



Like a Tree



Introduction:

Coronavirus is here and our children know it. It is worrying and frightening many of us at the moment. Nature offers us some metaphors to help our children and young people make their way through the anxiety and concern that they may be feeling at this time. What if we were to think of ourselves as trees right now - living through a storm that is passing around us?



Purpose:

The following visualisation activities invite children and young people to use their imaginations to tune into three cross out three and replace it with four different aspects of a tree for relief in different ways:

- Tree roots reaching down into the soil- grounding and holding the tree firmly. – Useful when children or young people might feel like they need strength.
- Trunk and branches- flexibly swaying and bending in the storm. ---Useful for times when children or young people feel delicate or like they could snap.
- A leaf at the tip of the highest branch- freely sprouting and reaching into the sky. – Useful for times when children or young people are feeling confined.
- Tree weathering a storm story- useful to help children or young people see their way through difficult events.



Audience:

Primary school aged children and older.



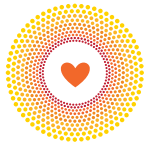
What you do:

- Don't introduce this activity when your child or young person is anxious or worried. Choose a time when they feel relatively safe and connected. You might use the introduction below to orient your child or young person to the activity.
- Talk about the three parts of a tree suggested by the tree diagram.
- Read through the stories. Children might like to follow the movement suggestions within the stories or they might prefer to just listen as they relax. It is up to them.
- Enquire about which story your child/young person preferred and why.
- Repeat one or more stories with your child/young person from time to time. Children/ young people might find they prefer a particular story. Stick to the stories your child/young person prefers or requests.



Extension:

Invite your child to draw himself/herself as a tree. I wonder what your family grove of trees might look like?



Like a Tree



Introduction:

Can you think of many big old trees around your place? Can you see any out of your windows? Next time you go for a walk, look around for them along the way.

Some trees are hundreds of years old. They are strong, and tall and have lived through many storms. They could probably teach us a thing or two those old trees.

What if we were to pretend we were one of those trees?

We could have roots that reach down into the soil- grounding us- powerfully holding us up.

We could have a trunk and branches that are bendy and can sway and shift in the winds- even if the winds are fierce.

We could have ends of our branches, sprouting and growing tiny new leaves all the time. We reach for the sky though these tiny leaves.

We have made up 4 imagination stories about these 3 parts of a tree and about the tree as a whole- I wonder which one of the stories feels the best to hear? Feel free to just listen to these stories or to try out the movements they suggest.



The tips of our Branches:

Can help us feel more free.

The Trunk and middle branches:

Can help us feel like we can bend and not break.

The Roots:

Can help us feel stronger and more powerful.

Four Tree Imagination Stories



Roots Focus- for times when we want to feel stronger and more powerful

Find a comfy sitting position, close your eyes or look towards the ground and get ready to imagine.

Imagine that you are a giant, healthy, tree.

Think about to your tail bone at the base of your back, and from here imagine your roots growing down into the ground, very very deeply into the earth.

Feel your roots held strongly in the soil connecting down from your tailbone into the deep center of the earth.

Feel how deep your roots grow.

As you are imagining your deep, deep roots, take a few slow, deep breaths. Breathe slowly in then pause, then out and pause. Repeat this. Feel how great it is to be solidly connected into the ground, how strong your body feels. Let's stay like this for a while.

As you continue to breathe, gently focus back into the room around you feeling strong and powerful and solid.



Trunk & Middle Branches Focus – for times when we want to feel more bendy

Find a comfy standing position, feet on the ground, close your eyes or look down at the ground and get ready to imagine.

Imagine that you are a giant, healthy tree.

Your roots are deeply planted, and you are strong. Pay attention to your body that is the trunk of the tree. Let it feel powerful and solid. Even when the wind is blowing, your body feels strong. Let your body sway a little as the wind rises. Let your branches move and wave as the cool air blows through. Let the movement help you feel fresh. With your feet firmly planted on the ground, let yourself stretch and bend your body, feeling connected through your body and in sync with the air moving around you. You move and flow together with the wind, smoothly in a way that helps you feel more awake and even on the inside.

As your movement slows, gently focus back into the room, feeling more bendy and smooth in the way you can move.





The Tips of our Branches Focus- for times when we want to feel more free

Find a comfortable sitting spot, close your eyes or look down at the ground and get ready to imagine.

Imagine that you are a tiny leaf, growing at the very tip of the highest branch of a giant, healthy, tree.

The tree is held in place by a thick, strong root system that grounds it. With its roots deeply planted, and its trunk strong and solid you are a tiny leaf growing from the highest branch of the tree. You get to touch the sky, light and high. Stretch up your arms and your hands and your fingers and reach into the sky. Feel the air, you are free. Feel your body open into the sky above the clouds. Surrounded by sunshine and blue sky. You are warm and content. Come into your body as you stretch outward and upward into the blue sky. Feel lightness come into your chest as you stretch out and float in the sky. Stay here, safe in the sky for as long as you like.

Then, when you feel ready, gently come back to the room around you feeling a new freedom in your body and mind.



A Tree weathering a Storm

Find a comfortable sitting spot, close your eyes or look down at the ground and get ready to imagine.

Imagine that you are a giant, healthy tree standing tall and proud.

Your roots spread down from you deeply into the ground. Deep, deep, down. They stretch wide and deep and hold you strong. You are very powerful, feel that. You are held firm by the earth, protected.

You grow up through your trunk and branches. Your trunk is solid and firm. Your center. Feel into your center, it will always steady you. You draw up strength from your roots and energy from your branches and it comes together here. Branches spread from your center. Long, flexible branches that sway a little in the gentle breeze around you. Your branches reach out all around you. They stretch right out. They grow towards the sky.

You are ready for the storm. You are both strong and resilient. You were built for this. The clouds gather and the winds and rain rise. Storms can't reach you underground, the earth guards you. Your roots hold you strong, always. Above the ground is where the storm will be felt. But your trunk is firm and sturdy. You stand tall in readiness. Back strong, head up. Un-moved. Your branches were made to shift in the rising winds. To dance. You let the energy of the storm move your branches. You don't resist, you flow with the wild air not against it, and you shift and move and soar with all of the energy swirling around you. Feel the movement give freedom to your arms and hands. Let them swing and sway. Then, the winds slow, as do you and you find stillness. You take in the rain that the storm has left you. You let it soak into you like a lovely cool, refreshing drink. The sun finds its way through the clouds that are breaking up above you, and you turn yourself towards it- broad and mighty and strong.

