

Community-based Theatre for Conflict Transformation in the Maldives

Working Manual, 2nd Draft



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Forum Theatre: A brief introduction

*“Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.”
(Augusto Boal, Creator of Theatre of the Oppressed/Forum Theatre)*

Forum Theatre is a theatre that is open for everyone, even for professional actors and other trained artists. It is a theatre that is at the service of ordinary people and that aims at democratizing peoples' access to art and culture not only as passive consumers but as active participants, as creators, in the process re-discovering their inherent creative potential usually dormant and atrophied after years of non-usage.

Forum Theatre is also an entirely community-driven process, in which people from different walks of life come together to collectively discuss important community issues, develop interactive plays about these issues and act out these plays in front of other people like them in order to start a search for grassroots solutions, in which the focus of the performance lies as much on the audience as on the actors on stage.

Hence, in *Forum Theatre* the main aim is not art per se but the mobilization of ordinary ('oppressed' or 'marginalized') people to take control of their own lives and become powerful agents of change for the transformation of their community conflicts in particular and their societies in general. In other words, forum theatre is a predominantly political and social rather than an artistic tool, though it is ultimately the combination of politics and art that makes it such a unique and innovative methodology.

2.

So what are the differences between Forum Theatre and other, more conventional theatre forms? Arguably the main difference is that conventional theatre is more often than not a top-down process in which most if not all of the aspects related to the production are the exclusive domain of theatre professionals, with the audience assigned the role of passive spectators, recipients of other people's work and ideas. In Forum Theatre, on the other hand, the main focus is on providing opportunities for ordinary people who might have never thought of themselves as actors to re-appropriate the theatrical means of production and to use these theatrical means to start transforming society. In the words of the founder of the Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theatre, Augusto Boal,

"Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society."

3.

At the same time, it is important to emphasize that Forum Theatre is not an effective tool when it comes to simply wanting to pass a particular message to the audience, i.e. when the goal is to educate people about a particular issue or desired behavioral change. On the contrary, forum theatre performances always revolve around questions rather than answers, and the idea is to empower communities to find their own solutions instead of letting others decide what is good for them.

This notion of supporting self-help is intimately linked to the theory and practice of renowned Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire. Working with largely illiterate, impoverished communities in Brazil and other parts of Latin America in the 1970'ties, Freire was interested in nourishing a pedagogy that could be used to liberate people from oppression. In his analysis of the educational system in Brazil at the time (and still very much predominant in most parts of the world today), he realized that there was an almost absolute lack of dialogue between teachers and students based on an ill-conceived dichotomy between an all-knowing teacher and his/her know-nothing students, whose empty brains served as deposits for the teacher's information. This "Banking System of Education" treated people as objects and reflected a larger culture of silence in which ordinary people's potential was left untapped and indeed deliberately ignored in order to serve the interests of those in power.

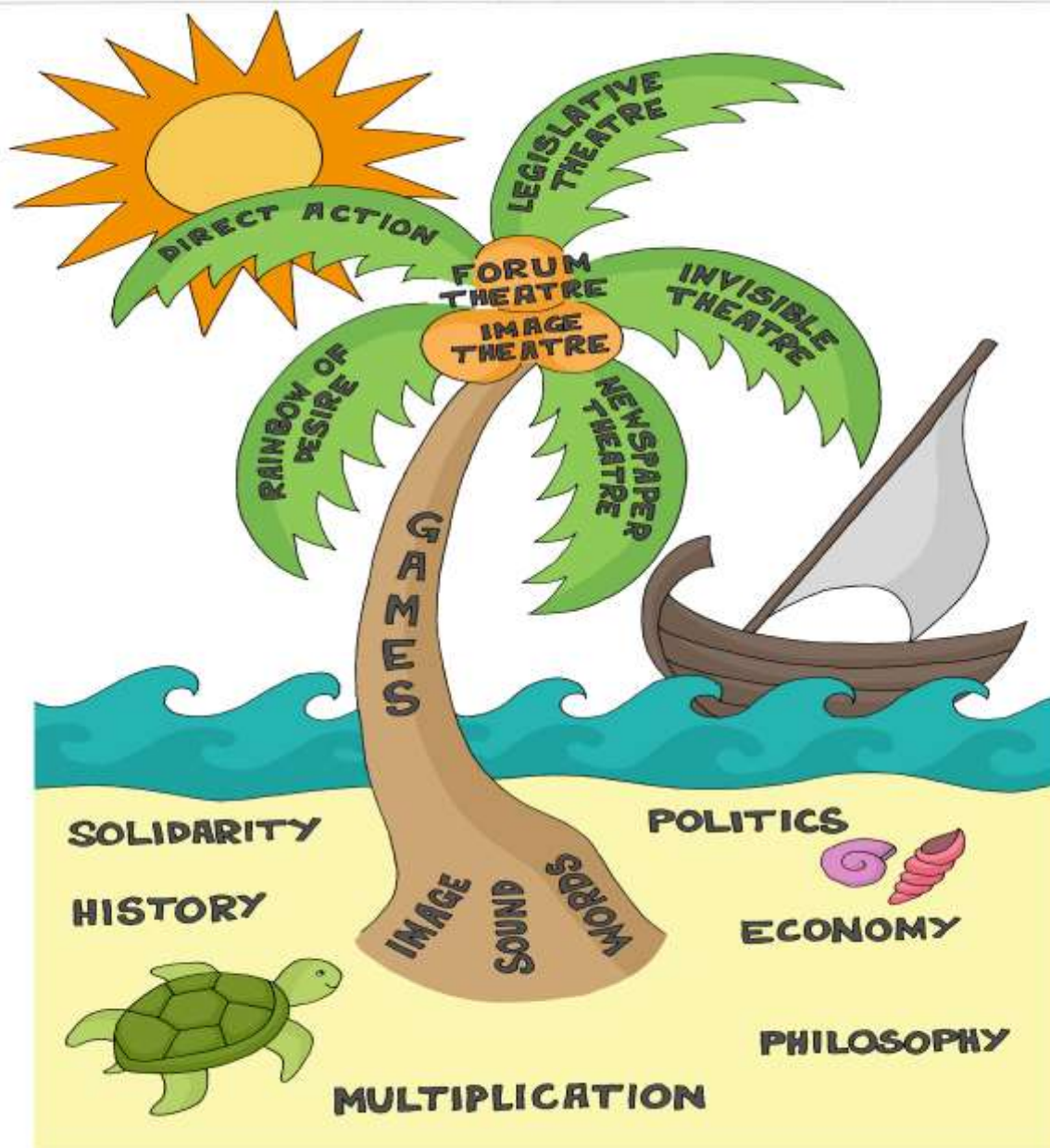
Freire attempted to address this situation of injustice by proposing a people's centered "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", in which the act of learning is transitive and all parties learn, i.e. teachers learn from the students and vice versa. Working with marginalized communities, the goal would be for these communities to gain a deeper understanding of their situations of oppression, in what Freire called "Conscientization", or the process of increasing of ones awareness and understanding. Once aware of the reasons behind their oppressive situations, people would then try to find their own solutions and strategies for change, i.e. they would become the protagonists of their own lives instead of waiting for other people (political or religious authorities, community leaders, businessmen, parents) to solve their problems for them.

Theatre of the Oppressed (TO)

These radically new ideas of an education for liberation from below were eventually discovered and applied to the theatre by a contemporary of Freire and fellow Brazilian, Augusto Boal (1931-2009). Inspired by Freire's notion of more participatory approaches to learning and social change, Boal analyzed the theatre of his time and found similarities to some of Freire's criticisms of the educational system¹. For him, in most theatre practices there was a lack of dialogue between actors and audience, with professional artists acting for a passive audience in what resulted in many propaganda performances with information (messages) deposited into the brains of the spectators. In addition, living in the harsh political climate of a military dictatorship in the Brazil of the Cold War era, Boal asked himself what the theatre could do to liberate people from oppression. The result of his deliberations was the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), a bottom-up theatre approach in which the theatre is used to gain a deeper understanding of one's situation of oppression ("Conscientization"), with the objective for both actors and audience to learn together and the latter to try out their ideas how to bring positive change in their communities.

Since its birth almost 40 years ago, the Theatre of the Oppressed has gradually made its way across the planet and is now practiced in nearly 100 countries on all continents. More importantly, led by Boal and an increasing number of passionate and dedicated practitioners, the methodology has been enriched, expanded and adapted to fit different cultural contexts and meet local needs. The result is an authentic arsenal of different participatory theatre techniques that are most beautifully symbolized in the so-called tree of the Theatre of the Oppressed.

1 Please refer to the annex for two foundational stories often told by Boal.



Simultaneously to the development of the different practical techniques, an equally great deal of time and efforts have been invested into devising a coherent theoretical body of work. This includes various books by Augusto Boal himself, regular reflections by the TO practitioners of the Center for the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio (CTO Rio) and many articles, book chapters and secondary literature by TO professionals from all over the world². Moreover, an international network of practitioners has found its home online (www.theatreoftheoppressed.org) and has developed a series of guiding principles that form the philosophical backbone of every TO endeavor. Some of the principles include:

2 Please refer to the annex for a book list with some of the most relevant literature

- The basic aim of the Theatre of the Oppressed is to provide the oppressed an opportunity for expression.
- The Theatre of the Oppressed is based upon the principle that all human relationships should be based on dialogue. Therefore, the main principle of Theatre of the Oppressed is to help restore dialogue among human beings.
- The *oppressed* are those individuals or groups who are socially, culturally, politically, economically, racially, sexually, or in any other way deprived of their right to *Dialogue* or in any way impaired to exercise this right.
- *Dialogue* is defined as to freely exchange with others, as a person and as a group, to participate in human society as equal, to respect differences and to be respected.
- The Theatre of the Oppressed is made of Exercises, Games and Techniques to help men and women develop what they already have inside themselves: theatre.
- Everyone is capable of acting. We all use, in our daily lives, the same language that actors use on stage: our voice, our body, and our expressions.
- The Theatre of the Oppressed offers everyone the possibility to examine their past, its effect on their present, and subsequently to invent their future, without waiting for it. Theatre of the Oppressed is *rehearsal for reality*.
- The Theatre of the Oppressed is respectful of all cultures. It is a method of analysis and a means to develop happier societies. Because of its humanistic and democratic nature, it is widely used all over the world, in all fields of social activities such as: education, culture, arts, politics, social work, psychotherapy, literacy programs and health.

Forum Theatre

Easily the most well-known and widely practiced technique of the Theatre of the Oppressed is Forum Theatre (FT), the main subject of this working manual. Forum Theatre is an interactive form of theatre in which a problematic scenario is presented and then replayed, with audience members (spect-actors) encouraged to enter the action and attempt to positively change the outcome on the stage and then take what they have learned during the forum and apply it in their real lives. It is a rehearsal for future action, a unique opportunity to practice change in the safe space of the theatre. Hence, Forum

Theatre is theatre not as spectacle but as a means of expression where all people have the possibility and the right to be heard and exchange their perspectives in action. It is a constant search for authentic dialogue, in which people analyze their past, in the context of the present in order to identify strategies to create a more peaceful future.

Legislative Theatre

In the early 1990'ties, coming back to Brazil from a long period of exile in Europe, Boal was voted into the city parliament of Rio de Janeiro. Realizing that there was very little contact between elected officials and their constituencies, and taking advantage of his new role as legislator, Boal started promoting Legislative Theatre: the attempt to democratize democracy by using forum theatre to involve ordinary people in the making of laws that will protect and expand the rights of marginalized communities. How? Boal and his colleagues at the CTO Rio continued to produce public forum theatre plays with oppressed populations but this time, during the performances, a lawyer present in the audience, would note down the suggestions for change, look for patterns in different audience responses and eventually channel these responses into a legal report that Boal presented in the Rio city parliament for discussion. The results were astonishing. In little over 2 years, 13 laws were passed and a new, more participatory form of democracy was born.

Other TO techniques

Apart from Forum and Legislative Theatre, a range of other techniques have blossomed and enriched the tree of the theatre of the oppressed over the past four decades. What all of these methods share is the desire to promote spaces for ordinary people to use the theatre to discuss sensitive community issues and find ways for people to actively affect positive transformation from below. For instance, Newspaper Theatre serves to analyze the often contradictory role the media and other opinion producing agents can play in the control of access to crucial information. Invisible Theatre, on the other hand, is used in contexts in which sensitive conflicts cannot be discussed openly. A highly controversial method even among TO practitioners, Invisible Theatre aims to promote dialogue and real life interventions in a public space (the street, public transport, restaurants, etc.) without the public knowing that what they are witnessing is a theatre performance.

A more inward-looking technique is a set of so-called introspective methods named the

Rainbow of Desire. Rainbow of Desire was conceived as a result of Boal's life in exile in Europe, when he came to realize that the objective realities of Europe were very different from what he knew from Latin America. There were no brutal military dictatorships, no overt police repressions, no outrageous poverty nor any other kind of excessive injustices that claimed for immediate redress. On the other hand, people in his workshops complained about a lack of meaning in life, feelings of profound depression and spiritual emptiness as well as a generalized lack of energy, motivation and even a tendency towards suicide. When analyzing some of these symptoms, Boal found out that many of these stemmed from conflicting desires and fears as well as concrete experiences with being at the receiving end of abuses of power and repressive behaviors by parents, teachers, bosses and other authorities. Recognizing that Forum Theatre had been designed primarily to tackle external oppressions, he invented the Rainbow of Desire as a means to support people suffering from internalized oppressions to overcome their states of paralysis and promote healing and a sense of catharsis, the latter in the sense of paving the way for action and the removal of all blocks that prevent people from taking action towards achieving their desires.

Finally, towards the end of his life, Boal realized the need for a new Aesthetics of the Oppressed. In this technique, different art forms including painting and photography ("The Image"), poetry and creative writing ("The Word") as well as musical production ("The Sound") are promoted to enable people's full engagement with their creative potential at the service of overcoming oppression and exclusion.

Playback Theatre (PT)

A different, complementary form of participatory theatre is Playback Theatre. During a Playback Theatre performance, a group of performers guided by a facilitator (the conductor) invite the personal stories of members from the audience. These stories are then played back to the tellers in an improvised performance on the spot.

Developed by Jonathan Fox and his wife Jo Salas in the USA of the 1970'ties, Playback Theatre holds that people have a need to tell their stories and that the theatre can promote spaces for ordinary people to do so. It is hence a way to validate and acknowledge people's life experiences, often with a focus on promoting the voices of marginalized and silenced groups. It is also a space for deep listening and the humanization of human

relationships, with the final result often described in terms of individual and collective healing.

Similar to TO, Playback Theatre has gradually become a powerful community tool across the globe and there are so-called Playback Theatre companies from Brazil to Hong Kong, from Finland to Afghanistan. Playback Theatre activities have been documented extensively and a regular Playback Theatre newsletter ("Interplay") is published and circulated digitally.

The Forum Theatre Workshop

Preparation for a Forum Theatre Workshop

The Forum Theatre workshop is an absolutely essential element in the development of an interactive Forum Theatre play. The theatre workshop may vary in duration and content, generally lasting from 3-6 days, but always aims to promote dialogue on sensitive community issues through the use of different theatre games and exercises. Before embarking on such an initiative it is important for the workshop facilitators (called the Joker) to prepare the activities.

Basic Considerations/Questions for the Jokers

Who is your audience/target group? Who are your participants?

Are there any exercises that may be considered culturally inappropriate? If yes, how can they be adapted?

In which language will the workshop be conducted? Is there a need for an interpreter?

What are some of the conflicts existing in the community?

What do you aim to achieve with the activities? What impact do you want to have?

How can the activities be evaluated?

Planning of Workshop Sessions

Is the workshop space conducive to the kind of games and exercises you want to do?

What is the theme of the session and which exercises will best address this theme?

How does the session take into account the readiness levels of the participants?

What feelings are we, as Jokers bringing to the session?

How much time is there to conduct the sessions?

Which specific resources (Flip Chart, Markers, Props) are needed for the workshop?

Workshop Structure

Depending on the facilitator's style of facilitation, level of experience and the specific objectives of the theatre activities there are many different ways of structuring a community-based theatre workshop. One suggestion for a workshop outline includes³:

3 Please see examples of the different games and exercises in the next section.

- ✧ Opening Circle (Welcome, Theoretical introduction, Logistical questions)
- ✧ Introduction Exercises
- ✧ Warm-Up & Trust Building Exercises
- ✧ Acting and Improvisation Skills Exercises
- ✧ Image Theatre Exercises
- ✧ The Construction of the Play
- ✧ Closing Circle/Debriefing (Time for reflections)

In terms of choosing the different games and exercises for the workshop, every practitioner has his/her own favorites with some exercises (Colombian Hypnosis, Blind Games, different Image Theatre exercises) that are part and parcel of most practitioners' tool box. However, given that theatre is ultimately a physical language, every day time should be made for physical exercises that promote physical self-awareness and what Boal calls “demechanization”.

Physical and Mental Demechanization

Our sensory capacities are often severely limited by the deforming and repetitive nature of our everyday jobs and activities. In addition, our minds and brains are under constant pressure to conform to certain, mechanized, ways of thinking, often heavily influenced by a cultural industry that manipulates our ways of being in the world. Boal suggests that one way of dealing with these daily mechanizations is the use of theatre.

Hence, the aim of physical demechanization exercises is to support the participants to reconnect with their senses and develop their capacities to understand the world in different ways. At the same time, all theatre games and exercises attempt to create an atmosphere in which people can think new thoughts, thereby demechanizing our thought processes.

Final Considerations

Apart from the technical preparation, it is crucial for the facilitator(s) to keep in mind the importance of providing a safe working environment.

Ideally the working space is

- free of obstructions, open, clean and warm
- free of judgment, a place where it is safe to take risks
- somewhere where it is safe to make mistakes
- where it is possible to think new thoughts
- where it is possible to feel different kind of emotions
- where it is possible to disagree

Important!

- All the games and exercises relate strongly to the senses and can be used with actors and people who have never thought of themselves as actors.
- The aim of the exercises is to help people find new ways to see, to listen and to touch in order for them to use the theatre as a means for social change.
- All games have their own powerful symbolism. They are metaphors for real life and each person will experience them differently, experiencing the games through their own life experiences.
- All games should be adapted to local circumstances and needs.

Workshop Rules

Generally, the workshop rules will be developed together with the workshop participants. However, certain basic guidelines should be established by the Joker so that the working environment will be safe and comfortable enough for people to engage authentically with the games and exercises.

It is important to stress that:

- ✧ During the discussion of an exercise, only one person speaks at a time. The discussion is an opportunity to speak and to be heard
- ✧ The participation in all games and exercises is voluntary
- ✧ Each person is invited to extend their own boundaries, and should not be forced and/or pressured by others to do things s/he does not want to do
- ✧ The games and exercises are not a competition
- ✧ The participants project their own understanding onto the images they see
- ✧ There is a general respect and recognition of the different degrees of knowledge and experience that the participants bring into the workshop.
- ✧ Everything said in the room stays in the room
- ✧ Cellular phones should be turned off at all times during the workshop sessions as it is very disrespectful to interrupt a workshop process in which the participants often go deep inside themselves
- ✧ Cultural traditions should be treated respectfully

Rules for Blind Games

Before doing blind games, it is important to remember the following rules:

- ✧ In order to respect people's physical integrity and privacy, participants' hands should be either by their side, behind their back, or across their chest
- ✧ Heads are up so that head crashes can be avoided
- ✧ The speed is determined by the person doing the walking
- ✧ Blind games are silent games

Post-Exercise Discussion

- ✧ A general discussion should take place after each (or most) theatre game or exercise
- ✧ The goal is to make links with "real life", problems and conflicts that exist in our communities
- ✧ It encourages personal disclosure, greater group cohesion and trust
- ✧ The Joker should not assume anything but should rather ask the group how they experienced the exercise.

To do this, the Joker needs to make a few decisions regarding the question s/he will ask. It is important to decide:

- how to phrase the questions
- how to order them,
- which to include
- which to leave out

Generally, the Joker tries to ask open questions, i.e. *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why* and *how* questions.

Example Questions:

- ✧ **What** thoughts and feelings did have during the exercise?

- ✧ **What** insights did you have as a result of engaging with the game?
- ✧ **How** does this game relate to life in Maldives?
- ✧ **How** does this exercise relate to the topic that we are here to investigate?
- ✧ **What** do you think this exercise was about?

Special discussion questions apply to Image Theatre work:

- ✧ **Who** might these people be?
- ✧ **What** seems to be going on?
- ✧ **What** do you think that gesture means?
- ✧ **What** does it seem like this person is saying/thinking at this moment?
- ✧ **Where** do you think this could be taking place?
- ✧ **When** does it look like this is taking place?
- ✧ **What** might you do in this situation?

Games & Exercises

Warm-Up, Group Building & Demechanization

Badu

Objectives: Group Building, Introduction, Internal Rhythm

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 10 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The group stands in a circle.
- ✧ The participants, using their right hands, gently tap on their hearts, establishing a collective rhythm.
- ✧ After a while, the Joker asks the participants to introduce a second, complementary rhythm. This time using the right index and middle finger to gently tap twice on the palm of their left hand. They establish the following rhythm: heart (2 taps), hand (2 taps), heart (2 taps), hand (2 taps), heart (2 taps), hand (2 taps), etc.
- ✧ Finally, the same rhythm continues but this time the participants will also say their names while tapping their hands. Mu-Naam. Za-Far. Aen-Tu.

Circle Dash

Objectives: Warm-Up, Group Building

Number of People: 7+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ This is a silent game.
- ✧ The group gets into a circle with one volunteer in the middle.
- ✧ The Joker explains that the aim of the game is for any two people in the circle to silently signal each other and quickly switch places.
- ✧ The person in the middle tries to get into one of the open spots before the participants successfully swapped places. The person left out takes the spot in the middle.



Clap Exchange

Objectives: Warm-Up, Team Building

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 10 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The group stands in a circle.
- ⤴ Facing to his/her right, the Joker sends a clap around the circle. The person on the right attempts to clap his/her hands at the same time and then passes the clap to the person next to him/her, all the way around the circle, again and again, faster and faster.
- ⤴ After a while, a second, third or fourth clap starting from a different section of the circle, can be introduced.



Colombian Hypnosis

Objectives: Demechanization, Analysis of Power Relationships

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 30 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ First, the participants divide into pairs. Then, the Joker asks for a volunteer to demonstrate the exercise with him/her while explaining the basic instructions at the same time.
- ✧ Stage One: One person will be the hypnotizer (A) and the other one the hypnotized (B).
- ✧ A holds one of his/her hands in front of B's face, at a distance of approximately 10-15 cm. As A slowly moves his/her hand B follows the hand always maintaining the same distance.
- ✧ The idea is to help B move his/her body into unusual positions. The whole space can be used.
- ✧ After a few minutes A and B swap roles.
- ✧ Variation Two: A and B hypnotize each other at the same time.
- ✧ Variation Three: One hypnotizer (A) hypnotizes two people (B & C) simultaneously, using both hands.
- ✧ Variation Four: 'A' comes into the middle and slowly starts moving through the space. One by one, the other participants "attach themselves" to any part of A's body (elbow, knee, ear) and follow his/her movements.
- ✧ During all stages, music can be played, with the participants moving in accordance to the rhythm of the music.
- ✧ Before discussing the exercise in the big group, each pair can be given a minute to discuss their experiences during the exercise.
- ✧ It is not necessary to do all variations consecutively on the same workshop day.



Cover the Space

Objectives: Warm-up, Cooperation

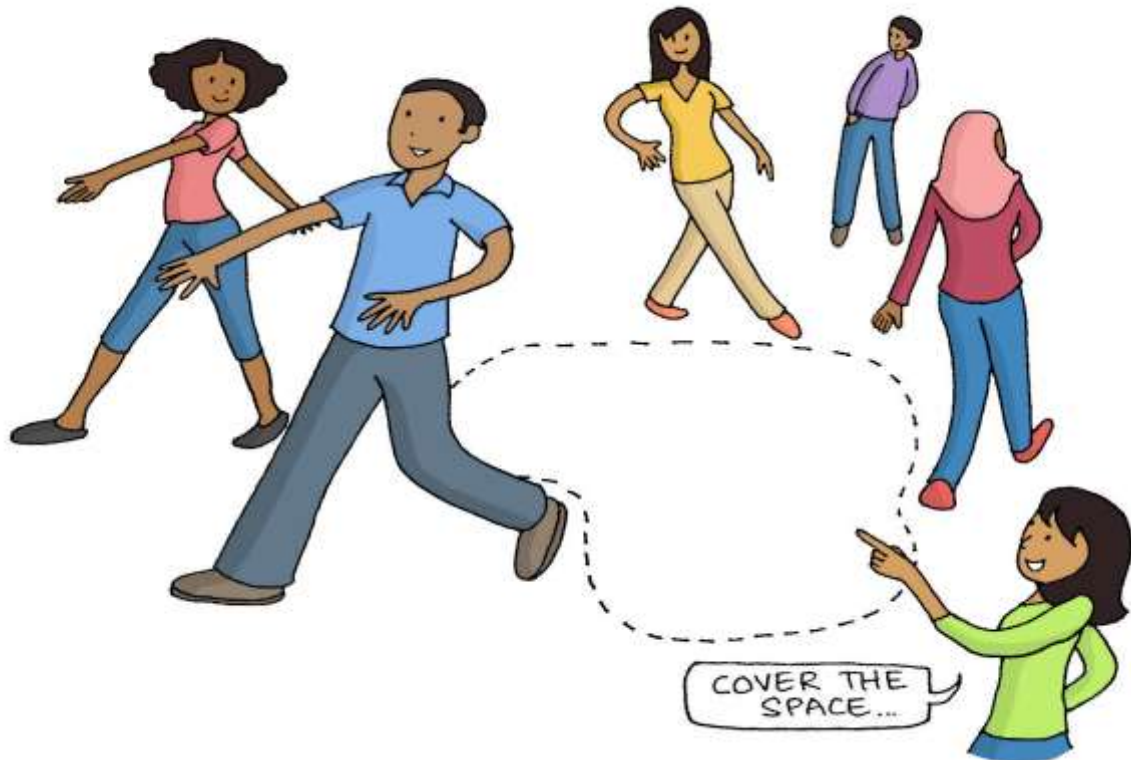
Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Joker asks the participants to walk around the workshop space, trying to make sure that all empty spaces in the room are constantly covered.
- ✧ From time to time the Joker claps and all participants freeze wherever they are and the Joker points out the empty spaces (if there are any).



Cross & Circle

Objectives: Demechanization, Warm-Up for Forum Theatre Audience

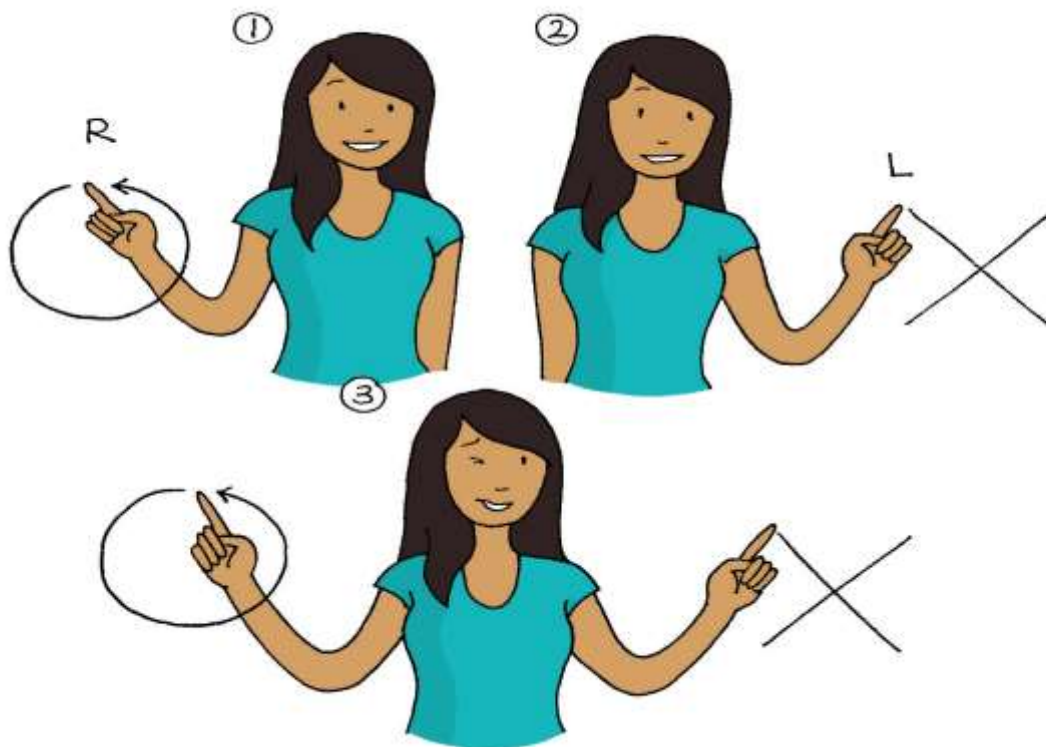
Number of People: 4+

Duration: 05 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The Joker asks the participants to make a circle with their right hand.
- ⤴ Next they should make a cross with their left hand.
- ⤴ Finally, they should do both at the same time.
- ⤴ This is a great warm-up for the audience before a Forum Theatre performance.



Enemy & Friend

Objectives: Warm-Up

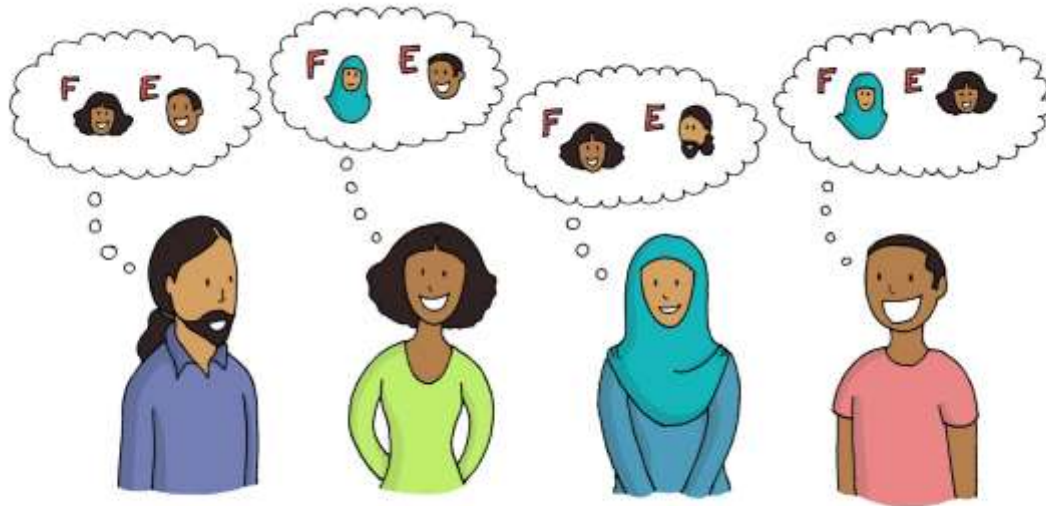
Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The participants start walking around the space without talking.
- ⤴ Then, the Joker asks each person to silently pick an individual in the room that s/he will consider his/her friend. They continue to move around while doing so.
- ⤴ Next, the participants are asked to silently pick an enemy.
- ⤴ Then the Joker tells the participants that the goal is to always keep their friend between themselves and their enemy. Because it is likely that everyone picks different friends and enemies, the usual result is that everyone frenetically runs around the space.



Fainting

Objectives: Group and Trust Building

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants walk around the workshop space. At any time during the exercise, one of the participants “faints”, i.e. s/he slowly falls backwards while producing a screaming sound to alert the other participants.
- ✧ The objective for the other participants is to quickly come over and catch the person before s/he hits the ground.



Heads Up, I do not want to see you

Objectives: Group Building

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 5-15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Joker asks the participants to stand in a circle and put their heads down.
- ✧ The game has two, back-to-back instructions: “Heads Up” & “Heads Down”.
- ✧ The game starts with the Joker saying “Heads Up”. “Heads Up” means all the participants simultaneously look up and gaze at a person in the circle.
- ✧ If four eyes meet, i.e. if two people look at each other at the same time, they both have to leave the game.
- ✧ The game continues with “Heads Down” (all the heads go down), then “Heads Up” (all heads go up; each participant looks at somebody else in the circle; if two gazes meet, the participants leave the game), “Heads Down”, “Heads Up”, etc. until only one or two participants, the winners, remain.
- ✧ The Joker can ask some of the eliminated participants to call out the instructions.

Maldivian Lap Dance (U'ngu)

Objectives: Demechanization, Internal Rhythm

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 10 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into pairs, facing each other, legs slightly bend.
- ✧ The Joker asks the pairs to establish a rhythm sequence, using the palms of their hands to simultaneously tap twice on their thighs.
- ✧ After a while, in the interval between the taps, the Joker invites the participants to start swinging their arms either to the right, left, up or down. In case, the participants happen to swing their arms in the same direction, e.g. both to the right, they now have to “high five” before resuming with the sequence tap-swing.

Me/Not Me

Objectives: Introduction

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 10-15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants stand in a circle.
- ✧ Round One: one by one, using only their hands/arms and facial expressions as well as saying their names, the participants will make two images, one representing something that they consider themselves to be (“Zafar”), and another image of something that they are definitely not (“Not Zafar”).
- ✧ Round Two: the participants repeat their own image sequence plus two sequences (including their names) from any of the other participants.

Name, Sound, Movement

Objectives: Warm-Up, Introduction

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The group stands in a circle.

- ✧ A volunteer takes a step forward, calls out his/her name and makes any kind of movement and sound.
- ✧ S/he then goes back into the circle and the rest of the group comes into the middle copying the name, sound and movement.
- ✧ The exercise can also be used at the end of a workshop day, finding different ways to say good-bye.



Ping

Objectives: Physical Warm-Up, Demechanization

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 30 min

Material: -

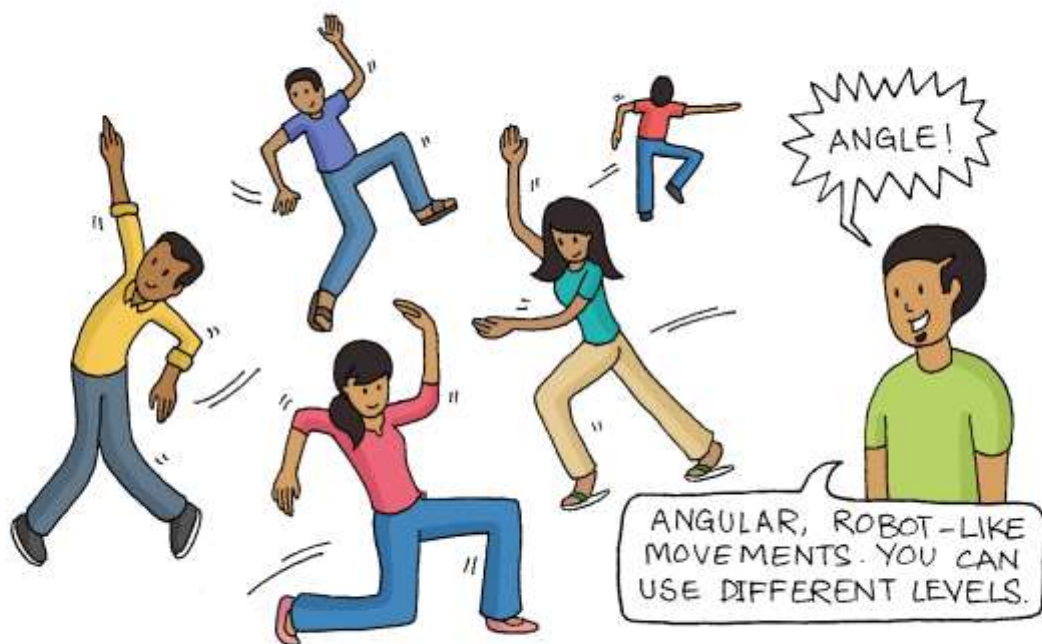
Process:

- ✧ The actors move around the workshop space and receive the following instructions from the Joker:

Walk (The actors walk through space)

Run (The actors run through space)

Jump (The actors jump and land at the same time)
 Silent Jump (The actors try to land silently at the same time)
 Walk Backward (The actors move through space walking backwards)
 Level (The actors freeze in different levels and then collapse on the floor)
 Spread (The actors run to the opposite side of the room and then spin around each other)
 Angle (The actors move around with angular movements, robot-like)
 Flow (The actors move around with round movements)
 Part of Body (The actors walk around leading with different parts of their bodies)
 Resistance (The actors move through space confronting different kinds of resistance: air, paper, stone)
 Freeze (The actors freeze and strike a pose)



Pulse Dance

Objectives: Physical warm-up, Demechanization

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 10 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The participants stand in a circle.
- ⤴ Next, the Joker asks everyone to find their pulse, listen to its rhythm and start

moving through space, eventually turning the rhythm into a 'pulse dance'.



Pushing against each other

Objectives: Demechanization, Preparing for Forum Theatre

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 10 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ This exercise is about using one's strength without trying to win.
- ⤴ Two partners face each other and place their hands on each others' shoulders.
- ⤴ They start pushing with all their strength. When one person feels that the partner is weaker, she eases off so as not to 'win'.

This exercise is very important because it symbolically shows what the actor's action should be during a Forum Theatre when responding to spect-actors interventions, pushing them to try harder but without totally defeating them.



Four Irish-Timorese-Maldivian Duels

Objectives: Demechanization, Team Building

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ This game consist of three different duels, each with groups of two facing each other, constantly attacking and defending at the same time.
- ⤴ Duel 1: Knee Tag. Two participants attempt to touch each others knees.
- ⤴ Duel 2: Foot Stomp. Two participants attempt to (gently) step onto each others feet.
- ⤴ Duel 3: Back Tag. Two participants attempt to touch each others backs.
- ⤴ Duel 4:
- ⤴ The first person to reach three points wins.



Tsunami

Objectives: Demechanization, Group Building

Number of People: 7+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Joker asks the participants to divide into groups of three, with two participants making a house by lifting their arms and joining their hands, making a roof. The third person stands inside the house.
- ✧ One person remains without a group. The Joker explains that s/he can choose one of three instructions: "House" (all the houses change partners), "Person" (all the people inside the houses change houses) or "Tsunami" (everyone changes).
- ✧ Depending on the instruction, the person without a group attempts to either make a house or become a person, leaving another person without a group, who will choose the next instruction.



Walk means Run

Objectives: Demechanization, Group Building

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 20 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants walk around the workshop space.
- ✧ One by one, the Joker introduces the following combinations: Walk/Run, Stand/Sit, Stop/Jump, Knee/Arms.
- ✧ After a while, the facilitator explains that from now on his/her instructions mean the opposite of what he/she says, e.g. Walk means Run, Stand means Sit, Stop means Jump, Knee means Arms etc.



Blind Games

Affective Hand

Objectives: Trust Building, Physical Sensitization

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The Joker asks the participants to walk through the workshop space with their eyes closed. Whenever they encounter somebody, they briefly shake hands and continue walking.
- ⤴ Next, at a signal from the Joker, the participants find a partner, thoroughly explore each others hands and then continue walking through the space with their eyes closed.
- ⤴ Finally, the Joker asks the participants to find their partners hands again.
- ⤴ The exercise can be done with other parts of the body, for example the face.
- ⤴ Alternatively, the exercise can start with a back-to-back dance and then move into

the blind part.



Blind Car

Objectives: Trust Building, Cooperation

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into pairs. One is going to be the car and the other the driver.
- ✧ The driver stands behind the car while the car closes his/her eyes.
- ✧ The driver has 5 options to drive the car:

Patting on the back of the head means go forward.
Patting on the left shoulder means turn left,
Patting on the right shoulder turn right,
Patting on the back means reverse and
No pats means stop.

- ⤴ This is a silent game. The participants change roles after a while.
- ⤴ Before discussing the exercise in the big group, each pair can be given a minute to discuss their experiences.
- ⤴ Variation: Blind Bus.
- ⤴ It works just like 'Blind Cars', but this time groups of four to five people make "busses", i.e. standing in line, one after another, with the driver at the back of the bus.
- ⤴ The driver is the only participant with open eyes. Everyone else is blind.
- ⤴ The signals are the same as in 'Blind Cars', i.e. the driver moves his/her bus by patting the person in front of him/her, who in turn pats the person in front of him/her, etc.
- ⤴ The Joker can ask the groups to change the driver after a while.



Blind Handshakes

Objectives: Trust Building, Cooperation

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ This is a silent game.

- ⤴ The participants divide into pairs.
- ⤴ They find an open space to stand in the room, shaking hands.
- ⤴ Next, they are asked to close their eyes and agree on a number of steps they will walk backwards.
- ⤴ When they feel ready, they start to walk backwards very slowly. Then, still with their eyes closed, they attempt to come back together and shake hands again.
- ⤴ The number of steps should be gradually increased: 3-5-7-10-15-20, as far back as possible.
- ⤴ Before discussing the exercise in the big group, each pair can be given a minute to discuss their experiences.



Blind-V

Objectives: Trust Building

Number of People: 7+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process

- ⤴ The participants stand in the shape of a “V” at one end of the room
- ⤴ One by one, a volunteer comes to the other end of the room and, with his/her eyes

closed, runs as fast as possible into the V.

- ✧ The people in the V have to serve as a buffer, making sure that the blind runner is safe.
- ✧ This is a silent exercise.

Find the spot blind

Objectives: Trust Building, Sensitization

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ Everyone finds a place in the room, standing on his/her own.
- ✧ Next, all participants point at a specific spot in the room.
- ✧ Then, with their eyes closed, the participants slowly walk to their spot. When they think that they have reached their destination, they may open their eyes to check.
- ✧ This is a silent game.

Pachamama (Forest of Sounds)

Objectives: Trust Building, Team Work, Listening Skills, Playback Theatre Practice

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 20 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ Pachamama means “Mother Earth” in the language of the Aymara and Quechua people of South America.
- ✧ The participants divide into pairs. The Joker explains that one is going to be the guide (eyes open) and the other will be blind (eyes closed).
- ✧ The pair decides on a sound together, something that can be done with the breath. The guide moves in the room and makes the sound. The blind partner moves towards the sound.
- ✧ The guide has two instructions: sound and no-sound. No-sound means stop.
- ✧ All pairs do this at the same time so the blind person really has to listen to the sound of his/her partner.
- ✧ For Playback Theatre: The actors choose different instruments and guide their partners through the space by making sounds with their instruments.
- ✧ Before discussing the exercise in the big group, each pair can be given a minute to discuss their experiences.



Trust Falls

Objectives: Trust Building

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into pairs. Person A stands with her back in front of B and closes his/her eyes.
- ✧ B stands in a way that s/he can receive weight.
- ✧ A, still with the eyes closed and with a straight back, lets herself fall into the arms of B.
- ✧ B can slowly increase the distance. After a while A and B change roles.
- ✧ This is a silent exercise.
- ✧ Before discussing the exercise in the big group, each pair can be given a minute to discuss their experiences.



Trust Walking

Objectives: Trust Building, Team Work, Feeling what we touch

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 20 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into pairs. Person A is the guide and leads B, with his/her eyes closed, around the room. Every once in a while, A makes B touch an object present in the room. B takes time to really feel the object.
- ✧ After a while, the partners swap roles.
- ✧ This is a silent exercise.
- ✧ Before discussing the exercise in the big group, each pair can be given a minute to discuss their experiences.



Personal Disclosure

3-Image Story

Objectives: Personal Disclosure, Playback Theatre Practice

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants work in pairs (A + B). 'A' tells the other a brief personal story. 'B' listens and then plays back the story in three sequential images (Beginning, Middle, End).
- ✧ 'A' and 'B' swap roles.



Aima, I love/I hate

Objectives: Introduction, Personal Disclosure, Image Theatre

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ Round One: The participants walk through the space and introduce themselves to each other by first saying the other persons name and then performing a brief sound and movement sequence of something they really love ("Aima, I love the mountains"). The other person copies the same sound and movement and then performs his/her own sequence ("Spoon, I love dancing").
- ✧ Round Two: The participants walk through the space and introduce themselves to each other by first saying the other persons name and then performing a brief sound and movement sequence of something they really hate ("Munaam, I hate violence"). The other person copies the same sound and movement and then performs his/her own sequence ("Shaz, I hate housework").
- ✧ After each round, in the big group, the participants perform some of the things they learned about the other participants.

I feel...

Objectives: Personal Disclosure, Playback Theatre Practice

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 10 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ This exercise has three stages.
- ⤴ Stage One: The participants stand in a circle. One by one, the participants come into the middle and share a feeling they have experienced in recent times ('I feel happy', 'I feel sad'). Next, the rest of the group plays back the feeling using facial expressions only.
- ⤴ Stage two: One by one, the participants come into the middle and share some of the feelings they have had in recent times ('I feel worried', 'I feel relieved'). Next, the rest of the group plays back the feeling making only sounds that symbolize the emotion.
- ⤴ Stage Three: One by one, the participants come into the middle and share some of the feelings they have had in recent times ('I feel angry', 'I feel disappointed'). Next, the rest of the group plays back the feeling using the entire body, sounds and words.



I have got something to tell you

Objectives: Communicating a difficult personal moment without words

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 20-30 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The participants divide into pairs.
- ⤴ The Joker asks all participants to close their eyes and think of an unresolved conflict from their lives that involved another person. They should briefly revisit the conflict and remember the basic data: "What happened? How did you feel? Why did you not manage to resolve the conflict?" After a while, the Joker asks the participants to open their eyes.
- ⤴ The pairs decide who will be A and who will be B. They stand facing each other.
- ⤴ The joker will now guide the pairs through several stages, in which A will treat B as if s/he was the person A had the conflict with, telling B without words, how A feels about him/her. B just receives, i.e. should not react to the telling.
- ⤴ Stage 1: A must use only the eyes to tell B how s/he feels about the incident.
- ⤴ Stage 2: A can use the eyes and the rest of his/her face.
- ⤴ Stage 3: Eyes/Face/Upper Body plus Arms
- ⤴ Stage 4: The whole body
- ⤴ Stage 5: The whole body plus sounds (not words)
- ⤴ A and B change roles, with the joker once again guiding the pairs through the five stages.
- ⤴ A and B discuss the exercise, with B telling A what emotions they perceived. A should not be obliged to reveal the conflict but may do so if /she feels like it.



Pain Circle

Objectives: Physical warm-up, Personal Disclosure, Intro to Playback Theatre

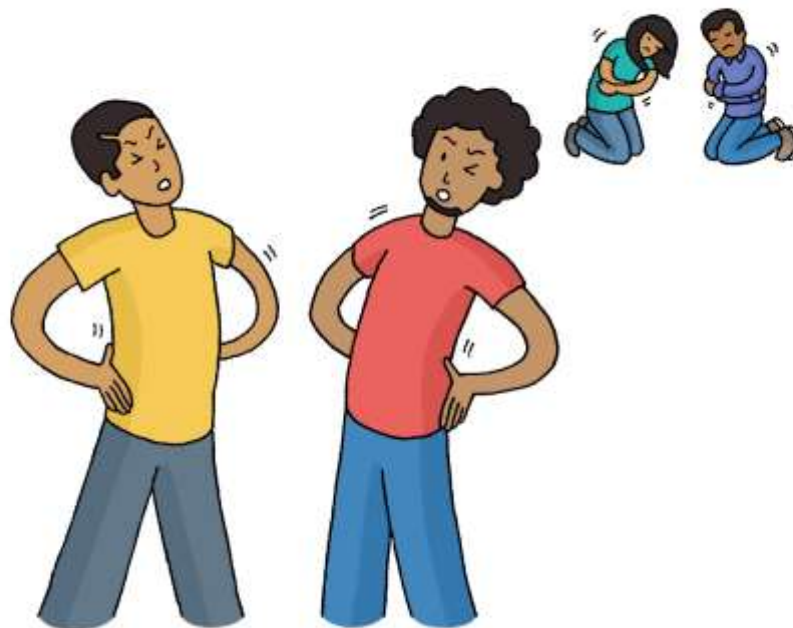
Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ This exercise has three stages and is useful to introduce the basic logic of Playback Theatre in a symbolic manner.
- ✧ Stage One: Standing in a circle, the participants identify a pain in their body and slowly start acting it out.
- ✧ Stage Two: Working in pairs, the partners perform their pains to one another. Next, each partner plays back the other persons pain.
- ✧ Stage Three: Still in pairs, the partners invent a new pain and act it out together.



Sociometry

Objectives: Personal Disclosure, Team and Trust Building

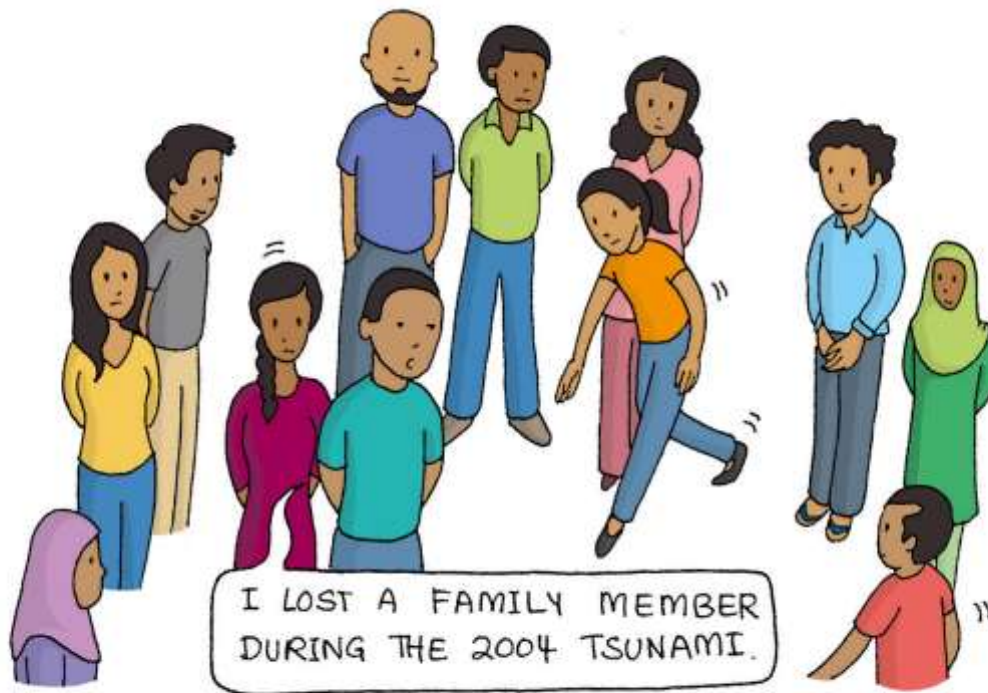
Number of People: 4+

Duration: 20 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The group stands in a circle.
- ⤴ The Joker asks different people to voluntarily come into the middle and share a piece of personal information ("I have three brothers"/"I have lost a family member during the Tsunami"). If somebody else in the circle has had the same experience, s/he silently joins the person in the middle.

**Story of my Name**

Objectives: Personal Disclosure

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 10 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The participants work in pairs.
- ⤴ Each partner has three minutes to tell the other the story of his/her name (why did his/her parents choose the name, what does the name mean, does the teller like the name, etc.).



The wave comes and takes

Objectives: Personal Disclosure, Team Building

Number of People: 5+

Duration: 15 min

Material: Chairs

Process:

- ✧ The group sits in a circle with a volunteer standing in the middle. The volunteer says “The wave comes and takes everyone” and adds a piece of personal information that the other participants might have in common (“everyone born in Laamu”).
- ✧ Those who share the statement have to get up and find a different chair, with the volunteer trying to get onto one of the free chairs.
- ✧ Suggested themes for the participants are objective truths (clothing, jewelry, etc.), things you like/do not like, family/community, fears, dreams, etc.



Three Things in Common

Objectives: Group Building, Improvisational Skills

Number of People: 3+

Duration: 20 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into small groups and are asked to find out three things that they all share (All born in Male/All like Tuna Fried Rice).
- ✧ Then, they will perform these three things to the other groups who have to guess what it is they share.



Tour of my favorite Place

Objectives: Personal Disclosure, Team and Trust Building, Storytelling, Playback Practice

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 20 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into pairs. The Joker asks each participant to briefly close his/her eyes and think of a really existing place that is very special to him/her. S/he is asked to imagine the place in detail, remembering the colors, smells, shapes, etc.
- ✧ Afterwards, with their eyes open, the participants take their partners on a tour of their favorite place by leading him/her through the workshop space and describing the place in great detail.
- ✧ For Playback Theatre: The listener plays back the emotional content of the space as well as how the teller described the space.



Two truths, One lie

Objectives: Personal Disclosure

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The participants work in pairs, A & B. A tells B three things about herself. Two things must be true, the other a lie. B has to guess which information was false.
- ⤴ Next, A & B swap roles.



Values Clarification

Objectives: Personal Disclosure, Listening Skills

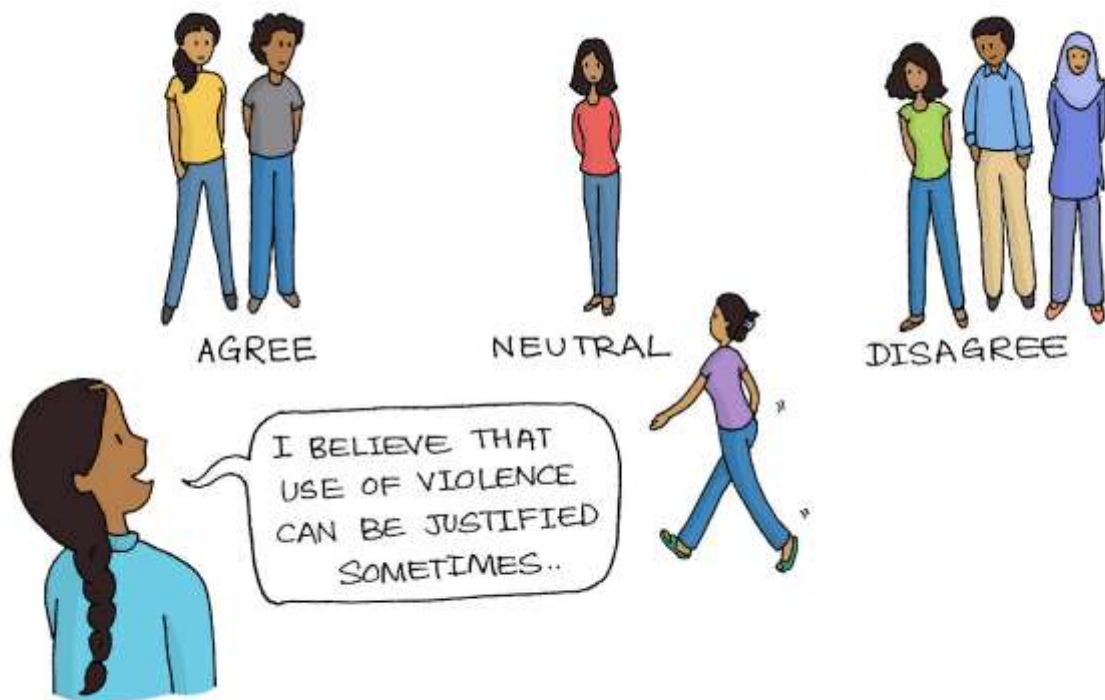
Number of People: 4+

Duration: 30 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ Before the start of the exercise, the Joker prepares a number of statements about the workshop theme, for instance "I believe that the use of violence can be justified sometimes" or "Victims of violence have only themselves to blame".
- ✧ The participants gather on one side of the workshop space.
- ✧ The Joker explains that the working space will be horizontally divided into three separate zones: "I agree", "Not sure" and "I disagree".
- ✧ One by one, the Joker reads out the statements and the participants are asked to decide to walk to the zone that corresponds to their perspective about the statement.
- ✧ Once everyone has chosen a zone, the Joker can ask different participants to volunteer their views.



Where are you from?

Objectives: Personal Disclosure, Acting Skills

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ Working alone or in pairs, the Joker asks the participants to perform some of the aspects that are special about their hometown or home country.



Acting and Improvisation Skills

1, 2, 3 Bradford

Objectives: Acting Skills, Demechanization

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 20 min

Material: -

Process:

- The participants get into pairs and face their partner.
- This exercise has four stages:
- Stage One: Participants simply count from one to three. A says 'One', B says 'Two', A says 'Three', B says 'One', and so on. As fast as possible. The Joker should invite the participants to take risks and make mistakes, celebrating every mistake and then continue the game.
- Stage Two: Instead of saying 'One', A makes a sound and a movement. Now we have the following sequence: A makes a sound and movement, B says 'Two', A says 'Three', B makes the sound and movement invented by A, A says 'Two', and so on.
- Stage Three: 'Two' is replaced by a second, different sound and movement. The pairs should try to get as fluent as possible, celebrating their mistakes.

- Finally, “three” is replaced by a third sound and movement. There are no more numbers. Only three different sounds and movements.
- The game works best if the three sounds and movements are very different from one another.
- The counting part of the exercise is sometimes used as a warm-up for a Forum Theatre event.



Association Jump

Objectives: Acting Skills, Improvisation Skills

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Joker gives each participant a number starting from 1 and asks the participants to walk around the workshop room.
- ✧ At regular intervals, the Joker yells out one of the numbers. The participant with that number 'jumps' into a frozen position/image. Then, the other players quickly add

complementary images around that player. The end result is a still scene.

- ⤴ Next, at a signal from the Joker, the participants, using words and movement, start a brief improvisation.

Boxing

Objectives: Acting Skills, Using violence in Forum Theatre, Demechanization

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -



Process:

- ⤴ The participants work in pairs standing several meters apart.
- ⤴ The Joker asks the participants to get into a physical fight. Everything is allowed: punching, kicking, biting, pulling hair, etc.
- ⤴ There are only two rules: 1. the participants must move in slow motion and, 2. they cannot actually touch their partner.
- ⤴ After a few minutes, on a signal from the Joker, the fight turns into an all-out brawl with everyone fighting against everyone.

End Of The Day Performance

Objectives: Acting and Improvisational Skills

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15-30 min

Material: Any objects available in the workshop environment

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into groups of 2-6 people.
- ✧ The Joker gives each group 5-10 minutes to make a short play about an actually existing community conflict.
- ✧ The groups perform their plays and the Joker leads a discussion about the issues depicted.

Environment

Objectives: Acting and Improvisational Skills

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into groups of 4-6 people.
- ✧ In each group, a volunteer starts doing an activity (e.g. washing his/her face). As soon as another participant knows where the activity takes place, s/he begins a complementary activity that could also take place in the same location (e.g. putting on make-up).
- ✧ The rest of the participants keep adding additional activities, until everyone is in the space.
- ✧ Then, they start a new environment, and another, and another, etc.
- ✧ Generally, this is a silent exercise but the Joker may ask the participants to add sounds or even words to their characters.



Exit-Entrance (Burning House)

Objectives: Improvisational and acting skills

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✦ The Joker asks the participants to divide into pairs and decide who is A & B.
- ✦ Round One: A decides on a specific space (e.g. at home, in the office, on a plane) s/he is in. A urgently needs to leave that space. B, using words and actions, makes sure that A does not leave.
- ✦ Round Two: B is outside a specific space (e.g. a hospital, a governmental building, a public restroom) and urgently wants to get inside. A, using words and actions, makes sure that B does not get in.
- ✦ Both sides have to engage in an improvised dialogue, using arguments for and against getting in and out of their respective spaces.

Flying Mask

Objectives: Acting Skills

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 10 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The group stands in a circle. One person volunteers to make a mask (i.e. any facial expression), briefly covering her face with both hands and then revealing the mask to everyone in the group.
- ✧ Then, s/he throws the mask to any other person in the circle, who catches it, copies the mask, covers his/her face and comes up with a new mask, which is then thrown to another person, etc.



Freeze Tag

Objectives: Improvisational and acting skills

Number of People: 3+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into groups of three.
- ✧ Two people start an improvisation using words and gestures.

- ✧ At any time, the third person can yell “Freeze”, replace one of the actors in the exact same position s/he is in and then start a totally new improvisation from within that particular position.

Machine

Objectives: Acting Skills, Image Theatre

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Joker asks a volunteer to start doing a repetitive sound and movement, imagining that s/he is a part in a complex machine.
- ✧ Next, another person adds a different, complementary sound and movement to the machine.
- ✧ Eventually all participants should be integrated into the machine. The Joker can ask the participants to vary the speed and volume of the machine. Faster. Slower. Louder. Silent.
- ✧ The machine can be given different themes (Love, Male, Maldives).
- ✧ This exercise works well with some of the participants being the audience, interpreting the different machines.



Magritte

Objectives: Acting and Improvisational Skills, Playback Theatre Practice

Number of People: 3+

Duration: 15 min

Material: Any kind of object people can hold, Playback Theatre Cloth

Process:

- ✧ The group stands in a circle.
- ✧ The Joker places an object into the middle of the circle, e.g. a bottle or a shoe and says "This is not a bottle".
- ✧ Then, the Joker invites the participants to find different uses for the object, e.g. the bottle becomes a telephone, a rocket, a toothbrush, etc.
- ✧ For Playback Theatre: Instead of an object, the actors can use Playback cloth to symbolize different emotions and scenarios.
- ✧ For large groups, it can be useful to first divide into small groups and later do the exercise in the big group.



The Haka

Objectives: Acting Skills

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 10 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Haka is the national dance of the indigenous Maori people of New Zealand.
- ✧ The exercise has three different variations.
- ✧ Variation One: One actor comes in front of the group and makes a series of movements and sounds which the other participants have to copy.
- ✧ Variation Two: One actor comes in front of the group and makes a series of movements which the other participants accompany with different sounds.
- ✧ Variation Three: One actor comes in front of the group and makes a variety of sounds which the other participants accompany with different movements.

Soundscapes

Objectives: Acting Skills

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process

- ✧ The Joker asks a volunteer to leave the room. The rest of the group decides on a natural environment (the streets of Male, an uninhabited islands, office environment) they can represent by making different sounds.
- ✧ After a while, the volunteer comes back in, closes his/her eyes and listens to the sounds of the environment, which s/he then has to guess.

That's a lie

Objectives: Listening skills, Verbal improvisational skills

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into pairs, A and B.
- ✧ A tells a story, fictional or real. B can interrupt A on various occasions by saying "That's a lie", at which point A has to backtrack and quickly invent a new part for the story.
- ✧ After a while, the Joker asks A and B to change roles.



The sad story of Zuhra, Tahrir and Palang

Objectives: Physical warm-up, Group Building, Acting and Improvisational Skills

Number of People: 8+

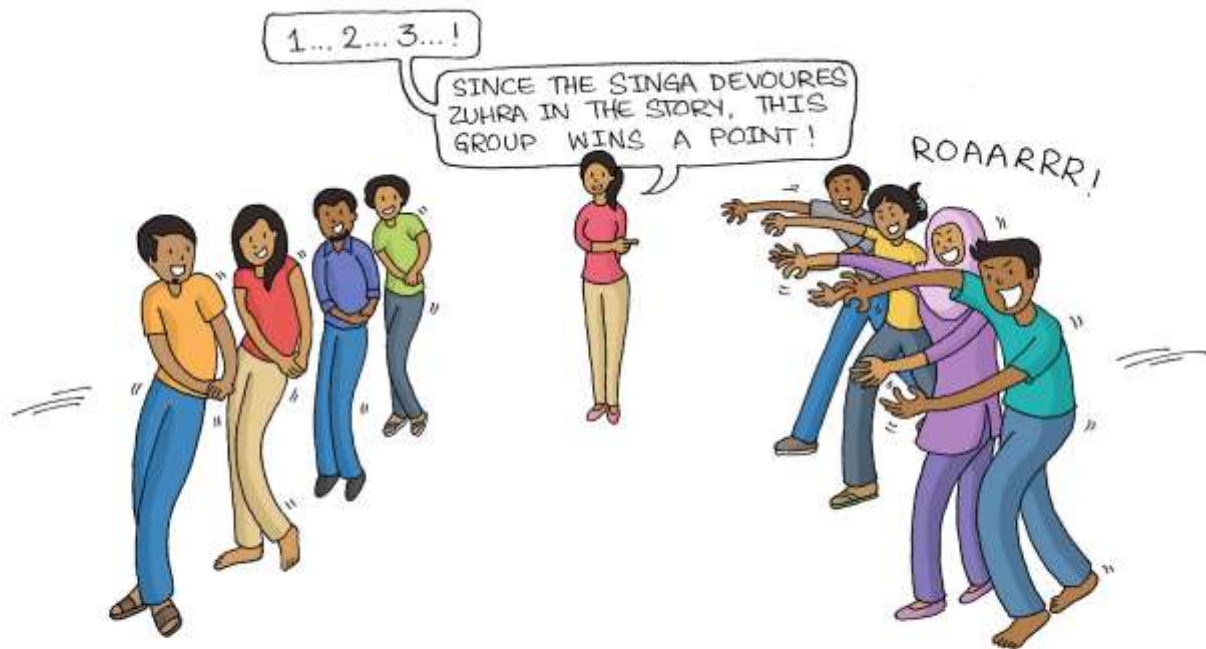
Duration: Part One: 15 min, Part Two: 30 min

Material: Props for Part Two

Process:

- ✧ The Joker tells the tragic Persian story of Zuhra, Tahrir and Palang ("Lion" in Persian).
- ✧ Tahrir, a proud and charming prince falls high over heels in love with beautiful and enticing Zuhra (Scene 1), who one sad day falls prey to a ferocious lion (Scene 2). In his unbearable despair, Tahrir kills the lion with a sword (Scene 3).
- ✧ The exercise has two stages.
- ✧ Stage One: The participants divide into two groups and face each other. Next (similar to rock, paper, scissors), they choose one of three characters Zuhra, Tahrir, or Palang. Then, at a signal from the Joker they present their images. Zuhra entices Prince Tahrir (Zuhra wins), Palang devours Zuhra (Palang wins) and Tahrir stabs Palang (Tahrir wins).
- ✧ The first group to get 3 points, wins.
- ✧ Stage Two: In groups of at least four, the actors perform the story, inventing one or

more new characters (for example, the mother-in law, the king, a witch, etc.) and one additional scene.



Two Lines

Objectives: Acting Skills

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 10 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The Joker asks the participants to make two lines.
- ⤴ The first person in each line is asked to come up to each member of the line, making different sounds and movements, with the people in the line copying him/her as exactly as possible.
- ⤴ As soon as the first person has moved on, the next person in the line initiates his/her "journey".



Two Secrets

Objectives: Acting and Improvisational Skills

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into pairs, standing or sitting in two lines facing each other at a few meters distance.
- ✧ The Joker gives the pairs an interpersonal relationship they will have to improvise. Only close relationships should be selected (husband and wife, father and son, boss and worker, etc.).
- ✧ Next, the Joker asks the participants to invent an extremely important and realistic secret their character might have.
- ✧ Then, the improvisation begins. First, the pairs meet. They say hello and start talking about the things they would usually talk about.
- ✧ On a signal from the Joker, one of the partners reveals his/her secret, and the other reacts to it from the perspective of his/her character. After a few minutes, the Joker tells the second partner to make his or her revelation, and the first partner reacts accordingly.

- ✧ On a final signal from the Joker, the partners say good-bye and the improvisation comes to an end.



West Side Story

Objectives: Acting Skills, Team Building

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Joker asks the group to form two teams.
- ✧ The two teams should stand in two horizontal lines facing each other, with a leader (1 & 2) a few paces in front of each team.
- ✧ 'Leader 1' does an "aggressive" rhythmic sound and gesture (no language). His/her group, once it has grasped the sound and movement, joins in, moving forward in line behind him/her.
- ✧ As team 1 advances, team 2 retreats, making defensive movements and sounds.
- ✧ After pushing the other team to the end of the workshop space, 'Leader 2' responds with a challenge that forces group 1 to retreat.
- ✧ Then, the leaders join their respective line and two new leaders come to the centre.

What are you doing?

Objectives: Acting & Improvisational Skills

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The group stands in a half circle.
- ✧ A volunteer comes in front of the group and starts an activity, e.g. brushing his/her teeth, planting a flower, etc.
- ✧ After 5-10 seconds, another participant comes up to the actor and asks: "*What are you doing?*" The person answers with a different activity than the one s/he is doing ("I am dancing" instead of "I am brushing my teeth"). The person who came in and asked the question will now have to perform this new activity.
- ✧ After a while the next person comes in and asks: "*What are you doing?*", etc.



Yes, let's

Objectives: Acting Skills

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The group stands in a circle. A volunteer steps out of the circle and begins by saying "Let's go (e.g. swimming, eating, sleeping, etc.)" and initiates a movement and sound that goes with the sentence. Afterwards, the whole group replies "Yes, let's" and copies the sound and movement.
- ⤴ After a few seconds, another participant offers a new activity. "Yes, let's".



Image Theatre/Play Development Exercises

1:1 Oppression

Objectives: Image Theatre

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 30-60 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ Working in pairs, one person is F (the artist), the other person G (the clay).
- ⤴ F silently sculpts G into an image of oppression.
- ⤴ All artists come to one side of the room, look at the different images of oppression and then join an image other than their own, taking on the role of the oppressor

character.

- ✧ Next, the Joker can activate these images using movement, sound, words and dialogue in order to explore the different scenes of oppression.
- ✧ Time permitting, F and G should change roles.

Complete the Image

Objectives: Image Theatre

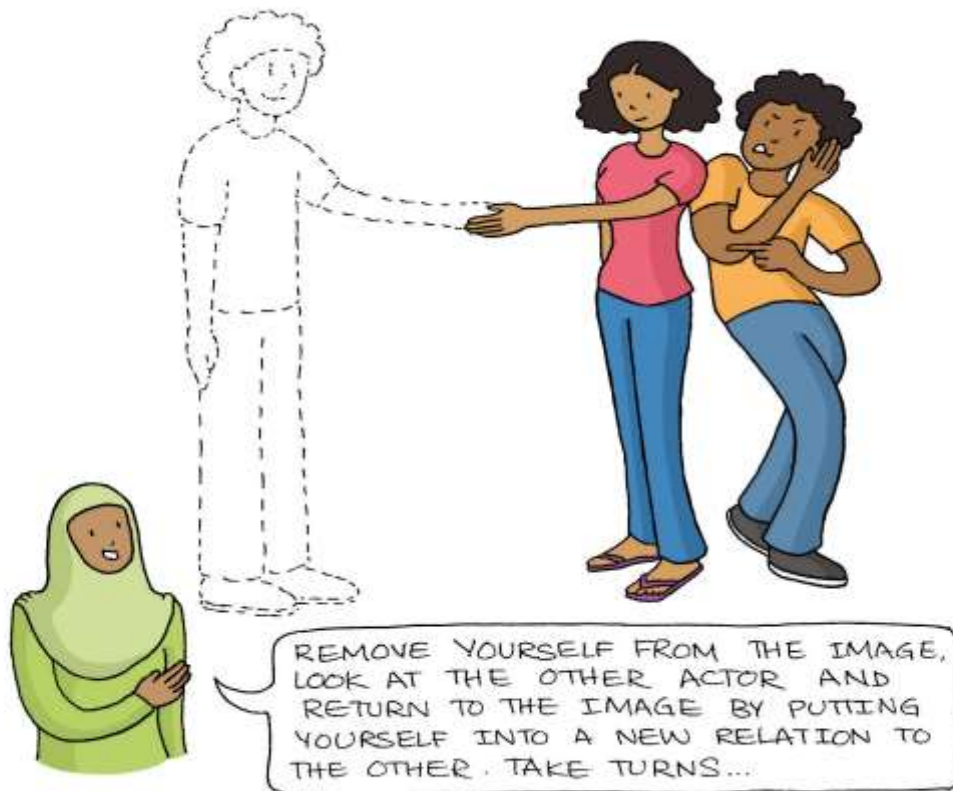
Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Joker asks a pair of actors to shake hands and freeze.
- ✧ Then, the Joker asks the group what possible meanings the image might carry.
- ✧ Next, one of the two actors removes himself from the image, looks at the other actor and returns into the image by putting himself into a new relation to his/her partner. Again, the Joker invites different readings of the image.
- ✧ Next, the Joker invites the participants to divide into pairs and do the exercise, taking turns, removing and returning to the image, thereby creating a dialogue of images.
- ✧ After a few minutes, the Joker can bring together groups of 4.



Group Sculpting (Image of Four)

Objectives: Image Theatre, Play Development

Number of People: 8+

Duration: 40-60 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Joker asks the participants to divide into groups of four or five.
- ✧ Then, the Joker explains that each person should make an image, using himself/herself and other people in the group.
- ✧ The image created should depict a moment in the sculptor's life, when s/he is struggling with a certain problem or oppression. It should really be his/her own moment, not the moment of someone s/he knows.
- ✧ Each image must contain at least two characters, the sculptor and the person with whom s/he is struggling. Images can have more characters but not more than the number of people that are in the group. The sculptor is himself/herself in the image and should sculpt the other characters with as much detail as possible.
- ✧ The images are presented to the rest of the group.
- ✧ The Joker proceeds to dynamize the images, asking the participants to make

movements, sounds and/or words their characters may say.

Image of the Hour

Objectives: Image Theatre, Forum Theatre Character Development

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 20 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Joker asks the participants to walk around the workshop space.
- ✧ While the actors move around the space, the Joker calls out a time of the day, an occasion or a significant date (Friday 7am, Wedding Day, Eid).
- ✧ When the Joker says "Image", the actors must get into a frozen image of what they usually do at the time indicated. When saying "Action", the actors bring their images to life.
- ✧ Variation 2: Alternatively, this exercise can be used to deepen the actors' understanding of the character they are playing in the Forum Theatre play. In this case, the exercise will be carried out in the same way, but this time with the participants focusing on what their characters do at the time and day given by the joker.



Image of the Word

Objectives: Image Theatre

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 30-60 min

Material: -

Process:

- The group stands in a circle, facing outwards, their eyes closed.
- The Joker names a topic (Maldives/Democracy/Youth), for which the participants should think of an image they can make using their own bodies.
- At a signal from the Joker, all actors simultaneously turn around and show their images to the rest of the group.
- Next, the Joker asks the participants to make families of images, joining those images that are similar to their own.
- Then, the Joker proceeds to dynamize the images, family by family.
- First, the Joker asks the other participants to read the images.
- Then, at a signal from the Joker, the families make sounds and movements contained in the image. Again, the Jokers for comments by the other participants.



Sculpting

Objectives: Image Theatre

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 30 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Joker asks the participants to divide into pairs.
- ✧ Next, each pair decides who is going to be the sculptor and who is going to be the clay. Then, the Joker gives the group a topic (Maldives, Human Rights, GBV, Poverty, etc.) and the sculptors can sculpt by touching the clay and moving him/her into space or by mirroring and showing him/her the position s/he should take.
- ✧ Sculptors should be as detailed as possible and are responsible for all limbs and facial expressions. When touching, the sculptor should be very respectful.
- ✧ The image can be realistic, abstract, concrete or symbolic.
- ✧ The Joker can bring together the images in a "Museum", asking the participants to interpret the images.
- ✧ The Joker may also dynamize the images, asking the participants to make movements, sounds and/or words their characters may say.
- ✧ During the making of the images, the Joker should ask for absolute silence.



Sculpt the Face You Love

Objectives: Image Theatre

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 5-10 min

Material: -

Process:

- ⤴ The Joker asks the participants to think of a person they love.
- ⤴ With their eyes closed, the participants are invited to use their hands to sculpt the face of the person they love.
- ⤴ After a few minutes, the Joker prompts the participants to come up with one sentence they would like to say to that person. Next, at a signal from the Joker, the participants all say their sentences at the same time.

Sheep

Objectives: Group Building, Image Theatre

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The Joker asks the participants to make a circle, with one volunteer in the middle.
- ✧ The Joker explains that s/he should point at someone and call out one of the following figures:

Figure	Middle Person	Side People
✧ Elephant	✧ Arms in front, one hand touching the nose, the other making a trunk	✧ Arm in a big "C" position to form ears on either side
✧ Rabbit	✧ Sitting down, hands in front, teeth out	✧ Arm straight up to form an ear
✧ Helicopter	✧ Rotating with the arms stretched out	✧ Ducking
✧ Pirate	✧ Looking through a telescope	✧ Left side: Parrot on Pirate's shoulder ✧ Right Side: Pulling down the sail
✧ Playboy	✧ Posing like a true star	✧ Admiring
✧ Maldives	✧ ? (to be invented together with group)	✧ Left Side: ? ✧ Right Side: ?
✧ Sheep	✧ No movement	✧ No movement

- ✧ The person pointed at and the people on either side quickly make the image of the figure.
- ✧ If any of the three people involved makes a mistake, s/he comes into the middle.



Song of the Mermaid

Objectives: Forum Theatre Play Development, Image Theatre

Number of People: 4+

Duration: 30-60 min

Material: -

Process:

- This exercise is used to start developing the Forum Theatre plays.
- The Joker asks the participants to lie down with their eyes closed. Then, the Joker asks them to think of a moment in their lives in which they were struggling with something/someone. S/he asks them to picture (relive) the moment in detail, remembering the people, the place, the colors, smells, sounds, eventually trying to identify the strongest emotion felt in this moment.
- The Joker then proceeds to ask each actor to find a sound that best symbolizes their strongest emotions. Depending on the size of the group, the Joker asks 3-5 actors to share their sounds and invites the rest of the group to join the person whose sounds most resembled their own sound and/or emotion that informed the sound. The actors then divide into groups according to their sounds.
- The person who made the sound has no special responsibility in the group. However, s/he should speak first about the feelings that went into his/her sound. S/he may also tell the story behind the sound but what is most important is to talk

about the feelings. Afterwards, the other members of the group also speak about the feelings that informed their sounds.

- ✧ As they talk, the participants will realize that there is a reason why they are together in the same group. Once they have identified what it is that links them (Anger, Sadness, Frustration), they should decide on a topic they would like to work with.
- ✧ Next, the Joker asks them to make an image of the strongest, **final** moment of the theme the group has decided on.
- ✧ The Joker then proceeds to dynamize the image. Afterwards, s/he asks the group to make an image of what happened before the final moment, dynamizes the image and then asks for another image of what happened before that moment, etc.
- ✧ After the basic skeleton of the Forum Theatre play has been developed, the Joker may use different rehearsal techniques to strengthen both content and form of the play.



Spontaneous Image

Objectives: Image Theatre

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The participants divide into groups of 4-6 people. Each group decides on 3

problematic themes (for example Global Warming/Domestic Violence/Corruption) they will give the other groups to perform.

- ✧ Next, one group gives the themes, the other group quickly creates images of the themes.



The Journey from here to there

Objectives: Image Theatre, Creating a path from the problem to the solution

Number of People: 8+

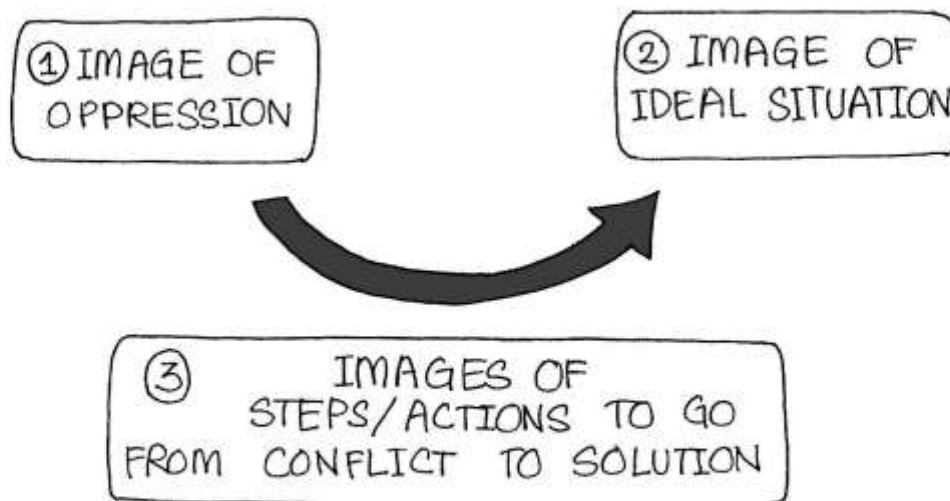
Duration: 60-120 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ This exercise is based on the famous saying by Paulo Freire: You cannot get there (to our ideal world) by starting from there, you can only get there by starting from here (today's situation).
- ✧ Before the beginning of the exercise the workshop group decides on a specific topic they would like to explore, for example "Problems of Youth in Maldives".
- ✧ The exercise has three stages.
- ✧ In the first stage, the aim is to analyze and define the problem by making an image of problems of youth in Maldives. One by one, the Joker asks the participants to come on stage and make individual images of concrete problems of young people in Maldives (e.g. unemployment, alcohol abuse, early pregnancy, etc.). Then, the Joker leads a discussion of the images with the audience. After the initial discussion, the Joker proceeds to dynamize the images, asking them to make movements, sounds and words or sentences contained in the character.

- ✧ In the second stage, the participants are asked to create a group image of their dream situation, i.e. they are asked to define how a better Maldives for young people should actually look like. One by one, the Joker asks the participants to come on stage and make individual images of their dream situation. Then, the Joker leads a discussion of the images with those participants that are not in the image. After the initial discussion, the Joker proceeds to dynamize the images, asking them to make movements, sounds and words or sentences contained in the character.
- ✧ Stage 3: Having defined both the problem and the solution, the group now needs to decide how to get from the problem to the solution. What kind of actions are necessary? We do not reach our dreams by some act of magic, there need to be concrete actions. Next, the Joker asks the participants to make individual images of these concrete actions (Images of Transition). The Joker then discusses the meaning of these images with the rest of the group. The Joker may also dynamize the images.
- ✧ The exercise finishes with a general discussion about the exercise.



Two chairs, Three actions, One Play

Objectives: Collective Play Development

Number of People: 6+

Duration: 60-120 min

Material: One chair per participant

Process:

- ✧ This exercise has six stages.
- ✧ *Stage 1:* The Joker asks the participants to walk around the workshop space.

- ⤴ One by one, the Joker introduces three different instructions: 'Stop', 'Sit' and 'Drop'.
- ⤴ 'Stop' means that at any time a participant can stop walking. When that person stops, everyone else has to stop, too.
- ⤴ 'Sit' means that at any time a participant can sit down. When that person sits down, everyone else has to sit, too.
- ⤴ 'Drop' means that at any time a participant can 'drop', i.e. lie down on the ground. When that person 'drops', everyone else has to drop as well.
- ⤴ Once the three instructions have been introduced, the participants will stop, sit and drop without the Joker repeating the instructions.
- ⤴ After a few minutes, the participants divide into pairs and continue with the same three instructions. If one partner stops, the other partner stops. If one partner lies down, the other partner lies down, etc.
- ⤴ *Stage 2:* Working with the same partner, the Joker asks the pairs to create a one minute scene/sequence about a power relationship between two people using only two chairs and the same three instructions.
- ⤴ *Stage 3:* Using the same scene/sequence of movements, the participants should now add one single word for each of their two characters (for example: 'Relax/Behave', 'Domination/No'), thereby giving the hitherto symbolic scenario a more concrete theme.
- ⤴ *Stage 4:* Using the same scene/sequence, the Joker asks the participants to introduce six sentences (eliminating the six words).
- ⤴ *Stage 5:* The group chooses the scene/sequence (i.e. the theme) that most resonated with them and now proceed to make a brief (1-3 min.) scene that shows the chosen theme in more detail. The improvisation does no longer have to include the same three instructions/movements (stop, sit, drop).
- ⤴ *Stage 6:* The group, aided by the Joker, can now build on this first improvisation and begin to create a more complex, longer play around the issue at stake.
- ⤴ *Joker's Note:* In bigger groups (10-30 people), it may be useful to divide the participants into two or even groups, then invite them to divide into pairs and finally end up with 2 or 3 improvisations.

PLAYBACK THEATRE FORMS AND EXERCISES

Fluid Sculptures

Objectives: Playing back people's emotions (Playback Theatre Short Form)

Number of People: 3-4 actors plus musician(s)

Duration: 1-2 min for each Fluid Sculpture including the conductor's questions

Material: Colored fabric, musical instruments

Process:

- ⤴ In Playback Theatre, the Joker is called Conductor.
- ⤴ The conductor asks the audience a question about the here and now, for example "How are you today? How did you wake up this morning?"
- ⤴ A member from the audience shares his/her personal feeling in response to the conductor's question. At times, the conductor may ask a series of follow-up questions in order to clarify the teller's feelings. The actors and musician listen

carefully.

- ✧ Next, the conductor hands over to the performers by saying “Let's watch!”
- ✧ Now, the performers start the enactment. One at a time, they step forward and make a repetitive sound and movement (and on some occasions a word or sentence) that express the different aspects of the teller's feeling(s). During the enactment, the musician accompanies the action by producing sounds or melodies that also express the tellers feeling(s).
- ✧ When all four actors are on the stage, they gradually come to a freeze and finish the enactment by briefly looking at the teller (This moment is called the acknowledgement). Next, the conductor asks for another audience member to share his/her feelings, and a new enactment begins.
- ✧ In Fluid Sculptures, all actors play only the teller, not any other characters that may have been part of the teller's response.



Pairs

Objectives: Playing back people's conflicting emotions (Playback Theatre Short Form)

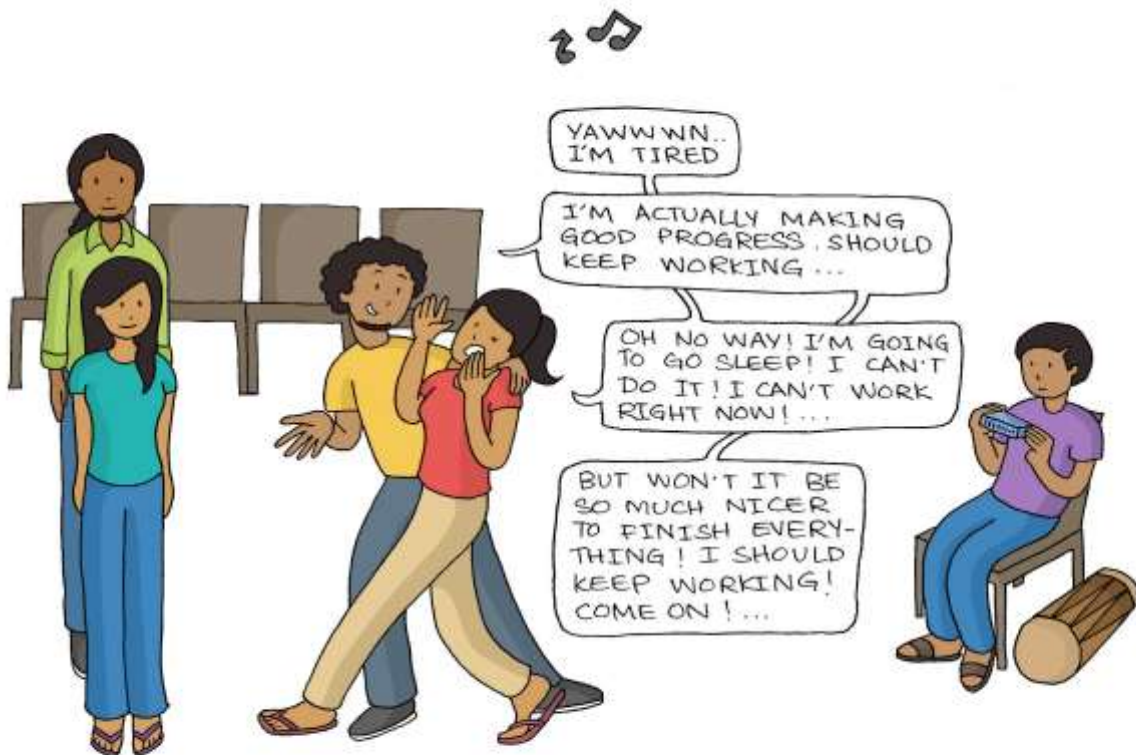
Number of People: 3-4 actors plus musician(s)

Duration: 3 min per pair including the conductor's questions

Material: Colored fabric, musical instruments

Process:

- ✧ The conductor asks the audience for a moment from their lives, when they felt conflicting emotions at the same time. For instance, a moment in which they simultaneously felt happy and concerned.
- ✧ A member from the audience shares his/her conflicting feelings in response to the conductor's question. At times, the conductor may ask a series of follow-up questions in order to clarify the teller's feelings. The actors and musician(s) listen carefully.
- ✧ Next, the conductor hands over to the performers by saying "Let's watch!"
- ✧ The pair close to the musician begins.
- ✧ During the enactment, the actors face the audience in two's, one behind the other, with one actor playing one emotion and the other actor playing the conflicting emotion. After a while, the actors gradually come to a freeze, the musician starts a brief musical transition, which is followed by the enactment of the second pair. At the end of the second enactment, the actors briefly look at the teller in acknowledgement.
- ✧ Next, the conductor invites a new pair from the audience.



3-Part Story (4-Part Story)

Objectives: Playing back a short story told by an audience member (Playback Theatre Intermediate Form)

Number of People: 3-4 actors plus musician(s)

Duration: 3-5 min per enactment including questions from the conductor

Material: Colored fabric, musical instruments

Process:

- ✧ The conductor invites the audience to tell a brief story from their lives. If necessary, the conductor clarifies the content by asking further questions.
 - ✧ Next, the conductor hands over to the performers by saying "Let's watch!"
 - ✧ One by one, the actors play back the story, with the first actor playing the beginning, the second actor the middle and the third actor the end of the story. At the end, they freeze and look at the teller in acknowledgement.
 - ✧ In 3-part story, the actors can play any character (including significant objects) but should finish with the teller.
-



Tableau

Objectives: Playing back a short story told by an audience member (Playback Theatre Intermediate Form)

Number of People: 3-4 actors plus musician

Duration: 3-5 min including questions from the conductor

Material: Colored fabric, musical instruments

Process:

- ⤴ The conductor invites the audience to tell a brief story from their lives. If necessary, the conductor clarifies the content by asking further questions.
- ⤴ Next, the conductor hands over to the performers by saying "Let's watch!"
- ⤴ The conductor retells the story in approximately five short sentences, using present tense and "story language" ("One fine day, Shaliny confronted her teacher").
- ⤴ After each sentence, the actors quickly create a frozen image, accompanied by dramatic music. The actors use only minimal movement and sound to make the image.
- ⤴ At the end the performers acknowledge the teller.



Story

Objectives: Playing back a long story told by an audience member (Playback Theatre Long Form)

Number of People: 3-4 actors plus musician(s)

Duration: 10-20 min

Material: Colored fabric, musical instruments

Process:

- ⤴ The conductor invites the audience to share a story from their lives.
- ⤴ Next, the teller comes onto the stage, sits with the conductor, tells his/her story and chooses an actor to play him-herself during the enactment.

- ⤴ The conductor hands over to the performers by saying "Let's watch!"
- ⤴ The actors set up the stage without talking while the musician plays. Then, they enact the story and eventually come to a freeze and acknowledge the teller.
- ⤴ The conductor checks in with the teller after the enactment ("How was this for you?").
- ⤴ The entire process can be divided into 5 stages: interview, setting-up, enactment, acknowledgement, and checking in.



Playback Theatre Merry-go round

Objectives: Practicing different Playback skills

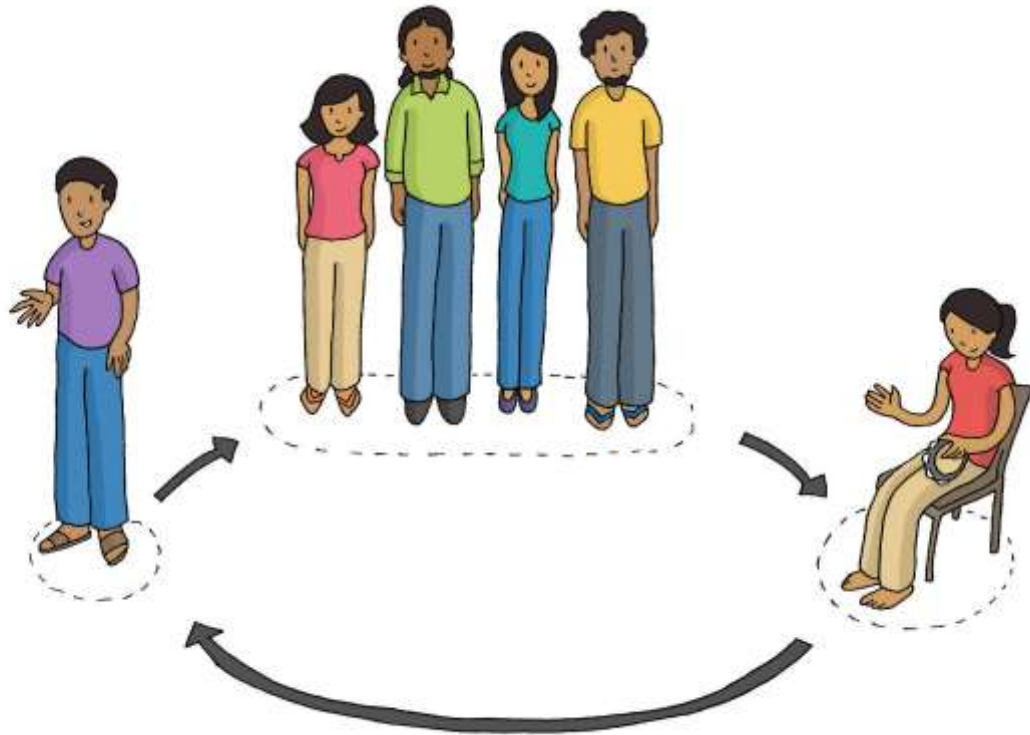
Number of People: 3-4 actors plus musician

Duration: 30 min

Material: Colored fabric, musical instruments

Process:

- ⤴ The conductor asks the participants to divide into groups. The participants then divide their responsibilities. One becomes the conductor, one is the teller and the others are actors and musicians. After each story, they change roles in order to receive a maximal amount of Playback practice.



6 Elements

Objectives: Playback Theatre Practice

Number of People: 6+Teller

Duration: 20 min

Material: Playback Props

Process:

- ✧ Six actors sit on chairs representing the following Playback elements:
 - The Teller's Actor
 - Any other important character
 - The story's environment (nature, a cafe, the streets of Male)
 - The story from the perspective of an object (A coconut tree, a boduberu drum, etc.)
 - The overarching theme of the story (friendship, love, loss, etc.)
 - The way the teller told the story
- ✧ The conductor invites a member of the audience to share a personal story. After the teller has told the story, the actors, one by one, play back the story in accordance to the element they are representing.



Once there was

Objectives: Playback Closure

Number of People: 3-4 actors plus musician

Duration: 5 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ At the end of the performance, the actors stand in a semi-circle facing the audience.
- ✧ One by one, they take a step forward, saying: "Once there was...", completing the sentence with a moment from the performance. ("Once there was a woman, who lost her husband during the Tsunami"), giving one final acknowledgement to the teller's stories.
- ✧ Ideally, the exercise ends with a "positive" "Once there was" so as to not leave the audience with a sense of sadness.

Forum Theatre Rehearsal Techniques

Analytical Rehearsal of Emotions

Objectives: Forum Theatre Rehearsal, Character Development

Number of People: Forum Theatre actors

Duration: 30 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ No human emotions are entirely pure. It is often the case that we love and hate somebody at the same time. This rehearsal technique is about exploring the different emotions the characters feel towards one another in the play.
- ✧ A forum theatre scene is rehearsed using only one emotion (love, sadness, etc.) even if this emotion seems to contradict the scene, e.g. a scene showing a lot of violence is played with all the characters expressing love.
- ✧ This exercise helps the actors discover different emotions present in the character. As a result, the characters become more complex and real and less stereotypical.



Analytical Rehearsal of Style

Objectives: Forum Theatre Rehearsal, Character Development

Number of People: Forum Theatre actors

Duration: 30 min

Material: -

Process:

- ✧ The forum theatre scene is rehearsed in a certain style of performance, for example

opera, horror movie, comedy, Bollywood.

- ✧ This technique helps the actors to find new content and form for the play.



Inspired by an Animal

Objectives: Forum Theatre Rehearsal, Character Development

Number of People: Forum Theatre actors

Duration: 30 min

Material: -

Process:

- Often our human actions resemble those of animals (“Mihad is cunning like a fox”).
- The group designates an animal to each character according to his/her personality in the play.
- During the rehearsal of the scenes, all actors play their role with the characteristics of the animal designated to them.



Interview

Objectives: Forum Theatre Rehearsal, Character Development

Number of People: Forum Theatre actors

Duration: 30 min

Material: -

Process:

- This exercise will deepen the actor's understanding of their characters.
- In character, one actor at a time is asked by the group questions about their life (as the character), e.g. 'What's your name?', 'Are you married?', 'What is your favorite food', 'What kind of childhood did you have?'



Play to the Deaf

Objectives: Forum Theatre Rehearsal, Character Development

Number of People: Forum Theatre actors

Duration: 15 min

Material: -

Process:

- This technique helps to make the plays less wordy and more theatrical.
- The forum theatre scene is played without words.
- The characters don't use mime or exaggerate gestures, but play the scene as though the sound has been turned down.
- After watching the scene, the rest of the group is asked to tell the story as they understood it.
- The actors will be able to see if any part of the story is unclear without words.



**Forum Theatre
Play Development
& Performance**

The Forum Theatre Play

Forum theatre plays can be developed in many different ways, depending on the particular style, preference and experience of the Joker as well as the group one works with. Hence, the path suggested in this working manual is just one of many different possibilities.

At the same time, there are a series of specific elements that make a forum theatre play appealing for the audience to intervene:

- ⤴ A believable and realistic scenario
- ⤴ A conflict that is clear
- ⤴ Protagonists with whom the audience can identify
- ⤴ A clear idea of what the protagonists want and do not want
- ⤴ Antagonists that are not evil and cartoon-like but credible and with their own life story and choices that impact on the desires of the protagonist(s)
- ⤴ A protagonist ultimately failing to achieve what s/he wants

The Creation of a Forum Theatre Play

Developing the theme & creating the plot

- The Joker uses “Song of the Mermaid” to divide the participants into groups and start identifying experiences of oppression they all have in common.
- In order to avoid long group discussions about the plot, it can be easier to start developing the play in reversed chronological order, i.e. starting with the end of the play and then deciding what happened before.
- Hence, the groups decide what the central themes of their plays will be and then proceed to make images of the worst and final moment of their plays (How does the play end?). Next, the Joker proceeds to activate the images, thereby supporting the actors to better understand the theme and characters.
- Then, the groups make images of what happened immediately before the worst moment, and then how the problem began. Each time, the Joker activates the images.

- It is important that the individual scenes are designed in a way that audience members can say “Stop”, i.e. the scenes should not provide solutions to the problems but rather move the story forward towards its inevitable catastrophe.
- For a one-week workshop, a Forum Theatre play should realistically have 3-5 individual scenes with a total duration of 7-10 minutes.
- Once the basic structure of the play has been developed. The Joker applies some of the different rehearsal techniques to strengthen the plays both aesthetically and in terms of content. The rehearsal techniques also help the actors to engage more deeply with their characters and become comfortable with one another.
- It can be useful to write down the script containing the most crucial dialogue and sentences said by the characters in the play.

The Characters

- ✧ The characters in the play should be close to real life and not like caricatures that show our own stereotypes of people.
- ✧ There should be at least one protagonist and one antagonist. However, the protagonist in one scene can become the antagonist in another scene, thereby recognizing the complexity of people's lives and the different roles they play in society.
- ✧ Often there are a number of bystanders (i.e. potential allies of the protagonist)
- ✧ The motivations of each character must be clear. What does the character want? Respect, Acknowledgement, Power? What does the character fear? Isolation, Punishment, Loss of Power?

Set, sound, staging and props

- A Forum theatre performance can take place anywhere.
- No sophisticated set is necessary but if time and resources permit the play should be made as aesthetically pleasing as possible.
- If possible, objects that can be found in the community should be used.

- Costumes should make the status of the character visible.
- Actors should be encouraged to speak loud enough.
- Actors should face the audience when speaking.
- Other audio-visual means (songs, poetry, etc.) should be incorporated for the audience to identify more strongly with the play.

The Role of the Actor, Spect-Actor & Joker in a Forum Theatre Play

The Role of the Actor in a Forum Theatre Play

1. It is very important that the actors understand the characters they are playing.
2. They must know enough about the theme and their character in order to improvise during the forum.
3. They must listen very carefully to the spectators interventions.
4. They must be able to improvise on the spot and respond to the audiences ideas in a way that is consistent with their character.
5. They must not simply reject the spect-actor's idea but should adopt a "Yes, but" strategy, challenging the spect-actor to engage deeper with the problems in the play.

A useful questions the actors should ask themselves during the audiences interventions is "Does the intervention empower me to join the protagonist's struggle?".

The Spect-Actor

- ✧ The spect-actor is the audience member who comes on stage and takes part in the action ("The Intervention").
- ✧ Spect-actors look for alternative ways for the protagonist (and in some instances the antagonist) to change the outcome of the play.

The Joker

The Joker is the host of a Forum Theatre performance. S/he sets up the rules of the event for the audience, facilitates the audience's interventions, and processes the interventions together with the audience. This latter part is absolutely crucial and entails challenging the audience to engage deeply with the issues at hand. However, challenging the audience does not mean imposing one's point of view. On the contrary, the main task of the Joker is to ask questions that will help deepen everyone's (including the Joker's) understanding of the situation. Metaphorically, the Joker acts as a midwife, encouraging the audience to give birth to new ideas.

Besides, it is important to emphasize that there is no one style of Joking a Forum Theatre play. Jokers bring in their own personalities and ways of engaging with the audience. At the same time, the Joker

- ✧ is energized and enthusiastic about the process
- ✧ is a good listener
- ✧ is nonjudgmental
- ✧ is confident in the role as guide, not as someone who knows all the answers ahead of time
- ✧ is aware of the dynamics in the room
- ✧ is flexible to change his/her plans
- ✧ deepens the discussion and moves the event forward
- ✧ avoids all actions which could manipulate or influence the audience
- ✧ knows that the more answers s/he provides, the less chance there is for audience participation
- ✧ asks open questions, avoiding "Yes" and "No" questions
- ✧ asks every question truly wanting to hear the answer
- ✧ understands that people need time to think things through
- ✧ avoids long discussions with the audience and encourages the audience members to try out their solutions on stage
- ✧ knows that there will always be more than one solution to any problem

- ✧ must watch for magic solutions and ask audience to decide
- ✧ makes sure the person who has intervened does not leave the stage defeated

Jokering a Forum Theatre Event

Every Forum Theatre event consist of two performances. First, the presentation of the so-called anti-model (the play developed by the workshop participants) for the audience to know what the play is about. Second, the actual forum in which the audience is invited to come on stage and try out their ideas for change.

In terms of the duration of a Forum Theatre event, this depends heavily on the length of play as well as the audience's reactions to the play. Generally, a Forum Theatre event lasts between 60-120 minutes.

Regarding the facilitation ('Jokering') of the event, Jokering can be divided into four phases:

- ✧ *Before the performance of the anti-model*

During this phase the Joker, usually standing centre stage, welcomes the audience, introduces him-herself (and in some cases the performers), describes the nature of the theatre initiative and explains the basic differences between non-participatory forms of theatre and Forum Theatre as an interactive, audience-driven theatre. On some occasions, it can also be useful to let the audience know that none of the performers are playing themselves. Finally, the Joker hands the play over to the performers and the play begins.

"Here is the play"

- ✧ *During the performance of the anti-model and the beginning of the Forum*

After the play is finished, the Joker comes back onto the stage and engages the audience in a brief dialogue about the play. S/he may ask questions such as

- ✧ *What happened during the play?*
- ✧ *What were some of the issues and problems you saw?*
- ✧ *Who are the main characters?*
- ✧ *What did the protagonist want?*
- ✧ *Did the protagonist get what s/he wanted?*
- ✧ *What prevented her from getting what he/she wanted?*
- ✧ *What else could she have done to get what he/she wanted in this situation*
- ✧ *Do these problems exist in our society?*

The goal is to involve as many audience members as possible, get them to share their ideas and warm them up to the idea of participating in the forum event. Next, the Joker explains the rules of Forum Theatre:

- ✧ *Please yell “Stop” when you have an idea what the protagonist can do to positively effect the outcome of the play. Come on stage, take the role of the character you would like to replace and try out your idea.*

and then invites the audience to play a little game (for example, Cross & Circle or 1,2,3 Bradford) in order to prepare them for coming onto the stage and intervening in the play.

“Here is the play again!”

- ✧ *During the Forum*

During the Forum, the Joker should be somewhere on the side of the stage, facing the audience (not the performers) in order to immediately identify audience members willing to intervene in the play. Once an audience member (the spect-actor) has come onto the stage, the Joker may ask

- ✧ *What is your name?*
- ✧ *Who would you like to replace?*
- ✧ *From which moment in the play would you like to start your intervention?*

During an intervention the Joker should pay close attention to what the audience member is trying to do, both in terms of his/her words as well as actions and gestures. When an intervention has come to an end, the Joker first invites other members of the audience to discuss the intervention

- ✧ *What did you witness during the intervention?*
- ✧ *What did this person do differently than the original person?*
- ✧ *Did he/she get what she wanted?*
- ✧ *Was it realistic? Has this happened before?*
- ✧ *Would that option work for everyone?*
- ✧ *What are other things he/she could do in this situation?*

and then asks the spect-actor to talk a little bit about what s/he tried to achieve.

At times, the Joker may also involve the other actors and ask them questions about the intervention from the perspective of their characters. Finally, the Joker may ask if another spectator has a different idea of how to tackle the problem in the same moment. If no one has another idea, the play continues as if nothing ever happened until the next spectator seizes the opportunity to come and try out his/her idea.

✧ *After the the Forum*

The Forum Theatre event ends with the Joker thanking the audience for their participation and the performers for their work. S/he also invites the audience to take what they have learned during the event and apply it in their real lives. "Thank you & Good-Bye."

!!!ENJOY!!

Annex

Two Stories told by Augusto Boal

The Story of Virgilio-The birth of the Theatre of the Oppressed

In the 1960's Augusto Boal was mainly involved in the production of Agitprop plays, theatre plays that forcefully denounced the different forms of oppression existing in Brazilian society, demanding revolutionary change. During one of these initiatives, Boal and his theatre troupe performed a play advocating the urgent need for a land reform, the changing of laws, regulations or customs regarding land ownership, which in Brazil was (and continues to be) concentrated in the hands of a tiny elite, leaving the vast majority of peasants living and working in conditions of abject poverty and marginalization. The play incited the peasants of Brazil to rebel against the oppressive landowners, if necessary by violent means. After one of the performances in the Northeast of Brazil, one of the peasants in the audience, Virgilio, approached Boal and his troupe, praised them for their revolutionary commitment and invited them to join him and his fellow peasants to fight for the revolution. As Boal offered a range of excuses- the guns were props; he and his actors did not know how to fight and were not real peasants but mere artists-Virgilio pointed out the hypocrisy of Boal's call for action.

Before that encounter, we were preaching revolution to abstract audiences. Now we met "the people". Virgilio was "the people" we had been looking for...But how should we speak to this real people? How could we teach them what they knew better than us?

(Augusto Boal)

The painful realization that he was not willing to practice what he preached, led Boal to develop a less top-down, more inclusive, horizontal and more participatory theatre focusing on making theatre *with* as opposed to *for* communities. The Theatre of the Oppressed was born.

The Story of the Fat Lady-The birth of Forum Theatre

Experimenting with different ways of involving the audience, Augusto Boal first invented what he called "Simultaneous Dramaturgy". During a Simultaneous Dramaturgy event, a theatre play showing a situation of oppression was performed and the audience was invited to propose suggestions for change that the performers would act out on their

behalf. During one of these performances, in which the husband-actor shamelessly cheated on his wife, one of the audience members, a “fat lady”, suggested that the humiliated wife tell her husband in “clear terms” what she thought of his betrayal. The wife-actress tried her best to do what the fat lady had suggested, but the latter was never satisfied, always insisting that what the actress had done was not exactly what she had suggested. Boal got increasingly impatient and frustrated by what seemed to be a rather stubborn and overly fussy spectator. Finally, he would invite her to come on stage, relieve the poor actress of her duties and try out her idea without intermediary. The fat lady came onto the stage, replaced the actress and confronted the shorter, much skinnier husband, explaining him in very clear, almost violent terms that this extramarital relationship had to end immediately. The audience loved the intervention, the fat lady was finally satisfied and returned to her chair and Boal recognized that the power to try out ideas for change had to be directly transferred to the audience. Forum Theatre was born.

Suggested Workshop Plan

Every Joker has his/her favorite exercises that figure in most of their activities. In terms of the precise order of exercises, this depends very much on the duration of the workshop as well as the particular needs and challenges of the group one is working with. At the same time, every workshop day should include games and exercises from different categories (Warm Up, Acting Exercises, Personal Disclosure, Image Theatre, etc.), thereby ensuring that every workshop has its own journey.

The following schedule is one suggestion of how a six-day Forum Theatre workshop may be conducted:

Day I (9.00-17.00)

Introduction to Theatre of the Oppressed

Clap Exchange

Circle Dash

The Wave comes and takes

Find the Spot Blind

Blind Walking

Complete the Image

Lunch

Irish-Timorese Duels

Name/No Name

Aima, I love

Machine

Image of the Word

5-Minute Plays (2 people)

Closing Circle

Day II (9.00-17.00)

Earthquake

Cover the Space plus Character Walk

Pachamama

Affective Hand

Colombian Hypnosis

Forum Hypnosis

Lunch

Greetings

Magritte

Image of the Hour

2 Secrets

Association Jump

7 Minute, 2 Scene-Plays plus challenges (3 people)

Closing Circle

Day III (9.00-17.00)

Walk means Run

1,2,3 Bradford

Blind Car/Blind Busses

Exit-Entrance

What are you doing?

Journey Part I

Lunch

Ping

Tour

Journey Part II

1:1 Oppression

10 Minute, 3 Scene-plays plus challenges (6 people)

Closing Circle

Day IV (9.00-17.00)

Ping

Sheep

Blind-V

Image of Four

Song of the Mermaid

Lunch

Zuhra, Tahrir & Palang

Play development and rehearsal techniques

Closing Circle

Day V (9.00-17.00)

Games such as Boxing, Environment, the Haka, No, you did not

Play development and rehearsal techniques

Closing Circle

Day VI (9.00-17.00)

Games such as 2 Lines, Pushing against Each Other, Character Image of the Hour

Play development and rehearsal techniques

Forum Theatre rehearsal

Public Performance

Final Evaluation

Glossary

Forum Theatre practitioners use very particular language both during the theatre workshops as well as the performances:

Actor

A person whose role is to play a character other than his/her own.

Aesthetic Space

The space in which a participatory theatre workshop and/or performance is carried out.

Antagonist

One of the main characters in a Forum Theatre play who is in conflict with the protagonist.

Anti-Model

The original Forum Theatre play that shows a gradually rising conflict that finishes at the worst moment.

Audience

A group of people who observe a theatrical performance. During a Forum Theatre event the audience transforms from passive spectators into active spect-actors.

Conflict

Conflict is the fundamental element in any theatre play. Conflict can often be described as a clash of opposing desires. The protagonists desires one thing, the antagonist desires something else, hence there is a conflict that is not easily resolved.

Conscientization

The process of gaining of a deeper consciousness regarding one's life situation that will lead to marginalized communities transforming into agents of change.

Cop-In-The-Head

An exercise amongst Augusto Boal's therapeutic techniques dealing with internalized oppressions.

Demechanization

A series of games and exercises that help the actors reconnect to their bodies and the enormous variety of movements they are capable of producing. Demechanization also means to overcome automatized ways of thinking that prevent us from understanding the world as it really is.

Devised Theatre is a form of theatre where the script originates not from a writer, but from collaborative, usually improvisatory, work by a group of people (usually, but not necessarily, the performers).

Forum Theatre

An interactive form of theatre in which a problematic scenario is shown and then replayed, with audience members (spect-actors) encouraged to enter the action and attempt to positively change the outcome.

Image Theatre

A series of silent exercises in which participants create frozen images of their feelings and experiences using only their bodies. These frozen images are then "dynamized," or brought to life, through a sequence of movement-based and interactive exercises.

Improvisation

Improvisation, using words and gestures, involves quickly creating and reacting to a new circumstance on the stage.

Intervention

An intervention is the moment during a Forum Theatre play when an audience member comes on stage, replaces the protagonist and attempts to positively change the outcome of the play.

Joker

The host of a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop and performance. In Forum Theatre, the Joker sets up the rules of the event for the audience, facilitates the spectators' replacements of the characters, and invites the audience to discuss the essence of each solution proposed in the interventions. In addition, the Joker has the responsibility to not simply accept but challenge the ideas that come from the audience. In that sense s/he is

not a facilitator but a 'difficultator', a midwife giving birth to new ideas.

Legislative Theatre

Legislative Theatre is Forum Theatre for the creation of suggestions for legislation that promote and protect the rights of oppressed communities. In Boal's words, the aim is 'To transform desire into law', in the process turning ordinary citizens into law makers and making a contribution to the democratization of democracy.

Magic

A Forum Theatre intervention that radically changes the nature of the conflict depicted. For instance, the main character has problems with alcohol and the intervention magically transforms him/her into a staunch non-drinker.

Mobilization

One of the fundamental goals of the Theatre of the Oppressed. Mobilization means providing opportunities for ordinary people to actively take part in the discussion and resolution of their community conflicts.

Powerless Observer

Additional characters in a Forum Theatre play that want to help the protagonist but often feel powerless.

Praxis

The combination of both theoretical as well as practical activities in the search for transformative change.

Props

Any object used on stage for enhancing the plot and making the play more beautiful.

Protagonist

The main "oppressed" character of a Forum Theatre play that fails to achieve his/her desires.

Rainbow of Desire

One of Boal's main therapeutic techniques in which the protagonist has so many different,

often conflicting desires that s/he is not sure what she really wants.

Role

A dramatic persona assumed by the actor.

Side-Coaching

The verbal instructions given by the Joker to the actors *during* the exercises, games & rehearsals.

Spect-Actor

The audience member who comes on stage and takes part in the Forum Theatre play.

Trust Games

Theatre games and exercises that aim at building trust among the workshop participants.

Warm-Up

Theatre games and exercises that aim at getting a group of people playing together in the same space, to energize that space and to create a sense of comfort in the collective doing of specific and structured activities. The goal is to demechanize body and mind and to promote responses that are fresh and in the moment.

Recommended Reading List

Aristizabal, Hector: The Blessing next to the Wound

Babbage, Frances: Augusto Boal

Baim, Clark: The Geese Theatre Handbook

Boal, Augusto: The Aesthetics of the Oppressed

Boal, Augusto: Games for Actors and Non-Actors

Boal, Augusto: Hamlet and the Baker's Son

Boal, Augusto: Legislative Theatre: using Performance to make Politics

Boal, Augusto: The Rainbow of Desire

Boal, Augusto: Theatre of the Oppressed

Cohen-Cruz, Jan: Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy, Activism

Cohen-Cruz, Jan: A Boal Companion: Dialogues on Theatre and Cultural Politics

Diamond, David: Theatre for Living: The Art and Science of Community-Based Dialogue

Emert, Toby & Friedland, Ellie: Come Closer: Critical Perspectives on Theatre of the Oppressed

Fox, Hannah: Zoomy Zoomy

Fox, Jonathan: Acts of Service

Ganguly, Sanjoy: Jana Sanskriti: Forum Theatre and Democracy in India

Joffe-Eichhorn, Hjalmar Jorge: Tears into Energy-Das Theater der Unterdrückten in Afghanistan

McCarthy, Julie: Enacting Participatory Development

Rohd, Michael: Theatre for Community and Conflict: The Hope is Vital Manual

Rowe, Nick: Playing the Other: Dramatizing Personal Narratives in Playback Theatre

Salas, Jo: Do my story, sing my song

Salas, Jo: Improvising Real Life

Sternberg, Patricia: Theatre for Conflict Resolution: In the Classroom and Beyond