

Talking stick and the sharing circle



OBJECTIVES:

- To reflect on the importance of making space during class time to share what is the minds of children, to support them to solve problems and to come to decisions.
- To have equal opportunity in being fully heard by others.
- To reflect on children's ability to listen and provide support (also adults!).
- To cultivate a sense of contribution, responsibility and ownership within the classroom.



AXES:

Sense of belonging and collective identity



AGE GROUPS:

From 8 years



STEP BY STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1st part of the activity: Creating the talking stick

Give a short introduction about the aim of the activity and what a talking stick is (show a one as a reference).

Depending on the size of the group, create a single large talking stick for the whole group or divide the children into pairs or small groups. Each pair or group then creates a single stick.

Ask the whole group, pairs or small groups to cooperate and make the talking stick with different elements that you can present as you go along.

2nd part of the activity: The sharing circle

Carry out a very quick sensory awakening exercise so that the children can practise active listening with their whole body. For example, suggest "awakening ears" while asking them to touch their ears.

Continue with the rest of the senses.

Ask everyone to take turns holding the stick while you pose a question or a topic you want to share. For example, "What is your favourite holiday? What is your favourite activity?", etc... the child not holding the stick should try to give their full attention to the child holding the stick. Once the child holding the stick finishes his/her/their story, someone who is not holding the stick should try to tell and share what he/she/they heard.

Change roles and repeat. Ensure that everyone has had a chance to listen and feel heard.



MATERIALS:

- Wood sticks.
- Yarn/threads of different colours.
- Feathers and/or other natural elements to decorate the sticks.
- Glue.
- Beads.
- Paint brushes.
- Stickers.
- Paint brushes.
- Sand paper (to soft rough edges/surfaces for the sticks)

METHODOLOGY:

**Nature-based therapy/
art therapy/Indigenous
knowledge**

PREPARATION

If the teachers/facilitators want, they could go outside with the children and collect the sticks and nature elements together. It is important that adults "prepare" the sticks beforehand with sandpaper to avoid that kids might get injured.



TIPS FOR THE PERSON DOING IT

- Adults might need to "prepare" the sticks beforehand with sandpaper to avoid that kids might get injured.
- It is good to have one talking stick prepared to show as reference for the children.
- It is good to have a stick ready to show as a reference.
- The more time is available, especially for the first part, the richer the activity. The second part can be internalised within the daily rhythms of the classroom. In other words, a time of the day can be set aside where a sharing circle is created and the stick is used. You can also close the activity by asking when and for what purpose the talking stick could be useful.



WHEN:

Beginning of school term, especially after a new group has been formed and/or new children are joining a group



DURATION: At least one hour



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Activity inspired by the rituals of the word of the Indigenous Nations of Abya-Yala (American Continent).