

A POCKET OF STONES

Innovative
Resources

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Booklet: **Andrew Shirres & Karen Bedford**

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Stones, whether in their natural state or through human interaction, remind us of how our world 'is'.

Carefully arranged in circles or lines, stones might indicate a place of ceremony or represent the heavens.

Gathered together and stacked into cairns, stones can be navigational aids, burial markers or ways in which custodianship of surrounding lands is represented.

Petrification or being 'turned to stone' sits within both classic and modern folklore to intimate wrath and vengeance, failure on a quest or shock. In some fairy-tales those turned to stone await redemption or heroic rescue, perhaps indefinitely.

Stones may be used functionally. They make great walls and long-lasting, well-insulated houses, implying permanence and tradition.

Metaphors about stones have entered our language, for example, being 'set-in-stone' indicates the final, immutable action, and 'stony-faced' means an unchangeable, and perhaps even cold, expression.

Nearly every child has at some point felt the satisfaction of carrying a stone of the right shape and weight in his or her pocket. As adults we may still do so. Such stones act as both keepsakes and ways of reliving a special moment or place.

Stones, imbued with culture, history, folk-lore, language, art and ceremony have long been considered useful tools in both educational and therapeutic work, as tactile metaphors to describe human differences.

As a publisher of strengths-based, conversation-building tools, Innovative Resources is a fitting place for *A Pocket of Stones* to have laid its foundation back in 2003. And these stone characters remain unchanged to this day—same timeless expressions.

These twelve small ceramic heads are hand made by Yvonne Cahill, and complement the cards set *Stones...have Feelings Too!* and picture book *The Wrong Stone*, both by Innovative Resources.

These ceramic stones can playfully represent a wide range of human emotions anywhere from happy, sad, loud and quiet to angry, complacent, confused and suspicious.

Use them to talk about your family, work team, community or society. Use them to tell stories and speak about your feelings, goals, values, hopes or dreams.

Ideas for Using the Stones

The tactile nature of stones makes them ideal as talismans or symbols. They can be used on their own, or as part of techniques such as sand play therapy. They can also be used as prompts for creative arts activities such as collecting and painting your own rock characters, or making them from clay or dough.

Like any tool, *A Pocket of Stones* depends for its success on the creativity of the person introducing it and on how it resonates with the person using it. It is always important to consider such factors as the developmental and cultural fit, and the timing and setting of introducing the activities.

Take the stones out of the pouch and place them on a surface such as a bench, table, floor or shelf (or invite the person to do this). Let the person or group pick up and look at each stone. Then you can build activities around questions such as:

Ideas for Using the Stones

- Which stone looks the closest to how you are feeling today?
- Which stone is you on the outside and which one is you on the inside?
- Which stone represents you at your best?
- Which stones look like you after a long day? Why?
- Which stone represents how you think others see you? Why do you think they would choose that one?
- Which stone would you like to be?
- What can we do together to help you become like the stone you want to be?
- Which stones are like the people around you—parents, brothers and sisters, friends, teachers? Why?

Ideas for Using the Stones

- Which words might best describe how you think each stone is feeling?
- What names would you give to each stone?
- Can you tell a story about when you had the feelings shown by each stone?
- Would it help if you kept a stone in your pocket to remind you of the feelings you want to have or the person you want to be?
- Is there a missing stone? If you had to create a new one what would it look like? What would its most prominent feature be?
- Which stone would you 'gift' to someone else? Why? What response would you hope for?
- Can you lay the stones out to represent you through a typical day? Would you prefer a different order?

Ideas for Using the Stones

- Can you write or tell a short story using the stones to represent key characters?
- Think of a team you work in or a group that you belong to. Can the stones represent the members? How do these characteristics complement each other?
- Is there a hierarchy of feelings that the stones represent? Which feelings are most important to you?
- Imagine if the stones could talk to you. What would they say?
- Some might be shouting. What would you like them to shout out to the world around you?
- Do any stones represent where you think you/your family/team/town/city/country is heading?

Ideas for Using the Stones

- Imagine two sides of yourself having a conversation. Use the stones to represent this. What are they saying? Does one dominate or do they both get to have their say?
- Imagine being one of the stones and having a conversation with someone in your family, your partner, someone in your team. What do you want the stone to say?
- These stones/feelings don't fit easily together. Does your life sometimes feel like that? If so, can you accept this?
- Which stone (or feeling) could you not do without? Why?
- Which stone looks like you after work? Before work?
- Some stones feel a little rough. Some smooth. What do you 'feel' like?

Ideas for Using the Stones

- Stones don't float. Do you ever feel like you are sinking? Drowning? Skimming across the surface?
- A little bit of the stones rubs away when you touch them. Who do you 'rub off' on? What influence do you have on others?
- Can you go for a walk and find your own group of stone characters?
- Or collect them over a period of time, say, one per day or one per week?
- What feelings do they represent?

We hope these questions kindle your imagination for other activities you would like to try. At times when other strategies and tools may not have been successful, a tactile resource such as *A Pocket of Stones* may just open up conversations that had otherwise been blocked with a stony silence!

**Counsellors, social workers,
teachers and parents:**

Twelve hand-made ceramic heads
for talking about emotions, people,
situations, goals and stories with
children and adults.



**PERFECT FOR
TACTILE LEARNERS!**

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