

TH Activity Plan – Stone Angles, Guardian Angels & Behavior

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ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will make a stone angel art piece during discussions of when & how a live or figurative guardian angel is helpful.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Discuss concept of guardian angel, luck, coping with adversity & an individual's responsibilities for their own choices & behaviors to expand understanding

Physical: Strengthen hand dexterity manipulating stones (shapes & weight); improve hand strength using calking gun

Psychological/Emotional: Internalize appropriate behavior & choices; self-regulate

Sensory: Use sensory integration skills (eyes, touch) selecting materials

Social: Practice modulating hypervigilance, anxiety, sensory over-responsiveness or under-responsiveness; share ideas related to guardian angels

Materials

Stones in specific shapes

Cedar shakes, other thin wood pieces

Contractor grade stone adhesive (glue) & calking gun to fit

Rope for hanging art, drill & drill bit

Gloves, wipes

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather materials. Pre-drill holes in wood. Lay out stones for viewing & easy selection by size, shape and color. Make a sample. Have plants with angel names on display.
2. Facilitator begins session by asking if participants believe in or have guardian angels, real or imaginary. Discussion on why, when & who should interest & engage participants. Encouraging them to share experiences related to guardian angels in the safe environment of the TH session can promote bonding.
3. Moving onto an experiential activity using stones, participants select these using sensory inputs (& sensory integration) for angel art.
4. Begin by using cedar shakes or other wood with pre-drilled holes (or if appropriate have participants drill hole). Put rope through hole for hanging the art.
5. Arrange stones on wood prior to gluing. Use calking gun & contractor adhesive on stones to attach/glue to wood. Let dry for 24 hr., or be careful transporting angels. (Most participants would not have adhesive & calking gun at their homes for repairs).

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: Dealing with life's high and low points throughout the lifespan will be experienced by most. Understanding and coping with these requires self-awareness, resiliency and coping mechanisms. For some, and appropriate for most ages and levels of intellectual understanding, is the concept of a guardian angel. Discussion of real or imaginary angels, and the role these can play can lead to better understanding of making choices, listening to one's internal voice, recalling elder or parental advise, and personal responsibility. The TH session does not use angels in a religious context.

The session can address coping mechanisms, like a guardian angel, along with ways to practice modulating behavior, hypervigilance, anxiety or fear. Making an angel from natural stones can be a concrete symbol for an angel watching over someone. It can also be a tangible reminder of the TH discussion related to self-regulation, internalizing personal boundaries, taking responsibility, and making good choices. Using a guardian stone angel is not a substitute for good judgement, but it can help frame life's experiences and moments in positive terms.

Occupational therapists refer to modulation dysfunction, most often exhibited in pediatric populations, where the brain is not efficiently modulating one or more of the eight senses (Kincheloe & Nave, 2024). Sensory modulation, different from modulating behavior, refers to how the brain regulates sensory inputs, filtering out irrelevant information for functioning in their environment (Pediatric Therapy and Learning Center, 2024). Children with “sensory modulation dysfunction are likely to exhibit behaviors such as defiance, hostility and anger...because their brains are not efficiently modulating sensory information they are taking in” (Kincheloe & Nave, 2024). Behaviors are a way of communicating, and may need modulation as well.

Working on sensory modulation, sensory integration and behavior modulation in this TH session can include facilitator giving directions one step at a time, without background or other distractions. This will discourage participants from over-responsiveness from too much sensory information. Choosing a level of activity and easy to follow directions supporting sensory under-responsiveness where passive or withdrawn engagement for participants who may have this challenge is recommended. Pre-session assessments or individual education plans (IEPs) should identify sensory or behavior modulation challenges of participants.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. Some contractor grade stone adhesive (glue) may be caustic – have participants use gloves, and consider having facilitator be the only one to handle adhesive if this may be a problem for participants.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: The shapes of the stones are important to create the angel with wings. Flat surfaced stones, proportionate shapes and sizes, (wings are smaller) will require the facilitator to find these and have them ready for participants. Use sufficient adhesive for stones' weight. Some participants may not have hand strength to use adhesive gun and may need accommodation or assistance. Lay angels flat to dry.

Having some plants with angel in their names can create additional interest. Presenting the plants at the beginning of the session can set the theme. For example angel's trumpet (*Brugmansia* - a hallucinogen), [begonia angel wing species](#) (*coccinea*, *maculata*, *corallina*, *dietrichiana*), various daylilies (*hererocallis*) – pink angel of peace, men and angels, cranberry angels, and blue angel clematis. [Heuchera 'snow angel'](#), *hosta 'earth angel'*, and [narcissus 'angel eyes'](#) are a few more that may be available for session.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Guardado, KE., & Sargent, SR. (2020). [Sensory integration](#). Europe PMC. PMID, 32644581
Kincheloe, M., & Nave, G. (2024). [A link between sensory modulation and behavior](#). My Sidekick Therapy.com.
Pediatric Therapy and Learning Center. (2024). [Sensory modulation](#).



Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2024.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2024.