










The art of asking — what your body tells you — customized massage

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|  TIME | 20 minutes |
|  No. | 6 to 16 participants |
|  MATERIALS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 20 minutes of relaxing music; • Cushions or floor/yoga mats; • Candles or soft light. |
|  OBJECTIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a relaxed environment and making participants bond in a trustful way; • To become aware of one's desires and limits through a body activity; • To learn to express your needs and welcome those of the other person. |
|  INSTRUCTIONS STEP BY STEP | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain to the group that this is a “massage” activity that involves touching <i>the shoulders, the back, the arms, the head...</i> Ask everyone if they would like any part of their body to be left untouched. Make sure to carefully address each participant's wishes and make sure that they are respected. If someone does not wish to participate, respect their choice; |

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. You may want to play slow, low volume music to create a zen-like atmosphere; 3. Invite participants to pair up with people they feel comfortable with for this activity. Make sure everyone feels comfortable and relaxed throughout the activity; 4. Give a time for person 'A' to mention to 'B' the parts of the body that they do not wish to be touched. Then 'A' closes their eyes and 'B' stands behind them; 5. 'B' gives 'A' a massage for 5 minutes. Ask 'B' to start with something gentle and tell 'A' to connect with the moment, with the massage, and with their feelings. Signal to the pairs when the time is up. Give 'A' a moment to appreciate the sensations left by the massage; 6. Then switch roles: 'A' gives a massage to 'B' for 5 minutes, and let them know when the time is up; 7. Debriefing time: 'A' has 1 minute to express what they liked and disliked about the massage. Ask 'A' to make concrete requests, express preferences and discomforts. Emphasise that this is not a critical evaluation of the masseur or masseuse and their massage, but that it is rather a feedback on the needs of the person being massaged. 'B' is actively listening and does not interrupt their pair; 8. When it's their turn, 'B' has 1 minute to give feedback and make request; 9. A massage session starts again for 2 minutes per person. The masseurs or masseuses take care to put into practice the requests expressed by their pairs. Signal when it is time to switch roles; 10. At the end you can spare a moment and have pairs to thank each other. Then do a debriefing together. |
|  <p>DISCUSSIONS</p> | <p>Open up for a group discussion at the end of the activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were your difficulties and comfort levels in identifying your preferences/ limitations during and after the massage? • How did you communicate your needs? • How did you receive each other's needs? • What were your observations about the 2nd massage? • How would you apply these steps in the rest of the workshop or in your daily life? |

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|  <p>HINTS</p> | <p>Respect boundaries and create a sense of trust: We may not be used to being massaged by strangers, especially in a workshop setting, and contact with the body may trigger discomfort whether circumstantial, psychological or cultural. Issues of gender or beliefs may emerge. Provide a space for participants to express their preferences and be careful to ensure that they are respected — that is the whole point of this activity!</p> |
|  <p>THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE</p> | <p>-</p> |
|  <p>THEORY</p> | <p>When someone kindly does a favour for us or gives us attention, it can be difficult to identify and then express what we like and dislike. We are probably afraid of hurting their feelings, or we don't feel entitled to ask for something specific. However, consent is built on clear, benevolent requests and attentive listening on the part of the other person. It is therefore necessary to create an environment where we feel confident to express ourselves, to refuse, and where we feel we are being listened to, and where our requests are taken into account.</p> <p>Here we practice all these subtle details in a massage exercise. Engaging the body in group exercises can generate resistance in participants. However, it is an excellent opportunity for our practice, and it is an exercise that greatly contributes to the establishment of intimacy among/ between people. Be attentive with the group, you may want to ask them in advance whether they want to participate. Remind the group that we can always use our safety sign and practice everything we learned about saying 'yes' and 'no's. Think about your group and make your own variation.</p> |