Stages of a Deep Talk session

Getting ready

"*Let's get ready."* Give people time to get ready. You may do a stilling exercise: invite people to lower their gaze, relax their shoulders, notice the points of contact on the chair or floor, and notice their breath. Then, as you look round the circle, ask "*Are you ready for a story?"*

Tell the story

"*This is an open place" (You could add "where there are no rights and no wrongs" or for this particular story - "full of grace")* as you move the sand or unroll the cloth.

Handle the objects carefully. You can represent people by moving your hands (two or three fingers together) or use the wooden figures, or representations of people using stones, seedheads, feathers, sticks...

Take your time and leave pauses for people to imagine and reflect.

If possible, learn the story and tell it from your heart. Don't be tempted to rush or add more words!

Wondering

Invite the group to wonder. You can ask one or some of these questions:

"Now I'm wondering..."

"*What did you like best?" "What didn't you like?" "Where would you most like to be in the story?" "Is there anything you would like to leave out?" "What does this remind you of?" "I wonder where you are in this story?" 'At which point in the story would you find yourself today?"*

Carefully place the objects back in the basket.

(It sometimes feels appropriate not to put the objects away, but to leave the story in the sand and jump straight to choosing a question for the group in the Community Play).

If appropriate for your setting, invite people to change places as you are moving into a different phase of Deep Talk.

Community Play

Representing feelings or your day

Invite people to represent their day or feelings in the sand (or on the cloth).

"*How is your day? How are you feeling?"*

Feelings can be represented in the sand or you may also provide objects that can help with expressing feelings e.g. stones, feathers, candles. (If you are doing Deep Talk on cloth you will need to provide objects!) Depending on time available and size of group not everyone may contribute. Put your own feeling in at the end, or if the group is new to Deep Talk, you might model what to do by going first.

Using a Metaphor from the story

Choose a question for the group that opens up wondering about a metaphor from the story. If there is a physical object that represents the metaphor you are working with, hold it reverently in your hand, e.g. the precious stone and ask a question. As people speak 'place' those things gently onto the object with your other hand and perhaps repeat them. e.g. if you had told the story of the Precious Stone you could ask.

"*What is precious for you?" or "What is precious for us in our community?"*

"Let's name those things out loud or in our hearts..."

At the end of the wondering, speak your contribution too, before saying

"*All the things, said and not said, are here, in this star"*

Ask the group where they want to place the object.

"*Where shall we put this precious stone?"*

Stages of a Deep Talk session, contd.

Pass round the basket of people (or stones, sticks, feathers, shells whatever you are using to represent people)
"*Would you like to place yourself somewhere in the sand / on the cloth?"*
"What would you like to say about yourself?"
"What can you see here?"

In addition you could invite people to place their inner child, or other self, in the sand, and give them time to imagine what their adult self and inner child (or self and other self) might be saying to each other.
"*What are your adult self and inner child saying to each other?"*

When the community play is coming to a close, ask
"Is there anything else that needs to be said or done?"
Allow time for people to say more, or add or move objects.

"Is this good enough?" Pause in case anything else needs to be said.
"This is good enough." or *"This is good."*
Hold out your hands as a blessing (You might invite everyone to make a gesture over the sand, e.g. some may like to do a Namaste blessing. a thumbs up or another gesture.)

Clearing away
Invite people to put away the people they put in the sand and afterwards to take from the sand anything else they have placed down. Alternatively you can do this. Show reverence by packing away slowly and with care.



An example of Community Play

Information and support in the art of Deep Talk:

There are folk in the Deep Talk community who love to support each other and those new to Deep Talk.
To link in to the community and to receive news, information and events (including training) please sign up to the Deep Talk newsletter
Contact: kathryndeeptalk@gmail.com
Website https://deep-talk.blog/
Facebook group

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