

Mindfulness Techniques

Guided Meditation

During the Relaxation segment of class, encourage participants to find a comfortable position, seated in a supportive chair. Once they find some stillness, invite them to close their eyes if they feel comfortable, or keep a gentle eye gaze toward the floor. The following are a few guided meditation suggestions:

- There are many types of guided meditations. Practice different variations and find your favorite.
- Even during a guided meditation, it is ok to plan moments when you are not speaking, and space is created to appreciate the silence.
- Share mantras like those found in a Loving Kindness meditation. Ask participants to repeat phrases to themselves like, “May I be well,” “May I be healthy,” “May I be at peace.” Then ask participants to think of someone they want to share these feelings with – a friend, partner, relative, etc. Guide participants to repeat phrases to themselves like, “May you be well,” “May you be healthy,” “May you be at peace.”
- Share a poem or inspirational reading focused on gratitude, self-love, new beginning, etc.

Guided Meditation - Focus on Gratitude

During the Relaxation segment of class, encourage participants to find a comfortable position, seated in a supportive chair. Once they find some stillness, invite them to close their eyes if they feel comfortable, or keep a gentle eye gaze toward the floor. The following are a few guided meditation suggestions, focused on gratitude:

- Encourage participants to think of something for which they are grateful. This could be a friend, a place, a feeling or maybe even a favorite book or song.
- Ask them how thinking about these things makes them feel – joyful, happy, content.
- Have participants notice their breathing. Has it become easier and more relaxed?
- Guide participants to notice how their body feels. Maybe their shoulders have softened, or a smile has come across their face.
- Reminding participants to pause and reflect on the things that are important to them, big and small, is an easy tool to encourage gratitude.

Guided Imagery

During the Relaxation segment of class, encourage participants to find a comfortable position, seated in a supportive chair. Once they find some stillness, invite them to close their eyes if they feel comfortable, or keep a gentle eye gaze toward the floor. The following are a few guided imagery meditation suggestions:

- Encourage participants to imagine a beautiful place in their minds. It can be anywhere they wish – a beach, a field of flowers or even the top of a mountain.
- Ask them to think about what they see, what they hear, smell and taste. Suggest that participants focus on how the imagery makes them feel.

- If appropriate, offer suggestions. If they are envisioning a beach, maybe they hear the waves. If they are picturing a field of flowers, they can smell the beautiful aroma. Or if they are atop a mountain, they can feel the breeze across their skin.

Breathing Techniques

During the Relaxation segment of class, encourage participants to find a comfortable position, seated in a supportive chair. Once they find some stillness, invite them to close their eyes if they feel comfortable, or keep a gentle eye gaze toward the floor. The following are a few breathing technique suggestions:

- **Three-Part Breathing.** Inhale through the nose – fill belly with air, then the ribcage and finally the chest. Pause for a second or two. Exhale through the nose or mouth, releasing in reverse order – chest, ribcage then belly.
- **Pursed-Lips Breathing.** Inhale in through the nose. Purse the lips as if about to blow out the candles on a cake. Exhale through pursed lips.
- **Diaphragmatic Breathing.** One hand rests lightly on the chest and the other hand rests lightly on the belly, below the ribs. Inhale through your nose and let the belly fill with air – notice the movement of the hand on the belly and the stillness of the hand on the chest. Exhale and relax the belly.

Remind participants that their breathing should be easy and relaxed during these exercises. Breathing should not feel forced or bring about dizziness or discomfort.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

During the Relaxation segment of class, encourage participants to find a comfortable position, seated in a supportive chair. Once they find some stillness, invite them to close their eyes if they feel comfortable, or keep a gentle eye gaze toward the floor. The following are Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) techniques you could share with your class.

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation focuses on tightening a particular muscle group during an inhale and relaxing that same muscle group as you exhale.
- Tense the muscles in your hands by making a fist as you slowly take a deep breath in. Relax your hands as you breathe out.
- Tighten the forearm muscles and wrists with the next breath. Relax these muscles as you breathe out.
- Continue this breathing technique, moving to the upper body, back, belly, legs and down to the toes. You can keep the focus on larger muscle groups like the shoulders or back and/or smaller muscle groups like the fingertips and toes.