

LEAVES ON THE STREAM MEDITATION

Individual, Dyadic, or Group Mindfulness Exercise

USE THIS EXERCISE TO BUILD:



Social and
Emotional
Abilities



Social
Connections

PURPOSE

Letting go of overwhelming thoughts and feelings is essential to figuring out how to move forward. This process of letting go gives us more energy to instead strengthen our connections to ourselves, to others, and to our spirituality. These connections provide further opportunity for strength and healing.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY LENGTH: 15 MINUTES

5 minutes for introduction | 5 minutes for meditation | 5 minutes for reflection

MATERIALS

Comfortable place to sit and relax

Headphones or music (optional)

Guided online meditation (optional): [Leaves on a Stream Meditation](#) or [3-minute Leaves on a Stream Meditation](#)

Notes for the facilitator

- Not everyone responds well to deep breathing and meditation
 - A mindfulness walk is a great alternative that still includes mindfulness (see Exercise 14: Mindfulness Walk).
- There are many guided versions of this activity online that can be helpful to watch before guiding a group on your own.
 - [Leaves on a Stream Meditation](#)
 - [3 minute Leaves on a Stream Meditation](#)
- You can try this exercise at the beginning of a session, after discussing a difficult topic, or when survivors seem to be overwhelmed.
- This meditation is grounded in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). You can read more about this meditation [here](#) and more about ACT [here](#).

**When using this activity with children:**

- Consider age (recommended range: 6–18 years old)
- Kids of all ages can benefit from mindfulness techniques.
- Leaves on a Stream meditation requires some sitting and listening skills that may be difficult for younger kids.
- The important thing to remember is not the details of the exercise itself, but the goal of regulating our emotions and connecting with ourselves.
- Here are some other younger kid-friendly meditations to try if your child doesn't like Leaves on a Stream:
 - [Melting Exercise](#)
 - [Dragon Breathing](#)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- 1 Take deep, calming breaths.
- 2 When ready, keep breathing deeply and imagine yourself in front of a stream watching the water flow.
- 3 Each time you notice a thought, feeling, or sensation, imagine placing it on a leaf and letting it float down the stream.
Note: Do this regardless of whether the thoughts, feelings, or sensations are positive or negative, pleasurable or painful.
- 4 If you notice your attention drifting, gently bring yourself back to the stream.
- 5 Acknowledge the interruption, place it on a leaf, and watch it float away.
- 6 After your thoughts and feelings start to slow, allow the image of the stream to dissolve.
- 7 Slowly bring your attention back to your body.
- 8 Wiggle your fingers and toes, stretching slowly and bringing yourself back to where you are.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How do you feel after doing the exercise?
- Did anything feel particularly difficult or easy?
- What did you notice in your body as you were doing this exercise?
- What do you notice in your body after this exercise?

Promising Futures



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