

ART FOR WELLBEING IN THE CLASSROOM

EXPLORING COMMON EXPERIENCE – TREE WHISPERING

Good for	Sharing Reducing anxiety and isolation following an unusual group experience Group cohesion, empathy Group of 10 -12 people
Length	60 – 90 mins
Resources	Hall with a hard floor Foam mats (if you have them) White ribbon (50m) Post it notes (4 different colours i.e. green, blue, pink, yellow) Ribbons of different colours (4 colours x 50m, green, blue, pink, yellow) Pens to write on post its Blue tack (2 packs) Extra paper (A4) for notes as needed by the group
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-cut the ribbon, each piece 2-3m long. You need 1 piece of the 4 colours per person. Two pieces of 2m white per person • Before you start think of 4 themes the group can explore. Connect each theme to a colour (for example, pink for home and family, blue for school and learning, green friendship, and so on). • Split the blue tack up before the session so each person has the same amount.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand in a circle • Everyone to shut their eyes and imagine we are all trees in a forest. <i>Stretch your branches out towards the sun, and sway in the wind.</i> • Explain that below the ground our roots are interwoven and connected. <i>Through this hidden network we are sending nutrients to support one another. This is done through Whispering</i> (make a group sound). • Take the white ribbons and mark out a tree trunk for themselves on the floor, as in the photo below. • Explain that an unusual event (i.e. covid) comes to the forest, entering it like a storm. • Everyone to open their eyes and do 'Calling the Storm' (see Number 7) • Explain that although the storm has blown our branches around and caused leaves to fall, our roots below the ground remain strong and connected. • Give each person 4 post its, different colours



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<p>Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them to write the theme at the top of each post it • Stick the post its to the floor at the base of their foam mats • Give out the ribbons and ask the group to stick the ends of them onto the floor using blue tack just below the post its (see image below) • Group members now look immediately across the circle and whoever is there they will partner with. • Each pair will work together quietly, addressing how they experienced each theme during the event / experience in question. They should take note of their common experiences. They should write notes on their post its, or on paper. This can take around 10 minutes • Everyone to return to their places. Add notes to post its as needed. • Then, taking their coloured ribbons, where there are shared experiences they can weave and tie their ribbons across the circle to their partner's. • Take 10 minutes at the end to sit in a circle and share findings. • 'Popcorn' before ending the session. (Go around the circle asking for one word from each person that describes their experience.)
<p>Tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have used this activity to share experiences of Covid, but you might use it for looking at something that has happened to a class, or community. • It could also be used to evaluate an experience or project • For older groups you might want to create a series of questions around the theme for them to discuss in pairs • Encourage the group to use the blue tack sparingly as it runs out quickly • Don't use blue tack on carpets, it's impossible to get out.
<p>Variation</p>	<p>-</p>

