

Focusing – what it is, and guidelines

What is focusing?

Focusing is a way of developing a relationship with parts of you that tend to get ignored, squashed, suppressed. An example might be: feelings of anxiety come up in particular situations and you really don't want them to. Focusing can enable you to make contact with that part of you that feels anxious and to acknowledge it, which can help the feelings settle (because that anxious part doesn't feel it has to shout for attention).

The Focusing process

- ✦ Bring your awareness into your inner world
- ✦ Make contact with what is there
- ✦ Acknowledge what is there
- ✦ Develop a relationship with what is there
- ✦ Describe what is there
- ✦ See if the words that come are the ones that describe it well
- ✦ Sensing for how *it* feels
- ✦ Receive what has come
- ✦ Thank your body process
- ✦ Bring your awareness back to the outer world

What does this look like in practice? I'll ask you to settle into your body, close your eyes if that feels OK (or look down at the floor), and talk you through a body-scan or check-in. Then I'll lead you into the 'inner space' of your body to see what's there, or to check-in with a particular issue.

You describe to me what's there (although I don't need to know meaning or content) and I reflect back what you say. I may make suggestions to help you communicate with what comes up. We are not attempting to analyse or interpret what comes up – though part of you may want to!

At the end I'll ask you to take some time to thank what came up and to come back into the room. If you want you can talk about what happened in the session and you can ask for my feedback if that feels as if it would be helpful.



Guidelines for Focusing

It may be useful to read these through before our Focusing session. We can go through them again when we meet, and you can ask me if there's anything that doesn't seem to make sense. Of course, you won't remember them all, and that's fine.

When you're Focusing

- ✦ Be physically comfortable
- ✦ Move around if it feels right
- ✦ Have your eyes open or shut
- ✦ Choose whether to bring your awareness inside, and just see what's there, or work on an issue

What to do when I reflect back

- ✦ I will be reflecting back to you what you say
- ✦ Listen for your own words coming back to you
- ✦ Does it hit the nail on the head? Is it exactly right, or not quite right?
- ✦ Pay close attention – this is the heart of Focusing
- ✦ Notice how it's feeling now
- ✦ Has anything changed? Do the words fit what you are feeling? If they don't fit, what would fit better?

What to do when I make a suggestion

- ✦ Check inside to see if my suggestion feels right
- ✦ If it doesn't fit, do what feels right instead
- ✦ If it does feel right, see if you can internally follow my suggestion, which is usually about developing an inner relationship with what is there
- ✦ Notice if anything changes, or if it still feels the same, and let me know, when you are ready

You're in charge

- ✦ I'll be offering suggestions about what you might do, but the direction, content, and pace of the session is under your control
- ✦ You can ask for more suggestions, or quiet
- ✦ You can end the session when you want
- ✦ You can interrupt at any point, or put up your hand for me to be quiet
- ✦ You can be as private or as open as you want to be. I don't need to know the content of your session. However, it is helpful to me to keep track of your process, or if something new comes

What to do if you want to let me know something

- ✦ You can let me know, at any time, if you are feeling uncomfortable or unhappy, about anything

- ♦ Some things can be resolved immediately, e.g., you may be feeling too hot or too cold
- ♦ Some things may take a little longer to resolve, e.g., there's critical thoughts, or scared feelings. These may need some time spending with them

Mixed Feelings

- ♦ Focusing is about *being with* whatever is there, in your experiencing, in a friendly, non-judgmental way
- ♦ It is about keeping yourself company, and bringing your attention inside, to whatever needs your attention
- ♦ It would be helpful to me, if you let me know if there is a critical voice that comes up. We may need to give that part some attention too

Ending

- ♦ I will give you time signals before the end, say, 5 and 2 minutes. Then you will know you have some time to complete the process
- ♦ I will also be making some suggestions as to how you may do this
- ♦ You can say at the beginning, what time signal you want

