

Activity: Design Goal: Psychological/Emotional Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Moss Frame

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Materials

Preserved moss
(assorted colors)

Wooden frames

Glue gun & glue sticks or
durable craft glue

Pinecones, shells, sticks

Gloves, wipes

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will create a collage-type moss artwork in a wooden frame.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Learn about moss: small & often overlooked; enable plants around them/people to thrive

Physical: Exercise fine motor skills; practice measured, appropriate physiological responses

Psychological/Emotional: Explore sense of self, character strengths, our important role in greater good (no matter how small)

Sensory: Engage tactile sense to enhance mood, reduce stress & as a mechanism for joy and distraction from unpleasant thoughts/experiences

Social: Normalize feelings of inadequacy; build community; appreciate others

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather materials. Make/purchase wooden frames unless this is to be part of this session.
2. Facilitator begins session by introducing moss frame activity and depending on participants, the therapeutic connections (see goals above).
3. Working on a flat surface, with lots of room for everyone, participants begin selecting moss & materials, laying these out as the planning phase prior to glueing.
4. Using glue gun or craft glue, begin attaching items to frame backing.
5. Leave on flat surface to dry. Weight down artwork.
6. Facilitator leads discussion about exploring sense of self and how to express this, contributions to society large & small, feelings of inadequacy and other relevant topics.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: A therapeutic horticulture activity that does not require long-term care of plants may be appropriate for some populations and programs. Using preserved moss, not live moss is the basis of this activity, with many sources available for purchasing moss. Preserved moss is 100% moss that is no longer alive which has been preserved using non-toxic materials and processes to maintain color, appearance, and sometimes scent. It does not require water, sunlight or soil.

The moss frame activity can include an outdoor component, possibly an additional session, where participants gather natural items like stones, pinecones, seedpods and sticks. At each stage of completion, participants can experience sensory inputs touching, smelling and observing these natural items. Naturally occurring or facilitator-led discussions can raise topics of being/feeling small, feelings of inadequacies, normalizing these feelings, and sense of self and self-expression through creative arts.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitator is responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts.

Facilitator needs to be mindful of sharp items including some pinecones, splinters from frame or sticks, burrs or other unpleasant tactile items. It may not be appropriate for some populations to use hot glue guns; fabric gloves can provide some protection. Safety protocols should be reviewed for glue guns, handling of glued items, and work area where glue guns sit. Children and people living with dementia may be tempted to put items in mouths. Working with a partner who can assist and prevent this is an option.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: This activity can be extended by hosting an art show displaying moss frames, making other nature frames using different items in place of moss, or doing a group frame that is larger than one used for personal art.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Quiet Earth Moss. (2020). Types of preserved moss.

<https://www.quietearthmoss.com/preserved-moss-walls/types-of-preserved-moss/>

Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2023.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.