

Activity Plan



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NAME OF THE ACTIVITY:

HAPPINESS AND WELLBEING

OVERVIEW

THE ACTIVITY EXPLORES THE NATURE OF HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING THROUGH A PHILOSOPHICAL STORY. IT CONTRASTS THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS THROUGH EXTERNAL ACHIEVEMENTS (E.G., POWER, WEALTH) WITH CULTIVATING HAPPINESS FROM WITHIN. USING THE STORY OF DIOGENES' WISDOM AND ALEXANDER THE GREAT'S RELENTLESS CONQUESTS, THE ACTIVITY ENCOURAGES PARTICIPANTS TO REFLECT ON THEIR OWN BEHAVIORS, EXAMINING WHETHER THEY SEEK HAPPINESS THROUGH EXTERNAL MEANS OR ENGAGE IN ACTIONS WHILE ALREADY HAPPY. THROUGH MINDFULNESS EXERCISES AND DISCUSSIONS, THE ACTIVITY PROMOTES SELF-AWARENESS, EMOTIONAL REGULATION, AND A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SUSTAINABLE, INTERNAL HAPPINESS, FOSTERING PERSONAL GROWTH AND WELL-BEING.

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OBJECTIVES:

- TO HELP PARTICIPANTS REFLECT ON THE TRUE ESSENCE OF HAPPINESS, UNDERSTAND HOW PEOPLE SEEK HAPPINESS, AND DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PURSUING HAPPINESS THROUGH EXTERNAL MEANS VERSUS CULTIVATING HAPPINESS FROM WITHIN.
- TO DEVELOP SELF-AWARENESS AND MINDFULNESS AMONGST LEARNERS
-
- TO ENABLE LEARNERS TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY AND EXPRESS THEMSELVES FREELY AND CREATIVELY
- TO ENABLE LEARNERS TO UNDERSTAND THEIR EXPECTATIONS IN RELATIONSHIPS, DEVELOP EMPATHY, AND ENSURE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY, PEERS & TEACHERS
- TO ENABLE LEARNERS TO APPLY LIFE SKILLS TO DEAL WITH STRESSFUL & CONFLICTING SITUATIONS AROUND THEM

COMPLEXITY AND TIME:

LOW TO MODERATE.
120 MINUTES TOTAL.

GROUP SIZE:

5 TO 20 PARTICIPANTS (CAN BE ADAPTED FOR LARGER GROUPS).

THEMES ADDRESSED:

HAPPINESS
TEMPORARY VS. LASTING HAPPINESS.
MINDFULNESS IN HAPPINESS
CULTIVATING INNER PEACE
PERSONAL HAPPINESS
SELF-AWARENESS
• SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

TARGET GROUP:

YOUNG ADULT FROM 18-30 YEAR

MATERIALS:

STICKY NOTES OR PAPER FOR REFLECTION
PENS OR MARKERS
A WHITEBOARD/FLIP CHART (FOR SHARING INSIGHTS)
MINDFULNESS MUSIC OR TIMER (FOR RELAXATION)

RESOURCES:

READING MATERIALS:

- ARTICLES OR HANDOUTS ABOUT MINDFULNESS AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING (OPTIONAL)
-

SPACE:

- QUIET SPACE FOR GROUP DISCUSSION AND MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. START WITH MINDFULNESS (5 MINUTES)
 - BEGIN THE SESSION BY ASKING PARTICIPANTS TO CLOSE THEIR EYES, SIT COMFORTABLY, AND FOCUS ON THEIR BREATH FOR 2-3 MINUTES.
 -
 - ENCOURAGE THEM TO NOTICE THE SENSATION OF THEIR BREATH AS IT ENTERS AND LEAVES THEIR BODY. THIS EXERCISE IS MEANT TO GROUND THEM AND FOSTER A SENSE OF CALM BEFORE THE DISCUSSION.

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INSTRUCTIONS:

- 2. STORY OF ALEXANDER AND DIOGENES (15 MINUTES)
- PURPOSE: TO INTRODUCE THE CONTRASTING APPROACHES TO HAPPINESS THROUGH THE STORY OF ALEXANDER AND DIOGENES.
- STORY:
- (STORY SHOULD BE NARRATED IN AN ENGAGING, PLAYFUL AND DRAMATIC WAY SO THE PARTICIPANTS DON'T LOSE FOCUS AND ARE ENGAGED)
- IN ANCIENT GREECE, THERE LIVED A PHILOSOPHER NAMED DIOGENES, WHO WAS KNOWN FOR HIS UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM. PEOPLE OFTEN SOUGHT HIM FOR ADVICE, AND HE WOULD SAY, "IF YOU DO SOMETHING TO BE HAPPY, YOU WILL BE DISAPPOINTED WHEN YOU DON'T GET WHAT YOU WANT. HOWEVER, IF YOU DO SOMETHING WHILE ALREADY HAPPY, YOU WILL ALWAYS BE CONTENT, REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME."
- ONE DAY, ALEXANDER THE GREAT, WHO HAD CONQUERED MANY LANDS, MET DIOGENES. ALEXANDER ARROGANTLY INTRODUCED HIMSELF AS THE KING WHO COULD FULFILL ANY WISH. HE OFFERED DIOGENES ANYTHING HE DESIRED, EXPECTING THE PHILOSOPHER TO ASK FOR WEALTH OR POWER. HOWEVER, DIOGENES SIMPLY RESPONDED, "YOU CAN GIVE ME NOTHING, FOR I AM CONTENT. BUT YOU, ALEXANDER, WILL NEVER BE CONTENT, EVEN IF YOU CONQUER THE WHOLE WORLD. TRUE HAPPINESS LIES IN UPLIFTING HUMANITY, NOT IN SUBJUGATING IT."

DISCUSSION PROMPT:

- "WHAT DO YOU THINK DIOGENES MEANT WHEN HE SAID ALEXANDER WOULD NOT BE HAPPY EVEN AFTER CONQUERING THE WORLD?"
- "WHAT DO YOU THINK ALEXANDER WAS SEEKING, AND WHY WAS HE NEVER SATISFIED?"
- "HOW DO WE, IN OUR DAILY LIVES, SOMETIMES ACT LIKE ALEXANDER, SEEKING HAPPINESS THROUGH EXTERNAL ACHIEVEMENTS RATHER THAN CULTIVATING IT WITHIN OURSELVES?"

3. GROUP DISCUSSION: THE TWO PATHS TO HAPPINESS (30 MINUTES)

OBJECTIVE: TO MAKE PARTICIPANTS REFLECT ON THEIR BEHAVIOR IN RELATION TO HAPPINESS – DO THEY SEEK HAPPINESS EXTERNALLY, OR DO THEY CULTIVATE IT INTERNALLY?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. WHEN DO YOU DO SOMETHING TO BE HAPPY?

2.

- EXAMPLE: BUYING SOMETHING NEW, GETTING A PROMOTION, GOING ON VACATION.
- ASK: "WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF SEEKING HAPPINESS THIS WAY?"

1. WHEN DO YOU DO SOMETHING HAPPILY?

2.

- EXAMPLE: VOLUNTEERING, HELPING OTHERS, PURSUING A PASSION.
- ASK: "HOW DOES THE HAPPINESS YOU FEEL WHEN DOING SOMETHING HAPPILY DIFFER FROM DOING SOMETHING TO BE HAPPY?"

1. WHY DO YOU THINK CONSTANT EXTERNAL ACHIEVEMENTS DON'T LEAD TO LASTING HAPPINESS?

2.

- ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO REFLECT ON TIMES WHEN THEY'VE ACHIEVED SOMETHING BUT STILL FELT AN EMPTINESS AFTERWARD. DISCUSS HOW EMOTIONAL FULFILLMENT AND PEACE COME FROM WITHIN, NOT FROM EXTERNAL VALIDATION.

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INSTRUCTIONS:

4. INTERACTIVE EXERCISE: COMPARING TWO STATES (20 MINUTES)

OBJECTIVE: TO HELP PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFY AND DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN DOING SOMETHING TO ACHIEVE HAPPINESS VERSUS DOING SOMETHING WHILE ALREADY HAPPY.

STEPS:

- ASK PARTICIPANTS TO **PAIR UP** WITH SOMEONE IN THE GROUP.
-
- GIVE EACH PAIR THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS:
 - **SCENARIO 1 (TO BE HAPPY):** BUYING A NEW GADGET OR ITEM TO FEEL HAPPINESS.
 -
 - **SCENARIO 2 (WHILE BEING HAPPY):** DONATING YOUR TIME TO A CAUSE BECAUSE YOU FEEL JOY IN HELPING OTHERS.
 -
- ASK EACH PARTICIPANT TO **REFLECT ON:**
 - HOW DO YOU FEEL IN THE MOMENT WHEN YOU' RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE HAPPINESS (SCENARIO 1)?
 -
 - HOW DOES IT FEEL WHEN YOU' RE DOING SOMETHING OUT OF AN EXISTING STATE OF HAPPINESS (SCENARIO 2)?
 -
- ONCE THEY'VE SHARED WITH THEIR PARTNER, HAVE **VOLUNTEERS** SHARE INSIGHTS WITH THE LARGER GROUP.
-

DEBRIEF DISCUSSION:

- ASK: "WHICH OF THE TWO APPROACHES FELT MORE FULFILLING? WHY?"
 -
 - "CAN HAPPINESS FROM WITHIN BE SUSTAINED LONGER THAN HAPPINESS FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES?"
 -
 - "WHAT ARE SOME DAILY PRACTICES THAT CAN HELP CULTIVATE HAPPINESS WITHIN RATHER THAN RELYING ON EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES?"
- ### 5. REFLECTION: WHAT DOES TRUE HAPPINESS MEAN? (15 MINUTES)
- **OBJECTIVE:** TO HELP PARTICIPANTS EXAMINE THEIR VIEWS ON HAPPINESS AND IDENTIFY HOW THEY CAN INTEGRATE DIOGENES' PHILOSOPHY INTO THEIR LIVES.
 - **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:** AS A TRAINER YOU CAN GIVE AN EXAMPLE FOR EACH QUESTION, SO GET MOTIVATION TO FORM THEIR OWN ANSWER
 - 1. CAN YOU RELATE TO THE IDEA THAT EXTERNAL SUCCESS OR MATERIAL POSSESSIONS DON' T GUARANTEE LONG-TERM HAPPINESS?
 - AS A TRAINER, I REMEMBER WORKING TIRELESSLY TO EARN A PRESTIGIOUS CERTIFICATION IN MY FIELD. WHEN I FINALLY ACHIEVED IT, I FELT AN IMMEDIATE RUSH OF EXCITEMENT AND PRIDE. BUT, WITHIN WEEKS, THE JOY FADED, REPLACED BY STRESS OVER MAINTAINING THE SAME LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE. THIS EXPERIENCE TAUGHT ME THAT EXTERNAL ACHIEVEMENTS, WHILE FULFILLING IN THE MOMENT, RARELY PROVIDE SUSTAINED HAPPINESS. INSTEAD, IT'S THE SENSE OF PURPOSE AND FULFILLMENT I GAIN FROM MENTORING OTHERS AND MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT THAT TRULY LASTS.
 - 2. WHAT PRACTICES OR HABITS DO YOU ENGAGE IN THAT HELP YOU FEEL A SENSE OF CONTENTMENT AND INNER PEACE?
 - PERSONALLY, I'VE FOUND THAT INCORPORATING MINDFULNESS MEDITATION INTO MY MORNING ROUTINE SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCES MY WELL-BEING. TAKING 10 MINUTES EACH DAY TO FOCUS ON MY BREATH AND OBSERVE MY THOUGHTS WITHOUT JUDGMENT HELPS ME START THE DAY WITH CLARITY AND CALMNESS. ADDITIONALLY, JOURNALING ABOUT MOMENTS OF GRATITUDE BEFORE SLEEPING ALLOWS ME TO END THE DAY ON A POSITIVE NOTE. THESE SIMPLE HABITS PROVIDE ME WITH A STEADY FOUNDATION OF INNER PEACE, REGARDLESS OF EXTERNAL PRESSURES.

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INSTRUCTIONS:

- 3. HOW CAN YOU CULTIVATE HAPPINESS FROM WITHIN, REGARDLESS OF EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES?
- FOR ME, HAPPINESS FROM WITHIN OFTEN COMES FROM CREATIVE PURSUITS AND GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY. WHENEVER I FEEL OVERWHELMED OR DISSATISFIED, I SPEND TIME PAINTING OR WRITING, WHICH HELPS ME RECONNECT WITH MY INNER SELF. VOLUNTEERING AT A LOCAL NON-PROFIT ALSO GIVES ME A PROFOUND SENSE OF FULFILLMENT, KNOWING THAT I'M CONTRIBUTING POSITIVELY TO OTHERS' LIVES. CULTIVATING GRATITUDE, REGULARLY REFLECTING ON MY PERSONAL GROWTH, AND SETTING INTENTIONS RATHER THAN EXPECTATIONS ARE TECHNIQUES I CONSCIOUSLY PRACTICE TO NURTURE INNER HAPPINESS.
- NOTE: TRAINERS CAN FORM THEIR OWN ANSWERS DEPENDING ON THEIR EXPERIENCES.
- 6. MINDFULNESS AND REFLECTION (5 MINUTES)
- END THE SESSION WITH ANOTHER SHORT MINDFULNESS PRACTICE, ALLOWING PARTICIPANTS TO SIT QUIETLY AND REFLECT ON THE DAY'S DISCUSSION. ASK THEM TO FOCUS ON THEIR BREATH FOR A FEW MINUTES AND NOTICE HOW THEY FEEL AFTER THE DISCUSSION.
- 7. CLOSING THOUGHTS (10 MINUTES)
- SUMMARIZE THE SESSION'S KEY LEARNINGS:
- HAPPINESS IS AN INTERNAL STATE THAT COMES FROM WITHIN, NOT JUST FROM EXTERNAL ACHIEVEMENTS OR POSSESSIONS.
- WHILE EXTERNAL SUCCESSES CAN BRING TEMPORARY JOY, TRUE, LASTING HAPPINESS COMES FROM PURSUING ACTIONS THAT ALIGN WITH INNER PEACE, FULFILLMENT, AND POSITIVE INTENTIONS.
- THE TRIAD FOR HAPPINESS:
 - THROUGH OUR SENSES: THIS IS THE PLEASURE WE GET VIA INPUTS THROUGH THE 5 SENSES OF SIGHT, SOUND, TOUCH, SMELL AND TASTE. WE CAN OBSERVE/EXPERIENCE THAT HAPPINESS THROUGH OUR SENSES LIKE EATING GOOD FOOD, WATCHING A FILM, OR LISTENING TO MUSIC ARE HIGHLY ENJOYABLE BUT SHORTER IN DURATION. HAPPINESS FROM TASTING A PIECE OF SWEET, OR WATCHING A GOOD FILM COULD LAST FROM A FEW SECONDS TO A COUPLE OF HOURS. HENCE, THIS CAN BE CLASSIFIED AS MOMENTARY HAPPINESS.
 - FEELINGS IN RELATIONSHIPS: WE INTRINSICALLY DESIRE FEELINGS LIKE AFFECTION, CARE, GRATITUDE, RESPECT IN ALL OUR RELATIONSHIPS, BE IT FRIENDS, FAMILY AND SOCIETY. THESE FEELINGS ESTABLISH THE VALUE OF A RELATIONSHIP AND THUS THEY ARE CALLED 'VALUES'. WE EXPECT THESE FEELINGS TO BE FULFILLED. THESE EXPECTATIONS CAN'T BE FULFILLED BY ANY MATERIAL OR PHYSICAL THINGS, BUT BY FEELINGS ONLY. IT IS WHEN THESE EXPECTATIONS ARE MET THAT WE FEEL HAPPY. ALSO, WHEN WE INTERNALLY FEEL VALUES OF AFFECTION, TRUST, RESPECT, GRATITUDE FOR SOMEONE, HAPPINESS FROM SUCH FEELINGS STAYS WITH US FOR A LONGER TIME THAN THAT DERIVED THROUGH THE SENSES. THIS IS DEEPER HAPPINESS. THEIR IMPACT ON OUR INNER STATE IS LONGER AND HELPS US 'BE' IN A RELATIONSHIP.
 - LEARNING (CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR ACCORDING TO CONSTRUCTIVE UNDERSTANDING) & AWARENESS: THIS IS TO DO WITH BEING AWARE OF OUR THOUGHTS, BEING MINDFUL OF OUR ACTIONS AND BEING FREE FROM INTERNAL CONFLICT. THIS HAPPINESS IS WHAT WE EXPERIENCE WHEN WE SOLVE A PROBLEM, LEARN SOMETHING NEW, UNDERSTAND A CONCEPT OR SOME MEANING THAT STAYS WITH US FOR A MUCH LONGER PERIOD. HENCE, THIS IS SUSTAINABLE HAPPINESS, WHICH INVOLVES CLARITY OF THOUGHT, DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SELF, BEING ABLE TO FOCUS, BEING MINDFUL, FINDING CAUSE, PURPOSE AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS IN OUR LIVING, ETC.
- ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO APPLY THESE INSIGHTS IN THEIR DAILY LIVES BY CULTIVATING HAPPINESS THROUGH PERSONAL GROWTH, RELATIONSHIPS, AND POSITIVE ACTIONS.
-
- THIS ACTIVITY ENCOURAGES ADULTS TO REFLECT ON THEIR PERSONAL PRACTICES AROUND HAPPINESS AND CHALLENGES THEM TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN FLEETING HAPPINESS DRIVEN BY EXTERNAL REWARDS AND LASTING HAPPINESS NURTURED FROM WITHIN. BY FOSTERING A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF HAPPINESS, IT ENCOURAGES PARTICIPANTS TO BECOME MORE INTENTIONAL ABOUT HOW THEY APPROACH THEIR EMOTIONAL WELL-BE

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DEBRIEFING AND EVALUATION:

DEBRIEFING: AT THE END OF THE SESSION, ASK PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE ANY INSIGHTS OR THOUGHTS THEY GAINED FROM THE ACTIVITY. THIS HELPS IN EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DISCUSSION AND GIVES PARTICIPANTS A CHANCE TO REFLECT ON THE KEY TAKEAWAYS.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- "DID THIS SESSION HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PURSUING HAPPINESS AND CULTIVATING IT?"
-
- "HOW DO YOU THINK THIS UNDERSTANDING WILL IMPACT YOUR DAILY LIFE AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING?"

TIPS FOR FACILITATOR

- BE EMPATHETIC: THIS TOPIC INVOLVES DEEP PERSONAL REFLECTION. CREATE A SAFE AND OPEN ENVIRONMENT WHERE PARTICIPANTS FEEL COMFORTABLE SHARING WITHOUT JUDGMENT.
-
- ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION: INVITE EVERYONE TO CONTRIBUTE AND ENSURE THAT QUIETER PARTICIPANTS FEEL ENCOURAGED TO SHARE THEIR VIEWS.
-
- PROVIDE RELATABLE EXAMPLES: USE REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES, SUCH AS SOCIAL MEDIA HABITS OR FAMOUS PERSONALITIES, TO MAKE THE DISCUSSION MORE ENGAGING.
-

GUIDE THE DISCUSSION: KEEP THE CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON HAPPINESS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO INNER PEACE AND EXTERNAL ACTIONS. GENTLY STEER PARTICIPANTS BACK TO THE TOPIC IF DISCUSSIONS VEER OFF-COURSE.

FOLLOW UP

- MINDFULNESS PRACTICE: ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO PRACTICE MINDFULNESS DAILY OR WEEKLY TO HELP THEM CONNECT WITH THEIR INNER SENSE OF CONTENTMENT.
-
- GRATITUDE JOURNALING: SUGGEST THAT PARTICIPANTS KEEP A GRATITUDE JOURNAL TO HELP SHIFT FOCUS TOWARD WHAT THEY ALREADY HAVE, RATHER THAN WHAT THEY NEED.
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- CONTINUOUS REFLECTION: RECOMMEND SETTING ASIDE A FEW MINUTES EACH DAY TO REFLECT ON THEIR ACTIONS—ARE THEY DOING THINGS TO BE HAPPY, OR ARE THEY DOING THINGS WHILE ALREADY HAPPY?
-
- GROUP DISCUSSIONS: SUGGEST FOLLOW-UP GROUP DISCUSSIONS OR SUPPORT GROUPS TO SHARE PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN CULTIVATING INTERNAL HAPPINESS.
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- RECOMMEND THEM TO WATCH PODCAST: [HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/ROVMWEJILA](https://youtu.be/rovmwEjIILA)
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RECOMMEND TAKING THE HAPPINESS TEST: [HTTPS://WWW.PSYCHOLOGYTODAY.COM/US/TESTS/HEALTH/HAPPINESS-TEST](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/tests/health/happiness-test)