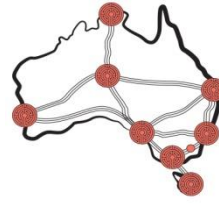


# Labyrinths & Social Emotional Learning (SEL)



australian labyrinth  
network inc.

## Notes and Preparation Ideas

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These are your refer-to pages for explanations, background, links to resources, and anything else you may need in order to run an activity: a one-stop shop, so to speak!

## The Activities

We have designed the activities to have strong connections with social and emotional learning (SEL). Some will also develop Executive Function (EF) skills. We are aware of the many, many SEL programs in use in schools and so we recommend that you use student appropriate language and modify or adapt the wording of our activities to suit the program/s you use. We would also recommend that you adapt the activities for your particular context, whether that be:

- Public/State School
- Special Learning School
- Religious-based School
- Independent School
- Montessori or Rudolf Steiner School
- Home School
- School Online
- Early Learning Centre
- Higher Education Institution



## Resources to Support the Activities

*(Why not consider one or more of these Resources listed below for whole staff or sub-school PD?)*

### Introducing Students to Labyrinths

Use the PowerPoint slides *A Short Introduction to Labyrinths on the World Labyrinth Day in Educational Settings* [Resources page](#)

**Drawing classical labyrinths:** these links will take you to *The Labyrinth Society* resources page, 'types of labyrinths'

How to draw/make a [3 circuit classical labyrinth](#) (recommended for younger children)

How to make/draw a [7 circuit classical labyrinth](#)

How to draw/make an [11 circuit classical labyrinth](#)

And here is a [video](#) with Lars Howlett from [Discover Labyrinths](#) demonstrating the drawing of 3, 5, 7 and 11 classical labyrinths for *The Labyrinth Society*. Students could easily follow this.

## Finger labyrinths

Follow the directions in the links above to create your own – a very FUN thing to do, or download a readymade template from *The Labyrinth Society* download documents page

[Template for 7 circuit classical labyrinth](#)

[Template for Chartres labyrinth](#)

## Making a Labyrinth

From *The Labyrinth Society* download documents page

[“Step by Step” to Lay out a Three=Circuit Classical Labyrinth](#)

If you do not have access to a walking labyrinth, we would strongly encourage you to consider making a temporary one somewhere in the school grounds or in a gymnasium or multi-purpose room, and enjoy the experience of working together to plan it, measure it out, and mark it with whatever materials you choose. And FINALLY, to walk it!

## Calming Breaths

Before starting a walk it is important to give the body time to slow down. Some calming breaths can help.

Use a method that your students are already familiar with.

OR

- When using a finger labyrinth, place your finger at the entrance to the labyrinth. Take a long, slow breath in and move your finger around the outside edge in a clockwise direction to about 10 or 11 on the “clock-face.” Let the breath out slowly as you continue tracing back to the entrance. Repeat 3-5 times.
- On a walking labyrinth, walkers can be seated or stand somewhere on the perimeter as they breathe in slowly and calmly, and release their breath slowly. Repeat 3-5 times.

## The Basics of Introducing Young People to Walking a Labyrinth

Invite them to approach a labyrinth walk as follows:

For a walking labyrinth path:

- gather around the labyrinth, seated or standing
- focus students on calming breaths
- one by one and allowing 1.5-2m between walkers, start the walk into the centre
- encourage them to pause for a short time when they reach the centre
- then slowly walk out
- when they reach the entrance gather them again & encourage them to pause quietly for a few moments

For a finger labyrinth path:

- focus students on calming breaths
- use a finger of their non-dominant hand to do the “walking” along the path
- encourage them to pause for a short time when they reach the centre
- then slowly “walk” out using the same finger and hand
- encourage them to pause quietly for a few moments

Encourage voluntary responses from your learners and remind them that it's theirs to walk any time they feel the need: sad times, happy times, puzzling times, confusing times ...

## For Things to Run Smoothly on a Group Walk on the Labyrinth

- remove shoes if using a canvas labyrinth
- walk with “soft eyes”, be respectful of others on the path
- walkers walk at different speeds; so when necessary, pass others with care
- in the quiet space of the labyrinth, awareness can arise; be mindful of and respectful of any responses – in yourself and others

## Reflection Process – an explanation

As teachers we are practically hard-wired to thinking in terms of “outcomes” - those things that we can see students do/explain/write/show/etc. We set our intentions for lessons or units, and we are very explicit about what we are looking for students to demonstrate so that we can see that they “got it”.

Working with labyrinths is a little different. This is body work, letting our minds have a rest for a while, and for a lot of us, “reading” our bodies is something we’ve not had much experience with. The same goes for young people. And so we need to allow space for this to happen. When we still our minds we allow awareness to arise. The reflections at the end of each Labyrinth activity are intended as prompts, something for students to ponder and think about. Give them time to sit with the questions. It is not intended that students should be required to respond, but if they wish to, that’s fine. And don’t be surprised by what students might share – at the time or later – because their innermost self is being allowed to express itself. They might choose to journal or draw or write or create something.



## Harmony Problem Solving Labyrinth

This is a Lisa Gidlow Moriarty resource, used with permission, and there are four components as follows:

- The Psychology of the Path Progression in the Harmony Problem Solving Labyrinth (with four Harmony Design variations).
- Cross Roads/Harmony Problem Solving Labyrinth (template and steps for participants)
- Labyrinth template with words
- Labyrinth template without words

The documents have been uploaded separately.

## Some Music

*Music for a Labyrinth Walk* by Australian composer Corrina Bonshek.

<http://bonmusic.com.au/lab/>

It was especially composed for a walking meditation at Centennial Park Labyrinth, Sydney. Run time is 6min 30sec.

## References – not referred to in Notes

Neff, Kristin & Germer, Christopher. 2018. *The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook – a proven way to accept yourself, build inner strength, and thrive*. The Guildford Press, NY.

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Thich Nhat Hanh. 2016. *A Handful of Quiet – Happiness in Four Pebbles*. Plum Blossom Books, Berkeley, CA.