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PEACETIME

INFORMATION PACK

Relaxation and Mindfulness Sessions for Schools and Carers Forums

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Relaxation and Mindfulness Sessions for Schools and Carers Forums

I am Karen Hughes a BWY Qualified yoga teacher with over 15 years teaching experience. I teach Yoga in a variety of settings and run local general classes. I have also completed my Professional Training in the therapeutic use of Mindfulness with the British Mindfulness Institute.

I have recently been involved in developing specific PEACETIME sessions for parents & carers of children with disabilities and also PEACETIME sessions for pupils with a range of learning disabilities.

The objectives of PEACETIME for

Children, Young People and Children with Disabilities

- To have an understanding of the fun and joy of being a YOGI and share it with others
 - To offer an opportunity for Children and Young People to explore simple strategies for creating calmness and peace in their often chaotic stressful lives
 - To gain an understanding about the fun of movement and postures through fun activities
 - To encourage children to actively and creatively, participate, contribute and inform the sessions
 - To encourage children to breathe correctly using calming breath works
 - To give children techniques to deal with stress or anxiety
 - To have the opportunity to engage, interact and contribute to a fun session
 - To build confidence and resilience that can be translated into a wider forum – school or home
 - To have a moment of peace -to learn how to relax and know how to return to it anytime
 - To be able to share and exchange and engage in ideas concepts and imagination
 - To receive a self-help pack/ links /resource to continue the good work
-
- ✓ I run group sessions with a maximum 15 pupils but this will be dependent on any special needs or considerations that may require support from your teaching staff
 - ✓ One to one sessions with parents / carers and their child / young person
 - ✓ I have a current DBS Certificate

To discuss options and costs please contact me direct on Karen@theyoga-place.co.uk or 07517 423 080



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CASE STUDY 1

Relaxation and Yoga Sessions for schools - PEACETIME Sessions with Stanley School for Pupils with Autism and Special Education Needs- Observations February –June 2015

As a yoga teacher I have had the joy and experience of teaching a variety of diverse groups, but I can honestly say the most rewarding experience I have had is being given the opportunity of teaching PEACETIME Yoga Sessions to Pupils, Parents and Teachers at Stanley School based on the Wirral.

Stanley School is a school for pupils with a range of Learning Disabilities, including those with **Autistic Spectrum Conditions**. They also have a significant number of pupils with **Down syndrome** and global delay.

<http://stanley.eschools.co.uk/website>

*"I was introduced to Karen Hughes, a Yoga teacher, and explained what I was trying to do at school at Stanley School which was to engage our children in some kind of deeper appreciation of quiet, calm and awareness in order to become more open to learning. She very kindly agreed to deliver 3 lunchtime yoga-taster sessions to our children at school. I opened the yoga classes up to 3 Key Stage 2 classes with pupils of different levels of ability and understanding. **Jinny Morgan Lewtas DT leader and Head of Key Stage 1 Stanley School***

After conducting some taster sessions and observing the children at school during general class, I decided to put together a programme of teaching primarily simple flow movement, Yoga positions and breathing exercises that could be presented to the children in a fun story telling way. I wanted the children to actively contribute to the story we told in each session, and throughout the session asked for suggestions as to what animals or characters we may meet on the Yoga journey. These suggestions from the children were then jointly translated into Yoga movements for them to explore. The approach is deliberately not formulaic in order to encourage creativity from the children, but included the repetition of certain moves and songs which are important to maintain a consistent progressive learning. These familiar positions and exercises were interwoven with newly created positions as informed and suggested by the children.

The use of the magic Yoga mat that can take you to any number of places including the Jungle or Batman's cave, incorporating singing, familiar animals or objects as pictures gave the children permission to take the yoga journey anywhere in each session.

Ideas of other animals or situations enabled the children to become more imaginative, engaged and have a sense of ownership over the session.

Having a class plan of objectives that I wanted the children to try and achieve throughout the session was essential, but the flexibility to interweave their ideas that came up during the session enabled the learning process to become truly interactive.

*“Karen engaged the children instantly by singing a song called ‘I’m a cool Yogi....’ This she repeated throughout the sessions and the children caught-on very quickly. Through these sessions, I saw evidence of imitation, turn-taking, sharing, waiting and eye contact particularly with some of the most severely autistic pupils engaging with the activity for extended periods of time far and above their usual attention and focus abilities, some with the support of an adult, others independently. We booked another 6 sessions with Karen and I carefully chose a mixed group, (a group whom I thought would benefit most) to participate each week. **Jinny Morgan Lewtas Stanley School***

An important essential element to the sessions was the repetition at the end of the session to a final approach to relaxation. I would allow 10 -15 minutes for this section at the end to enable the children to explore what it means when the body is tense then letting go. We explored the difference in feeling and sensation between being tense and relaxed. This part of the session using breathing techniques and a final guided relaxation using singing (a variation of Yoga Nidra that I have developed) was never altered or adapted. It was a wonderful experience to observe these children as they progressed through each session to begin to anticipate and prepare for the final session. Lying on the floor, sitting quietly or quietly singing along. They began to recognise that this part of the session was their quiet relaxation – or “Yogi Sleep” time and they came to fully engage with it in different individual ways. The use of a technique during relaxation of the Happiness Switch was used in each session to teach the children that even when outside of the Yoga session they could always at any time if they felt anxious, upset or worried take themselves back to this happy safe place. A lovely observation for me as a teacher was seeing the children hold on to the Happiness Switch during the sessions and smiling. At one session one little boy commented “I feel so floppy- like a pancake”. Another young boy when visualising the Happy Place commented “look at the colour it is so bright”.

*This proved to be a huge success with pupils going back to their classes in positive states of mind with the ability to maintain attention for longer periods during the afternoon.” **Jinny Morgan Lewtas***

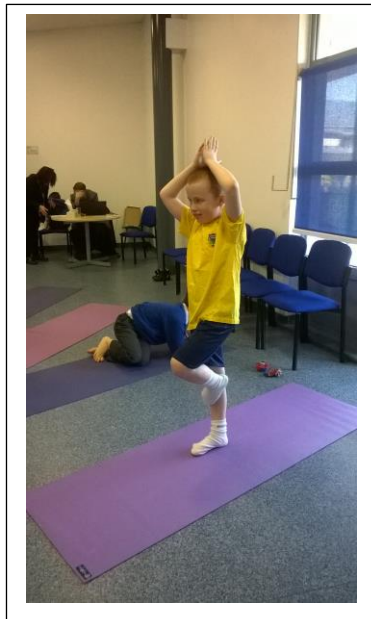
During the progress of the sessions various individual children would approach me at the beginning of each session to request a favourite position or a new position to try. One little girl informed me that at home she was doing Yoga with her Mum. One little boy brought his own yoga mat along to the sessions. Another young girl asked if the position of the Tree could be named after her as it was her favourite position that she practiced at home.

The pupil who surprised me most was an 8 year old boy who has quite extensive Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) and limited communication. He has difficulty sustaining attention for more than a minute at a time. He enjoys running around and making lots of noise by shouting and repeatedly banging objects against hard surfaces. During the course of the session, he listened to Karen and copied her movements. He maintained attention for a full fifteen-twenty minutes before deciding that was enough and taking himself off to look out of the window. He made no noise and didn't seem to feel the need to run around.

An 11 year old girl who has very challenging and demanding behaviour issues, engaged fully, independent of adult support and even suggested some 'new moves' for Karen to try out.

*There was also a 10 year old boy who has complex learning difficulties, language and communication issues and is severely autistic. He is a happy boy who enjoys nothing more than to run around outside and eat anything he can find due to pica. He is very much 'locked' inside his own world and has limited understanding. He engages well with adults and enjoys intensive interaction games, all on his terms. This little boy engaged for the whole session with the support of an adult, by rolling round the floor, giving maximum eye-contact, laughing, connecting with and enjoying the whole activity. **Jinny Morgan Lewtas Teacher***

Stanley School PEACETIME Sessions





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The objectives of PEACETIME for

Parents and Carers- “For Me to Care for You - I Need to Care for Me”

- To understand the principle of “For me to Care for you - I Need to Care for Me”
 - To offer an opportunity for Parents and Carers to explore simple strategies for creating calmness and peace in their often chaotic stressful lives
 - To gain an understanding of how to breathe correctly using calming breath works
 - To learn simple postures , yoga flow movements that can help calm and decrease anxiety in particular stressful situations
 - To gain general techniques to deal with stress or anxiety with their cared ones
 - To have the opportunity to engage , interact and discuss how they can incorporate Mindfulness strategies into their everyday lives
 - To explore techniques that may be taught to their children or cared for – to build upon those strategies at home
 - To build confidence and resilience
 - To have a moment of peace -to learn how to relax and know how to return to it anytime
 - To be able to share ,exchange and engage in ideas concepts with regard to relaxation , calming and coping strategies
 - To receive a self-help pack/ links /resource to continue the good work
-
- ✓ I run group sessions with Parents Carers maximum 15
 - ✓ One to one sessions with parents / carers and their child
 - ✓ I have a current DBS Certificate

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CASE STUDY 2

Parent and Carers Sessions- Stanley School April May 2015

“For me to Care for You I need to Care for Me”

I also conducted 2 sessions with parents and carers at Stanley School. One session was a small group session with parents during which I taught self - help techniques to work towards calmness , mindfulness and relaxation. The emphasis of these sessions was also a sharing of some techniques that I was teaching the children that could be practiced at home.

The underlying message used in these sessions was ***“For me to care for you I need to care for me”***

For the purpose of the following case study I will use the names Sue and Peter. These are not their real names

I also delivered a one to one session working with a parent Sue and her 11 year old son Peter who has a severe autistic spectrum condition. During pre- discussion with Sue it was noted that Peter had not shown any tenderness or affection to this his mum for over 4 years. I decided to make the session about Sue and although Peter was present in the session I emphasised the work and connection with Sue. Peter observed our session together sitting quietly in the corner of the room. In the final stage of the session Sue was fully relaxed, calm and lying on the floor. Peter moved from his place of observation, lay down on a chair next to her and engaged in the final relaxation session. During the final calm moments Peter reached out his hand for his mum to hold.

It is these observations and moments that are difficult to define that have made this experience of teaching at Stanley School the most rewarding in my professional time as a Teacher of Yoga and Mindfulness.

To Stanley School and particularly Jinny Morgan Lewtas thank you for giving me the opportunity and to Sally a parent for recognising the opportunity



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Feedback from Sefton Carers Parent Carer Support Group at Parenting 2000

Collated by Joanne Fazakerley Sefton Parent Carers Support Worker

20/05/15

Karen Hughes PEACETIME workshop delivered to parents carers

- *Really enjoyed the session. Great easy techniques demonstrated in calm environment. Would love to try this with my children.*
- *I found it very useful and very relaxing.*
- *Found it excellent, relaxing and helpful*
- *The session was interesting, more the mindfulness rather than the relaxation as I fall asleep all the time anyway.*
- *I feel much more relaxed for a person who is rushing about trying to fit everything in.*
- *I enjoyed the session*
- *I totally enjoyed it love to do it again with my son and me time would be good for both of us.*
- *I thought it was really helpful and I felt relaxed and calm. I will try it when my son has a meltdown at home and won't listen to me.*
- *The session was beneficial for myself and my family. I would like to do more with my family and hope it would help them feel more relaxed and will try to bring this into every situation*
- *I would like to ask for more sessions*
- *Useful session which helped me. Many parents would like to use this at home with their children*



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References

Joanne Fazakerley – Carers Support Worker

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Jinny Morgan Lewtas - Leader, DT leader and Head of Key stage 1

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