



Capacitar For Kids

A Multicultural Wellness Program
for Children, Schools and Families

Patricia Mathes Cane, Ph.D.

Mary Duennes, R.N., B.S.N., M.A.

Capacitar for Kids is a program in Multicultural Wellness Education for children, schools and families. The program is based on the work of Capacitar International whose vision is “healing ourselves and healing our world.” Capacitar for Kids grew out of a desire to offer wellness practices to children, especially those caught in the cycle of violence and trauma. The program’s goal is to bring health and well-being to the lives of children, their families, schools and communities. Capacitar for Kids offers students, parents and teachers simple wellness practices for use in the classroom, in daily life and in the home.

“My favorite Capacitar for Kids practice is Tai Chi because I like doing the moves. They make me feel like I’m floating free like a feather.” –5th grade girl

“I like doing the fingerholds because it relaxes me and calms me down when I’m nervous and it helps me breathe.” –6th grade boy

“The Capacitar practices help me because I can channel my anger. It helps me to calm down for tests or homework.” –7th grade boy

“One of the children who used to complain of stomachaches now uses Capacitar on her own and reports that it completely relieves her upset stomach. She reports to me that she has taught this to her parents as well.” –3rd grade teacher



Patricia Mathes Cane, Ph.D., is Founder and Co-Director of Capacitar, a project in multicultural wellness education that focuses on personal and societal healing and transformation. Working in 26 countries, Pat has taught more than 900 bilingual workshops in body-mind-spirit practices to thousands of participants. Besides trainings in the United States and in Central and South America, she has developed programs for grassroots groups in areas affected by trauma, violence, disasters and HIV/AIDS, including the U.S., Colombia, Eastern and Southern Africa, Sri Lanka and Ireland/Northern Ireland. She has a B.S. in Biological Studies, an M.A. in Psychology, and a Ph.D. in Multicultural Wellness Education. She is author of Trauma Healing and Transformation (English and Spanish), as well as other Capacitar manuals available in different languages.

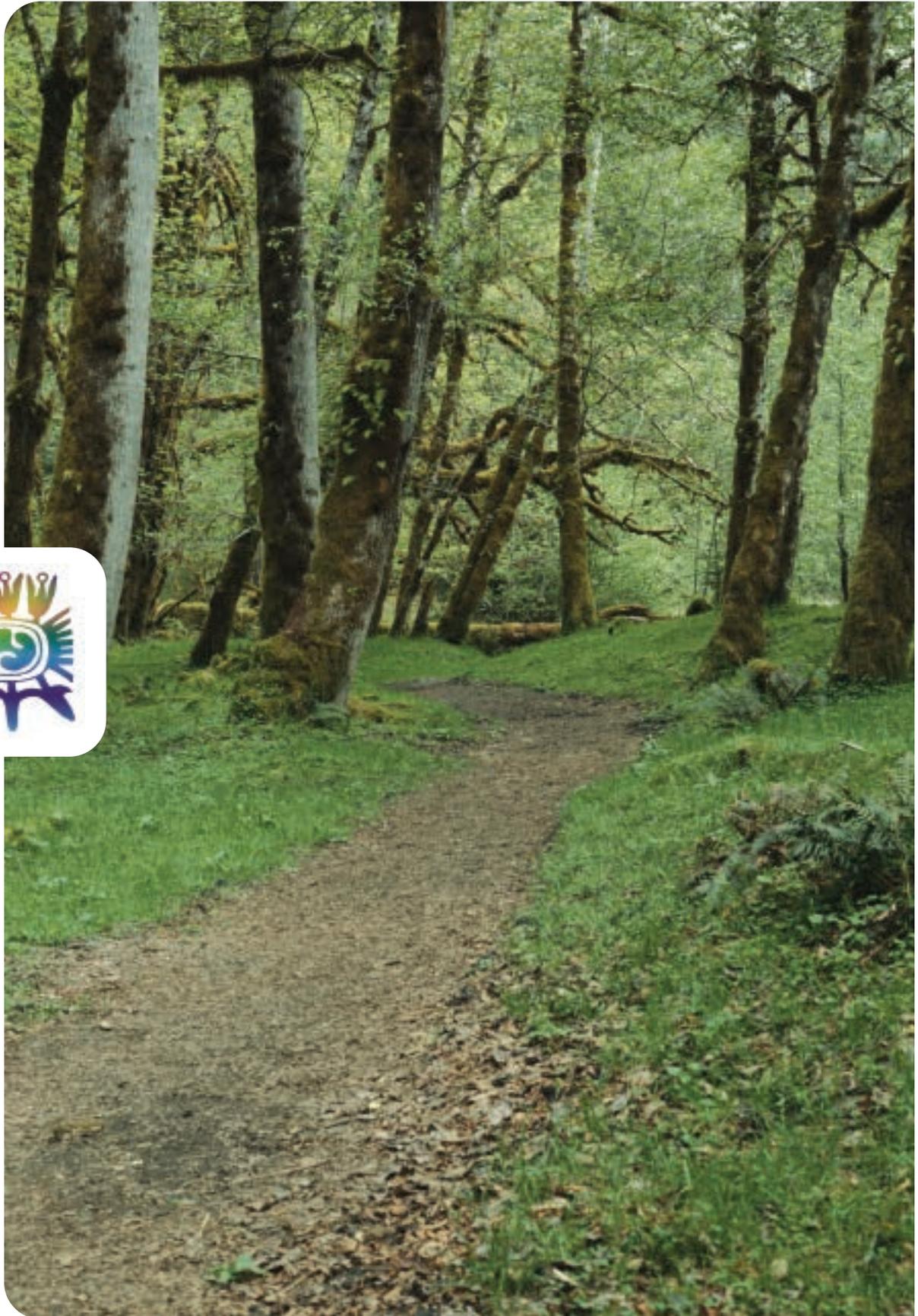


Mary M. Duennes, R.N., B.S.N., M.A., is Program Director of Capacitar for Kids, a three-year grant-funded pilot program based on the work of Capacitar International. Mary is a registered nurse with more than 30 years of experience in a wide variety of clinical settings. She currently works as a Parish Nurse in a hospital-sponsored program in Cincinnati, Ohio. Mary is a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner and Instructor and has taught Healing Touch and other advanced energetic healing techniques and holistic wellness practices in the United States, South Africa and Lesotho.



Capacitar International

Healing ourselves, healing our world





Capacitar For Kids

**A Multicultural Wellness Program
for Children, Schools and Families**

Teacher Handbook

**Patricia Mathes Cane, Ph.D.
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Dedication

We dedicate this manual to the children and families affected by violence, poverty, HIV/AIDS, trauma and natural disasters with whom Capacitar works around the world and whose lives and courage have inspired our efforts.

We also dedicate this work to all those who teach children and influence their growth and development, both formally in the classroom and informally through interactions with children of all ages.

With them we join in solidarity on this healing journey to heal ourselves and heal our world.



A Prayer of Healing and Transformation

We join with the Earth
and with each other
with our ancestors
and all beings of the future
to bring new life to the land,
to recreate the human community,
to provide justice and peace,
to remember our children,
to remember who we are.
We join together as many and
diverse expressions
of one loving Mystery,
For the healing of the Earth
and the renewal of all life.

— Capacitar Prayer
adapted from the UN Prayer of the Sabbath

Acknowledgements

Capacitar for Kids is blessed with the energies of many remarkable people whose collaborative efforts have shaped its content and spirit. With joy and deepest gratitude we acknowledge and affirm the contributions of:

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Introduction and Overview of the Program

Capacitar for Kids is a program in Multi-cultural Wellness Education for children, schools and families. The program is based on the work of Capacitar International whose vision is “healing ourselves and healing our world.”

Capacitar for Kids grew out of a desire to offer wellness practices to children, especially those caught in the cycle of violence and trauma in many of our local neighborhoods. Too often children are the unseen and unheard victims of the choices of the adults in their lives. We wanted to bring health and well-being to the lives of children, their families, schools and communities. We thought that simple wellness practices could serve as valuable tools to help children heal and transform the stress and violence of their lives so that they could better learn and grow as healthy and whole persons.

Since our founding in 1988, Capacitar has worked with children and families in local and international communities. Capacitar is a Spanish word meaning “to empower, to encourage, to bring each other to life.” Using popular education methods, Capacitar teaches healing, team building and self-development, giving people tools for themselves, their families and their communities. Capacitar endeavors to awaken people to their own source of strength and wisdom so they can reach out to heal injustice and violence and create a more peaceful world. Capacitar currently works in 26 countries on five continents. With escalating global violence, there has been a growing interest in using Capacitar practices with children in schools in the United States, as well as in other areas of the world.

Capacitar for Kids offers students, parents and teachers simple wellness practices for use in the classroom, in daily life and in the home. The practices and methods described in this manual have been field-tested by Capacitar International with many different cultures and socioeconomic groups. A three-year pilot program began at St. Joseph School and Holy Family School in Cincinnati, Ohio, in August 2003 with the financial support of Catholic Health Initiatives and the Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation.

This manual is offered as a resource for teachers and families and can be used with or without formal training. The wellness practices can be incorporated within the curriculum and subject areas, and as part of the daily routine in the classroom, on the playground or at home. The language and method of presenting the practices can be readily adapted to grade level, culture and subject area. The manual provides Suggestions for Teachers and identifies Capacitar Core Practices in each section.

Often children come to school distracted—not able to concentrate and learn. *Section 1* offers practices such as breathwork, visualization and cross-lateral exercises to improve mental focus, concentration and learning.

For many cultures of the world, health is a dynamic state of balance and energy flow within the person and with the environment. *Section 2* discusses a holistic understanding of health and well-being based on energy. Through movement exercises such as Tai Chi and the Salute to the Sun, children work with their energy flow to promote a feeling of well-being and renewed vitality. By holding their fingers, children learn

to release emotional pain and manage the overwhelming energies of strong feelings.

Section 3 addresses the health of the body through traditional and modern practices. The ancient exercise Pal Dan Gum brings balance and healing to the body's organs and systems. With acupressure children learn simple ways to alleviate minor aches and pains such as headache, upset stomach and nausea. Other practices, such as pain drain, massage, and the immune system boost, give children tools for daily self-care to promote good physical health.

Besides developing IQ, the intellectual and cognitive skills, schools also play a key role in developing EQ, the emotional literacy of children. *Section 4* presents specific practices—fingerhold meditation, the Emotional Freedom Technique and acupressure—to help children identify feelings, manage strong emotions, and release traumatic memories and stressful states.

Section 5 looks at the spiritual nature of children, offering simple practices in mindfulness, meditation, prayer and ritual. With these tools children are able to develop a spiritual practice and nurture their spirits on a daily basis.

Many children are affected by daily violence and stress from home, the playground, the community or the media. *Section 6* offers several methods to work with traumatic stress, teaching children to care for themselves and to create strong boundaries and a sense of inner safety.

To help teachers and administrators better use the Capacitar practices, *Appendix I* offers a Course of Study that presents objectives for each practice. It includes suggested subject areas for teaching each practice and appropriate grade levels for accomplishing each objective, to provide for planning and evaluation so that the material can be integrated into the curriculum. Additional teacher resources and children's books are listed after the Course of Study.

Through this manual and the Capacitar for Kids program, Capacitar endeavors to:

- Support the learning process in the classroom through practices promoting health and well-being.
- Develop within children their emotional intelligence and awaken their inner wisdom of body, mind and spirit.
- Promote positive, healthy attitudes in the person, the family and the community.
- Heal physical and emotional symptoms related to traumatic stress.
- Transform patterns of violence in the individual, the community and the society.

At a time of global trauma and violence, it is our hope that Capacitar for Kids can bring hope and healing not only to the local community, but also to the larger world. We envision an ever-growing circle of solidarity—children, families, schools, teachers and communities—all joined hand in hand, healing ourselves and bringing healing to our world.

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Capacitar for Kids Program Director

June 2005





“As children grow and mature, an important aspect of the learning process is the development of the different ways of knowing — cognitive, intuitive, kinesthetic, proprioceptive, emotional and spiritual.”

Section 1

Wellness Practices to Improve Learning and Mental Focus

One of the primary goals of education is the formation of the whole person, alive to all capacities of body, mind and spirit. Dr. Richard Moss, M.D., describes this in the following way: “Wholeness is the key to aliveness. It is more than just physical vitality; it is radiance, coming from being one with yourself and your experience. Life then flows through you and radiates from you.”

Psychologist Aminah Raheem, Ph.D. says: “If I were living from the whole of me, what would I be like? Awakening in body, mind, emotions and soul brings us to wholeness. It is a learning process of recovering the soul, of liberating the body and consciousness to follow its destiny.”

As children grow and mature, an important aspect of the learning process is the development of the different ways of knowing—cognitive, intuitive, kinesthetic, proprioceptive, emotional and spiritual.

The Capacitar practices in this section develop these channels or ways of knowing to promote effective learning. Breathwork, centering, meditation and acupressure help to focus and clear the mind. Visualization, work with safe space and the imagination develop the intuitive and spiritual capacities. Cross-laterals and head-neck exercises open the kinesthetic and proprioceptive capacities and improve brain function.

When children are able to access and use these different ways of knowing, learning becomes a wonderful adventure and each experience an opportunity for growth.

Sources

Moss, Richard. *The Black Butterfly: An Invitation to Radical Aliveness*. Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts, 1986.

Raheem, Aminah. *Soul Return: Integrating Body, Psyche & Spirit*. Fairfield, CT: Aslan Publishing, 1990.

Suggestions for Teachers

Breathwork

Children often hold their breath or breathe in a shallow way. To help them learn abdominal breathing, have the children place their hands below the navel and lean forward in their chairs. Then lead them in breathing slowly through the nose and exhaling through the mouth. In this bent position, the only way they can breathe is abdominally. After a few minutes, have the children straighten up in the chair and continue to breathe deeply into the abdomen.

In tense or difficult moments in the classroom, remind the children to breathe deeply, imagining that the feelings can move through them and out into the earth.

Energy and Health

Harmony in body, mind and spirit is essential to the learning process and to the healthy growth of children. Some stress is also an important component for learning, offering challenges that can result in growth, creativity and the development of talents. However, if stress is overwhelming, as in the case of trauma and violence, children are unable to focus and learn effectively. Recent research has shown that normal brain development is impaired when children are continuously exposed to overwhelming stress, trauma and violence.

Current science, as well as ancient cultures of the world, recognizes that we are remarkable systems of energy in constant flow, interaction and balance. People from Asian, African and indigenous cultures (more than half of the world's population) use energy as the basis of their healing methods. In this worldview, health is defined as a dynamic state when energy is flowing in harmony within the whole system and with the environment. When energy is out of balance or is blocked, the result can be physical pain, mental confusion or emotional instability.

The Capacitar practices in this section awaken children with an understanding and appreciation of their energy system. With breathwork and visualization, they are able to experience their energy state and work with releasing, harmonizing and balancing energy to better focus and learn. With the safe space and centering exercises, children can develop the fundamental connection with their true selves and with the core energy of their center. Cross-lateral exercises energize children as well as bring balance to the left and right sides of the brain. And acupressure points and head-neck exercises unblock and stimulate energy flow to the head and brain, helping children to feel alert, alive and focused, able to think creatively and rationally.

Breathwork

Breath is the source of life, bringing fresh energy into the tissues and cells to nourish body, mind and spirit. When we exhale, we release accumulated stress and toxins. Breathing through a stressful time is an effective way to let go of the tension that accumulates in the body. A few long deep breaths at a difficult moment can completely change the way we handle a situation. The breathing pattern shifts when different emotions arise. Through conscious breathing, we can become aware of the flow of these emotions. By changing the way we breathe, we can change emotional and physical states. Feelings and emotions can be released and cleared out of the body by working with the breath.

The following breathing exercises can be taught to children in the classroom to consciously unblock, move, balance and increase energy. The breathwork combined with images of light, nature or beautiful flowers helps children to feel peaceful, calm and focused. Language can be adapted to the grade level and vocabulary of the children.

Abdominal Breathing

Sit comfortably supported in a chair and close your eyes. Breathe deeply and center yourself in the moment, letting go of all worries and concerns. Place your hands on your abdomen, breathe in deeply through your nose, and imagine the air moving down through the body into your center within your abdomen. Imagine that your abdomen fills with air as if it were a balloon. Hold your breath for a few moments and then exhale slowly through your mouth, contracting the muscles of your abdomen, letting go of all the tension in your body. Continue abdominal breathing for several minutes. If unwanted thoughts come into your mind, gently release them and return to the image of the air moving in and out of your body.

Breathing in Nature

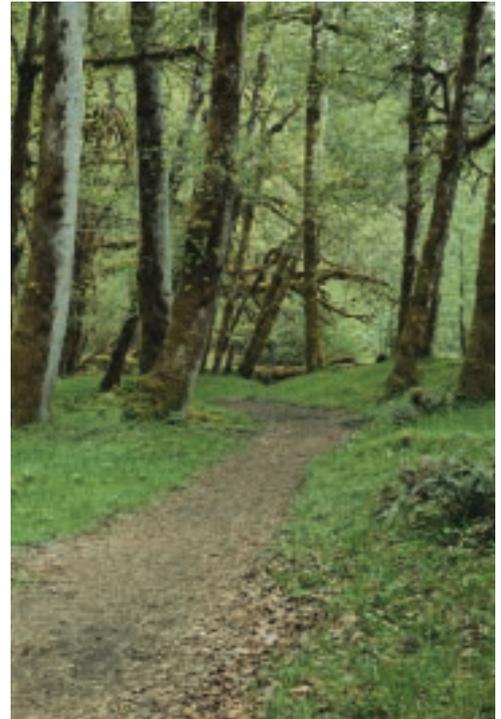
Trees and nature are tremendous sources of energy for grounding and healing us. Remove your shoes, placing your feet on the ground (or imagine doing so). Breathe in deeply, imaging that your feet are like the roots of a tree running into the earth. Breathe in the earth's energy through your feet, and breathe out stress, tension and pain.

Alternate Nostril Breathing

Alternate nostril breathing is a powerful practice from India that is used to circulate and balance energy. This breathing exercise is used with students in many Indian schools before studying or testing to balance the left and right sides of the brain—the rational and the creative capacities. Alternate nostril breathing helps to release anger and strong emotions and to bring clarity and calm to the body, mind and spirit of the person. The exercise should be discontinued if dizziness is experienced.

Sit comfortably with your back supported and your feet touching the ground. You will be using your right hand during this exercise. You may close your eyes. With your right thumb at the side of the nose, gently shut off your right nostril. Breathe deeply through your left nostril to a count of 8. Hold your breath for a count of 4 (or 8). Then release your right nostril, place your index and/or middle finger over your left nostril, while exhaling through your right nostril to a count of 8. Hold for a count of 4 (or 8) and breathe in through your right nostril to a count of 8. Hold the air, release your left nostril, and place your right thumb over the right nostril while exhaling through the left side. Inhale through the left nostril and hold for a count of 4 (or 8). With index and/or middle fingers, shut off the left nostril and exhale through the right. Continue this alternate breathing pattern for several minutes.

When you are finished, open your eyes and breathe normally. Observe any changes you feel in your body. If you are unable to sleep at night, this is an excellent practice to discharge the feelings and tensions of the day. This is also a very effective practice to balance and harmonize strong emotions.



Breathing exercises combined with images of trees and nature help children to feel peaceful, calm and focused.

CORE PRACTICE:

Visualization, Safe Space and Centering

Visualization or guided imagery is a powerful practice that focuses the mind on healing images to bring about physiological changes in the body, mind and spirit. Through the conscious creation of peaceful images or thoughts, many positive outcomes can result, including the healing of disease, alleviation of physical and emotional pain, elimination of traumatic stress symptoms, and change in behavioral patterns. The power of visualization has been recognized in many cultures throughout the ages, and it is now effectively used to lower blood pressure, treat cancer patients, promote the healing process after surgery, alleviate pain, improve stamina, and enhance performance of athletes and artists.

Visualization used with children in the classroom helps them to develop and focus their active imagination. Guided imagery planned as part of subject areas or daily lessons can stimulate creative and intuitive thinking. The Safe and Sacred Space visualization develops the capacities for safety, trust and a sense of security. Images of boundaries and protection can also be created through visualization. With breathwork and the image of an inner refuge, children can develop the skill of centering and focusing themselves.



Images to Use with Visualization

The following images may be used as part of a guided visualization for children.

- Visit a forest or a meadow filled with plants, flowers and animals. Feel deeply connected with nature and the healing power of the earth.
- Travel to the ocean or to a river. Enter the water and swim or float freely. Imagine any negative feelings or experiences leaving your body, floating away in the warm water.
- Follow a path in the open country and come to a door or a gate. Open the door or gate and enter into a wonderful new world to enjoy. What is it like for you?
- Imagine a person or saint of great wisdom and love appearing before you. Talk with this person and ask them to give you an important message or gift for your life.
- Imagine an animal of great wisdom and power appearing before you. Talk with this animal. Ask this animal to tell you an important message of wisdom for your life.
- Remember a moment or an experience of joy or happiness in your life. Fill yourself with the energy, vitality and happiness that you felt at that moment.



Visualization helps focus the mind on healing images. Nature images such as a meadow filled with flowers or plants may be used as part of a guided visualization for children.

The Safe and Sacred Space

One of the most important visualizations is the Safe and Sacred Space. Each child can imagine a place they consider to be their refuge—a garden, the beach, the mountains, a waterfall or stream, a chapel, their bedroom or a place important to childhood. Pictures or postcards can be brought to the classroom to help children create images of the place they choose for their safe space. Teachers can also invite children to draw their safe space, putting into it all the elements that are important to help them feel safe, secure and happy.

The following visualization may be tape-recorded with soft music and the language adapted for use with different grade levels or groups. Read the visualization slowly in a soft tone of voice, taking plenty of time for each part. The first part of the visualization involves the complete relaxation of the body. The second part is an interior journey to the Safe and Sacred Space. A visit with a wise guide may also be added at this time. The third part consists of a complete return to the body, to present time. The part for relaxation of the body may be shortened because of time constraints. After the visualization children can be invited to write about or draw a picture of the experience or to share the experience with someone in the class.

Part 1—Body Scan and Relaxation

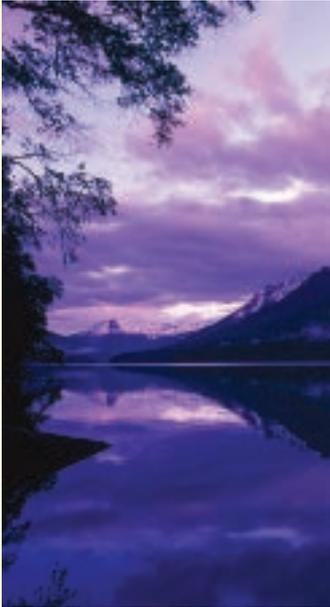
Take a comfortable position, close your eyes and breathe deeply. Let go of all the concerns of the day and be present in the moment. Feel your connection with the earth. Imagine the energy of the earth flowing up through your feet and throughout your entire body. You will now go on a journey through your body, letting go of any tension, and relaxing each part completely. Connect with your toes, feet, ankles and legs. Stretch and flex them, getting in touch with any tension you may feel there. Breathe deeply and as you exhale, let go completely, releasing all the tension in your toes, feet, ankles and legs. Feel deep peace and tranquility in all parts of your being.

Breathe deeply again. Imagine the energy of the earth flowing up into the trunk of your body, moving through your pelvis, abdomen, stomach and chest, circulating up your back and spinal cord to your shoulders. Stretch and flex the muscles of your trunk, abdomen, back and shoulders. Breathe deeply and as you exhale, let go completely, releasing all the tension in your abdomen and stomach (very relaxed), and in your chest, back, spinal column and shoulders (very soft and relaxed). Feel deep peace and tranquility in all parts of your being.

Breathe deeply again and imagine the energy of the earth moving up into your arms, elbows, forearms, hands and fingers. Connect with your arms and hands, and stretch and flex these parts of your body, getting in touch with any tension you may feel there. Breathe deeply and as you exhale, let go completely, releasing all the tension in your arms, elbows and forearms (very soft and relaxed), and then in your wrists, hands, palms and fingers (very soft and relaxed). Feel deep peace in all parts of your being.



Pictures or postcards may be brought into the classroom to help children create images of the place they choose for their safe space.



One child's safe space might be a mountain lake where the family vacations.

Breathe deeply again and now imagine the energy of the earth moving up into your neck and head. Scan your neck and head to get in touch with any tension you may feel there. Gently flex the muscles in your neck. Open your mouth in a wide yawn, flexing your tongue and jaw, letting go of all the tension and feelings caught there. Make a grimace and flex all the muscles in your cheeks and forehead, and around your eyes. Breathe deeply and as you exhale, let go completely, releasing all the tension in your neck (very soft and relaxed), your tongue, jaw and cheeks (very relaxed), and your forehead, eyes, ears and scalp (very soft and relaxed). Feel deep peace and tranquility in all parts of your being.

Now scan your body and if there is still any place where you feel even the slightest tension, go back to that part of your body to flex and tense it, increasing the tension you experience there. Breathe deeply and now let go completely. In all parts of your body you feel deep peace, calm and tranquility.

Part 2—Journey to the Safe and Sacred Space

Imagine that you are starting on a journey to a very special place. This is your inner refuge, your Safe and Sacred Space where only you can enter. Take time to journey to this place and to discover your special refuge.

What is your safe space like? Perhaps it is a garden, full of flowers and beautiful trees. Or maybe your refuge is in the mountains by a lake or in a meadow with clear blue skies and passing clouds. Or perhaps your safe space is in a chapel or house from your childhood. Decide now where you will go to be in your safe and sacred space. Take some time to explore and create this place, filling it with all that will support and nourish you. Are there colors, sounds, smells or textures that you are aware of? How do you feel in this place? What is it like for you? Take some time now to enjoy your special place. Feel very safe, secure and peaceful. Fill yourself with great peace and a deep sense of security. Take time to open yourself to receive whatever you may need at this moment.

Take a few more moments enjoying your refuge of peace. You might want to look around for some image that you can bring back with you to remind you of your refuge. And when you feel ready, say goodbye to your safe space, knowing that you can return here whenever you desire.

Part 3—Return to the Present Moment

Begin now to return to your body. Breathe deeply and feel the energy of your feet and toes. Stretch and flex your feet and toes. Breathe deeply. Stretch and flex your legs, feeling the energy flowing fully throughout your body. Stretch and flex the trunk of your body, feeling fully alive in your pelvis, abdomen, chest and shoulders. Stretch and flex your arms and hands, feeling the energy flowing fully through your arms. Very gently stretch and flex your neck and facial muscles, feeling very alive and relaxed in your head. Breathe deeply and when you are ready, open your eyes and feel very alive and relaxed, present in the moment and in this room. Feel very peaceful and tranquil in all of your being. Take a few moments in silence to reflect on your visit to your safe space.

You might want to write about your safe space or draw your experience. Or you might want to share this with a friend.

Visualization: The Wise Guide

(The following visualization may be included with the visit to the The Safe and Sacred Space, or it may be practiced by itself.)

Enjoy your safe space for a few moments. When you are ready, invite a special person—a wise guide—to join you. Your wise guide may be a person important to your life, a guide or mentor who has wisdom to share with you. Perhaps this person is a friend, a grandparent, a sister or brother, a saint, a holy person or a model for you. Invite this person to your safe space and enjoy a few moments with them. What are they like? How do you feel in their presence? What is it like to just sit quietly without speaking with them? Take some time with them. Ask this person if they have any special words of wisdom to share with you. Do you have any questions for them concerning your life? Take a moment to listen to what your heart needs.

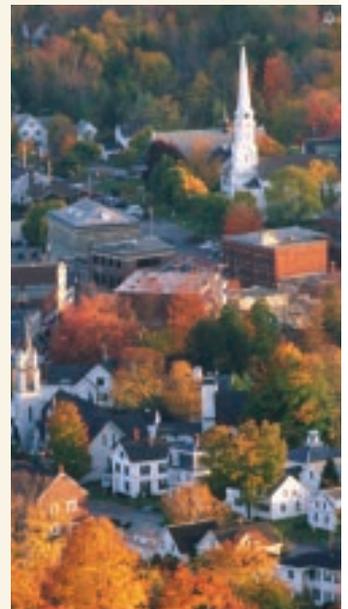
Imagine that this person gives you a gift or some special symbol that is significant for your life. What is that like for you? Receive this gift with joy, love and gratitude. Take a few moments more with this special person. When you are ready, thank them and say goodbye. Your guide is always within you. You can always return to your safe space to seek their counsel and companionship. Take a few moments alone again in your refuge. Feel the warmth and love that surrounds you. Know that you are able to return to this place whenever you desire. And when you feel ready, say goodbye to your Safe and Sacred Space and begin to return to the present moment.

Return to your Safe Space

You can return at will to your safe space during the day to take a mini-vacation when you are tired, stressed or need a place of security. This is a skill that you can practice daily or more frequently to help you be more peaceful and relaxed.

Be seated comfortably, and breathe deeply with the intention of going to your special place. Remember the image or symbol you took from your sacred place. This can be a key to your return. Close your eyes, and remember now the image or symbol. Breathe deeply, flex and move your arms and legs to connect with the body and release tension, and then move into the safe space for a few moments. Return to the refuge of your soul, enjoying the colors, sounds, fragrances and textures of your safe space. Once again feel deep peace and relaxation. Enjoy fully this place for a few moments.

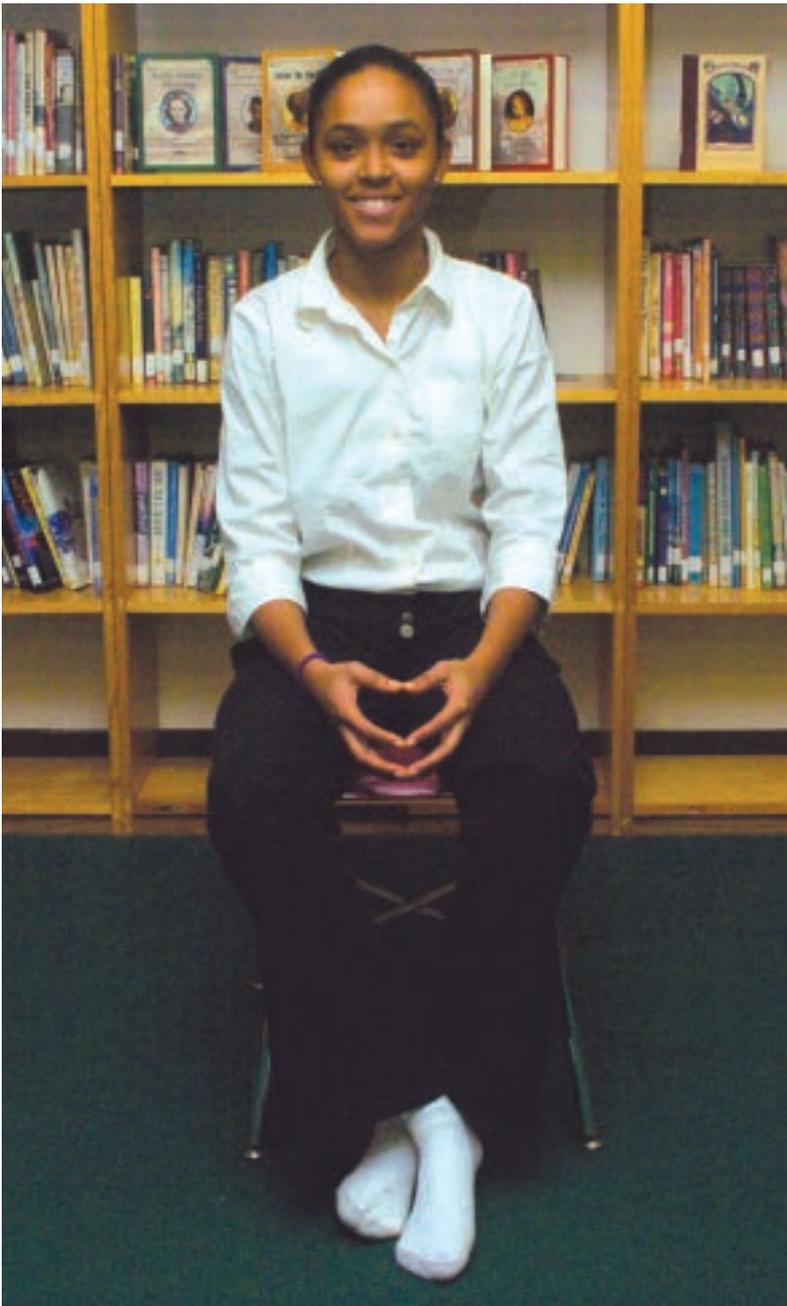
After a couple of minutes, when you are ready to leave your refuge, begin to return to the present moment. Flex your arms, hands and legs to reconnect fully with the body. Breathe deeply and open your eyes. Feel deep peace and wholeness throughout your body, mind and spirit.



Another person's refuge might be in a chapel or house from childhood.

Centering

Once the safe space skill has been developed with children, the concept of centering in a peaceful place within themselves becomes very natural. Use breathwork or abdominal breathing to connect with the center. To further help their focus and concentration, the children can be seated with crossed ankles and with their fingertips together (**Figure 1.1**). Or they can rest their hands lightly on their abdomen, imagining that they can feel their breath going into a center within their abdomen.



Be seated in a comfortable position, breathe fully and slowly, and imagine that you are able to breathe in and rest in your safe space deep within yourself. Rest within your center and feel a deep sense of peace and relaxation. Enjoy this place for a few moments, fully alive to yourself, focused and aware of all that is happening around you.

Centering is an important skill for children to use before taking a test or speaking in front of the class, or for athletes when playing different sports.

Considerations When Using Visualization with Children

For some children who have suffered overwhelming trauma, their experience upon closing their eyes may be one of fear. Others have inner images of terror because of living most of their lives in places of violence. To help children regain a healthy sense of imagination and inner imagery, use pictures or postcards of nature, flowers, mountains, trees or the ocean to create a healing place of their liking.

Some children have a hard time deciding where to go for their safe space and keep changing places during the visualization. If that is the case, you can experiment by

Figure 1.1 Centering

using the same refuge for the entire group to give children a similar experience. For example, enter a safe space that is a beautiful garden, full of trees and flowers. The sun shines overhead, and the birds are singing, etc. Describe in great detail the colors, textures and sounds in the garden.

At times there are children in the group who, for their own safety, frequently dissociate and live outside their bodies, or who live in a constant fantasy or dream world. To help them be more grounded, you can suggest that they raise their hands above their heads and gently take hold of their spirit hovering over their body. Then invite them to pull their spirit back down into their physical body.

Each child will have a different experience with visualization. Some have very vivid imaginations and can see great details, colors, sounds and odors. Others will hear inner messages or have inner sensations. Some participants will experience only light or darkness, or perhaps nothing, during the visualization. If that is the case, reassure the participants that each person uses different ways of perception, and that they need not feel bad if they do not have a colorful experience. The most important result of the visualization is a deep sense of peace and relaxation.

Once in a while during the visualization, some painful memories may arise. At the end of the session, always say to the group that if anyone had a difficult experience and feels a strong emotion or fear, they should talk with the teacher or with someone in whom they can confide. If they choose to talk with you, you can return them to their safe space to work through the difficult experience so that their inner space can truly be one of peace and security.

The following guidelines may be helpful when leading visualization in the classroom:

- Voice quality and timing should be slow and tranquil to permit the unfolding of the visualization process of the child.
- The environment for the visualization process should be considered—room temperature, outside noise, odors, contamination or the energy of the room. Soft music can be helpful to create a healing environment.
- In the visualization, use all the senses: sound, smell, taste, touch, sight and inner messages.
- It is essential to re-establish a connection with the body at the end of the visualization to help the child feel grounded and connected. Breathing deeply and stretching different parts of the body help the person to relax and stay connected and grounded. You can also say, for example: “Say goodbye to the person or place. Be aware of your body. Feel energized and more relaxed with each breath.”

Suggestions for Teachers

Visualization, Safe Space and Centering

In using visualization with children, it is important to respect the uniqueness and style of each child and to adapt the visualization practice to the culture or individual. The Safe and Sacred Space can be used to empower a child to claim their inner refuge in moments of tension or crisis, and to experience inner safety and security, while at the same time viewing the reality of the moment with the wisdom of the soul.

CORE PRACTICE:

Exercises and Points for Head and Neck

Often children are unable to concentrate and learn because of emotional or physical pain that is blocked in the head and upper body in the form of headaches, stiff neck, tight jaw and overall stress and weariness. The following exercises are helpful to open up the flow of energy in the head and neck and to release congested energy in the upper back.

Head Rolls

Gently and slowly roll your head and neck in circles (with your eyes open to avoid dizziness). Do five or six head rolls clockwise, and then roll your head counterclockwise. Breathe deeply while doing the exercise.

Shrugs

Shrug your shoulders up towards your ears while inhaling deeply. Hold for a moment and then drop your shoulders while exhaling in a long full breath. Do this several times to release stress and blocked energy from your shoulders and upper back. Let your jaw hang loosely, and yawn to release stress in the jaw and face muscles.

Head Tap

There are many acupressure points in the head and scalp that can awaken energy in all parts of the body. Gently tap the top of the head and all parts of the scalp with the fingertips for several minutes. Imagine the taps as raindrops washing away tension, sadness and fatigue.

Jaw Tap

Often a tight jaw can be a sign of tension and repressed feelings. Overwhelming stress can also trigger facial ticks and paralysis of the facial muscles. A gentle jaw tap for several minutes can help release

stored stress and tension. With the fingertips, lightly press into the joint where the jawbones connect. Gently tap the joints for several minutes, imagining that with each tap, the muscles become filled with light and warmth, relaxing and releasing their tension.

Brain Balance and Focus

Locate the acupressure points at the base of the skull in the indentation on either side of the head. These two points balance the rational and intuitive sides of the brain. These points can be held, tapped or massaged. Gently hold the two points for several minutes while breathing deeply. Imagine that your mind and spirit are filled with light, clarity and peace.



Exercises for Head and Neck Brain Balance and Focus

CORE PRACTICE:**Cross-lateral Exercises**

During the day we all have high and low energy cycles that are related to the activity of the left and right hemispheres of the brain. When the left hemisphere is dominant, the child is better attuned to logic and sequential thinking. This is followed by another period of greater activity of the right hemisphere, when random, creative and spatial abilities dominate. The left hemisphere of the brain controls the right side of the body, and the right hemisphere controls the functions of the left side. The left and right sides of the brain are connected by a bridge of nerve fibers called the corpus callosum that is responsible for communication between the hemispheres. Movement exercises, such as cross-laterals, create more cross-hemispheric activity, helping children regulate their energy cycles as well as balance both sides of their brain.

Cross-laterals are exercises whereby the left or right limb crosses over the visual field or midline of the body to the opposite side of the body. All of these cross-laterals are energizing and can help children when feeling “off balance” to think more clearly and improve coordination. The exercises are fun and can easily be done in a playful way.

The Healthy Thump

Tap the acupressure points just below the collarbone on either side of the sternum. This practice increases energy flow, balance and overall well-being.

The Cross Crawl

This exercise is like marching in place. Begin by lifting the right arm and the left leg at the same time. As you lower the right arm and left leg, lift the left arm and the right leg.

Continue the marching exercise for at least a minute. Exaggerate the movement by swinging your arms across the front of your body and lifting and crossing your leg toward the opposite side.

Variations

1. As you march in place pat the opposite knee.
2. March in place and touch the opposite elbow, shoulder, knee, ankle and hip. Repeat on opposite side.



Cross-lateral Exercises
The Healthy Thump

*Suggestions
for Teachers***Cross-lateral Exercises**

Cross-lateral exercises are an excellent practice to use regularly with children to harmonize the group and to balance and focus the energy of the classroom. These exercises are especially helpful for primary grade children to help improve coordination. Students can lead the exercises in a playful way as a game or with lively music as a dance.



Cross-lateral Exercises
The Cross Crawl



Cross-lateral Exercises Scissors

Scissors

This bilateral exercise is done in a seated position. Extend the arms and legs out from the body and simply cross the arms and legs in front of you in a scissors motion. Continue this for about a minute. As arms and legs are crossing, you can also turn your head from side to side.

Tapping Acupressure Points

Gently tap the acupressure points on either side of the base of the skull for about a minute. Tap both sides at the same time.

Resources for Further Study

Jensen, E. *Learning with the Body in Mind: The Scientific Basis for Energizers, Movement, Play, Games, and Physical Education*. San Diego, CA: The Brain Store, Inc., 2000.



Cross-lateral Exercises Tapping Acupressure Points



“With wellness practices, children discover their natural capacity, intuitive wisdom and inner power to bring balance and healing to themselves and others.”

Section 2

Wellness Practices to Promote Energy Flow

For many peoples of the world, health of body, mind and spirit comes from the harmonious flow of energy within us and around us. We are interconnected with this energy flow and often feel this force in our bodies and spirit. When this energy is blocked by stress, negativity, overwhelming feelings, lack of sleep or exercise, or an unhealthy diet, the body becomes sick. Pain, tension and sickness are messages from the body that the energy flow is blocked or stagnant. Children in particular are very sensitive to energy.

With fingerholds, Tai Chi, Salute to the Sun and other practices used daily, children can recover the natural balanced flow of energy, heal physical and emotional pain, and maintain strength and health of body, mind and spirit.

Energy Flow of Body, Mind and Spirit

Around us and within us is the energy of the universe that connects all living beings. We are interconnected with this energy, and in each moment we are able to feel this life force. Working to unblock, balance and increase the flow of energy forms the basis of many healing systems in different traditions.

Each person has the ability to experience and work with this energy to bring balance and harmony to body, mind and spirit. With wellness practices, children discover their natural capacity, intuitive wisdom and inner power to bring balance and healing to themselves and others.

In the following exercises, children will discover and work with the energy in their bodies and hands. Guide the children to listen to their hands and be aware of any sensations they may feel in their palms and fingers.

Energy in our Hands

Stand and relax your legs, arms and shoulders. Imagine that your legs, feet and toes are like long roots connected with the earth and that your head and upper body are connected with the heavens. Place your hands together



A family in Guatemala uses the fingerholds practice to manage emotions.

Suggestions for Teachers

Energy Flow of Body, Mind and Spirit

Children are very energy sensitive and often feel or see the flow of energy as color or vibration around them. They are also able to easily connect with the energy of nature and plants.

The energy field visualization is an important exercise to help children develop the capacity to center themselves and to have clear boundaries for personal integrity and protection. Words and images appropriate to age and culture can be used to better develop the concepts of energy, the energy field and protection.

and for a few moments rub them together briskly. Separate your hands, listen to them for a moment and feel what is happening in your palms and fingers. What sensations do you feel?

Try the exercise again. Rub your palms briskly together and then separate them. Experiment with the distance and the force of energy between and in your hands. Imagine that the energy is a globe or ball of light. Play with this ball of energy. Form a large ball and a small ball. Feel the sensation in your hands when you throw and catch the ball of light. This sensation is an experience of your life energy.

Bring your palms together again, bend your fingers and rub your fingernails together. After a few moments, stop and place your fingertips together. Feel the rays of energy flowing between your fingertips. Now lower your hands toward the earth, and feel your energy flowing with the earth. Raise your hands to the sun, and feel your energy flowing and connecting with the energy of the heavens. Gradually and with some practice, you will be able to nourish and balance your energy when you feel tired or in low spirits to bring a sense of harmony and well-being to your body, mind and spirit.

The Energy Field of the Body

During the day we are constantly interacting energetically with our environment and with those around us. Some people and situations drain our energy, while others fill and enliven us. When we become more conscious of our energy system, we can begin to recognize the people and situations that drain us as well as those that nourish us. With practice we can learn how to protect ourselves energetically from being drained and how to have healthy boundaries with others.

Energy Field Exercise

Stand straight and in a relaxed manner with feet shoulder-width apart and knees slightly bent. Close your eyes, breathe deeply and imagine that your feet are like long roots running into the earth, grounding and connecting you. Your back and spinal column are like a column of light supporting you between heaven and earth. Connect with your heart center for a moment, breathe deeply and exhale any tension that you carry.

Now image that from your heart center a strong radiant light begins to shine out. As the light grows, your energy radiates out in all directions around you—above, below, in front of and behind you—forming an egg or globe of light that shines with the tone and color that is you. Everyone who meets you immediately recognizes you by your unique vibration of energy. Enjoy the experience of your energy field. During the day, practice walking with an awareness of this light energy that surrounds and protects you. Imagine the circle of energy that also surrounds and protects others you meet. If a difficult situation or person challenges you, imagine that you have clear boundaries of light and protection around you, so you can respond with respect and wisdom in the moment.

CORE PRACTICE:**Fingerholds to Manage Emotions**

The following practice is a simple way to work with emotions and to develop emotional literacy. Emotions and feelings are like waves of energy moving through the body, mind and spirit. Often we judge emotions as “good” or “bad” rather than recognizing them as wise messages from the body to guide us in our response to challenges in our environment. With strong or overwhelming feelings, energy can become blocked or repressed, resulting in pain or congestion in the body.

Through each finger runs a channel or meridian of energy connected with an organ system and related emotions. By holding each finger while breathing deeply, we can promote the flow of emotional energy and feelings to bring physical release and healing.

These fingerholds are a helpful tool for children to use in daily life or in the classroom. In difficult or challenging situations when tears, anger or anxiety arise, the fingers may be held to bring peace, focus and calm so that the appropriate response or action may be taken. The practice may also be done as a meditation with music, or used before going to sleep to release the problems of the day and to bring deep relaxation to body, mind and spirit.

Practice

Hold each finger with the opposite hand for two to five minutes. You can work with either hand. Breathe in deeply; recognize and acknowledge the strong or disturbing feelings or emotions you hold inside yourself. Breathe out slowly and let go. Imagine the feelings draining out of your finger down into the earth. Breathe in peace, harmony, strength and healing. Breathe out slowly, releasing past feelings and problems. Often as you hold each finger, you can feel a pulsing sensation as the energy and feelings move and become balanced. You can also hold the fingers of someone else who is angry or upset. The fingerholds are very helpful for young children when they are crying or having a tantrum, or for people who are very fearful, anxious, sick or dying.

Fingerholds to Manage Emotions

Through each finger runs a channel or meridian of energy connected with an organ system and related emotions, as shown in this diagram. When children experience any of these emotions, they may first hold the corresponding finger to bring peace, focus and calm to themselves so that they are better able to act or respond appropriately to the situation.





Fingerholds Thumb—Grief, Tears, Emotional Pain



Fingerholds Index Finger—Fear, Terror, Panic



Fingerholds Middle Finger—Anger, Rage, Resentment

Suggestions for Teachers

Fingerholds

The fingerholds are an important tool in emotional literacy to teach children to recognize their feelings and manage the expression of their emotions. Teachers can help children develop emotional understanding with the following simple exercises.

Have children draw an outline of their hand, write in the name of the emotions for each finger, and paint each finger with an appropriate color. Tape copies of the hand picture with the emotions to each child's desk as a reminder of how to work with different feelings as these feelings arise during the school day.

Thumb

The thumb is for tears, grief and emotional pain. Babies or small children often suck or hold their thumbs for comfort. The fingerhold does not repress tears or sorrow, but allows the energy to move out and be released.

Hold the thumb, breathe deeply and exhale grief, sorrow and sadness. Breathe in peace, comfort and strength.

Index Finger

The index finger is for fear. Fear can be a guide regarding our environment, our physical well-being or our growth as individuals. We often experience fear when facing changes or risks that offer an opportunity for such growth. It is what we do with fear that can be either beneficial or harmful. If danger or risk is present, rather than being paralyzed by fear, hold the index finger so that a wise decision can be made in the situation—to flee, to stay or to react. Use of the index finger is a good way to learn how to work with fear, rather than to be a victim in the grip of fear.

Hold the index finger, exhale and let go of fear. Inhale courage, strength and wisdom.

Middle Finger

The middle finger is for anger, rage and resentment. Anger is a natural and normal emotion in many situations. But it is the response of anger that can result in violence toward others or self. Repressed anger or denial of feelings can result in passive-aggressive behavior or in physical symptoms such as arthritis, ulcers, migraines or knots in the shoulder muscles.

Hold the middle finger, exhale and let go of anger and rage. Inhale compassion and creative passion, transforming anger into wisdom.



Fingerholds Ring Finger—Worry, Anxiety, Preoccupation



Fingerholds Small Finger—Lack of Self-esteem, Victimhood

Ring Finger

The ring finger is for anxiety, worry, preoccupation and feeling overwhelmed. Often people unconsciously play with their rings when they are worried about many things and bothered by constant mental chatter. Holding the ring finger can help to discharge unnecessary worry and anxiety, saving energy for action.

Breathe deeply holding the ring finger. Exhale, letting go of all worry and anxiety. Inhale a deep sense of peace, trust and security in the midst of life's problems.

Small Finger

The small finger is for lack of self-esteem, negative self-talk and victimhood. Hold the small finger to transform feelings of unworthiness and low self-esteem into a sense of self-appreciation and self-worth.

Hold the small finger and breathe deeply, exhaling and letting go of insecurity and unworthiness. Breathe in gratitude and appreciation for the gift of life.

Resources for Further Study

Goleman, D. *Emotional Intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1995.

Suggestions for Teachers

Fingerholds

Continued

Use age-appropriate words, explanations and examples for the feelings and emotions when working with different grade levels. This practice is a good way to invite children into conversation about difficult feelings or when challenging things happen. A kindergarten teacher used the fingerholds with her class when the mother of one of the children died. Another teacher found it helpful to have students involved in arguments stop and hold their anger finger for two minutes as a way of diffusing the situation before trying to talk about what had occurred. Sometimes it helped the teacher to also hold her anger finger in the midst of the situation. Teachers can also discuss appropriate responses to feelings to guide children in developing options for their own lives and conduct.

CORE PRACTICE:

Tai Chi

These energy exercises are based on *Tai Chi Chih*[®], a simple form developed by Justin Stone. Images, along with the movements, help to release stress, to open and balance the flow of energy, and to promote health and well-being. The purpose of this Tai Chi meditation is not to master a traditional form, but to empower the person in discovering and following their own flow and body wisdom. The practice of Tai Chi reconnects the person with the source of life, the universal energy of earth and heaven. With regular practice the movements bring healing and harmony to body, mind and spirit.

One or two of the Tai Chi movements can be used at the start of the school day, after recess, or before a test to help children release stress, calm their spirits and focus their attention. Different images can be used that are appropriate for the grade and level of understanding of the students.

Images for the Practice of Tai Chi

Breathe deeply and imagine that your body is a tree with your feet like roots planted in the earth, and your arms like branches open to receive the energy of the heavens. Breathe fully during the movements and feel the currents of energy passing through your body, bringing harmony, vitality and strength. Relax in the moment, release all worries and allow your body to move freely and fully without controlling your movements with the mind. Often you will feel pulses or currents in your hands or in different parts of your body. As you move with Tai Chi you are fluid, relaxed, peaceful, alert, present, focused, flowing, breathing, open, graceful, fully alive, dynamically moving while being deeply centered and grounded in the earth.



Tai Chi The Rocking Movement

The Rocking Movement

Stand straight with your feet separated shoulder-width apart and your hands at your sides. Raise your heels and, at the same time with palms facing upwards, raise your hands and arms to the level of your chest. Turn your palms and move your hands downward while you lower your heels and raise your toes in a rocking movement. Continue the motion, slowly rocking up and down while you breathe deeply. With each move, relax your shoulders, arms and fingers. Do the exercise smoothly and slowly.

Breathe deeply and imagine that your feet are planted securely and that your toes are like long roots connecting you with the nourishing energy of the earth. As you raise your hands, imagine that you are able to bring down the energy of the heavens to cleanse and fill you. As you sweep your fingers through the air, feel your interconnection with all being. Exhale all tension and worry, and breathe in the peace and abundance of nature around you.

Centering

As you finish the Rocking Movement, take a few moments to be still. Place your hands in front of your abdomen with palms down. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Imagine that you can rest for a moment in a safe and sacred place deep within you. Connect with your center and the source of your life. Feel peace and tranquility throughout your entire body, mind and spirit. Rest in your center for a few moments. As we continue with the next movements of Tai Chi, try to stay peacefully connected with your center and move from this center of your being.

Foot Positions

Begin each Tai Chi movement first on the left side with your left foot forward, knees slightly bent, weight balanced between both legs. Your feet are at an angle separated by a distance of about two feet. As you rock forward on your left foot, your right heel comes off the ground. As you rock backward, your right heel goes down and your left toes come off the ground. Most of the Tai Chi movements involve rocking back and forth while you breathe deeply into your center. After each movement is completed on the left side, do the same movement on the right side, placing your right foot forward and beginning the movement to the right.

On the left side, imagine receiving or bringing energy into your being. On the right side, imagine giving your energy to others—giving your compassion and healing to the world.



Tai Chi Centering



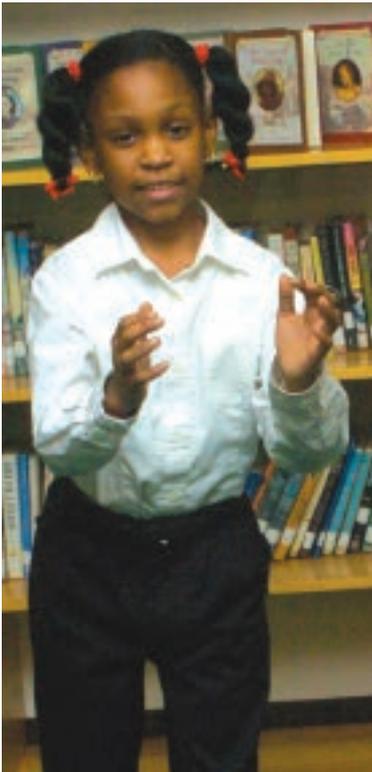
Tai Chi Left Foot Position



Tai Chi Right Foot Position



Tai Chi The Circle of Light



Tai Chi The Globe of Light

The Circle of Light

With left foot forward and hands facing downward toward the earth, form a circle of light with your fingers. Rock back and forth while you move the circle of light in a clockwise direction, giving and receiving energy. Repeat on the right side, this time moving the circle of light counterclockwise.

With this movement imagine that you are interconnected with all being, giving and receiving energy.

The Globe of Light

With left foot forward, form a ball of light with your hands at shoulder level. Playfully throw the ball away from your body towards the left side and circulate your hands back around to the chest. Repeat on the right side. Imagine you are a joyful child delighting in play.

As you form the ball of light between your hands, feel the radiance of your being. Freely toss the ball toward the world, connecting with the gift you have to give. Feel a smile on your face and gratitude in your heart for this joyful moment of play.

The Shower of Light

With left foot forward, hands separated the width of your body and palms facing each other, raise your hands up over your head, and move them downward as if showering yourself with light. Feel the energy cleansing and filling your body, mind and spirit. Repeat on the right side with your right foot forward. Imagine the energy that surrounds you.

As you lift your hands, breathe in the shower of light, and as you lower your hands, exhale and let go of any negative thoughts or feelings within you. Feel the light of the heavens cleansing and renewing you. As you do the movement on the right side, get in touch with the violence and negativity in the larger world around you. In the name of the human family, commit yourself to healing the wounds of violence around you. Breathe in the cleansing light to strengthen the human community.

The Wise Being

With left foot forward, raise both hands to eye level, with your left hand closer to your face. Move your hands in sweeping circles in front of your face and then downward, outward and upward. Hands do not touch as they pass at eye level in front of your face.

Connect with the sacred center within you and remember the wise being you are, with your unique history, gifts, wounds, and possibilities. Feel deep gratitude, love, and respect for your being. You can pause for a moment during this movement to give yourself a hug,



Tai Chi The Shower of Light



Tai Chi The Wise Being

compassionately cherishing and caring for your body, mind and spirit. Repeat move on the other side with right foot forward. When you do the movement on the right side, look around at the others with whom you are practicing Tai Chi. See the unique grace and goodness of each person, as well as their wounds and possibilities. When you see them later in the day, look at them with love and respect, and greet them as the wise beings they truly are.

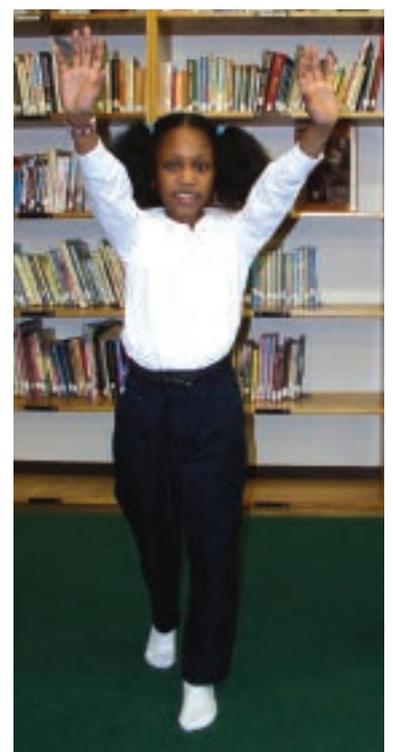
The Offering

With left foot forward and hands forming an open circle at the level of your abdomen, imagine an open vessel in which to place your life. Move your hands upward in offering and then outward (palms facing outward) in an arc, circling back round to your abdomen. Receive and give the fullness of your life. Repeat with right foot forward. Imagine your life in your hands.

As you sweep upward and outward with your hands, give fully the gift of your life. As you do the movement on the right side, imagine that you are interconnected with all being.



Tai Chi The Offering, hands moving upward



Tai Chi The Offering, hands facing outward in an arc



Tai Chi Let Go and Open to Receive



Tai Chi Ask and Receive

Suggestions for Teachers

Tai Chi

Introduce children to two or three of the Tai Chi movements and then gradually present others over time. The Rocking Movement is one of the first to be used to promote balance, groundedness and coordination. If children are stressed, the Shower of Light, Let Go and Open to Receive, and Flying through the Air Movement are most helpful. Practice a few minutes of Tai Chi at the end of recess to calm children when they return to the classroom or before a test to focus attention.

Let Go and Open to Receive

With left foot forward, palms curved softly downward, and hands at chest level, 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 the goodness and abundance of life. Repeat with right foot forward. Connect with whatever wounds, tension, or violence you may be holding in your heart.

As you do the movement on the left side, breathe out pain and violence. Breathe in peace, grace, and the abundance of life around you. As you do the movement on the right side, connect with the violence and pain of the world. In the name of the human family, let go of the violence, and breathe in the peace and healing needed in our world.

Ask and Receive

With left foot forward, hands at waist level, palms facing upward, move your hands outward in a clockwise circle and then back toward your body. Breathe in deeply and feel the life force of the earth flowing in through your fingertips from nature. Repeat on the right side, hands circling counterclockwise.

The Scriptures tell us to ask, knowing that we shall receive. Ask for what you may need, confident that you will be filled with abundance. As you do the movement on the right side, ask for those around you. Include in your prayer all who are suffering from sickness, poverty or violence in the larger world.

Flying through the Air

With your left foot forward, move your left hand above your left shoulder, palm outward. Move your right hand, palm upward, so that it is level at the right side of your waist. Swim or fly through the warm, energizing air. Enjoy the grace and lightness of your body. The motion should be free and

light with arms and shoulders relaxed. Repeat the movement on the right side, starting with your right hand above your right shoulder, and left palm at the side of your waist.

Fly freely through the air, letting go of all that weighs you down, feeling the liberation of your spirit. Open your heart to all the possibilities and desires you have for your life and growth. As you fly on the right side, imagine all the possibilities for the human family in different parts of the world. Imagine you are able to fly around the planet encouraging and inspiring all those you meet.

Passing Clouds

Stand with your knees slightly bent and your feet shoulder-width apart. Move your arms in circles at eye level starting with your left hand. Imagine problems, joys, and sorrows all passing like clouds, while you stand in the eternal moment, peaceful, calm, and centered. Breathe deeply and connect with the eternal nature of your being. Your feet are planted on the earth and your head is connected to the heavens.

As passing clouds move around you, connect with your birth, life, and death, all in the present moment. Give thanks for the gift of your life and for the wisdom and grace of your being.

Bird Flapping Wings

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees bent and hands at your sides. Gracefully wave your arms and hands like a bird flapping its wings, three times while you raise your heels. On the third flap, move your wrists in circles. Lower your hands and arms to your sides and repeat the exercise two more times.

Relax your hands and arms as if you were a bird preparing to fly. Each movement flows gracefully to the next.



Tai Chi Flying through the Air



Tai Chi Passing Clouds



Tai Chi Bird Flapping Wings

Suggestions for Teachers

Tai Chi

Students in the primary grades respond eagerly to Tai Chi. Younger children particularly enjoy movements that can be done in a playful way—Globe of Light, Flying through the Air and Bird Flapping Wings.

In work with pre-teens and teenagers, be aware of the influence of peer pressure and their self-consciousness when doing the movements. With teens it is better to introduce Tai Chi after they become more comfortable with other practices, such as acupuncture and Pal Dan Gum (see Section 3). Even though older children may not respond enthusiastically to Tai Chi in front of their peers, they often report using Tai Chi at home to calm themselves in stressful situations. Training a group of students to lead the movements is another approach that has been successful.



Tai Chi Window of Eternity

Namasté

If you practice Tai Chi with others, join your hands as if in prayer and bow to each person saying, “Namasté.” Look deeply and appreciate their unique beauty and goodness. Namasté, the Sanskrit greeting of the people of India, means, “I honor the place in you which is of spirit, of love, of light, and of peace. When you are in that place and I am in that place, we are one.” Namasté!

Resources for Further Study

Olson, S. *Tai Chi for Kids: Move with the Animals*. Rochester, VT: Bear Cub Books, 2001.
Chungliang Al Huang. *Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain: The Essence of Tai Chi*. Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts, 1988.
Stone, J. *Tai Chi Chih*. Fort Yates, ND: Good Karma Publishing, Inc., 1992.

Window of Eternity

Lift the heel of your left foot and balance it against your right inner ankle. Interlace your fingers, palms facing inward, and hold your hands slightly below eye level. Relax your gaze, looking out over your hands. Enjoy a moment of peace, knowing that you carry the light within you in the midst of the joys and struggles of life.

Feel your light shining out in all directions around you and know that you are one with all being. When you are ready, slowly lower your hands to your sides, breathing deeply. Carry this peace and light with you during the day.



Tai Chi Namasté

CORE PRACTICE:**Salute to the Sun**

The Salute to the Sun, based on an ancient yoga practice from India, energizes body, mind and spirit by connecting us with the cycles of nature. Done in a standing position, the movement involves several simple stretches combined with images of nature. The movement is very inspiring when practiced in a garden or a natural setting. The meditation recalls the natural cycles of life—birth, growth, maturity, death, and rebirth. The sun is the source of energy and center of life. Our ancestors celebrated this in the solar festivals, saluting the sun and praying for its return. In modern times, we forget our dependency upon the sun. With this practice, we reconnect with the sun, and our bodies are nourished and healed by its energy.

The Salute to the Sun is very beneficial for children during the school day to energize the body, mind and spirit, promote health and focus attention.

Connect with the Sun's Energy

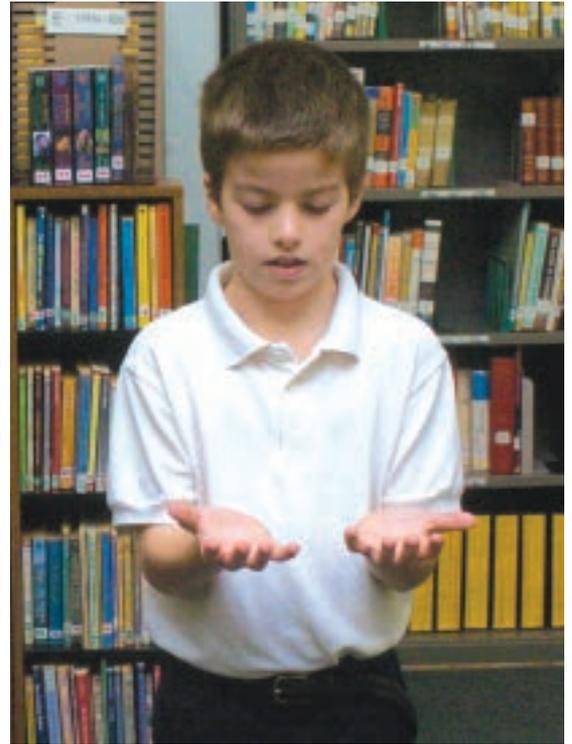
Stand with feet separated shoulder-width, knees bent. Before you start the Salute, look at your hands and rub them together for a few moments to feel the warmth of your energy. Then join your hands together at the level of your heart in prayer and gratitude.

Meditation: Get in touch with the energy in your body that comes from the sun. Imagine the muscles, bones, and cells of your body that were created from the energy of the sun. Feel gratitude for the gift of the sun. With your hands in a position of prayer, center yourself and go into the sacred space of your soul, grateful for the unique gift of your life.

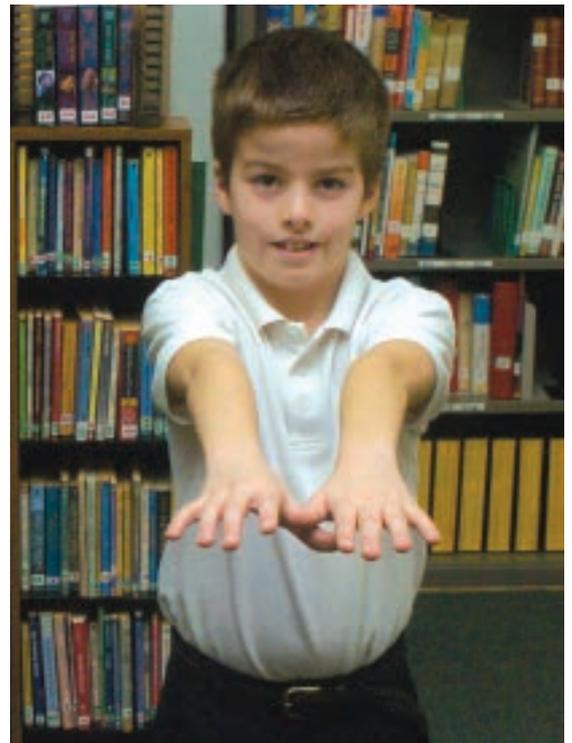
Greet and Welcome the Sun

Exhale and stretch your arms forward, palms facing down toward the earth. Inhale deeply and move your arms upward to the sun until they are over your head. Be careful of your back, as you arch slightly backwards, opening to welcome the sun's energy.

Meditation: As you stretch your arms forward, open yourself to greet the energy of the sun. Reach out to embrace life in its many forms, recognizing that everything around you has also been formed by the energy of the sun. In humility and gratitude, welcome the sun.



Salute to the Sun Connect with the Sun's Energy

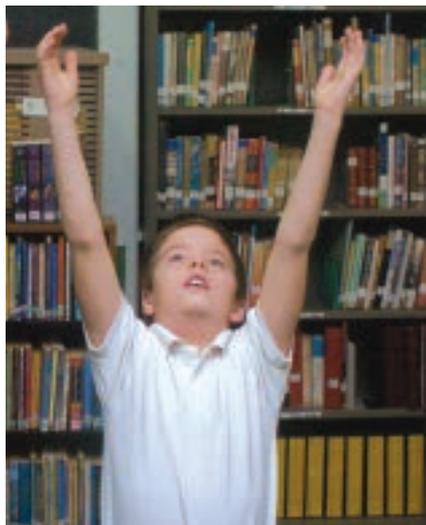


Salute to the Sun Greet and Welcome the Sun

Suggestions for Teachers

Salute to the Sun

This practice can be used with younger children to teach them about the seasons of the year. Invite the children to imagine a warm summer day, feeling the sun on their face and hands. Have them greet and welcome the sun, and bask in the warmth of the sun. As they bend forward and stretch downward, ask them to imagine the season changing to fall as the leaves of the trees fall to the ground. As they stretch to touch the earth, have them recall winter when the leaves and seeds are buried underground, dormant and covered with snow. As they slowly move back upward, invite them to imagine new growth and plants bursting to life, coming up from the earth in the spring. As they open their hands with "Here I Am," have them imagine themselves as flowers opening to life, radiant with their unique color and beauty.



Salute to the Sun Basking in the Sun



Salute to the Sun Ripening, Maturing and Harvesting

Basking in the Sun

Open your hands to the heavens, arching your neck and back. Feel energy moving up from the earth through you and into the heavens. Breathe in, receiving the fullness of the sun, and breathe out all tension and fear.

Meditation: As you bask in the sun, open yourself to be bathed and nourished. Feel the light and grace of the heavens flooding through you. Feel fully alive as you bask and delight in the sun. Connect all the vibrant moments of your life with this gift of the sun.

Ripening, Maturing and Harvesting

With arms stretched out, slowly bend forward, hands and arms arching downward until your fingers touch the earth. (Be careful of your back and stretch only as far as is comfortable.) Inhale and then exhale as you begin to move toward the ground.

Meditation: With life's cycles come the ripening, maturation, harvest, aging and then dormancy, as the seed falls into the ground. We open to the cycles in all stages of life.

Death and Resurrection

As you bend downward and touch the earth, let go of all tension and stress in your body, mind and spirit. Breathe out completely all negativity and the problems you may be carrying, letting these be absorbed and transformed in the earth.

Meditation: As you connect with the seed dying in the earth, connect with the moment of complete surrender that you will experience one day through your death. Let go of all the problems, worries, and anxieties of



Salute to the Sun Death and Resurrection



Salute to the Sun Rebirth to New Life



Salute to the Sun Here I Am

your life as you surrender completely in the moment in deep faith and trust. Like all moments of dying, you hope for a resurrection and rebirth into the fullness of life.

Rebirth to New Life

From the bent position, gradually begin to move back upward, inhaling fully the energy of the earth, filling your self with new life.

Meditation: As you move back upward feel the new energy pulsing through your body, preparing you for the next part of the cycle.

Here I Am

Come back to full standing position, moving your arms upward and outward until your hands are at shoulder level, palms facing forward. Hold this position for a moment.

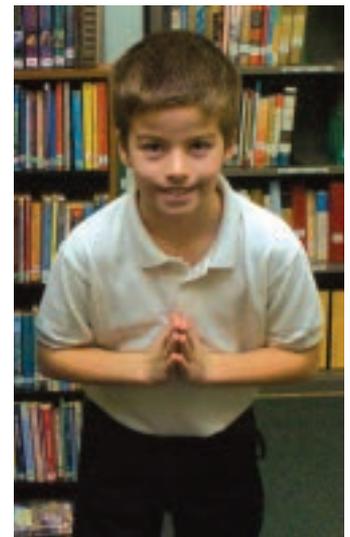
Meditation: As you open to the new life pulsing within you, connect with the unique calling that you have in this lifetime. Open yourself to give this gift in full commitment. Yes! Here I am!

The Blessing and Namasté

Bring your hands back again to chest level, palms together in the posture of prayer. Repeat the Salute several times. Finish the movement with a Namasté bow to the sun and to all the people in the community.

Resources for Further Study

Cohen, K. *Imagine That — A Child's Guide to Yoga*. Buckingham, VA: Integral Yoga Publications, 1998.



Salute to the Sun The Blessing and Namasté



“In the classroom children can learn to take responsibility for their health, to care for their bodies and to alleviate the pain by holding acupressure points or by using some of the other Capacitar exercises.”

Section 3

Wellness Practices to Heal the Body

The body is a mirror of the history and experience of the person. As the body grows and develops in childhood and later through adulthood, everything that happens in life affects the health and well-being of the person. When energy is flowing freely and without obstruction through the channels and energy centers of the body, the person experiences good health, emotional balance, mental clarity and spiritual well-being. If energy flow is obstructed in any one channel or center, physical, emotional and mental imbalances ensue.

The exercises in this section promote the flow and balance of energy in the body. In the classroom children can learn to take responsibility for their health, to care for their bodies and to alleviate pain by holding acupressure points or by using some of the Capacitar exercises. The physical health of children can be supported with regular use of different exercises such as Pal Dan Gum, the Pain Drain and the Immune System Boost.

CORE PRACTICE:

Pal Dan Gum

Pal Dan Gum is a series of ancient exercises from China and Korea used for thousands of years to promote health, strength, longevity and spiritual awareness. The exercises release tension and balance the energy channels or meridians of the body. If practiced regularly the exercises purify and recharge the inner organs and meridians, improve the circulation of blood and body fluids, promote the flexibility and resiliency of muscles and joints, improve posture and eliminate many chronic ailments.

Morning is a good time to practice Pal Dan Gum, as a way to start the school day with focus and energy. In doing the exercises, guide the children to focus on the body movements, breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth. Pal Dan Gum should be practiced with gentleness, respecting any place in the body where there is tension or soreness. If tension is experienced during a stretch, have the children breathe deeply and imagine the release of the pain or tightness.



Pal Dan Gum
Upholding the Heavens

Upholding the Heavens

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, arms at sides. Inhale and with palms up, slowly raise your hands over your head. Interlace your fingers and turn your palms upward. Stand on tiptoe and stretch toward the sky as if your hands were touching and upholding the heavens. Look upward as you stretch, maintaining this hold for a few seconds. Then breathe out, unlock your hands and slowly bring your arms back down. Repeat two or three times.

Benefits: Relieves fatigue, improves circulation, strengthens the body, balances the digestive and respiratory systems, helps the reproductive and excretory systems, releases tension in the shoulders, benefits the muscular system, stretches the tendons and ligaments, and helps prevent arthritis.

Opening the Bow

Stand with feet separated more than shoulder width, knees bent, as if you were riding a horse. Cross your wrists and arms in front of your chest, hands clenched, left arm in front of the right. Extend the index finger of your left hand, and imagine that you are holding a bow. Pull the bowstring with your right hand, while pushing out your left arm until it is fully extended. Inhale deeply while turning your head to the left. Focus on your left index finger, imagining energy pulsing out the tip. Exhale and release the bow, returning your arms to a crossed position at your chest, right hand in front of the left. Turn and repeat opening the bow to the right side. Repeat the movement on both sides two or three times.

Benefits: Increases the elasticity and capacity of the lungs, strengthens the muscles in the chest, arms and shoulders, and stimulates the Lung Meridian.

Touching Heaven and Earth

Stand straight with feet separated, wrists crossed at the level of the solar plexus. Inhale and extend your left arm above the head with palm touching the sky. Lower your right hand behind your back with palm touching the earth. Inhale as you push up to touch the sky and down to touch the earth. Exhale and return to the starting position. Repeat the exercise this time stretching upward with your right arm. Repeat on both sides two or three times.



Pal Dan Gum
Opening the Bow



Pal Dan Gum
Touching Heaven and Earth

Benefits: Stimulates Large and Small Intestine Meridians, which flow along the sides of the outer arms. Harmonizes the digestive system and strengthens the spleen.

Looking Behind You

Stand with feet separated, knees relaxed, arms crossed in front of your chest, left hand in front of the right. Breathe deeply while pulling your arms to the sides and back, turning your head slowly to the left, looking back as far behind you as possible. Your chest is arched up and out, while your palms touch the earth. You will be able to feel the stretch in your arms, wrists, neck and eyes as you look behind. Exhale and return your head and arms to the starting position, with right hand in front of the left. Repeat the exercise, turning to the right side. Repeat two or three times on both sides.

Benefits: Rejuvenates heart, lungs, pericardium, spleen, pancreas, liver and kidneys; presses acupressure points in the upper back, shoulders and neck to release tension and prevent shoulder and neck pain; and strengthens and tones the muscles of the chest and upper back and neck.

Swinging the Trunk and the Head

Stand straight with feet separated shoulder-width, knees relaxed, hands on your hips. The weight of your body is equally distributed on both sides. Breathe deeply and exhale as you bend your upper body to the left, feeling the stretch on your right side. Slowly and carefully stretch forward, then to the right, then to the back, as if you were stretching in waist circles. Do not strain yourself doing this exercise. Inhale as you return to the original position. Exhale and repeat two or three more times starting from the left side. Then change sides and repeat two or three times.

Benefits: Strengthens the digestive system, stretches abdominal muscles, loosens the back, stretches the sides of the body, eliminates tension, improves circulation in the heart, benefits the nervous system, helps with headaches, and stimulates the Gall Bladder, Bladder and Stomach Meridians.

Stretching Backwards

If you have a weak back, skip this movement. You can also do it gently and carefully if you tighten the muscles in the buttocks to protect your back. Feet are separated, knees slightly bent. Place your palms on your lower back, fingers downward. Inhale, bend your knees and arch backwards with your head and eyes arched upward. Exhale and gently straighten up. Repeat the backward stretch two or three more times.

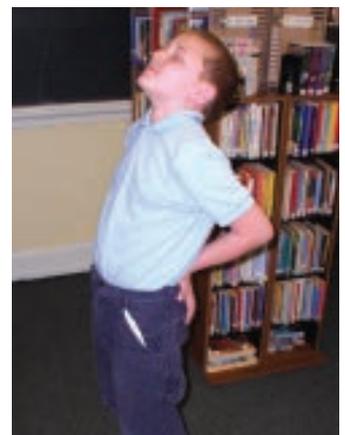
Benefits: Rejuvenates all of the internal organs, especially the kidneys; stretches the spine; increases the flexibility of the back, waist and legs; stretches the Bladder, Gall Bladder, Stomach and Spleen Meridians; stimulates the kidneys, enhancing the body's ability to eliminate toxins; gives the body fresh energy; and increases the circulation of energy to the brain.



Pal Dan Gum
Looking Behind You



Pal Dan Gum Swinging the
Trunk and the Head



Pal Dan Gum
Stretching Backwards

Suggestions for Teachers

Pal Dan Gum

Pal Dan Gum is a valuable exercise to promote health in the entire body and release stress, and it is a favorite for all age groups. Even if there is not time for the entire sequence, doing just one or two of the stretches can energize and wake up the children. To help children understand the importance of stretching, discuss with them how their pet cat or dog or other animals begin the day with stretching and then frequently stretch throughout the day.

If there is a problem with violence in the school or classroom, omit the punching exercise and the Lion's Roar, until the children can do this without expressing violence toward each other.



Pal Dan Gum Stretching the Legs

Stretching the Legs

Stand straight with feet separated, knees relaxed, hands at your sides, palms down, wrists and fingers flexed upward to feel the stretch. Inhale deeply and raise your heels up slowly, until you are standing on your toes, while you flex your fingers and palms backward. Hold the stretch for a few seconds. Exhale as you slowly return the heels to the ground and the hands back to their original position. The exercise can be done focusing the attention on the center or point of equilibrium beneath the navel, breathing deeply from this point. If you feel unbalanced while doing this exercise, imagine that there is a long cord that flows from your navel, connecting you securely to the center of the earth. Repeat the movement 10 or more times.

Benefits: Strengthens Stomach and Kidney Meridians; strengthens the leg, ankle and wrist muscles; improves focus; and gives a sense of being centered.

Punch and Shout with Fists

Stand with feet separated, knees bent. At waist level with palms facing upward, make fists with your hands. Inhale, open your eyes wide, and as you exhale, punch your left fist (then your right) directly forward, turning your fists over so that they face downward when fully extended. As you punch your fists forward, discharge your breath and your inner tension with a loud "Ho" sound. Turn to the right and repeat. Turn to the left and punch again. Repeat this sequence in the three directions another three times.



Pal Dan Gum Punch and Shout with Fists

Roar Like a Lion

Finish with the Lion's Roar. Pull arms outward and to the sides, extending the fingers to form claws. Pull arms forward, bending forward with a ferocious roar, stretching all the muscles in your face and jaw. As you do the movement, imagine you are able to release all the tension and words that are stifled in your throat and jaw. Roar with a full voice coming from deep within.

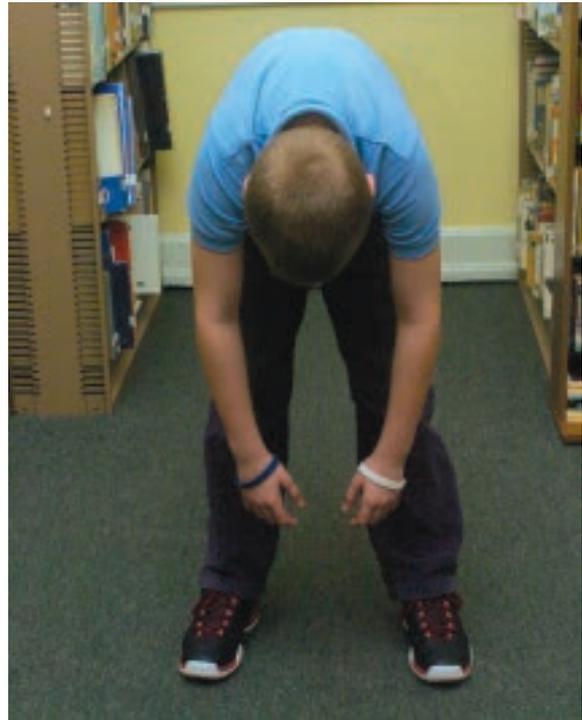
Complete Relaxation

Relax the entire body after the Lion's Roar, bending forward from the waist. Breathe deeply. Enjoy feeling completely relaxed for a few moments. Then slowly raise your body, feeling the spinal column relaxing back into place. Shake off any remaining tension in the hands, trunk and feet.

Benefits of last three exercises in sequence: Releases frustration, anger, irritability and stored emotion; energizes the body; strengthens metabolism; relieves blockages in Liver and Gall Bladder Meridians; releases tension in arms, chest and shoulders; strengthens organs, especially the liver; and relaxes face and jaw muscles.



Pal Dan Gum Roar Like a Lion



Pal Dan Gum Complete Relaxation

Suggestions for Teachers

Acupressure for Physical Symptoms

Self-acupressure is a simple holistic way to empower children to stay healthy, manage pain and address common physical complaints as they arise. Most children are energy sensitive, and often within less than a minute, pain or congestion disappears when holding acupressure points.

A third-grade teacher commented: "One of the children who used to complain of stomachaches now uses acupressure on her own and reports that it completely relieves her upset stomach. She is also pleased that she is able to handle this problem independently. She reports that she has taught this to her parents as well."

CORE PRACTICE:

Acupressure for Physical Symptoms

Acupressure is an ancient art using finger pressure on specific points on the body to unblock, balance or increase the circulation of energy. The roots of acupressure date back more than four thousand years to traditional Chinese medicine. Hands-on folk remedies were passed down from generation to generation to cure illness and relieve pain. In many indigenous cultures, grass-roots people have traditions of rubbing or pressing areas of the body to relieve pain or emotional discomfort.

The acupressure points in this section may be used by the children on themselves during the school day, or with the help of another person at home. The points described here are ones that help relieve symptoms of stress: nervousness, anxiety, insomnia, sleep disorders, chronic pain, headaches, back pain, depression, fatigue, memory loss, dizziness, general body pain, etc. The points can be used whenever symptoms occur, or even better, as a daily preventive practice for maintaining balanced energy flow in the body.

The flow of energy through meridians nourishes and balances the entire body. When this flow is restricted or blocked, physical or emotional sickness or pain results. Tension in the muscles usually indicates a blockage of energy that has accumulated around an acupressure point. The point is located by feeling for tension that appears as a tight area or knot in the muscle surrounding the point. When the acupressure point is held, the tension releases, permitting energy to flow more freely through the area, allowing the body to heal and balance itself naturally.

Self-acupressure

The following acupressure points may be held while seated or lying in a comfortable position. If you are able to, close your eyes and press the acupressure points with medium pressure for two to three minutes. Often acupressure points are painful or sensitive. This is normal and is considered to be "good pain" that wants to be released. You know you are finished holding a point when there is a change in the quality of the pulsation. The energy pulse feels clear, strong and balanced. You can enhance the energy flow with visualization and deep breathing while doing self-acupressure. When you hold the point, imagine that golden energy or light is circulating through the points and throughout your entire body, bringing harmony and balance to your whole being. Breathe deeply and imagine the flow of light energy. As you exhale, breathe out all the tension and pain associated with the point you are holding.

Children need only about a minute of holding the points to clear and balance their energy. Their bodies have fewer blockages than adults. With their fingertips slightly curved, have the children press firmly into the point (using the bone inside the finger) and then lighten the pressure until they begin to feel a pulsation or energy flow. Don't worry if they can't feel the energy pulse. After a while their fingers will get accustomed to finding the pulse. The energy is flowing whether or not they feel it.

Head and Neck Points

Use these head points for headache, migraines, neck pain, tension, dizziness, depression, anxiety and stress. The points at the base of the skull can also be used to balance left and right (rational and creative) sides of the brain to help focus attention and think clearly and creatively (as described in Section 1, Cross-lateral Exercises, page 19).

- Interlace your fingers, place your hands behind your head, and with the thumbs, press the two points at the left and right sides of the base of the skull in the hollows at the side of the head.
- Head hold: Place one hand high across forehead, while the other hand rests lightly at the base of the skull.

Hand Points for Headaches and Migraines

Use these hand points for headaches, head congestion, migraines and upper body pain.

- Press into the point between the bones of the thumb and the index finger. This point is also good for pain in the upper part of the body.

Note—contraindication: This point is used for labor at the time of childbearing, but should not be held during pregnancy because it may start the contraction of the uterine muscles.

Shoulder Points

Use these points for shoulder tension, stiff necks, worry stored in the shoulders, feeling overwhelmed, anxiety and nervous tension.

- With the index, middle and ring fingers, press down lightly on top of the shoulders into the ridge formed by the trapezius muscles. If it is more comfortable, the arms may be crossed while holding the points.



Acupressure Points for Head and Neck Pain



Acupressure Head Hold for Head and Neck Pain



Acupressure Hand Points for Headaches and Migraines



Acupressure Points for Shoulder Tension and Anxiety



Acupressure Points for Stomach Pain or Tension



Acupressure Point for Constipation



Acupressure Points for Nausea



Acupressure Abdominal Points for Diarrhea

Stomach Points

Use these points for stomach pain, tension or a knot in the stomach and solar plexus.

- With the index, middle and ring fingers of both hands, press inward and upward under the cheekbones. For support while holding the points, you can lean on your lap or onto a desk or table.

Constipation

Use these points to promote regularity and to alleviate abdominal pain caused by constipation. The point should be held only for a few minutes.

- Press into the point between the base of the index and middle fingers on either hand.

Nausea

These points help alleviate or control nausea, motion sickness, morning sickness, stress and anxiety.

- Locate the points a distance of two finger-widths away from the wrist joint between the bones on either side of the forearm.

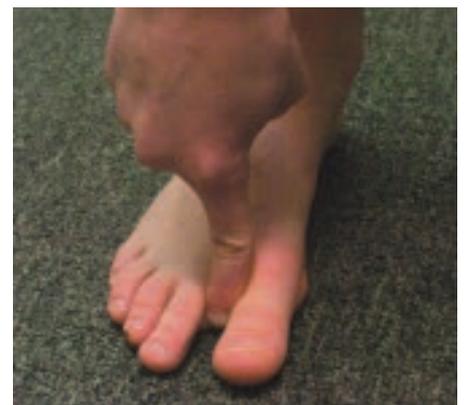
Diarrhea Points

Several different points are helpful for controlling diarrhea or abdominal pain.

- To locate the abdominal points, measure a distance of two finger-widths below the navel.
- Press the point on the top of the arch of the foot, a distance of one thumb behind the ball of the foot.
- Press the point in the juncture between the big toe and the second toe.



Acupressure Foot Points for Diarrhea



Acupressure Points between Toes for Diarrhea

Hiccups

To stop the reaction of hiccups, the following points may be used.

- With the index, middle and ring fingertips, press points under the ribcage below the breasts while breathing deeply and relaxing.
- With the index fingertip, press the point in the indentation behind the earlobe.



Acupressure Points on Ribcage for Hiccups

Acupressure Points behind Ear for Hiccups

Immune System

These points help boost the function of the immune system and strengthen natural resistance.

- With the index fingertips, press the points on the outer crease of the elbow.
- Press the points under the heads of the clavicles on either side of the sternum.



Acupressure Points on Outer Elbow for Immune System

Acupressure Points under Clavicles for Immune System

Back and Spinal Column Points

These points help alleviate stress and tension in different parts of the back.

- Press points on either side of the spine. Avoid pressing on top of the bones of the vertebrae. You can also put two soft tennis balls into a sock. Separate the balls several inches and lean into or lie on top of the balls to press the region of the back where there is pain. Or you can tie two knots in a towel or cloth to use for pressing the points.
- For lower back pain, press the points in the center in the back of the knee joint. These are called the lower back drain points.
- For pain in the sacral area, make fists and with the knuckles press the points on either side of the spine.



Acupressure Points for Back/Spine Stress and Tension

Acupressure Knee Points for Lower Back Pain

Acupressure Points in Sacral Area for Lower Back Pain



Acupressure Points for Abdominal Pain or Cramps (menstrual)

- The arch of the foot contains reflexology points that correspond to the back—the point at the top of the arch corresponds to the upper back; the center of the arch to the mid-back or waist; and the bottom of the arch to the lower back. Use a golf ball, a rolling pin or an empty bottle to press into and massage the arch of the foot.

Abdominal Pain or Cramps (menstrual)

These two points alleviate pain in the abdomen caused by menstrual cramps and diarrhea.

- With the index and middle fingers of both hands, press two points in the abdomen—one is located at a distance of two finger-widths below the navel; the other at four finger-widths below the navel. Hold both points at the same time.



Acupressure Three Miles More Points for Leg Pain and Energy Boost

Leg Pain and Energy Boost

These points, called Three Miles More, are for pain in the lower part of the body, for leg pain and for boosting energy.

- Press the points located on outer side of leg about a hand's distance below the kneecap. To find the points, place the heels of the hands level with the knee caps, fingers pointing downward. Slide the hands a quarter turn outwards. Where the tip of the middle finger falls, poke around until you find a very sensitive point. This is the Three Miles More point.



Acupressure Head and Chest Points for Insomnia

Insomnia

These points are helpful to relax and promote deep sleep, or can be used when unable to fall asleep.

- With the fingertips hold the point in the center of the forehead along with the point in the center of the chest on the sternum and breathe deeply.

Two other points—in the indentation below the front of the inner anklebone and in the indentation behind the outer anklebone—may be also be used for insomnia. Additionally, the fingerholds and the Emotional Freedom Technique (described in Section 2, page 25 and Section 4, pages 61 and 64) are helpful to clear the stress of the day before sleeping.



Acupressure Points for Sinus Congestion and Allergies



Acupressure Points under Collarbones for Chest Congestion and Asthma

Sinus

Use these points for sinus congestion, allergies and to clear a stopped up nose.

- With the tips of the index fingers gently press the points in the indentation outside the base of the nostrils.

To help relieve sinus congestion, you may also press and massage the tip of each finger.

Chest Congestion and Asthma

Use these points for a tight chest, difficulty with breathing, asthma and for grief and sadness that accumulates in the chest area.

- With the fingertips, gently press the two sensitive points under the collarbones halfway between the throat and the arm socket.
- With the fingertips press the points in the curve of the upper arm at the insertion area of the deltoid muscle (the area for shots and vaccinations). The palms of the hands can also hold over these points as a self-hug.

Fainting, Crisis and High Blood Pressure

This point can be used on oneself or with another if a person is fainting or in crisis.

- With the index fingertip or knuckle of the finger, press into the point directly below the nose on the upper lip.



Acupressure Points in Upper Arm for Chest Congestion and Asthma



Acupressure Point for Fainting, Crisis and High Blood Pressure



The Holds 1. Head Hold



The Holds 2. Crown Hold

Suggestions for Teachers

The Holds

The Holds can be taught in the schools as a self-care technique. The practice can also be assigned as homework, inviting the children to use them on a parent or sibling. The Holds are a good way to teach children about healthy touch and about how to care for others as well as for oneself.

CORE PRACTICE: The Holds

The Holds consist of four simple energy contacts that may be done on oneself or on another person. In the photos, Liz Waters of Ireland uses the holds on her son Patrick to help him relax as he prepares for final exams. The practice can be used for anxiety, emotional or physical pain, traumatic memories, strong feelings and emotions such as anger or fear, insomnia, or deep relaxation. The Holds have been used very effectively with many different cultures and in places of violence with highly traumatized people as a way to heal deep emotional pain.

Through the energy of our hands, we have the power to bring profound peace, harmony and healing to body, mind and spirit. In using the practice on oneself or on another, children can imagine a deep sense of peace, light and spaciousness in their mind and hearts. The Holds can be done for several minutes each, with eyes closed, breathing deeply to promote greater release. The touch is very light. If someone has suffered abuse and fears touch, the Holds may be done a couple of inches off the body, working in the energy field.

1. Head Hold

One hand lightly holds the head high on the forehead; the other hand holds the base of the skull. The energy of the hands connects with parts of the brain related to memories and emotions.

2. Crown Hold

With the thumbs of both hands together, hold the crown center at the top of head. Spread the fingertips and softly touch the area across the forehead.



The Holds 3. Shoulder Hold



The Holds 4. Heart Hold

3. Shoulder Hold

The palms of the hands rest lightly on the shoulders. This is the place in the body called excess baggage and is related to anxiety, feelings of being overwhelmed and the burdens of life.

4. Heart Hold

One hand rests lightly and respectfully across the sternum high on the chest. The other hand gently touches the upper back behind the heart. The heart area often holds emotional pain, wounds of the past, grief and resentment. Breathe deeply and imagine the heart pain draining down into Mother Earth.

To finish the session, lightly brush off the body and energy field with the hands. The tops of the feet may also be held for a few moments to ground the person.

CORE PRACTICE:

Hand Massage and Reflexology

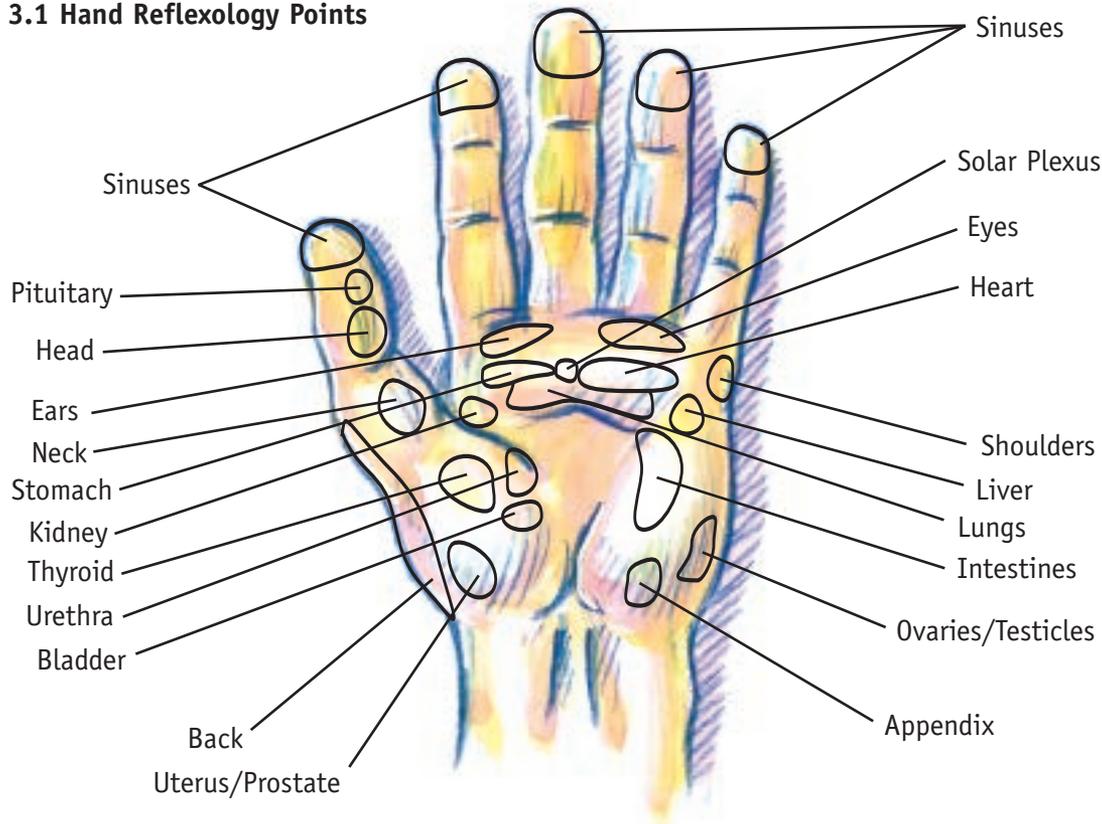
The hands, wrists and arms often hold much tension and pain. With five to ten minutes of hand massage, children can relax and relieve pain and stress in the body. Many acupressure and reflexology points in the palm and fingers affect internal organs and different parts of the body (see **Figure 3.1** on page 52). Massaging hands, fingers and joints can relieve many problems, including poor circulation and arthritis. If children feel anguish or stress, they can give themselves healing care without any words. Hand massage can be done on oneself or on other people of all ages and conditions—children, teens, adults, the elderly, the sick or the dying. Hand massage can be done with or without oil or lotion. Soft music may be used during the massage.

Suggestions for Teachers

Hand Massage and Reflexology

Hand massage can be taught to children as a self-care practice to use after sports or when hands feel tense or for use at home with others in caring for parents and family members. The reflexology points in the hand are helpful to children in managing pain or other physical problems.

Figure 3.1 Hand Reflexology Points



Children from Honduras perform hand massage on one another to relieve pain and stress.

Directions for a Hand Massage

- Place one hand of the person between your hands to create a connection and to peacefully center yourself. At this point you can apply lotion to the first hand, if desired.
- Open the palm of the person's hand, gently pressing the palm and stretching the muscles of the hand. Press reflexology points covering the entire palm.
- Massage the muscles and tendons between the bones of the hand. Support the wrist with your palm. Work from the wrists toward the fingertips. Massage the upper part of the hand.
- Massage each finger and each joint, visualizing the tension pouring out of the fingertips.
- Massage the muscles around the wrist and forearm.
- Massage the upper part of the arm, moving towards the elbows.
- Brush off any static energy that remains in the hand and arm.
- Finish by placing the person's hand between your hands. Visualize warm light and energy entering the person, giving them a sense of deep peace and well-being.
- Do the same procedure with the other hand.

CORE PRACTICE:

Drum Massage

Drum massage on oneself or another person is every group's favorite practice because it is so energizing and fun. Start with some lively drum or marimba music, or other music appropriate for the culture. Show the children different rhythms they can use on their bodies. If the children are seated, use the fingers and hands to make "drumstick" percussion on the lap—tapping with the fingertips, slapping with the palms, hitting with the fists, chopping with the sides of the hands, cupping with cupped palms, brushing lightly, etc. Each hand position has a different sound.

With drumsticks in place, start with one arm and lightly tap or cup or slap up and down the arm for an arm massage. Then repeat on the other arm. Then move to the shoulders, back, hips, thighs, legs, bottoms of feet, chest, neck, head and face, working through all parts of the body. After you have covered the body, then go back and work on the part of the body that most needs relaxation. Depending on the amount of time available, you can do this for a couple of minutes or for a longer period. Everyone feels so alive and vibrant with this massage.

This is a good exercise for depression and lethargy. Drum massage can also be done on another person, and has remarkable healing effects on many health problems. One researcher has synchronized the drumming to 90 beats per minute to generate deep trance states for healing people with physical or emotional problems.

Circle Massage

Drum massage can easily be done in a circle with everyone working on the shoulders of the person in front of them. You can also do regular shoulder and head massage this way, working on the shoulder muscles and back, then doing a head rub, and then finishing off with brisk back circles (clockwise for energy, counterclockwise to relax) down the spine.

A massage circle can be fun and playful, especially if the group is tired and needs to be energized. Within this playful context, most people do not have the fear of physical touch as they might with a one-on-one massage. This is also a good dynamic with youths who might be embarrassed to touch one another.



Drum massage can easily be done in a circle with everyone working on the shoulders of the person in front of them. In a group context, as shown here with a group of people from Nicaragua, it is often fun and energizing.



Pain Drain 1. Drain the Pain from the Body



Pain Drain 2. Fill the Body with Light and Energy

CORE PRACTICE:

Pain Drain

The Pain Drain can be done during the school day on oneself or at home on another person to relieve physical and emotional pain or tension in the body. If the exercise is done on another person, it is important that the children learn how to protect themselves with a shield of light or energy (or some other appropriate image of protection), so that the tension of the other person is not picked up. If they feel the pain or tension of the other person entering their body, guide the children to use an image of a garden hose to drain the tension down into the earth. This practice can be done for several minutes.

1. Drain the Pain from the Body

Place the left hand on or above the area that hurts and hold the right hand downward and away from the body. Imagine that you can drain the pain or tension from the painful area with your left hand, and this energy can circulate through you and move out your right hand into the earth. A pumping action with the right hand will speed up the process. Hold this position for several minutes or until any sensation or movement of energy flow stops.

2. Fill the Body with Light and Energy

Reverse the hands, placing the right hand on or above the area that was painful and hold up the left hand, palm upward, to bring in healing energy from the universal energy field. Imagine that the light of the heavens fills your left hand and circulates through you and out your right hand into the area that was painful. Fill the area with healing, light and warmth.

Remember that any energy drained off is neutral, does not have negative or positive qualities and quickly dissipates into the universal energy field.

Source

Hover-Kramer, D. *Healing Touch: A Guidebook for Practitioners*. Albany, NY: Delmar Thomson Learning, 2002.

CORE PRACTICE:

Immune System Boost

This practice works to energize the immune system, fight off infection and strengthen resistance in order to promote health and well-being. It can be used in the classroom on a daily basis to strengthen the children's immune systems or whenever children feel weak or vulnerable to infection. It is also beneficial as a daily practice for those with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, cancer and HIV.

In this exercise the hands are used to send energy to three different organs of the immune system: (1) the Peyer's Patches located in the walls of the intestines, (2) the spleen and (3) the thymus. Hold each position for two to three minutes. This practice is adapted from the work of Sue Hovland and used with permission.

Suggestions for Teachers

Pain Drain

This is a simple practice and can be readily used by children in the classroom to help with headaches, sports injuries and other tension in the body.



Immune System Boost
Position 1



Immune System Boost
Position 2



Immune System Boost
Position 3



Immune System Boost
Position 4

Position 1

Place the left hand on the lower abdomen just below the navel. The right hand rests on the abdomen just above the left hand, over the navel. This position energizes the Peyer's Patches.

Position 2

Leave the right hand in place over the Peyer's Patches and move the left hand to the spleen, located on the left side of the abdomen just at the edge of the rib cage.

Position 3

Leave the right hand over the Peyer's Patches and move the left hand to the thymus, located just above the heart and below the throat in the center of the chest.

Position 4

Leave the left hand on the thymus and move the right hand to the spleen, located on the left side of the abdomen just at the edge of the rib cage.

Suggestions for Teachers

Immune System Boost

The Immune System Boost is a valuable practice in the classroom during cold and flu season. The practice can be done with soft music, and the children can imagine light and healing energy filling each area of the body. The practice also promotes focus, inner peace and deep relaxation.



Relaxing the Eyes Acupressure Points below the Eyebrows



Relaxing the Eyes Acupressure Points above the Eyebrows



Relaxing the Eyes Acupressure Points at the side of the Eyebrows



Relaxing the Eyes Acupressure Points on the Cheekbones

Suggestions for Teachers

Relaxing the Eyes

Both eye exercises can be done for several minutes during the school day to quiet and focus the children, and to promote self-care and healthy eyes.

CORE PRACTICE: Relaxing the Eyes

Often with reading and study, the eyes are stressed and feel tension. The following exercises help children to relax the muscles around their eyes and to alleviate pain and tension in the head and face.

Acupressure Points for the Eyes

A series of points forming a circle around the eyes can be held to alleviate pain or tension.

- With thumbs or index fingers gently hold the points in the indentation below the eyebrows on either side of the nose.
- Press the points above the eyebrows on either side of the nose.
- Hold the points in the indentation above the arch of the eyebrows (*not shown*).
- Press the points at the side of the eyebrows.
- Hold the points beneath the pupil of the eye on top of the cheekbones.

Cupping the Eyes

To relax and energize the eyes, briskly rub the hands together for a minute to generate heat and energy. Place the palms over the eyes, cupping the hand gently over both eyes. Breathe deeply and relax, imagining that you are in a beautiful place in nature. Breathe in the beauty and energy of the earth. Do this exercise for several minutes.

Mindful Eating

Often with the stress of modern life, we eat meals rapidly without even realizing what we are eating. Many families do not even sit down at a table for a meal together, but watch television or go off to their separate rooms. This kind of eating pattern can eventually lead to upset stomach, ulcers, and other digestive and eating disorders in children and adults.

The practice of eating one item of food, such as a slice of orange or apple or a piece of bread, is a good way to introduce the practice of mindful eating to children. This exercise can be done as a ritual or ceremony for Thanksgiving or in preparation for some other holiday.

The following guided meditation can be adapted to the appropriate language and grade level of the class.

Mindful Eating Meditation

(Prepare slices of fruit or bread in a ceremonial basket and place in front of the class.)

As we celebrate together, let us give thanks for the food we eat and for the people who labored to grow and harvest this food. And let us also be mindful of the children and families living in places of war and poverty, who have little or no food today. This meditation can help to reconnect us with the sacredness of food.

Breathe deeply and relax, with your feet touching the ground. For a moment, look at the food before you. Close your eyes and connect with this gift of food given to us by Mother Earth. Imagine the seed that sprouted to form this food and see the seed growing into a plant. As the plant grows, imagine a farmer tending the plant with great care. The sun shines on its leaves, and the rain and nutrients of the soil nourish its roots. When the farmer picks the harvest, he feels deep gratitude in his heart. And here now in this food before us, we have a symbol of the harvest. Breathe deeply for a few moments and when you are ready, open your eyes so that we can share the harvest.

(When the group is ready, distribute a piece of the food to each person, and continue with the guided meditation.)

As you receive your piece of food, hold it between your hands for a few moments and look at its shape and texture. Smell its fragrance and imagine the life force that this food will give to nourish your life. When you are ready, give thanks and bite into the food with love and respect. Taste the quality and texture of the food. Carefully chew the food, marveling at your capacity to eat and absorb this food for your life.

As you swallow, observe the food moving down into your stomach. Imagine the complex changes that are necessary to break down the food to give you the necessary nutrients to sustain your life. As you finish eating the food, take time to sit mindfully present in the moment. Give thanks for the life that you share and exchange with the plants and animals and with all being.

When the children have finished and have had a few moments in mindful meditation, slowly bring the group back together.

Suggestions for Teachers

Mindful Eating

Depending upon what is appropriate, students can share their experience in the whole group or in pairs using active listening. Or some may prefer to make a journal entry or create a drawing of the experience.



“As emotional intelligence develops in children, they are able to better understand their own feelings and, in empathy, can appreciate the differences in how others feel about things. They are able to listen and talk effectively, and value openness and trust in relationships.”

Section 4

Wellness Practices to Promote Emotional Balance

The emotions can be likened to waves of energy moving through the body, mind and spirit, giving us the information and stimuli we need to act upon or respond to changes, stress or challenges in a situation or environment. When energy is flowing freely through the channels and energy centers of the body, the result is good health and emotional balance. When feelings are overwhelming, denied or repressed, the emotional energy gets blocked in the body, causing congestion, pain or illness, and often resulting in erratic behavior. Children learn patterns of emotional expression from family, school and society. When children are anxious, angry or depressed because of upbringing or traumatic experience, they have difficulty learning and may be unable to listen, focus or concentrate. Their emotional brain is in conflict with their cognitive brain.

The exercises in this section, as well as in the entire manual, help to unblock, release and balance the flow of energy to promote emotional well-being. Through the fingerhold meditation, Emotional Freedom Technique and acupressure practices described in this section, children can work with their emotional states in daily life. They can learn to recognize emotions as resources in making wise choices for their actions, rather than falling victim to their feelings.

Emotional Intelligence

Intelligence for many teachers has traditionally been a measure of the mind—a student’s cognitive ability. Schools have focused on teaching children reading, problem solving, analysis and decision-making, and on developing the many cognitive skills needed for life. What has been missing in most courses of study, however, is a consideration of emotional intelligence, a concept developed by psychologist Daniel Goleman, Ph.D.

Current research shows that in humans, there are really two parts to the brain: the cognitive brain responsible for conscious and rational

outward activity and the emotional brain responsible for survival and unconscious regulation of functions within the body. For health and well-being, both “brains” depend on constant integration and interaction. Inner harmony results when both cognitive and emotional brains work together, cooperating over the functions of thinking, emotions and behavior.

Recent studies show that students who become most successful in life have high intellectual capacity along with a good range of emotional skills. In developing emotional intelligence in the classroom, children should be able to do the following:

- identify and name feelings
- express feelings
- assess the intensity of feelings
- manage feelings
- delay gratification
- control impulses
- reduce stress
- know the difference between feelings and actions

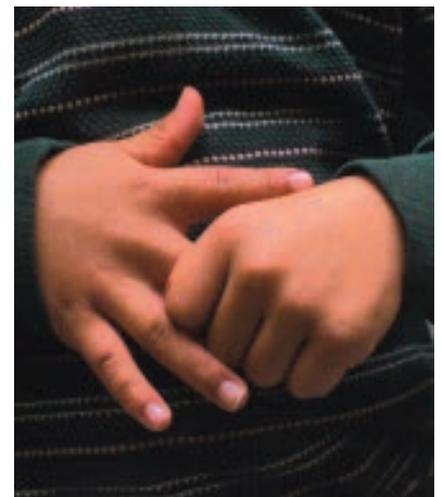
As emotional intelligence develops in children, they are able to better understand their own feelings and, in empathy, can appreciate the differences in how others feel about things. They are able to listen and talk effectively, and value openness and trust in relationships. They grow in self-awareness and self-acceptance, recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, taking responsibility, and recognizing the consequences of decisions and actions. In managing feelings they are able to recognize



Fingerholds Thumb—Grief, Tears, Emotional Pain



Fingerholds Index Finger—Fear, Terror, Panic



Fingerholds Middle Finger—Anger, Rage, Resentment

internal put-downs, seeing what is behind a feeling and finding ways to handle feelings.

The exercises in this Capacitar manual help children to develop “body literacy,” opening them to the wisdom that is inherent in their being. The practices support the development of emotional intelligence, enabling children to connect with their inner wisdom, listen to their body and feelings, and guide their decisions and actions.

Fingerhold Meditation for Emotions

The fingerhold exercise is an important practice to help children develop emotional intelligence. Through this practice they are able to identify emotional states, as well as work to release the energy of the emotion.

As explained in Section 2, “Fingerholds to Manage Emotions,” page 25, the fingerholds may be done as a meditation or visualization with music, or used before going to sleep to release the problems of the day and to bring deep relaxation to body, mind and spirit. To review:

- The *thumb* is for grief, tears and emotional pain.
- The *index finger* is for fear, terror and panic.
- The *middle finger* is for anger, rage and resentment.
- The *ring finger* is for worry, anxiety and feeling overwhelmed.
- The *small finger* is for lack of self-esteem, victimhood and negative self-image.

The guided meditation on the following pages can be adapted to the appropriate language and grade level of the children.



Fingerholds Ring Finger—
Worry, Anxiety, Preoccupation



Fingerholds Small Finger—Lack of
Self-esteem, Victimhood

Suggestions for Teachers

Fingerhold Meditation for Emotions

The fingerhold meditation can be adapted and developed in appropriate language to meet the needs of the children. The meditation can be adapted to work with only one finger if a difficult situation arises during the day such as fear, anger or grief. Before using the fingerhold meditation, work with the children to build the concept of the Safe and Sacred Space (see Section 1) by using pictures of nature and helping children to imagine and create a place where they can find inner peace and safety. To reinforce this concept, children can draw or paint an image of their safe space, filling it with nature and images that are supportive and nourishing.

Guided Fingerhold Meditation

Close your eyes and breathe deeply, feeling your feet connected to the earth. As we go through the fingerhold meditation, you can use your breath to release any feelings into the earth. And as you breathe in, inhale the energy of nature to bring peace and healing into your body, mind and spirit.

Start by taking hold of your thumb. This is the finger for tears, grief and emotional pain. As you hold your thumb, recall any feelings of sadness or tears that you may have within you. Imagine that you are able to see these feelings flow through you and out your thumb down into the earth. Breathe deeply and exhale tears and grief into the earth. Breathe in peace and strength, transforming your sadness into wisdom to guide your life.

(After a few moments of quiet)

Take a moment more with your thumb, knowing that you can always return to work more with these feelings. And when you are ready, move along to the index finger.

This is the finger for fear, terror and panic. As you hold your index finger, recall any feelings of panic or fear or memories of terror that you may have within you. Imagine that you are able to see these feelings flow through you and out your index finger into the earth. Breathe deeply and exhale fear and panic down into the earth. Breathe in courage, strength and wisdom to work with your fears and make wise choices to guide your life.

(After a few moments of quiet)

Take a moment more with your index finger, knowing that you can always return to work more with these feelings. And when you are ready, move along to the middle finger.

This is the finger for anger, rage and resentment. As you hold your middle finger, recall the anger, rage and resentment you carry within you. Imagine that you are able to see this anger flow through you and out your middle finger down into the earth. Release all anger so that it doesn't grow into burning resentment. Breathe deeply and exhale anger and rage down into the earth. Breathe in peace and energy, transforming your anger into wisdom, passion and action to guide your life.

(After a few moments of quiet)

Take a moment more with your middle finger, knowing that you can always return to work more with these feelings. And when you are ready, move along to the ring finger.

This is the finger for worry, anxiety and feeling overwhelmed. As you hold your ring finger, recall any feelings of anxiety and being overwhelmed that you may have within you. Imagine that you are able to see these feelings flow through you and out down into the earth. Breathe deeply and exhale worry and anxiety down into the earth, letting go of all the unnecessary burdens you can't do anything about. Breathe in strength to carry your responsibilities lightly, doing what you need to do in life with peace and wisdom.

(After a few moments of quiet)

Take a moment more with your ring finger, knowing that you can always return to work more with these feelings. And when you are ready, move along to the small finger.

This is the finger for lack of self-esteem, when you feel small or like a victim of life. As you hold your small finger, recall any feelings of unworthiness or negative

self-talk that you may have within you—messages that come from family, peers, society or life experience. Imagine that you are able to see these feelings flow through you and out down into the earth. Breathe deeply and exhale these negative feelings down into the earth, letting go of all that no longer serves you. Breathe in strength, self-acceptance and gratitude for life.

(After a few moments of quiet)

Take a moment more with your small finger, knowing that you can always return to work more with these feelings. And when you are ready, move along and now cross your ankles, rest your hands in your lap and join your fingertips together. With your eyes closed imagine that you are able to rest in your center in a safe and beautiful place in nature where you love to go. Breathe deeply and rest in peace for several moments.

(After a few moments of quiet)

Perhaps as you hold your fingertips together you can feel a pulsing of energy. This is your life force, the gift of your life, the energy that makes you uniquely YOU. Breathe deeply and feel gratitude for your body, mind and spirit, and feel blessed by the joys and challenges of this life.

Take a moment more in your center, in your safe space, and when you are ready, disconnect your fingers and uncross your ankles. Breathe deeply and slowly open your eyes, coming back fully to the present moment, very calm and rested, full of energy and very peaceful. Take a moment to look at your hands and recognize the gift of your life.

My Helping Hand

Capacitar Fingerhold Poem for Children

When I feel down or a little bit sad,
If I hold my thumb, I don't feel so bad.

My pointing finger's for when I panic;
I can face my fears whether small or gigantic.

When anger makes me want to explode,
My middle finger's the one I hold.

And when I'm worried about any old thing,
I hold the finger that's meant for a ring.

My little finger will help me see,
I'm a fine person! I'm glad to be me!

—Sr. Marcel DeJonckheere, S.C.
Holy Family School, Cincinnati, OH



A young Haitian girl practicing the fingerhold meditation finishes by crossing her ankles, resting her hands in her lap and joining her fingertips together. She then rests in her center for several peaceful moments.

Suggestions for Teachers

Emotional Freedom Technique

The EFT practice can be taught to children like a game in the classroom, such as “Simon Says,” to tap away strong emotions and memories, and to manage feelings that arise in difficult situations. It is not necessary to identify a problem or trauma to do the practice. When tapping the side of the hand, children can create their own phrases, such as “I’m afraid, but I’m OK,” or “I feel sad, but I’m OK.” The practice is also effective for alleviating headaches and pain caused by stress, as well as controlling addictive behavior.

CORE PRACTICE:

Emotional Freedom Technique—EFT

The Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) developed by psychologist Gary Flint, Ph.D., is very useful for unblocking and healing strong emotions, fears, anxiety, emotional pain, anger, traumatic memories, phobias and addictions, as well as for alleviating body symptoms and pain, such as headaches and overall body pain. Children can be taught the practice of tapping their worries and problems away, without having to discuss their trauma and stress.

The technique (shown photographically on page 65 and as a diagram in **Figure 4.1**, on page 66) is based on energy field theory, along with meridian theory of Eastern medicine. Problems, traumas, anxiety and pain can cause a block in the healthy flow of energy. Tapping or pressing points on channels or meridians can help move blocks in congested areas and promote the healthy flow of energy in the body, mind and spirit. (Adapted with permission from the EFT materials of Gary Flint, Ph.D., *Emotional Freedom Technique*.)

Practice

1. *Think of an issue to work with and measure your anxiety level.*

Choose to work with a problem, worry, phobia, anxiety, traumatic memory or negative self-concept. Using a scale of 0–10 (where 0 means no anxiety and 10 means an extremely high level of anxiety), measure the level of anxiety that you feel when thinking about the issue. If it is difficult to quantify or measure with a number, use a simple scale such as none, small, medium, large; big to little; or tall to short.

2. *Tap the sequence of acupressure points 7–9 times.*

Breathe deeply and tap the following sequence seven to nine times with the index and middle fingers:

1. Points above where the eyebrows begin
2. Points at the side of the eyebrows
3. Points on the cheekbones below the pupils of the eyes
4. Point below the nose
5. Point below the lips on the chin
6. Points below armpits (about four inches down)
7. Points below the clavicles on either side of the sternum

3. *Tap point at side of hand and recite acceptance.*

Tap point at the side of the hand while saying three times: “In spite of the fact I have this problem, I’m OK; I accept myself.” (The wording of this phrase may be adapted to the language of the children.)

4. *Repeat the sequence in #2 and #3*

Repeat the sequence until your anxiety level goes down to a 0–2.

The Sore Spot

In moments of strong anxiety or upset, the sore spot may be used.

Rub the Sore Spot

The Sore Spot is located on the left side of the chest between the ribs, about three inches below the left collarbone and two to three inches to the side of the sternum. The Sore Spot usually is very sensitive or painful in most people. Rub, hold or massage this point while breathing deeply to unblock and release strong feelings of anxiety, upset, sadness or anger.



EFT 1. Points above Eyebrows



EFT 2. Points at side of Eyebrows



EFT 3. Points on Cheekbones



EFT 4. Point below Nose



EFT 5. Point on Chin



EFT 6. Points below Armpits



EFT 7. Points below Clavicles



EFT Point at side of Hand
(Recite Acceptance)



EFT The Sore Spot

Figure 4.1 Emotional Freedom Technique Diagram

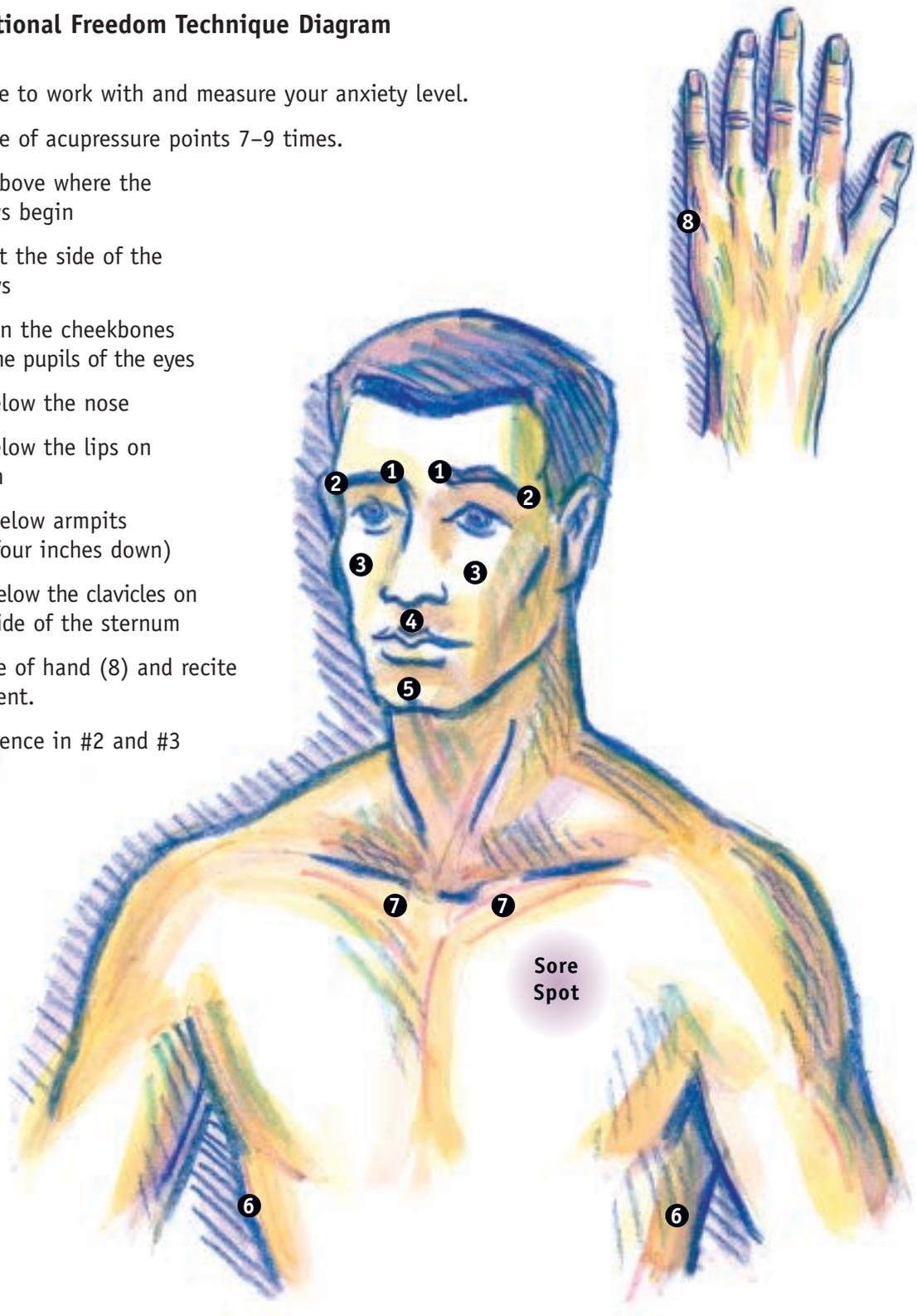
1. Think of an issue to work with and measure your anxiety level.
2. Tap the sequence of acupressure points 7–9 times.

1. Points above where the eyebrows begin
2. Points at the side of the eyebrows
3. Points on the cheekbones below the pupils of the eyes
4. Point below the nose
5. Point below the lips on the chin
6. Points below armpits (about four inches down)
7. Points below the clavicles on either side of the sternum

3. Tap point at side of hand (8) and recite acceptance statement.

4. Repeat the sequence in #2 and #3

Rub the Sore Spot



CORE PRACTICE:

Acupressure Points to Manage Emotions and Feelings

Acupressure is the use of finger pressure on specific points to unblock, balance or increase the circulation of energy in the body. This is a very effective tool for children when they have problems or strong feelings caused by stress and tension. A few moments spent holding acupressure points can promote calm and focus in the classroom after recess or before a test. The following section addresses specific emotional states.

Anxiety and Worry

The following points bring calm, inner peace and relaxation in moments when children are anxious or worried.

Points on top of the shoulder muscles: With the fingertips of both hands, hold the points on top of the shoulders. The arms may be crossed if this position is more comfortable.

Points between the shoulder blades and spine: Reach over the shoulders and down the back to locate points between the spine and shoulder blades at the level of the heart. You may have to hold one point at a time if you are unable to reach these points.

Point in the outer wrist: Press the points in the indentation on the outside of the crease of the wrist, down from the small finger.



Acupressure Points on top of Shoulder for Anxiety, Worry



Acupressure Points between Shoulder Blades and Spine for Anxiety, Worry



Acupressure Point in Outer Wrist for Anxiety, Worry

Depression, Heaviness and Exhaustion

The following points are good for moments of depression and heaviness, to bring a sense of peace and inner quiet.

Crown of head: With the fingertips of both hands, lightly hold the top of the head. There are three acupressure points in a line in this area.

In the forehead between the eyebrows: With the fingertips of one hand, hold the sensitive area between the eyebrows where the nose connects with the forehead.

Base of skull at the sides of the head: Interlace your fingers, place your hands behind your head, and with the thumbs, press the two points at left and right sides of the base of the skull in the indentation between the muscles and bones.

Points at the sides of the neck: Locate these points halfway down the neck about a half-inch outward from either side of the spine.



Acupressure Points on crown of Head for Depression, Heaviness



Acupressure Point in Forehead for Depression, Heaviness



Acupressure Points at base of Skull for Depression, Heaviness



Acupressure Points at sides of Neck for Depression, Heaviness

Sadness and Grief

Emotional pain, sadness and grief are often stored in the chest area as a dull, aching feeling. The following points can help to release these feelings.

Center of the chest: With the fingertips of one hand, hold the point in the middle of the sternum (breast bone).

Collarbone points: Hold the points located in the indentation of the lower edge of the collarbone on either side of the sternum.

Arm socket: Locate the points in the sensitive area in the outer part of the upper chest near the arm sockets, the distance of approximately four finger-widths from the armpit.



Acupressure Point in center of Chest for Sadness, Grief

Suggestions for Teachers

Acupressure Points to Manage Emotions and Feelings

In developing emotional intelligence, children can learn to identify their body feelings and emotional states, and then make wise choices about how to manage these feelings. Acupressure is a simple, effective tool that children can use in the moment when feelings arise, rather than being a victim or feeling helpless in the face of their feelings.



Acupressure Points in lower edge of Collarbones for Sadness, Grief



Acupressure Points near Arm Sockets for Sadness, Grief



“Connecting with the inherent wisdom of body, mind and spirit is essential for the unfolding of the human person. Learning how to return to the center and connect with this deeper wisdom of the Self is an important capacity to awaken in children.”

Section 5

Wellness Practices to Nurture the Spirit

Spirituality is an essential part of the health and well-being of the human person, and especially of children. In many cultures of the world, spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation and ritual are part of everyday life. The spiritual journey into maturity is considered to be the central purpose of life. Awakening to our sacred nature is the goal.

In many modern materialistic societies, families and children have lost identity with their roots, traditions and spirituality. The result often is despair, hopelessness and loss of a sense of the Sacred. Yet the hunger and longing of the human heart remain. Children, in particular, have sensitive spirits that need to be spiritually nurtured. Reconnecting to the Source of Life and to the beauty and abundance of nature through daily rituals and prayer are simple ways to encourage the spiritual growth and development of children.

Many of the Capacitar practices, such as Tai Chi, fingerholds and Salute to the Sun (see Section 2), can be adapted with scripture or sacred images and used as body prayers. Children easily recognize the Sacred within themselves and readily embrace the awakening and healing that comes from a daily spiritual practice. The following section develops the concept of mindfulness, along with meditation and ritual for classroom and daily personal use.

Mindfulness—Body, Mind and Spirit Wisdom

Dr. Roger Walsh, M.D., in *Essential Spirituality* writes: “Our world is in desperate need of healing. But it also rests in good hands, because it rests in yours. And in you rests the Source of all healing, and all that is needed to awaken you and the world.”

Connecting with the inherent wisdom of body, mind and spirit is essential for the unfolding of the human person. As children grow and develop, they can easily be thrown off center, acculturated with unhealthy patterns, and

lose their deeper connection with Self and the Sacred. Learning how to return to the center and connect with this deeper wisdom of the Self is an important capacity to awaken in children.

When we are connected with this wisdom or higher consciousness in the present moment, we know what is appropriate to do and we can flow with any situation for the higher good. Different spiritual traditions call this “mindfulness.” The Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, who was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Martin Luther King, Jr., for his nonviolent service during the Vietnam War, teaches mindfulness as a way to live in all of our daily activities.

Mindfulness is an open awareness that can be brought to each moment and activity of life. This practice involves the discipline of staying grounded in the present moment, in the here and now, so that the mind does not run to the past or to the future. The mind rests in the stillness of the moment, as if it were an eternal moment.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., describes mindfulness as “waking up and living in harmony with oneself and with the world. It has to do with cultivating some appreciation for the fullness of each moment we are alive. Most of all, it has to do with being in touch. Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmentally. Mindfulness provides a simple but powerful route for getting ourselves unstuck, back in touch with our own wisdom and vitality. It is a way to take charge of our own lives, including our relationships within the family, our relationship to work and to the larger world, and our relationship with oneself as a person.”

Mindfulness is a powerful tool to cultivate with children as they form good habits of concentration, focus and self-management in the classroom. Many of the Capacitar practices, such as breathwork and visualization (Section 1) and the fingerholds (Sections 2 and 4), help prepare the child for living with mindfulness by clearing the mental chatter and healing overwhelming feelings. In this section, meditation, prayer and ritual are developed as ways to mindfully nurture the spirit.

Sources

Walsh, Roger. *Essential Spirituality: The Seven Central Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1999.

Kabat-Zinn, Jon. *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Hyperion, 1994.

Mindfulness, Meditation and Prayer

Meditation and mindfulness are spiritual practices that have been used by people around the world for thousands of years. Some of the meditation methods currently taught in many places are the fruit of diverse cultures and spiritual traditions. Some forms of meditation are used as part of religious ceremonies and rituals, while other forms, studied by doctors and psychologists, are used to alleviate physical and emotional pain and to promote healing.

With meditation, a person's attention is directed to the clear and sacred center of one's inner being. Some methods of meditation use the body or the mind to come to a peaceful state. Those methods, based on control of the mind, use contemplation, visualization and concentration to arrive at a meditative state. Some contemplative practices use a sacred word, mantra or prayer. Visualization focuses on a scene or imagery. And concentration involves focus on an object, such as the flame of a candle or the words of a prayer. With the control and quieting of mind or body, the person is able to achieve deep peacefulness. Other practices work with the intention of "letting go" of either the body or the mind, including the relaxation of muscles and body movement, so that the person remains open and still in the present moment, in the here and now.

Meditation has long been known to contribute to a person's physical, psychological and emotional well-being. An alpha state of brainwave patterns usually results from different meditation practices, and this level of consciousness promotes deep healing. Breathwork, visualization, safe space, Tai Chi and the Salute to the Sun—practices that have been covered in different parts of this manual—are kinds of meditative practices that contribute to the physical and spiritual health of children. This section will present several practices of mindfulness and meditation to help children to focus and center themselves. The following meditations can be adapted to the grade level and language of the children.

Seated Meditation

Sit quietly and comfortably with your back straight and your feet touching the ground. Begin by following your breath moving in and out of your nostrils, and eventually follow your breath all the way down into your abdomen. Become aware of the rising and the falling of your abdomen. Stay with your breath and observe how your body moves with the process.

Now observe anything else that may come to your awareness—sounds, images, sensations in the body, odors or temperature. Try to observe each experience fully, without judgment or interpretation. Observe everything that comes to you in a clear straightforward way, without interpreting what is happening or thinking "this is good" or "that is bad." Notice that the sensations change constantly, like a flow where nothing is solid or permanent. Pain may come and then release. A joyful or pleasurable feeling may pass through the body and then disappear. Observe everything deeply, seeing each experience arise and then break apart and change, so that eventually you are able to look into the nature of the experience itself.

Suggestions for Teachers

Mindfulness, Meditation and Prayer

Ask children for suggestions about when they could practice mindfulness during the school day or at home. Some examples might include:

- *Traveling on long, uncomfortable bus trips*
- *Waiting in line at the store*
- *Taking a shower or bath in the morning or evening*
- *Doing some repetitive task at home or school*
- *Cleaning the house or helping a friend*

With continued practice, mindfulness can become a valuable habit and a way of life, grounding the children in the here and now, and relieving their minds of worries and anxieties, and of past or future concerns.

As you continue to do this, your mind will become very still and calm. You will be able to look at all that arises with a great clarity of observation, seeing things as they truly are. You can bring this pure nonjudgmental quality to all that you do during the day so that you are mindfully present to each moment. Continue the practice of mindful seated meditation, first starting with five to ten minutes several times a day and working up to longer periods of time. The practice may also be done while holding acupuncture points.

Mindful Walking Meditation

Walking meditation is an ancient practice popularized by Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh. Many indigenous people have the practice of walking slowly and respectfully, mindful and present to the miracle of nature. Often we live life in a rush, without paying attention to the remarkable things that are around us in each moment. We see without truly seeing, live without savoring the precious moments of life. Walking meditation is a good practice for children of all ages to use when it is difficult to sit still. The act of walking slowly in nature is very grounding and calming to the body, mind and spirit. It is also an excellent practice to use with children who have never experienced meditative practice. It is especially beneficial if done outside walking in nature.

When doing this practice with a group of children, it is advisable to go over the route before starting the walking meditation. Be aware of any areas that are difficult to navigate, especially if participants have some level of disability. Also be aware of other people or animals in the area and whatever you might run into during the walk. Plan a route to pass plants, trees and flowers. If walking indoors, try to pass items that may be somehow connected with nature or the Sacred. You can place a bouquet of flowers or plants along the route, so that people can connect with the grace of nature. Give an orientation to the children before starting on the walk. After the walk, give the children time to process the experience alone or together.

Orientation to Walking Meditation

The following orientation can be used with children, adapting the language to their age and grade level.

I invite you to join me in a walking meditation. We will be walking much slower than we usually do and in silence, coordinating our breathing with each step. For example, you can take three steps with each in-breath, and three more steps with each out-breath. Make your breathing and your steps as natural as possible, following whatever rhythm feels good to you. If your rhythm is a little faster than the person in front of you, you can respectfully pass them to maintain your natural pace. As you walk along, be aware of the contact between your feet and Mother Earth. Take each step with great love

and reverence. Imagine that with each step, your feet are able to touch the Earth with great respect. We have brought much destruction to the Earth, so walking with great love and reverence is a way to reconnect with our Mother, the source of our bodies and our lives. As we walk with this consciousness, we can be aware of the energy in our feet as they touch the Earth. Imagine that your feet are like roots in the Earth, and through your feet you are continually absorbing energy from the Earth.

As you breathe deeply and walk along, be mindfully aware and open to all that you pass. Imagine that the outside reality flows into you. And without judgment, you are present to all, observing and appreciating each being around you. With tender eyes, look at the plants, flowers and trees you pass, as if you were seeing them for the first time. Breathe in the perfume of the flowers and listen to the sound of the birds. From time to time you might want to reach out and touch the leaves of a tree or the petals of a flower, feeling their texture and their unique energy.

Look down at the soil and see the insects and small animals that might be there. See the water and the dewdrops penetrating the earth, nourishing and giving life to all being. Smell the damp pungent earth, fragrant with energy, minerals and the elements needed for life.

Observe any animals you might pass along the way, including human animals. Without judgment, just observe them going about their daily lives, digging in the earth, flying through the clouds, walking along or working. Observe that they, too, have the same needs as you do. And like you, they are nourished and held by Mother Earth.

Breathe deeply and fill your lungs with fresh air, feeling the connection with the air molecules moving in and out of your body. Look up at the clouds and see the same air in the sky that is moving in and out of your body. As you breathe deeply, imagine that you are able to exhale all of the tension that you feel in your body, mind and spirit. Inhale all the nourishment you need for your life and well-being.

We will walk in silence for about 15 to 20 minutes before returning back to the classroom. You may wish to sit quietly after you finish walking. Or if you want to draw or write about your experience, there are pens and pieces of paper on the table for you. Afterwards we will take a few minutes together to share any thoughts or experiences from the walking meditation.



Walking meditation is especially beneficial if done outside walking in nature.

The practice of eating one item of food is a good way to introduce children to the meditation of mindful eating.



Mindful Eating Meditation: Preparation for Eating Meditation

Often in the stress of modern life, we eat our meals rapidly without even realizing what we are eating. Many families do not sit down at a table for a meal together, but watch the television or eat on the run on their way to other activities. This kind of eating pattern can lead eventually to upset stomach, ulcers and many other digestive disorders.

The following practice comes from Christian monastic and Buddhist traditions, where meals were eaten mindfully in silence. The practice of eating one item of food, such as a piece of orange or apple, is a good way to introduce children to the meditation of mindful eating.

In working with a group of children, it is important to prepare the fruit ahead of time, so that all is ready in advance. You might also want to taste the fruit beforehand to be sure it is good for the meditation.

Eating Meditation

Setting: Children are seated at their desks or in a circle. In the center is arranged a colorful piece of fabric along with flowers, plants and other images of nature to form a sacred space. A platter of orange or apple slices to be used during the meditation is placed in the center. Soft background music may be used during the eating meditation. The words of the meditation can be adapted to the food being used and the age of the children.

Guided Eating Meditation:

Breathe deeply and relax, with your back straight and your feet touching the ground. Look at the oranges that will soon nourish your body, mind and spirit during this meditation. Close your eyes and for a few moments, connect with this gift given to us by Mother Earth. Imagine the seed that sprouted many years ago to form the orange tree that bore this fruit. See the seed growing into a plant. As the plant grows larger, imagine the farmer who tended the growing tree with great care.

Imagine the tree growing into fullness with the sun shining on its leaves, and the rain and nutrients of the soil nourishing its roots. Finally the tree is sufficiently large to begin bearing flowers. Smell the fragrance of the orange blossoms in the

tree's first springtime. See the bees buzzing around the blossoms, picking up the nectar and moving the pollen to other blossoms to fertilize the first fruits. See the oranges growing into fullness, ready to be harvested. As the farmer picks the oranges and carefully places them in a basket, feel the gratitude in his heart for the abundance of his harvest. The oranges go to market where they are sold with respect. And now here in our midst we have the fruit of much care. Breathe deeply for a few moments and when you are ready, open your eyes so that we can share the fruit and partake of the harvest.

Give participants a few moments to return from the visualization. When the group is ready, have someone prepared to ceremoniously walk around the circle with the platter and respectfully present the fruit to each person. As each person takes a slice of orange, you can continue with the guided meditation.

As you receive your piece of fruit, hold it between your hands for a few moments and behold the miracle of its life. The life of this orange will go to nourish your life. Notice the shape and texture of this orange, with each part made up of millions of small cells vibrating with life.

When you are ready, give thanks for the food and bite into the orange with love and respect. Taste with your tongue the quality and texture of its fleshy fruit, the sweet and sour of its juice. Carefully chew the slice between your teeth, marveling at your capacity to eat and absorb food for your life. As you swallow, observe the food moving down into your stomach. Imagine the complex chemical changes that are necessary to break down the tissues of the fruit to give you the necessary nutrients to sustain your life. As you finish eating the fruit, take time to sit mindfully present in the moment. Give thanks with joy and love for the life that you share and exchange with all being.

When all participants have finished and have had a few moments in mindful meditation, slowly bring the group back together. Depending upon what is appropriate, participants can share their experience in the whole group or in pairs using active listening. Or some may prefer to write about it in a journal or draw a picture of the experience.

Mindful Living

Children can learn to live in the spirit of mindfulness throughout the day, whether at school, at home or at play. Mindfulness is a daily habit. To move into the spirit of mindfulness, all that is necessary is to become conscious of the breath and to be present in the moment. Thich Nhat Hanh uses the wonderful statement, "Breathing in I calm my body, breathing out I smile. Present moment, wonderful moment!" Living with this sense of the miracle of the moment can heal many stress-related problems.

Suggestions for Teachers

Rituals and Celebrations

The following are some examples of rituals that can be planned by children for their class or community.

- *Healing ritual for a sick friend or family member*
- *Ritual for peace and healing for our world after a disaster*
- *Dedication of the school year*
- *Ritual of completion and celebration before graduation*

During the day, there are many times when children often increase the tension and stress of life by the way they deal with situations and people. Or they can learn to respond to stressful moments from a place of mindfulness.

When faced with a challenge or with difficult people, breathe deeply, smile, and try to be mindfully present in the moment, respecting rather than resenting the tension of the situation. As our quality of presence and our attitudes change, so do the people and the circumstances around us.

Thich Nhat Hanh suggests two situations that can be fruitful occasions for mindfulness: riding in a car and answering the phone. When caught in bumper-to-bumper traffic, the red brake lights of the cars in front of you can be a reminder to return to consciousness of the breath and to the present moment. When the phone rings, stop for a moment and breathe deeply. Then mindfully be present to the person on the line before saying, "Hello!"

Rituals and Celebrations

From earliest times, the family and the community gathered together to ritualize significant moments of life, death and passage. With the advance of modern culture, traditional rituals and gatherings in communities were lost for a variety of reasons—the migration of refugees, the breakup of local communities by war and violence, and the advance of modern ways. In many cultures ritual has been a resource for people to deal with grief, loss and emotional pain, as well as to celebrate special moments. Rituals and gatherings in the circle have provided ways to reclaim the healing power of community and to make meaning out of difficult moments that people have experienced individually or as a group.

Rituals are a valuable way to give children an experience of their roots and traditions, as well as to make meaning out of challenging life experiences, such as the death of a classmate or a tragedy in the community. This section deals with the elements of ritual, the creation of ritual, and some plans for rituals and celebrations in the community. These ideas are offered to inspire children to look to their own cultural resources and to talk with their grandparents and elders about what was traditionally done in their own communities.

The Nature of Ritual

Each culture has its own ceremonies and rituals to celebrate special moments during the year and significant occasions in life. Most often we think of "ritual" as a prescribed order of religious ceremony, like worship or liturgy that follows rubrics and ancient traditions. Rituals elevate all involved to the realm of sacred mysteries.

Besides formal religious ceremonies, there are also many other kinds of rituals that touch the ordinary moments of life. One definition of the word "ritual" is "a pattern of activity that is repeated over and over again,"

such as a ritual afternoon cup of tea, a ritual evening bath, or the way some families eat their main meal together. With mindful attention to the many human and ordinary moments of life, ritual can imbue these moments with extraordinary meaning. Mindfulness transforms many routines into rituals. Christina Feldman and Jack Kornfield in *Stories of the Spirit, Stories of the Heart* write: “Our growth as conscious, awake human beings is marked not so much by grand gestures and visible renunciations as by extending loving attention to the minutest particulars of our lives. Every relationship, every thought, every gesture is blessed with meaning through the whole-hearted attention we bring to it.”

With these different aspects of ritual in mind, it is important to begin to help children look at how ritual is a part of life—and if it is missing, to take some time to talk to grandparents and other members of the family and community to discover the traditions and rituals of their heritage. Claiming traditions, rituals and celebrations can be a wonderful way to reconnect with the community and to bring healing to many wounds of the heart.

Personal Rituals

The following are some simple suggestions of daily rituals that can bring the sacred dimension into one’s life.

Candle Lighting Rituals: To connect with the Light within—at a difficult moment or time of distress or depression, at a time of joy, for a dinner celebration, or to honor the memory of a loved one.

Cleansing Rituals: To cleanse negative energy or difficult memories—a ritual prayer; a ritual shower or bath; a cleansing diet; or use of water, salt, music or incense to clear negative energy.

Forgiveness Rituals: To forgive and let go of the past—a prayer, or a ritual gesture with another person.

Thanksgiving Rituals: To acknowledge the blessings of life—a prayer, a candle, flowers, or a gesture.

Rituals of Remembrance: To reconnect with people who have died, past events, or special moments.

Creation of a Sacred Space: To create an altar or some simple place in the home where images, flowers, photos of loved ones, elements of nature or written prayers may be reverently placed.

The Elements of Ritual

Rituals, both personal and communal, may include many different parts. The following is a simple formula of elements to help children create their own rituals.

Suggestions for Teachers

Rituals and Celebrations Continued

Also invite the children to make their own suggestions for rituals. A circle of chairs around a sacred space is an effective way to create a ritual environment. The sacred space may be created very simply with a brightly colored piece of cloth placed in the center on the floor or on a low table. Flowers, images and candles may be placed on the cloth to symbolize the theme of the ritual. A good way to involve children is to invite them to bring some things that are sacred to them or are connected with the theme of the ritual.

It might be an interesting assignment to have children talk to older family members about ways they used to celebrate special occasions in their family and see if they can trace the cultural significance of the ritual.

The invocation: This is the calling upon the sacred to be present. This can take the form of a song, a formal prayer or a gesture, such as lighting a candle or burning incense.

The action of the ritual: This deals with the reason why the community is gathered together, or why the ritual is being done. This part may include any or all of the following:

- readings from sacred texts, poems, or writings of group members
- music and songs
- dance and symbolic gestures
- a prayer of petition, asking for the benefit of the community
- a sharing of food
- a commitment of the community

A prayer of thanksgiving and blessing: The prayer may be through gestures or words. The community gives thanks for the gifts of life and for what has been received, and receives a blessing to carry on the journey.

A concluding action or gesture: This part of the ritual is to close the sacred space and mark the moment of return to daily life.

Items of use during the ritual: These may include water, fire, candles, incense, flowers, food, sound (such as bells), salt and oil.

Celebration and Body Movement

Movement, dance and music are powerful ways to release traumatic stress and balance energy. Research has shown that dance and movement can be significant therapies for the healing and empowerment of those who suffer from trauma and violence. When the Capacitar International Team coordinated the Healing Tent for the NGO World Forum on Women in China, the Chinese doctors taught the team dances that the people of China use to release the stress of the day. One lively dance used movements that criss-crossed the limbs to release blocked energy and balance the meridian flows. The doctors also said that the Chinese use music for healing in their clinics. In *The Mozart Effect*, Don Campbell describes how music has the power to stimulate our innate healing systems by connecting us with the deeper rhythms of life.

Research has shown that music can strengthen memory and learning, boost productivity, regulate stress-related hormones, boost the immune function, affect body temperature, increase endorphin levels, reduce muscle tension, improve body movement and coordination, and affect respiration, heart-beat, pulse rate and blood pressure. Music has a positive effect on people who have suffered some kind of physical or emotional trauma, and is currently used in some hospitals to alleviate pain or anxiety connected with surgery or medical procedures. This section offers some simple suggestions on ways to use movement, dance and music for healing.

Free-form Movement and Dancing

One of the best ways to release blocked energy and open channels or meridians is free-form dancing. Free-form movement can be a very beneficial experience for children, but only after some level of trust and comfort has been established. Usually after some work with Pal Dan Gum and Tai Chi, participants are ready to move more freely with their bodies, without feeling too self-conscious. If you sense that the group is inhibited, you can talk about the feeling of discomfort and invite them to experiment with holding the feeling while moving freely anyway. Often just acknowledging the feeling is a simple, direct way to move the energy. The choice of music for the free-form movement is also important. Look for music that is appropriate for the group and their culture. Sometimes lively music is the best; other times soft graceful music is good for gently releasing pain. With free-form movement, the body leads the dance through the expression of feelings, thoughts and body sensations.

Some ways to warm up the group include dancing while sitting down, stretching as part of the dance form, or visualizing the dance before doing it. As you dance you can add sounds and breathing to release blockages. If any memories spontaneously come up, imagine that the images can flow through the body and out into the ground. Another way to guide the free-form dancing is to invite participants to walk freely around the room while you name different emotions. They will try to feel the emotion and then express it through their bodies—joy, sorrow, anger, frustration, hope, aliveness, peace, playfulness, etc. As you change from one feeling to the next, have participants breathe deeply to release and let the emotion flow out of them. With children this can be lots of fun and can help them to learn how to recognize feelings and to release them.

The Dance of the Trees

Free-form movement can use nature to help participants connect with healing images. Movement performed outdoors under the trees or surrounded by mountains and clouds is a wonderful way to release stress, to breathe in pure fresh air and to absorb the healing rays of the sun. If it is not possible to be outdoors, you can lead children in a guided visualization where they go into a garden and connect with the trees, flowers, running water, etc. When they have internalized these images, you can then invite them to move with free-form dance, using the following as a guide. This can be done in silence to the sounds of nature, or you can have some flowing music to accompany the dance.

Breathe deeply and imagine that you are a special tree planted in the garden. What kind of tree are you? Pine, eucalyptus, redwood, oak, willow, cypress, palm, magnolia, apple, etc. (Name trees appropriate to the culture and region.) What does it feel like to be this tree? Become that tree. Move for a few moments like the tree that you have chosen to be. Now imagine the tree going through the cycles of nature. First you are a young sapling growing strong, with roots running deep into the rich soil of

Suggestions for Teachers

Celebration and Body Movement

With the imagery of the tree, children usually enjoy the movements. After the dance you can invite them to share in pairs or as a whole group what the experience was like, or prompt them with questions such as the following:

- *What kind of tree were you?*
- *What were the cycles of nature like?*
- *What feelings came up?*
- *Where did you feel tightness or tension in your body?*

Mother Earth, and branches reaching up to the heavens. As your tree matures, you begin to bear flowers and then fruits or cones. Feel your fruitfulness and the abundance of your harvest and seeds. And then you pass into the autumn of your cycle, with the fruits, seeds, and leaves falling into the ground, to become part of the soil. The cold of winter comes and your branches are dormant. You move into a period of great stillness and hibernation, holding life deep within you. And then come the first rays of springtime, warming your branches and roots. The first leaves and buds begin to sprout until you are an amazing burst of beautiful blossoms, alive with new life and possibility. Throughout the cycle of your life, feel your rootedness to the earth. When storms and winds whirl around you, you have the flexibility and balance to move with it all, because you are deeply rooted and grounded on Mother Earth. Take a few moments now to flow with the grace and beauty of your tree. And when you are ready, gradually bring your dance to a close. Feel the beauty and grace of your body, and the strength and peace of your being.

Music, Song and Chant

Traditionally song and chant have been used to connect the person and community with the sacred, to give meaning to life's rituals, and to bring joy and energy to all. Chant and song involve breath and sounds that have been passed on through many generations. In *Chanting: Discovering Spirit in Sound*, Robert Gass speaks of the power of chant to anchor and entrain as well as to connect us with the healing energy of the morphic field of the music: "The ancient chants have been infused with power and meaning from the voices and devotion of millions of people over the centuries, creating a kind of energy field that impacts us here today as we intone the sacred syllables."

Music, song, and chant are good ways to enliven a group of children and to get the energy flowing. If they are shy about singing, there are many recordings of traditional songs that you can use to sing along. Many children are also musicians, or potential musicians, so a good way to use music and rhythm for healing is to bring in some simple instruments like tambourines, maracas, rain sticks, drums, bells (or even pots and pans) and other traditional local instruments. The rhythms, vibrations and pulsing beat of the human voice, drum and other instruments are found to be of great healing benefit.

Sources:

Feldman, Christina and Kornfield, Jack. *Stories of the Spirit, Stories of the Heart*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1991.

Campbell, Don. *The Mozart Effect: Tapping the Power of Music to Heal the Body, Strengthen the Mind and Unlock the Creative Spirit*. New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, 1997.

Brehony, Kathleen A. and Gass, Robert. *Chanting: Discovering Spirit in Sound*. New York, NY: Broadway Books, 1999.

Capacitar Songs

The following songs may be sung for rituals and celebrations and accompanied with the hand motions as described.

Leadership Song

Suggested music: Hawaiian songs by Keali Reichel

Patience

(Brush down arms)

Slow down and live in the moment

(Hands/palms down and move downward)

Open mind and heart to listen to self and others

(Palms upward and moving slowly up and down)

Fill ourselves with love and compassion

(Hands and arms roll inward toward self and your heart)

Give love and compassion to others

(Hands and arms roll away from your heart and outward to others)

Celebrate diversity and the human family

(Arms move upward and over your head and turn in a circle to send love and blessing to all the world)

O Great Spirit

O Great Spirit

Of earth, sun, sky and sea

You are inside

And all around me.

(Spanish)

O Gran Espíritu

De la tierra, sol, cielo y mar

Estas adentro

y alrededor de mi.

Movements (movements are done quickly to the tempo of the song):

1. Hands are held above head with palms facing outward
2. Hands move down to earth
3. Hands move outward from shoulders as if opening to the sun
4. Hands roll in front of eyes like clouds
5. Hands move together like waves on the sea
6. Hands over heart
7. Hands over head and turn in circle as you honor the four directions

Your Light Within Us

Your light within shines
Your love in our hearts
U Allah U Allah U Allah U

(Spanish)
Tu Luz en todo esta'
Tu Amor en Nosotros
U Allah U Allah U Allah U

or

Your light within shines
Your love in our hearts
O Jesus, O Jesus, O Jesus, O

Tu Luz en todo esta'
Tu Amor en Nosotros
O Jesus, O Jesus, O Jesus, O

Movements (these can be done as a circle dance with an inner and outer circle facing each other):

1. Hands and arms circle out with palms facing out
2. Hands over heart
3. Hands together in prayer posture, bow to right and bow to left

If doing as a circle dance, people in outer circle move one person to the right after each verse.

Song to Mother Earth

The earth is our Mother
Let us take care of her (2x)
That all may live as one
One in love, one in love (2x)

O Holy is our Mother Earth
In whom we live and move (2x)
That all may live as one
One in love, one in love (2x)

Movements:

1. Hands and palms face down as you move and step lightly with respect for the earth, and then raise hands over head as you circle and salute the sacredness of life as you turn around.
2. Second verse: Hands behind back, continue to move slowly to the beat, stepping lightly, and then raise hands over head as you circle and salute the sacredness of life as you turn around.





“The work of schools and teachers, besides proficiency in subject areas, is to give children skills to enable them to heal stress, to change unhealthy patterns of thinking and acting, and to develop their true potential.”

Section 6

Wellness Practices to Heal Traumatic Stress

Currently many people in the world suffer from some level of stress and trauma due to accidents, domestic abuse, street violence, natural disasters, violence in the media, and the impact of living in a challenging world. In many places whole communities or societies suffer from intergenerational trauma and violence.

Children in particular are most affected by stress, violence and dysfunctional patterns in the family, classroom, playground and community, and often are unable to learn. The work of schools and teachers, besides proficiency in subject areas, is to give children skills to enable them to heal stress, to change unhealthy patterns of thinking and acting, and to develop their true potential. All of the practices in this Capacitar manual can help children release traumatic stress, improve learning and develop their capacities of body, mind and spirit.

Transforming Stress into Well-being: Stress and Compassion Fatigue

Teaching, studying and caring for family, friends and other people can be both rewarding and challenging. Without good self-care we can suffer from stress, burnout, compassion fatigue and feelings of being overwhelmed. Even small children can suffer stress when living in difficult situations or when dealing with a school bully. The symptoms of stress and compassion fatigue are just like those found in people who have suffered violent or traumatic experiences: headache, body pain, anxiety, nervousness, insomnia, stomach disorders, fatigue, numbness, strong emotions, depression, etc. It is important for children and adults to recognize these symptoms and take responsibility for caring for themselves. The following questions can be used for a checkup from time to time on the state of health and well-being. Daily use in the classroom of some of the energy practices can promote well-being for children in the midst of all the struggles of life.

Suggestions for Teachers

Transforming Stress into Well-being

Teaching children to listen to the body, to reflect on how the body feels, and to make wise decisions about self-care is important. Children feel pain, stress and emotions deeply, even though they might not be able to put these feelings into words. They are often confused with these feelings and don't know what to do for themselves. Capacitar practices can be helpful tools to build into daily life to help children better handle the challenges as well as the traumas of life. Teachers can help children to explore different ways to care for themselves when they feel sad, angry or hurt.

Questions for Self-care

1. Where do I feel my pain? Do I have any or many of the following symptoms, and if so, how often? (*These are all symptoms of traumatic stress.*)

- shoulder pain
- headaches
- neck or chest pain
- dizzy feeling
- nausea/stomach pain
- nightmares
- flashbacks or strong memories
- strong emotions
- crying frequently
- shortness of breath
- difficulty falling or staying asleep
- racing or pounding heart
- always feeling sad
- body pain
- problems concentrating
- worry about the future
- feeling very tired
- feeling anxious

2. What do I do daily or weekly to care for myself as I care for others?

- physically
- psychologically
- emotionally
- spiritually

3. How do I deal with and release or transform the following feelings?

- grief
- sadness
- fear
- panic
- anger
- resentment
- rage
- anxiety
- worry
- feeling overwhelmed
- lack of self-esteem
- victimhood

4. What kind of plan can I make to better care for myself?

5. How can I get the support I need to do the work I am doing?

Protection and Boundaries

Learning how to protect oneself and how to set boundaries is an important skill for all people, and especially for children. During the day we are constantly interacting energetically with our environment and with those around us. Some people and situations drain our energy, while others fill and enliven us. Most of this interaction happens on a subconscious level.

When children become more conscious of their own energy system, they can then begin to recognize the people and situations that drain or nourish them. With practice they can learn how to protect themselves energetically from being drained and how to have healthy boundaries with others. Several images and practices from different cultures can help develop this capacity.

Wrapping Oneself in Light

The Mayan peoples of Guatemala have a traditional practice of protection that has been used for generations. The people “wrap” themselves and their children in healing light before starting the day. Spiritually we are all interconnected with the sacred energy that flows through us and through all of nature. With this practice of protection, we make ourselves conscious of the sacred energy that is always with us and around us.

Start in the area of the head and with the hands, brush through the energy field, wrapping sacred light around the body, like a protection of grace.

Radiating Light as Protection

Stand straight in a relaxed manner with your feet shoulder-width apart and your knees slightly bent. Breathe deeply and imagine that from your navel grows a long cord that goes down into the earth to ground and connect you. Your back and spinal column are straight like a column of light supporting you between the heavens and the earth. You might want to close your eyes. Place your hands beneath your navel and connect with your center for a moment, breathing deeply and exhaling any tension that you may be carrying. Now as you breathe in and out, imagine that an egg or circle of light begins to shine out from your center. As the light grows, your energy radiates out in all directions around you—above, below, in front of, and behind you—forming an egg or globe of light that pulses and vibrates with the rhythm that is you. Enjoy the experience of your energy field. During the day, practice walking with an awareness of the light energy that surrounds you. Imagine the circle of energy that also surrounds the people you meet.

Images for Protection

In different kinds of situations or with people who drain energy, it is important to know how to protect yourself. Usually the person who is negative or who drains another’s energy is not at all aware of what they are doing. If you are exhausted at the end of a day, or from having to interact with different people who drain you, begin to listen to your body and discover where you feel tension or sensations indicating that your energy is being pulled.

Suggestions for Teachers

Protection and Boundaries

Having the capacity to center oneself, focus, recognize one's boundaries and respect the boundaries of others is an important skill for children as they mature and learn how to relate to themselves and others. Boundaries and protection are key concepts to develop with all children, and in particular with those who are victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse. Children who are victims of trauma usually have no boundaries and have very low self-esteem. Working with the energy field can help to strengthen self-esteem and develop a sense of personal worth and recognition of the integrity of self.

Use the following visualizations to “protect” yourself, depending upon the situation:

- Imagine a window of glass that surrounds you as protection and sets your boundaries.
- Imagine that a globe or an egg of rose-colored light (the color of compassionate love) surrounds you and protects you. Nothing can penetrate this shield, but you are able to give off love and compassion to others.
- In difficult situations, imagine a strong yet graceful shield of impenetrable material surrounding you to establish your boundaries. Feel strong, secure and protected.

Shielding with Your Hands

If you feel that a person or situation is pulling energy from a specific part of your body (for example, from your solar plexus, your heart, or your throat), place your hands gently over this area of your body. Imagine that your hands form a shield of protection.

If the memory of a situation or an event comes to mind, breathe out all the captured painful energy, and breathe in loving kindness and compassion toward yourself and the experience. Recognize that you are now living in the present moment, and that what has happened is over. As you breathe out and let go of the memory, look at the wisdom you have gained to live more fully in the present and to not repeat the situation.

If you feel chains or cords connecting you with people, past events or memories, you can visualize cutting the cords that bind you. Use the abdominal breathing exercise to center yourself. When you feel sufficiently ready and finished with a situation or memory, choose some way to cut the ties that bind you—an imaginative scissors, sword, fire or cleansing white light. After the visualization, feel the wholeness and integrity of yourself.

Holding Your Energy Field

Sometimes when we are with people in situations of conflict, we start out like a full juicy plum and leave like a dried-up prune, completely drained by others. The following practice offers an effective way to hold your energy so that others do not drain you in conflictive situations.

Be seated and cross your ankles. Relax your hands on your lap and join together the fingertips and thumbs of both hands. Breathe deeply, relax your shoulders and feel your energy system circulating through the channels that run through each of your fingers. Rather than losing energy, with this posture you are circulating your energy in a closed system. You can be fully attentive to others and focused on the matter at hand, without being drained.

CORE PRACTICE:

Figure 8 Exercise to Heal Energy Drain

This practice, an adaptation of the work of psychologist Phyllis Krystal, uses the infinity sign or “figure 8” to energetically separate oneself from another person, a traumatic memory, negative self-talk, or a strong emotion that can drain energy and cause depression or anxiety. This practice encourages in children the creation of healthy personal boundaries and the recognition of their integrity, core energy and self-esteem.

Practice

Imagine yourself in the center of a circle, surrounded by a tube or cylinder of golden light. Next to your circle, imagine another circle in which you place the person, strong emotion, negative self-talk or traumatic memory from which you want to energetically disconnect yourself. With respect, surround the other person, emotion, or memory with a circle of golden light. (As you start the practice, you are still energetically connected at the point of intersection of the two circles.)

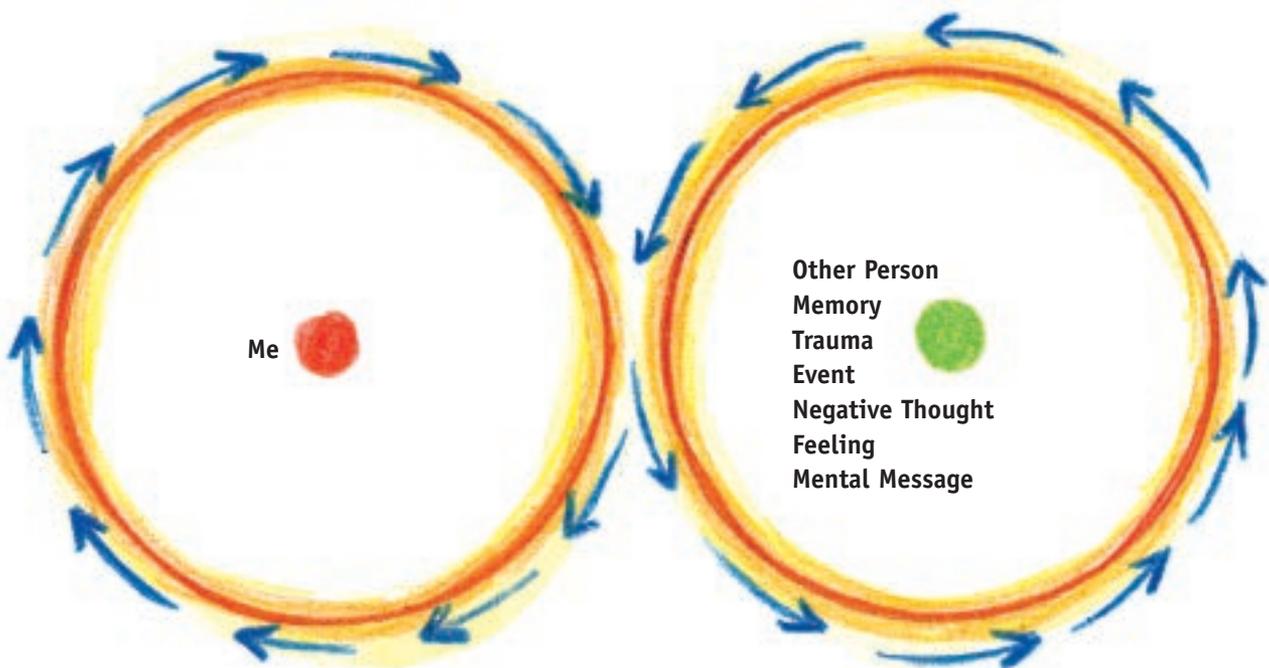
Now visualize a blue neon light that moves around, following the direction of a figure 8—first around the circle where you have placed the person, strong emotion or traumatic memory, and then around the circle where you are. Continue to visualize this blue light moving around and around like a figure 8 or infinity symbol (see **Figure 6.1**).

*Suggestions
for Teachers*

Figure 8 Exercise

This exercise can help children to create healthy boundaries or to separate from nightmares, fears, memories or traumas. With young children, suggest they place their fears into balloons to create the feeling of separation and distance. When they are ready, they can cut the cords of the balloons and release the difficult feelings into the heavens.

Figure 6.1 Visualizing the Figure 8 Exercise



Suggestions for Teachers

Head-Neck-Shoulder Release

This is an excellent exercise that can be taught to children to relieve back, shoulder and head pain resulting from sports, study, work on the computer or stress. Help the children to locate the points. Often they will readily feel with their fingertips the energy pulses in the points. The fingers should be slightly curved using medium pressure for holding points.

Do this practice for several minutes at a time, repeating it two or three times a day for several weeks or a month or two. A good time to do this is when your subconscious is most active: when you first awaken, just after meditation and before you go to sleep at night. Slowly, the recognition of your core energy, your separateness from the person or feeling you place in the other circle, enters your subconscious mind.

After several weeks or months, and only when you feel ready to do so, cut the tie that binds you. You can do so literally or figuratively, creating your own ritual of separation. Taking a knife, scissors, candle or other implement, sever the energetic tie with great respect for the energy field of the other and with great respect for your own core energy. Fully release the person, memory, negative thought or trauma, giving it back to itself. Stand alone in the fullness of your energy being.

This practice is especially helpful with relationships or situations that drain energy, and should usually be done without the other's knowledge. Doing this practice doesn't imply that you are physically leaving the person or situation. Rather, you have detached energetically from the bond that is draining or that is not healthy.

Variation: If you have difficulty imagining the process, you can draw the figure 8 on a piece of paper to help you visualize it, or you can trace the figure 8 in the palm of your hand with your finger, thus embedding it in your tissues.

CORE PRACTICE: Head-Neck-Shoulder Release

This acupressure practice releases pain, tension and congestion in the upper back, shoulders, neck and head. It is based on the work of Aminah Raheem, Ph.D. When people experience trauma and stress, often their energy becomes blocked in the shoulders, neck and head. Most of the energy channels flow through this area, resulting in a "bottleneck" of tension in some people.

Children can do this practice in the classroom on themselves, or at home on another person. If the children will be doing this on another person, guide them in how to keep clear boundaries. If they feel the other person's energy coming into their hands, have them imagine it flowing through and down into the earth.

With slightly curved fingertips, press into the six sets of points shown in **Figure 6.2** for one to two minutes, or until the energy pulse is clear, strong and flowing. Most of the points will feel sensitive. (The acupressure sequence is illustrated photographically in **Figure 6.3** on page 94.) During the practice, imagine the energy flowing freely and in harmony, while breathing deeply. To end, imagine that your feet are rooted to the earth to ground you. If working on another person, you can hold the tops of their feet to ground them.

Figure 6.2 Head-Neck-Shoulder Release Diagram

Sets of Points

1. About an inch outside the bottom of the shoulder joint where the arm connects to the trunk of the body.
2. At the top of the inside curve of the shoulder blades about two inches from the center of the spine.
3. On top of the shoulders at the base of the neck in the trapezius muscles.
4. Midway up the neck in the band of muscles on either side of the spine.
5. In the hollows at the base of the skull at the sides of the head.
6. The crown center at the top of the head.

To Finish

Hold the tops of the feet for grounding.

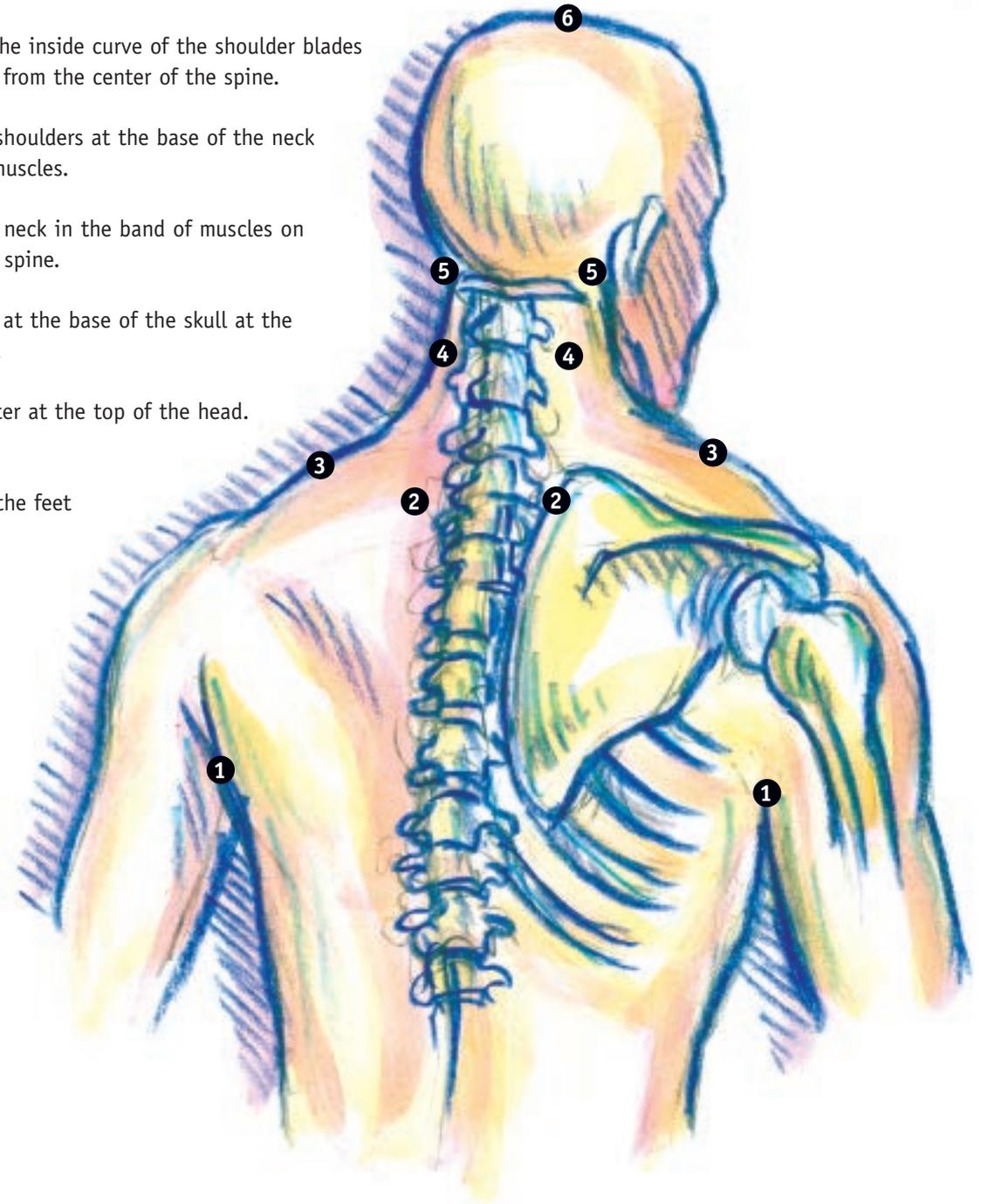


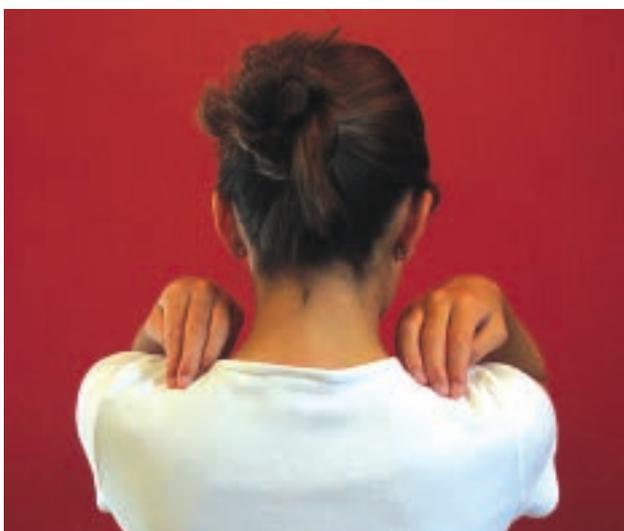
Figure 6.3 Head-Neck-Shoulder Release



1. About an inch outside the bottom of the shoulder joint where the arm connects to the trunk of the body.



2. At the top of the inside curve of the shoulder blades about two inches from the center of the spine.



3. On top of the shoulders at the base of the neck in the trapezius muscles.



4. Midway up the neck in the band of muscles on either side of the spine.



5. In the hollows at the base of the skull at the sides of the head.



6. The crown center at the top of the head.

Appendix I: Course of Study and Additional Resources

Course of Study

Introduction

The Capacitar for Kids Course of Study is designed to provide the classroom teacher with identifiable and measurable objectives in wellness education. The objectives give desired learning outcomes for grade levels and subject areas, to provide for planning, evaluation and accountability. The Course of Study may also be used to guide the development and the use of material in an integrated way in the overall curriculum.

Program Objectives

I, D, M—Introduce, Develop, Master—are used as designations for the objectives as a way to identify how the material may be used at different grade levels. Objectives at all grade levels should be introduced and developed with concepts presented to the students in a motivating way, encouraging them to understand how each concept affects their world and their lives. The Course of Study is divided into two parts:

1. *Objectives by Practice and Subject Area:* This part lists the I, D, and M objectives for each practice and includes appropriate subject areas for teaching the various practices.
2. *Objectives and Practices by Grade Level:* This part details the appropriate grade level for accomplishing each objective by practice.

Mastery occurs when a student has a clear understanding of the material and can demonstrate or apply it to new situations or experiences.

Objectives — Key

I = Introduce
D = Develop
M = Master

Objectives by Practice and Subject Area

Section 1: Wellness Practices to Improve Learning and Mental Focus

Breathwork

I	Experience the relaxation effects of breathwork.	Health
D	Uses breathwork for relaxation and during times of stress.	Health
M	Understands the bodily effects of breathwork as a form of stress reduction. Understands the use of breath work to unblock, move and increase energy. Practices breathwork as a form of meditation.	Health Health Religion/Spirituality

Core Practice: Visualization, Safe Space and Centering

Visualization

I	Practice recalling an inner image of nature.	Health, Religion/Spirituality
D	Create an inner image from a description or guided visualization. Use inner images of nature for developing a calm inner state.	Language Arts Health, Religion/Spirituality
M	Create one's own inner images for maintaining a calm inner state. Recall different appropriate images when needed.	Health, Religion/Spirituality Health, Religion/Spirituality

The Safe and Sacred Space

I	Practice an inner image of a safe space.	Health, Religion/Spirituality
D	Create an inner safe space.	Health, Religion/Spirituality
M	Recognize and use the safe space when needed.	Health, Religion/Spirituality

Core Practice: Exercises and Points for Head and Neck

Head Rolls, Shrugs, Head Tap, Jaw Tap

I	Name places in upper head and neck that can create tension and block energy. Practice head and neck exercises.	Health Physical Ed.
D	Use head rolls and shoulder shrugs when experiencing headaches, stiff neck and tight jaw.	Health
M	Use various head/neck exercises regularly to prevent headaches, stiff neck and tight jaw.	Health

Brain Balance and Focus

I	Locate acupressure points in the head for balancing rational (left) and intuitive (right) sides of the brain.	Health
D	Experience a sense of focus when holding acupressure points at the base of the skull.	Health
M	Practice the head hold when feeling scattered and unfocused. Practice the acupressure points to access creativity and rational abilities.	Health Health

Core Practice: Cross-lateral Exercises

I	Identify left and right sides. Experience a sense of balance using locomotor skills.	Physical Ed. Physical Ed.
D	Use left and right repetitive movement to balance energy flow.	Physical Ed., Health
M	Use bi-lateral movement to balance and discharge energy and for hyperactivity.	Physical Ed., Health

Section 2: Wellness Practices to Promote Energy Flow

Energy Flow of Body, Mind and Spirit

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| I | Identify creation as all that is both visible and invisible.
Experience and sense energy of the body and in nature. | Religion/Spirituality
Physical Ed., Health,
Religion/Spirituality |
| D | Describe all in creation as interdependent.
Recognize the types of energy in oneself and in creation.
Demonstrate an awareness of personal and general space and the energy field. | Religion/Spirituality
Religion/Spirituality, Science
Physical Ed., Health, Science |
| M | Work with the energy field and use different methods to clear the field. | Physical Ed., Health |

Core Practice: Fingerholds to Manage Emotions

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| I | Identify feelings with the appropriate finger.
Move energy through fingers. | Health
Health |
| D | Develop skill of using fingerholds in the moment when experiencing strong emotions. | Health |
| M | Understand the connection between energy flow and balancing emotional states. | Health |

Core Practice: Tai Chi

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| I | Experience the flow of energy through three simple Tai Chi movements.
Connect Tai Chi with images in nature.
Experience Tai Chi as a form of body prayer. | Physical Ed., Health
Science
Religion/Spirituality |
| D | Perform 8 basic Tai Chi movements.
Develop a sense of balance and coordination using Tai Chi movements.
Exercise the major sets of muscles in the body.
Develop a sense of body prayer through movement. | Physical Ed., Health
Physical Ed.
Physical Ed.
Religion/Spirituality |
| M | Recognize the benefits of Tai Chi for body, mind and spirit health.
Understand the origins, history and use of Tai Chi in other cultures.
Understand and use Tai Chi as a prayer expression. | Health
Social Studies
Religion/Spirituality |

Core Practice: Salute to the Sun

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| I | Experience the flow of energy through the body while stretching and connecting with nature and the sun.
Connect the movements with the changing seasons of the year.
Experience the Salute to the Sun as a form of body prayer. | Health, Science
Science
Religion/Spirituality |
| D | Perform the movement and stretches of the Salute in a prayerful way.

Develop a sense of coordination using the movements of the Salute.
Develop a sense of body prayer through the movement. | Physical Ed., Health,
Religion/Spirituality
Physical Ed.
Religion/Spirituality |
| M | Recognize the benefits of the Salute for body, mind and spirit health.
Understand the movements as representing the different parts of the journey of life.
Connect with God as the Source of being. | Health
Religion/Spirituality
Science, Religion/Spirituality |

Section 3: Wellness Practices to Heal the Body

Core Practice: Pal Dan Gum

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| I | Perform the series of stretches and movements included in Pal Dan Gum.
Experience the flow of energy while doing Pal Dan Gum. | Health/Physical Ed.
Health/Physical Ed. |
| D | Understand Pal Dan Gum as a way to balance and increase energy flow.
Use Pal Dan Gum to release physical tension and stored emotion. | Health/Physical Ed.
Health/Physical Ed. |
| M | Understand the body systems affected by Pal Dan Gum. | Science, Health/Physical Ed. |

Core Practice: Acupressure for Physical Symptoms

- | | | |
|---|--|------------------|
| I | Recognize the benefit of acupressure for healing body pain and symptoms.
Practice 5 acupressure points for alleviating pain. | Health
Health |
| D | Practice 10 acupressure points for specific conditions and symptoms. | Health |
| M | Develop the ability to give oneself an acupressure session to alleviate bodily pain.
Practice acupressure points with another person to promote healing of body and spirit. | Health
Health |

Core Practice: The Holds

- | | | |
|---|--|--------|
| I | Learn the four hand positions of the technique and practice on self. | Health |
| D | Practice using The Holds on a family member. | Health |
| M | Use The Holds in times of stress and anxiety to promote relaxation. | Health |

Core Practice: Hand Massage and Reflexology

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| I | Experience the healthy benefits of massaging acupressure points in the hands. | Health |
| D | Recognize the sacredness of the hands and the benefit of healing touch. | Health, Religion/Spirituality |
| M | Develop the ability to give oneself a hand massage to alleviate bodily pain.
Practice hand massage with another person to promote healing of body and spirit.
Practice hand massage with another person as a form of meditation and respect. | Health
Health
Health, Religion/Spirituality |

Core Practice: Drum Massage

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| I | Experience the healthy benefits of drum massage for oneself. | Health |
| D | Recognize the sacredness of massage and touch for promoting healing. | Health, Religion/Spirituality |
| M | Develop the ability to give oneself a drum massage to alleviate bodily pain.
Practice drum/circle massage with a group to promote health of body and spirit. | Health
Health |

Core Practice: Pain Drain

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| I | Understand pain as blocked energy.
Learn the two hand positions used in the Pain Drain. | Health
Health |
| D | Understand that energy that is drained off is neutral and does not have negative or positive qualities. | Science |
| M | Use Pain Drain for self-care and with family. | Health |

Core Practice: Immune System Boost

- I Demonstrate the four hand positions of the Immune System Boost. Health
- D Sense the flow of energy as each position is held. Health
- M Understand the functions of the immune system.
Use the Immune System Boost on a regular basis to maintain health. Science, Health
Health

Core Practice: Relaxing the Eyes

- I Experience holding acupressure points located around the eyes.
Experience cupping eyes for relaxation. Health
Health
- D Recognize when eyes are tired or strained and use acupressure and cupping
to relieve stress. Health
- M Use acupressure and cupping to prevent eye strain, promote self-care and healthy eyes. Health

Mindful Eating

- I Understand the connection between energy, food and health of body and spirit. Health, Religion/Spirituality
- D Develop healthy eating habits. Health
- M Develop the ability to make healthy choices in food selection and preparation.
Practice focus and peaceful presence when eating. Health
Health, Religion/Spirituality

Section 4: Wellness Practices to Promote Emotional Balance

Emotional Intelligence

- I Identify feelings and body states.
Describe how faces and bodies show feelings. Health
Health
- D Develop the skill of naming emotions connected with body feelings and states.
Differentiate between healthy and unhealthy ways to act on feelings. Health
Health
Recognize how the emotions are a source of wisdom and intelligence. Health
- M Recognize behaviors that come from following body wisdom and emotional intelligence.
Understand the relationship between feelings and emotions and good mental health. Health
Health
Develop the capacity to use both left and right brain (creative and rational potential). Health

Fingerhold Meditation for Emotions

- I Move energy through fingers accompanied with deep breathing to balance emotions. Health
- D Develop skill of focusing and centering using fingerholds and breathwork in the moment
when experiencing strong emotions. Health, Religion/Spirituality
- M Understand the connection between energy flow, breath, balancing emotional
states and meditative states. Health, Religion/Spirituality
Understand and use fingerholds, breathwork and focusing as prayer or meditation. Religion/Spirituality

Core Practice: Emotional Freedom Technique—EFT

- I Identify the location of the sore spot.
Relieve anxiety by pressing or tapping the sore spot. Health
Health
- D Locate and tap in sequence the EFT acupressure points. Health
Name a simple problem, worry, fear or negative self-concept and perform the
tapping sequence used in EFT. Health

- M Understand the theory that supports EFT.
Use EFT to manage difficult thoughts and feelings. Health
Health

Core Practice: Acupressure Points to Manage Emotions and Feelings

- I Identify 5 acupressure points that can move emotional energy. Health
- D Use acupressure points to transform body feelings and emotions. Health
- M Use acupressure points as a healthy way to transform emotions and feelings.
Understand the relationship between emotions, acupressure and good mental health. Health
Health

Section 5: Wellness Practices to Nurture the Spirit

Mindfulness—Body, Mind and Spirit Wisdom

- I Recognize that there are many ways that wisdom and knowing come to a person. Religion/Spirituality
- D Develop the different ways that knowledge and wisdom come to a person—
proprioceptive, visual, auditory, emotional, spiritual, kinesthetic, relationships
with others, the world and nature. Religion/Spirituality
- M Practice using the different ways of knowing.
Work with and strengthen the less familiar ways of knowing. Religion/Spirituality
Religion/Spirituality

Mindfulness, Meditation and Prayer

- I Experience mindfulness and different forms of meditation .
Recognize the sense of calm and peacefulness that flows from mindfulness
and meditation. Religion/Spirituality
Religion/Spirituality
- D Recognize peacefulness as a sense of Divine Presence.
Use meditation to develop a prayerful relationship with God. Religion/Spirituality
Religion/Spirituality
- M Practice mindfulness, meditation or some form of prayer in daily life. Religion/Spirituality

Rituals and Celebrations

- I Experience ritual in the classroom for some significant occasion. Religion/Spirituality
- D Explore the use of rituals and customs in families and in different cultures.
Reflect on the elements used for daily rituals. Social Studies
Religion/Spirituality
- M Create a ritual for the class or group for a significant occasion. Religion/Spirituality

Celebration and Body Movement

- I Use music and movement to connect with images in nature
(e.g., trees, clouds, mountains, flowers, water, etc.) Language Arts, Phys. Ed.,
Religion/Spirituality
- D Use music and movement to release blocked energy. Health
- M Use music and movement freely without self-consciousness, acknowledging any
feelings that arise while continuing to move freely.
Understand the connection between music and movement and indigenous cultures
around the world. Physical Ed., Art
Social Studies,
Religion/Spirituality

Section 6: Wellness Practices to Heal Traumatic Stress

Transforming Stress into Well-being: Stress and Compassion Fatigue

- I Identify moments and situations that trigger body responses related to stress and trauma and one practice to help shift feelings and physical responses. Health
- D Apply practices to shift body feelings and responses. Health
- M Choose two practices as part of daily life and self-care. Health

Protection and Boundaries

- I Practice an image of protection. Health
- D Create a sense of healthy and safe boundaries.
Identify situations and people who nourish or drain your energy.
Demonstrate an awareness of personal and general space. Health
Health
Physical Ed., Health
- M Recognize the need for protection and use boundaries when needed. Health

Core Practice: Figure 8 Exercise to Heal Energy Drain

- I Identify issues, people or events that need containment. Religion/Spirituality, Health
- D Apply the Figure 8 to one issue and draw the energy loop around oneself and the issue.
Separate the self from the issue energetically and cut the tie that binds. Religion/Spirituality, Health
Religion/Spirituality, Health
- M Reflect upon the significance of this exercise and apply the exercise to other issues. Religion/Spirituality, Health

Core Practice: Head-Neck-Shoulder Release

- I Locate the six sets of acupressure points.
Practice holding each acupressure point. Health
Health
- D Recognize the benefit of this acupressure protocol for healing body pain and symptoms. Health
- M Develop the ability to use the acupressure session to alleviate bodily pain.
Practice this protocol with another person to promote health of body and spirit. Health
Health

Objectives and Practices by Grade Level

Section 1: Wellness Practices to Improve Learning and Mental Focus

Practices	Grade Levels								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Breathwork	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M	M
Core Practice: Visualization, Safe Space & Centering									
Visualization	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M	M
The Safe and Sacred Space	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M	M
Core Practice: Exercises and Points for Head and Neck									
Head Rolls, Shrugs, Head Tap, Jaw Tap	I	I	D	D	M	M	M	M	M
Brain Balance and Focus	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M	M
Core Practice: Cross-lateral Exercises	I	I	D	D	M	M	M	M	M

Section 2: Wellness Practices to Promote Energy Flow

Practices	Grade Levels								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Energy Flow of Body, Mind and Spirit	I	I	I	I	D	D	D	M	M
Core Practice: Fingerholds to Manage Emotions	I	I	D	D	D	D	D	M	M
Core Practice: Tai Chi	I	I	D	D	D	D	M	M	M
Core Practice: Salute to the Sun	I	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M

Section 3: Wellness Practices to Heal the Body

Practices	Grade Levels								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Core Practice: Pal Dan Gum	I	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M
Core Practice: Acupressure for Physical Symptoms									
Head/Neck	I	I	I	D	D	M	M	M	M
Headaches, Hand Points	-	-	-	-	I	I	D	D	M
Shoulders	I	I	D	D	M	M	M	M	M
Stomach	I	I	D	D	M	M	M	M	M
Constipation	I	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M
Nausea	I	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M
Diarrhea	I	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M
Hiccups	I	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M
Immune system	-	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M
Back/Spinal Column	-	-	I	I	D	D	M	M	M
Lower Back	-	-	I	I	D	D	M	M	M
Cramps (girls, menstrual)	-	-	-	-	I	D	D	M	M
Leg Pain/Energy Boost	-	-	-	I	I	D	D	D	M
Insomnia	-	-	-	I	I	D	D	M	M
Sinus	I	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M
Chest Congestion/Asthma	I	I	I	D	D	M	M	M	M
Fainting, Crisis and High Blood Pressure	-	-	-	I	I	D	D	M	M
Core Practice: The Holds	-	-	I	I	D	D	D	M	M
Core Practice: Hand Massage/Reflexology	-	-	I	I	I	D	D	D	M
Core Practice: Drum Massage	I	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M
Core Practice: Pain Drain	-	-	-	-	I	I	D	D	M
Core Practice: Immune System Boost	-	I	I	D	D	D	D	M	M
Core Practice: Relaxing the Eyes	-	-	I	I	D	D	D	D	M
Mindful Eating	-	I	I	D	D	D	D	M	M

Section 4: Wellness Practices to Promote Emotional Balance

Practices	Grade Levels								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Emotional Intelligence	I	I	D	D	D	D	M	M	M
Fingerhold Meditation for Emotions	-	-	I	I	D	D	D	M	M
Core Practice: Emotional Freedom Technique—EFT									
Sore Spot	I	I	D	D	M	M	M	M	M
Acupressure Points	I	D	D	D	M	M	M	M	M
Entire Protocol	-	-	D	D	M	M	M	M	M
Core Practice: Acupressure Points to Manage Emotions and Feelings									
Anxiety/Worry	-	-	-	I	I	D	D	M	M
Depression/Heaviness/Exhaustion	-	-	-	I	I	D	D	M	M
Sadness/Grief	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M	M

Section 5: Wellness Practices to Nurture the Spirit

Practices	Grade Levels								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Mindfulness—Body, Mind, Spirit Wisdom	I	I	I	D	D	D	D	M	M
Mindfulness, Meditation and Prayer	I	I	I	D	D	D	D	M	M
Rituals and Celebrations	I	I	I	D	D	D	D	M	M
Celebration and Body Movement	I	I	I	D	D	D	D	M	M

Section 6: Wellness Practices to Heal Traumatic Stress

Practices	Grade Levels								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Transforming Stress into Well-being: Stress and Compassion Fatigue	-	-	-	-	I	I	D	D	D
Protection and Boundaries	I	I	D	D	D	M	M	M	M
Core Practice: Figure Eight Exercise to Heal Energy Drain	-	-	-	-	-	I	I	D	D
Core Practice: Head-Neck-Shoulder Release	I	D	D	M	M	M	M	M	M

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Appendix II: Capacitar for Kids Pilot Program

Capacitar for Kids grew out of a desire to offer wellness practices to children, especially those caught in the cycle of violence and trauma in many of our neighborhoods. We wanted to bring health and well-being to the lives of children, their families, teachers, schools and communities. Too often children are the unseen and unheard victims of the choices of the adults in their lives. Our vision was that simple wellness practices could serve as valuable tools to help children heal and transform the stress and violence of their lives so that they could better learn and grow as healthy and whole persons.

The Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation and TriHealth Parish Nurse Ministry collaborated on this three-year pilot health program with Capacitar Founder/Co-Director Patricia Mathes Cane, Ph.D., and Capacitar International. Capacitar practices and methods were introduced at in-service training days for the faculty and staff of Holy Family School and St. Joseph School, Cincinnati, Ohio, in 2003–2005. During the school year, Parish Nurse and Program Director Mary Duennes, R.N., met regularly with administration, faculty, staff and students to review the wellness practices, to introduce additional material, to monitor health issues and to encourage the learning process. Capacitar practices were integrated throughout the existing course of study with age-appropriate learning and cross-curriculum continuity. Ongoing support for faculty, staff, students and parents was offered to help them learn the practices as well as understand their value for daily use in school, on the playground and at home.

During the second year of the pilot program, a Capacitar for Kids teacher's manual was published. A video was produced with children modeling the practices for use as a teaching tool. The overall program was monitored with ongoing computerized evaluation and measurement of outcomes with student and faculty questionnaires and by group feedback. Positive changes were noted in student behaviors, emotional self-management, attitudes and conduct in the classroom and on the playground, and reduction in stress-related symptoms as reported by students. To date the Capacitar for Kids program has had an overall positive impact on the children and faculty at both schools. Because of the positive outcomes to date, trainings for teachers and staffs will be offered to other schools in the area during the third year of the pilot.

Through this pilot program, it is our hope that Capacitar for Kids can bring hope and healing not only to the local community, but also to the larger world. Capacitar for Kids models reverence for all life and encourages the experience of our deep interconnection. At a time of global trauma and violence, the program offers to students and teachers tools and possibilities for personal and communal healing along with a recognition of global solidarity.

Through Capacitar for Kids we envision an ever-growing circle of children, their families, schools, teachers and communities, all joined hand in hand, healing ourselves and bringing healing to our world.

We wish to express our deepest gratitude to Catholic Health Initiatives for their financial and moral support to make this endeavor possible.

Appendix III: About Capacitar International

Fact Sheet

History, Vision and Mission

Capacitar is a national and international network of empowerment and solidarity based in California. Founded in 1988, Capacitar is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to heal ourselves and heal our world.

Capacitar teaches simple wellness practices to individuals, families and communities, working especially with those affected by violence, poverty and trauma, placing in the hands of people skills to empower them to heal and transform their lives and their societies.

Capacitar currently works in 26 countries on five continents. These include 16 states in the United States, Mexico, Ireland, Northern Ireland, and countries in Central and South America, the Caribbean, Asia/Pacific (Indonesia, East Timor and Sri Lanka), and Southern and Eastern Africa. By invitation Capacitar responds to needs identified by communities and works through established groups and in concert with other economic and social development efforts.

Capacitar started its first workshops in 1988 in response to the needs of grassroots Central Americans affected by violence, poverty, war and trauma. Since its founding Capacitar trainers have offered more than 1,500 primary workshops to more than 40,000 people on five continents. Participants in turn have shared the trainings with their families and communities, multiplying the work to improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Capacitar gives workshops that model alternative uses of power as well as sensitivity to culture and traditions. Capacitar connects people from grassroots organizations through an international network of solidarity, building relationships of cultural and personal understanding.

“Capacitar” is a Spanish word meaning to empower, to encourage, to bring each other to life.

Programs, Method, Staff and Teams

Capacitar uses a learner-centered popular education approach in its programs, empowering participants to connect with their own deep wisdom and capacities of body, mind and spirit. Because of the enormity of trauma in many places, Capacitar uses an educational approach, rather than an individual or group therapeutic approach, so that many more people can benefit.

Capacitar methods involve healing, team building, and personal/community development using simple body-mind-spirit practices such as Tai Chi, visualization, breathwork, meditation and acupressure. Practices used by Capacitar come from many ancient cultures as well as from current research. Practices and methods have been researched and field-tested with a large cross-section of people from different cultures, ages and socioeconomic groups and have shown positive outcomes.

Capacitar programs include the following:

- Multicultural Wellness Education—a one-year training in theory and practices with a community internship
- Trauma Healing and Transformation—an intensive training in trauma theory and holistic approaches to healing
- Healing Ourselves, Healing Our World—basic Capacitar workshops for grassroots groups
- Trainings in Team and Organizational Development—with Capacitar practices
- Living in Wellness Programs—for caregivers, families and persons with HIV/AIDS or cancer
- Capacitar for Children—trainings for schools, teachers, children and families

Capacitar's website (www.capacitar.org) contains a description of programs and partners in different world areas, a calendar of workshops and trainings, and a listing of manuals and materials available in different languages.

Capacitar has trainers and/or teams in different countries and states, respecting an organic growth and program development consistent with the needs, culture, spirituality and reality of the people and area. Some places have formal well-developed teams and centers (e.g., in El Salvador and Chile), other areas have developed coordinating teams and regular workshops for groups (e.g., in South Africa, Botswana, and Tanzania), while still other groups have incorporated Capacitar practices in the context of an established center with its own unique spirit (e.g., in Argentina, Peru, Guatemala, Wisconsin, and San Diego/Tijuana).

Capacitar has a small staff in Santa Cruz, California, whose function is to coordinate national and international trainings, communications, newsletters, funding of programs, networking, and development and distribution of workshop materials.

Capacitar International, Inc.
212 Laurel Street, Suite 210
Santa Cruz, California 95060 USA
Tel/Fax: 831-471-9215
www.capacitar.org
capacitar@igc.org

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Capacitar?

Capacitar is:

- A spirit of empowerment and solidarity
- A network connecting people on five continents
- An organization—Capacitar International—based in California
- A team of international trainers
- People in 26 countries who live with the Capacitar spirit—using practices in their lives and multiplying them in their families, work and communities

How many people are a part of Capacitar?

The Capacitar network includes hundreds of thousands of people on five continents (North and South America, Africa, Asia and Europe) who have learned Capacitar practices and incorporated them into their lives, work and communities. A small staff in California directs the nonprofit organization, Capacitar International. Capacitar International has a training team that responds to invitations for trainings and represents the organization in the field. In many countries Capacitar local teams and groups of multipliers have developed their own organizations that sponsor ongoing gatherings, workshops and outreach.

What does “solidarity” mean to Capacitar?

Since its founding in 1988, Capacitar has accompanied grassroots people in places of war, violence, poverty and disaster. We have walked in solidarity with those working for justice, peace and reconciliation in their communities. Because of our twofold commitment to heal ourselves and heal our world, we have gained the trust of people living in places of trauma and violence. The credibility of Capacitar with so many grassroots people is directly connected to this commitment of personal and societal healing and transformation.

How can Capacitar work effectively with so many different cultures?

Capacitar work embodies a fundamental respect for and sensitivity to cultures and traditions. Using popular education methods, Capacitar develops in its trainers and participants principles of multicultural understanding. In Capacitar workshops facilitators create an atmosphere of respect for cultural systems including language, boundaries, gender issues, learning styles, mores and customs. When Capacitar receives invitations from grassroots groups or organizations to come to their country or region, trainers work closely with hosting groups to learn about their culture and socioeconomic experience so that workshops and methods meet the needs and reality of the people.

How do people in various cultures react to learning the energy practices?

Most grassroots people are sensitive to energy and are grateful to learn ways to connect with the energy in their own hands. The practices Capacitar teaches come from ancient cultures as well as current research. Energy is the basis of most traditional healing systems. In modern times, many people have lost the fundamental connection with their own body wisdom and their capacity to use their energy for healing. In our trainings people are encouraged to reconnect with this source and to ask their community elders what they traditionally did in their culture to heal their bodies and spirits.

Does Capacitar teach “new age” things?

Capacitar practices (acupressure, Tai Chi, Pal Dan Gum, Chakra work, etc.) do not originate with the “new age movement” but come from many ancient cultures. The practices have been well researched by Capacitar for their benefit to body, mind and spirit. Current medical research also shows the positive health benefits of many of these ancient practices. Some newer modalities (Emotional Freedom Technique, Thought Field Therapy and Polarity) have also been included in Capacitar programs because of their effectiveness. We have field-tested all practices with hundreds of people from different cultures and socioeconomic groups. We evaluate program content, methods and outcomes.

Is Capacitar faith-based?

Capacitar is non-denominational, respecting the faith, religious beliefs and commitments of all people. Capacitar recognizes the spiritual interconnection we all share with the Source of Being. Through its practices Capacitar endeavors to inspire people to recognize the sacredness of life and the goodness and wisdom we carry within our body, mind and spirit, and to make a commitment to create justice, nonviolence and peace in our world. Many people use Capacitar as part of their daily spiritual practice and incorporate some of the practices in their group rituals and ceremonies.

Can anyone be a Capacitar trainer?

Participants in Capacitar workshops are encouraged to informally share what they learn with their families, friends and communities in the spirit of popular education. Capacitar International has a team of trainers who officially represent the organization and its policies and curriculum. These trainers respond to invitations received by Capacitar International and are responsible for ongoing research, evaluation and development of programs.

What is the meaning of “popular education”?

“Popular education” is a dynamic educational method developed by Brazilian Paulo Freire that empowers people to awaken to their own wisdom and power. It is used extensively with grassroots people in Latin America and Africa. Popular education forms the basis of Capacitar’s learner-centered approach. Using wellness practices such as Tai Chi and acupressure, Capacitar teaches “body literacy” to reconnect people to their own wisdom and capacity. An important aspect of popular education is the multiplier effect—people are encouraged to pass on what they have learned to their families and communities, empowering the learner, contributing to the community and multiplying the work.

Does Capacitar do therapy?

Capacitar uses a popular education approach, rather than a therapeutic approach. Workshop leaders are educators, not therapists or counselors. Capacitar places skills in the hands of the people so they can do for themselves. In many places where Capacitar works, individual therapy is not culturally appropriate, while education is valued and accepted. The Capacitar educational approach is an important way to meet the needs of many traumatized people in places of massive trauma and violence where there are often not enough individual therapists.

Capacitar Manuals — Order Form

The Capacitar Manual

Cost per book with postage & handling: \$20

The Capacitar basic manual (150 pages) gives simple wellness practices for use by individuals or with groups and is illustrated with photos of Capacitar participants from the U.S. and Latin America. (English or Spanish)

Trauma Healing & Transformation

Cost per book with postage & handling: \$25

Capacitar's Trauma Healing manual (300 pages) offers a wide variety of practices for grassroots people, professionals and all those desiring to heal traumatic stress. The book contains pictures, personal experiences, theories, suggestions for leaders, methods of presentation, lists of resources and bibliographies. (English or Spanish)

Living in Wellness: A Capacitar AIDS Manual

Cost per book with postage & handling: \$20

This manual (50 pages) gives simple wellness practices to help people live with well-being as they deal with HIV/AIDS. Practices can be used by caregivers and family members for self-care and by those with HIV/AIDS. (English)

Capacitar for Kids Teacher Handbook

Cost per book with postage & handling: \$20

This manual offers a series of practices and tools to be used in the classroom, in daily life and in the home. Practices can be used in the school curriculum, with parents and community groups. (English)

Order and Payment Options

FAX or Mail to:

Capacitar International

212 Laurel St. #210

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Tel/Fax: 831-471-9215

www.capacitar.org

E-mail: capacitar@igc.org

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