Super Senses!

Training our mind to be strong, calm and focussed can make it easier to cope with worries and difficult times. It takes practice and if someone practises using it when they feel calm, it can make it easier to use the skills when they feel anxious or upset.

It can be really helpful to take a moment (aim for around 5 minutes but even the shortest time can help) just to focus on one thing. Let your pupils know that should any other thoughts that come into their head to just let them drift off but focus and return their thoughts to this one thing.

Click on the audio link to hear Susan read out this guided mindfulness activity. Hopefully you can join in with the activity (perhaps with another member of staff keeping an eye on your class).

*Let’s try to use our ‘spidey senses’ just like a superhero would. Be curious about what happens and what you notice…*

*It might be best to turn your chair to face the front of the room and sit with your feet flat on the floor with your body fairly relaxed. Just finding a way of sitting that feels comfortable and stable. Let the chair hold your weight. You don’t need to do anything at the moment, just rest.*

*Now look at the wall in front of you. You might see something that you can focus on. It might be the edge of the whiteboard, a mark of some sort, the corner where the walls come together, anything. Just keep your focus on whatever it is. Have a really good look at it. Don’t force anything though. Blink as you normally would. Relax into it and if your mind starts to wander off, gently guide it back to what you were looking at.*

*Now, if you are happy to do so, close your eyes and allow your body to relax. Listen to the sounds in the room. Use your ears to listen to what is inside or outside the room. Just let your ears do what they are designed to do… listen. Maybe there is something that you can hear that takes your focus but maybe not. Can you hear sounds inside your body? Maybe your tummy is gurgling or you can hear yourself breathing. Be aware of the sounds around you. If your mind wanders just guide it back to listening.*

*Still with your eyes closed, run your tongue over your lips. Can you taste anything? Any little tastes of toothpaste or juice or whatever it was that you last ate? Gently let your tongue rest in your mouth and take the chance to notice how your mouth feels. Allow the tongue to settle.*

*Now slowly move your hands to allow you to feel the sides of the chair. Maybe it feels smooth. Or is it bumpy? Maybe the surface feels cold to touch. Perhaps your legs can you feel the hardness of the chair or the support of its seat. Are other parts of your body touching the chair? Behind your back? Your shoulders? How does it feel to be sitting there just focussing on where your body is in contact with the surface? Allow your body to feel this.*

*When you would like to move on, switch your focus to your sense of smell. Are there any familiar comforting smells in the room? Maybe the air smells fresh and clean. Perhaps there is a smell of cooking in the air? Allow your nose and your sense of smell to guide your focus. Try to stay with it and keep bringing your focus to what you are doing right now. If thoughts appear in your mind, just gently lead your thoughts back to your spidey senses. You are practising being mindful. Mindfulness is a way of focussing on what is happening right now – using all your senses to experience it.*

*As you are sitting there, notice how you are feeling right now. Well done, taking time to do this, just as you have done, gives your body and brain a chance to be focussed and relaxed at the same time.*

Come back to this activity as often as you like (perhaps once a day). You can decide just to use one sense each time if you prefer. Remind your pupils that it’s ok for the mind to wander and practice makes it easier to bring back the focus. There is no ‘wrong’ way to do this. Even simply sitting and noticing our breathing for a few minutes (or even a few seconds, if you are usually very active) has a calming effect on our brain and body.

Congratulate your pupils for taking this time to allow their body and brain to be still.

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