

EXERCISE:

Body Map³³

FORMAT:

INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 60 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: LARGE BLANK PAPER (ONE PER PARTICIPANT), MARKERS, ARTS AND CRAFTS MATERIALS*SUMMARY:

This is a very powerful exercise that helps participants connect to their bodies, emotions and experiences by drawing a life-size outline of their bodies and placing symbols on the drawing on the areas where they feel strong emotions.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- **Individual work:** ask each participant to create a life size outline of themselves. Within this figure, then ask them to draw (or use any materials they would like) the places where they feel deep emotions. Emotions can include anger, pain, love, joy, happiness, emptiness – it is up to the participant to choose the emotions, but they should try to strike a balance between what they perceive as ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ emotions. They can use a symbol to express that emotion, either drawn or with materials on hand.
- **Individual presentations within group:** ask each participant to present their drawing and explain the emotions that they felt (hurt, anger, love, happiness), and when they first felt that emotion in that particular place. They are also welcome to give any other observations or comments. Other participants should not comment on the presentations.
- **Work in pairs:** ask participants to go into pairs to talk about one thing that hurts them. The person who is listening should not offer opinions or advice, but simply listen openly and with compassion. This is an opportunity to engage in deep and focused listening to someone else – and to understand how even a little support is enough to release pain.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- This is a very powerful and moving exercise. Expect it to release deep emotions for participants, and keep the space as safe and supportive as possible. The exercise should never be used at the end of the day, it must be followed by further exercises that will help develop strategies to work with the issues that have been surfaced.
- Some participants may find this exercise difficult, and leave areas of their ‘bodies’ blank. Facilitators should gently ask follow-up questions in these cases to draw the participant out and ask about areas that are blank.

Alternative Option:

- If time is limited, don’t do the final work in pairs. However, do leave some time and space for participants after the exercise to work with some of the emotions that have been released – if possible, give a break to the group here, and perhaps an opportunity to go for a walk.

*OPTIONAL MATERIAL, INCLUDING GLUE, PLAYDOUGH, YARN, ETC.