

EXERCISE:

*The River*³¹

FORMAT:GROUP
EXERCISETIME: 60 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: COLOURED PAPER (6 PIECES PER PARTICIPANT), MARKERSSUMMARY:

This exercise is excellent for both identifying and sharing self-care strategies.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask each participant to sit for a few minutes with six pieces of paper on which they write the strategies that they employ to keep themselves well (in one or a few words). Each piece of paper will represent 'stones'.
- Once a participant has finished writing out their strategies, they should set them out in the shape of an imaginary flowing river. Wait until all participants have placed their strategies along the length of the river.
- Then, ask each participant to walk down the river by stepping on the 'stones' (strategies) that they feel are important (it does not matter in which direction they walk along the river). Some may choose to step on their own stones, whereas others may just select the stones that resonate with them (not their own). When a participant stops on a stone, they are asked to explain why that stone (strategy) is important to them. The group simply listens to each participant, without making comments.
- After the session, the facilitators should lead a brief discussion on how the process went (how it felt, not about the details of the strategies). It is possible also to post strategies up on the wall afterwards so that people are surrounded by them, and refer to them again later in the workshop and in summaries – to remind everyone of the many strategies available to them.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- This exercise should be facilitated in a peaceful place, preferably in nature, if possible. It is a very focused and calming exercise, so facilitators need to set the tone for this.
- Note that in some contexts, participants would prefer not to step on the 'stone', for example, if spirituality or prayer has been listed as a strategy. It is fine for them to stand near the 'stone' instead.