

Aromatherapy

Give students 'Aromatherapy Fun' to work on while waiting for all students to arrive.

Activity

(Have a volunteer smell familiar scents and describe thoughts/memories the smells evoke – i.e. crayons, playdoh, cinnamon)

The aroma of apples and cinnamon wafting from the kitchen, the crisp smell of pine in the forest and the unmistakable scent of a salty ocean breeze all illustrate how certain smells can evoke memories, moods and emotions.

Scan the shelves of the local bath and body stores and one is sure to find products labeled for aromatherapy. This is part of the theory behind Aromatherapy.

So what is aromatherapy, how is it used and will those products actually work?

II. What is Aromatherapy

- ❖ How many used aromatherapy in some form or another?
- ❖ The term derives from two words: aroma - fragrance or smell and therapy - treatment.
- ❖ Aromatherapy is the use of essential oils from plants for healing purposes.
- ❖ Essential oils penetrate the body in 2 ways – nose & skin.
- ❖ Essential oils are gaining new attention as an alternative treatment for infections, stress, and other health problems. Aromatherapy is used to bring about greater feelings of well-being and depending on the essential oils used can reduce stress and tension, improve mental clarity, invigorate, relax, relieve depression and reduce anxiety.

I. Brief History of the use of Aromatics

- ❖ Essential oils have been used for therapeutic purposes for nearly six thousand years.
- ❖ The ancient Chinese, Indians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans used essential oils for spiritual, therapeutic, hygienic, and ritualistic purposes.
- ❖ It wasn't until the early 1900's that Western civilizations began to find the powers of essential oils.
- ❖ Aromatherapy did not become really popular in the United States until the 1980s, when essential oils gained the attention of massage therapists, alternative practitioners, and the commercial industry.
- ❖ Today, many lotions, candles, and beauty products are sold under the name "aromatherapy." Unfortunately, however, many of these products contain synthetic fragrances which do not have the therapeutic benefits found in essential oils.

III. What are Essential Oils

- ❖ Essential oils are a highly concentrated form of the plant in which they were derived (i.e. extracts may be taken from the roots, leaves, or blossoms of plants).
- ❖ Essential oils and fatty/vegetable oils are two completely different types of oils.
- ❖ Essential oils are not oils at all but rather a water-like fluid.
- ❖ Some oils are believed to promote physical healing -- for example, some are able to relieve swelling or fight infections.
- ❖ Others are used for their emotional value -- they may enhance relaxation or invigorate.
- ❖ Very potent (i.e. one drop of essential oil = about 30 cups of herbal tea (i.e. when making chamomile tea w/ the dried herb, you are extracting miniscule amounts of the essential oil present along w/ the other water soluble ingredients). – not for consumption.

- ❖ Understanding that essential oils are volatile by nature (most essential oils tend to evaporate or change to vapor quickly when exposed to air)
- ❖ Shelf life of up to 7yrs

IV. Safety Precautions

Some of safety procedures you need to know if you are using aromatherapy and essential oils:

1. Essential oils are flammable.
2. Never take essential oils internally, as swallowing oils can be extremely dangerous.
3. Never use an essential oil undiluted on the skin. With oil or water – skin test
4. Keep essential oils away from your eyes.
5. Avoid children accidentally coming into contact with essential oils, treat oils as if they are medicines.
6. There are also cautions which apply to individual essential oils. For example, certain oils should not be used by pregnant women, epileptics, and those with high blood pressure, sensitive skin, people with severe lung conditions such as severe asthma / emphysema.

V. Our Sense of Smell – nose brain connection

- ❖ This sense is incredibly powerful -- according to some estimates, about 10,000 times more sensitive than any other sense we possess.
- ❖ The "smell" receptors in your nose communicate with structures that are embedded deep in your brain and serve as storehouses for emotions and memories.
- ❖ When essential oil molecules are inhaled, they affect these parts of the brain directly.
- ❖ Researchers believe that stimulation of these structures influences our physical, emotional, and mental health.
- ❖ *Facts about Smell*
- ❖ Sidebar – The dominant nostril of a person correlates with the dominant hand.
- ❖ Smell Dysfunction can come from smoking, head injuries, or strokes.
- ❖ Your sense of smell peaks between 20 – 40 years of age
- ❖ Most sensitive – Nighttime, Women – especially during ovulation.

VI. Psycho-Aromatherapy

- ❖ Mind/body connection – When the mind thinks, the body listens (process).
- ❖ We all experience stress.
- ❖ We cannot always change the outside stressors, but you can learn to change how you will react.
- ❖ Key to coping with stress isn't about control, rather it is identifying stress and finding better ways to handle it.
- ❖ Relaxation can be learned! "Stop and Smell the Roses"

VI. Breathing / Relaxation Exercises

VII. Detailed Properties and Applications of 6 specific Essential Oils

VII. Questions