

Carol's Club CAROL GRAY SOCIAL STORIES

Custom Social Stories™ Resources Created by Carol Gray for Members - March 12, 2019

ColorStorming Workshop Activity



Use with any topic to encourage people to laugh and learn.

Background

Thank you for the emails regarding the last two projects about Coloring Stories! I've heard from several members, like Kris from Australia, "I love these colouring-in stories, as I get the chance to explain everyday language with James, who then uses these 'sayings' (as he calls them) all the time. The current phrase he uses whenever he sees something a little unusual to his daily routine is, "Well you don't see that every day do you?" It's hilarious (and finally, gratifying) to see him referencing and pointing to things I have shown him over the years and have him do this." I have enjoyed communicating with each of you. Before moving on to other project topics, I want to introduce you to ColorStorming, a fun and productive activity for any parent or professional meeting, training, or workshop.

A few weeks ago, in ["Introducing Coloring Social Stories."](#) posted in the Clubhouse on February 12, 2019, I mentioned that when I paint or color with someone else the conversation always heads into creative territory, and the research that explains why that occurs:

Activities like coloring have always been a great escape for me, a way to happily lose myself and absorb an entire afternoon. If someone joins me, the conversation is likely to head into uncharted territory. My daughter, Joanna, comes to visit at our cottage in the summer. We get out the paints to create new art for the cottage walls and end up having conversations with fresh directions. It's as if the painting opens new windows in our exchange of ideas. According to the research, it does (p. 2).

By quieting the amygdala and stimulating the cerebral cortex, the repetitive motion involved in coloring creates a cognitive “perfect storm” that simultaneously reduces stress and anxiety while boosting creativity and problem-solving.

As many of you know, I conduct several presentations and workshops every year. I like to involve the audience every-step-of-the-way, using demonstration and activities to engage participants in the material and offset boredom and fatigue (especially in the last afternoon segment of the day). Considering the links between coloring, creativity, and problem-solving, I decided to incorporate coloring into one of my afternoon workshop activities. The only obstacle is that most presentation activities do not involve coloring, and asking people to color might understandably make them feel a little uncomfortable. I needed something to efficiently and matter-of-factly share the relevant research related to coloring along with directions for the activity.

ColorStorming

ColorStorming is an activity that harnesses the benefits of coloring to support small-group discussion about any topic, uniquely suited to brainstorming where there are a variety of possible answers, contributions, and perspectives. Recently, I used it to raise awareness of the many different kinds of lines or cues, and the factors that people consider and the strategies that they use to effectively participate in them. (For more information about autism and the issues surrounding lines, see the Carol’s Club project, [“Autism in Line: Solutions and Social Stories”](#) posted on January 14th of this year.)

This project includes everything you need to implement ColorStorming including the PowerPoint® slides to serve as a guide during your presentation, as well as the materials that participants will need.

There is some prerequisite work that you need to complete before your presentation. You’ll want to review the articles listed in the reference section to familiarize yourself with the research on coloring and its benefits. And you’ll need to identify the items to be discussed and insert them into your PPT and the Recorder Notes form. That’s about it!

The entire activity, including a description of the rationale and directions to complete it, will likely take about 10-20 minutes. Your discussion questions will be a big factor in timing. I've included a sample set of questions in the Appendix for you to use as a guide as you write your own.

Once the groups begin coloring and talking, it's fun to walk around and listen in on the conversations, and interesting to see a variety of methods emerge for sharing a limited number of colored pencils! The required sharing is such a part of this activity - I believe it would be a mistake to give each person their own set! Eaves-dropping also helped me to gauge when to end the activity. My guess is most discussion-coloring times will last 3-5 minutes.

ColorStorming is easy to implement, especially with the support of the PPT slides and speaker notes. I've listed some additional notes below. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at TakeThisToCarol@gmail.com. I'd LOVE to hear about your experiences!

Materials

- PowerPoint Slides describing the activity (to insert into any of your presentations)
- Coloring page and the accompanying Social Story, "Coloring at a Workshop is Okay" (1 per participant)
- Document titled, "Recorder Notes" (1 per small group)
- A pack of colored pencils (per table/small group)

Set Up

- Small groups, about 3-6 participants each
- A person designated as the Recorder
- Each person in the group has the Coloring Page (Appendix)
- Recorder also has a copy of "Recorder Notes"

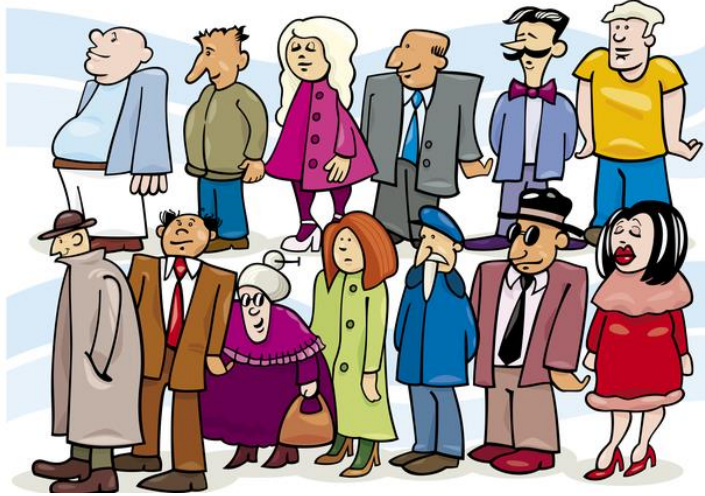
Preparation

- Review the articles listed in the reference section
- Review the ColorStorming PPT speaker notes
- Develop ColorStorming questions related to your topic and insert them into the PPT presentation and on the Recorder Notes
- Insert the ColorStorming PPT into your presentation

As I mentioned, there are script and implementation suggestions in the speaker notes of the PPT. I have had the opportunity to use this activity twice, both with positive feedback and reviews. If you do have the opportunity to use ColorStorming, I would love to hear how it goes for you!

I look forward to hearing from you, and, as always, thank you for being a member of Carol's Club. You are helping to shape the future of Social Stories one request and project at a time. I appreciate your involvement.

Appendix: Sample ColorStorming Questions



Recorder Notes
in response to
questions A-C below.

More room to write on
the back!

A. In mid-January Carol completed 7 errands in two hours with lunch at Panera Bread:

- 1-2. Dropping off two bags of clothes - one at Goodwill and the other at the dry cleaners;
3. Mailing an antique cocoa set to her daughter;
- 4-5. Buying gas and groceries;
6. Returning a vest to Kohl's department store; and
7. Taking a short video at McDonald's for an upcoming presentation.

Including lines while driving, etc., how many lines did Carol encounter to complete her errands?

Notes _____

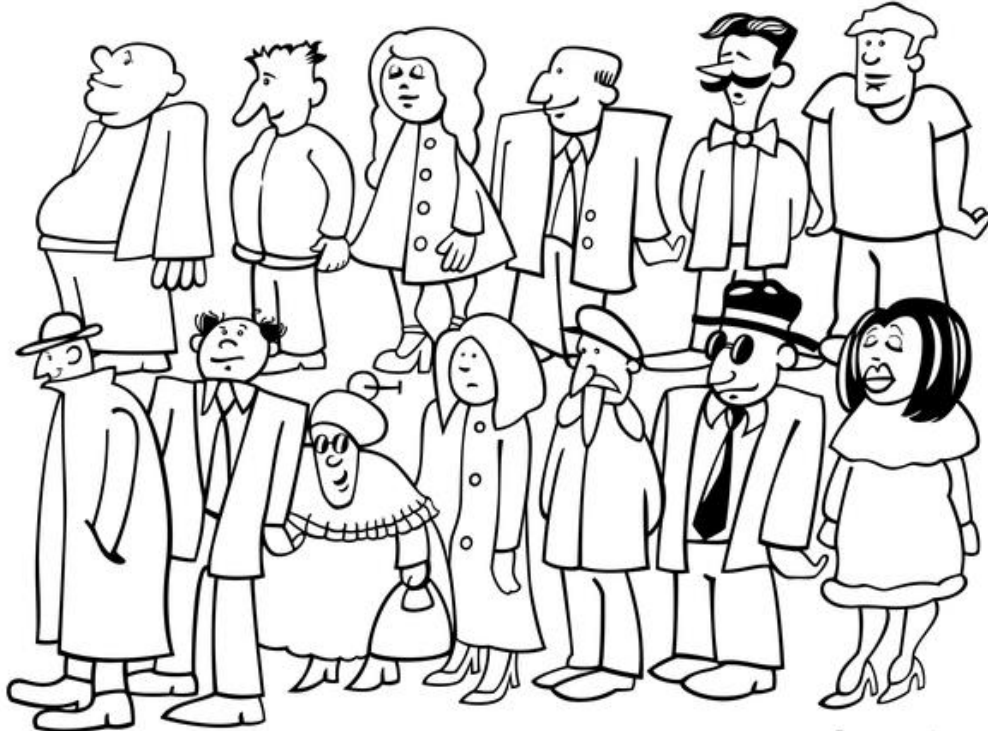
B. Think about lines in the community, for example, those that we join to complete errands like the series above. How do community lines differ from those used in schools?

Notes _____

C. Do "lines" always look like a line? List as many situations as you can where people are waiting in order, but a line is not apparent.

Notes _____

Activity: Coloring and Brainstorming



Coloring at a Workshop is Okay

We are attending a workshop. Sometimes, adults color at a workshop. This is okay. Even if this is the first time that adults have ever colored pictures at a conference, it is still okay. This Story explains why coloring at a meeting is a mature and informed thing to do.

Coloring involves small repetitive motions that “...engage parts of the cerebral cortex while relaxing the amygdala, the brain’s fear center” (Chen, D., no date). This may explain why coloring has been linked to improved creative thinking and attention (Neuroscience News, May 4, 2018).

It is okay to color at a workshop while brainstorming, especially when there is research to support the idea.

References

Chen, D. (no date). Coloring books for adults: 8 Science-backed reasons to pick up your crayons. Retrieved from <https://www.rd.com/health/wellness/adult-coloring-book-benefits/>

Neuroscience news. May 4, 2018. Coloring reduces stress and boosts creativity. Retrieved from <https://neurosciencenews.com/coloring-stress-creativity-8969/>



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Notes _____

References

Coloring references

Bergland, C. (2015). The cerebellum, cerebral cortex, and autism are intertwined. Retrieved from: the cerebral cortex in autism (no web address).

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Turner, D. (2017, April 18). Color and autism. Retrieved from <http://enduratex.blogspot.com/2017/04/color-and-autism.html>