3 Ignoring Distractions

☑ Children   ☑ Teenagers

> **Aims** To develop concentration and decrease distraction.

> **Materials** Large whiteboard, coloured markers, fleeces, mats, large drum(s), personal folders and workbooks, crayons and coloured pens.

Warm Up Invite everyone into the circle and check for any feedback from the previous session. Explain that this session is about increasing concentration and decreasing distraction: write on the board key words for things that group members find distracting, such as the sound of a chair scraping, roadworks (external sounds), and so on.

Everyone has a body-stretch and shakes out arms, hands, legs, one at a time. Explain that everyone is going to walk in straight lines in the room, turning at the corners and continuing to walk. Meanwhile, call out directions to try and distract, such as 'over here', 'run and jump', 'faster', and so on. 'Freeze' is when everyone stops; finish with a repeat of the shake-out.

Activities The following mental exercise is to assist concentration and focus; participants may choose to sit back-to-back in twos or threes:

- Close or shade the eyes and think about trees, any sort of a tree.
- Imagine one tree with leaves or spines when it is beginning to grow.
- Imagine it is growing in size and producing blossoms or fruit or cones.
- Now concentrate very hard on the detail of the tree.
- Slowly open eyes and draw your tree in the your workbook.

This exercise uses a specific 'graded focus': participants focus on trees generally; then choose one individual tree; then concentrate on its growth and change; and then they recreate it in their workbooks. This approach channels mental energy into greater awareness of detail.

> **Sharing** Share tree pictures in twos/threes, look at their similarities and differences.

> **Closure** Write or draw in workbooks anything that was distracting; relax with fleeces.

I Feel Lost

Decide where you are on the tree, and colour a leaf person to show where you are.

Colour another leaf person to show where you would like to be.