

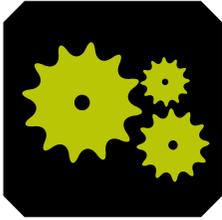
3.1 Integrated Wellness Exercises



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Title	Selection considerations	When to use	Timing
My pillars exercise	This is an excellent exercise for use in a workshop that has a deeper focus on wellness.	Day Two, morning or afternoon	45 minutes
Pillars personal plan	Use in conjunction with 'My Pillars Exercise'	Day Two, morning or afternoon	45 minutes
The river exercise	All workshops should include some form of discussion of well-being strategies, this exercise is a strong, interactive format to help the group identify and discuss strategies.	Day Two, afternoon or Day Three, morning	60 minutes
Well-being barometer exercise	This is a good exercise to open up either a session or a day of work on wellness, it is very dynamic, so a good energiser as well.	Day Two, morning	30 minutes
Body Map Exercise	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.	Day Two, never in the end of the day	60 minutes
Finger holds for managing emotions	This is a quick, practical exercise that teaches simple tools for managing extreme emotions. It can be used as an energiser as well and is good to use after an emotionally challenging exercise.	Day Two, morning or afternoon or Day Three, morning	20 minutes
Hara breathing exercise	This is a good exercise to begin a session and in particular to help a group to focus and to clear stress.	Day One, morning or Day Two, morning or afternoon	30 minutes

EXERCISE:

*My Pillars*³⁰

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 45 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: BLANK PAPER, PENCILS OR PENSUMMARY:

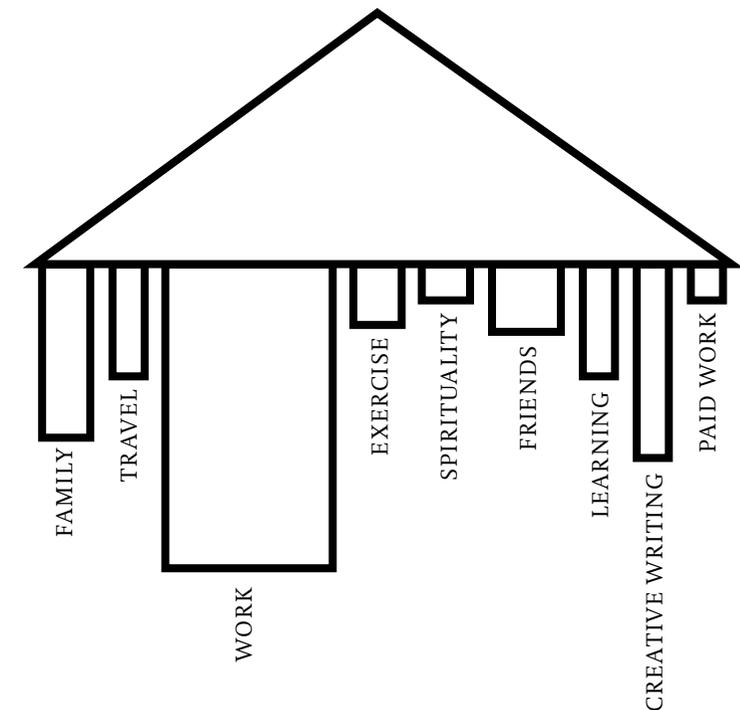
This exercise is a useful way for participants to reflect on elements or 'pillars' of their life and to assess how much time and attention they devote to each, in order to determine what is and isn't in balance.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask participants to draw a house that illustrates their current life. They should do this individually, without discussion.
- First, they draw the roof of a house. Then they are asked to draw the pillars that represent the different aspects of their life that are important to them and 'hold up' their house. These pillars should be labeled. The pillars should be drawn in proportion to how important they are and how much time they spend on them.
- Once they have completed their 'house', they return to the group and each participant presents it.

FACILITATION NOTES:

An example of how a completed 'house with pillars' might look is presented below:





EXERCISE:

FORMAT:

Pillars Personal Plan

INDIVIDUAL
AND
GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 45 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: BLANK PAPER, PENCILS OR PEN

SUMMARY:

This activity should be a follow-on to the ‘pillars’ exercise. Once participants have assessed what elements they would like to focus more attention on in their lives, they then develop a personal plan to take steps to develop the ‘underdeveloped’ pillars.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask participants to choose four pillars that they would like to work on (that are important but not developed).
- For each pillar, they should then identify three goals they would like to achieve to develop that pillar. For each of these goals, they should describe what skills are needed to achieve them and what inner strengths/power they already have to accomplish this goal.
- Goals should be achievable and realistic.
- Participants can add pillars if necessary.
- Participants should work on their own for around 15 minutes, and then in pairs for an additional 15 minutes.
- A presentation or discussion should follow.

The pillar plan could look like the one below:

Pillar #1

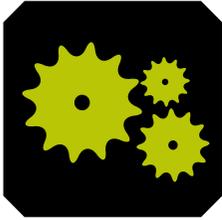
Goal	Skills needed	Inner strengths/ power to achieve
1		
2		
3		

FACILITATION NOTES:

- It can be challenging for participants to develop concrete goals and personal plans. Facilitators should be active in circulating and supporting participants during this process. In addition, facilitators should consider pre-selecting pairs to ensure that participants that may be struggling are matched up with stronger participants.

Alternate option:

- For groups that need more support, consider using triads instead of pairs for the joint work on personal plans.
- If there isn’t time for a group discussion of the plans, participants could choose a partner from their organisation or a friend who can remind them to develop the expressed goals.

EXERCISE:

*The River*³¹

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 60 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: COLOURED PAPER (6 PIECES PER PARTICIPANT), MARKERSSUMMARY:

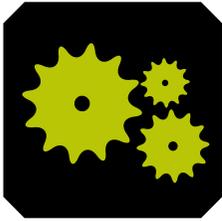
This exercise is excellent for both identifying and sharing self-care strategies.

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.

EXERCISE:

Well-being Barometer³²

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 30 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: SET OF QUESTIONS FOR BAROMETERSUMMARY:

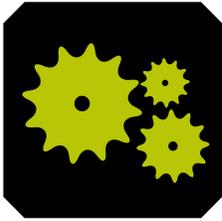
This is an interactive, energetic exercise that works well to stimulate participants' thinking about integrated wellness, it is equally useful for facilitators to assess attitudes of the group.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask participants to stand up, and explain that one end of the room represents the place where you strongly agree to a statement, the opposite end is where you strongly disagree, and the middle is neutral.
- Ask participants to place themselves in each space depending on how they answer each of a series of 10–15 statements.
- Give simple statements at first (such as: 'I am a cat lover'), so that participants can get a feel for the exercise.
- Then, give more complex and challenging statements that have been prepared for the group, such as: 'my organisation supports me when I need a break'; 'I rest when I need to'; or 'I am not prejudiced'. For the first set of 8–10 statements, the facilitator asks for between two and five comments; the last five statements are made without comment.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- This exercise should move quickly, it is very interactive and good as an ice-breaker.
- Participants are free to change positions if they hear a comment that helps them think more deeply about the statement.
- Facilitators should have a set of questions prepared in advance that are most relevant to the group and the type of issues we want to explore. Though the example questions are about integrated wellness, they could also address key issues, such as solidarity, power or trust.

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.

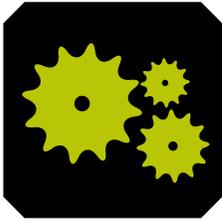
FACILITATION NOTES:

- 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.



EXERCISE:

PAGE 1/2

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

*Finger-holds for Managing Emotions*³⁴

TIME: 20 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: NONE

SUMMARY:

This is a light and practical exercise that offers participants tools for immediate self-care by teaching simple finger-holds to release extreme emotions. It is also good as an icebreaker in between sessions.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Explain that the following exercise, based on Polarity and Indonesian culture, is a simple way to manage emotions by holding the fingers.
- It is also connected to the art of Jin Shin Jyutsu, a Japanese acupressure technique.
- Emotion is like a wave of energy that moves through the body. Often with strong emotions the energy of the body becomes blocked. Through the fingers run meridians or channels of energy.
- Through each finger runs a channel of energy that corresponds to the different emotional states (*see the next page*).
- The fingerholds are a very helpful tool to use in daily life. 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 for relaxation with music, or used before going to sleep to release the problems of the day and to bring deep peace to body and mind. The practice may be done on oneself or on another person.
- Ask participants to gently hold each finger with the opposite hand for two to five minutes until they feel a steady, rhythmic pulse. This will help move and drain blocked energy, and bring back a sense of balance and harmony to the body. They can work with either hand.
- Explain that deep breathing while holding each finger can also help to bring the body-mind-spirit to a state of peace and harmony.
- As they hold each finger, ask participants to 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 your finger into the earth. Breathe in a sense of harmony, strength and healing. And breathe out slowly, releasing past feelings and problems.
- Explain that often, as you hold each finger, you can feel a pulsing sensation as the energy and feelings move and become balanced.
- Summarise the exercise by explaining that this is something that participants can do at any time, when they feel stress, anger, anxiety, or any other strong emotion. It only takes a few minutes, and is a useful tool in difficult situations.

EXERCISE:

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FORMAT:GROUP
EXERCISE

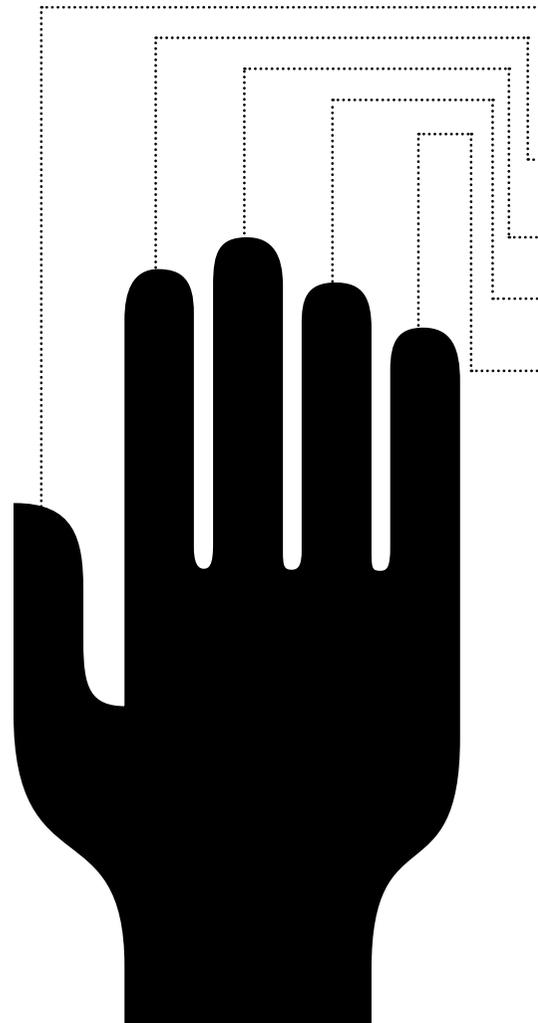
Finger-holds for Managing Emotions

FACILITATION NOTES:

- This exercise helps balance the energetic pathways that run through the fingers (referred to as meridians), which brings harmony to the entire body.
- This is a nice exercise to offer as a simple tool for self-care, and helps to emphasise that we carry the tools for self-care within ourselves.
- This exercise can be very useful following a challenging or emotional session, to help release emotions and shift the group into a space where they feel more hopeful and empowered.

Alternative Option:

- For participants who have challenges using their hands and fingers, or who are missing fingers or limbs, discuss this exercise beforehand and assess their comfort levels with it – they may be able to adapt it to hold other parts of their hand that correspond to the correct meridians, they could place fingers on the center of the palm (either side), which helps with fatigue and depression.
- An experienced facilitator who is familiar with ‘mudras’ (sometimes referred to as hand yoga) could continue this exercise by teaching specific mudras to the group.



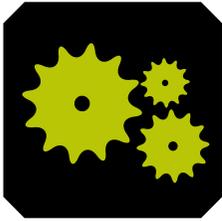
Thumb = Emotional pain, sadness, grief, tears

Index Finger = Fear, terror

Middle Finger = Anger, rage, resentment

Ring Finger = Anxiety, worry, preoccupation

Small Finger = Lack of self-esteem, victimhood



EXERCISE:

PAGE 1/2

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

*Hara Breathing*³⁵

TIME: 30 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: NONE

SUMMARY:

This is a simple breathing exercise that will help participants to become calm, centered, and clear. It should help to restore energy, and to set the tone for further exercises.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask participants to get into a sitting or lying position (whichever is comfortable), close their eyes and quietly bring their attention to their body. The spine should be straight, in whichever position. If a participant is lying down, ask them to cover their navel area with their hands.
- Take a few deep breaths to clear your body and mind.
- Then, take a breath and bring it down all the way to your hara (literally your belly or your abdomen, the hara is a central area of power and essence – it is also referred to as the Sea of Energy). Explain that our hara is located about two fingers below your belly button, in your center, on the midline of your body and closer to the spine. This is your area of power in the body.
- Next, breathe in through your nose. While you're breathing in through your nose, place the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth behind the front teeth. This is important as you're connecting the Yin Conception Vessel (runs up the middle of the front of the body) to the Yang Governor vessel (which runs up the middle of the back of the body, over the head, and terminates just above the upper lip).
- As you exhale, remove your tongue from the roof of your mouth and exhale through your mouth. As you inhale through your nose, have the tongue touching the roof of the mouth. As you exhale through your mouth, remove the tongue from the roof of your mouth.
- Practice inhaling and exhaling a few times. Now you're ready to start breathing from your belly. When you breathe from your belly, the muscles of the abdomen should be doing part of the work of breathing. You'll be able to feel your abdomen expand and contract while breathing just like you can feel your chest expand and contract while breathing. Practice breathing from your belly for a while. While you're doing this, air is getting into all of your lungs. When you breathe just from the chest, air does not always reach all places in your lungs. More important, when you're breathing from your belly, it encourages Qi (power) to flow smoothly through all parts of your body.
- Breathe through your belly, inhaling through your nose while the tongue is touching the roof of the mouth, exhaling through your mouth with the tongue not touching the roof. Practice for a while.
- Now you're ready for Hara breathing. You've already located the hara. Don't worry about not knowing exactly where this point is located, just so you know the general location. As you breathe from your belly, as you inhale with tongue touching roof of mouth, visualize a stream of golden particles entering through your nose



EXERCISE:

PAGE 2/2

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

Hara Breathing

and being sucked down to the area of the Hara. As you hold your breath, visualize the flow of golden particles circulating through your body, bringing energy and health to all parts of it. Now exhale. As you exhale you can visualize the breath taking black particles (toxins, bad Qi, etc.) out of your body. Now breathe in more healing, golden particles, circulate, and breathe out the negative.

- Do the breathing exercise a few times. You may want to start out with 5 breaths.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- This is a very calming exercise that can be used at the beginning of the day, particularly if no other centering techniques (such as yoga or qi gong) are used beforehand.
- It can also be used after an emotionally difficult session as a form of energiser.

Alternative option:

This exercise can be done more quickly if we focus only on breathing into and out from the hara, without teaching the technique of touching the tongue to the roof of the mouth on the inhale and removing on the exhale. In this case, the aim of the exercise is simply to help participants feel the location of the hara in their body, as a source of power and energy.

In this case, it can also be followed by teaching the martial art technique of 'ki-up', which is a self-defense form of shouting from the hara area. This can also be taught on its own as a quick energiser.