

Scripting violence, rehearsing change

Games and theatrical tools to work with perpetrators
of gender-based violence



Author's Acknowledgement

I would like to thank all the WWP EN staff for their constant engagement in building a world of beautiful relationships free from violence.

I am immensely grateful to Alessandra Pauncz for her open mindedness, accepting from the beginning to invest time and energy on introducing informal games and creative exercises in the Work With Perpetrators.

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This manual collects games from all over the world. They have been tried in many different situations, countries and cultures. So many people have contributed to their evolution, kids, adults, teachers, trainers, activists, theatre makers, clowns, queers, drags. Many thanks to each of them.

Augusto Boal and many theater of the oppressed practitioners showed me how to use games to trigger political transformation. This manual owes them a lot.

Olivier Malcor

For more than 20 years Olivier has been looking for creative tools that could allow anybody to work on Gender Based Violence in a playful and collective manner. After a philosophy thesis on the invisible theater of human relationships, years of learning and practicing the theater of the oppressed in Latin America and Africa he has been working in French and Italian suburbs, trying to dismantle the culture of violence with men and boys. For the last 10 years he has been working with perpetrators of GBV on probation or in prison.

Scripting violence, rehearsing change – Games and theatrical tools to work with perpetrators of gender-based violence

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Compiled and written by
Olivier Malcor



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Why have a manual with games and theatrical tools for those who work with perpetrators?

The European Network of the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (WWP EN), which I have the honour of representing, is a membership organization formally founded in 2014 that represents over 60 members in more than 30 European countries. Our mission is to promote safe, victim-centred, and effective perpetrator work, contributing to the development and implementation of EU laws and policies through different lines of action, among which capacity building and training are crucial.

This manual is part of this effort. We think an ongoing challenge of working with perpetrators is finding the right balance between building a strong working alliance of trust and support while challenging harmful beliefs that are often deeply rooted in identity and gender constructions.

With many of our clients, we face a perplexing contradiction since their abusive behaviour seems at the same time deliberate and invisible. We are constantly struggling with a thread of awareness that sometimes appears as men talk and quickly disappears as feelings of anger and frustration take over.

The challenging trio that represents the biggest obstacle for change: denial, minimization, and victim-blaming.

We know that these feelings are linked with denial, minimization, and victim-blaming: The challenging trio that represents the biggest obstacle for change. So, what if we could just find a different approach to resolving this? What if we could stop struggling and start playing?

When we play or “perform”, something magical happens. We start experiencing, instead of thinking about, beliefs and alternative realities.

We believe that working with men to stop their violence against women is much more than just a psycho-social intervention. If we want to

When we play or “perform”, something magical happens. We start experiencing beliefs and alternative realities, instead of thinking about them.

create social change and challenge social norms around dominant masculinities, we need to find ways of addressing men’s daily experiences of privilege and entitlement and we need to do this using conventional and unconventional tools.

The knowledge we gain through games and theatrical tools is powerful because they have grown out of the lived experiences of hundreds of thousands of individuals all over the world, all struggling with the same problems and all trying to find different ways of challenging dominant masculinities. This wealth of knowledge is too precious for us to ignore and offers us a multitude of different ideas to work with the men in our programmes, but also with boys in schools and with men and women in all kinds of settings.

We are very grateful to Olivier for bringing our attention to this amazing opportunity, and we believe that this manual will be life-changing for some of you. The harder the clients – and by harder, I mean more difficult for us, the service providers, because they struggle to recognize the violence they have committed or the harm this has brought on the victims – the more helpful some of these activities will be.

We are very interested in hearing about your experiences and how these ideas might travel and develop and evolve in different settings, contexts, and European countries. Be generous! Give us feedback and help us expand our knowledge around challenging dominant ideas and gender-based violence.

We hope you enjoy using the manual as much as we have enjoyed preparing it!

Alessandra Pauncz
WWP EN Executive Director

Purpose and scope of the manual

Working with perpetrators of gender-based violence (GBV) is a demanding task. In June 2021, WWP EN organised focus groups and interviews with practitioners to define some key challenges of the work. The following issues emerged:

- Tackling denial, lies, manipulation, control, sabotage, narcissism, blame-shifting, minimization, and victimization during sessions.
- Working on gender, masculinity, privilege, and power without causing resistance.
- Developing empathy, capacity to feel others' emotions and their own.

This manual provides games and theatrical exercises that address the issues raised above. It is no replacement for a perpetrator programme, but the tools in this manual help with difficult conversations and topics. If you are open to using games and theatre in your programme, they can become integral components of your work.

I based this manual on four principles:

1) Games and theatre to mirror social interactions

Games can foster a very interactive and playful atmosphere.

Laughter during games is frequent and triggers positive participation, making resistance easier to overcome.

Interaction between group members means that they build knowledge collectively. Each game includes a spontaneous part, during which participants overcome a challenge, in collaboration or competition, to reach a goal. A reflection follows each of these spontaneous parts.

This manual adopts a Freirian (1968) understanding of games. This means participants are not considered as bad or ignorant people to be filled with the right thoughts or attitudes. Instead, games and theatre invite perpetrators to reflect on how they act in spontaneous situations in the games. Games allow them to collectively analyse their feelings, thoughts, and behaviours in a safe setting. The facilitator must also feel like playing, sharing, making mistakes, and learning during this process.

2) Games and theatre to embody power

Image theatre/building sculptures, by physically representing a situation, can uncover oppressive stories and script power. An image/sculpture might reveal a detail that wouldn't come

Abdulkadir Mohamed (CISP): Forum theatre in Mogadishu on how to create space for women's contribution in decision making processes



out through verbal interaction. It can make the contradictions of a perpetrator's narrative visible. In Chekov's words "theatre makes things visible in such a way that we won't be able not to see them anymore".

Gender is a social construct of power and deconstructing masculinity through theatre can reveal fascinating responses, even for more reluctant participants. Gendered roles are learnt from earliest childhood with heavy control from family and peers. These scripts are well-rehearsed and performed daily. When a boy is told not to cry because it is 'girlish', he is told to deny a healthy expression of his emotions and encouraged to perceive girls as unequal. Such reminders are gradually internalized and acting 'manly' can become spontaneous. An apparently natural response that hides the complex construction of gender and its harmful effects. Theatre exposes these constructions and its effects. The weight of stereotypes, how they have sculpted our bodies and complicate basic interactions, all this appears clearly in games and theatrical exercises.

3) Games and theatre to un-learn violence

Violence is a learnt behaviour. It might have been experienced in childhood, tried out during youth, seen acted out or justified by peers, and practiced with friends until it has become a stereotypical response to challenges. As a learnt



behaviour, it can be unlearned and new responses can be tested and rehearsed. Because violence comes from a complex learning process, learning alternative behaviours must include complex multi-sensorial experiences as well (Thompson, 1999). Games and theatrical tools allow participants to experience their learning with all senses.

Theatre is the art of looking at ourselves from the outside

as Boal (1992) puts it in *Games for actors and non-actors*. It allows us to shift our point of view by constantly inviting us to change roles. Theatre multiplies insights on how others may feel, think, believe, and justify their actions, thus developing empathy. For James Thompson (1999), role-play, role reversals and forum theatre help develop the ability to be fluent in several roles, to change perspective, to rehearse new responses to challenges.

Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed is probably one of the most comprehensive methodologies to unlearn violence and toxic masculinities with all its de-mechanization games, its infinite possibilities of image theatre techniques and tools to rehearse change.

4) Games and theatre to rehearse change collectively

Forum theatre gives the opportunity to start a scene over and over as many times as needed to find a way out of a violent or tense situation. Participants can try new behaviours and rehearse change together.

Since violence is fueled by patriarchal culture that pervades all societies, it must be faced collectively.

You must guide perpetrators through situations in which they can rethink their roles, use of power and privilege, rewrite gendered scripts, and practice these changes with their peers. They need to simulate the challenges that await them at the end of the session and programme, as well as the rest of their lives.

Gabriele Fiolo: Men in the shoes of women in street harassment scene, role reversal in Pianoro, Italy

How to use games and theatre with perpetrators?

Getting your group interested in games and theatre

Your first challenge is to have the men in your group participate in games and theatre techniques. Many of them may not be interested in playing games and think they are for children, aimless. They might feel like you are not taking them seriously. Younger perpetrators may be reluctant for the same reasons. To counter this resistance, you should offer a new perspective on games and theatre before starting such activities.

Games are used by children and even animals to learn social life and develop skills, but they are also used with oppressed people, workers, managers, sport professionals, politicians or religious leaders. There are few groups of people who don't use them. A perpetrators' favourite singer or actor, for example will probably be prepared for a press conference or a TV show through a role-play exercise. It is useful to find examples that speak to the participants.

Starting to use games

It is important to start with very gradual games and make it clear that people will not be asked to do 'weird' things in front of the group. There will be no harsh spotlight or shaming. The men will participate in simple creative activities and participatory group-work. Sitting games are good to begin the process. First standing games must be easy and pleasant.

While introducing a more difficult or engaging game, it is a good idea to give an example of where else this game is being used and why. For example, a place, situation, and goal that is relevant to the group. Sometimes you might communicate only one of the goals (e.g. "Colombian hypnosis" is a physical warm up that allows to work on leadership").

As soon as the group accepts and understands the game, start it. After they have played it, you can ask people to guess what (else) the game is about: "Why did we do it? What did we learn from it?" If they don't guess some of the main aims, you can add: "Colombian Hypnosis is a game about empathy, power and losing control".

From there you can start working on the questions that lead to the issue of violence: "How did you feel when you had the power to lead the game? How did you feel when you lost it? How does that apply to your personal life?"

This manual starts with simple activities which prepare your groups for more in-depth work. Some are simply questions to be answered one by one in a circle, while some others take place in pairs or mingling. These exercises introduce games and theatre but are not too clearly identifiable as games and theatre.

This gives you time to create positive attitudes towards more interactive activities.

They can be used when starting with a new group or at the beginning of each session.

Creating positive group habits

Many activities, simple or in-depth, help create a positive habit in the group. You can decide how much you want to develop that habit. The point of many exercises is that they don't end when the activity finishes. For instance, you may want to regularly use "continuums" to assess where participants stand on a controversial issue. This enables confrontation between peers without requiring the facilitator to do the confronting. "Defend the opposite" is another example of an exercise that might be used during a conflict where two participants are stuck on their point of view. Inviting them to reverse roles and exchange chairs with a due round of applause might facilitate the move out of an un-productive situation.

While some techniques in this manual have been used for decades by numerous facilitators, some tools have been developed especially for this manual and will hopefully continue to evolve. "The conflict from the cup's point of view", which makes egotism visible to the perpetrator, has been developed specifically to reveal denial, minimization, or blame-shifting. The exercise can be done formally but some of its parts can easily be used in very informal settings, or as part of another activity.

Triggering collective reflection

At the end of each activity, facilitators raise some questions and participants analyze the game and what happened during the activity. Participants often offer very important contributions when analyzing the game. Valuing their input reinforces their trust in the learning process. Apparently irrelevant or unhappy comments should also be taken as valuable contributions. Sometimes participants propose important improvements to the game.

The collective analysis can be very creative, and facilitators should encourage this dynamic.

Participants appreciate when they can express themselves freely, e.g. with a simple word or a short sentence.

For instance: “Hola Barcelona”, “Greet as many” or “Point of view” are games where everybody can speak in a two-minute game if they wish. These activities help shy people and more reluctant participants to become more and more comfortable with sharing.

Using appropriate vocabulary

Words like “game”, “theatre” or “drama” should be used with care and associated from the beginning with vocabulary that matches the participant’s vision of the world.

You might prefer to avoid phrases such as “playing games” or “performing theatre/drama scenes” at the start and begin using them once participants start enjoying the activities. Alternatively, you can use other expressions: “showing a problem”, “staging a challenge”, “trying a new strategy”, “role playing”, “simulating a solution”, “practicing”, “rehearsing change”, and so on. You will find your own way of introducing theatrical activities. While many perpetrators talk about violence as they might talk about a performance, never take for granted they are willing to be involved in theatre.

Lowering the stakes

In this manual, you will find many activities that don’t look like theatre. They may not require acting something out in front of the group, but they are already theatre, since participants enter a (new) role. Some exercises invite partici-

pants to do so all at the same time (for instance “Greek tragedy” or “Colombian hypnosis”). This avoids tension and too much attention on individuals. It allows you to understand who is uncomfortable with such activities

These suggestions aim at giving you some tools to overcome possible resistance. Maybe the men in your groups will not be very reluctant. With a well-planned session and awareness for normal levels of resistance, you might not have big issues with introducing games and theatre.

Additional tips

- If you have never done any theatre or worked with games, sign up for Theatre of the Oppressed training or any other social theatre workshop. Many companies offer short and intensive training courses.
- When in doubt, always try out an activity with colleagues, friends or in easier situations. If this is not possible, try to make a mental simulation. This should limit unpleasant surprises.
- Start with easy, simple, pleasant games and exercises you feel comfortable to facilitate. In each session go gradually from simple to more challenging games.
- Explain the goal of the activity and why it is important to work on that point. Use vocabulary that makes it relevant for participants. Don’t explain more than what is necessary. You can always add rules or information during the activity. At the end, the important analysis must come from participants. The introduction only aims at making the game acceptable and letting it start.
- Value the contributions of the participants when collectively analysing an activity. Use the knowledge that comes from the participants throughout the sessions.
- Value mistakes and surprises. Encourage people to air their views freely and not to judge them.
- Expose yourself, feel comfortable to make mistakes and acknowledge them. They should not affect your credibility at all.
- Be ready to change your plan, to stay longer on a game, to accept variations, or to move to plan B if the activity is not working well.

How to use the manual

While the “**Simple activities for the start**” are described very briefly, each “**In-depth activity**” contains a **description** and some **challenges** you could face. Some possible outcomes are listed in bullet points. **Tags** mention the issues that can be tackled.

Some games have **options and variations**. You will find variations for many games. I only listed variations relevant to perpetrator work in this manual.

Sequence points to other games or exercises that go well before or after the activity. It also contains suggestions about where that exercise could take place within the perpetrator programme.

This part aims at connecting the games. Depending on the materials participants bring, you might want to use one tool and then move to another. Some activities will become much easier and give better results when performed in sequence. **Sequence** suggests links between the activities, but you should feel comfortable making new ones.

Source tries to acknowledge a possible origin of the game/exercise or who taught it to me. The goal is to provide references so you can explore further if you are interested. The manual does not claim to track the true origin of each game. Apologies if someone’s contribution to a game was ignored.

In the same way that I love being trained by the people I have trained, I wish to one day read a manual that offers some evolutions of these games or offers new creative tools to work with perpetrators.

Meanwhile, I hope the creative activities developed to overcome gender-based violence will multiply, making this work more and more significant, efficient, and positive.

References can be found at the end of the manual. They include details about the books and studies that made this manual possible.



Gabriele Fiolo: Forum theatre on violence against people with disability in Dar Es salaam, Tanzania

Activities



1. Simple activities to start with



2. In depth activities – games



3. In depth activities – image theatre/sculptures



4. Role plays and forum theatre



5. Additional simple forum theatre scenes and role plays



Tran Van Nhi: Gender Forum in Vietnam to end violence in the world of work, an event held by Fair Wear, CNV International and Mondiaal FNV

1. Simple activities to start with

These are simple activities that prepare the group for more creative activities. They make participants accustomed to standing, moving and mingling in the space, as well as working in pairs. In addition, they also prepare for issues which may arise in a perpetrator programme like emotional challenges, being in danger, being the danger, seeing things from someone else's point of view etc.



Paolo Sulpasso: Theatrical assemblies in Rome

1.1. Three things you have in common

Setting: in pairs or in a circle

Participants mingle, creating pairs. In each pair, the two participants should find three things they have in common. You can suggest easy things if they feel stuck (e.g.: they might both like ice-cream, pasta or beer), but encourage them to go beyond the obvious, finding more unique things they may have in common.

Depending on the time available you can ask the group to go into at least 2 or 3 pairs, finding 3 common things each time.

After collecting some interesting common things found within the pairs, participants will sit in a circle and try to find 3 things that the whole group has in common. When someone makes a proposal (for instance: 'we all love soccer') ask if this is true for everybody, encouraging people to disagree and welcoming differences.

If you take part, prepare to agree or disagree on problematic statements: "Here we all hate prison/ women/gay people/paedophiles etc". You can also decide not to take part, and just question whether a statement is shared by everybody and process the emotions behind it.

1.2. I am the only one here who...

Setting: in a circle

In this exercise each person must find something that makes them unique. Each time the facilitator will ask anyone if else relates to the speaker. For instance, when someone says, "I am the only one here that swims all year round in the ocean", the facilitator checks that no one else does that as well.

1.3. Introduce yourself to each other in pairs and then introduce your partner to the group

Setting: first in pairs, then in a circle

Participants divide into pairs and introduce themselves for one minute each. After that, they return to the circle and are told to introduce the other to the group.

Some participants might already have forgotten what they have just been told by their partner. Even their name. Some might not have listened. This should not be blamed. They may say what they remember or may even improvise. No pressure. No judgement.

An interesting debate could take place about this situation, and interesting questions may arise: How come we tend to easily forget peoples' names and simple information about them? What was the information that stuck with more ease to the listener's memory? When you discovered you had to report the information about the other to the group and you couldn't remember much, how did you feel? What did you think? What decision did you make?

The game obviously invites participants to take care and listen to each other better in the future.

1.4. Two truths and one lie

Setting: in a circle

Each participant has to say three things about themselves, two of these being true and one being false. The group must guess which one is false. The participants do not have to reveal which one is false if they prefer.

1.5. Introduce yourself as an other who came to replace you

Setting:	in a circle or in pairs
Source:	Rino Cerritelli (Humour Therapy, Milan)

Each participant introduces himself as if he were someone replacing himself. So, for example, Joe should pretend he is Jack. Jack is replacing Joe because Joe couldn't come. From here participants start asking questions to Jack about Joe. Why did Joe not come? Is that the true reason? Is he the kind of guy that easily disappears?

This questioning of Jack about Joe might allow the facilitator to get information that they might not always clearly get (What Joe might think about the programme, why he feels obliged to come, etc....), it also compels Joe to get out of himself and see himself from outside. Joe steps into Jack's shoes and sees himself from that perspective. The facilitator might encourage Jack to make jokes about Joe to get information about Joe's personal and intimate relationships.

1.6. I like/I don't like; one reason why you don't want to be here/one reason why you want to

Setting:	in pairs, discussion in a circle
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Participants mingle and every time they meet someone, in a pair, they tell each other one thing they like and one they don't (e.g. music/soccer) without saying "I like/I don't like". You could ask to "guess which one is my like/which one is my dislike," and allow the other person to guess if it is soccer or music that the participant likes. Participants should meet at least three people until they have been able to collect information about other participants in the room.

The same exercise can be done with one reason you want to be in this programme and one reason why you don't.

This exercise works better when done quickly. Afterwards you can wrap it up. While questioning the interesting things that emerge, you can also keep it anonymous, which means you ask for the interesting likes and dislikes that the participants learned about while insisting on the fact that while reporting, they don't necessarily need to reveal who said what.

1.7. Your place in the room

This exercise is very good for creating trust.

Setting:	individual
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Ask participants to go to a spot in the room where they feel most comfortable. Some might go as far as possible from the centre, while others might go right there. Some might turn their chair outwards. Some might go near the door. Each place should be questioned with the aim of getting information from the participant and making an informal group contract. If they go near the door, you can question whether this means they want to feel there is an escape from any activity. You can rephrase this with the participant in a way that leaves space for positive things to come up. If their fear or distance is acknowledged positively this can help create a safe and respectful atmosphere.

1.8. Map on the floor

Setting:	individual
Source:	Jale Karabekir (Center for the theatre of the oppressed, Istanbul); Baim, Brookes and Mountford: The Geese theatre handbook; Drama with Offenders and People at Risk 2002

Explain to the participants that the floor is going to become a big map. On one side there will be north, opposite side south. On the right east, and on the left west.

If you are working on very local issues, then it might be a map of the city. If you are talking about places on earth where participants might dream to live or would hate living, then a world map is more appropriate. It is important participants try to be as accurate as possible in their position, checking with their neighbour where they stand and if their position is relatively exact.

Participants might not always be in the condition of telling exactly where they live or where they come from, so caution should be taken to raise the right questions at the right time and not be insistent when a response is vague.

Many questions can be considered here, e.g.:

- Where does your grandfather/grandmother come from? Where is the place you most would like to live?
- Where is the place where you had the best time of your life?
- Where is a place you have been in trouble?
- Where is a place you feel in danger?
- Where is the place where you have done most harm?
- Where is a place where you are the danger?
- Where is a place where you feel more vulnerable?
- Where is the place where you easily get very angry?
- Where do I feel more competent?
- Where do I feel appreciated?

When people move from where they live to where their grandparents lived it can be interesting to invite participants to watch movements and note that almost everybody has some migration story in their family. If this hasn't emerged you can observe that again when you ask them to move to the place where they would most love to live. Exploring the places where people come from can be precious when exploring masculinities. You could ask them to make their bodies into a statue of their grandfather, or a typical male from the place they come from which inspired their vision of masculinity. This can then also be questioned and discussed.

For some questions you could explore further why a place has been chosen, but caution should again be taken not to push participants to reveal details they might want to keep secret.

1.9. Dangerous places

Setting:	individual
Sequence:	Fits well before or after "Map on the floor".
Source:	Baim, Brookes and Mountford: The Geese theatre handbook; Drama with Offenders and People at Risk 2002

Ask participants to identify in the room some possible dangerous places or objects. They can do this standing or sitting. For instance, they might suggest that a table on the side could be dangerous if everyone is moving around the space; that the step near the door could be trip someone up, etc. Every time participants are invited to imagine how the danger could be avoided during sessions.

This exercise creates an opening for more personal questions:

- What is a dangerous place in your life?
- Is there a person you avoid? Why?
- How do you avoid dangerous situations in your life?
- When are you the danger? For whom might you be a danger? Why?

1.10. Same journey

This game should make it clear that personal and social life can always be improved. Progress is possible anytime. This game can make change and progress seem more desirable and realistic.

Setting:	individual
Source:	Baim, Brookes and Mountford: The Geese theatre handbook; Drama with Offenders and People at Risk 2002

Participants spread around the room. They should remember the exact place where they stand. They will have to perform four actions as fast as possible before returning to this place:

- 1) touch two different walls,
- 2) shake hands with three people,
- 3) turn around a chair,
- 4) touch the floor.

These four actions can be done in whatever order. Depending on the situation/place you can change the four actions to be performed. Participants should be careful not to bump into each other.

It is best to time the performance. You stop the timer when the last participant is back in their original place. These four actions might take about 30 seconds the first time.

From there you can raise some questions: How did it go? What were the challenges you met? Can that be improved and how? What should be fixed? Do you think you can complete the task in a shorter time?

Participants might manage fine and another trial can happen. The result will probably be much better, like 20 seconds. This is satisfactory. Question again the challenges and possible strategies. Which strategy is personal, which decision should be taken collectively, or by smaller groups of people close to each other?

You can start again until you feel participants are enthusiastic enough to go ahead. This could mean repeating the exercise 5-6 times with young perpetrators, 3 with older ones. With older participants it is good to emphasize that running is not necessarily the fastest solution and age might have given them some advantage...

Questions you can ask for reflection: If the challenges met in this game were moments in your life where you would end up or ended up using violence, what could you do to change the normal path?

1.11. Dreams and fantasies

Setting:	individual
Source:	James Thompson: Drama Workshops for Anger Management and Offending Behavior 1999

Participants are invited to briefly answer some questions. you could raise one every week or every two sessions. They trigger positive participation.

- What would you do if you were the president of the country?
- What would you do if you were to win the lottery?
- What would you do if you had 5 minutes left before the end of the world?
- Where would you go if you could take a trip anywhere now?
- If you were to lose all your memories except one, which would it be?
- If you could meet one person of your choice, who would you like to meet? What would you tell them?

1.12. If someone bumps into my car, I...

Setting:	individual
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Participants have to finish the above sentence. While they do so, the facilitator can note down their answers and place them in 4 categories: thoughts, emotion, physical sensation, behaviour. Participants are asked to find out which category a sentence fits in. For instance: "If someone bumps into my car, I get very scared" goes to emotion. In which category do "I punch the driver" or "I shout at the driver" go? This allows to train perpetrators at distinguishing these 4 categories and prepares them for other exercises on emotions.

2. In depth activities – games

2.1. Ali, Ali, Ali

A game for entering the realm of interactivity, as it is a game that doesn't necessarily seem like a game. It is great for a first exploration of emotions and what it means to be in the spotlight. The game can be done sitting on chairs or standing. I suggest using this game to get people used to activities without chairs.

Tags:	emotional intelligence strategy
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4
Group size:	5+
Time:	from 5 – 15 minutes
Sequence:	Great after other name games. Works well before “Anyone who”. It is also good to prepare for more complex strategic games or other games in a circle. Good at the beginning of a programme to show the benefits of practicing, doing exercises, trying to improve. Good to introduce the concept of being unable to think because of stress.
Source:	Game originated in Egypt, also described in Johnston “Drama games for those who like to say no”, 2010.

Description:

Everyone stands in a circle. Someone (e.g. John) stands in the middle. For John to leave the center, he has to say someone else's name 3 times very quickly. But if that person says their own name once before it has been said 3 times then they don't have to go into the middle. If John says “Ali Ali Ali” very quickly and Ali didn't have the time to say his own name in the meantime, Ali now must go into the middle. Ali now has to say someone else's name 3 times quickly enough to surprise that person.

Challenges:

People in the middle might feel stressed and be unable to find tricks to surprise other players. If this happens, the facilitator can ask the group to reflect on what doesn't work and what tricks could work. When starting again the game should work better. It is important to acknowledge the stress of being in the middle. Sometimes the brain can't even find a name to call. It is helpful if the facilitator also participates and puts himself under the potential stress of being in the middle.

People might think that it is easier to trick Ali than it is to trick Maximilian, because of the length of the names. In a way this is true, but once a strategy works it most often works for both.



Questions during the game:

How do you feel in the middle/in the spotlight? Why do we get stuck when in the middle? How do you handle that?

Questions after the game:

When does this happen in your life? How do you handle feeling stuck? How did you manage to get out of the middle? What were you thinking? How did you change your situation? How did you find the right strategy? What else can you do when this happens in your life?

Outcomes:

- Participants experience stress at an acceptable level
- Participants increase their understanding of their emotions and feelings when they are under pressure
- Participants overcome stress and handle strong feelings
- Participants are satisfied when they find their way of getting out of the circle



Abdulkadir Mohamed (CISP): De-mechanisation game in Mogadishu, Somalia

2.2. Greet as many: men/women; powerful/powerless

A great game to start performing and to become aware that gender is a social construct and a performance. The game is an exploration of different types of masculinities and how acting 'manly' can be tiring, boring, damaging to your health.

Tags:	gender power masculinities performance social construct social rituals
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4
Group size:	6+
Time:	the greetings are best done very fast, but the analysis can take very long since you can work intensively on gender in this one.
Sequence:	<p>If you are comfortable with the group, this game can be used close to the beginning. The only difficult part is performing femininity which in any case should be done fast (10 seconds max). Masculinity and power are most often enjoyed. Alternatively, you can go for several types of masculinity (for instance young boys; 20-year-old men; 40-year-old men; very old men, or men from other places/contexts). You can use the “greet as many in 10 seconds” format to work on other social constructions and on emotions you might want to explore in your programme (anger; sadness; shame; disgust; pride; trust; fear): “Greet as many people as you can in 10 seconds while being very angry/proud/sad...”</p> <p>This exercise goes very well with “Hola Barcelona”. The variation on feeling powerful/powerless can be used to introduce the image theatre work on “you at your best, you at your worst”.</p>
Source:	I learned this exercise and many others on stereotypes from a Drag King group we invited at our Masculinity Festival in 2014 (link if relevant https://www.parteciparte.com/en/festival/#1456784956683-3b210e8e-36e4). The group's name is “Eyes Wild Drag”.

Description:

Step 1

Participants are invited to meet and greet as many people as they can in 10 seconds while the facilitator is counting. You could add some other variations for the greetings: 10 seconds to greet as many people as possible in a very serious/formal way, 10 seconds to greet with elbows, with feet etc., greet as many people as you can while respecting social distancing/Covid-19 safety measures.

Step 2

This is the important step. Ask participants to greet as many people as they can in 10 seconds in a way in which men typically greet each other.

Step 3

This step must be handled with care (details in “challenges”). Ask participants to greet as many people as they can in a way in which women typically greet each other.

Step 4

Now start asking questions. How were the male greetings? Were they all similar or were there some differences? Can male greetings vary depending on area, city, region, country, age, origin, belief, etc....? Are the male greetings something 'natural'? Are males born with such a behaviour or is it something that is learnt, a social construct? If so, where/how did you learn to behave like that?

Step 5

Continue asking questions. What about the female greetings? Are they different from the male ones? What were the differences? Are females born like that, is it natural to them or is it something they learn? If so, where/how did they learn to behave like that? Why did they have to learn that?



Free Sight Association: Greet as many, forum theatre project on religious extremism in Tunisia

Challenges:

Performing the female greetings can create discomfort for some men. This depends on how the group is already used to moving around, expressing themselves and performing simple tasks. Since one greeting session doesn't last longer than 10 seconds, participants who aren't taking part in one of the greetings out of discomfort shouldn't feel excluded.

Variations/options:

Ask participants to greet as many people as you can as if you are feeling powerful/powerless. These two options offer a new perspective, allowing the facilitator to explore participants' feelings around power. If you decide to do this, introduce it before going into the gendered greetings (steps 2 and 3).

You could also include 10 seconds based on what would be comfortable/uncomfortable greetings for men/women.

Outcomes:

- Opens a discussion on power and gender
- Participants physically explore power and gender
- Participants discover and investigate physically a concrete example of gender as a social construct
- Participants learn to tell the difference between what is given at birth and what is learnt
- The facilitator(s) can create bridges to other learnt behaviours like violence, looking tough, behaving in a manly way
- Participants discover how traditional masculinity can sometimes be tiring, boring and ludicrous

2.3. Hola Barcelona

This is a fun game with a simple challenge and lots of possibilities to explore various topics and social constructs.

Tags:	gender social construct challenge communication skills
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4
Group size:	6+
Time:	5 min – 1 hr
Sequence:	Good game to start with. Great after “Greet as many”. It fits well in parts of a programme on gender and power, but other issues can be explored as well.
Source:	I learned this game at a Féminisme Enjeux training in Paris (https://www.facebook.com/feminismeenjeux/), and we (Parteciparte, Rome https://www.parteciparte.com/en/) added the gender part.

Description:

Part 1 (max. 2 min)

I say my name to someone, they take my name, and I take their name. I go to someone else, say my new name and get a new name again from that person, and I carry on until maybe I get my name back. Every time I meet someone, I get a new name. The same for all participants who mingle all at the same time and exchange names until they get their name back or until the facilitator stops the game.

Discussion of part 1: What were challenges during the game? How did you deal with the challenges? Often participants mention the loss of identity here.

Why do we feel disturbed by having to change name and why is it challenging in this game? This often leads to great analyses from participants that our brain is programmed to fit to a name and unlearning them is difficult. This will prepare for questions on other social constructs, in particular gender. Gender can be compared as well to a certain programming and the fact this programming might get us in trouble when we behave differently or when we meet someone that has a different programming etc.

Part 2 (max. 2 min)

Facilitators repeat part 1 with words about masculinity, femininity, love, or any other topic you want to explore. Now participants are told that instead of exchanging names, they should exchange a word. For example, the first word that comes to mind when they hear ‘man’. Facilitators should encourage participants to use the first word that comes to their mind, and not the most intelligent, nor the most politically correct. Inform them that this will remain anonymous since nobody at the end will remember who said what at the beginning.

Participants then mingle and exchange words around masculinity: John says ‘strength’, Abu says ‘beard’, John will say ‘beard’ to Lucas, getting a new word from Lucas etc. until perhaps they get their word back.

Questions for part 2 and any additional rounds: What were the words that came out? Without telling me who said what, which words did you hear? From here you can discuss some of the words. For instance, you are talking about masculinity and the words ‘beard’, ‘muscle’ and ‘tie’ are mentioned. Facilitators can ask: Do these words only belong to men or can they apply to women as well? Is society

pushing women to be very muscular? What happens if a girl appears to be very strong? What might she be told at school?

Which of these words relate to a social construct and which refer to something that is part of our body and can hardly be changed? Did most of the words come from a social construct or biology? What are the consequences in our lives of associating men with strength or women with weakness for instance? Are there any negative consequences?

Variations/options:

After the discussion, you can repeat this game with any additional topics you want to explore, such as love, power, romantic ideals, sexuality etc.. Repeat as often as needed.

Challenges:

Although the game is quite simple, an abstract explanation of the rules can cause confusion. It is better to show the game directly by greeting people: "Hello I'm Oliver", "I am Paul". "So I will become Paul and Paul will become..." They should understand Paul will become Oliver. "Then I go to someone else in the group and say "hello I'm Paul", the other: "I'm Toni". I ask "Who am I now?" and the group might say "Toni". "And who will Toni become?" and they might say "Paul". If they say "Oliver" they should be reminded that each time they should change name.

Only start the exercises on more complex topics once everyone has understood part 1. There might be someone who does not understand. Often, they might understand while doing the game. The part on names is simply a preparation for the part on complex topics, so it is no issue if there are still some misunderstandings during part 1.

Outcomes:

- Participants explore the idea of gender as a social construct and the weight it has in their lives
- Participants analyse their social constructs, discuss some cases, understand the impact stereotypes might have on their lives
- Participants can challenge and change preconceived notions in a pleasant, constructive framework
- Participants understand that there is a lot of knowledge in the room, that it can be built collectively through discussion, criticism and even jokes
- Facilitators foster a constructive atmosphere in which participants can express stereotypes anonymously without being judged

2.4. Make together

This is a great game to work on cooperation and becoming aware of controlling tendencies. “Make together” is probably the easiest and most popular games for perpetrator programmes.

Tags:	cooperation power domination respect acceptance
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4
Group size:	2+
Time:	5 – 20 min
Sequence:	Excellent game for a new group. It can be done after name and presentation games. It can be done before <u>“Are you not in my head?”</u> as it prepares participants well for the challenges in that game. This game can be used in your programme when you work on power and control, as well as on gender.
Source:	Baim, Brookes and Mountford: The Geese theatre handbook; Drama with Offenders and People at Risk 2002

Description:

Participants go into pairs with a sheet of paper for each pair and have to build a paper airplane using only one hand each. The other hand should always be behind the back. Facilitators should never intervene in the process unless it is a gentle reminder to keep one hand behind the back.

Wait for all the participants to be ready before throwing the planes. Value all the flights, the curvy, the short and long ones. The aim is to see all the different ways in which a relationship can fly. You can repeat this activity as often as you want with the same or different partners.

Challenges:

Participants might forget to keep their hand behind their back. Facilitators should gently remind them to do so if this happens.

Participants who tend to impose their view might get stuck since the game requires the other to fully collaborate. If the other is not fully committed, they might not do the task well and the airplane will not fly. In any case, this is not an issue because the game is very simple so both participants have the chance to evolve, reset their communication and listen to each other. It does not require too many skills, but participants can improve their skills and overcome the challenges they create.

If some participants don't know how to make a paper plane, show them first.

Questions:

Facilitators could ask participants some of the following questions: How did it go? What did you need to do to make a good plane? How did the work in your pair go? Was there space for both of you to propose strategies? How did you negotiate and decide how to proceed? How did you decide on each move?



Partecipante: Make together

Were you more passive or more aggressive in the process? Are there some other situations in your life where this happens? Do you want to change the way you react? If so, where in this process of building a plane could you have done something differently? Do you want to try again? Do you want to try with another partner?

Variations/options:

Participants could try again with a different partner or with other similar challenges, like tying a shoelace, putting on/taking off a sweatshirt or having a person blindfolded while the other partner tells them how to fold the plane. The game can also be done by having participants draw something together without talking, with one person blindfolded and with the other guiding them, etc. Invite participants to invent variations. You might be surprised what they invent.

Perpetrators can be invited to do this game again at home with their partner, or their whole family. They can also be invited to film it and then watch the video with the question in mind: How do I seem if I see myself from this point of view?

Outcomes:

- Participants learn to assess their own capacity to collaborate with someone else
- Participants playfully discover their controlling tendencies and how this can damage respect and collaboration in a relationship
- Participants practice learning new skills and get immediate results from their progress.

2.5. 99–55

A beloved game to explore disruption, acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, and personal scripts that potentially lead to offending.

Tags:	harassment disturbing the other focus concentration role reversal accountability perspective taking
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4
Group size:	4+
Time:	5 – 60 min
Sequence:	Excellent game for a first session, to tackle sabotage, to start working on violent behaviours in a 'light' way. It goes very well after <u>"Make together"</u> and before <u>"Greek tragedy"</u> Some of the questions can translate into short scenes: "How could you tell John he has harmed you?" You can role play in pairs how to work on restoring a healthy relationship: How do you acknowledge that you have been disrespectful and disturbed Carol? What should you say/do/ask?
Source:	Baim, Brookes and Mountford: The Geese theatre handbook; Drama with Offenders and People at Risk 2002; The part on acknowledging unacceptable behaviours and restoring a healthy relationship was developed by me.

Description:

Participants go into pairs, and one will count from 99 to 55 while the other must interrupt and try to make the one counting make a mistake or stop counting. The goal of the second participant is for the other never reaches 55.

Once they have done it one way, they swap roles.

Challenges:

If some participants have learning difficulties and are not comfortable with counting from 99 to 55, you can make it more accessible by making them count from 30 to 1. For people who are not fluent in the local language, you could allow them to count in their own language, providing they acknowledge if they miss one number or lose count. If two participants speak the same language, they can do it together in their own language.

At the beginning of the game, there is a lot of chaos and hilarity. As the request is to create disturbance, most perpetrators will enjoy this game very much.

Questions:

What did you do to disturb the other person? Most of the time the answers will be: "counting as well but insisting on wrong numbers; asking personal questions; talking about the body of the one counting; trying to find a topic that could disturb; touching, tickling, making noises, making fun of them..."

Once you have a list of behaviours that could disturb the other, you can ask: In real life, what is acceptable and what is not? (Emphasize here that it was a game, so we are not blaming the game but trying to understand some life situations better). Is it, for instance, acceptable to mention some body parts or physical aspect of someone while they are paying attention to something else? Here you could mention a work situation where a woman is constantly told about her appearance and rarely about her professional skills.

Can you decide for the other what they should consider as acceptable or not?

Are there some things you did in the game that you tend to do in your life? Which? If you become aware you have been disturbing someone, what could you do? How can you build a healthy relationship starting from there?

Then you look at the reversed role. How did you feel when you were counting and the other was trying to disturb you? How did you keep your focus? What strategy did you use not to get disrupted? If 55 were your life project, how would you focus on it and avoid getting interrupted? What were the things that disturbed you most while you were counting? What are the main things that could disturb you? If 55 represented for you a life without violence, what are the challenges you are going to face on your way to 55? Did the strategies you used to not get disturbed apply to situations where you might be tempted to use violence? Could they help you to control your behaviour?

These questions can be answered in pairs or in a group as well:

If someone has disturbed you or caused you harm, how could you tell them?

What would you like them to do? If someone caused you harm but claimed it was kind-hearted and you misinterpreted it, how would you react? How would you feel about that? What would you think about that person? What would you say to that person? If you have been disturbing the other, how do you restore a healthy relationship? What should you do? What should be avoided?

Variations/options:

To make it more difficult participants can count down from 100 in increments of 7 (100-93-86-79...) while the other disturbs them.

Making the other laugh can be an alternative option, and the one who is counting will be asked to try not to laugh.

“Make me laugh” can even be done without counting. It is present in many cultures. In general, there should be no touching or talking.

Outcomes:

- Participants are involved in a very pleasant and dynamic game
- Sabotage becomes an official game
- Participants define acceptable and unacceptable behaviours
- Participants reflect on their own behaviours in stressful situations or under pressure
- Participants work on how to acknowledge unacceptable behaviour and hold themselves accountable
- Participants learn how to move on and build a healthy relationship after unacceptable behaviour
- Participants discover they cannot decide for the other what is acceptable or not

2.6. Saints and sinners

A great game to radically change perspective and build empathy.

Tags:	verbal violence perspective taking role reversal goal setting assertiveness empathy
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4
Group size:	2 – 4+
Time:	10 – 30 min
Sequence:	It fits well before or after some other continuum exercises. It is good for working on goal setting, defining obstacles and strategies to surmount them. It is very lively and good for working on verbal abuse/violence. Some role play could be done in situations where participants believe it is better to answer and behave 'badly'. Participants can try all the possible responses, thus exploring concrete results.
Source:	Baim, Brookes and Mountford: The Geese theatre handbook; Drama with Offenders and People at Risk 2002

Description:

Make 2 or more groups of maximum 5 participants. One groups are the saints and one groups are the sinners.

Ask each group: "Could you please lower the volume of the music?"

The saints will have to prepare and agree on the kindest possible answer to that request, while the sinners prepare and agree on the worst possible answer. After each response, the groups should switch and try their best at being saints or sinners.

The groups have 1-2 minutes to prepare their answers. Depending on the facilitators, the answer can be analysed in-depth or not. The unfriendly answer deserves attention since it offers a quick collective sociology of insults and curse words. These words often express sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia, and other kinds of discrimination. They can be questioned, and perpetrators tend to love doing this de-constructive work, revealing experts in explaining the 'deep' meaning and origin of some insults.

Challenges:

Some groups get stuck trying to find a perfect answer or disagreeing on some words. This can be seen positively. They should be reminded that they need to agree quickly. If you feel the group is going through an important process you could allow more time.

Questions:

What is it in the saint response that makes it so gentle? What are the words that make it sound so great? Some jokes might come out if it doesn't seem perfectly saintly. This is precious material.

What made it a perfect 'bad answer'? Which words make it offensive? What do these words mean?

Where do they come from? Why are they used? What impact do they have on the receiver? What impact do they have on the one using it?

Variations/options:

Make a continuum with one side of the room being for saints and the other for sinners. Where in your life are you now? Where were you in the past? Where would you like to be in the future? What is preventing you from being there yet? What can you do to reach that aim? How can this programme help you towards that way?

Some people might be willing to become 'worse' or might wish to become more gentle, at least sometimes. This is very interesting material to question: why do some participants believe behaving more aggressively will allow them to get more respect?

Outcomes:

- Participants become more aware of verbal violence and the meaning/impact of the language they use
- Participants reverse roles, they try roles they are comfortable with and roles they are less used to. They become more fluent in trying new roles.

2.7. The right distance

A game to become more aware that the other may have different needs from mine.

Tags:	empathy distance respect gender embarrassment
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4
Group size:	4+
Time:	5 – 30 min
Sequence:	This game is good to prepare for the work on empathy, understanding the other's point of view and their needs.
Source:	I learned this exercise from Birgit Friz (Theatre of the Oppressed, Wien) and Stefania Girelli (prevention for Child Abuse, Milano)

Description:

Participants stand in two lines (A & B) so they are facing each other. Each participant should have another participant in front of them. The distance between the lines should be at least 4-5 meters.

At the facilitator's signal participants from line A walk towards the person in front of them until that person stops them with a hand signal. The person from line B has to decide how close the person from line A can get to them. Line A has to accept line B's decision. A stops at the distance B has decided and they look at each other for about 30 seconds. A can now return to their starting point. A should not go too close if they don't feel like it, even if B allows them to come very close.

Roles are now reversed. B will be the one walking towards A and A will have to decide when to stop B. Once B has been stopped, they both look at each other for 30 seconds and B returns to their place.

Challenges:

It should be emphasized from the beginning that participants should stop the other person before the point where they might become intrusive and violate one's personal space. "Don't wait for them to be too close. If this happens let them gently understand with your hand how far they should step back".

Tell participants from the beginning that they must be at a distance where they feel conformable to look into each other eyes for at least 30 seconds.

Questions:

How did you feel when the other stopped you? How did you feel when you stopped the other? Did you both stop each other at the same distance? If not, how did you feel when you discovered that difference? How do you feel if you discover that others need more distance than you do? How will you feel about that in 10 minutes/10 days/10 years?

Are there some situations in your life where you might not be aware that you go too far or too close to the other? Do you always check you are at the right distance? If not, how can you check more often with your partner/friends?

If you were told to keep more distance than what you expected, does that mean that your relationship is not good? If you become more caring for the distances in your relationships, what impact might it have on these? Where in your life could all this apply? Is there a relationship that could gain from rethinking the distances?

Outcomes:

- Participants learn to cope with light frustration and embarrassment
- Participants learn to accept the other's decision
- Participants experience the fact the other has a different view and different needs
- Participants learn to express their needs, to look for the right distance, to step back when they have gone too close or to have the other step back if they have entered their personal space.



Partecipante:
The right distance

2.8. The conflict from the cup's point of view

A game to make blame shifting, denial and minimization visible.

Tags:	selfishness empathy conflict blame shifting denial minimization
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4
Group size:	2+
Time:	5 – 30 min
Sequence:	Prepares well for games on active listening and empathy.
Source:	Kris Dekraemer, Evan Hastings, Augusto Boal 1992

Description:

Participants sit or stand in a circle. The facilitator explains the rules by showing how the exercise works: Tell a story of a recent conflict with your child or partner. Alternate the focus on you, what you said, did, felt, why you reacted like that, and on other people in the conflict (child or partner). The group moves closer or away depending on how 'self-centered' or 'other-centered' the story is being told

Concretely, while the story is being told, the group moves far away when the story is focused on the narrator's point of view or if he shifts blame, minimizes his responsibility, or justifies his actions. The group comes closer when the narrator focuses on the other's point of view or takes responsibility for the conflict.

For instance: "yesterday my kid came back home from school, and he had too many things to tell me while I was busy on the computer. I asked him to let me finish my work, but he was continuing to annoy me while I had urgent things to manage, and so I ended up getting angry because he has to learn he can't expect me to be available all the time (until that point participants might be moving away from the narrator). On the other hand, I understand that many things happen at school, that he wants to share stories and feelings with me, that he probably only needed five minutes of my attention, and that perhaps I could have paused my work... (and in that part the participants might have come closer to the narrator).

Challenges:

Participants might find it difficult to determine when the storytelling is self-centred and when it is empathetic. A narrative could focus only on the participant shifting all the blame onto the other. In the same way they could be self-centred but very honest and leave space for empathy. Some examples could be analysed with participants before starting.

It is important feedback for the perpetrator to see the whole group walking away or coming closer while they tell a story, but it takes much more time to process one by one. To make it shorter you can send participants in pairs and while one tells the story the other moves away or closer. Then they swap roles. You might then try with the whole group at least on one or two stories.

Questions:

How did you feel when telling the story of a conflict? How did you feel when you saw the other/s moving away/coming closer? What did you learn from this exercise? What do you think would happen if you were more centered on the other's point of view during a conflict? What happens when you are focused on yourself? What can you do to change that from now on?

Variations/options:

The same exercise can be done with different movements for different problems, e.g. minimization (hand or finger pointing towards the floor), accountability (hands raising up and moving joyfully to show support) or denial (participants turning their back to the narrator).

These three exercises (people moving close or far, people pointing downwards or upwards, people facing or turning their back) could become a playful habit being taken at the beginning of a programme in order to have participants learn to assess themselves if one of them is denying, minimizing or shifting blame. They should then be enabled to work that out by themselves. You could invite participants to use it in other moments of the programme.

Outcomes:

- Participants get a signal from others when they are too focused on themselves and lose the other
- Participants develop signals for when someone is shifting blame, denying violence or minimizing their own responsibility
- Participants learn to analyse a conflict from the other's point of view
- Participants learn to assess other participants' capacity to focus on the other
- Participants learn to assess what is narcissism, and what a narcissistic version of a conflict looks like
- Groups develop mechanisms to move collectively towards accountability

2.9. Anyone who

A dynamic game to get a map of the stereotypes and prejudices in the room.

Tags:	gender stereotypes non-judgement group building energizer
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	6 – 25
Time:	5 – 30 min
Sequence:	Works well after “Ali, Ali, Ali” and games on gender (e. g. “Greet as many” or “Hola Barcelona”). Great before “Two-person exercise”. Good to be used when working on gender, stereotypes, masculinities, and power
Source:	I learned the version on gender stereotypes from Muriel Naessans (Féminisme-Enjeux). The standing version with people positioning far or close depending on how much they agree was taught to me by Chistina Zoniou (Theatre of the oppressed, Greece) in her training on hierarchy.

Description:

Part 1

Participants are sitting in a circle. One person is standing in the middle. They have no chair. To get out of the middle, I have to share something about myself. For example, if the person in the middle loves ice cream, they say “Anyone who loves ice-cream”. If other people in the group also love ice cream, they all need to stand up from their chairs and try to get to another free chair. While everybody is trying to get a chair, the person in the middle has the opportunity to also get a chair and leave the middle. Someone else will remain without a chair and stand in the middle. It will then be their turn to share something they like and that others might like as well.

Participants can’t move to the chairs that are immediately next to them and they can’t return to the chair they have just left.

Part 2

Once participants have gotten used to this game, whoever is in the middle should say sentences that starts with “Anyone who thinks men...” or with “Anyone who thinks women...”. Someone might say “anyone who believes men are more courageous than women” or “who thinks women are not good at driving cars”. Again, people who agree change chairs. There is always someone remaining in the middle who will have to find a new sentence. People in the middle should say something that is true for them, but this should not be the main focus.

For a while all kinds of statements will come out. They should not be analysed yet and participants should be encouraged to air their views very freely and not to judge others. If they don’t agree with a statement they can remain on their chair. If they somewhat agree they should also change chairs, or else the game might get stuck.

Discussion

When a statement provokes a lot of reaction, it is possible to work on that statement in the debriefing section. Instead of positioning participants in a circle, they position themselves close or far from the person in the centre who made the statement depending on how much they agree with that statement. If people agree with a statement, they come close to the person who made it. If they strongly

disagree, they go as far as possible. And of course, they can also have intermediary positions. The facilitator at that point can question the different points of view and make them interact.

This exercise done on gender allows to get a feel of the stereotypes at stake, but other topics can be explored. “Who thinks violence...”, “who thinks the justice system...”, “who thinks pornography...” etc.

At a certain point or in a next session you could bring some questions you want to explore with them.

Challenges:

Some participants might not immediately understand they have to say something people could share and might thus remain in the middle. They should be gently encouraged to find inclusive statements.

Some participants might feel under pressure in the middle. Others might want to help them. This should be avoided. The facilitator should encourage the one in the middle with simple questions: Is there something that you like and that others might like as well?

In extreme cases there could be a joker rule where the one in the middle says joker and everybody has to change chairs.

The part on gender should come only once the game is already working well.

This game easily works well and could even become frantic with passionate people jumping to get the chair before someone else. The passion allows participants to express themselves more spontaneously. But to avoid incidents they should be told that it is better to end up in the middle than in hospital. This is not a contact sport.

Questions:

How did it go? What happened in this game? What skills did you need not to get stuck in the middle? What were the challenges? How did you feel in the middle? What skills did you need when you were in the middle?

Which statement struck you particularly? Are there some statements about men or women you think could get you/people in trouble?

During the discussion afterwards, generalizations should be avoided and the facilitator should re-focus with questions like: In which situation has this been true for you?

Variations/options:

The game can also be played without chairs, the last one in the middle remains there for a statement.

Outcomes:

- Participants gain awareness about stereotypes and on the fact they are seldom agreed upon by everybody.
- Participants have a critical conversation on gender stereotypes with very different points of view amongst peers.

2.10. Continuums – Oppositions – Defend the opposite

A game to assess positions, differences between peers and changes in attitudes.

Tags:	awareness goal setting
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	1+
Time:	10 min+
Sequence:	Active listening, defend the opposite and image theatre techniques can be very valuable to avoid unproductive discussions. This exercise can be used and reused any time in the programme. It is great to assess attitudes and changes in attitudes.
Source:	There are very good description and many questions in Geese's handbook (2002). Rus Funk uses this exercise to trigger critical peer discussions on pornography (2018). Mouhamadou Diol (theatre of the oppressed Senegal) for "defend the opposite".

Description:

Continuum is a simple and well-known exercise with many possible options. As with "Map on the floor", participants are told that one side of the room will mean "I totally agree" while the other side will mean "I totally disagree".

The facilitator can start with some sentences and participants position themselves between total agreement or disagreement. For instance, "women have the right to do whatever they want". Those who agree go on one side. Those who partially agree stand in the middle or between the middle and one side, depending on their exact attitude. Then "men have the right to do whatever they want" can allow to check whether there are differences. You can also deepen the enquiry. "Having sex is a right" or "women have the right to do whatever they want unless it harms the family's/partner's reputation". This is the first option with a facilitator proposing sentences.

Another option is for participants to propose their own sentences, as in "anyone who".

Challenges:

Participants may start arguing in a quite aggressive manner. An active listening exercise between opposite positions can be very productive. Having them defend the opposite can often help overcome unwillingness to accept the other's point of view.

Some perpetrators could claim that their position will never change. It is therefore important to invite them to reflect on what was their position on something when they were 10 years old or when they were 20/30. Normally they should acknowledge that they often changed their mind in their life. Very simple examples can be used for that: music, food, holiday destinations etc.





Parteciparte: Defend the opposite

Questions after the exercise:

How did you feel when you discovered some participants were at the opposite side and thus had an extremely opposite position to yours? How did you deal with that? What thoughts helped you to cope with that?

Variations/options:

Defend the opposite invites participants to defend the point of view at the other end of the continuum. Once their disagreement is clear, they are invited to change positions. This means they both have to move to the other side of the room and will have to defend the opposite of what they think in a credible manner. The facilitator invites to switch roles as often as necessary with the two participants moving as fast as possible from one side to the other.

This exercise can be made more gradual (broken into smaller steps): A simple version can be proposed at the beginning of a programme: Participants are invited to go in pairs and argue on an issue brought up by the facilitator e.g. bikes vs. cars. One participant argues for the use of bikes while the other one argues against and defends the use of cars. Regularly, the facilitator will clap hands meaning participants should swap roles and thus have to defend the other position. Other issues can be tested, like “home office vs. office”. Facilitators should start with non-controversial topics. Once participants get used to this exercise, they will be able to work on difficult topics more easily.

Outcomes:

- Participants become aware of their attitudes, as well as those of their peers
- Participants gain capacity to accept differences
- Participants assess how much they evolve throughout the programme
- Participants become able to understand and defend an opposite point of view

2.11. Active listening data/emotion

A game to develop the capacity to understand other's emotions and listening actively

Tags:	active listening emotional literacy
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	3+
Time:	15 – 30 min
Sequence:	Good game for first sessions. Excellent to prepare for “Defend the opposite”. Good also before “Are you not in my head?” Can help prepare for work on empathy and changing perspectives.
Source:	Handbook First Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Kit 2018

Description:

Participants go into groups of three. Person 1 will tell a story about a conflict that isn't too extreme. Person 2 will listen to the words, the data, all the technical information: where, when, who... Person 3 will listen for emotions and feelings.

After person 1 has told their story, person 2 will ask some questions to check some information and will report what they understood. Once person 1 tells person 2 “yes, you understood everything”, person 3 can start reporting the emotions they found. They check that person 1 agrees those are the feelings they experienced. Once they agree, the 3 participants swap roles. They swap 3 times to each experience the three roles.

Challenges:

Participants can have problems expressing emotions or become distressed when getting feedback from others. The person telling their story could be surprised to discover some emotions they had not known about. This should be given space and questioned.

Questions:

What did it feel like to have people listen to you so intensely? If it put some pressure on you, how did you handle that? How did you feel when you got the technical feedback? What about when you got the one on your emotions? How did you feel when you didn't identify with an emotion that was reported to you? What about if you had not been aware of an emotion? Where in your life do you need to use this exercise more often?

Outcomes:

- Participants develop their communication and listening skills
- Participants develop their emotional literacy, learn to identify and name emotions by looking at the other
- Participants develop empathy



2.12. Colombian hypnosis

A game to warm up physically and work on empathy, abuse of power and loss of control.

Tags:	power control empathy leadership physical de-mechanization
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	2+, best 4-6.
Time:	12 – 30 min
Sequence:	Good before “Greek tragedy”, as it will become easier. Prepares for more complex acting. Fits well in parts of the programme on power, domination, loss of control.
Source:	The original version is reported by Boal (1992). The empathy-domination-emancipation version comes from Fabienne Brugel (NAJE theatre of the oppressed Paris). The Indian version comes from Sanjoy Ganguly (Jana Sanskriti Theatre of the Oppressed India). The Italian version comes from Parteciparte, Theatre of the Oppressed, Rome.

Description:

Part 1: Empathy and collaboration (2–5 min)

Participants go into pairs and person A will lead person B with the palm of their hand. B’s face should always be about 20 cm from A’s palm. This means A must be careful B is able to follow the hand. A should adjust and try to understand what they can expect from B, without asking them to do impossible things. They should not talk, so A has to understand and assess silently how much B is following them. In this first part they should be as empathetic as they can. B tries to follow A’s hand as well as possible.



Tran Van Nhi: Gender Forum in Vietnam to end violence in the world of work, an event held by Fair Wear, CNV International and Mondiaal FNV

Part 2: Domination (2–5 min)

In this part A has to gradually abuse their power, and they should try to bring B in more and more difficult positions. This should happen progressively, or else B might soon stop playing. A can experiment gaining power on B trying to get as far as possible that way. In that part B has to adapt to A’s more and more demanding requests. Talking should be avoided.

Part 3: Emancipation (2–5 min)

Go from part 2 to part 3 without stopping the game, so that participants are still moving while you explain the evolution of the game: A is still trying to abuse their power but now B will be allowed to rebel as gradually as possible. First in a very secret and subtle way, then, slowly, slowly in a more explicit way. A will progressively lose their power and might try to recover it. Some physical negotiation might take place, they might try to be more gentle in their abuse but will slowly lose their power until B no longer reacts to their movements. Like the second one, this third part should happen as gradually as possible.

After all three parts, A and B switch roles.

Challenges:

This game brings participants in very unusual physical positions. Although it is a pleasant exercise you might want to wait for participants to be comfortable with moving, first (see “Sequence”).

Some participants might stop playing the game before the time is over. Find out some arguments that might convince them to continue playing. If they have not really understood the game, let them try to hypnotise you. Putting yourself in hypnotised positions might show them it is not such a big deal. Show them nobody is watching them and that it is more embarrassing to be the only one not doing it/watching the others.

At the beginning you might insist more on following the other than on leading the other if you feel it could be an issue.

Questions:

For part 1

How did you feel when you were leading? Was it challenging? Did you feel the other was following you easily? Did you meet some challenges? Did you overcome them and improve your relationship with the other person?

Did you prefer leading or being led?

When you were being led, how did you feel? Did you feel the other was taking your reactions into consideration? Were they trying to improve and understand you? Were they caring for you not bumping into others?

For part 2

How did you feel when you had full power over the other? How was it when you had no power at all and had to follow the other whatever the demand? Were there moments where one of you stopped? If this happened, what did you feel?

For part 3

How did you feel when you understood you were losing power/control? How do you react when this happens in your life?

How did you feel when you could rebel progressively against the other's power? What were your strategies to do so? What did the other do to try to keep their power?

How does this relate to your personal life?

Variations/options:

There are many variations for this game. It can be done in groups of three, with A leading B and C with a hand each. These two might lead other two people each with their hands downwards. Or one

person could lead another who is leading another and so on in a chain. Leading at several meters distance can be interesting as well.



Parteciparte: Collective hypnosis

Indian version: at some point ask all participants to freeze in a statue/image/sculpture. Choose one very significant image and the others can relax while they come to observe the chosen image. They can analyse it and are invited to imagine that there is a violent story behind this statue.



Abdulkadir Mohamed (CISP): Colombian hypnosis, Indian version

Italian version: Everybody freezes at the same time. The facilitator will count to three and all the participants will start talking at the same time trying to imagine they are in a statue that tells a story. They should quickly imagine a story and start talking as much as they can. There will be no pressure, nobody will hear what they say because everybody will be acting and talking at the same time. They all should stay still and not unfreeze until the improvisation finishes. Insist on that. The facilitator should keep it short (1/2 minutes max.). This is the shortest way to help people feel comfortable with acting without being in the spotlight.

Outcomes:

- Participants physically explore power, loss of power and (loss of) control
- Participants work on their empathy and their leadership skills
- Participants warm up physically and are ready for more engaging theatrical activities

2.13. Angels and devils on the move 1

A fun game for playing around with concepts of good, bad, evil, but also on consent, pressure, harassment

Tags:	consent sexuality influence coping with stress pressure morality
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	3 – 12
Time:	20 min+
Sequence:	Becomes easier after playing “99-55”
Source:	Emanuele Avallone (Italian Clown)

Description:

Participants get into groups of three. Person 1 will have two counsellors, an angel and a devil. The angel will have to convince them to do good things, for instance saying nice things to other participants, making friendly gestures and offering something, while the devil will have to convince them to do the opposite: to make a negative joke about somebody, to tell something unfriendly to someone. Angels and devils might also end up arguing. If the group is ready for that, this should bring chaos and laughter. Each participant will have about 2-4 minutes in each role.

Challenges:

Sometimes angels and devils don't understand they have to push the person to do concrete things: taking someone's glasses, go say something loudly to someone else...

Participants often start warming up by the second round. In the third and last round they might be very active. Leave enough time for people to enter the game. Support those who have not understood what they have to do or those who might be a bit passive and might break the dynamic.

Questions:

What did you do? Who had more influence on you? The angel or the devil? Who got you to do what? Why? Why did you accept some tasks? Did you happen to do something you were not really willing to do, or you might normally not have done? Why? What persuaded you? If you were to repeat the exercise, how could you resist 'temptation' or pressure?

Outcomes:

- Participants reflect actively on consent, harassment, pressure, morality

2.14. Angels and devils on the move 2

A game to expand role repertoire, develop graduality and capacity to change role.

Tags:	role reversal acting skills graduality
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	4+
Time:	5 min+
Sequence:	Better after “99–55” and/or “Greek tragedy”. Great to prepare for more complex role reversal situations. Connections might be made also with “Saints and sinners”.
Source:	Si les Sardines avaient des ailes; Caravane théâtre; Participarte developed the gender variation

Description:

Participants go into pairs. They stand at least 4 meters from each other. One person is going to be the angel, the other the devil. The angel will do very peaceful gentle sounds, probably moving their arms in loving manners while the devil might make weird sarcastic sounds, probably trying to scare the angel. Interpretation is free and participants should perform angels and devils as they feel comfortable.

Once they start, they should both move forward and backwards together on a line. The more they move backwards the more they become their character (angel or devil). The more they move forward the more their character becomes light, their sounds become more subtle until they reach the point between them where they are ‘neutral’ and where they will switch roles, moving to the other side of the line and becoming the other character. The line can extend. If they are far from each other, they



Participarte: Greek Tragedy

are intensely in their character, if they come closer they are less and less their character. By crossing the line and going on the other side they swap roles. This should be done as gradually as possible.

Challenges:

Participants must be ready for acting. After "99–55" it should be easier. Even easier after "Greek tragedy".

Questions:

This second game also explores why many participants might like the devil part more. How did you feel while playing each, what thoughts came to your mind? How was it to perform a role and then gradually move to another?

Variations/options:

If participants have been used to play with masculinity and femininity, for instance through '1-2-3 grandma', 'Angels and devils' can be replaced by 'men and women'. When far from each other they will act very masculine or very feminine. The closer they come the less they accentuate both genders until crossing the line and reversing parts gradually. This exercise requires a collaborative group but if you have it, it could provoke lots of laughter, very positive situations, and lots of materials to work on.

Outcomes:

- Participants expand role repertoire and train in reversing roles gradually



2.15. Greek tragedy and psychological violence

A game to see psychological violence at work in a pleasant setting.

Tags:	psychological verbal emotional violence power control abusive behaviour
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	4 – 6+
Time:	15 min+
Sequence:	<p>This exercise requires trust from the group. Perpetrators love games with power at stake but this one contains a lot of acting. So it is best when preceded by “99–55” or after a successful “Colombian hypnosis”.</p> <p>After this exercise any theatre activity should be easier. It also prepares well for role reversals and work on empathy.</p>
Source:	Greek tragedy; Emmanuel Gallot Lavallée (French Clown); Parteciparte (theatre of the oppressed Rome)

Description:

Part 1

Participants learn a piece of Greek tragedy shown by the facilitator:

O gods (hands up), the city of Troy (hands forward showing the city) is destroyed (hands going downwards showing destruction).

Participants rehearse their piece of tragedy all together.



Ksenija Livada: Greek Tragedy at the ITC-ILO's Gender Academy

Part 2

When participants are all comfortable with the piece, they go into pairs and one in each pair will become the actor while the other one is the artistic director. The artistic director will demand from the actor to perform again and again this piece of tragedy. The actor does their best to satisfy the director, but the director is never satisfied (make this very clear). The role play will only last 2 minutes. Directors should enjoy their full power while actors should do their best to perform brilliantly for the demanding director. The roles will be swapped after two minutes.

Part 3

Invite the participants back into the group to reflect and make a list of things that a 'bad'/problematic artistic director does. We are not interested yet in the positive things.

Participants are invited to list the bad things without sharing who did what. We talk about the artistic director, not about Simon or Abu. This list should include what is being said, the way it is said, the body language and will allow participants to obtain a very complete definition of psychological/verbal/emotional violence.

Other interesting questions to explore are: Do only artistic directors behave like that? Who else does the same? Participants will probably mention their boss, teachers, parents, and other more surprising categories

We have explored the most negative behaviours of an artistic director. Now the groups should discuss what a very positive artistic director would do. Often it is enough to reverse the negative list into positive, for example, a problematic director never says what's wrong, gives no clear indication of what they want... turning this into a positive statement: a good artistic director gives clear instructions of what they want...

Part 4

Participants will go back into the same pairs as before and reflect on the strategies they used as artistic directors e.g., which words and gestures they used. This gives them precious information about their capacity to use psychological violence.

When appropriate they can work on where they learnt that kind of behaviour. What is their script and where did they learn it?

Part 5

Participants go back into the main group and share not only what they have discovered about themselves as potential artistic directors, but about how it felt to track and spot their own artistic directors.

Part 6

Back in their pairs, participants will now explore: How do you acknowledge you have been acting in a damaging way? How do you restore a healthy relationship with the other? Do you ask to be forgiven? Do you give a long explanation about why you did it? Or do you ask the other to tell you how they felt? How do you decide what is the best strategy to re-build a relationship?

Challenges:

The rehearsal of the lines should be done collectively. At that moment nobody should feel observed. When participants go into pairs, they might fear of being observed. If so, avoid staring at them too much, they will soon be very passionate. If they seem hesitant and are looking around, encourage them to start. Invite the artistic director to have their actor work hard and show who is the boss.

When participants make a list of the abusive behaviours of the artistic director and when you make connections to their personal lives, be aware that all their past oppressors/'artistic directors' might

come back to their mind. This is happening in a safe space. They have been critical about the artistic director, and they have experienced that abusive power in a safe setting so it should not be an issue, but the facilitator must still be aware of the dangers in that moment.

While forms of psychological violence that are easier to name might come out, try to track the more hidden and subtle ones, the ones that can happen with a very gentle smile and a friendly tone of voice.

Questions:

How do you feel when you are the artistic director? How do you feel when you have to adapt to the artistic director?

Variations/options:

From Part 3 you can do some forum theatre on how participants face their artistic director. Some role reversals might also allow them to double experience what it means to live with an over-powerful artistic director.

To make it less theatrical, the same exercise can be done with one having to draw something and the other continuously putting them down for 2 minutes, before reversing roles.

Outcomes:

- Participants have developed an idea of what psychological, verbal and emotional violence is
- Participants have seen psychological, verbal and emotional violence in action. They have investigated their use of psychological violence and where they learnt it
- Participants learn to recognize and acknowledge their psychological, verbal and emotional abusive behaviours
- Participants are involved with theatre but without a harsh spotlight on anybody

2.16. 1-2-3 Grandma

A well-known traditional game with variations allowing to go from competition to collective work. Great to prepare for image theatre.

Tags:	competition emotional intelligence collaboration strategy image theatre
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	6 – 20
Time:	15 – 30 min
Sequence:	Prepares very well for work on emotions and image theatre. Great warm up and group exercise.
Source:	Traditional game still used in many countries. Part 2 comes from Baim, Brookes and Mountford: The Geese theatre handbook; Drama with Offenders and People at Risk 2002. Part 3 was developed by Parteciparte. The Greek version without leader was taught to me by Christina Zoniou, a Theatre of the Oppressed trainer in Greece.

Description:

Part 1

Participants stand on one side of the room and one participant is invited to become grandma. They will have to count 1-2-3 with their back turned and their eyes closed. In these three seconds, participants should try to reach the grandma and touch her shoulder to rob her power. Since they are far away at the beginning, they will not reach the grandma in three seconds and should stop and freeze, every time the grandma stops counting and turns to look at them. After counting quickly grandma will turn back and if she sees someone moving after she said 1-2-3. She can send that person back



Eros Achiardi: 1-2-3 Grandma at the Cinema School in Rome to prevent sexual harassment

to the starting point. The goal is for someone else to touch grandma's shoulder gently and take her power. Give at least three people the chance to be grandma.

Part 2

In part 2 people are told that from now on it is not an individual that has to reach grandma's shoulder but an object, a bottle for instance. That object will have to pass from hand to hand while grandma turns her back and counts. Every time- after counting 1-2-3- grandma is facing the group, she can accuse someone, and that person should show their hands to demonstrate that they do not have the bottle. If they have it, the bottle returns to the back of the room and the whole group starts again. If she didn't guess, she counts again. In this part, participants might need to agree on a strategy. Grandma is not focused anymore on whether people are perfectly frozen or not. They should still respect that rule, but individuals are not sent back anymore. Only the object is sent back.

Part 3

In part 3 the facilitator will be the grandma, at least for the first round, and before counting she announces an emotion, a character or something else to be performed as soon as she turns back facing the participants again. For instance, "anger, 1-2-3!" When she turns to check, after counting 1-2-3, she can send back to the start those who are not performing anger.

Facilitator should give a chance to some participants to be grandma at that stage so they can propose some issues to be explored. Sometimes participants make a collective list of situations/emotions/characters they want to explore. Sometimes someone might ironically propose names of some participant/s or of the facilitator. This should be welcomed and the one portrayed should have the time to see those images of themselves.

Challenges:

The biggest challenge for participants is to accept to play a game they used to play when they were children as adults. Fortunately, the game is easy, and the variations are both pleasant and challenging, so everybody should end up finding the game interesting.

For part 2: While some groups are very well organized and might have no issue with getting the object hidden and passing it around in secret, other groups might struggle to organise and grandma might often guess who has the object or bottle thus sending the group back repeatedly. This can become frustrating if there is no progress. In this case, facilitators should help the group organise, give them one minute to define a strategy while grandma is not allowed to listen. Ask them what didn't work, why, and ask what could work. If they don't manage, you could consider changing the rules and define it as a win if participants manage passing the object three times without grandma guessing where it is.

Questions:

In part 1 when people are sent back by grandma they can be asked how they feel, in particular when they claim it's unfair. You can also ask grandma how she feels when the whole group is getting closer to her, and she understands she is soon going to lose her power. You can also ask the group to say how they see grandma, how she feels, how she behaves, particularly if grandma is becoming abusive. Use humour to note how some people that might have argued against grandma's abuse of power often abuse it themselves once they get it.

In part 2, strong feelings might also be interrogated, in particular when the group fails and grandma finds out who has the bottle. Strong feelings might also arise when someone else is caught and the whole group has to start again. Grandma might also be questioned when the group gets closer, and she is under pressure.

When they manage to get the bottle to grandma, ask amidst the enthusiasm what made the group reach their goal and what the key to success was.

Variations/options:

There are many variations for this game.

In part 3 options are endless (e.g. Michael Jackson 1-2-3, women 1-2-3, men 1-2-3) and can be used to explore issues you want to work on during that session (pride, shame, discomfort...). This is a good occasion to quickly start working on some new topics to be discovered more deeply in that or following sessions.

For part 1 there is a French version where participants are invited to cheat as much as possible with grandma struggling to impose her authority.

In part 2 the object could be bigger than a bottle. Very collaborative groups might want to try very difficult challenges, the biggest one we have seen is reaching grandma with a chair.

There is a version where the bottle is between grandma's feet and the participants have to first reach grandma, then take the bottle without grandma seeing who took it, and then returning it to the back of the room. Note: The bottle may never be thrown in any way. It must be passed.

A Greek version of part 1 happens without any one in power leading the group. The group must find a strategy to move together without any leader.

A blindfolded version allows to explore more deeply the arbitrariness of power and how people feel when they are blindfolded and they are told they did something wrong and have to go back.

Outcomes:

- Participants learn about competitive and collaborative behaviours
- Participants work on their emotions in a very playful atmosphere
- Participants practice image theatre and start the work on difficult topics that are important for later sessions

2.17. Are you not in my head?

A game to make it clear that people cannot read minds.

Tags:	communication
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	2+
Time:	10 min+
Sequence:	Great after communication exercises like “Active listening”. Very helpful for work on expectations. Requires no acting or moving, so good for first sessions.
Source:	I wish I could remember from where I got it

Description:

The group goes into pairs. Person A is going to make a very simple drawing and then tell person B what to draw to make the same drawing. This drawing must be easy to explain to the other without saying what it is. For instance, if A wants B to draw a person, they cannot tell B to draw a head with long hair. They should say something like: “Draw a circle. Then from the upper part of that circle draw some lines that will curve down along the circle reaching the lower part of the circle. In the lower part these lines go straight downwards”. B might understand well or not. Person B will experience how difficult it can be to understand what is in someone else’s head. Person A might discover how difficult it is to communicate clearly. At the end of describing to person B what to draw, persons A & B should compare their drawings.

Emphasise that the drawings should be very simple.

If participants get good results, they can try something more difficult while some pairs might still be busy.

Challenges:

The biggest challenge for participants is to never name a thing to their partner but to describe it only technically (with lines, shapes, directions etc.).

For some participants, this could be very challenging. Underline that the two drawings might be completely different, and it should be seen as an achievement if they have much in common. Facilitators find ways to positively interpret the differences and develop curiosity on where these differences come from. The two drawings put together can be seen as an art piece. Have pairs invent a title for their twofold art piece.

Questions:

How did you feel in this game? What was the challenge? How did you make it through? How did you feel when you discovered person B didn’t understand perfectly what you meant? How did you feel when person A was telling you how and what to draw? How did you feel when you discovered your drawing was not like your partner’s? How will you feel about that in 10 minutes/1 day/1 year?

Variations/options:

This exercise can be done in two versions: one where the one trying to draw can ask the one giving information for some more details and one where the one drawing cannot ask anything.

In the version with no possibility to raise questions many points can be explored: Which version of the game gives better results? The one where the other can't give feedback about what they understand, or raise questions, or the one where they can ask and say what they understand? Why is that? Are there some situations in your life where you don't want to or can't get feedback? How does that feel? How could you change that?

Outcomes:

- Participants work on their communication skills
- They discover how the other person has difficulties understanding exactly what they want even with best intentions
- They learn to cope with imperfection, whether it is theirs or the other person's



2.18. Cross the room on paper/chairs

A game to develop group work and strategy

Tags:	group work challenge strategy power
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	6 – 8+
Time:	10 min+
Sequence:	Great game for building group rapport and an easy activity for starting to play games. Great to work on handling frustration, stress, irritation but also satisfaction
Source:	I learned this game from Julian Boal (theatre of the oppressed Brazil)

Description:

Participants – if less than 12 – all go to one side of the room. Facilitators somehow create a line that they won't be allowed to pass anymore except by walking on pieces of paper. Participants must now cross the whole room with only a few pieces of paper for the whole group, ideally newspaper. They have to find a strategy to get the entire group to the other side of the room without ever touching the floor. If you work with a bigger group (at least 14) you could do two teams, each on one side of the room. Give a relevant number of paper sheets. If the group is 6–10 people, two sheets are enough. With 11+ participants give 3 sheets. The sheets must not at all be enough to build a bridge from one side of the room to the other to ensure that participants develop a strategy.

Challenges:

Participants often get passionate and rush to start, even before you finish explaining all the rules, in particular if there are two groups.

Expect someone to take the lead in a very unproductive manner. For instance, one takes all the sheets and goes to the other side and then tries to send them back to the other side of the room. The sheets will most probably fall to the middle and out of reach. This could be embarrassing because the result of this behaviour is for all to see. Be ready with constructive and non-blaming comments when they get stuck. For instance: "Great! There is always a first strategy that doesn't work, thanks Joe for showing it, now does the group want to decide together on another strategy?"

Any negative comments on failures can be rephrased positively by the facilitator to keep a constructive mood. There might still be strong feelings of frustration when abusive behaviours pop up. These should be given space. Help the person who took power in the group to step back. They should be the one critical about what happened. Help them gently reach that awareness in case they do not get there by themselves.

Questions:

Questions should allow understanding of what happened during a spontaneous group reaction. How did the group organise? What happened? What can be done when negative things happen? How would you re-organize to have the perfect strategy?



Cross the room in Rome with parents and children

Variations/options:

This exercise can also be done with chairs. In that case you can give three chairs to groups of seven or more.

Forum theatre can be done in the moments when someone takes power within the group in a very unproductive manner. Someone else should perform the 'abusive' leader in a constructive and non-caricatural way. Before doing this variation, create a non-judgmental, non-blaming atmosphere. Overpowering happens in any group. The focus here is not on who but why this happens and how this can be faced.

Outcomes:

- Participants learn to work together in a pro-active non-judgmental setting
- Participants learn to cope with imperfection, failure, the challenges of communication in a group
- Groups reach satisfactory solutions after working and reworking their strategies. After the game they will define the ideal strategy, thus becoming more aware that often strategies can be improved, and that being too critical might lead nowhere.

Partecipante: Cross the room to tackle abuse of power in Tunis, Tunisia, with government



3. In depth activities – image theatre/sculptures

3.1. Introduction

A theatrical technique to track inequality and foster physical involvement

Tags:	embodiment emotional literacy perspective taking creating scenes preparing role play and forum theatre
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	2+
Time:	5 min+
Sequence:	These first exercises introduce participants to image theatre and its key concepts. The next two exercises are the easiest to start with in image theatre (“Point of View” & the “Two-Person Exercise”). Image theatre can be used at any point during the programme, e. g. to work on emotional literacy, to explore the consequences of a situation on others, on the protagonist and to understand triggers.
Source:	Boal 1992-1995; Baim, Brookes and Mountford: The Geese theatre handbook; Drama with Offenders and People at Risk 2002

Description:

Image theatre is a theatrical tool that is simple to use and offers many possibilities. Those new to theatre can use some of its simplest tools and might soon be able to work with any type of image theatre, as well as invent some new ones.



Partecipante: Forum theatre on restorative Justice with social workers and young offenders in Como, Italy



Partecipante: Image theatre on gender-based violence in a high school in South Italy

Image theatre means a physical image is created. Participants use their bodies to sculpt a statue, a frozen image. This image should not move. Once an image is created it can be commented by the audience (the other participants) and processed by the facilitator. Facilitators can invite participants to produce individual images (e. g. make an image of the last time you got angry) or group images (e. g. make an image of a conflict with two, three or more participants).

Images can be created in several ways. “Point of View” and “Two-person exercise” are the easiest way to introduce image theatre. But it can also be introduced through some games. In “1-2-3 grandma” for instance, it happens naturally when participants who do not freeze fast enough get sent back to the starting point. “Colombian hypnosis” also allows to introduce it easily.

At the beginning going fast and giving a time limit is a good idea. For instance, facilitators could say: “In groups of two you have five seconds to make an image of a clock, in groups of three you have ten seconds to make an image of a boat, in groups of four you have ten seconds to make an image of a family” etc. Then let the images remain frozen for a few seconds thus creating the habit of remaining frozen. You can unfreeze part of the group thus allowing them to observe other parts of the group. A game within the game could be trying to disturb the frozen images and trying to make them unfreeze.

Most facilitators will prefer to introduce image theatre gradually. Having participants walk and suddenly freeze when you say stop is a good start. At some point having to freeze making an image of anger/fear/pride or disgust works well: “now before saying stop I’ll say an emotion and you will make an image of this emotion when I say stop...”. Facilitators can explore more than just emotions. For more information, see “Image of the word”.

Organizing a museum of anger can also be fruitful, for example. The facilitator asks some participants to portray “anger”, while the other participants organize the exposition or comment on the images. Once participants are used to freezing you can work on the issues you want to tackle.

Challenges:

Participants might easily unfreeze or freeze too partially. This could lower the impact of the image. Commenting or other activities should thus be over quickly, not expecting frozen participants to remain as images for too long. Allow images to unfreeze (pause) regularly if you need more time.

Create a ritual for freezing, for instance counting 1-2-3 and/or clapping hands when participants should freeze or un-freeze.

Some participants can be tempted to comment on their own statue. This should be avoided, at least during the processing. You can remind them that statues do not speak. Tell the frozen participant that they will be allowed to share their view afterwards but that for now their body is the one expressing and the group needs them to be still to understand the image.

Making image theatre a guessing game at the beginning could help. This means that those who made a statue should not explain anything and allow the others to guess.

Questions:

Questions will vary depending on the issue you are exploring. Some basic questions are: What does this character feel? What are their most secret thoughts? What does he think about him/her? What does she think about him? What does he want? What does he say?

There might be interesting contradictions to explore, for instance the difference between what one character thinks and what they end up saying or doing.

Variations/options:

The facilitators can explore diverse issues/themes: bad eve, the argument, the provocation, the lie, the secret.

Alternatively, they can send participants into groups to prepare an image of a problematic situation that others will have to guess.

One variation is that participants have to make three images that should tell a true story. Image one is the moment before the offense; image two the offense or the moment of violence, image three the consequences, the breakdown or the unhappy ending.

Having the audience comment, analyse feelings, thoughts and actions of the protagonists can allow to create a moving scene in very little time. Ask them to go from three frozen images to a normal scene. Using the vocabulary of photography and film could help: "Now that you have three pictures. Make a short scene, like a movie, where characters can now move and talk. Keep it short, don't lose the physical aspect of the images."

Once you have scenes of violence (or better, preceding violence), it is very useful to do role reversals or rotations. This way, participants explore how it feels to be in the other's shoes and what the other person thinks about that situation. While the technique can be done quickly, there should be enough time to comment and process.

Outcomes:

- Participants physically explore their conflicts & challenges
- Participants get used to working with theatre
- Participants work on the different moments of a problematic story
- Participants further develop empathy through role play

3.2. Point of view circle

An exercise to make it very clear there is more than one point of view to everything

Tags:	image theatre perspective taking thinking distortions victim empathy role reversal/rotation
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	4+
Time:	5 min+
Sequence:	Great exercise to work on gender and power. A favourite for first sessions.
Source:	Baim, Brookes and Mountford: The Geese theatre handbook; Drama with Offenders and People at Risk 2002

Description:

A volunteer is invited to sit on a chair in the middle of a circle. That person will have to do absolutely nothing. The facilitator asks some participants sitting in the circle to say how many eyes, ears, and hands they see. Those sitting in the circle behind the volunteer might see only two ears, two hands and no eye. Those on the side might see one eye, one ear, and one or two hands. Those in front might see two ears, two eyes and two hands. Have many participants share what they see from their point of view.

Once you are done with the first round, have participants change chairs and ask again how many eyes/ears/hands they see.

Challenges:

Participants might soon pretend the conclusions of this exercise are obvious, minimizing its potential. While you start processing be ready to go to the next level with new questions

Questions:

Some see no eyes, some see two. Who is right? Is someone wrong? We have many different points of view. Does that apply to other situations in life? Can you always cope with that? Who feels challenged by that? In which situation do you feel other points of view can be challenging for you? Are there situations where you don't want to be challenged by another point of view? Which? Why? Does everyone feel the same in this or that situation? At this point facilitators could use a continuum exercise to discuss several situations mentioned.

What would you think about someone claiming that the volunteer in the middle has only one eye and that it is the absolute truth? Do they have the right to say that you are wrong? What would you do if they start getting angry at you because you defend your point of view? If I claim you are totally wrong, what skills do you think I lack?

In which moments of your life would you benefit from seeing things from another point of view? Would you be able and willing to look at things from your victim's point of view? Is their point of view like the different points of view in this exercise?



How do other people see you? Do they all see you the same or do people around you have different points of view on you? Can you mention three different points of view on you?

Variations/options:

Some questions can lead to forum scenes or role playing, for instance: “How do you cope with someone angry claiming there is only one/their own point of view?”

Outcomes:

- Participants gain perspective, go into another person’s shoes
- Participants get used to working with image theatre, role reversals, and role reversal

3.3. Two-person exercise A/B

An exercise to make it clear what gender-based violence means.

Tags:	masculinity gender power oppression
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	5+
Time:	10 min+
Sequence:	Excellent to start theatrical work. The two-person exercise is an easy one to follow this game, but you can also go directly to role play or forum theatre if some interesting challenges come out.
Source:	Baim, Brookes and Mountford: The Geese theatre handbook; Drama with Offenders and People at Risk, 2002.

Description:

1)

A volunteer come in front of the group, sits on a chair, and won't have to do anything but watch the floor, facing the audience. If a co-worker is female, she might do that part. Another volunteer, a male, will stand behind her, frozen, doing nothing but watching her. He stands on the side, behind her.

From here, participants are invited to imagine a problematic story between these two characters. The audience gives them names. Stories of violence might soon pop up, stories of betrayal, harassment, stalking. In most cases he might be the one oppressing her. This gives you an idea of what stories participants have in their minds. Rarely, will they claim she is oppressing him. Indeed, the image of her looking at the floor and him standing behind her is not neutral. Maybe you will hear a story of her betraying him and now feeling guilty while he is assessing what to do.

2)

If there are only men and no female co-facilitator, you can start by collecting stories of conflict between two men. Then you can ask the sitting volunteer if he is ok to be interpreted as a female. He might do some funny gestures. Ask him not to over-perform femininity, as the participants will be the ones that will project stories onto him considering him as a female, and therefore, he should restrain himself as much as he can from stereotyping female characteristics. He just has to sit and watch the floor.

3)

From here there are two options depending on what you want to work on. If you want to work on gender and power, you can go for the role reversal. You can also work on one of the stories that came out and after getting more details you can do some forum theatre (see “she has been seen hugging another man”)

Role reversal

Now she stands behind him, on the side, and he sits on the chair looking downwards. Get some new stories and ask if the same stories could fit this new situation. Often participants will laugh because they can't imagine him being scared, harassed, or stalked by her. This should be questioned. Participants quite easily acknowledge in this game that some forms of violence can be perpetrated by women but most of these are possible mainly for men. Intermediary questions could be necessary



here to explore these stereotypes and ideas further. Female violence should not be minimized if it is mentioned, but this exercise should allow participants to become aware that in most of cases it is men being more violent towards women.

Challenges:

Sometimes facilitators will want to get more details about a story. Tell those bringing new stories to wait and ask more about the story you want to deepen. Sometimes you might want to work on a story you consider to be a good example. You can either move immediately to role playing or pause that story, keep it in mind, and finish the two-person exercise quickly concluding the part on gender through role reversal before returning to the story you felt was particularly relevant.

Questions:

Normal processing techniques for image theatre: How does he/she feel? What does he/she think in this situation you have described? What is going to happen next? Which thoughts fuel his/her anger/fear/shame/pride? How could he handle these emotions/thoughts to avoid violence? There are many opportunities to go into forum theatre. Audience members come to replace the one struggling to overcome a challenge (see part in manual on Forum Theatre)



Abdulkadir Mohamed (CISP): The two person exercise in Mogadishu, Somalia

Variations/options:

In Geese's handbook, the exercise focuses more on one story, getting into details and deeply processing it. They invite the character behind to go forward and freeze closer to the other for a couple of times thus offering three different images to explore. One a few meters behind, one closer and one very close. This also allows to work on personal space that can nicely complete the exercise on "The right distance" explained earlier.

Outcomes:

- Participants explore gender-based violence, the possibility of women being violent toward men and vice versa. Bodies make it difficult to deny the huge privileges men have compared to women, not just physically.
- Participants get used to image theatre, role reversal and analysing power imbalances.

3.4. Image of the word: man/woman; you are at your best/worst

An exercise to work on a difficult concept in a very physical manner

Tags:	body emotional literacy masculinity femininity narcissism ups and downs
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	As for all the image theatre techniques the collective work gives lots of results but individual work and work in a pair can do wonders as well.
Time:	5 min – 2 hrs
Sequence:	This exercise works very well after other games on gender. The part on failure fits well in a moment when a perpetrator have a difficult time accepting their vulnerabilities. Some games prepare for this exercise, e. g. “1-2-3 grandma” and various continuums.
Source:	Augusto Boal: The rainbow of desire 1995. The variation on gender I learned from Muriel Naessens; the variation on failures, ups and downs of narcissists from Umberta Telfener.

Description:

Part 1

Participants stand in a circle looking outwards. The facilitator says a word and the participants will have three seconds to make an image of that word and turn inward. It can be “religion” or “fear” or any topic you want to explore. As soon as participants feel they have it, they turn back inward and make their image. If it helps you could ask participants to close their eyes until they feel ready to create their image.

Not too much should be said about the word you want to explore. It is about what they have in mind and how their body expresses it. What does religion mean to them physically for instance?

Part 2

An important construction to work on with perpetrators is masculinity and femininity. You might have introduced these already through the presentation games or through “1-2-3 grandma”. Perhaps you already explored some masculine images in the “Map on the floor” exercise.

This time, you ask participants to make an image of “men” after you count to three. Once they are frozen images, invite them to watch the other images without losing their image and its powerful expression. They can relax for a few seconds.

Part 3

Now they stand looking outwards again and once they are ready, they will make an image of “women”. After exploring the other images they can relax again.

Part 4

Now participants will freeze again in their “men” image and when the facilitator claps their hands they will transform in slow motion from “men” to “women”, exploring physically all the muscles, all the subtle changes that take place in their body moving from masculinity to femininity in slow-motion. Allow time for comments after the exercise is done from man to woman and back to man at least twice. For many men this has been a life changing experience.



Part 5

Now participants freeze again as men and look for other images that are somewhat similar to theirs. They make families of images. For instance, there might be a family of images that show a muscular aspect of masculinity. Once you have groups and individuals, freeze some, let others relax, and comment on those who are frozen. Start by asking about physical details, analyse the body aspect (e. g. chin is up) slowly moving to interpretations (e. g. his chin expresses pride). Find possible common points between images. Acknowledge the differences and plurality of masculinities.

You might also want the frozen ones to show to the un-frozen ones their slow-motion transformation from men to women and back. The same could be done with femininity.

You can process each single image or all at the same time by asking “What is the sound this image might make? 1-2-3 sound: ...”. Then you can ask: “If this statue/image could make a simple movement what would it be? 1-2-3 movement: ...”. The movement might be repeated. “If this image could say a single word, what would it be? 1-2-3 word:...”.

Challenges:

Some people might need more or less time. Try to adapt the process to them rather than the opposite. Some participants might be uncomfortable embodying women at first. This requires comprehension but also capacity not to put them in the spotlight while they find the courage to freeze into an image.

Questions:

How does it feel to make an image of men? What might have inspired you? Who are the men that influenced your image of masculinity? What about the other images? How do you feel about those who were very similar or very different?

How did you feel when performing femininity? Who inspired you? How was it to move from men to women? Which physical changes stood out to you? Where did you feel more/less comfortable? What did you learn from this activity?

Variations/options:

The same exercise can be done with several opposite concepts/emotions like love/hate or pride/shame. A particularly interesting opposition to explore with perpetrators is “you when you feel at your best” and “you when you feel at your worst”. The slow motion is very important to explore what is in between and could help the perpetrator avoid extreme moods.

Some perpetrators might easily create an image of them at their best but be more reluctant to make one of them at their worst. You could also involve another participant: “Make an image of how this person might be when they are at their worst”. The goal is to find all the images that are between the best and the worst to help the perpetrator find their physical ‘in-between states’. If we call the ‘best’ number one and the ‘worst’ number five, it means we want them to find images two, three and four. Each image can be processed through the usual questions “How do you feel?”, “Can your image make a sound?”, “If your image could say a word what would it be?”, “If your image could make a movement what would it be?”. Image one can talk with image five. After doing image one and talking to image five, the participant leaves image one, is replaced by another participant, and goes into image five to talk to image one. They can do the same with other numbers to have them talk to each other.

Outcomes:

- Participants explore opposite concepts/situations that polarize their lives.
- Participants explore gender as a social construct that has sculpted their bodies.
- Participants work on their failures, their voids, their moments of extreme weakness and explore the intermediate states.

3.5. Angels and devils on the move part 3

A game to challenge a perpetrators' angriest thoughts, but also the tendency to minimise, deny, blame shift and act egotistically.

Tags:	expanding role repertoire	challenging anger	blame shifting	narcissism	victimization	minimisation	denial
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5						
Group size:	3+						
Time:	15 min+						
Sequence:	Good after earlier angel and devil games, but also works without.						
Source:	James Thompson, the pump manual for the work on anger 1999; Participarte for the "challenge your devil's part", Evan Hastings for the "challenge your self-demeaning thoughts" exercise						

Description:

Part 1A

This exercise can start with a person sharing a story of anger. Together with another participant (the antagonist), the person who shared the story (the protagonist) makes a frozen image of the most conflictual moment.

Once the image of the conflict is ready, they will improvise the conflict for 1-2 minutes without being allowed to move. They remain in a frozen image/statue while talking. It might be difficult to stay still, but you should insist on them remaining frozen. Once the conflict is clear to everybody, the improvisation ends.

Now two other people will stand behind the protagonist (if possible, on a chair): the angel and the devil. While the protagonist and antagonist are frozen, the angel will come to support them from behind, trying to propose peaceful thoughts. The devil will also join after 15–30 seconds to encourage their angry thoughts, even pushing them to more aggressive behaviour while the angel still tries to calm them down. The scene un-freezes and the feelings of the protagonist can be processed.

After hearing the angel and the devil, the protagonist can now go to challenge the devil face to face. All the other characters can leave (with due applause). The protagonist must face their devil and try to face their arguments and overcome the devil's pressure.

Other participants could replace the protagonist if they have no more arguments to face their angriest/most devilish thoughts. They come to show how they would tackle these angry thoughts.

Part 1B (optional)

The statue of the conflict is re-created. Protagonist and antagonist freeze again at the crucial moment of the conflict. The angel is now the one supporting all the angry thoughts of the person in a very gentle and collusive manner ("poor you, she's provoking you again, how could you not react...") while the devil will challenge the angry thoughts with his ironical style ("What a terrible challenge for you, she asked you to care for the baby tonight, so of course you are now entitled to shout and get mad as if she had been cutting your leg, poor you, how dare she do that..."). The two people in the conflict try not to move when this happens (frozen image), or at least find a comfortable position that calls back to their conflict.



Part 2

Once the angel and devil have shown the challenging/supportive thoughts behind the protagonist, the conflictual scene with the antagonist stops and the protagonist can try to challenge the thoughts that fuel their violence with the angel or the devil depending on who showed their most dangerous thoughts.

This scheme involves only two participants: The protagonist and angel or devil. The protagonist now faces their problematic thoughts.

Challenges:

The schemes should be adapted to the circumstances and be proposed in a specific moment when angry thoughts or blame shifting are popping up. Feel comfortable to adapt the ways of playing the game.

Questions:

How is it to hear your angry (or other problematic) thoughts? How was it to challenge them? How was it to hear the angel supporting your thoughts while the devil was challenging them?

Variations/Options:

This game can also be used with blame shifting: The angel comes behind the protagonist shifting blame and supports their blame shifting thoughts ("It's all her fault, girls know that if they behave in a certain way, they will get what they deserve..."). After a few seconds the devil will come in and will challenge the blame shifting thoughts in their own way ("So you really think it's all her fault? you have no responsibility at all? no no no? If women wear blue socks it means they want a man? So you're surprised she now pretends you harassed her?...").

Something similar can be done on narcissism: Two participants are talking. A third person comes to tell person A that person B is telling lies, and that person A should not listen to person B (person B should try to continue the conversation normally with person A). The third person now starts insisting person A is great, is better than everybody and doesn't deserve to talk with person B. Here angels and devils are not necessary, but the style of the exercise remains the same. This will allow participants to perform narcissism, to see it from outside, to hear such thoughts from behind. Once identified and staged, the narcissist character can also be challenged, once processed the feelings and thoughts of the protagonist.

This works also with victimization.

This game also works with self-demeaning thoughts. The participant talks about a dream they feel they might never realize and mentions all the thoughts that have convinced them that they will never make it. Someone replaces them, continuing to air negative thoughts and the participant can now come to challenge their own negative and demeaning thoughts. They can also be replaced in a forum theatre style to see how other people would tackle such thoughts.

Outcomes:

- Participants gain insights by becoming angels or devils that support very aggressive or minimizing thoughts.
- Participants learn to understand who are their friends or family members that might fuel their violent behaviour and those that might support them to stop using violence.



Abdulkadir Mohamed (CISP): Angels and devils in Mogadishu, Somalia

4. Role plays and forum theatre

4.1. Introduction to Forum Theatre and Role Play

Role play and Forum Theatre allow participants to start and restart a scene as many times as they need to. They can practice, try out new skills, different behaviours, and responses, and rehearse the ones they want to adopt.



Parteciparte: Forum theatre on gender-based violence in schools

In role play, any form of interaction is possible, any character can be replaced and changed. In forum theatre, the focus is on one person, the oppressed, who is facing a challenge and the challenge is always presented from the oppressed point of view. Participants take the role of the oppressed (not the victim) to show possible alternatives and new strategies to overcome an injustice. Characters that are the victims of an oppression but are unaware of it or have no idea how to overcome their oppression or are not in condition of struggling should not be replaced.

Also, the character causing injustice, the oppressor, shouldn't be replaced in the forum theatre as it makes the process too easy.

The oppressors are not bad monsters. They are the ones who have an oppressive ideology, sometimes without being aware of it. Paul telling Joe that his wife has been seen hugging another man can be considered oppressive, if Paul is not supportive. If Paul fuels jealous thoughts, for sure he is an oppressor. Joe might become aggressive and could behave violently towards his partner. In our example, Paul brings the challenge. So, he is the one to be faced. Other participants who see this scene could either replace Joe or, if they think he doesn't understand the oppression yet, support him from the outside.

In forum theatre, the oppression must be clear, and the challenge must be well-defined. The oppressed (not the victim) is replaced and the facilitator constantly assesses whether the situation is becoming less oppressive.

In role playing, any role can be taken by participants. Aims vary from changing perspective to practicing skills and there is not necessarily one point of view. The conflicts can be at equal level of power and while imbalances of power might be staged as well, the work is not necessarily done from the side of the one being oppressed. In forum theatre, this is the clear focus, and the method should not help people who oppress to oppress better. The fact that forum theatre scenes are ideally created through image theatre allows participants to find power structures in their bodies and allows them to identify clearly who has more power. In a fight, a man and his wife might be equally abusive verbally but most often the man is privileged physically. Going from image theatre to forum theatre, the facilitator questions the power structures. Who has more power economically and politically? If two men play the couple's fight and one plays the wife, he might spontaneously make his body seem weaker. Bodies rarely lie and if so, the contradictions might be easier to unveil.

In role play, participants practice new skills, expand their role repertoire, develop empathy, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and internal resilience. They work on the personal side. In forum theatre, they develop solidarity, and practice collective change. Because gender-based violence cannot be stopped individually, the facilitator should always bring the focus on systemic change. For instance, the facilitator can also ask whether a new strategy to overcome peer pressure changes the minds of the peers or allows the oppressed to overcome this pressure. In the first case, it is forum theatre, in the second case, it is more of a role play.

Here again no rigidity or hierarchy. Both role play and forum theatre are very useful for the work with perpetrators, and in this chapter, we propose a basic sample, which hopefully will allow you to create scenes that better match your programme. Some exercises can be considered a mix of forum theatre and role play, for example “stage a situation where an emotion was not handled well”. It fosters the work on a personal skill but also a collective work on men’s emotional understanding.

Sometimes, the challenge can be found by improvising a role play. Once the challenge is clear and if it resonates with more than one participant it can become forum theatre.

In role play, participants practice new skills, expand their role repertoire, develop empathy, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and internal resilience. They work on the personal side. In forum theatre, they develop solidarity, and practice collective change.



4.2. Fake handshake

This is a very basic forum theatre scene that can be used even in a first session. It allows participants to understand plainly the whole pedagogy that underpins the use of games and theatrical tools: they define challenges, tackle them, and can try as many new strategies as they want to address the challenge. A good metaphor could be that of a rewind button allowing them to try again. In life mistakes can cause trouble and be final, but in forum theatre, change can be tested and rehearsed as much as necessary. Forum theatre is, in my experience, very appreciated by perpetrators, so this exercise could help them enjoy the methodology from the first session.

Tags:	rehearsing change trying several strategies widening response capacity
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	4+
Time:	10 min+
Sequence:	Good exercise for the beginning, is a non-threatening start to doing theatre.
Source:	I learned this exercise from Julian Boal (theatre of the oppressed, Brazil)

Description:

The facilitator announces they are going to perform a small scene and asks for a volunteer. The volunteer is told that they won't have to do much, just react to what the facilitator does. The facilitator asks them to stand on one side of the scene, and from there the scene starts. The facilitator (now actor) moves their hand towards the volunteer as if wanting to shake hands with them. If the volunteer doesn't get it and doesn't come, they might insist on moving the hand towards the volunteer. When the volunteer comes closer to shake hands with the actor, the actor will remove their hand in a very unfriendly manner, even turning their back to the volunteer. The scene is thus one of a person who seems to offer you a handshake but then moves their hand away in a very frustrating manner. The volunteer might react or not. At that point the actor becomes the facilitator again and asks the audience:

"What happened? What did my character do? Why did they behave like that? What power do they have that makes them feel so entitled? Are there many people like that around? Are there other situations like that in your life?

How did the volunteer feel about that? How did they react? What would you do in such a situation? Can something else be done or there is not much to be done? Who thinks something can be done? What can be done? Do you want to try? Come!"

The first volunteer could play the oppressor from now on, or someone else who understands that character's mindset.

Young offenders might quickly propose a violent reaction. To prevent that, announce that violent solutions can be performed, but in slow motion, and that nobody should be hurt. Have the oppressor show the consequences, probably a fight where both will end up with serious pain (that may be pretend in forum theatre but have real consequences in life). If necessary, discuss the possible consequences: "What will probably happen after that? Even if you are physically stronger, what could happen? Are there alternatives to violent responses? Is it possible not to react violently?"



Facilitators should value all proposed alternatives: “What do we like about their intervention? We know each intervention has its limits but let’s try to focus on the positive aspects. What is the element of this strategy that could be useful? Is something still missing? Who could complete it or propose something new?”

After participants have tried at least four alternatives, you can bring the exercise to a conclusion, insisting on the fact that they showed that there are many options even in very fast moving and oppressive situations.

Explain that forum theatre can be used every time they have an oppressive situation to face, and they would like to see what others would do in their shoes.

Challenges:

Facilitators should make the difference between facilitator-you and actor-you very clear. Get someone else to play the oppressor if there is a risk people might get confused.

The first volunteer should be protected and valued, through a round of applause perhaps, as they didn’t know what to expect, and so it was more difficult for them.

The first simulation might not always work well. Explain the rules again. It is about showing how you would react in a certain situation that is going to happen. Try it again.

Problematic intervention should be valued on one side and questioned on the other. The consequences should always be discussed.

Variations/options:

Any other simple scenes can be tried out to make participants understand how forum theatre works: “Someone skips the line at the post office and stands in front of you” or “Someone does not answer your question in a public office because you are a foreigner, young or for other discriminatory reasons. How can you react?” Each time have the participants define the oppression. Encourage that through questions like “Why does this man skip the line? What makes him feel he can do it?”. Then you can tackle the issue.

To make the challenge harder you could add peers laughing at the volunteer whose hand remained ‘un-shaken’. This should be done once they are used to the scene and the forum theatre structure.

Outcomes:

- Participants learn new possible responses to a provocation.
- Participants learn to handle frustration and anger in a very dynamic and fast situation.
- Participants get used to work with forum theatre, understand the pedagogy at its root.



Partecipante: Fake handshake

4.3. Your partner's sister is with a perpetrator

An exercise to have a perpetrator work... with a perpetrator

Tags:	support solidarity empathy risk assessment
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	4+
Time:	10 min+
Sequence:	Good to be used when defining gender-based violence, its effects not only on the victim but also on her social network and on Peter, who is destroying his relationship with her. It is good for working on victim empathy.
Source:	Inspired by a role play in "Drama games for those who like to say no" (2010) and by our forum theatre performance on gender-based violence created with Women Shelters

Description:

Some perpetrators are very fast in defending their sisters or protecting women they know. This is an exercise to understand better what that support could mean, to discover from outside what gender-based violence means, and how difficult it is to intervene and help a woman trapped in an abusive relationship.

Two participants will perform the couple and let participants give them names, let's say Mary and Peter, with Peter being very aggressive and constantly demeaning towards Mary. Another participant will be the one struggling to dismantle this oppression. They should give their character a name as well. Let's say Nasser.

Nasser's girlfriend is sick, and she asked him to go to her sister's house to get a beloved book. Nasser will go to his girlfriend's sister. He will have a talk with her where he will become aware something problematic is in the air, and at a certain point, Peter will enter the room and create a lot of tension. Peter will make fun of Nasser for obeying his partner and coming to get the book. Peter will leave the room for a moment, giving a last opportunity for Nasser to talk with Mary now that he understands what is going on.

There are three moments where Nasser can try to intervene and where participants could replace him if they have other ideas to try:

When he arrives, talks with Mary, and feels she is in trouble.

When Peter comes into the room and starts demeaning Mary and making fun of Nasser for being such a submissive partner.

When Peter leaves the room and Nasser understands what is going on.

Have the group collectively build the challenges, the thoughts and emotions of the characters: the demeaning attitude of Peter, the fear of Mary, the surprise of Nasser. Once the scene is ready, try to perform it completely. It doesn't have to be perfect. Discuss the different parts: "What happened? Do you think these things happen a lot? Have you ever seen something like this? Is it their private business or should we intervene when something like that happens around us? How did Mary feel? What might she be thinking of this situation? How did Nasser feel when Peter started making fun of



him? Can something be done without putting Mary at risk? When?" Don't let participants say it. As soon as they start saying: "He should..." invite them to try out their solution.

If they claim to know what Mary should do, ask them if it is easy to be in Mary's situation and if she can take the risk of facing her abusive partner. As mentioned in the introduction to role play and forum theatre, in a forum theatre scene she cannot be replaced because she probably doesn't have enough power to face Peter and replacing her could mean that she did not do the right thing, that it would be easy for her to free herself if only she did the right thing, etc. In a role play scene, she could be replaced to let participants feel what it means to be in her shoes, threatened by a perpetrator. But the actor playing Peter should give him a hard time because it should not seem to a participant that it is easy to overcome a violent relationship. Replacing Mary could be a frustrating experience, but sometimes necessary. Facilitators should choose their approach based on the outcome they want to foster with the group.

In replacing Nasser, participants will discover how difficult and dangerous it is for a woman to be in an abusive relationship. They will try to support her. Each strategy should be carefully analysed through the facilitator's questions: "How did it go? What did we like in this intervention? Are there some risks associated with such an intervention? Etc." Many interventions might put Mary at risk. Facilitators should make this very clear. Often not trying to save her and simply listening to her and asking her questions might already make a difference. Each intervention replacing Nasser might unveil a different aspect of violence.

Challenges:

Participants must get familiar with the story. Repeat it several times if necessary. Have participants create the key dialogues, define key words, thoughts, and feelings of characters in the high-tension moments.

As mentioned, men and perpetrators often claim to know what women should do to avoid violence. Be prepared for that. The forum should not let this happen as they can only replace the one that has the desire and the possibility to intervene: Nasser. In the scene, Mary is trapped in this relationship. A harsh series of questions to make this clear is the following: "Why is Mary still with Peter?" If answers don't make it clear she is trapped: "Is she stupid? If not, why did she end up in such a mess?" Participants at that point normally start looking for her point of view: That she might not have been aware at the beginning, that she got trapped slowly, or might feel ashamed to be in such a situation, not understanding how she ended up there. Insist on the fact: "We are not going to work on why she is still with him but why he is perpetrating violence against her and what we can do to change that. We will face Peter by replacing someone that could make a difference, that might understand what is going on from the outside: Who wants to replace Nasser?"

Another challenge is that perpetrators might minimize the violence. The actor playing Peter might try to justify himself. The risk that Peter will be portrayed as a very friendly and empathetic partner is low. If this happens, it could be praised, reminding participants that the reality of this character is different.

Most often a perpetrator might try to make Peter and his violent behaviour look cool. As this is not realistic, ask the group if there is a way to portray the perpetrator more accurately. Have the actor be replaced so someone else can try to be the oppressor.

Questions:

What did you learn from this scene? What do you have in common with Peter? What advice would you give to Peter? Would Peter be receptive? Do you think Peter could change? Why should he change?

Variations/options:

To make it even more personal instead of his partner's sister, participants can work on a story where it is their own sister that is trapped in a dangerous relationship.

Outcomes:

- Participants understand gender-based violence better.
- Participants face gender-based violence in a protected environment.
- Participants become aware of its damages, how it ruins people and relationships, not only the couple.
- Participants see a clear example of a man controlling his wife with all the consequences.
- Participants understand some aspects of violence they did not consider in their own stories yet.

4.4. She has been seen hugging another man

A forum theatre scene to work on handling jealousy and jealousy-related anger.

Tags:	jealousy control anger management gender based violence
Level of difficulty:	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Group size:	5+
Time:	15 min–2 hrs
Sequence:	It might take place naturally after “point of view circle” or the “Two-person exercise”
Source:	It is a scene of our forum theatre performance on masculinity.

Description:

Ask participants how they would feel, what they would think and what they would do if they were told their partner has been seen hugging another man. There are two interesting possibilities to explore here: Either there is a misunderstanding, and she was hugging her cousin, brother, or there was nothing threatening in their relationship or she is having an affair. You must decide which possibility you want to explore before you start the scenes.

Two people play the scene. One volunteer plays the partner, the other the man.



Noino.org and Fondazione del monte: She's been seen hugging another man



Option 1

Participants have to get information from their partner. Explore how they get that information. What do they do before they go talk to their partner? How do they prepare? How do they handle the meeting? In that case the volunteer performing the partner should challenge him a little or a lot depending on his capacities to handle that meeting. If he is overwhelmed, the challenge should not be too strong. If he is handling it well, the level of difficulty can be set higher

Option 2

She has had an intimate relationship with someone else. Ask participants: What do you do? How do you face the situation with her? If you end the relationship, how does that happen? If she ends the relationship, how do you handle that? If the relationship continues, how will that be?

Option 3

Sometimes it is easier to start with a scene where participants have to help a friend whose partner was seen hugging another man. This means a volunteer should act as a very angry partner and another as the supporting friend.

Ask participants to prepare a scene with the following questions: How do you help a friend whose partner has been seen hugging another man? How do you support this very angry friend, how do you help him manage his anger and the situation? How do you prepare him for a meeting with her?

It is a good idea to have the facilitator perform the angry man who is feeling betrayed, showing all his anger, making it clear that there is a risk of violence and that he justifies that violence because, for instance, a woman cannot do that to him. Volunteers will have to help a very aggressive character.

Challenges:

These scenes can get perpetrators very passionate.

The challenge and situation must be clear when you do the forum. Two key points are whether she has had an affair or not and whether the intervention in the scene is to support the man who feels betrayed or to intervene as that man and talk to her.

Questions:

What do we learn from trying to support him and talking with her?

Which intervention did you prefer? Would you be able to react like that? What do you need to work on to get there?

Outcomes:

- Participants help a peer handle their anger and their tendency to perpetrate gender-based violence.
- Participants dismantle the belief system that a male has to react if his partner has an affair. Discuss this idea of their partner belonging to them.

5. Additional simple forum theatre scenes and role plays

5.1. A brother and his friend claim that you have mistreated his sister

One volunteer (A) leaves the room. The other participants are briefed. One volunteer (B) will have to inform (A) that a brother (C) and his friend (D) want to have a talk with him because they claim that he has been violent with C's sister. When A returns to the room, he is told by B that there is a risky conversation awaiting him with C and D. B leaves and C and D enter, claiming that A has been violent with C's sister. How does A handle the situation? C and D have to prepare to give good examples of unacceptable behaviours by A. If necessary, the group can help them to find behaviours.

Participants can intervene replacing A, who will have to cope with angry C and D. But they can also intervene as the brother trying to figure out what to do when a guy you know is mistreating your sister. Here we are at the border between role play and forum theatre.

This exercise will incite participants (B-C-D) to argue against gender-based violence and A will have to handle C and D's aggressiveness. C and D are not willing at all to minimise the situation.

5.2. Stage a situation where an emotion was not handled well

Participants are asked about a situation where they were unhappy with how they handled an emotion. The situation should be quite simple. Once the story is clear, one volunteer will perform the challenging character and other participants can try to handle the emotion and the whole situation better. Other participants can show how they would do this.



Ugo Panella: Forum theatre on emotional abuse



Chris Corcinschi: Forum theatre on masculinities, how to help men handling their emotions at a funeral

5.3. The wedding funeral

In this role play, two participants are told that they both have organized an event and it seems the manager has rented the same venue to both at the same time on the same day. One person organized a funeral and the other a wedding. Guests of both events are about to arrive in less than 10 minutes and the manager cannot be reached. They have to find a solution.

Participants can be sent in pairs to role play for 10 minutes. The goal is to find a solution that satisfies both or at least reach a compromise.

Each person should be passionate about their event (wedding or funeral). Prepare them well for this before sending them into pairs.

5.4. You go to school to tell students about gender-based violence

“For the 25th of November you are going to talk in a school about gender-based violence”. Other participants are the school students and should not make it too challenging, at least in the beginning. If they feel the volunteer is handling the situation well, they could increase the difficulty. They can also question contradictions in the volunteer’s speech.

This is an opportunity for participants to explain what they have learnt in the programme.

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The European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (WWP EN)

Founded in 2014, the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (WWP EN) is a membership organisation with members including perpetrator programmes, research institutes, and victim/survivor support services. Today, we unite over 60 members across Europe for a common goal: accountable, effective, and victim-centred perpetrator work.

We believe that gender-based violence violates women's human rights and aim to create a gender equitable world by supporting member organisations in their work with those who choose to use violence in intimate partnerships, predominantly men.

As an umbrella organisation, WWP EN supports its members in offering and developing responsible, victim-focused perpetrator work. As part of our capacity-building, we offer innovative and essential training for perpetrator programmes. Additionally, we work to promote the Istanbul Convention together with a growing network of European and global partners.

