

Online Supplementary file 2

Example from group session 6: Anger

The first part of the programme is common in all sessions: Participants are invited to share their reflection on experiences from home exercises after previous session in group of three to four persons. They are encouraged to read their reflective diaries for each other and to share and listen with an open, non-judgemental attitude without discussing or giving advice. Next, participants are invited to take part in an awareness exercise instructed by one of the group facilitators. They are guided to attend to their thoughts, feelings and bodily senses in the present moment with openness, acceptance and curiosity. After the exercise, they are invited to share their experiences with one other person in the group.

In the next part of the session, the group facilitators introduce the topic “anger” by giving a short introduction about relationship between chronic illness and emotions and the purpose of addressing emotions. The participants are then invited to take part in an exercise with awareness of anger, introduced by one of the facilitators: “Think of the word anger... or to be angry. Notice what you become aware of... thoughts, maybe concrete situations, perhaps memories from the past... Are the situations that you become aware of new or old? Maybe both?... What do you experience in your body right now when you think of anger or being angry?... Also note whether the word anger or being angry evokes any other feelings...”

Awareness of anger is continued in movement to music. The music allows participants to express anger with their body and they are invited to let their bodies do what they want to do while listening to the music. Then, written hypothetical sentences are used to enhance discovery to tacit knowledge, for example: “If there are any other emotions related to my feeling of anger, it must be...” Participants are further invited to share and reflect upon experiences and discoveries from the exercise in small groups and in a plenary session.

The next exercise is a guided imagery intending to help individuals to connect to their experiences of anger in the present moment, and to explore its meaning. Further, crayons and white paper are used to draw an image of anger as experienced here and now. Again, participants are invited to share and reflect in small groups and in plenary, with focus on new discoveries and the consequences of these discoveries from the participants` daily life. Finally, they write a diary about their experiences from the whole session.

Before closing the session, participants are asked to be aware of how they relate both to their own anger and anger from others in their daily lives. They are provided with guided mindfulness audio files and are encouraged to practice these exercises in everyday life and to train awareness in daily activities. They are asked to write reflective diaries about their thoughts, emotions and bodily senses. The session ends with a relaxation exercise. Each session follow the same structure with exercise adapted to the particular topic.

The group facilitators in the SALSA trial are health professionals, such as nurses and physiotherapists, and certified through a one-year university training programme (30 crd) at VID Specialized University in Oslo.