

Embedding Mental Wellbeing: Methods and Benefits Collaborative Enhancement Project 2021

Reflective worksheet: Compassionate Play

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This worksheet is based around my article:

Reeve, J., (2021) Compassionate Play: why playful teaching is a prescription for good mental health (for you and your students), *The Journal of Play in Adulthood* 3(2), p.6-23. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5920/jpa.855>

The article makes the point that teaching playfully enhances the wellbeing of teaching staff as well as students within higher education. It outlines my pedagogic approach to Embedding Mental Wellbeing: utilising playful, creative approaches combined with compassionate and contemplative pedagogies to develop skills in empathy, listening and reflection, and providing safe, creative spaces for identity work. To best understand and utilise this reflective worksheet, we recommend you first read this 'Compassionate Play' article.

This reflective worksheet is designed to prompt reflection on your own practices and learning experiences that playfully support mental wellbeing. When going through the questions, do consider playful activities in their broadest sense, some of these may be part of your personal rather than professional life, but are still relevant.

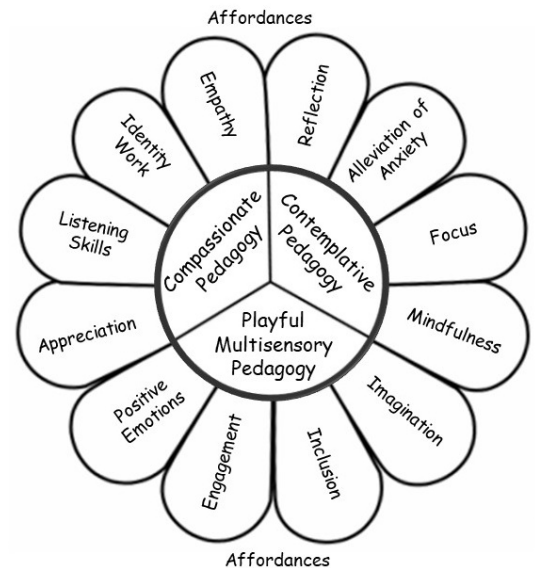
- 1) Considering the quote, "The opposite of play....is depression." (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p.198), can you identify any examples of quiet or solitary playful activities that you have used when experiencing negative emotions?
 - a) Can you recall how you felt when taking part in these activities?
- 2) Compassionate Play in Context: how have factors such as COVID-19 impacted on playful learning within your own context?
- 3) Compassionate Pedagogy and Playful Learning: have you experienced compassionate pedagogy in any form, either as an educator or learner?
 - a) Were there any aspects of this that could be considered playful?
- 4) Did your experiences relate to any of the Affordances of a Compassionate and Playful Pedagogy listed in the article? Which ones and why?
- 5) Contemplative Pedagogy and Playful Learning: have you experienced contemplative pedagogy in any form, either as an educator or learner?
 - a) Were there any aspects of this that could be considered playful?

- 6) Did your experiences relate to any of the Affordances of a Contemplative and Playful Pedagogy listed in the article? Which ones and why?
- 7) Are there any playful practices that you currently offer or take part in to support positive mental health?
- a) How could you develop these further based on some of the tools outlined in the article?

- 8) The Blossom model: are there any 'petals' within the model that you would particularly like to develop in your practice or learning?
- a) How might compassionate, contemplative and playful pedagogies inform this?

- 9) Activities: have you used the 'Collage for Self-Compassion' and/or 'Mindful LEGO® Meditation' activities? If so, what are your reflections?
- a) How might you adapt these tools within your own practice or learning?

- 10) Finally, what is your key take-away from this article?
- a) And what will you do differently in your teaching or learning as a result?



References

Sutton-Smith, B. (1997). *The Ambiguity of Play*. Harvard University Press: USA.

This document was produced as part of the [Collaborative Enhancement Project - Embedding Mental Wellbeing](#).