

## Suggestions for Leading Meditation Sessions

- Introduce yourself and ask others to introduce themselves, too.
  - Ask about their prior experience with meditation because it will help you decide what kind of experience to lead (i.e., concentration-based, guided imagery, etc.).
  - Refer to each student by name and relate his/her comments to others' in order to help them make connections with each other.
- Introduce the topic of meditation and your day's activity before you begin.
- Encourage students to find a relaxed (but not too relaxed!) position that can be maintained comfortably during the meditation. I often ask students to "sit in a way that embodies dignity," which prompts them to sit up straight.
- Develop the ability to be in a state of relaxed awareness as you guide students.
- Remain alert and aware of the students as you lead them. You may notice signs of drowsiness, restlessness, anxiety, or discomfort. Monitor students' breathing and general body activity to gauge their relaxation.
- Remind students that meditation takes practice, like exercising or working out. With time, they will be able to let go of more tension and focus their minds more reliably.
- While leading the group, remember to keep your voice calm, steady, and easily heard. Try not to let your voice fade out.
- Use phrases and language that invite participation and give permission, rather than demanding that students follow you in a particular way. For example, you might use some of the following phrases: "Allow the chair to support your weight," "Can you become aware of your breathing?" or "Return your attention to the room in whatever way feels comfortable... stretching, yawning, whatever."
- Be sure to maintain the secular content of the meditation. Students can use religious phrases in their personal meditations, but keep your own discussion of meditation free of spiritual or religious references.
- The best way to describe meditation is usually to dive in and try it. You might feel a bit self-conscious at first. However, as you become more familiar with leading meditation sessions, your nervousness will lessen and you will begin to enjoy the meetings. Feel free to use humor and share your own experiences.
- Enjoy your experience as the group leader and remember: BE. HERE. NOW.