

Holding Space Program: Supporting the Emotional Journey of Implementing Trauma-informed Practice in Early Childhood Settings

Workshop 2: Stress, Trauma, and the Brain: The Neurosequential Model

Implemented on the CSU Albury-Wodonga Campus Tuesday April 1st 2025

Notes to Accompany Workshop Slides

SLIDE 7: TAKE A LITTLE MOMENT (Dr Vicky Graham)

This activity connects to Slide 4: Holding Space = A community of respect; a community of regulation. It also connects to one of the Workshop 2 key take aways on Slide 6: Use little moments to regulate and relate!

The purpose of this 'take a little moment' activity is to take a little moment to "arrive". It is an activity that can bring people together, help to create feelings of safety, and reduce distracting thoughts or emotions. If you are using the slides to run your own workshop with colleagues, you may find this activity helpful to give them the experience of taking a moment to "arrive" before moving onto the more detailed parts of the workshop.

You can also adapt the activity to use with the children who you work with. Perhaps consider incorporating a 'take a little moment' activity, like this one, into your morning routine.

Please note that the following wording is suggested wording and please adapt it as needed for your setting or purpose.

Suggested wording for adults

Take a breath, inhale, then exhale slowly. On the next inhale, gather all your thoughts of the past or future and see if you can leave them outside this room, even just for a moment.

For the next few breaths, just be here, in this room. Take a look around, see what you notice. Now feel your feet on the floor, as you keep breathing slowly. Notice your position, the weight of your body, the air moving in and out of your nose.

Suggested resources that can help you to adapt the activity for children

See the Finger Breathing mindfulness activity on Page 12, and the Mindful Listening Bell activity on page 18 in the resource booklet found via the following link (the booklet has other great ideas as well that you can explore): [https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/mental-health/School link Newsletters/Mindfulness%20and%20Calming%20Activities.pdf](https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/mental-health/School%20link%20Newsletters/Mindfulness%20and%20Calming%20Activities.pdf)

SLIDES 8 & 9: FEELING SAFE (Dr Vicky Graham)

These slides connect to Slide 4: Holding Space = A community of respect; a community of regulation. They also connect to one of the Workshop 2 key take aways on Slide 6: Everything is easier when we feel safe.

As noted on the slide, feeling safe goes beyond worrying that an animal is going to get you. It is more often how we feel around others - that keeps us from being our own, authentic selves.

Dr. Vicky Graham's personal aside:

As a shy child, I worked to overcome my fear of public speaking. I thought it was something unique to me, and did not realize how common it is to have fears of being embarrassed or teased in public. Now that I am an educator, guess what happens? When I ask questions of my students, my audience, I often stand waiting in the long silence for a reply. No one wants to get it wrong!

I realise that we all have fears of saying the wrong thing or making a mistake - particularly around certain people.

So to help you lean into this all too common experience, take 10 minutes to consider the questions on Slide 8, and discuss with each other.

We then invite you, on Slide 9, to think about how you can use this idea of 'feeling safe' in your work with children, and/or with your colleagues.

SLIDES 13 & 14: TAKE A LITTLE MOMENT (Kate Fiske)

This activity connects to Slide 4: Holding Space = A community of respect; a community of regulation. It also connects to one of the Workshop 2 key take aways on Slide 6: Use little moments to regulate and relate!

We chose to finish our workshop with the following 'take a little moment' featuring the work of Dr Russ Harris, and particularly his idea of 'dropping anchor'. Our purpose for using the activity was to give workshop attendees an opportunity to experience 'dropping anchor' as a potentially useful strategy for managing overwhelming emotions (Regulating). If you are using the slides to run your own workshop with colleagues, you might like to ask them the questions on Slide 14 as it will help connect the activity to their work.

You can read more about Dr Russ Harris and 'dropping anchor' here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Tnw7sRebVGCvbuhgEZY2Dr4EWQcp9HN5/view>

We have provided the wording (from Dr Russ Harris) that we used in the workshop below, but please adapt to suit your setting.

Suggested wording

Notice what is happening in your inner world.

Observe your thoughts, emotions, memories, images and urges.

Be curious and gentle. Just notice, without passing judgement.

Connect with what is going on in your body (rather than in your mind).

Push your feet into the ground.

Gently straighten your back and neck, as if stretching towards the sky.

Press your fingertips together.

Stretch out your arms.

Shrug your shoulders.

Take some steady breaths. Aim for a slower out-breath.

Notice what is going on around you.

Notice 5 things you can see.

Notice 4 things you can hear.

Notice 3 things you can feel.

Notice 2 things you can smell.

Notice 1 thing you can taste.

Now refocus your attention on whatever task or activity you are doing.