



Sculpting Stones...Finding my Place

Key message

Understanding what young people think and believe to be true about themselves, their core beliefs and values is important when developing strategies to steer them away from radicalisation. We need to know 'how' they see themselves and what they believe to be true of themselves so as to be able to respond appropriately to them, to dispel misgivings about them, and to re-build their self-image after radicalisation. Using these sculpting stones is an effective way of uncovering this information in participants without putting them under pressure to express their feelings and open up.

Key words: self-reflection, self-awareness, de-radicalisation

Summary

Sometimes it can be difficult to get young people to open up and express what is going on for them. This may be for a variety of reasons, sometimes a fear of being judged or excluded or just a general lack of confidence in their own abilities. The sculpting stones are a novel way of getting participants to talk about themselves and the issues of relevance to them in a safe and creative manner. The idea is to get to the heart of participant's beliefs about themselves as these can provide a frame that shapes their world-view, and can be powerful motivators.

Module	Group size	Group age	Duration
• Exit strategies	• small • medium	• 16 - 19 • 20 - 24	• 1 hour

Purpose

- Gives participants the opportunity to offer support and encouragement to each other as they move forward in their journeys
- Challenges participants to really look at their own perceptions of themselves and their relationships and to explore the insights that this brings particularly as it relates to limitations they may be placing on themselves
- Sometimes the depth of sharing brought about through this type of exercise can lead to real bonding within the group which can only enhance the potential of any future sessions they participate in

Participants

Suitable for use with a wide variety of groups but may be most relevant to teenagers and young adults; non-gender specific.

Description

Step 1: The facilitator scatters the various stones (different colour, shapes, sizes and textures) on the

floor and invites each participant to pick a stone that represents themselves.

Step 2: In pairs they are to share with a partner why they chose this particular stone and what it says about them as a person. What is it about the size, shape and colour that appeals to them.

Step 3: The pairs all come back to the main group and each person introduces their partner and says a little about them based on the stone they chose.

Step 4: Once again the facilitator invites the participants to pick some stones, this time the stones will represent their friends/family/and groups relevant in their life today. Allow a few minutes for this part of the exercise.

Step 5: The facilitator then invites each participant one by one to place the stone that represents themselves on the ground. They are then encouraged to place their other stones (representing family etc.) around that first one they picked. They are to place these stones close by or far away depending on the relationship they currently have with that person or group and to reflect on why they have ended up in that position.

If the facilitator feels it is appropriate, they may choose to mention specific groups that participants have been involved with recently (positive or negative influences).

Tell them to imagine that this circle of stones effectively represents them and their place in society and the individuals/groups that are currently sharing their world.

Questions to ask include:

- *What strikes them as they reflect on this symbol of their world?*
- *Are they on the fringes or in the centre of everything?*
- *Are they happy with their position in society? if not what would they like to see changed?*
- *How engaged are they in what's going on around them in their community?*
- *How free do they feel to express themselves amongst the other 'stones' in their world?*
- *To what extent are their ideas and opinions heard by the other 'stones'?*
- *What degree of trust and openness do they feel in their community?*
- *To what extent do they now feel a part of society?*
- *What are the difficulties that emerge for them being a part of this society?*
- *What needs to happen to make them feel more integrated into their community/society?*

Materials needed

Different sizes, shapes and textures of stones/pebbles

Methodology

Individual reflection, Negotiation in pairs, Small group discussions, Feedback to main group

Advice for Trainer

This exercise works best with a small intimate group. It can be extended beyond a 60 minute exercise, depending on availability of time and the level and depth of discussion that is prompted.

It is possible to pick up coloured stones of various shapes and sizes in many places, from flower shops to arts and crafts stores and if all else fails the local beach can be a good hunting ground also!

Source / Literature

Original material developed for the purpose of the YCARE project.



CC - Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Sculpting Stones...Finding my Place. Retrieved %s, from %sWednesday May 6, 2026 from <https://toolbox.ycare.eu/courses/YCARE205/>

<https://www.ycare.eu>

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein