

Creative Synthesis Project Assignment

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Abstract

Creativity in counseling is as individual as a person's fingerprints. God has created each of us with unique gifts and talents that we can use in our counseling practice and our work with students. Mindfulness and breath work exercises are woven beautifully together in this intervention to help lower stress and bring awareness to the body. A wonderful takeaway is that there is beauty in all forms of creativity in counseling, and the focus is the benefit and safety of the client or student that is participating in the exercise.

Keywords: Mindfulness, breath work, biblical worldview, innovative

Introduction

Breath work and mindfulness exercises work together seamlessly to invite awareness to the body and how a client is feeling while participating in the exercise. With time restraints being a common factor for many people, this exercise can be done in a variety of settings and can be done in as little as five minutes with positive outcomes. If the client or student is feeling stressed or activated, this exercise helps to reduce stress and bring a feeling of calm in a very short amount of time.

Description of Activity

Drawing the Breath is a mindfulness intervention used to help create awareness of the breath; you start by drawing the breath in a “breath doodling” practice that focuses on the pause in our breath. As you inhale, you move the pencil up the page, and as you exhale, you move the pencil down the page, drawing dots as “pause points”. The goal is to be as true to your natural breath as possible to help notice your breath; it should be easy and comfortable. Once we draw the pencil points, we can use watercolors or markers to color them or make a pattern from the drawing, always being mindful of the breath.

I learned about this mindfulness intervention on youtube.com, from the Mindful Creative Muse. I was initially searching art journaling projects and found this wonderful page that resonated deeply with me. As a yoga instructor, I know the amazing value of practicing breath work and I was thrilled to find an innovative intervention that incorporated both journaling and breathwork. I hope you enjoy practicing this as much as I have enjoyed it.

Learning Across the Term

This class has opened an innovative world of artistic interventions for me and has encouraged me to think outside the box when working with my patients and future students. I have enjoyed learning about and practicing all the techniques that we have studied, and I especially enjoyed learning about and creating the Phoenix from Ashes intervention. I believe that I will use this book and my art project as continuous reference points in the future with my patients and students.

Biblical Worldview

There is an abundance of scripture that supports and celebrates creativity. Psalm 104:24 says that “we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Creative Art Favor, 2022). Psalm 139:13-14 tells us that God has filled us “with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills- to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic crafts” (Creative Art Favor, 2022). I believe that God made us in His image to enjoy and discover our creative gifts so that we can glorify Him and help others as we navigate this journey of life.

Meaningful to Me

I have enjoyed working with and getting to know my classmates throughout this class as we each discovered our unique creative niche. I felt comfortable exploring new ways to engage with my clients, and it was entertaining sharing my work with the class. I received helpful and positive feedback throughout the class, which encouraged to keep exploring my creative gifts. While I don’t feel particularly artistic, this class has taught me that I am creative, and I am

excited to continue pursuing new and innovative ways to engage with my clients and my future students.

Conclusion

Creative arts in counseling can take many shapes and forms, and the wonderful takeaway for me is that every attempt at creativity is beautiful. I appreciate that I don't have to have a perfect execution to have a successful intervention. Knowing this, I feel more freedom to try new and innovate techniques and exercises with my clients and students to help enhance the counseling relationship. I look forward to practicing creativity in arts and potentially teaching it in the future.

References

Creative Art Favour. (2022). *The ESV BIBLE: History of the English standard version church study Bible*. Independently Published.

Degges-White, S., & Davis, N. L. (Eds.). (2018). *Integrating the expressive arts into counseling practice* (2nd ed.). Springer Publishing.

Mindfulness and art exercises to destress. (2024, March 5). Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6KJ94wnVsU>

Drawing the Breath

Location: Online

Presenter: Suzy Vaile

Learning Objectives:

1. Explore mindfulness exercises to help relieve stress
2. Create a breath drawing
3. If desired, color/paint the breath drawing and practice self-reflection

Description: Drawing the Breath is a mindfulness intervention used to help create awareness of the breath; you start by drawing the breath in a “breath doodling” practice that focuses on the pause in our breath. As you inhale you move the pencil up the page, and as you exhale, you move the pencil down the page, drawing dots as “pause points”. Try to be as true to your natural breath as possible to help notice your breath; it should be easy and comfortable.

Target Population: Clients, Students, Supervisors

Who would benefit: Clients, students, supervisors, and faculty can benefit from practicing drawing the breath or breath doodling. This activity can be done in five minutes or less to help notice a shift in mood and level of stress during and after completing a breath doodle. It is a convenient intervention to use for clients or students that are feeling overwhelmed or activated in session to help relieve stress and bring a feeling of calm to the session.

Materials: Paper, pencil, markers or watercolors are optional

Time to Conduct Intervention: 6-10 minutes

Time to Learn Intervention: 10-20 minutes

Step-by-Step Guidelines:

1. We will create our Breath Doodle on a piece of paper using pencils or colored pencils.
2. As you inhale, you will move your pencil up the page and draw a dot where you notice a pause in your breath.
3. As you exhale, you will move your pencil down the page and draw a dot where you notice a pause in your breath.

We will continue this cycle for 2-3 minutes, paying attention to the natural rhythm of your breath and drawing it on the page. The goal is to notice the breath and the self-reflection of your feelings as you are participating in the exercise. Some breaths will be shorter or longer

than others, and that is perfectly fine. There is no right or wrong way; the goal is to bring awareness.

Potential Modifications

This intervention is created to be ability friendly. One potential modification would be using larger pieces of paper for visually impaired participants.

Ethical Considerations

The goal of this intervention is to bring awareness to each participant. We want to provide a safe and inviting space that allows for individual creativity and expression during the exercise. These are personal artistic expressions and do not have to be shared with the group.

Potential Risks:

Breath work could be triggering for some individuals. If triggered, try taking slower, shorter breaths or refrain from participating in the exercise.

Attribution

Original to presenter