

The Mind Jar/The Calm Jar/The Peace Jar

This is a great tool to use in Chill Skills sessions as it shows children how to calm down their thoughts. They can use it when they are upset, angry or before a test. It helps clear their mind at the end of the school day or before bed. They can keep it by their bed or in their calm corner.

How to Make

Small jar- make sure it's one that will hold liquid tightly
 2 tubes of glitter glue
 Half a tube of glitter
 A few drops of food colour
 Warm water

Put everything in the jar and give it a good shake.



Get children around and talk to them about their minds. Shake the jar and explain that during the day, their thoughts are racing. When they are still and calm, their thoughts slow down and settle just like the glitter in the jar. They can think clearly when their mind is still.

Here are some ideas from Kerry Lee MacLean

The Mind-Jar works on many levels:

1. **CALMING** - Quickly calms and clears a child's mind.
2. **ILLUMINATING** - Shows children that we all have the same kind of mind, containing the same types of thoughts.
3. **EMPOWERING** - Shows children how they can begin taking responsibility for their own mind and emotions, simply by being still and quiet every now and then, letting their thoughts and feelings settle themselves, thus clearing their minds by letting go of the clutter of old thoughts and feelings.
4. **BONDING** - The Mind-Jar exercise is profoundly bonding for any group or family. Children love being let in on each other's thoughts - and are comforted by the realization that everyone deals with the same array of feelings, from joyful, loving and excited; to sad, mad, or anxious. This fosters a much needed feeling of belonging.
5. **THERAPEUTIC** - This exercise builds a child's 'letting go' muscle, healing old hurts and anxieties.
6. **SELF-REFLECTION** - Cultivates a child's ability to self-reflect, considered by many psychologists to be the hallmark of sanity. Self-reflection helps a child to inwardly grow and change, and most importantly, enables them to empathize with others.
7. **CLEAR THINKING** - This exercise instantly clears a child's mind so they can think more clearly, helping them to achieve their best!



1. Ideally, have the children gather around, so they can all see close up what's going on. Demonstrate how the amind clogs and clears itself by holding up a tall jar with clean, clear water. Explain, "This is your mind when you wake up feeling great, the sun is shining and all is good! Your mind is clear and, and so, you are thinking very clearly. What's the first thing you do when you get up? You start thinking. What are you thinking about?"

2. Invite everyone to put a small handful of sparkles in, representing the thought they want to share: WHITE for HAPPY thoughts BLACK for ANGRY thoughts PINK for LOVING thoughts PURPLE for SCARY thoughts GREEN for EXCITED thoughts BLUE for SAD thoughts MIXED sparkles for CONFUSED thoughts (Don't use red, it stains the water.)

3. When about half the children have had a turn, point out how the 'thoughts' have collected on top of the water, and start asking, "Is this next handful of sparkles going to make it cave in?" With every new handful of sparkles, the surface tension gets tighter, and the 'thoughts' sag toward the bottom, but it usually holds, and the children are fascinated.

4. Once everyone has had a turn, including you, (it's important for any adults in the room to set a good example by openly contributing their own thoughts as well), you can say, "Now I'll put in a handful of sand in for all the ordinary thoughts we have: I wonder what time it is? Do I have soccer practice today? What's for dinner?" If you trickle the sand in slowly, children get excited waiting for the surface tension in the jar to finally break. Keep going with trickling sand in until it finally collapses. Kids LOVE this part!

5. Ask, "Now what happens to our mind when suddenly we're stressed out or in a hurry? We're late for school, we forgot our homework, we had a fight with our mom, things aren't going well." Stir the sparkles and sand up with a long spoon, faster and faster, and ask, "What does it feel like when we're stressed out like this?" Usually the children will say, "mad" or "sad" or "confused" or "tired", and you can add a description or two, as well.

6. Say, "Now let's see what happens to our mind when we just sit quietly for a minute, and let it settle itself."

7. Ring the gong, and just watch in silence for a minute or two as the mad swirl of sand and sparkles begins to slow down, then drop to the bottom.

8. Once the water is clear (with some sparkles clinging to the top and most at the bottom) you can say softly, "When you can't hear the sound of the gong anymore, raise your hand. Then ring the gong (or even a large pot lid) very hard. You'll be the last to raise your hand since you're closest to the gong. At this point, the feeling of peace in the room is palpable. End by saying, "Ahhh, my busy mind feels so much better, and now I can think clearly again. Now we're ready for anything!"

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MOVE

PLAY

STRETCH

FEEL

BREATHE

BELIEVE

RELAX