



Therapeutic Horticulture Activity Mindful Study of a Flower

Source: *Gardening for Mindfulness* by Holly Farrell

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Overview: This activity fosters the anchoring or grounding of the mind by focusing on a flower.

Precautions:

1. May need fine motor dexterity to fully examine the flower.
2. May need good vision to fully examine the flower

Completion Time: 15 minutes

Materials: (10 participants)

1. Individual flower on a stem (10)
2. Timer (1)
3. Handout *Parts of a Flower*, attached (optional) (10)
4. Handout *Introduction of Mindfulness*, attached (optional) (10)
5. Paper or journal to record impressions (optional) (10)
6. Pen or pencil (optional) (10)
7. Colored pencils (optional) (1-2 sets)
8. Magnifying glass (optional) (10)
9. Small platform to elevate flower closer to eye level, such as a small box or cardstock paper resting on 2 cups (optional) (10)

Pre-Session Prep:

1. Gather supplies
2. Identify a quiet place for participants to sit comfortably during activity; if they are not able to hold the flower for 5 minutes, position the seat in front of a table or surface

Step-By-Step Process/Instructions:

1. Encourage the silencing of phones and removal of other distractions.
2. Introduce the practice of mindfulness; use *Introduction to Mindfulness* attached below as needed
3. Talk about how it is ok if your mind wanders, this is natural; encourage participants to notice the wandering and without judgment return the focus to the flower.
4. If participants are not already seated where they will do the activity, have them move.
5. Introduce the activity and let them know the goal is to be mindful of the flower for 5 minutes;
6. Look over the *Parts of a Flower* handout if using;
7. Talk about how they will not be having a narrative with themselves of what they are seeing but rather just noticing details of the flower;
8. Read over the example prompts below so they will have an idea of what they are going to be doing beforehand; examples of things to notice...
 - a. The color of the petals
 - b. The change of color of the petals, from base to tip and the interior and exterior
 - c. Does the texture look smooth or velvety
 - d. Are the petals thin or thick
 - e. What does the center of the flower look like, is it domed or flat, is there pollen
 - f. Has the flower just opened
 - g. Does it look like the petals are about to fall off
 - h. Does the stem hold the flower upright, or is it nodding
 - i. Is the stem smooth or hairy
 - j. What shade of green or brown is the stem

- k. Do you see other stems or buds emerging from the stem
 - l. Are the sepals from which the flower bud originally emerged still green, or fading, or brown
 - m. What is the shape and texture of the leaves
 - n. Lastly we will take a deep breath with your nose close to the flower and notice its fragrance; is it floral and sweet or fresh and grassy
9. Tell them there will be a bell or verbal notification at 2 ½ minutes and the end of the 5 minutes for the activity.
 10. Start the timer for 5 minutes
 11. Instruct participants to close their eyes and take 3 slow breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth, trying to allow the exhale to be a little longer than the inhale; notice your body relaxing with each breath. Take 2 more breaths noticing how the chest or stomach rises and falls.
 12. Ask them to notice where their body is touching the chair or ground.
 13. While the participants have their eyes closed, set the flower in front of them if seated at a table or on their lap if not at a table.
 14. Instruct them to open their eyes and focus their attention on the flower in front of them.
 15. Remind them to try not to describe (using words/talking to yourself) what you see but rather focus on noticing details of the flower...
 16. Pass out paper or journals if they would like to record their impressions before sharing or if not sharing to allow a method of more deeply thinking through the detail they noticed; encourage recording colors or shapes (see Tip below)

Tips:

1. If fine motor dexterity is limited, place the flower elevated so that it is closer to the participants face
2. If visual acuity is of concern provide participant with a magnifying glass
3. If visual acuity and dexterity are of concern provide with magnifying glass on a stand

4. Provide colored pencils to draw what they saw; provide them with a line drawing of the specific flower being used so they can color that if drawing is intimidating.
5. Use a meditation timer app on phone to play a bell at 2 ½ minute and 5 minute marks; this is likely to be less disruptive of attention than verbal prompts.

☰ Introduction to Mindfulness. final

☰ Parts of a Flower. final

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