

Exercise 2.3

Practising peace – becoming silent



Process:

Meditation and reflection



30 minutes

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ experience a relaxed and peaceful state through becoming silent
- ✓ identify the effects of becoming silent on the body, thoughts, emotions and felt sense of peacefulness
- ✓ appraise the potential benefits of becoming silent as a way of experiencing peace
- ✓ compare the effects and benefits with those of muscle relaxation and breathing.

Materials



- Worksheet 2.3 Exploring focus on becoming silent
- CD track no. 4 Practising peace through becoming silent
- CD player/tape recorder (optional)

Facilitating the exercise

- 1 Play **CD track no. 4 Practising peace through becoming silent**. Alternatively, read out the following text, using a soft, gentle voice and pausing at ellipses (...) in order to allow participants to follow you into a relaxed state.

“ Sit comfortably on your seat... allow the body to relax. Let your feet rest on the floor and your hands rest on your lap. Focus your awareness on your body and breathing... notice your breathing and follow the flow of your breath. Observe your breathing... follow its rhythm as it slows down... you can close your eyes or keep them open.

Your thoughts may wander... thoughts from the past... concerns about the future. Let them go... Try not to analyse or sort out problems... instead, focus on the spaces between thoughts, before thoughts, after thoughts or beyond thoughts – find the stillness and peace that is there...

As you do so, say the following to yourself silently: I notice many thoughts and feelings arising in my mind. I turn these thoughts away from things of the outside world and focus on thoughts of peace. All the other thoughts and ideas I leave behind... I let them go... Gradually my thoughts begin to slow down and I sense that within me there is peace... I simply create the thought: 'I am a peaceful being'.

As I create this simple thought, then the feeling arises... and I am drawn towards that feeling of peace... even though thoughts may come to distract me, I acknowledge them and I am aware of what they may be telling me about myself... I accept them... but I don't dwell on them... I allow them to come, I acknowledge the feelings they bring, and then I bring myself back to that one thought: 'I am a peaceful being'.

As I do this and my thoughts begin to slow down I experience a state of rest – of stillness – of calm within my mind. As I become absorbed in this experience of peace I realise that I am peace. Once again I focus on this one thought and experience it for as long as I can...

Now, in your own time, bring your attention back into the group and this room. Gently move your hands and feet.”



- 2 Distribute **Worksheet 2.3 Exploring focus on becoming silent** and allow a few moments for participants to briefly record their impressions, using the questions on the worksheet as prompts. Ask them to consider the final question, comparing the effects with the previous exercise on muscle relaxation and breathing, and to jot down some notes before moving into feedback.

Feedback
10 minutes



Invite participants to share their experiences of Exercises 2.2 and 2.3, comparing the effects of both techniques of practising peace on mind, body and emotions.



Movement exercise



5 minutes



Break



20 minutes