In with How Our Bodies Feel	23
Activity 3: Bullrush Tag Game.....	24
Activity 4: Rock Skimming.....	25
Close.....	25

Session 4

My Thoughts are Not Me.....	27
Introduction	28
Session Outcomes	28
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope.....	28
Activity 2: Balloon Sling.....	29
Activity 3: Tug of War	30
Activity 4: Chinese Finger Traps.....	31
Activity 5: Mindfulness Activity	32
Activity 6: Mindfulness / Sand Drawing	33
Close.....	33

Session 5

Values for Moving Forward	35
Introduction	36
Session Outcomes	36
Activity 1: Energy Rope.....	37
Activity 2: Tug of War	37
Activity 3: Breathing	37
Activity 4: Values Clarification	38
Activity 5: Using Clay as a Metaphor for Storytelling	39
Close.....	40

Session 6

Identifying Goals for Action	41
Introduction	42
Session Outcomes	42
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope.....	43
Activity 2: Stand Up for My Values (a modified tag game using values cards).....	43
Activity 3: Mindfulness and Storytelling with Beeswax Sculpture	44
Activity 4: Visualisation and Breathing Exercise	45
Close.....	45

Session 7

Creating an Action Plan	47
Introduction	48
Session Outcomes	48
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope.....	48
Activity 2: Problem Solving and Planning for Action	49

Activity 3: Adapted Minefield Activity	50
Close.....	52
Session 8	
Active Commitment to Future Goals	53
Introduction	54
Session Outcomes	54
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope.....	55
Activity 2: Nature Walk and Activity	55
Activity 3: Letter to Self.....	56
Activity 4: Close: Energy Rope, Group Sharing and Moving Forward - The Lookout	58
Capstone Activity.....	59
References	60

Introduction

Welcome to the companion manual for ACT in the Outdoors. This manual is based on an intervention and study developed by researchers in the Centre for Educational Research at Western Sydney University. The interdisciplinary research highlights the synergies between outdoor learning and a therapeutic intervention grounded in Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT). Underpinned by the aim of developing increased self-awareness, behaviour management skills, and positive future narratives, our research included the development of an eight-week intervention for 9-12 year old students with behavioural and emotional challenges. The innovative program incorporated ACT principles with adventure therapy and outdoor learning throughout the development and facilitation of the program. This research, and the resulting facilitator manual, are unique insofar as they leverage the evidenced-based principles of ACT and apply them in new ways that complement learning in the outdoors.

ACT in the Outdoors Research Publications:

Gray T, Tracey, D., Truong, S., & Ward, K. (2017). Fostering the wellbeing of students with challenging behaviour and/or emotional needs through Acceptance Commitment Therapy and Outdoor Learning <http://doi.org/10.4225/35/5924fd37c514d>

Gray, T., Tracey, D., Truong, S., & Ward, K. (2018). Get of the way and let nature weave her magic. In Book of Abstracts: European Outdoor Education Conference, Plymouth, UK, June 28-July 2, (p. 52-64). 978-0-9955996-4-2

Tracey, D., Gray, T., Truong, S., & Ward, K. (2018). Combining acceptance commitment therapy with adventure therapy to promote psychological wellbeing for children at-risk. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9(1565). doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01565

Truong, S., Gray, T., Ward, K., & Tracey, D. (2018). Expanding the circles across Outdoor Learning, Adventure Therapy, and Acceptance Commitment Therapy in schools. Proceedings of the 2018 8th International Adventure Therapy Conference, Sydney, 29th August – 2nd September. <https://8iatc.internationaladventuretherapy.org/>

ACT has emerged as a popular behavioural change technique which has been applied to address a wide range of challenges (Barney et al., 2017; Coyne, McHugh, & Martinez, 2011; Enoch & Dixon, 2017; Ghomian & Shairi, 2014; Hayes & Ciarrochi, 2015; Ruiz, 2010). Its primary objective is to support participants to identify and reframe the behaviours in their lives that impede constructive action through a process of acceptance of the current state of being, a conscious framing of constructive actions that will result in the life desired by the participant, and a deliberate process of commitment to these actions. Reviews have demonstrated positive long-term benefits for children and adolescents managing a range of issues from depression to risk of dropping out of school (Murrell & Scherbarth, 2006; Ruiz, 2010). Furthermore, empirical research has shown that ACT can deliver positive long-term effects 2 years following its completion (Livheim, 2004). ACT is founded on the principles of positive psychology where the goal is to begin to catalyse a change in focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities (Hayes et al., 1999). ACT promotes value-consistent action by decreasing experiential avoidance and increasing psychological flexibility, the ability to contact the present moment more fully as a conscious human being, and to behave in ways that serve valued living. There are six core principles of ACT: acceptance, defusion, being present, self as context, valued living and commitment to action (Bach & Moran, 2008; Hayes et al., 1999).

The unique development in our research is the integration of the ACT principles with those of outdoor learning and adventure therapy (Tracey, Gray, Truong, & Ward, 2018). The components of mindfulness, reframing and commitment to action are complemented by key components of outdoor learning, including rejuvenated

directed attention highlighted through Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan 2010), states of identification with the natural world through biophilic (Wilson, 1984) connections and ecopsychological (Roszak, 2001) restorative processes.

This integrated approach was used to engage a group of participants at-risk in learning and participation. This research sought to not only enhance the social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing of participating students, but also to generate a new body of knowledge about how ACT programs may be implemented in outdoor settings in a collaborative and complementary way to support change for students with challenging behavioural and/or emotional needs.

Using this Manual

This manual has been developed based on the program conducted during the research and has been enhanced so that it can be adapted and used by educators and professionals with interest and expertise in this integrated approach. The program was designed through an iterative process and was responsive to students' unique needs and interests on a weekly basis. Therefore, while the activities themselves were developed on an ongoing basis, the core principles and aims of the program, namely, ACT, outdoor learning, and adventure therapy, guided the overall design and weekly objectives. The overall approach has been documented and visually represented as a facilitation framework (see Figure 1) that amplified the research outcomes, including: i. promoting self-reflection; ii. incorporating storytelling; iii. embedding ritual; iv. integrating mindfulness; v. combining creative and arts-based practice; and vi. maximising embodied learning.

The specific delivery of the program (that is, structure, timing, curriculum) is designed to be delivered over eight weekly sessions. The duration of the weekly session is flexible; our sessions were developed to fit within the school's planned activities and therefore were one hour in duration. While conducting our research, the impact of ACT in the Outdoors was examined by the administration of pre and post-test surveys. To enhance our understanding of the experience of the intervention, post interviews were conducted with participants and teachers. The results of the research are available from the project report (see Gray, Tracey, Truong, & Ward, 2017).

Please note, this research received ethical approval from the university's Human Research Ethics Committee as well as the NSW Department of Education, and all teachers and students provided informed consent to participate in the program. The program was implemented in consultation with school staff, who are experienced educators working with students with specific needs. Furthermore, the research team consists of interdisciplinary educators and practitioners with complementary expertise including: a registered psychologist with specific ACT training and experience, a specialist in outdoor learning and experiential education approaches, a certified therapeutic recreation specialist with ACT training and experience in adventure therapy, and a certified nature pedagogue specializing in arts-based pedagogies in the outdoors.

This manual is intended for educational purposes and the implementation of any activities for therapeutic aims should be carried out under the supervision of a qualified health professional.

We trust you will find the components of this program flexible and adaptable, so they suit your own circumstances and the groups of young people with whom you work. The key to successful implementation for the facilitators is critical reflection at the end of each session. This will assist in determining the duration, order, and flow of the program.

Approach / Framework

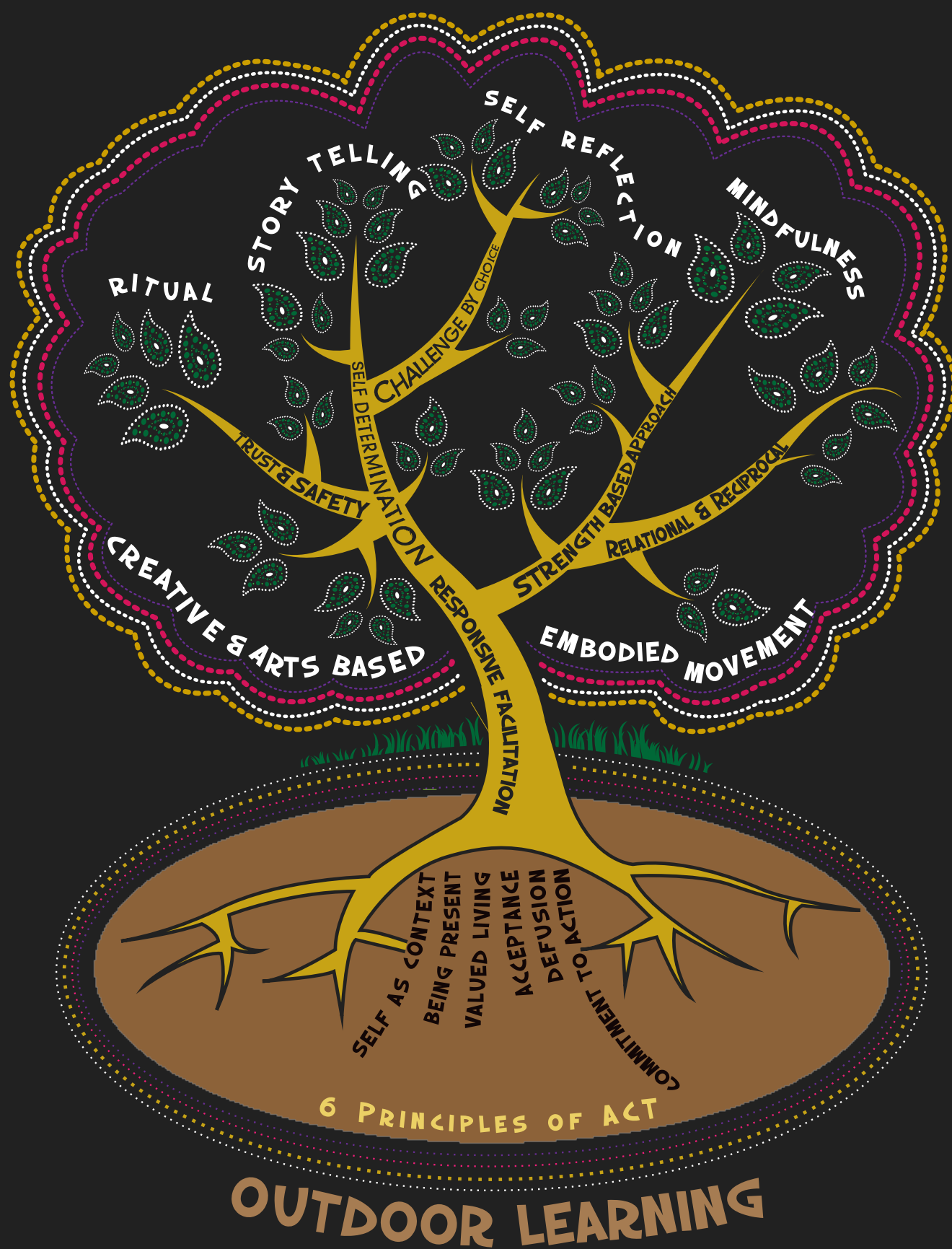


Figure 1: ACT and outdoor learning framework (Gray, Tracey, Truong, & Ward, 2017, p. 13).

Session 1

The Witness



Introduction

The focus of this session is on establishing a safe environment for all participants and introducing the structure for the program and subsequent sessions. Establishing routines and shared expectations is a key focus for this session, as well as acknowledging everyone's perspective and experiences. The session includes an introduction to ACT, the process of recognising inner experiences, and the practice of mindfulness. The key message of this session is being a witness through enhancing self-awareness.

Session outcomes

At the end of this session participants will:

- Have greater awareness of the thoughts that occupy their undirected attention
- Understand the parameters of working within the group – Being Safe, Respectful and Learners
- Develop a beginning awareness of their bodies in place
- Be introduced to mindful stretching and breathing for calming mind and body.

Activities	Minutes	Materials
Activity 1: introduction and energy rope	5	Rope (8mm) and string
Activity 2: Ice breaker - Team Architect	10	Straw, Sticky tape rolls, Rocks
Activity 3: Stretch and breathing exercise	5	
Activity 4: Establishing group expectations	10	Three timber letters S, R & L representing: "Safe", "Respectful", "Learner"
Activity 5: Overview of ACT in the Outdoors	10	Pens, coloured textas, pictures (outlined below), and worksheets
Activity 6: Awareness of inner experiences and outer experiences	10	'Feeling' cards
Activity 7: Introduce and practice mindfulness	5	
Close	5	

Note: Always try to have participants sit in a semi-circle if in small groups or one large group to encourage eye contact. Facilitators should not stand up the front as if teaching; they should also be sitting in the semi-circle.

Small group discussions may work best so break up with one facilitator taking a small group for activities, especially when discussing sensitive issues.

Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope

Welcome participants and conduct introductions. If participants know each other already a simple acknowledgement of this and of their commitment to working together is a good way to identify the participants as a group comprised of individuals committed to making their own lives more fulfilling. Explain to participants that in this session the group will establish collective expectations and introduce the key guiding principles or concepts they will be working with. For example, being **Respectful**, prioritising **Safety** and being an engaged **Learner** were the three key concepts relevant to the group we worked with and this is reflected by the use of R, S and L throughout the manual.

Respect refers to respect for one another, both adults and students, as well as taking turns, not interrupting each other, and not distracting others who are choosing to participate in the program.

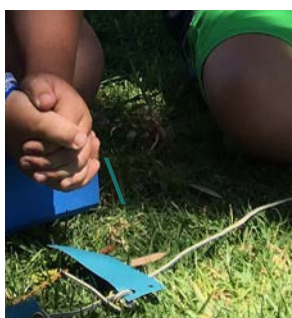
Safety refers to both physical and emotional safety. This includes looking after self and others in an outdoor environment, listening to instructions, and listening to each other without judgment. Safety also involves a group commitment to confidentiality for anything shared and discussed within the group.

Learner refers to everyone entering into the program with a willingness to learn. This includes being open to new experiences, demonstrating a willingness to participate, and also for adults to be positioned as learners as well.

Offer an overview of the ACT in the Outdoors program, what may be expected during weekly sessions and the enhanced outcomes of practicing activities during the week. Highlight to participants that they will be exploring and perhaps even sharing (optional) different types of emotions and thoughts throughout the sessions emphasising that the extent to which they share their insights is up to them.

The 'energy rope' is a rope of approximately 8mm thick made of a material that is comfortable to hold (e.g. not hard plastic) and positioned as a circle. The symbolism is that each person has a place in the circle and is a part of the group. Ropes, especially when used outdoors, are generally used to bring things together/anchor/make connections/keep us safe, so it represents Being Safe, and Being Respectful. It is important to note that the use of any symbolism or metaphors should be chosen carefully and be presented in an open and flexible manner to be meaningful for participants.

- Each participant receives a string that they will tie to the rope with their name attached, which represents that they are an engaged participant (a Learner), and they agree to follow the rules and to participate in their own way.
- Adults tie a string with their name attached as well to show their commitment to the group.
- Each week the rope can be brought out (it doesn't have to be a specific activity, but just mentioning something positive about the group from the week before is helpful and a reminder of the commitment to the group principles).



Respect refers to respect for one another, both adults and students, as well as taking turns, not interrupting each other, and not distracting others who are choosing to participate in the program

Activity 2: Team Architect

The purpose of this activity is to engage participants in working together while problem solving.

- Each facilitator joins one group. Divide the groups randomly by drawing a “group formation” card that has been pre-prepared, or the class teachers may know the group dynamics and choose to select small groups to work together. Ideally, there would be a maximum of 3 participants in each group.
- Each group is given one rock of equal size.
- Each group has 5 minutes to gather natural material from the environment (e.g. leaves, sticks) to build a structure that will “hold up the rock off the ground by at least 5 centimetres without being held by anyone.” (take some straws and sticky tape as back-up if the environment is resource-limited).
- After the allocated building time is over, all the groups meet, and the structures are measured and tested for balance.
- Debrief the activity by asking participants about their experiences of working together, being comfortable with each other, communicating during the building process, what skills were required for them to problem solve and work effectively, or what challenges they faced and if they were able to overcome them.



Activity 3: Stretch and Breathing Exercise

The purpose of this activity is to calm and focus the group prior to the session.

- Invite participants to return to the circle around the energy rope and check-in with how they are feeling physically. You may choose to mention the connection between how we feel and our physical body's responses. Invite everyone to move and stretch their body with facilitators or invite participants to offer suggestions for stretches. Once this is finished, move onto a breathing exercise.

Explain

- "For the next 5 minutes we are going to sit quietly and practice a breathing exercise. That simply means we are going to focus on our breathing, both in and out, and really notice it."
- Ask participants about their experience or knowledge with breathing exercises.
- Note: This might be completely new for some participants, so acknowledge this with the group, and explain that breathing can be used to calm ourselves, but if they feel like it is increasing their anxiety, they can stop at any time, and just find a comfortable sitting position, draw in the sand, look at the grass or sky, etc., while being quiet and relaxed.
- Ask participants to get into a comfortable position where they can relax their shoulders and sit with a tall spine. If they feel comfortable, they can lay down and close their eyes, or choose any other position in which they feel comfortable. (Note: Some people feel quite threatened by lying down with their eyes closed, so do not insist on this). Ask participants to stay close enough so that you can hear the facilitator speaking, if this is intended to be a guided breathing activity.
- There are scripts that may be found online and many ACT resources will include sample activities. Facilitators should plan this in advance based upon their own experience and skills leading breathing activities, and their knowledge of the group. It does not need to be a prescriptive activity, but rather one that helps participants to draw their awareness to their body and breath.
- Have a discussion after the exercise and ask participants what the experience was like for them. Explain that when we are anxious, worried or stressed we tend to take short, quick breaths. This can actually make us feel worse. Calm breathing is a tool that we carry with us and can use whenever we are feeling anxious, stressed or worried. Whenever we need to, we can take a few minutes to calm our breathing and check-in with our feelings and thoughts.



When we are anxious, worried or stressed we tend to take short, quick breaths. This can actually make us feel worse. Calm breathing is a tool that we carry with us and can use whenever we are feeling anxious, stressed or worried. Whenever we need to, we can take a few minutes to calm our breathing and check-in with our feelings and thoughts.

Activity 4: Establishing Group Expectations

The purpose of this activity is to establish basic rules for emotional safety, and group rules and expectations to facilitate engagement.

- Explain that group members are going to be talking about feelings and some personal experiences in their time together and this means there are some basic group rules about group interaction to ensure they feel safe and supported. In addition, group members will also develop some guiding principles that are important to them.
- To assist with establishing group protocols, present three 'mascots' to represent the basic rules for the group interaction. They may be soft toys, dolls, statues, plaques or other items of importance to the group. In our program, we used three wooden letters (R, S, and L) that were attached to the Energy Rope as reminders of the group's commitment to the principles of Respectful, Safety, and Learner. Explain that these mascots represent the basic rules:
- What we say here is confidential and private. We only need to tell someone else if:
 - a. you are being hurt,
 - b. you are hurting someone else, or
 - c. you are going to hurt yourself;
- We take turns and listen to each other;
- We don't make judgements or put down others.

Remind participants that no one is forced to do anything, but they are encouraged to participate.

- Explain to participants that you want to have fun together and get the most out of the time together. This is the point at which everyone develops and agrees on some specific guiding principles or concepts. Our group had the concepts of being Respectful, Safe and Learners but you can develop your own. Discuss the meaning of your guiding principles and what they mean.
- Facilitate discussion about each guiding principle and how they will apply in the work of the group during the sessions.
- Discuss what should be done if someone breaks a rule. "What did group members agree on at the start of the program?"



Our group had the concepts of being Respectful, Safe and Learners but you can develop your own.

Activity 5: Overview of ACT in the Outdoors

The purpose of this activity is to ensure all participants are aware of what to expect for the whole program of sessions and have some idea about the experiences they will engage in, the expectations of their participation and what they may gain from it.

Possible Script:

- *"We have come together to not only have fun together, but also for another very special reason. So, we would like to spend some time describing what we will be doing together and answering any questions you may have".*
 - *"We will be together every week at this time for 8 weeks. We will spend about one hour together. If the sun is shining we can be outside, but if it is raining we will need to find some shelter"*
 - *"Each of you will have your own folder to keep things from our time together. Sometimes we will be writing things down and drawing, other times we will be playing games, and other times we will be talking to each other."*
 - *"During our time together we are going to be learning some new skills. And one of the best ways to help make a new skill a habit is to practice. Think about when you first started to learn to ride a bike... the more you practiced, the more skilled you became. And then, with practice, riding a bike is now automatic. We would like these new skills to become automatic for you just like that."*
 - *Explain "Okay, so what are we going to be working on? What are these new skills? The aim of the program is to help us learn skills to manage bad feelings like sadness and worry so you don't miss out on the important things in life. We are not trying to get rid of these bad feelings as sometimes these feelings can be helpful. But we want to help you get on with your life and have fun doing what is important to you without having to fight with these bad feelings all the time or having these bad feelings taking over your life. When we learn to manage bad feelings they do not bother us as much anymore. Let's look at some pictures that help explain this a little more".*
- Break into small groups, with one facilitator sitting in a circle with each small group.
 - Hand out the participant folders with pictures to discuss. Pictures may be sourced from <http://www.acceptandchange.com/visual-metaphors/> Pictures may be selected to focus on any aspect of ACT based on your assessment of your group's needs. We selected three pictures: Mindfulness - "Now, what are we going to do?"; and Willingness and Acceptance - "Struggling to get rid of our emotions can be like playing tug of war with a monster" and "What is the alternative to struggle?"
 - Each participant looks at picture one. The facilitator explains what is happening in the picture. Ask: what they believe the picture means, what is the message, and if they ever felt this way?
 - Now each participant looks at picture two and three. The facilitator explains what is happening in the two pictures. Ask: what they believe the pictures mean, what the message is, and if they ever felt this way?
 - This activity may be used to introduce participants to the ACT principles.
 - The discussion may also be used to foreshadow the types of activities and discussions in the program.
 - At the end of the discussion, participants write their name on folders and place pictures back in folder.

Activity 6: Awareness of Inner Experiences and Outer Experiences

The purpose of this activity is to provide participants with some tools for identifying and managing the difficult thoughts and feelings they experience.

- Lay out the “feeling” cards. These may be printed cards prepared in advance or purchased from a variety of sources. Ask each participant to go and select a card that shows how they often feel.
- Explain that we are going to talk about feelings or emotions and that people experience feelings differently. However, even though they might not realise it, every feeling has three parts: mental reaction (what we think), physical reaction (what our body does), and our behaviour (or actions, what we do). These things happen inside us, and they may start because of something from the outside (maybe a place, person or event) triggers us.
- Now ask participants to think about when they feel sad, stressed or worried and ask them to identify how this makes them feel, physically. Also, ask them to share the thoughts that arise. What sometimes causes these feelings?
- Finish with a discussion based on what participants will learn in this program. They will learn to notice all the aspects of their feelings – what happens in their bodies, what they think and the messages these thoughts give them, and how they are likely to act. With practice they will begin to notice these aspects of their thoughts and feelings as they are happening. They will also learn that they are not their feelings – in other words, they do not need to be defined by their feelings. Participants will be encouraged to think about how they can separate themselves from their feelings so they don’t have so much control over their behaviours. They will come to understand that our thoughts and feelings do not have to push us around.

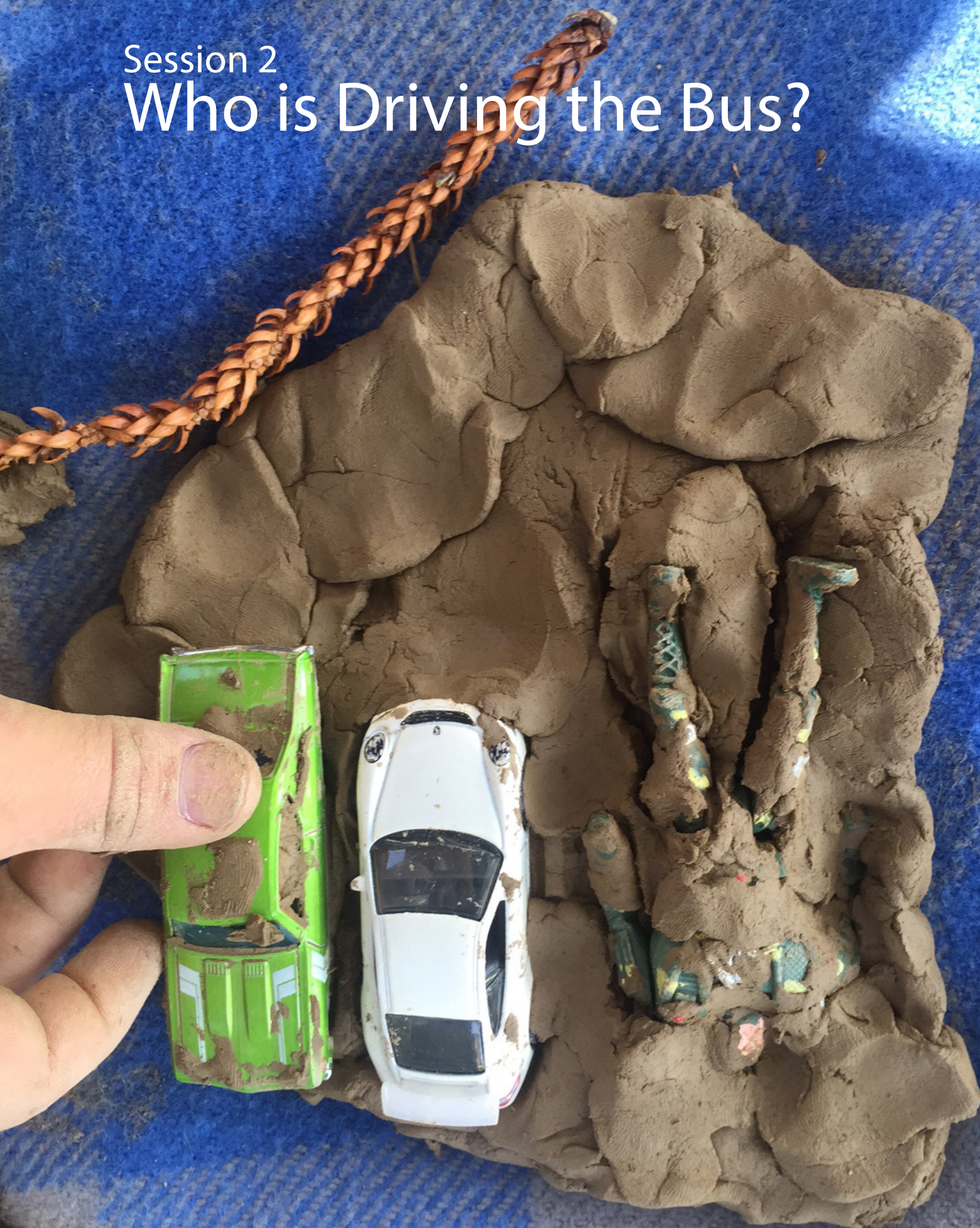
Close

Bring the group together again in a circle. Have participants take hold of the ‘energy rope’ again. Thank them for their engagement and ask if they have any questions or would like to share anything. Remind them they have attached their names to the rope and that they are linked together through their common goal of understanding themselves better and their commitment to generating a positive future. Briefly indicate one or two of the activities they can expect the following week.



Session 2

Who is Driving the Bus?



Introduction

The focus of this session is on developing the skill and willingness to make space for difficult thoughts. Through mindfulness, participants will develop understandings about thoughts and emotions, and our relationship with thoughts and emotions. Activities to highlight the ineffectiveness of seeking to control difficult thoughts will be highlighted. The key message of this session is: Who is driving the bus?

Session outcomes

At the end of this session participants will:

- Have gained greater understandings about tensions stored in the body
- Reinforce their understanding of and capacity for witnessing difficult thoughts
- Be better able to identify how frustration and anger can arise from an inability to control emotions
- Discover additional methods for expressing difficult thoughts that render them harmless.

Activities	Minutes	Materials
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope	5	Energy rope
Activity 2: Stretching and checking in with how our bodies feel	5	Sitting blocks
Activity 3: Helium Stick	15	2 dowel rods; Laminated cards/words to describe emotions during Helium Stick (e.g. blame, frustration, anger, hope, success, communication, etc.)
Activity 4: Nature Walk to explore Anger	20	Signs for nature walk
Activity 5: Sand drawing	10	Sticks
Close	5	

Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope

- Invite participants and teachers to join the circle. Sitting with energy rope tucked underneath knees or legs (e.g. if needed, as participants may be distracted by the rope, pull at it, disrupt others, etc.).
- Welcome the participants to Week 2. Reintroduce facilitators.
- Reflect back on last week and provide some positive feedback to the group (e.g. how well the participants did to listen and give everything a go, highlighting their ability to overcome any challenging circumstances such as weather or other distractions, etc.).
- Ask the participants if they remember what the key word indicators (e.g. S, L, R for Safe, Respectful, Learner) stand for, and their meaning.



Activity 2: Stretching and Checking In with How Our Bodies Feel

The purpose of this activity is to start bringing participants' awareness inward (first to their physical bodies). Start with standing stretches, then finish with a few seated stretches. The goal over the next couple of weeks will be to work towards integrated breathing with the stretches, which helps participants to focus their attention to their bodies.

- Instructions: Stretching is important to prepare our bodies for activity and to help us recover from physical activity, but it's important to check in with our bodies and to perform the stretch safely, so attention needs to be paid to what we're doing. Do they feel tired, strained, light, heavy, strong, etc.
- Spread out in a semi-circle, and guide participants through a series of approximately 5 standing stretches. If they are focused, the facilitator may consider asking for ideas for stretches.
- Distribute blocks or sitting mats if available and close with approximately 3 seated stretches.
- Bring participants' awareness to deepening their breath. Focusing on the stretch and a calm steady breath pattern. Eyes to a fixed point on the ground just in front of them, or if they're comfortable, closing their eyes even for just a few breaths if that helps them to relax.

Reflection:

Ask participants what it feels like to check-in with how their bodies are feeling.

Possible Script:

- *Was anyone able to just focus in on their stretching? Their breathing? What did that feel like?*
- *Stretching/breathing is something we can all do to calm ourselves when we feel anxious, worried, agitated, angry, etc. Just like it's important to check-in with our bodies, it's important to check-in with how we're feeling*

Activity 3: Helium Stick

The purpose of this activity is to showcase emotions and behaviours associated with adversity and hardship. The goal of Helium Stick is to create a challenging or frustrating situation for participants (in a safe environment) with a seemingly impossible task, in order to then relate the experience to feelings of frustration, anger, impatience, etc., and how they react to these types of situations. The purpose of this simulated activity is to lead to discussion about identifying when we first start to experience these feelings, and then mindfully choose to respond in positive and productive ways. This could be related to participants' current challenges in managing their behaviour while at school, relationships with others, or any other relevant examples they may choose to share.

Over the ensuing weeks the objective is to guide participants to work towards noticing their reactions, to anger, blaming and giving up – and bring back their awareness to one of hope, where their decisions are based on their values. The focus then becomes how they can clarify their values, and make decisions based on these values, by being mindful and being able to press the “pause button” when they feel difficult emotions beginning to emerge. The purpose of the “pause” is not to control the emotion, but rather, to take a moment to make choices based on values and meaning.

- Instructions: This is an activity called Helium Stick. The name will become obvious as this activity unfolds.
- Participants will form 2 lines (e.g. 3 per line standing shoulder-to-shoulder), with each line facing one another.
 - Raise hands outstretched parallel to the ground and point both index fingers straight out.
- Place the dowel on their fingers. The goal is to keep EVERYONE'S fingers in contact with the dowel when it is placed on top of your fingers.
 - On signal 'GO' – the team attempts to lower the dowel to the ground with all pointer fingers in contact with the dowel.
 - Any time a finger loses contact with the dowel, the group must resume the starting position and begin again.
 - The facilitator must watch closely to indicate each time a finger loses contact, as well as encourage participants to stay engaged as the challenge unfolds.
 - The facilitator may choose to provide some prompts (e.g. what might help you with this challenge, is everyone being listened to, is everyone being included, etc.), or may deliberately choose to step back, but should always remain aware of the group dynamics and communication.

This is almost impossible as the dowel invariably rises or participants lose contact with the dowel. Allow participants time to experiment, but also be mindful when motivation wanes, bring them back in and process the initial activity thus far – (keep it on track!).



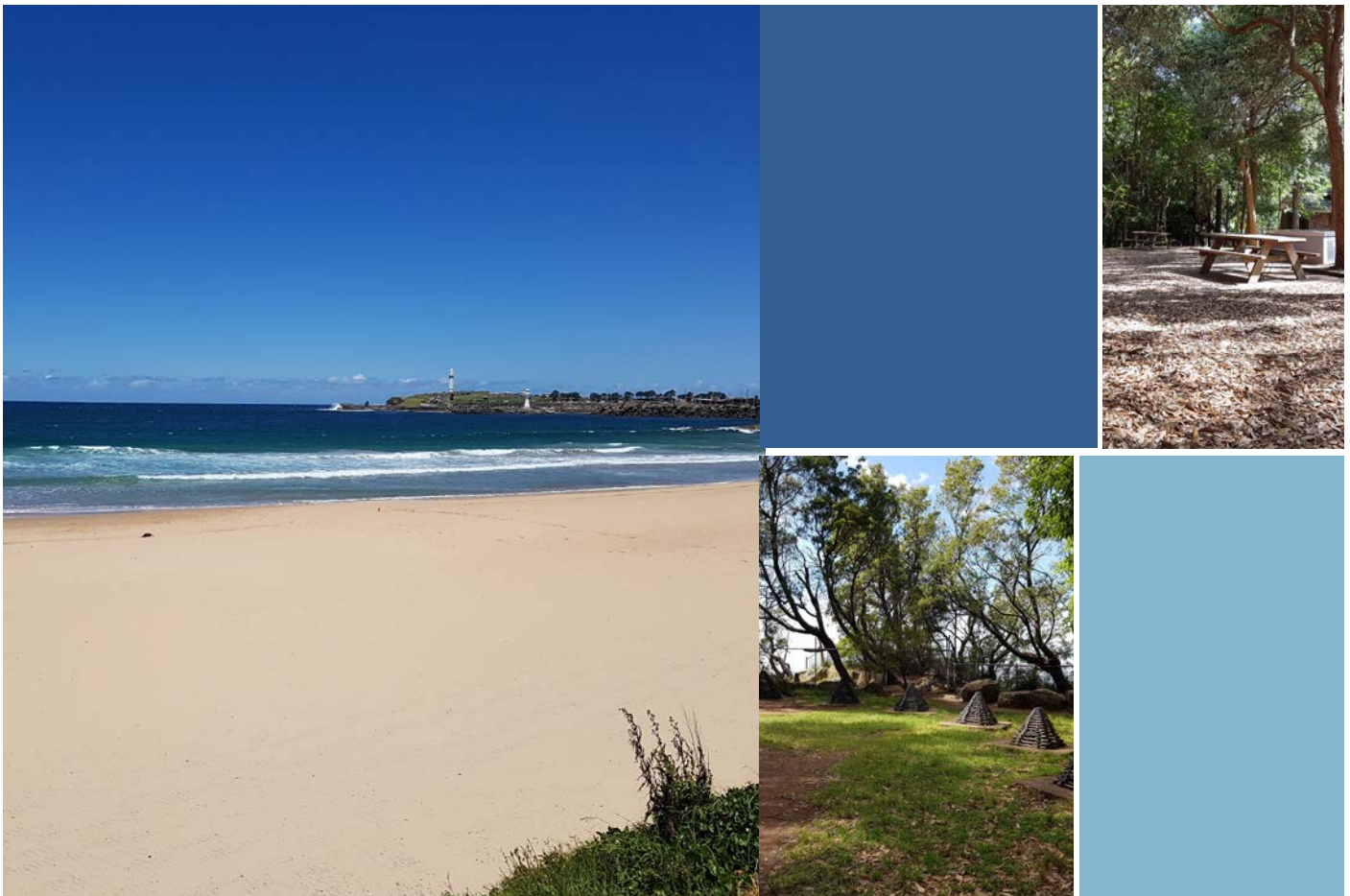
The goal of Helium Stick is to create a challenging or frustrating situation for participants (in a safe environment) with a seemingly impossible task, in order to then relate the experience to feelings of frustration, anger, impatience

Processing Ideas

- Debrief: Firstly, ask the teachers how they felt doing the Helium Stick – what emotions emerged? Then move to the participants. Ask them:
- How did the group first respond to this challenge?
- What were some of the different reactions in this group when facing this challenge?
- What skills were used when trying to overcome this challenge?
- What were the different ideas suggested? How were they received by the group?
- Did you learn anything new about yourself? If so, what was it?
- What were the different feelings that surfaced during the activity?
- When have you experienced these feelings before?
- What in your life right now is challenging you?
- What skills do you think you need to use to face this challenge?
- What can the role of those around you be to help you face this challenge?

Reflection:

Who wanted to give up? Who was angry? Or who felt that the game was impossible? How can we draw parallels/metaphors to life (i.e. What gives you hope? How can you make things better by noticing the way you react to anger? What other situations (e.g. at school or home) are like the Helium Stick and what do you need to be successful with these challenges (e.g. skills, supports, etc.)?



Activity 4: Nature Walk

The purpose of this activity is to explore the relationship between our thoughts, feelings and behaviour, how they are related, and how this plays out in our bodies and in our actions. Being in a green space helps to relax externally directed attention and to allow participants to recognise what is arising for them.

Laminated emotion cards are used as talking and reflection points along the walk.

Note: The cards must be placed on the track beforehand. Adults may participate in the discussion as well, where appropriate.

Possible Script:

- Explain “Now we are going on a nature walk to discover how our feelings, thoughts and behaviour are related. People experience feelings differently. But, even though you might not realise it, every feeling has three parts: mental reaction (what we think), physical reaction (what our body does), and our behaviour (or actions, what we do). These things happen inside us, and they may start because something from the outside (maybe a place, person or event) triggers us. Let’s take a walk and tell me when someone finds a picture of a ‘feeling’ “.
- Identify first stop in walk: a laminated sign “ANGER” place on a rock.
- Today, we will be talking about the feeling of anger... what is anger? Who has felt angry before?”
- Identify second stop: What made you feel angry?
- “We all feel angry sometimes. Think about the last time you felt angry. What triggered your anger? What made you feel angry? It could have been a place, person or thing. Here are some examples. You can choose one of these, or we can help you write your own”. Examples include: Friends, family, school, not getting something you want, being treated badly, or failing at something. Make sure each participant has identified a ‘trigger’ and written/drawn this on a piece of paper.
- Identify third stop: What were you thinking when you felt angry?
- “you may not realise it at the time, but our brains talk to us all the time. When you were angry, what were you saying to yourself about yourself?” “Most times, people will provide a response about the other person they are angry at, e.g. I hate that person, they are so rude. But when you feel anger, it is usually because of how it makes you feel about you ... so what did you say to yourself in this situation?” Examples include: I am not good enough, I am worthless, No one likes me, I am so different to other people, I am dumb, Things will never be okay, I wish I was someone different, I am a failure, I am hopeless. Make sure each participant has identified a ‘thought’ and written/drawn this on a piece of paper.”
- Identify fourth stop: what happened inside your body?
- “What was happening inside your body when you felt angry and said these things to yourself?” Examples include: Shaking, face went red, sweating, muscles went tight, started to cry, got a headache, or dry in my mouth. Make sure each participant has identified what happened in their body and written/drawn this down on a piece of paper.
- Identify fifth stop: What did you do; what was your action?
- “When you had this thought and feeling inside your body, what did you do?” Examples include: Threw something, hit something, hit someone, screamed, ran away, stayed quiet, or hurt yourself. Make sure each participant has identified what their action was and written/drawn this down on a piece of paper.

When participants and adults have all their pieces, finish by lining up in order and revise / debrief about the sequence and ask all to reflect on any insights (if possible).

Activity 5: Sand Drawing

The purpose of this activity is to highlight the ways in which our minds are always busy and always noisy talking to us, even if we don't always notice. We are reiterating that we are not our thoughts; they are just thoughts and it takes a lot of energy and effort to try to control them. Instead of trying to control them, which is not possible to do, we are encouraging participants to focus on what is important to them and the life they would like to lead. Instead of fixating on our thoughts, we can choose to shift our focus to living and enjoying our lives. Ask everyone to think about a thought about themselves that keeps coming up when they feel sad or worried. Maybe it's 'I am not good enough' or 'I am dumb' or 'I am unlovable'.

- Head down to the wet sand on the beach or a patch of bare earth. Ask participants to find a stick that would be suitable for drawing in the sand/earth.
- Each participant finds some space to draw the main "negative thought" in the sand. For example, they may choose to write a word or draw an image that represents the thought.
- Once everyone is finished, reiterate that "words and thoughts are not you!" "They are just thoughts and they can't hurt you if you don't let them control you". This doesn't mean that our thoughts and feelings are not real, and that they do not impact us. Validate that the participants might have very challenging circumstances and even people in their lives, and that change requires support at many levels. Change takes time. However, our goal here is to understand that our thoughts do not have to control us. Rather than staring at the thought in the sand, we can choose to look up at the world around us, and refocus on our values and the type of life we would like to live.
- Invite participants to destroy the writing in the sand/earth if they wish – jumping on it, scribbling it out with the stick, transforming it, or walking away from it.



Close

Have participants take hold of the 'energy rope' again. Thank them for their engagement. Remind them they have collectively used many skills today to face and overcome frustration (i.e. Helium Stick) or to identify their negative thoughts and feelings. This is difficult work. Remind everyone that they are linked together through their common goal of understanding themselves better and their commitment to identifying a positive future. Briefly indicate one or two of the activities they can expect the following week.



Session 3

Being in the Moment



Introduction

Being in the moment is a key focus in this session. It begins with a mindfulness activity to focus participants' attention to the body, providing participants with more exposure to breathing activities. Participants will be introduced to new skills for noticing difficult thoughts and how they can result in harmful feelings and beliefs about themselves. The focus is on connecting with the present, acknowledging damaging thought patterns and externalising them through constructive creative and physical expression. This session reinforces previously introduced ideas and provides participants with practice in developing these new skills. Effectively, these processes promote the idea of 'getting out of your head and into your life.'

Session Outcomes

At the end of this session participants will:

- Gain practice with mindfulness activities, including breathing exercises
- Gain practice identifying triggers for anger
- Gain practice identifying difficult thoughts and communicating them with others
- Develop strategies to disassociate from these

Activities	Minutes	Materials
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope	5	Energy rope
Activity 2: Stretching and checking in with how our bodies feel	10	Sitting blocks
Activity 3: Tag Game	25	Oz Tags, Cones
Activity 4: Rock skimming	15	Rocks to write on, textas
Close	5	



The focus is on connecting with the present, acknowledging damaging thought patterns and externalising them through constructive creative and physical expression

Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope

- Invite participants and teachers to join the circle around the energy rope.
- Welcome the participants to Week 3. Review names.
- Reflect back on last week. Begin by sharing some positive feedback, and possibly constructive encouragement, if needed. Share an example from the previous week (e.g. respecting each other's participation and giving each other space during the nature walk).
- Invite participants to share something positive; something they enjoyed.
- Revisit what S, R, and L stand for, and their meaning.

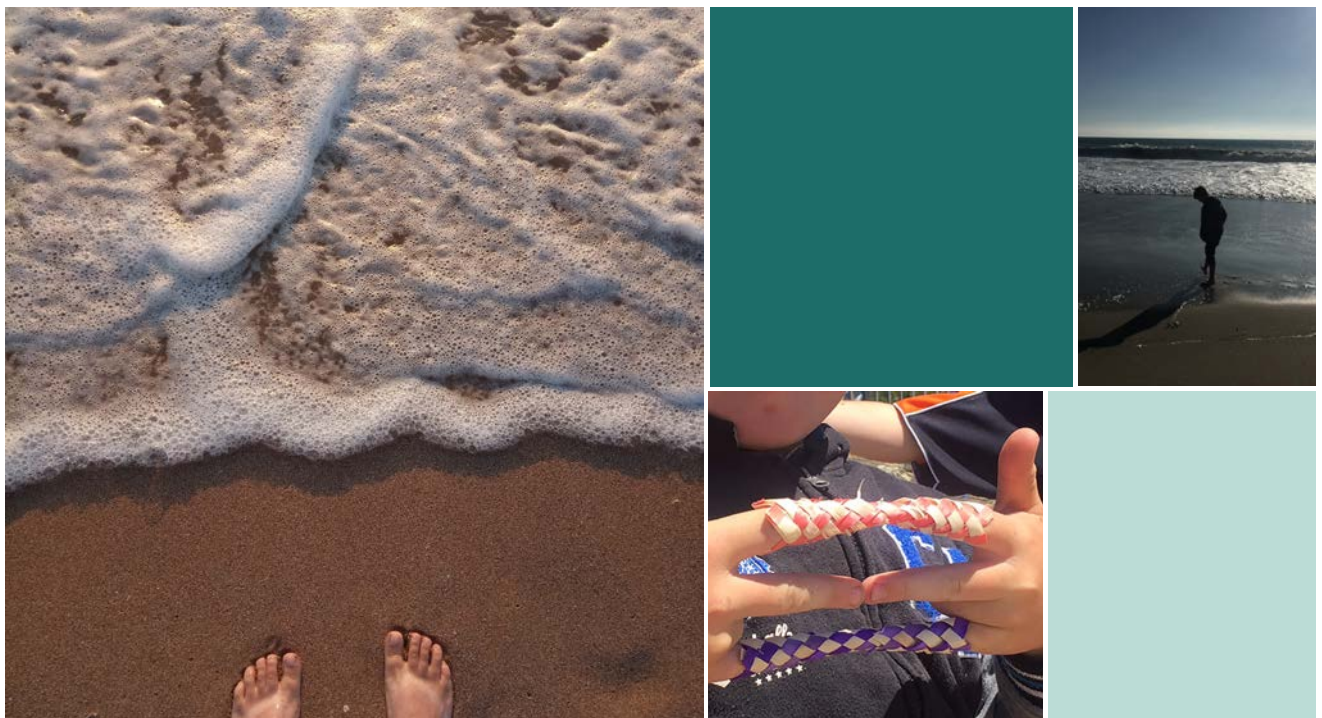
Activity 2: Stretching and Checking In with How Our Bodies Feel

The purpose of this activity is to bring the group together, help to focus their attention, and re-familiarise them with the process of mindfulness and quiet reflection.

Ask the group to stand in a wide semi-circle, the same as they did last week. This will help to build on their familiarity with each other and the group processes. Stand at least an arm's length on each side; no one standing in front of each other, so each person can look out to the water/horizon. Blocks can be set out, but on the ground beside participants until they're asked to use them for seated stretches.

We found that some students struggled with this quiet, focused attention activity, and they were invited to choose a quiet activity that could serve the same purpose and not distract others in the group, such as sitting or drawing in the sand. However, the focus of the activity was to continue providing practice with integrating stretching (e.g. movement) and a focus on breathing.

Depending on the facilitator's experience and skill, guided stretching and breathing exercises may be introduced, a relevant script can be adapted from other sources, or a particular breathing exercise could be taught.



Activity 3: Bullrush Tag Game

The purpose of this activity is to provide opportunities to practice noticing thoughts and feelings, in order to learn to think purposefully rather than reacting. Strategy and timing are required to reach the far side of the playing field, particularly as the numbers of players in the middle increase.

- This tag game was selected as it is easy to explain, and many Australian children are already familiar with it, or some variation of the game.
- Set-up a large rectangular playing area in the grass or a field.
- Participants start at one end and one or two teachers (e.g. taggers) start in the middle.
- Participants need to run to the other side without getting tagged. If tagged, they join the teachers in the middle and rounds continue until there is only one participant left running.

Play a few rounds of the game, then introduce the use of Oz Tags (Velcro belt and tags). Now, the 'taggers' need to remove their Velcro tags in order to 'tag' them.

After a few more rounds with the variation, bring all participants in for a discussion. Ask them how they felt when a 'tagger' was running towards or after them? What emotions or sensations do they experience and what does this feel like in their body (e.g. anxious, afraid, stressful, increased heart rate, etc.). Ask participants to compare this with the feelings they experience with their difficult thoughts.

Explain to participants that in this game we changed the rules and introduced the use of Oz Tags to give them more time, to be able to see what was going on, and make a decision on what to do, rather than just reacting. This is somewhat similar to learning about ACT. Sometimes, using different skills or strategies can help us when we are facing a challenging situation. ACT helps us to make our own decisions, based on our values, and not just react.

Close by asking participants if there are times when they just react to something, without thinking about it? What happens? Does it sometimes get them into trouble? What can we do to step back before reacting? What skills can we use? How can we make the best decisions?



Activity 4: Rock Skimming

The purpose of this activity is to reinforce the idea that thoughts can be expressed as words and by communicating and externalising them, we can recognise them. Recognising them is a part of connecting with the present moment. If we recognise and accept that it is just a thought, we can then try to defuse or unhook from our thoughts, and eventually refocus our attention towards a commitment to action and valued living.

Ask each participant to gather a small collection of flat rocks from small to medium. They need to be able to throw them so suggest they don't collect rocks that are too heavy. Ask them to write the difficult thoughts that they find themselves dealing with most frequently on the rocks with a texta - one per rock.

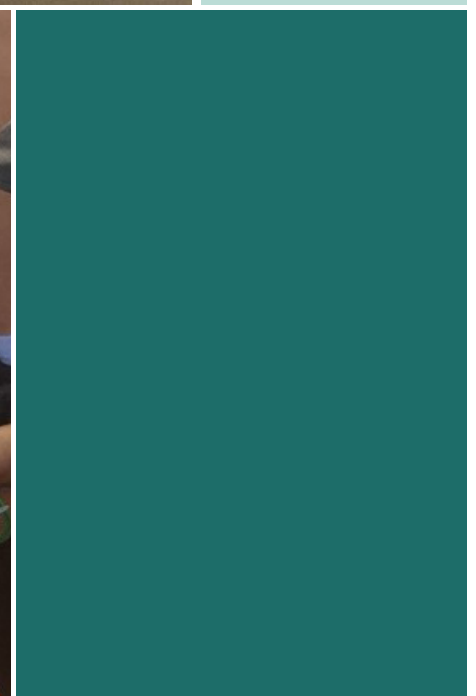
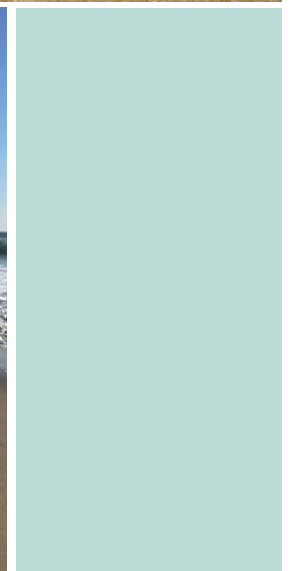
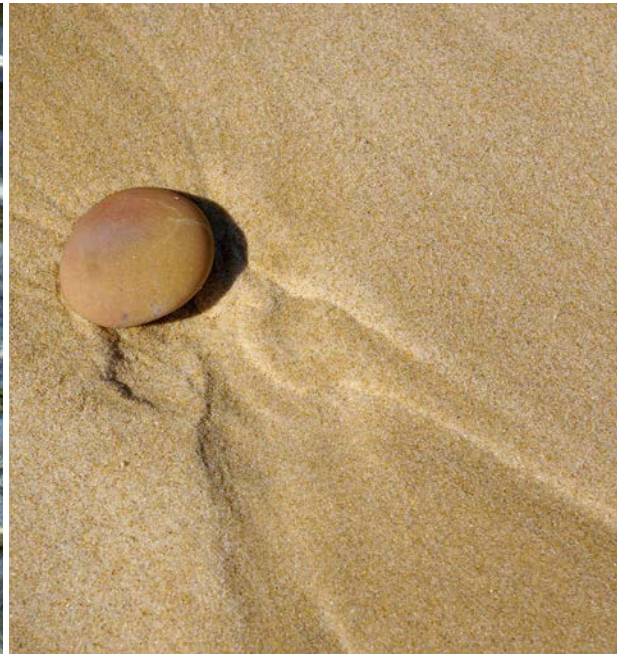
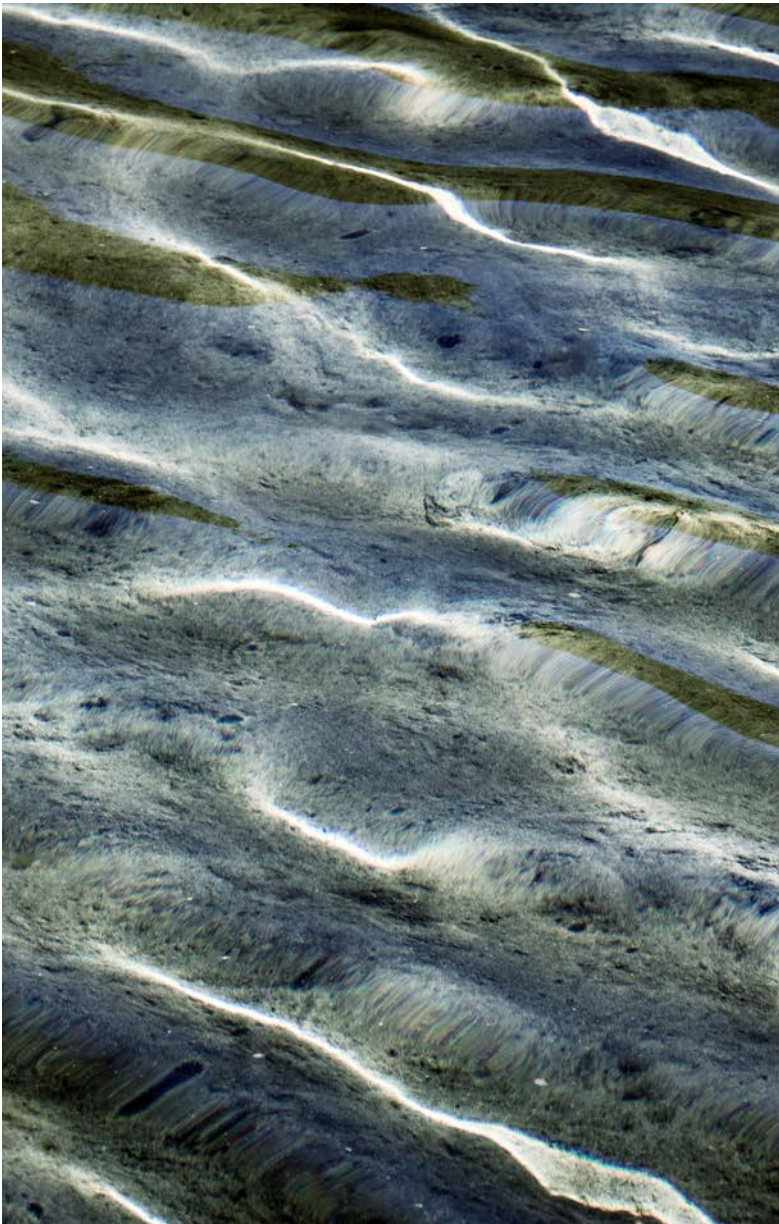
- Invite each participant to find a part of the shoreline or open green space where they can skim or throw the rocks without risking the safety of other participants.
- When they are ready they skim or throw the rocks as far as they can. They continue to skim or throw all of their rocks until they are finished. Ask them to imagine the rocks carrying the negative thoughts with them out into the water.
- Ask them to reflect on how they feel after they have thrown all their rocks.
- Bring the group back together near the shoreline for a closing discussion.

Possible Script:

- *We have a choice when these difficult thoughts come into our mind. We can let them stay with us and continue to think about them over and over. For example, when only looking at the difficult thought we drew in the sand, we can't see everything else happening around us.*
- *Imagine how difficult it would be to carry around these rocks all day. Wouldn't they be heavy! What would they stop you from doing if you had to carry around such a heavy load all day? Where do you think your focus and attention would be while you're carrying them around? You wouldn't be able to enjoy life as much.*
- *What if you decided to let them go instead? It doesn't mean that you get rid of the thoughts completely, but you can focus on the other parts of your life that you value.*

Close

Have participants take hold of the 'energy rope' again. Thank them for their engagement. Remind them they have identified previously underlying beliefs about themselves, questioned them and unhooked from them. Highlight again that they are linked together through their common goal of understanding themselves better and their commitment to generating a positive future. Briefly indicate one or two of the activities they can expect the following week.



Session 4

My Thoughts are Not Me



Introduction

This session focuses on identification with thoughts and recognising that they are not part of the participants' character; rather, they are just thoughts. Deepening the practice of mindfulness this session goes beyond mindful witness or awareness and introduces the concept of mindful thinking. It engages participants in activities that reveal how we can experience difficult thoughts as just thoughts and not letting them control us. Through a strengths-based perspective we identify the mind as a problem-finder and problem-solver. The focus on identifying where we put our energy, the struggle of trying to 'control' our difficult thoughts, and identifying positive thoughts is the aim. This is building towards making a commitment to the process of conscious identification of positive affirmation and recognition of existing positive personal qualities.

Session Outcomes

At the end of this session participants will:

- Have practiced skills to identify difficult thoughts and unhook from them
- Begin to develop understandings of deliberate mindful thinking and problem solving
- Begin to consciously identify positive thoughts and their relationship to well-being

Activities	Minutes	Materials
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope	5	Energy rope
Activity 2: Balloon Sling	10	Balloons, textas, towels
Activity 3: Tug of War	10	Rope for tug of war, Rock for tug of war "pit"
Activity 4: Chinese Finger Traps	10	Chinese finger traps
Activity 5: Mindfulness Activity	10	Textas, rocks, sticks
Activity 6: Mindfulness and Sand Drawing	10	Sticks for sand drawing
Close	5	

Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope

- Invite participants and teachers to join the circle around the energy rope.
- Welcome the participants to Week 4. Review names if needed.
- Reflect back on last week.

Activity 2: Balloon Sling

The purpose of this activity is to reinforce the idea that we can unhook from our difficult thoughts and uncouple them as part of our identity. It is a classic small group communication and decision-making exercise, with variations.

Note: This activity works best outdoors.

Each participant is given a balloon to fill with water- fill to half or two thirds full.

Ask participants to write one unhelpful thought onto the balloon with the permanent marker.

Divide into groups of three participants. One will position the balloon in the sling (towel), while the other two hold the sling at the corners ready to propel the balloon into the air.

Consensus can be hard to reach, however, set the aim for all participants to at least partially agree on how they will use the sling and what methods work best for them to achieve maximum distance when propelling the balloon.

Encourage groups to assist each other and take turns at the corner of the towel so each person can be assisted in launching their balloon.

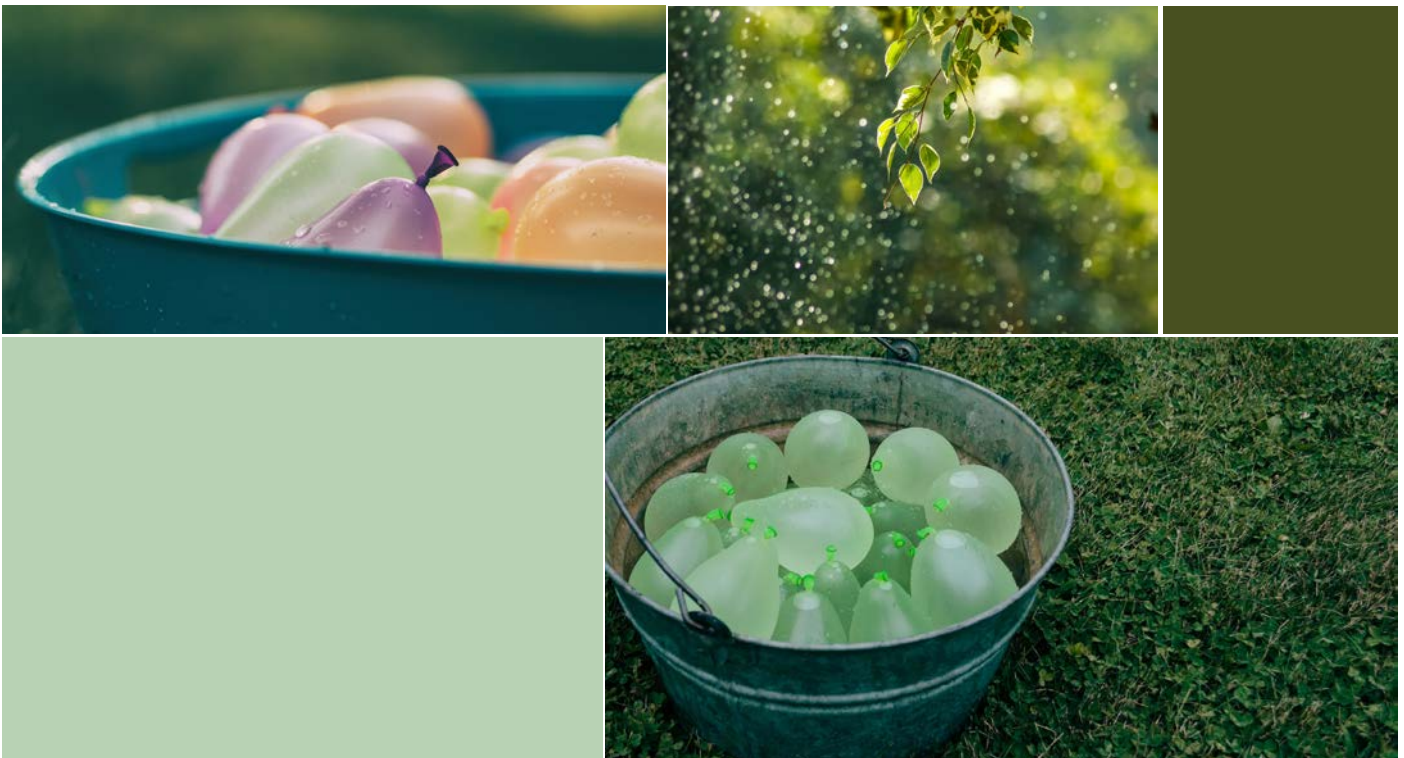
Complete the task by flinging the water-filled balloon as far as possible.

Watch for participants' word choices for their unhelpful thoughts. Remember these words for group reflection during the debrief.

Debrief:

An important outcome of this exercise can be learning to move forwards to a solution, you need to:

- acknowledge the thought;
- be willing to allow it to be released (i.e. to get rid of negative thoughts and behaviours).
- Set a time limit. Rotate participants' roles so everyone has a turn with the balloon/thought to be written down.



Activity 3: Tug of War

The purpose of this activity is to provide an analogy to the struggle of trying to control our difficult thoughts and the energy and effort it takes to try to win this battle.

- Play tug-of-war: Set up a tug of war game where the two teams are evenly matched in strength. This will help the struggle seem time-consuming and “unwinnable”.
- In the middle place a large object to mark the mid-point. This represents a big pit and if you lose this tug-of-war you will fall into the pit.
- Bring the group together and discuss the activity and metaphor:

Possible Script:

This situation is similar to the tug-of-war we sometimes play with the thoughts in our head. Sometimes the thoughts are strong and powerful and it feels like we focus a lot of our attention on struggling with them. Your instinct in the game and in life is to pull harder and harder. But when you do this, your thoughts pull even harder taking you closer to the pit. All of your energy is focused on this pull.

The hardest thing to do here is to realise that our job is to not keep pulling to win. We can actually win by letting go of the rope. The focus is on identifying where we put our energy. Letting go of the rope allows us to stop the struggle of controlling our thoughts or feelings. This is building towards making a commitment to the process of unhooking from difficult thoughts and feelings, and focusing on identifying our values and the kind of life we would like to live.



Activity 4: Chinese Finger Traps

- Give each participant a Chinese finger trap.
- Ask them to place their index fingers into both sides of the tube and try to get their fingers out.
- Talk participants through their frustrations and the strategies they are using while they are trying to get their fingers out of the trap.

Possible Script:

Living with lots of worries and fears can make you feel trapped and uncomfortable. Placing your fingers inside this tube can feel like that too. Trying to pull your fingers out of the trap seems like the best thing to do, the most sensible thing to do, the most natural thing to do. But this actually makes the situation worse, you become even more trapped. The tube actually tightens in on you, making it even more uncomfortable and giving you less room to move.

You must actually do the opposite of what comes naturally – you must lean into the trap by pushing your fingers in rather than trying to pull against it. This is the same as when you respond to feeling worried or scared. When you feel worried or scared you naturally want to get control the feeling. Instead try doing the opposite. Just accept that the feeling and thought has come. Be willing for the feeling or thought to come and then just let it be as you start doing what you care about doing. This way you won't waste all your time and energy trying to fight the feeling or thought. You will notice the thought or feeling and just let it be and get on with what you enjoy in life.

There is no point trying to fight or control the feeling or thought. It takes you away from what you love in life. So, this shows that sometimes trying to do what seems to be natural, like fighting a horrible feeling or thought can actually make things more uncomfortable and takes up all of your attention. We need to learn to make room for the feelings or thoughts and this will give us more room to enjoy life.

Wrap up this activity by asking participants to reflect. Ask if they can think of a time when they didn't let their thoughts or feelings push them around, when their thoughts and feelings told them to do one thing, but they did something else?



Activity 5: Mindfulness Activity

The purpose of this activity is to practice mindfulness and it also serves as a debrief to the tug-of-war and finger trap activities. The participants are still actively engaged rather than sitting in discussion.

- Have the semi-circle with seating blocks and a large rock at the centre set up in advance, nearby the tug-of-war area.
- Bring participants back to the tug-of-war rock.
- Ask participants to think about the feelings or thoughts that they struggle with, that they fight, or what takes up all their energy.
- Participants use a texta or chalk to write this thought on the rock in the centre of the tug of war.
- Explain to participants that when we focus our energy on these negative thoughts or words, we're not able to live our lives. Letting go of the struggle, means unhooking from the thought.
- In this activity the participants will turn their backs on this rock, and the 'pit' and walk away, turning away from the pit and towards the semi-circle of blocks and the new rock.
- It doesn't mean that it's not there. It just means that we don't place it at the centre of our focus.

New Focus & Symbolism:

- Before distributing the sticks, explain that while the rock represents the difficult thought(s) that holds us back – it's heavy, it's hard to carry around – the sticks, which come from trees, represent something that's growing, that's moving outward, upward, and into life.
- Ask participants what they want to turn towards? What is something positive that they want to focus on? What do they value or what would be a happy life?
- Ask participants to write their positive thought on the stick and then place the stick in front of them in the sand, while they sit comfortably on the block.
- Explain to participants that they are learning a new skill to help them recognise their thoughts. Remind them that sometimes it's difficult to know when we're focusing on the negative rather than the positive – to recognise when we're in the tug-of-war. The skill that they will now practice and use to help in this process is called mindfulness.

Adults can circulate quietly and reinforce some of the ideas from above by encouraging participants to:

- Observe their senses
- Observe their bodies
- Bringing their focus/awareness to their positive thought or to the present moment.



Activity 6: Mindfulness / Sand Drawing

The purpose of this activity is to provide practice for participants in the process of being mindful and to further understand the connection between thoughts, feelings (in their body as well), and emotions.

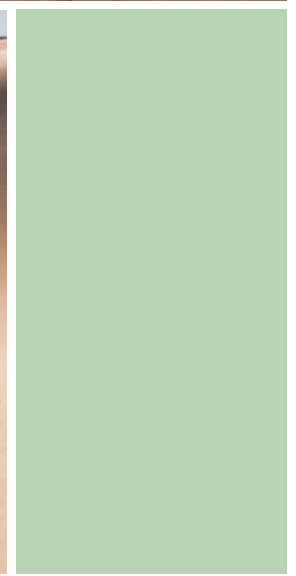
Invite participants to practice mindfulness while they are drawing in the sand. They may take their sticks and spread out along the beach. Drawings may be words or images. Ask participants to be mindful of the feelings, thoughts and sensations that occur for them when they are drawing or writing in the sand.

Possible Script:

- *Step 1: Finding a comfortable position and sitting quietly – no speaking or distracting others for the next 5 minutes.*
- *Step 2: Start to focus from outward to inward. So, we start with our senses.*
 - *First, what do you see? At first you see a lot of things all around. But rather than be distracted, just for now focus your attention to your positive thought – to your stick. What do you smell? Maybe you might even taste something. The salt in the air. Next, what do you hear? If you're comfortable, maybe you want to close your eyes and really focus in on what you hear. Lastly, what do you feel on your skin? The weight of your body and the sand underneath. The wind on your skin or through your hair. The sun on your face.*
- *Step 3: What we've been doing is bringing our focus from outward to inward. We started with our senses and now we explore how our body is feeling. So, we can do a body scan. Take three deep breaths in and out and observe how your body is feeling. You don't need to tell me and you don't need to do anything else. You're just observing for yourself. Maybe you're a bit stiff or sore. Maybe you're tired. Maybe you're relaxed. Your heartbeat might be fast or it might be slow. Next, let's start with your lower body, flex your feet and legs. Tighten your muscles, squeeze and contract. Hold for one more inhale, and then slowly relax your body. Next, your upper body, let's flex our arms, chest, and abs. Squeeze. Hold for one more inhale, and then slowly relax. Lastly, whatever position you're in now, just relax your entire body.*
- *Close: Mindfulness is a skill you can practice and just like we just did together, the first steps involve bringing our focus from outward to inward. We can all do this any time during the day and it can help us know when we're battling in the tug-of-war, so that we can let go of the rope and turn towards our positive thoughts.*

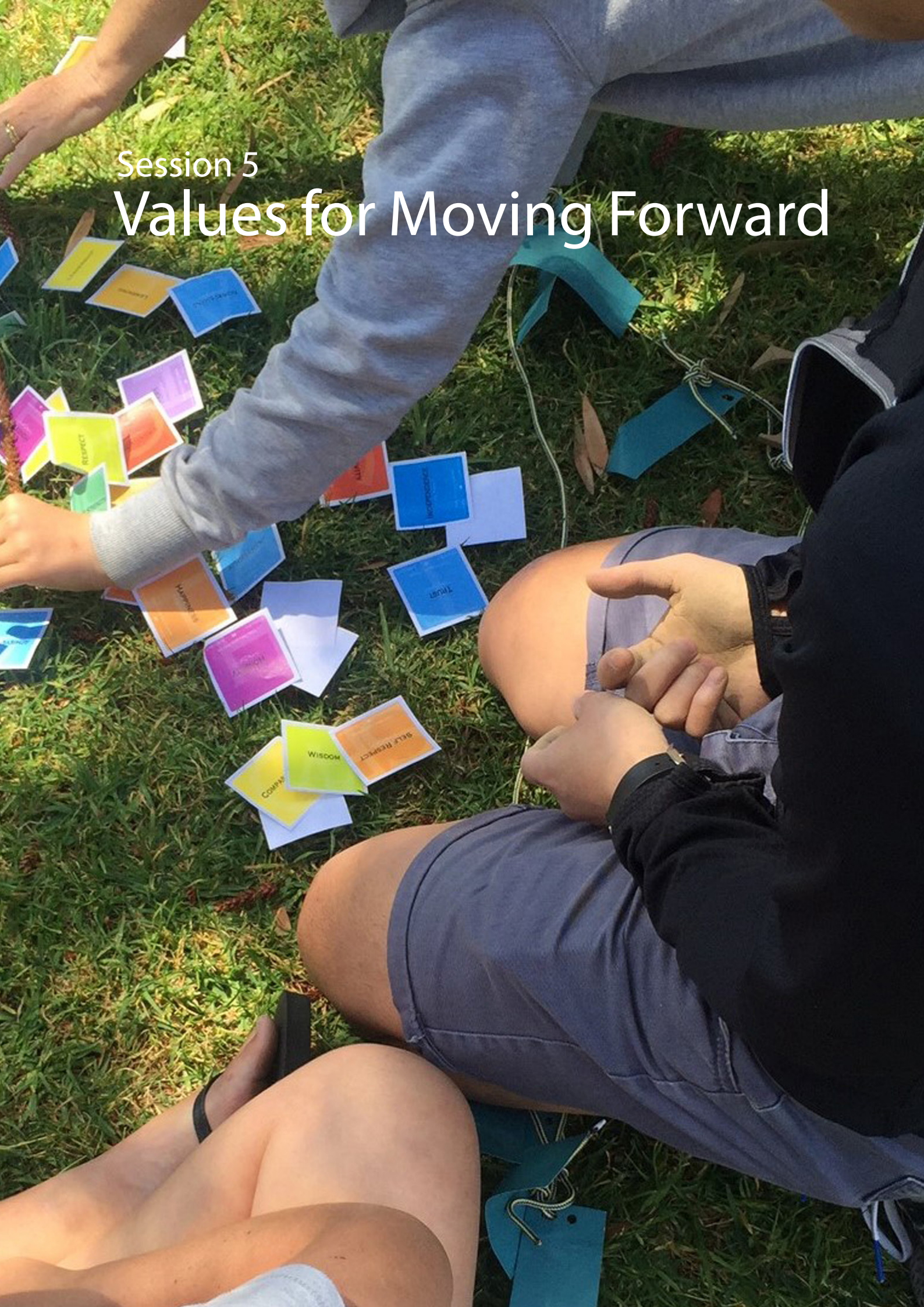
Close

Have participants take hold of the 'energy rope' again. Thank them for their engagement. Remind them they have learned to release control and to find positive qualities that will enrich their character, helping them to move toward their commitment to generating a positive future. Briefly indicate one or two of the activities they can expect the following week.



Session 5

Values for Moving Forward



Introduction

This session builds on Session 4 with practice in identifying difficult thoughts and on identifying personal strengths and values. In this session we recognise that unhooking from difficult thoughts can be a challenge as they are often well established as part of our identity and how we see ourselves functioning in the world. The session begins with a mindfulness activity to bring to focus our new processes for recognising thoughts and feelings. The emphasis is on refocusing energies on working towards what is important rather than being hooked to difficult thoughts and emotions.

Session Outcomes

At the end of this session participants will:

- Develop their skills in identifying difficult thoughts and feelings
- Deepen understandings of the difficult thoughts and feelings and the effect they may have on our lives
- Recognise their courage in moving forward while accommodating difficult thoughts
- Reinforce the choices that enable ongoing commitment to a positive life
- Connect positive thoughts to explicit values that will broaden understandings of a positive life.

Activities	Minutes	Materials
Activity 1: Energy Rope	5	Energy rope
Activity 2: Tug of War	10	Tug-of-war rope, tug-of-war photo
Activity 3: Breathing	5	
Activity 4: Values Clarification	15	Values Impact Sheet (20 copies), stimulus question cards , values cards (4 sets), camera
Activity 5: Clay sculptures representing a positive moment	20	Clay, twine or fishing line to cut/ slice the clay, bucket of water for washing hands, drop sheet, alfoil, assorted figurines (e.g. cars, trees, animals)
Close	5	

Activity 1: Energy Rope

The repeated practice of the energy rope is to remind participants that they are part of a supportive group, that is engaged in a specific learning process, in which it is safe for them to explore their inner thoughts and feelings and to share them if they choose.

- Invite participants and adults to join the circle around the energy rope.
- Welcome the participants and discuss any changes in space (If relevant).
- Revisit what S, R, and L stand for, and their meaning.

Activity 2: Tug of War

The purpose of this activity is to begin the session with an embodied learning activity from the previous week that the students responded to very positively. The aim was to have fun with each other, scaffold participants' learning, and to reiterate the message introduced during the previous week of the self-defeating nature of trying to wrestle with difficult thoughts and feelings.

- Set-up one or two rounds of tug-of-war. This could be a similar arrangement to the previous week, or a four-way tug-of-war could be prepared. We conducted the latter to provide some variety.
- After the activity, return to the energy rope circle and ask participants if they remember the purpose of the tug-of-war from last week.
 - Discuss the thoughts and feelings we sometimes struggle with. Ask them to identify the fights that we take on that use up all our energy.
 - Ask participants if there was a time in the last week when they were caught in a tug-of-war, and if they were pulled into the struggle or if they 'dropped the rope.'
 - Ask if there was a time in the last week when they let go of the rope and how this affected them.

Activity 3: Breathing

The purpose of this activity is to reaffirm the value of quiet reflection and the role that self-calming through breathing can have on participants' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

- Staying seated on the blocks, ask participants if they have noticed that stopping and reflecting on their dominant thoughts and feelings helps them to see when they are using up all their energy on things they can't control.
- Ask participants to quietly reflect on their current thoughts and feelings and to observe them as a witness.
- Ask participants to re-focus their attention from their thoughts and feelings towards their breath. We will engage in 5 minutes of breathing, starting with observing the body and then the breath. Lead the breathing exercise or modify as time allows. This could include focused attention towards their senses, a body scan, visualisation, or other guided breathing exercises.
- Ask participants to reflect on how they feel at the end of the breathing exercise.

Activity 4: Values Clarification

The purpose of this activity is to practice engagement in reflective activities to identify values and work towards commitment to change. They may be more challenging for some participants, but they are an important part of the ACT approach.

Step 1:

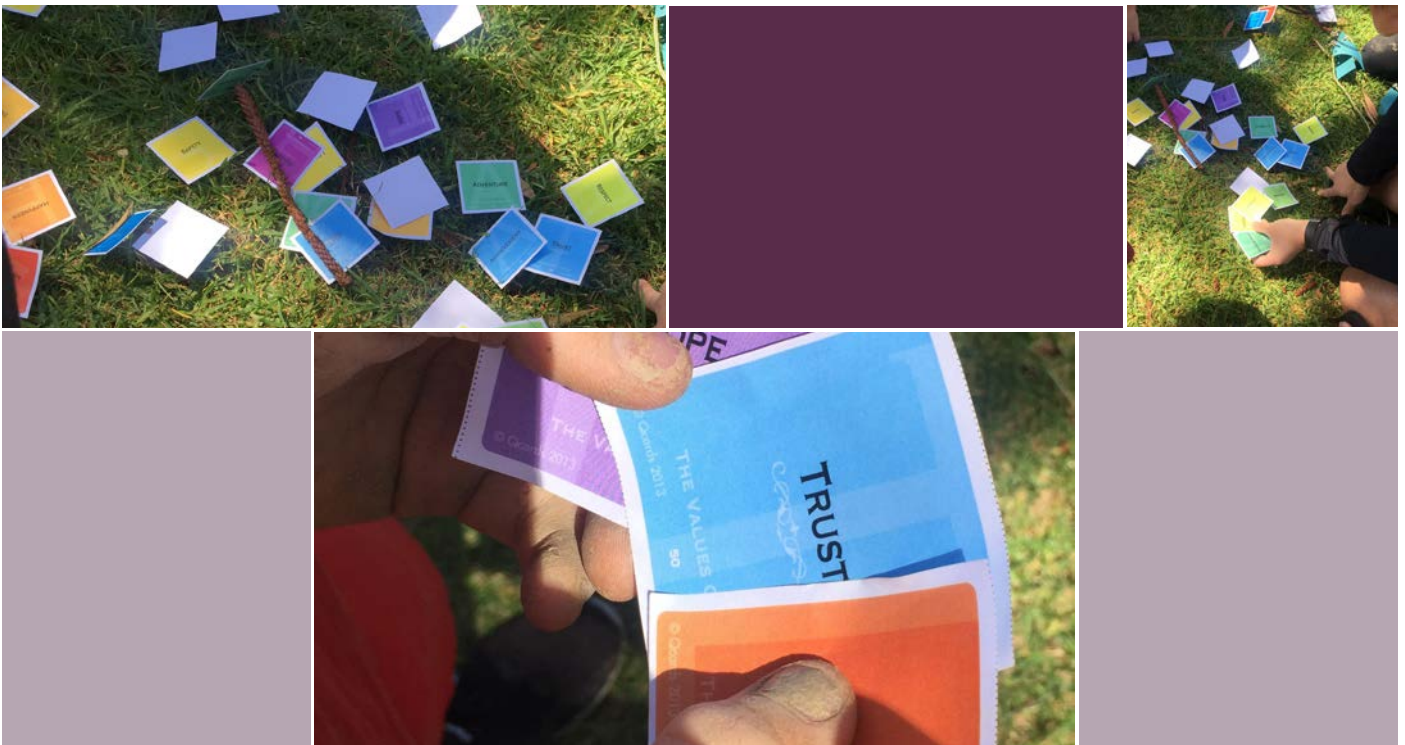
Have participants (2-3) arranged in a semi-circle on an outdoor rug. Introduce the notion of “values.”

Possible Script:

Values are what we hold precious to us, what we believe is good, right and important. They are like a compass that can keep us on course in our life. They influence our attitudes and behaviour, how we act and react in our everyday lives. For example, you might value honesty. This is something you expect from others and you try to live. But one day you are dishonest to a teacher to avoid getting in trouble. You instantly feel uncomfortable. You feel uncomfortable because you have acted in a way that contradicts your values. We want to 1) know what our values are, 2) make decisions and act in a way that is consistent with these values. So far, we have spoken a lot about “letting go of the fight” with negative thoughts. Today we are going to be identifying what is it that you want to move towards in your life.

Step 2:

Place bundles of values cards on rug in the centre of the participant circle. These may be prepared by the facilitator in advance or purchased through various online providers. Ask participants to choose 3 that are most important to them in their life (help read and explain the text as appropriate). To record the three, they can either take a photo of the three cards or write on a provided sheet. Discuss What impact does this value have on their life? For example, if I value “health” I might choose to eat fruit and vegetables every day or make sure I get daily physical activity. Try to encourage concrete, achievable activities.



Step 3:

Ask participants to choose one or two stimulus cards that are of interest to them. These stimulus cards will help them to articulate how they wish to explore the values they have chosen to work with for the session and to highlight the link back to the implications for their actions and behaviour.

The text on the stimulus cards includes the following:

- What would you most like to achieve?
- What do you hope for?
- What is your main purpose in life?
- How do your values differ to those of your family?
- What makes a good life?
- What makes you strong?
- Imagine you could achieve anything – what would it be?
- Who is the wisest person you know?
- What is the most important thing to you right now?

You can create additional cards that are responsive to your group's needs or select cards that align with a particular area you would like to focus upon with your participants. Spend some time discussing, as a small group or individually, the cards selected by each participant. Aim to reinforce the focus of moving forward towards a valued life. This means making decisions based on the values they have identified, and identifying their supports and strengths to respond to difficult situations.

Activity 5: Using Clay as a Metaphor for Storytelling

The purpose of this activity is to engage with an arts-based process to facilitate discussion about past experiences of challenging situations. The malleability of clay provides a neutral third-space where participants can shape symbolic representations of their experiences, thoughts, and feelings in a safe environment. The prompt to share a story about a challenging situation and the productive ways in which they responded to it assists participants in identifying their strengths.

- Facilitator selects an appropriate example to share with the group of a time in their life when they were proud of what they had achieved, including a little bit about the hardship they endured to get there, and the result of the resiliency (e.g. growing up in a challenging situation has made them a stronger, more determined person to not let negativity control their life).
- Ask participants to think of a time when they were proud of themselves. Invite them to make a clay representation of that time that encapsulates what they were doing, the context or things around them, the significant people and other relevant elements of the experiences.
- Share artefacts and meaning amongst the group.
- Thank participants for sharing and highlight that the facilitators and other adults present believe in participants' ability to identify and work toward their vision of a valued life. Acknowledge the importance of participants feeling proud of their accomplishments. Talk briefly about the links between these accomplishments and how they are related to their values. State clearly that you want to help them work towards realising these values in their lives.

Close

- Bring the participants back together.
- This week we decided to recognise participants' strengths in trusting and supporting one another during the session activities by closing with a team building challenge that involves the use of these interpersonal skills.
 - Have participants and adults stand in a circle. The circle requires an even number of people, so the facilitator can step out if needed. The facilitator numbers all participants in the circle number one or number two.
 - Ask everyone in the circle to join hands, then slowly take small steps backwards until everyone's arms are at full stretch with a firm grip of each other's hands.
 - Remind participants that this activity requires trust and support, in order to successfully create a 'yurt circle'. Participants must keep their feet in place flat on the ground, arms fully outstretched, and bodies straight.
 - When the facilitator says go, all participants numbered one will lean slightly in towards the centre of the circle, and those numbered two will lean slightly out away from the centre. This will create a counter balance for a free standing circle of trust and support.
- Explain the focus of identifying what is important to us and then moving towards that life through everyday commitment and actions.
- Reflect back on positives that were observed and ask participants for their feedback.
- Thank everyone for participating and close the session.



Session 6

Identifying Goals for Action



Introduction

Living a valued life through identification of explicit values as introduced in the previous session is the beginning of identifying what we really want from life. To realise these values takes practice and needs to be supported by the identification of goals and strategies to achieve the desired life. In this session, we begin with a mindfulness activity to centre participants' focus and remind them of the significant achievements they have made by committing to participation in this program. We look at goals that are consistent with our values and prioritise what is important to each person. We revisit the tendency to remain hooked to difficult thoughts and emotions and highlight how this prevents us from living our valued life. Most importantly this session assists participants to realise that the development of these skills and their new self-awareness is not a linear process and encourages participants to practice self-compassion.

Session Outcomes

At the end of this session participants will:

- Identify and revisit their values for a meaningful life
- Recognise the development of their awareness and/or skill in identifying difficult thoughts
- Consolidate their understanding of the ways in which being hooked to difficult thoughts constrains their objectives for a positive life
- Begin to identify goals that are consistent with their values
- Begin to identify strategies to achieve their goals.

Activities	Minutes	Materials
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope	5	Energy rope
Activity 2: Stand Up for My Values (a modified tag game using values cards)	25	Tag Game: cones, Oz Tags, values cards, textas, 2 large hoops (or ropes)
Activity 3: Mindfulness and storytelling	20	Beeswax
Activity 4: Visualisation and breathing exercise	5	
Close	5	



Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope

The repeated practice of the energy rope is to remind participants that they are part of a supportive group, that is engaged in a specific learning process, in which it is safe for them to explore their inner thoughts and feelings and to share them if they choose to.

- Invite participants and teachers to join the circle around the energy rope.
- Revisit what S, R, and L stand for, and their meaning
- Reflect back on last week and in particular, the clay activity and group sharing.

Activity 2: Stand Up for My Values (a modified tag game using values cards)

The purpose of this activity is to engage participants in physical activity and embodied learning, while using a modified game to provide an analogy for values clarification. The road blocks in the form of players from 'the other side' can be conceptualised as obstacles in life that put challenges in the path. This message reinforces the need to be able to live with, and accommodate difficult thoughts and circumstances, and to find other ways of moving forward towards the valued life the participant desires.

Set-Up and Rules:

- Start with participants selecting three of the values cards (or have blank ones as well so participants can write their own if they want to) that are important to them.
- Play the game of "Rob the Nest": a running and tag game as follows:
- Divide the playing area into two halves (approximately 40m x 20m divided in half with chalk or cones, resulting in 2X 20mx20m sections). Participants are in two teams, with one team in each half.
- Each team's values are placed into a "nest" (i.e. a rope circle which is a safe zone) at the far end of the opposing team's half.
- The goal is to cross the middle line, run to the nest, retrieve their values card (one at a time), and bring it back to their own side.
- The players on each side are also defending the nest in their half (i.e. once a player crosses the middle line, they are in 'enemy territory' and opposing players can tag them). The tagged player must then go back to their own half before trying again to retrieve their values card. If a player is tagged while they are trying to return to their half with their values card, the opposing player can take their values card and put it back into the nest, and the tagged player must return back to their half empty-handed before trying again.

Activity 3: Mindfulness and Storytelling with Beeswax Sculpture

The purpose of this activity is to bring mindful contemplation to challenges and to identify personal and/or symbolic resources for meeting challenges while being mindful of responsible behaviours.

This exercise is useful for assisting participants to deal with grief or serious disappointment. It encourages participants to identify and draw on their own personal or spiritual resources that acknowledge the depth of the challenging experience, help to overcome such circumstances, and look to the future.

This activity involves story sharing and beeswax modelling of a personal totem or symbol. While the facilitator starts with telling their own story (e.g. a story that is pre-planned and appropriate for the purposes of the activity and to share with the group), each participant is given a piece of beeswax to knead and mould. The wax responds to the warmth of the participants' hands and becomes soft, allowing it to be moulded freely and providing participants with something to do with their hands while they are listening to the story. The story needs to be true and represent a time in the life of the person telling it, where they wanted a particular outcome that did not come to pass. The intention here is to highlight, through the story, the resources that the story teller drew upon to reconcile or come to terms with the outcome of the event.

Participants will consider traits that are important to them and create their own totems out of wax. These will be individual representations in three dimensions.

The message is, that even when you want something very badly, it does not always happen and there has to be a way to deal with this. Toward the end of the story, turn the moulded ball of beeswax into a totem, animal, or symbol that represents the resilience developed as part of dealing with the outcome of the event. Participants will now consider the traits that are important to them and create their own totems out of wax. These will be individual representations in three dimensions.

Debrief:

Possible Script:

What qualities of resilience do you use or identify with?

They may be totems, symbols or animals.

Totems can be related to animals or land features and identifying with a totem (in Indigenous lore) brings great strength on the one hand, and responsibility to see beyond life's difficulties and look to what a positive future can be by invoking the qualities of the totem.

For example the qualities of loyalty are strong in the dog; community responsibility is a feature of the elephant.

The eagle is said to be a symbol of wisdom and sucker fish and shard are said to 'understand the value of helping each other'.

What symbols or totems do you identify with? Mould your wax into this shape and take it home with you.

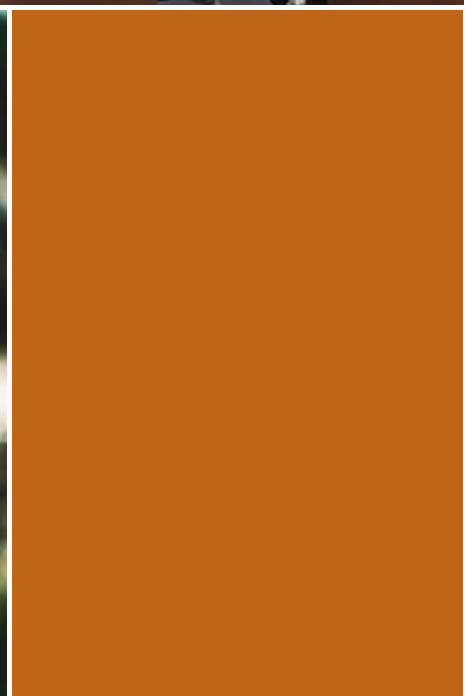
Activity 4: Visualisation and Breathing Exercise

Have participants sit in a semi-circle for a guided breathing exercise. Ask them to imagine a rushing river, and what happens when the water meets a strong tree or rock in the river. Ask participants to think about the strength of the tree and the way it stands tall with the water rushing around it, and also the flexibility of the water that moves around the tree rather than fighting against it

Conduct a brief guided breathing session with this visualisation, focusing on drawing attention to the senses, the breath and the body. End with a visualisation of participants standing strong and thinking about their inner strength and resilience.

Close

- Bring the participants back together.
- Explain the focus of identifying what is important to us and then moving towards that life through everyday commitment and actions.
- Reflect back on positives that were observed and ask participants for their feedback.
- Thank everyone for participating and close the session.



Mindfulness and storytelling with beeswax sculpture:

This activity involves story sharing and beeswax modelling of a personal totem or symbol. While the facilitator starts with telling their own story (e.g. a story that is pre-planned and appropriate for the purposes of the activity and to share with the group), each participant is given a piece of beeswax to knead and mould.



A close-up, low-angle shot of a sandy beach. Several footprints are visible, with the most prominent one in the foreground showing clear tread patterns. The sand is a warm, golden-brown color, and the lighting creates soft shadows, emphasizing the texture of the sand and the depth of the prints.

Session 7

Creating an Action Plan

Introduction

This session builds further on the previous activities by reinforcing values for a positive life, goals to work toward the values, and action plans for implementing the goals. We begin with a mindfulness activity as per the earlier sessions to centre participants' attention and then continue with the focus on values-guided action. In addition, participants will take a side step to deliberately invoke and engage with difficult thoughts and develop effective plans for taking action to manage them. This will include quick identification of responses to difficult thoughts, recognising the impact they have on the body, thought processes and the potential for them to affect behaviour. Finally, the strategies will include processes for unhooking from difficult thoughts. Some of the exercises in this session are based on concepts contained in Harris and Aisbett (2013).

Session Outcomes

At the end of this session participants will:

- Develop an overview of the ways in which their values, goals and actions are part of a continuum of awareness
- Become aware of the difference between the thinking and observing self
- Identify and practice strategies for quick identification of the actions they need to take in order to reach their goals
- Consolidate processes for objectifying difficult thoughts
- Learn targeted processes to manage difficult thoughts as they arise

Activities	Minutes	Materials
Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope	5	Energy rope
Activity 2 Problem solving and planning for action	25	Pine tree foliage, tree bark and charcoal
Activity 3: Adapted Minefield Activity	25	'Mines' (Frisbees, floor markers, cones, etc.), blindfolds, list of challenges
Close	5	

Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope

The repeated practice of the energy rope is to remind participants that they are part of a supportive group that is engaged in a specific learning process, in which it is safe to explore their inner thoughts and feelings and to share them if they choose to.

Activity 2: Problem Solving and Planning for Action

The purpose of this activity is to identify meaningful strategies to solve problems and to move beyond the reactions that difficult thoughts can elicit. Learning useful strategies to respond, rather than react, can in turn lead to identification of goals for responding and acting on challenging situations in a manner that is consistent with the participants' values.

Ask participants to think back to the last session when they identified their values. Ask if they can recall one value that was really important to them?

Possible Script:

- *Remember we talked about how your actions and decisions everyday can help you move towards that valued life? When we get worried, anxious or mad it is easy to get caught up in a problem that we can't figure out how to deal with it, and we lose sight of our valued life.*
- *When we have a problem, we need to let go of the strong thoughts or feelings that we have and work through our alternatives. This will help us to live our valued life.*
- *I'm handing out pine tree foliage to everyone (e.g. long fronds from the local trees were used in this session as they could be knotted. Use whatever you have available or take suitable materials with you).*
- *What is one of the problems that you experience? Can you identify a problem you have with these strong thoughts or feelings? Then, tie knots in the foliage to show how much of a problem this is in your life (e.g. 1 knot – a little, 2 – somewhat, 3 – quite big).*
- *Now, let's use pencils/textas and paper, or even this charcoal and tree bark to draw or write about your strong thoughts and feelings.*
- *Can you brainstorm different ways to respond to these thoughts and feelings? What are possible solutions?*

Encourage participants to come up with a wide range of ideas for how to solve the problem. These can be silly and serious). They may list them all. The facilitators can work individually or in small groups with participants and go through each solution one by one to identify the pros and cons for each solution. Aim to identify at least one of each.

Look at the pros and cons and then rate the solutions from best to worst with the best being the one that will give each participant the best outcome - meaning the one aligned with their values. It should also be one that they can realistically put in place.

Once they have chosen a solution, plan how it will work exactly. How and when will they try this, and who will be involved? Is this something they can try over the week and come back and report on next week? There might be hiccups, so they need to give it a chance to work, and they might need to refine it. The more they practice solving problems and not getting stuck with their challenging thoughts and feelings, the better at it they will become.

Thank participants for their engagement and bring the activity to a close.

Activity 3: Adapted Minefield Activity

The purpose of this activity focuses on developing communication skills, trust in others (and in particular teachers or adults), asking for and accepting help from others, and moving past barriers. In last week's Rob the Nest game, the participants were asked to identify some of the strategies they can use to get past their challenges to reach their values and they have practiced this in the previous activity also. This activity builds on these ideas and may help as a precursor to the "Letter to Self" activity.

Preparation:

- Email teachers in advance and ask them for specific examples (not identifying individual participants, but examples) of the types of challenges or barriers that the participants face to having a positive, successful, or enjoyable school or group experience. Examples may include bullying, getting into fights, not listening to the teacher, not doing their work, disrupting others, giving in to peer group pressure, angry outbursts, blaming others, the 'it's not my fight, but I can't help myself' defence, not listening to advice, disrespecting teachers, unsafe, disengaged behaviour. In all these examples, someone else is driving the bus!

Set-Up:

- Large rectangular playing area in the grass marked with cones.
- A number of 'flat' objects (e.g. Frisbees, floor markers, cones, etc.) are scattered throughout the playing area.

Step 1:

- Staying in the group circle, ask participants to think ahead to their next school year. It's a fresh start. What does a positive/successful/enjoyable school experience look like?

Step 2:

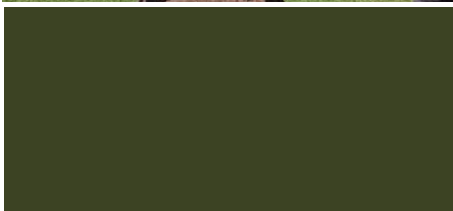
- Bring the participants over to one end of the playing area.
- Explain that for this activity, the other end of the line represents their positive school experience, but to get there, they're going to have to rely on their own skills, inner strength, and focus, as well as help from their teachers and other trusted adults.
- Next, explain that you already asked the teachers/adults for examples of the challenges/barriers that they think some students may face.
- Go over the examples with the participants. Then ask if they agree, disagree, or have others to add to the list.
- Each of the 'obstacles' scattered throughout represents those challenges.
- To get through, they're going to have to take a leap of faith, maybe approach the year differently, and also sometimes accept help from their teachers and trusted adults.

Step 3:

- Explain that doing things the same way over and over doesn't always work, so, wearing a blindfold is going to represent the commitment to taking a different approach.
- The goal is to reach the other side blindfolded, while avoiding as many obstacles as possible, and with only the verbal instructions of others (e.g. teachers).
- One adult per participant, so participants may either have to take turns or they could pair up with two participants moving together with the verbal instructions of one adult.
- Debrief with the participants.

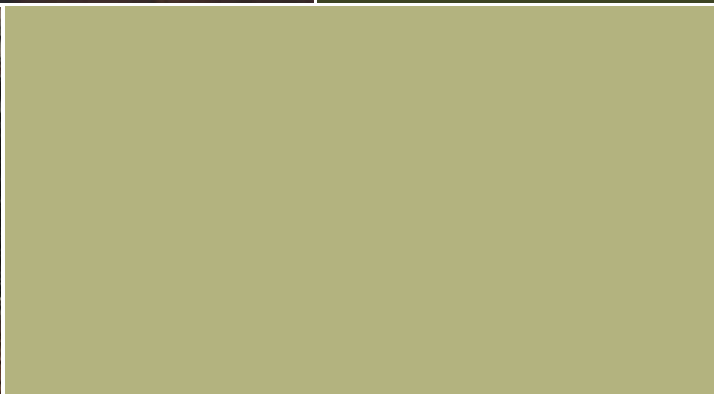
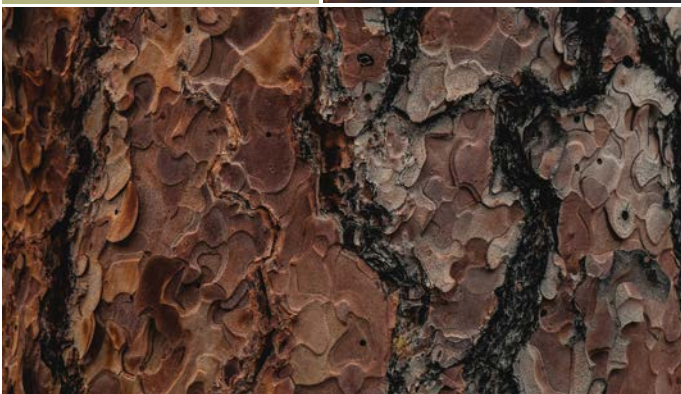
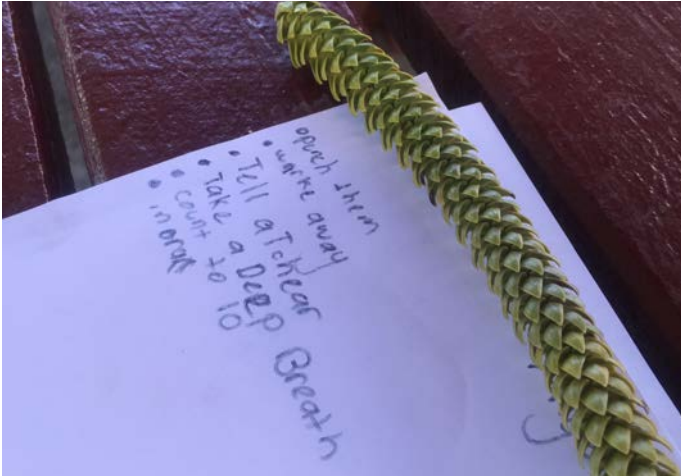
Possible Script:

- *What did it feel like to have to trust your adult for help?*
- *Do you think it's important to commit to taking a different approach to your next school year?*
- *Why or why not?*
- *What sometimes happens if we just keep doing the same thing over and over again? For example, getting in fights with other participants over and over again? Getting into fights with our teachers over and over again? Getting suspended from school over and over again?*
- *Did anyone run into an obstacle?*
- *Things aren't always going to go our way. Sometimes we'll still get into fights with our teachers or run into obstacles, but like we said last week, we need to get back up and keep on trying.*
- *You also had to rely on your own skills, inner strength, and focus to get to the other side.*
- *What are some of your own strengths that you're really proud of?*



Close

- Bring the participants back together.
- Explain the focus of identifying what is important to us and then moving towards that life through everyday commitment and actions.
- Conduct a brief guided breathing session, focusing on drawing attention to the senses, the breath and the body. End with a visualisation of participants thinking about their inner strength and how this can be applied to their positive future actions.
- Reflect back on positives that were observed during the session and ask participants for their feedback.
- Thank everyone for participating and close the session.



Session 8

Active Commitment to Future Goals



Introduction

Welcome to Session 8. Participants have been on a significant journey that will be capped by a challenging experience in the outdoors. The setting for this session is in the forest and takes the form of a bush walk or hike. The opportunity for the participants here is to put into action some of the skills they have learned over the course of the program to assist them in getting through the hike (e.g. communication, teamwork, accepting help, giving support, empathy for others, etc.). The trail needs to be one that is manageable for the level of physical fitness of the participants, and the time available, but difficult and long enough to require considerable effort. The objective is to provide a significant cooperative challenge to the whole group, while setting them up for success. This activity will assist the participants to commit to taking action, remind them to be mindful of their thoughts and feelings, and help to illustrate that they can deal with hardships and recognise progress. The activities within the session will also review and reflect on what has been learnt throughout previous sessions.

Session Outcomes

At the end of this session participants will:

- Review and reflect on what has been learnt throughout the 8 sessions
- Consolidate understanding of ACT principles and how they can use what has been learnt to work with difficulties in their lives
- Have greater understanding of the choices they have in life
- Consolidate the process and strategies they can use to accommodate difficult thoughts and feelings and be more confident in applying them
- Understand the processes they can use to clarify their values, take actions to achieve their goals

Activities	Minutes	Materials
Activity 1: Introductions and energy rope	5	Energy rope
Activity 2: Nature Walk & Activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing B.O.L.D • Identifying the challenging situation • Choice Point – fork in the road • Values you want to live by and strength spotting (strengths you can use) • What does this mean for action? • Practising self-compassion 	70	First Aid Kit, water, mosquito repellent, sun protection, closed-toe shoes Values and strengths cards
Activity 3: Mindfulness and Letter to Myself	20	Paper, pens, iPad, audio recorder
Activity 4: Close: Energy Rope, Group Sharing & Moving Forward	25	Scissors, tea light candles, matches

Location: Choose a location that is accessible to all participants and ensure you have the appropriate ratio of adults to child participants to meet safety requirements. Have one of the adults or facilitators do the walk prior to engaging the participants in it and to nominate places for each of the activities that will be contained in the walk. The purpose of this session is to consolidate a plan to take action in order to strive towards living a valued life and to help participants to focus on values-guided action. There will be focus on commitment to a plan for future action, dealing with setbacks and recognising progress.

Activity 1: Introductions and Energy Rope

The repeated practice of the energy rope is to remind participants that they are part of a supportive group, that is engaged in a specific learning process, in which it is safe for them to explore their inner thoughts and feelings and to share them if they choose to.

- Invite participants and adults to join the circle around the energy rope.
- Revisit what S, R, and L stand for, and their meaning
- Explain today's activity, the reason for a new location, and the commitment to participate in the nature walk and activities along the journey. Encourage participants to be open to the experience, give all aspects of the journey a go, and not to distract anyone else.
- Review Safety for the nature walk.

Activity 2: Nature Walk and Activity

The purpose of this activity is to consolidate the learning from all of the sessions in a challenging, but safe environment. The walk encompasses a number of short activities (numbered below) to refocus participants and connect the concepts, practice and context of the program. We also introduce the BOLD approach (see Ciarrochi, Hayes, & Bailey, 2012).

Be BOLD:

B Breath – breath slowly, slow down

O Observe – observe what you are doing, feeling, thinking, allow inner experiences to flow through you.

L Listen to values – right now what kind of person do you want to be?

D Decide on actions and do them. Choose actions that will reflect your values

- Walk to the first activity location.

1. Identifying the challenging situation

Invite participants to think about a situation they are encountering that is difficult. This may be the situation they identified last week or a new one. Invite participants to share if they wish.

Ask what negative feelings come up and what happens when we try to fight them?

- Walk to the next location

2. Fork in the road

Explain to participants that we now have a choice about how we handle the feeling or situation, even though sometimes it feels like we don't. Remind them that if we breathe, remain calm and take on the role as the observer, we can drive the bus and make the choice. This may be an opportunity to introduce the Choice Point model (see Ciarrochi, Bailey, & Harris, 2013).

- Walk to the next location

3. Values you want to live by and strength spotting (strengths you can use)

Lay out values cards for each participant to choose one. Ask participants what kind of person they want to be? What strengths do they have that they can use to help them deal with this situation? Lay out strengths cards for each participant to choose one and discuss.

- Walk to the next location

4. What does this mean for action?

Everyone makes a paper plane and attaches/writes/draws one value and one strength onto the plane to help it fly high and in the right direction.

Ask participants to consider the behaviour/actions that will show they are living their valued life? How will they check in with their own success in achieving this?

- Walk to the next location

5. Practicing self-compassion

Remind participants that if the plane crashes or goes in the wrong direction it doesn't mean that the values or strengths disappear or weren't worthy. It just means they need to try to fly again.

Activity 3: Letter to Self

NB: (walk to end of trail; complete activity before final destination)

Introduction: Mindfulness and Letter to Myself

The purpose of this activity is for participants to focus on one of the solutions they have identified in Activity 2 and one of their strengths that they are proud of – identified in Activity 3, and apply the thinking and representational steps outlined below. This represents the combining of a potential solution and a strength.

- Invite participants to do a drawing using paper or bark representing what the combination of the solution and strength look like in the future. Adults walk around and interview participants about their drawings while they are doing them. This becomes the letter to self – see below:

Letter to Myself for Next Year

For participants to identify the type of person they want to be (i.e. values clarification) and examine ideas on how to achieve this – within a school or community context. The focus is intentionally on the type of person they want to be in their context, but also to narrow the scope to a particular arena of their lives. For example, within a school context, we asked participants to consider the student they want to be, and to write a letter to themselves for the start of their next school year.

Adults and facilitators will work one-on-one with participants to write or record (audio or video) a message that each participant would like to give to themselves at the start of the next year. It can be written for the participant by the adult or just a recorded conversation that will then be typed out for the participant. The recording will not be played anywhere else. This way, there isn't any pressure on the participant to write on the spot, but rather, the focus is on identifying the type of person they want to be or the type of school or life experience they want to have. The following steps will help to build up to the final recording or writing process.

- Gather participants in a close circle. Tell them you would like to learn more about their school or group experiences. Ask for some of the challenges or difficulties they face in their regular school or life context.
- Use prompts to get the discussion started. They may include: Discussion about the schedule, the classroom environment, learning content, other participants, teachers, adults, etc.

- Ask participants if not going to school, or not finishing school, is a good option and if not, why not?
- Highlight the need to figure out realistic strategies so school can be a positive experience.
- Work one-on-one with participants to write or record a message. Ask them to provide advice for themselves for next year to have a better school experience?

You may consider prompting participants with the following questions to assist them in writing or recording their message to themselves:

Possible Script:

- *Is not going to school, or not finishing school, a good option? If not, what does a 'good' school experience look like to you? (e.g. to learn, to make friends, to get along with others, etc.).*
- *We need to figure out strategies so that we can have a positive experience at school. What advice do you have for yourself to have a better school experience?*
- *What do you need to do? What needs to change? What worked really well this year that you can keep doing (i.e. your strengths)?*
- *What do you need to make this positive change happen (e.g. support, skills, help, etc.)?*
- *Thank participants for sharing and let them know we will come back to this. We will type out their letters so that we can come back to these important messages. We believe in them and want to help them work towards these goals and values. and it represents (metaphorically) a reminder of their commitment to positive change.*



Activity 4: Close: Energy Rope, Group Sharing and Moving Forward - The Lookout

At the last session, the idea is that while the experience as a group is coming to an end, the hope is that each participant will take the experience, the lessons learned, and the skills practiced and developed with them into their everyday life, so each participant receives a section of the rope (some might wear it as a bracelet, some might just take it with them). So, they take a part of the positive energy of the group with them.

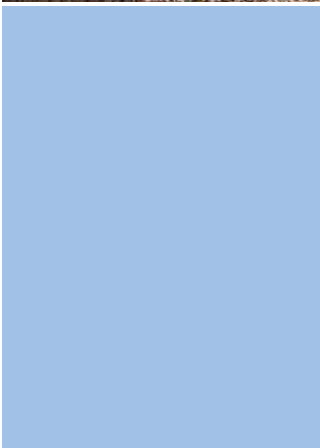
Possible Script:

- *The rope has been a constant. It has been with us at every session.*
- *We each have a place in the circle.*
- *We all committed to Respect, Safety, and being a Learner.*
- *What have we talked about in our sessions?*
- *What are things we learned together?*
- *What are strengths of this group and individuals in this group?*

Thank the participants for their participation and everything they have achieved as a group. Our hope is that they will take everything they learned and apply it to their lives, so they can work towards the life they described in their letters to themselves.

As a symbolic gesture, each participant will take a section of the energy rope (cut into approx. 30cm strips)

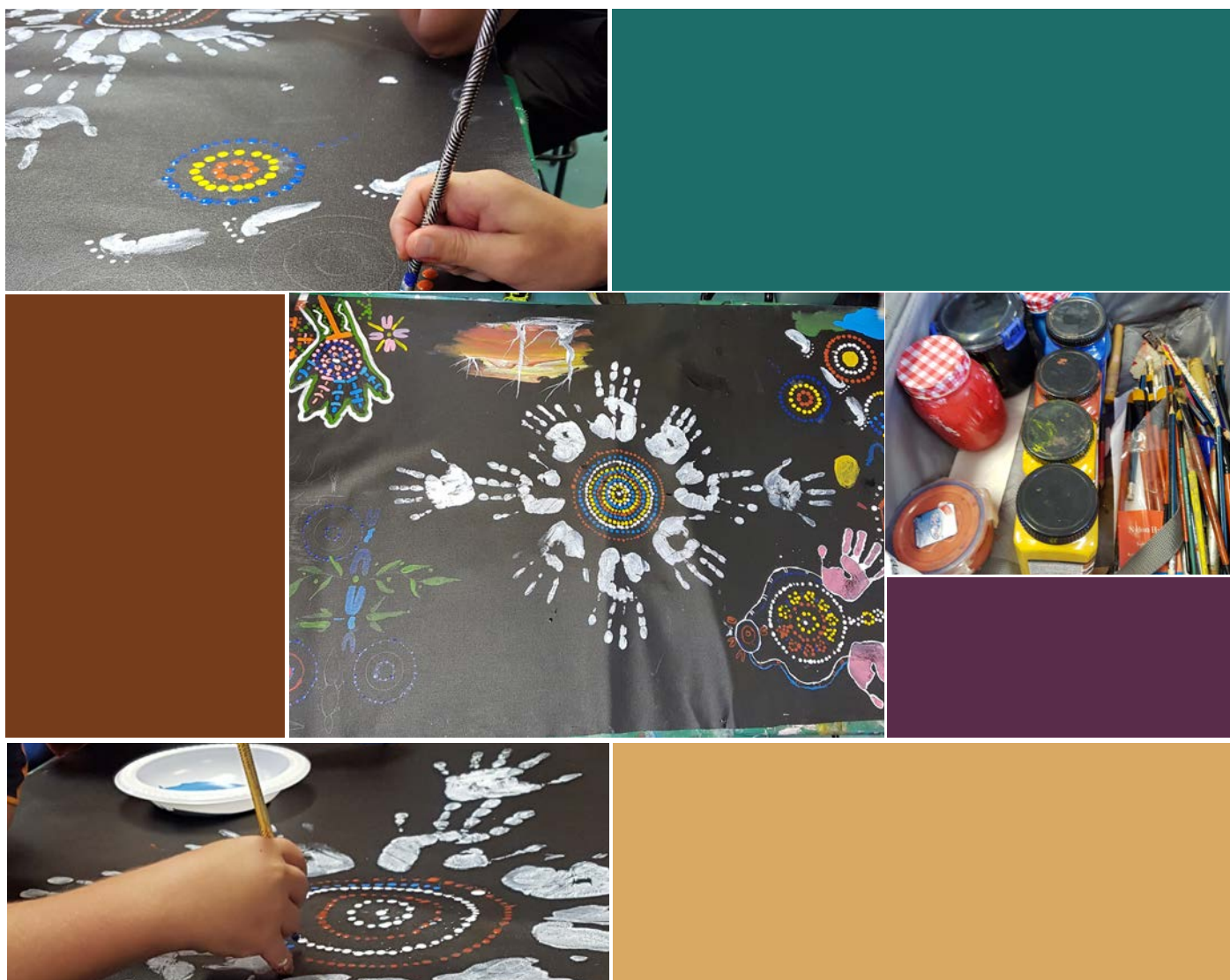
- Each participant receives a part of the rope and adults will have tea lights to help them burn the ends so they do not fray. This is done with the participants, as it is a part of the symbolic commitment to positive change.



Capstone Activity

This research incorporated ACT principles with adventure therapy and outdoor learning throughout the development and facilitation of the program. The multiple experiential activities shared throughout this manual were adapted and implemented within the ACT approach in order to engage students in developing psychological flexibility, life skill development, and coping strategies. Student participation was uniquely enhanced through outdoor learning, movement experiences, and engagement in arts-based processes, culminating in a symbolic bushwalk.

After the post-test surveys and focus group interviews had been conducted, the study concluded with the students' narratives being co-generated into a creative artwork collaboratively with an Aboriginal Elder and artist. The mural was co-created together as the students were asked: In 100 years how would you like your grandkids or kids to be looked after? What would you like to see happening? What things would you see if your kids were being looked after well? This approach embedded a tangible commitment to their future values and provided a concrete artefact that was co-created amongst students that would be displayed at their school. This represented the communal learning experience, as well as a reminder of the learning that took place outdoors that could be brought back to the school environment and context (see Gray, Tracey, Truong, & Ward, 2017; Tracey, Gray, Truong, & Ward, 2018).



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