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Action KA210-ADU - Small-scale partnerships in adult education

THRIVE50+

Set of materials for the workshop

Guided Imagery: Visualizing Calmness and Peace | Gratitude Practice: Cultivating Positivity to Reduce Stress

Project title:

Total Health Resources for Improving Vitality and Endurance 50+

Project No.:

2023-2-RO01-KA210-ADU-000184831

THRIVE 50+

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FACILITATOR GUIDE

BASIC INFORMATION

This workshop focuses on two powerful tools for stress management: guided imagery and gratitude practice. These techniques are designed to help participants reduce stress, foster a sense of calm, and cultivate a more positive mindset.

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Guided imagery involves using mental visualization to create calming and peaceful images, while gratitude practice helps participants focus on positive aspects of life, improving emotional well-being.

TARGET GROUP NEEDS

The primary target group for this workshop consists of individuals aged 50 and above.

This demographic often experiences increased stress due to major life transitions such as retirement, health challenges, caregiving responsibilities, or shifts in social roles.

Participants may also face mental health concerns such as anxiety, loneliness, or a lack of purpose as they navigate these changes. They require practical, easy-to-learn techniques that they can apply in their daily lives to enhance their emotional resilience and reduce stress.

DURATION

The workshop is designed to last between 2 to 3 hours, allowing participants sufficient time to absorb new techniques and practice them in a supportive environment. This timeframe provides a balance between learning and applying concepts, with breaks included to ensure that participants remain engaged and energized throughout the session.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

The ideal number of participants for this workshop is between 2 and 15 people. A smaller group size ensures that each participant receives personalized attention, especially during exercises such as guided imagery, where individual feedback can enhance the learning experience. This number also facilitates meaningful group discussions and allows participants to share their thoughts and experiences in a supportive environment. A manageable group size also enables participants to connect more easily with one another, fostering a sense of community.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

Understand Guided Imagery:

Learn what guided imagery is and how to use it to calm the mind and body. Participants will understand how visualizing peaceful, relaxing scenes can help reduce stress and promote emotional balance.

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Learn the Benefits of Gratitude:

Explore the positive impact of gratitude on mental health and well-being, and understand how focusing on gratitude can shift negative thought patterns and reduce stress levels.

Practice Guided Imagery and Gratitude Techniques:

Develop practical skills by engaging in guided imagery exercises and gratitude journaling. Participants will experience firsthand how these practices can lead to a greater sense of peace and positivity

Create Personalized Stress-Relief Strategies:

Tailor guided imagery and gratitude exercises to their personal needs, learning how to incorporate these techniques into daily life for long-term stress management.

Develop Emotional Awareness:

Reflect on how stress and gratitude affect their emotions and mental health, leading to improved self-awareness and emotional regulation.

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TECHNICAL AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

To successfully run the workshop, the following equipment and materials will be required:

- Computer and Projector: For displaying slides that guide participants through the theory and exercises. Visual aids will help reinforce key points on guided imagery and gratitude.
- Speakers: Calming background music can enhance the guided imagery exercises, creating a more immersive and relaxing environment.
- Flipchart and Markers: To note down participant responses during group discussions, list key concepts, and summarize gratitude practices and stress-relief techniques.
- Comfortable Seating: Relaxation exercises such as guided imagery require participants to sit in comfortable positions, so the seating arrangement should promote comfort and relaxation.
- Soft Lighting and Ambiance: If possible, dim the lights during guided imagery exercises to create a calm and soothing atmosphere, encouraging deeper relaxation.
- Pens and Notepads: Each participant will need these materials for gratitude journaling exercises.

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MATERIALS

The following materials will support the workshop's activities and learning objectives:

- Printed Handouts: Summaries of guided imagery and gratitude techniques for participants to take home, including instructions for personal practice and stress-relief tips.
- Guided Imagery Scripts: Written scripts for the facilitator to use during the guided imagery exercise, ensuring a smooth and calming experience for participants.
- Gratitude Journaling Templates: Simple templates or prompts that guide participants through the process of writing about what they are grateful for.
- Visual Aids: Diagrams showing how stress affects the body, and how gratitude positively impacts emotional and mental well-being

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The workshop will use a variety of methods to engage participants and support different learning styles:

- Interactive Lectures: Brief educational segments introducing key concepts of guided imagery and gratitude. Visual aids and examples will be used to illustrate the importance of these techniques for reducing stress.
- Guided Practice: Participants will be led through a guided imagery session, where they visualize a peaceful environment, and a gratitude journaling exercise, allowing them to experience the positive effects firsthand.
- Group Discussions: Small group discussions will allow participants to share their experiences and reflections on gratitude and visualization. This method promotes connection, support, and a deeper understanding of the material.

- Reflective Journaling: Gratitude journaling exercises will help participants focus on positive aspects of their lives, reinforcing the benefits of daily gratitude practice.
- Mindfulness Exercises: Participants will engage in short mindfulness practices, such as deep breathing, which will complement guided imagery and help participants become more aware of their emotional state.
- Energizers and Breaks: Between activities, energizers or light physical exercises will be introduced to keep participants alert and engaged.

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Curriculum

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Guided Imagery - Visualizing Calmness and Peace Gratitude Practice

Welcome and Introduction (10-15 minutes)

- Objective: Set a positive and relaxed tone for the workshop.

Explanation of activity:

- Welcome participants as they arrive, ensuring they feel comfortable.
- Introduce the purpose of the workshop, emphasizing the importance of relaxation through guided imagery and positivity through gratitude.
- Ask participants to briefly introduce themselves and share something they are grateful for today. This simple exercise sets a reflective and positive tone.

Materials Needed: PowerPoint Presentation (slides 1-4), Name tags, Flipchart, Markers.

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Introduction to Guided Imagery (15-20 minutes)

Objective

Teach participants the basics of guided imagery for stress relief.

Explanation of activity:

- Introduce the concept of guided imagery, explaining that it involves creating calming mental images to induce relaxation.
- Discuss the benefits, such as reduced anxiety and a sense of peace. Show examples of peaceful environments (e.g., a beach, a forest) that can be visualized.

Materials Needed: PowerPoint Presentation (slides 5-12), Flipchart with examples of calming scenes.

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Guided Imagery Practice (15 minutes)

Objective

Practice guided imagery for relaxation.

Explanation of activity:

- Lead participants through a guided imagery exercise. Ask them to sit comfortably, close their eyes, and visualize a peaceful environment (such as a beach, forest, or garden).
- Use calming background music and gentle instructions to guide participants in visualizing the details of the scene (e.g., the sounds, smells, and sensations).
- Encourage participants to focus on their breathing and notice how their body feels as they relax.

Materials Needed: PowerPoint Presentation (slide 13), Calm background music, Comfortable seating.

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Energizer: “Stretch and Breath” (5 minutes)

Objective

Re-energize the group and prepare them for deeper relaxation exercises.

Explanation of activity:

- Guide participants through simple stretches (e.g., shoulder rolls, gentle arm stretches) and deep breathing to refresh their energy.
- This activity helps release tension and gets participants into a more relaxed state.

Materials Needed: PowerPoint Presentation (slide 14), None (optional: relaxing background music).

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Gratitude Practice and Its Benefits (15-20 minutes)

Objective

Introduce the benefits of gratitude for mental health and well-being.

Explanation of activity:

- Present the psychological and emotional benefits of practicing gratitude, such as improved mental health, reduced stress, and increased emotional resilience.
- Provide examples of how a daily gratitude practice can shift focus from negative to positive aspects of life.
- Encourage participants to think of small things they are grateful for, like a sunny day, a cup of tea, or a conversation with a loved one.

PowerPoint Presentation (slides 15-22), Flipchart to list benefits of gratitude.

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Gratitude Journaling Exercise (20 minutes)

Objective

Cultivate positivity by reflecting on personal gratitude.

Explanation of activity:

- Distribute notepads and pens to participants.
- Instruct participants to write down three things they are grateful for and why they are thankful for these aspects of their lives.
- Allow participants time to reflect and, if they feel comfortable, invite them to share one of their reflections with the group. This activity deepens the sense of appreciation and creates positive energy.

Materials Needed: PowerPoint Presentation (slide 23), Notepads, Pens.

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Energizer: “Gratitude Walk” (5-10 minutes)

Objective

Provide a movement break while encouraging reflection on gratitude.

Explanation of activity:

- Ask participants to stand and walk around the room, or step outside if the space allows. As they walk, they are encouraged to reflect on something they appreciate, such as their health, the weather, or the workshop itself.
- Participants can later share what they focused on during their walk.

Materials Needed: PowerPoint Presentation (slide 24), None (optional: outdoor space or walking area).

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Combining Guided Imagery and Gratitude (20 minutes)

Objective

Integrate both techniques for enhanced stress relief.

Explanation of activity:

- Guide participants through a combined exercise where they visualize a peaceful scene and then reflect on feelings of gratitude within that visualization (e.g., appreciating the beauty of nature, a moment of peace, or a personal achievement).
- Encourage participants to notice how incorporating gratitude enhances the depth of relaxation and positivity in their guided imagery experience.

Materials Needed: PowerPoint Presentation (slide 25), Calm background music, Comfortable seating.

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Group Discussion: Personal Gratitude and Visualization Experiences (15-20 minutes)

Objective

Share personal experiences and insights from the exercises.

Explanation of activity:

- Invite participants to share how they felt during the guided imagery and gratitude exercises. What did they visualize? How did gratitude influence their emotions?
- Use a flipchart to summarize key insights and takeaways from the group's reflections.

Materials Needed: PowerPoint Presentation (slide 26-27), Flipchart, Markers.

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Closing and Reflection (10-15 minutes)

Objective

Conclude the workshop and gather feedback from participants.

Explanation of activity:

- Summarize the key techniques participants learned: guided imagery and gratitude practice.
- Encourage participants to think about how they can integrate these practices into their daily routines to manage stress and maintain a positive outlook.
- Ask participants to share one key takeaway or their plan for using these practices going forward.
- Provide additional resources, such as recommended apps (e.g., Headspace for guided meditations) or books (e.g., “The Gratitude Diaries” by Janice Kaplan) for further exploration of gratitude and mindfulness practices.

Materials Needed: PowerPoint Presentation (slide 28) Feedback forms (optional), Resource handouts with suggested further reading or apps.