

## Sacks

Purpose: To promote counseling and increase awareness regarding reasons why people seek out counselors. The Sacks activity will provide students with two skills: 1. Improving their abilities in figuring out what they're feeling, and 2. Gaining understanding on how not knowing and imagination can effect their feelings. Feelings can be very mysterious!

Materials:

Six paper lunch sized sacks (Three sets of doubled lined bags.)

Bag 1: Big Ball of string

Bag 2: Partially peeled cold orange laying on bed of cotton balls.

Bag 3: Balloon animal (tail, legs, nose, etc.)

Time Required: 15- 20 Minutes.

Procedure: Introduce/re-introduce self and then:

Ask: "How many of you have a good memory about being on a roller coaster ride or a spinning ride, or even one of those rides that shoots you way up in the sky and back down again really fast?" (You're pulling at emotional memories.)

Ask: "Is it something that you'll remember even when your 20? 30? Or 40 years old?"

Say: "Well, today we're going to make a counseling memory that you can remember for a really long time, so if you ever want to see a counselor again you'll remember what counseling is or can be about."

State: "We're doing a feeling activity today":

~Feeling clue words only

~You've been thinking all day so now you can turn off your brain...feelings turned on.

~Do not try to name or think of what it is you're feeling...just feel.

State: "I've brought in some bags and I want you to reach inside each bag without looking and touch what's inside! (This will create some excitement for many..anxiety for some.)

Introduce first bag. Go around room (up and down the rows) and encourage each person to reach hand his or her hand in the bag and touch.

Instruct not to pull object out, shout out, try to name, make any squeamish faces, or give any clues to anyone else. People may pass on touching the object if they wish.

## Second Grade Lesson #1

(Usually everyone touches the object in the first bag.) After everyone has had a turn, go around and gather one word clues from everyone who participated. Ex: Soft, hard, fuzzy, round, big, warm, stringy, cold, scratchy, etc.)

Once all feeling clues are gathered...pull out object in the first bag and

Ask: "Does this fit our clues?"

**\*Before introducing second bag, casually inform students:**

**"The next item is something I found moving around under a tree this morning when I had gone out running. It was still just barely moving by the time I had got to it. By the time I got it home, well, it seemed I was too late so I figured I'd just put it in the refrigerator and bring it for our activity today. Also, be careful not to poke the object in the bag...it was already getting kind of squishy. Instead, imagine just trying to "pet" the object....very, very softly and carefully."**

**"Now clear your minds. Remember, this is a feeling activity!"**

(This will create more excitement...some therapeutic anxiety will be felt by most students.)

Introduce second bag. (Always hold bag high enough that student cannot look into it and will need to raise his/her arm up while reaching down into the bag) When (if) the first student reaches his/her hand in the bag, with your hand that is supporting the bottom of the bag, quickly and firmly tap/push the bottom of the sack upwards towards the reaching hand helping the item in the sack touch the student's fingers. Most kids will react!

Participation begins to drop off after this first trial as their anxiety levels begin to soar. Encourage kids to reach in and touch the object but don't insist~ Offer that kids may opt for touching the outside of the bag as a way of participating=)

Gather feeling clue words from kids. Ex.: cold, squishy, soft, hard, mushy, smooth, dead, scaly, beak like, jumpy, sharp, etc.

Ask:

- ~How many of you were a little afraid?
- ~Did you know scary thoughts make scary feelings?
- ~and Angry thoughts make angry feelings?
- ~and Worried thoughts make worry feelings?
- ~and Sad thoughts make sad feelings?

State:

"Figuring out what you're feeling should begin with what you're feeling not thinking."

## Second Grade Lesson #1

Say:

~People come to counselors to help them better learn about their feelings, to figure out what they're feeling, and many times to "see" what they're *really* afraid, sad, mad, or worried of and for many people, it's just not as bad as they think.

**(Dramatically, slowly, and somewhat squeamishly, pull out Orange) and**

**Ask: "Is this what you were afraid of (orange) (you will hear a huge sigh of relief) or was it something else... (put orange back in bag and hold up for all to see)... like not knowing or imagining something?"**

Say:

~Sometimes when we don't know what might happen with our family, friends, or even ourselves, it's easy to get scared and really imagine some scary things!

~Remind kids that there is nothing in the bag that would have been scarier than the things they imagined were there (counselors aren't about scaring kids.) People go to counseling to talk about stuff that scares them but are sometimes too afraid to pull it out "of the bag" (themselves) and give it a name. Counselors help.

Ask:

- ~Can the clues be turned into more than one thing (orange or ex. "dead bird")?
- ~Does it depend on what you're thinking?
- ~Does an argument always mean divorce?
- ~Does quiet always mean something's wrong?
- ~Does crying always mean sadness?)

State:

~Sometimes, it can be scary not knowing what we're feeling!

(Some kids may ask you about your comments that the item was "moving around" when you found it. Explain that it was their anxiety/fear that misinterpreted what they heard. When an orange drops from a tree it's pretty natural for it roll "around" a bit before coming to a stop.)

If time allows, introduce third bag. Remind students not to try and name object at this point...focus on feelings. Save all one word feeling clues until the end (after everyone has had a chance to feel object) and then reveal. Pull balloon animal out by the tail very dramatically and slowly) Remind kids that counselors always ask about feelings first and will figure out the rest after that=)