



Wellbeing, Self-Care, and Integrated Security (WeSIS) Manual for Human Rights Defenders



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**Wellbeing, Self-Care, and Integrated Security (WeSIS) Manual for
Human Rights Defenders**

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Preface

“**CARING FOR MYSELF IS NOT SELF-INDULGENCE, IT IS SELF-PRESERVATION AND THAT IS AN ACT OF POLITICAL WARFARE.**”

— Audre Lorde

Across Southeast Asia, human rights defenders are fighting for their rights, often putting themselves in harms' way and experiencing great personal cost in the name of what they believe in.

As activists, we can take for granted the toll that our work takes on our minds and bodies, as well as on our families and loved ones. We continue to put our causes and the needs of others before our own, all the while facing heightened risk on account not only of our activism, but also our identities. Too often, the cost becomes too great. We overwork, burn out, get sick or become disillusioned.

Yet the efficacy of our movements depends on our own ability to fight and keep fighting for the change we want to see in the world. This manual is based on IWE Asia experiences in strengthening the internal strength and resilience, and nurturing wellbeing of feminist activists. It is a response to the struggle facing too many women and LGBTIQ+ rights defenders, and a hope that together we can create space for solidarity and healing, movement-building and growth.

The manual was first created for a wellbeing workshop for WHRDs and LGBTIQ+ rights defenders in Southeast Asia, organised by PBI and held in October 2022 in Bali, Indonesia. We are grateful to the participants of that workshop for sharing their experiences honestly and openly, and creating a space in which we could experience care together.

On behalf of
PBI Southeast Project Exploration Committee

Hannah Dwyer Smith

Introduction to WeSIS: Wellbeing, Self-Care and Integrated Security

The term Wellbeing, Self-Care and Integrated Security (WeSIS) was coined by the Institute for Women's Empowerment (IWE) and is regarded by IWE as a fundamental practice for building sustainable, transformative feminist leadership.

WeSIS practices aim at strengthening the foundations of social movements through nurturing the individuals who form the basis of these movements. Feminist activists often neglect their own health and wellbeing in their constant fight for equity and justice. When individual activists are unable to recognise their physical and emotional limits, or devote their lives to a cause or a movement without taking stock of their personal wellbeing, they may burn out, and the movement is likely to be unsustainable.

Wellbeing, Self-care and Integrated Security form an integrated concept and practice(s) which guide individual activists and their organisations to build internal strength (resilience) and avoid burnout and damage to their health and wellbeing. Although sometimes not explicitly addressed, the practices to enhance the resilience of activists at the same time cultivate and maintain their sense of personal security, based on confidence and self-awareness that they can always find the way out of any situation, trusting their own powers of intuition and observation.

The practice of WeSIS usually begins with the individual, but has far reaching outcomes for the organisations and movements they work for.

Internalised gender defines our concept of self and how we understand the role of women through our relationships with those around us. In most societies this results in women not only being assigned caregiver roles, but that they must prioritise this role above all else, including their own self-care and wellbeing. It is through first recognising these internalised gender mandates that we can relinquish feelings of guilt and selfishness which are tied to our own and others' expectations of women.

The concept and practice of WeSIS encourages individuals to deconstruct internalised gender mandates, building a critical awareness of their own mentality and how this affects their wellbeing.. We are then equipped to understand where these gender mandates originate – are they cultural, religious, a product of class inequality and so on. Releasing ourselves from these feelings of inadequateness also builds self-esteem and encourages us to express and prioritise our own needs, rather than solely the needs of others.

Reflexivity is central to the concept and practice of WeSIS, and there is a conscious effort to anchor a sense of security by building safe and inductive spaces where women can reflect and express their experiences, feelings, aspirations and thoughts. For women who, whether consciously or unconsciously, regard their primary role as caring for others' needs, this can be a profound step in realising the value of their own opinions and developing their self-esteem in vocally expressing their thoughts to others without fear of reprisal or being judged or shamed. The value of this internal work cannot be understated, as through realising our self-worth, reclaiming our conceptualisation of ourselves and our identities and recognising our value and potential as leaders, we empower ourselves. Wellbeing is about internal strength and resilience, by nurturing these internal attributes we create stronger foundations for the networks, organisations, communities and collectives that we are party to.

Personal and Collective Wellbeing is Crucial to Feminist Leadership

Building internal strength and resilience or nurturing our internal wellbeing has been a critical component missing from recent and present approaches to activism. Many individuals who are regarded as extraordinary leaders and have accomplished great victories in their work for social justice have suffered enormous costs to their own wellbeing. This in turn has affected their social justice work, leading to personal burnout and stagnation or even the demise of movements. To sustain transformative feminist leadership, the mental, physical and emotional health of individuals must not be compromised. Thus, to preserve the holistic health of their workers and members, the collective must provide space and opportunities for self-care and mindfulness practices even as they organise other strategic skills training. If the individual self is not sustainable because health and overall wellbeing are not being attended to, then the foundations for sustainable leadership are weakened.

WeSIS strives to provide a holistic approach to activism, through incorporating not only an awareness or mindfulness of individual and collective wellbeing, but also practical relaxing mind and body exercises to reflect individually and collectively on present emotions and thoughts, and to observe and know oneself in a safe and supportive environment, thus building the foundation for sustainable activism, and hopefully, sustainable leadership, organisations, movements and sustainable transformation.

Overview

This part consists of the practical components in conducting and facilitating WeSIS workshops. It consists of workshop objectives and understanding the context and priorities. For the workshop objectives, please also note that each workshop can have additional aims that have specific context to priorities of the participants.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the workshop is to strengthen the resilience of human rights defenders and encourage them to develop a community of wellbeing practices to sustain their work.

Specifically, these are the following objectives that should be achieved:

Increased awareness of human rights defenders to:

Define various dimensions of wellbeing and closely link them with their challenges living as an individual with one or intersecting identities, such as based on gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicities, geography, age, faith or cultural background, etc.

Reflect on the different forms of power in their lives and collective works and how those powers impact the individuals and community wellbeing.

Develop practice of self-care and activate the self-healing capacity of human rights defenders to:

Utilise them daily for themselves and also share it to their organisations and community.

Exercise the care and healing practices collectively and make them as regular activities in their organisation and community.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES

Prior to the workshop, the facilitator should understand the priorities of each of the human rights defenders who will participate. It consists of:

1

Discussing individual security challenges related to the travel preparation to the workshop site with the organisation who send the participants to the workshop.

2

Inviting the participants to fill out a form for the following:

- a. Participant basic information, specific requirements related to dietary preferences, languages, or other necessary things that can support the workshop logistical preparations
- b. Motivation, knowledge and experiences of wellbeing. Some questions can include:

Why do you think that this workshop is important for your organisation, community, as well as your safety and security?

Please explain the nature of risk and threat that you may or had experienced which will affect your wellbeing?

What capacities and strengths does your organisation/collective have to mitigate or address the impact of your work to your wellbeing condition?

Has your organisation or collective carried out similar activities in the past? What was the result (the benefit to your organisation) and how did you follow up?

Workshop Session

The workshop consists of six sessions. They are:

1

Creating space and getting to know each other

2

The knowledge and practice of wellbeing and self-care

3

Understanding personal and collective power

4

Exercises for caring for ourselves

5

Developing a personal self-care plan and community wellbeing strategy

6

Closing circle

The workshop is tailored in sessions, as a guidance to develop the programme's flow. The minimum amount of time for the workshop is three days, as the previous workshop in October 2022 was conducted. However, it is also better to allow more time for the participants to have coffee breaks and longer breaks each day. Therefore, the ideal workshop will take a maximum of five days

Day 1: Introduction, Knowledge and Practices of Wellbeing (360 mins)

Morning

Session 1. Creating space and getting to know each other (90 mins)

Session 2. Expectation and set ground rules (90 mins)

Afternoon

Session 3. Knowledge of wellbeing: understanding well being dimensions (90 mins)

Session 4. The practice of wellbeing (90 mins):

Knowing and connecting with yourself - body, mind and spirit

Understanding 3A's: Attention, Attitudes and Action

Day 2: Understanding Personal, Collective Power and Practices for Physical care (360 mins)

Morning

Session 5. Reflecting on experience of power in the community and organisations (120 mins)

Identifying the issues and challenges on being well in organisation and HRDs community

Reflecting on the impact of those challenges to personal life, organisation and HRDs community

Session 6. Reflecting on personal experience of power (90 mins)

Afternoon

Session 7. Exercises for caring for ourselves (150 mins)

Conscious breathing

Conscious breathing combined with slow movements

Energy hand hold to help yourself and to help others

Day 3: Practices for Physical care, Develop Personal Self-Care Plan and Community Wellbeing Strategy (300 mins)

Session 7 (continued). Exercises for caring for ourselves (120 mins)

Body scan for total relaxation

Emotional body mapping

Meditation to cultivate mindfulness

Session 8. Next step: develop personal self-care plan and community wellbeing strategy (120 mins)

Creating space and getting to know each other

It is crucial for the process of the workshop to create, from the start, an atmosphere / space that will stimulate self-reflection and mutual learning of participants. It is thus important to start each workshop with a session to create and hold an atmosphere/space where participants feel safe, included and respected. It is a space that is relaxing/peaceful and stimulating at the same time. It should encourage an attitude of mutual attentiveness and respect for each other, and at the same time, an openness and trust to share one's own reflections and emotions, without fear of judgement or shame.

There are several activities to get to know each other:

1. Me and my symbol

SUMMARY: This activity enables participants and facilitators to get to know each other

EXPLANATION POINTS:

Facilitator invites participants to have a self-introduction:

Round of names that each participant likes to be called, including their preferred pronouns. It is also possible of to do this by spelling their name or first letter of their name with a movement

Going further, all participants are given 10-15 minutes to look around the workshop venue and go outside the venue to find an object that represents themselves. If they can't find it, the facilitator can provide a piece of paper with coloured markers for them to draw something.

2. Creating a physical and interactional, relaxed but alert atmosphere

SUMMARY: These activities allows participants to have a safe and inclusive space to practice attentiveness or listening to oneself, and to each other.

EXPLANATION POINTS:

Activity 1: Physical-spatial interaction

In silence, no talking, facilitators tell the participant to focus on themselves, their internal space and in mindful silence to take note of the space around them.

Ask participants to walk quietly, then explore the space in the room in mindful silence, no talking but be aware of what or who around them.

Ask participants to do the facilitator instructions:

- a. Walk across the room and acknowledge each other IN SILENCE, look at the face you meet, receive the smile and warmth without talking.
- b. Greet each other with caring eyes, smiling eyes.
- c. Start to walk fast, rush around to dodge each other walk backwards, then sideways like a crab walk
- d. Greet each other with thumb to thumb, feet to feet, toe to toe, elbow to elbow

Activity 2: Connecting with each other

Facilitator play a song and ask participants to follow the instructions:

- a. Look around and move to face the person with whom you feel some connection...
- b. Without talking, or making any sound, using your eyes, ears and concentration, create some MINDFUL, ATTENTIVE mirroring movement with each other.
- c. Allow yourself to be led and lead.
- d. When music stops, form a standing circle.

Facilitator ends the activity by inviting all participants to inhale together and exhale together with the breathing sound “HAAA” and repeat this deep breath three times.

Expectation and setting the ground rules

SUMMARY: Facilitator continues to understand the participant expectation for the workshop.

EXPLANATION POINTS:

Activity

Participants answer two questions and write them in different coloured post-its and paste on a board:

- a. What do you hope to get from the workshop or expectations?
- b. What will you contribute to the workshop?

It is also useful for facilitators to clarify and adjust logistic arrangements of the workshop process and space if necessary, for optimal comfort. Some questions that can be discussed:

- a. How to maintain a pleasant, non-cluttered organised workshop space
- b. Appoint a time-keeper for each day of the workshop
- c. Coordinate and conduct the morning wellness sessions
- d. Feedback group process time – whether it will be conducted at end of day or beginning of each day

SUMMARY: Participants agree on guidelines / ground rules that will promote the confidence and trust of participants and encourage everyone's active participation.

Activity

Facilitator invites participants to agree on some basic ground rules which can be added on by participants throughout the day.

Some proposed ground rules:

- a. Mutual confidentiality of all disclosed/discussed
- b. Respect, understanding, care (showing support – silence together when needed)
- c. Deep listening without any assessment/judgement
- d. No right or wrong answers – just express what you experience and feel ..
- e. Try not to censor yourself ...
- f. Be mindful of the limited time ... do not talk too long, and thus deprive others of their time to express themselves
- g. Allow yourself to participate and enjoy the process

The knowledge and practice of wellbeing and self-care

THE KNOWLEDGE OF WELLBEING

SUMMARY: Participants understand the concept of wellbeing, (the KNOWLEDGE), with an exercise with discussion questions which will help participants to deepen their understanding and explore ways to sustain, restore, or enhance their wellbeing.

EXPLANATION POINTS:

The Knowledge /Concept of Wellbeing : The Five Dimensions

What do you actually mean, when someone asks you: How are you? and you answer: I am well? Usually the question ends there, and no one asks more details about how well you feel/are.

The term wellbeing can mean different things to different people. You need to discover the parts of yourself, your life, that do NOT feel so well. When we understand more why we feel some UN-wellness in some parts of our life, we can find effective ways to do something about it, and become more wholly well - grounded and connected, to ourselves, and everything around us.

Basically, we can examine 5 dimensions that can help to understand every aspect of our lives. For this purpose, it is very useful to unpack these dimensions of wellbeing. They are:

PHYSICAL DIMENSION

1 Physical wellbeing is not only the absence of illness or bodily injuries. It involves making choices and caring for our bodies in a meaningful way that corresponds with our values concerning our physical health. Physical wellbeing balances all aspects of our physical self which includes sleep, movement, nutrition, hygiene, relaxation, sexual health, management of illness and injuries, and the usage of drugs and alcohol. Going further, our physical wellbeing is also affected by external factors like our workspace, housing, living and working environment. So we may need to pay attention to a broader scope of issues than only our internal needs.

2

MENTAL/INTELLECTUAL DIMENSION

This includes our process and clarity of thinking, acquiring knowledge, information, distinguishing between fact and fiction, the ability to have some degree of control over our thoughts, as well as the creativity to think beyond the box. Intellectual wellness is the creativity and mental growth that we hopefully developed through school, and which should help us to deal with all the complicated issues we meet throughout our lives. Meant to expand our knowledge and skills, cultivating intellectual wellbeing helps to stimulate creativity and curiosity as well, which helps us to keep interacting more with the world around us. Curiosity helps us to be open to new things and new experiences, and learning is a life-long process.

3

EMOTIONAL DIMENSION

Emotional wellbeing is the process of recognising, understanding, and accepting our emotions. It involves the ability to remain in the present moment and effectively handle change and challenges that come our way. Emotions are an important part of being human, allowing us to experience life in a meaningful way. When we choose to engage with our emotions, we can know ourselves better, learn deeper insight into why we feel a certain way, and decide how to move forward based on our values. Emotional wellbeing means that we are able to be mindful and reflective before taking action even when strong emotions are threatening to overwhelm us.

4

SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

Spiritual wellbeing is connecting to something greater than yourself and following a set of values, morals, and beliefs to guide your actions and help to form meaningful habits or a consistent life process and to cultivate a sense of purpose and meaning. These values may or may not be connected to a particular religion, but they usually are connected to broader concerns than our personal welfare, like freedom and justice for everybody, the good of the community, etc. Spiritual wellbeing and the consistency it helps to create have the potential to make decisions and choices easier and to keep us grounded during periods of change and uncertainty.

5

RELATIONAL WELLBEING

Relational or social wellbeing refers to the relationships we have and how we interact with others. This dimension involves the ability to build healthy, nurturing, and supportive relationships as well as fostering a genuine connection with self and those around us. Social wellbeing is important for maintaining harmony in all relationships – from acquaintances to close friends and immediate family. This dimension is critical to building resilience in the other dimensions such as emotional wellness as well, as relationships involve mutual respect, open communication, equality, care, and are not exploitative or manipulative.

Activity

For each of the five dimensions described above (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, relational), facilitator invites participants to discuss in groups of maximum three people on the following questions:

- a. What does it mean to “be well” in that particular dimension? (e.g. in the physical dimension, in the mental dimension....etc)
- b. What are the challenges you face in each dimension?
- c. What are you presently doing or intending to do - to face these challenges?

Each group will appoint someone to present the answers of the groups to the panel.

As the participants discuss, they will notice that the five dimensions are not mutually exclusive, but that in real life, they are very much connected with each other, and affect each other. Note carefully how (or most?) situations can involve issues in more than one dimension.

THE PRACTICE OF WELLBEING

SUMMARY: Participants understand why it is essential to intentionally PRACTISE self-care methods to enhance their wellbeing in their daily lives.

EXPLANATION POINTS:

“Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice” (Anton Chekhov)

“We learn by practice. Whether it means to learn to dance by practicing dancing or to learn to live by practicing living, the principles are the same” (Martha Graham)

The cultivation of a holistic wellbeing involves the consistent process of taking responsibility for our lives in all its dimensions. It requires diligent and systematic PRACTISE, and can sometimes require a major change in lifestyle and habits. It will only succeed if one has the intention to change, pays consistent attention to the required steps and is willing to take the time to learn and systematically put the steps into practice until they become habitual.

In the long run, one will cultivate self-awareness and mindfulness, as well as the valuable attitudes of non-judgemental, acceptance and letting go and compassion.

Self-care practices to achieve holistic wellbeing have these intended objectives:

1

To know oneself: through observation of our body sensations, thoughts, feelings, emotions; through conscious, deep breathing and slow, deliberate movements.

Consistently giving ATTENTION to how and what we are feeling, thinking, doing ... is living mindfully. It is how we learn to know ourselves – our feelings and sensations, our emotions and our thoughts.

Only when we know ourselves deeply and honestly, can we begin to care for and help ourselves, and even to heal ourselves – whether from past traumatic experiences or present hurts and stresses of daily life.

We can practise living attentively or mindfully, through various methods of meditation.

2

To practise keeping our attention on the present moment – whatever we are doing; and in this way, to cultivate basic positive attitudes for joyful mindful living, and relationships based on openness, honesty, generosity and compassion.

ATTITUDE is a basic approach to life. Usually we have positive and negative attitudes. and we sometimes feel worried or carefree, fearful or secure, angry or friendly, sad or happy, confident or unsure of ourselves. Especially the feelings and emotions we feel when we are overwhelmed by the toxic and destructive situations around us which cause us to feel stress, and can lead to depression and burn-out.

The basic attitude we can cultivate, in order to be more balanced and calm in facing all the challenges of life, are:

- a. Non-Judgement, of ourselves and others, for our common human failings and weaknesses
- b. Acceptance, what is, or has happened, without trying to deny or reject the reality
- c. Letting Go, of what is no longer useful or necessary for our wellbeing
- d. Compassion, that is based on the realisation of being totally connected with every being in the cosmos.

3

With consistent practice or ACTION, we can learn to restore the body's natural ability to heal itself, to maintain a healthy state, and to enhance wellbeing.

We can learn to let go of the obstacles we put in the way of our bodies' natural and optimal functioning through our own unhealthy habits and life-styles, and to cultivate healthier habits and attitudes.

We are practising self-care not only because we are concerned about keeping ourselves well and because we want to live happy and healthy lives, with our families, colleagues and our communities. Not even only because as activists, we are committed to changing the toxic and systems which are destroying all life and ecosystems of the one planet Earth we live on, and we need to be resilient and sustainable for the action.

We need to practise self-care because it is by caring for ourselves that we also learn how to care for others, for all beings, and eco-systems, for nature and the cosmos.

Activity

Facilitator invites participants to share in a group with a maximum of 3 people about their challenges in practicing self-care. What was the situation or moment? How did they feel about that?

Understanding Personal and Collective Power

Power affects everything we do or cannot do– the decisions that control our lives; what emerges in the public agenda and what does not; even what information we have, what we know, and how we see ourselves as agents and actors. Making change happen means both understanding the power that prevents change from happening – that protects an unjust status quo – as well as understanding the power we have within ourselves and with others to create change, hopefully towards a more just, sustainable and positive future.

The power dynamics at work within a community or organisation may even affect the wellbeing of the members of that community /group. Thus, to achieve holistic wellbeing it is necessary to recognise the forms of power at work, personally, in or relationships and in our living and working environments

Power often has many different meanings. Sometimes it is about people and actors – the powerful or the powerless – and other times it is about structures, rules or institutions. Sometimes it is about how we feel about our capabilities and those of others to act for or against change; other times it is about the more material sources and resources of power that affect our actions. Sometimes it is located in very intimate experiences in our families or private lives, other times it involves issues and actions on the larger public stage, be it in our communities, our nations or even globally.

Power is also hard to understand because by its very nature it is illusive. Power can be the ability to act visibly in ways that affect others, but it is also the power to act behind closed doors through more hidden and invisible means. Power can be about what is on the agenda, but also what is kept off; about who speaks, but also who does not; about whose voices count, as well as whose voices go unheard. As such, power is about what we see easily and experience directly, as well as what we do not see.

For this reason, we need deliberate and creative ways to understand it and to make how power affects our everyday lives more legible and visible to ourselves and to others. Power is also dynamic. We may all have assumptions about who wields power in communities and in our societies, yet these constantly need to be re-tested against an ever-changing reality. Power changes, and in doing so opens up new possibilities while also closing off older avenues and strategies for citizen action. Making change happen effectively means understanding and getting ahead of these shifts, otherwise we may be acting in the wrong places, on the wrong issues, or in the wrong ways.

REFLECTING ON EXPERIENCE OF POWER IN THE COMMUNITY

SUMMARY: Participants understand the different forms that power in our living and working collectives take, and the impact these forms have on the wellbeing of the individuals and the community

EXPLANATION POINTS:

Most of the time, power does not operate in tangible ways. There are forms of power: visible, hidden, invisible.

VISIBLE POWER includes the aspects of political power that we 'see', such as formal rules, structures, institutions and procedures informing decision making. In other words, it is about how those people with power use existing procedures and structures to control the actions of others. Examples: elections, political parties, policies, laws, regulations, decision making arenas of organisations and of social movements.

HIDDEN POWER is exercised when powerful people and institutions maintain their power and privilege by creating barriers to participation, setting, manipulating agendas, excluding from the decision making by society's unwritten rules, and marginalising the concerns and voices of less powerful groups.

They may occur not only within political processes, but in organisational and other group contexts as well, such as workplaces, NGOs or community-based organisations. Those with power see and understand these rules of the game; others don't. Examples: quality of some consultation processes that exclude some voices; setting the agenda behind the scene.

INVISIBLE POWERS operate in ways in which people will adopt belief systems that are created by those with power. Problems and issues are kept away not only from the decision making table but also from the mind and hearts of different people, including those affected by these decisions. This is when powerlessness is internalised. In this form of power, people may be unaware of their rights, their ability to speak out, and may come to see various forms of power or domination over them as 'natural', or at least unchangeable, and therefore unquestioned. Examples: stereotypes that limit the roles of certain groups, cultural norms, values and practices that reinforces privileged-inferiority, blames the victims

Activity

In order to anchor the discussions over power in the community on real situations faced by participants, each participant will share their experiences on the challenges they face personally, in organisations and/or communities, and how they have tried to address these challenges. Wherever possible, participants can mention how they think power or the lack of power has played a role in their situation.

Guiding questions for the sharing:

- a. What is the context in which you work?
- b. What attracts, energises, and inspires you to do this work?
- c. What causes you fear, disappointment... and discourages you in this work?
- d. Can you see how power has played a part in your experiences of a particular situation? Can you describe it?
- e. How are you trying to face these challenges?

REFLECTING ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF POWER

SUMMARY: Participants reflect on and understand personal experiences of power, or powerlessness, and how to change it.

EXPLANATION POINTS:

There are many expressions of power. It is important to reflect the expression of power not only as a coercive manner but also as a capacity to raise aspiration and act collectively:

‘POWER OVER’

Power is seen as a win-lose kind of relationship. Having power involves taking it from someone else, and then, using it to dominate and prevent others from gaining it. It has many negative associations for people, such as repression, force, coercion, discrimination, corruption, injustice, inequality and abuse. In the absence of alternative models and relationships, people repeat the ‘power over’ pattern in their personal relationships, communities and institutions.

‘POWER TO’

individual ability to act. This is rooted in the belief that every individual has the ‘power to’ make a difference and shape their life and world.

‘POWER WITH’

collective action, the ability to act together. ‘Power with’ helps build bridges across different interests, experiences and knowledge to transform or reduce social conflict and promote equitable relations and is about bringing together resources and strategies.

‘POWER WITHIN’

Individual or collective sense of self-worth, value, dignity. Enhancing the ‘power within’ individuals builds their capacities to imagine and raise aspirations about change. It affirms the common human search for dignity and fulfilment.

This different expression of power contributes to affecting our wellbeing. ‘Power to’ and ‘power within’ is a capacity of individuals for loving, taking care and being present with themselves. When someone is well and able to take care of themselves, they will be empowered and continue to express ‘power with’ to transform the ‘power over’.

Activity

Facilitator ask the participants to sit by themselves, and quietly reflect on the following questions. The participants can give themselves about 5 mins for each question, or more, if they have the time.

- a. When did you first become aware of POWER between people? What kind of power? What feelings came up in you? What did you experience then?
- b. Remember an experience when you felt POWERLESS... What was the incident, or situation? How did you feel?
- c. Remember the occasion / time when you became aware of YOUR OWN POWER: What happened? How did you feel?

Exercises for caring for ourselves

SUMMARY: Participants are able to know themselves , help themselves and heal themselves, through observation of breath, body sensations, thoughts, feelings, emotions – and to learn appropriate ways to help oneself and activate our natural self-healing capacity.

EXPLANATION POINTS:

The practitioners of traditional healing modalities, as in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the Shamanic and Indigenous Healing Wisdoms point to the presence of a “life force”, a “flowing energy” (which they call Qi, or Chi or Ky in different languages). Qi actually powers the flow of blood and waters in our veins and arteries, the beating and pumping of our heart and lungs, the churning of our digestive system, and the firing and wiring of our nerves and neurons to transmit messages between the brain and the specific moving and secreting parts of the body.

We live, because we have Qi / Energy. The flow of this life Energy takes place normally without our being conscious of it, like we normally breathe automatically, and we know we are alive. But it can become stagnant, or blocked, when our normal breathing and other bodily functions are affected by our good or bad life experiences. When this happens, we can restore, and then continue to maintain a good and healthy energy flow by consciously exercising adequate methods of breathing. Qi/ Life Energy can be activated, harmonised, even directed, to wherever it is needed in the body, by different ways of conscious Breathing.

So the integrity of the body, its good functioning, its holistic health depends on the smooth collaboration of breath, and Qi/energy.

EXERCISE 1: CONSCIOUS BREATHING

BREATH is LIFE:

Breathing connects or integrates thinking, feeling, movements. Breathing creates space physically between our internal organs to allow oxygen to pass through; irons out knotted nerves and unblocks energy channels internally. Our breath assists us also in bearing physical as well as mental and emotional pain...

We always have our breath with us, free and bountiful, but usually we breathe on auto-pilot, not even realising we are breathing. Therefore, the first thing we need to do is to practice conscious breathing by observing our breathing: every in- and out- breath. Conscious breathing slows us down, simply because we need time to observe the in- and out- breaths. And slowing down is necessary for the energy flows to harmonise, and for the body to re-adjust itself.



Conscious breathing

FACILITATOR NOTES

The video exercise is available to invite participants to observe the practice in the beginning. After watching the video, the facilitator guides participants to have the exercise together.

This is the voice over of the exercise video of conscious breathing the facilitator can use to guide the exercise:

Assume a comfortable position, either sitting or lying on your back.

If you are sitting as best as you can, sit in a posture that embodies dignity without being rigid.

Keeping the spine straight and lowering your shoulders relaxing.

If you are lying down, lie straight on your back.

Relaxing your shoulders and your neck.

Place your hands on your belly so that we can observe your belly moving up during your in breath and falling back during the outbreath.

Follow your breath as your belly fills and as it falls during your outbreath.

Carry on breathing in as your belly fills up.

And feel your belly falling as you breathe out.

Carry on.

Breathing in and out.

And follow your breath to the end.

In and out.

Pay attention also to the sensations you feel while being.

Follow your breath completely to the end.

In and out to the end.

In and out to the end.

Every time you notice that your mind has wandered off your breath, simply notice what it was that carried you away.

And then gently bring your attention back to your belly and to the sensations of the breath coming in and the breath going out.

Continue to breathe in and out.

In and out.

Continue to bring your thoughts, your mind, back to your belly every time your mind wanders away.

Feel how good it is to spend some time with yourself.

Just being with your breath without having to do anything.

Practice this exercise for 15 minutes at a convenient time every day, whether you feel like it or not.

And notice what has changed in yourself.

EXERCISE 2: CONSCIOUS BREATHING COMBINED WITH SLOW MOVEMENTS

Combining conscious deep breathing with slow movements of different parts of the body concentrates the mind on these parts, and deepens the sense of relaxation as well as stimulation of the energy flow, first to those parts that we are exercising, and then, throughout our whole bodies and all our organs. This optimises their functionality, and awakens a healing energy flow.

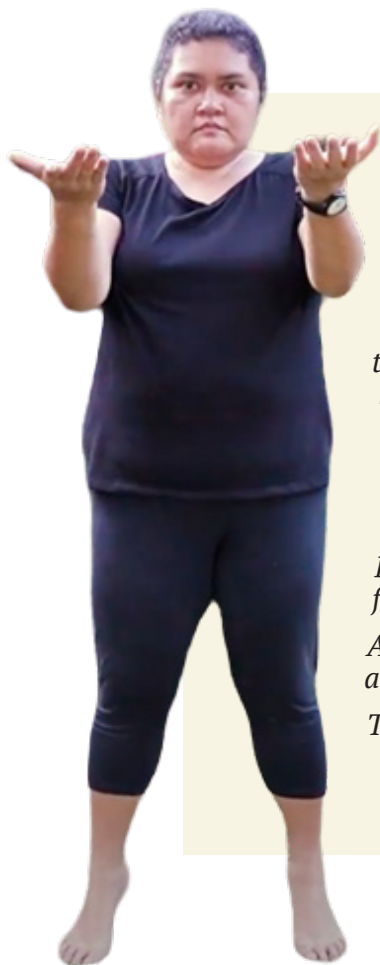
There are four slow movements:

1. The rocking movement
2. The shower of light
3. Let go of the past and open to receive new energy
4. Flying through the air

FACILITATOR NOTES

The video exercise is available to invite participants to observe the practice in the beginning. After watching the video, the facilitator guides participants to have the exercise together.

This is the voice over of the exercise video of conscious breathing that facilitator can use to guide the exercise:



The Rocking Movement

Stand with feet separated shoulder-width apart, hands at sides.

Raise your heels and with your palms facing upwards raise your hands to the level of your chest.

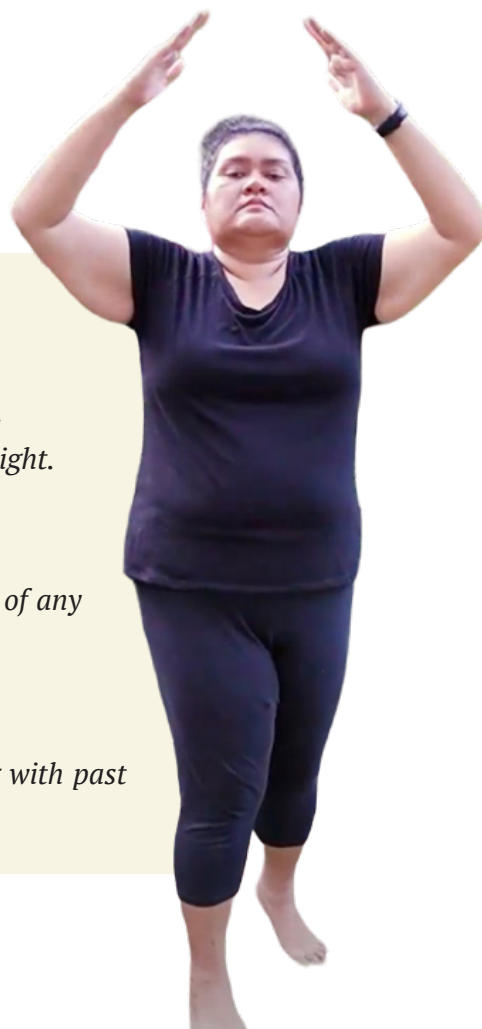
Turn your palms downward and move your hands downward while you lower your heels and raise your toes in a rocking movement.

Continue slowly rocking back and forth, breathing deeply. With each move drop your shoulders, relax your arms and fingers.

Do the exercise smoothly and slowly. Breathe deeply and imagine that your feet are planted securely on the earth.

As you raise your hands imagine that you are able to bring them into body and mind healing energy to cleanse and fill you.

This is a very beneficial movement for trauma and depression.



The Shower of Light

With left foot forward. Raise your hands up over your head.

Then move them downwards as if showering yourself with light.

Feel the energy cleansing and feeling your being.

Repeat on the right side with right foot forward.

Breathe in the shower of lights and then exhale and let go of any negativity within you.

Feel the light.

Cleansing and renewing you.

This is excellent for persons who are depressed or dealing with past wounds of trauma.



Let Go of the Past and Open to Receive New Energy

With left foot forward, palms curved softly downward.

Push your hands outward in a gentle arc, letting go of all tension, negativity and violence within you.

Turn palms upward and draw them back towards the chest.

Breathing in peace and healing.

Repeat with right foot.

Forward.

Breathe out the pain and violence.

And breathe in peace and healing.

Flying through the air

With your left foot forward.

Your left hand upward.

Swim or fly through the air.

The motion should be free and light.

With arms and shoulders.

Relax.

Repeat the movement on the right side, starting with your right hand upward.

Life really through the air, letting go of all the weight that weighs you down, feeling light, alive and free.

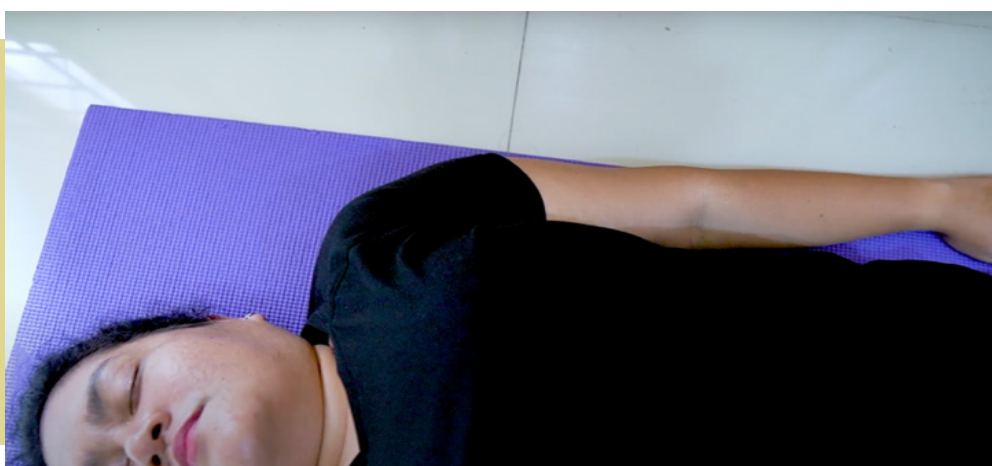
Open your heart to all the possibilities for your life and healing.

This is good to release pain in the back, shoulders and head.



EXERCISE 3: BODY SCAN FOR TOTAL RELAXATION

A body scan is a process of bringing your attention to each and every part of your body, in turn, starting from the toes, then feet, then ankles, etc., up to the belly, breast, etc., up to the head, accompanied by deep, slow breathing. This exercise, done slowly and attentively, helps each part of the body to attain a deep relaxed state. It is best to do this exercise lying down, but it can also work in a sitting position.



Body scan for total relaxation

FACILITATOR NOTES

The video exercise is available to invite participants to observe the practice in the beginning. After watching the video, the facilitator guides participants to have the exercise together.

This is the voice over of the exercise video of conscious breathing that facilitator can use to guide the exercise:

Become aware of and relax your whole body through deep breathing.

Simply lie on the floor or any comfortable surface.

Close your eyes to deepen concentration and breathe deeply like you did in Exercise one.

Observe your breath coming in and going out.

Coming in and going out.

Observe your breathing, feel the air entering and leaving the body, and then slowly move your mind's focus across your body from your feet up to your head.

Start from your toes. Feel your toes. If there are any tension in your feet.

Wriggle your toes, move your toes. Tense them and let them go.

Relax.

Now bring your attention to your feet. Tense your feet and relax. Move your attention up to your ankles and relax all the time.

Continue breathing with your next breath.

Bring your attention to your knees, Tense your knees and relax.

With the next breath.

Feel your thighs. Is there any tension in your thighs? You can tense them and release.

With the next breath.

Bring your attention to your belly. Dance your belly and release.

Then bring your attention up to your breast, to your chest. And release.

Feel your shoulders now. And release. Can you tense your shoulders?

You can pull them up to your neck and release.

Take a few deep breaths here.

Breathe in and out. Breathe in and out. Breathe in, out.

Now, bring your attention down. Your right hand. Your right arm, the upper arm.

Can you tense your upper arm and release tense your wrists?

And release.

Spread your fingers. Tense them. And release. Release them and let them lie quietly.

With your next breath.

Bring your attention to your left arm from your shoulder. Dance your left shoulder and release.

Bring your attention down to your upper left arm, tense your muscle and release.

Feel your left elbow. Tense and release. Feel your lower arm tense and release your left wrist.

And release and bring your attention down to your left hand.

Close your palm. Move your fingers and release.

After this activity, facilitator invite participants to have self-reflection by answering this questions:

1. What new aspects about your body did you learn? E.g. which parts are more tense than other parts? Which parts are most comfortable and at ease?
2. Does breathing into the parts of the body that are tense help to relax them?

EXERCISE 4: EMOTIONAL BODY MAPPING

It is sometimes difficult for us to recognise, or name the emotions which we feel in different situations. Some of us are even in the habit of repressing our emotions when they arise, because we are afraid of what may follow if we allow them to surface. But denying or repressing our emotions is unhealthy, and detrimental to our wellbeing. It can have negative effects on our physical health, causing un-ease or dis-ease, as emotions do not just fade away, they get stuck in some parts of our bodies. It also affects our ability to form good relationships and have an open and easy social life, if we cannot or will not express our emotions openly and honestly, when it is advisable to do so.

This exercise helps participants to know, acknowledge and name emotions, so that they can go on to understand how they arise, and learn how to deal with them.

Facilitator guides participants to draw a simple outline of a body, to represent their body in a piece of paper. Then they list down all the sensations, feelings and emotions they know, or have observed - whether they have felt them themselves or not. Remember, emotions vary: joy and pleasure are also emotions! Ask the participants to follow this guidance:

1. Circle in red, the ones you have experienced >80% of the time
2. Circle in blue, the ones you have experienced <50% of the time
3. Circle in green, the ones you experience 10% or less of the time.
4. Mark within the body you have outlined, with their respective colours (red, blue, green) the places where you feel the emotions or sensations you identified in three previous steps (1,2 and 3)

After the participants finish drawing, invite them to share their drawings in pairs. Each of them decides who will share the drawing and the other is listening with no comments or offering advice. Then, they take turns. Each of them can share their drawing for 10 minutes.

In the big group, facilitator can ask several self-reflection questions and invite participants to answers them:

1. What does this exercise tell you about yourself?
2. Was it easy, or difficult, to identify and name the sensations and emotions you feel?
3. Was it easy, or difficult to locate them in your body?

EXERCISE 5.1: ENERGY HAND HOLDS TO HELP YOURSELF

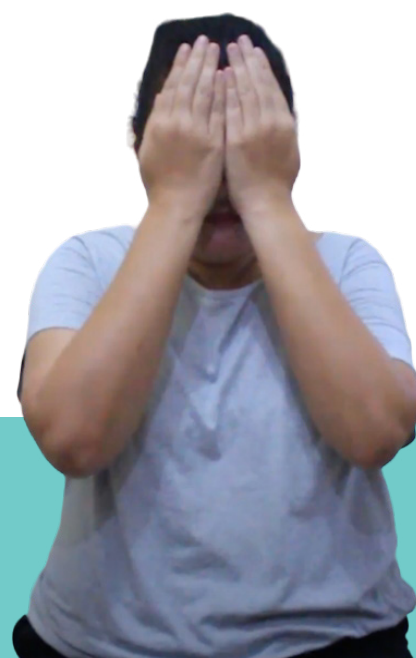
This exercise is based on stimulation of energy flows through laying our hands on, or over (without touching) in certain positions on the body, with good intention to help ourselves or to help another person (when our own energy is flowing well and balanced).

The effective stimulation of energy flow will remove blockages, revive stagnant energy, and harmonise all flows. This results in a sense of deep relaxation, which is necessary for the body to slow down, get rested, and to start a healing process.

FACILITATOR NOTES

The video exercise is available to invite participants to observe the practice in the beginning. After watching the video, the facilitator guides participants to have the exercise together.

This is the voice over of the exercise video of conscious breathing that the facilitator can use to guide the exercise:



1

Palms of your hands are placed against your face.

Cupping your hands over your eyes lightly and fingers upon your forehead.

No pressure needed, touch lightly

2



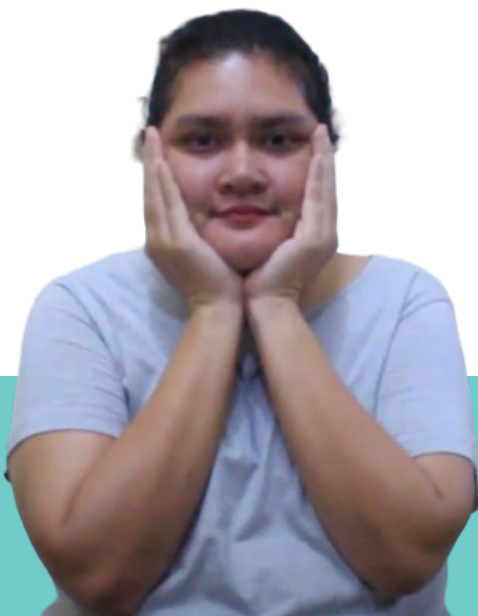
*Crossing your arms behind your head.
Place one hand on the back of your head
and the rest the other hand directly
above the nape of your neck.*

3

*Place your hands on both sides of your head.
Heels of your hands resting near your ears.
Fingertips touching at the crown.*



4

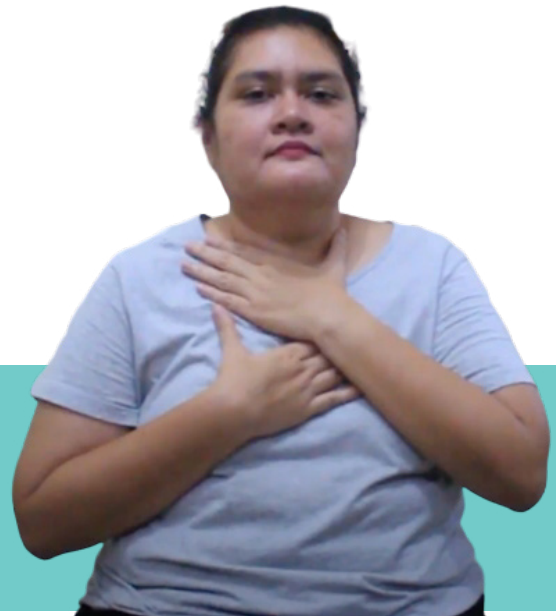


*Rest your chin inside the palms
of your cupped hands.
Allow your hands to wrap
themselves along your jawline.*

5

Grasp your neck comfortably inside the V formed by your thumb and fingers.

Lower your other hand and rest it between your collarbone and heart center.



6



Place your hands on both sides of your head. Heels of your hands resting near your ears. Fingertips touching at the crown.

7

Place your hands on the tummy, solar plexus area, above our navel, allowing your fingertips to touch.



8



Place one hand over each pelvic bone, again, allowing your fingertips to touch.

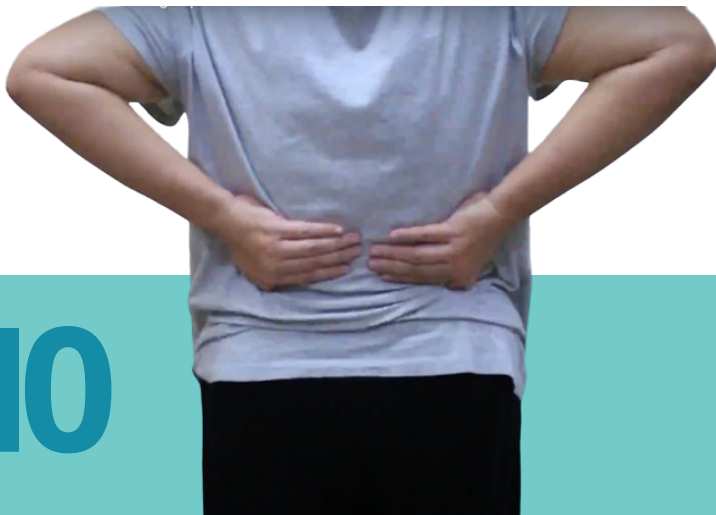
9

Reach your arms over your head, bending your elbows and placing your hands on your shoulder blades.

Alternatively, place your hands on top of your shoulders if you cannot reach your shoulder blades comfortably.



10



For the midback placement.

Reach behind your back with elbows bent and place your hands on the centre of your back.

11

The final two placements are the lower back and the sacrum.

Reach behind your back, elbows bent and place your hands on your lower back region.



12

Lastly, lower your arms and place your hands on your sacral region.



EXERCISE 5.2: ENERGY HAND HOLDS TO HELP OTHERS

FACILITATOR NOTES

The video exercise is available to invite participants to observe the practice in the beginning. After watching the video, the facilitator guides participants to have the exercise together.

This is the voice over of the exercise video of conscious breathing that the facilitator can use to guide the exercise:

STEP 1

Stand up straight and relax, then have intention to give healing to others, set breathing comfortably.

Then ask the willingness of the person you will care for.

Is it comfortable to be touched directly or not?

If not, then you can do this holding method a few centimetres from the body to respect the feeling of the person receiving this holding.



STEP 2

Rub your palms together until they feel warm.

Place your palms gently on the ears of the person you are treating on the right and left side.

STEP 3

The two thumbs meet and are placed in the middle of the crown above the head.

The fingertips are placed gently on the top of the forehead.

If the holding method is combined with breathing and body message.

It can help to release emotion.



STEP 4

Put one hand lightly, hold the top of the forehead.

The other hand holds the bottom of the hand.

The energy from the hands is related to the part of the brain that has to do with emotion and memory.



STEP 5

The hands are placed gently on the shoulder, the place on the body associated with the anxieties and burdens of life.



STEP 6

One hand is placed on the sternum at the top of the chest.

The other hand touches the top of the back behind the heart.

The area around the heart or chest is often a place where emotional pain, past wounds, sadness and anger gather.



STEP 7

Using your hand lightly, press the outside of the body of this person's energy area, sweep from the top to the fingertips.

EXERCISE 6: MEDITATION TO CULTIVATE MINDFULNESS

Meditation is a practice in which a person uses a technique – such as observing a particular object, thought, emotion or certain activity – to train the mind to be aware of the present moment. Often, people are struggling with their past experience or think a lot about the future so that they lose their present moments – the ‘here and now’ moments. Meditation is a practice to build the habit of being present or attentive and intentional (purposeful) in everything a person does, in every moment of their daily lives and work. Meditation trains our mindfulness muscles.

Meditation is a method, a practice to cultivate several attitudes such as:

Being non-judgemental

At the same time a person is practising meditation, they are also developing patience and practising being non-judgmental. They are not feeling guilty and giving themselves a hard time because their mind wandered away from the breath. Simply and matter-of-factly return it to the breath, gently but firmly.

The attitude of non-judgement helps us to keep an open mind, be curious to learn about people and things that are at first new or strange to us, and be inclusive.

Acceptance

The best way to learn acceptance is to explore the sensations of (bodily) pain and discomfort which arise while you are sitting, and to welcome them, rather than resisting them or trying to make them go away because we don’t like them. By sitting with some discomfort and accepting it as part of our experience in the present moment, even if we don’t like it, which we don’t, we discover that it is actually possible to turn toward and relax into physical discomfort, to embrace it in awareness as it is. This is one example of how discomfort or even pain can become your teacher and help you to heal.

Relaxing and softening into discomfort sometimes actually reduces pain intensity. Intentionally working with your reactions to discomfort and to whatever arises that is unpleasant and unwanted will help you to develop some degree of calmness, equanimity, and flexibility of mind, qualities that will prove useful in facing many different challenges and stressful situations in life, as well as pain – physical or emotional.

The attitude of acceptance allows us to acknowledge and accept the reality of situations that we do not agree with, so that instead of immediately reacting with anger or frustration, we are able to take the time to consider alternative options and actions.

Letting Go

During meditation, we intentionally treat all our thoughts as if they are of equal value. As best we can, we bring awareness to them when they arise, and then we intentionally return our attention to the breath as the primary focus of our attention, regardless of the content of the thought and its emotional charge. In other words, we intentionally practice letting go of each thought that attracts our attention, whether it seems important or unimportant.

We just observe them as thoughts, as seemingly independently occurring events in the field of our awareness.

We are aware of them because they are here, but we intentionally refuse to get caught up in the content of the thoughts during meditation, no matter how attractive they may be. We note their content and we intentionally let go of them and refocus on our breathing once again and on the experience of being “in our body” as we sit. We repeat this hundreds of thousands of times, millions of times, as necessary. And it will be necessary.

The attitude of letting go of the things, relationships or emotions that are harmful to us, or holding us back, that we do not need anymore, gives us the space and energy to acquire new ways and new connections that are more beneficial and can help us to reach our true life destinies.

Compassion

Each time we recognise a thought as a thought when it arises and we register its content and discern the strength of its hold on us, as well as the accuracy (or not) of its content, we are strengthening the mindfulness muscle. Each time we then let go of it and come back to our breathing and to a sense of our body, we are strengthening the mindfulness muscle. In the process, we are coming to know ourselves better and becoming more accepting of ourselves, not as we would like to be but as we actually are. This is an expression of our innate wisdom and compassion.

The attitude of compassion, towards ourselves and all other beings, strengthens our sense of connection, with ourselves and all beings in the world – sentient, human or non-human, and grows within us a sense of wholeness and peace... of true wellbeing.

FACILITATOR NOTES

Facilitator invites participants to exercise sitting meditation. These are some guidance that the facilitator uses to deliver the exercise.

Mindful, or conscious, or intentional sitting is different from ordinary sitting in the same way that mindful or conscious breathing is different from ordinary breathing. The difference is that you are doing it purposefully.

The basic instructions for practicing the sitting meditation are very simple:

We observe the breath as it flows in and out.

We give full attention to the feeling of the breath as it comes in and full attention to the feeling of the breath as it goes out.

And whenever we find that our attention has been carried elsewhere, wherever that may be, we simply note it, do not follow the thought, but let it go and gently bring our attention back to the breath, back to the rising and falling of our own belly.

By doing so, we are training our mind to be less reactive and more stable. In this way we are cultivating our natural ability to concentrate our mind and building inner strength and the right attitudes for living mindfully.

Developing a personal self-care plan and community wellbeing strategy

Personal self-care is a conscious effort to incorporate wellbeing practices in human rights defenders (HRDs) daily life. Personal self-care is the entry point that can lead to community wellbeing. As HRDs learn to care for themselves, HRDs can then also think about and build a culture of care for their peers and community members.

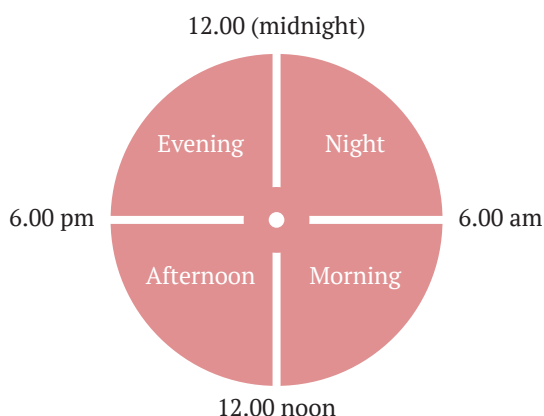
To develop a personal self-care plan, HRDs need to understand self-care practices in a broader perspective. Self-care plan is not an added task that HRDs put them in the to-do-list.

As HRDs become more aware about the self-care practices and continue to consciously exercise them in their daily routines, it will affect the community wellbeing. It is because community or organisation, like the individual, is a living organism. Community also has energy that should be taken care of by the people who bring life to it.

SUMMARY: Participants will exercise to develop an individual or personal self-care plan and community wellbeing strategy

Activity 1: The 24-hour method

A personal self-care plan is a set of daily activities which you consciously choose to keep you well. In choosing the activities, you should first reflect upon your current routines.



The circle above represents your 24-hour day in 4 quarters. Facilitator invites participants to reflect on the 4 quarters of their 24-hour day and answer the following questions for each quarter:

1. What happens or what do you do in each quarter that takes away /depletes your energy?
2. What would you ideally like to do in each quarter?
3. What WILL YOU DO to make the change? (Name ONE thing you will change in each quarter, and give a timeline)

FACILITATOR NOTES

By answering those following questions for each quarter, participants will be able to decide activities that help you to feel energised, peaceful, fulfilled or to cope with difficult moments.

Remember, start small but consistent.

Activity 2: Unpacking deep structures in your community or organisation.

An organisation or community is a living organism and combination of different people who establish and nurture it. An organisation usually has policies, mechanisms, and procedures to inform on how to do the work and accomplish the objectives. However, it is essential to unpacking deep structures of an organisation. Deep structures usually reflect the unspoken values that become the basis of thinking or working. If these values are ignored, this can prevent wellbeing and preserve inequality.

Facilitator invites participants to divide themselves into groups under three different themes. Each of the themes has a maximum of three questions to be answered. See the table below

| BODY | VOICE | SAFETY |
|--|--|---|
| How does your organisation treat the body of the people who do the work or labor? | How does your organisation ensure that all voices are heard, including the different one? | How does your organisation provide protection for HRDs? |
| How does your organisation value diverse bodies and identity, such as disability, gender, sexuality, race, etc? | How does knowledge transfer between different generations take place in your organisation? | What kinds of support are available for you and your significant others/family members? |
| How does your organisation prevent and handle the violence and discrimination that might occur between organisational members? | How is the communication pattern that is applied amongst different people in the organisational structure? | |

Each group points to someone to present the result of the group sharing. Other groups will listen and provide the feedback for the presentation and add their reflection under the theme. Facilitator then invites the participants to suggest concrete recommendations to address the problems or maintain the best practices from each of the themes.

Closing Circle

SUMMARY: This is a closing circle exercise that gives a space for the participants to express their appreciation to other participants and their wishes.

Activity

Facilitator prepares a circle shaped by small white stones and invites all of the participants to sit near to the circle. Each of the participants is given a small candle. They light the candle, express their appreciation and their wish, and put the candle inside the stones.

Make a circle, with candlelight and ask participants to make a wish.



FACILITATOR NOTES

After the closing circle, the facilitator can ask the organiser to distribute the feedback form (paper based or online link) to invite participants to fill it out.

EXAMPLE OF FEEDBACK FORM TEMPLATE

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking part in the Wellbeing Capacity Building Workshop. [Name of organiser] would like to know your feedback on the workshop to help us make better for you and other participants, including in arranging the workshop in the future. Furthermore, we would like to continue the engagement with you through the follow up activities.

Name :

Email :

Country :

Part 1: Logistical Aspect of the Workshop (scale 1 = very disappointing to 5= very satisfy)

1. How satisfied are you with the communication with the workshop organiser?
2. How satisfied are you with the transportation of the workshop?
3. How satisfied are you with the accommodation of the workshop?
4. How satisfied are you with the food during the workshop?
5. How satisfied are you with the meeting room of the workshop?
6. How satisfied are you with the length and schedule of the workshop?
7. Please provide comments or recommendations to improve for the logistical aspect of the workshop

Part 2: Content and Facilitation Process of the Workshop

1. What do you liked the most about this workshop that we should continue / keep?
2. What should we improve in future workshops?
3. What is the most valuable knowledge (concept or framework) that you have learnt in this workshop for your own life?
4. What are the most valuable practices / skills / tools you have learned in this workshop?

Part 3: Workshop Follow-Up Activities

1. What will you bring back to your work in your own context / country? How will you do it?
2. Are you willing to adapt and use the module and the video materials to develop wellbeing activities in your organisation or community? If yes, what is your plan to use the module and video materials? Who are your audiences? Please specify their characteristics, such as gender, sexual orientation, location, background, etc.
3. A regular monthly online check-in for participants will be conducted. What are activities that you want to have during the online-check in?

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