

MEDICINE HORSE WAY

Mandalas

Mandalas are a reflective exercise that are often used during the first session with a client to help them bring into focus their intention for working with you, and to give you insight into where they are in relation to where they want to go. You can also use this tool as a way for clients to express and share what they experienced in other reflective or introspective experiences that may be difficult to put into words.

Mandala is a Sanskrit term from India and Tibet meaning circle. A mandala is a holy circle that is a representation of wholeness and reminds us of our unity with all living things. In Tibet, a teacher often draws a mandala for his student and leaves him to meditate on this symbol for many years before he gives the next step of instruction. The mandala is also found in the rose window in Gothic architecture, and it appears frequently as a healing symbol in Christian and Native America ceremonies.

Supplies

You need clip boards, either black paper with a white circle drawn on it or white paper with a black circle drawn on it. Crayons, colored pencils, oil pastels, or colored chalk. Oil Pastels and colored chalk show up best on black paper and provide a more dramatic expression.

Explain to your clients that in Medicine Horse Way we find it more valuable to introduce ourselves through expressing something meaningful to us rather than giving our occupation, marital status, or other roles that we play in daily life. A mandala isn't necessarily a fine art creation, it can be stick figures, abstract colors, or even words.

Facilitation

Ask the client to close their eyes, drop awareness down into the body and allow their reply to the question to arise from the body rather than the mind. You can ask a question that is important to the individual or a theme you intend to explore with them. For example if the intention is for the client to explore their authentic self you can ask the question: "What does authenticity mean to me?" Or "What is the most authentic aspect of my life?" You can also use a series of 2 Mandalas and questions with the concept of exploring where they are now in relation to where they want to be.

Example: "When you think of our life's journey, where are you now?"

Next step it to instruct them to express whatever comes from their heart on the paper. Allow about 10 minutes, paying attention to when they seem complete. Then give the suggestion that they put a title on their mandala and record the date on the back.

Then ask "When you think of your life's journey, and imagine complete freedom, where would you be now?" and repeat the process. Allow the client to share both, where they see themselves and where they would like to be.

Do not offer any comments or feedback. It is important that you not evaluate, or interpret, the mandala. This is an important and sacred inner process for the client. Over time they may begin to see more and more than what they initially share with you, leave them space for discovery.

Use of Mandala's in Group sessions vs use of Mandala's in Individual Client Sessions

During workshops it can be beneficial for the instructor to also complete a mandala and share the meaning with the group (but only if there is enough time!) It can demonstrate to the group the value of stepping into vulnerability.

However, it is not recommended for coaches/instructors to create a mandala during one to one private sessions, because it is very important to keep the focus on your client. Coach or Instructor self-disclosure can distract from the client's process.