

Hand Massage

Step by step guide

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1. Ensure that there is a positive and safe atmosphere in the room amongst the students. It is beneficial to have a group charter that provides a sense of respect and collaboration within the group but also be aware of those students who may find being part of a group difficult and ensure that the students have a chance to step back from some of the connecting activities that they may find too difficult to engage with initially.
2. Help the students to move into a circle. Encourage, help and enable them to sit together with thoughtful key adults reassuring students who are more reluctant and need a sense of containment. Be aware of those students who find touch difficult and help them to feel acknowledged, safe and understood.
3. The adult then shows the hand lotion and puts a blob on his/her hand..... naming how it feels, the sensations with an open, friendly voice..... e.g. "ooooh it feels smooth and shiny....."
4. See if some of the students would like to have some and gently place a blob on their hands. Be careful to notice the sensation and the responses of the children as they try and watch as they rub it in or smell it and add the language for them... "I see how it is cold on your hand....." "ooooh I wonder if that is smooth and silky..." "I can see you smiling and notice how it feels nice to touch..."
5. The adult can then show how to rub or massage the hand lotion into their own hand or on the hand of a student who doesn't mind having a go..... and the adult notices their experience or their body language and names it..... "I can see how you are a little reticent... maybe it's a bit cold at first on your skin..... I wonder if you are noticing the smell of the cream.....? You are even beginning to smile as I'm smoothing the cream on your hand..."
6. Invite the group to join with a partner and have a go at massaging each other's hands but be aware of those children who aren't keen.
7. Be aware of the students that will find it hard to allow another to touch their hand and keep them safe with noticing this out loud and offering for them to feel the sensation themselves without being with another person. Keep them nearby and in mind as they explore the sensations of the cream on their skin.
8. The adult notices and names the sensations and the experience for the students understanding that they may be unable to name and think about the experience and need the adult to name and give them the language to shape their experience.
9. Enable there to be a light and positive atmosphere in the room so that everyone feels safe and valued. The key is in naming the sensations and noticing and matching the sensual experience the child is having. This is about connecting

and attuning with them also so that they feel understood, safe and free to be in the moment in the sensations they are experiencing and to have the adult able to wrap the language around the experience or simply to just be, to just be with them in the moment, containing, reassuring and safe.

Notes

Be aware of students who may have allergies to particular hand creams.

Resources

Hand lotion