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Breath of Nature – encounter with the forest and yourself



WORKSHOP PROGRAM

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Introduction to Workshop: “Breath of Nature – encounter with the forest and yourself”

Conduct the workshop according to our guidelines and share your reflections.

Invite adults, including seniors, and you surely know people from vulnerable groups – encourage them in particular to attend meetings held in contact with nature, e.g., in a forest, park, or community garden.

The aim of the meeting is to relieve stress, cope with loneliness and illness, and strengthen bonds with nature and other people.

Duration: you need 4 hours (with a tea break) – you can adjust the time to suit the needs of the participants.

Participants: Adults, including seniors and people from vulnerable groups (max. 15 people)

Workshop objectives:

- Strengthening a sense of calm, mindfulness, and balance
- Counteracting loneliness through shared experiences of nature
- Reducing stress and emotional tension
- Support in the process of accepting illness or difficult emotions
- Deepening the bond with nature as a source of strength and hope

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1. Welcome and introduction (30 min)

- Greeting the group, brief introduction of the facilitator and participants (name, what I like about nature).
- Discussion of safety and comfort rules (everyone works at their own pace, you can be silent, rest, sit down).
- Introduction to the idea of “forest bathing” (shinrin-yoku) and therapy through contact with nature.
- Short mindfulness exercise: focusing on breathing and the sounds of the forest.

2. Mindfulness walk and exercises

- Quietly walking through a section of the forest/park at a slow pace, without talking.
- Stops at several points:

to listen to the sounds of nature,

to touch the bark of trees or leaves,

to observe light and colours.

- Exercise: ‘Senses of nature’ - participants choose one sense (sight, hearing, touch, smell) and focus only on it for 5 minutes.

- Brief sharing of impressions in pairs or in a circle.

3. break for tea and conversation (20 min)

- Warm herbal tea or infusion of lime, mint, lemon balm.
- Informal chat, sitting together on blankets or benches.
- For those wishing to do so: writing one word on a piece of paper to describe how you feel.

4. creative encounter with nature (60 min)

- Mandala from nature" exercise: Participants create their own composition out of natural elements (leaves, pebbles, twigs), symbolising peace, strength or hope.
- Alternatively (for people with reduced mobility): drawing or painting inspired by the landscape.
- Brief discussion: What would I like to take away from this painting into my life?

5. Gratitude meditation and conclusion (40 min)

- Short relaxation guided by the facilitator's voice (e.g. 'Roots of the tree' - visualisation of stability and peace).
- Gratitude exercise: everyone can say what they thank nature or themselves for today.
- End in a circle - symbolic farewell, take a photo together or write your thoughts in the "Forest Diary".

Materials needed:

- Mats, blankets or small cushions to sit on
- Cards, crayons or markers
- Cups, thermos of tea, water
- Wipes, disinfectant, first aid kit
- (Optional) bins for collected natural materials

Notes for the facilitator:

- It is useful to keep the class calm and slow.
- Encourage but do not force conversation - some participants may need silence.
- Provide a rest area for people with limited mobility.
- In case of bad weather - some activities (mandala, relaxation) can be done under a roof.

