



9. HORS-PISTE ACTIVITY

Specific workshop objectives

At the end of the workshop, the student will be able to:

- Step outside of their comfort zone in a group activity;
- Expose themselves “in vivo” to more anxiety-provoking situations;
- Experiment with the concepts learned in previous meetings;
- Create ties with the other participants.

How the workshop works

Welcome the students and present the workshop objectives and how it will work.

A. The week in review

1. Explain to the students that you will review the challenge during the next workshop.

B. Body scan (10 min.)

1. Ask the students to get into a comfortable position. Use the attached complementary worksheet to do this mindfulness exercise.

C. Time to think outside the box! (60 min.)

1. Do the chosen activity using the complementary sheet.

D. What did I get out of it? (15 min.)

1. Ask the students about their experiences during the activity. How did you feel about the activity? You can ask some of the questions below to get them talking. Keep the discussion moving by telling the students what you observed as they were doing the activity:
 - Did you step outside of your comfort zone? If so, in which situations?
 - How did it make you feel? What things did you observe about yourself (emotions, sensations, thoughts, behaviours)?
 - Did you try new things? If not, how could you do this the next time?
 - Did you think about the situation differently, less dramatically, less judgmentally? If not, how could you reformulate some of the thoughts that overwhelmed you, held you back, or prevented you from trying?
 - Did you reach out to other people? If not, were there opportunities when you could have done so?
 - Were you proud of yourself for any reason?
 - Did you learn anything today?
 - Did you observe any strengths or positive qualities in yourself or the other students?
 - Did you feel more comfortable, less nervous, more confident? How do you explain this?
 - Did you have fun? Were you fully present? What helped you?
 - Would you be willing to take the next step, another challenge?

E. This week's challenge (5 min.)

1. Explain that this week's challenge (also in their *Handy student guide*) is to try to do a mindfulness exercise and think about how it helped them. Explain, as needed.

For the next workshop, bring a device to record the meeting (e.g., cell phone or recorder).



COMPLEMENTARY SHEET

Body scan

Get into a comfortable position. If you can, lie on your back somewhere where you won't be disturbed. During this exercise, you may or may not relax, and that's perfectly normal. The goal is to become aware of the sensations you might notice as you shift your focus to different parts of your body. *(Pause)*

Start by closing your eyes (if you want) and taking the time to observe your breathing, without changing it. Observe the movements as you breathe in and out. Focus your attention on the path the air takes as it enters your body, fills your lungs, and flows back out through your nose or mouth. *(Pause)*

Now, shift your attention to your feet. Try to feel their temperature and the contact with your socks or shoes. Maybe you don't feel anything specific, and that's perfectly fine, too. *(Pause)*

Now, shift your attention to your legs. Observe the different sensations from your ankles to your hips. Notice their position in space and in relation to the rest of your body. Observe their angle and their contact with the floor, chair or wall, if you are leaning against one. *(Pause)*

If your thoughts start to wander, that's perfectly normal. Simply refocus them on your next inhale.

Now, observe your abdomen, your rib cage and your neck. Maybe you can feel the movements of your breath in that part of your body. Try to notice if you are feeling anything in particular. Again, you may not feel anything at all, which is perfectly fine. *(Pause)*

Now, focus on your arms. Notice the sensations in your shoulders *(pause)*, elbows *(pause)*, hands *(pause)*, and fingers *(pause)*.

Now, notice the sensations in your face, forehead and mouth. Maybe you're feeling something in your jaw. Maybe your eyebrows are furrowed. Or maybe you don't feel anything specific in your face. If that's the case, refocus on your breath to stay grounded in the present moment. *(Pause)*

Take a few minutes to reconnect with your surroundings. Yawn, stretch and open your eyes, before slowly reconnecting with what's happening around you.





COMPLEMENTARY SHEET

HORS-PISTE activities

What's the point?

The main objective of the HORS-PISTE activities is to allow the students to try new things, with your guidance, outside of their normal environment, hence the name HORS-PISTE. These activities will allow them to:

- Step outside of their comfort zone in a group activity;
- Expose themselves "in vivo" to more anxiety-provoking situations;
- Experiment with the concepts learned in previous meetings;
- Create ties with the other participants.

During the program, students are required to step outside of their comfort zone, learn new behaviours, and expose themselves to anxiety-provoking situations. These activities are an opportunity for them to safely test out new situations, with your guidance and with support from the other students.

It's not always easy for young people to recognize the situations that make them anxious or the behaviours they adopt in these situations. These activities are an opportunity for you to observe them, in order to then help them become more aware of their reactions and ultimately improve their capacity for introspection and self-awareness.

The HORS-PISTE activities give you materials and concrete examples that you can use during the workshops. Through their interactions, body language, and behaviours, the students will often reveal more about themselves than during most discussions.

These activities are an opportunity to test the concepts seen during the workshops, which significantly increases the chances that the students will adopt these new behaviours after the program (Furman and Sibthorp, 2013).

Since each student is different, with unique challenges, it's important to identify in what way the experience challenges them. For example, it may seem more obvious to challenge students who are more socially anxious. Simply being in a group provides opportunities. A student with performance anxiety, but who is very comfortable trying new things, for example, will need to think about their quest for perfection, their fear of being judged when seen with others, and their ability to experience things for enjoyment versus results.

It's also an opportunity to encourage mutual support, since not everyone has the same



challenges. Experiencing something together builds relationships, and these relationships lead to mutual support and possibilities. During reviews, encourage the students to interact with each other.

These activities will allow the students to experience successes, as well as learn about themselves, learn to observe themselves, and learn to recognize and welcome their experiences without judgment. As Nelson Mandela said: *"I never lose. I either win or I learn."*

Reviewing, reflecting on, and discussing the experiences are the keys to getting the students to learn from the experience. It's an opportunity for them to reflect on what they've learned and the challenges they encountered, to identify areas for improvement, and to rethink things to deepen their understanding of certain concepts (Chapman *et al.*, 1995). To help you with your observations and review, here are some sample questions you can ask the students.

- Did you step outside of your comfort zone? If so, in which situations?
- How did it make you feel? What things did you observe about yourself (emotions, sensations, thoughts, behaviours)?
- Did you try new things? If not, how could you do this the next time?
- Did you think about the situation differently, less dramatically, less judgmentally? If not, how could you reformulate some of the thoughts that overwhelmed you, held you back, or prevented you from trying?
- Did you reach out to other people? If not, were there opportunities when you could have done so?
- Were you proud of yourself for any reason?
- Did you learn anything today?
- Did you observe any strengths or positive qualities in yourself or the other students?
- Did you feel more comfortable, less nervous, more confident? How do you explain this?
- Did you have fun? Were you fully present? What helped you?
- Would you be willing to take the next step, another challenge?

What is it?

There are a few options you can choose from, but you're also free to create or adapt your own activities. The possibilities are endless. It all depends on how willing and open you are. The HORS-PISTE activities can be very straightforward, but if they get you, as the facilitator, to step outside of your comfort zone, then you'll also find it much easier to work with the students.

The key to the HORS-PISTE activities is that they all share the same objective: to create informal situations where the students can observe each other and expose themselves to



potentially anxiety-provoking situations.

Examples of activities:

- Do an outdoor activity such as a hike or a snowball fight;
- Watch a short news report and then talk about the topic and their impressions;
- Make a short video featuring a message of encouragement for future Expedition program participants or describing the experience to family or friends;
- Play a board game that involves little or no sharing of materials;
- Organize a “show and tell” session; each student will have to introduce the others to a favourite object or experience, for example, their favourite music, book, or hobby. You can also introduce a theme, such as “something I’m proud of” or “my biggest dream.”

