

Talking Tools

Storytelling Our Way to Emotional Health

Why

For such a time as this, when people are filled with anxiety, confusion, frustration, fear, loneliness, and sorrow, we may now add to our toolbox Matt Potosky's charcoal-drawn tools to draw out our feelings and our life stories.

As the social norms of our society rapidly deteriorate, and people are hiding and distancing and prevented from contacting and connecting, Talking Tools facilitates crucial conversations that will help groups pursue emotional health together. Feelings and life stories will quickly be put on the table as family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers share what's been going on inside of them.



Purpose

Talking Tools serve as provocative projective screens that pull from our social emotional landscape. Before long, our social network is in the stories. At center stage, and all our stuff we thought was hidden in the back of our refrigerator, closet, shop, or garage is now speaking to and through us from our tools. Who would have thought tools could talk? Tools can't talk, but these do. And they have so much to say if we listen carefully and let them speak. Sacred stories, ancient stories, and new stories will narrate the scripts of our lives as we create safe places for safe people to connect at a heart level.



Connecting

With Talking Tools in our toolbox, our potential for developing deeply connected relationships is huge. Our potential to pursue emotional health with people we care about is now in our hands. All we have to do is slow down, make time, develop trust, and speak the truth in love with one another.

The relationships we desire are just a few intentional conversations away!

Settings

Talking Tools is designed to travel in our toolbox wherever we go.



Work



School

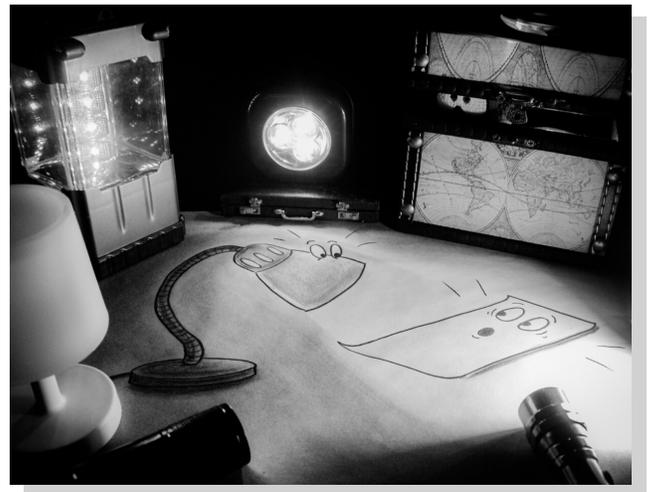


Home



Community

If we are already in people-helping relationships, Talking Tools is a trauma informed tool that will cut straight to the heart to help us launch crucial conversations with people desiring connection, healing, and growth.



Outcomes

When properly used, Talking Tools will help develop safe people and safe places and a restorative community. Then people won't have to turn to social media looking for a voice or for support. They won't have to turn to video games to escape their feelings and problems. They won't have to turn against themselves or against one another. They won't have to have emotional build ups, cut-offs, or blow ups. They won't want to quit or stay home in bed. They'll want to be together if they learn to talk and share their stories with one another and find support, encouragement, and ways to make things better.

Talking Tools is a cutting-edge communication tool of Spirit-Driven.



Guidelines and Boundaries

Set aside uninterrupted time with a small and trusted circle of people. Turn off all cell phones. Listen carefully and pay close attention as each one takes turns telling stories using Talking Tools as the prompt to share honest feelings. To create a safe and supportive community, no one may interrupt the storyteller. No one may give the storyteller ideas or tell the story for them. Only words of support and encouragement may be shared.

Absolutely no humor or sarcasm or discouraging words will be tolerated so that no one will interrupt the process of sharing emotion-packed stories. People who lack social or emotional maturity may not be ready to engage or follow these guidelines. Don't force people who aren't ready to participate with Talking Tools.

One-on-one sessions may be necessary to help people develop listening, communication, empathy, and social emotional awareness skills. Hurting people can and will hurt people. Your responsibility is to create a safe environment and to develop safe people who can listen and share with the desire to know and understand one another.

Setting-Specific Instructions

Family Conversation Tool

Set aside a meal time to gather as a family to use Talking Tools to share stories expressing how each family member is feeling. Since we tend to be preoccupied, easily distracted, and raw in our reactions when we're with our loved ones, be careful to listen well and to speak only words that are honest and respectful, and remove all your distractions.

As each family member takes turns telling stories using Talking Tools, use these prompts and questions to improvise as the storyteller.

- What happened?
- How do the character(s) feel?
- Is something missing or needed?
- What will happen next?
- Talk about a time when you've experienced a similar feeling.

This will be a great opportunity to brainstorm and problem-solve as a family when issues, conflicts, and challenges are brought to the table. Be proactive and take steps to improve your family relationships.



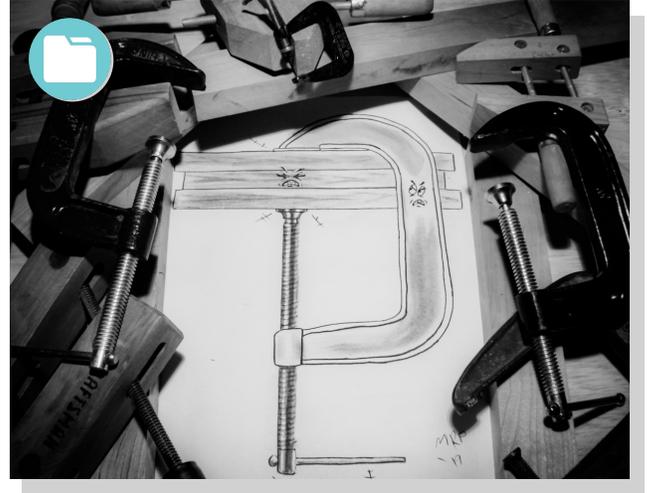
Work Conversation Tool

Set aside time to divide up into small groups of two to four people. Include leaders and workers in each group. To begin, review the Talking Tools guidelines and boundaries (see above). Communicate and ensure that no one will be repeating what is said, and no one will get in trouble for being honest. Make sure all cell phones and distractions are set aside.

Take turns telling stories using Talking Tools with these prompts and questions as each person improvises as the storyteller.

- What happened?
- How do the character(s) feel?
- Is something missing or needed?
- What will happen next?
- Talk about a time when you've experienced a similar feeling at work, at home, or sometime in your life.

This will be a great opportunity to brainstorm and problem-solve as a work team as issues, conflicts, and challenges are brought to the table. Be proactive in taking steps to improve your relationships and work environment.

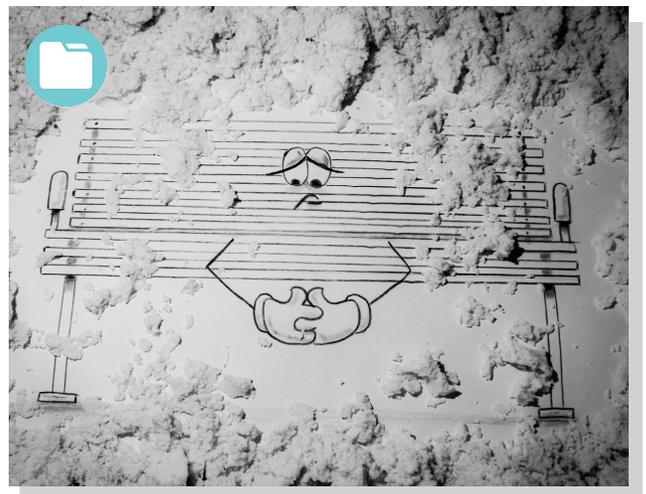


Counseling Tool

Talking tools may be used in a variety of ways to help people. As a counseling tool, Talking Tools may be used as a projective assessment tool to learn what people have experienced and how they've been emotionally impacted. Any of the Talking Tools pictures can be selected by the counselor or client as a trauma-informed tool to help facilitate working through difficult issues when people have been emotionally or relationally wounded.

Allow the client to pick a picture, and use any of these prompts to help craft their stories.

- Create a story using the picture to discuss what happened and how the characters are feeling.
- When applicable, include in the story what's missing, what's needed, and what will happen next.
- Talk about a time when you experienced similar feelings and dynamics, how you responded, and the impact it had on your life.



Coaching Tool

In a leadership, coaching, or mentoring role, where helping develop people is the focus, Talking Tools provides a variety of pictures to open the door for crucial conversations. Coaches may discover that people will be more open if they first open up and share stories from their own life. This will establish the vulnerability bar for the people who are being developed. The more the coach shares, the more the people will likely share. The same prompts as counseling (see above) may be useful in generating meaningful discussions.

Any of these prompts can be useful to generate discussions.

- Take a close look at the picture. Allow yourself to enter into the story. What's happening? See if you can discover the different emotions these characters are experiencing.
- Share some of your own stories about when you have experienced similar feelings.
- What's needed most when people are going through some of these emotionally and relationally challenging experiences?
- What helps and what hinders people from feeling safe to share their life stories?
- What skills would help you to develop the ability to hear and understand and accept the people around you?

Group Icebreaker Tool

Take turns selecting a Talking Tools picture. Look at the picture carefully, then select a "cast of characters" who will team up with you to create and act out a story. As the characters come to life, you will tell the story with your cast, and you will also animate one of the characters.

If the picture has only one character, you're the character when it's your turn. If the picture is missing a character, you may add it to your story. Remember that every good story must have some tension and mystery. Add all your feelings, include some good humor, and have fun storytelling and making memories together. This will be the most fun way to use Talking Tools.

Personal Intervention Tool

Talking Tools may also be used as a personal intervention tool for people who are having emotional or interpersonal conflicts. When people lack social emotional awareness, Talking Tools may be intentionally used to help people get in touch with their feelings, learn how they emotionally impact others, learn ways to have feeling-oriented discussions, and become more socially and emotionally sensitive and responsive.

