









Getting into Flow

	Objective: To develop an ability to get into states of flow.
	Time Requirements: a. Preparation: 0-5 minutes b. Activity: 15-25 minutes
	Items: a. Getting into Flow Handout b. Coloring pencils
	Learning Outcomes: a. Increased ability to cultivate flow states. (EI Subskill 2: Managing Own Emotions).
	Key Learning Point: Flow states can be achieved through prolonged periods of intense, engaged concentration.
Self-Disclosure: *	
Difficulty: Basic	

Instructions

- Flow states are periods of intense, immersed concentration that usually accompany experiences of being fully connected to a task at hand. Start the activity by asking individuals to think about an experience where they felt immersed in a task or hobby they were doing – to a point where they ‘lost track of time’ or were unaware of their surroundings. Mention that such states of flow help us focus on task and may prevent the replaying of unpleasant memories and events in our minds.
- Hand the coloring pencils and Getting into Flow Handout to participants. Tell them that they are to color the drawing any way they wish. Remind participants to also turn off any potential distractions in their immediate environment. This may include their laptops, tablets and their mobile phones. If possible, remove all time indicators (clocks, watches) in the immediate environment.
- After 20 minutes, ask participants to guess how much time has passed. Tell participants that flow is a means of purposely redirecting one’s attention and focus away from unpleasant emotions. Temporary flow states help the brain see problems in a new light without the distraction of unpleasant emotions.

	Reflection Questions: a. Was it easy to slip into a state of flow? Why or why not? b. How did it feel being in the state of flow? Were you conscious of how much time passed when you were engaged in the coloring task?
	Further Reading and References: a. Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). <i>Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention</i> . New York: Harper Collins. b. See also http://pomodorotechnique.com/ for an alternative suggestion and ideas on how 25-minute periods of intense can be helpful for productivity.
	Note: a. Flow should not be confused with simply ‘avoiding’ the problem. Tell participants that flow states can be counterproductive if individuals seek flow states as a way of putting off a problem rather than solving it.