

Facilitator's Notes:

Exploring Clay

These notes work with the 'Exploring Clay' worksheet. Feel free to adapt sessions, or develop your own. Do share your new plans or notes via our website

<http://kewstudio.org/explore-creativity>

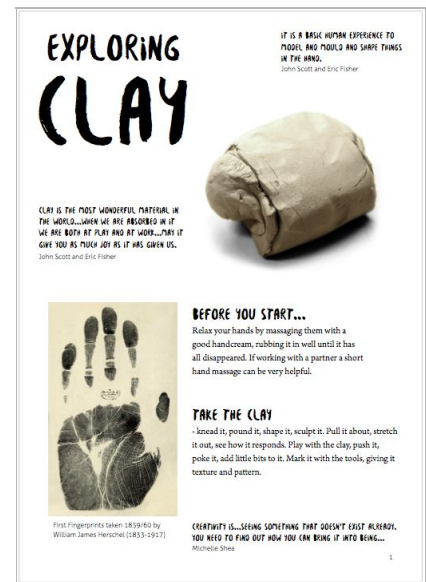
Working with Clay

You will need clay, tissues, board to work on or paper to cover surfaces, tools (like pencils, blunt knife etc). If you want to keep clay to work on from one session to the next you will need an airtight box.

- You could prepare the participants for this activity by giving them a gentle hand massage using hand cream to loosen up their hands and help them to relax. (This is particularly effective when working with older people)
- You could encourage playing with the clay – enjoying the feeling of rolling and stretching it, using that as a starting point for your discussion.
- You could try making patterns in the clay using fingers or the tools, or by imprinting objects like leaves or twigs.
- You could suggest that the participant makes something specific – a model of themselves, their home, a pet, a book-end, a tile.

Some people might prefer to watch you working with clay – if so talk to them as you are modelling and tell them what you are doing, and what you are thinking as you do it. Remember the aim of this is not to get people to model great ornaments! It is the taking part and communication between you that counts.

Some people may initially not like this activity as it involves getting one's hands dirty, others may think it is too childish. You can help people get past that by working with the clay yourself, as described above.



A few do's that you probably know already...

when working with clay

Time – modelling in clay needs time so aim to be relaxed yourself in advance of the workshop to create a calm and receptive atmosphere. You could allow extra time in preparation to have a few moments to yourself and be still, or include a relaxation exercise in the workshop for everyone to centre themselves.

Space – Sit beside your partner, at the same level, rather than lean over them. Knowing your participants, you might find you need to stay with one for a while to keep their confidence up while others may prefer to work alone.

Listening – listen to your partner, reflecting back their last words or a phrase that seems important for them to continue with their thoughts.

Silence – can be a positive rather than a negative. Many people get anxious about silence so this is your chance to model to participants a companionable silence that can open up space for unspoken thoughts and feelings to come to the surface

Encouragement – be genuine and specific e.g. *I really like the shapes/textures you are making.*

Finishing – hold a participant's work away from them so that they can see it differently and maybe others can see it too. Then let them decide if it is finished. Your care with their work is a mark of respect. Try to keep all work, even if only until the next session. Often this can result in a sense of achievement or progress as ideas develop.

Discussing – be sure to treat participants as equals when talking with them. Keep to the Adult Ego state. (See *Working Together*) If they ask what you think, using the feedback phrase: "*When you... I feel...*" will give you a pattern for authentic discussion. Sharing some of your own thoughts and feelings with the participants makes for a more equal and much deeper relationship.

A few don'ts that you might know already...

- Don't model with the participant's clay
- Don't tell them something is wrong or would be better done another way...