

THE ACTIVITY ADVISOR

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



TU TOWSON UNIVERSITY Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science



ISSUE 4

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: Handy Thoughts

Mindfulness Moments features mindfulness based activities that encourage you to be present in the moment. For this week's activity, Handy Thoughts, we are focusing on our emotions, and how we think about and illustrate them in the context of nature. This grounding activity, adapted from Keri (2020) integrates mindfulness, which has been found to allow individuals to feel more connected to nature and to natural environments (Schutte & Malouff, 2018). Use this time to help ground yourself and free your mind of any stress or worries.

This activity should take approximately 20-30 minutes.

You will need:

- Paper (plain white, construction, or card-stock)
- Pencils
- Coloring utensils (crayons, markers, colored pencils)
- A window or outdoor space
- Paint (optional)



(Keri, 2020)

Steps:

- 1) Stand next to a window in your house or find an outdoor space. Trace your hands onto the paper. Notice how your hand feels on the paper. Glide your hand across the paper and take note of the pressure, the sounds around you, and how it all makes you feel.
- 2) Based on what you can see around you in nature, decorate your traced hands. Be creative! Use various shapes, designs, colors, strokes, pressures, and words to illustrate what you can see. Let nature inspire you. Are there clouds in the sky? Birds chirping in the trees? Hills in the distance? Draw anything that catches your eye!
- 3) When you're done, reflect on your drawing. What did you decide to draw, and why? What does your drawing symbolize? How did the activity make you feel? What role did nature play? You may also choose to share your thoughts with a family member or friend.



Mindfulness Quote of the Week

"Look past your thoughts, so you may drink the pure nectar of This Moment." - Rumi (Jones, 2020)

Craft Corner

Craft Corner features engaging activities that encourage you to take part in hands-on activities with relevance to your senses and the world around you. This week's activity features a Nature Journal made with materials found at home and in nature! Journaling has been found to have numerous therapeutic benefits such as decreased stress and anxiety within many populations, such as adolescents (Utley & Garza, 2011). This activity was adapted from Regan (2018).

This activity will take approximately 30-60 minutes, but may vary.

You will need:

- Recycled cardboard; i.e. cracker or cereal box
- Paper
- Glue or modge podge
- Yarn, twine, ribbon, embroidery thread, string, note card rings, etc.; to bind nature journal together
- Art supplies--colored pencils, markers, paint, nature stickers, etc; to decorate nature journal
- Hole-puncher (optional)

Nature Journal

How To Make the Nature Journal

1. Cut two pieces of RECYCLED cardboard of the same size (front and back covers to your journal) from an in-home resources such as a soda, cracker, or cereal box.
2. Decorate the cardboard. Draw, paint, stamp, or apply stickers.
3. Apply a thin layer of glue or Mod Podge to the cardboard. Press materials onto the cardboard. Allow time for cardboard to dry completely. Express yourself & your findings!
4. Punch holes in the cover and paper. Cut paper to equal size of covers.
5. Place the number of pages of paper between your covers. Use your note card rings or string to connect the front cover, paper, and back cover. Push one string through each hole. Leave enough string on either side to tie a knot. Be careful not to tie too tightly, as you want to be able to turn pages easily.



Journal Entry Ideas

- Gather clippings of plants and apply to the paper:
 - Glue or tape them
 - Smear the plant clippings on the paper to use the colors of the plant
- Paint, draw, or describe what you see in nature



- Add photos of nature.
- Consider the weather. How does that make you feel? Journal these emotions.
- Write about what happened in your day. How did you connect with nature?



Craft Quote of the Week

"Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort." (Alcedo, 2018)

References

- Alcedo, M. (2018). *20 inspiring quotes about success*. Retrieved from <https://www.countryliving.com/life/entertainment/g19827741/success-quotes/?slide=8>
- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2020). *What is occupational therapy?* Retrieved from <https://www.aota.org/Conference-Events/OT-Month/what-is-OT.aspx>
- Keri, C. (2014). *Mindfulness art activity: I am here*. Retrieved from https://www.counselorkeri.com/2019/05/21/mindfulness-group-art-activity/?utm_source=Pinterest&utm_medium=Social
- Jones, M. (2020). *28 incredibly motivating quotes to start your week*. Retrieved from <https://www.inc.com/matthew-jones/28-motivating-mindfulness-quotes.html>
- Regan, N. (2018). *How to make & keep a nature journal or notebook*. Rhythms of play: raising creating outdoor kids. Retrieved from https://rhythmsofplay.com/get-outside-connect-create-nature-journal-notebook/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=pinterest&utm_campaign=tailwind_tribes&utm_content=tribes&utm_term=744116378_30306922_240565
- Schutte, N. S., & Malouff, J. M. (2018). Mindfulness and connectedness to nature: A meta-analytic investigation. *Personality and Individual Differences, 127*, 10-14.
- Utley, A. & Garza, Y. (2011). The therapeutic use of journaling with adolescents. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health, 6*(1), 29-41.