



# Using Art-based Lessons & Activities In School Counseling

40 COMPLETE SEL LESSON PLANS WITH ART ACTIVITIES  
PLUS ENGAGING EXTRAS FOR GRADES 1-7

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## Topics Include:



- Accepting Others
- Anger Management
- Conflict Resolution
- Coping Skills
- Diversity
- Empathy & Kindness
- Friendship Skills
- Gratitude
- Identifying Emotions
- Mindfulness
- Perseverance & Grit
- Positive Attitude
- Positive Character Traits
- Positive Self-talk
- Positive Support Systems
- Resiliency
- Self-Regulation Strategies
- Setting & Achieving Goals
- Stress
- Teamwork
- Test-taking Strategies

# Contents

<b>A Note From the Author .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>How to Use This Book .....</b>	<b>9</b>

## Section I

<b>Using the Art of Doodling in School Counseling .....</b>	<b>11</b>
SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION	
Using the Art of Doodling in School Counseling .....	12
LESSON 1A: LEARNING FROM MISTAKES/RESILIENCY (GRADES 1 - 3)	
Using Your Noodle as You Doodle .....	13
LESSON 1B: LEARNING FROM MISTAKES/RESILIENCY (GRADES 4 - 7)	
Using Your Noodle as You Doodle .....	16
LESSON 2A: MINDFULNESS/RELAXATION (GRADES 1 - 3)	
The Power of Doodling – Mindfulness .....	18
LESSON 2B: MINDFULNESS/RELAXATION (GRADES 3 - 7)	
The Power of Doodling – Mindfulness .....	22
LESSON 3: POSITIVE EMOTIONS/POSITIVITY (GRADES 1 - 7)	
Feeling Positively Positive Doodles .....	25
LESSON 4: NEW EXPERIENCES/PERSEVERANCE/GRIT (GRADES 1 - 7)	
Experiencing Doodling .....	28
ENGAGING EXTRAS!	
3 Activities to Help Students Open Up & Relax .....	32

## Section 2

<b>Using Postcards &amp; Comic Strip Art in School Counseling .....</b>	<b>33</b>
SECTION 2 INTRODUCTION	
Using Postcards & Comic Strip Art in School Counseling .....	34
LESSON 1: POSITIVE VISUALIZATION/COPING SKILLS (GRADES 1 - 7)	
"Stamp Up" Positive Thoughts Postcards .....	35
LESSON 2A: BEING THANKFUL/GRATITUDE (GRADES 1 - 3)	
Thank You Postcards .....	39
LESSON 2B: BEING THANKFUL/GRATITUDE (GRADES 4 - 7)	
Grow Gratitude! Postcards .....	43
LESSON 3: CONFLICT RESOLUTION/SELF-CONTROL (GRADES 1 - 7)	
Two Sides to Every Story Comic Strips .....	46

LESSON 4: SELF-ESTEEM/POSITIVE CHARACTER TRAITS (GRADES 1 - 7)	
I'm a Superhero Comic Strips .....	50
ENGAGING EXTRAS!	
5 Activities to Help Students Open Up & Relax .....	54

## Section 3

<b>Using Silhouette &amp; Collage Art In School Counseling.....</b>	<b>55</b>
SECTION 3 INTRODUCTION	
Using Silhouette & Collage Art in School Counseling .....	56
LESSON 1A: STRESS MANAGEMENT/LOCUS OF CONTROL (GRADES 1 - 3)	
Circle of Control Silhouette.....	57
LESSON 1B: STRESS MANAGEMENT/LOCUS OF CONTROL (GRADES 3 - 7)	
Locus of Control Silhouette .....	61
LESSON 2: POSITIVE SELF-TALK/COPING SKILLS (GRADES 2 - 7)	
Ducks, Owls, & Buzzards Self-talk Silhouettes.....	65
LESSON 3: GROWTH MINDSET (GRADES 2 - 7)	
My Brain Can Grow! .....	70
LESSON 4: MINDFULNESS/NATURE APPRECIATION (GRADES 1 - 7)	
Welcome to Nature Collage.....	74
ENGAGING EXTRAS!	
4 Activities to Help Students Open Up & Relax .....	78

## Section 4

<b>Using Paper Art in School Counseling .....</b>	<b>79</b>
SECTION 4 INTRODUCTION	
Using Paper Art in School Counseling .....	80
LESSON 1: POSITIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS (GRADES 1 - 7)	
It's an Important Event.....	81
LESSON 2: CREATIVE MINDSET/BEING UNIQUE/PERFECTION (GRADES 1 - 7)	
The Incredible Snippets!.....	85
LESSON 3: ANGER/STRESS MANAGEMENT: MY TRIGGERS (GRADES 1 - 7)	
What's Bugging Me?.....	89
LESSON 4: GRIT/ACHIEVING GOALS (GRADES 3 - 7)	
The Mountains & Valleys of Life.....	94
LESSON 5: FRIENDSHIP SKILLS/RESPECT (GRADES 1 - 7)	
The Friendly Penguin .....	98
ENGAGING EXTRAS!	
4 Activities to Help Students Open Up & Relax .....	103

## Section 5

### Using Watercolor & Acrylic Paints in School Counseling ..... 105

#### SECTION 5 INTRODUCTION

Using Watercolor & Acrylic Paints in School Counseling .....	106
LESSON 1A: DIVERSITY/ACCEPTING OTHERS (GRADES 1 - 4)	
Flowers Celebrate Diversity .....	107
LESSON 1B: DIVERSITY/ACCEPTING OTHERS (GRADES 4 - 7)	
Diversity in Nature .....	112
LESSON 2: POSITIVE ATTITUDE/CHARACTER (GRADES 1 - 7)	
I'm as Bright as the Sun .....	116
LESSON 3: IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS (GRADES 1 - 7)	
Delivery of Kindness .....	121
LESSON 4: TEAMWORK (GRADES 1 - 7)	
Race for the Pennant! .....	125
ENGAGING EXTRAS!	
3 Activities to Help Students Open Up & Relax .....	130

## Section 6

### Using Markers, Crayons & Pencils in School Counseling ..... 131

#### SECTION 6 INTRODUCTION

Using Markers, Crayons & Pencils in School Counseling .....	132
LESSON 1: GRATITUDE (GRADES 1 - 7)	
Circle of Gratitude Mandalas .....	133
LESSON 2: POSITIVE TRAITS/CHARACTERISTICS (GRADES 1 - 7)	
Wisdom of a Tree .....	138
LESSON 3: SELF-COMPASSION/SELF-CONFIDENCE (GRADES 1 - 7)	
Tree Rings of Joy .....	143
LESSON 4: BODY LANGUAGE/SELF-AFFIRMATIONS (GRADES 1 - 7)	
There is a Superhero in Me .....	148
LESSON 5: CHARACTER TRAITS/POSITIVE EXPERIENCES (GRADES 3 - 7)	
Let's Totem About Me! .....	151
ENGAGING EXTRAS!	
6 Activities to Help Students Open Up & Relax .....	155



## Section 7

<b>Using Simple Craft Materials in School Counseling .....</b>	<b>157</b>
SECTION 7 INTRODUCTION	
Using Simple Craft Materials in School Counseling .....	158
LESSON 1: DIVERSITY/UNDERSTANDING BRAVERY (GRADES 1 - 5)	
The Mask of the Luchador(a) .....	159
LESSON 2: TESTING WORRIES/STRATEGIES (GRADES 3 - 7)	
I'm a Testing Star! .....	165
LESSON 3: GOAL-SETTING/DREAMS (GRADES 3 - 7)	
Catch Your Dreams! .....	169
LESSON 4: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT/POSITIVE CHOICES (GRADES 3 - 7)	
Spinning Positive Choices .....	173
LESSON 5: SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES (GRADES 3 - 7)	
Let's Put the Pieces Back Together .....	177
ENGAGING EXTRAS!	
7 Activities to Help Students Open Up & Relax .....	181

## Section 8

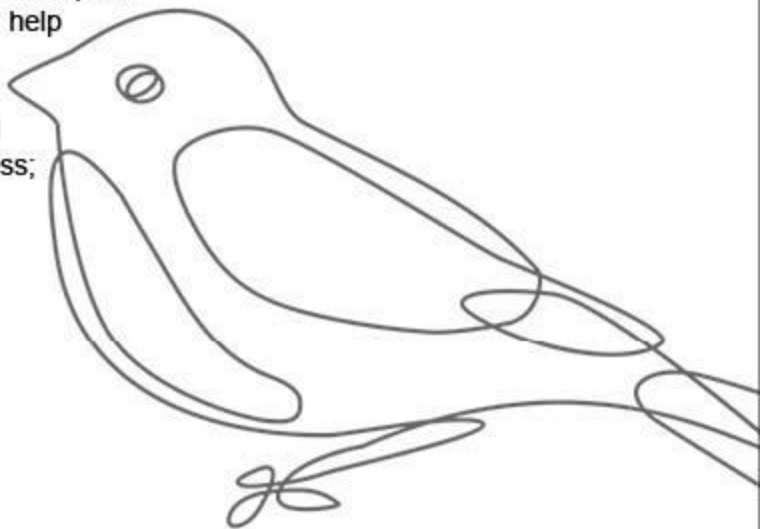
<b>Using Clay, Stones &amp; Legos™ in School Counseling .....</b>	<b>185</b>
SECTION 8 INTRODUCTION	
Using Clay, Stones, & Legos in School Counseling .....	186
LESSON 1: SHOWING COURAGE/BULLYING PREVENTION (GRADES 1 - 7)	
The Courage of a Lion .....	187
LESSON 2: EMPATHY/COMPASSION (GRADES 1 - 7)	
Hands of Compassion .....	192
LESSON 3: SHOWING KINDNESS (GRADES 1-5)	
"Rocking" Kindness .....	196
LESSON 4: TEAMWORK/COMMUNICATION (GRADES 2 - 7)	
Together We Built This Bridge! .....	202
ENGAGING EXTRAS!	
7 Activities to Help Students Open Up & Relax .....	206
<b>Book Index List &amp; References.....</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>About the Author .....</b>	<b>214</b>

# Using the Art of Doodling in School Counseling

The art of doodling has been around for many generations. Doodling is defined as a drawing composed of random and abstract lines or scribbles. This is a simple activity that does not require many materials. Doodling is primarily a black and white drawing created with a pencil, pen, or marker. Doodling can be either free or assisted. Free doodling, in my definition, is mindfully drawing on a page to see what image shows up. Assisted doodling is using a preexisting shape or mark and building on this shape using your imagination. The activities offered in this section focus on the assisted doodling process.

Research has shown that doodling is a whole-brain activity which may enhance memory, focus, creativity, problem-solving, and mindfulness. In my experience, doodling also helps to build a relationship between the counselor and students. Allowing students to doodle before or during a counseling session helps them to de-stress and builds rapport.

This section focuses on how incorporating doodling in lessons can help students learn from mistakes; encourage positive thinking, mindfulness, and perseverance; reduce stress; and build resiliency and grit.



month, so we are prepared and know what to do if there is a fire in the school. This can help all of us to feel safer because we know what to do and can do it quickly.”)

## Art Activity – My Circle of Control Silhouette

Prior to presenting the art activity, choose and cut out the silhouette head template designs for younger students.

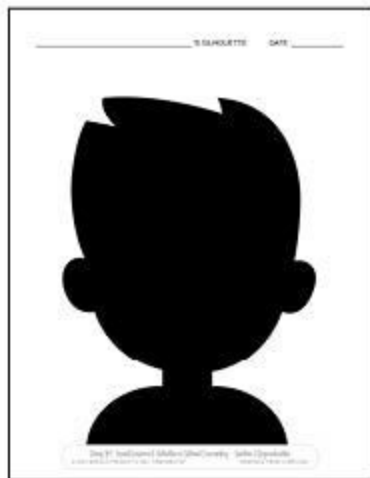
Begin the activity by displaying different examples of silhouette art. Then say:

**“Silhouette art has been around since the early 1700s. You don’t have to be good at drawing to make a silhouette. All you need are some art materials and your imagination. Today, each of you is going to create a My Circle of Control Silhouette.”**

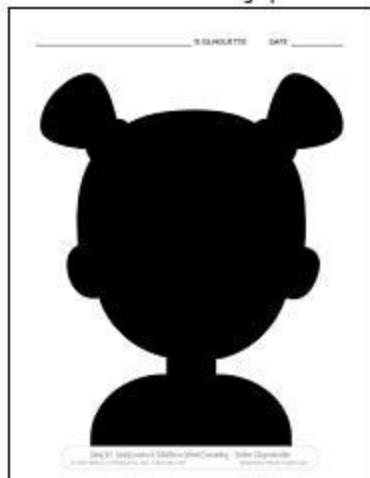
Give each student a head template, a piece of darker construction paper, a piece of lighter construction paper, scissors, glue, a pencil, and crayons or markers.

Give the students the following instructions:

1. Place the head template on top of the darker piece of construction paper. Trace the head shape with your pencil, then cut it out.
2. Using a crayon (or marker), title your cutout: *Things I Can Control*.
3. List or draw different thoughts, actions, and situations you *can* control. (The students can use ideas from the list created previously or use their own ideas.)
4. Glue the head cutout in the center of the lighter piece of construction paper.
5. On the lighter piece of construction paper, write the title: *Things I Cannot Control*.
6. Around the outside of the head cutout, list or draw different thoughts, actions, and situations you *cannot* control. (This symbolizes that these situations or actions are outside their control.)



Section 3\_Lesson 1A Digital Content  
Silhouette Head Younger.pdf



## Art Activity – Nature Collage

(Note: Depending on the time allowed for this lesson, this activity may need to be presented in another session. If two sessions are required, do a quick review, practice mindful or penguin walking, then have the students create their collages.)

On a table, have available for the students different colors of construction paper, glue, pencils, crayon or markers, scissors, and optional craft items (glitter, assorted stickers, yarn, etc.).



Section 3\_Lesson 4 Digital Content  
Nature Collage Samples.pdf

Begin this activity by showing the students an example of a nature collage. Say:

***“Today, you are each going to create a peaceful nature collage using the items you collected on our nature walk. The word collage means ‘to glue.’ A collage is a work of art where you glue together different things to create a beautiful masterpiece.”***

***“During today’s mindful walk through nature you might have noticed something interesting or unexpected that caught your attention. Perhaps you saw a bird, smelled a flower, or touched the bark on a tree. Using this as your inspiration, I want you to create a peaceful nature collage using the things you collected during your walk and the craft items that are available on the table. There are only two rules you need to follow as you work, be creative and do your best.”***

As the students complete their collages, walk around and assist any student who needs further instruction or help. Encourage the students to be creative and to make their collages unique masterpieces.

Conclude the activity by telling the students to title and sign their collages and to keep them as a reminder of their peaceful and mindful experience in nature.

## Conclusion

Conclude the lesson by saying:

***“Today, you practiced walking mindfully/penguin walking. Mindful walking can help you to feel calmer and more relaxed. So next time you feel upset, frustrated, worried, or stressed, get outside and take a nature break.”***

Thank the students for doing a great job and for participating in the lesson.



# Engaging Extras!

## Build Rapport as You Help Students Open Up & Relax

Use these ideas with one or more students.

**1 IDENTIFYING FEELINGS** (Crumpled Paper, Cave Art): This activity can be completed in one or more sessions. Pre-session preparation: Choose soft music to play at the beginning of the session, print out some cave art examples, and crumple and uncrumple a long piece of brown butcher paper. Tack or tape the butcher paper to the wall. When the student enters your office, instruct him/her to take a deep breath. Ask the student how he/she has been feeling today (or a period of days) and what caused those feelings. Next, give the student crayons or markers. Starting at the top left side of the butcher paper, instruct the student to draw an emoji to show how they felt in the morning (or previous day/days). Then, next to the emoji, tell the student to draw a symbol or simple picture depicting the event or situation that made him/her feel that way. Continue this activity until you reach the right edge of the butcher paper and the student has created a cave art timeline.

**2 CELEBRATING UNIQUENESS/DIVERSITY** (Paper Folding): Begin the session by discussing how each snowflake that falls to the ground is unique and beautiful even though they do not look the same. Then, discuss how the student is unique and special. Next, give the student a piece of white paper, scissors, and markers. Show the student how to create a snowflake (Watch How to make a 6 sided SNOWFLAKE. <https://youtu.be/a3mpmly9b2o>). Have the student make the snowflake, then write on the snowflake ways he/she is unique or special.

**3 DISPLAYING CREATIVITY** (Paper Folding, Origami): Creativity is an important component in developing a growth mindset. This activity will focus on penguins. Begin by showing the student the video clip where Bumble is dancing in the movie *Happy Feet*. After showing the clip, ask the student to be creative and come up with their own unique penguin dance. Then, help the student create an origami penguin using the *Origami Penguin* folding instructions for younger students (Session 4\_Extras Digital Content: *Origami Penguin Younger Students.pdf*) or the *Origami Penguin* folding instructions for older students (Session 4\_Extras Digital Content: *Origami Penguin Older Students.pdf*). You could also have the student follow along as he/she watches a video on how to make an origami penguin (see page 102). Encourage the student to creatively decorate the origami penguin.



# Let's Totem About Me!

## Purpose:

- to have students recognize the character traits they possess that make them unique
- to help students understand the importance of having positive experiences

**Suggested Grade Levels:** 3 - 7 (Grade 2 with assistance)

**For Use With:** Small groups, classrooms

**Time Required for Lesson:** 30 - 40 minutes

## Materials Required:

For the leader:

- Board to write on and/or whiteboard to write on and display pdf examples
- Picture of a totem pole from websites/online images or Section 6\_Lesson 5 Digital Content: Totem Pole.pdf
- Optional: Pre-made paper totem pole to show students or Section 6\_Lesson 4 Digital Content: Character Totem Pole Sample.pdf
- Optional: Computer/radio to play native flute music

For each student:

- 4 index cards
- 3 sticky notes
- Clear tape
- Card stock
- Scissors
- Pencil or pen
- Markers or crayons
- Optional: Paper towel tube



## Introduction – You Are Special!

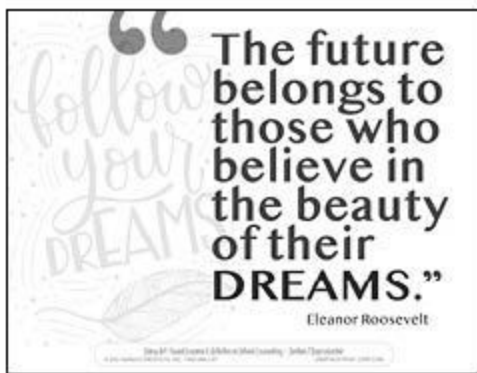
Begin the lesson by saying:

***“Take a couple of deep breathes. Now that you are calm and relaxed, think about what makes you special. (Pause for a moment, then continue.) You are special because there is only one YOU in the WHOLE WORLD. Today’s lesson will focus on the one and only YOU!”***

Then ask:

***“What do you think this quote means?”***  
(Pause for responses, then continue.)

***“In this quote, Eleanor Roosevelt, a former first lady, believes that being inspired by your dreams is the first step to achieving success. Having dreams is important, but you must also make a plan of action to achieve your dreams. Today, we are going to talk about the importance of setting and achieving goals in order to realize your dreams.”***



Section 7\_Lesson 3 Digital Content  
Roosevelt Quote.pdf

## Discussion – Realizing Your Dreams

Begin the discussion by displaying or writing the following quote on the board:

***“Dreams don’t work unless you do!”***  
~ Author, John C. Maxwell

Then say:

***“Having dreams is important, but you need to set and achieve goals to turn your dreams into reality. You can’t just say, ‘This is my dream!’ and wait for it to happen. For example, Taylor dreams of someday being a lawyer. But in order to become a lawyer, a person must go to law school, get a degree, and pass the State Bar Examination. Achieving the dream of being a lawyer will take hard work, perseverance, patience, and determination.”***



Section 7\_Lesson 3 Digital Content  
Maxwell Quote.pdf

Tell the students to take a moment to think about their future career dreams and goals. Then ask:

***“What job would you like to have when you are older?”***

List the students’ responses on the board.

**CAREER EXTENSION:** Circle some of the careers listed on the board and discuss the average salary, education requirements, and what high school endorsement tracks students can choose to help them reach their career goals.

**5 RUMORS/PERSONAL POWER** (Paper Plate, Craft Materials): Rumors can have a major effect on the individual that is targeted. It is important to remind a targeted student of his/her individual strengths and personal power. Begin the activity by sprinkling a little glitter on the table or desk and lightly blowing on it. Tell the student that like glitter, rumors spread easily and go all over the place. Give the student a paper plate, glue, glitter, and crayons or markers. Have the student decorate the plate with pictures illustrating and/or words describing his/her favorite foods, things, and people. Then, discuss the positive personality traits the student possesses. Together, choose one word that describes the student's strongest personality trait. Instruct the student to use glue to write this word on the center of plate, then sprinkle glitter all over the plate. Say: "The glitter is like a rumor that spreads easily. But rumors do not last long, and once they disappear you have a chance to shine!" Ask the student to shake the plate to spread the glitter, then dump the excess glitter in the trash. The student's positive personality trait written in glue will shine and the leftover glitter, like a rumor, will vanish into the trash. End the activity by reminding the student that real friends will support you. They are your strength and comfort.

**6 POSITIVE EXPERIENCES BRACELET** (Pipe Cleaners, Beads): Begin the activity by giving the student a pipe cleaner and different colored beads. (Older students can braid three pipe cleaners together.) Have the student make a knot on one end of the pipe cleaner. Then ask the student to take a deep breath and think of positive experiences he/she has had. For each positive experience named, the student can choose one bead. When there is no more room to string beads, have the student tie a knot to create a bracelet. The student can keep the bracelet as a reminder of his/her many positive experiences.

**7 MIRACLE WAND** (Craft Stick, Pipe Cleaners, Beads, Craft Materials): Students sometimes come into the counseling office upset and feeling like everyone and everything is against them. This activity is based on the miracle question from Solution Focused Brief Therapy. Begin the activity by saying: "Imagine that you wake tomorrow up and, by some miracle, what is bothering or upsetting has vanished. What changed? What would need to happen?" Discuss the situation with the student. Help him/her to reframe the situation and to think of some creative ideas for resolving it. Then, give the student a craft stick, pipe cleaners, beads, and (optional) glitter and glue, stickers and/or markers. Have the student create a "miracle" wand. Tell the student to shape one pipe cleaner into and heart, circle, star, etc. to form the top of the wand. (Optional: Show the student a pre-made sample or a picture of a wand - Section 7\_Extras Digital Content: Miracle Wand Sample.pdf) Then, have the student thread beads onto the other pipe cleaners and wrap them around the craft stick to hold the top of the wand (heart, circle, star) in place. The student could also decorate the craft stick with markers, stickers, glitter, etc. The student can take the wand home as a reminder to stay positive and to think of creative ways to resolve his/her problems.

