



Practice: Walking meditation

Key learning:

Mindful walking can be guided as a formal practice during the course. I sometimes like to introduce it in this week to break the habit that has developed when participants first come in at the beginning of each session. This week they come into an empty room and I invite them to explore what this feels like for them.

Anchoring in the present moment through the physical sensations

Application to daily life

Resources:

Clock, bells / singing bell, handout for client, ? recording for client to have for home practice.

Benefits:

Anchoring
Moving, mobilising
Feeling sensations more effectively than lying or sitting still
Can be done almost anywhere

Potential Difficulties Arising:

Pain
Mind wandering
Wobbling
Light-headed

Guidance:

Explain the importance of finding a safe path, inside or out, of approximately 16 paces.

The practice should be taught whereby the participants walk in a straight and uninterrupted way, not disturbed by the movement of others in the room

Relate the practice to mindful movement- the experience of the feet on the floor, the arms swinging, the breath

Invite them to keep their eyes open

Start with slow walking and then after 5 minutes or so speed it up and suggest they become aware of preferences to use in the inquiry

Eyes should be looking down just in front of them, not gazing around and not with the head tilted down, just the eyes.

Hands can be wherever is comfortable

An explanation can be given at the end saying that this can also be done as an informal practice such as when walking the dog, imbibing all the sights, sounds, smells etc involved in this activity

Clear delineation between formal and informal practice is most helpful.

Inquiry

Ask about the participants' experience of the practice and acknowledge and explore any benefits and potential difficulties which come up.

Examples of useful questions to start the inquiry process with the client:

During or after the practice ask them to notice:

How that felt

What happened?

Were there any differences in the mind between walking slowly and more quickly

Were you aware of the breath, how was that for you?

Did you set up a habit around which way to turn?

How can this be used in daily life to good effect?