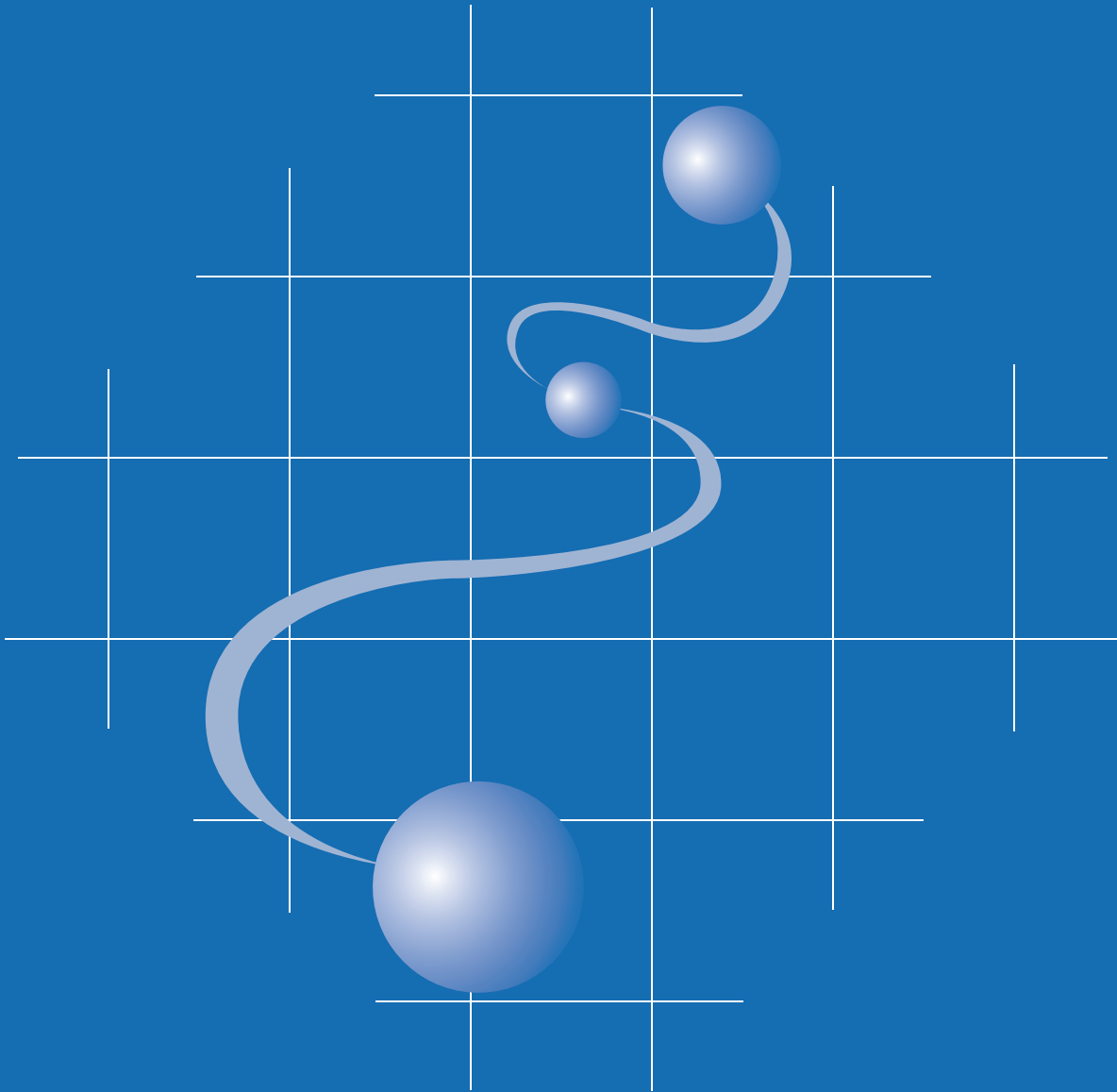


# More Theatre Games and Exercises





## More Theatre Games and Exercises

*Trust that still, small voice that says, 'This might work, I'll try it.'*

– D. Mariechild

It is important to have a variety of games and exercises from which to draw for training and rehearsals. New games and exercises keep training fresh and provide more options for solving acting problems as they arise. This section includes additional games and exercises that did not appear in Section 2.

These games and exercises are just some of the hundreds of theatre exercises that are used all over the world. They vary in their skills-building objectives. Some are designed to improve acting skills and techniques, while some help actors hone their abilities as improvisers. Other exercises help with both acting skills and improvisation techniques.

There are five categories of exercises in this section:

- trust building
- ensemble building
- observation and movement
- improvisation
- emotional availability

### Trust Building

#### *The Lift*

A player lies on the floor with the group surrounding her or him. Each member of the group is responsible for lifting a part of that player's body. The group lifts the player gradually up over their heads and around the room. Rotate players until all have participated.

#### *The Jump*

The group stands in two lines facing each other, approximately 30 centimetres apart with arms extended and spread to create a 'landing field'. One at a time, players jump from a chair or a table (approximately one metre off the ground) into the arms of the group. **Caution: the group must be sure to cushion the jumper's landing.** Rotate until all have participated as jumpers.

### *The Blind Run*

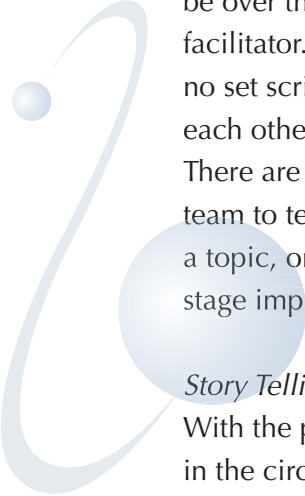
The group lines up across one end of a large room. One blindfolded player runs towards the line of people. The others gently catch and stop the player as she or he gets to them. Rotate until all have participated as runners.

### *The Blind Circle*

The group forms a tight circle around a player in the centre, whose eyes are closed and feet are together. Participants in the circle pass the player in the centre around while she or he completely relaxes and allows the group to move her or him. Rotate until all have participated in the centre.

## **Ensemble Building**

### *One Voice*



Teams of two to four people line up one by one on the stage. Their arms should be over their teammate's shoulders, and they face the other players and the facilitator. All of the members of a team will speak together as one voice, with no set script. The team should speak slowly and try to maintain eye contact with each other. No one player should try to lead – this is about ensemble and trust. There are several ways to play this game. One way is for the facilitator to ask the team to tell a story (the facilitator can determine the topic), speak as an expert on a topic, or answer questions from the group. Another way is to have two teams on stage improvise a scene as two characters.

### *Story Telling I*

With the players in a circle, the facilitator calls out the title for a story. The players in the circle tell that story, with each player saying one word at a time as the story travels around the circle.

### *Story Telling II*

Proceed as above, only a player tells the story up to certain point and passes it to the player to the right, who continues the story until passing it again.

### *Gibberish Story Telling*

Proceed as above, only give no title to the story. A player begins and passes the story as before, only it is spoken in gibberish – no real language is used. At the end, everyone can write down what they think the story was about and compare their ideas.

### *Movement*

A player in the circle shows a physical movement to the player on the right. One by one, each player copies it and sends it on until it gets back to its originator, at

which point the player on the right begins a new movement and sends it around the circle. Variation: Add sound with movement.

### *Zip, Zap, Zop*

The group stands in a circle. The player who starts points across the circle to another player, makes eye contact, and says, 'Zip'. The receiving player points to another person, makes eye contact, and says, 'Zap'. The new receiving player points across the circle and says, 'Zop'. The game continues with the words passed in this order. Players should try to pass the proper word smoothly. This can also be played as an elimination game (i.e., if the receiver speaks incorrectly, he or she is out of the game).

### *Hot Seat*

Three players sit side by side. The players on the left and right are instructed to compete for the attention of the player in the middle by whatever means necessary (within reason and without physically touching the player in the middle at any time).

### *The Huddle*

Have the players stand close together, with their arms around each other's shoulders (called a huddle). Ask them to close their eyes and be silent while you lead them through a minute of deep inhales and exhales. When everyone is relaxed, ask the players to move out from the huddle, continuing to close their eyes and staying physically connected, if they can. Ask them to get a sense of the room. Where are the other players? Where are they in relation to everyone else? Tell them to explore the stillness and the energy of the group. After a few minutes, remove a few players, who can then open their eyes and observe what is happening. To end, have everyone open their eyes and discuss the exercise.

## **Observation and Movement**

### *Awakening*

The players lie on the ground with their eyes closed. Players are told to open their eyes and see the world with new eyes, exploring their own bodies and environment as if for the first time. Gradually, players sit up, stand, etc. This exercise should last at least 30 to 45 minutes.

### *Animal Exercise*

Divide into groups of four or five players. Each player in the group picks an animal they want to become. In this exercise, groups are confined to specific boundaries and, for a designated time, explore their animal and their relationships to other animals in their group. Discuss the exercise and its application to working with characters, etc.



### *Moving through Space*

Participants begin to walk around the room. The facilitator calls out physical states – such as a shift in tempo, heaviness, lightness, larger, smaller, tightness, jerkiness, bubbles, traveling through a cloud, etc. – and the players respond with their bodies as they move around the space.

### *Stillness to Speed*

Ask the players to run around the room at full speed. At a cue from the facilitator, everyone freezes and becomes absolutely still and silent. At the next cue from the facilitator, the group runs again.

### *Tempo Changes*

Divide into groups of five to six players. In clearly defined areas, each group moves continually at the tempo called out by facilitator. ‘One’ is barely moving. ‘Ten’ is as fast as players can move. ‘Five’ is in the middle. The group must find the subtle tempo changes as the exercise progresses.

### *Moving to Music*

The players spread around the room. The facilitator plays different pieces of music while the players explore how that music affects their bodies. After a few minutes, make those movements larger or smaller. Talk about how ‘feeling’ the tempo is related to scene work.

### *Neutrality*

The players spread out around the room and try to find completely neutral positions for their bodies. The facilitator works with the players to find **true** neutral positions. Discuss how anything not neutral makes a statement.

### *Clay Game*

Three players come forward and face the group in a neutral position. Three other players are ‘sculptors’ who take one player each and sculpt their bodies and faces. After a few minutes, the facilitator asks the statues to come alive as characters reflecting their new body changes.

### *Fill in the Space*

The players are assigned the numbers one, two, or three. Working in a defined space and standing in a neutral position, the players fill in the space around them when their number is called. For example, the facilitator will call out, ‘Twos’ and everyone with the number two steps in to fill the empty areas between themselves and other players. Advanced version: The players work on three levels: low, middle, or high. The facilitator calls out, ‘Twos go low,’ ‘Ones go high,’ etc. and the players fill those spaces.

## Improvisation

### *Frozen One-Liners*

The players move freely around room. The facilitator calls out, 'Freeze.' The facilitator goes around room and points to players one at a time, and players describe their frozen positions in one sentence.

### *Statues*

The players work in pairs, positioned back to back. The facilitator calls out a word, feeling, issue, etc. (e.g., love, hate, joy, or sex). Then the facilitator counts to three. On three, the partners turn and instantly create a statue that expresses that word and freeze.

### *Name Dance*

The players have 20 minutes to create a dance piece that uses their entire body to spell their name.

### *Orchestra I*

One player is the conductor. Each of the other players personifies an instrument (e.g., trumpet or violin) with sound and body. The conductor leads the orchestra, using all players in the group.

### *Orchestra II*

One player is the conductor, as above. The players divide into groups of three or four to create an original musical phrase (two or three measures is enough). First, the groups present their 'song' to the whole group, one at a time. Next, the conductor leads the group as a whole, fading groups in and out, going louder and softer, etc. The groups can add movement in the second round.

### *Group Expression*

The facilitator calls out different states of being for the entire group to express themselves (either as a group statue or a moving mass). Some examples of states of being include: powerful, light, expansive, heavy, angry, sad, happy, nervous, or drunk.

### *Three Words*

The players divide into pairs. The facilitator calls out three words or phrases that do not relate (e.g., tree, rice, and school books). Player A has to tell Player B a story using all three words. All the pairings do this exercise at the same time and within a limited timeframe. After the first round, the facilitator calls out three more words, and it is Player B's turn to tell a story, and so on.

### *Word at a Time*

The players work in pairs. The facilitator gives the players a title of a story. Each pair creates the story together, one word at a time (for example, Player A: 'Once', Player B: 'upon', A: 'a', B: 'time', A: 'there', B: 'was', and so on).

### *Third Person Enters the Room*

Two players are asked to improvise a scene and are given a relationship, conflict, location, and time of day. Meanwhile, a third player waits outside the room. She or he has only been told who they are and what information or fact they will bring into the scene. When the facilitator lets the third player in, the players in the middle of their improvisation will have to adjust. Lead a discussion about how the third player affected the scene.

### *Scene in Reverse*

Two players are asked to improvise a scene and are given a relationship, conflict, location, and time of day. The players must play the scene in reverse – starting with the last line, then the next-to-last line and continuing to the beginning of the story.

### *Giving Scene Events*

Two players are asked to improvise a scene and are given a relationship, conflict, location, and time of day. They are also given an 'event'. (For example, the scene is about two siblings whose father is sick with AIDS. One character gets a call from the hospital saying, 'Come to the hospital, your father is very ill.')

By adding an event, the scene takes on added urgency.

## **Freedom and Fun**

Foster an environment of freedom and fun in your training sessions, especially when playing theatre games. For a variety of reasons, some of these games are initially intimidating for participants. The level (or even existence) of intimidation will vary by the individual and by game or exercise and could surprise the participants, even after playing the game for some time. If it has been established that in the workshop or training it is impossible to 'do it wrong', the participant's fear is much more manageable and can be instructive.

Remember to be sensitive to cultural norms regarding touch and other issues, and adjust exercises as needed.

### *The Fairy Tale*

The entire group picks out seven or eight 'elements' to include in a fairy tale or traditional story (e.g., rain, wind, lightening, stampeding horses, falling trees, etc.). Each element should also be given a sound (e.g., clapping hands for rain). Next, the group should be divided in half, with one half planning the story (which should include all the elements), and the other half adding movements for each element (e.g., for the lightening flashing everyone jumps in the air with their arms straight up). After the groups have had a chance to plan and choreograph, bring the groups back together and have the story performed by the first group while the second group acts out the elements.

### *Foreign Movie*

Two players work as 'actors' in a foreign movie while two players act as 'dubbers'. The actors act a scene and the dubbers speak for them.

### *Telling a Lie*

Two players face the group: They are children (siblings or best friends). The facilitator asks a question (e.g., 'John, Susan, how did the dog get painted red?') and the two children share the explanation. One starts, then turns to the other, who continues the story and passes it back, etc. The audience can ask questions at any time. The more outlandish the story, the more fun.

## **Emotional Availability**

### *HASH (Happy – Angry – Sad – Happy)*

Each player counts to ten. As they count, they move through the emotions: happy – angry – sad – happy. (For example, on 1-2-3 they might be happy, on 4-5 they might be angry, on 6-7-8 they might be sad, and on 9-10 they are happy again.) This exercise allows players to explore feelings and emotions. It can be modified to either five or 20 counts, or it can be substituted with lines of monologue instead of counting.

### *Physical Impairment*

This exercise is useful when a player experiences a 'block' in the development of a scene or a particular character. The player is instructed to deliver his or her lines from the scene with some sort of physical restriction (e.g., two cast members hold down the player's feet while she or he attempts to walk and deliver the lines, or several players form a human wall that the player attempts to get through while delivering the lines). **Caution: This exercise should only be used in a group situation where cast members have developed a sense of trust.** The boundaries of the restriction must be simple, non-violent, and clear to the group. The facilitator must monitor them.



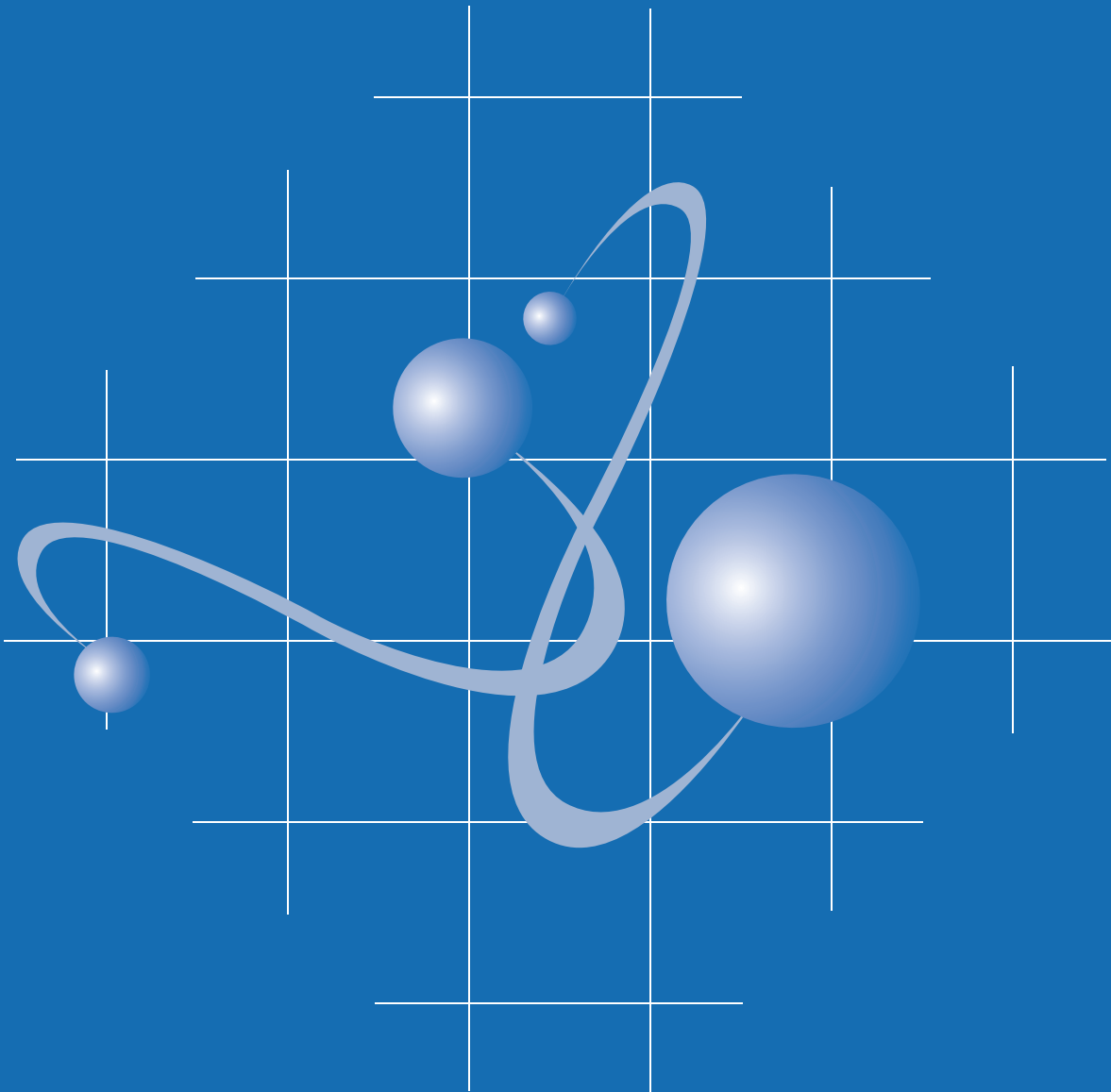
### *Affect the Player*

The players divide into pairs. Each player is directed to elicit a specific feeling or set of feelings from his or her partner, but neither player is aware of the objective of the other (e.g., Player A makes Partner B feel confused, Player B makes Partner A feel elated). Players may be directed to elicit two different emotions from their partner. This exercise is most often done without talking, although actions, sounds, or gibberish may be used. The players are instructed to strongly and actively pursue their objective, while allowing themselves to be affected by the actions of their partner.



## Section 4

# Advanced Peer Theatre Programmes: Forming and Building a Theatre Company





## Advanced Peer Theatre Programmes: Forming and Building a Theatre Company

*Whatever you can do or dream, you can begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.*

– Goethe

This section is designed as an introduction and overview of how to build a theatre company. The basic skills covered in Sections 1 and 2 – such as developing educational objectives, creating scenes, and performing them – are pre-requisites for using this section. The section addresses identification of goals and priorities, casting and auditioning, training, rehearsals, scene refinement, logistics and management, and other issues. This section is written for those considering the development of a theatre company, but many of the ideas can also benefit all peer education programmes using theatre techniques.

### Forming a Theatre Group

#### Identifying Goals and Priorities

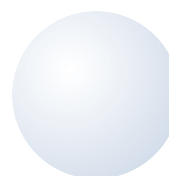
Before you begin casting and auditioning, you will want to refine your vision of the theatre group you want to develop and the educational goals you have for specific pieces. Think about what you want your show to look like and how you can achieve that goal. Remember that this vision may change and evolve as you work, so remain open and flexible as things unfold. Art tends to take on a life of its own as you surrender to the creative process.

At the outset, it is helpful to be specific.

- What kinds of topics will you cover with your theatre piece?
- Will your cast have input into the content, or does your funding source mandate that you address a specific concern?
- Will you be creating original material or will you have a script provided for you? (The authors of this manual highly recommend using improvisation as a means to develop scripts.)

These factors affect short- and long-term goals, as well as rehearsal planning. For example, if you have no pre-written script – the actors themselves will be creating the material in rehearsal – your initial goals might be to:

- identify the health issue(s) to be covered in the show
- brainstorm the issue(s) using the ‘who, what, and where’ technique



- improvise and refine the scenarios
- work on connecting and strengthening the pieces that result from the improvisation (e.g., adding music, and, in general, giving the show a shape)
- work on backstories and post-performance discussion

Accomplishing these goals will take in-depth planning, organization, and many hours of work over several weeks or months. Also, consider the goals below, which are less concrete but important for a theatre company to work at the highest possible level:

- building trust and unity within the ensemble
- working on physical, emotional, and vocal flexibility
- improving acting skills and techniques
- improving musical and vocal skills

### **Casting Actor/Peer Educators**

Recruiting, auditioning, and casting appropriate actor/peer educators is a major activity for an organization that intends to develop a full-length theatre piece or use theatre as a primary component of a peer education programme.

Programme managers need to consider an array of casting issues based on the demands of the performance piece. For example, will the piece incorporate music or dance? Will performers need to play an instrument? It is important to find an appropriate balance between the need for talented actors and talented peer educators. Remember, cast members will need training in both areas.

Think about the peer education skills the programme requires. Must peer educators be able to write at a certain level? What types of activities will they be required to do in addition to acting?

### **Auditioning Actor/Peer Educators**

If possible and practical, audition young people from the target audience for roles in the theatre piece. Auditioning actor/educators will help you identify those who are most committed to acting and peer education and give you an idea of the range of talent upon which you can draw. Here are a few audition tips to keep in mind:

- Announce the audition in the community (among the target audience) in various ways, such as by attending community meetings, visiting schools, and handing out flyers in the market.
- Be sure the audition space has room for young people to move freely and that it has a table and chairs for staff.
- If you need musical instruments, make certain that they are available and in the room.

- If you can, provide a reception area (preferably with a door that closes) that is separate from the actual audition space. This will allow staff and actors to interact without a lot of background noise.
- Assign an audition monitor to register people when they arrive and to collect contact information. To save time, you may also want to assign an assistant to the monitor to escort individuals in and out of the audition room.

Be respectful of the young people who audition for you, as they might be your future actor/peer educators. Notify them promptly about whether they will be called back for a second audition or if they were chosen for the cast.

## Audition Checklist

- ▼ Be clear about what you are looking for.
- ▼ Think about why you are holding the audition.
- ▼ Determine how many roles are available and how many guys or girls you want to cast. Be open-minded and open to surprises at the actual audition.
- ▼ Find your space, and coordinate your audition dates and times based on space availability.
- ▼ Rent a piano or keyboard, when necessary, if one is not provided at the audition space.
- ▼ Hire an accompanist, if necessary.
- ▼ Publicise the audition with newspaper ads, flyers, and personal visits.
- ▼ Be sure that all publicity materials are thorough.
- ▼ Recruit an audition monitor and assistant monitor well in advance of audition dates. Be sure that they are well trained.
- ▼ Prepare information sheets, audition applications, sign-up sheets, a waiting list, callback slips (optional, but decide ahead of time on your method of asking people to return for additional auditions), signage, and company photos for display. Gather tape, pens, staplers and staples, and anything else you might need for audition day.
- ▼ Decide ahead of time how your staff will communicate with each other during the audition.
- ▼ Take two minutes after each audition to discuss the applicant.
- ▼ Determine how will you communicate with the monitors.
- ▼ Discuss everything in advance in order to alleviate miscommunication and tensions among staff.
- ▼ Be sure that all participating staff are clear on arrival and departure times, meal breaks, and any other procedural details.

Now, have a great time. You're ready!

### **Training the Cast in Peer Education/Health Education**

Make certain your cast members receive training on the health topics they will be addressing. Although this manual does not contain a training module for youth peer education in reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, there are many that are available, including the *Training of Trainers Manual* in this toolkit series. If your organization does not have expert health and peer education trainers on staff, seek help from organizations in your community that do.

### **Train the Cast in Peer Theatre**

Section 2 is designed to help you and your actor/peer educators attain your goals. The exercises assist with long-term skills building, and many of the activities should be regularly incorporated into your rehearsals, special training sessions, retreats, and other scheduled training events.

Your actor/peer educators will have different levels of experience, skill, openness, and willingness to take risks. This variety among the actor/educators is actually a gift, as they will mentor one another and learn from what each has to offer.

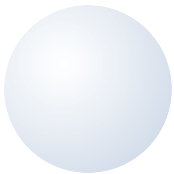
## **Building a Theatre Company**

Assuming you have a great cast, you now need to determine short- and long-term goals to make your vision a reality. Thinking in short- and long-term time frames can help you to manage things in a logical order and not become overwhelmed with an urge to do everything at once. Remember, creating and refining material is a process that happens over time. Some tasks need to be accomplished now and others will not be done for six months or even a year.

### **Rehearsal Overview**

Perhaps the most important aspect of building a theatre company is your approach to good, solid rehearsal planning and preparation. In order for rehearsals to be effective, it is important to create a safe, dynamic, energized, and fun space. Let it be the actor/peer educators' space, because the more comfortable they feel there, the more open they will be to creativity.

It is the responsibility of the director and other staff to set the tone for rehearsals. The director should help everyone to feel safe to try new things, to fail, to succeed, and to play. Humour is an essential tool. The director must create an atmosphere where there is no right or wrong, no pass or fail. The director must also help the group find the balance between a fun, open atmosphere and a rigid, overly disciplined one. People should arrive on time, leave on time, get the work done efficiently, and still have a good time.



## Rehearsal Logistics

Keeping in mind that actor/peer educators have other responsibilities – jobs, school, families, and extracurricular activities – reflect upon the following questions:

- How much rehearsal time can you realistically expect from the cast each week?
- How much rehearsal is too much rehearsal?
- How much is too little?

Before making major decisions, you should consult the cast. Generally, two rehearsal sessions per week is about right in terms of time commitment, balance with actor/peer educators' schedules, and the time needed to get the work done. It may take a couple of months to determine if this is enough or too much time.

The key to success is structure. Young people need and thrive on structure as much as they may seem to resist it. If you establish a structure for rehearsals that is consistent, almost ritualistic, you will be amazed at how much is accomplished.

### Compensate, If Possible

Consider paying your actor/peer educators for rehearsal time and their transportation to and from rehearsals, if it is possible. Or, find another way to compensate them. You are expecting them to arrive at a specific time and perform a specific task – they should be paid for it, if the budget allows.

## Rehearsal Warm-up, Games, and Exercises

A warm-up activity focuses energy and motivates actor/peer educators to work. There are many ways to do this – consult Sections 2 and 3 for exercises that will help get the actor/peer educators moving. The important thing is to start each rehearsal with a group activity that warms up the body and voice, energizes the cast, gets them focused, and serves as a ritual. The ritual helps to define the space as 'group space'. It will also let everyone know that the rehearsal has begun.

After the warm-up, shift into a series of theatre games and exercises. Allow 30 to 45 minutes per rehearsal for this type of work, enough to play at least three or four different games. Alternate between exercises that are physical and those that

are more cerebral. Listed below is a sample plan for one 45-minute session of games and exercises (the games are described in Sections 2 and 3).

Zip, Zap, Zop (5 minutes)

Pass the Beat (3 minutes)

Grid Walk – Mask Removal (10 minutes)

Mirror Exercise (10 minutes)

Machines (12 minutes)

### **Scene Creation and Development**

The largest part of the rehearsal time should be devoted to developing and refining the performance piece(s). Creating a new scene from improvisation and taking it to performance level requires concentrated work and must progress in stages.

After the actor/peer educators create new scenes, have the group reflect on the scenes. Without this reflection, a scene may never improve. Answering the questions below can help evaluate the effectiveness of a scene.

- How well does the scene address (fulfil) the educational objectives?
- Is the scene (including characters and conflict) relevant to the target audience?
- Is the scene age appropriate?
- Is the language appropriate for the audience age and culture?
- Is the language too 'trendy'? Will the slang be outdated soon?
- Is the language gender biased?
- Does the scene contain a blend of humour and conflict?
- Does the scene convey a message without being preachy or judgemental?
- Is the scene interesting and engaging to watch?
- Does the scene raise awareness, inform, educate, build skills, and call for new behaviours?

Keep asking these questions as the scene evolves. Do not be afraid to stop a scene that is not working, even if you have worked on it for a long time.

Now invite some people outside your group to watch the piece and tell you what they think of it. This is an excellent way to know if what you created meets your goals. Feedback and modification are very useful, so do not be afraid of criticism.

Once you have created your scenes, evaluated them, and improvised again and again, it will be time to 'set' them, which means to write them down as scripts. Once you have performed them for a month or so, you will have a better sense of what needs to be changed to make them more relevant for your audiences.



## Some Things to Watch

- ▼ Be careful not to put too many characters in one scene. Scenes can easily lose focus if they are overcrowded.
- ▼ Watch out for ‘fight scenes’ or other confrontational scenes. They can easily turn into shouting matches, which limits their educational value.
- ▼ Check the length of your scenes. Usually, less is more.
- ▼ Avoid having characters speak too many words. In real life, we use few words. Behaviour tells the story – sometimes a much more interesting story.
- ▼ Do not be afraid of humour.

### **Humour and Dramatic Tension – Finding the Right Balance**

Find the appropriate balance of humour and dramatic tension, whether presenting a single scene or an entire show made up of several scenes. Humour is an effective tool for many reasons. It can help the audience relax, and as they relax, they will be more open to your message. Humour, especially if used early in a presentation, can improve an audience’s focus and attention, as well as prepare them for more dramatic interactions later. If you have used humour effectively, you will have ‘earned’ a dramatic moment later, and most audiences will respond more favourably to the drama than if no humour had been used at all.

But, humour must also be used selectively. Although humour might be effective in a scene about sexually transmitted infections, it is not appropriate to use humour when dealing with an issue such as date rape. Each group and its leaders need to look carefully at the presentation as it develops. Continue to evaluate the emotional balance of your work.

### **Creating the Flow of the Show**

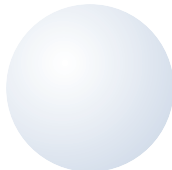
The ‘flow’ or ‘arc’ of the show refers to its highs and lows, tempos, and emotional peaks and valleys. In simple terms, an arc is a beginning (the characters start at point A), a middle (they go on some kind of journey in the scene, which creates some kind of change), and an ending. While the end need not resolve the scene, something needs to have happened that has changed or will change the lives of the characters.

## **Company Business and Closing Circle**

You could use approximately 15 minutes at the end of the rehearsal to conduct any business. This could be asking for announcements from the cast, discussing the rehearsal schedule, or providing information about upcoming performances or trips. This company meeting time is important, even if it is devoted to an informal check-in. It is part of the bonding process.

To close the rehearsal, have the group form a circle and finish with a closing circle ritual. A closing circle should be something very simple, such as having everyone do two foot stomps and a clap or three finger snaps and a breath, sing a song, or even do meditation. The closing circle can change with each rehearsal and be led by a different actor/peer educator each time. The important thing is to do something that brings the session to a close so that everyone does not just drift away.

## **Direction**



This manual does not discuss how to direct theatre. If you do not have theatre experts on staff, try to get some who will help your group. This need not be expensive; many local universities or colleges have directing students who will appreciate the opportunity to work on an outside project. A local or regional theatre company may have someone with directing experience who will either volunteer or agree to help for a small fee. The ideal, of course, is to have a brilliant, creative, inspiring full-time artistic director who will work tirelessly and selflessly for the programme. However, while you are searching for this person, hire consultant directors and refer to the section below for a few basic, yet helpful, tips to help you refine your material.

## **Basic Directing Tips**

- One of the functions of the director is to help with the focus of the scene, that is, to help determine which character(s) should have the audience's attention at any particular moment. An effective method for establishing focus is through staging, or 'blocking'. Blocking is where and how actors move on stage. By using movement, stillness, positions on stage, and relationships between characters, you can create not only focus but also dramatic tension. Ask yourself, if you were forced to use no dialogue, how would you tell the story using only visual elements?
- Another role of the director is to make sure that the scenes (and, indeed, the entire show) have an arc (as described previously). The director is the critical third eye, watching the arc, making sure that the journey is clear, focused, logical, and believable. Related directly to the arc is the central event of every scene – the key action of the scene. Everything in the scene leads to this key

moment. Everything after this key moment is changed because of it. There are, of course, many other 'moments' within a scene; a director is there to help focus the scene.

- A director ensures that the piece has a good balance in the use of humour and dramatic tension and makes final decisions regarding how humour or drama work with various topics.
- The director must work with the cast to ensure that the piece is believable and repeatable. Pieces should not be improvised on stage in front of an audience. They are meant to be performed over and over again. While there will be subtle differences in every performance, what makes theatre art is that it imitates life. It is rehearsed dialogue that has been so finely crafted that we perceive it to be real.

## Long-Term Goals

After you have begun performing your show and feel it is effective for your audience, you can begin accomplishing some long-term goals. These goals will vary with every company, but something worthy of consideration is double (even triple) casting your actors. This means that your actors can cover for each other in different parts in the event of illness or other conflicts. Time must be devoted to rehearsing actors in various roles. Eventually, you can teach your actors that no one actor 'owns' any one role. An actor may create a character or a scene, but this type of theatre emphasizes the ensemble, in which the entire group owns all of it.

Other long-term goals may include scene revisions and re-writes, adding new scenes for topics not yet covered, improving facilitation techniques, revising dance numbers, or adding new songs. Each company will have different long-term goals. It is important to keep rehearsing. Meeting regularly as a group will keep you tightly knit both as a theatre company and as a 'family unit'.

Above all else, be flexible with your plans. Yes, have goals and objectives, both short- and long-term. Yes, have a plan. But be willing to discard that plan, especially if something amazing is happening. If a scene is really succeeding, do not stop it because your agenda says you have to work on something else. Later on, you will be glad you did.

## Maintaining Quality

It is tempting to think that once you have a scene or performance piece ready, rehearsed, and set to go that you can relax and all will go as planned every time. Unfortunately, this is never the case. Actors change, staffing changes, information included in the scenes is updated or changed to reflect new and emerging issues and statistics, scripts get lost, or updates are not recorded. The executive director, the artistic director, or the person in charge of the overall vision and quality of your theatre company or peer education programme should regularly and rigorously review the scenes, performances, and facilitated workshops. Quality can deteriorate over time if someone is not directly responsible for it.

### Music and Dance

The use of original music and dance can be very effective in youth peer education theatre. Music can be utilized in many innovative ways: to create an emotionally engaging opening number, to connect scenes, and to enhance the message and emotional level during the performance. When using music, schedule regular music rehearsals within the larger rehearsal time.

Like music, dance can add to your scenes. Dance can be a powerful tool, but creating meaningful pieces requires much rehearsal time and professional help from consultants.

