



ART BRIDGES: Lesson Plans for Enrichment, Growth and Healing

Soaring In The Future

**An Activity Contributed by
Behaven Kids**

www.behavenkids.com



Objectives:

The participants will

1. Identify positive traits within themselves to display and communicate with others
2. Find the inner strengths they possess that give them hope--hope for a better future

3. Be able to discuss their past traumas in a narrative form of art and poetry

Audiences:

This lesson was originally designed for children that have been victims of trauma which include child abuse (sexual, physical, and emotional), victim/witness of violence, disasters, immigration, medical, grief, historical/generational trauma). This lesson plan was integrated as the “narrative” component of the Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Group. Trauma Narrative is focusing on meaning-making. This activity could be adapted to adult audiences who may benefit as well.

Note to Facilitators:

Social anxiety disorder (SAD) is commonly treated with Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), a form of therapy that first became popular in the 1980’s and 1990’s for treating anxiety disorders. Research has shown that CBT is one of the few forms of therapy that reliably helps in overcoming clinical anxiety disorders. CBT is not one set method but rather a combination of various techniques that depend on the disorder being treated. Cognitive-Behavioral Group Therapy (CBGT) is a form of group therapy developed according to the principles of CBT. The two primary techniques used in CBGT are cognitive restructuring (changing negative thinking patterns) and exposure (facing feared situations).

One of the central goals of CBT is to identify irrational beliefs and thought patterns and replace them with more realistic views. As part of the therapy process, the therapists works on a number of problem areas including misperceptions about abilities and self-worth; guilt, embarrassment, or anger over past situations; how to be more assertive; tackling perfectionism and being more realistic; dealing with procrastination related to social anxiety. The ultimate goal of the therapy is to help the client on a path of self-discovery and change.

Source: <http://socialanxietydisorder.about.com>

Supplies/Materials:

- Poster board or Canvas
- Pencils and paper
- Erasers
- White Glue
- Non-toxic paint in a variety of colors that is washable (such as tempera)

- Small washable dishes for the paint
- Paint brushes or paint sponges
- Black thin-tip marker for writing and other colored markers for decorating
- Mod Podge (found in craft and art stores)
- Aprons or shirts to protect clothing from paint
- Wet Wipes or water and paper towels for clean up

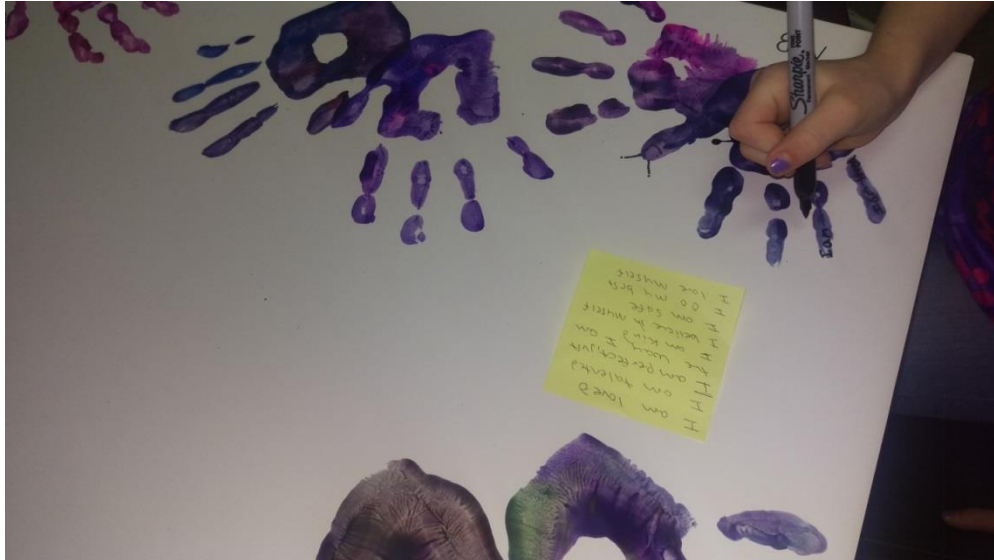
Class Instructions:

1. Ask the participants to identify eight positive strengths about themselves and use the group to help identify strengths they see in other group members.
2. Using any color of non-toxic paint and a brush or paint sponge, paint the palms of each child's hands. Help children to lightly place their hands with thumbs touching to form the shape of the butterfly on the poster board or canvas. Lightly push the hands down to get the paint on the board or canvas.



3. Once everyone has added their hands to the board, have the participants clean their hands.
4. Ask the participants to refer to their individual sheets listing their eight positive strengths.

- Using the black, thin-tip markers ask the participants to write one strength found on their sheets on each of their eight "fingers" painted onto the board (do not write on the thumbs at this time).



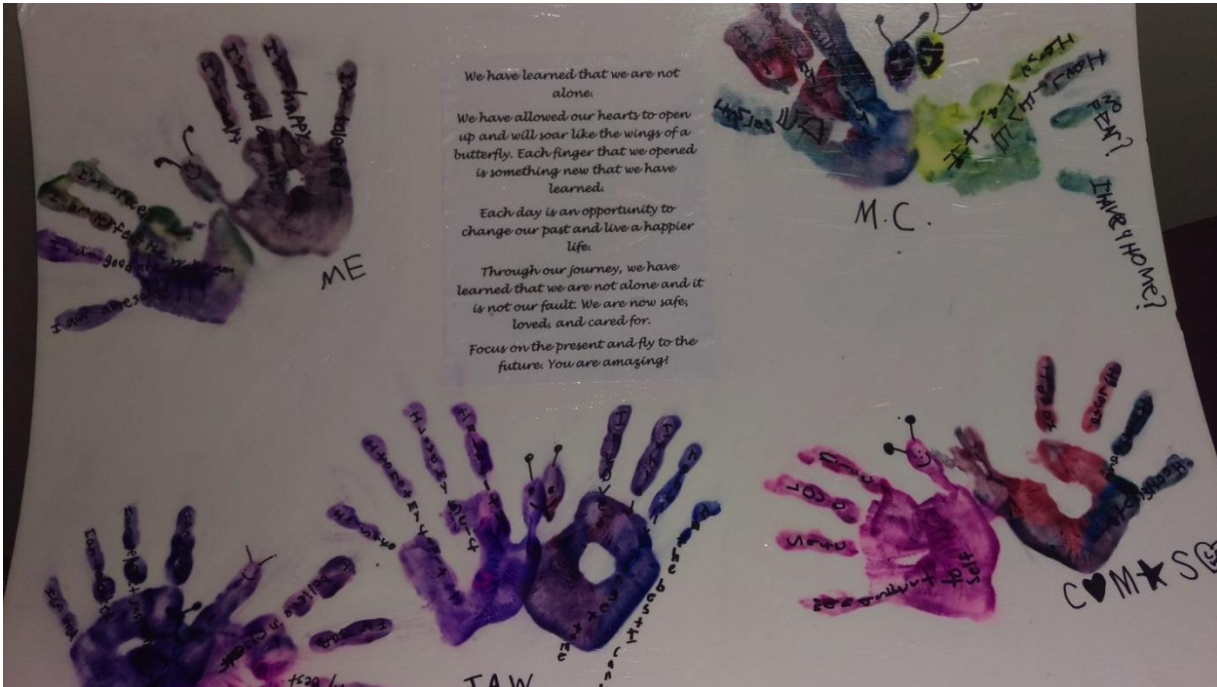
- Each child creates the outline of their thumbs as the face of a butterfly, using other markers to decorate. They can add the antennae, eyes and a smile to personalize their butterflies. Ask the children to initial their butterflies on the board.
- Help the children compose a personalized group poem about growth, focusing on the wings of the butterfly opening up and flying to the future. Using the symbolism of the art and poetry as a catalyst, the facilitator/therapist discusses past trauma and the completion of the trauma therapy with the focus on hope to the future.

Following is an example of a poem created in one therapy group:

*We have learned that we are not alone.
We have allowed our hearts to open up and will soar like the wings of a
butterfly.
Each finger that we have opened is something new we have learned.
Each day is a chance to change our past and live a happier life.
Through our journey we have learned that we are not alone and it is not our
fault.*

*We are now safe, loved and cared for.
Focus on the present and fly to the future.
You are Amazing!*

8. Paste the poem on the board/canvas with glue.



9. Use Mod Podge (Decoupage) to cover the entire creation to preserve it.

10. Read the poem to caregivers as a group and ask the children to discuss their “butterflies” as the completed “Narrative” for their trauma therapy

*Special thanks to **Behaven Kids** for sharing this wonderful activity. Geralee Olson-Triplett completed this activity with a trauma-focused group. Geralee is a Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner as well as trauma certified at Behaven Kids in Lincoln, NE. Behaven Kids offers several practical, research-based solutions to a wide range of behavior issues. Services include a unique Specialized Day Program for children ages 18 months to 8 years, individual and family counseling for all ages, workshops/training, child behavior coaching and more. The goal of Behaven Kids is to assist and support parents and caregivers so that all children can be happy and successful at home, in school and in the community. To learn more about Behaven Kids, please visit www.behavenkids.com.*

If you have used this activity, we'd love to hear from you! Please send questions or comments through our website www.hildegardcenter.org .

Hildegard Center for the Arts is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Arts Organization whose mission is to unite people of all beliefs, cultures and traditions to inspire humanity through the Arts.

Donations to further our mission are always appreciated!

P.O. Box 5304, Lincoln, NE 68505



© 2015 Hildegard Center for the Arts
All Rights Reserved.