

THE ACTIVITY ADVISOR

ISSUE 2

A weekly newsletter brought to you by Towson University
Occupational Therapy students



TU TOWSON UNIVERSITY Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science



Who are we?

Hello! *The Activity Advisor* is a weekly newsletter brought to you by Towson University Occupational Therapy students. Our names are Sarah T., Allison A., and Brandyn G.. For those of you who may not know, occupational therapy is a field that helps individuals across the lifespan successfully carry out activities that are meaningful to them and achieve their greatest potential through the therapeutic use of daily activities, otherwise known as "occupations" (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020). We hope to inspire and motivate individuals to take part in mindfulness and craft based activities at home, inspired by nature and our senses. These activities will be catered towards children and adolescents, with suggested parental oversight. However, we encourage everyone to participate in them. We hope you all enjoy these activities and find them to be meaningful and enjoyable!

Mindfulness Moments

Mindfulness Moments features mindfulness based activities that encourage you to be present while calmly acknowledging your feelings, senses, and thoughts. This week's activity will encourage you to find your "sit spot" while enlightening your senses and getting some fresh air. We recommend that you complete this activity on a day with nice weather, as it will need to be completed outdoors.

This activity should take approximately 15-20 minutes.

You will need:

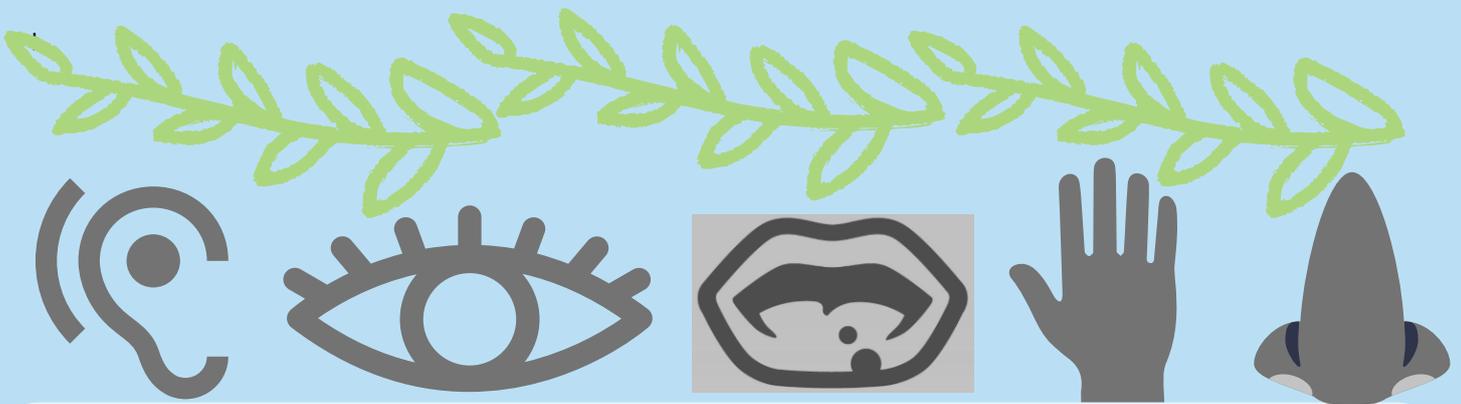
- An outdoor area (preferably in your backyard, maintaining a close distance to your home)



Steps:

- 1) Go outside of your home, into a backyard, or any area you prefer nearby. Try to find your "sit spot" meaning a safe area where you feel safe but also somewhere that has minimal distractions. (This area may be next to your favorite tree, bush, or plant.)
- 2) Once you choose your "sit spot," sit down. Spend the next few minutes identifying and exploring your senses.
- 3) First, identify five things you see. This can be anything from insects, animals, trees, flowers, etc.
- 4) Second, think about four sounds you hear. Are there birds chirping in the background? Is the wind blowing? Are there cars passing by in the distance? Maybe you hear a squirrel or a dog? As you are thinking about these sounds, try to slow your breathing and focus on slowly inhaling... and then slowly exhaling.
- 5) Next, find three things you can physically touch in nature. For example, this may be brushing your hand against a bush, picking up a flower, or collecting rocks near your home. Notice how the objects make you feel, and think about what you are experiencing as you are picking up the objects. Does this impact your thoughts in any way?
- 6) Finally, place the objects down and smell the atmosphere around you. Think about two distinct aromas that surround you. How are the scents effecting your experience, either positively or negatively?

How did the overall experience make you feel? Do you feel more in line with your senses as compared to before you began the activity? What feelings arose?



Mindfulness Quote of the Week

"In today's rush, we all think too much, seek too much, want too much, and forget about the joy of just being."- Eckhart Tolle

Craft Corner

Craft Corner features engaging activities that encourage you to take part in hands-on activities with relevance to the world around you. This week's activity features a social story! Social stories are a great way for children to learn about novel experiences, understand others' emotions, and enhance their critical thinking and memory (Rymanowicz, 2015).

This activity will take approximately 30-60 minutes.

You will need:

- The social story titled "A Social Distancing Story" (Eaton, 2020) located at the end of this document
- Scissors
- Paper
- Crayons or other coloring utensils



There are many activities you can do with the social story provided. Feel free to do one of these suggested activities, or all of them!

Social Story Read-Along

1. Print out the social story titled "A Social Distancing Story" (Eaton, 2020) located at the end of this document. You may also choose to read them off of a tablet!
2. Read one line of the social story slowly. Self-reflect or discuss with a family member how the pictures included relate to the story line.
3. Before looking at or reading the next line, predict: What do you think will be discussed next? Why do you think that?
4. Continue to read the story while stopping to reflect and predict after each story line.
5. Self-reflect or discuss with a family member: How did reading the social story make you feel? Did you learn something that you didn't know? What questions do you have?

Social Story Sort

1. Cut out the social story "strips" from "A Social Distancing Story" (Eaton, 2020) located at the end of this document. Make sure to keep the corresponding pictures and story line together!
2. Scatter the strips around the surface that you are working on.
3. Now, put the strips in order!
4. Reference this document to see if you put them in the correct order.
5. Self reflect or discuss with a family member: Did you put them in the correct order, as shown in this document? Why or why not? What was challenging? Does changing the order change the meaning in any way?

Social Story Coloring

1. Cut out the social story "A Social Distancing Story" (Eaton, 2020) located at the end of this document. Cut out only the story line, not the pictures included. Keep the story line strips in order, to follow along with for this activity.
2. Read each story line out loud, and draw a picture of what you think the story line is describing.
3. Self-reflect or discuss with a family member: What does your drawing include? What parts of the story line stood out to you that you drew? Could someone else have drawn or thought of the story line differently? Could the picture you drew be used for more than one of the story lines?

Craft Quote of the Week

"Craft is creating with my hands from my heart and having control over the whole process. It's about seeing the seed of an idea and slowly growing and nurturing that seed until it flowers." - British Landscape Artist Helen Hallows

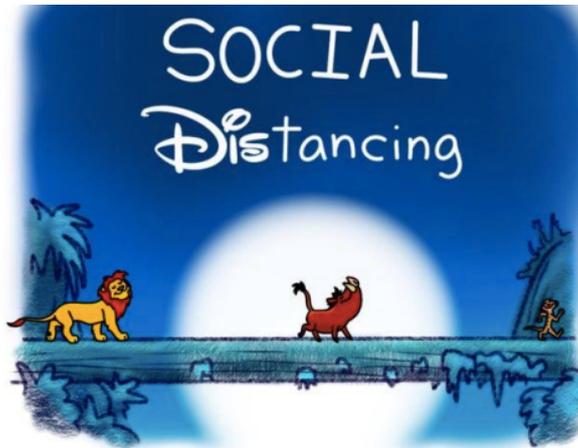
A Social Story on...



Megan the Cartoonist

Written by: Lauren Eaton

Illustrated by: Mary the Cartoonist (<https://www.facebook.com/MeganTheCartoonist/>)



Megan the Cartoonist

"Social Distancing" means you need more space between you and other people. Even best friends like Simba, Timone, and Pumba need to be 6 feet apart right now.



Megan the Cartoonist

We are staying 6 feet apart to stay healthy. When people are close together they share germs. "Social Distancing" is a way to stop spreading germs.



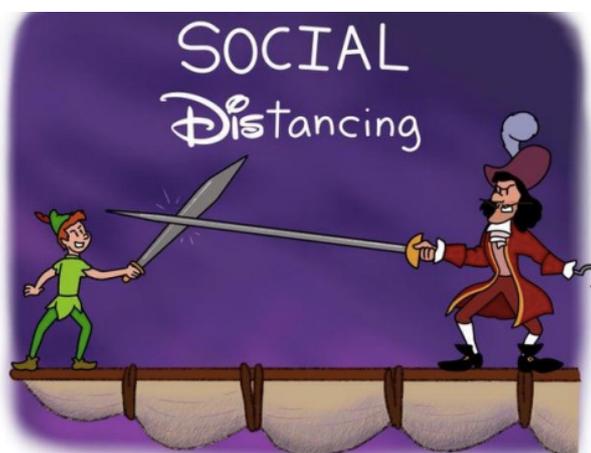
Megan the Cartoonist

Being far apart from people we care about can make us feel sad and confused. Staying 6 feet away does not mean that something is wrong or others are upset with us.



Megan the Cartoonist

We can't hug or kiss, so we can blow kisses instead.

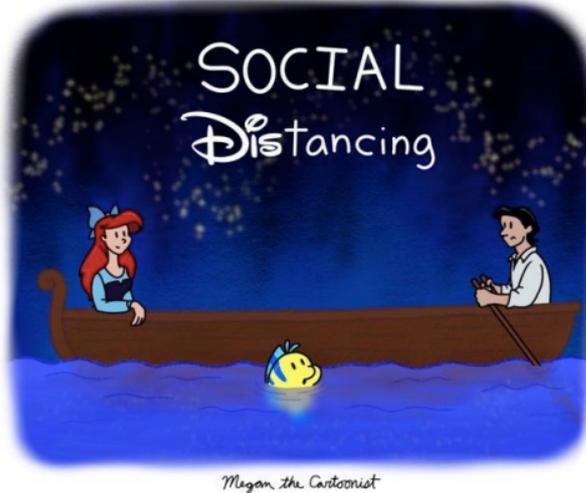


Megan the Cartoonist

We can still play, but we need to play 6 feet apart.



We can still eat, but we need to sit at our own table. It's also important to wash our hands and wipe our table.



We can still talk, but we need to stand 6 feet away.



"Social Distancing" means things will be different for a little bit. We are not going to work, school, restaurants, or the movies. This is because we want to stay safe and healthy. Even though it's weird, it won't be forever. Soon, doctors will tell us when it's safe to go back to normal, and then we will be able to hug, kiss, and play with our friends again!

References

- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2020). *What is occupational therapy?* Retrieved from <https://www.aota.org/Conference-Events/OT-Month/what-is-OT.aspx>
- Eaton, J. (2020). *A story on social distancing*. Retrieved from <https://www.itinerisbaltimore.org/>
- Rymanowicz, K. (2015). *Once upon a social story: Advantages, writing, and presenting social stories*. Retrieved from <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/once-upon-a-social-story-advantages-writing-and-presenting-social-stories>