

Workshop Plan: Walk Away Your Stress

Length: 60+ minutes

Objectives: By the end of this workshop participants will be able to identify 1 or 2 strategies for stress relief. Participants will also be able to identify at least 1 scientific fact of nature's effect on mental health. This workshop will introduce stress relieving practices that will help expand our senses within nature to connect with our mental health on a deeper level. The focus is to outline the importance of people's connection to the world around them and the effects it can have on one's own mental health. This will be done through guided walking meditation, expansive sensory exercises, and some creative reflection.

Materials: Journal and writing utensil

Lesson Overview:

(15 minutes) **Opening Circle:** Sit in a circle and introduce each other to all participants. Opening gratitude to build a safe environment. Putting participants in a more thoughtful space before the workshop is started. Introduce agenda.

(5 minutes) **Background:** I will briefly describe my background with stress relief practices during my own college career and how I began using nature as a tool for my health. I will go over some brief facts from the articles and books that I have been reading.

(5 minutes) **Pre-reflection:** Ask participants to jot down anything they can observe about themselves. Anything is welcomed whether it is emotional or physical observations.

(20 minutes) **Walking Meditation:** I will guide participants in a walking sensory awareness meditation to open participant's minds to their environment.

(15 minutes) **Sit Spot:** Introduce participant's awareness of the five senses in nature. Encourage them to get dirty, touch the trees, and smell the leaves.

(10 minutes) **Post Reflection in Journals:** Ask participants to explore their mental state, emotions, and thoughts they experience both during the exercises and after. Encourage diverse forms of response.

(20 minutes) **Discussion of our Experiences:** Invite participants to share some of their reflection. Handout fact sheet (walking meditation, sensory awareness/sit spot). Talk about the qualities of stress and how certain techniques are not best for everyone. Outline Nature's benefits.