



A CREATIVE HANDBOOK

TOOLKIT

methodology and ideas

A book from the Artist Within.



The Artist Within Toolkit

methodology and ideas

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Introduction

Initially, **The Artist Within Toolkit** was created in order to help the Trainer-Participants of the training *“Implementation of Creative Training Methods for Helping Professions”* at the Społeczna Akademia Nauk in Łódź, Poland, between 2–10. April 2016.

This was the fourth training of the *two-year-long Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership project “The Artist Within – Applied eMOTION, Dance and art expression in formal and non-formal education for developing entrepreneur skills – best practice sharing between sectors and methods”*.

The Partners of the Partnership were (1) Hungarian Association for Expressive Arts and Dance Therapy, IKTE – Hungary, (2) Association on Refugees and Migrants, ARM-BG – Bulgaria, (3) Theater Vision e. V. – Germany, (4) Comparative Research Network e. V., CRN – Germany, (5) EURO-NET NETWORK – Italy, (6) Społeczna Akademia Nauk, SAN – Poland.

While working on the results we glimpsed a broader horizon than just helping our participants, and it became apparent that our findings and experiences are well worth sharing, thus, we created a format for **The Artist Within Toolkit** that can serve as a guide for helping professionals in terms of integrating different creative methodologies.

Description of the methods

Here we shortly introduce the three methodologies used throughout the Erasmus+ project.

Expression and dance/movement

Integral expression and dance therapy is a member of the family of approaches internationally known as expressive arts therapy. The method has been present in Hungary since the mid 90’s, brought to our country by the founder, a German psychologist, integral expression and dance therapist, Wilfried Gürtler (1950-2003).

A key feature of this complex, interdisciplinary approach is that it uses multimodal expressive arts processes for therapeutic goals. This feature derives from one of the basic assumptions of this method, i.e. the healing power of expression. Along with movement and dance, IED uses the integrating effect of music making, visual expression and drama, as well as ‘authentic movement’, imagination, poetry, personal symbols and rituals. The process helps the individual to find his/her self-healing potentials, hidden resources, and thus to improve the quality of his/her life.

You might get the idea if you watch our video on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lvdwCsYMWE>

English subtitle of the Hungarian video is available by switching on the annotation function on YouTube.

Storytelling

Storytelling is basically the ancient art of telling stories. The method helps to recall, structure, collect and utilize stories in different ways. Since stories are container for experience and knowledge, they constitute as well the oldest form of teaching and learning. Teacher and trainers are storytellers. In the class or workshop room, storytelling inspires purposeful talking, raises the enthusiasm on the lessons learned and initiates students to reflect and find their own stories. Through improving the listening skills, it enhances the community in the room and beyond. Storytelling can help to structure thoughts, ideas and experiences and enables creativity.



Nowadays storytelling is again transformed to meet the needs of the modern media. Digital storytelling helps people to find their voice and thrives bottom-up participation. However, in order to do so smart citizens are needed, trained by smart trainers, knowing the potential of storytelling. The UNESCO included storytelling in their Agenda 21 as a tool for teaching and training for a sustainable future. There are more information and links on the website:

http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_d/mod21.html

The Inner Clown – Social clown and humour methodology

Nobody is perfect, but in daily life we often have the feeling that we have to be perfect and that we have to function to fulfil all our daily tasks – what can create burn-out and depressions. To discover the inner clown means to discover the inner child, the inner playful sides and to use your foibles and imperfectness as a strength, not as a weakness. It can be the initial point for a playful being and it can help to get over the life-long learned restrictions that adults are usually confronted with and used to. People in helping professions are confronted with lots of difficult situations that are not easy to solve. Social workers who have to cope with the moods of difficult teenagers, nursing staff in retirement houses who face the demonstrations of dementia, therapists who have to handle the difficult emotions of their clients. All these professions are very different, but they have one thing in common: they are working with other people and so they have to guarantee the personal stability to be able to cope with the daily challenges. Humour can be a help for that, it can be a strategy to handle difficult situations and to remain relaxed about the mistakes made. So, the objective of this approach is to explore humour and its strengths – your own and other people's humour, which can be quite different. To be conscious about the differences enables us to adapt ourselves to different situations and to different humour. Another important objective is to discover the inner clown and how to use your own personality to create humorous situations. Various exercises help to find the clown figure and to develop it as well as create humorous group situations. The approach uses lots of games and exercises of theatre improvisation.

Learning outcomes

The project involved a research into the learning outcomes (LOs) of art-based, creative methodologies, its affective and cognitive components. Based on that, we created a set of LOs (general as well as method-specific) that are desirable for helping professionals. Creating this operationalized list also contributed to the measurement and evaluation of our programme. For didactic reasons we allotted the appropriate LOs to the good practices and exercises we collected, but bear in mind that these kinds of complex exercises have an effect on multiple levels and layers of the personality and the relational functioning. Also, we would like to emphasise that in some cases the LOs depend on the way of facilitation, and the decisions the Practitioner makes, or it can be complex.

Affective and Cognitive Outcomes of Arts-based Teaching and Learning: Background Analysis Based on Literature, Core and Pilot Trainings' Experience

Several analyses prove that students and trainers, participating in arts-based learning are benefited both affectively and cognitively. There are strong relationships among affective development, cognitive development, and learning. As a learner develops cognition, she/he develops corresponding abilities and expertise that support academic and social learning. Affective development, on the other hand, increases a learner's interest in learning and a feeling of self-worth, which, in turn, increase his/her willingness to learn and apply new skills.

Effects of Arts-Based Teaching and Learning on Affective Development

Affective development in this context means an increased interest in learning, self-worth, and willingness to try new things. Arts-based teaching promotes affective development by increasing the learner's interest, motivation, and enthusiasm for learning.

Arts-based instruction increases interest and motivation. All students, including diverse learners and those at risk for academic failure, can reportedly achieve higher academic results.

Arts-based teaching and learning strategies are among those that **appeal to multiple types of intelligence and engage multiple ways of learning.**

Arts-based instruction increases self-esteem and willingness to try new things. Arts allows us to “invent and reinvent ourselves”.

As attitudes improve along with a willingness to experiment, **arts-based learning activities give students skills with which they can “explore uncertainty/ambiguity”**

When we are involved in arts-based learning, we can better express our thoughts and ideas and improve our communication skills, which allows us to “act upon our imaginations and curiosity,” cooperate with other students, and display our learning publicly.

Effects of Arts-based Teaching and Learning on Cognitive Development

Cognitive development in this context means areas of ability and expertise that can be applied successfully to academic and social learning situations. Authors describe these abilities and areas of expertise to include creativity, self-direction, and complex thinking. Arts-based teaching and learning practices reportedly influence the development of such skills.

Arts-based instruction develops learning abilities. Our pilot training activities proved some evidence of cognitive skill development through the arts. Standardized tests of creativity showed more highly developed creativity in students who participated in arts-based trainings. Our research showed that students in high-arts groups perform better than those in low-arts groups on measures of creativity. Pilot training activities proved that creativity is a “capacity” for learning that can be developed through an arts-based curriculum. In related areas, high-arts students also demonstrated better capacity than low-arts students in the areas of fluency, originality, elaboration, and for helping professionals - resistance to burnout effects.

In addition to creativity, arts programs help students develop self-assessment, organizational, and planning skills. Students in high-arts groups, compared with students in low-arts groups, also demonstrated better rapport with teachers and more sustained focus. Such abilities help students connect with themselves, each other, and the outside world. These connections, along with self-direction and self-assessment skills, help prepare students for the workplace, including that of helping professionals.

Arts-based instruction develops thinking skills. Thinking skills attributed to arts-based teaching include improved comprehension, interpretation, and problem solving. The cross-disciplinary learning environment associated with arts-based instruction, in particular, helps students develop deeper, broader, or “higher-order” thinking skills. Such skills enable the learner to recognize, contrast, and compare varying elements of the world around her/him and, therefore, to comprehend its complexity.

Higher levels of thinking are related to the comprehension of symbols: the ability to interpret symbols and construct their meaning. The arts, in its various media and approaches, offer a broad range of symbols and other ways of representing ideas. Students who experience the arts learn to interpret symbols and understand abstract ideas. Students of the visual arts, for example, learn visual problem solving by interpreting the symbolism of visual artworks. The ability to construct



meaning through various representations leads to deeper, more conceptual thinking. Arts allow representation of ideas that are not otherwise easy to process. Once an idea is represented, it can be processed through comparison and discussion. Processing of information and communicating about it lead to new learning.

Arts-based instruction develops neural systems. Its influence on neural systems is another way to associate arts with learning. By engaging the brain, the arts enhance neurobiological systems that support cognitive, emotional, attention, and immune systems. Music, for example, has been found to synchronize neural firing patterns. Instruction in music promotes and maintains this synchronicity, which increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the brain. Authors attribute such brain activity with increased ability in the areas of spatial reasoning, creativity, and general math. Artistic experiences, among others, change the brain and, therefore, influence cognition in a positive way.

The influence of art on cognition is in its development of thinking abilities and motivation for learning.

Social skills development may be related to arts-based learning. The arts help students develop communication and cooperation skills. *When students learn to express themselves more effectively*, their relationships with other students and instructors improve. For helping professionals this means improved abilities for establishing relationship and linking both with their professional and target-group communities. In terms of social behaviour researchers note that students involved in music activities exhibit fewer at-risk behaviours than those who are not involved.

Arts-based learning generalizes to other learning. The question of “transfer” also emerges in this discussion of learning outcomes. Drama, for example, increases interpersonal relationship and communication skills which improve learning. This may be considered a transfer, or, an example of the so called “far” learning -- the ability to generalize or transfer learning to academic areas that are not part of the arts-based activity.

Arts teach students to solve problems, elaborate ideas, and to structure and organize different kinds of experiences. Such skills are transferable to science, math, and language, although this transfer cannot be characterized as “one-way.” Similar to the conceptualization of a web or constellation of influence across learning domains, this transfer happens in a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in which learning activities, such as visual arts, music, literature, reading, and social studies, are combined so that one subject challenges another.

Findings of the authors of reviewed literature as well as our own experience evidence to support positive relationships between arts and academics as follows: a) Drama develops higher-order language and emotional literacy skills; b) Music enhances language learning, spatial reasoning, learning concentration; c) Music & Dance enhance body-mind synchronicity, self & others reflection and rapport; d) Art experiences develop writing and public talking skills, as well as general literacy; e) Art experiences develop social learning and communication skills.

Arts-based teaching may be particularly effective with diverse learners. Across the literature, authors seem to agree that arts-based teaching engages a wide range of learners. Arts challenge all students—including the hard-to-reach, the gifted, delayed learners, and others who may be, for a variety of reasons, at risk for academic failure. Arts-based teaching and learning work as a strategy for helping professionals because the arts give everyone a chance to learn and succeed. Instruction in the arts involves different kinds of learning activities that are meaningful for different kinds of learners.

According to our own project-related experience and many authors, **arts-based teaching and learning practices are particularly effective with learners from diverse cultures.** We can report a significant relationship between **arts-integrated instruction** and improvements in language studies and inter-cultural communication. **In addition to providing alternate forms of learning, arts-based instruction also appeals to intercultural learners.** University students who participated in interviews about the learning outcomes of arts-based instruction reported that **arts-based instruction is more likely to promote better understanding of our own culture and the culture of “the others”.**

Focused on integral expression, dance and humour therapy, our project based experience gives reliable evidence that arts-based instruction provides the optimum of stress and burnout alleviating learning and teaching approaches.

Moreover our training methodology is conducive to filling in the gap between the existing mostly theoretical and general knowledge on burnout syndrome prevention and the urgency of developing long-term and life-style oriented personal coping strategies. Having in mind that burnout syndrome prevention skills development is a long and learner-proactive process, we focused on cultivating the learning outcomes, you can find in the attached document “Key-words to be used in the promotion of 4th training in Łódź”.

We expect our method-specific learning outcomes to result in a better practical preparedness of helping professionals in meeting and coping with the challenges of the burnout syndrome, in cultivating skills for sustainable work motivation in highly demanding care providing environments. We expect these LOs to cater trainees for multi-spectral competences in dealing with increasingly complex and challenging social and professional situations.

We foresee these as possible if helping professionals

- are trained practically,
- are offered various methods they can rely on,
- are provided with chances to develop themselves personally,
- are opened to gain new experiences,
- have access to building a professional community/ network.

To reach this we have designed the ongoing training courses for adults in this field. We expect that adult learners will this way

- get skills and competences by learning by doing,
- adapt new methodologies to their work,
- discover and make part of their life-styles creativity and innovation,
- offer fitting support to their target groups, and
- ensure their own well being
- enable reinventing themselves and their work with creative resources,
- empower the use and maintenance of own personality (személyiség) as a working tool,
- be ready for a long-term quality work as helping professionals,
- understand that for achieving the above listed competences, personal development, capability to deal with conflicts and strengthen teamwork are essential.

Thus, on the background of our training methods are:

Non-formal learning principles:

- Learner-centeredness (i.e., a focus on the learner and their development)
- Shared agreement between trainers and learners on learning objectives
- Confidentiality
- Attention to content and methodology
- Not obligatory, based on voluntary commitment
- Participation
- Participants are in charge of their learning process (self directed)
- Democratic values and practices
- Learning by doing

Competences: system of skills and knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, as well as values that can be applied in practice to manage various complex situations and tasks successfully.

Skills: multi-spectral and prone to concrete applicability in complex situations



Knowledge: practical, renewable & sustainable

Attitude: opened, proactive, committed, reflexive, cooperative, creative & communicative

In conclusion, we would like to point out that **the offered training methodology, based on the synthesis of three different art methods is innovative and gives access to unique experience.** Moreover, as each innovative process, it is opened to creative participation. That's why we are looking forward to receive feedback from the participants at the end. The upcoming training is a great opportunity to take part in an international professional discussion on creativity and methodologies offering support and learning to Helping Professionals.

General LOs

Professionals in adult education get competences to:

1. accept ambiguity, flexibility in communication, in organization and project work, in working environments of helping professionals, including clinical, teaching/ learning environments
2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
4. develop empathy, honesty and respect for differences
5. educate knowledge of the notions and concepts of acceptance of ambiguity and change
6. identify the potential of conflict and problem resolution related environment; clinical treatment environment, learning & teaching environment, group dynamics, constantly changing contexts of our existence the environment
7. identify risk factors related to personal and professional environments
8. train attentiveness to the safety of the learner group
9. adopt an attitude of reflectiveness
10. take an attitude of readiness to unlearn
11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity
12. identify one's own emotions and relate them to a working situation
13. share one's own emotions with the group in an educational/supportive way and maintain ethical boundaries
14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
15. analyse learners' strengths, weaknesses and learning opportunities and plan the learning process accordingly
16. develop knowledge of the concepts and methods relating to the transferability of knowledge and values to the group of learners
17. improve knowledge of methods and approaches towards working with diverse groups of learners
18. connect evaluation and impact assessments with relevant conclusions for further learning
19. gain the recognition of the importance of evaluation and impact assessment during and after the educational/helping process
20. clarify roles and responsibilities in the team
21. adopt an attitude of openness to tasks that are not necessarily part of their usual role
22. improve knowledge of one's possibilities and limits in the context of educational/helping activity
23. foster cooperation among team members
24. take an attitude of tolerance for interpersonal tensions and openness to deal with disagreements
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
27. work with empathy in a way that allows others to learn from the experience
28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts



29. deal with emotions and ask for support
30. adopt an attitude of readiness to confront and be confronted

Method-specific LOs

Integral expression and dance therapy

Professionals in adult education get competences to:

31. use artistic expression for self development and self reflection
32. be aware of own body / physical / somatic sensations, and body clues of the client
33. be aware of spatial dimensions of interpersonal situations
34. be aware of different modalities of expression, relying on the strengths inherent in the client

Story telling

Professionals in adult education get competences to:

35. discuss and understand the essential elements of a story
36. create a story as a way to express thoughts, information, emotions
37. use the method of storytelling in self-reflection, self-understanding and for understanding others
38. use the method of storytelling to improve communication skills
39. be able to re-interpret, re-organise a story and change the narrative
40. identify the potential of storytelling for solving various problematic situations (professional and personal)

Humour strategies, clowning

Professionals in adult education get competences to:

41. switch/change perspective
42. (stage) presence in public situations
43. establish humour in working institutions and environment
44. distance themselves from own work
45. use relaxation in the work

Good practices, exercises

In this chapter, you will find the *description of good practices, exercises, structured as follows:*

Under the **Title** of the exercise you'll find the

Description of the exercise: description of the process with instructions

Aim of the exercise: the goal(s), aim(s) you intend to achieve with the exercise

Structure: individual, pair, trio, half group or whole group process. Some exercises might be used in more than one structure or can be developed in a way that uses different group structure (e.g. a pair exercise can be developed into a whole group exercise, as in Exercise No. 1.)





Target population: Which population the exercise is recommended for. Is there a population where it is not recommended, is there a contraindication? e.g. “not to use with population of short attention span (like smaller children)” etc.

Minimum-maximum group size: speaks for itself

Conditions: when to use it, what to look out for, what to emphasize, rules etc.

Duration: possible time frame

Equipment: necessary materials, music etc.

Development of the exercise, possible variations: speaks for itself

Meta-feedback, debriefing: how to run sharing rounds, what could be the main questions, direction to facilitate this part so as to learn the most, and reach the LOs.

Learning outcomes (LOs): We refer to the previous chapter. We would like to emphasise that in some cases the LOs depend on the way of facilitation, and the decisions the Practitioner makes, or it can be complex.

Original method: expression and dance/movement; or storytelling; or humour strategies

Methodological integration and combination possibilities: some suggestions on integrating and combining the three methodologies used in the project (expression and dance/movement; or storytelling; or humour strategies). Note that the list is not all-inclusive, many other new ways of integration/combination are quite possible.

Contributor: Name of the person who contributed to The Artist Within Toolkit with this exercise.



1. Mirror game

Description of the exercise:

The group members form pairs and stand in front of each other. One of them is the model, the other one follows, mirrors any movement as best he/she can. Then they change roles.

Aim of the exercise:

Body warm-up
Body empathy
Attunement
Group building

Structure:

pairs and group

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

any size with an even number of participants

Conditions:

Give enough space for moving freely to each pair.

It is a rather easy exercise that can be used at the beginning of a new group process, it has a warm-up effect as well.

Duration:

With inexperienced groups shorter times (3-5 minutes) is recommended before changes.

If the group is immersed in the task, more time is possible.

Equipment:

No material necessary.

With or without music.

When you use music: rather lively music preferably without lyrics is recommended.

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

Possible development 1: they do not decide on the roles, and still maintain the mirroring. Both of them model and mirror at the same time.

Possible development 2: Repeat the exercise with different persons as pair

Possible development 3: It can be extended to the whole room with the whole group where half of the group is on one side, half on the other. Each person on one side has a partner on the other. As if there was a long mirror across the whole room. If people interact on one side this interaction is mirrored on the other by the partners of the interacting persons.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Pay attention to dealing with constantly changing situations and improvisation.

Experiences in terms of empathic attunement via bodily encounter in space.

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
4. develop empathy, honesty and respect for differences



- 23. foster cooperation among team members
- 32. be aware of own body / physical / somatic sensations, and body clues of the client
- 33. be aware of spatial dimensions of interpersonal situations

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling: the model moves so as to depict a story which the other mirrors

Integration with humour strategies: the model experiments with sudden, surprising, unexpected, exaggerated movements.

Contributor: Kiss, Tibor Cece



2. Sensing personal space

Description of the exercise:

The group members stand in two lines along opposite walls facing each other in pairs (introduction with breathing exercise, then eye-contact with partner). The process happens in silence, without talking. First the people on side A start to walk closer to their partners (side B), each in his/her own pace and they have to stop in front of their partner at a distance by which they think their partner would feel comfortable with. Then they go back to their places and side B walks, while side A is receiving the person.

Discussion between the pairs in the middle.

Repeat the whole process again with another partner.

Aim of the exercise:

Tuning in to others

Non-verbal communication

Body awareness

Focusing

Structure:

pairs

Target population:

visually able

Minimum-maximum group size:

any size with an even number of participants

Conditions:

The distance among the lines has to be min 8 m.

Note, that it might seem as an easy activity, using it with new groups, at the beginning phase of the group can be challenging.

Duration:

One round is around 7 minutes, including the verbal sharing.

Minimum of 2, but rather 3 changes of partners are needed to offer a chance at meeting non-verbally with different kinds of people in the group.

Equipment:

No material, no music is needed.

The size and light conditions of the room is important. The participants have to fit in the space in 2 lines, without disturbing the ones standing next to.

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

The exercise can be repeated later during a longer program, thus creating the possibility of comparison: What has changed in the quality of connection of the participants with regard to bodily cues, eye contact etc.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Depending on the flow of the program, you might run a sharing in big group after this exercise, but it is not necessary. Even though to ensure that there is a kind of insight on a group level of the similar/different experiences a one-word/person round can close the activity, which allows also the



leader of the activity to get a picture of where the group is standing (whether it was intimidating, comfortable, etc.) for the group.

Learning outcomes:

- 4. develop empathy, honesty and respect for differences
- 23. foster cooperation among team members
- 32. be aware of own body / physical / somatic sensations, and body clues of the client
- 33. be aware of spatial dimensions of interpersonal situations

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling: the activity can be followed by writing a story of the other standing opposite, or about meetings, connections.

Integration with humour strategies: once the clown figures are developed a bit they could run this activity in order to discover more of the personality, the stage presence (being seen).

Contributor: Zsiday-Galgóczy Krisztina



3. Impulse giving

Description of the exercise:

Moving in groups of three. The person in the middle receives physical impulses from the two others. He/She integrates these impulses into his/her own movement.
Changing the roles.

Aim of the exercise:

Liberating body movement
Integration of outer and inner impulses
Introduction of physical touch
Facilitation of connecting and building trust

Structure:

trio

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

any size with a number of participants that can be divided into three

Conditions:

Give enough space for moving freely to each trio.
It is a more advanced exercise, a safe group atmosphere is required. Even more so, if you use it with closed eyes.

Duration:

3-5 minutes is recommended before changes.
If the group is immersed in the task, more time is possible.

Equipment:

No material necessary.
With or without music.
When you use music: medium fast, melodic music preferably without lyrics is recommended (e.g. Reny Aubry)

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

Possible development 1: The task can be done with the person in the middle having their eyes closed.

Possible development 2: After a while the partners can stop giving outer impulses, and the person in the middle move freely. If his/her eyes are closed, the partners task is to protect the space of the moving person, to avoid collisions. This requires bodily attunement from the accompanying persons, and moving along with the person in the middle.

After all changes verbal sharing is possible about the exercise either in the trios or in the whole group.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Issues with safety, trust, free vs. restricted movement, connection, attunement, eventual accidents and resulting loss of trust can be addressed

Learning outcomes:



2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
8. train attentiveness to the safety of the learner group
9. adopt an attitude of reflectiveness
32. be aware of own body / physical / somatic sensations, and body clues of the client
33. be aware of spatial dimensions of interpersonal situations

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with humour strategies: The person receiving the impulses can experiment with exaggerating the movements.

Contributor: Kiss, Tibor Cece



4. Exploring through the 'close' senses (touch, smell, taste)

Description of the exercise:

Discovering the world without visual aid. Group members work in pairs. One with closed eyes, the other is leading him/her, walking around and putting the hand of the "blind" person on different surfaces, touching different objects and materials. Then he/she withdraws, letting the person explore it by touching, smelling, and in case of edible objects, tasting.

Changing the roles.

Aim of the exercise:

Exploration of the environment in a new way
Integration of less used or less conscious senses
Building trust

Structure:

pairs

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

any size with an even number of participants

Conditions:

As the person with closed eyes is quite vulnerable it is important not to abuse his/her trust. It is a more advanced exercise, a safe group atmosphere is required.

Duration:

10-15 minutes, but it can go up to half an hour each round

Equipment:

No music, but many different objects are necessary that have a different surface quality, or deeper structure quality that can be explored by touch/grasp. It is good to have some objects that have a typical fragrance or scent, and some that are edible.

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

The exercise can be used without any prepared objects or materials, working only with the objects, materials, surfaces at hand. The experience can be quite interesting also without using edible stuff. It can be used indoors and outdoors.

With a more prepared bodily involvement, in a more advanced group, the closed eyed person can be lead to another person to explore.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Issues with safety, new experiences, surprises can be addressed.

Learning outcomes:

- 8. train attentiveness to the safety of the learner group
- 32. be aware of own body / physical / somatic sensations, and body clues of the client

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:



Integration with storytelling: You might create a story about the experiences gained during the exercise.

Contributor: Kiss, Tibor Cece



5. Voice and sound work

Description of the exercise:

Everybody is lying on the ground connected to each other by touches of arms, legs, etc. The facilitator first is warming up the soundmaking, by saying vowels and consonants that the group repeats and starts to play with them using different pitches and accentuations. Then the facilitator offers different scenarios, places and situations in relation to what the group can create voices: e.g. a jungle, a paint factory in Poland, Bulgarian market, Italian opera, German village at midnight, village in Hungary in the morning etc. Then the activity is closed by offering the participants to pay attention to the silence, to their feelings, bodily sensations.

Aim of the exercise:

Work with sounds to explore personal connection to it
Discover physical resonance to scenes, scenarios
Creating a group experience
Strengthening the group
Work with humour
Canalisation of tensions

Structure:

whole group process

Target population:

hearing intact
(With groups where some participants are deaf or hearing impaired an alteration of the setting is possible: When identifying the scenes to be created with sounds we can use pictures as well. The hearing impaired can pick up vibrations by putting their palms on their own and on others' chests)

Minimum-maximum group size:

5 to 50

Conditions:

Some may react strongly to sounds, for this reason to offer chances to be at the edge, farther from the rest of the group might be important. As the participants are lying down, to have warm and slightly hard surface is important. Having a connection to the ground supports the participants in staying grounded.

Duration:

30-45 minutes

Equipment:

In case the floor has a cold surface (e.g. stone), having blankets is important.

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

With international teams it is an option to have scenes from their own country, culture - but the facilitator needs to cover all, and be aware of possible conflicts/dislikes of cultures (that are advisably avoided).

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

It is better to have a drawing or other non-verbal activity before moving on to verbal sharing. That helps to focus the individual experiences and to start to talk about it too.



Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
4. develop empathy, honesty and respect for differences
23. foster cooperation among team members
31. use artistic expression for self development and self reflection
34. be aware of different modalities of expression, relying on the strengths inherent in the client

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling: The scenarios to be sounded can be chosen so as to depict or create a storyline in themselves. Or we can give a storyframe: e.g. The day of a village from sunrise until noon, and the group has to follow this with the sounds.

Integration with humour strategies: This exercise usually generates quite a lot of laughter, as many sounds are funny. The sounds can be increased or decreased. Or we can work with transitions between different emotional states.

Contributor: Zsiday-Galgóczy Krisztina



6. Abstract symbols into group choreography

Description of the exercise:

Use a set of cards featuring abstract symbols. 10-15 different symbols are sufficient. Divide the group into 3-4 subgroups. Each subgroup should have 5-7 participants. You need as many sets of cards as many subgroups you have. The subgroups get a set of cards, and go to a location where they can work unperturbed by the other subgroups. There they pick 6 different symbols from the set, put them in a special sequence, then create a group choreography that expresses the chosen symbols in this sequence. It is advised to use voice and sounds as well. After each subgroup is ready, they come back in the common room, and perform their choreographies each. The spectator subgroups' task is to try to find out which symbols and in what order were used.

Aim of the exercise:

Work in a team

Creative work in a team

Enhancing connections in the group

Structure:

small group (consisting of 5-7 persons) process

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

15 to 30 (3-4 subgroups)

Conditions:

It helps if you have separate rooms, spaces for the subgroups to use for rehearsal. If necessary, the subgroups can work in the same room as well but it is not ideal, they might disturb each other, the surprise effect is gone.

Since it is a rather structured exercise, it can be used earlier in the group process.

Duration:

cca. 20 minutes for preparing the choreographies, then cca. 1-2 minutes for the performances.

Equipment:

Identical sets of cards featuring abstract symbols is needed. Each subgroup will need one.

No music is necessary.

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

After the performing subgroup checks the solutions of the spectators they might repeat the performance.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

This exercise makes it possible to reflect on one's role taking in a working small group. Do I take a leading or rather a following role? How do I manage (or do I not manage) to give my input? How do I cooperate? How do I deal with different ideas and opinions? Ask for and give feedback! How do you perceive the others? How do they perceive you?

Learning outcomes:

1. accept ambiguity, flexibility in communication, in organization and project work, in working environments of helping professionals, including clinical, teaching/ learning environments



2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
4. develop empathy, honesty and respect for differences
9. adopt an attitude of reflectiveness
15. analyse learners' strengths, weaknesses and learning opportunities and plan the learning process accordingly
20. clarify roles and responsibilities in the team
21. adopt an attitude of openness to tasks that are not necessarily part of their usual role
22. improve knowledge of one's possibilities and limits in the context of educational/helping activity
23. foster cooperation among team members
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
30. adopt an attitude of readiness to confront and be confronted
33. be aware of spatial dimensions of interpersonal situations
34. be aware of different modalities of expression, relying on the strengths inherent in the client
36. create a story as a way to express thoughts, information, emotions

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling: The choreographies tend to have a story. The subgroups can be encouraged to conceptualise it verbally, to transform it into a tale.

Integration with humour strategies: You can give the instruction at the beginning to create a "funny" performance.

Contributor: Halmos, Gábor



7. Dance with sticks

Description of the exercise:

Two persons are in contact via two thin sticks held between them only by the light pressure they apply at the two ends of them by their index fingers. Explore movement possibilities! First slowly, later with more dynamism.

Aim of the exercise:

Attunement

Physical contact through an object

Structure:

The basic setting is in pairs, but it can be developed into trios, or groups of more people, even the whole group is possible.

Target population:

any population with basic fine motor skills in their arms and hands

Minimum-maximum group size:

5 to 30

Conditions:

This exercise enhances concentration in the group. It is good to use when you want to deepen the process.

Duration:

4-10 minutes each turn

Equipment:

Thin sticks. Each pair has to have two.

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

Possible development 1: Changing partners can give an impression how different the connection to different people can be.

Possible development 2: We can work in the direction of the whole group. Create trios or groups of four connected by sticks held in place by the fingertips. Or groups of six, or the whole group can be connected.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

The following topics could be addressed: adaptation to changing situation, differences in the encounters with different persons, characteristics regarding leading/following, personal talents.

Learning outcomes:

- 2. adjust to a changing situation
- 3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
- 20. clarify roles and responsibilities in the team
- 32. be aware of own body / physical / somatic sensations, and body clues of the client
- 33. be aware of spatial dimensions of interpersonal situations

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:



Integration with humour strategies: This exercise - for its calming, concentrative qualities - could introduce some work into the clown figure. The sticks could be used as part of a transformation game (find different use, meaning for the object).

Contributor: Kiss, Tibor Cece



8. Drawing

Description of the exercise:

Create a drawing, a painting, a visual representation of your experience.

Aim of the exercise:

Use a different artistic expressive modality.

Encounter in visual art modality

Structure:

Mostly individual, but it can be used in pairs or little groups. Even the whole group can create something together.

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

any size

Conditions:

It is good to emphasize that the focus is not on the aesthetic value but rather on the expressive quality of the drawings.

As drawing is physically less challenging, it can be alternated with movement exercises.

Duration:

15 min - 1 hour

Equipment:

Sheets of paper, drawing and painting material is necessary.

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

There is an inexhaustible source of possibilities, a whole art therapy approach is dedicated to visual arts modality. Some possible development ideas:

1. Drawing can happen individually, but it can be a means of encounter, when two persons communicate with each other in drawing.
2. Or a group of four can have turns and draw something on the paper making it more and more complex with each turn - all this without speaking. In the end their task might be to write the fairy-tale "that they just drew the illustration for".
3. The choice of painting/drawing material can make the creation quite a different experience. Using water paint for example takes more time and reaches more emotional levels.
4. After some symbolic or relational work the experiences can be put on a visual level before verbal sharing.
5. Movement and drawing can alternate, inspiring each others.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

How do the participants relate to the various expressive artistic modalities?

There is a possibility of giving and receiving feedbacks.

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
4. develop empathy, honesty and respect for differences



5. educate knowledge of the notions and concepts of acceptance of ambiguity and change
9. adopt an attitude of reflectiveness
10. take an attitude of readiness to unlearn
11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity
12. identify one's own emotions and relate them to a working situation
13. share one's own emotions with the group in an educational/supportive way and maintain ethical boundaries
14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
15. analyse learners' strengths, weaknesses and learning opportunities and plan the learning process accordingly
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
27. work with empathy in a way that allows others to learn from the experience
28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
29. deal with emotions and ask for support
30. adopt an attitude of readiness to confront and be confronted
31. use artistic expression for self development and self reflection
34. be aware of different modalities of expression, relying on the strengths inherent in the client

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling: There are many options. E.g. you can create a story, a fairy-tale relying on a drawing created by a small group.

Integration with humour strategies: You can draw a caricature of something.

Contributor: Kiss, Tibor Cece



9. Clay work

Description of the exercise:

Get in touch with the material, with the clay. Knead it without intending to reach any specific form. Then create a clay statue.

Aim of the exercise:

Use a different artistic expressive modality
Create something in 3D
Deepening of the process

Structure:

Mostly individual, but it can be used in pairs or little groups. This doesn't happen often though.

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

5 to 30

Conditions:

It is advisable to give time at the beginning just for exploring and getting the clay warmed up in the hands. This also makes the clay more plastic.

It is good to emphasize that the focus is not on the aesthetic value but rather on the expressive quality of the clay work.

Duration:

15-30 mins

Equipment:

clay in enough quantity for the whole group
bowl with water to moisten the clay
optionally some tools for shaping the clay

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

1. When the small figurines are ready they can be shown at an improvised exhibition where the group walks around and the maker gives sharing about the process.
2. You can create a relational exercise by creating pairs where the two persons work on the clay in turns.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

How do the participants relate to the various expressive artistic modalities?
What specific insights are gained from working with clay?
There is a possibility of giving and receiving feedbacks.

Learning outcomes:

12. identify one's own emotions and relate them to a working situation
13. share one's own emotions with the group in an educational/supportive way and maintain ethical boundaries
14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude



- 28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
- 29. deal with emotions and ask for support
- 31. use artistic expression for self development and self reflection
- 34. be aware of different modalities of expression, relying on the strengths inherent in the client

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling: You can create a story of the clay figurine. Elaborate its history, its relations, its present and its possible future.

Contributor: Kiss, Tibor Cece



10. Mask work

Description of the exercise:

In pairs, create a plaster mask of the other person lying on his/her back!

Aim of the exercise:

Use a different artistic expressive modality

Creating trust

Deepening of the process

Work with self-image, shadow self

Deepening self-knowledge

Structure:

The creation happens in pairs.

Working with it can happen individually, in pairs, or in the whole group.

Target population:

people with enough self-restraint so as to stay immobile for cca. 1 hour while the mask is being made.

People who get claustrophobic under the plaster can choose to have a mask of their hands made, or they can choose to draw a mask for themselves.

Minimum-maximum group size:

6 to 30 (even number is required)

Conditions:

It is a more advanced exercise, a safe group atmosphere is required. To have more benefit, use it later in the group process, in the working phase or nearing the closing phase.

As it is rather time consuming, use it during a longer group process.

It is good to emphasize that the focus is not on the aesthetic value but rather on the expressive quality of the mask work.

Duration:

Creating the plaster mask takes up cca. 1 hour.

Working with it in different settings might take up many more hours.

Equipment:

plaster stripes in enough quantity for the whole group, scissors, sheets paper for protecting the cloths from wet plaster, paper tissue, cream to be applied on face (so that plaster mask does not get stuck in the tiny hairs), bowls for water where the plaster is mixed

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

1. After the masks are ready it is quite a strong experience to work with white masks in movement. There are many possibilities, as for example exploring one's own mask, or meeting with each others wearing the masks.

2. The masks can be painted expressing a theme chosen for the process, e.g. inner strengths, or the shadow self.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

How do the participants relate to the various expressive artistic modalities?

What specific insights are gained from working with masks?

There is a possibility of giving and receiving feedbacks.



Learning outcomes:

11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity
12. identify one's own emotions and relate them to a working situation
13. share one's own emotions with the group in an educational/supportive way and maintain ethical boundaries
14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
15. analyse learners' strengths, weaknesses and learning opportunities and plan the learning process accordingly
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
29. deal with emotions and ask for support
31. use artistic expression for self development and self reflection
34. be aware of different modalities of expression, relying on the strengths inherent in the client

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with humour strategies: You can choose to create the mask of your clown figure. Clowns' faces are prototypically painted anyway.

Contributor: Kiss, Tibor Cece



11. Theatre

Description of the exercise:

Using props and costumes solo or duo or group performances - using words or completely nonverbal - can be put on stage.

Aim of the exercise:

Use a different artistic expressive modality
Deepening of the process
Work with self-image
Deepening self-knowledge
Work with performance skills

Structure:

whole group process (although on stage individual, pair, trio or small group performance can happen, all the others are spectators)

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

5 to 30

Conditions:

It is a more advanced exercise, a safe group atmosphere is required. To have more benefit, use it later in the group process, in the working phase or nearing the closing phase.
As it is rather time consuming, use it during a longer group process.
It is good to emphasize that the focus is not on the aesthetic value but rather on the expressive quality of the performances.

Duration:

20 min - 1,5 hours

Equipment:

All kinds of theatrical props can be used including lighting and other stage equipment, but it can be a "minimalist" theatre as well where only the bodies and space are used.

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

There is an inexhaustible source of possibilities, a whole art therapy approach is dedicated to drama and theatre modality. Some possible development ideas:

1. Any movement exercises can be put on stage later on. Exposition to spectators or witnesses creates an extra layer of experience.
2. After a story is created it can be played on stage.
3. Mask work can be completed by performance on stage.
4. Closing a longer group process can conclude to a performance eve, where the participants can show something from their development in solo or duo performances.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

How do the participants relate to the various expressive artistic modalities?
What specific insights are gained from working with theatre?
There is a possibility of giving and receiving feedbacks.



Learning outcomes:

11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity
12. identify one's own emotions and relate them to a working situation
13. share one's own emotions with the group in an educational/supportive way and maintain ethical boundaries
14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
15. analyse learners' strengths, weaknesses and learning opportunities and plan the learning process accordingly
20. clarify roles and responsibilities in the team
22. improve knowledge of one's possibilities and limits in the context of educational/helping activity
23. foster cooperation among team members
28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
29. deal with emotions and ask for support
31. use artistic expression for self development and self reflection
34. be aware of different modalities of expression, relying on the strengths inherent in the client
36. create a story as a way to express thoughts, information, emotions
42. (stage) presence in public situations

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling: The relationship is obvious, performances work with stories - verbal or nonverbal.

Integration with humour strategies: Another obvious connection: in the clown work performance is inherent.

Contributor: Kiss, Tibor Cece



12. Chrystal dance

Description of the exercise:

Free movement or dance in the room. When someone stops somewhere as a statue, all the others stop moving around and go to that person, touching him/her while taking up a chosen position, thus chrystallizing as a group statue. Then the first person starts moving again, and the whole statue dissolves. All move and dance again until the next person stops, and so on. It is possible that without intending to two persons stop around the same time: this can create a two-core chrystal.

Aim of the exercise:

Relating to each other
Creating together
Experiencing that I am the centre
Experiencing that I am part of the whole

Structure:

whole group process

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

5 to 30

Conditions:

It can be used around the beginning of the group process thus helping the group cohesion. Or it can be used at the end as a fare-well exercise.

Duration:

4 to 8 minutes

Equipment:

use it with any nice music

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

You can use the structure of this exercise for mapping the relationships in a group. You can observe and in a way measure the likes and dislikes in the group by the choice of position and distance in correlation to each other.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

This exercise creates an opportunity for reflection on the roles and relationships in the group.

Learning outcomes:

- 2. adjust to a changing situation
- 3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
- 20. clarify roles and responsibilities in the team
- 32. be aware of own body / physical / somatic sensations, and body clues of the client
- 33. be aware of spatial dimensions of interpersonal situations

Original method: expression and dance/movement

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:



Integration with humour strategies: It can be added to the instruction that the participants try to adopt unexpected or exaggerated positions.

Contributor: Kiss, Tibor Cece



13. Absurd introduction

Description of the exercise:

Everybody presents his/her neighbour without knowing him/her. Feel free to imagine anything!

Aim of the exercise:

Create a playful mood in the group

Have a first contact with the group and its members without a classic presentation round

Structure:

whole group in a circle

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

4 to 20

Conditions:

At the beginning of a workshop when people don't know each other yet

Duration:

5 to 10 min (depends on the size of the group)

Equipment:

none

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

Try to say something about your neighbour that is obviously not true or you think is not true.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

How was receiving a description that was made relying on the perception or first impression. What can I identify with? What is strange and not acceptable? How does humour help?

Learning outcomes:

3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations

4. develop empathy, honesty and respect for differences

switch/change perspective

11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity

14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits

15. analyse learners' strengths, weaknesses and learning opportunities and plan the learning process accordingly

26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude

30. adopt an attitude of readiness to confront and be confronted

41. switch/change perspective

42. (stage) presence in public situations

43. establish humour in working institutions and environment

Original method: humour strategies

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling: the connection is obvious, this IS storytelling.



Integration with expression and dance/movement: You can make this kind of introduction nonverbally, in a pantomime way.

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie



14. Whiskeymixer

Description of the exercise:

„This is very serious! Relax your body, stand in a good position...“ (you can start the exercise like that) stay in a circle, nobody is allowed to laugh, if somebody laughs, as a punishment he has to run around the whole circle, there are three words circling around (as if you were giving a ball from one to the next person, you pass the word: „Whiskey mixer!“ to the right, you can change direction with „Measuring swap!“ and to the left you continue with the word „Wax mask!“)

Aim of the exercise:

Energizer
Creating confusion
Show the power of laugh
Observe group dynamics

Structure:

whole group process

Target population:

any population (except for people that can't move very well)

Minimum-maximum group size:

7 to 30

Conditions:

Opener or after a break or when the energy is low

Duration:

depends on the size of the group, 5-15 minutes

Equipment:

none

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

You can adapt the game to your own language, e.g. in German you can use "Whiskeymixer – Messwechsel – Wachsmaske"

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

How does humour help? Finding humour in making mistakes. Not taking ourselves too seriously.

Learning outcomes:

- 43. establish humour in working institutions and environment
- 44. distance themselves from own work
- 45. use relaxation in the work

Original method: humour strategies

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling or expression and dance/movement: This exercise can be used as a funny energizer in appropriate group processes working with other methodologies as well.

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie



15. Oh, James!

Description of the exercise:

Stay in a nice circle, somebody starts to pretend to shoot somebody named „James“. James acts as if having been shot and slowly, painfully dying. The two people next to him (one on the right, one on the left side) scream with a high voice „oh James“ and help him when collapsing to the floor. Just before the moment when he is really dead, he shoots at another person in the circle, and that person can begin with the fake agony. Afterwards this person can stand up and rejoin the circle.

Aim of the exercise:

Energizer
Creating confusion
Show the power of laugh
Playing
Taking a new role
Paying attention

Structure:

whole group process

Target population:

anyone that can move well (may be not for people with a fragile physical health or people with a handicap)

Minimum-maximum group size:

10 to 20

Conditions:

Opener or after a break or when the energy is low or when you want to get more in a playing mood instead of being focused on thinking and discussing

Duration:

depends on the size of the group, 5-15 minutes

Equipment:

none

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

Instead of shooting with a pistol, you can also use a lasso, boomerang, bombs, a rifle, a bow...

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

How does humour help? Elaboration of tension and aggressive tendencies.

Learning outcomes:

- 42. (stage) presence in public situations
- 43. establish humour in working institutions and environment
- 44. distance themselves from own work
- 45. use relaxation in the work

Original method: humour strategies

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:



Integration with storytelling: you can also make the people play out the whole story, why did they shoot, what happens after - so that it gets a (short) story - as a common improvising game with the whole group in a circle

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie



16. Emphatic energy circle

Description of the exercise:

Walk with the whole group in a nice round (!) circle, look continuously into the other's eyes – looking from one to the next person, get energy from the others' eyes, find a common rhythm (the leader has to remind the people not to forget to look into each others' eyes and to keep the group rhythm, to keep the same distance from each other and to keep the circle round and nice – if not some people might lose the contact with the whole group). Get faster all together, but staying in the same rhythm, everybody can change the direction counting out loud in the rhythm of the walk (or later - run): „one - two – three – change“, with „change“ everybody changes in the same time the direction, all together turn around. Get faster all together looking into each others' eyes, getting the energy from each other – at the fastest point, when everybody is running, exclaim feelings with noises, e.g. how was my breakfast together, how did I sleep tonight, how am I doing today... (the leader asks these questions) – when you get exhausted, you get slower again, but all together and all in the same rhythm, till you walk again and then you move in very slow movements and the whole group comes closer to each other until all people are very close and get to stop the movement at all. There you stop the exercise.

Aim of the exercise:

Get together as a group
Get energy from the group
Warming up
Arriving into the space and into the situation
Leave behind the situation that you are coming from

Structure:

whole group process

Target population:

anyone that can move well (may be not for people with a fragile physical health or people with a handicap)

Minimum-maximum group size:

10 to 20

Conditions:

Opener, warm up exercise, getting in contact and developing a feeling for the group and for being in that group. It is important to emphasize that the group really has to keep the common rhythm as well as the round, nice circle and the contact with the others looking into their eyes.

Duration:

10-15 minutes

Equipment:

none

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

You can ask a lot of different questions at the fastest point of the exercise, e.g. if you are at the beginning of the second day, you can also ask how they are feeling now in the morning of the second day or how they liked the first day of the workshop.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:



Make the experience that you can get lots of energy from your group and from the others so that you don't even realize that you are exhausted, because you are still able to run and overcome limits. You can get a feeling for the group and its mood, creating a common atmosphere.

Learning outcomes:

- 32. be aware of own body / physical / somatic sensations, and body clues of the client
- 44. distance themselves from own work
- 45. use relaxation in the work

Original method: humour strategies

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with expression and dance/movement: when you have a longer workshop of some days, you can use the circle to share (deeper) feelings on the fastest point of the circle and to focus the energy of the group, it can help you during a longer process

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie



17. Spotlight

Description of the exercise:

Phase 1: Move with music in the space. When the music stops, talk to the person next to you, exchange whatever you like, try to remember your dialogue. Maximum five stops with the music if you have a big group.

Phase 2: Presentation: The participants enter the scene one by one, speaking out loudly their name, then the people who met this person before come on the scene and give the person a spot – also with a gesture/body position – telling a memory out of their little meeting. Then all the „spot-givers“ freeze, and the public claps for the person „in the spotlight“.

Aim of the exercise:

Get to know each other

Overcome own limits

Get encouraged to be on stage, to be seen, not to be shy

Active listening

Feeling accepted by the group

Structure:

whole group process

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

10 to 20

Conditions:

At the beginning of a workshop, it is a very beloved exercise, because you can create a nice atmosphere, the members of a group get to know each other and they make a first, but easy stage experience, let the people talk to each other not longer than two minutes – otherwise it gets endless.

Duration:

depends on the size of the group, 20-40 minutes

Equipment:

Big space, and some music is necessary.

Energizing, light music, easy to move on

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

It's possible to use this exercise also for a feedback step. In this case the first part of the exercise is similar, but when the music stops the participants share their feeling about the training with another participant. In the second part, on the scene, one or more „pictures“ will be created. One person after the other enters the stage and speaks out loud one feedback in one short sentence, that he/she received before from someone else. After 4-5 people the people go back into the public and a new picture starts. This can make feedback to the workshop organisers, trainers anonymous.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

What was your experience during the development of a private meeting into a stage performance?

How did you overcome your own shyness and limits or fears to be in the center of the attention?

What did help in improving the skill to talk to a big group/audience? E.g. through feeling accepted by the group and through getting into a playful mode.



In case of the second version of the exercise: How was working on problems, conflicts through receiving and giving anonymous and authentic feedbacks?

Learning outcomes:

- 11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity
- 25. listen actively
- 26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
- 42. (stage) presence in public situations
- 43. establish humour in working institutions and environment
- 44. distance themselves from own work

Original method: humour strategies

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling: try to perform "the whole story" of a person in a short time

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie; Messina, Raffaele



18. Initial clown exercise

Description of the exercise:

First part: Put prohibitions and dictates of the childhood into a drapery and shake it out of the window. It can happen in the mother tongue and can even be silent! But if the people are in the mood for it, it can also be inspiring to hear what the others say, to remember the own childhood. Then the leader puts a hat or something else with the red noses in the middle of the room – everybody can choose a red nose that speaks to him (but don't put it on, yet!!) Find a private place, find a comfortable position (lying), put the nose next to you, close your eyes. Inner child meditation (the leader of the exercise reads it out, there can be a quiet, silent music to accompany the exercise. Second part: Get the nose, put it on on your own (without any contact with the other group members). Explore what it does to you, how your body changes, what sensations it gives to you to have this red nose on your face. Open your eyes, see how the world changed, first lying, then getting up, exploring the world – but still alone, some inputs can be given by the leader: how does the world look like now, how do you feel, in your body, how do you move, how does your body change? etc.) The leader counts dramatically up to five and claps his hand. Now the clowns can see each other and discover each other if they want, if they want to stay alone, they stay alone, free exploring, follow your impulses, enjoy your new figure, meet the others if you like to.

Aim of the exercise:

First part: Get off daily life restrictions, Leave behind all these prohibitions and rules that you learned all your life from your childhood on, Put out your inner child.
Second part: Make a first contact with your own clown figure, Get into a playing c

Structure:

individual process in a group setting, at the end whole group process

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

3 to 30

Conditions:

It is important to develop a trusting atmosphere, before you go to this exercise. It can be very sensitive and it is important that the group members already know each other a little bit and have some confidence in the group. A body warm-up and some exercises of different ways of using your body and to create a figure are important, too, to help the participants to get into a new role.

Duration:

Meditation: 10-15 minutes

First nose contact: 5 minutes

Exploring the room: 5-25 minutes, but it depends on the group, some will get very playful and don't want to stop, some groups are more shy or unsure and want to end faster with this exercise and rather

Equipment:

music, red noses (at least as many as there are participants, but it is better to have more noses in different styles, so that the participants can change if they need or if something gets broken. If you don't have enough noses, at least you can prepare s

Development of the exercise, possible variations:



Of course there are many ways to create the first contact with the red nose. This can be one possibility. But there is no right or wrong. It depends also on how you see the clown figure. In this method it is important for your clown to have this playful being that you had as a child and what you learnt to leave behind during the years when you were growing up. Here we try to get back into a playing mode in which you can re-discover the world and its surprises and in which you don't have to be perfect. The nose is the „smallest mask of the world“ (Jacques Lecoq) and we can use it as a help to open up a journey to rediscover the world. Later some clowns don't use the red nose any more, some of them have an other make-up. The most important is to create a whole figure with its own character that might be based on the „real personality“ behind. The red nose is not the most important, but as it works like a mask works, it opens up the doors and helps to bring a person in a new mode or humour.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

How is your "playmode"? Reflect on your restrictions and limitations, on how you change perspectives, on how you re-discover your environment in a new way. What is your own clownfigure like? In what way is it similar to you, as you know yourself? In what way is it different?

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
4. develop empathy, honesty and respect for differences
9. adopt an attitude of reflectiveness
10. take an attitude of readiness to unlearn
11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity
14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
23. foster cooperation among team members
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
31. use artistic expression for self development and self reflection
41. switch/change perspective
42. (stage) presence in public situations
43. establish humour in working institutions and environment
44. distance themselves from own work

Original method: humour strategies, clown work

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with expression and dance/movement: make a verbal sharing round about your "inner child" - did you find it, how was it to be a child again, how did it feel, was there some sadness or joy or...

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie; Messina, Raffaele



19. Clowns' ritual - individual

Description of the exercise:

Find a little ritual for putting on and off your red nose (possibly three movements that you can always repeat before putting on your nose).

Aim of the exercise:

Create a transition
Transform yourself into another character
Have a conscious and private moment about changing reality
Put yourself in a playing mood

Structure:

individual

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

any size

Conditions:

You can install it after a first meeting with the clown or in a later phase. This is a ritual that can accompany you throughout your whole "clown life". It is important that you find a quiet place in the room and that you have a private moment just with yourself to concentrate on the transition moment into the clown role.

Duration:

30 sec - 2 min

Equipment:

red noses

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

If you (later?) work with make-up, you can also integrate your little ritual in the phase of putting on the make-up. Then the short ritual becomes a whole "meditation" of getting into your inner clown - for those who might need more time than a little short "switch".

There are different notions of clowning, but from what I learned in my theatre school and what I am convinced of is that you never put on your nose in public, you always have your private magic transition moment in which you find the switch from the private person to your clown character. It is very helpful to have your own clown ritual that you can celebrate in any moment when you want to switch and that helps you to transform yourself.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

How do you create transitions in your life? How do you care for your needs?

Learning outcomes:

- 9 adopt an attitude of reflectiveness
- 10. take an attitude of readiness to unlearn
- 11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity
- 14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
- 41. switch/change perspective



- 42. (stage) presence in public situations
- 43. establish humour in working institutions and environment
- 44. distance themselves from own work
- 45. use relaxation in the work

Original method: humour strategies, clown work

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling: the transition can be a key element of a story/when working with stories

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie



20. Clowns' ritual in pairs

Description of the exercise:

In pairs: develop a short greeting ritual (find five common movements together without talking). Then show the ritual to the others (little "spotlight showing" in the room, not on stage).

Aim of the exercise:

Get together
Find an easy way to play together
Lose fear of the first contact with your nose
Try out to play something

Structure:

pairs

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

4 to 20

Conditions:

To overcome the first fear/insecurity after meeting with your inner clown figure and get in contact with somebody in your red nose/clown. Make a first experience in "showing something" to a public, but in an easy way, in a playful mode.

Duration:

10 min (depends on group size)

Equipment:

red noses

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

The pairs try to find each other with closed eyes in the room with the help of the noises of the movements of their ritual.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Following issues can be addressed: cooperation skills, acceptance of self and other, public presence, adjustment in changing situations.

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
21. adopt an attitude of openness to tasks that are not necessarily part of their usual role
23. foster cooperation among team members
42. (stage) presence in public situations
43. establish humour in working institutions and environment
44. distance themselves from own work

Original method: humour strategies, clown work



Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with expression and dance/movement: This exercise has a lot in common with expression and dance/movement. There is a nonverbal encounter where a common movement pattern will be created, that, furthermore, will be shown in the group.

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie



21. Development of my clown character - qualities of movement

Description of the exercise:

Try out different ways of walks and body positions. First way of trying it out: you get external orders how to move your body e.g. freeze your arm, walk on the outer/inner edges of your feet and let influence from this starting point your whole body, you elaborate a whole character or a feeling from that.

Aim of the exercise:

Explore possibilities of developing a character
Find unusual ways of moving and behaving

Structure:

individual

Target population:

any population with movement abilities

Minimum-maximum group size:

4 to 20

Conditions:

Use it e.g. after the introduction to the clown and putting on the red nose. But you can always use it to explore and to discover new sides of your clown character.

Duration:

10 min

Equipment:

red noses and optionally music (if you like or if you want to stimulate a special atmosphere, put the clowns in a special mood)

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

There are endless possibilities to discover new ways of moving, behaving, acting, so you can introduce this as one proposition, the participants may figure out themselves what helps them to get creative and inspired for their clown through trying out different possibilities.

Another idea is to take a feeling or a gaseous state (water, air, fire, floor) or a material (stone, wax, etc.) and let your whole body movements and your figure inspire by that.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Following issues can be addressed: connection between movement quality, bodily expression, emotional state, mood. What are the main characteristics of your clown character?

Learning outcomes:

- 3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
- 14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
- 21. adopt an attitude of openness to tasks that are not necessarily part of their usual role
- 23. foster cooperation among team members
- 28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
- 32. be aware of own body / physical / somatic sensations, and body clues of the client
- 42. (stage) presence in public situations
- 43. establish humour in working institutions and environment



44. distance themselves from own work

Original method: humour strategies, clown work

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with expression and dance/movement: You can use this exercise also as a helping tool that creates deeper self-knowledge. Experimenting with movements and feelings with an external cue and then analyzing what feelings/movements you liked and why, what would you like to keep for your own/private personality, what did you dislike and why, what do you see in others' movements and so on.

Integration with storytelling: You can create stories that are played out purely with different movement qualities.

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie



22. Development of my inner clown - walking styles

Description of the exercise:

In pairs - one walks, the other one observes the "normal, neutral" walk. The observer starts to walk behind the first person and tries to imitate the walk of the first person and give emphasis on specific qualities of the walking. The first person stops walking and starts observing the "feedback" of his pair. Then he/she starts to walk again, this time behind the previous observer and plays with exaggerating the movement. The previous observer stops walking, observes and walks behind the other person, exaggerating what he sees even more. Now it becomes a parody. Then change roles (the previous observer will be the first walking person).

Aim of the exercise:

Learn to play with yourself and with your really individual specialities of your body
Accept everything what is special about you and play with it
Use your "body material"
Explore the possibilities of your clown

Structure:

pairs and individual

Target population:

any population with movement abilities

Minimum-maximum group size:

4 to 20

Conditions:

Use it e.g. after the introduction to the clown and putting on the red nose. But you can always use it to explore and to discover new sides of your clown character.

Theoretical background: The clown's play is a lot about playing with human mistakes, foibles, weaknesses and strengths. It is about being human and human issues. So you can reach authenticity and freedom in your play if you learn to play and feel free with your body, to accept own strengths, but also weaknesses. If you are able to play with your "body material" you can have a big effect on the public, because it feels that there is something real and authentic. Examples can be a tall person that wears high heels or trousers that are too short to emphasize how tall he/she is. Or a very thin person that wears very straight clothes. This can be the costume level, but the development starts with your walk, maybe one of the shoulders is hanging down, so this can be exaggerated and hang down even more.

Duration:

15 min for the pair work
5-10 min for further experimentation with different walking styles

Equipment:

nothing

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

1. If the atmosphere in your group is quite relaxed and open, you can let the people show the parody of other people. Make sure that this is meant in a respectful way, not to hurt anybody, but to laugh together at ourselves in a positive way and in a joint, safe atmosphere.
2. Wearing the red noses (think of your little ritual when putting it on): walk in the room, try out different „Clowns“: you are a scary, gentle, stupid, elegant, vain etc. clown. How do you move



around as that kind of a clown? With bent legs or stiff knees, bent or straight and so on – explore your clown! The leader/trainer gives the indication of exploring different characteristics, so you need to have prepared a list of characteristics/moods/adjectives that you want your participants to try out. Also, you might want to tell them that they shall pay attention to what feels good for them, what do they want to keep, what do they not want to use as material for their own clown figure.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

You can invite reflection how the participants dealt with making mistakes, seeing weaknesses and encourage giving and receiving feedbacks to and from each other.

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
10. take an attitude of readiness to unlearn
11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity
12. identify one's own emotions and relate them to a working situation
13. share one's own emotions with the group in an educational/supportive way and maintain ethical boundaries
14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
21. adopt an attitude of openness to tasks that are not necessarily part of their usual role
23. foster cooperation among team members
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
32. be aware of own body / physical / somatic sensations, and body clues of the client
42. (stage) presence in public situations
43. establish humour in working institutions and environment
44. distance themselves from own work

Original method: humour strategies, clown work

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with expression and dance/movement: The connection between the different approaches is quite obvious, we experiment with expressive movement.

Integration with storytelling: When you have a clown character you want to explore more deeply you can put it into little scenes, and have them play out stories.

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie



23. Three levels of emotions

Description of the exercise:

Walk in the room, the leader/trainer calls out different feelings (joy, boredom, anger, fear, being in love, sadness, curiosity etc.). The group plays the feeling with movement and sound qualities. When the leader/trainer claps his hands, the participants increase the feeling, on the next handclapping they exaggerate the feeling completely – and then decrease the intensity.

Aim of the exercise:

Play with different feelings
Play with different intensities

Structure:

individual process in the whole group

Target population:

any population with movement abilities

Minimum-maximum group size:

4 to 20

Conditions:

Use it, when the group is already warmed up and if there is a trustful atmosphere. It needs some courage to open up and increase feelings.

Theoretical background: A clown has to be able to get very deeply into emotions very fast and also to be able to get off them. He/she is like a little child, sometimes crying, sometimes laughing, he expresses directly what he feels, he has a direct response to the environment. Clowns are very subjective, so it is important to learn to play with emotions and to have a tool kit of emotions. It is also important that you really play with it, it is not useful to get into an emotion and stay there and live it for real, discover all the different sides of an emotion. If you get stuck, it can become a melodrama.

Duration:

10-15 min

Equipment:

none

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

You can also increase feelings in a circle, one participant starts to express any chosen feeling, he starts it very subtly, little, the next participant makes it a little bigger and so on, until it reaches the maximum. You can also indicate to do it in 10 steps the participants have to be very precise how much they increase a feeling (not for beginners). Even more advanced is to reduce the feeling: once you reached the maximum you go back again until it completely disappears.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Following issues can be addressed: expression of emotions, different levels of intensity, transitions. Likes and dislikes about the experience. Thoughts about using the exercise in a helping (professional) environment.

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation



3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
21. adopt an attitude of openness to tasks that are not necessarily part of their usual role
23. foster cooperation among team members
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
29. deal with emotions and ask for support
32. be aware of own body / physical / somatic sensations, and body clues of the client
41. switch/change perspective
42. (stage) presence in public situations
43. establish humour in working institutions and environment
44. distance themselves from own work

Original method: humour strategies

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with expression and dance/movement: working with different intensities has a bodily movement component which is easily integrated with expression and dance/movement.

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie



24. Three levels of emotions

Description of the exercise:

Scene on stage: two clowns but only one chair. Find different strategies to defend/conquer the chair.

Aim of the exercise:

Improvise together on stage

Structure:

pairs, there are always two Clowns on stage to improvise together

Target population:

any population with movement abilities

Minimum-maximum group size:

6 to 50

Conditions:

This exercise can be an introductory stage exercise for the exploration of how to create an own improvised scene on stage, working with a partner. It might help if you give some rules like: It is important to accept the propositions of your partner and not to block, because then the scene is finished suddenly. Find a good end together, etc.

Duration:

30 to 45 min with a group of 15-20 people (10 pairs à 4-5 min)

Equipment:

a chair, a stage

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

You can give some rules like: A clown says always "yes" to the partner or the two clowns are in some family relationship with each other, or are lovers etc.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Following issues can be addressed: how do you deal with conflicting interests. Likes and dislikes about the experience. Thoughts about using the exercise in a helping (professional) environment.

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
6. identify the potential of conflict and problem resolution related environment; clinical treatment environment, learning & teaching environment, group dynamics, constantly changing contexts of our existence the environment
10. take an attitude of readiness to unlearn
12. identify one's own emotions and relate them to a working situation
13. share one's own emotions with the group in an educational/supportive way and maintain ethical boundaries
14. take an attitude of openness to accept one's own unconscious behaviours/habits
15. analyse learners' strengths, weaknesses and learning opportunities and plan the learning process accordingly
20. clarify roles and responsibilities in the team
21. adopt an attitude of openness to tasks that are not necessarily part of their usual role



23. foster cooperation among team members
24. take an attitude of tolerance for interpersonal tensions and openness to deal with disagreements
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
30. adopt an attitude of readiness to confront and be confronted
41. switch/change perspective
42. (stage) presence in public situations
43. establish humour in working institutions and environment
44. distance themselves from own work

Original method: humour strategies

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with storytelling: The connection is obvious, stories are created on stage. But you can also use this exercise to train your storytelling skills, then you need some more introduction to storytelling to give/remember some basics that should be in the scene. When you put the exercise into a later moment of your workshop, you can give some time to the participants to invent the whole story before. Then it is less improvising and more focused on creating a story together.

Contributor: Bouchbouk, Sophie



25. "Me" Story Bag

Description of the exercise:

1. Look all the things in your bedroom and around the house. Choose five or six objects that tells something special about you. Put the objects into a paper bag.
2. Decorate the bag with your favourite colours, cartoons, sports stars, etc.
3. On the outside of the bag write your full name in big letters. Ask your parents to tell you the story behind your name. Why was the name chosen? Who were you named after? Were there any unusual circumstances surrounding your birth or naming?
4. Share the contents of the bag with other participants in your group.

Aim of the exercise:

Learn about yourself

Learning how to connect emotion and stories

Group building

Structure:

individual process in a group setting

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

2 to 50

Conditions:

Be aware of possible traumatic events in the past of participants. A special attention has to be put on the central role of names and naming, which might bring up childhood/family issues.

Duration:

Preparation is "homework", can take up a lot of time but not from the group time.

Presentation might take about 5 min pro person.

Equipment:

paper bags

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

Number of materials could be changed, topics can vary for example to "what is home for you", "where did you live" etc.

A special dynamic can be created when the "factual" story can be told in a "fantastic" way.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Ask for the motivation and why the items were chosen. Relate this to the structure of storytelling.

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity
12. identify one's own emotions and relate them to a working situation
13. share one's own emotions with the group in an educational/supportive way and maintain ethical boundaries
25. listen actively



26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
27. work with empathy in a way that allows others to learn from the experience
28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
29. deal with emotions and ask for support
35. discuss and understand the essential elements of a story
36. create a story as a way to express thoughts, information, emotions
37. use the method of storytelling in self-reflection, self-understanding and for understanding others
38. use the method of storytelling to improve communication skills
39. be able to re-interpret, re-organise a story and change the narrative
40. identify the potential of storytelling for solving various problematic situations (professional and personal)

Original method: storytelling

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with humour strategies: There is the possibility of improvisation and expression on stage.

Integration with expression and dance/movement: 'Travel to yourself': authentic movement from one end of the room to the other end, with a partner witnessing, and giving feedback nonverbally and verbally.

Contributor: Barthel, Martin



26. Toy Stories

Description of the exercise:

1. Pick a toy, or an object from the bag (of the previous exercise), one that could be a metaphor for who you are or how others see you. Go around the circle and tell why you picked that toy.
2. Form groups of three. Create a group story using all three toys.

Aim of the exercise:

Icebreaking
Group building
Get-to-know each other
First steps to discover storytelling

Structure:

individual, then trio

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

6 to 50 (with a number of participants that can be divided into three)

Conditions:

If the exercise is used to explore the storytelling techniques, make sure a storytelling structure had been facilitated before. But it can be used outside storytelling context for getting to know each other or, if materials are chosen adequately, can be used to stimulate discussion on specific topics.

Duration:

20-30 minutes

Equipment:

a bag with a number of various items, photos or postcards. If the method shall be used to stimulate reflection on a topic, vary the items accordingly.

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

The exercise can be used for focused stimulation of discussions. Adapt items accordingly.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Ask for the associations of the participants. What was the motivation of the participants to choose the specific item?

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
27. work with empathy in a way that allows others to learn from the experience
28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
29. deal with emotions and ask for support
35. discuss and understand the essential elements of a story
36. create a story as a way to express thoughts, information, emotions



37. use the method of storytelling in self-reflection, self-understanding and for understanding others
38. use the method of storytelling to improve communication skills
39. be able to re-interpret, re-organise a story and change the narrative
40. identify the potential of storytelling for solving various problematic situations (professional and personal)

Original method: storytelling

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with humour strategies: You can put an emphasis on telling funny stories around the chosen objects.

Contributor: Barthel, Martin



27. Three Word Story

Description of the exercise:

Tell a short story that has a particularly vivid imagery, poetic descriptions and evocative phrases and names. Then ask the listeners to close their eyes and reflect on the story they just heard, and choose one word from the story, one particular word that stands out. Ask the participants to form groups of three.

The participants will share their chosen words. When they have done this, they try to create a story using all three words. If by chance they've chosen the same words, then that word must be used that many times in the story. So if they've chosen 'chrystal', 'sun' and 'delicious' the story is built around these three words. If they've chosen 'chrystal', 'sun' and 'sun', then the story is built around these words and 'sun' is used twice. (Some groups cleverly use homonyms and take the liberty to use 'sun' and 'son'. This can give an interesting twist to a story.) After giving the instructions, give the groups about 5 to 10 minutes to develop their story. Then let the groups share their story with all the other groups—with one individual telling the story, one telling with the help of the other two, or with all three telling the story in turn or in chorus.

Aim of the exercise:

Demonstrate the way a story can be improvised and developed very quickly out of another story
Strengthen and develop descriptive language.

Structure:

whole group process with trios

Target population:

any population capable of using and understanding the same language

Minimum-maximum group size:

5 to 50

Conditions:

Things to look for: This process often leads to a combination of simplicity and richness of language, with short and vivid, powerful stories. Make sure to point that out. Sometimes the stories have themes or incidents similar to the first story, but usually they take an entirely different turn. Again, look for that.

Things to Point Out Before the Activity: Don't give instructions before telling the story. Simply tell the story and allow the listeners to relax and enjoy it. Then ask them to choose a word from the story that stands out in their memory (but don't tell them why). When they have all had a chance to sit quietly and recall the word, then give the instructions.

Duration:

5 minutes for creating the story, 20 minutes for sharing and discussion

Equipment:

prepared story

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

Make sure you created a sufficient story.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Things to Point Out and Ask Participants to Observe After the Activity: This exercise is especially good to demonstrate how richness of language in a story can be used, found, and developed. This



activity makes the groups or individuals tell their story to the other participants, especially if this is an activity at the end of a day-long workshop on storytelling, or an exercise introduced at the third or fourth meeting of a long storytelling residency. It can be a very safe exercise for giving comment and positive criticism upon storytelling techniques and methods to beginners.

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
11. develop knowledge of the various dimensions of identity
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
27. work with empathy in a way that allows others to learn from the experience
28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
29. deal with emotions and ask for support
35. discuss and understand the essential elements of a story
36. create a story as a way to express thoughts, information, emotions
37. use the method of storytelling in self-reflection, self-understanding and for understanding others
38. use the method of storytelling to improve communication skills
39. be able to re-interpret, re-organise a story and change the narrative
40. identify the potential of storytelling for solving various problematic situations (professional and personal)
41. switch/change perspective

Original method: storytelling

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with humour strategies: You can ask the participants to create the story with sudden, unexpected turns, surprises, comic elements.

Integration with expression and dance/movement: The story could be prepared for performance on stage.

Contributor: Barthel, Martin



28. Story Stew

Description of the exercise:

Explain that making up a story is like cooking food. Just as with food, there are lots of different ingredients. And just as each cook has a special recipe, maybe unique to the family, maybe secret, so stories have certain ingredients to make them special. These ingredients make a person's own story special and unique, and help to create an individual and personal style of storytelling.

The participants will receive a 'recipe' for a story. The recipe can be told, or written either on a blackboard or on a piece of paper handed out to the participants. The recipe should have about half a dozen ingredients for the story, and a few optional ingredients to make it spicy. The workshop leader can also stipulate that the story stew must have a certain number of extra ingredients.

Examples of ingredients (The story **MUST** have each of these):

chief girl slave village storm wish

And the story **MUST** have at least **THREE** extra ingredients (it can have more than three):

god magic ring sword cave 3 little pigs horse treasure giant grave

Note: Participants may all receive a different recipe, to come up with very different stories, or they can all work from the same recipe. Different genres can also be explored, with different ingredients so that the story becomes for example a science-fiction story, or a historical fiction story set in a war.

If you give the same words to the groups it's funny to see how different the stories can be.

Aim of the exercise:

Explore how different ingredients can be put together to make a story

Explore how some ingredients are vital for a story to work as a story, or to seem to be a story

Explore how other ingredients make a story unique, special, or in a certain style.

Structure:

whole group process with the possibility of small group work

Target population:

any population capable of using and understanding the same language

Minimum-maximum group size:

5 to 50

Conditions:

Things to look for: If somebody is struggling, encourage and support him by asking questions: Who is in your story? What is the character like? What does he/she look like? What does the character like to do? What is the problem in the story? Where does it take place?

By posing focused questions, and by asking the participants to decide about details, the answers will gradually build up a story.

Things to Point Out Before the Activity: Emphasise the importance of asking questions about the characters so that they can be described in colourful ways. It has to be decided what the problem is and how the characters relate to it. Asking questions can provide a framework that shows how the ingredients may be used and which extra ingredients may be chosen.

Things to Point Out and Ask Participants to Observe After the Activity: Once a basic story is agreed upon, ask the participants whether the story can be made more interesting. Is it worth re-telling a few times and adding more details?

Duration:

20 minutes



Equipment:

ingredients for the stew prepared on paper, paper to write on and writing tool

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

Developing the story is a verbal exercise, and can be done by the entire group to create a shared story, or by pairs or small groups of three to six. The small groups can develop a shared story, or they can work on individual stories. After they have developed their stories, a group or individual can tell the new story to the entire group, or the story could be illustrated, written down, dramatised, or presented by any combination of these activities.

This exercise can be easily adapted to different groups.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Ask about experiences while creating something new. What about creating together? Did you manage to put your input? How? If not, what was the difficulty?

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
27. work with empathy in a way that allows others to learn from the experience
28. take an attitude of openness in the expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts
29. deal with emotions and ask for support
35. discuss and understand the essential elements of a story
36. create a story as a way to express thoughts, information, emotions
37. use the method of storytelling in self-reflection, self-understanding and for understanding others
38. use the method of storytelling to improve communication skills
39. be able to re-interpret, re-organise a story and change the narrative
40. identify the potential of storytelling for solving various problematic situations (professional and personal)
41. switch/change perspective

Original method: storytelling

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with humour strategies: You can ask the participants to create the story with sudden, unexpected turns, surprises, comic elements.

Integration with expression and dance/movement: The story could be prepared for performance on stage.

Contributor: Barthel, Martin



29. Crazy Titles

Description of the exercise:

Explain that a new story will be created out of the title of a well-known story, such as Little Red Riding Hood. Point out that the game works best when the title is more prolonged. In this case, write on the writing board: Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf. The next step is to change the title into something wild, by using antonyms (opposites) or synonyms (the same) for nouns and adjectives. Ask the participants for ideas. This may result in Big Black Chief Helmet and the Small Grumpy Pig.

The next step is to ask for more titles. Emphasize the importance of lengthening the title.

Participants may come up with:

Cinderella and the Mean Sisters and the Pumpkin Coach

The Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf

Goldilocks and the Three Bears and the Walk in the Woods

Jack and the Beanstalk and the Big Ugly Evil Giant

Then ask the participants to change these titles into wild ones.

Once this is done, demonstrate how the title can be turned into a story. Take the first wild example, Big Black Chief Helmet and the Small Grumpy Pig, and explain that a story needs characters, in this case Big Black Chief Helmet and a Small Grumpy Pig. A story also needs a problem. Quickly improvise a story based on the new title, the characters and the problem, and share it with the participants.

Then, the participants continue in couples or groups of three or four. They choose a title to devise a new story. After the groups have devised their stories, volunteers can be asked to tell the new stories to the entire group.

Aim of the exercise:

Playing with known stories, creating new ones.

Structure:

whole group process with small group work later

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

6 to 20

Conditions:

This game provides participants with a structure (that is: a story they already know), and it shows how imagination and creativity can emerge from playing with words. Combining the two, the result is a new story.

Things to look for: This is a complex activity; each step should carefully be made clear.

Things to Point Out Before the Activity: Explain that ideas for new stories can emerge from well-known stories, and that it is amusing to play with titles.

Once the participants have the knack of creating new titles, encourage and praise unusual words and descriptions they come up with. For example when someone replaces the usual 'Little' in Little Red Riding Hood with 'Huge', 'Ginormous', 'Humungous' or another exaggerated adjective.

Duration:

45 minutes

Equipment:



blackboard, white board, flip chart, or overhead projector. Paper and writing materials.

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

Could be developed through symbols or items for non-verbal storytelling.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Ask about creating order from disorder. What about creating together? Did you manage to put your input? How? If not, what was the difficulty?

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
35. discuss and understand the essential elements of a story
36. create a story as a way to express thoughts, information, emotions
37. use the method of storytelling in self-reflection, self-understanding and for understanding others
38. use the method of storytelling to improve communication skills
39. be able to re-interpret, re-organise a story and change the narrative
40. identify the potential of storytelling for solving various problematic situations (professional and personal)

Original method: storytelling

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with humour strategies: You can ask the participants to create the story with sudden, unexpected turns, surprises, comic elements.

Integration with expression and dance/movement: The story could be prepared for performance on stage.

Contributor: Barthel, Martin



30. Memory Game 1 - Everyone can tell a story

Description of the exercise:

Participants are asked to think of something that really happened to them, a memory that is easy to evoke, such as coming late for work, what they had for breakfast, shopping, or visiting a museum. They are asked to close their eyes, recall that memory, play it a few times in their minds, each time trying to remember more details. Encourage them to use ALL FIVE SENSES – sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste. Ask participants to find a partner. The couples then should find a place where they can sit facing each other. Next they have to choose a number, one or two. Then, they should close their eyes and recall their memory. After a few moments of concentration, call out “one” or “two” to announce who starts telling their memory to their partner. After a few minutes, once they’ve had a chance to share the memory, ask everyone to sit quietly for a moment and ask the others to recall their memory, and to give an account of it.

Aim of the exercise:

To show that everyone is a storyteller.

Structure:

whole group process with pairs

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

6 to 26 (even number of participants)

Conditions:

This exercise shows that talking about an event, can turn the recollection into a story that can be communicated as a story. It shows that everyone is a storyteller.

Before the Activity: This activity is an experiment, as in science. Participants will find out that thinking and talking about a personal memory can change that memory into a story, and involves storytelling. They will discover that they do tell stories without even knowing it. There is no right or wrong way to do so.

Duration:

20 - 40 minutes

Equipment:

none

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

If you want to foster connections in the group you can repeat the exercise with a different partner.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Things to Point Out and Ask Participants to Reflect Upon After Activity: Acknowledge that the activity passed off satisfactory—it always does. Ask who thinks they were telling a story when they recounted the memory. Usually very few raise their hands. Then ask who thinks they were listening to a story when it was their turn to listen. Usually everyone raises hands. At that point, one can explain that the activity worked well, and that the participants actually told stories. Point out that people commonly put themselves down and will say they don’t know any stories and cannot tell or remember stories, or even jokes. Point out that this exercise shows that they can, and that the mental



imagery they used to recall and relate the memory of a personal experience is the same kind of mental process one uses in remembering and telling any spoken narrative. Then you can invite reflections about the exercise, the experiences.

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
35. discuss and understand the essential elements of a story
36. create a story as a way to express thoughts, information, emotions
37. use the method of storytelling in self-reflection, self-understanding and for understanding others
38. use the method of storytelling to improve communication skills
39. be able to re-interpret, re-organise a story and change the narrative
40. identify the potential of storytelling for solving various problematic situations (professional and personal)

Original method: storytelling

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with expression and dance/movement: Just as everyone can tell a story, everyone can dance in the sense of free expressive movement if you can let go of self-consciousness.

Contributor: Barthel, Martin



31. Memory Game 2 - Everyone can retell a story

Description of the exercise:

Participants are asked to remember a specific place that is easy to recall and that means something to them. Encourage them to use ALL FIVE SENSES – sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste. First, the participants work in couples and follow the steps described for Memory Game 1. After they have recalled and related their memories in couples, they all come together in a circle or semi-circle. Then someone is asked to volunteer, not tell about his or her own favorite place, but to relate the memory they just heard about from their partner. Let as many people talk to the group as are willing and as there is time for.

Aim of the exercise:

To show that everyone is a storyteller.

To show how we imagine someone else's story as we listen to it

To show how we tell someone else's story as part of our own memory

Structure:

whole group process with pairs

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

6 to 26 (even number of participants)

Conditions:

The exercise can be a starter-activity, or can build upon the previous one. Like the previous one, it shows how personal experiences are remembered and communicated as stories. It also shows how we can imagine someone else's story as we listen to it, and then tell it again as part of our own memory.

Things to Point Out Before the Activity: This is a 'double memory' experiment since the participants are asked not only to relate their own recollection, but also someone else's.

Duration:

20 - 40 minutes

Equipment:

none

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

The development is inherent in the exercise.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Things to Point Out and Ask Participants to Reflect Upon After Activity: Point out that everyone is telling and listening to stories. Also point out the ease with which participants remembered and communicated their partner's memory of a specific place. Learning, remembering and telling a story that one didn't create oneself, is the mental process to aim for.

Then you can invite reflections about the exercise, the experiences.

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation

3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations



25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
35. discuss and understand the essential elements of a story
36. create a story as a way to express thoughts, information, emotions
37. use the method of storytelling in self-reflection, self-understanding and for understanding others
38. use the method of storytelling to improve communication skills
39. be able to re-interpret, re-organise a story and change the narrative
40. identify the potential of storytelling for solving various problematic situations (professional and personal)

Original method: storytelling

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with expression and dance/movement: Just as everyone can tell a story, everyone can dance in the sense of free expressive movement if you can let go of self-consciousness. And everyone can give something back from the quality of the other's movement.

Contributor: Barthel, Martin



32. Object Story

Description of the exercise:

The participant thinks of an object in his or her room, office or house. The participant is encouraged to think about qualities of the object and words to describe it. Then the participant is encouraged to imagine what that object would say to the owner if it could speak. And what would it complain about? What would it praise or encourage? Has it seen anything to talk about? As before, encourage participants to use all five senses and to recall what they see, feel (emotions and physical sensations), hear, smell, and taste.

Ask participants to find a partner. Partners should find a place to sit facing each other, close to each other but not too close to other couples. Then they choose a number, one or two. Ask them to close their eyes and recall the object. After a few moments of concentration, call out “one” or “two” to announce who starts talking in the name of the object they remember. When they have finished their story, ask everyone to sit quietly for a moment, and change roles subsequently.

Aim of the exercise:

Development of the ability to recall and describe.

Development of skills such as characterization and dialogue.

Development of skills such as changing perspective.

Structure:

whole group process with pairs

Target population:

any population

Minimum-maximum group size:

6 to 26 (even number of participants)

Conditions:

Things to look for: This exercise helps to observe how much of the body language shows the degree of involvement. It shows how much listeners and speakers are engaged in the storytelling experience, or hypnagogic trance. In case the participants retell the object stories they heard from their partner, one could point at good examples of descriptive language and characterization.

Things to Point Out Before the Activity: Explain the point of this exercise. Encourage participants not to fuss too much about which object they choose, just choose something that is easy to imagine, something they know well and can describe easily.

Duration:

up to 30 minutes

Equipment:

none

Development of the exercise, possible variations:

There can be variations to this exercise. It could be one to start a workshop with. Or the listeners retell the stories they just heard, thus making the exercise an activity to develop description, characterization and memory.

Meta-feedback, debriefing:

Things to Point Out and Ask Participants to Observe After the Activity: If this is one of the first storytelling activities, one can bring up that difference in body language shows who is telling and



who is listening, and how it differs from body language during conversation. If participants share their story with the entire group, point out effective and vivid descriptions, the use of descriptive language rather than dialogue, and characterization.

Then you can invite reflections about the exercise, the experiences.

Learning outcomes:

2. adjust to a changing situation
3. encourage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations
25. listen actively
26. adopt non-judgmental and engaging attitude
35. discuss and understand the essential elements of a story
36. create a story as a way to express thoughts, information, emotions
37. use the method of storytelling in self-reflection, self-understanding and for understanding others
38. use the method of storytelling to improve communication skills
39. be able to re-interpret, re-organise a story and change the narrative
40. identify the potential of storytelling for solving various problematic situations (professional and personal)
41. switch/change perspective

Original method: storytelling

Methodological integration and combination possibilities:

Integration with humour strategies: You can ask the participants to create the story with sudden, unexpected turns, surprises, comic elements.

Integration with expression and dance/movement: The object story could be prepared for little performances.

Contributor: Barthel, Martin

Ways of integration

As our whole project has shown, it is possible, and because of mutual inspiration and enrichment, it is even desirable to use integrated methodologies. The pathway of development leads from simple to complex. Life opposes entropy.

Recommendations

As a result of our fourth, integrated training *“Implementation of Creative Training Methods for Helping Professions”* at the Społeczna Akademia Nauk in Łódź, Poland, between 2–10. April 2016, from the personal experiences of the Trainer-Participants, the following recommendations emerged – using World Café style discussions. Of course, these are but partial aspects to pay attention to. Many more research-based, empirically founded features could be identified and elaborated.

Recommendations can be grouped as follows, but are not strictly separated:

Recommendations for a trainer as a professional

- Combining these three methods might lead to new/better results in one's work
- Combining methods challenges one as a trainer
- When designing a workshop with combined methods, it is important to have a clear understanding of the potential of each method
- It is crucial to accommodate methods and exercises to the specificity of groups and situations
- Being clear about the goal of the training process leads to better results and more fluent workshop
- Adopting methodologies potentials to group dynamics and levels of energy stimulates learning environment
- Being flexible and ready to improvise in changing situations helps facilitating the combined method training

Recommendations for designing a beneficial workshop for participants

- Combining methods stimulates creativity and engages different parts of the brain
- Participants are different and combined methodologies engage diverse interests
- Combined methods keeps the participants interested and encourages to employ the whole personality

Recommendations for a trainer team working with combined methodologies

- Make sure that all the facilitators know and understands the exercises and share each other's understanding and experiences if they differ
- Trust and respect for each other's expertise is crucial
- Build a team with different experts



Inspirations

- Use body language awareness and techniques as instruments for changing perceptions
- Use creative methods for initial group building
- Let participants explore methods, that are not their usual ones, but don't push them too hard
- Don't be afraid to try new teaching skills/unknown methods as a teacher
- Dare to risk and not follow methods but be balanced. Pay attention to security rules, to make sure that the exercises will have a good impact on the learners.
- Use your colleagues to experiment with new methods
- Take time to relax and find ways to enjoy your work
- Find new perspectives of old games
- A mistake can show you a new good way
- Show your emotions and stay authentic but do not let them take over
- Playing can show you new perspectives and cure
- Close the workshop with happy/good feelings

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