

FORUM THEATRE

A MANUAL TO ENACT POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE

Anti-trafficking and safe migration for Viet Nam



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WELCOME TO THIS DIGITAL RESOURCE

And welcome to Forum Theatre!

If you are reading this it is probably because you want change. This Forum Theatre Digital Resource is here to help you learn the skills to bring change to communities, and avoid major social problems by imagining and rehearsing alternatives.

This training addresses the dreadful results of humans being trafficked and enslaved.

Trafficked and enslaved people are treated like goods. They are bought and sold and are abused, damaged physically and mentally and many die as a result.

The change we want to see is that people are not abused or damaged and that they do not die. By following this resource you can save lives!

Here you will learn a relatively simple method for making plays about these issues and using them to start a discussion with communities about how we can avoid that abuse. It is called Forum Theatre and is like an acted conversation where you can show the problems but you can also involve your audience in changing the stories.

Before you start, please take a moment to pause and reflect on the change you want to see. Think of the issues you have identified, and think of a world where those issues do not exist. It is that vision of change which will drive us to make good Forum Theatre and help our communities.

Although we focus here on human trafficking and modern slavery, Forum Theatre can be used to tackle many other social issues. Across the world it is used to think of alternatives in matters of: child abuse, climate change, suicide, gang violence, prejudice, HIV/AIDS awareness, gender issues, drug addiction, abuse in the workplace, corruption and much more.

You are now joining thousands of others worldwide who use theatre to make the world a fairer place.

You may be someone directly affected by trafficking or another injustice. If that is the case you will have real examples and stories. These are very important. Use them to share knowledge. If you don't have direct experience or knowledge then go and talk to people who do. To effect change we need to know those real conditions and the real stories will be our material to play back to the community audiences so that we can explore alternatives.

This research is very important. When you start working on these ideas or if you can join a Forum Theatre training, come with some real knowledge, real stories, of the issue which you can share with others, and if it is local knowledge you know it will be relevant to those you are working with and for.

We really hope you will find this Digital Resource useful, and that it will benefit you, your friends, family, and your community.

We are glad to have you joining us in making positive changes to end the abuse, damage and injustice of human trafficking and slavery.



Đặng Minh Thư

Life Art

Hà Nội

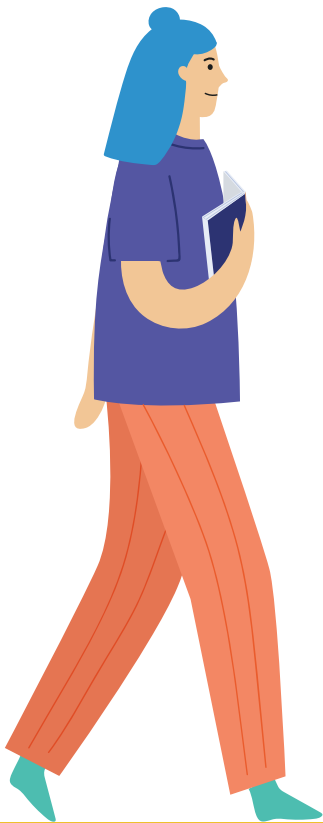


John Martin

Pan Intercultural Arts

London

LET'S START OUR JOURNEY WITH FORUM THEATRE



01

FIRST DIALOGUE:
Instructor's notes

Back from
your training,
I see.

Still hard at work,
I see.

I am. The problems
of society won't
fix themselves.

I actually think
I learned something
that can help you.

Didn't you
go to a theatre
training?

Hear me out.



This manual is designed to give the reader a clear method of training community organisations to create Forum Theatre performances which will raise awareness of the dangers of human trafficking. By doing this, communities can make new decisions for their members, avoid being lured into modern slavery and lives can be saved.

This manual is written for community members, not for professional actors.

Although their theatrical skills may not be as refined as professional colleagues, their knowledge of the real effects of trafficking and of the people who are most at risk allows community members to create strong, realistic and effective plays. The kind of plays that can start real discussion in their community. These performances are agents of change as much as they are works of art.

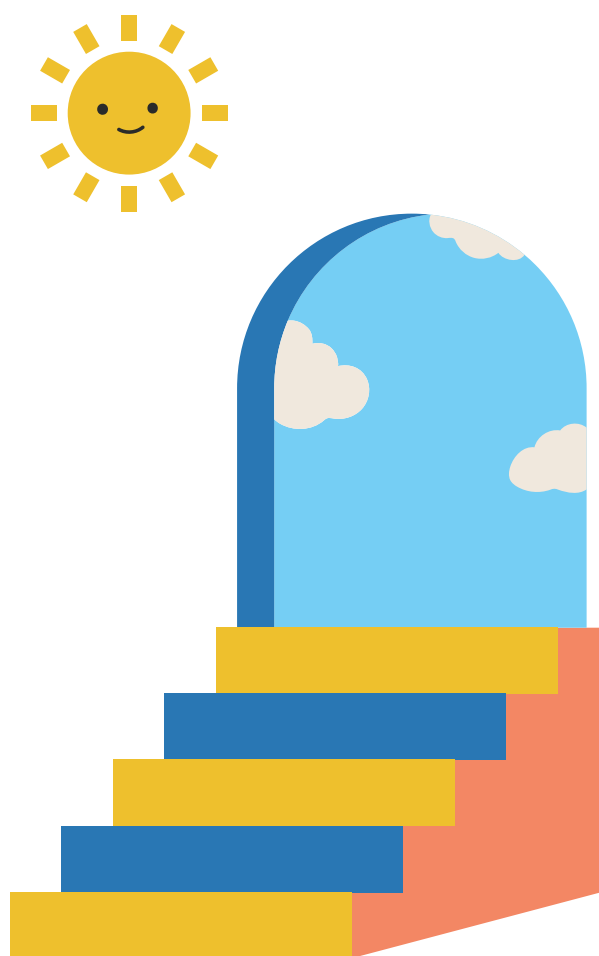
They are Art for Change.



This course was developed based on a five-day Forum Theatre training in Viet Nam

Students learned about Forum Theatre, developed their own scripts based on real life scenarios, created their own plays, and performed them with the help of a facilitator and an audience.

As it was just a five-day programme, the instructors carefully planned all key elements to be included over that timeframe. But if you are using this manual to help plan or lead your own training in Forum Theatre, there is no need to stick to five days.



**IN FIVE DAYS,
I LEARNED:**

Day one

- Acting techniques
- Explaining Forum Theatre
- What is trafficking?

Day two

- Turning real trafficking stories into Forum Theatre plays

Day three

- Devising
- Casting
- Rehearsing the play

Day four

- Who guides the debate in the audience? The MC

Day five

- How we perform and work with our audience to find solutions

**MY JOURNEY WITH FORUM THEATRE.
AS YOU CAN SEE, IT WAS A BIT OF
A ROLLER COASTER!**

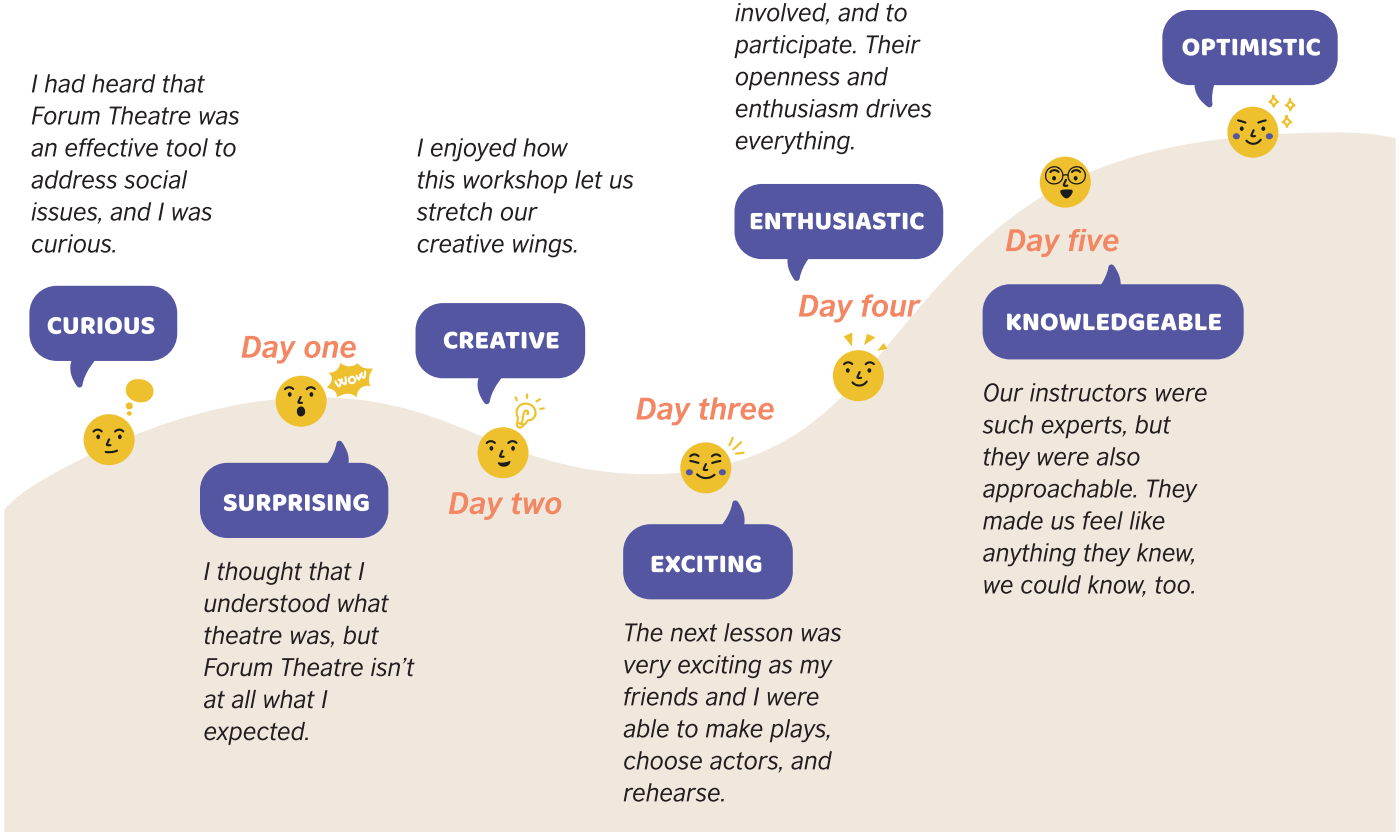
Mastering the basics of Forum Theatre has made me excited about the future. I will definitely apply this method when doing social work, and think that you will find it useful, too!

The MC is there to get people to feel involved, and to participate. Their openness and enthusiasm drives everything.

I had heard that Forum Theatre was an effective tool to address social issues, and I was curious.

I enjoyed how this workshop let us stretch our creative wings.


Our instructors were such experts, but they were also approachable. They made us feel like anything they knew, we could know, too.



02

SECOND DIALOGUE:

What is theatre?



Before I learned about Forum Theatre, I used to think that the actors were there to speak, and the audience was there to watch, simple as that.

But, isn't that true?

Well, it doesn't have to be.

WHAT IS THEATRE?



ASK THE WHOLE GROUP TO SIT DOWN IN A CIRCLE AND DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS:

- 1 **What does 'theatre' mean to you?**
- 2 **What are the tools for actors on the stage, other than props?**

SUGGESTIONS FOR A DEFINITION:

Theatre takes place where live performers (actors) creatively use dramatic means to communicate an idea to an audience.

The single most important element of theatre is human interaction. Without human beings present, both performing and watching, theatre cannot take place. It is this human quality which gives theatre its power. Theatre is a very immediate way to explore human experience, to understand life's problems, to dialogue and to find meaning.

It can take place in any environment where people are able to watch and hear it – whether it be a theatre building, a street, a temple, a marketplace or under a tree.

Theatre is an ancient art which has taken many different forms all over the world. It can include storytelling, music, dance and puppetry. It can be used to communicate a story, a play, a myth, a message.

There are very powerful tools for actors on the stage, apart from props, they are body, voice and the strong connection between individuals.

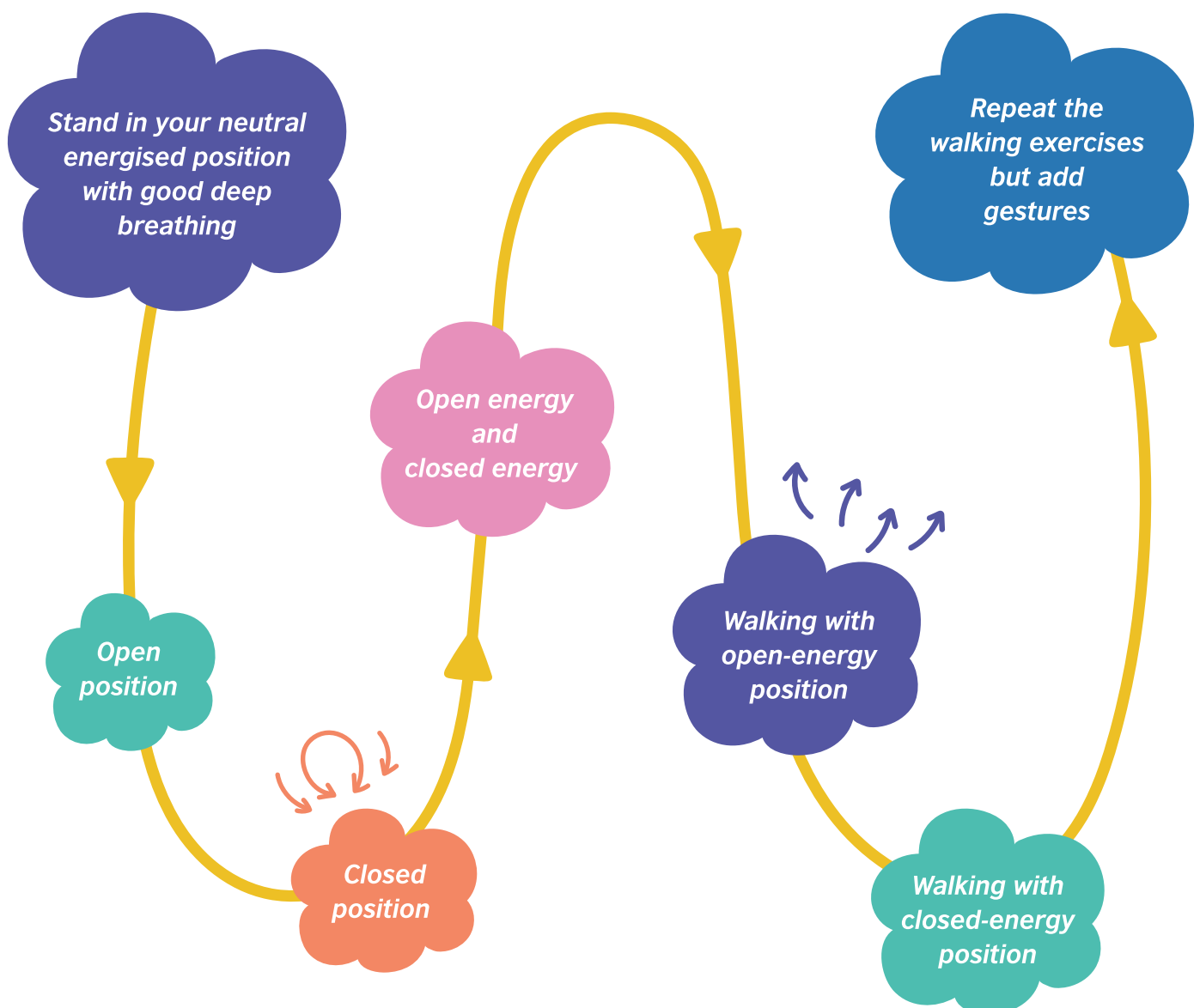
OPEN AND CLOSED BODIES EXERCISE

Have you ever wondered how Anthony Hopkins can play such varied roles, from lunatic king to thoughtful Pope? Every actor and actress will play many different characters during the course of their career. And every character goes through many different emotional states, from happy, to moody, to angry.

A basic skill of an actor/actress is knowing how to move and manipulate his/her own energy to achieve these states. When we are happy, or angry, it becomes visible in our bodies.

Understanding how to control that energy is key to communicating different emotions to audiences.

Try this series of ideas to see how you feel different and how others look different when doing them.



Stand in your neutral energised position with good deep breathing

Open position

- 1 Take a breath in.
- 2 On the out-breath try to feel the energy flowing outwards from your centre in all directions.
- 3 Down through your legs to your feet it strengthens your standing. Upwards let it travel through your torso to the shoulders and the arms and to the fingertips, stretching to the most open position possible. Also feel it through your neck, face and head, opening your expression into space.
- 4 Stay in this open position for a moment to appreciate how it feels to be in this open-energy body. Who are you when you are like this?

Closed position

- 1 Take another breath in.
- 2 On the out-breath feel the energy flowing inwards from the extremities towards the centre. Slowly close the whole body down to the most closed position you can make.
- 3 Stay there and feel what it is like to be in this closed energy body. Who are you when you are like this?



Working in this way gives you possible characters through your body. We often talk of people being 'open' or 'closed'. This is a discovery of such states through the body. ***Remember that changing your body changes how you feel and how people see you - that is the start of acting a character.***

HYPNOSIS

Hypnosis is when one person imposes a feeling or a state on another person. It is all about power, both the loss of power and the taking of power over another person. That's why it's so important to Forum Theatre.

**Ask the group to get into pairs and to decide who is A and who is B.
The exercise is carried out without any speech.**



- 1 A will place their hand about one hand's distance away from B's face. The bottom of A's hand will be approximately in line with B's chin, the top of their hand in line with the top of B's forehead.
- 2 Wherever A moves the hand, B will follow (as if they were hypnotised!). Therefore all A's movement must be humanly possible for B to follow.
- 3 The A's begin by moving their hands quite slowly, they can then build up until they are gradually moving around the room and moving their hands to different levels and in different directions, in order that both partners begin to explore expressive movement and the limits and potential of their bodies.
- 4 The participants should not stop moving until the end of the exercise.
- 5 Once the pairs have got really expressive, ask them to swap so that B becomes the leader and A the follower.

VARIATIONS

When this first version of the game is established, let it continue but start to move the participants around

Example: The player who is leading can now lead two people, one by each hand. When two players are hand in hand, they can both lead and be led at the same time. **Music may be played during the exercise. But make sure the music is varied and changes pace, otherwise participants will tend to get stuck in the same rhythm, pace and mood.**

DISCUSSION

ASK THE GROUP TO SHARE:

- 1 *Which role they preferred?*
- 2 *Which parts were pleasurable, what was challenging, what was unpleasant, how did it feel?*
- 3 *What did it remind them of, what surprised them?*



03

THIRD DIALOGUE:

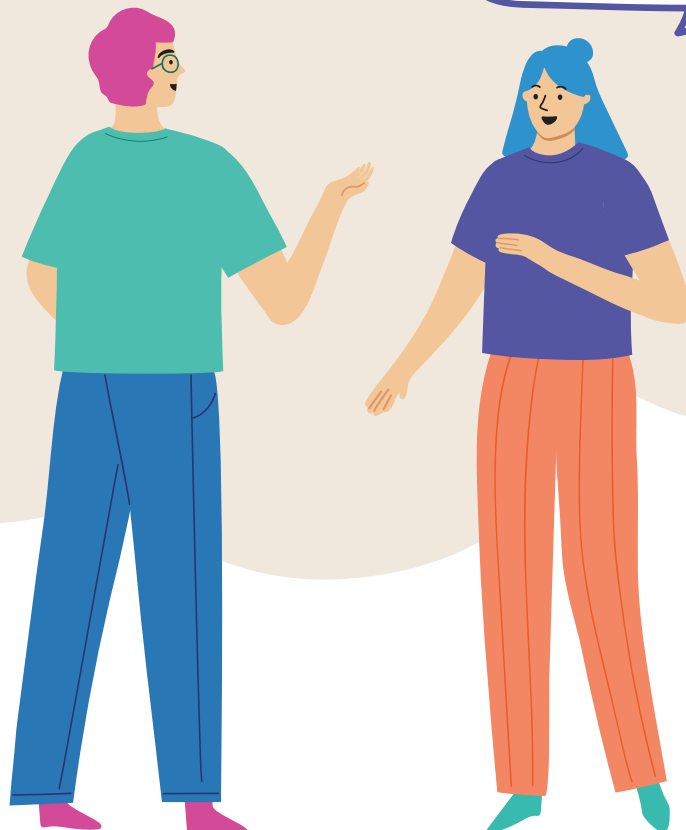
Can Forum Theatre do that?

The last exercise was very interesting.

See, I told you!

?
But I still don't understand how this is supposed to help with my social work.

Hang on, we're getting there.



WHAT IS FORUM THEATRE?

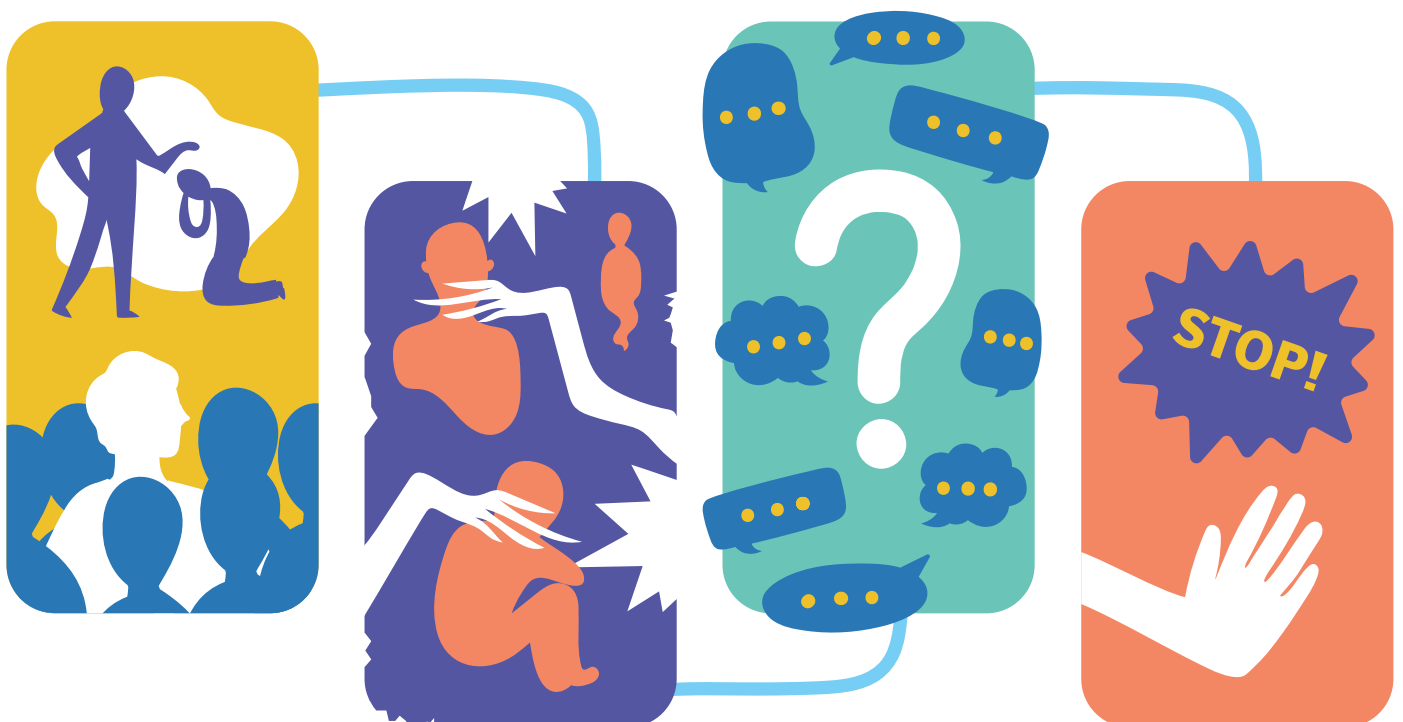
We shall spend a lot of time building our understanding of Forum Theatre. *Theatre* is performing stories of people whom we may not know but with whom we empathise. A *Forum* is a place for discussions and debate, for hearing opposing views.

Forum Theatre is a theatrical debate where the audience finds solutions to problems and pressures affecting their lives through offering their own ideas in order to change a

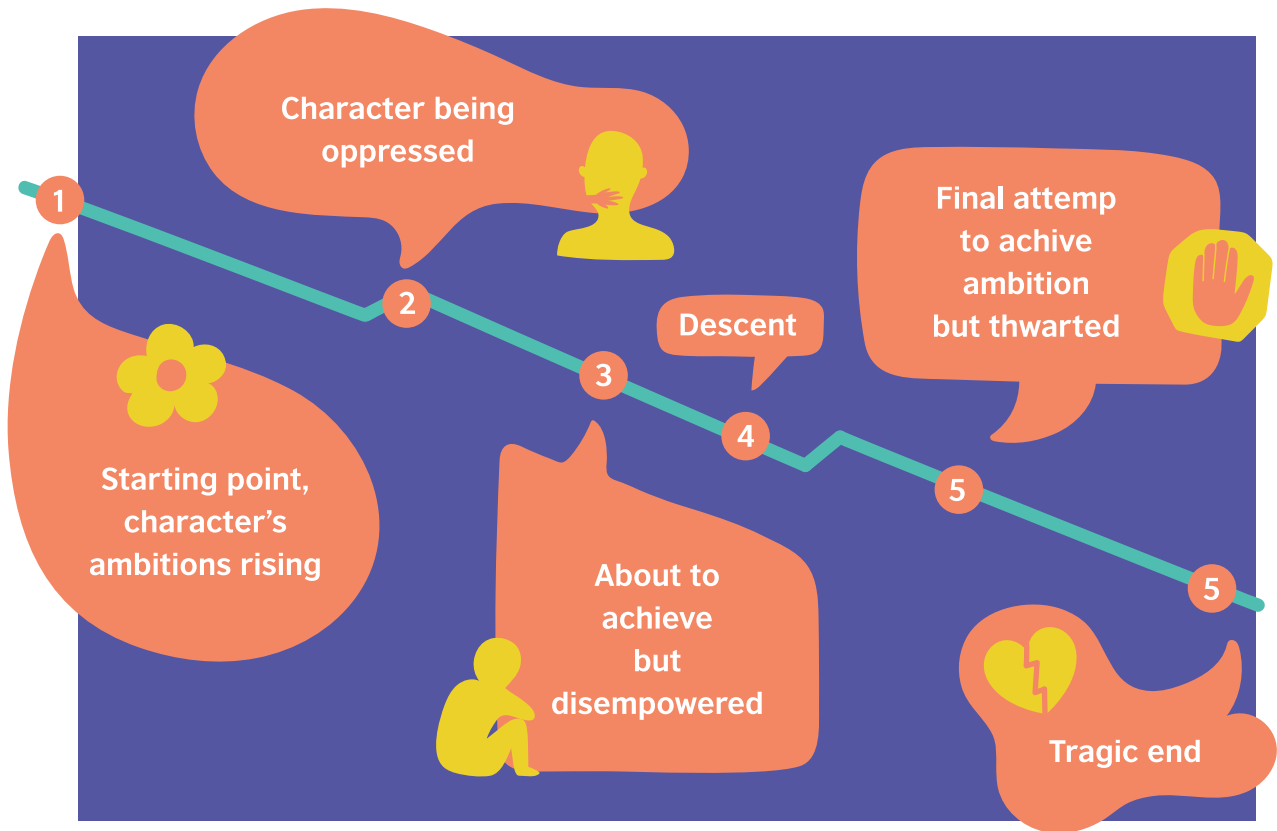
THE BASIC FORUM THEATRE EVENT WORKS LIKE THIS:

- 1 The audience watches a short play about a difficult issue which is very real in their community (for us this will be trafficking).
- 2 The play shows the worst that can happen – a central character who is forced to do things they do not want to do or blocked from doing what they want to do. That person ends up abused, addicted, damaged or even dead.
- 3 The audience is then asked what went wrong, why did it end like that? And they are invited to think how those problems could be avoided.
- 4 The audience then watches the short play again but with one difference: now they can stop the play whenever they want to and suggest alternative actions to avoid the bad ending.

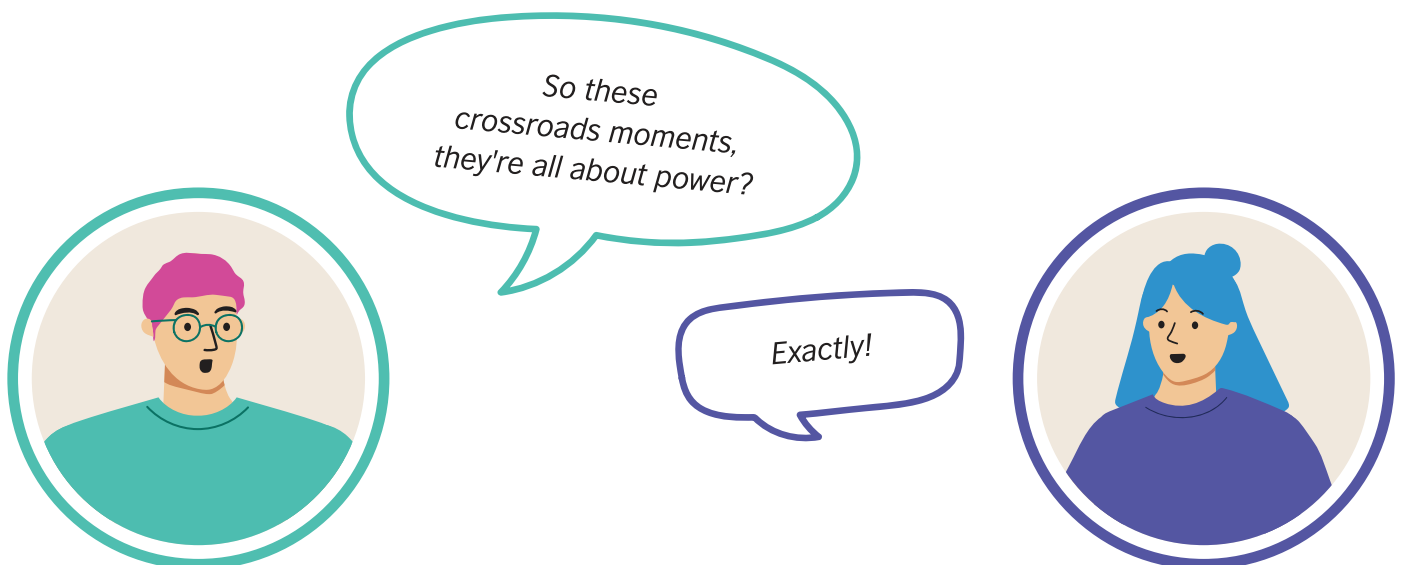
This is an 'intervention'. There can be many interventions as the audience has more ideas for change and come and try them out.



A TYPICAL FORUM PLAY CAN HAVE A STRUCTURE LIKE THIS:



IMPORTANT - Point out and explain the crossroads moments; those moments when *decisions* are made which could have gone in *another direction* and changed the outcome.



04

FOURTH DIALOGUE: Who has the power?

POWER?

Why stop the play, just to talk about power?



WHO HAS THE POWER?

In Forum Theatre the central character's tragic story is because he or she is forced or persuaded to do things by someone with more power. Because he or she is less powerful, or thinks they are less powerful, they cannot resist the power.

Power, of course, is neutral. It can be used well or badly. We are concerned with the abuse of power. And power can be in every relationship, between siblings, teacher and pupil, father and daughter, trafficker and trafficked, rich and poor, abled and less abled etc. Remember the hypnotism game you played earlier? It was about power. Take a look at the video below to get a clear demonstration.

WHO HAS THE POWER?



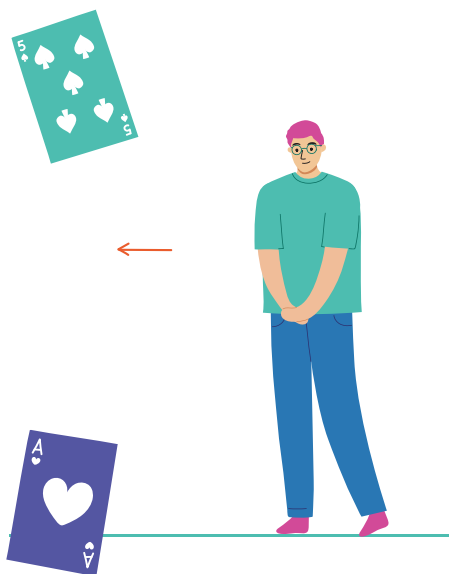
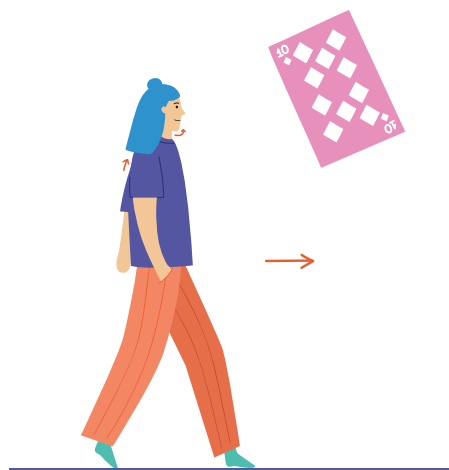
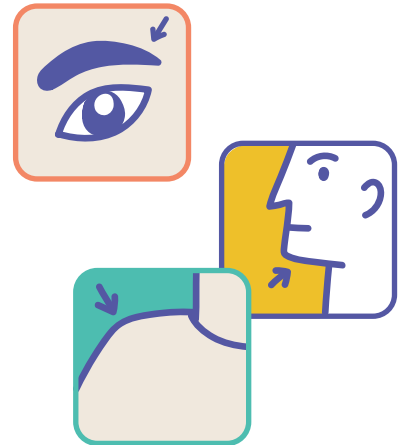
Open up a discussion with members of the group - ask them to take a moment's silence and think about where they see power or powerlessness.

EXAMPLE:

- *When have you experienced abuse of power?*
- *Share stories with each other in two seconds, then with the group*
- *Make a physical (snapshot) image of abuse of power*

In groups of four or five

- 1 Prepare a series of frozen images of your own experiences.
- 2 Each person creates one image from their memory. Concentrate on showing by the position, level, eye-line, tension etc of the bodies, where the power lies and how it is used.
- 3 Playback, in silence, each group's 'slideshow' of images.
- 4 Discuss the commonalities, the interpretations.



Experience the feeling of power

- 5 Walk around the room as if you have no power - who do you feel like?
- 6 Walk as if you have a great deal of power - who do you feel like?
- 7 Walk as if you are more powerful than some, less powerful than others - who do you feel like?
- 8 Using a pack of cards each person pulls out a card and assumes the power of the number on that card (Ace is low, King is high). Walk in the space.
- 9 Try to see who is more and who is less powerful than you. Place yourselves with a person you think is more powerful on your right, and someone less powerful on your left.
- 10 All form a line like this, then reveal your card values to see if you were correct.

All Forum Theatre depends on power. Trafficking also depends on Power and Powerlessness. Think who might have those roles in a trafficking scenario.

WHAT ARE TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY?



We can use Forum Theatre to address a range of social problems, from domestic violence to drugs or gambling. In my training, we focused on human trafficking.

Now let's see what we already know from our own lives and communities.

Do you know of any instances of trafficking in your community or friends?

Are you aware of the relative numbers of males and females who are trafficked in your country?

Where do you think most people are trafficked to?

What do you think happens to most people who are trafficked?

What do you think is the main cause of trafficking? Why does it happen?

If you heard of someone in the process of being trafficked, would you know what to do?

Do you think it could be worth the risks?


What legal measures are there to prevent trafficking?

How can trafficking be reduced or stopped?

Share your knowledge, compare your experiences. Discuss what you have heard and what kind of knowledge you have. Make notes during this and start to 'cluster' these narratives.

05

FIFTH DIALOGUE:

Learning
through play

Let me guess...
more exercises?

You learn by doing. And
in theatre, we need to
use our whole bodies to
tell the story!

COUNTING GROUP

Here is an exercise to help you train your senses!

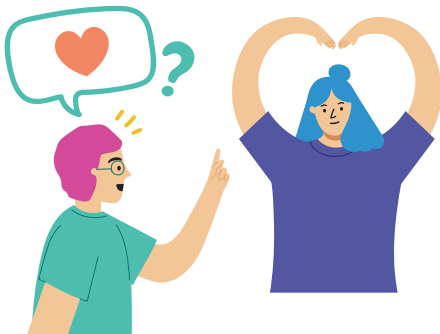


- 1 The group sit, stand or lie down in a circle. The group will now count up to ten, one person at a time. If two people speak at the same time, even for an instant, the group returns to number one.
- 2 No one knows who will speak first, second, third etc. The ordering of who says the numbers must be completely random without signalling to each other, without anyone leading the group or taking control or indeed being passive.
- 3 The group play by using their senses and it is the whole group's responsibility to get to ten, to choose when to speak, and when to be silent.
- 4 The game is played several times depending on the skill of the team. The number can be increased from ten to 20 etc.
- 5 Try the reverse; counting from ten to one. Is this easier?
- 6 Now repeat it with closed eyes! This exercises your other senses.



IMAGE OF THE WORDS

This exercise helps you practice visualising.



- 1 Collect themes and issues that the group is interested in working on, for example 'love', 'fear', 'school', 'the harvest', 'homelessness', 'domestic violence', 'growing old'...
- 2 Ask the group to stand separately from each other, in a circle with their backs facing into the circle.
- 3 The facilitator will call out one of the themes. The participants are going to make a still picture with their bodies that expresses this theme for them.
- 4 Count the group down from ten to one ending with 'turn around and show your picture!'.
- 5 At this point the group should all turn inside the circle to face each other and spontaneously present their individual images with their bodies. Ask the group to hold the image they are making at the same time as taking a look at the other images in the circle.
- 6 The participants are invited to say what they can see in the images, they notice which shapes recur, what emotions and situations come to mind and what this says to them about the theme.
- 7 The group turns back into the circle, another word is chosen and so on...

Variation

- As above. This time the images are 'brought to life' in various ways. For example, the facilitator says 'play sound' or 'play movement'.
- The facilitator can also instruct the participants to move toward someone with a very different image.
- The participants move like statues on wheels, holding their image in place but travelling forward. They make pairs with the person who seems to be in a different shape to theirs. These groups of images can thereby be brought together into very short quick scenes with the pairs moving and having a dialogue with each other - 'play scene'.

Aren't these exercises interesting?



They're fun, sure. But I still don't understand exactly why we're doing them?

Exercises help you master your body and voice onstage, as well as help you unleash your creativity.



How many did you learn?

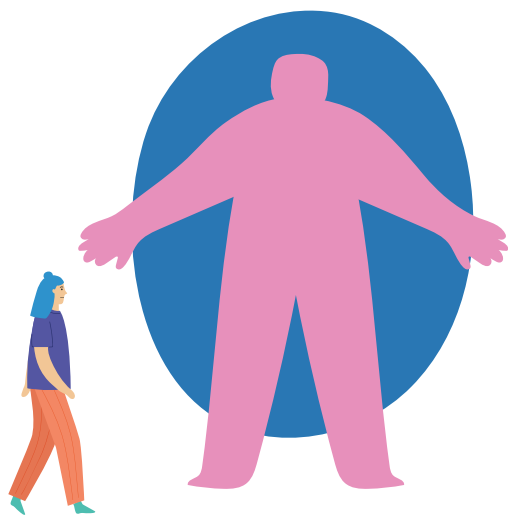
A LOT! These are just a few. If you want to explore more, turn to the end of this book. There is a whole series back there for you to pick from.



Oh, that's great.

DANGER AND PROTECTOR GAME

- 1 Ask the group members to walk around the room in various directions, not following anyone but taking their own path. The group should keep moving throughout the exercise.
- 2 Whilst they are moving, ask the players to each think of someone in the room but not show who they have chosen. Tell the group the person they have just chosen is going to represent something that they fear. Their task therefore is to try to keep away from the thing that they fear, to try to keep as much distance between themselves and the fear.
- 3 Let this continue for a while. The dynamic in the room will start to change.
- 4 Stop them in a freeze frame.

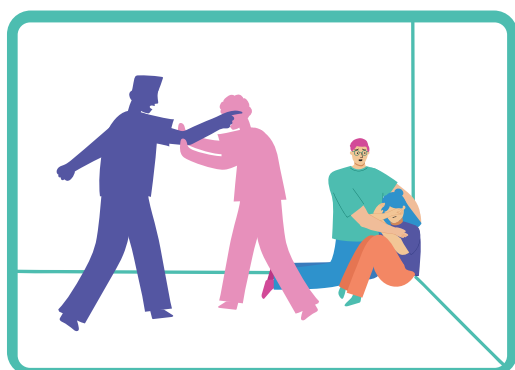


- 5 Ask the group members to keep this person as representing the thing they fear, but to now also choose a second person in the room and not show that they have chosen them.
- 6 The second person that they have chosen will now represent the thing that can protect them from their fear - a protector. So the aim of the game is now for the participants to try to keep the 'protector' between them and their 'fear'.
- 7 Tension can be added to the game by asking the group to move faster, or counting them down from ten to one, saying that by the time you get down to one their fear will be at its most extreme. This is a good place to stop the game.

- 8 At the end of the game ask the group to freeze and look at the stage picture they have made. They can now point to the people who represented their fear and then to their protector.
- 9 Ask the group to make observations, for example how did their breathing change, how did their bodies change, what shapes did the group make, how did the game and the roles they played feel etc.
- 10 Think about that last game and how it relates to power and what was introduced on Day One.



QUICK IMAGES OF TRAFFICKING (NO WORDS) SHOW SLIDESHOW BACK TO OTHERS




- 1 Choose a pressing social issue, such as human trafficking or domestic violence.
- 2 Working in groups of four or five.
- 3 Each one uses the rest of their group members' bodies as people and objects to create a photo of modern slavery/human trafficking as you now understand it. So if a group has four members, there will be four 'photos'.
- 4 Remember to show the role and the power/powerlessness of each person in it.
- 5 After sometime to prepare the photos, groups present their series of photos to the class.

How are you feeling so far? Are you getting more confident expressing your thoughts and feelings onstage?

06

SIXTH DIALOGUE:

Telling stories

An illustration of two people standing in a conversation. On the left, a person with pink hair and glasses, wearing a green t-shirt and blue pants, has a speech bubble above their head. On the right, a person with blue hair, wearing a purple t-shirt and orange pants, has a speech bubble above their head. A third speech bubble is positioned between them. The background consists of large, light-colored, rounded shapes.

Ok, so we've learned our lesson about power. We also did a little warm-up for our bodies, and minds. Now it's time to create the script.

Oh, that makes me nervous. I'm not good at making stuff up.

Who says we are making anything up?

TRUE IS INTERESTING

Forum theatre isn't about creating fictional scenarios. Take a look at the video below to learn how true stories can often be the most interesting, and useful.



STORYTELLING ACTIVITIES

We are now going to revisit your knowledge of trafficking and start to pull out stories which could become our narratives for plays.

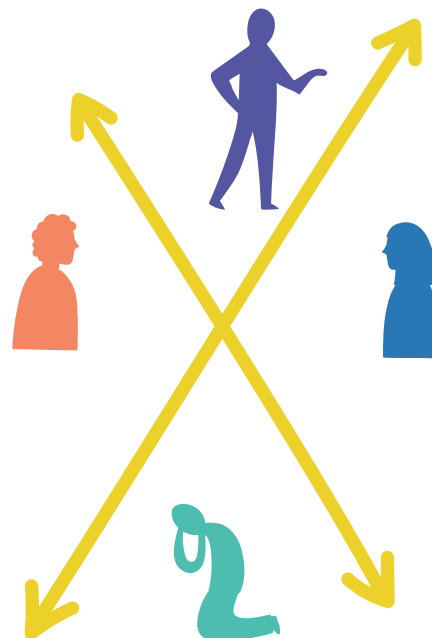


Work in small groups (four or five).

- 1 Tell each other stories that you know to be true – remember we are not imagining stories, we are creating them from real facts. But we are not going to tell an actual story with identifiable people, we want a story which everyone feels is true, is possible, and this will come from blending and fusing elements of real stories.
- 2 Have a large sheet of paper (flipchart paper) and markers. As you listen to each other, write down key moments, key situations, key moments which may be “crossroads moments” when the downward path of the story is accelerated but it could have been different if another path had been taken.
- 3 Ask yourselves who is the central character in each story?

You may create a new story with elements of two or three different stories but make sure that:

- It could be a real story i.e. it is recognisable to an audience in your community.
- The central character is someone people will empathise with (she's like my mother, sister, neighbour).
- There are people with more power than the Central Character who cause him/her to take the routes he/she takes, but also that there are others who could do something but don't (friends, neighbours, bystanders, siblings etc.).
- It ends badly (with no redemption at the end).
- There are several moments where, if a character had acted differently against the oppressor (more powerful), the tragic ending could have been avoided. Ideally there should be such crossroads moments in each scene.
- Change is possible.



When each group has found such a melded storyline, tell it to others in the group and stimulate honest feedback.

AN EXAMPLE TAKEN FROM A FORUM PLAY:

If this is not clear, here is an example taken from a forum play about abuse of girl children:

Participant one told a true story of a baby girl, just born. Her grandmother had wanted a boy baby not a girl. When she is left alone with the baby she heats oil until it is very hot and pours it into the baby's mouth. It does not kill her but she is dumb for the rest of her life.

Participant two told a story of when she was a very small child her mother was a labourer in a factory. Her mother earned all the family's money and had to take the child to the factory where she sat in the corner all day. When she was a little older (9/10) she was still going with her mother and the factory owner noticed her, gave her treats and took her to his office. Day after day he sexually abused her. The mother knew but could not afford to lose her job.

The forum play fused these two stories.

The girl in story two became the girl from story one. She was dumb (story one) and was abused in the factory (story two) and therefore could not tell anyone about what was being done to her. This mix actually made the overall story even more powerful.

NOW TAKE A LARGE PIECE OF PAPER AND TRY TO BREAK UP THE CONTINUOUS LINEAR NATURE OF YOUR STORY INTO THE MODULAR NATURE OF A SCENE STORY BOARD.

Image scene one:

SCENE ONE

Text ideas:

Image scene two:

SCENE TWO

Text ideas:

Image scene three:

SCENE THREE

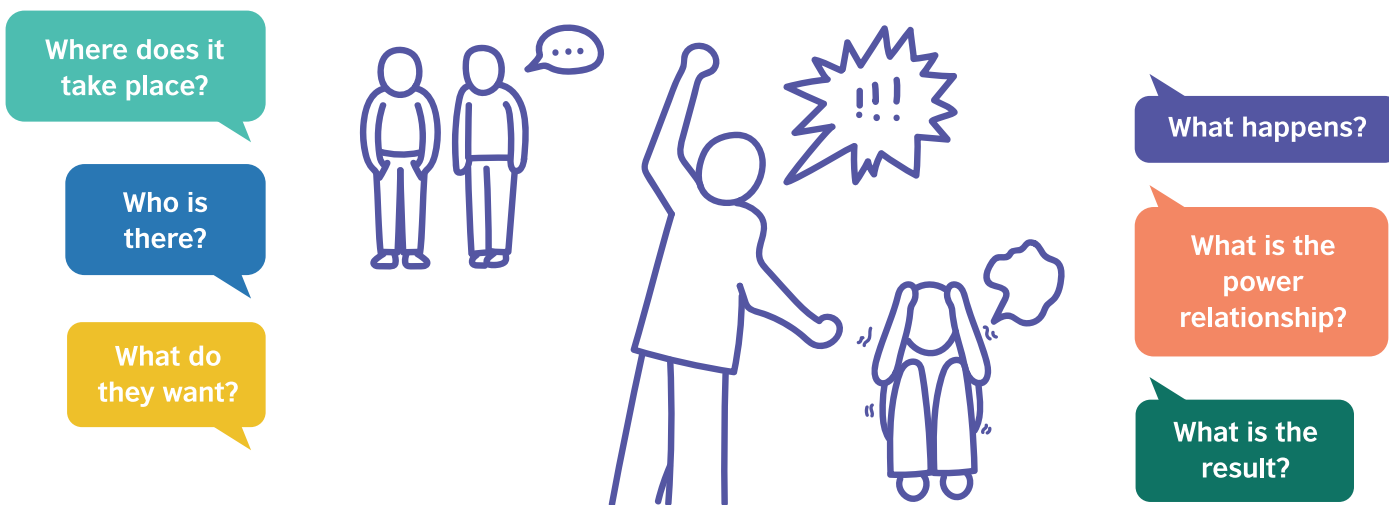
Text ideas:

Image scene four

SCENE FOUR

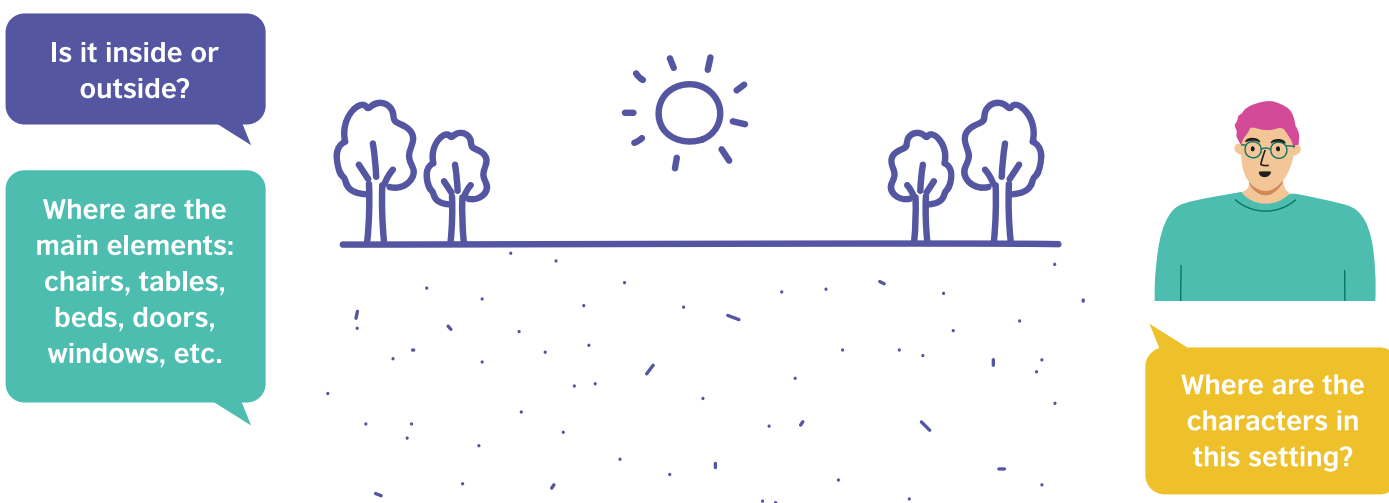
Text ideas:

WHERE EACH SCENE IS DECIDED ON AND DESCRIBED, USING:



- You can use stick figures, speech bubbles, whatever it takes to get your story into a scene structure.
- For your first attempts at creating a Forum Theatre play, keep it simple. Probably five scenes are enough.

SET UP A BASIC SETTING FOR EACH SCENE



- Draw out text from improvisations, letting colleagues take notes and construct a rough text. Each time you improvise a scene the text will start to refine itself.
Notice that you are becoming the playwright! We do not need an external playwright because they will not understand the speech, mannerisms, rhythms of your community.
- When you have worked on each scene, run through the whole play and see if it makes sense.
- Make adjustments, try again. Rehearsing is repeating and refining.
- Try it out in front of the other groups and take on their comments and adjust your play as necessary.
Remember you are only creating a short play. 15 – 20 minutes is enough.

TO PROGRESS THE SCRIPTS AND CHECK YOUR OWN STORY LINES, TRY TO:



Bring your storyboard to life by making one physical image for each scene. This helps you define the most important moment of the scene.



Then choose someone to narrate the play as you change from image to image. This allows you to tell the story of each scene and show it. It is like a cartoon strip and is the basis of Image Theatre, which is a quick way of telling a story.



Then you can progress from Image 1 (first scene) to Image 5 or 6 (whichever is your last scene) which gives you a picture progression of the whole play.



You can even progress to allowing each character in your frozen image to speak what their strongest thoughts are at that moment. You are beginning to construct a script!

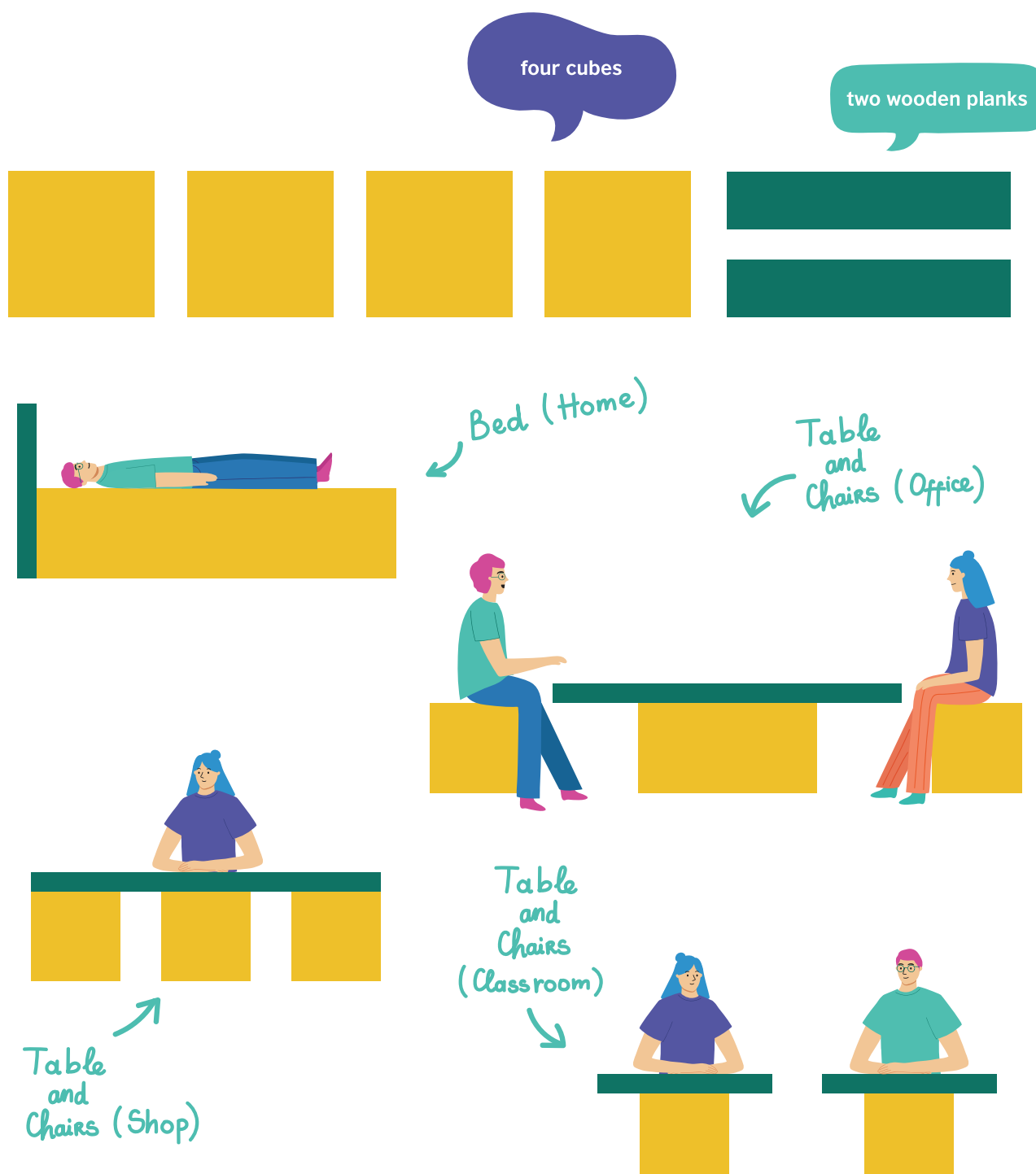
- Check back that all the key elements of the forum structure are there.
- At the end of the day you have a simple but effective way of performing a version of your story as a play in image and narration form.
 - ➔ Practise it and share it with others.
 - ➔ Listen to feedback.
 - ➔ Question your colleagues about their plays.
 - ➔ Make any changes necessary.
- Remember this is a discussion to get the most effective result for your community.



THINK ABOUT THE STAGING

We are making community theatre and need to be able to play in small and simple venues, inside or outside for small to medium sized audiences (100-300). So we don't need big expensive theatre scenery and we don't need very complex lighting.

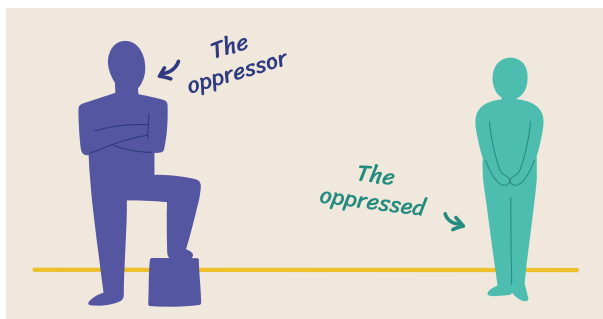
So that we can be flexible and creative, we can make our scenes with very simple items. If we have four cubes of about 70cm in each dimension and two wooden planks of 1.3m we can create all sort of spaces: chairs, tables, desks, beds, offices, shops etc. and we can change scenery very fast (10-15 seconds in full view of the audience)



EXAMPLE OF A FORUM THEATRE PLAY STRUCTURE

You can always add scenes to it if necessary but remember it should not become too complex.

1

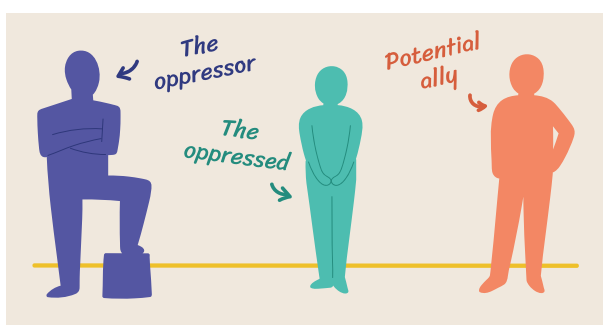


SCENE ONE:

three minutes

Introduce the central character, their desires, the oppressor(s) and the oppression.

2



SCENE TWO:

four minutes

Introduce a potential ally witnessing a further stage of the oppression.

3



SCENE THREE:

seven minutes

Show a big point of conflict between the central character and oppressor(s), the central character does not win.

4

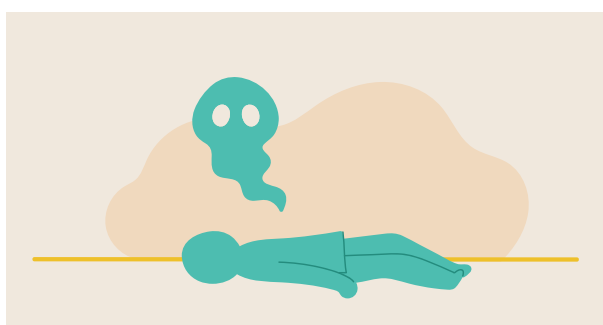


SCENE FOUR:

four minutes

Show the negative consequences for the central character arising from the conflict, with the central character still trying to battle with the problem but being pushed down.

5



SCENE FIVE:

two minutes

Show the central character at their lowest point, in despair and crisis.

In each scene, let's check:



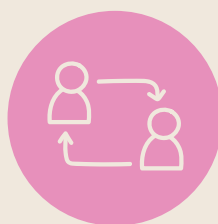
This means you will have to think about:



Character



Action



Relationships



Emotions



Stage Image

All the above will help the audience understand the situation clearly

07

SEVENTH DIALOGUE:

Building characters,
making scenes

Don't forget
there are additional
interesting exercises
at the end of
this manual.

Today we're going to
develop the characters
we created.

Great.
Where do I have
to start?

Here are some
exercises that
can help!

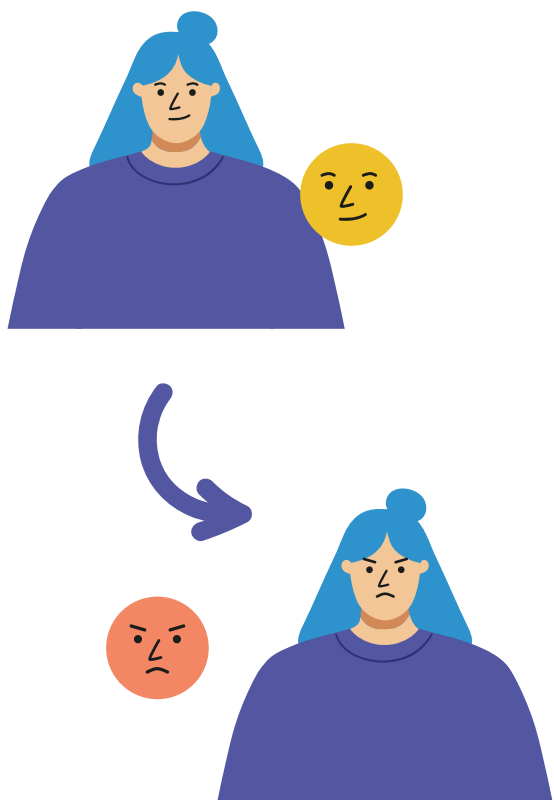


TAKING CHARACTERS FOR A WALK

By doing this you are exploring the world of your character and its different moods AND how that character might change moods when the situation changes.

Step one:

- 1 Walk around the room as yourself. Feel relaxed and free and ready for anything.
- 2 The facilitator calls out a character and on a count of one-two-three-four you change your body, your rhythm and your tension to that character and you continue walking, feeling how different this body/person is from your normal being.
- 3 Then the facilitator calls out another character and one-two-three-four and you change again and again.



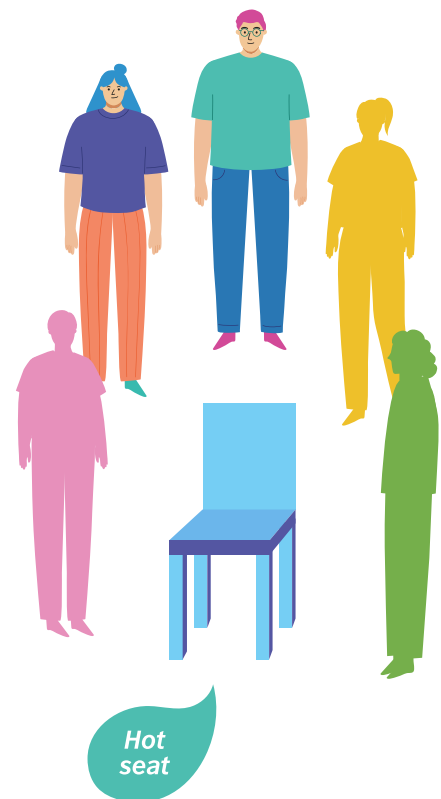
Step two:

- 1 You repeat the above, but the facilitator adds emotions. For example: “Change to the trafficker in friendly mood... one-two-three-four”.
- 2 The change happens and then they add, “friendly changes to angry, one-two-three-four”.
- 3 Use your imagination to create as many new situations as possible for your characters.

CHARACTER HOT SEAT

By the end everyone should know more about their character and this will help how they react in the interventions.

- 1 Place a chair - the hot seat - in front of the group.
- 2 One after another each person developing a character sits in the hot seat - they must enter the space as their character not as themselves.
- 3 You may ask them to introduce themselves.
- 4 Then anyone in the group can ask questions of them, and they answer in the voice of the character. Some questions may relate to areas of the character already known e.g. events which happen in the story or play. Most questions, however, should be to build up knowledge we cannot know from the play; about the character's background, likes and dislikes, political persuasions etc.
- 5 The actor has to come up with answers and, surprisingly, they normally do. Some may be answers the actor has already thought about, but many decisions have to be made on the spot, possibly bringing answers from the actor's subconscious.



WHO SHALL WE CAST IN EACH ROLE?



- In our last exercise, we picked up a few skills to develop our characters. Now, you must work with your group to decide who will be the main character, the principal antagonist, and who will play the protagonist's friends, family, and neighbours.
- Think about what the characters look like, how they walk, and their natural rhythm. Once we've chosen the actors that best fit these characters, we'll develop the scenes in the play.

08

EIGHTH DIALOGUE:

Meet the MC

I feel like I'm learning a lot, but I still don't get it. I know how to build characters, and create a script. But when do we get the part where the audience changes the ending of the play?

That's what we're going to look at now. Let's learn by practising it!



HOLDING THE SPACE

Step one:

- 1 All participants start milling about the room.
- 2 Ask them to greet each other, perhaps just by shaking hands. Players just shake hands, move on, and greet the next player they meet. Then ask the players to greet each other in a more specific way. Possibilities are:
 - Greet each other like you greet a long lost friend.
 - Greet someone you don't really trust.
 - Greet an ex-lover.
 - Greet someone you really hate.
 - Someone you have a secret crush on.
 - Someone that sold you a crappy used car.
 - Greet someone like you are a cowboy, a soldier, a nanny, a farmer, etc.



Step two:

- 1 One by one walk into the space and try to hold everyone's attention and greet them with a warm and friendly presence and an easy greeting and tell them you have a great idea for them.
- 2 Do they trust you? Do they see you as confident but still their equal?
- 3 Discuss each attempt in the group.

This will take some time but it is worth spending that time.

Earlier you asked how we can get the audience to join us on stage. How can we get them to debate the issues, and intervene in our play? Well, the answer is to have an MC.



The host?

Sort of. But so much more than that. We will learn about the MC's role and duties in a video.



MEET YOUR MC

The MC is unique to forum theatre. Watch this short video to understand how!



MEET THE MC!



Before the play the MC observes the audience as they are entering the space. This will give you an idea of who is present.

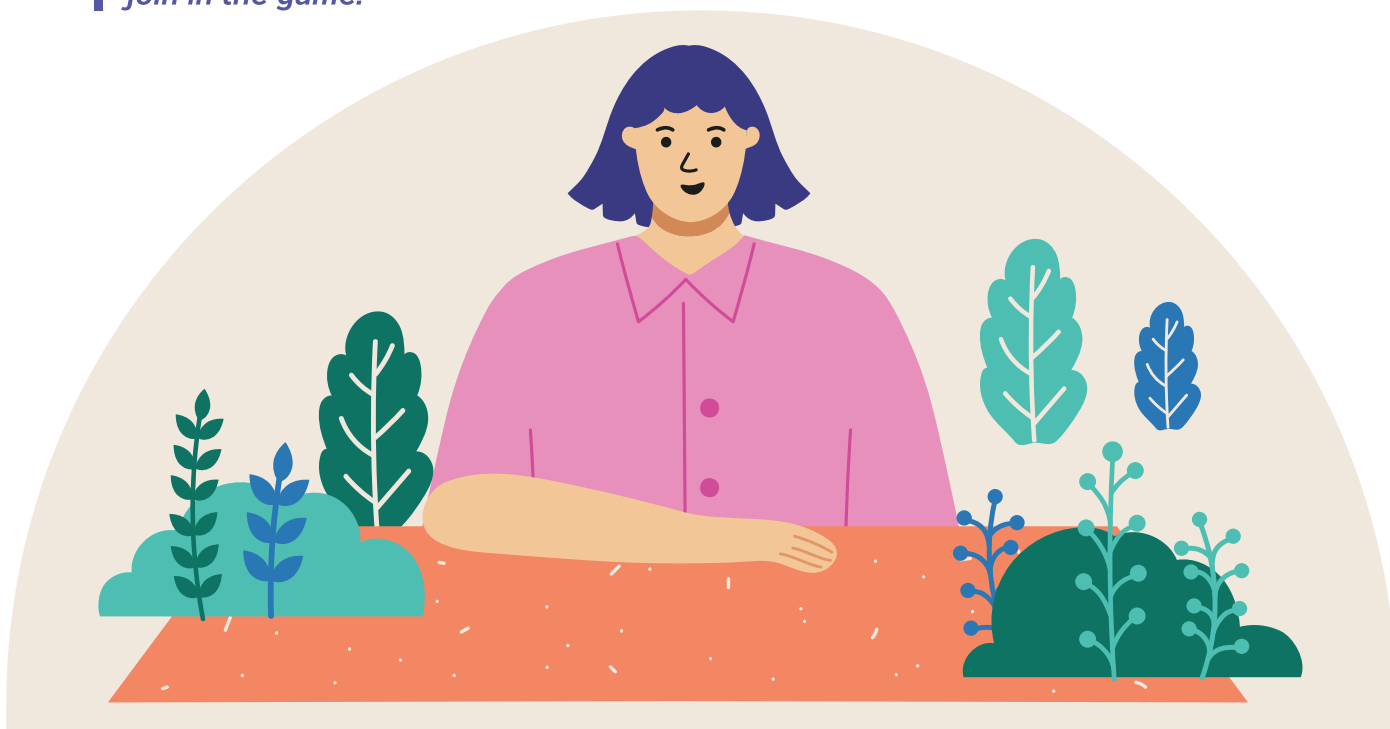
This is crucial as a Forum Theatre play is aimed at people who are experiencing, or who may experience, the situation that the central character is dealing with. If a different kind of audience arrives, you may need to adjust what you do.

As these guests arrive, the MC will introduce themselves, and explain a little about the program structure, before the play begins.

THE ROLE OF MC

You have created a play in the Forum Theatre model. You can perform it in front of a local community audience. *But somebody has to bring that audience into our forum, to make them part of the debate, to let them know that they are important and that their views matter, to tell them how they can do that.*

We shall call this person the MC. We don't mean a super stylish, distant, pompous TV star MC but a friendly person who is just 'one of us' who has come to get us to join in the game.



The role of the Forum Theatre MC is rich and challenging.

- Needs to have all the skills of a good leader and group member.
- Friendly, clear, neutral, non-judgmental.
- Remember that the job is to give power to the audience, not to keep it for yourself.
- Is not an autocrat but holds the space for others to debate the issues.

(The attitude should be: "We see there is a problem. We can change this together")

VERY IMPORTANT: This role can be shared by two people who work together to perform the MC's tasks.

09

NINTH DIALOGUE:

The MC, and interventions



SIX DIALOGUES WITH AUDIENCE

First dialogue

At beginning of event – before first run of forum play

- Welcomes the audience warmly to make them feel they have a friend.
- Warms up the audience to be active participants with physical and vocal games (choose a two-minute game to get them 'awake' – call and response, copying large gestures etc, anything to get them out of 'just sitting there'. Prepares them for a different kind of theatre where they will be active and important.
- Introduces the play as something which we all care about and then introduces the central character (brings them onto stage, so s/he is recognisable). Asks audience to watch the show extra carefully. Warns them that it will end badly.
- Asks them to think what they would do if they were the central character or one of the 'less powerful' people in the play. Tells them they will have a chance later to change things.
- Asks if the audience is ready to watch.
- Asks if the actors are ready to perform.
- Then let's begin..... (starts the play).



Second dialogue**After first run of the forum play**

Stops the action and reminds audience: "I told you it would end badly"

- "Are you happy with that ending?"
- "Does it have to be like that?"
- "So what was the real problem in that story?"
- Talk to the person next to you – discuss what happened "Tell me – shout it out!"
- "What did the central character want?", "What was stopping him/her?", "What could have been done differently?"

"Great, so let's see if we can change that ending"

- "We are going to perform the play for you again – exactly the same ending will happen unless you suggest some changes".
- "Here's how we can do it. When you think that you have an idea of how one of the less powerful people could act differently and change the story, you shout "STOP!".
- We will then stop the play, and you can come up here on the stage and take that person's place and try out your idea. It's easy, you just shout "STOP". Do you understand?
- Whatever you think that character can do to change the story you can try out, in actions, in words, or even by changing the scene (going to the police, to the press, to a lawyer). We will make it happen here on stage so you can try your idea.

STOP!

"There are only three rules you must stick to when you come up here:

- No magic – you cannot suggest something which is highly unlikely to happen (winning the lottery, a bus running over the oppressor etc)
- No violence – because violence only leads to more violence (and you might hurt the actors!)
- You cannot replace the oppressors.

- "Is that clear? Are you all ready to watch, engage and try to change the story?"
- "Are the actors ready?"
- "Then let's start..... (starts the play)"
- Then the facilitator stands at the side of the stage and watches the audience very carefully as if encouraging them to shout "STOP"

Third dialogue

When an audience member shouts “STOP” for an intervention

- The facilitator freezes the action and prompts applause to bring them on stage.
- Welcomes them – asks their name and who they want to replace.
- Facilitates the replacement of the actor by the newcomer. “Where do you want to start from?”
- Gets everyone in position and starts the action.

OR

- “OK, you want to go to the..... (new place)”/ “You want to phone someone? Who?”
- Organises actors into the new scene.
- Starts the action and watches.
- Watches the intervention, ready to help if necessary, for example if the newcomer is not facing the audience or cannot be heard.



Fourth dialogue

At end of intervention (or when the facilitator thinks the scene has gone long enough)

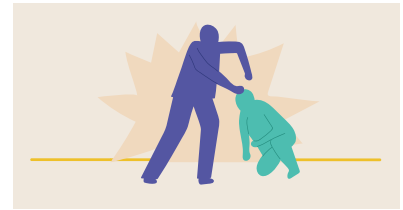


- Stops the action and prompts applause from the audience.
- Congratulates the audience member “Thank you. Did you achieve what you set out to do?”
- Asks the audience if the intervention could have changed the story and avoided the “bad” ending.
- Sends the audience member back to the audience.
- Asks if there is anyone else who wants to try an intervention in that scene. If so, repeats the above points.
- Restarts the action with the actors to continue the play until the next intervention.

Fifth dialogue

If there is no intervention in a very ‘oppressive’ scene.

- Facilitator can stop the action at the end of such a scene and ask:
 “Do you think that behaviour is OK?”
 “Are you happy with that?”
 “If you don’t intervene then the same thing will happen”
- If not can challenge them to intervene and change it.
 “Who could they go to?”
 “Who could they phone?”
 “Where could they go for help?”



Sixth dialogue

Either when the second forum play has run to the end, or when facilitator decides it is time to finish



- Thanks the audience for their willingness to enter into the challenge of finding an alternative outcome to the play (If there is time he can ask the audience to suggest an IDEAL IMAGE – of what they would want to see).
- Asks them to continue thinking about these problems so they can deal with them better in real life.
- Gives them any information they may need about sources of information or help (or tells them where they can get such information or asks actors to come on and give such information). This is a great place for reminding audiences of the vital messages you want to communicate.
- Introduces any final element e.g. a closing song/a legal expert.



10

TENTH DIALOGUE:

Bringing it all together

We certainly have come a long way since we started. But I think it's finally time to bring all to the pieces together and see the full structure of a play.

Yes! And then I'm ready to rehearse!

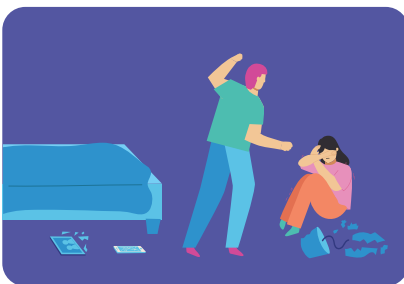


THE SHAPE OF FORUM THEATRE

Before we rehearse our plays, let's review the "shape" of a whole forum theatre performance. The video below will take you through it, from beginning to end.



For the rest of the day we shall try to create a situation as close as we can to giving a performance in your community, but we shall do it in stages.



For each attempt your group should perform to other groups. They will attempt to behave like a community group. After performing to them ask:

- Is the plot clear?
- Is the story recognisable to the audience?
- Do we have the crossroads moments in place? (test by running play and asking others to shout STOP without intervening).
- Are there characters who don't intervene but could do so?
- Is there a realistic alternative outcome for the central character?

When rehearsing the interventions ask if you are successful in:

- Encouraging audience members to intervene.
- Bringing an "interventionist" to the stage.
- Ending the intervention and talking constructively about what happened with the audience member, and with the audience.



You may still be thinking

“How does my character in the play react during an audience intervention?”

The MC will now invite you to take the positions at the start moment for the intervention and will count down to start the scene. **Now the new, improvised scene begins:**



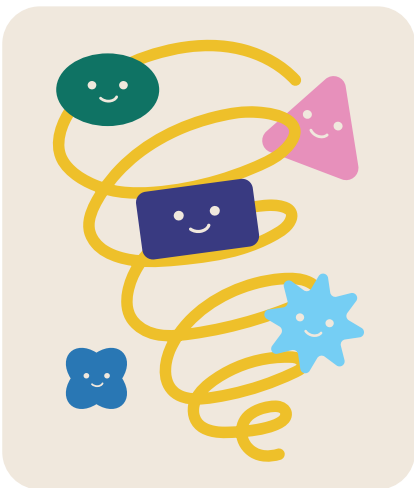
RULE ONE

Stay true to your character - what would he/she do in this situation?



RULE TWO

Listen to what the audience member is suggesting, it will be a change in the action, how do you feel about that? How would you react to that? Is the idea strong enough to make you change your mind and behave differently? Or does it make you push back even more stubbornly?



RULE THREE

You are not there to make the audience member's idea work, **you are there to TEST it.**



RULE FOUR

Embrace the improvisation, don't be scared of it, and don't judge what you do. You might be surprised and do or say something unexpected.



RULE FIVE

When the intervention is finished make the audience member feel good about what they have tried. **Just a smile to them will help.**

THE FUTURE

Of course this intensive course has not given you every single detail of Forum Theatre but it has given you the skills, the structures and the possibility of making effective Forum Theatre events.

You can now go and work in and with your local community to make plays which are relevant to them. By doing that you will **change things** for them and you will learn from the experience how to improve, how to fine-tune your Forum Theatre so that it **engages** more people, stimulates your audiences to want change and yes, you will start to **save lives**.

As in so many things you will learn enormously by doing the work. You will identify any obstacles and find ways of overcoming them. Stay in touch with other groups doing this kind of work, form a network and **learn from each other's challenges and successes**.

Good luck and we hope that one day we will see your work in action.



ANNEX

Recommended exercises in a Forum Theatre training



1. NAMES AND MOVEMENT

- 1 As a group, stand in a circle.
- 2 To learn everyone in the group's name, the first person says his/her name and at the same time makes a body movement. The rest of the group repeats both the name, and the body movement, together.
- 3 The second person says his/her name and at the same time makes a body movement. The rest of the class repeats it (the name and the movement together).
- 4 And so on...



2. MAKING A GROUP AGREEMENT

The group starts this exercise by sitting in a circle. Their task is to create a mutual agreement about how they are going to work together, including a list of rules for things they will or will not do. The group may also want to include how they will respond if someone breaks a rule or does not observe a request.

Some suggested rules include:

- Listen to each other attentively.
- Support each other without aggression.
- No competition with others - only try to be better than yourself.
- No violence and no pain.
- Punctuality.
- No use of mobile phones - turn them off!
- No smoking or alcoholic drinks during working time.
- Group responsibility - each actor should be able to perform each character in all the plays so that, in case one person is not there, another person can perform the role.
- A leader has to be transparent, democratic and non-judgmental.



3. VOICE EXERCISES

Chewing gum to warm up the face, mouth, lips, tongue

All participants imagine they have a very big, tough piece chewing gum and have to chew it with as large a movement of the mouth as possible. Use all the muscles you can.

Breathing

Establish strong abdominal breathing, because the breath is the base for the voice and movement. Hold your hand over your belly (just below the navel) and imagine breathing into that area so that it swells. On the out-breath it will push into the body. You can develop it by practising a quite fast in-breath followed by a slow controlled out-breath. If you breathe in and then count with a soft voice as you breathe out you are helping your control. Start with counting to five on the out-breath, then 10, then 15, then 20. Can you go further? Don't strain anything, and check that you are not moving the shoulders - it should all be powered from the abdomen.

Finding the sounds

- 1 With the abdominal breathing and an open throat, you can now engage the breath with the vocal chords or vocal folds. This creates the sound. We want to avoid tension in the voice. If you feel tension, yawn and stretch. This opens the back of the throat in an almost uncontrollable way.
- 2 Stand in an easy position with the feet slightly apart. Take a deep breath in and breathe out without making a sound. Do this several times.
- 3 Repeat this but make a very breathy 'haaa' sound as you breathe out. Do this several times.
- 4 Again, take a deep breath in. As you breathe out let the air gently touch the vocal chords to make a very soft, breathy 'aaaah' sound. Feel as if the air is caressing the vocal chords, not attacking them.
- 5 Repeat that, but each time try to let a little more air through the vocal chords to vibrate them and make sound. You should concentrate on feeling the mechanism of the voice - breath - air - vocal chords - sound.
- 6 The voice will be relaxed and quite a low tone because it is so relaxed.
- 7 Produce that same tone but jump gently while making the sound. The movement of the body will push air up through the throat and open it. As you land you will hear a slight volume increase in the voice. Keep the mouth open and you will feel the effects of the jumping better.
- 8 Other ways of increasing the volume on that basic tone are to raise and drop the shoulders as you produce the tone, or to gently beat your fists on your chest, lower ribs and abdomen to 'massage' the voice out of you. You can also do this to a partner. Watch that your partner keeps the mouth open and the shoulders relaxed as they produce the sound.

4. WALKING GROUP

Keeping your eyes alert

- 1 The group begins by walking in the space. The group will keep walking throughout the exercise unless they are instructed to stop. They walk in different directions, not touching each other, keeping their eyes alert.
- 2 The facilitator calls out certain instructions for the group to carry out quickly, in order to heighten the group's awareness of the space. For example: "touch three walls", "touch the floor and the ceiling", "touch one cold object", "touch one hot object", "touch three man-made objects", "touch two nature-made objects", "touch one object which might cause an injury", "touch one object which is soft" etc.
- 3 Now the group is more aware of the space, and potential hazards in the space, the group returns to simply walking.

Space awareness:

- 1 Keep walking. The group must cover as much of the ground as possible, not following each other but keeping the space balanced (evenly covered).
- 2 The facilitator calls out "Stop"! The group must stop instantly. Observe whether the group has covered the floor space. Where are the gaps? Are there many people all in one area? The aim is to keep the space balanced.
- 3 This can be repeated several times until the group's spatial awareness has improved.



5. STAYING ALERT, WORKING TOGETHER

Ball connection one - several tennis balls

- 1 The group stands in a circle in silence. The facilitator makes eye contact with someone and then throws the ball to him/her.
- 2 The receiving player makes eye contact with another person and throws the ball to them, and so on from person to person.
- 3 Once there is good eye contact and focus the facilitator throws another ball to another player. This continues until there are several balls being thrown from player to player, always getting eye contact before a throw.
- 4 The aim of the game is to get as many balls being passed as possible without a single ball being dropped.
- 5 The other aim is to get every individual very alert and ready for anything
- 6 If a ball drops at any point, the balls come back to the facilitator (or whoever is starting the game) and the game starts again.

Ball Connection two - use a lightweight, football-sized ball

- 1 The group stands in different places in the room - not in a circle. Players throw the ball from person to person, standing still.
- 2 Each player calls the name of the person to whom they are throwing the ball.
- 3 Players must make eye contact with the person to whom they are passing the ball.
- 4 The players should pass and receive the ball with care and kindness, not aggression.
- 5 There should be no feeling of competition.
- 6 Once the group has achieved this they can move on to passing the ball from person to person whilst travelling in the room, starting with walking and building up to running.
- 7 Eye contact must always be maintained with each throw.
- 8 After a while the name calling can be taken out, so the game just involves eye contact, giving and receiving the ball and moving in space and silence.

HYPNOSIS

Hypnosis is when one person imposes a feeling or a state on another person. It is all about power, both the loss of power and the taking of power over another person. That's why it's so important to Forum Theatre.

**Ask the group to get into pairs and to decide who is A and who is B.
The exercise is carried out without any speech.**



- 1 A will place their hand about one hand's distance away from B's face. The bottom of A's hand will be approximately in line with B's chin, the top of their hand in line with the top of B's forehead.
- 2 Wherever A moves the hand, B will follow (as if they were hypnotised!). Therefore all A's movement must be humanly possible for B to follow.
- 3 The 'A's begin by moving their hands quite slowly, they can then build up until they are gradually moving around the room and moving their hands to different levels and in different directions, in order that both partners begin to explore expressive movement and the limits and potential of their bodies.
- 4 The participants should not stop moving until the end of the exercise.
- 5 Once the pairs have got really expressive, ask them to swap so that B becomes the leader and A the follower.

VARIATIONS

When this first version of the game is established, let it continue but start to move the participants around.

Example: The player who is leading can now lead two people, one by each hand. When two players are hand in hand, they can both lead and be led at the same time. **Music may be played during the exercise. But make sure the music is varied and changes pace, otherwise participants will tend to get stuck in the same rhythm, pace and mood.**

7. MIRRORING WITH MUSIC - FOR OBSERVATION, ACCURACY, AND PHYSICAL EXPRESSION

- 1 The group gets into pairs and names themselves one and two.
- 2 They stand facing each other.
- 3 One starts to move very slowly, carrying out an action.
- 4 Two reflects the action, as if in a mirror.
- 5 Swap over.
- 6 Music played during the activity.



8. VOCAL STRENGTH

Chewing gum

All participants imagine they have a very big, tough, chewing gum and have to chew it with as large a movement of the mouth as possible. Use all the muscles you can.

Humming

To give the voice the power it needs is not a matter of pushing the voice. We need to use the body to amplify the volume. Just as a guitar has a sound box behind the strings to resonate its vibrations, we have parts of the body which naturally amplify our voice. By being aware of them and maximising them, we can find richer and louder tones to use. The two main areas for resonance are the head and the chest. Here is how we can feel their resonance and increase it:

- 1 Start to hum with the lips closed. Choose an easy note where you are comfortable and relaxed. Breathe deeply (abdomen only).
- 2 Try to feel the hum on your lips. If you can't, slightly relax the lips and vary the note you are humming up and down until you feel your lips starting to 'buzz'. If you gently bring the teeth together behind the lips you may feel that they are also 'buzzing' with the sound.
- 3 Now place your hands on your face, let your fingers give a little pressure around the nose, under the eyes, on the forehead. Vary the pitch of your hum to try and feel these parts resonating with the sound. When you can feel it, try to relax those areas – perhaps by massaging them—to increase the resonance.
- 4 Do the same with the top and back of your head. These are useful resonators, using the structure of the skull to amplify sound. Again vary your note from high to low and back again, until you feel the 'buzz' here.

- 5 These are the head resonators. See if you can feel them all working at the same time.
- 6 Now place your hands on the front of your chest and continue humming. It should be easy to feel the vibration here, perhaps on a lower note than in the head.
- 7 Take the hands to the lowest ribs, and to the side ribs. Try to find a note to resonate here. You may need to gently massage the fingers into the ribs here to feel the resonance. If it is difficult try to imagine that your mouth is in the place you want to resonate - that the voice is coming out of your body at that point. This can help sensitise the area.
- 8 When you have explored all these areas, try slowly to open the lips so that you are making a “mmaah” sound, and try to maintain the resonance while you do it. Work on this regularly until your resonator/sound-box is fully helping you.

How many 'A'

- 1 The group stands in a circle.
- 2 One person steps forward and makes a vowel sound together with a gesture which expresses an emotion or idea. (NB. Vowels might be different in each language; English has aah, ee, oh, ai, oo.)
- 3 The rest of the group copies the sound and gesture exactly.
- 4 Another person steps forward with a vowel sound and gesture, expressing a different intention, the group repeats and so on. Make sure everyone has a few turns.
- 5 Work through all the possible vowel sounds in your language, making sure you find as many variations on how you might express that sound, in volume, tone, speed, length etc.

Extension:

- Once you have worked through sounds, choose a sentence. Find as many different possible ways of saying that sentence. For example, 'I love you' can be said in many different ways. In English, 'I love you' can be said in such a way that it actually expresses 'I hate you', or 'I want you', or even as a question 'I love you?'.
- Now try one person saying the sentence directly to another person in the room. The second person then responds to what has been said. In this way, a small verbal dialogue begins. How many 'A' exercise helps participants to discover sounds, words and begin to play with them.

9. COUNTING GROUP

Here is an exercise to help you train your senses!

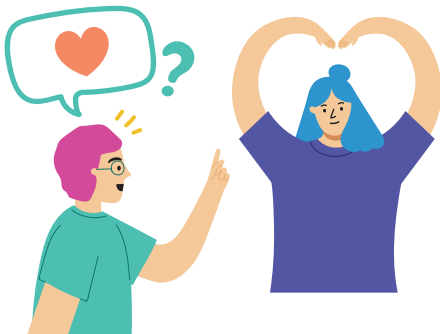


- 1 The group sits, stands or lies down in a circle. The group will now count up to ten, one person at a time. If two people speak at the same time, even for an instant, the group returns to number one.
- 2 No one knows who will speak first, second, third etc. The ordering of who says the numbers must be completely random without signalling to each other, without anyone leading the group or taking control or indeed being passive.
- 3 The group play by using their senses and it is the whole group's responsibility to get to ten, to choose when to speak, and when to be silent.
- 4 The game is played several times depending on the skill of the team. The number can be increased from ten to 20 etc.
- 5 Try the reverse; counting from ten to one. Is this easier?
- 6 Now repeat it with closed eyes! This exercises your other senses.



10. IMAGE OF THE WORDS

This exercise helps you practice visualising.



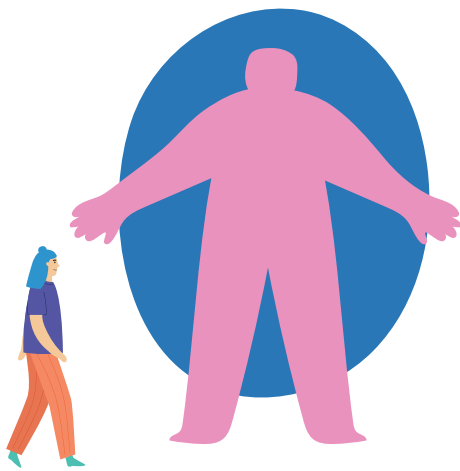
- 1 Collect themes and issues that the group is interested in working on, for example 'love', 'fear', 'school', 'the harvest', 'homelessness', 'domestic violence', 'growing old'...
- 2 Ask the group to stand separately from each other, in a circle with their backs facing into the circle.
- 3 The facilitator will call out one of the themes. The participants are going to make a still picture with their bodies that expresses this theme for them.
- 4 Count the group down from ten to one ending with 'turn around and show your picture!'.
- 5 At this point the group should all turn inside the circle to face each other and spontaneously present their individual images with their bodies. Ask the group to hold the image they are making at the same time as taking a look at the other images in the circle.
- 6 The participants are invited to say what they can see in the images, they notice which shapes recur, what emotions and situations come to mind and what this says to them about the theme.
- 7 The group turns back into the circle, another word is chosen and so on...

Variation

- As above. This time the images are 'brought to life' in various ways. For example, the facilitator says 'play sound' 'play movement'.
- The facilitator can also instruct the participants to move toward someone with a very different image.
- The participants move like statues on wheels, holding their image in place but travelling forward. They make pairs with the person who seems to be in a different shape to theirs. These groups of images can thereby be brought together into very short quick scenes with the pairs moving and having a dialogue with each other – 'play scene'.

11. DANGER AND PROTECTOR GAME

- 1 Ask the group members to walk around the room in various directions, not following anyone but taking their own path. The group should keep moving throughout the exercise.
- 2 Whilst they are moving, ask the players to each think of someone in the room but not show who they have chosen. Tell the group the person they have just chosen is going to represent something that they fear. Their task therefore is to try to keep away from the thing that they fear, to try to keep as much distance between themselves and the fear.
- 3 Let this continue for a while. The dynamic in the room will start to change.
- 4 Stop them in a freeze frame.

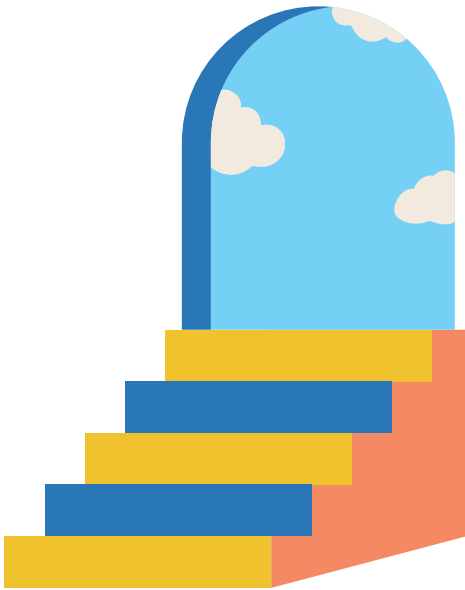


- 5 Ask the group members to keep this person as representing the thing they fear, but to now also choose a second person in the room and not show that they have chosen them.
- 6 The second person that they have chosen will now represent the thing that can protect them from their fear - a protector. So the aim of the game is now for the participants to try to keep the 'protector' between them and their 'fear'.
- 7 Tension can be added to the game by asking the group to move faster, or counting them down from ten to one, saying that by the time you get down to 1 their fear will be at its most extreme. This is a good place to stop the game.

- 8 At the end of the game ask the group to freeze and look at the stage picture they have made. They can now point to the people who represented their fear and then to their protector.
- 9 Ask the group to make observations, for example how did their breathing change, how did their bodies change, what shapes did the group make, how did the game and the roles they played feel etc.
- 10 Think about that last game and how it relates to power and what was introduced on Day One.

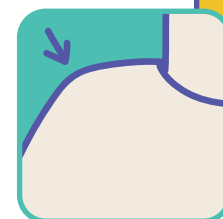
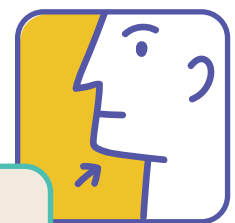
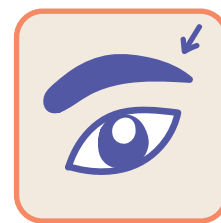


12. GROUPS AND SHAPES



- 1 Ask the group to move around the space, tell them you are going to call out groups which they must get into as quickly as possible.
- 2 When they are in those groups you are going to tell them a shape or object which they must find a way of showing as a group. They must find the most dynamic way of making that shape, using different levels, with attention to detail etc.
- 3 For example: “get into groups of six, make a circle” “get into groups of three, make a star”, “get into groups of seven, make a market place”...
- 4 As you progress, the groups and tasks should get more challenging. For example: “get into groups of people with the same colour eyes as you, make the word theatre”, “get into pairs with a person who is most different in height from you, make a bird on a pond”, “get into groups of people with the same size feet as you, make a bicycle”...

- 5 You can also start to introduce themes or issues you want to explore through the kind of group they are in, and the task: “get into groups of 12, make a factory paying low wages”, “get into groups of people born in the same month as you, make a family who have received some good news”...
- 6 After a while you can ask groups to look at each other’s pictures and talk about what they see.
- 7 The groups can introduce sound and movement to the shapes they have made, so they start to become potential scenes which you can develop.



13. QUICK IMAGES OF TRAFFICKING (NO WORDS) SHOW SLIDESHOW BACK TO OTHERS

- 1 Work in groups of four or five.
- 2 Each participant uses the rest of their group members' bodies as people and objects to create a photo of modern slavery/human trafficking as you now understand it. So if a group has four members, there will be four 'photos'. Remember to show the role and the power/powerlessness of each person in it.
- 3 After sometime to prepare the photos, groups present their series of photos to the class.



14. "YES, AND..."

- 1 The players get into pairs.
- 2 They are going to improvise a short story together, one by one, one sentence at a time.
- 3 Player One makes a sentence to start the story.
- 4 Player Two adds to continue the story starting with "Yes, and..."
- 5 Then player One adds a further sentence starting with "Yes, and...", so on till the end of the story.

The "Yes and" will serve to open up your ideas. If you say No, then you are blocking the story.



15. POINTS OF CONTACT

- 1 Ask the group to get into groups of about five people.
- 2 Tell them how many points of contact they can have, as a group, on the floor at any given time.
- 3 Start off with an easy instruction, for example nine points of contact on the floor (so in a group of five people with two feet each, if one person raises a foot off the ground, the group now has nine points of contact on the floor).
- 4 Continue changing the number of points of contact on the floor.
- 5 The group should discover more and more inventive ways of contacting, and not contacting, the floor.

Variation:

- As above.
- Then call out different body parts that can have points of contact on the floor. For example five feet, two hands, three elbows, one knee, one hip, two shoulders...

16. VOCAL STRENGTH

Chewing gum; humming

All participants imagine they have a very big, tough, chewing gum and have to chew it with as large a movement of the mouth as possible. Use all the muscles you can.

Calling for communication

People who work in the fields, in the hills, on the shore, often have ways of calling long distances - sometimes in a song - which is clear and unforced. It is a technique with an open throat which can help us discover the potential of our voices, and is useful when we are performing in big spaces. Here is one way to discover it for ourselves:

- 1** The group stands in as big a circle as possible; feet apart and knees very slightly bent.
- 2** You swing your “throwing arm” back and forward in unison with everyone else, as if in an under-arm throw. As you swing back, take a deep breath in. As you swing your arm forward breathe out and release the hand as if letting go of a ball which will fly up and forward.
- 3** Check that your throat is open (like in the yawn), especially for the out-breath.
- 4** Now use the out breath to throw a sound—as if calling someone who is across the river, across the playground, up a mountain etc. It is good to start with the sound “hey” as the “h” helps to keep the throat unblocked.
- 5** Each time you swing the arm forward let that call fly out with your mimed throw.
- 6** Check everyone is doing it without tension by letting everyone try it one by one. Point out any tensions you can see or hear in their voices.
- 7** Try it with two syllables and two notes, e.g. “hey,ho!” , “hoh-yah” etc. All together, then one by one.
- 8** Try it on three syllables, four etc. Try putting words to the call e.g. “Hello, are you there?”, “Do you need help?” etc. and making sure that each word is called and not swallowed.



17. STOPPING AND STARTING

Watching animals is always fascinating as they have wonderful and varied control of energy and rhythm. They can also be the basis for developing characters. In particular we can learn how they hold their energy, how they stop and start. They always seem to be perfectly in control, and using the correct energy for what they intend to do. Some are better than others. The cat family is a great example, which is probably why we are so fascinated by them.

- 1 Everyone walks around the space in all directions, not in a circle. Be alert, taking eye contacts, looking at things in the space, being alive.
- 2 When a leader calls “Freeze!” try to stop in exactly that moment – like when a cat suddenly sees a bird or a mouse.
- 3 Make sure that the whole body stops, from eyes to toes, not just your legs with the arms still swinging. Think how a cat sometimes stops with one paw lifted – everything frozen and ready.
- 4 Practise this until you can stop instantly with your energy held in your body. A stop is not when your energy runs out. It is when you hold all your forward energy from moving. So a stop has double energy - the forward energy and the energy which holds that energy back. When a cat stops and is perfectly still, looking at a bird, there is no movement but we can all see the energy held in the body, waiting to jump.
- 5 As you start to walk again, feel that the held energy has been released so you suddenly burst into movement. Not a slow, lazy acceleration, but a full energy start. Such starts are great for entrances on stage. They have energy and intention, and that makes the audience look at them.
- 6 Now when you walk feel that you could stop at any moment. Now you don’t need a leader to shout “Freeze!”. You can stop at any impulse: seeing something or someone, hearing something, smelling something, thinking of something. Try it, stopping on your own impulses. This is the level of energy control which will make your acting alive.
- 7 Now try it moving at different speeds between the stops.
- 8 Now try it walking with some of the body shapes you tried above.
- 9 Now try it varying the amount of tension in the body. Walk with a lot of tension, like somebody very stressed, the stops and starts should be quite easy.
- 10 Walk with a very lazy tension, like someone who is tired or in the heat. Even with this you should be able to do the stops and starts precisely.

18. COMPLETE THE IMAGE - THE HANDSHAKE

- 1 The group gets into pairs which number themselves one and two.
- 2 Each pair makes a still image of two people shaking hands. There is no talking.
- 3 Number one steps out of the image. Number two remains in exactly the same shape.
- 4 Number one looks at the image of number two from all angles. This process of looking is sometimes forgotten as the exercise gets more complicated, but it is very important that the participants keep this element as part of the exercise and take a very good look.
- 5 Number one steps back into the image, but this time in a new position (not a hand shake). They can be encouraged to make clear physical choices and to experiment with using different levels, to work in three dimensions and place themselves at different angles etc. (It is useful to always have one point of physical contact between the two bodies)
- 6 They hold the position for a moment, noticing what the image suggests to them.
- 7 Then number two steps out. Number one keeps the shape she has made. Two looks at the image.
- 8 Two steps back in and takes up a new position.
- 9 The cycle of images continues.
- 10 The players should be encouraged to 'think with their bodies', using different levels, working from all angles.
- 11 After a while pairs can watch each other, and describe what they see, what stories emerge for them, what issues. In image work there is no right or wrong answer!

Variation:

- Another form of greeting can be used to begin the exercise if this is very unfamiliar in your community. However, using some form of greeting which involves some form of physical contact can be useful to start the exercise.
- Try the exercise with music to create a different dynamic.
- Try it without physical contact, playing with distance.
- The exercise can also be practiced with three people. (Two in a handshake. Three enters and adds to picture, then one changes, then two then three etc).

19. WHAT ARE YOU DOING? (LIAR'S MIME)

- 1 The group stands in a circle.
- 2 One player goes into the middle and begins an action.
- 3 A second player enters the circle and watches the first player carrying out the action. After a short time, player two asks what are you doing?
- 4 Player one continues his action and says he is doing something quite different from what he is actually doing. He then leaves the circle.
- 5 Player two then begins to carry out the action player one said he was doing.
- 6 Player three enters the circle, and asks, what are you doing? Player two says he is doing something different. And so on...



20. STATUES OF EMOTIONS

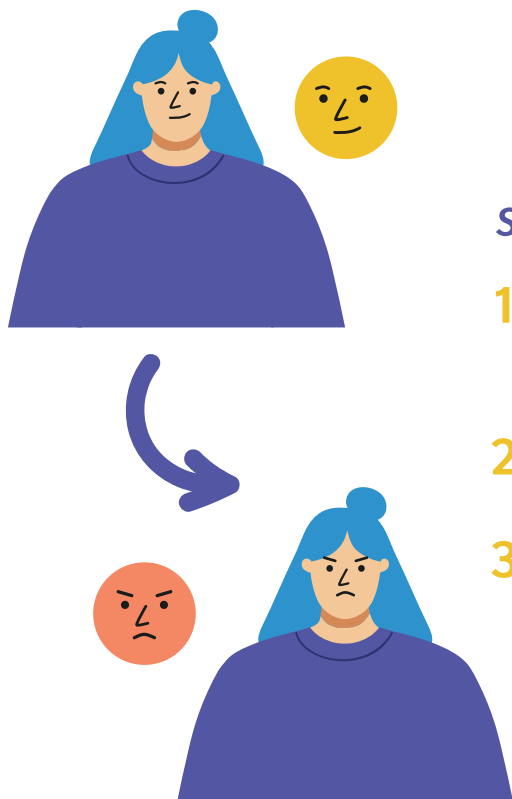
- 1 Collecting some emotion words, for instance: happy, sad, angry, surprise, fear, worried, excited, etc.
- 2 Participants find a place in the room that is not too close to others.
- 3 Each time the facilitator calls out a word of emotion, participants use their bodies to create statues that illustrate the emotion word given by whatever poses they want to use to express the word.
- 4 Ask a half of the group to stay still as statues. Invite the rest to move around to enjoy the museum without touching or trying to distract the 'statues'. Swap over.
- 5 Do the same with other words.
- 6 Ask those who watch the statues to imagine a storyline which might link them together.

21. TAKING CHARACTERS FOR A WALK

By doing this you are exploring the world of your character and its different moods AND how that character might change moods when the situation changes.

Step one:

- 1 Walk around the room as yourself. Feel relaxed and free and ready for anything.
- 2 The facilitator calls out a character and on a count of one-two-three-four you change your body, your rhythm and your tension to that character and you continue walking, feeling how different this body/person is from your normal being.
- 3 Then the facilitator calls out another character and one-two-three-four and you change again and again.



Step two:

- 1 You repeat the above, but the facilitator adds emotions. For example: “Change to the trafficker in friendly mood one-two-three-four”.
- 2 The change happens and then they add, “friendly changes to angry... one-two-three-four”.
- 3 Use your imagination to create as many new situations as possible for your characters.

22. ACT - STOP

- 1 Two actors (A & B) starting a simple scene, for example discussing an issue.
- 2 At a moment of the scene (30-45 seconds after the beginning), facilitator say “Stop!”, A & B freeze, facilitator then invite another actor (C) come on the stage to replace A or B with the same position and pose.
- 3 When C is ready in the position, the facilitator says “Act” and C start a brand new scene from his position, trying to use the position that given to start with.
- 4 And so on.

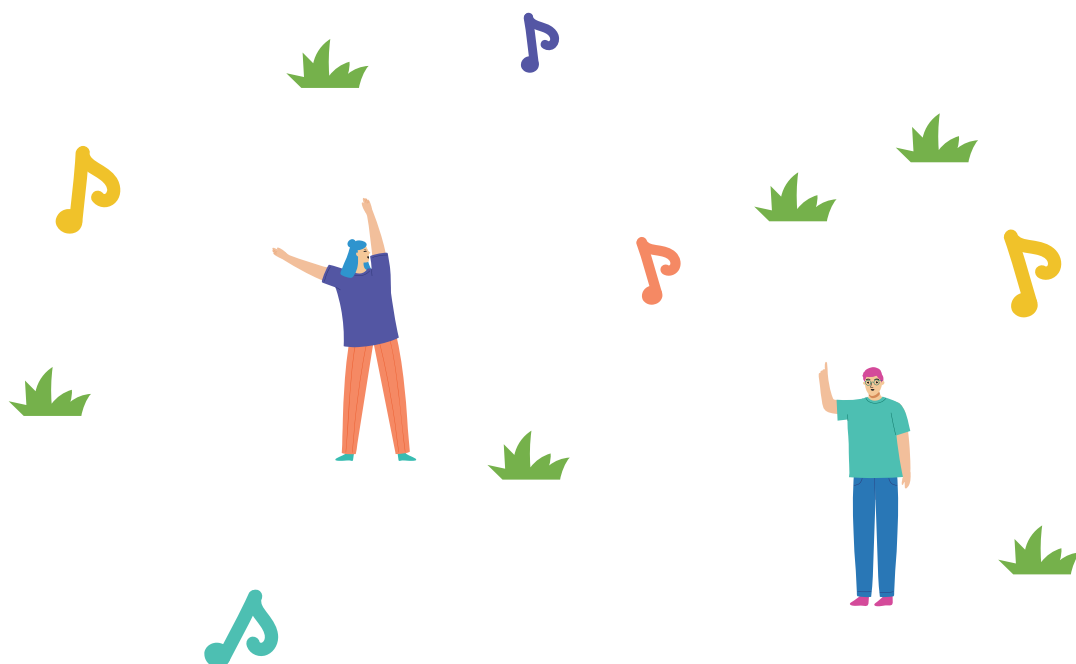
23. SING, IMPROVISE, ILLUSTRATE!

- 1 One group sings a song, another group has to illustrate the song by their improvisational movements.
- 2 Encourage the illustrators to do whatever they think matches the song.

Take a well known song and illustrate it.

Now think about changing the lyrics to speak about your play’s story and practise singing that - with illustrations. This is a gentle introduction to the topic of the dangers of trafficking and what we can do about them.

It can be used at the beginning and end of your performance.



24. GREETINGS AND HOLDING THE SPACE

Step one:

- 1 All participants start milling about the room.
- 2 Ask them to greet each other, perhaps just by shaking hands. Players just shake hands, move on, and greet the next player they meet. Then ask the players to greet each other in a more specific way. Possibilities are:
 - Greet each other like you greet a long lost friend.
 - Greet someone you don't really trust'
 - Greet an ex-lover.
 - Greet someone you really hate.
 - Someone you have a secret crush on.
 - Someone that sold you a crappy used car.
 - Greet someone like you are a cowboy, a soldier, a nanny, a farmer, etc.



Step two:

- 1 One by one walk into the space and try to hold everyone's attention and greet them with a warm and friendly presence and an easy greeting and tell them you have a great idea for them.
- 2 Do they trust you? Do they see you as confident but still their equal?
- 3 Discuss each attempt in the group.

This will take some time but it is worth spending that time.

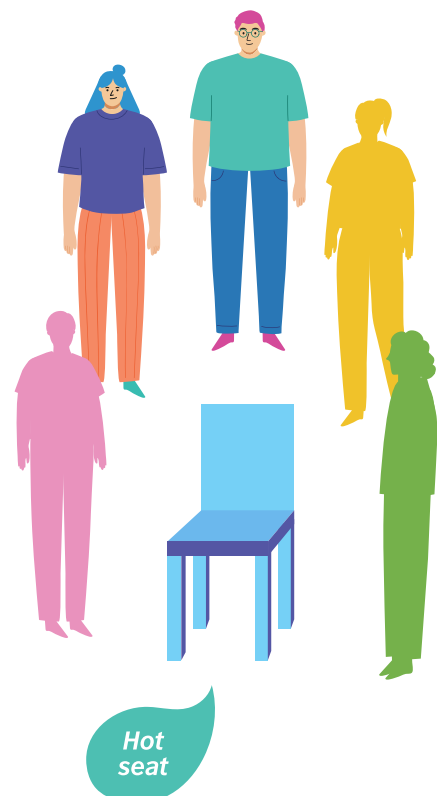
25. FOLLOW THE LEADER



- 1 Everyone stands in a circle
- 2 The first person, A, is the leader and starts a series of simple movements in a slow steady rhythm.
- 3 Others will follow him or her till the facilitator says “Next”, then the person on the left-side of A becomes leader and begins his/her series of movements, others follow him/her, so on.
- 4 Each individual has to make their own movements, no movement should be repeated by anyone.
- 5 Music can be played during the whole activity.

26. CHARACTER HOT SEAT

- 1 Place a chair - the hot seat - in front of the group.
- 2 One after another each person developing a character sits in the hot seat - they must enter the space as their character not as themselves.
- 3 You may ask them to introduce themselves.
- 4 Then anyone in the group can ask questions of them, and they answer in the voice of the character. Some questions may relate to areas of the character already known e.g. events which happen in the story or play. Most questions, however, should be to build up knowledge we cannot know from the play; about the character’s background, likes and dislikes, political persuasions etc.
- 5 The actor has to come up with answers and, surprisingly, they normally do. Some may be answers the actor has already thought about, but many decisions have to be made on the spot, possibly bringing answers from the actor’s subconscious.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND TRAINERS



Đặng Minh Thư



Dang Minh Thu is a person who is passionate about practising applied arts, especially applied theatre, in education and community development. Her career began in 2002 when she was chosen out of over 300 potential candidates to be one of the Forum Theatre/Interactive Theatre team members - a six-year peer education project which led by World Population Foundation, David Glass Ensemble and Vietnam Theatre Artists Association to raise awareness of Hanoi youth about reproductive health. Active performance in the theatre team and being guided by many famous domestic and international artists such as David Glass, Robert Hale, Xuan Bac, Vu Long & Thu Lan, Phuc Di, etc. formed a solid foundation for her later success.

Since 2004, just 2 years after joining the Forum Theatre troupe, some non-profit organisations began to invite her to conduct short-term training programs for their target audience (students, teachers, staff, youth in the community, etc.) in interactive drama application to communicate about topics of interest to the community, such as prevention of school violence, prevention of domestic violence, raising awareness about human trafficking, child protection from child marriage, infection prevention and anti-discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, etc. Disciplined organisations like OUCRU, VVOB, ChildFund, Plan International, etc. expressed satisfaction with the consulting programs that she designed and implemented.

In 2010, she was one of the first members of Life Art, a social enterprise specialising in the application of art in education and community development, where she later became its director. Realising the potential of teachers as inspirations and contributing to social change, from 2018 to present, Life Art's contribution has focused on the field of education and provide short-term training courses for teachers. The group of Inspiring Teachers that she founded after only 12 months has reached a number of 24,000 members including teachers across Vietnam.

John Martin



John is the founder and director of London's Pan Intercultural Arts www.pan-arts.net, one of the first and leading Arts for Social Change companies in the UK. Having studied drama at the University of Bristol and l'Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris John has always looked for new ways of creating theatre, from experimental drama with the LaMama company in New York to lakeside settings of anti-war plays in India.

Over the last three decades John has focused on using theatre as a means of enabling change in situations where people face major obstacles in achieving a fulfilling life or are subject to pressures from oppression, natural disasters or conflict. John's training concentrates on re-introducing boundless imagination and creativity to enable participants to reflect on their lives and access more complete futures. In extreme situations this even leads to saving lives by stopping suicides, finding ways out of deadly poverty or avoiding conflict. Forum Theatre has been one of John's major methods of achieving change. In the UK Pan Intercultural Arts works with asylum seekers and refugees, survivors of human trafficking and young people close to criminality.

In worldwide situations Forum Theatre has been the centrepiece of his projects against girlchild abuse in Indian slums; against ethnic rivalry in South Sudan; against farmer suicide and against post conflict difficulties in Sri Lanka; against societal breakdown after typhoons and against lack of access to justice in Myanmar and against HIV/AIDS ignorance and prejudice in Pakistan. These and other similar projects have convinced John that theatre, while always being engaging and entertaining, is also, and more importantly, a deep and necessary way for people to tell their stories, express their fears and imagine alternative and better futures for themselves.

These projects have often been with British Council but also for UNDP, the ILO, the Red Cross and other international organisations. John is a visiting professor at the UK's Rose Bruford College, an Associate Lecturer at the London College of Communication and speaks widely about the force of the imagination, the need for creativity and the power of theatre.

He is delighted to be collaborating with artists and training course participants in Viet Nam.

