



Focusing

Course Manual

Prepared for Palestine Trauma Centre - Gaza

Autumn 2013

Focusing Course Manual

This manual will help you to put into practice what you learned on the Focusing Course and it can be used to help you support other people using Focusing.

The Journey

I find that a journey is a useful metaphor for how we learn Focusing - you may find your own metaphor which fits how the learning process is for you. The course is like a map - it shows you the way, and also shows you there are different ways to get there. You may have some idea of why you are doing this course and what you hope to get out of it - but you may find your destination changes as time goes on. On a map you can see the route but travelling on it is a whole different experience - then you see what the place is really like.

I would encourage you not to rush on the journey - enjoy the scenery - accept that you may get lost occasionally, and give time for each piece of learning to settle in. Focusing unfolds differently in each of us and you need to allow it to happen rather than trying to force something to happen. I would invite you to let go of expectations and preconceived notions of what Focusing is and how you want it to help you.

Introduction

Ground rules for Focusing Courses

When using Focusing the following ground rules are important:

Acceptance

- it is important that we accept one another and ourselves - just as we are.

Responsibility

- The Focuser responsible for deciding what feels right for them - how deep they go, how much they share, or deciding not to do an exercise that doesn't feel right.

Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is well understood in terms of not revealing any personal information that may be shared on Focusing. In Focusing it also means respecting what people share in a Focusing session - not referring to it later, or saying you had a similar experience. What is shared in Focusing is very sensitive and doesn't want to be exposed to comment.

What is Focusing?

Focusing at its most basic is about:

Pausing and sensing inside

Noticing that something is here

Listening to what is here just as it is

Following - allowing it to be just as it is - getting to know what is inside us just as it is

"Focusing is a careful listening to oneself. Listening is a careful following of another trying to stay in their terms without adding. The careful listening to another is a bridge to the other's experience; the careful listening to oneself is a respectful bridging to your own experience. There is an inherent goodness in this kind of bridging."

Robert Lee

Focusing is a process of sensing inside for what the body has to tell us through feelings, body sensations, and images. Focusing is about helping the person to understand himself well. The focuser is in charge and is going to help himself -

they will lead themselves. Focusing gives space and time to the person to sense his feelings, body sense, images and words. Focusing can be helpful in bringing past experiences into the present, from unconscious to conscious. It seeks to help the person to get a bit of distance from what they are feeling so they can be with their feelings. Focusing respects the humanity in the person and helps to give them some power over how they respond to life events.

Differences from other approaches

In focusing the clients are leading the session. They decide how deep to go, when the session starts and ends and can ask for the help they need from the listener. This differs from other approaches where the therapist is in charge and the client expects the therapist cure their problems. Focusing seeks to harness the clients own inner resources to help themselves. In this way the client learns a process they can use to cope with daily events. This is the difference between giving someone food to feed themselves and teaching them to fish so they can find their own food. Another metaphor is that focusing is aiming to give the person the key so they can open the door themselves where other approaches are seeking to open the door for them.

Module 1 – Pausing

To start Focusing you first need to pause. When we are trying to think of something we have forgotten we pause - then maybe we remember. Pausing in Focusing allows us to stop what we are doing and sense inside. Relaxing the body helps us to pause.

Go around the room and invite everyone to say their name. Now go around again and invite them to pause before they say their name. Notice how it feels different.

One way to teach people to pause is with the Safe Space Exercise. This exercise can be used at the beginning of a session to show people it can be safe to sense inside or we can use it at the end to help to settle feelings when they have been stirred up. It can also be used on its own to help people relax and find that they have a place of safety inside they can go to.

Invite the group to sense inside by asking them to close their eyes and relax. The guide them through the exercise by reading the instructions really slowly - giving a pause after each one. After the exercise people can be invited to draw what they noticed. When all the drawings are finished each person can talk about their drawing.

Practice 1 – Focuser – Safe Space Exercise

Before you start bring to your mind a place you would like to be - it could be a place you know or somewhere imaginary. Somewhere that feels calm and beautiful.

I'm bringing my awareness into my body, starting with my feet,

Then my legs,

Back

Arms shoulders, Head and

into my centre (my throat, chest, stomach area)

I'm taking myself to my Calm, Beautiful, Safe place . . .

I'm sitting in this place ...

I'm noticing what is around me in this place ...

I'm sensing what I can feel here ...

I'm noticing what I can smell ...

I'm becoming aware of any sounds I can hear ...

Spend a few minutes in this calm beautiful safe place

I'm sensing how this place feels in my body ...

I'm sensing where I feel this Calm, Beautiful, Safe place in my body ...

I'm taking time to be in this safe place inside

I'm remembering that I can return to this place whenever I want to.

I'm inviting it to stay with me as I come back out. ...

Adapted from *Safe Space Exercise*, Nina Joy Lawrence and Pat Omidian.

Make a drawing of what you noticed and then share drawings with others.

Module 2: Qualities of Good Listening

Goals: to find out the qualities of good listening and practice listening to another person.

Time: Duration of activity: 1 hour 15 minutes

Activity:

1. Qualities of listening - 30 minutes

Ask the group to sense inside and remember a time when they felt really listened to. Notice the qualities of the person who listened to you. Ask the group to bring their attention back into the room. Then ask for qualities of listening from the group and write these on the flipchart.

Now ask the group to sense inside for a time when they really listened to another person. Notice the qualities of the person who listened to you. When they bring their attention back into the room ask for qualities of being a listener. Add any more qualities to the flip chart.

When we are truly listening to another person we are in a state we call presence. In Focusing we want to be able to listen to ourselves in the same way as we listen to other people. In this way we can be in presence with our feelings - without judgment, without taking sides, without having a goal.

2. Listen to the storyteller 25 minutes for exercise and 20 minutes discussion.

Ask the group to divide into pairs and spend 10 minutes listening to a story told by the other person. Remember the qualities of good listening and being in presence with another person. The story can be about a special day you had, something you have done which you are really proud of, or something about your family. Each person is to listen to the other for 10 minutes. Ask the group to follow the handout.

Discussion:

When the group gets back together ask them to talk about what it was like to listen and what it was like to be listened to.

Purpose:

By learning to listen to another person people start to learn the role of the companion. As we get better at listening to others we get better at listening to ourselves.

Handouts

Storyteller handout

How to take into your daily life for you

Take more time to really listen to other people instead of thinking about what you are going to say next.

Taking it home to others

When you go home tonight take 10 minutes to listen to another person without responding using the qualities of good listening.

Practice 2: Listening to the Story Teller:

FOCUSER

I'm bringing my awareness into my body,
Starting with my feet,
Then my legs,
Back,
Arms shoulders,
Head and
Into my centre

Thinking of the story you want to tell,
Check inside to sense what is ok to talk about
Notice any feelings in you about this story

Take time to tell the event and how your body felt about the event.
Before finishing the story, see if there is anything else that wants to be said

After telling the story, Notice:
Sense what it felt like to be listened to by your companion.
See if you can sense if you feel any different now than you did before you told the story.

NJL and PO Kabul 2005

Practice 2: Listening to the Story Teller:

COMPANION

Ask:

"How is this distance between us?"

How many minutes signal would you like?"

Now only in silence...

bring your awareness into your own body for a short time

Come to that place in you that is Calm, Safe and Beautiful for a moment and then:

Bring your awareness back to the storyteller

Like you were still sitting in the safe place with the story teller

Be gentle

Calm

Patient

Interested

Listen and be with the Story Teller.

When time is almost over, say:

"We have about ___ more minutes."

After listening to the story, notice:

What it was like to listen without helping?

Where it might have been difficult to stay with the story teller?

What you sense in your body at this time?

NJL and PO Kabul 2005

Module 3: Noticing - Presence language

Goals: To notice feelings and be in presence with them

Time:

Duration of activity: 2 Hours

There are different types of feeling and we have different ways of handling them. The feelings that are the most difficult to cope with are those that overwhelm us - take us over. Focusing helps us to find a way of putting a little distance between what we are feeling and ourselves - enough to we can see them - but not so much that we are not understanding them. It is when we are in presence with our feelings that we can really get to know them. There are many ways of taking a step back - Ann Weiser Cornell and Barbara McGavin developed one way - they call this presence language.

Activity:

1. Presence language - 20 minutes

Presence language is a way to be with what you are feeling without getting caught up in it. I want you to close your eyes and sense inside when I say something in 3 different ways. Notice what comes each time I say it:

'I'm sad'

Ask the group how that felt

'Something is sad'

Ask the group how that felt different from the first time

'I'm noticing something that is sad'

Ask the group how that felt. Now, discuss the three phrases

Use the presence language handout to discuss different ways of making sure you are with something rather than caught up in it.

Presence language offers us one way of bringing ourselves into presence with what we are feeling and step back from things that have potential to overwhelm us.

I	The part of Me	The felt sense
I'm sensing	A part of me	that is worried
I'm noticing	Something (inside me)	that is tight
I'm aware of	A place just here	that is like a rock

Adapted from the Focusing Student's and Companion's Manual part 1 - Barbara McGavin and Ann Weiser Cornell (2002): Calluna Press.

2. Focusing Demonstration – 20 minutes

Ask someone to keep time for you while you demonstrate focusing. Ask them to give you a time signal and ask the participants to use the qualities of good listening when listening to you. Ask them to observe the process you are using like curious scientists.

After the session invite questions and discussion

3. Ground rules for focusing 10 minutes

- hand out ground rules for the focuser and companion and go through them.

4. Focusing practice 35 minutes

- give out the practice one handout and go through it. Group to choose partners and work in pairs.

Each of the pairs to have 10 minutes to focus but give them 30 minutes for the session so they have time to hand over and discuss. Companions are just to listen and keep silent this time.

5. Discussion 25 minutes

Ask the group to come back and discuss. The content of a persons session can only be discussed if the Focuser invites it or gives permission. The main thing is to talk about the process. Prompts - how did it feel to listen to yourself? Could you listen to yourself without judgment, taking sides or having a goal?

5. Ending - 10 minutes

Time for final discussion, questions and reminder of homework - When you find a strong feeling inside you try using the Relationship language to help you to step back from that feeling.

Purpose:

Learning to Focus and learning that the focuser is in charge of the process.

Notes to Trainer:

Give the group a signal when it is time to change partners

Handouts

Presence language handout

3. Guidelines for Focusing

4. Practice 1 for focuser and companion

How to take into your daily life for you

This is a skill you can use to get in touch with the wisdom held in your body

Taking it home to others

When you feel some strong feeling come inside try using Presence language to step back from the feeling and see it from the outside. For example: "I'm noticing something inside that is really anxious."

Guidelines for Focusing

For the focuser

- the focuser is in control
- The focuser can decide when to end the session or to take a break
- The Focuser is responsible for the process - where the session is going
- Sharing what you find inside can strengthen the process.
- Its up to the focuser how much, if anything, they want to share with their companion

For the companion

- The listener never reveals what a focuser has said in a session - the focuser can.
- The listener doesn't comment or give advice to the focuser after the session on what they found
- Avoid the impulse to make things better
- You need to build trust that they can reveal things without you commenting
- Remember the qualities of good listening

Focusing - Presence Language - Handout

I'm Sad - there is no distance - you are merged with a part

Something is Sad - Now the sadness is only a part of you

I am noticing something that is sad - This is like taking two steps back - there is me and there is the thing I am noticing - they are clearly separate.

There are different words you can use to distance yourself from what you are feeling.

Presence	The part of me	The felt sense or how it is inside
I am noticing	Something (inside me)	That feels sad
I am aware of	A part of me	That is aching
I am sensing	A guest inside me	That is a little person
		Like a rock

So you could form a sentence that says

I am sensing / a part of me / that is like a rock

Adapted from the Focusing Student's Manual, Ann Weiser Cornell and Barbara McGavin

Practice 3 – Using Presence Language

Focuser

You might find it helpful to tell your companion what it is that you are noticing at each stage. You can ask your companion to remind you what comes next - to read the next instruction.

Start by bringing your awareness into your body,

Starting with your feet,

Then your legs,

Back,

Arms shoulders,

Head and

Then bring your awareness into your throat, traveling down into your chest and abdomen.

Now you may want to notice what feels good in the body.

Now take some time to notice if there is anything that wants your attention - it may be an indistinct or vague feeling, a word or an image.

When you find something say to yourself:

I am noticing something inside that is (what you are noticing)

You might like to just acknowledge what you are noticing.

You could just get a sense of it as if you are a curious scientist - noticing it from a distance.

You could just say "hello" to it if that feels right.

Take a bit of time to allow it to be there.

You could sense if there are any words that would capture a sense of this part of you.

Now in your own time you can return to the room - bringing some sense of what you have experienced back into the room.

Companion Practice 3

Ask the focuser how much warning they would like before the end of their time.

Check with the focuser whether you are sitting at the right distance.

Now take a bit of time to sense into your own body.

Then open your eyes and be present with the focuser.

If asked you could read out the next line of the focusers instructions.

Listen quietly and empathetically to the focuser.

Keep time and give the focuser a warning at the agreed point before the end.

Module 4: How Focusing Builds Resiliency

Goals: To understand what makes us resilient in the face of difficulties and how Focusing can help to make us to be more resilient.

Time:

Duration of activity 1 Hour 10 minutes

Activity:

1. Why listen to our feelings? 5 minutes.

We can't control what is happening around us - but we can change how we react to what is happening. By noticing what we are feeling and understanding what is going on inside we can find a different way of being with our feelings. Instead of being caught up in our feelings, we can get to know them as friends - even when they are uncomfortable feelings.

2. Group exercise: 15 minutes

Ask the group to discuss in groups of 4 and talk about how you have been able to stay resilient. Ask each group for examples of being resilient and anything they think has helped them to be resilient. Ask someone to keep a list from each group.

3. Large group discussion 15 minutes

Bring the groups back and write their examples of being resilient onto a flip chart.

You could add some things that have come from other groups:

Things that help people stay healthy and be able to cope in difficult times are:

They have a goal,

They are resourceful

They have family and friends they can talk to

They help others

They show kindness to others

They are able to remember good things

They have a vision of things getting better

They can be in touch with positive and negative feelings without getting overwhelmed

Belief in Allah

Are there other things the group would like to add to the list? Do the group have examples of people being resilient in Palestine today?

3. How does all this help people? 15 minutes

Resiliency is the ability to keep going when things get bad. Some people are more resilient than others and it is like the difference between the green and the dry stick.

. (show how one stick breaks under pressure and another stick can bend and spring back into shape).

Pairs Exercise – Green and Dry Stick

Divide people into pairs and hand out green and dry sticks to each pair. They will take it in turns to hold the green and dry stick and sense what comes inside with each one. Each person gets 5 minutes to hold the green and dry stick and talk about what this makes them feel inside. After 5 minutes ask them to swap who is talking.

Discussion: 20 minutes

4. Ask pairs to come back and share what came from their Focusing on the green and dry stick.

Purpose:

This session is to help people realize that they have been able to be resilient and understand how they can build their sense of resilience.

Notes to Trainer:

By steering discussion to positive examples of when people were resilient people can discover that they already have resources inside that have helped them. People may bring up times when it has been hard to be resilient. Listen to these examples with compassion and kindness.

Handouts/Equipment

Trainer to bring a dry stick and green stick to use for the presentation and for each pair of participants.

How to take into your daily life for you

When you feel under pressure remember the image of the green stick. Listening to your feelings and talking to friends and family about them can help you to be like the green stick. When you feel under pressure you can open the door and just notice what feelings have come. Say hello to them using distancing language. "Oh I am noticing this feeling inside me."

Taking it home to others

Talk to your family and friends about what makes us resilient. Take time to listen to others. Talk to family, friends and people you work with about the need to be like the green stick when you feel under pressure.

Module 5: Listening

Goals: To teach people how to use reflective Listening

Time: Duration of activity: 1 hour

1. Explaining reflecting back 10 minutes.

Reflecting back is when we listen to another person and reflect back what they have said. When we are listening we are not always giving our full attention to people - instead we are thinking of what we are going to say next. In Focusing we want to give people our full attention using the qualities of good listening we talked about before. Reflecting back does a number of things:

It means the Focuser hears back what they are feeling and helps them stay with the feeling

It checks that the listener has heard correctly what the focuser is feeling

It lets the Focuser check that what they have said is really what they are feeling. They might notice that the words don't quite fit and want to try some other words to describe what they are noticing.

The listener is not trying to interpret or understand why feelings are there.

They are not trying to fix things for the other person. They are just reflecting back what they have heard.

2. Practicing reflecting back - 20 minutes

The trainer focuses and invites each of the group to reflect back what they have heard. The trainer will give the thumb up if the reflecting back is ok and ask them to try again if they want to hear it differently. Each of the group is invited to reflect back in turn.

3. Discussion: 15 minutes

Invite the group to say how it felt to reflect back. Invite any questions about why we do this.

Purpose:

So that people understand that reflecting back is the most important thing the listener can do. Also this teaches that the listener follows the focuser.

Notes to Trainer:

Some people may not feel ok about just reflecting back. They may worry that it sounds like a parrot. Ask them to give it a try and then we can discuss how it felt for the Focuser.

How to take into your daily life for you

Take some time to reflect back what someone tells you this evening.

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Module 6: Following

Goals: For each person to have an experience of Focusing and Listening using distancing language and reflecting back.

Time: Duration of activity: 2 hours

Activity:

1. Preparation 20 minutes

Explain to the group that we are going to have a chance to practice all that we have learned so far by working in pairs. Go through the ground rules particularly how important it is for listeners to keep things confidential and that the focuser is responsible for the process. Go through the handout (Practice 2) and explain what the listener and companion are supposed to do.

2. Focusing practice: 60 minutes

Each person is to take turns to be a listener, Focuser, or observer for 15 minutes. Listeners are to keep the time and reflect back if the Focuser wants it. Focusers can indicate with their hands if they want something reflected back or not. After each session the Focuser can say how it felt to be listened to and have someone reflect back.

3. Discussion: 30 minutes

When the group return, invite the Focusers to share what came for them and listeners to share what it was like to be the listener. What went on in the focusing session should only be shared if the Focuser wants to share it.

Invite any questions about the process.

Ask how it felt to have things reflected back.

Ask how easy or difficult it was to do the exercise

4. Concluding: 10 minutes

Explain that this is an example of how focusing works. Practicing the process in pairs can help. People who use focusing regularly have found that it has made big differences in their lives.

Purpose:

This session gives people a chance to try the main parts of Focusing using distancing language, good listening skills and reflecting back.

Notes to Trainer:

It is important that people value whatever comes from this session. They may not have fully got focusing but whatever they have found through this must be valued.

Handouts

Ground Rules for the Focuser and Companion (if not already given out on practice 1)

Practice 2 handout.

Uses of ...

Focusing can be used when you get overwhelming feels. It can also be used to build resiliency or make decisions.

How to take into your daily life for you

Focusing is easier when you have someone listening to you. If you are doing it on your own you may want to draw a picture of what you found inside or write down what comes. Looking at the picture or reading what you have written is a bit like someone reflecting back.

Taking it home to others

Talk to your family and friends about what you have learned. Use the focusing skills to listen to others. Help someone to understand that they can also listen to themselves.

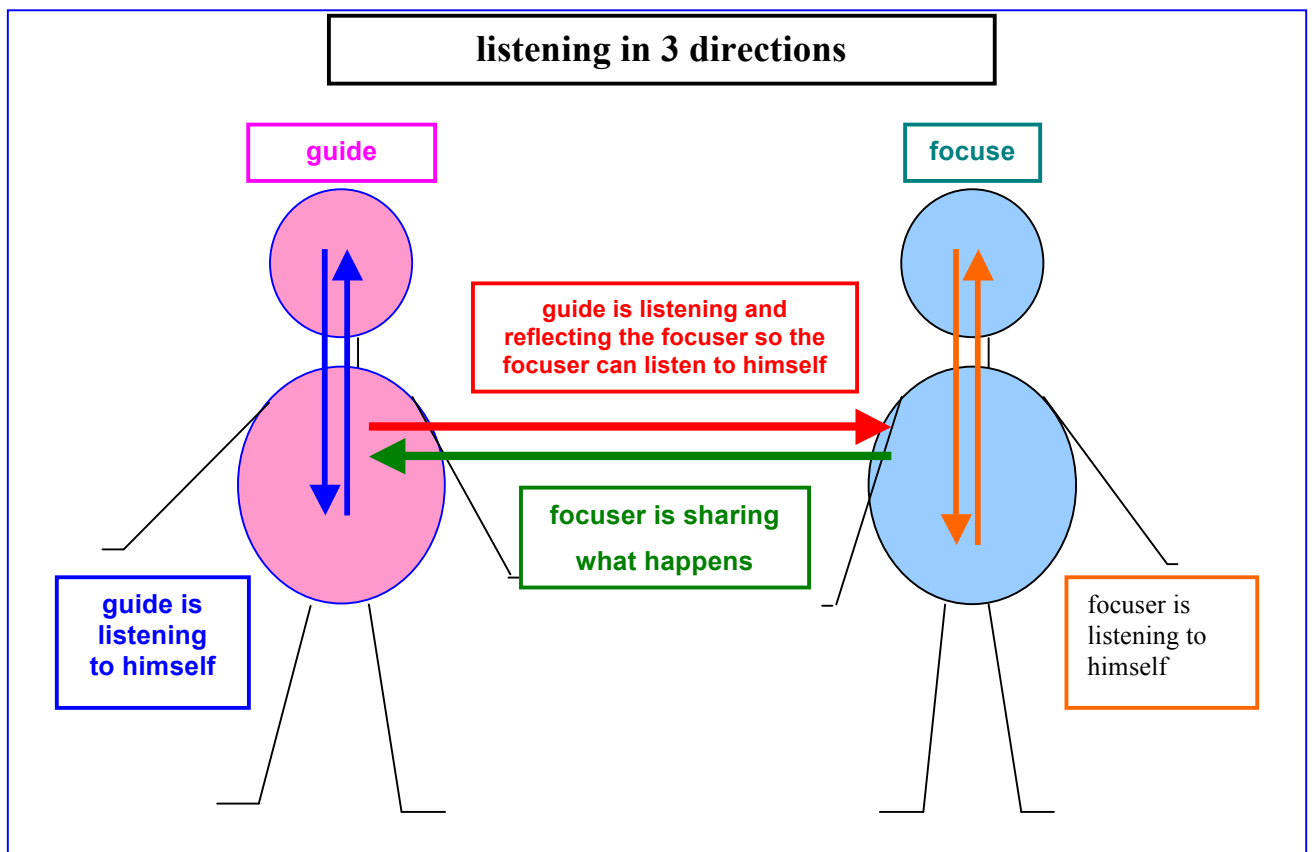


Diagram by René Veuglers

Practice 4 – Reflective Listening

Focuser

Take some time to sense into your body. Notice first your feet, then legs, your seat and back. Become aware of your hands and arms. Across the shoulders, head, face, down your throat and into your chest and abdomen.

- Take a bit of time to invite whatever wants your attention now...
- Sense inside for a word, image, feeling or body sensation
- You may become dimly aware of something inside
- Take some time to notice it
- Just acknowledge that it is there
- Sense if it is ok to say hello to it
- Sense if it is ok just to be with it
- Take some time to sense what it feels like or looks like
- Start to tell your listener what it is you are noticing
- When your listener reflects back take those words inside and see if they feel right
- You could notice if it has a feeling or an emotion
- Now check if you can find words that really describe it
- Hear those words reflected back and check if they really fit
- Notice how this unfolds as you get closer to a description that fits.
- Now check if it is ok to stop soon
- You could let it know you are willing to come back to it again
- Take some time to thank your body for what has come
- Slowly bring your awareness back into the room.

Guidance for Companions - Practice 4

Before

Check 3 things with the Focuser

Is this the right place for us to sit – the right distance?

When do you want a time signal?

During

Take some time to relax and become aware of each part of your body

Sense inside for what feels good in your body - or for you safe space inside

Open your eyes and feel yourself in presence with the Focuser

Remember the principles of good listening - attentiveness, compassion, without judgment

When the focuser speaks take it inside - give a pause before reflecting back

Take the focusers words inside and reflect back some of what they have said

Try and mirror the tone and pace of the focuser

At the agreed time give the focuser a time signal - give the signal after reflecting back

Allow them some space after the focusing session

Remember

-You are not trying to make anything happen or fix anything

-You need to trust the Focuser and the process

-Stay with the focuser - reflecting back where they are now - not where they were a few minutes ago

-Being corrected can be very creative -

It helps the focuser know they have been understood

It helps the focuser to clarify what it is they notice

Do

Let the focuser know if you didn't hear what they said

Sense for what needs to be reflected back

Don't

Ask Questions

Analyse

Refer back to what the focuser said

Ask why they said anything after the session

Module 7 - The Felt Sense

The Felt Sense

Up until now I've talked about feelings - but feelings are only part of what we are sensing into when we are Focusing. Gene Gendlin coined the phrase "felt sense" to describe the whole sense of this thing we are noticing. It is not just a feeling or just an image. It can usually be felt in the body and located somewhere inside.

"A characteristic of the felt sense is that it is experienced as an intricate whole. One can sense that it includes many intricacies and strands. It is not uniform like a piece of iron or butter. Rather it is a whole complexity, a multiplicity implicit in a single sense." (Gendlin 1996 Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy, p 20)

When you notice it you are aware that there is the bit you can sense and there is more that you haven't yet sensed. The feeling, or image, or body sensation is not the felt sense but it points you towards the felt sense.

"Felt sense is a wonderful phenomenon. It contains all of your inner knowing about a given situation and that which you do not yet know about yourself. Your felt sense can lead you to the next growth step. It can even sense an answer that has not yet been experienced. The felt sense is something before mind, body, and spirit are split apart." (Hinterkopf 1998 p 19)

Exercise: Finding the felt sense

Think about an incident which brought up some feeling for you. Now sense in the body for what comes as you recall the incident. Notice it as a whole sense of the situation and what came. Notice where it is in your body and how it is sitting there. Get a sense of whether there is more about this that you haven't quite put your finger on - a kind of fuzzy edge.

Module 8 – Guiding Yourself in a Focusing Session

The difference with Focusing is that the Focuser can lead the process by guiding themselves. You do this by making suggestions to yourself - we've done some of this already by saying "I'm saying hello to it" or "I'm noticing how I can be with it".

There are many suggestions you can give yourself when you are Focusing and it can help to know what kind of suggestions help at different times. A Focusing Session can have a shape with different stages:

- 1. Pausing - Sensing for what's there - We relax the body and sense inside. Waiting quietly to Notice what is there.
- 2. Noticing - Making contact with something. At this stage we are welcoming what we notice, maybe saying "hello" to it. You can use presence language here by saying "I'm noticing a part of me is feeling ..."
- 3. Listening - Deepening our contact and sitting down with it. This is where we get to know this feeling or felt sense - describing it in more detail, listening to how it is feeling. It can be important here to be at the right distance - "I'm checking how it wants me to be with it"
- 4. Following - Checking it knows I understand it. This is where you are starting to show the part you understand how it is feeling or letting it know you have heard it. This is also where you check to see you have the right words to describe it. When you find just the right words often there is a big change inside.
- 5. Ending for now - When you hear the time signal the Focusing session may come to a natural end - or you may notice your body has a bit more to tell you. You can also let it know you can come back to it.

We don't always follow this from 1 to 5 - sometimes parts just want to be noticed - other times you may go back a stage and notice a new part.

Guiding Yourself at Each Stage of a Focusing Session

1. Pausing - Sensing for what's there

I'm relaxing my body

I'm sensing for what is there

2. Noticing - Making Contact - saying hello

I'm taking time to pause and check inside for what is there

I'm acknowledging it

I'm saying hello to it

I'm starting to describe it

I'm noticing it in my body

3. Listening - Deepening contact - Sitting down with it

I'm sensing how it wants me to be with it

I'm checking if I am at the right distance for it

I'm taking time to settle down with it

I'm sensing if it would be ok to put a gentle hand on it

I'm sensing if there is a quality of caring it would like

I'm just being present to it and keeping it company

4. Following - Checking if it knows I understand how it is for it

I'm sensing for how it feels now

I'm checking if the words really fit or if there are other words that would be better

I'm letting it know I understand how it is for it

I'm letting it know I've heard that

Ending for now

I'm sensing if there is anything more it wants to let me know

I'm sensing for a stopping place

I'm letting it know I can come back to it

I'm thanking what has come

Module 9 Deep Listening

When you listen to another person you are supporting them to be with what they find inside. You can do this by being fully present with them. You may want to pause and notice how you are before you meet with someone you are going to listen to. When you are really following the other person you are not trying to fix them or make things better - you are listening to things just as they are for that person. You are allowing them to share feelings without commenting. Your presence will be the thing that can help them most. Eugene Gendling describes this:

The primacy of human presence

"I want to start with the most important thing I have to say: The essence of working with another person is to be present as a living being. And that is lucky, because if we had to be smart, or good, or mature, or wise, then we would probably be in trouble. But, what matters is not that. What matters is to be a human being with another human being, to recognise the other person as another being in there. Even if it is a cat or a bird, if you are trying to help a wounded bird, the first thing you have to know is that there is somebody in there, to be in contact with you. That seems to me to be the most important thing.

So; when I sit down with someone, I take my troubles and feelings and I put them over here, on one side, close, because I might need them. I might want to go in there and see something. And I take all the things I have learnt - client-centred therapy, reflection, focusing, gestalt, psycho-analytic concepts and everything else (I wish I had even more) - and I put them over here, on my other side, close. Then I am just here, with my eyes, and there is this other being. If they happen to look into my eyes, they will see that I am just a shaky being. I have to tolerate that. They may not look. But if they do, they will see that. They will see the slightly shy, slightly withdrawing insecure existence that I am. I have learnt that that is ok. I do not need to be emotionally secure and firmly present. I just need to be present. There are no qualifications for the kind of person I must be. What is wanted for the big therapy process, the big development process is a person who will be present. And so I have gradually become convinced that even I can be that. Even though I have my doubts when I am by myself, in some objective sense I know I am a person."

(Excerpt from: *The Small Steps of the Therapy Process: How they come and how to help them come* by Eugene T. Gendlin, University of Chicago, USA)

Module 10 - Name Exercise

Title: How does your name sound inside you today?

Age Range: 4 to adult

Group Size: 1 to 20

Goals: To hear your name inside your body and symbolize the sense of it.

Time: Duration of activity: 30 - 45 minutes

Activity:

Introduction:

"Hello children in this session we are going to listen inside our bodies. This is easy and everyone can do it." You can see there are lots of colours and materials in the group and we will use these later.

Settle:

"Let yourself sit more comfortably. Just being by yourself. Perhaps you start to breathe more gently. Notice the how your body feels, your feet on the floor, your legs, your hands and arms. Perhaps you can feel inside your shoulders, your head or even your chest and notice how it is. You might find yourself closing your eyes or letting your eyes stare at nothing."

(If you are using a puppet the puppet can demonstrate settling too.)

Sense and Notice Kindly:

"In a moment somewhere inside you you can notice your name sounding. Where is that sound saying or calling your name? Is there one or more places? Can you put your hand where you hear your name sounding inside? What kind of voice could it be that is saying your name? Is it yours? Does your name sound soft or loud? How does it sound? Perhaps you can notice the feeling that you have about your name like that today. Perhaps you can see colours or a place or something else."

Group Share

The group listen kindly and do not ask questions of the sharer

The trainer reflects the words and tone of the sharer.

Trainer: Model how your voice sounds, say it out loud and put your hand where you feel it. Perhaps you can see a colour or feel a warm feeling. Maybe you have

some other feeling. Perhaps it is your voice that says your name or someone else. Maybe your name seems to be in a place.

(If you are using a puppet you can talk to the puppet and let the puppet model and dialogue with you, as you reflect what the puppet says to the group. Let the puppet speak to the group and you.)

Ask the group if any one would like to say how their name sounds today. Reflect their words and actions. Seek to help the child hear the tone and locate the place they feel or see their name.

Symbolise

Model this activity yourself (or with the puppet if you are able!)

Talk to the group as you select the colours you want, show yourself to be uncertain what is going to happen *"I seem to want a green wax, and a yellow, that blue looks the right shade"*

Let the children choose their things as you talk to them and begin yourself to just draw your name. Talk to them about your experience without knowing what is going to happen exactly. Let them draw.

Say small phrases as you model your symbolization.

"Just let your hand draw what it feels like." "You don't have to be an artist."

"You may not know what you are drawing." "Perhaps a picture comes as well as a name."

Share

In this sharing everyone who wishes gets a turn (no need to raise your hand!) It is possible to use a "Talking Object" for the person who is speaking to hold.

When they have finished they pass it on to the next person who volunteers or is chosen to share. If you are not using a Talking Object agree a visual sign for the sharing child to show they want to stop. You might like to model yourself first saying about your name and the feelings, surprises, interesting things you feel.

Do not forget to model how you talk to yourself. Look out for being unfriendly to your experience and correct yourself gently.

If you have a helper it would be possible to use a puppet to gently remind you when you are being unkind to yourself.

Let each child who wishes share.

Purpose:

For each participant:

- to listen to the sound of their name,

- to feel where it is in their body
 - to notice some qualities of feeling and sound (felt sense)
 - to notice their attitude towards this (focusing attitude)
 - to listen to others kindly (focusing attitude)
 - to symbolize the sense of the sound of their name
- (This exercise contributed by Simon Kilner)

Module 11 – Welcoming and Caring

One way to check if you are in presence with something inside is to see if you can welcome it, be friendly towards it or take care of it. Empathy bears can help adults or children to see their feelings from a distance and be better able to take care of them.

FOCUSER – Empathy Bears

Hold the teddy in front of you and look at him/her. Your teddy has been through some difficult times recently and he/she sometimes gets a bit upset. You are going to take a few moments to listen to him/her.

Now close your eyes and say hello to what's inside you.

Then you can look at your teddy and let him/her know you are there.

You could say hello to him/her.

You might like to ask him how he/she is feeling right now.

You could tell your listener what your teddy has told you.

Now let your teddy know you understand how he/she is feeling.

You could ask your teddy if there is anything more he/she wants to tell you.

And you could tell your listener if your teddy tells you more.

Now you could ask your teddy how he would like you to take care of him/her.

And you could let your teddy know you will take care of him/her.

And now you could ask your teddy where he/she would like you to put him/her when you can't hold him/her.

And you could put your teddy where he/she wants to be.

Now just check inside to see how things are for you after being with the teddy. Check for how you are feeling now.

Companion - Empathy Bears



Check where your Focuser would like you to sit and what kind of a warning they would like.

Take a moment to sense inside you.

Say hello to yourself.

Now open your eyes and listen to the Focuser talking about the teddy.

Reflect back anything they say.

They might want you to read their next instruction.

Give a time signal when agreed

Allow them some space at the end of the session.

The Guest House - Poem

*This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.*

*A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.*

*Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.*

Rumi, Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Din ar- (1207-1273),

Focusing - Finding out more

Books

Eugene Gendlin, Focusing. 1973/2003*

Eugene Gendlin, Focusing-oriented psychotherapy. 1996

Campbell Purton, Person-centred therapy - the focusing-oriented approach. 2004

Ann Weiser Cornell, The Power of Focusing. 1996*

Ann Weiser Cornell, The Radical Acceptance of Everything. 2005

Marta Stapert and Erik Verliefde, Focusing with Children. 2008

Harbert Rice, Language Process Notes - Using Words to Get Beyond Words. 2008

Peter A Cambell & Edwin M. McMahon, Bio-Spirituality: Focusing as a Way to Grow. 1985/1997*

* Books to start with

Internet links

The Focusing Institute - New York www.focusing.org

Inner relationship Focusing - Ann Weiser Cornell <http://focusingresources.com>

British Focusing Teachers Association www.focusing.org.uk