



HEART*

▶ ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

 **Time:** 5 - 15 minutes

 **Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Have a respite from heavy brain work
- Physically release some tension.

 **Materials:** None

 **Preparation:** None

Instructions

1. Explain that one simple way for us to focus and to be present in the moment is to do a simple yoga pose called “Anjali mudra.” This is used as a posture of composure, of returning to one’s heart, whether you are greeting someone or saying goodbye, initiating or completing an action.

It looks like this: demonstrate bringing both hands together in front of your heart, palm to palm. Ask the group to try it.

2. Tell the group: As you bring your hands together at your center, you are literally connecting the right and left hemispheres of your brain. This is the yogic process of unification, the yoking of our active and receptive natures. In the yogic view of the body, the energetic or spiritual heart is visualized as a lotus at the center of the chest. Anjali mudra nourishes this lotus heart with awareness, gently encouraging it to open as water and light do a flower.
3. Ask them to sit comfortably, both feet flat on the floor. Ask them to close their eyes, or look downward as you read the following, in a slow, gentle voice:
 - Take two to three slow, deep breaths
 - Lengthen your spine out of your pelvis and extend the back of your neck by dropping your chin slightly in.
 - Now, with open palms, slowly draw your hands together at the center of your chest as if to gather all of your resources into your heart.
 - Repeat that movement several times, contemplating your own metaphors for bringing the right and left side of yourself—masculine and feminine, logic and intuition, strength and tenderness—into wholeness.
 - Now, to reveal how potent the placement of your hands at your heart can be, try shifting your hands to one side or the other of your midline and pause there for a moment. Do you feel slightly off kilter?

* This module comes from the Lotus Women’s Peer Education Training Manual, Center for Health Training and Women Organized to Respond to Life Threatening Diseases (WORLD), 2008.

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- Now shift back to center and notice how satisfying the center line is, like a magnet pulling you into your core.
 - Gently touch your thumbs into your sternum (the bony plate at the center of the rib cage) as if you were ringing the bell to open the door to your heart.
 - Broaden your shoulder blades to spread your chest open from the inside. Feel space under your armpits as you bring your elbows into alignment with your wrists.
 - Stay here for some time and take in your experience. What initial shifts of consciousness do you experience? Is there a change in your mood?
4. After 2-3 minutes, ask the group to slowly breathe in, and as they breathe out, to relax their hands to their sides and open their eyes. There's no need to process this activity; the experience is the point. Or you could simply check in by asking how everyone is doing.

* This module is part of the online toolkit Building Blocks to Peer Success. For more information, visit http://www.hdwg.org/peer_center/training_toolkit. This module comes from the Lotus Women's Peer Education Training Manual, Center for Health Training and Women Organized to Respond to Life Threatening Diseases (WORLD), 2008.