

3. ACTIVITIES



In this section there are examples of:

Name games;
Laughter based warm-ups;
Laughter yoga games;
General laughter group games;
Meditative games;
Drawing and Artwork;
Gibberish;
Ending a session.

At the end of this section there is a sample general long session

Check out our **Feelgood FirstAid** YouTube channel for videos of the activities and background information.

NAME GAMES

In some sessions with a small number of people it's good to do a name game. If it is a large group then a name game may take too long.

Laughter Yoga name game:

The leader says their name and laughs or pretends to laugh, and the whole group join in with the leader. The next person says their name and laughs or pretends to laugh and the whole group laughs along with them. This is a playful game and continues until everyone has enjoyed introducing their name.

Laughter Yoga name game with an extra:

The leader says their name and something else as well, such as a favourite activity, place or item. It needs to be an uplifting thing. And then everyone takes turns and we all laugh together after each person has spoken.

Telling a lie name game:

The leader says their name and something that is an outrageous over the top lie about themselves.

Call and respond name game:

The leader says their name and where they are from. Everyone responds by saying hello and making a celebratory positive gesture or sound. For example, the leader says, "My name is Bob and I'm from Worcester"; everyone responds with, "Hello Bob from Worcester" and cheers, waves, gives a thumbs up or another supportive response. People take turns to introduce themselves.

Repeat 3 times name game:

First of all, everyone says their own name. Then the leader stands in the middle and has to say someone else's name three times before that person can say their name once. If they achieve this then the other person comes into the middle.



LAUGHTER BASED WARM UPS

- Warm ups help people ease into a laughter session and relax.
- They bring our awareness to our body and to the moment.
- They can encourage playfulness.
- Sometimes if there are latecomers it is easier for them to join in during warm-ups rather than when everyone is laughing.

Take standard warm-up exercises and add playfulness appropriately so that they generate laughter. We have to be aware of our participants' abilities and limitations. We must tell people to only join in with what they choose to do.

Arms and hands

- Wrists: Rotations, and wave at people.
- Elbows: Ask people to write their name with their elbows, or to draw a figure of eight with both elbows at the same time.

Shoulders

- Gently bring your shoulders up towards your ears and gently let them drop down with a haa sound. Repeat this a few times.
- Bring shoulders up towards your ears and gently then rotate them back and down and forward and up three times, and then the other way round. You can ask people to smile and sigh as they do this.

Head and face

- Make your face as big as possible.
- Make your face as small as possible.
- Pull faces at people.

Torso

- Sideway stretch: gently and slowly stretch down to one side then the other.
- Body twist: if there's room, gently let your arms swing from side to side. You can add a haa with alternate swings.

Hips, legs and feet

- Pretend to play with a hula-hoop to rotate hips.
- Walk around in different ways suggested by the leader, for example as if walking through treacle or taking big steps to avoid stepping on things.
- Imagine a camera on your big toe, and keeping your balance pretend to video the room.

Breathing and shaking out

- At different stages of the warm-up it's nice to shake out the body.
- It is also nice to take deep breaths and stretch gently and smile.

Also check out Brain Gym

LAUGHTER YOGA GAMES



*Dr Kataria (pictured here) invented Laughter Yoga.
Since 1995, people have been creating Laughter Yoga games.*

Here are some popular Laughter Yoga games:

- a. **Greeting Handshake:** Shake hands, make eye contact, and laugh.
- b. **Mobile Phone:** Pretend to have a hilarious caller.
- c. **Thumbs Up and High Five:** High Five or thumbs up with an appreciative laugh.
- d. **Milkshake:** Mix an imaginary drink and then drink it with a big laugh.
- e. **Hand Up Laughter:** When the leader's hand is up we laugh together. When they lower their hand there is silence.
- f. **Silent Hand Up Laughter.**
- g. **Laughter Cream:** Squeeze out some imaginary cream from an imaginary tube and apply it to wherever you have aches and pains and laugh the pain away.
- h. **Not Going To Argue:** Greet people with a side-to-side finger wag and a laugh to playfully indicate, "I'm not going to argue".
- i. **Measure Out A Laugh:** Measure out small, medium, big and enormous laughs.
- j. **Shy Laugh:** Pretend to be shy, cover your mouth and laugh.
- k. **Blow your problems into a balloon and pop it:** Blow, laugh and pop.
- l. **Crying Laughter:** Curl forward from the waist and bend down while pretending to cry, and then come back to a standing position while laughing.
- m. **Laugh down and up:** Like Crying Laughter but laugh down and laugh up.
- n. **Love yourself:** Give yourself a big hug and a laugh.
- o. **Mental Floss:** Imagine you have a long stick of mental floss (instead of dental floss) and pretend to push it in through one ear and out through the other and clean your mind.
- p. **Lion Laugh:** Put up your paws, and laugh like a lion.
- q. **Happiness sharing laughter:** Gather lots of happiness from around you, hug it to yourself, and throw it to the world to share it with a big laugh.

GENERAL LAUGHTER GROUP GAMES

Simon says: If the leader says, “Simon says” before giving an instruction then everyone does it. If there is no “Simon says” then you remain still.

Pass the laughter parcel: Sitting or standing in a circle, pass on a smile or a laugh to the next person.

Mexican Wave: Sitting or standing in a circle have a Mexican wave with everyone in turn raising his or her arms and having a quick burst of laughter. Go around the group one or two or three times.

Shy Walk: In a circle or while walking around look for eye contact with others, and as soon as you get it look away quickly and shyly laugh.

Joy and amazement: Just be amazed by everything.

Competition: Have a laughter competition (or championships) for the most joyous or silly or contagious laugh, and everyone wins.



The UK Laughter Championships has been running since 2012.

Spelling In groups: Each group spells out a word one letter at a time using their bodies. When each letter is complete, the group laughs. Words to use might include L-A-U-G-H, Y-E-S, F-U-N. The other groups can guess the words.

Mirror games: In pairs, one partner mirrors the other. Then swap over. You might give a playful focus such as getting up in the morning or looking at oneself in the mirror.

Eye gazing: Smile at each other, breathe in together, and on the outbreath chuckle together with eye contact.

Self-energiser: Send a smile to the palms of your hands then pass it on around your own body.

Singing: Sing together “Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” and other songs with actions.

DRAWING AND ARTWORK



Very often it's not the finished art but the process that is important.

Eyes Closed Step by step self-portrait using a crayon: With eyes closed, draw one feature at a time, and after each feature take the crayon off the page and touch the tip of your nose. The leader tells you which part of the face to draw on the page.

Laughter: Create a picture of a laugh or a smile.

Nice thought: Put a nice thought in your mind or listen to happy music, and create a picture or abstract energy picture of how you feel about it.

Speech Bubbles: Put speech bubbles on pictures in a newspaper or magazines.

Group Art: Create a group picture.

GIBBERISH

The power of gibberish is that we express our emotions without having to find the words to do so.

Some people find it very liberating, and usually within a couple of sentences we start laughing.

We are not translating words into sounds, we just let sounds express how we feel.

- Have a conversation in gibberish with someone about amazing things in the world.
- Have a conversation in gibberish with someone about shocking things in the world.
- Give compliments in gibberish (maybe while wandering around).
- Tell jokes in gibberish.
- Individually, and perhaps directed at a window or other item in the room (but not at a person), use gibberish to speak your frustrations.
- Present yourself with certificates for anything, especially ridiculous skills.



MEDITATIVE GAMES

Laughter is a meditative practice in as much as it brings us into the present moment, takes our mind off other things, and brings about physiological changes that make us feel happier and calmer and more positive.



Eye gazing: In pairs, look into your partner's eyes, and on the outbreaks both of you giggle together (or pretend to giggle). Do this for about up to 10 out breaths until you are laughing.

Laugh for No Reason: We can sit, or lie on the floor, with eyes closed and without talking, and pretend to chuckle until real laughter follows. We can set a timer, or let it continue until the laughter naturally stops (maybe for a few seconds or a few minutes). It's fine to pretend to laugh as long as it's playful. When it comes to an end, ask people to sit or lie quietly with a smile on their face for a couple of minutes.

Laughter meditation: This needs more specific understanding and training because it can be a very powerful releasing activity.

ENDING A SESSION

Having brought people together for a laugh, we want to end the session with them ready to leave feeling relaxed and complete.

If it has been a longer session it will almost certainly be necessary to have some sort of grounding exercise. This can be followed by thanking people for coming along.

Grounding exercises include:

- Guided visualisation;
- Relaxation and breathing exercises such as Yoga Nidra;
- Becoming aware of your senses and your surroundings;
- Humming;
- Dancing to music.

When people are feeling relaxed after a session, we don't want them engaging too much with their minds and talking and listening to each other. So, you might ask for a thumbs up to see if everyone is okay.

Sometimes it's nice to have refreshments and especially drinking water available afterwards.





A SAMPLE GENERAL LONG SESSION

Introduction - (5 minutes)

- Welcome people and introduce yourself.
- Say why we are doing these laughter activities.
- If you wish, let everyone introduce themselves with a name game.

Warm ups and games - (5-10 minutes)

- Gently warm up our body and relax our mind with some playful activity.
- Select warm up exercises for various parts of the body: face and head, shoulders, arms and hands, waist, legs and feet.
- Include gentle shaking out exercises and breathing.

Laughter Activities - (15-25 minutes)

- Gently ease people into laughing activities.
- Select from the lists or add your own activities where we laugh together.
- You might pick mostly Laughter Yoga games, or include creative games too.
- Depending on group interests you might include singing, movement, drawing and word play.
- You may also choose non-competitive children's and party games where we laugh together.

Celebration, meditation – (5-15 minutes)

- It is lovely to celebrate together when everyone is relaxed.
- Gibberish is great, having conversations including about the wonderful things in life.
- You might choose to do the meditative *laugh for no reason*. We sit or lie and chuckle. Set a timer, or let it naturally stop. At the end ask people to quietly rest for a couple of minutes.

Relaxation and close - (5-10 minutes)

- Maybe lead a relaxation exercise such as Yoga Nidra. It feels really good after the laughter session. It could take 5-10 minutes just for this.
- When this relaxation is over, if people are lying on the floor then let them slowly sit up, supporting themselves with their hands. Then request people gently to open their eyes. Don't get up quickly in case people are feeling light headed.

