



ART BRIDGES: Lesson Plans for Enrichment, Growth and Healing

Story Stones

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Kristina Marcelli Sargent
<https://kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com>



Objectives:

The participants will:

1. Arrange story stones in a linear fashion to tell stories based on the words and symbols contained on the stones

2. Orally tell the story (if possible) that they have created by the arrangement of the stones

Audiences:

This activity is very useful in working with those who are either low functioning or have low communications skills. It is also helpful for working with those who have experienced trauma and are unable or unwilling to verbalize their experience(s).

Uses for the Story Stones:

1. Stories are a vital part of every culture because by nature, our brains love stories! Whether we obtain them from getting lost in a novel, telling a friend about our day, or watching our favorite TV show, stories are everywhere.
2. Stories are especially essential for children because they help them make sense of their world.
3. I use story stones with my therapy clients to help them tell the stories of their lives and related feelings in therapy. This helps children to see the logical order of events and how they felt during different parts.
4. If you are a therapist or counselor, this works great for children sharing their trauma story too. Of course, these little rocks can be used by parents as well (“Tell me a story about your day at school using these rocks.”).
5. The stones with the images help children to have visual sensory input while verbally sharing information, and this helps for the child to have something tangible/concrete to use to tell the story.

Creating Your Own Story Stones:

1. I bought a small sheet of mosaic stones at a hardware store and then drew on them with permanent markers. Image ideas: houses, people, feeling faces, animals, toys, parks, seasons, weather etc.
2. For more information on how stories and other everyday strategies relate to brain development in children, check out “The Whole Brain Child” by Daniel Siegel M. D. and Tina Payne Bryson. It’s a great book and an easy read compared to other brain books out there.



Using Story Stones for.....

Trauma Processing:

1. Allow child to tell their story while using the stones to provide the images. This helps them create a LINEAR story and helps them identify facts and feelings along the way by using the pictured stones to represent facts and the stones with feelings on them to represent feelings.
2. This will help them use their WHOLE BRAINS to process the event.
3. Even just using the pictured stones and using words uses the right and left side of the brain to fully process the event!
4. Processing traumatic event by using the whole brain has proven to be crucial in healing and growing from traumatic experiences.

Triggers:

1. Draw feeling pictures or feeling words on separate sheets of paper and spread them out.
2. Allow the child to sort the stones into the different categories of how the images make him or her feel.
3. This can help identify triggers and may reveal things you never knew about your client that are clinically significant.

Process any life event:

1. Use the stones to spend more time talking about simple life events and choices (e.g. when the child hit her brother for taking her toy).

2. Allow the child to identify facts and feelings and then use the stones to make a different choice. This allows the child to realize how they have a choice in situations and can use skills learned in therapy in everyday life to change the outcome of their daily life stories!

Make up a story:

1. This is a fun way to use them too!
2. Using imagination is a great form of relaxation for everyone!

TIPS: Don't tell the client what the picture is. If they ask you, reflect the question back to them, "Hmm what could that picture be?" Usually the child will come up with something, even if it is not the intended description and THAT IS OKAY! Let them make it what it needs to be and just follow their lead!

*Heartfelt thanks to **Kristina Marcelli Sargent (MSW)** who graciously gave permission to Hildegard Center to re-post this activity from her website <https://kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com> . Kristina is a mental health therapist (living in Cincinnati, OH) who works with children and their families. Her blog is a place where creative expression and social/emotional well-being can become one, offering creative interventions, activities and inspiration for all ages—please visit it! Kristina has her undergraduate degree in art and creative writing and has written and illustrated her first book, "**Buttons the Brave Blue Kitten**" a story*



*about separation anxiety intended to help children develop empathy and give adults the skills to reinforce its development. The book is available to order on Kristina's website or on Amazon.com. Also check out Kristina's newest book: "**Ursula Unwinds Her Anger**" which teaches children mindfulness-related skills and offers adults tips on encouraging these skills in children. You can purchase this great book at <http://www.amazon.com/Ursula-Unwinds-Kristina-Marcelli-Sargent/dp/1499073003> .*

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

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