

Facilitator's Notes:

Exploring Words

These notes work with the 'Exploring Words' worksheet.

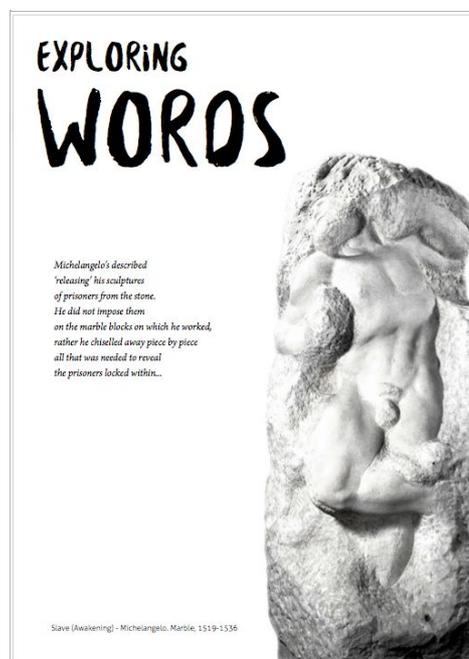
Feel free to adapt sessions, or develop your own. Do share your new plans or notes via our website

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

Working with Words

You will need pens and paper

- Ask your conversation partner to choose a word – any word will do
- Write the word in the middle of a piece of paper
- Ask your partner what the word makes them think of
- Make a few notes, connecting them to the main word by a line – like a map
- If your partner appears to have finished a particular line of thought, go back to the original word and start again by asking them what it makes them think of this time. You will often get a completely different line of thought emerging
- Keep track of this 'conversation' by making a 'map' around the original word. Use arrows to show which ideas lead on to the next.
- Keep the map in the participant's folder for referring to another time, or for working further with paint or clay another time. This folder can help others working with the same participant on different occasions and with different materials. (Useful for example in a residential home setting where different members of staff will work with different residents over a period of time.)
- Some examples of connected ideas are:
 - Precious
 - My husband
 - My children
 - Myself
 - Sky
 - Grey
 - Don't like thunder
 - Scared in the house – and my brothers threw a spider at me
 - Would have liked to have a sister...



A few dos that you probably know already...

when working with words

Time – working with words 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

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 enjoy hearing your story.”*

Finishing – if a participant seems to need more time to talk with you than you have at present, say something like *“I have really enjoyed talking with you. Perhaps we can speak about this again another time, because I have to go now.”*

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 rush the participant in an effort to do too much. Take time to enjoy the experience with them.