

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

Cirque du Monde Training - Part 1 and Part 2

This awesome Participant Handbook belongs to:



SOCIAL CIRCUS PROGRAM OF
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL.

FOREWORD

Ever since *Cirque du Soleil* has had the resources to follow its dreams, it has chosen to be involved with at-risk youth through its social circus program, *Cirque du Monde*. With the objective of encouraging the personal and social development of these young people, *Cirque du Monde's* actions take the form of social circus workshops, training, support and consulting, networking and raising awareness.

Most recently, in order to support the development of social circus, *Cirque du Monde* has invested in the production of a series of educational tools. The *Participant Handbook* is an integral part of this series and is based on the expertise developed by *Cirque du Soleil* and its numerous partners and collaborators since 1995.

Both a notebook and a reference manual, the *Participant Handbook* aims to prepare the instructors and community workers taking part in *Cirque du Monde* training sessions. Furthermore, in order to promote the professional development of a greater number of practitioners, *Cirque du Monde* has decided to make this handbook available to the social circus community, thereby allowing both individuals and organizations offering training activities to take full advantage of it. They will, however, note that using this handbook does not give them the right to provide training on behalf of the *Cirque du Soleil*.

The *Participant Handbook* is a product of the *Social Circus Trainer's Guide*, which is the educational reference document for *Cirque du Monde* Training. The handbook brings together all thematic that will be addressed during the training session. For each thematic, we have listed objectives, basic notions and related key messages. In the appendix, you will find a collection of various documents and practical grids related to social circus project planning and follow-up. Furthermore, we have taken care to leave you plenty of room for additional notes, so that you can summarize what you have learned during the training session in your own words.

Have a great training session!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Production coordinator: David Simard

Production assistant: Cláudia Marisa Ribeiro

Content approval: Emmanuel Bochud, Lino de Giovanni, Hélène Brunet

Contributors: Michel Lafortune, Elisa Montaruli, Normande Hébert, Lino de Giovanni, Stéphane Batigne, Hélène Brunet,

Annie Bouchard, Lorenzo Zanetti, Dirce Morelli, Emmanuel Bochud, David Simard, Andréa Seminario, Jan-Rok Achard, Daniel Turcotte,

Jocelyn Lindsay, Christian Barrette, Édith Gaudet, Denyse Lemay, Richard Prigent

Linguistic coordinator for English version: Cláudia Marisa Ribeiro

Translation from French to English: Adriana Palanca

Linguistic revision and proofreading of English version: Alexis Diamond

Artistic Direction: Pierre Desmarais

Graphic Design: Maria Masella

Editing and layout: Dominique Picard

Illustrations: Gabriel Benjamin Pérez Robles (a.k.a. "Gabo")

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SOCIAL CIRCUS TRAINING

The purpose of *Cirque du Monde Training* is to prepare circus instructors and community workers for conducting social circus workshops with at-risk people. The training also seeks to help them better understand the overall context of social circus intervention. It also aims to develop the skills needed to intervene appropriately with partners in a varied and multicultural context.

GENERAL TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- Develop strong personal and professional ethics;
- Introduce the fundamentals of an innovative and participative teaching method;
- Develop a community-based learning environment;
- Turn art into a personal development tool.

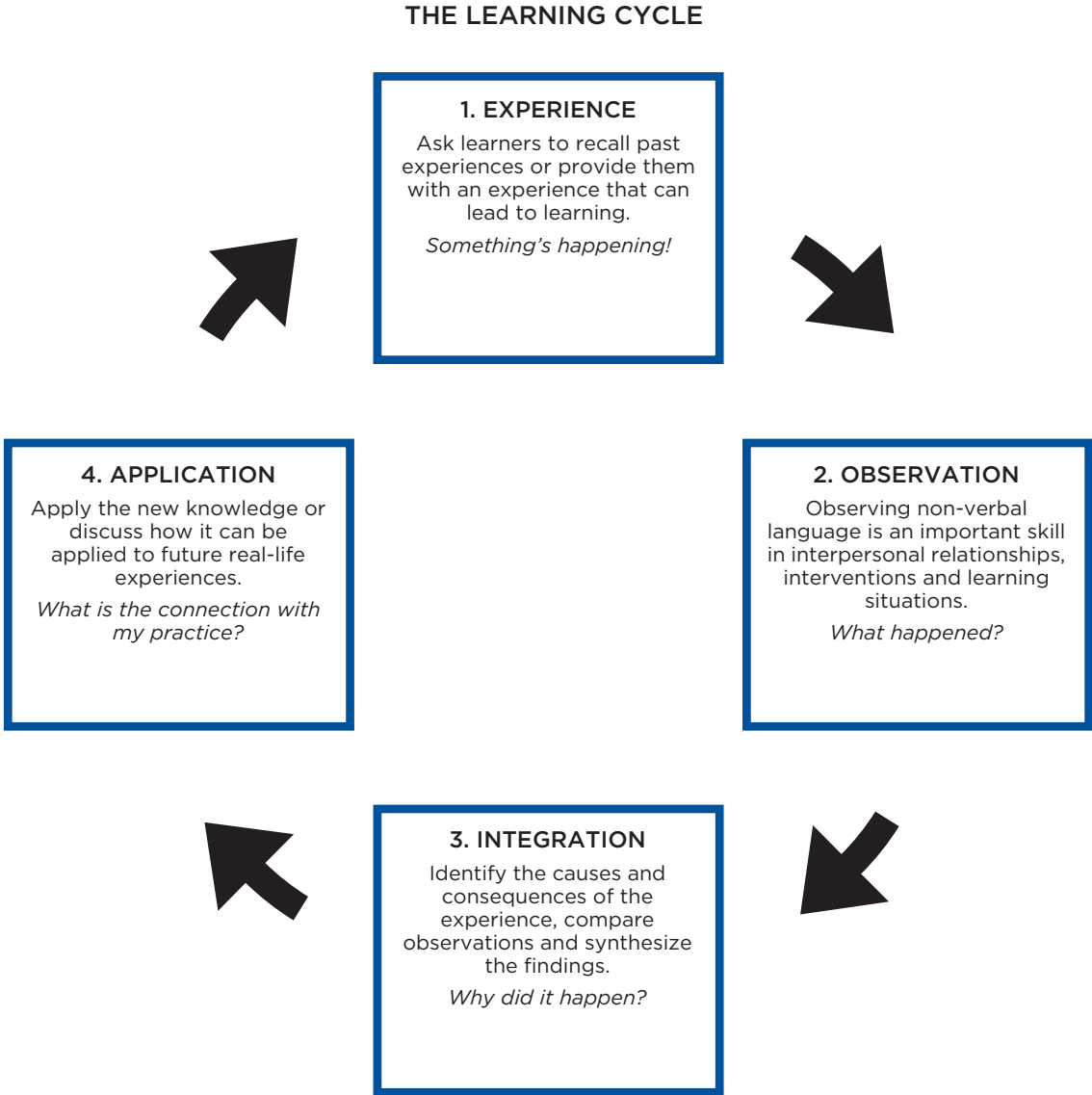
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THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

In this text, we focus on the four stages of the experiential learning cycle: experience, observation, integration and application. Each stage reflects the different ways in which individuals learn. For example, some need to feel what they're learning - to be touched emotionally - some prefer to observe, reflect, analyze and question, while still others learn through action. By applying all four stages of the model, all types of learners can find meaning.

The activities proposed during this training are arranged according to the four stages of the experiential learning cycle.



SOCIAL CIRCUS

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Adopt the notion of social circus.**
- 2. Recognize the principles and objectives that define social circus.**
- 3. Understand how social circus is a type of social intervention.**

We were at the annual meeting of Cirque du Monde in Baie-Saint-Paul in 2009. It was one o'clock in the morning when I started talking with the youth about the great day we had just spent together. One of them asked me to read a poem that he had written during the day. It went: "Circus has influenced me and changed my life. It's helped me to learn new techniques and discover my strengths, my potential. I want to do circus all my life – I want to live it. It's given me the desire to build new dreams." I have had the privilege of hearing similar comments in countries all over the world, of watching youth explore their strengths and find inspiration. Whenever I hear these testimonials, I more fully understand how this experience can become a powerful catalyst for personal and social change. All across the globe, there are young people stepping on stage and choosing to build their futures. For these young people, social circus is a tremendous springboard.

Lino De Giovanni, Social Circus Training Manager
Cirque du Soleil, Montreal





SOCIAL CIRCUS DEFINITION

Social circus is an innovative social intervention approach based on the circus arts. It targets various at-risk groups living in precarious personal and social situations, including street or detained youth and women survivors of violence.

In this approach, the primary goal is not to learn the circus arts, but rather to assist with participants' personal and social development by nurturing their self-esteem and trust in others, as well as by helping them to acquire social skills, become active citizens, express their creativity and realize their potential.

Social circus is a powerful catalyst for creating social change because it helps marginalized individuals assume their place as citizens within a community and enrich that community with their talents.



SOCIAL CIRCUS PRINCIPLES

Creation
Bubble
Conflict management
Mutual agreement
Refuge
Freedom
Greeting
Physical security
Encounter
Belonging
Experimentation
Group
Respect
Ritual
Empowerment
Ethics
Magic
Personal development
Craziness
Value
Risk-taking
Play
Without discrimination
Code of conduct
Social support
Socializing
Emotional security
Free expression
Mutual assistance

The safe and fun space



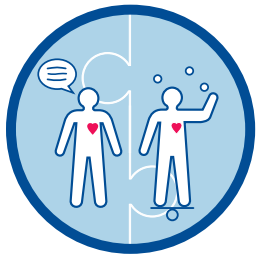
Changing perceptions
Communication
Bridge
Empowerment
Family
Citizenship
Anchoring
Relations
Awareness
Reconnecting
Resources
Networking
Recognition
Complexity
Dialogue
Trust
Social involvement
Intergenerational
Belonging
Involvement
Intercultural
Show
Mutual assistance

Links with the community

Invention
Critical thinking
Culture
Intuition
Daring
Self-mockery
Impact
Strategy
Solution
Improvisation
Imagination
Agent of transformation
Provoking
Risks
Adaptation
Spontaneity
Shows
Freedom
Skills
Destabilizing
Exploration
Thinking outside the box
Communication
Innovation
Affirmation

Expression and creativity





Agent of transformation
 Negotiation Mutual support **Complementarity** Knowledge
 Connecting with the reality of youth Tandem Listening
Teamwork Role safety openness **Feedback**
 Reflection
Collaboration between social and circus
 Planning Communication Limits Concerting
 Trust Common goals Intervention Specialty Challenge
 Consistency Adaptation Involvement
 Common language Friendship Experience

Generating
 Ritual Appropriation Objectives
 Processes **Educational approach** End
 Start solidarity Development Solidification Growth
 Taking control
Duration over time Evolution
 Means Story Synchronization Rhythm
Progression Evaluation Limits
 Step Opportunity Planning Relation sense of belonging
 Meaningful learning Appropriate timing



Participants' knowledge
 Listening Individuality **Ethics** Complexity Self-regulation
 Inclusion Mediation Specificity **Adaptability** Coaching
 Relation strategies Voluntary participation
An approach centred on participants
 Protagonist Respect Progression Analysis Development
 Reality Group Personalization Support
 Rhythm Concerting **Process** Guidance

Multiplication of knowledge
Structure Commitment Institutionalization
Relations Openness **Complementarity** Accountability
Win-win Synergy Common goal Cooperation
Partnerships Responsibility Durability
Ethics Diversification of resources Networking
Strengths Agreement Sharing
Leadership Outreach Union



Notes 



Social circus is an innovative method of intervention based on the circus arts.

Social circus leverages the skills of circus artists and community workers.

Social circus has enormous potential to change youth and communities.

Personal and social development is the primary goal of social circus.

THE ROLES OF INSTRUCTOR AND COMMUNITY WORKER

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Pinpoint the skills, attitudes and knowledge instructors and community workers must possess.**
- 2. Understand the complementary roles of instructor and community worker.**
- 3. Recognize the limitations of these roles and the scope of intervention possible, as well as the advantages of the tandem approach.**

The circus instructors have the technical knowledge. In some cases, however, they'll ask us to take over because they don't feel properly equipped to deal with certain situations. For example, there was this young man from a youth centre participating in a workshop. He got angry with the community worker assisting him and started freaking out. He wouldn't listen to a word the instructor was saying and just lost it. Because he was having this breakdown, the instructor wasn't able to get through to him. In fact, it just made the situation worse, to the point where the instructor lost total control of the situation. The young man was in such a state, he could have torn the place apart.

We had to ask the instructor to step aside and wait for the young man to ride out the anger. Once he was a bit calmer, I could step in – since I wasn't involved in the confrontation – and try to calm him down further.

Sylvain Demers, *Cirque du Monde* Coordinator
Centre résidentiel et communautaire Jacques-Cartier, Quebec





THE COMMUNITY WORKER'S ROLES

As a general rule, the community worker plays the part of liaison between the social circus project and the participants. Employed by the local organization, the community worker often has intimate knowledge of the living environment of participants and, in some cases, has followed the course of their lives and even shared some of their difficulties.

The community worker's roots in the living environment of participants give him opportunities to capture and maintain their interest in a social circus project. He can also be a great help in building a powerful bond of trust.

The community worker's first role consists in preparing the circus session: recruiting participants, finding the location, planning the workshops. During the workshops, his main responsibility is to develop bonds of trust with the participants, an indispensable condition for the effectiveness of the social circus approach. In fact, the quality of these relationships is at the root of any progress. Only where there is a strong and lasting bond of trust between the community worker and the participants can the circus lessons become life lessons.

For extra information about the community worker's roles, we invite you to refer to *Community Worker's Guide: When Circus Lessons Become Life Lessons*, pp. 34-39.

COMMUNITY WORKER'S DEFINITION

Social intervention expert who generally comes from the local organization or community that houses the project and whose main role is to work with the community participants, whom he assists in their personal and social development during social circus workshops.



THE SOCIAL CIRCUS INSTRUCTOR'S ROLES

Social circus instructors are asked to teach circus techniques as part of an educational program, but they are also called upon to help youth in their overall development by acting as important role models for that growth process. Teaching the circus arts is basically a pretext for building a trusting relationship with at-risk youth and giving them the resources they need to grow.

SOCIAL CIRCUS INSTRUCTOR'S DEFINITION

Circus artist whose main role is to teach various circus disciplines to social circus workshop participants.

In order to understand at-risk youth and the complexities of their milieus, instructors must have strong social awareness, developed educational skills and a spirit of openness. Instructors must also have realistic expectations about what participants can learn and put the focus on effort instead of results.

The duties and responsibilities of the instructor are determined by the work mandate. This mandate is defined by how far advanced the intervention program is, as well as the circumstances and development of the youth participating in the circus workshop.

DEFINING THE INSTRUCTOR'S MANDATE

The mandate issued by the hiring organization outlines the responsibilities and determines the social circus instructor's field of activity. It must be clearly understood by the instructor and employer, as well as by the local community and other workers in the field (organization coordinator, assistant instructor, community worker, etc.). The clearer the mandate and the more realistic the expectations, the easier it will be to achieve the objectives.

The instructor's mandate will vary according to certain factors:

- Instructor status (coordinator, assistant, intern, etc.)
- Individual experience and qualifications
- How far advanced the program is at the time
- The length of the work mandate
- The needs and expectations expressed by the community and the program's partner organizations

THE INSTRUCTOR'S OBJECTIVES

As part of the work, the social circus instructor must be able to do the following:

- Adapt to the socio-economic and cultural realities, as well as the overall skills of participants.
- Take into consideration the cultural codes, lifestyles and unique customs of the community in which the intervention is taking place.
- Quickly find available resources to ease the process of producing these workshops.
- Respect the rules and vision of the partner organization.
- Encourage other individuals in the community (family, friends, members of the partner organization) to participate and support the youth's involvement.

THE INSTRUCTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the social circus instructor will vary depending on the mandate given and must be carried out with the partner community. Responsibilities include the following:

- Organizing and planning circus workshops
- Facilitating circus workshops appropriate to the needs and proficiency of the participants: introducing the circus arts, refining techniques, introducing artistic elements (acting, characters, etc.), preparing a public performance
- Setting up and maintaining a physically and emotionally safe environment for the workshops
- Handling materials and logistics
- Evaluating all activities, from preparing to running the workshops and briefing the relief team

THE INSTRUCTOR'S ROLES

For workshop participants, the social circus instructor must do the following:

- Prepare and teach circus activities appropriate to the skills and experience of participants, as part of an educational initiative that takes their overall development into consideration.
- Listen to participants, paying special attention to their needs, stages of development and limits.
- Empower participants through learning, and provide them with a wide range of tools to keep them stimulated and actively involved in the learning process.

For community workers, the instructor must do the following:

- Develop a relation of trust and encourage teamwork in a complementary and harmonized way, in accordance with the tandem facilitation model.

For directors of the partner organization, the instructor must:

- Gear the program's general intervention toward the local community eventually taking charge.

Lastly, the instructor may also play a role in the community. As such, the instructor must do the following:

- Contribute to changing the community's perception of at-risk youth by encouraging involvement in circus activities or public performances.

THE INSTRUCTOR'S POSITION AND MOTIVES

Social circus instructors must oftentimes find a compromise between the mandate they've been given and their own personal ambitions. This allows the instructor to remain balanced and composed when managing tasks and dealing with the expectations of project collaborators.

The instructor's motivations can be defined using the four main values for volunteers, as generally outlined by NGOs (non-governmental organizations) for international cooperation:

- Professional challenges
- Social engagement
- Cultural challenges
- Personal experience

DEFINING THE INSTRUCTOR'S LIMITS

It is difficult to define the instructor's limits, but in a general sense, social circus instructors teach circus techniques, get involved with at-risk youth and support community workers and local partner organizations. The mandate will determine what's required and must clearly define the instructor's responsibilities and scope of action, as well as the position to be assumed by the instructor, employer and community partners.

THE ATTITUDES TO ADOPT

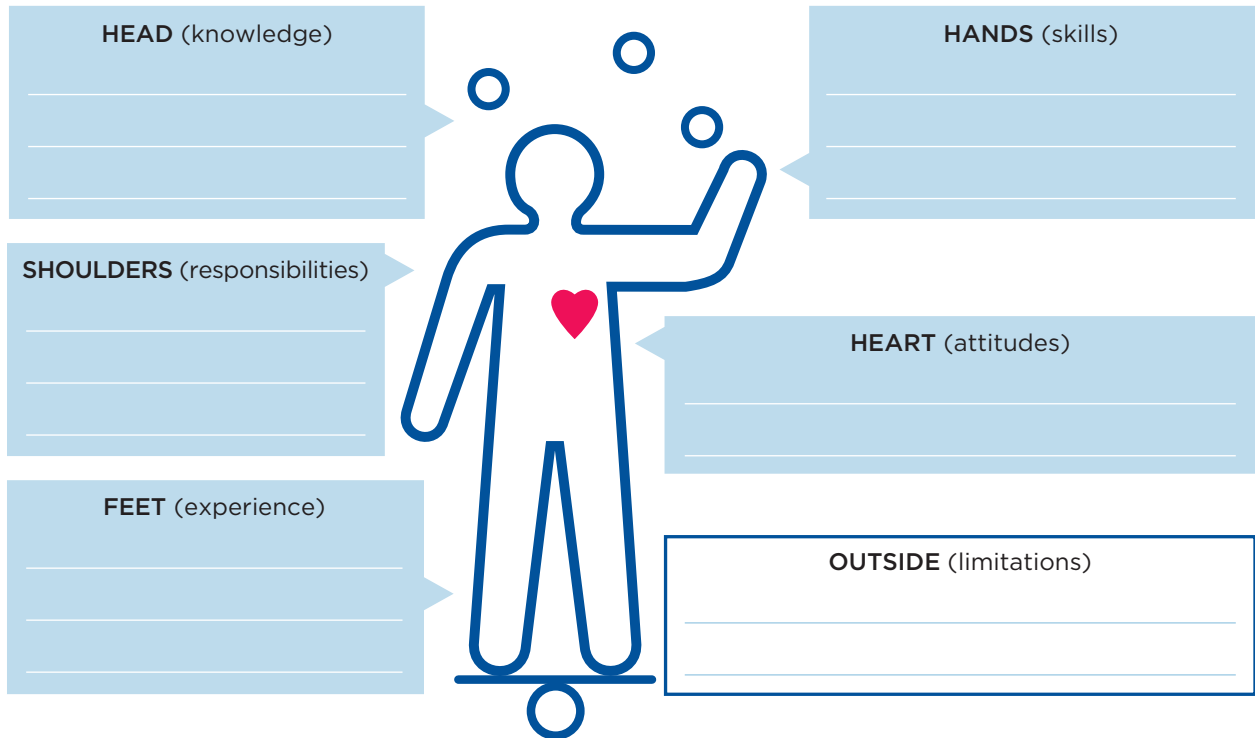
The arrival of a social circus instructor in a community can disrupt its usual activities and work methods. However, the introduction of new methods, interventions and tools for change can be well received if they are presented with respect and flexibility, gradually introduced so as to build consensus and framed in a spirit of mutual help and support.

It is therefore important to adopt and maintain an attitude that is open, attentive, flexible, respectful, humble and cooperative. Also, instructors must remember to be adaptable to the realities of the community and the context in which they are working. The attitude adopted will always transcend action. After the instructor has left, the circus skills taught will remain in the community, of course, but the attitude displayed by the instructor when sharing these skills will have a far more lasting effect.



INSTRUCTOR AND COMMUNITY WORKER PROFILE

CIRCUS INSTRUCTOR PROFILE



A central blue outline of a circus instructor balancing on a ball. The diagram is surrounded by six light blue boxes with white text and horizontal lines for writing. The boxes are: HEAD (knowledge) at the top left, HANDS (skills) at the top right, SHOULDERS (responsibilities) on the left side, HEART (attitudes) on the right side, FEET (experience) at the bottom left, and OUTSIDE (limitations) at the bottom right. A red heart is located in the center of the instructor's chest.

HEAD (knowledge)

HANDS (skills)

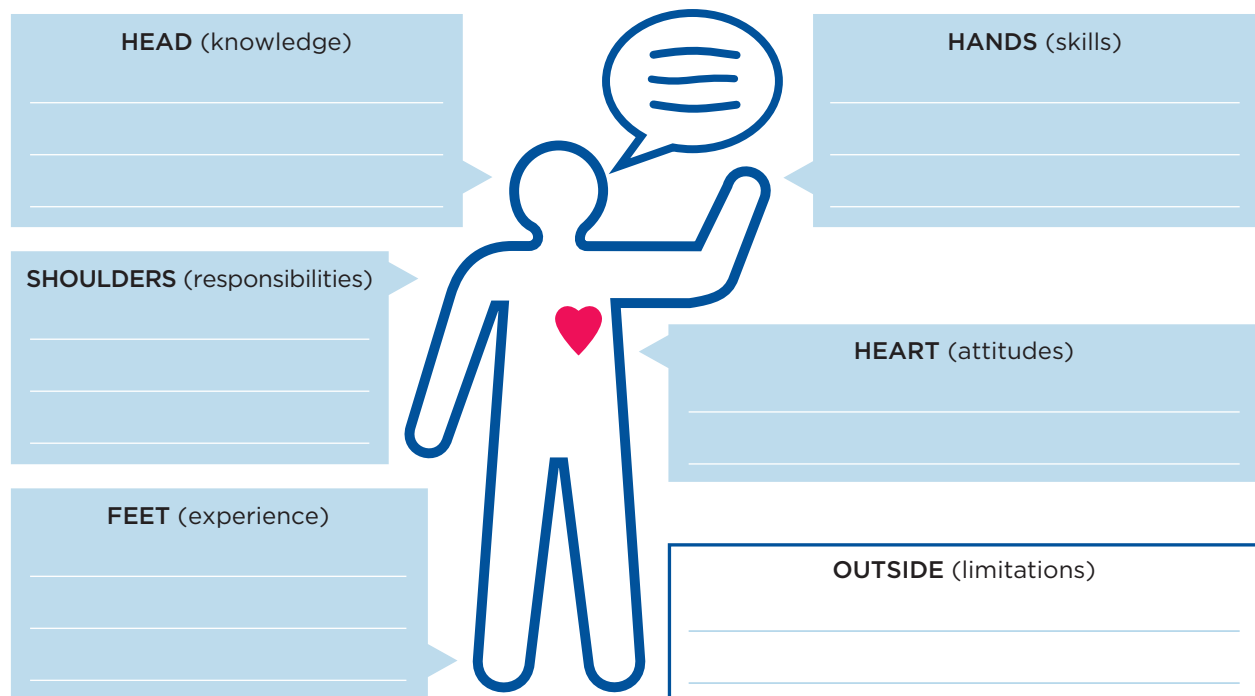
SHOULDERS (responsibilities)

HEART (attitudes)

FEET (experience)

OUTSIDE (limitations)

COMMUNITY WORKER PROFILE



A central blue outline of a community worker with a speech bubble above their head. The diagram is surrounded by six light blue boxes with white text and horizontal lines for writing. The boxes are: HEAD (knowledge) at the top left, HANDS (skills) at the top right, SHOULDERS (responsibilities) on the left side, HEART (attitudes) on the right side, FEET (experience) at the bottom left, and OUTSIDE (limitations) at the bottom right. A red heart is located in the center of the worker's chest.

HEAD (knowledge)

HANDS (skills)

SHOULDERS (responsibilities)

HEART (attitudes)

FEET (experience)

OUTSIDE (limitations)



Both the social circus instructor and community worker must be highly adaptable to the needs of participants, other members of the facilitation team, partner organizations and the community, as well as to the context.

As adult figures, the instructor and community worker are role models for participants.

Instructors and community workers must be instigators, facilitators and catalysts for social change.

It is imperative that social circus instructors and community workers are consistent and reliable in all interactions with participants.

AT-RISK YOUTH

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Comprehend how the social circus approach addresses inclusion and marginality.**
- 2. Gain a better understanding of the realities of young people locally and abroad.**
- 3. Define the concept of resilience.**

They should not be pitied, even if they are at risk. These young people must be treated as equals. There is so much help available to them. But at-risk youth must take responsibility for – and also take charge of – their situation. The day when a young person decides to make a change, to do what he or she really wants to do, there will be no limit to what can be achieved. There was one young girl who sat “paralyzed” on the bench for three years. We respected her decision.

She still joked around and talked with the community workers. Then, two years ago, when we started aerials, she fell in love with the trapeze. From that point on, everything about her changed: her lifestyle, eating habits, training, wardrobe, etc. She’s now trying to get into the circus school in Quebec City.

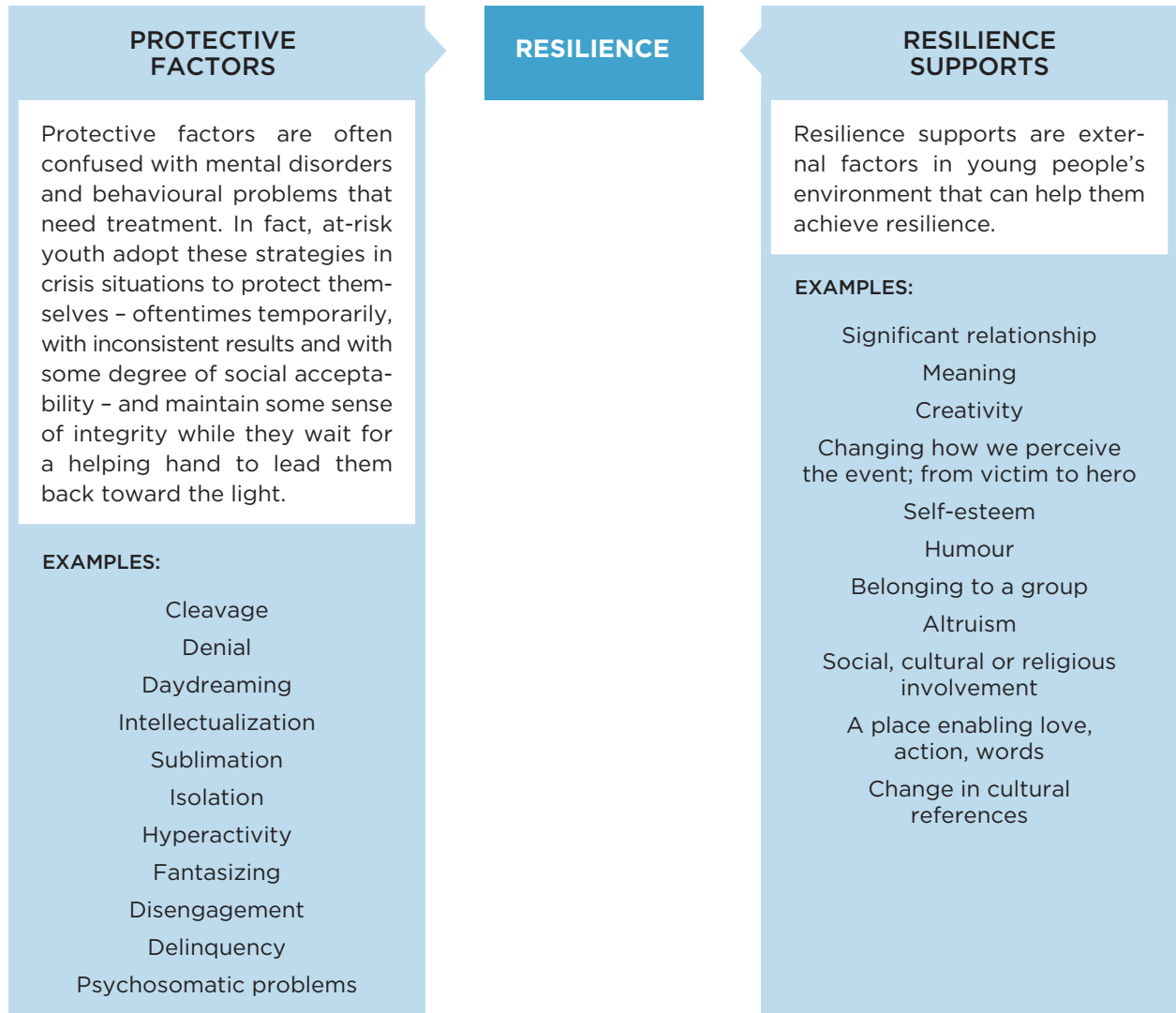
Marc Lafrenière, Social Circus Instructor
Cirque du Monde, Sherbrooke





RESILIENCE

Resilience is a psychological process that occurs when an individual touched by trauma uses that traumatic event as a means to transform their experience and implement mechanisms that enable them not only to cope with what has happened, but also to bounce back.



RESILIENCE SUPPORTS IN SOCIAL CIRCUS WORKSHOPS

The following is an overview of possible ways to integrate resilience supports into the framework of social circus workshops.

AIMING FOR CHANGE

Since the goal is encouraging young people to change, it is best for instructors and community workers to target that change directly rather than express vague expectations. Consequently, it's important to set solid objectives rather than merely talk about good intentions.

ASSUMING THE ROLE OF INITIATOR

The role of initiator is to invite – with a benevolent spirit – young persons to explore their selfhood through a technical learning process that goes beyond the simple transfer of knowledge. It is also the initiator who uses his or her teachings to introduce youth to life and relationships with others, and to help them advance through the stages of development. Much the same role that instructors and community workers must play.

ASKING A LOT AND GIVING A LOT

Giving more is not the key to helping these children. On the contrary, we make them stronger by demanding more of them. – Boris Cyrulnik

Young people must become their own catalysts for change. As they are the ones undergoing the development process, the success of an intervention does not rely on the instructor and community worker alone. Consequently, we must demand a lot from young participants and provide them with challenges, all the while properly assessing their abilities.

CREATING A MAGICAL SPACE

Making the workshop environment a magical space helps to create a protective bubble around youth and to disconnect them from their other reality. This space is totally safe and is monitored by instructors and community workers, who help establish the ground rules for using the space. Ultimately, it is created to help participants learn a different way of relating to themselves, to others and to the world.

ESTABLISHING RITUALS

Rituals help engage participants, encourage a sense of belonging to the group and become comforting moments for youth. When they are integrated into the structure of a social circus workshop, they can also channel aggression into more acceptable and positive expression within the group. The greeting ritual is one of the most common and beneficial of rituals. It helps to immerse participants in the present moment of the workshop and to disconnect them from their outside problems – thus helping them to benefit more fully from what they're learning.

CREATING A SPACE FOR FREE EXPRESSION

Since all interior changes call for and trigger external changes, youth will need to talk about and name the new emotions arising from participation in the social circus workshops. It is thus important to provide a space where participants can express themselves and share with others. This forum could add meaning to their experience and guide them towards greater self-discovery.

FORMING A MEMBERSHIP GROUP... AND A PEER-HELPER NETWORK

It's important to ensure, from the very first moment, that a membership group is harmoniously formed. This is why everything must be done to facilitate exchange and recognition between participants. Group games facilitate the development of bonds, affinities and complementarities. A group created under such circumstances could eventually grow beyond the workshop context and become an informal network of helpful peers.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF RHYTHM

Rhythm plays an important role in workshop dynamics. Workshops should be designed like a performance, with variations, intense high points and more quiet moments, and include group activities and individual exercises, organized games and free time. This attention to rhythm helps us to avoid “dead” time, which inevitably leads to flare-ups of behavioural problems and discipline issues. It also enables us to sustain the group’s motivation and reinforce the group dynamic.

USING LAUGHTER AND HUMOUR

We use laughter and humour to create a relaxed atmosphere, defuse tense situations and laugh at ourselves. They are also tools that help us to stand back from a situation, not take things too personally and avoid getting mired in frustration. Instructors and community workers must make space for laughter in every social circus workshop – even if it's just through a clown game – all the while making sure that participants don't feel ridiculed by their peers.



REALITY OF YOUTH AROUND THE WORLD - SOME STATISTICS

EDUCATION AND LITERACY

- 11% of youth 17-24 are illiterate. In sub-Saharan Africa, this statistic rises to 28.8%.
- In 2008, 796 million adults worldwide (15+ years old) reported not being able to read and write and two-thirds of them (64%) were women.
- In other words, 39 million teenage girls are currently not enrolled in either primary or secondary education, which amounts to 26% of that age group.
- Only 1 in 3 countries had achieved gender parity in secondary education by 2005.

LABOUR MARKET

- In developing countries, one child in six works.
- The global number of child labourers stands at 215 million.
- Youth 15-24 account for an estimated 23.5% of the working poor in countries with available data.
- 27% of the population in developing regions live on less than \$1.25USD a day.
- The estimated global number of working poor (15+ years old) living on less than \$2USD a day is 942 million (i.e. 53% of the total population in developing countries).

YOUTH AND HIV

- The estimated number of young people 15-24 living with HIV globally in 2009 was 5 million.
- In 2009, 79% of new infections occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.
- In Southern Africa, adolescent women are 2 to 3 times more likely to be infected than males of the same age.

STATUS OF WOMEN

- The percentage of women 15-49 in developing countries (excluding China) who think that a husband is justified in hitting/beating his wife under certain circumstances is 49%.



Government websites and websites of international organizations are good reference points. Here are some suggested sites:

- Social indicators from the United Nations (UN):
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/socind/statistics.htm>
- Country profiles compiled by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):
http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableView/document.aspx?ReportId=198&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=
http://www.uis.unesco.org/FactSheets/Documents/Fact_Sheet_2010_Lit_EN.pdf
http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/global_education_digest_2011_en.pdf
- World Bank data, by country, topic or indicator:
<http://www.worldbank.org/>
- L'Encyclopédie de l'État du monde (in French; subscribers only):
<http://www.etatdumonde.com>
- International Labour Organization
http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/news/WCMS_165276/lang--en/index.htm
http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_126685.pdf
- Childinfo - UNICEF
http://www.childinfo.org/facts_archives.html
- Worldometers (Real Time World Statistics)
<http://www.worldometers.info>

Notes 

GROUP PROFILE

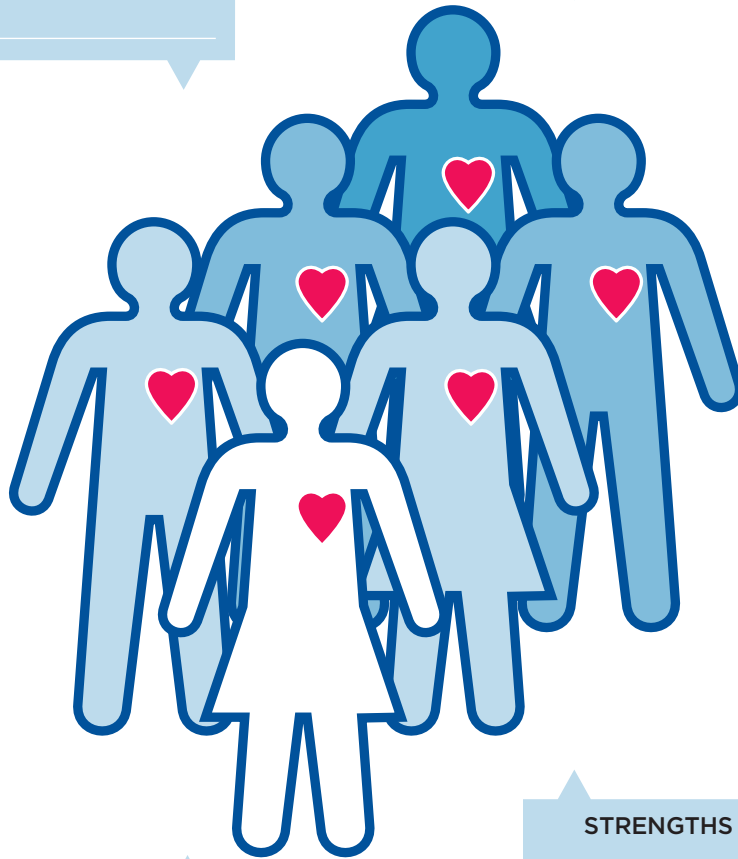
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Average age:

Ratio of men/women:

Ethnic origins:

BACKGROUND AND LIVING CIRCUMSTANCES:



SOCIAL PROBLEMS:

STRENGTHS AND QUALITIES:



The objective of social circus is not reintegration at any cost. On the contrary, it's about allowing the marginality of youth to enrich the social fabric.

The life experiences of at-risk youth can be used as the foundations for change and serve as catalysts, enabling youth to rebound and become creators of their own lives.

Each young person has his or her own history: instructors and community workers can embrace this truth by being attentive to each young person in the group.

The social circus workshop offers a fun and accepting environment that encourages young people to express and create and allows them to feel safe.

ETHICS

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Recognize the importance of having a common code of ethics.**
- 2. Use a frame of reference for all interventions.**
- 3. Understand the scope and limits of their role.**
- 4. Adapt the application of and respect for the code of ethics to their particular set of circumstances.**

In Montreal, we worked with one community worker who happened to be punk. She had a fantastic relationship with the kids, mostly because they all listened to the same kind of music. One day, she approached me with a problem. The punk scene is very small in Montreal, to the point that on a Friday or Saturday night, she often found herself in the same bars or concert venues as some of our young participants. She wanted to party – to dance, drink and indulge – but the youth that she worked with during the workshops were also there. She came to me with an ethical question about this very situation: “When I’m at Foufounes Électriques and I get a little too drunk, I have to leave because I don’t want to behave badly in front of the participants.” What she finally did – and I thought it was a great idea – was to use this situation to open a dialogue with youth about drinking and taking drugs.

Emmanuel Bochud, Social Circus Liaison Officer
Cirque du Monde, Montreal





THE DEFINITION OF ETHICS

“Ethics” comprises a collection of moral principles that help individuals know how to react in certain situations, and to do so in a way that respects the self and others.

Current notions of “ethics” and “morality” are often used interchangeably, but there is a slight difference between the two. Unlike morality, ethics does not claim to be universal and timeless; rather, its meaning changes according to time and place, and is adapted to the unique customs and rules of each human community. Seen this way, ethics never puts forth a pre-packaged response. Instead, each situation calls for its own solution.

In general, ethics asks us to answer the question: “What is the best action?”

DEFINING A CODE OF ETHICS

A code of ethics is a collection of principles, rules and values that guide an organization. Its goal is to provide a common frame of reference for persons working within the same organization, regardless of their location or context.



CODE OF ETHICS FOR SOCIAL CIRCUS INSTRUCTORS – CIRQUE DU SOLEIL¹

PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The objective of any code of ethics is to provide a common frame of reference. This code sets guidelines for those assuming the role of social circus instructor. It guides their conduct during training practice and also indicates proper behaviour for the cultural context in which they'll be working.

Social circus instructors work with at-risk youth who have often been betrayed and hurt in the past. As a result, these young people place an enormous amount of faith in the efforts they make and seek to develop trust-based relationships with their instructors.

Consequently, the instructor-youth relationship goes beyond the mere teaching of circus skills. These interactions must be infused with compassionate sensitivity and obey certain guidelines in order to prevent any instance of abuse or neglect, or any awkward situation that could negatively impact young participants or the social circus program.

Instructors are not required to be psychologists, social workers or street workers. Their involvement, however, does entail certain responsibilities and tasks that will keep their interventions grounded in the utmost respect for the young people, colleagues and partners participating in the program.

Instructors must be aware that their attitude and behaviour will serve as models for young participants, and that this aspect of the relationship is just as meaningful as the skills that will be taught.

In this spirit, this text outlines the principles and actions that should guide the attitudes and behaviours of social circus instructors during the circus workshops and, in certain circumstances, outside the workshops as well.

These principles and standards of conduct are what instructors must strive to achieve as they carry out their duties according to the highest performance criteria.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

This code of ethics for social circus instructors grew out of existing codes developed by various sports and professional associations with a social and educational bent. It is in keeping with the definition of social circus instructor; in other words, it integrates the artistic, social and sports aspects into one single training approach.

The code is founded on the following key principles:

- 1. Competence**
- 2. Integrity**
- 3. Personal responsibility**
- 4. Dignity and respect for the culture**
- 5. Social responsibility**
- 6. Physical and emotional safety**
- 7. Teamwork**
- 8. Relationship with employer**

¹ The Code of Ethics for Social Circus Instructors was adopted by Cirque du Soleil in 2001 to provide a common reference for instructors working within partner organizations of Cirque du Monde.

The statement of each of these principles is followed by a definition and list of standards of conduct describing how the principle applies to the instructor's actions. These standards of conduct are an important aspect of each principle.

1. Competence

Instructors will teach techniques that they have mastered or are capable of teaching, according to recognized standards, in a safe manner. Furthermore, instructors shall acknowledge and respect their limits and agree to act according to these limits, all the while seeking to improve and increase their overall abilities.

- 1.1 Instructors must have completed the basic training necessary to assume the role of social circus instructor.
- 1.2 Instructors must be aware that what they do impacts the lives of the individuals and groups with whom they work.
- 1.3 Instructors must respect the limits of their knowledge and abilities while performing their duties.
- 1.4 Instructors must refrain from working in an inadequate environment that presents excessive risks and dangers to the health of participants.
- 1.5 Instructors must provide activities that are suitable to the age, experience and abilities, as well as the physical and psychological state, of participants.
- 1.6 Instructors must train participants gradually and systematically.
- 1.7 Instructors must transform circus workshops into positive life experiences.

2. Integrity

Instructors shall be committed to maintaining integrity throughout their teaching and assisting activities, and they must do so in a sincere manner that shows respect for others. They shall not falsely represent their qualifications, experience or power, or otherwise inaccurately portray themselves so as to derive personal benefits.

- 2.1 Instructors must be aware of how their beliefs, values, needs and limits, as well as other aspects, could impact their role.
- 2.2 Instructors must clearly define their role and fulfill the requirements of that role with regards to those with whom they are working.
- 2.3 Instructors must understand that they can disagree with some of a participant's behaviours, without acting in ways that will be alienating to that individual.
- 2.4 Instructors must personally abstain from accepting any emotional, economic or sexual advantages offered to them during the course of their work, other than the remuneration they receive for fulfilling their role.
- 2.5 Instructors must not engage in any form of sexual intimacy with participants.
- 2.6 Instructors must refrain from all forms of sexual or psychological harassment.
- 2.7 Instructors must not commit any wrongful acts.
- 2.8 Instructors must acknowledge the use of any items of intellectual, artistic or other property that does not belong to them.

3. Personal responsibility

Instructors will accept responsibility for their actions and strive, to the best of their ability, to adapt their methods to the needs and potential of the individuals with whom they work.

- 3.1 Instructors must consult with their colleagues to avoid posing a danger to participants and to prevent behaviours that run counter to the instructor's code of conduct.
- 3.2 Instructors must respect the commitments they have made by ensuring that they perform their duties according to the determined schedules and objectives, and to the resources made available to them.
- 3.3 Instructors must keep their private lives strictly private, unless it is likely to compromise the instructor's practice or the workshop being run.

4. Dignity and respect for the culture

Instructors will be respectful of the fundamental rights, dignity and culture of all individuals. This means respecting the privacy, confidentiality, self-determination and autonomy of each individual.

- 4.1 Instructors must not use confidential information that could harm the workshop participants for the sake of personal gain or for the gain of others.
- 4.2 Instructors must be discreet, showing tact and good judgment when it concerns the private lives of trainees.
- 4.3 When participating in a research project, instructors must ensure that those participating in the project have wilfully and knowingly consented to do so, and that they have not been led to believe that a refusal to participate would lead to reprisal or sanctions.

5. Social responsibility

While leading circus workshops, instructors will be open and responsible to the communities in which they are working.

- 5.1 Instructors must take steps to ensure that actions planned for individuals and groups help them gain the greatest possible autonomy and independence. This excludes actions that aim to exert control or domination.
- 5.2 Instructors must promote social justice, acceptance, autonomy, self-determination and respect for all persons. They must also encourage trainees to take an active role in developing a mutual support and assistance network in their community.
- 5.3 Instructors must intervene if another instructor behaves in a way that does not conform to the code of ethics.
- 5.4 Instructors must never, under any circumstances, use their position for propaganda purposes, nor to procure – or attempt to procure – unjust or illicit benefits for themselves or for anyone else.

6. Physical and emotional safety

Instructors are responsible for physical safety on their training sites. They will ensure that training equipment is safe and properly used. They must also be ever vigilant when assisting with a risky move or ensure that said moves are attempted in the presence of a competent person who can oversee the safety of trainees.

Instructors are also expected to create an emotionally safe space where mutual respect is a given. They must establish a state of trust among the participants and ensure that all of them can find their place in the group.

- 6.1 Instructors must ensure that participants take part in activities in a secure setting.
- 6.2 Instructors must teach participants to be responsible for their own safety by making them aware of the measures they must take to protect themselves and others.
- 6.3 Instructors must encourage participants to have fun and learn in a positive environment that encourages fairness and collaboration.
- 6.4 Instructors must enforce the right degree of rigour and discipline, all the while being flexible and adaptable to different situations.

7. Teamwork

Instructors are committed to collaborate actively and voluntarily with other team members, including other instructors, community workers, partner representatives and employers.

- 7.1 Instructors must commit to work actively as a team when preparing, running and evaluating circus workshops, and to do so in an atmosphere conducive to reaching a certain degree of trust likely to generate honest, genuine exchanges.
- 7.2 If pending decisions lead to conflicts over technical, administrative or political choices, instructors must always focus on their top priorities: running a smooth workshop and helping participants in their development.

- 7.3 Instructors must promote an atmosphere of cooperation and support among workshop participants.
- 7.4 Instructors must cooperate with other partners who wish to lend additional support to the program.
- 7.5 Instructors must use discretion when resolving any disputes with colleagues. Differences of opinion must be settled in a constructive manner, with more serious conflicts dealt with through the appropriate channels.

8. Employment relationship

Instructors promise to respect their hiring conditions and account for their activities to their employer.

- 8.1 Instructors must provide their employer with any and all information likely to contribute to the smooth running of the program.

Notes 



A code of ethics is a framework that can be used to make working together easier, regardless of the participants or country. It is a common reference point, guideline and shared code of conduct.

A code of ethics enables greater consistency in every action and more stability in every intervention.

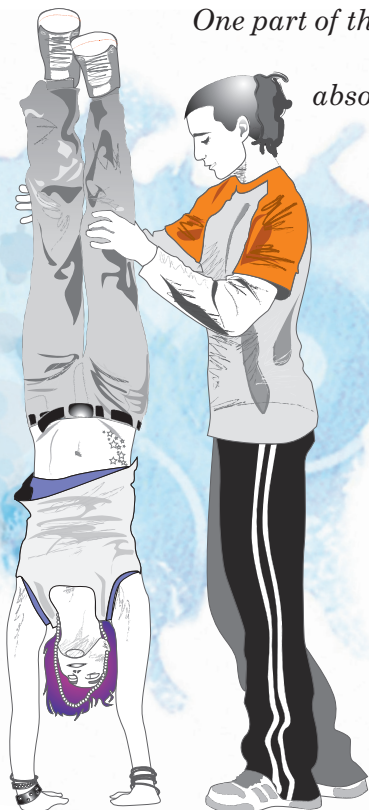
Differences in values between instructors, community workers, participants and members of the partner organization can lead to conflict. The development of a code of ethics eliminates some of the potential conflicts before they have even begun.

SAFETY

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Recognize the importance of establishing physical and emotional safety to ensure the success of workshops.**
- 2. Develop an abiding concern for safety.**
- 3. Learn ways to implement a safe environment conducive to circus workshops.**



One part of the program has us take our equipment out to the streets. One day, we arrived in the park and one young man absolutely wanted to use the stilts. As he had knocked back about ten beers and was completely drunk, we were insistent: “No, you can’t do that. You can juggle, but no stilts.” The next time, he was waiting for us; however, he had stayed sober, so that he could use the stilts. From that day on, each time we went out, he would make sure not to have any alcohol. It became a way for him to manage his alcohol consumption.

Karine Lavoie, Social Circus Instructor
Cirque du Monde, Montreal



SAFETY IN SOCIAL CIRCUS WORKSHOPS

With regards to safety, the responsibilities of the facilitation team address the following four points:

1. PREMISES
2. EQUIPMENT
3. PARTICIPANTS
4. INSTRUCTORS AND COMMUNITY WORKERS

1. PREMISES

The instructor and community worker must take care to create a working environment that is **pleasant, neat and safe**. Although they must be vigilant at all times to secure the environment, both the instructor and community worker must also **set aside specific periods of time for inspecting the premises**. When visiting a workshop site for the first time, they should walk around to familiarize themselves with the premises and verify certain key elements. The team must check, among other things, the safety exits, first-aid kit, fire extinguisher and location of a telephone in case of emergency, and make sure that they have the contact information of the person in charge of the premises. Furthermore, they must **check for the presence of objects that could cause injury** and remove them from the area. Lastly, the facilitation team must pay particular attention to the quality of the lighting and ventilation.

Should the workshop take place in an open area, the instructor and community worker should locate a sheltered area to use in case of rain or a shady area if it gets too hot. They should also inspect the terrain for the presence of dangerous objects (gravel, sharp objects, sand, etc.). However, whether the workshops happen inside or outside, instructors and community workers must always adapt workshop activities to the actual site where the workshop will take place.

A **quick evaluation of the premises** should also be conducted **before each workshop**. To help with this, we strongly recommend that organizations and members of the tandem facilitation team use *Checklist for ensuring safety during social circus workshops*, a grid that lists all the elements that must be verified before each workshop. This checklist, which has been provided in the following pages, catalogues the most common inspection points and includes a follow-up tool explaining recommended actions for situations when safety measures are not being respected.

2. EQUIPMENT

Instructors are responsible for the physical safety of participants and must ensure the safe use and maintenance of equipment. They must therefore **check all circus equipment or materials before allowing use**. The frequency and degree of use evidently determines how often the equipment must be checked. For example, stilts used but once a month can be quickly checked before each use, whereas stilts used every day by more than one participant should be rigorously examined before each workshop.

Instructors must also regularly make the rounds to verify, maintain and clean all equipment. During the rounds, instructors must confirm that equipment has been installed or mounted according to standard. If the instructor does not feel competent enough to evaluate the quality of the equipment installed, he or she must then ask a specialist. If this is not possible, the equipment should not be used. Also, instructors should be able to **recognize signs of wear** on equipment and safeguard that equipment has not come into contact with sand, liquids or blood. If this is the case, it becomes necessary to clean the equipment before use, or even during use, to make sure that no one slips, gets hurt or is contaminated. Finally, instructors must make sure that there is **enough clearance for safe use of the equipment**.

Another responsibility of the instructor is **educating participants about how to use the equipment** and encouraging them to **adopt preventive measures**. In doing so, instructors must transmit clear messages about how to move, install, use and store the equipment.

3. PARTICIPANTS

Instructors and community workers will be asked to work with a wide variety of participants. The age of participants, as well as their physical condition and abilities, degree of autonomy, experience and ability to work as a group will impact how activities are planned and **determine the level of safety to implement**. The facilitation team must be vigilant the day of the workshop to **make certain that participants are in an appropriate state** to take part in scheduled activities. If some participants are showing signs of physical or psychological fatigue, or are demonstrating signs of diminished capacities, the instructor and community worker must re-evaluate what they've planned and adjust safety levels accordingly. Before jumping into the activities, the facilitation team must also ensure that **participants have been adequately warmed up** and that they are wearing clothing that is appropriate for the planned activities.

Furthermore, from the very start, instructors and community workers should **make participants aware of the importance of safety** during social circus workshops. The facilitation team must help participants to understand the risks of practising the circus arts and teach them the safe behaviours to adopt. Teaching safety also involves helping participants to respect their limits and **to be mindful of others**. Over time, through ongoing sensitization, the instructor and community worker can **foster a spirit of mutual aid among participants**, all the while making them increasingly responsible for their own safety.

4. INSTRUCTOR AND COMMUNITY WORKER

While the instructor ensures the physical safety of participants, the community worker plays a major role when it comes to ensuring emotional safety. When faced with complex situations, the facilitation team will be called upon to mediate. Handling difficult situations is necessary and delicate work. It is important to be **strictly intolerant of psychological abuse** such as harassment, intimidation and bullying, and to intervene immediately. However, intervention goes beyond reacting to difficult situations as they arise. Throughout the session, instructors and community must focus their energies on **creating a safe and reassuring environment** – a safe space or bubble – where participants can feel that their physical and emotional integrity is always being respected.

It is also recommended that instructors and community workers be **well prepared to deal with all safety issues**. They should have a list containing all contact information for the parents or guardians of each participant and, if possible, health information about each participant. Naturally, the facilitation team understands that this information must be kept confidential. It is also highly recommended that the facilitation team be notified about the transmission of blood-borne diseases and understand what procedures have been established by the partner organization to deal with emergency situations. Remember that being well informed does not necessarily teach instructors how to intervene efficiently should the situation arise. For instructors to learn how to **react appropriately in emergency situations**, adequate training with simulation and practice is also required. Ideally, all members of a facilitation team should have completed full first-aid training.

CHECKLIST FOR ENSURING SAFETY DURING SOCIAL CIRCUS WORKSHOPS

SAFETY ELEMENTS TO VERIFY:	COMPLIANCE? YES/NO	IF NO, WHAT ACTION(S) MUST BE TAKEN:	ACTION(S) TAKEN	DATE
PREMISES				
Training area is well delineated and free of debris				
Adequate lighting and ventilation is provided				
Drinkable water is available				
Emergency exits are clearly marked				
A first-aid kit and fire extinguisher are on hand				
A telephone and an emergency phone number, as well as contact information for the person in charge of the premises, are available				
EQUIPMENT				
Equipment is appropriate and in good condition, and does not present a risk of injury for participants				
Equipment not being used is properly stored, so as not to inconvenience participants				
Equipment is set-up in full compliance with norms and standards				
Equipment is clean and disinfected				
There is sufficient clearance for safe use of the equipment				
Participants have received clear instructions on how to use equipment				
Instructions are given for the set up and uninstall of moveable equipment, which will be stored after each workshop				
PARTICIPANTS				
Activities have been planned according to the mental and physical state of participants				
Participants are willing and do not have diminished capacities				
Participants are able to adequately warm-up their bodies for the activity				
Clothing worn by participants is appropriate				
Participants are made aware of the potential dangers of practising the circus arts, as well as the safe behaviours they must adopt				
INSTRUCTORS AND COMMUNITY WORKERS				
Instructors/community workers ensure the emotional safety of participants and that they are not subjected to intimidation or harassment				
Instructors/community workers have a list with the names and contact information for each participant's parent or guardian				
Instructors/community workers know basic information about participants and their general health, all the while respecting their privacy				
Instructors/community workers are informed of the procedure to follow in order to prevent the transmission of HIV during social circus workshops				
Instructors/community workers receive clear instructions on procedures to follow in case of an emergency and their respective responsibilities at that time				
At least one member of the facilitation team has first-aid training				



The physical and emotional safety of participants is the top priority.

Safety must become a permanent concern shared by all.

Prevention and education are key to ensuring safe practices.

The extent of the safety measures required will vary according to the context, so it's important to re-evaluate your practices frequently.

When it's a question of safety, it's important to be aware of one's professional limits.

CREATIVITY

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Learn the role and importance of creativity in social circus both for participants as well as instructors and community workers.**
- 2. Apply the different steps of the creative process to the social circus context.**
- 3. Understand the benefits of and issues surrounding the performance in the social circus model.**

The theme for this year's performance was "The Giants." There was a parade in Baie-Saint-Paul, in which all the Cirque du Monde groups participated. Here in Manawan, we made traditional Aboriginal costumes for our giants. It was our way of combining the theme with our native traditions. Parents worked alongside their children. It was really beautiful to watch. The integration of traditional elements was a source of inspiration for the youth, because it's how they identify themselves. They can just as easily listen to Samian and traditional music as they can to hip hop.

Alice Echaquan,
Special Education Technician
Cirque du Monde, Manawan





CREATIVE EDUCATION

There are three reasons why creativity is at the heart of the social circus approach. First, for workshop participants, it acts as a powerful catalyst for both personal and social development. Second, creativity also stimulates the learning process for participants, as well as the facilitation team. Lastly, it is essential to the process of creating and producing the end-of-session performance, which must be prepared and presented by the group.

DEFINITION OF CREATIVITY

The capacity of an individual or a group of individuals to imagine or create a unique concept, a new object, an unexplored world or even solve a difficult problem with an innovative solution.

CREATIVITY AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

- ▶ Creativity enables to explore new horizons, produce new ideas and discover new paths of inquiry.
- ▶ Creativity enables to knock down barriers, deconstruct and rebuild what is considered standard or normal and find original solutions to old problems.
- ▶ Creativity enables to find affinities between seemingly random ideas, establish new relationships and contemplate new perspectives.
- ▶ Creativity contributes to personal development and growth.



CREATIVITY: A PROCESS

The creative process generally follows four stages:

1. PREPARATION

This first stage consists of gathering feelings, ideas, emotions and thoughts, without trying to put them into any order. It's a period of exploration in which one feels the desire for change.

2. INCUBATION

At this stage, the cognitive data collected begins to become more organized at the subconscious level. New ideas begin to emerge and are explored, but do not yet coalesce into a satisfying form.

3. INSPIRATION

Finally, an idea or solution is discovered! Thoughts flow and come together, becoming more organized and forming the foundations of the larger work.

4. CONFIRMATION

The idea or solution is at long last brought to life. The relevance and quality of the work is confirmed by the feedback provided by others and the public.

THE ROLE OF PERFORMANCE IN SOCIAL CIRCUS

- ▶ Depending on how far the group has evolved, the performance can take the form of a presentation, a demonstration, a contribution or be part of another public event like a parade, popular festival or open house.
- ▶ The performance is an opportunity to celebrate the end of the session and mark the achievement of a common goal.
- ▶ The performance a good opportunity to establish links with the community, family members and peers, so that they too become more aware of each participant's potential and perhaps change how they perceive these youth.
- ▶ The preparations and performance itself are an opportunity for participants to learn the importance of discipline and working together.
- ▶ The main goal of the performance is not a high-level technical performance; rather, it's to mark the end result of a long process and to do so with a prevailing spirit of fun.
- ▶ All participants, no matter what their skills and talents, have a part to play in the performance.
- ▶ After the performance, some time should be set aside to go back over the experience and talk about what has been learned and the emotions experienced. This period of exchange and discussion should also provide a chance to talk about the future: how can the participants integrate the life lessons drawn from their training into their daily lives? In other words, how can they transform the circus lessons into life lessons?

Notes 

CREATIVE FACILITATORS

The social circus approach is, by its very nature, creative because in practicing the circus arts, participants are being pushed beyond traditional models of social intervention. But it goes beyond that as well. Instructors and community workers must **make room for creativity** in their activities and interventions, not only because it fosters participation and integration of all group members, but also because it stimulates the artistic expression of participants.

Creativity **prevents us from falling into a routine**. The practice of “copy-paste”, which is the repetition of activities from one workshop to the next, can quickly become boring for both participants and the facilitation team. Creativity enables instructor and community workers to **take leaps of faith and step out of a comfort zone**. In many ways, the team must not only teach creativity – they must embody it as well.

Notes 



Creativity allows individuals to create a new world and explore new horizons.

Encouraging self-expression in all its forms stimulates a creative environment.

The instructor and community worker use creativity in their facilitation approach to ensure interaction between all participants.

The performance is not a goal in itself, but a rite of passage that permits individuals to meet a challenge and to perform to and even exceed expectations.

COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Understand the three components of communication: verbal, paraverbal and non-verbal.**
- 2. Know communication techniques to ensure the proper transmission of information.**
- 3. Understand notions allowing to give constructive feedback.**
- 4. Apply communication skills in terms of expression and mostly the ability to listen.**

I was working with a translator in Mongolia. At the beginning, I spoke the same way I would speak in North America, but I realized that the translator was having great difficulty translating my words. At one point, we sat down together and he said to me, "You must speak in very short sentences; you must get directly to the point." He explained that syntax in the Mongolian language is very different to that of English. If I remember correctly, sentences begin with the verb, followed by the subject and the complement. So I had to adapt, finding a way to state the point as briefly as possible and just speak less. I learned a huge lesson because of this experience. When I returned to Canada, I continued to use this method of communication with youth, even in French.

Emmanuel Bochud, Social Circus Trainer
Cirque du Soleil, Montreal



TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

1. Prepare what to say

2. Know how to listen

3. Paraphrase

4. Adapt the words to the audience

5. Define formal and informal spaces for communication

6. Know how to capture and keep attention



Developing good communication skills helps to capture and keep the room's attention.

Taking the time necessary to discuss and listen attentively helps to encourage good communication.

Adapting your language to the group and its milieu is essential.

Using many types of communication (visual, auditory, gestural) allows you to reach different types of learners.

Paraphrasing is an effective way to ensure a common and shared understanding.

Learning how to give and receive feedback is a communication skill that promotes learning and harmonious relationships.

TEAMWORK

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Understand how a team works.**
- 2. Recognize the essential elements of successful teamwork.**
- 3. Encourage participants to engage in teamwork.**
- 4. Recognize the advantages and challenges of teamwork.**

We will never truly be free to grow with the other until we recognize the other as an extension of ourselves... As a trainer, I've had the privilege of working with and learning from trainers both here and abroad. I sincerely believe that our observations and exchanges allow us to transform our visions, our thoughts, and that that's how we grow. During a training session in Brazil, we were scheduled to work with a Brazilian trainer. When we arrived, we already had a plan for the week, but when we spoke to the trainer, we understood that he too had developed a plan based on his reality. It totally destabilized us. We had a long meeting, during which time we planned the next day. We realized that, in order to build something together, we needed to allot time for constructing a training session to assemble all of our strengths and contributions. We were there to give training, but the teamwork process was training for us too.

Lino De Giovanni, Social Circus Trainer
Cirque du Soleil, Montreal





SEVEN TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR TEAM HEALTHY AND FIT

For social circus instructors and community workers, determining the issues that impact teamwork is essential. Working as a team can be a very enriching experience on both a personal and interpersonal level. From this collective effort comes the potential to obtain higher quality results than individual work could ever generate. To ensure the best possible results from a team effort, the instructor and community worker must take the following seven elements into account:

DEFINITION OF “TEAM”

A team is a group of individuals with assigned roles working together to achieve a common goal in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation. A team is therefore focused on both the task at hand and the group itself.

1. Limit the numbers

2. Develop a sense of belonging

3. Support individual commitment

4. Maintain unity

5. Target a common goal



A strong team focuses on both the task and the group.

The definition and pursuit of a common goal help rally the talents and efforts of all team members.

Teamwork requires organization and a huge capacity to adapt.

EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Recognize the approaches that influence the pedagogy behind social circus.**
- 2. Understand the links between the principles of social circus and its educational approach.**
- 3. Define the strengths and challenges of a good educator.**
- 4. Recognize the conditions that create an environment that is conducive to learning.**

Part of the educational approach consists of creating an environment that is welcoming, reliable and unconditional, that is not menacing or upsetting, and that allows youth to take part whenever they're ready. I remember one young man who visited our Los Angeles circus workshops for two years without ever participating in the activities. His curiosity piqued, he would look around but never got involved. When he finally decided to participate, he quickly became fascinated by juggling. Today, he is one of our most advanced and dedicated participants, able to juggle five clubs and seven balls. If we had pressured him to participate or insisted too much, he would have certainly

run away. But because we stayed cool, open and aware of his presence without imposing any conditions, he was able to approach us in his own way and when he was ready. This is how we were able to reach him

Philip Solomon, Social Circus Instructor
Cirque du Monde, Los Angeles



RELATED EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

1. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

- Process by which an individual, after having a direct experience, begins a reflective process that will then lead to action.
- Experience can only lead to learning when that experience is accompanied by reflection.
- Experiential learning happens in a cycle comprising four stages: experience, observation, interpretation and application.
- All experience arises from the interaction between the individual's subjectivity (history, economic condition, emotional state) and the objective realities of their physical and social environment (the reality in which the experience is happening).

Example

2. CONTEXTUAL LEARNING

- Contextual learning proposes placing participants in real situations in order to help them transfer the knowledge they've gained into an appropriate frame of reference.
- Once an individual has learned something in a "real" and meaningful situation, the individual is then in a better position to acquire knowledge.
- Knowledge must thus be transferred back to the social and cultural context in which they were generated.

Example

3. COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

- Collaborative learning helps develop social communication and problem-solving skills by emphasizing the importance of mutual aid in the learning process.
- Teamwork and debating ideas enable participants to quickly learn the benefits of opening up to other perspectives and learning how to assert oneself while still respecting the opinions of others.
- Participants learn that there is no single easy fix for everything, and, as a result, they learn how to adapt to circumstances, groups, cultures or regions.

Example

4. STRATEGIC LEARNING

- The strategic teaching and learning approach centres on the role that mental processes play in learning.
- The educator must first take into consideration the participant's previous knowledge and relate it to the new material to facilitate the acquisition process.
- Good educators know how to show genuine interest in the lives of participants and give meaning to what they're teaching by creating associations with the cultural context.

Example

5. CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

- Critical consciousness proposes an educational model that seeks to foster decision-making abilities and social responsibility. To achieve these goals, individuals must become more aware of their culture and why it's important for each person to participate in the collective and democratic act of building culture and history.
- This approach has many facets, including the importance of establishing dialogue, which creates an egalitarian relationship between individuals and encourages communication and exchange.
- It is also crucial that learning be rooted in reality and relate to real-life experiences – that is, to concrete and common situations – and that it lead to social action.

Example

SUMMARY

Evidently, it is difficult to create a direct and exclusive link between the educational approach used in social circus and already existing approaches. It is more practical to discuss the affinities between these many approaches, all the while emphasizing the unique and innovative features of the social circus model. This approach also adds a creative and original dimension to the important work of educating at-risk individuals by using the arts – specifically the circus arts – as an important teaching tool.

There are nevertheless many commonalities with the majority of educational approaches mentioned. The instructor and community worker sharing tandem facilitation must:

- **Take the participants' previous knowledge into consideration.**
- **Tie learning into the cultural and social realities of participants whenever possible.**
- **Help participants transfer lessons learned to other parts of their lives.**
- **Encourage active participation within the group by including every member in the process.**
- **Be experts in the process (rather than masters of the material) and pay particular attention to the personal relationships nurtured with participants.**
- **Be ready to call upon various creative strategies in order to reach goals.**

These elements are touchstones that can lead to a deeper reflection on the educational approach developed for social circus. Balanced between alternative education and social intervention, and given the profile of participants and the situations in which it is used, this approach will undoubtedly face new challenges. Consequently, in order to continue evolving, the social circus approach must integrate existing knowledge, all the while being extremely creative in stimulating the search for new directions.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS¹

By Lorenzo Zanetti

Spontaneity, humour, a little theory, facilitation, free expression, interaction and mutual trust are the essential elements of the educational process. However, because of their age, participants will still need to be free and to transgress, so instructors must also establish clear ground rules and discipline. The best way to maintain discipline is to give youth the power to apply and control the rules that they themselves define. In this process, the instructor acts as a mediator, ensuring that activities are always pursued with full respect for others and with a focus on working together.

To guarantee the success of the educational process, educators must do the following:

- Know how young persons are different and never assume that they are all alike.
- Be sensitive to socio-cultural differences.
- Prepare before taking action.
- Plan activities that take the participants' varying stages of physical, psychological and intellectual development into consideration.
- Demonstrate spontaneity and participate in games with youth.
- Recognize progress that has already been made, and reinforce participants' youthful optimism.
- Be consistent in every action.
- Respect the rules set by the group.

Students need the following to have a safe starting point for learning: well-structured and well-organized activities, equipment that is reliable and properly maintained, well-defined roles and functions, and clear and consistent instructions. It is also important that students participate in the educational process. To achieve this goal, educators should ask youth to participate in activity planning and the resolution of everyday problems. Also, it's vital to praise responsible behaviour and remind students of positive moments and past successes, as this helps to raise their self-esteem and increase feelings of security. Educators must avoid situations in which they'll be forced to impose their will, as youth are very self-critical and fear ridicule. They must be respected.

For the educational process to be successful, educators must create a climate - or intimate space - promoting flexibility, good humour, warmth, reflection and affection. This encourages debate, creativity and self-esteem, which in turn inspires youth to pursue new experiences. It is also important for educators to express their feelings and remind youth frequently how much they care about and appreciate them. They must support a young person's need to feel a part of society. Educators must be particularly open and receptive.

In addition to being aware of the differences between young people in the group, educators must also understand and respect these differences. More specifically, educators must endeavour to know the living conditions and social milieu of each participant, as that information will guide their work.

Obviously, the guidelines presented here are merely general recommendations that can be used in our practice, as long as we keep in mind the different temperaments of youth. It is therefore important for educators to use their experiences with young persons to try and determine their personalities. This will help them to increase their understanding and respect differences, as well as to guide their own conduct when confronted with these differences.

¹ Excerpt from the *Actes de la première rencontre internationale portant sur la formation de l'instructeur de cirque social* (internal document, Montreal, International Network for Social Circus Training, June 25-27, 2002), pp. 45-46.



Instructors and community workers must adapt their educational approach to support the evolution of the group, which is influenced by many factors (length of project, group energy, attendance, etc.)

The educational process is more important than artistic or technical performance.

The educational approach adopted by *Cirque du Monde* is inspired by many approaches, including experiential learning.

In the context of social intervention, *Cirque du Monde* favours the instructor-community worker tandem facilitation approach.

WORKSHOP PLANNING

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Understand the planning process for social circus workshops.**
- 2. Determine what elements must be considered when planning workshops.**
- 3. Understand how to align technical and social goals, as part of the educational process.**
- 4. Recognize the advantages of working in the instructor-community worker tandem when planning workshops.**

When planning workshops, it's crucial to listen to what the community workers have to say, because they frequently interact with these youth and take care of them day after day. Generally, as instructors, we are only present at a workshop for a few hours a week. So it's often truly impossible to understand what youth are interested in during such a short period of time. We had this experience at the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center, where we struggled for weeks to come up with a plan, but couldn't find the elements to make it work. Frustrated and confused, I went to see the human resources person and asked if he had any suggestions for how to make it happen. He told me that a lot of people at the Center loved putting on makeup and doing theatre, so he suggested face painting. The following week, we held a makeup workshop. Not only was it the most successful workshop held there, but it also allowed many obstacles to be overcome. It made a profound impression on many participants and improved the atmosphere of subsequent workshops.

Philip Solomon, Social Circus Instructor
Cirque du Monde, Los Angeles





PLANNING A SOCIAL CIRCUS PROJECT

THE ADVANTAGES OF PLANNING

Tandem facilitation with a group of young persons incurs some major organizational challenges. To avoid having to improvise, meticulous workshop planning is recommended. This preparatory step helps to resolve or even eliminates the numerous issues that could come up during workshops: it also helps to transition between activities, determine the rhythm of the workshop, provide a framework for measuring learning progress and reduce the amount of discipline required. Furthermore, planning encourages the achievement of long-term goals, such as the performance. So planning in advance supports both short-term (individual workshop) and the long-term (full session) objectives.

PLANNING THE SESSION

Planning the session makes it easier to set general objectives and foresee the different stages that must be implemented in order to achieve them. This planning must therefore take place before the session starts. Before each workshop, a meeting should also be held for all facilitators to discuss goals and specific activities. During this time, the community worker and instructor must clearly define the goals of each workshop and the methods necessary for achieving these goals. This is also an opportunity to get to know one another by sharing experiences and visions, and by trading information about individual skills and methods.

PLANNING EACH WORKSHOP

Preparation for a workshop enables facilitators to determine how much time will be needed for each activity. It's also an opportunity for them to adapt the content to whatever motivates participants and to the group dynamic. Facilitators have the option of re-evaluating the relevance of their goals and interventions. The flow of the workshop must be carefully outlined, including the content and schedule, and the responsibilities of each facilitator must be clearly defined. These responsibilities not only cover working with the participants, but also related tasks, such as updating files, checking materials and locations, buying materials and so on. The definition of roles clarifies responsibilities and, in so doing, diminishes tensions, frustrations, misunderstandings and the risk of injury. Having a plan gives a sense of security to both facilitators and participants, who are reassured when they see that the instructor and community worker are on an equal footing.

PLANNING MUST BE FLEXIBLE, YET RIGOROUS

Although meticulous by nature, planning does not necessarily have to be rigid. A plan must evolve during the course of the workshop, according to the individual and collective needs of participants, as well as the relationships between them. This flexibility is key to the success of a workshop and to participants' development.

This grid is a sample plan for a session of 15 workshops, broken down into two three-hour workshops a week. Modify the grid according to the circumstances and situation in your community.

PLANNING A SOCIAL CIRCUS SESSION

GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE SESSION: For example: Create a cohesive group. – Improve relations between participants and their community. – Improve relations between girls and boys. – Boost the self-affirmation of participants. – Encourage participants to take control of their own bodies. – Raise awareness about HIV prevention. – Help participants reduce their drug or alcohol use.

WEEK	TECHNICAL GOALS <i>Circus lessons</i>	SOCIAL GOALS <i>Life lessons</i>
1	<p>BLOCK 1 – INTRODUCING CIRCUS TECHNIQUES 4 weeks</p> <p><i>Introduce circus techniques as they relate to the goal to form a group.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the physical abilities of participants. Use increasingly challenging activities, all the while being sensitive to aspects that require physical contact. 	<p>BLOCK 1 – FORMING A GROUP 4 weeks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome participants, and foster mutual support and new relationships. Evaluate the group's composition and its needs (e.g. leaders? interaction models?). Establish a code of conduct.
2		
3		
4		
5	<p>BLOCK 2 – GAINING A GREATER COMMAND OF CIRCUS TECHNIQUES 6 weeks</p> <p><i>Teach participants a greater command of circus techniques, while fostering group cohesion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a deeper look at all techniques. Intensify the use of techniques requiring greater trust (e.g. pyramid building or hand-to-hand). Emphasize creative exercises and theatrics. 	<p>BLOCK 2 – ESTABLISHING GROUP COHESION 6 weeks</p> <p><i>Continue with exercises that foster cohesion and togetherness in the group.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulate interaction during formal and informal gatherings. Feature exercises promoting personal and social growth (e.g. self-affirmation, confidence building). Help develop a certain degree of physical comfort between participants. Use the group's resources for learning and social support.
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11	<p>BLOCK 3 – CONCENTRATING ON ONE CIRCUS TECHNIQUE 3 weeks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create numbers for the performance. Rehearse and run through numbers. 	<p>BLOCK 3 – INTENSIFYING THE GROUP PROCESS 3 weeks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the development of skills that contribute to the completion of the group project: manage decision making and stress management for the performance.
12		
13		
14	BLOCK 4 – FINAL RUN-THROUGH AND PERFORMANCE	
15	<p>BLOCK 5 – REVIEWING WHAT'S BEEN LEARNED 1 workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the performance (e.g. watching a video recording). Evaluate the techniques learned. 	<p>BLOCK 5 – REVIEWING THE GROUP'S EXPERIENCE 1 workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the progress of the group and individuals. Share information for the next session or refer to other resources.

This grid is a sample plan for a three-hour workshop in the second week of a session.

PLANNING A SOCIAL CIRCUS WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP: #2	LENGTH: 3 hours	ATTENDANCE: 7 girls 14 boys
INSTRUCTOR(S): Mamoudou, Genevieve	COMMUNITY WORKER(S): Alice	OTHERS: n/a

GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE SESSION:

Change the community's perception of the participants and the participants' perception of the community.

TECHNICAL GOALS FOR THE WORKSHOP

Circus lessons

- Establish a warm-up ritual.
- Explore some of the circus arts: pyramid building, hand-to-hand, juggling.

SOCIAL GOALS FOR THE WORKSHOP

Life lessons

- Create links and encourage new relationships (group and trust games).
- Motivate the group, have fun and foster success.

SCHEDULE

APPROX. LENGTH	ACTIVITIES <i>(list all activities, including the greeting, breaks and the review/closing)</i>	ACTIVITY LEADER(S) <i>(first names)</i>	WHAT'S NEEDED FOR THE ACTIVITY <i>(materials, safety, warm-up, creating teams, discussion of themes, etc.)</i>	ACTIVITY COMPLETED?	
				YES	NO
10 min.	Greet participants	All	Be mentally prepared to begin	X	
5 min.	Introduce the workshop	Alice		X	
15 min.	Name game: Jump higher (use names to encourage them)	Mamoudou	Chalk	X	
15 min.	Game: The trio gets carried away	Genevieve	3 balls, 3 teams	X	
15 min.	Warm-up	Mamoudou, Genevieve	Gym mat	X	
20 min.	Build team spirit: Under the Rope!	Alice	3 teams, gym mat, rope	X	
10 min.	Break	All	Juice and snacks, assisting the participants and encouraging informal talk	X	
45 min.	2 alternating activities: Juggling and hand-to-hand	Mamoudou (juggling) Genevieve (hand-to-hand)	2 teams, balls, gym mat Mamoudou=responsible for timing + rotation of groups	X	
25 min.	Pyramid building	Genevieve	Mat, notebook, drawings of pyramids		X
5 min.	Putting equipment away	All		X	
10 min.	Review: Talking Club (juggling club as microphone)	Alice	1 juggling club	X	
5 min.	Closing	Mamoudou	1 strong rope, the ends knotted tightly together		X

FOLLOW-UP

GENERAL COMMENTS:

(group dynamic, challenges faced, social interventions, modifications to consider, etc.)

- Nice group dynamic, numerous bonds. When creating smaller groups, remember to separate friends and allies.
- For some, hand-to-hand exercises create a bit of discomfort, shyness. Find a more comfortable range.
- In the next workshop, allow more time for pyramid building.
- Minor intervention required when some participants made negative comments about others.
- Check in with Valentino, who left during the break.
- Jonathan and Rebecca tend to shy away from the group.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT WORKSHOP:

- Continue with juggling and hand-to-hand (progression). Introduce pyramids and rola bola.
- Continue to encourage ties between participants. Make a particular effort to integrate Jonathan and Rebecca.



The technical goals of circus are set in accordance with the desired social goals.

Evaluating the physical and psychological condition of participants will help generate a plan that is better adapted to their individual needs.

Implementing progressive and well-paced educational activities is an important component of the learning process.

Planning a workshop promotes a stronger bond between the tandem animation team, participants and all others involved in the project, and minimizes the need for discipline.

Planning is not synonymous with rigidity, so it's crucial to demonstrate flexibility.

FACILITATION AND GROUP MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Identify their strengths, as well as areas needing improvement.**
- 2. Recognize the elements that create a strong group dynamic.**
- 3. Define the strategies for managing a group and encouraging interaction.**
- 4. Determine which elements can be used to stimulate a climate of self-regulation in the group.**

The first time I visited the Atikamekw community of Manawan, it was winter. The community worker that was supposed to meet us couldn't be there because there had been a suicide in the community. We decided to run the workshop anyway to give the kids an activity that would help keep them distracted. My assistant and I soon found ourselves standing in front of 40 youth in a school gymnasium. They were all sitting, they spoke only Atikamekw, they were laughing at us and they refused to take off their boots. They were testing us, of course. It took us 30 minutes to get them to take off their boots. We were able to identify the leader and convinced him to take off his boots. Once his boots were off, two seconds later, everyone else had their boots off too. It was instantaneous. Oftentimes, getting the leaders involved will yield positive results.

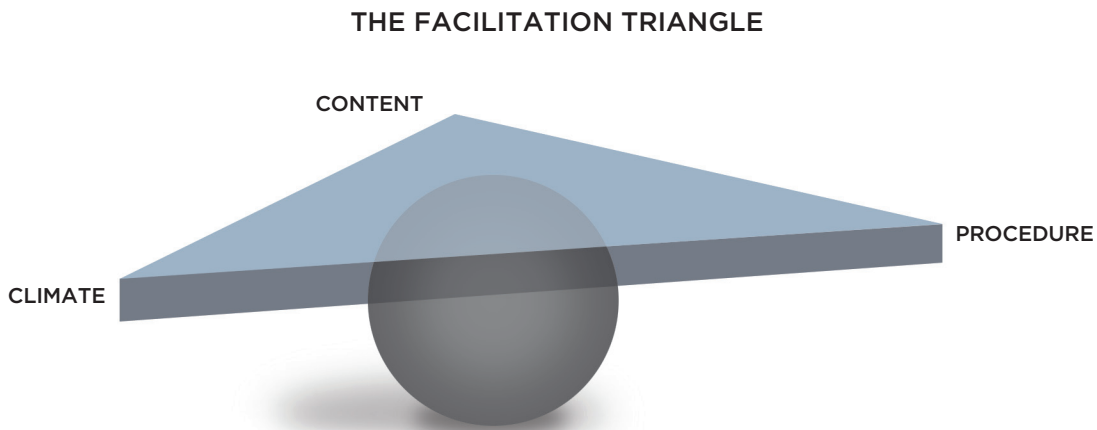
Karine Lavoie, Social Circus Instructor
Cirque du Monde, Montreal





THE FACILITATION TRIANGLE

The main role of instructors and community workers who are facilitating a group of participants is to guide the group as it gradually matures and assumes responsibility. To ensure the optimal conditions for sharing the knowledge necessary to help participants mature, instructors and community workers must carefully plan content, adopt a process that is conducive to sharing knowledge and be sensitive to the socio-affective climate within the group.



• Content

The group's intended goal promotes cohesion and is the main driver of motivation and development. The instructor and community worker must ensure that lessons and ideas circulate properly and are understood by all. To do so, they are responsible for the following:

- Defining content
- Making content accessible to all
- Creating bonds
- Summarizing and synthesizing acquired knowledge, lessons and opinions

• Procedure

The methods and rules adopted to help the group achieve its goals must be clear and accepted by all members of the group. The instructor and community worker are responsible for the following:

- Stimulating participation
- Curbing energy levels when they escalate
- Managing time
- Encouraging individual participation

PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOURS

The following table presents an overview of different individual behaviours labelled as problematic. These behaviours hinder group development and create roadblocks in the pursuit of the intended goal. This is why these behaviours are, in general, severely judged by other members of the group. Sooner or later, members displaying these behaviours will be ignored or rejected, unless the group uses their attitude to express certain feelings of malaise and thus assign those members a dysfunctional role.

When these behaviours are observed, the facilitator must take a central role and structure discussions that will enable all members to participate in a more enriching manner. This sometimes means organizing activities in subgroups or directing special attention to each individual for a fixed period of time in order to reduce the amount of space occupied by certain members. On other occasions, it might be more appropriate to make a comment, while being careful not to contradict the opinions of the members concerned or belittle them in front of others. Some examples include: “Your ideas are interesting, but I’d like to know what others think”; “I get the feeling that you’re insisting on this because you want others to agree with you, but I would like to hear other points of view on this question”; and “The discussion seems to be slowing down right now. Does anyone have anything to contribute and get it moving again?”

CATEGORIES OF PROBLEMATIC INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOURS AND PROFILES

CATEGORY	PROFILE	CHARACTERISTICS	INTERVENTIONS
The Deterrents	The Chatterbox	Thinks out loud, talks non-stop	
	The Distractor	Derails the conversation, abruptly changes the topic	
	The Fusspot	Gets bogged down in the details	
	The Clown	Avoids all serious topics, turns everything into a joke	
	The Specialist	Acts like an expert who knows everything	
The Opponents	The Mule	Stubbornly sticks to ideas	
	The Objector	Criticizes non-stop	
	The Strong Will	Imposes ideas, knows everything	
	The Aggressor	Instills a hostile atmosphere	
On the sidelines	The Downer	Does not speak due to disagreement	
	The Wallflower	Lacks confidence	
The Dead Weights	The Snob	Has no interest in debate	
	The Yawner	Feels indifferent	
	The Conformist	Has no personal opinions	

FACILITATOR OBSERVATION GRID

Circle the number that best represents your assessment of each facilitation element.

	Not applicable	Unsatisfactory	Weak	Good	Very good	Excellent
VERBAL COMMUNICATION						
Clarity and precision of instructions	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Relevance of interventions during facilitation	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
PARAVERBAL COMMUNICATION						
Tone of voice	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Rhythm of speech	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION						
Physical presence	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Gestures	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Eye contact	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOURS						
Equal sharing of facilitation tasks	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to adapt to the group	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to form a trusting bond	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
FACILITATION STRUCTURE						
Introduction	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Sequencing	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Conclusion	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluation	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Time management	N/A	1	2	3	4	5

Comments

Two things I liked about the facilitation:

Two areas that need improvement:



When facilitating, equal attention must be paid to content, procedures and climate.

The use of facilitation strategies that foster participation help create and maintain a positive group dynamic.

It's important to respect the development rhythm and culture of each group.

When faced with difficult situations, instructors and community workers must react quickly in order to prevent deterioration of the group dynamic and conflicts between participants.

PARTNERSHIPS

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Identify the responsibilities of instructors and community workers in a partner relationship.**
- 2. Recognize the benefits and challenges of working in a partnership.**

In Montreal, Cirque du Monde could not have had such a remarkable impact without the huge collaboration of our four partners: C.A.C.T.U.S. Montréal, Le Bon Dieu dans la rue, En Marge 12-17 and Plein Milieu. Although these organizations have different approaches, client bases and operating procedures, they still found a common platform for the Cirque du Monde workshops. Their participants came together to create one united group; community workers helped each other to cover the workshop time slots; everyone agreed on a code of conduct and even established joint recruitment strategies. Briefly put, all the partners deployed their resources and made the necessary compromises to ensure that workshops went well. In the end, all their work enabled youth to benefit from high-quality social circus workshops.

Michel Lafortune, Social Circus Director
Cirque du Soleil, Montreal





A strong partnership allows for actions with greater scope.

A partnership must be win-win for both parties involved.

Having an open and collaborative attitude is the most important factor in the success of any partnership.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Understand the components and evolution of a conflict.**
- 2. Define strategies for managing conflict and diminishing its effects.**
- 3. Determine the steps for resolving conflict or mediation.**

If I sense there's something happening in the group, it's important for me to take the time and sit down with them. If someone is suffering, we sit down together to see what can be done to alleviate that suffering. It's automatic now: they know that when I call a circle, it's time to talk. They help one another quite a bit, and I frequently base my interventions on this fact. We once had a huge crisis in the group while preparing a show to be given in Montreal in November. One of the young men, from the beginning of the school year, was always showing up high. He smoked pot and drank beer. The other youth didn't want him participating in the workshops. I told them that if we wanted to help him, we had to accept him regardless. This tactic helped him, and he showed up to each workshop a little less drunk. But one week before the show, another youth in the group told him, "You're just a druggie." He didn't like that, the situation got worse, and everyone wanted to quit. I was the only one leading the group – there were twelve of them in my care. I was discouraged. Finally, I told them, "We've started something. We've put together a really good show. We should at least finish it together. After that, you can do what you like, you can continue with circus or you can quit. But I just want you to know what it feels like to finish what you've started." They managed the crisis themselves, and it worked out well. I'm trying to teach them tactics for managing conflicts.

Alice Echaquan, Special Education Technician
Cirque du Monde, Manawan



HOW TO INTERVENE IN A CONFLICT SITUATION

In the case of a group conflict, instructors and community workers must get actively involved in order to find a satisfactory solution. This solution will not always be the fastest or the easiest option, so it's important to focus on finding a meaningful solution that will help everyone move forward and learn. There could be numerous issues involved in a conflict: for example, reconciling the parties involved or finding a compromise, common ground or solution that will enable the whole group to continue. Instructors and community workers are thus asked to play the role of mediator in order to maintain stability within the group.

There is a general consensus on how to approach a conflict situation. This intervention happens in three stages. The following is a detailed explanation of each stage to help facilitate the mediation of a conflict.

Stage 1: Explain personal view of the facts.

- All parties must describe how they view the situation by presenting the observable facts, consequences that affect them, their personal interpretation of the causes and needs they wish to fulfill.
- Each party must listen attentively to the other's point of view.

Stage 2: Encourage mutual understanding.

- All parties paraphrase their understanding of the other's problem.
- Positions are clarified during a question period.
- Paraphrasing is necessary when there's a misunderstanding.

Stage 3: Look for a solution.

- Parties explore numerous possible solutions (e.g. procedures, rules of conduct).
- Parties evaluate the possibilities and identify the win-win solution most apt to prevent future conflicts.
- The best solution is agreed upon and eventually implemented.

Throughout this process, each party must stay focused on the issues at hand rather than attack the other party. Comments should not allude to the past, unless they contribute to a better understanding of the present circumstances. The proposed changes must address observable behaviours. Also, each party must use body language consistent with what is being said. At all times, the meeting must be adjourned if the discussion starts to escalate.





There are always two parties involved in a conflict: the responsibility never lies with just one.

The role of the instructor and community worker does not involve finding the quickest and easiest solution, but rather finding the most appropriate solution that will provide everyone with a learning opportunity.

The energy put into avoiding a conflict is sometimes greater than the energy required to resolve it.

When resolving a conflict, both parties must get involved and show good faith.

INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, the instructor and community worker will be able to do the following:

- 1. Recognize the skills that promote intercultural communication.**
- 2. Adapt the social circus programme to the cultural context in which it will be delivered.**
- 3. Find tools to better adapt to and be aware of the cultural realities experienced by the group targeted by the intervention.**

There's this game called Zip Zap Bong. It's a concentration game to which you can add other rules. I added one called Disco Disco Time: whenever a participant made a mistake, all the others had to clap their hands, tap their feet and sing, "Disco, disco, disco time." The participant who made the mistake then had to walk into the middle of the circle and do some dance steps. In general, it helps youth concentrate more, because they don't want to dance in front of everyone. It works really well in Europe and North America. But not in Brazil! Young Brazilians so love dancing that for them, it became a reward, and they would make mistakes on purpose just so they could show off their dance moves.

Emmanuel Bochud, Social Circus Trainer
Cirque du Soleil, Montreal





CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL CIRCUS

When instructors and community workers are asked to work in communities with a different socio-cultural background than their own, intercultural relations can represent a huge challenge. Discovering a new culture means learning about other ways of being and doing, which inevitably leads us to redefine who we are and who we want to be. Before beginning this process, it's important to understand the notion of culture.

DEFINITION OF CULTURE

Culture can be defined as a set of human characteristics that are not innate; rather, they are learned while living in a society. Some, such as language, behaviours and customs, are easily identifiable, whereas others, such as worldview, beliefs, values and mindset, are less evident. The latter nonetheless acts as a filter that constantly influences our perceptions.

KOHL'S CULTURAL ICEBERG MODEL



INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

In today's world, it's become increasingly useful to know how to communicate with those from a different culture. To learn this skill, we must leverage our intelligence and creativity, while also employing certain basic skills that we will now discuss.

Learn to know yourself:

- Explore your own culture as well as that of others.
- Understand how your own culture influences how you interpret.

Steer clear of stereotypes:

- Evaluate how accurately you perceive reality.
- Be wary of generalizations: Don't assume that accent or colour of skin, for example, imply a certain set of values or behaviours.

Avoid snap judgments:

- Take the time to analyze a situation before jumping to conclusions.
- Ask questions and seek out additional information to increase understanding.

Discover others' frames of reference:

- Be open to learning from others.
- Look for more than one interpretation when dealing with intercultural communication.

Learn to negotiate:

- Identify similarities between cultures, rather than focusing on differences.
- Try to find an explanation that enables parties to step back from the problem.
- Look for a compromise to resolve differences.

Develop communication skills:

- Formulate messages that are precise, organized and structured.
- Learn how to use your voice, as well as your body, to convey a message.
- Explain the verbal and non-verbal messages being sent.
- Take the communication context into consideration: be aware of the moment and place in which it is taking place.

Take the time to communicate:

- Learn to respect the communication rhythm and style of each culture.
- Be patient: time can be a powerful ally when it comes to intercultural communication.
- Try to establish ties with those that play a large role in the social universe of these individuals.



SOCIAL CIRCUS, ENCOURAGING OPENNESS AND CULTURE

In a social circus workshop, instructors and community workers are called upon to create a space where reconciliation can happen. They must behave as role models in every interaction, encouraging openness to other cultures, acknowledging differences and allowing the circus culture to emerge (all the while recognizing the reality shared by participants). Social circus workshops also present ideal opportunities for teaching participants how to be curious and open to others, and for helping them discover the creativity that comes from diversity and difference.





Every kind of culture has its own rules, codes, regulations and values.

Social circus can offer opportunities for inclusion and cultural openness; a place where differences converge into a common goal.

It is important for instructors and community workers to recognize their own cultural principles and values, as well as those of the community in which they'll be working.

Being open to differences and diversity means being open to all differences, whether it be cultural, physical, intellectual, social, economic, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation or others.

APPENDICES

SOCIAL CIRCUS GLOSSARY OF *CIRQUE DU MONDE*

The following glossary provides definitions specific to the social circus terminology, as used by *Cirque du Monde*. These definitions ensure common understanding of the terms and expressions used in all educational documentation produced by *Cirque du Monde*.

At-risk individual

Individual deprived of one or more security factors that normally enable persons to assume their basic responsibilities in full enjoyment of their fundamental rights. At-risk individuals are often victims of socio-economic hardships, including poverty or lack of schooling. Many of these individuals have difficulty developing a balanced social and family life, and because they typically live on the edges of society, at-risk populations can suffer from fragile mental or physical health as well. Drug and alcohol addictions are also frequent.

Cirque du Monde

The group of young creators and ordinary citizens who contributed to the birth of *Cirque du Soleil* never forgot where they came from. Rather than attempting to embrace a wide range of causes, the *Cirque du Soleil* chose to commit itself to at-risk youth through its social circus program, *Cirque du Monde*.

With the objective of encouraging the personal and social development of these young people, *Cirque du Monde*'s actions take the form of social circus workshops, training, support and consulting, networking and raising awareness.

***Cirque du Monde* educational material**

To support their training activities, *Cirque du Soleil* wanted to provide trainers, community workers and instructors with suitable training material. Three educational documents have already been completed: *Community Worker's Guide*, *Basic Techniques in Circus Arts* and *Social Circus Trainer's Guide*.

Community Worker's Guide: This document is a summary of the social circus approach, as well as a practical guide, and will help community workers with the fundamentals and guiding principles of this mode of intervention, as well as support them in organizing, planning and evaluating social circus workshops.

Basic Techniques in Circus Arts: As both a technical guide and an educational tool, this document illustrates 177 technical elements drawn from 17 basic circus arts disciplines. Accompanied by video documents, this work offers in-depth expertise and technical content that will enable the delivery of progressive and specialized instruction in a safe environment.

Social Circus Trainer's Guide: Designed for trainers, this 14-module document covers the essential components of basic training for social circus instructors and community workers. Each module outlines objectives, key messages and testimonials from social circus practitioners. It also provides pertinent reference texts and facilitation activities to help training participants explore the educational aspects of the social circus approach developed by *Cirque du Monde*. The *Social Circus Trainer's Guide* comprises the following modules: social circus, the roles of instructor and community worker, at-risk youth, ethics, safety, creativity, communication, teamwork, educational approach, workshop planning, facilitation and group management, partnerships, conflict management and intercultural relations.

Participant Handbook: Both a notebook and a reference manual, the *Participant Handbook* aims to equip the instructors and community workers taking part in *Cirque du Monde* training sessions. For each thematic addressed during the training sessions, the *Participant Handbook* lists the objectives, basic notions and related key messages. The appendix contains a collection of various documents and practical grids related to social circus project planning and follow-up.

Cirque du Monde Training

In 2000, *Cirque du Monde* created a training program to help social circus instructors and community workers improve their educational skills. Launched in partnership with local organizations, this *Cirque du Monde Training* was designed to develop a high level of personal and professional ethics, share the fundamentals of this innovative and participatory educational approach, create a bridge between the lessons taught and the realities of the community, and position the circus arts as a unique personal development tool.

Since the program was launched, more than 3,000 instructors and community workers from over 30 countries worldwide have participated in *Cirque du Monde Training*. In fact, this program has impacted more than 100 different organizations.

A social circus training session is generally given by two trainers (one circus instructor and one community worker), who lead a group of about 20-25 social circus instructors and community workers. This session lasts about a week and offers a series of activities built around specific themes, such as: roles within the tandem facilitation team, working with at-risk youth, ethics, safety, creativity, communication, teamwork, educational approach, workshop planning, working with partners, conflict management and intercultural relations. Training might also include periods of time focussing on how to teach the circus arts and group games.

Code of conduct

Shared set of rules of conduct that are democratically agreed upon by the tandem facilitation team and the participants at the beginning of each social circus session. They are established to ensure that workshops run smoothly. These rules address the premises and equipment (storage, maintenance, repairs, loans, using materials), as well as schedules, safety procedures, etc. Simply put, the code of conduct establishes the foundation for respectful communication and outlines consequences for infractions.

Social circus

Social circus is an innovative social intervention approach, which uses the circus arts as a tool for fostering the personal and social development of at-risk individuals.

It targets various at-risk groups living in precarious personal and social situations, including street or detained youth and female survivors of violence. The primary goal of this approach is not merely to learn circus arts. Rather, it's designed to help participants achieve personal and social development by nurturing their self-esteem and trust in others, teaching them social skills, inspiring them to become active citizens, and helping them to express their creativity and explore their potential.

Social circus is a powerful catalyst for creating social change, because it helps marginalized people to assume citizenship within a community and enrich that community with their personality.

Social circus community worker

Social intervention specialists who generally come from the local organization. Their main role is to intervene with participants in social circus workshops, and guide them through the process of personal and social development.

The social circus community worker has roots in the community, which helps him or her to engage and maintain the interest of participants for the social circus project, as well as to establish a trusting relationship with them. The community worker is also called upon to work in tandem with a social circus instructor in complementarity and harmony.

One of the community worker's duties is to prepare the social circus session: i.e. recruit participants, find suitable premises and plan the workshops. During workshops, he or she main responsibility is to develop bonds of trust with participants, an indispensable condition for the effectiveness of the social circus approach. The community worker must also ensure that the content and pace of the workshops are adapted to the capacities and needs of participants and that these elements fit in with the particular character of the community. Lastly, this person must make sure everyone understands and respects the rules of the workshops. This last aspect is crucial to the development of a trusting relationship, as it conveys the importance of mutual respect, fairness and safety for all.

Social circus instructor

Circus artist whose main role is to teach various circus disciplines to social circus workshop participants.

Instructors must adapt their educational approach to suit the unique needs of the community, participants and local organizations they will be working with. In this role, instructors will also be required to work in tandem with a social circus community worker in complementarity and harmony.

The instructor's main duties consist of: teaching circus techniques; organizing, planning, facilitating and evaluating workshops; and, coordinating the project with the community worker and the local partner. Other responsibilities include establishing a good relationship with partner organizations, interacting with the community in order to encourage community members to change their perception of workshop participants, and occasionally participating in social interventions – all the while being conscious of the social impact of their own actions. The instructor is a true artist, but one who chooses to use his or her talents to help at-risk individuals.

Social circus session

Series of social circus workshops delivered to the same group of (20 or so) participants. The session usually ends with a public performance.

Generally, a session lasts between two and ten months, and it tends to follow the school calendar. Workshops are planned according to the group participating and available resources. The goal of the session is to help participants achieve personal and social development by nurturing their self-esteem and trust in others, as well as helping them to express their creativity and explore their potential.

Following the public performance, participants gather for one last group discussion to talk about the future and how they can apply what they learned during the session to their real lives. In some ways: How to turn circus lessons into life lessons?

Social circus trainer

Professional who teaches circus instructors and community workers the basic or advanced concepts of social circus.

Trainers are usually circus artists or community workers with a strong background in social circus. They are required to lead training sessions in tandem with another circus specialist/social intervention specialist. Together, they can more concretely illustrate what it means to work in a complementary way. Trainers use activities and moments for reflection to help instructors and community workers develop a clear understanding of the social circus approach, all the while adapting their teaching to better suit the cultural and social realities of the training group and of their community.

Social circus workshop

Given once or twice a week, social circus workshops generally run an average of three hours long. These workshops, which typically have 20 or so participants, are usually led by a tandem facilitation team composed of one social circus instructor and one community worker.

Workshops introduce participants to various circus techniques (juggling, acrobatics, stilts, unicycle, trampoline, etc.), as well as theatrical and clown acting. Participants also take part in discussion periods at the beginning and end of the workshops in order to share their opinions on various topics and learn how to express themselves.

Tandem facilitation

Within the social circus context, tandem refers to the pair formed by the social circus instructor and the community worker, who work together in complementarity and harmony.

The educational approach favoured by *Cirque du Monde* is based on this facilitation model.

PLANNING A SOCIAL CIRCUS SESSION

GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE SESSION:

WEEK	TECHNICAL GOALS <i>Circus lessons</i>	SOCIAL GOALS <i>Life lessons</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		

ACTIVITY



ACTIVITY

THEME

SEQUENCE

REFLECTION



ACTIVITY

THEME

1. EXPERIENCE

Something's happening!

Lined writing area for the Experience stage, containing 10 horizontal blue lines.



4. APPLICATION

What is the connection with my practice?

Lined writing area for the Application stage, containing 10 horizontal blue lines.

2. OBSERVATION

What happened?

Lined writing area for the Observation stage, containing 10 horizontal blue lines.



3. INTEGRATION

Why did it happen?

Lined writing area for the Integration stage, containing 10 horizontal blue lines.

GAME PROPOSAL

NAME OF THE GAME:

LENGTH OF GAME:

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

MAIN OBJECTIVE:

(FOR EXAMPLE: WARM-UP, TEAM WORK, COORDINATION, CONCENTRATION, ENERGIZER, OPENING, CLOSING, ETC.)

MATERIAL:

SEQUENCE:

COMMENTS AND GAME ALTERNATIVES:

NAME OF THE PARTICIPANT PROPOSING THE GAME:

GAME PROPOSAL

NAME OF THE GAME:

LENGTH OF GAME:

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

MAIN OBJECTIVE:

(FOR EXAMPLE: WARM-UP, TEAM WORK, COORDINATION, CONCENTRATION, ENERGIZER, OPENING, CLOSING, ETC.)

MATERIAL:

SEQUENCE:

COMMENTS AND GAME ALTERNATIVES:

NAME OF THE PARTICIPANT PROPOSING THE GAME:

Ever since Cirque du Soleil has had the resources to follow its dreams, it has chosen to be involved with at-risk youth through its social circus program, Cirque du Monde. With the objective of encouraging the personal and social development of these young people, Cirque du Monde's actions take the form of social circus workshops, training, support and consulting, networking and raising awareness.

Most recently, in order to support the development of social circus, Cirque du Monde has invested in the production of a series of educational tools. The Participant Handbook is an integral part of this series and is based on the expertise developed by Cirque du Soleil and its numerous partners and collaborators since 1995.

Both a notebook and a reference manual, the Participant Handbook aims to prepare the instructors and community workers taking part in Cirque du Monde training sessions. For each thematic addressed during a training session, the Participant Handbook lists objectives, basic notions and related key messages. In the appendix, various documents and practical grids related to social circus project planning and follow-up are also presented.

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL™

