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## Creative Interventions and Activities Clearinghouse

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# My Mancala: A Board Game to Increase Social Skills and Problem Solving

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this creative intervention is to increase social and problem solving skills.

**Materials Needed:**

Mancala game board; “gemstone” game pieces (marble-like stones that are flat on one side); magazines (can also type a list of feeling words and adjectives); craft glue (fast-drying, clear); scissors

**Procedures:**

Client brainstorms words that describe how they see themselves and how they feel. Provide client with a stack of magazines or a list of descriptive/feeling words. Client cuts out words they identify with and glues them face down onto the flat surface of the gemstones. While gemstones are drying, discuss how this process was for the client (see below). When gemstones are dry, explain the rules of Mancala to the client (rules should be included with the game), and begin playing. When game is done, client takes the gemstones they collected in their mancala and discusses the meaning of the words on the gemstones and how they relate to the clients sense of self. Give the gemstones to the client to keep as a reminder of how they see themselves at this point in their life.

A modification of this activity is to have premade gemstones with a variety of descriptive/feeling words to use with multiple clients. At the end of the game, the client picks out which of the gemstones in their mancala they identify with. The client can keep them or leave them back for other clients to use, depending on how much maintenance is desired.

**Process Questions and Follow-Up:**

How was it for you to find words that describe how you see yourself and how you are feeling?

What top five words would you choose for yourself?

How do you think other people see you?

Similar or different to how you see yourself?

What words do you wish were different?

Was there any point during the game that you felt frustrated?

**Practice Setting:**

Mental Health Agency/Private Practice