Three-Symbol Story

Creative Expression | 30 minutes | 3-12 participants | Adults and teens 13+ with appropriate facilitation

Purpose

Choose three symbols for a fictional beginning, present moment, and possible next step.

Materials: Paper or a printable handout, Pens or an accessible writing alternative, Optional blank cards or simple drawing materials

Invite and agree - 3 minutes

Name the purpose and the right to pass, observe, write, or use fiction. Agree that people share only their own experiences and do not promise absolute group confidentiality.

Introduce the example - 3 minutes

A character starts a new chapter in a story. Ask what is known and what is still a guess.

Practice: Creative activity - 17 minutes

Choose three symbols for a fictional beginning, present moment, and possible next step. Offer writing, drawing, arranging objects, or describing a fictional creation. No artistic skill or personal disclosure is required.

Reflect together - 4 minutes

How does the arrangement change the story? Ask what fit, what did not fit, and what would make the exercise more accessible. Do not interpret another person's response.

Choose a next step - 3 minutes

Invite one optional action, support request, or question to carry forward. Passing is a valid closing response. Confirm how to seek appropriate support outside the activity.

Facilitator fit and boundaries

Offer non-art alternatives. Meaning belongs to the maker; do not diagnose from symbols, colors, or artwork.

Offer observation, private writing, or a fictional example. Adapt instructions and group size to access needs. No client responses are collected by this page.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Conceptual reading: TIP 41: Substance Abuse Treatment: Group Therapy, TIP 57: Trauma-informed Care in Behavioral Health Services. Source links appear on the online activity page.