



Instructor on the Front Lines Instructor Profile

Psychology of Touch Activity

Submitted by:
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“Love what you do and do what you love.”
— Erin Murphy

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Activity Description

Toward the beginning of the Swedish massage module, students are given an assignment to share their history of touch in a five-minute presentation. They can use music, art, storytelling, pictures, etc., to tell their story.



Activity Goals and Benefits

The students say this activity is a great idea. It helps everyone understand each other better and promotes bonding. As the instructor, it gives me insight into the class dynamics and potential touch issues for students, it helps them understand the importance of safe boundaries.

Activity Suggestions

Ground Rules: Students are given a five-minute limit. No interrupting the student presentations or passing judgment (since some students may talk about domestic violence, sexual abuse, or drug use in their past, etc.)

Recommendation: If you have this class too early in the syllabus, the students don't know each other well enough to open up. If you have it too late, they feel they already know each other.

This information has been shared by the submitting instructor / administrator and has not been approved or validated by ABMP.

Activity Directions

- 1) When giving this assignment, give students lots of options for the delivery of their presentation. For instance, they can present via collages, poems, paintings, songs they compose, life photos — anything to tell stories.
- 2) Have students sit in a circle. Review the “rules.” It can be a bit of an emotional day. For some students, it’s the first time their past story has been given a “voice.” For this reason, it’s best not to do massage exchanges on this day. A potluck makes for a nice ending to the day instead.
- 3) For students who feel their past is too painful to talk about, suggest they base their project on what their *vision* of healthy touch is, or what they feel they can bring to this profession.
- 4) Students must be present to get the points for the day (they cannot hand in the project the next day if they are sick.) Reason being, the intent of the activity is to create class bonding/sharing.
- 5) At the end of the class, we have some closure. I honor how hard it must have been to talk about things, and how proud I am of them for changing their path and having a healthy vision for their future. We discuss how one’s past may be the reason you are who you are, but not your excuse for your behavior. I then put our garbage can in the center of the room. We all do a symbolic “dumping of our past emotional crap” into the garbage can. We finish up with a group hug.

Questions for Erin?
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More about Erin Murphy

Background

A 1992 graduate of the Brenneke School of Massage, Erin has had a private practice focused on treatment work for many years. For the past 13 years, she’s been teaching at Everest College (formerly Seattle Massage School and Ashmead College.) Erin tries to make sure that her passion for teaching and respect for this profession comes through to her students via her teaching style. She describes her teaching technique as “edutainment,” which is a combination of keeping the students’ minds engaged and entertained during the learning process — a must when you are teaching 4 ½-hour classes with 30 students ranging from ages 18–60!

What is your favorite ABMP teaching resource?

“I use Anne Williams’ idea of putting on the dry erase board before class: “My goals for today are ...” Students come in and write what their goals for the day are and what they need to work on. I also put my goals up there. I reference the board throughout class for key points of review.” (See *Teaching Resources information to the left.*)

A teaching tip from Erin

“See one...Do one...Teach one
 To see if a student really owns/understands a concept, I have them teach it to someone else. It helps boost their confidence and helps reinforce the concept. I always am nearby just in case they need help.”



Teaching Resources

For information regarding student goal setting and more, visit our Student Success Curriculum website page at www.abmp.com/instructors/resources.php#studentsuccesscurriculum and our Student Success Resources website page at www.abmp.com/students/tools_for_success.php.



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For workshop schedule and topic information, visit www.abmp.com/instructors_on_the_front_lines/index.php.