

'Using the Labyrinth as a therapeutic tool'

What are the mental/physical benefits of using a labyrinth?

The benefits are many, we all know stress puts pressure on the body and can cause all sorts of disease, when the mind is still, the body has a space for bringing about balance and healing. In this busy demanding world that we live in today, it is very difficult to find quiet place where we can get in touch with ourselves. Many people are interested in meditation to de -stress, but don't know where to start. Working with a labyrinth allows you to reach deep levels of relaxation very quickly by simply following the path

The most important role when working with somebody on a finger labyrinth is to **observe them and reflect back. Emphasize at the beginning that they must resist opening their eyes, even if they have a desire to do so if they feel lost. Encourage them rather to go inward into the feeling that is being invoked. If they do open their eyes it helps them to escape from the issue that needs to be addressed.**

For some people the whole journey may be a calm, peaceful one with no negative issues arising; only clarification, strength and **guidance. Ask them to remember this aspect of themselves. They are simply being reminded of their strengths.**

Others may find the whole journey flat and say that they never experienced anything. Allow them to reflect this back into their lives. Is this a common emotion?

Some could find that outside noises distract them and can provoke feelings of anger or irritation. This often relates to boundaries; who in their life is encroaching on their space? How does it feel? What emotions does it stir? Amplify these feelings and acknowledging them before helping them to create new boundaries. Maybe they need to voice something first or create a safe space for themselves.

Which had is leading? Do they get stuck in the corners? Are they going fast or extremely slow? Do they skip lines and become totally uncoordinated? Do they get lost?

The key into the unconscious is through the emotions; "How do you feel? Explore this- where in your body is this feeling anchored?" Relate the feeling to the chakras. "What does this feeling remind you of?" Get the person to visualize themselves and ask them how old they are in the visualization. What is the issue? Do they experience this emotion on the journey inward or on the way out (refer to symbology). Explore the issue and allow them to slowly move into the centre where they can connect with inner guidance. Encourage them to bring themselves in as the adult, guiding them to resolve the issue with whatever feels right at the time. When they already they can start the journey outwards affirming that they are bringing with them new found strength and energy from the centre. Encourage them to persevere when the outward journey is a

tough one.

These are only some of the different experiences users have found using the labyrinth as a **healing** tool. There are many more experiences to be revealed as each individual has a different experience and will change with each one over a period of time, reflecting their state of mind in a particular moment in time.

Using the labyrinth for ADHD children

I tried the labyrinth with my eldest daughter who is 14. She has ADHD and is also really struggling with her behavior and emotions at the moment - it was amazing! When she got stuck, she immediately opened her eyes and said 'well I'm finished - I can't go any further because I'm stuck' I suggested to her that she calm down, close her eyes and have another go, but I gave her no instructions on what it was she must do, I just told her to rest her fingers back where they were and to let them do what she felt they ought to!! This made her even more frustrated and she just replied that there was no point, as all she could do was go back the way she'd been and what was the point in back-tracking - I just looked at her and raised my eyebrows! I could see that she was starting to realize what was happening and see how this was very reflective of her attitude at the moment. She quieted down and had another go - she was more relaxed and I noticed that she was the reverse to me; her right hand kept waiting for her left!! She finished the labyrinth and came back out and we were able to talk about how her feelings were very similar to how she deals with things in her everyday life.

I think that the labyrinths are fantastic. Initially I thought that £35 was quite a lot of money to spend on one item, but I am glad that I decided to as it is a tool that the whole family can use. Although the things that it brought to the surface were things that might come about through general discussion I think the labyrinth manages to do it in a much more subtle way but with quicker results - we love it!