

Core Self

Purposes

To invite participants to connect with their inner being—to understand that it is always there for them to return to and that it is a source of peace, strength and goodness. Use this exercise in the Basic Workshop, following the Transforming Power talk. Use it also in the Trauma Resilience Workshop.

Time

30 minutes

Materials

Drawing paper, crayons, markers, oil pastels etc.

Core Self poster—a circle with the words “Core Self” inside the circle in big, bold letters. In smaller type, also inside the circle: “authentic, genuine, true”. Radiating out from the circle: “curious”, “confident”, “sincere”, “constant and maturing”, “capable”, “creative”, “calm”, “courageous”, “compassionate”, “clear”, “connected”.

Instructions

1. The facilitator explains that everyone has a core self and that the core self is the origin of our unique goodness, capabilities and qualities. The facilitator goes over the Core Self poster.
2. Lead the group in the following meditation:
“Stop in your body and your mind. Relax. Feel your skeleton. Notice your breath, your heart beat, your Transforming Power that is right here. You do not need to close your eyes. This place is always available to you, in every moment. Open to the Transforming Power within you. Remember a time when you felt totally yourself, alive and engaged in your core self. Remember a time when you were open to the goodness that is inside you—the goodness that is a place of calm, a place that brings you confidence in yourself and compassion for yourself and others. What does that place feel like? What does your core self feel like? In a moment I will ask you to begin to draw what that feeling looks like, feels like. Feelings can be abstract so your drawing can be abstract rather than representational. What color does your core self feel like? When you are ready, you may open your eyes and return to the room. When you begin drawing, start with your non-dominant hand.”

Note: We use our non-dominate hand so that we are not caught up in making the drawing look representational and so that we have to focus more on the act of drawing. When we are traumatized, the two sides of our brain become disconnected. The right side is our creative side, the left side our cognitive side—where language lives. So to really use the right side is important. And then to write three words and explain the drawing out loud is to help to reconnect the two sides of the brain.

3. When most people have finished drawing, ask them to write three words on their drawing. Any three words.
4. When the participants have finished, the facilitator explains that *“We always have our core selves with us. We can trust that it is there and always safe—a place where we find peace and strength inside ourselves. The more we practice going there, the more real it can become for us.”*
5. The facilitator then models showing their drawing to the group, saying a few words about it and reading the words on the drawing and then posting the drawing on the wall. The facilitator invites participants to do the same, one at a time, reminding participants that they can pass if they wish.

Processing Questions:

What did you learn about your core self?

What will you take from this exercise?