PROJECT #1

GIVE WORRY A TIME OUT



For this project, you will need:

Stones (if you don't have stones, you can use paper)

Markers for writing on stones (paint pens and permanent markers work best, but any markers will do)

A bag or box for each student that's large enough to hold a dozen or so stones (if your group will be meeting multiple times)

Markers or fabric pens for decorating the bags or boxes



Carrying your worries around in your brain all day can be super tiring.

The good news is—it's your brain, so you get to decide when to spend time with your worries, when to share them with a friend, and when it's time to take a break so you can spend your energy on other things.

Worry stones are a great way to remember that you're the boss of your brain!



Step 1 of 14

So first of all, any guesses why we like to use stones?

Did you guess because they're heavy?

Yep! Just like stones, worries can feel heavy sometimes, too.

A stone is also great because you can do whatever you want with it—just like a worry, you can hold onto it, share it with someone, put it away, toss it in a lake, or even turn it into art!

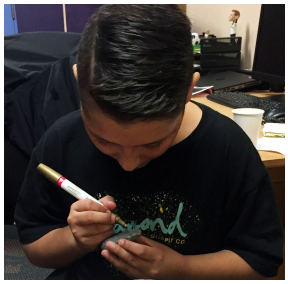
Step 2 of 14

If you don't have a stone…

…that's totally okay! You can just cut a stone shape out of a piece of paper, or use your imagination to picture a stone in your mind.

The great thing about imaginary stones is that you can do imaginary things with them like throw them off the top of the tallest mountain, or hand your stone to Taylor Swift to hold for a while. Maybe she'll even take it up on stage with her!

© 2022 Create More, Fear Less



Step 3 of 14

OK, do you have your stone, paper, or imagination all ready to go?

Great! Using a paint pen or permanent marker, write or draw something you are worried about, thinking about, or feeling right now.

It can be helpful to check in with your head, heart, and body. What's going on in there? Maybe you're worried about a test. Maybe your stomach is hurting. Maybe your heart is hurting a little because of an argument you had with a friend. Or maybe you're feeling pretty good right now.

It might take a while to figure out what you're feeling, and maybe, after thinking and thinking, you still aren't sure—that's OK, we all have days like that! Just come up with a word or picture to capture that feeling of not knowing.



Step 4 of 14

If you're doing this project in a group, or with family or friends, take turns sharing. You can always pass if you don't want to share—that is 100% OK—but it can also be helpful to talk about how you're feeling.

Also, when you share, there's a very good chance someone will say, "That's how I feel, too!"



Step 5 of 14

When everyone has had the chance to share or pass, it's time to decide what to do with your worry or feeling. (This is the important part!)

You can choose to give yourself a break by putting your stone away in your bag or box. Or maybe you want to hold onto your worry or feeling so you can think about it a bit longer. Maybe you want to give your stone (or paper) to a friend to carry for a while.

What you do with your feelings is totally up to you.



Step 6 of 14

Now you can move on to whatever is next in your workshop or day. One thing you might want to do is spend some time decorating your worry bag or box.

Markers, fabric paints, or paint pens will work great if it's a fabric bag you're decorating.

If you're using a box or other container for your worry stones, a collage can be another great option.



Step 7 of 14

If you're in a group and planning to do more projects together, we recommend starting every session with this ritual.

If you're doing this project on your own, maybe you want to start or end your day with this exercise and invite someone in your home to join you. That way you can share your feelings with each other. Here are some questions to ask yourself each time:

© 2022 Create More, Fear Less

Do I need to hold onto (think about) this worry right now? Do I want to share it with someone who can be a friend or help to me? Is this a worry I should talk to a trusted adult about?

And when you are ready to take a break from thinking about your worry, just put it away in your container.



Step 8 of 14

The important thing to remember is:

You are the boss of your worries. You get to decide how much time to spend with them. You can say: “Sorry, worry—I’m busy right now, but maybe I’ll spend time with you later.”

Or maybe your worry is too big to carry on your own. That’s when it’s a good idea to share your feelings with someone you trust.



Step 9 of 14

And soon you will discover that most of the stones in your container—maybe all of them—are no longer worries at all.

When that happens, it might be time to return those worry stones to the great outdoors. Some people like to bury them, others like to toss them in a lake or river, and some like to create a special rock garden to pay tribute to their dearly departed worries.

You can also paint pictures over the words and keep the stones in a special place where they can remind you that worries never stick around for long.

If you come up with other ideas, we’d love to hear about them!

What you do with your old worries is totally up to you.

Step 10 of 14

After a while, you’ll also find that imaginary stones and containers work just as well. You can just close your eyes and imagine yourself writing your worry on a stone and putting it away.

Step 11 of 14

Another way to give yourself a break from worry is to close your eyes and take some slow, deep breaths.

Deep breathing—even if you only do it for a minute—tells your body that you are relaxed, which then sends the message along to your brain.

Want to try it?

Step 12 of 14

Before you start, read through these instructions all the way:

Sitting in a comfortable position, close your eyes and take slow, deep breaths in through

© 2022 Create More, Fear Less

your nose and out your mouth. With every breath, try to fill your chest and stomach all the way up, then empty your chest and stomach all the way out. To help you remember to breathe in through your nose and out your mouth, you can imagine that you are smelling a big bunch of flowers, then blowing out birthday candles.

Now just close your eyes and count ten breaths in and ten breaths out. Or, if you want, you can set a timer for one minute.

Step 13 of 14

You can do this kind of breathing any time you want to feel more relaxed. It's especially helpful when you're feeling worried, stressed, or tense.

If there are people around, and you aren't comfortable closing your eyes, that's OK. Deep breathing with your eyes open works, too.

Step 14 of 14

If you want to, you can take a photo of your worry stone and add it to our gallery. That way someone else out there who shares your worry can see it and say, "That's how I feel, too!"

© 2022 Create More, Fear Less