



Introducing Forum Theatre

AS A TOOL TO EXPLORE
ISSUES OF EQUALITY AND
DISCRIMINATION

WORKSHOP RESOURCE PACK

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FOR DIVERSITY
AGAINST DISCRIMINATION



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DISCRIMINATION**

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The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

PROGRESS' mission is to strengthen the EU contribution in support of Member States' commitments. PROGRESS will be instrumental in:

- Providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;
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- Promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- Relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

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NAYD & ArtsTrain

NAYD

NAYD (National Association for Youth Drama) is the development organisation for youth theatre and youth drama in Ireland. NAYD supports youth drama in practice and policy, and supports the sustained development of youth theatres in Ireland.

NAYD advocates the inherent value and the unique relationship between young people and theatre as an artform, and is committed to extending and enhancing young people's understanding of theatre and raising the artistic standards of youth theatre across the country.

NAYD supports youth drama in practice through an annual programme that includes the National Youth Theatre, National and Regional festivals of youth theatres, commissioning new writing, publications, resources, training and other services as well as research and policy development.

With a membership of over 50 youth theatres throughout the country, NAYD supports the sustained development of youth theatres in partnership with local authorities, youth services, theatres and arts centres.

NAYD is principally funded by The Arts Council, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, FÁS, and is also affiliated to the National Youth Council of Ireland.

ArtsTrain

Established in 1999, ArtsTrain is the only dedicated youth drama facilitation training programme in Ireland. The course aims to provide training in the art of drama facilitation and youth arts, and to develop an understanding of good youth theatre practice. The learning takes place in a workshop context, through the trainees' active participation, observation, dialogue and analysis. Other skills explored are intuition, people skills, communication, imagination, planning and organisation. As part of the course work, participants deliver workshops to their peers, as well as to youth theatre groups and demonstrate their understanding of the material through written assignments.



What is Forum Theatre?

Forum Theatre is a form of interactive theatre developed by the late Brazilian theatre director, Augusto Boal, as part of his 'Theatre of the Oppressed'. Forum Theatre empowers the audience to actively explore different options for dealing with shared problems and motivates them to make positive changes in their own lives.

In Forum Theatre, an audience is shown a short play in which a central character (protagonist) encounters an oppression or obstacle led by an oppressor (antagonist), which s/he is unable to overcome. The theme of the piece will usually be something of immediate relevance to the audience, often based on a shared life experience. When the play has been performed, members of the audience can take to the stage and replace the protagonist, acting out alternative paths and decisions. The 'Joker', a member of the Forum company, leads the discussion with the audience and facilitates the interaction between audience and actors. The aim is not to discover the ideal solution, but to encourage the audience to analyse the situation and to try out strategies for countering oppression. The format encourages a positive and thoughtful approach to social problems. The actors explore the results of these choices with the audience, creating a kind of theatrical debate in which experiences and ideas are rehearsed and shared, generating solidarity and empowering them to generate social change.

Although this resource was developed to support the use of Forum Theatre as a tool to address issues of equality and discrimination, the process can be used in many different environments. It can be used with people of all ages in community centres, workplaces, schools, with homeless people, disabled people or anywhere that people experience oppression. Forum Theatre encourages people to find solutions, through debate that is action led rather than purely verbal. Groups that practice 'Theatre of the Oppressed' have opportunities to tackle broader social oppression at the heart of communities. It is also a highly effective tool in work with young people and can help them to identify, explore and challenge instances of oppression in their own lives.

Oppression can be found everywhere in society. People who are victims of oppression sometimes do not have a voice, and those who witness this do not always have the confidence or the voice to support the victims. They may not have the social conscience to know that the oppression is wrong. Groups that practice 'Theatre of the Oppressed' have opportunities to tackle the social oppression at the heart of communities. It can also be used as a way of tackling issues that might be present in local society. For a community made up of people from different cultures, traditions and religions, Forum Theatre could be used as a way of interrogating the prevailing attitudes and the treatment of citizens from multicultural backgrounds. Forum Theatre is also a highly effective tool in work with young people, and can help them to identify, explore and challenge instances of oppression in their own lives.

How can Forum Theatre be used to explore issues of equality and discrimination?

Oppression can be found everywhere in society. Very often people who encounter oppression are the victims of discrimination and inequality. People who are victims of discrimination sometimes do not have a voice and witnesses do not always have the confidence, or the capacity, to support the victims. They may not have the social conscience to know that the discrimination is wrong. Through exploration and debate, the Forum Theatre process can engender a sense of empowerment in people to affect positive change in dealing with discrimination and inequality. Also, the focus in some of the Forum Theatre exercises which requires participants to explore aspects of their own personalities or past experiences can involve an exploration of participants' view of themselves, and others, as well as their position in society. This can lead to an understanding of the role that stereotypes play in informing people's view of themselves and others. It can also lead to an understanding of the impact of stereotyping on people's life choices, as well as the role that stereotypes can play in shaping the policies and practices of organisations and institutions within society.

Equality legislation

Under Irish equality legislation, discrimination based on any one of nine grounds is unlawful. These nine grounds are:

- Gender
- Civil status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller community

Forum Theatre can be used to address any or all of these nine grounds. The Forum Theatre process can be used to educate people as to their statutory rights with regard to equality and is a dynamic tool that can be used by organisations and individuals that deal directly in supporting people who encounter discrimination.

Discrimination, harassment and victimisation

The legislation bans discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The laws apply to a wide range of everyday activities – for example, shopping, banking, entertainment, eating out, transport or travel, going to school or college, socialising or looking for accommodation. They also apply to the world of work, including full-time and part-time employment, temporary employees, job advertisements, pay, vocational training, and so on.

Discrimination occurs when somebody is treated less favourably than another person because of their membership of a group under one of the nine grounds. (However, the law does not guard against all forms of discrimination.)

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds that damages the victim in terms of their dignity, self-esteem, and so on, and places them in a hostile situation or environment.

How can Forum Theatre be used to explore issues of equality and discrimination?

Victimisation happens when a person is badly treated because they have made a complaint about discrimination to the Equality Tribunal or have been involved in some way on a complaint under the equality legislation.

Diversity

A key objective for achieving equality is respect for diversity for everybody across the nine equality grounds.

How schools respond to and plan for diversity and equality is to a great extent determined by their perceptions of and attitudes to difference. Seven common ways of viewing diversity and equality are provided below.

Assimilation – Fitting in

“If people decide to come to this country, they have to fit with ‘our’ way, the ‘accepted’ way of doing and seeing things.”

In this model, people are expected to adapt to the existing system, values and norms of society and the organizations in it like schools, clubs, and workplaces, which will not change. When assimilation is demanded, people are expected to suppress aspects of their identity that do not fit in with ‘our way’: being Irish, settled, Catholic or Christian, white, heterosexual and English speaking. This approach denies the right of individuals across the nine grounds to their identities.

Diversity blindness or silence – Ignoring differences

“All people are essentially the same and they should be treated identically. We should not draw attention to difference.”

This model is often based on a belief that if some people are treated differently from others, this will lead to resentment, divisiveness, bullying, prejudice or harassment. It can also stem from a belief that certain issues, such as sexual orientation, should be ignored in certain places like schools or work-places. While it is important to recognise the similarities that exist between all people, the non-recognition of central aspects of people’s identities by the organisations they belong to is detrimental to self-esteem. In schools, in work-places, and in a whole range of other places, ‘diversity blindness’ may negatively affect their progress and social status, and may fail to protect them from discrimination.

Labelling – Seeing only what is ‘different’.

“She is the gay member of the club.”

“He is the Muslim guy on the staff.”

Labelling is the reduction of a person’s identity to one characteristic that makes them different from the majority, such as their disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.

Labelling is often linked to stereotyping – that is, the making of unwarranted assumptions about people based on their membership of a particular group. The

How can Forum Theatre be used to explore issues of equality and discrimination?

assumptions made in stereotyping may be either negative or positive – for example, ‘Africans are good dancers’, or ‘young people are irresponsible’, or ‘young people are enthusiastic’. Labelling and stereotyping can result in failure to recognise the occurrence of multiple identities and associated multiple discrimination – for example, the experience of some girls from minority ethnic groups, or of students with disabilities who are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Labelling also contributes to those who are different in some way from the majority being seen as ‘them’, with the majority ‘us’ being regarded as the norm.

A charity approach – Feeling sorry for them

“It is our duty to take care of and help disadvantaged people – the poor, the disabled, Travellers and other minority ethnic people.”

Feeling sorry for those perceived to be less fortunate may perpetuate dependency and lack of status on the part of those being ‘helped’. It can also lead to resentment on the part of staff in schools, businesses, and so on, if those being ‘helped’ are not appreciative of what is done for them, or make demands for rights or recognition which the organisation is not prepared to facilitate. It can also be patronising to people from groups that experience inequality.

Negative recognition – Seeing diversity as a problem

“We already have our fair share of Traveller [or: disabled, Muslim] people in the area.”

“Other schools should share the burden.”

“The only time she ever called me a Traveller was when I was in trouble.”

Negative recognition refers to the perception of diversity or of certain groups as a problem. It may be reflected in a reluctance to accept certain groups of people; a perception of certain groups of people as being difficult; an implicit or explicit condemnation of certain types of family status, sexual orientation or religious beliefs; or a refusal to reflect, to accommodate or to value diverse identities in a club’s activities, in the school curriculum, or in work-places.

Limited recognition – So far but no further

“We’ll acknowledge their culture through special intercultural events, but don’t ask me to change the way I teach.”

“We’ll ensure access for a wheelchair user, but not adapt the club trip to ensure that she can take part.”

Limited recognition often means that organisations ‘do something special’ to recognise diversity, but do not adequately reflect on whether their everyday practice accommodates, respects and values diversity or, instead, ignores it or aspects of it. Limited recognition can also occur where organizations resist change in their traditional practices, where minority groups challenge the organisation’s norms, or where a staff member feels unprepared or under-resourced to respond to growing diversity.

How can Forum Theatre be used to explore issues of equality and discrimination?

Diversity and equality – Diversity is normal and good

“All people in this school have similarities and differences, and our policies, practice and curriculum reflect that. At times we may give special recognition to different groups within the school, but we also ensure that they are included and recognised in mainstream school life.”

“Our club welcomes and includes people from all backgrounds and groups. We try to provide an education which meets the needs of all.”

This approach means that organisations recognise diverse identities in a positive way, so that diversity is normalised and valued in ways which do not unintentionally spotlight, marginalise, or exoticise members, staff, or others who are different from the majority. Proper recognition of diversity entails an active commitment to accommodating, respecting and valuing diversity in order to achieve equality. This approach provides the basis for organisations to work towards creating an inclusive environment within which all members of the community can be recognised, respected and valued, and in which each individual can grow and develop.

Introduction to the Workshop Resource Pack

This resource pack, *Introducing Forum Theatre*, was developed upon completion of a Forum Theatre training programme delivered by NAYD and funded by the Equality Authority. It is hoped that this resource will be a useful support for youth workers, youth arts workers, youth theatre leaders, drama facilitators, community workers and teachers who are interested in exploring Forum Theatre.

The following Forum Theatre workshops were delivered as part of a Forum Theatre Training Programme to participants of NAYD's ArtsTrain course in youth drama facilitation. NAYD researched and developed the Forum Theatre Training Programme, which involved designing, and practically piloting, a series of workshops and Forum pieces that were delivered to 14 ArtsTrain participants/facilitators over a number of weeks.

These facilitators were trained in Forum Theatre techniques and approaches that specifically aided the identification and exploration of equality issues. In particular the group explored their own attitudes and experiences of equality and discrimination. NAYD staff then guided these participants through a process of designing their own workshops and drama pieces within a Forum Theatre framework underpinned by the issues of equality and discrimination. The facilitators delivered these workshops to each other as part of a peer learning process before writing them up and identifying youth theatre groups to deliver them to.

The final 'Introduction to Forum Theatre Workshop' was then delivered by the facilitators over a series of weeks to a number of different youth theatres within the Leinster Region. Ninety-seven young people took part in these Forum Theatre Workshops, exploring issues of equality and discrimination that they are likely to face in their own lives, and testing out strategies, which could resolve or improve these situations. These workshops have been devised for youth theatres, but the activities are highly transferable to a number of different contexts and settings, working with both young people and adults.

The resource is divided into 4 sections:

Section 1:

Introduction to Forum Theatre, the Workshop Resource Pack and NAYD.

Section 2:

Forum Theatre workshops delivered to facilitators as part of NAYD's Forum Theatre Training Programme.

Section 3:

The 'Introduction to Forum Theatre Workshop' that was delivered to youth theatres.

Section 4:

Forum Theatre resources and suggestions for further reading.

Introduction to the Workshop Resource Pack

Notes:

- The nature of some of the following Forum Theatre exercises requires participants to explore aspects of their own personalities, or past experiences that may be somewhat uncomfortable. Some of the exercises deliberately run the risk of people getting caught up in the moment of an activity or a discussion. These are all necessary parts of the Forum process. However, the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of each individual must be maintained at all times and not risked to improve the outcomes of the theatre work. Similarly, all individuals should be encouraged to disclose, or discuss only what they are comfortable sharing and exploring with the group.
- With regard to time, the breakdown of sessions is only a guide. Depending on a number of factors (group size, previous workshop experience, group dynamics, etc.), some sessions may take half a day, whilst some may take a full day. This is down to the judgement of the facilitator.
- The exercises in this resource pack come from Augusto Boal's books (*See Section 4*), Forum Theatre courses, and a variety of other sources. Some are standard drama games and others have been created by the writer. These drama exercises have become part of the public domain, and facilitators around the world have borrowed from them, adapted them and changed them to suit their own intentions. This resource also suggests ideas for developing these exercises further, so that the reader can continue this process of reinvention and renewal for the next generation of drama facilitators. If you are interested in reading about Forum Theatre exercises as originally devised by Boal, then please check the 'Forum Theatre Resources' page in Section 4.

Structure of the Workshop Plans

Session Objectives:

These are listed at the beginning of each workshop to give you a sense of the aim of each session and how it fits into the overall arc of the Forum Theatre Training Programme.

Physical Warm-Up:

It is a given that we need to warm up before we sprint or play football. The process prepares us mentally and physically for the task ahead. The warm-up is also the foundation of the drama workshop and will help participants prepare for the activities that follow. Warm-ups will also improve performance and reduce injury by preparing specific muscles for the movements required of participants during the workshop.

Effective warm-ups should include:

- A general warm-up;
- Stretching;
- Specific warm-ups (depending on workshop activities);
- Vocal warm-ups;
- Psychological preparation (including concentration and focus).

Introduction to the Workshop Resource Pack

Tips for effective warm-ups:

- Warm up for 10-15 minutes at the beginning of the workshop session. Increase the duration of the warm-up when the temperature is cold or the group is distracted and needs to concentrate for the work ahead;
- Warm up until the group is ready for the work ahead;
- Let only a few seconds elapse from completion of the warm-up until the start of the next activity;
- Experiment with various warm-ups to determine the amount, intensity and duration that will provide maximum preparation without fatigue;
- A warm-up will not cause early fatigue or hinder performance. On the contrary, warm-ups will increase your performance.

Exercise Objectives:

These are listed at the beginning of each exercise to explain the purpose of the activity and how it fits into the overall arc of the workshop.

Ideas for Progression:

Variations of activities are suggested in some sessions to help the facilitator deepen and expand exercises, and adapt work to suit the group.

Useful Questions for Feedback:

Feedback and group discussion is a vital part of good drama facilitation practice. It is assumed that the facilitator will check in with the group during/after exercises and at the end of each session to discuss the group's experience of the Forum work and their reaction to it. Questions are suggested for 'feedback' discussions after particular exercises to help the facilitator direct debate towards specific learning outcomes.

What is Feedback?

Feedback is a technique where the facilitator draws comments, reactions and opinions from the group in relation to the work. It can act as an indicator for the facilitator on how the group is progressing with the work.

What are Questions?

A question is a sentence of enquiry that calls for a reply. There are many types of questions. Questions range from those that extrapolate responses based on fact, to those that encourage analysis and hypothetical reasoning. Effective questioning is key to an open, positive and creative workshop.

Session 1

Exploring the Arsenal of the Theatre of the Oppressed

Objectives:

To strengthen group dynamic.

To equip the group to explore the principles and themes of Forum Theatre.

To begin to explore the themes of equality and discrimination

1. Head-to-Toe Physical Warm-Up

2. Duels

Objectives:

- To start exploring conflict, vulnerability and power.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each pair to face one another and place their hands on their own knees. They must 'duel' and try to score points by touching the knees of their opponent (their weak spot). To do this, they will need to take their hands off their own knees, thus leaving themselves vulnerable to 'attack'. As the duels continue, build up the tension and competitiveness by calling, "First person to 3 is the winner", or, "Next point wins".

Variation:

Divide the group into different pairs. Ask each pair to face one another, placing one hand behind their back with the palm facing out, and turning their other hand into a 'sword', with the index finger being the tip. They must 'duel' and try to score points by touching the palm of their opponent (their weak spot) with the tip of their sword. As the duels continue, build up the tension and competitiveness by calling, "First person to 3 is the winner", or, "Next point wins".

Useful Questions for Feedback

- How did it feel to win/lose?
- Did your partner overpower you?
- Did you get carried away with the competitiveness?
- How did you celebrate winning?

3. Two by Three by Bradford

Objectives:

- To start exploring Image Work;
- To start exploring possible scenes, characters and relationships.

Divide the group into different pairs (A and B). Ask each pair to begin counting from 1 to 3 together, repeating the sequence until the facilitator asks them to stop. For example, A=1, B=2, A=3, B=1, A=2, etc. Once this is mastered, ask each pair to replace number 1 with a physical action. Then ask each pair to replace number 2 with a sound, and then number 3 with a sound and a physical action.

Progression

- During the last stage of the exercise, invite participants to step out and watch the rest of the group working.
- Invite comment and observations on what is emerging from each pair (i.e., story, characters or relationships). Explore the possible relevance of some of the emerging scenes to the themes of equality and discrimination.
- Suggest emotions to participants to enhance the emerging scenes.

Session 1

4. People to People

Objectives:

- To help break down physical barriers;
- To encourage co-operation and negotiation.

Ask participants to walk around the space. Explain that when you call out a body part, they must find another person (or other people) and make contact with them using that body part, (e.g., knees to knees, elbows to elbows, backs to backs). Call, "Break!" to separate the group and get them walking around the space by themselves again. Try this with a number of different body parts.

Progression

- Ask participants to move through the space whilst attached to their partner(s).
- Ask these groups to interact whilst moving through the space.
- Invite the groups to add sounds and imagine what type of 'creatures' they might be.

5. Points of Contact

Objectives:

- To help break down physical barriers;
- To encourage co-operation and negotiation.

Divide participants into groups of 4/5. Explain that you will call out a list of body parts (e.g., 4 feet, 4 hands, 2 backs and 1 head). The groups must then work together to make contact with the floor using those body parts only. They must also make physical contact with at least one other person in the group. With participants remaining in the same group, continue to call out lists of different body parts for them to work together on.

Variation

- Make it competitive and award points to the quickest group.

6. Mirrors

Objectives:

- To help break down physical barriers;
- To encourage co-operation and negotiation;
- To start exploring Image Work;
- To start exploring possible scenes, characters and relationships.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask participants to decide who is A or B and to find a space in the room where they can work. A begins by starting a movement and B copies (mirrors) the movement. The movements should be continuous and not repetitive. Explain that they should not try to catch their partner out. As the movements progress, each pair may start to move through the space. Ask each pair to swap roles and let B lead A.

Session 1

Progression

- The exercise can develop to the point where you can call, “Change!” to pass the leadership between the pairs, without the movement stopping.
- The exercise can develop to the point where you can explain to the group that there are no leaders, and the mirrored movement should happen organically between the pairs.
- Invite half the participants to step out and watch the rest of the group working, then swap over.
- Suggest to the group that partners can be swapped organically as the movements continue.
- Bring in music.

Useful Questions for Feedback

- What was it like leading/following/having no leaders?
- Did any stories or relationships emerge with your partner?
- Did any stories or relationships emerge as you were watching others?

7. Puppets

Objectives:

- To continue the exploration of Image Work;
- To continue exploring emerging scenes, characters and relationships;
- To start exploring the themes of power, control and manipulation;
- To explore the role of power, control and manipulation in discrimination.

Divide the group into different pairs and ask participants to decide who is A and B. Explain that A is the puppeteer and B is the puppet. A creates an invisible string that is attached to a specific part of B’s body. When A moves the string, B reacts to the movement as a puppet would and moves that body part. The movement should be continuous and not too repetitive. As the movements progress, each pair may start to move through the space. Ask each pair to swap over and let B lead A.

Encourage the group to concentrate on the small movements as well and maintain a precision in the relationship between puppet and puppeteer. Remind participants that the face can be manipulated by the puppeteer, as well as the limbs.

Progression

- Encourage the puppets to interact with each other in the space.
- Invite half the participants to step out and watch the rest of the group working, then swap over.
- Add music to the exercise.
- Give the puppets tasks involving interaction with objects in the room.

Useful Questions for Feedback

- What was it like being the puppet/puppeteer?
- What was it like having ‘power’ over your partner?
- Did you get carried away with being the puppeteer at any time and if so, what was the puppet’s reaction?
- Did any stories or relationships emerge with your partner?
- Did any stories or relationships emerge as you were watching others?

Session 1

8. Columbian Hypnosis

Objectives:

- To continue the exploration of Image Work;
- To continue exploring emerging scenes, characters and relationships
- To continue exploring the themes of power, control and manipulation
- To continue exploring the role of power, control and manipulation in discrimination

Divide the group into different pairs and ask participants to decide who is A and B. Explain that A is the hypnotist and begins by placing their hand a few inches in front of B's face. B must maintain this distance at all times and react when A moves their hand. A should try to manipulate B into all sorts of positions (without it becoming unsafe). The movement should be continuous and not too repetitive. As the movements progress, they may start to move through the space. Ask each pair to swap over and let B lead A.

Progression

- Invite half the participants to step out and watch the rest of the group working, then swap over.
- Divide participants into groups of 3 or more to explore the impact of leading people whilst also being led yourself.
- Add music to the exercise.

Useful Questions for Feedback

- What was it like being the hypnotist/being hypnotised?
- What was it like having 'power' over your partner?
- Did you get carried away with being the hypnotist at any time?
- Did any stories or relationships emerge with your partner(s)?
- Did any stories or relationships emerge as you were watching others?
- How did the emerging stories and relationships relate to issues of equality and discrimination?

Session 2

Exploring Blind Work and Trust

Objectives:

To help break down physical barriers.

To explore sensory work.

To build up trust within the group.

1. Head-to-Toe Physical Warm-up

2. Glass Cobra

Objectives:

- To help break down physical barriers;
- To encourage co-operation and negotiation;
- To begin exploring sensory work.

Ask the group to stand in a circle. Invite participants to place their hands on the shoulders of the person to their right. Explain that, keeping their eyes closed, they should begin to explore the shoulders, neck and back of the head of the person in front of them. Take participants out of the circle, one by one, and place them randomly around the room, still with their eyes closed. When all the participants have been placed around the space, ask the group to re-form the original circle. Everybody must feel their way through the space in silence; encountering each other carefully until, eventually, the circle is re-formed. Only then can the participants open their eyes again.

3. Explore the Face

Objectives:

- To help break down physical barriers;
- To continue the exploration of sensory work.

Ask participants to find a space for themselves in the room. Then ask them to close their eyes and remain completely silent. One by one, guide participants gently through the space and pair people up randomly. Shape each pair so that everyone is standing facing their partner, touching palms, with their eyes closed. Ask each pair to begin by exploring their partner's hands through touch. Then invite them to make their way up the arms to the shoulders, neck and then face. Participants can spend time exploring the face and head, all the while trying to build up a picture in their mind of who they have been paired with. When both people have had their turn, they can open their eyes.

4. Blind Handshake

Objectives:

- To help break down physical barriers;
- To encourage non-verbal co-operation and negotiation;
- To continue exploring sensory work.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each person to face their partner and join hands in a handshake. Then ask participants to break the handshake and take roughly 5 steps back. Then ask them to walk 5 steps forward and reconnect with the handshake. Finally, ask participants to repeat this exercise with their eyes closed.

Session 2

Useful Questions for Feedback

- What was your approach to the exercise?
- Did you approach the reconnection mechanically (i.e., count out the steps in your head) or did you approach it more instinctively?

5. Blind Walk

Objectives:

- To help break down physical barriers;
- To encourage non-verbal co-operation and negotiation;
- To continue exploring sensory work.

Divide the group into pairs and ask each pair to decide who is A and B. Explain that A begins by leading B carefully around the room by the hand, building up non-verbal communication for leading and being led through the space. After a few minutes, ask the pairs to swap over and let B lead A. Then ask the pairs to swap again, but this time B must close his/her eyes as A leads them around. Finally, ask the pairs to swap again, with A closing his/her eyes while being led by B.

Progression/Variation

- When trust has been built up and each partner is comfortable, ask the leader to experiment with speed, levels and different ways of moving.
- Ask the leader to change the way they are leading (i.e., instead of leading by the hand, they could lead by a fingertip).
- Ask leaders to swap their partners whilst the partners are still 'blind'.
- Use a variety of music tracks to influence movement.

6. Trust Fall

Objectives:

- To help break down physical barriers;
- To build trust within the group.

Divide the group into pairs and ask each pair to decide who is A and B. Ask A to stand behind B with their hands on B's back. Explain that B should lean back slightly, letting A take their weight, and then bring them back up to a standing position. Ask each pair to repeat this action and build upon it so that B is brought further and further back by A. Ask each pair to swap roles so that A supports B.

It is very important that the person leaning back keeps their body as straight as possible and that the person supporting maintains a strong stance to enable them to effectively take their partner's weight.

Ask the pairs to swap roles again. This time when A stands behind B, ask A to leave a small gap between their hands and B's back. Invite B to fall back into A. Ask each pair to repeat this action and build upon it, so that the fall gets bigger and bigger.

Session 2

7. Falling (Groups)

Objectives:

- To help break down physical barriers;
- To build trust within the group.

Divide participants into groups of 5/6. Ask each group to find their own space in the room and stand in a line, shoulder to shoulder. Ask each person to take a turn walking forward and say, "Falling". Explain that when they call, "Falling", they should begin to fall backwards. As this happens, the rest of the group should position themselves, catch the person and return them to a standing position. Once everyone in the group has had a go, explain that participants can come forward at random.

8. Falling (Whole group)

Objectives:

- To help break down physical barriers;
- To build trust within the group;
- To develop a sense of group and individual achievement.

Ask the participants to walk around the space. Explain that at some point each person should randomly step into the middle of the room to call "Falling", and begin to fall. At this point the participants who are best placed should position themselves, catch the person and bring them back to a standing position. This activity can continue until everybody who wishes to participate has had a turn.

Variation/Progression

Explain that as the falling person is caught by the rest of the group, they can lift that person up, carry them around the room over their heads and then gently bring them back to a standing position.

Session 3

Image Work

Objectives:

To explore the themes of Forum and Oppression.

To explore the themes of inequality and discrimination as specific forms of oppression

To explore the use of Image Work in the creation of Forum Theatre.

To create a forum for debate with the audience.

1. Head-to-Toe Physical Warm-Up

2. Guess the leader

Objectives:

- To begin to explore issues of possible oppression (e.g., power of group over individual, gang mentality, power of knowledge, struggle of the discriminated minority, struggle of the protagonist)

Ask the group to stand in a circle and invite a volunteer to step forward. Ask this volunteer to leave the room for a few moments. Then invite a second volunteer to step forward from the group. Explain to the group that this person is the leader. The leader should begin a continuous movement, which the rest of the group should copy. Encourage the leader to change the movement regularly.

Explain that the volunteer waiting outside the room is going to return and will have to try to guess who is leading the movement. At this stage, brief the volunteer, who is waiting outside the room, invite them to return to the circle and try to figure out who is leading the movements. The leader and the group should do their best to disguise who is leading, but the leader must remain the *only* one who is leading the movement.

Repeat this activity, allowing different participants from the group to step forward and volunteer.

3. Granny's Creepy Footsteps

Objectives:

- To continue exploring issues of possible oppression (e.g., power of group over individual, gang mentality, struggle of the discriminated minority, struggle of the protagonist who tries but is ultimately defeated).

Continuing to work with the group in a circle, ask a volunteer to step forward. Invite the volunteer to stand in the centre of the circle. Explain that the objective for the group is to creep up on the volunteer in the centre and tip them on the shoulder, without the volunteer seeing them move. If the volunteer catches someone moving, they clap, point, and send that person back to the edge of the circle. The person who manages to tip the shoulder of the volunteer then replaces them in the centre of the circle.

Progression

- Encourage the group to focus on creating different atmospheres together rather than simply trying to catch the volunteer (e.g., exploring neutral faces, neutral body stance).
- Encourage the group to take their time and build up the tension of the exercise.

Session 3

4. Image of the Word

Objectives:

- To explore Image Work;
- To explore themes of Forum and Oppression;
- To explore the themes of inequality and discrimination as specific forms of oppression;
- To create a forum for debate with the audience when discussing the images.

Divide participants into groups of 5/6 and ask one of these groups to volunteer to go first. Invite this group to stand in a line and invite the rest of the participants to form an audience in front of them. Ask each person in the volunteer group to step forward, one by one, to strike a pose. These 5/6 individual poses will form one overall image. Invite the audience to discuss this image.

Once each group has had an opportunity to create an image, return to the first volunteer group. Repeat the exercise, but this time give the group a word related to oppression or discrimination and ask them to respond to this word when creating their image. Give each group a different word to show and invite the audience to interpret what they see. Begin by asking the group for broad interpretations of the images and progress to more specific interpretations.

Examples of image words:

Conflict, Family, Defeat, Difference, Minority, Outsider, Struggle, Intervention, Support, Bravery, Pressure, Hope, Oppression, Discrimination.

5. Images of Oppression

Objectives:

- To discuss the elements of Forum Theatre;
- To explore specific types of oppression and inequality;
- To create a forum for debate with the audience when discussing the images.

Divide participants into groups of 5/6. Ask each group to work by themselves and create a number of images of oppression. Once each group has achieved this, ask them to select 3 of these images. Assign a performance and audience space, and invite each group to present their 3 images to the rest of the participants. Work with the audience group to interpret these images.

Useful Questions for Feedback (Image Exercises 5 & 6)

- Who are the people and what is happening in the image?
- What form(s) of oppression and inequality are present?
- Who is being oppressed?
- Who are the protagonists/antagonists?
- Are there any neutral characters present?

Session 3

6. Images of Own Oppression

Objectives:

- To discuss the elements of Forum Theatre;
- To explore specific types of oppression and inequality;
- To create a forum for debate with the audience when discussing the images.

Divide the participants into groups of 5/6. Ask each person to think of a moment from their own life when they experienced oppression and in particular were the victims of inequality and/or discrimination. It is important that this moment is something they are comfortable sharing with the group. While the group is thinking about this, clarify that they may have been the oppressed person/oppressor or a witness to an oppression.

Ask each participant to sculpt their group into an image of that oppression, and then include himself/herself in the image. It is important that each participant plays himself/herself within the image they create, whether that's the oppressed person, the oppressor or a witness.

Set up a performance and audience space in the room and ask each group to present their images to the rest of the participants. For each image:

- Ask the audience to close their eyes while the image is created *without* the protagonist (the person who created the image). Then ask the audience to open their eyes.
- Ask the audience to close their eyes while the image is created *with* the protagonist (the person who created the image). Then ask the audience to open their eyes.

Invite the participants to interpret the image. Then ask the participant who created the image to explain it. After these discussions, give this participant an opportunity to alter their image so that the oppression is stopped. Repeat this sequence with each member of the group.

Note:

It is strongly recommended that each participant be allowed to experience this process and work through their own image with the rest of the group. However, it can take some time to explore each participant's image and time constraints may restrict the numbers you can work with. The length of time you spend on this exercise is at the discretion of the facilitator.

Session 4

Practising Intervention & Forum

Objectives:

To explore the basic mechanics of Forum Theatre.

To practise interventions.

To explore the role of the Joker (see page 4 for definition of the Joker).

To explore the roles of the protagonist, antagonist and other actors in the Forum piece.

1. Head-to-Toe Physical Warm-Up

2. Bomb & Shield

Objectives:

- To explore the theme of danger;
- To explore strategic thinking.

Ask the participants to walk around the space. While they are walking, ask each participant to select 2 other people. They should keep these choices to themselves and not indicate who they have chosen. One person is the bomb and the other person is the shield. Explain that the aim of the exercise is to keep your shield between yourself and your bomb.

After a few minutes, you can call, "Freeze", and check in with the group to see how they are doing. You can also give a countdown to the bomb exploding and then check with people to see if they are safe.

Useful Questions for Feedback:

- Did you panic?
- Did you use tactics? What were those tactics?

3. Equal Distances

Objectives:

- To explore the theme of cause and effect;
- To explore strategic thinking.

Ask participants to continue walking around the space. Again, while they are walking, ask each participant to select 2 other people. As before, they should keep these choices to themselves and not indicate who they have chosen.

Explain that the aim of the exercise, for each participant, is to walk around the space and keep an equal distance between themselves and the 2 people they have chosen. After participants have worked on this for a while, explain that the group can stop moving once everyone has achieved their objective.

Useful Questions for Feedback:

- Did you use tactics? What were those tactics?

Session 4

4. Image of the Family

Objectives:

- To explore the basic mechanics of Forum Theatre;
- To practise intervention;
- To encourage audience discussion;
- To explore the role of the Joker;
- To explore the idea of an audience consensus.

Ask for 4/5 volunteers from the group. Explain that the rest of the participants will form the audience. Ask the volunteers/actors to create a universal image of the 'family'. Discuss the image with the audience, and debate whether it conveys 'family' to their satisfaction. Ask if any of the audience members feel they could improve this image.

Then invite members of the audience up to *replace* any of the actors in the image and see if they could make a beneficial change. Explain that members of the audience can only make 1 'intervention' at a time. Discuss with the audience what impact the contributors have made to the image and the debate in general.

5. Image of the Mother

Objectives:

- To explore the basic mechanics of Forum Theatre;
- To practise intervention;
- To encourage audience discussion;
- To explore the role of the Joker;
- To explore the idea of an audience consensus.

Once again, ask for 4/5 volunteers from the group and explain that the other participants will remain as the audience. Ask the volunteers/actors to create a universal image of the 'mother', each person representing a different aspect. Discuss the image with the audience, and debate whether it conveys 'mother' to their satisfaction.

Then invite members of the audience up to *replace* any of the actors in the image and see if they could make a beneficial change. Again, explain that members of the audience can only make 1 'intervention' at a time. Discuss with the audience what impact the contributors have made to the image and the debate in general.

Variation

- Invite each actor in the image to add a repetitive sound and movement to enhance their contribution to the image.

6. Bus Scenario

Objectives:

- To further explore the mechanics of Forum Theatre;
- To practise interventions;
- To encourage audience discussion;

Session 4

- To further explore the role of the Joker;
- To explore in detail the roles of the protagonist, antagonist and other actors in the Forum piece;
- To explore the objectives of the actor in the piece in relation to interventions and how 'difficult' they make it for the people intervening;
- To explore the concept of 'Magic'.

Explain to the group that you will set up an improvised Forum piece. Set out a few rows of empty chairs that recreate the lay-out of a bus. Ask for 2 volunteers to take on the roles of the antagonist (male) and the protagonist (female). Explain that you will be the Joker and the rest of the group will be the audience.

Inform the group that the scene is the top floor of a late night bus. Brief the 2 volunteers as follows, and then ask them to improvise the scene:

- The bus is empty except for the protagonist.
- The protagonist has no mobile phone.
- The antagonist enters and despite all the empty seats, chooses to sit beside the protagonist.

Once the volunteers have established this scene, as Joker, ask the audience to assess the situation.

Brief the volunteers that as the scene develops, the antagonist will display inappropriate behaviour to the protagonist (e.g. invasion of personal space, various forms of intimidation and acting in a 'creepy' or offensive way) and ask them to improvise the scene. To deepen the exploration of issues of equality and discrimination the intimidation/offensiveness can also be based around gender, race, sexuality, social background etc. If the protagonist chooses to go downstairs, the Joker can set out the lower deck of the bus and ask a member of the audience to play the driver. If neutral characters, such as the driver, are introduced, it is important to discuss how 'difficult' these actors can be in relation to audience interventions. It is key for the group to understand that there are no easy solutions to oppression, and that neutral characters should make it *difficult* but not *impossible* for an audience member to make a positive intervention.

Continue to assess the developing situation with the audience. Depending on how the scene plays out, decide (as the Joker) when the time is right to ask the audience to intervene and replace the *protagonist*. Invite a member of the audience up to replace the protagonist and ask them to continue improvising within the brief to improve the situation.

Continue to invite interventions from the audience, discussing the impact of each intervention with the group, until the audience consensus is that the situation has improved. If any of the interventions are beyond the boundaries of reality (e.g., a person magically produces a phone or something quite unrealistic happens), the Joker, or a member of the audience, can call, "Magic". If the rest of the audience agree that the intervention was 'Magic', the person intervening must find an alternative approach.

Session 5

Preparation for Devising

Objectives:

To explore potential material for a Forum Theatre piece.

To explore the journey of the Forum characters.

To explore tactical approaches to oppression and discrimination

1. Head-to-Toe Physical Warm-up

2. Break the Circle

Objectives:

- To explore the struggle of the protagonist;
- To explore the theme of defeat;
- To explore tactical approaches to oppression and discrimination.

Ask the group to stand in a circle and invite 1 volunteer to stand in the middle. Explain that the volunteer's objective is to break out of the circle and that the rest of the group should physically stop the volunteer from breaking out by linking together. Encourage the volunteer to try and look for alternative ways of escape. Take feedback from the group and invite a few different volunteers to try the exercise.

3. Two Revelations of Saint Teresa

Objectives:

- To explore relationships;
- To explore potential material for Forum.

Divide participants into pairs. Ask each pair to come up with 'who' they are and 'where' they are. Explain that there should be a relationship between the characters they invent (i.e., they should not be strangers or acquaintances). Ask each pair to start to improvise a typical scene between these 2 characters.

After a few minutes, explain that at your signal (e.g., call, "1st Revelation".) *one* of the characters should share a revelation. This revelation should have the potential to fundamentally change their relationship, for better or worse. Give the signal and let the participants play out the moment of revelation and the consequences for the relationship. How does the other person react?

As the scene progresses, explain that you will signal for the second character to share a revelation. Give the signal and let the scene play out as both characters react to this second revelation. When you feel the moment is right, explain that you will signal for one person to depart. Give the signal and then let each pair play out this departure.

4. Internal and External Status

Objectives:

- To explore potential characters;
- To explore relationships between the characters;
- To explore potential material for Forum;
- To explore the duality of certain characters with regard to status (e.g., the 'bully', who may have strong external status but may also have low inner status).

Session 5

Ask for 5 volunteers from the group. Give each person 2 random numbers, ranging from 1 to 10. Explain that the first number refers to their *internal* status (their inner strength) and the second to their *external* status (how they are viewed by the world). Ask them not to reveal these numbers to others.

Ask the audience to select a setting for a scene that has the potential to highlight people's status (i.e., a work environment, a family occasion). Once the audience has selected the setting, brief the volunteers.

The scene will start and each person will attempt to play a character according to both aspects of their status. At appropriate intervals the facilitator will halt the scene and invite the audience to discuss the status of the characters and the nature of the scene.

Session 6

Devising Forum 1

Objectives:

To begin the process of devising a Forum Theatre piece.

After a head-to-toe physical warm-up, explain that the focus of the session is to begin devising pieces of Forum Theatre. Initiate a discussion with the group about the forms of oppression and issues of inequality that they would be interested in exploring through forum and have experience of as a group. Then divide the participants into smaller teams of 5/6, grouping participants with similar interests together. Ask each group to choose an issue to explore that they have experience of as a group.

Ask the group to begin to devise a forum piece based on their own knowledge and experience of the issue. Check-in with each group throughout the session to answer questions and ensure the groups are progressing with their task.

While it is advised to encourage the group to identify their own experiences as the source material for the devised Forum Theatre pieces, the facilitator can also choose to provide the participants with scenarios that specifically address inequality and oppression under the nine grounds of discrimination. *(Please see Appendix 1 for suggested scenarios that represent common examples of discrimination as identified in research conducted by the Equality Authority.)*

Session 7

Devising Forum 2

Objectives:

To complete the process of devising a Forum Theatre piece.

After a head-to-toe physical warm-up, ask the participants to return to their groups from the previous session. Ask each group to continue their devising process, explaining that the deadline for completing their piece is the end of the session. Check in with each group throughout the session to answer questions and ensure the groups are progressing with their task.

Session 8

Experiencing Forum Theatre

Objectives:

To create a Forum Theatre experience.

To allow participants to experience the roles of actors and audience within a larger Forum Theatre piece.

To explore the role of the Joker within a larger Forum Theatre piece.

After a head-to-toe physical warm-up, ask the participants to return to their groups. Allocate a performance space and an audience space within the room where you are working. Invite each group to present their Forum piece to the rest of the group, who will serve as the audience. Take on the role of the Joker during the Forum Theatre pieces.

Sessions 9 – 12

Devising the Forum Workshop

Objectives

To review the workshops and exercises from the Forum Theatre Training Programme.

To devise an 'Introduction to Forum Theatre Workshop'.

To trial workshop material and the final workshop plan in a peer learning context.

To develop workshop material suited to a youth theatre context that will support young people's exploration of equality issues.

Over the course of these 3 sessions, assist the group as they begin the process of devising an 'Introduction to Forum Theatre Workshop'. The process involves:

- Reviewing the Forum Theatre workshops they experienced (Sessions 1-8);
- Selecting material from these workshops that particularly interested them on the theme of inequality;
- Working individually/in pairs/in small groups to deliver this material to the rest of the group and develop a better understanding of the work;
- Discussing this experience through feedback sessions;
- Working in small groups to draft workshop plans incorporating and developing this material;
- Being mindful of the youth theatre context of the project, discussing the relevance of this work to young people and reviewing workshop plans to see if any exercises need to be adapted to suit this target group;
- Presenting these draft workshop plans to the other groups;
- Discussing these draft workshop plans as a group;
- Agreeing a final structure for the 'Introduction to Forum Theatre Workshop' as a group;
- Delivering the workshop 'in-house' to the participating group;
- Making final adjustments to the workshop structure and plan following this 'trial-run' experience.

Introduction to Forum Theatre Workshop

[This workshop was created by ArtsTrain participants during Session 9 – 12 of the Forum Theatre Training Programme and was delivered to youth theatres in the Leinster Region. Please see the Introduction to the Resource Pack for assumptions regarding the Warm-up and Feedback.]

TIME: 2hrs

1. Head-to-Toe Physical Warm-Up

2. Glass Cobra

Objectives:

- To help break down physical barriers;
- To encourage co-operation and negotiation;
- To begin exploring sensory work.

Ask the group to stand in a circle. Invite participants to place their hands on the shoulders of the person to their right. Explain that, keeping their eyes closed, they should begin to explore the shoulders, neck and back of the head of the person in front of them. Take participants out of the circle, one by one, and place them randomly around the room, still with their eyes closed. When all the participants have been placed around the space, ask the group to re-form the original circle. Everybody must feel their way through the space in silence; encountering each other carefully until eventually, the circle is re-formed. Only then can the participants open their eyes again.

3. Duels

Objectives:

- To start exploring conflict, vulnerability and power.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each pair to face one another and place their hands on their own knees. They must 'duel' and try to score points by touching the knees of their opponent (their weak spot). To do this they will need to take their hands off their own knees, thus leaving themselves vulnerable to 'attack'. As the duels continue, build up the tension and competitiveness by calling, "First person to 3 is the winner", or, "Next point wins".

Variation:

Divide the group into different pairs. Ask each pair to face one another, placing one hand behind their back with the palm facing out, and turning their other hand into a 'sword' with the index finger being the tip. They must 'duel' and try to score points by touching the palm of their opponent (their weak spot) with the tip of their sword. As the duels continue, build up the tension and competitiveness by calling, "First person to 3 is the winner", or "Next point wins".

Useful Questions for Feedback

- How did it feel to win/lose?
- Did your partner overpower you?
- Did you get carried away with the competitiveness?
- How did you celebrate winning?

Introduction to Forum Theatre Workshop

4. Columbian Hypnosis

Objectives:

- To begin to explore Image Work;
- To continue exploring emerging scenes, characters and relationships
- To continue exploring the themes of power, control and manipulation;
- To continue exploring the themes of power, control and manipulation in discrimination.

Divide the group into different pairs and ask participants to decide who is A and B. Explain that A is the hypnotist, and begins by placing their hand a few inches in front of B's face. B must maintain this distance at all times and react when A moves their hand. A should try to manipulate B into all sorts of positions (without it becoming unsafe). The movement should be continuous and not too repetitive. As the movements progress, they may start to move through the space. Ask each pair to swap over and let B lead A.

Progression

- Invite half the participants to step out and watch the rest of the group working, then swap over.
- Divide participants into groups of 3 or more to explore the impact of leading people whilst also being led yourself.
- Add music to the exercise.

Useful Questions for Feedback

- What was it like being the hypnotist/being hypnotised?
- What was it like having 'power' over your partner?
- Did you get carried away with being the hypnotist at any time?
- Did any stories or relationships emerge with your partner(s)?
- Did any stories or relationships emerge as you were watching others?
- How did the emerging stories and relationships relate to issues of equality and discrimination?

5. Image of the Word

Objectives:

- To explore Image Work;
- To explore themes of Forum and Oppression;
- To explore the themes of equality and discrimination as specific forms of oppression;
- To create a forum for debate with the audience when discussing the images.

Divide participants into groups of 5/6 and ask one of these groups to volunteer to go first. Invite this group to stand in a line and invite the rest of the participants to form an audience in front of them. Ask each person in the volunteer group to step forward, one by one, to strike a pose. These 5/6 individual poses will form one overall image. Invite the audience to discuss the image.

Introduction to Forum Theatre Workshop

Once each group has had an opportunity to create an image, return to the first volunteer group. Repeat the exercise, but this time give the group a word related to oppression or discrimination and ask them to respond to this word when creating their image. Give each group a different word to show and invite the audience to interpret what they see. Begin by asking the group for broad interpretations of the images and progress to more specific interpretations.

Examples of image words:

Conflict, Family, Defeat, Difference, Minority, Outsider Struggle, Intervention, Support, Bravery, Pressure, Hope, Oppression, Discrimination.

6. Bus Scenario

Objectives:

- To explore the mechanics of Forum Theatre;
- To practise interventions;
- To encourage audience discussion;
- To explore the role of the Joker;
- To explore in detail the roles of the protagonist, antagonist and other actors in the Forum piece;
- To explore the objectives of the actor in the piece in relation to interventions and how 'difficult' they make it for the people intervening;
- To explore the concept of 'Magic'.

Explain to the group that you will set up an improvised Forum piece. Set out a few rows of empty chairs that recreate the lay-out of a bus. Ask for 2 volunteers to take on the roles of the antagonist (male) and the protagonist (female). Explain that you will be the Joker and the rest of the group will be the audience.

Inform the group that the scene is the top floor of a late night bus. Brief the 2 volunteers as follows, and then ask them to improvise the scene:

- The bus is empty except for the protagonist.
- The protagonist has no mobile phone.
- The antagonist enters and despite all the empty seats, chooses to sit beside the protagonist.

Once the volunteers have established this scene, as Joker, ask the audience to assess the situation.

Brief the volunteers that as the scene develops, the antagonist will display inappropriate behaviour to the protagonist (e.g., invasion of personal space, various forms of intimidation and acting in a 'creepy' or offensive way), and ask them to improvise the scene. To deepen the exploration of issues of equality and discrimination the intimidation/offensiveness can also be based around gender, race, sexuality, social background etc. If the protagonist chooses to go downstairs, the Joker can set out the lower deck of the bus and ask a member of the audience to play the driver. If neutral characters, such as the driver, are introduced, it is important to discuss how 'difficult' these actors can be in relation to audience interventions. It is key for the group to understand that there are no easy solutions to oppression, and that neutral characters should make it *difficult* but not *impossible* for an audience member to make a positive intervention.

Introduction to Forum Theatre Workshop

Continue to assess the developing situation with the audience. Depending on how the scene plays out, decide (as the Joker) when the time is right to ask the audience to intervene and replace the *protagonist*. Invite a member of the audience up to replace the protagonist and ask them to continue improvising within the brief to improve the situation.

Continue to invite interventions from the audience, discussing the impact of each intervention with the group, until the audience consensus is that the situation has improved. If any of the interventions are beyond the boundaries of reality (e.g., a person magically produces a phone or something quite unrealistic happens), the Joker, or a member of the audience, can call, "Magic". If the rest of the audience agree that the intervention was 'Magic', the person intervening must find an alternative approach.

7. Devising Forum

Objectives:

- To devise a Forum Theatre piece;
- To create a Forum Theatre experience;
- To allow participants to experience the roles of actors and audience within a larger Forum Theatre piece;
- To explore the role of the Joker within a larger Forum Theatre piece.

Divide the participants into groups of 5/6. Ask each group to choose a form of oppression on the theme of equality that they have an interest in exploring. While it is advised to encourage the group to identify their own experiences of oppression as the source material for the devised Forum Theatre pieces, the facilitator can also choose to provide the participants with scenarios that specifically address inequality and oppression under the nine grounds of discrimination.

(Please see Appendix 1 for suggested scenarios that represent common examples of discrimination as identified in research conducted by the Equality Authority.)

Ask the group to begin to devise a Forum piece. Check in with each group to answer questions and ensure the groups are progressing with their task.

Allocate a performance space and an audience space within the room where you are working. Invite each group to present their Forum piece for the rest of the group, who will serve as the audience. Take on the role of the Joker during the Forum Theatre pieces.

Appendix 1

Identifying the problem – some scenarios for building Forum Theatre that explores discrimination and inequality issues experienced by young people.

Forum Theatre can be used to address any or all of the nine grounds of discrimination. While it is advised to encourage the group to identify their own experiences of oppression as the source material for the devised Forum Theatre pieces, the facilitator can also choose to provide the participants with scenarios that specifically address inequality and oppression under the nine grounds of discrimination.

The scenarios developed should be real and important; relevant to the real lives of the participants; involve an example of oppression as discrimination and relate to everyday life.

The following scenarios provide a prompt or starting point for the creation of the Forum Theatre piece by the participants. In his/her role as the Joker, the facilitator should analyse the response to the scenario as acted by the actors and spect-actors and provoke the participants into trying out strategies to counter the discrimination presented.

Scenario 1

You and your friends gather every Saturday to shop in a local shopping centre. One Saturday afternoon, while sitting in a common recreational area in the shopping centre, your group is approached by a security guard who tells you to move on. Groups of adults and families in the vicinity do not receive the same instruction. When you ask why, you are told that “groups of teenagers disturb the other shoppers”

Scenario 2

The sports team you play with is popular and wins matches regularly. It is hard to get onto the team and if you do it is considered an honour and an achievement. The team coach is tough but supportive and you admire and look up to him/her. Sometimes though the coach calls you and your team-mates ‘faggot’ or ‘gay’ as terms of disapproval when you move slowly or under-perform.

Scenario 3

You have a part-time job in a supermarket. One day a customer refuses to be served by your colleague who is working at the deli-counter and asks for someone else to serve them. When you ask why you are told it is because your colleague is black and shouldn’t be allowed to handle meat because “everyone knows they don’t wash their hands properly”

Scenario 4

Your youth theatre runs workshops in a room on the first floor of an old building with no wheelchair access. When a person in your class at school who is physically disabled and uses a wheelchair tells you they would like to try drama you ask your workshop leader if they can join the youth theatre. The leader tells you that although they would like to include your school friend, the building cannot accommodate people in wheelchairs.

Appendix 1

Scenario 5

In the queue for a club you notice the bouncer refusing entry to a group of people. Your friend comments that 'they look like Travellers' and expresses relief that they have not been allowed in because "they will only start fighting with each other and cause trouble"

Scenario 6

You apply for a job as a kitchen porter in a restaurant but receive no notification of an interview. When passing the restaurant you call in to enquire if they received your CV. The manager tells you that they did receive your CV but that they are only interviewing males as the job requires heavy lifting and as the rest of the kitchen staff are male a female wouldn't fit in. By way of consolation, the manager says they will keep your CV on file in case they need a waitress in the future.

Scenario 7

You attend a school run by a religious order. It is the only school in your area. As part of your religious studies class an annual retreat is held. This year the class is visiting a catholic pilgrimage site and the day will include a catholic mass. There are four people in your class who practice other faiths as well as a number of people who do not practice any religion. Announcing the trip your teacher says that if the young people of other faiths do not wish to attend they will be given the choice of staying behind at the school for supervised study on the day of the trip.

And finally...

As identified in the introduction to this resource a key objective for achieving equality is respect for diversity for everybody across the nine equality grounds. Facilitators should consider guiding a discussion on how the 'acted' responses reflected, related to, or countered the seven common ways of viewing diversity and equality as outlined earlier, namely:

- Assimilation – Fitting in
- Diversity blindness or silence – Ignoring differences
- Labelling – Seeing only what is 'different'
- A charity approach – Feeling sorry for them
- Negative recognition – Seeing diversity as a problem
- Limited recognition – So far but no further
- Diversity and equality – Diversity is normal and good.

Forum Theatre Resources

Games for Actors and Non-Actors

By Augusto Boal

Translated by Adrian Jackson

Published by: Routledge, UK, 2nd edition, 2002

ISBN: 978-0415267083

Theatre of the Oppressed (Get Political)

By Augusto Boal

Published by: Pluto Press, UK, New Edition, 2008

ISBN: 978-0745328386

The Aesthetics of the Oppressed

By Augusto Boal

Translated by Adrian Jackson

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