

INSIDE YOUR HEAD

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the session delegates will understand the impact of emotions on ability to pay attention at work. They will also understand how to accept emotions that may be distracting them and help themselves develop their ability to manage their emotions in useful and helpful ways.

INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed for a manager or a facilitator to deliver a short workshop featuring videos from the Video Arts Wellbeing Essentials Series. Each video comes with a series of activities around the following structure:

LOOK - watch the video and reflect on the content and message.

THINK - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the video will last around 15-25 minutes

PRACTISE – At the end of the series of videos there is a 20 minute practical training exercise which will bring the learnings together.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Don't compare your insides to other people's outsides
- Just don't think about it! (The backfire effect)
- You are not your emotions
- Get everything out of your head

VIDEO 1 – DON'T COMPARE YOUR INSIDES TO OTHER PEOPLE'S OUTSIDES

LOOK

THINK (5 minutes discussion)

What are the different ways we end up unfairly comparing ourselves to others?

You could capture this by writing on a flipchart in the form of a simple list, or just ask team members to share their thoughts and insights as they have them.

If you look at your closest friends, what do you think they would say about you and your life?

We all make assumptions and have perceptions of others which we compare ourselves to. Even when we know others well, it's still easy to make those assumptions and have certain perceptions.

How does social media colour that perception we have of others?

As interesting as it can be to see what people share on their social media, we must remember that it is only highlights people share. Most don't share the struggles they face or anything overly negative beyond frustrations and annoyances.

REMEMBER

- We only have access to our own monologue of worry and self-criticism
- We compare the daily reality of our lives to the highlight reels of other people's lives
- You're almost certainly coming across as more confident than you imagine

VIDEO 2 – JUST DON'T THINK ABOUT IT! (THE BACKFIRE EFFECT)

LOOK

THINK (5 mins)

When was the last time you tried not to think about something and you couldn't shake it?

What did that do to their productivity or what they were trying to achieve?

PRACTISE (5 mins)

Next time you're caught by a negative thought, don't try and ignore it. Instead, accept it and ask yourself these questions:

- How is this thought making me feel?
- Is there something I need to do about it right now?
- Is it something I need to discuss with someone urgently or can it wait until I'm done with my work?
- Is this a thought I've had before? Is there a pattern to this kind of thinking?

It might help to try and answer these questions either by writing them down in a journal, or taking about 10 minutes to reflect on them.

REMEMBER

- You can't just push thoughts out of your head – indeed, that usually makes them worse
- Realise that a thought is not a problem: you don't have to believe it or act on it
- The less you fight thoughts, the more likely the distressing ones will float away of their own accord

VIDEO 3 – YOU ARE NOT YOUR EMOTIONS

LOOK

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

When you're in a bit of a 'funk', what do you do to help yourself deal with those emotions?

We all have different ways of dealing with negative emotions. The important thing is to recognise that emotions aren't 'negative' or 'positive'. They help us know about how something is affecting us, and we should acknowledge those feelings. By doing this, we build our wellbeing because we accept our emotions are a part of how we get on day to day.

In the film 'Inside Out', the characters are human emotions. How is this a helpful way of understanding the influence our emotions have on our behaviours?

Emotions can 'override' rational thinking because they're helping us deal with something immediate and pressing. When we recognise an emotion is affecting us, is when we can choose to act on it, or choose to deal with it in a different and more helpful way.

REMEMBER

- Your emotions aren't "you", even though it's easy to assume they are
- Think of emotions like weather: you don't need to make the rain go away, it clears up on its own
- Try labelling your negative emotions mentally as they arise – "stress", "sadness" etc

VIDEO 4 – GET EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR HEAD

LOOK

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

How do you make best use of notes or lists?

As useful as note taking and lists are, we all use them in different ways. Get team members to share how they do this and what ‘tools’ they use (e.g. notepad, an app, on their PC).

PRACTISE (5 minutes)

Think about an upcoming piece of work you have to do and answer the following questions:

- Were there any details about the work you were told but forgot to make notes about?
- Have you thought of all the different things you need to do to make sure it’s a good piece of work?
- Do you have clarity on things like deadlines and expectations?

This short exercise will help team members to appreciate the benefit and value of writing notes and how they can help with project / work planning.

REMEMBER

- The human mind is a marvel, but it’s a terrible device for storing all the things you’ve got on your plate
- If you rely on your mind, you’ll be constantly stressed by the worry that you’re forgetting something crucial
- Making a list on paper can bring immediate relief from stress, even before you’ve tackled any of the tasks

PRACTISE (20 mins pairs exercise)

For this exercise, split your team into pairs, so everyone has a partner. Ask them to decide who will be partner A and who will be partner B.

Give partner A the instructions below, and give partner B their instructions.

Make sure each partner has an additional piece of paper to write on as they're going to be tasked with making notes of a list of requirements for party planning.

The purpose of this exercise is to show the impact of emotions and how it affects our attention and can distract us when needing to make detailed notes.

(As a fun piece, you can ask the team members to share how accurate their lists are.)

Once the task is done, ask the team members the following questions:

- How did the story affect your attention?
- Were there elements of the story that distracted you?
- How accurate was your list?
- What did you learn about the impact of emotions on your ability to pay attention?

Partner A instructions

Your task is to read out a set of requirements to your partner about an upcoming party.

Before you read out the requirements, tell your partner a story about something funny that happened in the last couple of days. Your story shouldn't take more than a 1 minute to tell.

Once you've told your story, let your partner know you're about to read out the requirements. When you read it out, try and read it quickly so it takes no more than about 15 seconds to read it out.

They have to make a note of the list and recount it back to you. Compare to see how accurate the list is.

Party requirements

- Food needed for 15 people
- 3 of those have gluten intolerance
- There needs to be 1/3 meat options, 1/3 fish options and 1/3 vegetarian options
- 5 cans of Coke, 4 cans of Sprite, 2 cans of Tizer and 4 cans of Pepsi
- Party is from 2pm-4pm and if everyone arrives at 14:01 they cannot enter

Partner B instructions

Your task is to read out a set of requirements to your partner about an upcoming party.

Before you read out the requirements, tell your partner a story about something annoying that happened in the last couple of days. Your story shouldn't take more than a 1 minute to tell.

Once you've told your story, let your partner know you're about to read out the instructions. When you read it out, try and read it quickly so it takes no more than about 15 seconds to read it out.

They have to make a note of the list and recount it back to you. Compare to see how accurate the list is.

Party requirements

- Pizza needed for 23 people
- 4 will only eat pepperoni toppings
- 16 will only eat a stuffed crust
- 12 will only eat with garlic bread as a side
- 22 all want their own sauce
- 6 want just sweetcorn
- 11 want extra mozzarella