Book Bathing

Grace Van Dyke Bird Library, Bakersfield College

Young Adult

|

Adults

Book Bathing

May 9, 2023

Free

Byline

Ariel Dyer, Librarian, Grace Van Dyke Bird Library, Bakersfield (Calif.) College

Book Bathing provides an opportunity for library users to reimagine the physical space of a library and engage all of their senses through a guided mindfulness audio experience.

Advanced Planning

This program was a part of our end-of-semester Destress Fest. Planning began about 6 weeks before the event. The goal was to create a relaxation/mindfulness event.

Initially, it began as a guided meditation activity, then morphed into a take on the popular concept of "forest bathing" that originated in Japan.

I wrote a script and reached out to our Commercial Music Department to utilize their recording space. They offered to partner on the program to ask for student submissions for the soundscape (I had originally planned on finding a public domain soundscape to use).

Writing the script took a few days; I referenced guided meditation techniques and scripts and relied on past experience with meditation, then fleshed it out to include more library-specific details. Recording took about an hour's time. I edited the audio track and put it together with the student's soundscape in Audacity (a free audio editing program). The issue of "hosting" the audio came up — where would we put it so folks could access it? I ended up letting it live on my Google Drive since site hosting is sort of a hassle (and for something with not a lot of traffic, Drive should suffice).

We created a tab in our Destress Fest libguide for Book Bathing and a QR code for people to scan at the event.

Marketing

The program was shared on social media, in the student newspaper and e-newsletter. This event is so niche that I am not sure how successful we were in marketing as a part of Destress Fest. It's almost more immersive theater than meditation. We might have been more successful in partnering with and marketing it to the local theater scene.

Budgeting

No cost was associated with this program besides the purchase of snacks for attendees. However, a budget could be considered for commissioning the writing of a book bathing script and the creation of a soundscape for local writers and artists. We did not provide headphones, but if possible, you could build this into a budget as well.

Day-of-event Activity

Set-up is very simple and involved putting out snacks and a sign with a QR code and instructions. It can take one person to set up about 20 minutes ahead of time. No unexpected challenges were faced in this aspect.

Program Execution

The program is happening now and is ongoing. I have received positive feedback from a few people who participated remotely. One great benefit of this program is even though it's site-specific, anyone can listen and do the experience remotely (it will just require a little more imagination!).

Since this program has just launched, it's too early to gauge outcomes fully. I will say that we have created a partnership with the Commercial Music Department on campus that will be beneficial for us going forward. We are already discussing a library podcast in partnership with them. Outcomes are currently being determined through ad hoc feedback and are ongoing.

Advice

The best advice for a program like this is to harness what's already happening in your community and see if there's a local meditation center to partner with, local artists doing immersive art, etc.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images





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