Contents

Drama Therapy Interventions

Descriptions of drama therapy interventions are spread out among a variety of texts. A few books, such as *Acting for real* (Emunah, 2020) and *Barrier-free theatre* (Bailey, 2010) have chapters with adapted drama games and interventions, but many are passed down verbally from generation to generation of theatre professionals or drama therapists. To remedy that we have compiled this list to provide commonly used interventions in one location. We also want to show how specific drama games are useful for therapeutic purposes by pointing out what goals and outcomes can be achieved by using them. This is an extensive list, but it is not exhaustive. There are many additional activities, and as time goes on, we hope that we can add to this resource. However, it will never be complete, because it is always possible to invent new interventions and adapt others.

Fully developed drama therapy theories and methodologies such as Psychodrama, Narradrama, or Playback Theatre are not included here as facilitating them safely requires a great deal of training. A few interventions from these methodologies are included because they can be used as tools on their own during any kind of role-play or scene work. In essence, this resource contains many tools, but does not replace training.

How to Use This Resource

Early career drama therapists sometimes have difficulty identifying what goals or outcomes different interventions can address. Most treatment goals and the skills necessary to achieve them fall under the larger umbrellas of physiological regulation, executive functioning and locus of control. The first heading—**Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes**—identifies the potential goals and outcomes of each intervention. Using this heading, the therapist can assess if the intervention would address the specific needs and objectives of the individual and/or group. We assume that every intervention develops spontaneity and creativity.

Purpose identifies what the intervention typically is used for within a drama therapy session: check-in, warm-up, primary intervention, or closure. In addition, some interventions can be useful for assessment purposes when first beginning with clients or at a turning point in therapy to identify what skills have been developed. These interventions will be noted. The suggestions are based on our experiences with these interventions. You may find other uses or purposes for them.

All drama therapy involves play. Knowing the Type of Play often helps a drama therapist understand at which level of development an intervention works best. If a game is beyond the clients' zone of proximal development, they will not be able to play it, but if the game is well past the clients' zone, they will become bored and may act out or stop playing. Not all drama therapists are trained in play theory, so a section will follow to identify the stages and types of play.

Configuration indicates if the intervention can be done in a group or individual setting. Most drama games are designed for groups, but there can be *adaptations* that make them useful in one-on-one sessions. Other games work best in a one-on-one or solo situation.

If any Materials are needed for an intervention, they are listed next.

The **Description** of how to do the intervention follows. We have included ❖Helpful Hints, ◆Notes, and ***Warnings** when warranted, based on experiences we have had using specific interventions with certain types of groups. ❖Helpful Hints offer suggestions for avoiding participant misunderstandings that can arise. They point out aspects of the game that may change with different types of participants. They also identify suggestions that will make the game unfold more smoothly. ◆Notes clarify aspects of the rules or uses of materials. Sometimes they provide clarification on the "how to" aspects of the game. ***Warnings** point out contraindications, potential physical or emotional harm, and dangers that may not be apparently evident when this game is used in a theatre education context.

Variations explain a different version of the intervention that may be simpler, more advanced or more appropriate for specific groups. If *Variations* of an intervention provide ***Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes***, they will be noted. *Accommodations* point out ways that an intervention could be made more accessible for participants who are differently abled, either physically, cognitively, or emotionally. Adaptations are made when changes are implemented for the entire group so that all members can participate equitably. Drama therapists are encouraged to use their creativity to design additional changes to best meet the inclusion of their participants. Often participants have the best ideas for their own accessibility since they deal with these problems everyday. If asked directly, they can provide insights about how to best implement these changes.

Stages and Types of Play

Play is one of the core concepts that can be found in every drama therapy intervention. What follows is an overview of the stages and types of play for anyone who has not studied play theory or needs a refresher. Stages of play are based on where a person is developmentally; types of play are based on the functions being addressed in an activity. Besides providing an informal way to assess participants developmentally, a lot can be discovered about the current state of social-emotional skills and executive functions by understanding a participant's current stage of play. The current stage of play of the individual or the majority of the group will help identify where to start in Phase One. Growth in play skills will be crucial in all phases of drama therapy because they impact the depth of work that can be done. British dramatherapist and actor Roger Grainger, says about game playing:

> The action of playing games is important and revealing in itself. Word games, mime games, action games, games inventing things. To play a game, "only a game," can be the best way of establishing a relationship of "betweenness," because in games you have to keep your distance and share at the same time! Acceptance and enjoyment of another person as themselves, the actual conscious appreciation of their otherness; being able sometimes to leave aside the need to understand other people in terms of our own ideas and assumptions; leaving space for insight by approaching things from a new angle; *recognizing how different we all are from each other* [his italics]—letting the way someone plays a game reveal things we would not ordinarily let ourselves see, and that they would have difficulty showing us; revealing ourselves to someone without embarrassment; having a shared experience to refer to during the rest of a therapy session these are some of the things we associate with games. After all, as Winnicott knew so well, the right kind of game is the most effective way of all to make people feel less afraid (Winnicott, 1980).
>
> (Grainger, 2006, pp. 73–74)

Parten's Stages of Play (1932)

The drama therapist can assess many aspects of participants through play. How a person plays initially can indicate if they had successful experiences with play as a child, if they had a disruption during their play development, if they understand the concept of following rules, or if they never experienced play at all. Other play habits can illuminate participants' level of creativity and spontaneity, their skills of cooperation, their drive to be competitive with others, where they are in the development of their theory of mind, their abilities with abstract thinking, and

their willingness to engage in dramatic enactment. Mildred Parten (1932) identified five stages of play.

Solitary Play

If a participant can only play alone, this may indicate that early in development they experienced isolation or lived in a chaotic environment and used *solitary play* to block out stimuli. Many child refugees can only do solitary play. Some children with disabilities are not given the opportunity to play. To begin play, they may need adult scaffolding and did not get it. In the case of children who have autism, caregivers and educators may not have thought they were capable of play. This deficit may mean that later on when they are teenagers or young adults and are given the opportunity to play, they tend to start at the solitary or parallel play level.

Onlooker Play

Onlooker play may indicate issues in relationship building or attachment. The child who can only watch others play may indicate a desire to connect, but lacks understanding of how to approach another or fears doing so. In individual therapy, the therapist can model how to join in play for the participant, and in group therapy, the group members can model play for each other along with the therapist.

Parallel Play

Parallel play is the ability of participants to play next to each other, but not together. While participants are not interacting, they develop ego strength and confidence being together. One player may see what the other is doing and copy it, so learning is often achieved through Bandura's social learning theory of modeling (1977). If participants are engaged in parallel play, the therapist should pay attention to see if the participants are able to stay focused on what they are doing versus getting distracted by others' play. Participants who have attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often struggle with distraction.

Associative Play

Associative play involves social give-and-take. In this stage, players are not playing with each other; however, they may share something with another or may ask them to explain what they are doing. There is a connection, but the play is not overlapping. Lack of ability to participate in associative play can demonstrate difficulty with group norms. Within a problematic interaction, one player may ask to borrow something, and there is not an ability from the other to share, or

there is no engagement at all. Often inability with associative play may indicate a lack of basic conversational skills or early childhood deprivation of resources or social support: There has been so much deprivation or loss that sharing feels unsafe.

Cooperative Play

In *cooperative play*, the players are actually interacting and playing a game together. There is an understanding of norms, social skills, reciprocity, and empathic understanding that all participants are in the game with each other for enjoyment. If participants are struggling with cooperative play, the therapist will see poor emotional and behavioral regulation.

Hughes's Types of Play

Bob Hughes (2012) created a taxonomy of play in the 1960s and continued revising it throughout his career as a playworker. As we looked at how these types of play function in drama therapy, we found that many overlap with dramatic play (symbolic, sociodramatic, social, creative, communication, fantasy, imaginative, mastery, and role-play), physical play (rough and tumble, locomotive, and objective) and constructive (exploratory, creative, mastery, and objective), so we have condensed categories.

Physical Play

Typical forms of *physical play* used in drama therapy include physical, locomotive, constructive, expressive, social, objective, dramatic, competitive, and virtual. Rough and tumble play also fits under this type of play. Physical play uses the body in expressive, social, dramatic, cooperative, or competitive games. This can be very useful for players who live sedentary lives and need the experience that freedom of movement in a game provides. Physical play can also be healing for players who feel depressed or anxious, as research has shown that physical exercise is an effective nonmedical antidote for mood disorders (Alexandratos et al., 2012; Firth et al., 2020; Melo et al., 2016). Movement games range from few rules to many. In this way, participants with less executive functioning and self-regulation skills can start at a simple level and build to a more structured and complicated one. The fuller embodiment of physical play provides participants with a strong sense of themselves in space, able to make choices and have effects on the other players in the game. This builds a sense of empowerment and the belief in one's ability to take specific actions that make a difference (i.e., self-efficacy). Physical play enhances locus of control.

Constructive Play

Constructive play allows players to build and create using blocks, legos, art supplies, etc. This includes creative, exploratory, objective, and mastery aspects of play. Participants' imaginations are warmed-up by allowing them to manipulate objects, explore options for a two- or three-dimensional creation, and connect their hand–eye coordination with an internal image. It also encompasses accommodations that can be employed for those who have manual difficulties by providing support (assistants or other resource devices) for object manipulation that is guided by the player. Experimenting with putting together different patterns and designs enhances mental and emotional flexibility in a concrete way. Constructive play can be done individually, in a pair, or with a group, thus developing different types of problem-solving skills. Ending with a finished product provides participants with an experience of self-efficacy. If participants are able to take their construction home, between sessions they have a reminder of their success. The use of constructive play can be continued in later phases, such as in the making of masks or costumes, which can be used to develop transitional objects.

Expressive Play

Expressive play provides a way for players to learn how to express their feelings and emotions through music, art, and other creative outlets. As theatre is the place where all the arts overlap, drama therapy is a modality where all the arts can be used to enhance treatment. Using rhythm instruments, dancing, singing, writing, drawing, painting, and sculpting in addition to drama allows participants to explore many ways to express themselves symbolically and allow their imaginations to grow.

Dramatic Play

Dramatic play (sometimes called *fantasy play*) allows the enactment of situations through role-play. This requires more imagination and abstract thought than the previously described types of play and lands in the middle of most drama therapy interventions. If participants do not have well-developed play skills, exploring through movement, objects, sound, and other modalities may need to happen before moving into dramatic play.

Vygotsky (1978) was a major proponent of dramatic play in child development during preschool ages to teach social skills and thinking abilities. Dramatic play allows children to experiment with the roles and interactions adults take in order to understand the world around them. He also felt that the talking through of scenarios and characters that children do in planning and negotiating dramatic play was part of the process of internalizing speech as thought, which occurs in early childhood (Bodrova et al., 2013; Vygotsky, 1978).

In the beginning, dramatic play, being a more complex form of play than less structured ones, needs to be scaffolded by a teacher, therapist, or other adult. In drama therapy, participants may need scaffolding or assistance from the therapist when they have a deficit in their dramatic play abilities. Scaffolding might involve starting players off with simpler situations until they learn the basics of entering dramatic reality, becoming a character, and focusing on developing a scene. Once basic skills have been achieved, the therapist can help identify the next level of complexity to add to scenes. This can ensure success and the interest to continue dramatic exploration.

Rule-Based Play

Rule-based play is part of many different types of play. Being able to follow rules and directions in and of itself is a treatment goal. Because of this, the authors decided to highlight rule-based play within descriptions of games based on its function within treatment outcomes. When following rules is a priority of a game, we highlight that in the "Type of Play" listed.

Virtual or Digital Play

Virtual or *Digital Play* has become part of the Drama Therapy Pie in recent years with the use of Therapeutic Tabletop Role-Playing Games (e.g., *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Kids on Bikes*, etc.) and the creation of videos and films by participants. Traditional digital and virtual play can lead to feeling disconnected from other players. However, drama therapists can focus these games towards creating connections, using imagination, and developing symbolic thinking. Virtual play is a popular method to use with adolescents and adults who played TRPGs when they were teens. TRPGs can be combined with actual dramatic play (climatic scenes enacted) and with constructive play (creating costumes, props, and scenery for games). Typically, Therapeutic Tabletop Role-Playing Games and filmmaking are incorporated into later phases because of their complexity.

Guidelines for Improvisation

Improvisation is part of dramatic play and is integral in many drama therapy interventions. Not everyone has training in improvisation, even if they get a degree in theatre, so we have included here some of the basic rules of improv:

    (a) *Have fun and relax:* there is not a right/wrong idea (Moshavi, 2001).

    (b) *Yes, and …*: keep an open mind, accept the here-and-now changing interactions, and develop ideas that rise from them (Shem-Tov, 2015).

(c) *Attentive listening*: be aware of partners to co-create with them (Barker & Borko, 2011).

(d) *Risk taking*: (similar to being spontaneous) individuals co-create at the moment without being able to revise or dismissing any idea (Berk & Trieber, 2009).

(e) *Support and trust your partner*: each exercise builds trust and the acceptance of unexpected ideas without objection, mockery or pressure (Berk & Trieber, 2009), creating a state of mind that facilitates risk-taking and creativity (Holdhus et al., 2016).

Drama Therapy Interventions

1776

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Emotional Tolerance, Following Directions, Observation Skills, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative, Competitive
Configuration: Group
Description:
The group forms a circle with one player in the middle. The center player points to a player in the circle and calls out one of five positions: Giraffe, Elephant, Hamburger, Jell-O, or 1776. For Giraffe, the person raises arms straight up in the air as if making the neck of a giraffe. For Elephant, the player pointed to becomes the trunk of the elephant, and the players on either side create the ears. For Hamburger, the player pointed to creates a hamburger patty with arms folded in front at chest level while the players on either side create the bun. For Jell-O, the player pointed to jiggles like Jell-O while the players on either side create the bowl around the Jell-O. For 1776, the player pointed to pretends to play a drum, the player on the right pretends to hold a flag, and the person on the left pretends to play a fife (small flute), recreating the painting "The Spirit of 1776."

The point of the game is for the player in the center to get out of the center and back into the circle. This happens when one of the players in the circle makes a mistake or does not create their position by the count of ten. The center player is responsible for counting to ten and can do so as fast as possible. If the group gets skilled at getting into position quickly, the count can be lowered to seven or five.

Adaptation: **Elephant and Giraffe**
Description:
For young groups or groups that have difficulty with working memory, the number of positions can be lowered to two: Giraffe and Elephant.

Variation: **Add more positions or change positions**
Description:
If groups enjoy this game, they can add more positions or change positions to provide variation. See examples below.

Airplane: The player pointed to creates a pair of goggles using their fingers and the players on either side create the wings of the plane.

Fish Sandwich: The player in the middle sticks their arms out in front of them on top of each other (creating the shape of a fish) while the players on either side create the bun.

Volcano: The player pointed to becomes the lava with hands raised over head and the players on either side become the mountainside.

Horse: The player pointed to puts both fists in front of their nose to form the muzzle (nose) and the players on either side put their elbow on the shoulder of the middle player and point their forearm into the air to create the ear.

Bunny: The player pointed to puts both hands behind their back to create the tail and the players on either side create one of the bunny's ears.

Angel: The player pointed to puts both hands together in prayer and the players on either side extend their arm out at the side to create a wing. All three sing an Angelic "Ahhhhh!"

Gump: The player pointed at holds and imaginary box and picks an imaginary candy out of it saying, "Life is like a box of chocolates," and the players on either side run in place.

The group can make up other positions.

ABCs

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Sequencing, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up or Closure
<u>Type of Play</u>: Cooperative
<u>Configuration</u>: Group
Description:
The group sits or stands in a circle. Through random taking turns, players try to say the alphabet from A to Z. The catch is that there can be no pre-arranged order for speaking. If two people speak at the same time, the group must start over at the beginning of the alphabet. The group must pay attention and listen to each other to sense when to speak.

Accommodation: If members of the group have auditory processing difficulties or are deaf, the ASL alphabet can be used with or without verbal communication

in order to help keep the sequencing clear. When using ASL without voicing, the therapist may need help tracking when the motions are made as it can be difficult to see all parts of the circle simultaneously.

Variation: **Count 1–20**
Description:
The game is played the same as above, except use numbers and see how far the group can go without two people speaking simultaneously.

Accommodation: If members of the group have auditory processing difficulties or are deaf, ASL numbers can be used with or without verbal communication in order to help keep the sequencing clear. When using ASL without voicing, the therapist may need help tracking when the motions are made as it can be difficult to see all parts of the circle simultaneously.

Add-on Memory Games

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Cognitive Flexibility, Listening Skills, Sequencing, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up or Assessment for sequencing, retrieval, and working memory
<u>Type of Play</u>: Associative
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Description:
Add-on memory games are any games that start with a player naming an item and the next player adding another item—sometimes in alphabetical order. Each new player must repeat all the items in order from the first one. Then the player adds their item at the end of the list. The items could be names of players in the group, names of items being packed for a trip, kinds of food eaten at a picnic, or whatever would be culturally appropriate to the group.

Adaptation:
Use alphabetical or narrative order if individuals have difficulty remembering items or their sequence.

Variation:
Additional Outcomes: Behavioral Initiation, Body Movement Control, Observational Skills
Description:
Add-on games can have a kinesthetic component in addition to being vocal. This may help players remember sequences more easily. In this case, if the group was

going to a picnic, each person would need to act out the items they are taking with them.

Adaptation:
If players struggle with sequencing and/or working memory, the chain can be created in this way: at the start of each individual's turn, start back with the first player in the chain and have each person say their own item and do their movement, before the next player adds on the new item. All players only need to remember who they follow and what their word and movement is. As their working memory and sequencing improves, the game can be made more difficult.

Airport

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Decision-Making, Emotional Tolerance, Following Directions, Listening Skills, Sensory Integration, Teamwork, Trust, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary intervention or Assessment for listening skills
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Blindfold, Objects in the room
Description:
The group sets up an obstacle course in the room using objects and people. One player volunteers to be the Airplane that is coming in for a landing, and another volunteers to be the Air Traffic Controller. The Airplane is blindfolded and follows the verbal directions given by the Air Traffic Controller to get from one side of the room to the other through the obstacle course. Players being obstacles may move arms or legs, but must stay in the same place. The goal is for the airplane to make it across the room without bumping into anything.

✦Note: It is as important for the Air Traffic Controller to be as clear as possible in their directions as it is for the Airplane to follow those directions carefully. If an Air Traffic Controller seems to be unable to verbalize what the Airplane needs to do, the leader can replace them.

✦Note: The leader must be aware of physical limitations in the group to make sure that the obstacles can be overcome.

Advanced Variation:
In a more complex version, the Air Traffic Controller turns their back to the obstacle course and faces a player who is the Radar Screen and can see the obstacles. The Radar Screen tells the Air Traffic Controller what they see, then the Air Traffic controller must provide the Airplane with directions based on the Radar Screen's

description. This channels information through two people instead of one, so descriptions must be very precise.

✦Note: This variation also works if your Air Traffic Controller has vision impairment, and your Radar Screen does not.

Amoeba

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control (Gross Motor Skills), Conflict Resolution, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Social Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up
<u>Type of Play</u>: Motor/Physical, Associative
<u>Configuration</u>: Group
Description:
Players wander around the room in a random fashion. The leader calls out a number, and the players get quickly into groups of that number. If a group needs another player(s), they can raise their fingers to show the number they need, but they cannot shout the number out. If they end up with too many in their group, they have to get rid of some players. If there is a "remainder" that is not large enough to create a group of the right size, those players are not "out." Since this is not an elimination game, they can rejoin in the next round.

As soon as the groups are created and checked, the group disperses and wanders around again until the next number is called.

Be sure that best friends are not moving together so that they end up in the same group each time. Players must move in a random fashion and let chance create the groups.

Make sure players know that they may only eject someone from their group if they have more than the number called out *and* that the ejection is because of "overpopulation," not a personal rejection. The leader needs to be aware of what is going on during the game. If someone keeps getting ejected from a group again and again, that issue needs to be addressed immediately and appropriately.

✦<u>Note</u>: Amoeba is a great technique for creating randomized groups, which can be especially useful when a group is first getting to know each other.

Variation:
The leader can change the size of the groups by subtracting or adding players. For instance, if there were groups of four, the leader could say, 'Plus two!' to create new groups of six. However, instead of totally re-forming groups, each group tries to convince two new people to join it.

Animal Herds

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Conflict Resolution, Nonverbal Communication, Problem-Solving, Teamwork, Trust

Purpose: Warm-up

Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Associative, Expressive

Configuration: Group

Description:

Divide the group into teams of six to eight. Show each team a picture of a different animal. Each team needs to act out that animal for the other team(s). The observing teams must come to consensus about their guess as to the animal being acted out. This is not a competition, so the idea is not to fool the other team(s), but to act out the animal clearly. This can be done with sound or no sound.

Variation:

Players can create the environment around the animal in addition to the animal. For example, someone could become a mound of dirt for the prairie dog to pop their head out of.

Advanced Variation:

Additional Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Organization Skills and all aspects of Social-Emotional Reciprocity

Type of Play: Cooperative, Expressive

Description:

For a group that is able to consent to touch and where touch is clinically appropriate, players in the group can create the animal together using their bodies as body parts of the animal. For instance, eight people can become the tentacles of a squid, and one or two people could be the head.

Animal Transformations

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Following Directions,, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Social Skills

Purpose: Warm-up

Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Associative

Configuration: Group or Individual

Description:

Players move around the room. The leader calls out different animals, and players take on the shape, movements, and behaviors of that animal. This can be done

with or without sound. Animals may interact with each other. The only rule is that ferocious animals may not attack each other.
Also see, Walks

Backwriting*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Reasoning, Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Boundaries, Following Directions, Observation Skills, Sensory Awareness, Sensory Integration, Sequencing, Teamwork, Trust
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
Create three to six straight lines of players, facing in the same direction. The leader comes up with a three, four, five, or six letter word (depending on the number of lines) and traces one letter of the word on the back of each player at the end of each line.

✦Note: Since English is read from left to right, the order of the letters in the word need to be traced on players' backs from right to left, so they end up in the correct order when revealed at the front of the line. For example, if the word is W-I-N, the last person in the left line would get an N, the last person in the middle line would get an I, and the last person in the right line would get a W. The opposite would be true of languages read from right to left. There is currently no variation of this game to play using languages that are read top to bottom or bottom to top.

After all players at the end of the lines have received their letter, the leader signals them to start passing the letter down their line. Receiving players can ask to have the letter re-traced if they do not think they understand what it is. In this game, accuracy is more important than speed.

When the letter gets to the front of each line, the first person in line should either write it down on a small piece of paper or quietly whisper it to the leader. When all letters have arrived in the front, each player in the correct order will say out loud the letter they thought they got. If all the letters are correct, the word is spelled. This game focuses on taking the time to work together to spell the word correctly.

Variation:
To play competitively, give each line a point when they get their letter correct.

***Warning:** Being touched can be a trigger for people who have a trauma history. Assess if your players have the emotional tolerance for being touched. This may also be inappropriate if your players have impulse control problems.

Ball Throwing with Categories

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Following Directions, Generating Alternatives, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Social Skills, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: A ball that is easy for players to catch, like a koosh ball
Description:
Pick an appropriate category based on culture and age interests, i.e., vegetables, movie stars, farm animals. The players form a circle and take turns tossing the ball around popcorn style, saying an item in the category before the toss. When the group runs out of items, a new category can be chosen.

Balloon Tango*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Body Movement Control, Empathy for Self, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Evaluating the Results, Locus of Control, Problem-Solving, Recognizing Triggers, Reframing, Self-Awareness, Stress Management/ Coping Skills, Task Initiation
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Solitary
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Punch ball or balloon for each player
Description:
Each player uses a punch ball or balloon that represents a problem that they are struggling with accepting, letting go of, or dealing with. The player writes words or draws images on the punch ball or balloon that represents the problem. Then the player attaches the punch ball or balloon to themselves with the punch strap or a string and begins moving around the space to see how it feels, experience the obstacle, and explore how to adapt to the attachment. Increase the speed of movement and have group members interact with one another. Set up additional obstacles for players to navigate around. Debrief with a discussion of the life-drama connection in terms of emotions felt, coping strategies, new insights about the problem, etc.

*Warning: Sometimes balloons pop, so warn the group in case anyone might be triggered by loud noises.

***Warning:** If your balloons or punch balls are made out of latex, check with the group to see if anyone has latex allergies.

***Warning:** If players have impulse control problems, this might not be an appropriate intervention.

Bear, Fish, Mosquito* (Patti Woolsey)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making, Following Directions, Social Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative and Competitive
Configuration: Group
Description:
This is a drama version of rock-paper-scissors. Divide the group into two teams. There are three possible poses that the entire team can decide to take. For Bear, the players raise their arms, make claws with their hands, and growl. For Fish, the players put both hands together and wiggle them like a fish. The players can also create a fish face. For Mosquito, the players flick their index finger off of their thumb like a mosquito stinging and make buzzing noises. Bear eats Fish, Fish eats Mosquito, and Mosquito bites Bear.

Each round both teams come to consensus on which pose they want to take. The teams line up side by side to face the other team. The leader counts to three and says, "Go!" Then everyone takes their pose. The team that has the most powerful animal in relation to the other wins the point. If both teams do the same thing, then it's a tie. The group can decide if no team gets a point or both teams get a point with a tie.

✦Note: If your group has difficulty with competitive play, try warming up to this game as opposed to jumping right into it.

Variation:
Any three entities that have a clear sequential impact on each other could be used. The relationships could be related to social justice issues or other subjects the group is interested in exploring.

Adaptation:
Configuration: Individual
Description:
This would be played more like rock, paper, scissors between the therapist and client without the consensus building between team members. This makes it more

of a physical warm-up without the conflict resolution-teamwork aspects of the group version.

*Warning: This is a competitive game. Only play if participants can handle winning and losing.

Bird, Beast, or Fish* (Aycox, 1999)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Inhibition, Behavioral Initiation, Body Movement Control, Cognitive Flexibility, Following Directions, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Cooperative and Competitive
Configuration: Group
Description:
Divide into two or three teams (six or more on a team). Have each team make up their own team name. Each team should have their own space in the room and chairs laid out in a line or semi-circle. Each team needs to decide on an order of play for the team members. It is helpful if they are arranged in that order.

Each team will send one player to the leader who whispers to them the name of a creature of some kind (even though the name of the game is "bird, beast or fish," you can also have insects, amphibians, reptiles, etc.) Both players are told the same creature. Then they go back to their team, and when the leader says "Go!" they start pantomiming their creature, with no sound, for their team. If all players are fully mobile for this part of the game, the team should be standing and calling out their guesses. When the pantomiming player hears the correct guess, they motion for the team to sit down. Seeing the movement of the whole group helps the leader know which team got the correct answer first, as sometimes there is so much noise going on that the correct guess is hard to hear.

Play as many rounds as desired. A round is one time through the team members. The team with the most points wins.

Accommodation: If players are not able to stand and sit quickly, the pantomiming player could signal them to freeze and become quiet to indicate they have the correct answer.

*Warning: This is a competitive game. Only play if the group can handle winning and losing.

Blast-off*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Following Direction, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Teamwork
Purpose: Closure
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The group gathers in a close circle, facing in, side by side. Everyone leans over from the waist with hands down by shins and begins to "warm-up the engines of the rocket ship" in preparation to blast-off into outer space. The warm-up noise consists of a low open AH sound and hands shake like mini "jazz hands" as if they are small flames in a rocket's engine. Then together, paying attention to each other, the noise of the group builds as everyone slowly begins to stand straighter. Finally, everyone "explodes" with the loudest noise they can make, their arms reaching up to the ceiling. Once the loud explosion stops, there is complete silence (because "There is no sound in outer space."). Everyone freezes in their "blast-off" position for a few seconds, and then slowly, each person breaks off from the group and moves away in slow motion as if they were stages of an early NASA rocket falling away from the space capsule. This closure activity creates a wonderful sense of finality, relaxation, and a sense of moving off from the group into "real life" with purpose.

Accommodation: Players who are not able to move their arms or bend from the waist can make the rocket noise.

*****Warning:** This game can be LOUD, so be aware of this if you are playing with someone who has sensitivity to sound or you are next to another classroom.

Blindfold Walk*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Behavioral Initiation, Boundaries, Emotional Tolerance, Compassionate Empathy, Decision-Making, Following Directions, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Observation Skills, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Self-Awareness, Sensory Awareness, Sensory Integration, Teamwork, Trust, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Enough blindfolds for the whole group

Description:
Players pair up with a group member they trust. One partner puts on a blindfold and the other partner leads them by the hand and takes them on a tour of the environment to experience the world through touch, movement, balance, proprioception, and interoception. The leading partner must be trustworthy and take care of the blindfolded partner. After a few minutes, partners switch roles.

Advanced Variation:
Lead the blindfolded partner around the room by voice only.

Advanced Variation: See **Airport.**
Adaptation:
Description:
The leader can set up the space to accommodate differing abilities. For instance, instead of guiding the group up a set of stairs, stay on the same floor level.

Variation: As a Group
Group members line up behind one another. All wear blindfolds except for the first one in line. Everyone puts their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them, creating a "train." The first person in line leads the train around the environment, moving slowly enough to keep everyone together and providing plenty of clues with body and voice about what changes are coming up (i.e., ducking for low places, making it clear that there is a step down, etc.). Another unblindfolded player—perhaps the group leader—can open doors or reconnect people who get disconnected in the line. If the train is long, include an unblindfolded person in the middle of the line for safety.

*****Warning:** Check out the space beforehand to make sure there are no places someone can hurt themselves.

*****Warning:** This is not a game to do with clients who have a history of trauma.

*****Warning:** This is not a game to do with people who have significant impulse control problems as it can become a safety issue.

Body Boundaries/Personal Space

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Inhibition, Body Movement Awareness, Boundaries, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Emotional Tolerance, Empathy, Following Directions, Identifying Emotions, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Trust, Verbal Communication

Purpose: Primary Intervention, Assessment of understanding of boundaries
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Associative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Something to mark personal space boundaries, such as a piece of masking tape.
Description:
Players line up with their backs against the wall, placing themselves two to three feet from each other.

The leader explains personal space is a little bit different for everyone, but typically is about the length of a person's arm in front of and all around them—almost like a personal bubble that we move in. If the boundary of personal space is broken without permission, a person feels threatened. When we are sick or upset, we usually need more personal space.

The leader measures where each person's personal space boundary starts. Beginning about six feet away from each participant, the leader slowly moves forward and stops when they can sense the participant's invisible boundary. The leader will be able to feel and see the boundary in the body response of the participant. It may be a tiny response, but it will be clear. On their end, participants need to tell the leader to stop when they sense their personal space boundary has been reached. This gives them practice identifying it. Mark the boundary on the floor with a piece of tape. After everyone's boundaries have been marked, compare them, and talk about the similarities and differences.

✤Helpful Hint: If the person measuring the boundaries is much taller or shorter than the participants, larger or smaller personal space may be needed. Personal space changes when a tall person approaches a shorter one and vice versa. There can also be boundary differences based on power differentials, such as therapist-client and gender.

Advanced Variation:
Have group members practice finding each other's personal space boundaries by moving toward each other and stopping at the appropriate place. Personal boundaries are always dependent upon who needs the most space.

Body Drawings*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Self-Awareness
Population Specific Goals for Eating Disorders, Body Dysmorphia, Physical Differences: Compassionate Empathy for Self, Emotional Regulation, Locus of Control
Purpose: Primary Intervention

Type of Play: Cooperative and/or Solitary
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Large sheets of butcher paper (at least a foot longer than each player) and colored markers. You can also use other art supplies such as paint, crayons, colored pencils, pastels, and collage materials.

Description:

Each player finds a partner. The partners decide who will be traced first. That player lays down on a large sheet of butcher paper. The partner draws the outline of the person around their body. Then the partners reverse. After the outlines are drawn, there are various ways to use the outlines. The players can create a self-portrait, drawing what they love in their chest area, what they love to do around their hands and feet, what their ideas are above and around their heads. Then they can present themselves and their portraits to the whole group. If players brought in photos and objects to group, the body could become a collage.

Accommodation: If any participants are unable to lay on the floor, instead of butcher paper, use a pre-made body outline on paper.

*__Warning__: If you believe participants may have body dysmorphia, this intervention should be warmed up to.

Variation:
Another way to approach the body drawing is to draw the pain and hurt the player feels physically and emotionally in whichever part of their body it is experienced (a stomach ache for someone who is anxious) and what it feels like in that place (a rumination up in the head going around and around). Then players can talk to that part of themselves, where it hurts, ask questions, and then role reverse and answer the questions.

Variation:
The drawing can also be approached from an inside/outside view, delineating internal aspects of self that are not shown to people and the external aspects of self that are shown externally to others.

Variation:
To display ethics or personal values, place one's values and beliefs on the inside and place the external influences on the outside of the body.

Variation:
Trace the body in a position of strength, rather than in a neutral or "dead body" position.

Body Emotion Dialogue

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Locus of Control, Recognizing Triggers, Self-Awareness, Self-Empathy, Sensory Awareness, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
<u>Type of Play</u>: Solitary
<u>*Configuration*</u>: Group or Individual
Description:
Leader asks the participant or group to identify where they feel a certain emotion in their body. Once the body location is identified, the participant asks their body part what that emotion is and what it is experiencing. Role reversals can be done with other body parts.

Bridges

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thought, Coping Skills, Decision-Making, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotion Identification, Emotional Tolerance, Locus of Control, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Recognition of Positive Events, Reframing, Self-Awareness
Purpose: Primary Intervention or Assessment of concrete planning abilities
<u>Type of Play</u>: Solitary or Associative
<u>*Configuration*</u>: Group or Individual
Materials: If doing art—paper, sandtray figurines, and other mixed-media supplies. If embodying the transition—scarves and other objects to create the setting.
Description:
This activity can be done in art form and/or in embodiment in relation to transitions in life that the client is going through or about to go through. Create where the now is, create the future goal, then create the bridge between them in order to explore how to get from point A to point B.

Bug-A-Low

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Behavioral Initiation, Body Movement Control, Focus, Following Directions, Generating Alternatives, Listening Skills, Observation Skills
Purpose: Warm-up or Assessment of rhythmic ability
<u>Type of Play</u>: Motor/Physical and Associative
<u>*Configuration*</u>: Group or Individual

Description:

The group forms a circle. The leader (Person One) starts off a rhythmic chant to another person in the circle.

Person One: Hey, (name)

Person Two: Hey, what?

Person One: Hey, (name)

Person Two: Hey what?

Everyone: Show us how you bug-a-low! Show us how you bug-a-low!

Person Two: (demonstrates dancing movements) With my hands up high and my feet down low, this is how I bug-a-low.

Everyone: (copies dancing movements) With our hands up high and our feet down low, this is how we bug-a-low.

ALL: (singing and dancing Person Two's made-up dance) Bug-a-low, bug-bug-a-low-a-low, Bug-a-low, bug-bug-a-low-a-low!

The game is repeated until everyone in the circle has had the chance to be Person One and Person Two.

✦Note: If participants have memory problems, the chant can be written and posted.

Bunny, Bunny

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Cognitive Flexibility, Emotional Tolerance, Following Directions, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Physiological Regulation, Sequencing, Teamwork, Working Memory

Purpose: Warm-up

Type of Play: Motor/Physical and Cooperative

Configuration: Group

Description:

The group forms a circle facing in. They slap their thighs with both hands, while chanting, "Hoo, Ha, Hoo, Ha," in a slow, steady rhythm.

The starting player makes "bunnies" (pointer and middle finger of both hands bending in the same motion as if making "air quotes.") toward themselves while saying, "Bunny, bunny." Then that player makes eye contact with someone across the circle, and says, "Bunny, Bunny," while pointing the "bunnies" toward that person. Staying with the rhythm, players pass the bunnies around the circle.

Meanwhile, when the starting player is doing "Bunny, bunny, bunny, bunny," the players on either side of them put their open hands out on either side of their bodies/heads (like frozen "jazz hands"), and lean side to side at the waist, saying "Tockie, tockie, tockie, tockie." When the Bunny is passed to the next person,

the people on either side of the new person do the same "Tockie, tockie" movement and chant.

Anyone in the circle who is not the "Bunny" or the people on either side of the "Bunny" (the "Tockies") continues the "hoo, ha, hoo, ha" chant. As players get more comfortable, the rhythm can increase.

The point of the game is for everyone in the group to pay attention, keep the rhythm going, and the game moving.

Adaptation:
Description:
Play the game in slow motion if participants need additional time to process or move.

Calling Out Emotions (Emunah, 2020)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Flexibility, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Following Directions, Impulse Control, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Sensory Awareness, Social Skills, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Description:
As an improvisational scene is acted out, members of the audience call out different emotions for specific characters or all the characters to play in the scene. These emotions may change the direction of the scene totally or guide the actors to deeper and more honest expressions.

Adaptation:
Configuration: Individual
Description:
The participant could be doing a monologue and the therapist could call out the different emotions.

Variation: **Emoji Scenes**
Materials: Large emoji pillows or large pictures of emojis on sticks
Description:
In this version, instead of calling out emotions, use emojis. Using either large pictures of emojis on tongue depressors or large emoji pillows, players in the audience can raise their emoji to change the emotion in the scene. Make sure the group agrees exactly what emotion each emoji is representing.

Adaptation:
Description:
If the players need to learn how to identify emotions, have each audience member be in charge of a different emoji and when they see that emotion appearing in the scene, they raise that emoji. If the audience is small, each player could have a unique emoji in each hand.

Variation: **Inside Out**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Teamwork
Description:
In this version, each basic emotion is taken on by different players. Emotions used could be anger, sadness, joy, fear, and disgust, as well as others appropriate to the situation of the improvisational scene. There should be an emotion-actor for each character-actor in the scene. Emotion-actors wait on the sidelines until they are needed. Each time the emotions in the improvisational scene change, a different emotion-actor comes in to play the part.

Deciding which emotion is changed could be done in two different ways:
- The audience calls out an emotion for a specific actor or both actors.
- The character-actors start the scene and whenever they become aware of a different emotion, they step back and motion in the emotion-actor who plays that emotion in the scene. As the scene progresses, the character-actor decides when to call different emotion-actors into the scene in response to what is going on. This version makes each character-actor evaluate what feelings would come up in different situations.

Variation: **Opposite Action Calling Out Emotions**
Additional Therapeutic Outcome/Goals: Opposite Action Skills
<u>Type of Play</u>: Associative
Description:
Instead of taking on the emotion that the audience member has called out, the actor must take on the opposite emotion/action.

The Captain Is Coming

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention Skills, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Decision-Making, Following Directions, Impulse Control, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Social Skills, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
<u>Type of Play</u>: Motor/Physical and Cooperative
<u>Configuration</u>: Group

Description:

The leader calls out a variety of commands. Players have actions they take for each command:

"The Captain's Coming!" Everyone stands at attention and salutes.

"To the Ship!" Everyone moves to the right.

"To the Shore!" Everyone moves to the left.

"Man Overboard!" Two players: one drops to one knee and the other stands behind with one hand on the kneeling one's shoulder. Both scan the sea for the man overboard with their hands shading their eyes.

"Crow's Nest!" Three players stand back-to-back and lock arms at the elbow to form the crow's nest.

"Mess Table!" Four players sit at each side of an imaginary table and pretend to eat ravenously, making loud eating sounds.

"Walk the Plank!" Five people stand in a line single file with their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them (except for the first).

✦Note: Although players are following the directions of the leader, they still need to make decisions about who they will partner with for the group formations.

Accommodation: Make accommodations as necessary for participants. For example, someone who uses a wheelchair, can always be the "lower" partner in "Man Overboard" with no need to kneel. Or someone who wears leg braces and cannot kneel, would always be the "upper" partner in that configuration.

Variation:

Other actions can be added to these OR an entirely different version can be invented. For instance, for a group doing a play about Robin Hood, commands could be changed to "Robin's Coming!" "To Sherwood!" "To Nottingham," etc.

Celebration

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Following Directions, Locus of Control, Observation Skills, Sequencing, Social Skills, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
In preparation for the celebration, dyads will be asked to create handshakes, high-fives, and dances. First, everyone finds a partner. They create a unique "handshake"

with at least three elements (spins, claps, winks, kicks, etc.). Each pair demonstrates their handshake to the whole group.

Then they find a new partner. With the new partner they create a "high-five" with three elements. These are demonstrated to the whole group.

Finally, each person finds a new third partner, and together they create a "celebration dance" with at least three elements. Once again, demonstrate the celebration dances for the whole group.

Now the celebration begins! The leader calls out the number of the different creations: One—handshake, Two—high-five, Three—celebration dance. Each person must find the partner they had with that creation and do their combination. As this continues, the numbers are called out quicker and quicker.

❧Helpful Hint: Remind the participants to make sure that all components of each celebration can be physically done by all partners.

Chain Pantomime (Aycox, 1999)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Sequencing, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical and Associative
Configuration: Group
Description:
Four players leave the room and decide on the order they will reenter. While they are out in the hall, the group decides on a task that has a specific series of actions that one person can complete alone. It could be anything from getting on a bus (waiting, climbing up the steps, paying the fare, and finding a seat) to saddling a horse. A group volunteer agrees to pantomime the action (no sound). The volunteer might want to practice once before Player One returns so the sequence of the actions is set.

Player One enters the room and is instructed to watch the group volunteer closely as the task is pantomimed. No guesses as to what is being done are to be made. Afterwards, the group volunteer sits down. Player One gets Player Two to come in. Player One acts out what they saw, while Player Two watches closely. Player One leaves and sends in Player Three. Player Three watches Player Two act out what they saw. Player Two leaves and sends Player Four in. Player Four watches Player Three act out the pantomime. At the end of the pantomime, Player Three goes back out into the hallway.

Player Four gets three guesses as to what Player Three pantomimed. Player Three comes back in and has three guesses what Player Two was pantomiming.

Player Two comes in and guesses what Player One was pantomiming. Player One comes in and guesses what the group volunteer was pantomiming.

If everyone is correct, everyone did excellent observing and remembering the sequencing. If the pantomime changed, then either the observation of the actions was not as clear as it could have been or the sequencing of the actions were off. If no one guessed the pantomime correctly, have the group volunteer act it out again and see if the four Players can guess what is being done.

♣Helpful Hint: If one of the players who goes out into the hallway would have difficulty with any of the actions in the pantomime, change the pantomime to something they can do.

Variation: **Pantomime Down the Line**:
Type of Play: Motor/Physical and Cooperative
Description:
This version gets everyone involved. Divide the group into three to five smaller groups of the same number. Each small group lines up facing the same direction. The leader shows the last person in the lines the same word or picture of what they are to pantomime. The last people get back in their line.

The leader tells the group if the word is a noun or verb (object or action). When the leader says, "Go," the last person taps the person in front of them on the back. That person turns around and watches the last person in line pantomime the object or action. When the observing person thinks they know what it is, they turn around and tap the shoulder of the person in front of them. In this way, the action or object is "passed down the line."

Whichever line gets the correct answer first, gets a point. If competition is not appropriate for this group, they get the applause.

♣Helpful Hint: The leader moves from the back of the lines to the front. As each pantomime arrives at the front of the line, the first person can write on a piece of paper what they think they received, or they can whisper the word to the leader. Once all the lines have finished, each first person in the line reveals what they received.

Change the Perspective

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Flexibility, Empathy, Locus of Control, Reframing, Social Skills, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Solitary, Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual

Description:

Tell or act out a story from the perspective of a character who is not traditionally the protagonist or from a different interpretation of the traditional character. For instance, in a version of Little Red Riding Hood, the Wolf thinks he is trying to help Little Red and cannot understand why she is afraid of him. In Rapunzel, the point of view could be from the Witch who keeps her in the tower, the Prince who finds her, or her mother or father.

✦Note: Depending on the story and characters chosen, additional cognitive, emotional, and behavioral regulation outcomes may be addressed.

Variation:

Have all the characters tell their side of the story.

Variation:

Act out the story, then have characters role reverse and act out the story from another character's perspective. Role reverse back and improvise what might change in the story because of the new perspectives that have been experienced.

Change Three

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Observation Skills, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:

In Pairs (or with therapist): Both players look carefully at what each other is wearing, how hair is arranged, etc. When both think they can remember everything about their partner's physical appearance, they turn their backs to each other, and change three things. Objects could be taken off or re-arranged. When the partners turn around, they must figure out what has changed.

Variation:

As a Group: One player is the changer and the rest of the group are observers. The observers take a close look at what the changer is wearing, how hair is arranged, etc. When they think they are aware of everything about the changer's appearance, the changer leaves the room and changes three things. Objects could be taken off or re-arranged. When the changer reenters the room, the observers must figure out what has changed.

✦Note: Impulse control and social skills can come into play with certain populations who struggle in these areas.

Character Conga Line

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Emotional Tolerance, Following Directions, Generating Alternatives, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Sensory Integration, Sequencing
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Associative
Configuration: Group
Description:
The group creates a conga line. The first person in line leads the line creating a character through movement and voice/sounds. One by one each person in sequence copies that character as the group moves in the line until all have become that character. Then the first person goes to the end of the line and the new first person creates a different character through movement and voice/sounds. In sequence, one by one, the others in line transform into the new character. Continue until everyone has had a turn creating a new character.

Variation:
Instead of waiting for the person in front of you in the conga line to become the character, everyone becomes the character as soon as the first person in line creates their movement and sound. Go around the circle one time as that character. Then the next person in line creates their character.
    ❖Helpful Hint: Each person needs to keep in mind what movements the other members of the group can and cannot make.

Adaptation:
Description:
Sit in a circle and create each character. Technically, this is no longer a conga line, but actors can observe each other better because they are face to face.

Chick-a-Berry (Aycox, 1999)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention Skills, Body Movement Control, Observation Skills, Sequencing, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical and Associative
Configuration: Group

Description:

The group forms a circle. Each player decides on a motion to make. Each motion should be unique. All players chant the chick-a-berry chant in unison: Chick-a-berry, Chick-a-berry, Chick-a-berry, Chick. Chick-a-berry, Chick-a-berry, Chick-a-berry, Chick, while performing their motion. At the same time, each player must pay attention to what the player to their right is doing. At the end of the chant, each player begins doing the movement the player to their right had done in the previous round. This continues until the movement gets all the way around the circle to the original player.

♣Helpful Hint: It can be helpful for the leader to say "change" when the chant finishes before starting it again.

♣Helpful Hint: Each person needs to keep in mind what movements the other members of the group can and cannot make.

It is easy to be distracted by the movement one is currently doing or by the other movements in the circle. Remind players to check out the movement of the player on their right while chanting. If this is not done, the non-observant player will have no motion to do the following round.

The other big challenge is to copy the movement of the person to the right exactly. If the player does not pay close attention, the movement will morph and not appear the same when it gets back to its creator in the circle.

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Circle of Acknowledgment
(Sondag & McKechnie, workshop presentation)

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Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Compassionate Empathy, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Self-Awareness, Verbal Expression
Purpose: Check-in and/or Closure
Type of Play: Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Go around the circle and allow each person to say something they have done in the last week that they are proud of. The group acknowledges the achievement by applauding and cheering.

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Circle of Appreciation

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Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Boundaries, Compassionate Empathy, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Trust, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Closure

<u>Type of Play</u>: Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
A group member takes one step forward (or sits on a chair/stool in the middle of the circle) and the other participants go-around the circle saying one thing they appreciate about that person. It should not be about physical appearance or material items (clothing, hair, facial features, etc.), but about qualities they possess, noteworthy actions they have taken for others, or insights they have shared that helped someone understand something in group.

✦<u>Note</u>: Depending on the feedback that is given, the giver or receiver might be using reframing. The receiver could also experience emotional attention set-shifting in regard to self. This exercise could also help with identifying emotions and emotional tolerance.

❧<u>Helpful Hint</u>: Prepare the group for doing this so they have time to think about something for each person. Either give them time before starting the intervention or mention it at the beginning of the group.

<p style="text-align:center">Civil Disobedience (Boal, 1992)
AKA Opposite Attack</p>

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Behavioral Inhibition/Impulse Control, Body Movement Control, Cognitive Flexibility, Generating and Implementing Alternatives, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Opposite Action Skills, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
<u>Type of Play</u>: Associative, Motor/Physical, Rule-Based
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The leader tells the group to do something, and they are supposed to do the opposite. For instance, cry vs. laugh, smile vs. frown, walk vs. run, etc. When opposite actions are not obvious, the leader can provide the action. For example: "If I clap my hands, you snap your fingers and vice versa." Players are required to inhibit the commanded behavior, think of the opposite action, and initiate that action.

Participants have so much fun doing the opposite of what they've been told to do, that this can be a good warm-up to get resistance out of their systems.

<p style="text-align:center">Clams Are Great</p>

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Flexibility, Generate Alternatives/Solutions, Listening Skills, Reframing, Verbal Communication, Working Memory

Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Associative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The group forms a circle. The first player lists all the reasons why clams are great, from realistic ("Clams are great because you can mix them with pasta.") to ridiculous ("Clams are great because they are good listeners."). When the first player runs out of reasons why clams are great, the next player takes over.

Variation:
Each player in the circle takes a turn listing one reason why clams are great.

Variation:
Pick something instead of clams.

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Come-Go-Stay (Bailey, 1993)

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Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Behavioral Inhibition, Boundaries, Decision-Making, Evaluating Results, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention or Assessment for understanding nonverbal communication
Type of Play: Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The group divides into pairs (or the therapist and participant can be a pair). One member of each pair lines up against the wall, next to each other, facing into the room: They are the senders. Their partners place themselves about six feet away, facing the senders: They are the receivers. The senders put their hands behind their backs and using only their faces, send one of three messages to their receiver: come, go, or stay (stop). No words or sounds are allowed. Come and go messages must indicate a direct line to or from the partner, not diagonally across the room (this is for safety, so that receivers do not bump into each other). The senders remain at the wall; only the receivers move—and only when they clearly understand the message being sent. Senders continue to vary the messages they are sending. Whenever the receiver reads a change in the communication, they respond to it.

After two or three minutes of sending and receiving, the leader tells the receivers to go back to where they started. Going down the line, pair by pair, the leader asks each receiver how many of the nonverbal messages they thought they understood. They can respond by percentage. For instance, "I think I got 80% of them." or "I think I got 25% of them." Then the leader asks the sender about how many

messages the receiver actually got correct. Sometimes the sender agrees with the receiver, but sometimes the receiver has been correct more times than they thought or less times than they thought. In either case the miscommunication can be addressed by the therapist.

If the receiver has done an accurate job of understanding the nonverbal communications, the therapist can encourage them to trust their nonverbal communication observations more. If they are correct less often than they thought, the therapist can suggest that they need more practice reading nonverbal communication signals.

Of course, another aspect of miscommunication can be that the sender is not being expressive enough or is sending a confusing message. The receiver and sender can discuss what was confusing and why.

Once the leader has checked in with all pairs, the lines can reverse places and roles: the senders become receivers and the receivers become senders. Play again for about two to three minutes and check in with each pair. Follow this with a more in-depth discussion about nonverbal communication.

Commonalities

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Flexibility, Generate Alternatives/Solutions, Listening Skills, Reality Testing, Reframing, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Task Persistence, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
This is an activity for a new group to help them get to know each other. Divide the group into smaller groups of three. The leader asks the following (or other) questions: What three things do you have in common that are not obvious (examples of obvious commonalities would be, you all have the same hair color or you are all in this group)? Where are three places you have never been that you would like to travel to? What are three behaviors that really aggravate you? What one thing can you all agree on that would make the world a better place? With each question, the small group must find answers that they all have in common. The small groups can share what their commonalities are with the larger group. You can use other questions that can elicit additional commonalities.

Conflict-Cooperation Drawings

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Behavioral Inhibition, Boundaries, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Emotional Tolerance,

Generating Ideas/Solutions, Identifying Emotions in Self and Others, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Recognizing Triggers, Teamwork, Trust

Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention

Type of Play: Cooperative

Configuration: Group or Individual

Materials: Two blank pieces of paper for each pair, a different colored writing utensil for each person.

Description:

This exercise is a great way to begin looking at the differences between conflict and cooperation. Divide participants into pairs. Put a blank piece of paper between them on the desk/table. Let each one choose a different color of marker to draw with.

Instructions for the pairs: "Together you are going to make a drawing. It could be realistic or abstract. Each of you will take turns drawing one line. No speaking between you so you cannot plan what you are doing. For this drawing, you are *not* going to work together. In fact, you may end up trying to stop your partner from accomplishing their goals. But you can only do this one line at a time."

Give pairs between three and five minutes to work. What usually results is a lot of scribbling on the paper as one student tries to cross out the work the other has tried to create. It is also possible that there might be two separate designs on the paper—instead of destroying each other's work, they may just ignore each other and work on their own in isolation.

Let each pair show their paper. Discuss what happened when they did not work together on their drawing: How did you feel? What does it look like? Is this a useful way to work on a project together? Then give each pair a new blank piece of paper.

This time each pair will work on creating a picture or design, but they will work *together* and try to enhance each other's drawing. No planning ahead of time, and no speaking during the exercise—just pay attention and try to help each other. Again, each one can draw only one line at a time.

Give participants five or ten minutes (depending on how focused they are on their work). If some pairs get done, and others are engrossed in making an elaborate design, give a three-minute warning to come to a stopping point. Tell pairs that are not done that they can finish their drawing later if they want.

Discuss what happened when they worked together. How did it feel? What were they able to create? Were they able to let go of ideas if their partner added a line they did not expect? Were they able to follow the follower? What is the difference between this drawing and the first one they did? What does this tell you about conflict? What does this tell you about cooperation?

Accommodation: If you have participants with fine motor control difficulties, use adaptive writing aids.

Variation: **Group Drawing**
Materials: A large sheet of paper for each group. Different colored marking utensils for each person so that they can identify their contribution.
Description:
Two to three participants cooperatively draw together without planning ahead of time and without speaking. They need to pay attention to each other and focus on how they can help create the drawing as a team. Give the group five to ten minutes (depending on age, speed of work, and interest in drawing) for the creation of the drawing.

Share drawings and discuss how each group nonverbally developed a process of working together. Was their group process successful in completing the assignment? Was their group process successful in developing a supportive and interactive team? If the group could make any changes in how they worked together, what would they be?

❧Helpful Hint: If a group wants to start over, tell them to work with whatever lines were drawn on their paper. Try to incorporate the "mistakes" into the design. If you allow groups to start over instead of drawing improvisationally, they will start becoming perfectionistic. In addition, part of the skill set of improvisation is accepting and incorporating mistakes.

❧Helpful Hint: Remind participants that they can "Yes, and…" in drawing as well as in acting.

Confronting Yourself in the Mirror

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Boundaries, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness/Self-Reflection, Trust, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Solitary
Configuration: Individual
Materials: Hand mirrors, half-length mirrors, or full body mirrors
Description:
The participant sits in front of a mirror and talks to their reflection about the issues they are dealing with. This conversation might be exploratory or questioning; in certain situations, the conversation might be a confrontation with the self. The therapist should be there to hold the space for the participant and process the experience. The mirror allows one to be present with themselves while being

witnessed and supported. If appropriate, this could be done with the therapy group also witnessing. When appropriate, a group member can be brought in to double the participant.

Variation: **Confronting Yourself on Video*** (Brawber & Emunah, 1992)
Type of Play: Solitary, Virtual/Digital
Materials: Video camera and monitor hooked up together, cell phone, tablet, or laptop.
Description:
The participant sits in front of a monitor with a video camera recording them in such a manner that the face of the participant appears on the monitor. The participant has a conversation with their video image, similar to the mirror version. The recording can be played back so the participant can view the monologue. Because of the playback option, this version can allow a deeper self-reflection than the mirror version. The therapist should be there to hold the space for the participant and process the experience. It is possible for participants to make similar videos at intervals during treatment.

✦Note: When deciding whether to use a mirror or video for self-confrontation, research has shown that we are more likely to negatively self-judge our video image than our mirror image. There are contradictions between our mirror reflection image and our video image. In a mirror, our image appears backwards to us and we begin to accept this as our objective appearance in the world. Therefore, on a video screen, our image looks backwards to ourselves. Intellectually, we know the image is ours, but our brain automatically identifies it as someone who is not familiar. This confusion leads to the person scrutinizing the image more closely, which then leads to an overly critical analysis of "that person on the video" (Mita et al., 1977). Acoustics add to this confusion and deepens the critical analysis, because we tend to hear our voices as deeper and fuller than they actually are. On video, we hear what our voices actually sound like to others, and our brain tells us the voice of that person is "not us" (Hullar, 2009).

❖Helpful Hint: If one chooses to do the video confrontation rather than the mirror one, the therapist can ask a specific question for the participant to focus on for each viewing in order to narrow the focus so there will be less interference of the "me/not me" confusion the video causes.

***Warning**: The therapist must make a clinical decision whether the client is ready to see themselves on video and/or confront themselves. Most likely this would be done in the working or termination stages of therapy (Phase Four or Five).

Corridors, Part I (Belt & Stockley, 1989)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Inhibition, Behavioral Initiation, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making Skills, Emotional Regulation, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Reasoning Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Working Memory

Purpose: Warm-up

Type of Play: Cooperative

<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual

Description:

Participants line up in two lines facing each other with space between the lines. Name the lines A and B. Actors are partnered with the person in line facing them. (If working one-on-one, the therapist and participant would pair up.) Line A actors will think of an offer that endows their partner in line B with a character and situation. For example, if Actor A says, "Wait until I tell Mom what you did!" it is obvious that A is a sibling of B and that B did something naughty. Actor B's response to the offer will set the scene a little more. Actor A accepts that offer and "ends" the short scene with a concluding line.

Continue down the line with each pair interacting. Then switch which side makes the first offer, so both lines have the opportunity to initiate the first offer and end the interaction.

♣<u>Helpful Hint</u>: Sometimes it is difficult for actors to stay focused on who their partner in the opposite line is. Before beginning, have each partner point directly to the other and say the partner's name or step forward and high-five their partner, staying in place long enough for the leader to make sure no one has been left out.

Advanced Variation: **Corridors, Part 2** (Belt & Stockley, 1989)

Additional *Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes:* Social Skills, Time Management

Type of Play: Cooperative, Dramatic

Description:

Participants line up in two lines facing each other with space between the lines. Name the lines A and B. Actors are partnered with the person facing them in the other line. Line A actors think of an offer that endows their partner in line B with a character and situation. Actor B needs to figure out who they are and respond appropriately. Allow the scene to go on longer until it comes to a logical ending. Try to encourage actors to keep the scenes relatively short because everyone is waiting in line for their turn!

Variation: **Relationship Frenzy**

Description:

Done in a circle with one actor in the center. A participant in the circle moves towards the participant in the center and endows them with a role. The center

participant must figure out who they are and respond. After a short back and forth, the actor in the center joins the circle, and the one who had entered the circle takes the center position for the next round.

✦Note: This version lowers the amount of sound and movement distraction in the room. It also allows for everyone to see each interaction and understand better how both partners are picking up nonverbal and verbal expressions to understand the relationship. This might be a better version for participants who have sensory integration or attention/focusing disorders or participants who are struggling with reading nonverbal communications.

The other plus for this version is that after each interaction, the therapist could take time to talk through the nonverbal and indirect verbal cues that were given to the person in the center of the circle.

Court Trial (Emunah, 2020)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Inhibition, Behavioral Initiation, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Following Directions, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Expression, Observation Skills, Organization Skills, Reasoning Skills, Sequencing, Social Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Expression, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Description:
Roles involved in this improvisational drama are: Judge, Defense Attorney, Prosecuting Attorney, Bailiff, Defendant, Plaintiff (if appropriate), Witnesses, and the Jury. Everyone in the group can have a role. Decide what the defendant has been charged with. Ask for a volunteer defendant. Let the defendant pick the defense attorney and enrole from there. Play out the trial and send the Jury out to make their decision.

Crash Boom, see Woosh Bong

Decisions, Decisions!
(D. Beal, personal communication, 2019)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Self-Awareness
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Associative

Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Masking tape
Description:
Place masking tape down the center of the floor. Players start in the middle of the room. The caller provides two choices within a category, and players get to pick between the two choices. Each round, the caller designates the right side of the room for one choice and the left side for the other. Players move to the side of the room that matches their choice. Categories can be likes or dislikes: school subjects (math or English?), colors (orange or blue?), animals (rhinoceros or hippopotamus?), pastimes (basketball or hide and seek?). In addition to energizing players and allowing them to practice making choices, they will get to know each other better, and the therapist gets to know them better. After each choice is made, the caller could move on to the next set of choices or ask players on each side why they chose that side. This gives them experience with supporting their choices.

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Dog and Bone*

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Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Impulse Control, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Sensory Awareness, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Materials: Blindfolds, Rawhide bone or something to represent the bone
Description:
One player volunteers to be the dog and is blindfolded. They lie down on the ground with the "bone" in front of them. The rest of the group stands at a distance from the dog on the starting line. If possible use the edge of a carpet or a line of tape on the floor to designate the starting line. The dog must listen carefully while the group tries to sneak up as quietly as possible. If the dog hears any noise, they must point in the direction of the sound and bark. The person who was heard must go back to the starting line. Whoever sneaks up on the dog and bone and steals the bone gets to be the next dog. Eventually the members of the group may realize that they can work together as a team to distract the dog and allow one of them to get the bone.

Adaptation:
Description:
If the group includes a player using a wheelchair, all players being the dog should sit in a chair as well with the bone in their lap. This allows a player in a wheelchair to steal the bone and keeps players off the ground where they could be run over.

***Warning**: Double check if any participants have trauma and could be triggered by being touched while blindfolded. (Touch is not required because the bone is being stolen, but touch can happen by accident, especially if you are playing the adapted version with the bone in the lap of the dog)

***Warning**: This game could be very difficult if any players have serious sensory integration issues or paranoid schizophrenia.

Variation: **The Queen/King/Royal Has a Headache**
Materials: Blindfolds, Chair for throne, Crown
Description:
In this variation, the Queen/King/Royal of the kingdom has a headache and, therefore, does not want to hear any noise because it hurts. The Queen/King/Royal is blindfolded and sits on a throne (chair). The group tries to sneak up on the Queen/King/Royal, and if the Queen/King/Royal hears them, they point in the direction the sound came from and moan loudly. If players from the group sneak up and tag the Queen/King/Royal on the arm or knee before being pointed at, they get to be the next Queen or King or Royal.

✦Note: Because there is touching in this game, consent for touching should be obtained.

Doubling (Moreno, 1959)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Boundaries, Cognitive Flexibility, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Reframing, Self-Reflection, Trust, Verbal Communication
Purpose: One technique used within a Primary Intervention or Assessment for ego strength
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
This is a psychodrama/sociodrama technique that allows the thoughts and emotions a character or a person is not expressing to be voiced by an auxiliary. The double is located behind the actor. When the double feels tuned into the actor and senses a thought or feeling that is not being expressed, they put a hand on the actor's shoulder and express it. If the actor agrees with the double's comment, the actor can bring the thought or feeling into the scene using the double's words or similar words. If the double's comment does not resonate with the actor, the actor ignores the comment. Doubling can open up a scene by bringing unspoken information and emotion into it. It is also good practice for the double in developing empathetic understanding of another.

✦<u>Note</u>: If the actor does not wish to be touched, an agreed upon object, such as a "magic wand" or a scarf, could be used to substitute for the touch on the shoulder. Having each person hold onto one end of the object represents the connection between the actor and the double.

✦<u>Note</u>: If trust has not been built yet, or if there is an actor who startles easily, the double could stand by their side within the actor's peripheral vision.

Drum Conversations

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
<u>Type of Play</u>: Cooperative, Expressive
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Materials: Drums* or other rhythm instruments
Description:
Two participants have a back-and-forth conversation using only the sounds they can make on a drum. The therapist can identify the topic for the conversation or leave it up to the participants.

***Warning:** Be aware of the type of drum being used to avoid a situation of cultural appropriation. If you only have djembes available, it would be appropriate to mention their use in ritual practices.

Dude!

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Social Skills, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up
<u>Type of Play</u>: Cooperative
<u>Configuration</u>: Group
Description:
The group forms a circle facing in. Everyone looks down at the floor. At various points, each person looks up, and if they catch the eye of another person, they both say, "Dude!" and change places in the circle. After they have moved, they look down again.

♣<u>Helpful Hint</u>: If participants are not looking up, the leader can step in and say, "Look up!" or "Look down!" to ensure that everyone is playing.

♣<u>Helpful Hint</u>: Encourage players to use different tones of voice when they say "Dude!" to create the very beginning of characters and a relationship between the characters.

Advanced Variation: **Kitty Wants a Corner***
Additional Outcomes: Decision-Making, Locus of Control for Mice, Organization Skills, Teamwork
Type of Play: Cooperative and Competitive
Description:
Everyone forms a circle facing in with one player in the center. Those in the circle are the Mice and the player in the center is the Kitty. The Kitty approaches a Mouse and says, "Kitty wants a corner." The Mouse responds, "Ask my neighbor." The Kitty must go ask another Mouse. In the meantime, other Mice are quietly making eye contact and communicating through gestures about changing places. If the Kitty sees a place change happening and is able to get to one of the spaces before one of the Mice, the Kitty becomes a Mouse and the Mouse who did not get to their place in the circle becomes the Kitty.

***Warning:** This game may not be appropriate for pre-adolescents or any group that is working through relationship aggression or bullying, because Mice may work together to keep a person they do not like in the center.

Elbow to Elbow, see **Person to Person**

Embodied Life Map (Paige Dickinson)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Decision-Making , Disorganized Thinking, Focus, Implementing Alternatives/Solutions, Locus of Control, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving , Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness, Sequencing
Purpose: Primary Intervention or Assessment for motivation for change
Type of Play: Expressive and Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: 10–12 large checkers or another kind of game marker for each player.
Description:
The participants identify one aspect of their life they want to change or a goal they want to accomplish relating to an emotion, attitude, relationship, or task. They share (metaphorically and practically) where they are now and where they would like to be when the change is completed. They create a three-dimensional map from beginning to end of the change process, including all the steps that will be needed. This makes participants think through the whole process in detail and reverse engineer the goal, so they can put their plan into action later. A participant lays out the process physically in the room, and with the group witnessing, they move from the first marker to the next, talking through, acting out (monologue), or sculpting what needs to be done to achieve each step. If there is an obstacle

or an interaction with another person, another group member could step in to represent that aspect of the plan and engage the participant in a dialogue. Group members can suggest or challenge the participant if they think a step is missing or has been placed out of sequence. Derole after activity.

Variation:
Each steppingstone can be done in a narrative or poem format.
Type of Play: Solitary

Variation: **Map to Recovery**
Type of Play: Dramatic
Materials: Large pieces of paper, colored markers or other writing utensils, props and costumes (if desired)
Description:
Participants draw their map to recovery (or journey through their problems). Have participants make a list of the obstacles to their journey and the supports on their journey, which will then be identified on the map in various places. Once the map is drawn, it can be acted out in the group. It is possible that a group map can be created with items from everyone's map or individual maps can be acted out.

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Emotion Orchestra
AKA **Emotion Symphony**

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Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Cognitive Empathy, Emotional Regulation, Following Directions, Impulse Control, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Associative with Group Members, Cooperative with Conductor
Configuration: Group
Description:
Each player chooses an emotion and creates a sound or a series of sounds for it. Players making similar emotions find each other so there is a section for each emotion represented, just as an instrumental orchestra has a section for strings, woodwinds, and horns. One player serves as the conductor and signals the emotional orchestra to begin. If the conductor points to a section, they begin to make their sounds. If the conductor's hands are raised, the players become louder and more intense. If the conductor's hands are lowered, the players become quieter. The conductor can take a section or the whole orchestra to silence by making an agreed upon gesture for silence.

Accommodation: If a conductor does not have the ability to raise or lower arms/hands, they can use an assistant or a different action could be created that they are physically able to do.

Variation: **Mini-Mouth Orchestra**
Description:
One player in the group volunteers to create a beat for the orchestra. Everyone else hums until the conductor motions them in. When each joins the orchestra, they create an easy to repeat, individual sound. This sound could change notes or be the same note (a siren sound like Eeeee-Ooooo, Eeeee-Ooooo as opposed to Bop, Bop, Bop). Orchestra members try to harmonize with each other and follow the beat. The conductor makes the orchestra louder, softer, bringing in different instruments for solos, duets, or trios, and can end the concert with a gesture for silence.

✦Note: This variation can teach individuals the basics of the game before moving into creating sounds based on emotions.

Variation: **Solo Emotion Instrument**
Description:
If working one-on-one, the therapist can conduct the participant (and vice versa) in a solo performance.

Variation: **Emotion Orchestra with Words***
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Verbal Communication
Description:
Each player chooses an emotion and decides on either one word/phrase or several to express it. Players making similar emotions find each other so there is a section for each emotion represented. The conductor conducts in the same way as for the other versions of emotion orchestra.

***Warning:** This version can be more sensory stimulating than nonverbal sounds for players who are neurodivergent.

Emotion Targets

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Anger Management, Behavioral Inhibition, Body Movement Control, Emotional Regulation, Locus of Control, Recognizing Emotional Triggers, Stress Management
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Associative, Expressive

<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual

Materials: Paper plate/butcher paper roll, colored markers or other writing utensils, wet tissues or bean bags to throw, tape or thumbtacks to put the target up on the wall or a bulletin board.

Material Accommodation: For people with movement or coordination difficulties, use poster board for a larger target.

Material Accommodation: For people who cannot throw, use water pistols to hit the target.

Description:

Each participant creates a visual metaphor of a problem that is upsetting, stressful, or angers them on a paper plate with art media. Then the plate is taped to the wall or pinned on a bulletin board. The participants throw bean bags or wet tissues at the target, as they make a noise that expresses their anger or frustration. Wet tissues create a lovely thump.

With a group, a large piece of butcher paper could be used instead of paper plates with all targets placed on the large sheet.

*Warning: Make sure the throwing object is soft enough that it will not harm other participants or the environment.

*Warning: Be sure you know the organization's rules of anger expression for residents.

*Warning: Do not use this intervention with anyone with intermittent explosive disorder or reactive attachment disorder.

Emotion Thermometer* (Paige Dickinson)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Behavioral Inhibition, Behavioral Initiation, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Emotional Regulation, Locus of Control, Self-Awareness

Purpose: Check-in, Warm-up, or Primary Intervention

<u>Type of Play</u>: Motor/Physical, Associative, Expressive

<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual

Description:

The therapist picks a variety of emotions for the participants to explore and asks them to embody and move through the space expressing them. Then the therapist instructs the players to increase or decrease the intensity of the emotion. Derole between each emotion and at the end of the exercise, talk about the emotions and experiences the participants had.

***Warning:** Participants need to understand the concept of personal space. If personal space is used to harass another member of the group, this would not be a good choice of intervention. Practice Bubble or Hula Hoop Walks first.

***Warning:** The following populations have difficulty with this intervention: oppositional defiant disorder, intermittent explosive disorder, reactive attachment disorder, dissociative identity disorder.

Emotion Walk and Freeze, see Walks

Emotional Greetings

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Behavioral Regulation, Boundaries, Decision-Making, Emotional Regulation, Following Directions, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Social Skills, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Participants find a partner and position themselves back to back. When the leader calls out different emotions, participants turn and greet each other verbally and nonverbally with that emotion. The partners can stay with each other for all rounds, or they can change partners each round.

Emotional Spaces (Emunah, 2020)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Empathy, Emotional Regulation, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Associative or Cooperative (dependent upon participant abilities), Expressive
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Divide the room into a minimum of four separate spaces named after an emotion. For example, the four corners could be happy, sad, angry, and surprised. Whatever part of the room players are in, they must act and interact as if they were experiencing that emotion. They can stay in one particular corner, or they can move among the corners.

❧Helpful Hint: If a participant appears to be staying in only one space, the therapist can encourage them to try out another space, at least for a short while.

Variation: **Emotion Party**
Additional Outcomes: Sequencing, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Activity
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Description:
This improvisation is set at a party. The first actor is the host of the party which can be for any specific occasion in the host's home or a special location (i.e., birthday party at the host's home or a reunion at a park). Guests arrive at the party individually or in pairs of two. Each entrance the actors bring in a specific emotion which they play out as they enter the party. Everyone who is at the party takes on this emotion. When the next guest(s) arrive, a different emotion is brought in. After all the guests have arrived and improvise for a while, guests begin to leave in the opposite order that they came in (i.e., the last guest(s) leave first and so on until the first guest leaves last). As they leave, they take their emotion with them and the general emotion for the party goes back to the previous guest(s)'s emotion. This means that the actors need to remember the order in which the emotions were brought into the party. Finally, the host is left alone and the improvisation ends.
    ✦Note: Because of the addition of working memory, this game needs a warm-up.
    ❧Helpful Hint: It is useful if the guests at the party decide the order in which they are going to enter and the emotion they will bring with them before the improv starts. This helps everyone remember the order when the guests begin to leave.
    ❧Helpful Hint: Because of the limits of working memory, the number of times guests enter should be limited to seven at the most. For groups which have more difficulty with working memory and sequencing, limit the number of times guests enter to no more than three or four.

Empty Chair (Moreno, 1959)*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Anger Management, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Opposite Action Skills, Reframing, Recognizing Triggers, Self-Reflection, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Material: A chair, perhaps a symbolic object and/or scarf

Description:

This is a psychodrama/sociodrama technique which allows the participant to talk to a real or fictional person or a concept (such as epilepsy or oppression) imagined to be sitting in an empty chair. Sometimes the empty chair is used for venting emotions or asking questions of the chair's occupant, sometimes it is used for practicing a confrontation or apology, sometimes it is used to say goodbye to someone who has passed away. A participant can even put themselves in the chair and talk to themselves.

❧Helpful Hint: If the participant has difficulty imagining the occupant of the chair, an object symbolic of the occupant can be put there to talk to or another member of the group can sit in the chair.

*Warning: When doing this in a group setting trust must be built before the empty chair can be used as a therapeutic tool. There is minimal distance when doing the empty chair, which means the participant will feel vulnerable as they will be revealing a lot of personal information. They must feel the support of the group to get the benefit of this intervention.

*Warning: In order to help participants clearly enrole and derole, the chair that is used should in some manner be enrolled as well. It should not be the participant's chair. If a symbolic object is being used—that will enrole the chair. If there is no symbolic object, a scarf could be put over the back of the chair so it can be deroled after the intervention.

Variation: **Empty Chairs with Role Reversal 1**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Listening Skills, Reasoning Skills
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Description:

Two chairs are set up facing each other. The participant sits in one and choses someone from the group who they trust and who is a good listener. The participant thinks of something they need to hear. It could be to praise themself for something they did that was wonderful or it could be to confront themself on a task they have been avoiding. Usually, the therapist positions themself behind the listener and listens carefully in order to be able to coach the listener later, if needed. The listener pays close attention to the message of the participant. When the participant has finished, the participant and listener exchange chairs. Then the listener repeats the participant's message as closely as possible in terms of words, emotions, and meaning. The therapist is there to coach the listener if an important part of the message has been forgotten or an important component of the message has not

been mirrored back. In this way, the participant forms and expresses the message they need to hear that day *and* gets to hear the message.

*Warning: If the participant picks someone to be their listener who is having a difficult day and may not be capable of listening fully or is someone who has poor listening/mirroring skills, the therapist may suggest for the participant to pick someone different.

Variation: **Empty Chairs with Role Reversal 2** (Gestalt version)
Type of Play: Dramatic
Materials: Two chairs
Description:
Two chairs represent two different points of view, or two different people, or the participant and a concept. The participant sits in the chair that reflects their point of view and states what it feels like to be in this chair or to be this person. Then the participant changes chairs to become the other point of view or person.

An example: A person who has epilepsy sits in one chair and talks about their feelings about having epilepsy, then switches to the other chair and speaks as Epilepsy, as if it were a living being.

✦Note: The participant must derole and enrole when switching between chairs.

Environments

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Behavioral Initiation, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Planning, Problem-Solving, Social Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative, Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Description:
Divide into groups of four to six players. Each group decides on an environment somewhere in the universe (fictional or nonfictional) to act out. Group members can be people, animals or objects in this environment. When each group performs, the audience does not guess verbally where they think the environment is. To guess, they must get up and join the environment and become a person, animal or object in it. If they are correct, the original players will incorporate them into the scene. If they are incorrect, they are asked to leave the scene. After a few minutes of dramatic guesses, the leader freezes the scene and asks where they are.

❧Helpful Hint: The leader should check with each group during the planning to make sure they are not doing the same environment.

Failure Celebration

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Listening Skills, Opposite Action Skills, Reframing, Stress Management/Coping Skills, Trust, Verbal Expression
Purpose: Warm-up
<u>Type of Play</u>: Cooperative
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Description:
All group members tell a story about a time when they failed (preferably not their most traumatic failure). After each story is told, instead of criticism, the entire group cheers and celebrates the failure.

Variation: **Failure Inoculation**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Social Skills
<u>Configuration</u>: Group
Description:
The group walks randomly around the room. Each time they pass someone, they stop for a moment and say, "I failed!" with great joy, and the person they are talking to congratulates them and says with great joy, "I failed, too!"

Variation: **Terrible Magician** (A. Sasser, personal communication, 2020)
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Nonverbal Communication
<u>Configuration</u>: Group
Materials: Depending on the group, the Terrible Magician can pantomime magic tricks or there could be a box with a selection of props that might be used in magic, such as scarves, a deck of cards, a hat, and a bunny puppet.
Description:
Each player pretends to be the Magician doing their most famous trick. The person to their right in the circle becomes the Assistant. However, the trick fails horribly (in whatever way the Magician chooses). The Assistant, then, must find a way to complement the Magician on something they did that was "brilliant." Everyone applauds. The Assistant then becomes the Magician, and the tricks continue until everyone has had an opportunity to be the Magician.

Fedder's Four

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making, Disorganized Thinking, Locus of Control, Opposite Action Skills, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Sequencing

Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Solitary or Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: If writing, paper and pencil or a computer would be needed. If acting, having props may help
Description:
Fedder's Four is the dramatic action pattern involved in playwriting, named after drama therapist/playwright Norman Fedder, who invented it. In addition to being the pattern for playwriting, Fedder's Four is also the universal pattern for problem-solving.

There are four steps to Fedder's Four: **I want—But—However—So**.

The individual/character has a desire or goal (**I want**)—**But** there is an obstacle in the way and so the goal is currently unreachable—**However,** the individual/character takes an action to overcome the obstacle—(**So,**) either the individual/character succeeds or fails. If the result is failure, the individual/character can choose a different action to overcome the obstacle.

A scene (fictional or non-fictional, improvisational or written) can be set-up for a writing exercise using the Fedder's Four formula or for acting out an improvisational scene. The players can try as many different ways to overcome the obstacle as they can think of. Fedder's Four encourages experimentation through improvisation or writing.

Variation: **Scene Analysis**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Working Memory
Description:
Fedder's Four can be used to analyze what is happening in a script and why or why not the character is able to overcome the obstacle.

Variation: **Problem or Life-Analysis**
Description:
A past or current obstacle in someone's life can be analyzed using Fedder's Four and experimented with in improv or through writing or discussion. Using Fedder's Four provides distance to discussions of real-life experiences.

Find Your Partner with a Sound*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Body Movement Control, Listening Skills, Sensory Awareness, Teamwork, Trust
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual

Materials: Blindfolds for each player

Description:

The group divides into pairs. Each pair decides on one sound they will make to find each other. Listen to all the sounds and make sure they are different. Have partners split up and go to opposite sides of the room. If you can trust your students to keep their eyes closed, great. If not, use blindfolds. Participants begin making their sounds, quietly enough that all the different sounds can be heard. They move toward each other slowly, trying to get nearer to the sound, but also trying not to bump into other people. Because others are making a noise as they move, it is possible to avoid them. When all the pairs find each other, the round is over.

❧Helpful Hint: Some participants can serve as spotters to keep blindfolded participants safe. The therapist should also serve as a spotter.

❧Helpful Hint: In groups mixed with players who use wheelchairs and ones who do not, caution players to move slowly for safety and to allow time for others to hear their partners' sounds.

*Warning:** Do not use this game with participants who have a trauma history!

Finding Spaces

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Locus of Control
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Associative
Configuration: Group
Description:
Group members move around the room randomly and at different speeds determined by the leader. They try to find the empty spaces in the room. This requires taking stock of where each player is, as well as where they are moving and at what pace.

❧Helpful Hint: Be aware of possible obstacles or dangers like rugs or wires on the floor, which participants could trip on or bump into.

Fire on the Mountain (Aycox, 1999)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Following Directions, Listening Skills, Social Skills
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Cooperative, Competitive, and Motor/Physical
Configuration: Group

Description:

The group needs to have an odd number of people. Everyone pairs up and creates 2 circles, one inside the other. This ensures that there is an even number in both circles. The odd person is positioned in the middle and is the rhythm leader. The inner circle are the music makers and face the rhythm leader with enough space on either side of them to allow room for someone to pass between them. The outer circle are the dancers. Each dancer starts behind a music maker they have paired up with.

The rhythm leader starts a beat that they can repeat. The music makers copy the beat. The dancers dance around the outside in a counterclockwise circle. At some point, the rhythm leader stops the beat and yells "Fire on the Mountain!" At this, the music makers also stop the beat and raise their arms with their hands open. The rhythm leader finds a music maker and matches hand to hand with them. Simultaneously, the dancers enter the inner circle between the music makers and find someone to pair with (it does not need to be their original partner). Because there is one extra person, someone will be left without a partner. They will become the rhythm leader for the next round. The dancers stay in the inner circle and become the music makers, while the previous music makers are now in the outer circle and become the dancers for the next round. At first, this game seems very confusing, but after one or two rounds it starts to make sense.

❖Helpful Hint: If the group has an even number of group members the facilitator can participate.

❖Helpful Hint: The one rule that everyone must follow is that music makers need to remain in the inner circle with their hands up after the rhythm maker says, "Fire on the Mountain." They should not pair up with another music maker or leave their position.

✦Note: Due to the competitive nature of this game, the facilitator should be aware of diagnostic or personality issues that could arise.

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Follow the Leader*
AKA **Shadowing**

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Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Following Directions, Observation Skills, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Cooperative, Motor/Physical
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:

The group divides into pairs. In each pair one player volunteers to be the person and the other volunteers to be the shadow. The person moves around the room slowly, and the shadow tries to follow and copy all the movements of the person (or

at least what can be seen from behind). This game is almost the opposite of Mirroring, although the players do not stay in one place, but move around the room.

✦Note: The shadow tries to keep the same amount of space between themself and the person. This means the shadow must pay attention to sense when their person stops, so they don't bump into them.

*Warning: If any participants have a trauma history, the space between the person and the shadow should be increased so they do not feel as if they are being stalked. If a participant does begin to feel unsafe, stop the game.

Fork in the Path, The

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Flexibility, Emotional Regulation, Decision-Making, Identifying Triggers, Locus of Control, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness, Sequencing
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Large checkers, small carpet squares, or other items that can represent steps toward emotional regulation/dysregulation, masking tape or scarves to use for outlining path, objects to represent the trigger, dysregulation, and calmness.
Description:
This intervention is useful for participants who are having difficulty recognizing their triggers and can help them identify what a choice point is. Set up a path in the room that forks in two directions. At "the fork in the path," place an object that represents the trigger. A positive choice needs to be made to self-regulate. At the end of one path, place something to represent dysregulation, and at the end of the other, place something to represent calmness. When the participant reaches the trigger at the fork, they stop and decide which way to go. Obviously, the appropriate choice would be toward calmness. Give the player large checkers or another object to represent stepping stones that they can lay on the ground. These are the steps that need to be taken to get from the trigger to self-regulation. Some participants may need one or two steps; others may need more. All of this can be verbalized and enacted, making it concrete. Some participants may need to work backwards from dysregulation to the trigger and then work forward to calmness. This kind of enactment can illuminate other types of issues like procrastination, avoidance, or any life decision that needs to be made by group members.

Accommodation: For those with movement problems the path can be mapped out on poster board or a large piece of paper, or by using an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device.

Fortunately/Unfortunately, see **Group Storytelling**

Four Corner Dash (Emunah, 2020)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Impulse Control, Problem-Solving
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Competitive and/or Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
Four Corner Dash is a game of tag, so it works best in a large space. Players choose one of the four corners to be bases or safe places. Either the leader or a volunteer player stays in the middle and acts as "It." The object of the game is for players in the corners to switch corners and not get tagged by "It."

Four-Part Breath*
AKA **Box Breathing or Square Breathing**

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Physiological Regulation, Stress Management/ Coping Skills

Purpose: Warm-up, Deroling, Closure
Type of Play: N/A
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Breathe in through your nose for four counts. Pause and hold breath for four counts. Exhale through your mouth for four counts. Pause and hold breath out for four counts. When in the pause sections (Steps Two and Four), notice your body sensations and rest in them.

Adaptation:
Description:
For groups who need concrete experiences, have participants use an index finger to draw a box in the air in front of their chests.

*Warning: Do not do this activity with a participant who has panic attacks, heart conditions, breathing difficulties, or lung issues as holding one's breath can increase heart rate.

Freeze

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Listening Skills

Purpose: Warm-up
<u>Type of Play</u>: Motor/Physical, Associative
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Description:
Group members randomly move around the room and must stop whenever the leader calls out, "Freeze!" They can move again when the leader says, "Unfreeze!"

Freeze and Justify*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Inhibition, Behavioral Initiation, Boundaries, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Expression, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Social Skills, Spontaneity, Verbal Expression
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
<u>Type of Play</u>: Dramatic
<u>Configuration</u>: Group
Description:
An improvisation is started between two actors. At a point when their physical postures are in an interesting juxtaposition, an audience member can call out, "Freeze!" Both actors freeze (stop moving and stay in that position). The caller enters the performance space and taps one of the actors out. The tapped-out actor goes back to the audience. The new actor takes the position and pose of the actor who was tapped out and restarts the scene but changes the subject and characters in the scene. The actor who remains must figure out what is happening, what the characters' relationships are, and who they are in order to continue the scene. This freezing and changing of the scene can happen as often as there are volunteers who want to freeze actors and take their place.

*Warning: This game moves so quickly and spontaneously that inappropriate boundary crossings can happen suddenly (e.g., one actor attacking another). It helps to provide parameters before beginning about what behaviors are appropriate or inappropriate to do. If boundaries are crossed, the game should be stopped, and the boundary crossing discussed.

Future Projection (Moreno, 1959)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Decision-Making, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Reframing, Self-Awareness, Sequencing, Social Skills, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention or a Closure to a Role-play

Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
While acting out a scene, participants are asked to imagine themselves at some point in the future (i.e., 1, 5, 10, or 20 years) when they have accomplished an important goal. They act out a reunion or chance meeting in the future during which they tell each other about the success they have had. This can also be done as a nonfictional exercise in which participants imagine succeeding in their real lives. This is a technique used in psychodrama or sociodrama, but it can be used independently.

    ✤Helpful Hint: If a participant says they can only imagine failure in their future, tell them their task is to imagine what it would be like to succeed and "act as if" it happened.

Getting Off the Island (Sternberg, 1998)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making, Empathy, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Sequencing, Social Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative, Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Description:
Between four and ten players volunteer to be people who have been shipwrecked on a deserted island. There is a limited amount of food to eat. The players need to decide how they are going to survive until they are rescued. The situation is acted out. After the scene is over, the audience and actors discuss the conflicts and obstacles the castaways dealt with and brainstorm better ways to deal with the dramatic situation. A scene replay can be done to see if some of those solutions will work or if other solutions can be tried out.

    ✤Helpful Hint: Players should not behave as if they are on the TV show *Survivor*. The point is for everyone to survive and win, not just one.

Ghost Guess Game*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Decision-Making, Observation Skills, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Competitive and Cooperative
Configuration: Group

Materials: Very large piece of opaque fabric
Description:
The group is divided up into at least two teams. One team leaves the room with the fabric. They decide on a player who will re-enter the room under the fabric. The player's goal is to change their posture and movement so that no one on the other team can guess who "the ghost" is. When the player re-enters the room, the team in the room has one guess they can make about who is under the fabric. If they are wrong, the team currently in the hall gets a point. If they are right, they get the point. Depending on how difficult the transition between room and hallway is, teams can switch after each turn, or one team can stay in the hallway for up to five turns.

The group in the hallway may decide to put more than one person under the fabric. In this case, if the group in the room does not guess there are two (or more) people under the fabric or they do not guess all correctly, the team in the hallway gets the point.

❧Helpful Hint: Players under the fabric must be careful to not show their shoes or their identity may be given away!

✦Note: If your participants have physical challenges, an assistant with each group can be helpful to problem-solve and keep everyone safe.

*Warning: If participants have PTSD, check to make sure this game does not feel threatening.

Gibberish

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Cognitive Flexibility, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Teamwork, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative, Expressive
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Players use a made-up language of nonsense syllables to communicate with each other. This can be done in pairs or in groups. Gibberish can take the pressure off making up dialogue that makes sense in order to allow players to focus on tone of voice, facial expression, and gesture.

Gibberish Dictionary

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Teamwork, Working Memory

Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
<u>Type of Play</u>: Cooperative, Dramatic
<u>*Configuration*</u>: Group or Individual
Materials: Paper and pencil for group members
Description:
Everyone writes down a gibberish word. Each player reads their word, and the others write down a definition of it. Then everyone reads their definition, and the group votes on what the best definition is. A scene is created based on one or several of the words and their definitions.

Variation:
Materials: Dictionary
Description:
For groups that need a little bit more warm-up or training on making up definitions, this game can be played by using a real dictionary. One person finds a word that no one knows the definition of, and all the rest of the players write down what they think the definition is. After the players vote on what they think is closest to the real definition, the person who looked it up reads the real definition.

Go

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Boundaries, Following Directions, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Sequencing, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
<u>Type of Play</u>: Cooperative
<u>*Configuration*</u>: Group
Description:
The group forms a circle. Person One makes eye contact with someone else (Person Two) in the circle. Person Two gives Person One permission to move to their spot by saying, "Go." Person One starts walking toward Person Two's place, and now Person Two must move to a new space in the circle. Person Two looks at a third person in the circle. Person Three gives Person Two permission to move by saying, "Go." Now as Person Two is moving toward Person Three, they must get permission to move to a new space. And so on. As the group gets better at this game, they can pick up speed.

✦<u>Note</u>: The difficulty in this game is that the player who has just given permission cannot move until they have permission to move. Having just said the word, "Go," one's tendency is to begin to move. But no movement can happen until the *next* person says, "Go."

✦Note: This game is better played in a large group. If the group is smaller than eight, everyone ends up moving continuously.

Gratitude Ball

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Coping Skills, Reframing, Self-Awareness, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up, Closure
Type of Play: Parallel
Configuration: Group or individual
Materials: Ball
Description:
Pass a ball around the circle, and as each person receives it, they share something they are grateful for.

Group Carries, see Transportation

Grounding

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Anger Management, Coping Skills, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Sensory Awareness, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Stress Management
Purpose: Warm-up, Deroling, Closure
Type of Play: N/A
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The purpose of grounding is to bring participants into the present moment and help them find a sense of safety within their bodies. Participants stop and take a few slow deep breaths. Then, standing or sitting in that place, they look around and bring their attention to:

- five objects they can see
- four textures they can feel
- three sounds they can hear
- two odors they can smell
- one thing they can taste

The leader should announce each of the five senses, providing enough time for participants to complete the task silently. Encourage them to use their imaginations to really see, feel, hear, smell and taste the items they have chosen.

Group Mood (Emunah, 2020)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Teamwork
Purpose: Warp-up
<u>Type of Play</u>: Dramatic
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Description:
One player leaves the room. While the player is gone, the rest of the group decides on an emotion that they all will portray. They should not copy each other, although they can behave similarly. They are free to express the emotion in different ways and at different intensities. The player who returns must identify what emotion the group mood is expressing.

✦<u>Note</u>: If working in individual therapy, either the therapist or the participant would leave the room and whoever is in the room takes on an emotion. This actually may be more difficult than doing it with a group because there are fewer examples of the emotion being acted out. Therefore, it might be a more advanced version of the game.

See **Making an Entrance** for the opposite structure.

Group Storytelling

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Cognitive Flexibility, Generating Alternatives, Listening Skills, Organization Skills, Reasoning Skills, Sequencing, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up, Primary Intervention, or Closure
<u>Type of Play</u>: Cooperative
<u>Configuration</u>: Group
Description:
The group is in a circle. One player starts a story. After the player sets the scene and the characters, the next player continues the story. Everyone must remember what was said from the beginning of the story, so it continues to make sense. Often themes appear in the stories that relate to the issues of the group, and when they do, time can be spent talking about the story.

Variation: **Fortunately/Unfortunately***
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Conflict Resolution, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Reframing
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Description:
The group builds a story as described above. The first storyteller starts the story. After setting the scene and introducing the main character(s), the second storyteller

takes over and starts with "Unfortunately …" and explains an obstacle that blocks the main character(s) from their task. The third storyteller takes over and starts with "Fortunately…" and explains how the main character(s) remove the obstacle. The story alternates between Fortunately and Unfortunately around the circle until the story ends. Always end on a Fortunately! This follows the structure of Fedder's Four (I want—But—However—So).

✦Note: If trust has not been built in the group, participants who have already added to the story can view an "unfortunately" added by a later player as an attempt to negate another's idea or contribution. However, if trust is in the transition stage, this story-building game can enhance trust.

***Warning:** Be cautious of using this intervention with highly manipulative or oppositional participants.

Variation: **One Word at a Time**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: This relies much more heavily on Attention, Listening Skills, and Working Memory than other Group Storytelling Interventions.
<u>Configuration</u>*:* Group or Individual
Description:
These stories are built with members of the group each adding one word at a time. Players must make decisions about when to end a sentence and start a new one or the story becomes one long, run-on sentence that begins to lose its meaning.

Variation: **Last Word/First Word:**
<u>Configuration</u>*:* Group or Individual
Description:
The first person begins a story by saying one sentence. The second person must start their sentence by using the last word of the first person's sentence. And the story is built continuing the same pattern until it ends.

Variation: **ABC-Z Storytelling One Sentence at a Time:**
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Description:
Write down the alphabet where all players can see it or give each player a copy of the alphabet. Create a story sentence by sentence. Each storyteller must begin their sentence with a word that begins with the next letter of the alphabet starting with A and going to Z. After the group gets good with this, see if they can create a story using only one go round in the alphabet. This requires concise storytelling!

Variation: **Yes, and … Storytelling:**
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Description:
If in a group sit or stand in a circle. One person starts a story. The person on the right or left of the first storyteller says, "Yes, and …" then adds to the story. The next storyteller also says, "Yes, and …" until the group has gotten all the way around the circle and ended the story. This version of storytelling can be good practice when participants are learning improvisation and using "Yes, and …"

Variation: **Dramatize a Picture**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Emotional Regulation, Social Skills
<u>Type of Play</u>: Dramatic
<u>Configuration:</u> Group or Individual
Materials: Pictures or postcards with people expressing a variety of emotions or involved in an interesting situation
Description:
Create a story from a picture or postcard. Discuss what is happening in the picture and how the people in the picture feel and create a story based on the discussion.

Variation: **Create a Story from One Sentence**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Conflict Resolution, Emotional Tolerance, Problem-Solving, Sequencing
<u>Configuration:</u> Group or Individual
Description:
A small group opens a magazine or book to a random page and randomly points to a sentence on the page. The group has to decide if the sentence is at the beginning, middle, or end of the story they are going to create. Then they must create a story using that sentence in that place in the story.
　✦<u>Note</u>: It is more difficult when the group decides the sentence will be incorporated into the middle or the end. The leader does not want to tell the group this, but must be aware that they may need more encouragement to work through the challenges that come up during story creation.

Guess Who's Guilty (Emunah, 2020)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Decision-Making, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
<u>Type of Play</u>: Dramatic
<u>Configuration</u>: Group

Description:

The group is divided in half. One half pretends they are detectives observing a group of suspects through a one-way mirror. The other half of the group are the suspects who are waiting to be interviewed by the detectives. The guilty party is chosen before the scene starts, either by picking slips of paper out of a hat or by everyone in the room closing their eyes and the leader tapping the guilty person on the shoulder. The suspects interact and try to be as realistic as possible. At the end of a set period of time, the detectives each guess who is guilty. The suspects do not say anything until all the detectives have guessed. After the first-round, groups can reverse roles so everyone gets to practice both observation and acting.

Hand Squeeze
AKA **Pass the Pulse**

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Sensory Integration/Awareness, Sequencing
Purpose: Warm-up or Closure
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:

Everyone forms a circle and holds the hand of the person next to them. The leader or a volunteer starts to pass a hand squeeze in one direction around the circle. As one hand receives a squeeze, the recipient must squeeze the hand of the person on the other side of them. Eventually, the squeeze returns to the first person.

Variation:
Arms can be crossed in front of the body, so each player has the left hand of the person on their left and the right hand of the person on their right.
　✦Note: This version requires more sensory awareness and integration.

Variation:
In whatever manner players are connected, the squeeze can continue to be passed around the circle at varying speeds.

Variation:
The squeeze can be passed in both directions simultaneously.

Adaptation:
Description:
If someone in the group is tactilely defensive, an object could be passed around the group instead. If it helps create a sense of belonging, the object could be squeezable like a stress ball and could be squeezed as it is passed.

Hook-up (Dennison & Dennison, 1989)*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Anger Management, Body Movement Control, Coping Skills, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Tolerance, Physiological Regulation, Self-Awareness, Sensory Awareness
Purpose: Closure, Deroling or Assessment for ability to focus
Type of Play: Motor/Physical
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Each participant begins by standing with their legs together and arms at sides. They cross their lower arms and clasp their hands together, then twist them up toward their chest and rest them on their breastbone. They take one foot and cross it over the other foot. Balance in this position for a minute or two while breathing slowly and allowing their body to calm down.

***Warning:** This may be difficult for participants who have balance issues. They could try standing against a wall or against a wall corner to do the hook-up.

Accommodation: For participants with balance issues or in wheelchairs, the arm cross could be done by itself.

Hot Chocolate River

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Cognitive Flexibility, Locus of Control, Observation Skills, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Social Skills, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up, Primary Activity
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Materials: Masking tape, small carpet squares
Description:
On the floor, place masking tape to indicate the two banks of a wide river. Divide the group into small teams (about four players in each). Each team must cross the hot chocolate river using their marshmallows (carpet squares). The problem to overcome is that if at least one foot is not on a "marshmallow," it will float away. There are not enough "marshmallows" to get across the river without re-using them. Players who are not on a crossing team are designated as Hungry Hippos who will be lying in the Hot Chocolate River watching the "marshmallows." If any "marshmallows" are left without a foot on it, they can claim it. The goal is to cross the river with as many "marshmallows" in their possession as possible.
    ✦Note: This is not to be played as a competitive game.

❖Helpful Hint: Often teams need to attempt several crossings in order to figure out how to get across the river with all their carpet squares.

Hula Hoop
AKA **Bubble Walk**

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Locus of Control, Observation Skills, Opposite Action Skills, Problem-Solving, Sensory Awareness
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Developing Associative Play into Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: One hula hoop for each group member.
Description:
Group members move around the room randomly while holding a hula hoop around them. The hoop represents the outer limits of their personal space. The idea is to be able to move without bumping into anyone else and their hula hoop. Music can be played as participants move. Participants can also be directed to move at different speeds. After practicing with their hula hoops, everyone puts them down and practices moving around the room without them. The ultimate goal is for group members to walk around without bumping into each other.

Material Accommodation: If someone in the group uses a wheelchair, use a larger hula hoop and have an assistant hold it around the wheelchair user.

Hula Hoop Pass

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Teamwork
Purpose: Main Intervention or Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Materials: One large hula hoop
Description:
One player hangs a large hula hoop over their arm. The group circles up and holds hands. The goal is to maneuver their bodies through the hoop so that the hula hoop goes all the way around the circle without players letting go of their hands.

I Challenge Your Story

Therapeutic Outcomes/Goals for Storyteller: Attention, Locus of Control, Organization Skills, Reframing, Self-Awareness, Sequencing, Verbal Communication, Working Memory

Therapeutic Outcomes/Goals for Listener: Attention, Listening Skills, Organization Skills, Reasoning Skills, Verbal Communication, Working Memory

Purpose: Primary Intervention

<u>Type of Play</u>: Expressive

<u>*Configuration:*</u> Group or Individual

Description:

Players think about an event that really happened to them and take turns telling their story to the group. In the process of each story, if group members believe that the reasons the storyteller is giving are not clearly thought out or seem like lies, they can say, "I challenge your story." The storyteller must rethink how the story is being told and revise it. If the storyteller has difficulty understanding why the story is not making sense, the listeners must be able to verbalize exactly what they do not understand.

✦<u>Note</u>: This game can be used for assertiveness training. If done one-on-one, because of the power differential, make sure the participant knows that it is OK to challenge the therapist.

Accommodation: If participants have sensory issues, verbal difficulties, or are shy, they can use a sign that says, "I Challenge Your Story" to interrupt the storyteller.

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I Spy

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Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Sensory Awareness

Purpose: Warm-up

<u>Type of Play</u>: Associative

<u>*Configuration:*</u> Group or Individual

Description:

Players describe, but do not name, an object in the room. The player says, "I spy with my little eye _____," and describes the object, while not looking at it (so as not to give away where it is). Other players must guess what it is.

✦<u>Note</u>: Players will need sensory awareness in order to describe the object in terms of its color, texture, shape, sound it makes, etc.

Variation: **In Plain View** (Aycox, 1999)

Purpose: Warm-up

<u>Type of Play</u>: Parallel

Description:

The leader asks everyone to close their eyes while a small object is placed somewhere in plain sight in the room. It should not be hidden. Once it is in place, and the leader is back where they started, players can open their eyes. Tell them what the object is and allow them first to look around from where they are. If no one

can find it, allow several to walk around the room and look. If they find it, they should not say where it is, but go back to their original place and sit down. Allow everyone to get up and look (if they say they have already found it, they do not have to get up). When everyone has had a chance to find it, ask, "Where is it?"

For the next round, a new person can place a different object in plain sight while everyone closes their eyes.

❖Helpful Hint: Make sure you assess participants' ability to see the object so everyone has an equal opportunity to see it!

Ideal Planet (Emunah, 2020)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Sequencing, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Teamwork, Trust, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative, Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Materials: Props can be used but are not required
Description:
Half of the group "creates" an ideal planet—i.e., they decide what the perfect place to live would be. They are not confined by the rules of physics. In addition to geography, they decide about values, rules, laws, occupations, ways of relating to others, and whatever else is important to them. Then they take the other half of the group on a tour of their ideal planet. The Visitors can ask questions about the planet and society. The Inhabitants explain how things work. If the Visitors ask about something that the Inhabitants had not discussed, they have to improvise in the moment based on the values, rules, and laws of their planet.

Variation: **Create a Culture** (Bailey)
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Instead of creating a planet, participants are given the option to create a culture anywhere in the universe in the past, present, or future—not confined by the rules of physics—to come up with the perfect culture in which to live. They can present their culture through an infomercial or give a tour. Typically, when this is done, the other members of the group are making up their own culture so they can share it. Often there are more than two groups working together. After all the cultures have been presented, then Inhabitants of the culture can choose to stay with their own culture or move to one they like better.

✦Note: The leader must make it very clear that moving from one culture to another at the end should be based on valid reasons, not in order to reject the members of their own culture. For instance, someone might switch from an Island Paradise to Candyland because it was their favorite game as a child, and they associate Candyland with safety and comfort.

I'm Thinking of a Word that Rhymes with… (Aycox, 1999)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Teamwork, Verbal Communication.
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative (within team), Competitive, Dramatic
Materials: Paper and pencil for each team
Configuration: Group
Description:
Create small teams of players (four to five is best). Each team thinks of four or five target words. Then they think of a word that rhymes with each of the target words. They decide an order in which the players will take turns. When both sides are ready, the leader chooses one side to start. The first player on that team says, "I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with _____ [and says the word that was chosen to rhyme with the first target word]." For example, "I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with cat."

Instead of guessing the target word out loud, the second team has to pantomime a word that rhymes with cat. They might pantomime hitting a baseball with a bat. If bat is not the target word, the player on the first team says, "No, it's not bat." The next player on the guessing side gets up and might pantomime putting on a hat. The player on the first team says, "No, it's not a hat." This continues until the correct word is pantomimed. If a player on the guessing team has an idea that needs to be acted out with more than one person, the member of the team next to them can help.

After the guessing team correctly pantomimes the word or gives up, the other side takes a turn until all the words have been guessed.

The group can decide a limit to the number of guesses that can be made, or the guessing team can continue until they guess the correct answer or give up.

❖Helpful Hint: Before starting, the leader should check the words of each team to make sure that they do not have the same rhyme sound in their words because the game can become boring if the same words are constantly being pantomimed. The leader also needs to make sure that the target word and the word that sounds like it, really do rhyme. Sometimes words look like they should rhyme, but they do not. This doublecheck is particularly important for younger players who are just learning about words that rhyme.

✦Note: The teams could pantomime their guesses as a group if they are shy or unsure of their pantomime skills at first.

Adaptation:
Configuration: Individual
Description:
The therapist and the participant each make their lists of words and take turns pantomiming and guessing the word.

Imaginary Suitcase

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Coping Skills, Emotional Regulation, Decision-Making, Self-Awareness, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Check-in or Closure
Type of Play: Imaginative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Each participant imagines they are coming into the group and bringing an imaginary suitcase with them. When it is time to check-in, they go around the circle, pantomime opening their imaginary suitcase, and report on what they have "brought with them" this week in terms of emotions or problems to work on. If there is something that may get in the way of participating today, they can make a statement about keeping it in the suitcase and leave their suitcase by the door of the room.

If used as a closure/checkout, each person in the group reports what from the group they are taking with them from the group and pantomime putting it into their imaginary suitcase.

Material Adaptation: If the group needs concrete props to understand the abstract concepts in this exercise, bring in a real suitcase for them to pass around.

In the Manner of the Word (Aycox, 1999)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Decision-Making, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Adverbs are written down on slips of paper and put into one envelope or container while action verbs are written down on slips of paper and put into another. Players take turns picking one slip of paper from each envelope and act out the verb in

the manner of the adverb. The observing players guess first the verb and then the adverb. For instance, if the verb is run, the adverb might be silly, slow, fast, etc.

Interest Vote

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making, Problem-Solving
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
If there are many options to choose from and the group needs to narrow them down, write all the choices on a white board. Have everyone vote for *every* idea they like by raising hands. This way the group gets to see how many others like their choice. Write the total next to each choice. The top three or four choices with the most votes are the "hot ideas"and will continue to be considered. The others are eliminated. From there, a choice might be made through further exploration of the remaining ideas followed by a locogram (see **Locogram**).

It's All in the Details!

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Following Directions, Observation Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative, Constructive
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Lego/blocks of different colors and shapes—same combination for each pair.
Description:
The therapist chooses several sets of three to eight Legos or blocks with different shapes, sizes, textures, and colors. The group divides into pairs. Each pair will receive two sets of Lego/blocks, one for each and will sit back-to-back so they cannot see each other. One partner creates a structure that their partner does not see. Then they tell their partner how to reconstruct it with their own set of Legos/blocks. After the description is finished, the partners can look to see what was built and how closely it conforms to the original.

Later, as participants become more concise and clearer at communication, they can build more complex objects to describe for their partners.

❖Helpful Hint: To make sure the first round of Legos/blocks are organized simply enough to describe, the therapist could make the constructions and cover

them so partners cannot see them until it is time to start. The second round, the participants could make their own constructions, as they would know how difficult they are to describe.

❧Helpful Hint: Start with constructions that are simple, made with no more than five to seven blocks, to keep it simple enough to build successfully.

Variation:
Instead of three-dimensional objects, the therapist could create designs made with different colored shapes of paper that are glued to a full sheet of paper for the describer. The listener would have a full sheet of paper with a set of the same shapes/color of paper that are not glued down. Instead of gluing them down, they just place them on the page according to their partner's directions.

It's Tuesday (Johnstone, 2018)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Emotional Expression, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Expressive, Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
This game is great for improving expressiveness. It requires actors to "over-accept" an offer.

Pair participants and ask them to decide which will be Actor A who makes the offer and Actor B who over-accepts the offer. If Actor A's offer is "That puppy is so cute!" Actor B will first repeat the line in a regular manner to make sure it was heard correctly, then B will *exaggerate* the line verbally and physically as large as possible and explore how large it can become. For instance, "That puppy is so cute! That puppy is SOOOOO CUTE! That is the cutest puppy I have EVER SEEN! I can't take my EYES off that puppy!" Then switch so Actor A can practice over-accepting a different offer from Actor B.

Line Repetition

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Conflict Resolution, Emotion Identification, Empathy, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication (tone of voice), Social Skills
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative and Expressive
Configuration: Group or Individual

Description:
Group members pair up. One partner takes one line and the other takes the response. They have a conversation using their own line, changing their tone of voice and body positions in order to try to convince the other to accept their idea. Eventually one player is supposed to be convinced by the other player and shows agreement by saying that line.

✦Note: Since the goal is ultimately to come to an agreement, not to win an argument, this game should be described as a cooperative game. However, with participants who have difficulty with assertiveness or lack of vocal expression, allow participants time to experiment and enjoy standing up for their initial stance.

Variation: **I Want It/You Can't Have It** (Emunah, 2020)
Description:
One partner takes the line "I want it," and the other takes the line "You can't have it" They have a conversation just using this line, changing their tone of voice. The "I want it" player is trying to convince the partner to give up whatever "it" is, but the partner refuses. The game can be played where the second player never gives "it" up or the second player may say, "You can have it," if convinced by the first player.

Variation: **Conflicting Colors** (Bailey, 2021)
Description:
Both partners are going to paint the room or buy something. One chooses one color and the other chooses the other. One has to convince the other to agree with their color choice. Partners repeat their color until one agrees by saying the other's color.

✦Note: Depending on treatment goals for participants, other line repetition pairing can be created.

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Locograms (Moreno, 1959)
AKA **Categorical Groupings**

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Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Decision-Making, Listening Skills, Self-Awareness
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Associative
Configuration: Group
Description:
A locogram is a sociometric measurement done by providing players with the choice of a category that indicates a personal preference. The leader calls out different categories that group members may like, prefer, agree with, hate, or disagree with. The participants get into groups with others with the same choice. For instance, if the category is favorite desserts, groups might be formed that like ice cream, cake, pie, brownies, etc. This helps groups find their commonalities.

Variation: **Locograms for Making Group Choices**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Problem-Solving, Social Skills
Type of Play: Associative
Description:
Locograms are effective ways to guide the group into making a choice or narrow down a variety of choices as with *Interest Votes.* In this case, the leader identifies a location in the room that represents each choice and may place an object representing that choice in the space. Group members move to their choice without paying attention to where the others in the group (i.e., friends or foes) are moving. Once participants choose, the most popular choice becomes the group choice. If two or more categories are evenly distributed, the categories with fewer choices can be eliminated, and everyone is asked to choose again until there is one clear group choice.

Machines

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Sequencing, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
The group's goal is to create a "machine" comprised of people who act as the machine's moving parts and sounds. One person starts the machine with a sound and a movement, then another joins in relationship to the sound and movement that the first has made. Other members of the group join in until the machine is complete. While parts of a real machine would touch, parts in a drama machine do not. This makes it a safe game for players who are tactilely defensive or who are trauma survivors. Not touching others helps teach boundaries and also avoids inappropriate touching.

When the machine is complete, the leader can have the movements and sounds speed up, slow down, or freeze in place. The machine can be an imaginary, Rube-Goldberg contraption and upon completion, the group can give the machine a name, or the machine can be a real machine which is planned out by the group, like a car or a pinball machine.

♣Helpful Hint: If you are working with a group that is intellectually challenged in some manner, they will have difficulty with abstract machines. Start them off by having them create a simple, concrete machine that they have seen before. Take the time to plan as a group what parts are needed for the machine and where they

should fit in relationship to each other. Later, they will be able to do this on their own and ultimately, they will be able to improvisationally create abstract, imaginary machines.

Advanced Variation:
For groups that want to be challenged, call out the name of a real machine and have players improvisationally form the machine, without planning, with each player deciding on their own where to fill in as a required piece. This requires nonverbal negotiation with other players who may want to play the same part and observation skills to know what is missing.

Variation: **Emotion Machine**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Emotion Expression, Emotion Identification, Understanding Intensity of Emotion
Additional Purpose: Primary Intervention
Description:
The group's goal is to create a "machine" comprised of players who become the machine's moving parts and sounds based on an emotion specified by the leader. For example, all movements and sounds of an Anger Machine would be angry in quality. One person starts the machine with an angry sound and movement, then another joins in relationship to the sound and movement that the first has made. Other members of the group join in until the machine is complete. Each piece can express a different aspect or intensity of anger. When the machine is complete, the leader can have the movements and sounds speed up (increase the intensity of the emotion), slow down (decrease the intensity of the emotion), or freeze in place.

Derole after each emotion, before moving on to a discussion or to another emotion machine. Discuss what players felt as they created the sounds and movements with others and how they feel now that the machine has stopped. Discuss the different aspects of the emotions that were displayed.

❖Helpful Hint: Whenever acting out a series of emotional states in any game as a warm-up, the deroling process can be helped by ending the series on a more positive emotion.

Magic Box

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Organization Skills, Recognizing Triggers, Reframing, Self-Awareness, Stress Management/Coping Skills
Purpose: Warm-up, Closure
Type of Play: Parallel, Expressive
Configuration: Group or Individual

Materials: An interesting looking container with a top and nothing inside: a hat box, a blank cardboard box, or a box that has been decorated to look magical.
Description:
The magic box can be played with an imaginary box or with an actual box for participants to put feelings, thoughts, or other ideas into. It is more fun if you have a real box. A real box also helps participants who have abstract thinking difficulties.

Variation: **Magic Box as Warm-Up**
Description:
The group is in a circle. The leader shows them the box and says,

> This is a magic box. You can put any emotion or thoughts or worries into it that are bothering you right now and would interfere with you being able to participate fully in the group. I will pass it around and when you get it, open the lid and pull the feeling or thought out of wherever it is in your body, put it in the box, close the lid, and pass it to the next person in the circle. If you want whatever you put into the box back at the end of the group, you can come and take it back OR you can leave it in the box when you go home.

This often helps participants focus on the present and prepare to make a transition into Dramatic Reality.

Variation: **Magic Box as Closure**
Description:
The Magic Box can be passed around the circle at the end of a session as a deroling activity. Players can put whatever emotions or characters that they do not want to take home with them into the box. Instead or additionally, players can take out any emotion or strength that they need to take with them into the world for the next week.

Variation: **Magic Present**
Description:
For players living in an institution (hospital, prison, rehab center), the Magic Box can be used to send an imaginary gift to significant others who they cannot currently be with. Because the box is magic, any object (imaginarily pantomimed) of any size and weight can fit into it and the box can send that object or thought message to anyone anywhere. By the same token, a player can take any present out of the Magic Box such as an imaginary object, a message or emotion.

Variation: **Group Imaginary Magic Box**
<u>Configuration:</u> Group

Description:

Participants can form a circle and pantomime bringing an imaginary magic box down from the sky or ceiling. The activity is the same as the individual passing of the Magic Box, but participants are working as a team to bring the box down and to put it up after they have completed the activity.

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Magic Shop (Moreno, 1959)

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Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Flexibility, Emotional Regulation, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Reframing, Self-Reflection, Social Skills, Trust, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative, Dramatic, Expressive
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:

The Magic Shop is a store that sells emotions and qualities which are in many different forms: powders, salves, potions, etc. The therapist acts as the Shopkeeper of The Magic Shop and players in the group can come to the Magic Shop to trade an emotion or quality they have for something that they need. If the Shopkeeper does not think the trade is fair to the Shop or if the Customer does not like the deal that is offered, they can negotiate. For instance, if the Customer asks for *all* of the shop's Good Sense, the Shopkeeper may say,

> I can't trade all of my Good Sense because it is a commodity that is in great demand, but the thing about Common Sense is that the more you use it, the more it grows, so would you take ½ a gram of Common Sense and agree to use it at least once every day?

If the Customer is requesting a trade that would be detrimental to them, the Shopkeeper might say, "Well, I think if you give me 100% of your anger, you won't have any anger left to protect you when other people legitimately threaten you. What if you give me 50% of your anger?" This helps the Customer think more deeply about the emotions they need and how each emotion can be useful to them. If the Shopkeeper and the Customer cannot negotiate a deal that is acceptable to both, the deal can be terminated.

✦Note: If the therapist thinks that one of the participants has the insight to serve as an Assistant Shopkeeper, the therapist can be "called away" and leave their assistant in charge. However, the Shopkeeper should be available for side coaching in case the Assistant gets stuck or is about to be cheated on a deal.

Variation:

If appropriate to the group members, the Magic Shop can be owned and run by a Wizard and in order to get the Wizard to barter, the Customer must show great respect by bowing and saying, "Oh, Great Wizard" three times.

Magic Object
AKA **Magic Stick, Magic Tube, Magic Scarf**

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Attention, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Social Skills, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up, Primary Intervention, or Assessment for cognitive flexibility
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: A stick, paper towel tube, pencil, piece of fabric, frisbee, cup, or other object
Description:
The group is in a circle. Each member of the group imagines what the object could be based on its shape, then acts it out using the object. The group guesses what that object is, then the object is passed onto the next person. For instance, a stick could become a stick of dynamite, a violin bow, an arrow, or a really large toothbrush depending on how it is used by the actor. Children can play this game for hours! This game is useful when a group is having difficulty solving a problem together, they cannot think of any answer, or they are not willing to take each other's perspectives.

✦Note: This game can be a useful way to assess whether participants have experience using their imaginations and are able to take different perspectives.

Magical Power (Boal, 1992)
AKA **Follow the Hand**

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Following Directions, Observation Skills, Teamwork, Trust
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Players are supposed to imagine that there is magical power within the hand they are following. The group divides into pairs. In each pair, one player volunteers to be the Magician (leader), and the other volunteers to be the Enchanted One (follower). The Magician has magical powers in the palm of one of their hands (they usually

choose their dominant hand). The Enchanted One focuses on the palm and must follow where the palm of the hand moves, keeping it at about the same distance. If it comes toward the Enchanted One, the Enchanted One backs up. If it moves away from the Enchanted One, the Enchanted One follows. If the palm moves up, so does the Enchanted One, etc. It should look almost as if there is a force field magnetically creating the movement. The Magician and the Enchanted One try to keep the same distance between the hand and the Enchanted One. After one round, reverse roles.

Making an Entrance

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Decision-Making, Emotion Regulation, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The leader explains that when an actor comes onstage, they must already be expressing what their character is feeling. One player volunteers to leave the room with the leader. Together they decide on an emotion the player will portray when entering the room. The player "makes an entrance," nonverbally showing the emotion, and the group guesses what the emotion is. (Also see **Group Mood.**)

Map to Recovery/Goal, see Embodied Life Map

Mirroring (Spolin, 1963)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Following Directions, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Sensory Integration/Awareness, Social Skills, Teamwork, Trust
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Configuration: Group or Individual
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Description:
Members of the group divide into pairs. Pairs face each other. One player volunteers to be the leader and the other agrees to be the follower. The leader is portraying someone looking in a mirror and the follower is the reflection of the leader, so they will copy every movement that the leader is doing. One key to being able to follow a partner is to make eye contact and watch the rest of the partner's body out of your peripheral vision. The other is for the leading partner to move slowly.

Tell players that the point of the activity is not to trick their partner, but to trick the group leader/therapist so they cannot tell who is leading and who is following.

After the first partner has led for about three minutes, stop and check in with each pair, asking about their experience. Allow all pairs to listen to this, as different pairs will have had different experiences. Then have the pairs switch roles so that the following partner can become the leading partner, and the leading partner can become the following one. At the end, a discussion of the activity could be had about being a leader versus being a follower in life. A discussion could also center on making connections through the activity and what happens when two people connect or work together/give and take.

Variation: **Emotion Mirroring or Following the Follower**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Conflict Resolution, Emotional Regulation, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Self-Awareness, Social Skills
Additional Type of Play: Expressive
Description:
Part one: Set Up: Members of the group divide into pairs. Pairs face each other. Each pair starts with basic mirroring with one partner as the leader and the other as the follower of whatever action the leading partner does. As they become fluid, the exercise can move to part two.

Part two: Sharing Leadership: The group leader instructs the pairs to share the leadership by paying attention to each other and going back and forth leading the movements. At some point, they will lose track of who is leading and who is following.

Part three: Mirroring Specific Emotions: The group leader identifies specific emotions for the partners to embody and mirror.

Part four: Allowing Emotions to Evolve: One of the partners begins embodying the emotion given by the leader, and the other responds to that emotion, as opposed to mirroring it. The emotional responses will continue being passed back and forth, changing and developing. What tends to happen is that the passing of the responses naturally resolves. When resolution happens with most of the pairs, the group leader/therapist can suggest another emotion to begin playing with or players can be deroled and discuss what happened.

Variation: **Group Mirror Pairs**
Configuration: Group
Description:
The group forms a circle. Pairs are assigned to mirror each other. If there is an odd number of players, the therapist/leader jumps in to partner with the unpaired player.

The goal is for each pair to successfully hand off their leadership back and forth without getting distracted by all the other pairs mirroring each other at the same time.

✦Note: This game is not appropriate for participants who have ADHD as it is extremely distracting. It might be an advanced exercise for them in Phase Four or Five if their attention skills have strengthened.

Variation: **Group Mirror Chain**
Configuration: Group
Description:
The group forms a circle. Each player is assigned or picks one player in the circle who they will mirror, but that person will copy another individual. In essence, this creates a chain of players who will be mirroring each other as if they were mirrors within mirrors. One player starts moving and slowly each member of the group begins following their assigned leader. Each player's focus must remain on their partner, or they will get distracted and confused.

✦Note: This game is not appropriate for participants who have ADHD as it is extremely distracting. It might be an advanced exercise for them in Phase Four or Five if their attention skills have strengthened.

Move to the Music

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Physiological Regulation, Stress Management/Coping Skills
Purpose: Warm-up, Closure
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Parallel
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Drum or other rhythm instruments
Description:
Use a drum or other rhythm instrument to create a beat. Everyone moves around the room to the beat. Vary the tempo and rhythm. Different kinds of recorded music could also be used.
Material Variation: Add scarves

Museum Guard
AKA **Night at The Museum**

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Decision-Making, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Social Skills, Teamwork

Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative, Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Materials: Set of keys on a keychain
Description:
One person (the group leader or a player) is the night guard at a museum. The rest of the players are statues or displays of some kind appropriate to the type of museum. The goal of the game is for the statues/art work to escape the museum. The guard's keys are set either on the floor or near the guard station. When the guard turns their back to the group, the players come alive and try to sneak up on the guard to steal the keys. Each time the guard turns around, the players must freeze and not move. Once the keys are stolen, they cannot be held in plain sight, or the guard can retrieve them. The players must then go after them again. If the guard sees any movement, the observed player must go back to where they started at the beginning of the game. Once the players have the keys, the group can work together to get the keys to the exit and unlock the door to the museum so they all can escape.

Variation: **Red Light, Green Light/Traffic Light**
Description:
One player is located at one end of the room as the traffic light, while everyone else is at the opposite end. When the traffic light is facing the rest of the players, no one can move. When the traffic light turns their back, the rest of the players can move. Their objective is to get to and tag the traffic light. Before the traffic light can turn around to face the other players, they must say, "Red Light, Green Light, One, Two, Three."

Variation:
The players can have an object (usually a small ball) to carry forward. Only when it touches the traffic light does the round end. When the traffic light turns around, if they see the object, that person is sent back to the starting line along with anyone seen moving. The best way to succeed in this variation is for all the players to work as a team.

  ✦Note: In these types of games, usually the players are in competition with each other as well as the museum guard or traffic light. In drama therapy, it is more useful for the players to work together as a team as opposed to focusing on being the first to get to the guard or light.

Name Games

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Listening Skills, Working Memory

89

Purpose: Warm-up

<u>Type of Play</u>: Associative

<u>Configuration</u>: Group

Description:

The group forms a circle. The leader looks to the left or right and says their name. That person looks to the left or right and says their name to the person standing there. The direction in which the name is being said can be changed, as desired. Sometimes the name gets stuck between two stubborn people. When everyone has said their names many times, the game can be ended. This game not only allows people's spoken names to be associated with their faces but also reveals aspects of their personalities, thereby making association of the name to the person easier.

✦Note: You can have participants also add their pronouns with their names, especially if this is the first time group members are meeting each other.

Variation: **Pass Your Name with a Movement**

Additional Therapeutic Goals: Body Movement Control, Nonverbal Expression, Observation Skills, Social Skills

<u>Type of Play</u>: Motor/Physical

Description:

The group forms a circle. Each person thinks of a motion that (1) sounds like their first name (e.g., a person named Matt might wipe his feet on a mat), (2) relates to a quality they have that starts with the same letter as their first name, or (3) relates to something they like to do (with or without needing to be the same letter as their first name). Practice the names and movements before beginning the game. Go around the circle and as each person shares their name and motion, the whole group repeats both to help remember it.

To begin, one person starts saying their name and doing their movement, then says the name and does the movement of someone else in the circle (popcorn style). That person says their name and does their movement (to reinforce it for the group), then does the name and movement of someone else. Keep passing the names and movements until each person has gone several times, thereby making associations of the name and movement to the person.

❖<u>Helpful Hint</u>: If a player cannot remember another's name and movement, they can ask and the other player will show them. This helps interaction skills and connection between group members. Also, if someone has a difficult name or movement, they will not be ignored or overlooked.

Adaptation:

Description:

If your group members have difficulty with working memory, the name could be passed around the circle in order (not popcorn style) and repeated by everyone in

the circle after the player does their name and movement, similar to the original go-around. If the group needs to practice sequencing, after each new name and movement is done, the group can go back to the beginning and start over, adding a new name and movement each time.

Variation: **Three Ball Pass**
Additional Therapeutic Goals: Impulse Control, Teamwork
Type of Play: Cooperative
Materials: Three distinct balls: one that bounces, one that can only be thrown, which is soft like a beachball, one to pass to the person next in the circle.
Description:
The group forms a circle. Starting with a ball that bounces, the leader says the name of someone in the circle and bounces the ball to them. That person says a third person's name and bounces the ball to person three, and so on. At a later point—perhaps when the bouncing ball returns to the leader—the leader adds a second b all. This ball does not bounce and must be thrown. Again, the person's name must be said before the ball is thrown so they are aware it is coming. The game continues with two balls. At a later point, the leader adds a third small ball that can be passed to the person to the left or right. The direction of the ball can change.

❧Helpful Hint: If players are being too competitive with the game, tell them that the point is to be aware of where the balls are and where they are headed so that no one gets thrown more than one ball at the same time.

Obstacle Course for Procrastinators/Avoiders

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making, Emotional Regulation, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Recognizing Emotional Triggers, Reframing, Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness, Sequencing, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
To address procrastination or avoiding behavior, create an obstacle course with objects and players around the room. Designate a place for start and finish. The player must identify the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors they have that get in the way of completing a task or addressing an issue and ask group members to represent those obstacles. The player dialogues with each obstacle and discovers how to deal with it positively. Then they can move on to the next obstacle.

❖Helpful Hint: If the player going through the obstacle course gets stuck, another player can act as their double to offer solutions, thoughts, and feelings about the interaction with the obstacle. Often the unspoken piece is the reason the player wants to avoid the obstacle which can be very helpful to recognize.

On the Bank/In the River*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Impulse Control, Listening Skills
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical and Rule-Based
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Masking Tape
Description:
Create a line on the floor with masking tape. On the one side of the tape is the bank and on the other side is the river. Everyone starts on one side. The leader calls out either "On the bank," or "In the river." If working with deaf participants, the leader should sign the words and make sure all in the line can see the signs. Players hop to the correct side. The leader can try to trick players by repeating one of the commands more than once or going fast.
    ❖Helpful Hint: The group can play the game competitively where if a player makes a mistake, they are eliminated. The only problem with doing this is that the eliminated players do not get warmed up as well as the players who stay in the game longer.

*Warning: If your participants have difficulties with balance or motor movement disorders, do not use this as a warm-up.

Partner Pantomimes

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Initiation, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Participants think of an activity (within appropriate boundaries) that one person cannot do alone, but needs one or more other people to help them do. When they have an idea, they come to the middle of the circle and begin doing one

person's part of the action in pantomime (no words or sounds). As soon as someone figures out how they need help, they can get up and help. For instance, two people could create a teeter totter, three people could create a jump rope, four people could create a card game, or a large group of people could create a baseball team.

❧Helpful Hint: A good discussion to have after playing this game is to talk about the importance of asking for help if you need it. Other people cannot read your mind or might be focused on something else and not see that you need help. There is no shame in asking for help.

Pass the Face*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Emotion Identification, Emotional Regulation, Nonverbal Communication, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Expressive
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The group forms a circle. One person makes a face and turns to look at the person on their right or left. That person copies the first person's face and turns to pass it to the person on the other side. When the face makes it all the way around the circle, the leader asks what emotion was passed and why the group thinks it was that emotion. Then another face can be passed. Usually everyone will want a turn to create a new face.

***Warning:** Culturally inappropriate expressions can create harm in a group. Ask participants to refrain from expressions, such as sticking out one's tongue. Obviously, there are facial expressions that are universally inappropriate. Encourage any participant to alert the group if an expression is inappropriate in their culture.

Variation: **Pass the Face and the Reaction**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Reality Testing, Self-Awareness, Social Skills
Description:
The group forms a circle. One player makes a face and looks at the player on the right or left. That player reacts facially to the emotion on the face and passes their reaction to the player on their other side. Reactions to emotions continue being passed around the circle until it gets back to the first player. A discussion can be done about what emotion receivers saw in the face passed to them, what their

emotional reaction was, and if the player they passed that reaction to received it as that same emotion.

Pass the Sound/Pass the Movement*

Therapeutic Goals: Attention, Behavioral Inhibition, Behavioral Initiation, Body Movement Control, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Sensory Integration/ Awareness
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The group forms a circle. One player passes a sound and a movement to the player on the left or right. That player copies the movement back to the first, turns, and passes the movement on to the next player in the circle. When the sound and movement get all the way around the circle, the next player can create a sound and movement to pass. This can continue until everyone has a chance to initiate a new sound and movement.

Warning: Culturally inappropriate gestures can create harm in a group. Ask participants to refrain from inappropriate expressions, such as giving the middle finger, the OK sign, or showing the bottom of their foot to another. Obviously, there are gestures that are universally inappropriate. Encourage any participant to alert the group if an expression is inappropriate in their culture.

Variation: **Pass the Sound/Pass the Movement with a Response**
Additional Therapeutic Goals: Cognitive Flexibility, Emotion Identification, Spontaneity, Teamwork
Description:
The group forms a circle. One player passes a sound and a movement to the player on the left or right. That player copies the movement back to the first, turns, and using the feeling they received, creates a new sound and movement to pass to the next player in the circle. The sound and movement is mirrored and then changed all the way around the circle.

Pattern Ball Passing

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Cognitive Flexibility, Observation Skills, Sequencing, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up

Type of Play: Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Materials: Several balls of different colors and/or sizes which can be easily tossed or rolled.
Description:
A small group of four to six forms a circle. One player starts the first ball around the circle in a pattern in which every player receives the ball once. When it has gone to everyone, it is thrown back to the first player. The group practices replicating this pattern until they can remember it. Then the second player takes a second ball that looks different and creates a different pattern with it in which every player receives the ball once and finally returns it to the second player. The group practices this second pattern until the group can remember it. Then the group attempts to do both patterns simultaneously. The group can add and practice new patterns by adding one new pattern at a time with different colored/shaped balls until everyone in the circle is starting a ball.

✦Note: To increase difficulty and challenge attention and memory, the group can be larger. However, limit your number of balls to 4 or 5.

Adaptation:
Description:
For individuals who use wheelchairs or have other movement or balance difficulties, the game could be played on a table or raised surface. Instead of throwing the balls, they could be rolled to the next person in the pattern.

People—Shelter—Storm

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Cognitive Flexibility, Following Directions, Impulse Control, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Sequencing, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
The large group is divided into small groups of three. In each group, two players work together to create a shelter or roof over the head of the third player with their arms. When the group leader says, "People," the People in the Shelters leave their Shelter and find a new one. When the group leader says, "Shelter," the players creating the Shelters break apart and find a new Person to make a Shelter around. They do not have to go together, but they can if they want to. When the leader says, "Storm," everyone moves around for five seconds and when the leader

says, "Time's up," they must form into new groups of three. Shelter players can become People in Shelters and vice versa or they can stay with the same role they had before, but everyone must take on a role.

❦Helpful Hint: Remind People that when the Shelters move, they stay in the same place and trust that another Shelter will be built around them. In the same vein, remind the Shelters that when the People move, they stay in the same place and a new Person will come to them.

Person to Person*
AKA Elbow to Elbow

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Following Directions, Listening Skills, Social Skills, Organization Skills, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
Level One: Group members move around the room randomly. The leader calls out "Person to Person" and group members pair up, touching elbow to elbow. After a few rounds of this, the leader begins calling out different body parts that the group members are to touch. It could be the same part from one person to another person (shoulder to shoulder), or it could be different parts (hand to back).

Level Two: Leader begins telling group members to find others with certain kinds of similarities. For instance, it could be the color of eyes, type of clothing, wearers of glasses, etc. In this case, if there are three people with the same commonality, they can group together. Categories can be very specific or more open to interpretation (e.g., color of shirt or style of shirt or anything common about shirts). This provides more options for matching.

Level Three: After the leader calls out "Person to Person" and group members match up, the leader then provides a question that they need to ask each other, such as "What is your favorite food?" or "Who is your favorite movie star?" In this way, group members can begin to find out more about the interests of others in the group.

*Warning: Avoid using this game when working with participants who have experienced trauma or had personal boundaries violated. It may also be inappropriate if there is a significant power differential among group members.

Personification of Emotions

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Anger Management, Boundaries, Conflict Resolution, Emotion Regulation, Empathy, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Recognizing Emotional Triggers, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Trust, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
This intervention is a dialogue between a participant and their emotions. The participant enroles other group members to portray different emotions they are having difficulty with. Dialogue with the emotions may happen one by one or with a group of emotions. This helps concretize a very abstract, invisible, nonverbal concept and makes it more understandable and less fearful.

Later in treatment, these personified emotions could be called upon to help the participant confront, apologize, or otherwise enact with another person the participant is having difficulty with in the group or struggling with in their everyday lives. The personified emotions become allies and mentors for the participant.

Variation: **Poetry/Story/Narrative**
Type of Play: Solitary or Parallel
Description:
Emotions can be personified through poetry, story, sandtray, or other narrative means. Writing about emotions as if they are entities who can talk provides distance and concretizes how emotions can be allies or enemies.

❧Helpful Hint: If the participants are having difficulty imagining an emotion, postcards or pictures of people expressing a variety of emotions could be offered to help concretize the emotion.

Pillow Burdens

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Anger Management, Boundaries, Conflict Resolution, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Decision-Making, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Self-Awareness, Sensory Awareness, Social Skills, Trust, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual

Materials: Many pillows that can be stacked on top of each other
Description:
While acting out a situation in which the theme is anger, guilt, lying, or the hiding of feelings, use pillows to concretize the hidden emotion that can weigh a participant down. For instance, if one character is lying to another, each time the character lies, the therapist places a pillow into the participant's arms. Eventually, the participant will have a pile of pillows in their arms and have trouble seeing the other character, and movement will become more difficult. Whenever the character tells the truth, a pillow can be taken away.

♣Helpful Hint: Since the pillows need to remain balanced in the actors' arms, encourage them to stay mostly stationary as the stack of pillows gets higher.

Pop Toob Scenes

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Anger Management, Attention, Boundaries, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Emotion Regulation, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Verbal Communication, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Materials: Two Pop Toobs (plastic accordion fidgets) per actor between 12 and 24 inches long
Description:
Group members pair up and each one gets two Pop Toobs. The group decides a scenario and an appropriate distance in which that conversation should be done. Each pair acts out their scene using the Pop Toobs to demonstrate the distance they are from each other. Then the scene is replayed twice: once with the Pop Toobs shortened and one with them extended. The group discusses the three scenes; often in the discussion, actors realize that the shorter the distance, the more uncomfortable they felt in the scene, and the longer the distance, the safer they felt.

Postcard Stories/Poems

Variation 1: **Narrative**
Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Empathy, Decision-Making, Disorganized Thinking, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Listening Skills, Self-Awareness, Sequencing, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Solitary or Parallel

Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Postcards with pictures of people on them
Description:
Group members look over the postcards and find one that they resonate with. They write a poem, story, or description of what is happening in the postcard. When everyone is done, group members share what they wrote and talk about why they picked this postcard. The themes to work on for the day could come from this discussion.

Accommodation: If your group has literacy difficulties, an assistant could be a scribe to write down the story or participants could be given a recording device.

Variation 2: **Action**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Social Skills, Teamwork
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Description:
Group members look over picture postcards and choose one they resonate with. They make up a story on the spot about this person or what is happening in the picture. The group can choose a story or several stories to act out. If the group wants to write out the stories before acting out, that is possible.

Variation 3: **Conflict-Resolution Scenes**
Additional Therapeutic Goals: Anger Management, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Organization Skills, Reframing
Configuration: Group
Description:
Group members look over the postcards and find one that they resonate with. If the postcard they have chosen only has one person in it, they can then choose another postcard of someone who might have a relationship or conflict with the person in their first card. Everyone writes a short scene for these characters using the Fedder's Four formula which will ensure a conflict and some kind of resolution. The group can read their scenes out loud together. If the group is planning on devising a short play, this is one way to start the process, or this can lead to more writing and improvising to find out more about these characters.

Variation 4: **Group Play/Story/Poem**
Additional Therapeutic Skills: Task Persistence!

Configuration: Group
Description:
Group members look over the postcards and find one that they resonate with. Then they look at the cards everyone else has chosen and find another character that they think their character either has something in common with or has an obvious conflict with. The two or three group members who connect can create a play about these characters through improvisation or playwriting or they can write a story or poem about them as a team.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation*

**Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes:** Anger Management, Stress Management/Coping Skills
Purpose: Warm-up, Closure, Deroling
Type of Play: N/A
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Participants sit comfortably or lie down on the floor. The therapist first brings their attention to their breath and then has them tense and release the muscles in their body from the feet to the head or from the head to the feet.

*__Warning:__ Due to the potential for triggering flashbacks, participants should be given the option to find a focal point to look at rather than closing their eyes.

Variation: **Breathing Relaxation**
Some participants get more tense if they tense up their muscles, so instead the therapist can go from feet to head or from head to feet having them pretend they are breathing warmth and air into each body part, and breathing out tension and stress. If the participants would relax better with more imagery, the therapist can suggest that they are breathing in a relaxing color of their choice, floating on a cloud, or sinking into the floor.

Prop Master

**Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes:** Attention, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Social Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Materials: Variety of props

Description:
Participants begin an improvisational scene and as the scene progresses, the Prop Master hands the actors props that need to be incorporated into the scene.

Variation:
The scene could be started based on the prop the Prop Master hands one of the actors, or the group can give the actors a subject or theme for the actors to improvise.

Advanced Variation:
The Prop Master can put in or take out props at a faster rate or more than one at a time.

Psychiatrist

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Boundaries, Cognitive Flexibility, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Empathy, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Trust, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Description:
Participants pretend that they are psychiatrists and listen to Client's problems. Typically this game is played with the group in a circle and the role of Client and Psychiatrist go around the circle in order. Often the Psychiatrist will discover in playing this role that they know more about their Client's troubles and what to do about them than they thought. Helping others is also an empowering experience.
✦Note: Participants should develop a Client character rather than playing themselves.

Variation: **Self-Therapist**
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Have one participant tell one of their real problems to a partner and then have them role reverse, so they have the opportunity to solve their own problem.
♣Helpful Hint: Use this version only if participants have shown evidence of self-insight previously. This intervention can help deepen it. If no self-awareness or insight has been shown yet, this variation will fail.

✦<u>Note</u>: If using this one-on-one, the therapist should make up a problem rather than self-disclose a real problem.

Queen Has a Headache, The, see Dog and Bone

Quality Annonomous Reflective Listening

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
<u>Type of Play</u>: N/A
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Description:
Group members pair up. They take turns speaking and reflecting back what the other person said. Number 1 says something, then Number 2 reflects back what was said. Then Number 2 says something in response to Number 1, and Number 1 reflects back what was said.

♣<u>Helpful Hint</u>: Sometimes it is easier to start with reflection on content and when that is successful, adding reflecting back emotions.

Variation:
If the group members really have difficulty responding to what the speaker said because they do not know how to listen carefully, drop the reflection back for a while and have them focus on responding to exactly what was said to them so that the conversation develops into a true communication.

Reframing the Frame

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Flexibility, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Locus of Control, Recognition of Positive Events, Reframing, Self-Awareness, Self-Empathy
Purpose: Check-in, Closure
<u>Type of Play</u>: Solitary
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Materials: An empty picture frame big enough to look through
Description:
Using an empty picture frame, each person in the group says something that happened to them this past week or day that was negative. Then they turn the frame around and reframe what happened to make it more positive.

Relay Race with No Hands

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Disordered Thinking (Thought Disorder), Focus, Observation Skills, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Sensory Integration, Trust, Teamwork, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative and Competitive
Configuration: Group
Materials: As many balls as there are teams
Description:
The group is divided into two teams. Each team member finds a partner. Half of the partners on each team cross to the opposite side of the room. The first pair of each team decide how they will move the ball from their side of the room to where the other half of the team is. Each pair may not use their hands to transport the ball; they must use some other part of the body. Of course, they will need to use their hands to put the ball in place, but after it is in the carrying position, hands cannot be used to keep it there. This will probably make it difficult to move quickly. That is OK, because what is more important than speed is working together and not dropping the ball. If the ball is dropped, the team must go back to where they started and begin again. Once the pair gets to the other side, they can hand the ball over to the next pair on their team. The next pairs must find a different way to take the ball across the room. The game continues until all the pairs have gone. The first team to get all of its pairs across the room, wins.

Role Development/Role Taking Using Role Cards

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Disordered Thinking (Thought Disorder), Disorganized Thinking, Organization Skills, Reality Testing, Reasoning Skills, Sequencing
Purpose: Primary Intervention, Assessment for role repertoire
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: A set of role cards
Description:
Creating the Role: Each person in the group chooses (or is given) a role card from the role deck. The role deck can be based on Landy's Role Inventory or could be created by the drama therapist based on roles that they feel the group members would understand or need to work on. Each group member creates a character from the role, making decisions about its history, behaviors, appearance, etc. They each give their character a name and practice moving as they would in different moods.

Variation: **Developing the Role**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Listening Skills, Behavioral Regulation, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Sequencing, Social Skills, Verbal Communication, Teamwork, Working Memory
Description:
Characters can pair off and create a short scene together based on a conflict (the leader can give them a conflict, or they can make it up themselves), trying to respond throughout the scene as their character would. After the scene, discuss what skills the role offered or did not offer to the actor. Ask, did the actor use all the potential skills that role could have? If they did not avail themselves of all the potential skills, they could replay the scene.

✦Note: If participants are not ready to create a scene, the therapist could just have them practice creating roles.

Role Theatre of Life*
(Based on an exercise by Sue Jennings from *Introduction to Dramatherapy*, 1998.)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Attention, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Following Directions, Locus of Control, Organization Skills, Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness, Sequencing, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention, Assessment of role repertoire
Type of Play: Solitary
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Writing paper, pencils, large pieces of paper, colored markers, various other art supplies, depending on how three-dimensional or elaborate the participants want to get and how much time is available to work.

✦Note: This activity involves complex and abstract thinking skills. If participants are not able to think symbolically already and do not have enough attention, organization, and perseverance skills for a long project, do not use this. This intervention can refine those skills, but is not meant to develop them.
Description:
Part one: **All the World's a Stage** (Task Planning and Organizing)
Individually, participants imagine their lives (metaphorically) as a theatre which is open 24/7 for performances from the day they were born until the day they die. They may name their theatre and even decide what is currently playing on stage. They design what the theatre looks like (thrust, proscenium, in the round) and list all the roles that they play in their own lives. These roles should be the internal roles that the participants' play, not the roles that other people play in their lives. For example, someone

could be a mother, daughter, sister, teacher, student, disordered eater, victim, friend, enemy, liar, critic, advocate, and pessimist. Once the list is complete, participants decide metaphorically where those roles would be placed in the theatre.

For example:

- On stage would be current or important recurring roles.
- Backstage waiting in the wings—roles which have just exited or are soon to enter.
- Costume/scenery construction areas—future roles currently being planned or built.
- Costume/scenery storage
  - o   Past roles which have been retired.
  - o   Roles in repertory which aren't currently being used, but might return in the future.
  - o   Roles which might be redesigned or recycled for future plays.
- Box Office/Lobby/Front of House
  - o   Roles used to promote the self, "meet the public" or "create an image."
  - o   Roles of welcome, hospitality or socialization.
- Other possible areas where roles might be placed:
  - o   Audience: orchestra, balcony, box seats (observing roles).
  - o   Dressing rooms (transition/housekeeping/daily maintenance roles).
  - o   Light and sound booth (controlling and observing roles).
  - o   Trapdoor and space under the stage (roles which hide and/or suddenly pop up).
  - o   Fly space above the stage where lights, scenery hang.
  - o   Prompter box.

Part two: Creation
Participants create the theatre in two or three-dimensions and place their roles in the appropriate places.

Part three: Analysis
Participants write an in-depth description of what they have drawn or share verbally with the group. For each role they address:

- What the purpose of that role is/was in their life.
- If that role is/was functional (healthy? helpful?) or dysfunctional (unhelpful or harmful?).

  ✦Note: Sometimes a role starts out as functional and then as one grows, becomes dysfunctional. Sometimes dysfunctional roles enable one to survive, but once the danger has passed, it needs to be put in "storage."

- Why was it placed in the particular location it is in?

105

- How do these roles work together (or not) to support the person's interactions in life?
  - If they don't function as "team players," what kinds of problems do they cause? Are there any ways they <u>could</u> work better together?
- Are there any missing roles that need to be created?
- Are there any weak roles that need to be strengthened or modified in some way?

Part four: Self-reflection
The activity concludes with clients writing a paragraph or two about what they have learned about themselves from this exercise.

***Warning**: If anyone in the group has dissociative identity disorder (DID), do not use this intervention unless you are trained in DID work.

<p align="center">**Role Reversal** (Moreno, 1959)</p>

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Anger Management, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Nonverbal Communication, Opposite Action Skills, Reframing, Social Skills, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention used within role-play
<u>Type of Play</u>: Dramatic
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Description:
Role reversals are used to help two characters who are not communicating in a scene see the situation from the other's point of view. Sometimes it is used when a scene has become stuck, and the actors are not listening to each other.

To do a role reversal, the group leader tells the actors to "freeze" or "hold," and then says, "Reverse roles." The actors switch places and take on the body position the other had been in. When the scene begins again, they start with the last two lines each said to help them get into the mindset and emotions of the other. After each has had enough time to experience the other's point of view, the group leader reverses them back into their original roles.

<p align="center">**Santa's Elves**</p>

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Decision-Making, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication (Tone of Voice), Sensory Awareness, Working Memory

Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Expressive
Configuration: Group
Materials: Blindfolds
Description:
Everyone makes a circle, facing in. One person volunteers to be "It" and moves to the center of the circle blindfolded or with eyes closed. The Elves move around the circle as they sing a song ("Jingle Bells" or another song everyone knows from any time of the year). At the end of the song, the group stops. The Elf immediately in front of It asks, "What would you like for Christmas?" or "Have you been good this year?" or another question one of Santa's Elves might ask. However, they disguise their voice, so they sound different. It has to guess who is speaking. If It can guess who they are, the Elf and It change places. If It guesses incorrectly, they must remain in the center for another round.

✦Note: For a group that does not celebrate Christmas or if playing at a different time of year, a different situation can be used in which there might be characters with a funny voice. For instance, the players walking around could be characters from Star Wars, a social media influencer, the Aflac Duck, Scooby Doo, Smurfs, etc.

Sarvisilla (Nelson & Glass, 1992)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Inhibition, Body Movement Control, Following Directions, Listening Skills
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Rule-Based
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
This is a Finnish game in the tradition of Simon Says; however, it requires players to listen carefully in a different way. The leader (aka the Horner) says "Horns, horns, horns—[names an animal with horns] buck-horns." Players put their hands on either side of their heads and spread their fingers like deer horns. If the Horner says, "Horns, horns, horns—[names an animal with no horns] dog-horns," players keep their hands at their sides.

The Horner could vary buckhorns with elkhorns, moose-horns, reindeer-horns, bison-horns, ram-horns, or another animal that has horns. For the no-horns category, any animal that does not have horns could be used like elephant-horns, cat-horns, mouse-horns, etc.

✦Note: If participants make a mistake, encourage them to listen more carefully instead of eliminating them. If they want to know whether their listening skills

have improved, they could keep track of how many times they make a mistake and keep the score to compare with the next playing of the game.

Variation:
The Horner could call out different animals and have players create the shape of the ears or horns of each one.

Scarf-Ball Toss

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Emotional Tolerance, Observation Skills, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative, Motor/Physical
Configuration: Group
Materials: At least three large scarves and either a balloon or a beach ball
Description:
This game needs to be played with at least 12 players (or 9 if you have triangle scarves). The corners of each scarf are held by a player and the scarves are lined up in a row about 3 feet apart. A balloon or beach ball is placed on the first scarf. The first scarf group throws the ball to the second scarf. That group works to catch the ball. The second group throws the ball to the third group. Then the ball is reversed back to the first scarf.

Variation: **Competitive Scarf-Ball Toss**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Impulse Control
Type of Play: Competitive
With 2 teams (24 players) and 6 large scarves, a competitive version can be played.
    There are different configurations the scarves can be placed into in order to make the game more difficult. For instance, the middle scarf can be switched between teams so that the ball has to be thrown in a diagonal instead of just forward and back. Also if there are more players, more scarves can be added to the line.

Scenes of Escalation/De-escalation of Conflict*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Anger Management, Behavioral Regulation, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic

Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The leader teaches the group different ways that a conflict can be escalated or de-escalated. As two or three players act out a scene of conflict, the audience identifies what the actors are doing to escalate or de-escalate the conflict in the scene. This can also be done using a scene of conflict in a play. After the scene is read or acted out, the group can discuss ways in which the escalated conflict could be de-escalated, and the conflict solved. The actors can improvise a new version of the scene using the de-escalation interventions discussed by the group to see how they work.

*Warning:** If working with participants with intermittent explosive disorder or reactive attachment disorder, make sure you have a warm-up to assess behavioral and emotional regulation status that session. Be prepared with de-escalation interventions if participants become dysregulated. Have an assistant available who can take a participant who is dysregulated to a calming down place.

❖Helpful Hint: If doing this one-on-one, the participant can work on a monologue alone or a dialogue with the therapist and at different points the therapist can suggest that the participant escalate or de-escalate the conflict.

Scene Replays

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Cognitive Flexibility, Emotional Regulation, Decision-Making, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Opposite Action Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Reframing, Sequencing, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Description:
After a scene is enacted in the session, players discuss and brainstorm other choices that the characters could have made. The scene can be replayed as many times as needed in order to discover the positive and negative consequences that result from different choices.

Variation: **Multiple Ending Stories**
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
There are stories which have multiple endings in which characters make different choices at crucial parts of the story. The therapist could find versions of these that

are age-appropriate to the group and, after reading each version, lead the group in acting them out. This might be a good option for younger participants. (There are series of books available, such as *Pick a Path*, *Choose Your Adventure*, *Pick the Ending, Alternate Ending*.)

❧Helpful Hint: If working one-on-one, the story does not have to be acted out if there are many characters.

Scene with Three Props

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Attention, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Sequencing, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Materials: A variety of objects, enough for each small group to have three.
Description:
The group is divided into smaller groups of three or four. A variety of props and costume pieces are laid out on a table. Each group gets to pick three from the table. This can be done by sending one person to make all three choices or by sending three different people to pick one item each. If the group leader has a specific challenge in mind for each group, the leader could pick the three props and assign them to groups (see **Story Bags**).

Each group creates a story using the three props. Group members could be given permission to use the props as what they actually are, or, if the item could be used as another object [as in the Magic Stick Game], they could be used in place of that object. (For example, if a group received a plastic banana, they could use it as a banana, a phone, a gun, a boomerang, etc.) After the group creates the story, they decide who will play which character in the story and act it out improvisationally for the group.

Variation: **Story Bags**
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: A variety of props and paper bags.
Description:
The therapist puts three props in each paper bag. The props may relate to each other or may be very random. Groups randomly choose their story bag and create their scene using the props in the bag.

Sculpting

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Decision-Making, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Problem-Solving, Sensory Awareness, Trust, Teamwork
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Expressive, Constructive
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
In sculpting, a player uses another player's body as "clay" to create an individual statue or uses several players' bodies to create a group statue or tableau. The player who is the sculptor should ask players who are serving as the sculpture or "clay," if they are OK with being touched or not. If they do not feel comfortable with touch, the sculptor can show the person being sculpted how to place their body or what facial expression to make. It is ok to use chairs or tables within the sculpts. Sometimes adding costumes or props will enhance the sculpt; sometimes they get in the way. The leader should use their discretion on this depending on the directive for the sculpt and needs of the group. For therapeutic purposes, sometimes the sculptor can become part of the sculpture, and sometimes the sculptor needs to stay outside to have distance from it.

Variation: **Concept Sculpting**
Targeted Therapeutic Outcome/Goals: Abstract Thinking, Cognitive Flexibility
Description:
Abstract concepts can be difficult to understand. What is self-esteem? What is obstruction? What is discrimination or oppression? These complex ideas become clearer to group members when they can see them. When group members can carry an image with them in their imaginations, they will be able to remember what they learned better. Sculpting a concept might involve one person or a group. Depending on the size of the group, the whole group could work together, or smaller groups could work on their version of sculpting the concept. Afterwards, the sculpt can be revised, or the concept can be discussed.

Variation: **Conflict Sculpting**
Targeted Therapeutic Outcome/Goals: Anger Management, Conflict Resolution, Locus of Control
Description:
A small group or a dyad can sculpt a situation of conflict and then sculpt how the conflict could be resolved. The group could then create a scene to show how the conflict was created and how it was resolved.

Another way to explore the change from creating the conflict to resolving it is to have the group move in slow motion from the beginning of the conflict to its height to its resolution, almost as a dance.

Variation: **Continuum Sculpting**
Targeted Therapeutic Outcome/Goals: Locus of Control, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Self-Awareness, Sequencing
<u>*Configuration:*</u> Group
Description:
Understanding how change happens can seem like a mystery when someone has been stuck in an unpleasant place. To show how change happens, create a continuum of sculpts from one state to another, using as many people or objects as needed to show the transition. One way to start building a continuum is for group members who understand either end of the continuum to sculpt what the extremities look like. Then someone can sculpt what halfway between looks like, and continue filling in until the progression is clear. Another way is to work on sculpts in a linear fashion from one end to the other. Group members can discuss what actions need to be accomplished to get from one step to another and how to motivate themselves to keep growing until they reach the end of the continuum.

Variation: **Emotion Sculpting**
Targeted Therapeutic Outcome/Goals: Cognitive Empathy, Emotional Regulation
<u>*Configuration:*</u> Group or Individual
Description:
Group members are paired. One volunteers to be the sculptor, and the other is the sculpture. Sculptors are told to create a statue that expresses a specific emotion. All sculptors make the same emotion, but they can create any intensity of it. When all the sculpts are done, the sculptors walk around the "sculpture museum" they have created to see all the different versions of that emotion. Sculptors can be asked to identify the common physical stances, facial expressions, gestures, or muscle tension that depict that emotion. The intensity of each sculpt can be assessed. Then sculptors and sculpts trade roles, and a different emotion is sculpted, observed, and discussed. Be sure to derole after each emotion.

If done individually the participant sculpts themself. It can be helpful to have a mirror so they can see what the sculpture looks like.

Variation: **Family Sculpting**
Targeted Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Flexibility, Emotional Empathy

Configuration: Group
Description:
Participants can sculpt their family relationships using members of the group. This becomes a group sculpt representing the family metaphorically. The sculptor should think of the emotional relationships between people and put those relationships into the picture. For instance, use the height of one member in relation to another to depict a power differential or use where different family members are focused to show who they are aligned with or against, and so on.

❦Helpful Hint: If group members are concrete thinkers, the therapist may need to provide symbolic examples or begin with a warm-up that explores what different body positions can represent.

The family sculpt can be brought to life to create a scene or the frozen figures in the sculpt could speak about how they feel about the other family members. The person whose family has been sculpted could re-sculpt the family into the relationships that they think would be ideal. Discussion could follow about how to get from the first sculpt to the second. What would need to change in the way the family members viewed each other and interacted with each other?

If a family is in therapy together, each member of the family could create a sculpture of their own point of view of their problems and relationships. A very deep and honest discussion can be opened if family members are willing to allow each person to have their own perspective. Each family member could re-sculpt their first sculpt to what they believe would be an ideal family relationship. If the re-sculpts do not look identical, discuss them to see if they really are different or if the sculpts are more similar than they appear. If they are representing different visions or goals for the family, that can also be discussed.

Variation:
Configuration: Individual
Description:
The family could be drawn or sculpted out of clay so the relationship between the family members can be seen.

Variation: **Goal Sculpting**
Targeted Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Decision-Making, Locus of Control, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Sequencing
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Paper, pencil, markers to make the map at the end
Description:
This activity is similar to the Embodied Life Map described previously, except that the goal setter uses one member of the group as a statue representing the goal

and others representing the separate tasks that will be needed to achieve the goal. The goal should be placed at one end of the space and the starting line at another. The goal setter either begins at the starting line and moves forward toward the goal or begins at the goal and reverse engineers back to the beginning. The group member representing a Task can come alive when the goal setter arrives so they can dialogue about what needs to happen there. The goal setter describes how to complete the task and the Task can ask questions about dangers or obstacles that might be in the way. The Task should also ask the goal setter how they will know when this task is completed correctly. Then the goal setter can move on to the next task. If in the process it becomes clear that a task has been left out, a group member who is not yet in role could be called upon to represent that task. At the end of the exercise, a map can be made of all the necessary steps, so the sequencing of tasks can be remembered and monitored.

When all the group members are aiming for the same goal, an embodiment of the process helps everyone learn about what they need to do and how to coach each other through the journey to the goal. When group members become impatient, they can remind each other (or themselves) where on the map they are, so they do not give up in frustration.

Variation: **Inside/Outside Sculpting**
Targeted Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Self-Awareness/Reflection
Configuration: Group
Description:
Often, we feel one way on the inside and cover it up with a different behavior on the outside. Each sculptor has two volunteers: one to represent their inside self and one to represent their outside self. Once the two sculpts are completed, the sculptor can speak about why they use the outside appearance to hide the inside feelings.
❖Helpful Hint: Sometimes sculptors are not aware of what their outside facade looks like to others. When this happens, the therapist can ask the other members of the group if the outside sculpt is what they typically see. The therapist could have the sculptor make adjustments to the outside sculpt until the group agrees it looks more like the facade the sculptor "wears." If the group is supportive and empathetic, the therapist could have members of the group take turns adjusting just one feature of the facade sculpt to make it more like what they typically see. Another way to do this is to ask a group member to demonstrate the outside sculpt to allow the sculptor to witness their facade.

Variation: **Oppression Sculpting*** (Boal, 1992)
Targeted Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Boundaries, Conflict Resolution, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication,

Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Teamwork, Trust, Verbal Communication

Configuration: Group

Description:

Divide the group into smaller groups. Each small group makes a group sculpt of the concept of oppression. Once each group is done, one group remains in its sculpt and the others comes over to observe. First, they describe what they see objectively (i.e., not creating metaphors of what they see, but literally describing how people are positioned.) For instance, if two people are standing back-to-back, an objective description would be, "Two people are standing back-to-back." A subjective description would be, "I think they aren't speaking to each other," or "They are about to pace off to have a duel." After the sculpt has been described objectively, *then* the observing group can make subjective descriptions. After all the sculpts have been described, each group uses the feedback they have had to revise their sculpt to be even more oppressive, and the describing process continues. Once all the groups have created the most oppressive sculpt they can, they try to create a sculpt of freedom or equality (the opposite of oppression). The same process of objective and subjective descriptions continues for this round. The exercise ends with a group discussion about power differentials.

*Warning: Participants who have been in real-life oppressive situations can be triggered by being part of these sculpts. It will be important to address this possibility before beginning the exercise and allow any participants to sit out, if they choose. It may also be wise to have a "safe word" for a participant to say if they begin to be triggered and then they can leave the sculpt. If the therapist observes any reactions of concern, they have a responsibility to intervene and take the participant out of the sculpt.

There is a difference between feeling uncomfortable and feeling unsafe. Feeling uncomfortable can be discussed and learned from. Feeling unsafe can lead to harm, dissociation, or flashbacks.

If the therapist is working in a residential program, lock-down facilities, or workplaces, there may be oppressors and oppressed in the same group. If the therapist suspects this, do not use this exercise without additional training because things can quickly get out of control.

Variation: **Past/Present/Future Sculpting**

Targeted Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Locus of Control, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Self-Awareness, Sequencing

Configuration: Group or Individual

Description:

Group members are paired; one volunteers to be the first sculptor and the other the sculpture. The sculptor sculpts their past onto their partner. When the sculpt is finished,

the sculptor can think of a line that the sculpt would say if it came alive. Once every dyad has finished, the group comes back together and each sculpt is demonstrated to the group. Each sculptor stands at a distance where they can clearly see their statue. The leader gently touches the statue on the shoulder or says, "Action," to bring the statue to life to speak its line. The leader asks the sculptors what they see in their statue.

This process is repeated for the present and future. Once the first group of sculptors have presented their series of sculptures, the person who has been the statue will take a few moments to recall the past, present, and future sculpts and lines. Then each sculptor steps back and views all three in succession. The leader calls out "Past—Present—Future." The leader asks the sculptors if they have any new ideas about themselves by looking at the difference in the positions, actions, and quotes of their statues over time. The person who has been the statue can also be asked what they learned about the sculptor by taking on that person's positions. They may also share what they learned about their own struggle: what they may have in common with the sculptor and what they could take from their experience.

At this point the dyads reverse roles and restart the process of sculpting the past, present and future.

The following are helpful hints to participants about what to sculpt for the past, present and future.

The Past: Sculptors create a statue that represents them at some time in the past when they were in the midst of their problem (i.e., before addressing it therapeutically).

The Present: The sculptors will sculpt themselves in the present (working on their problem).

The Future: Sculptors pick a moment in the future when they have achieved some success or solved their problem.

Other Sculpture Variations: Any dynamic, situation, or experience can be sculpted. Plus, sculptures can always be put into motion if that helps participants understand dynamics or changes involved.

Self-Monologues

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Emotional Regulation, Locus of Control, Problem-Solving, Self-Reflection, Verbal Expression
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Participants write self-monologues addressing questions, quandaries, or conflicts they are currently facing or have faced in their pasts. Encourage them to go beyond

the content of the facts and explore different perspectives. If possible, include an insight they have had either in real life or during the process of writing. This will create a stronger therapeutic experience. They read and/or perform these for the group. These can be the starting point for a Self-Revelatory or Autobiographical Therapeutic Performance.

✦Note: The monologue could be about witnessing an event that led to an insight, new understanding, or new perspective.

Variation: **Talking to Yourself on Video** (O. Cole, personal communication, 2014)
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Compassionate Empathy
Materials: Video camera and monitor, cell phone, tablet, or computer
Description:
Participants write down the type of encouragement and positive feedback they have found most effective when they have been down or felt lost. After the encouragement is written down, the participant can be videotaped with pauses left between sections of the encouragement. Later, the participant can talk to the image of themself on the video and pause to hear their own words of wisdom.

❖Helpful Hint: If participants have difficulty remembering a time when they felt down or which type of encouragement worked for them, a variation of the "Empty Chair" can help bring this back to mind. Have each participant choose an auxiliary from the group to sit in the "Encouragement Chair". The auxiliary improvises words of encouragement to the participant who listens for what resonates with them. Then the participant and auxiliary role reverse, and the participant practices saying the words of encouragement that felt effective. After that, the participant can write down the effective words and phrases for use in the video.

Shape Changing*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Behavioral Regulation, Boundaries, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Following Directions, Locus of Control, Self-Awareness, Sensory Awareness, Understanding Intensity of Emotion
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Associative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
To warm up players, alternate making big objects, animals, and emotions with smaller ones. Ask players how it feels to take up more space and to take up less. After doing this in place, players can begin moving around the room as these different big and small objects, animals or emotions.

***Warning:** If your players have impulse control problems, place them at a distance from each other and only have them move around the room, if they can do so without running into each other.

Variation: **Big, Tiny, Twisted***
Type of Play: Associative, then Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
Level One: Players move about the room while the leader calls out "Big," "Tiny," or "Twisted" and form themselves into statues with the appropriate quality.

Level Two: The leader tells players to create a statue connected with one other player with that quality.

Level Three: The leader tells players to combine Big, Tiny and/or Twisted in group sculpts of three or four. As players feel comfortable, more and more players can be combined in a sculpt.

***Warning:** Players must be willing to touch each other as they create group statues or get very close. If they do not want to be touched, keep the statues singular and only mix the quality and size of the statue.

Shape Copying

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Observation Skills, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
One player goes to the center of the circle and takes an interesting body position. It is important for the rest of the players to look 360 degrees around the posing player to get each tiny detail. One participant volunteers to reproduce the position. Then the poser comes out of the pose and the volunteer takes the pose as closely as possible. Other members of the group can judge whether the pose is identical or not.

✦Note: If there are participants who are limited in their movements, remind other participants to make shapes that everyone can copy.

Simon Says

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Inhibition, Body Movement Control, Following Directions, Listening Skills

Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Rule-Based
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The leader tells the group members to do different actions. If the leader says, "Simon says," before the command, everyone should do it. If the leader just gives the command, no one should do it. The usual rule for the game is that if players follow the command without "Simon says," before it, they can be eliminated. However, being eliminated does not help players warm-up. Instead, keep score on how many times each person is fooled into doing the command without orders from Simon.

Six Word Memoirs (Fershleiser & Smith, 2008)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Decision-Making, Locus of Control, Organization Skills, Self-Awareness
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Expressive
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Each participant writes the story of their life in six words. This requires them to be very succinct, clear, and to the point. They are forced to focus on one issue they want to describe or one main thread, pattern, problem, or question. A six-word memoir can bring a problem or a quest into focus. It can also create a poetic image that can be worked on in therapy through movement, music, art, or drama. Writers can share their memoirs in a small or large group and discuss their meaning and how they can use the clarity each brings to motivate them to change or accept their story.

The origin of this exercise is attributed to Ernest Hemingway who supposedly boasted that he could write a whole story in six words: For sale—baby shoes, never worn.

Variation:
Participants could "rewrite" their memoir to create a different ending by choosing different words.

Variation:
Work together in small groups, each person's life story is acted out.

Variation:
Pick six objects or images that tell a story of one's life.

Snail (Cattanach, 1992)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Behavioral Regulation, Boundaries, Cognitive Empathy, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Emotional Regulation, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Opposite Action Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Reframing, Social Skills, Trust, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative, Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Large piece of fabric
Description:
One player volunteers to pretend to be a snail in its shell (under the fabric). It is safe in its shell and the outside world is dangerous without the protection of a shell. Another player volunteers to talk the snail out of its shell. If that player does not succeed in convincing the snail to come out, another player can try. After the snail comes out or after several rounds of playing, discuss with the snail, the convincers, and the rest of the group what reasons and assurances worked or did not work, as well as what were emotional approaches that did and did not work.

Sound Stories

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Following Directions, Impulse Control, Listening Skills, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Associative, Expressive
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Items for sound effects. If recording the story for playback, a recording device of some kind.
Description:
Participants brainstorm all the sounds in a particular environment or story and how to make them. For instance, in a jungle one might hear lions, birds, monkeys, coconuts dropping from a palm tree, etc. Sounds can be made with rhythm instruments and other objects that make sounds, bodies, and voices. Then the leader or a member of the group makes up a story about that environment, and everyone makes the sounds needed to support the story. There are also sound stories that have been written down that could be brought in to use (here).

Speaker's Prop

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Boundaries, Following Directions, Social Skills

Purpose: Assistive Device for Discussions
Type of Play: Rules-Based
Materials: Object chosen as the Speaker's Prop
Configuration: Group
Description:
Pick a prop that represents the power to be the group speaker. It could be a magic tube, a gavel, a magic wand, a feather, or something else the group chooses. Whoever is speaking in a group discussion, holds the speaker's prop so that everyone knows who to pay attention to.

<center>**Spectrogram** (Moreno, 1959)</center>

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Emotional Regulation, Decision-Making, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Observation Skills, Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness, Sequencing

Purpose: Warm-up, Assessment
Type of Play: Associative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
This is a sociometry intervention/assessment. Ask group members to imagine a line on the floor from one end of the room to the other or from one object to another. Indicate which end is low/least/zero and which is high/most/100. Identify an object halfway between both ends so participants can tell if they are above or below the mid-point on the spectrum. This helps people be more specific in their measurement. Start by setting up a criterion (asking a question) that has many different degrees of answers or opinions to it. Group members move to the place on the line that expresses how they feel. Spectrograms usually consist of anywhere from 8 to 15 questions that have the purpose of getting group members to think about a topic, make choices, and think on their feet.

An example of a good spectrogram criterion/question: How much do you like a good argument? [This is a better phasing than "Do you like a good argument?" because it forces an answer on a continuum rather than a binary yes or no answer.]

❖Helpful Hints:
• Vary which side of the room is 0 and which is 100 to encourage participants to continue to actively think and make choices. You do not need to vary with every question, maybe after four questions or if you notice no one is moving much.
• Mix meaningful questions (those in reference to the topic you are introducing and want participants to think about and/or those you are using to find information about the group) with questions that ask about personal interests or preferences.

<center>121</center>

- Do not allow too much time for thinking about choices before having participants move.

Spectrograms are extremely useful as a warm-up and as an introduction to a main activity or topic. The group leader can see where the participants fall on the continuum and can see patterns within the group. Participants can evaluate where they stand individually on each question AND can see the patterns in the group as a whole.

Variation: **Emotion Spectrogram with Sculpt**
Description:
Create a spectrogram and assign one end as Low and the other end as High. The leader explains this spectrogram is exploring the intensity of different emotions. Players take a position on the spectrogram and create a sculpture that expresses what the intensity of the emotion would be at that place on the spectrogram. After players have created their statues, the rest of the group will need to determine if the statues appropriately represent the placement on the continuum or if they need to switch places. They can also determine if there is an intensity that is missing and can devise an appropriate sculpt for that spot.

Variation: **Moving Emotion Spectrogram**
Description:
The leader identifies an emotion to explore and then creates a spectrogram. The spectrogram will serve as a measure of the intensity of the emotion chosen. One player begins at the lowest end of the spectrogram and moves up the scale to act out how the intensity of the emotion changes from low to high. Be sure to derole after this exercise!

Splat

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Emotional Tolerance, Following Directions, Observation Skills, Teamwork, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
<u>Type of Play</u>: Motor/Physical, Cooperative, Competitive
<u>*Configuration*</u>: Group
Description:
This is a therapeutically appropriate adaptation of "Bang!" The group forms a circle with one player in the middle. When the Middle Player points to a person in the circle and says, "Duck!" the person must duck as quickly as possible. The

players on either side turn toward the Ducker and pretend they are splashing the Ducker with a bucket of water or a water balloon while saying, "Splat!" If the Ducker hasn't ducked in time and "gets wet," the Ducker has to change places with the Middle Player. If the player ducked in time, then the Middle Player has to point to another player in the circle.

Storyboarding

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making, Listening Skills, Organization Skills, Reasoning Skills, Sequencing, Social Skills, Teamwork, Trust, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention, Assessment
Type of Play: Expressive, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Materials: Pieces of 8 ½ by 11 drawing paper, markers, and/or pencils
Description:
A small group creates a story and storyboards it (i.e., draws each scene). They can create the story first and draw it after or make it up as they go along. This can be a wonderful way to teach about story structure. When the storyboards are done, the whole group can see what would happen if the storyboards were shuffled around in a different order.

Questions to ask (depending on the story): Is the main conflict in the story clear? Would the story make sense in a different order? Are any scenes left out that we need to see or hear about? Would the story be more interesting if the action in a scene was replaced with a different one? Are all the characters well-used or are any superfluous?

Variation: **Individual Storyboarding**
Type of Play: Solitary
Configuration: Individual
Description:
Same as above, but the individual would create the story and storyboard.

Step-out (Bloch & Angelin, 2017)*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Body Movement Control, Coping Skills, Emotional Regulation, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Sensory Awareness/Integration
Purpose: Deroling or Closure
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Solitary
Configuration: Group or Individual

Description:
This technique was created by Susannah Bloch as a deroling technique for her Alba Emoting method. The participant stands tall with feet under shoulders in a balanced position. They breathe in as they bend backwards slowly with arms raised above their head. When they have reached back as far as they can, they reverse and bend forward through a standing position to a bending down position as they breathe out. The participant does this at least three times and returns to the original standing position. Their emotional state should come back to a neutral state when they are finished. If after three times, the participant is not back to a neutral state, they can continue the bending pattern until they feel they have reached neutral.

*Warning: This exercise would most likely be contraindicated for participants with balance difficulties, vasovagal syncope, and vertigo. It may also be contraindicated for individuals with Down syndrome who have `atlanto-axial instability (AAI) or `atlanto-occipital instability (AOI).

<center>**Superhero Capes***</center>

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Empathy, Impulse Control, Social Skills, Trust
Purpose: Deroling or Closure
Type of Play: Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Materials: Large sheets of newsprint or butcher paper cut to the appropriate size of participants' backs (the shorter side should go from shoulder to shoulder and the longer side should go down the back), a colored magic marker for each participant, two pieces of masking tape per piece of paper.
Description:
Participants help each other by taping the "superhero capes" to the back of their peers at the shoulders. When all have capes, participants write a message of appreciation on the capes of others in the group and sign their message or draw pictures and sign them. No one can see what people have written until everyone is done, and they take off the capes.
    ❖Helpful Hint: Prepare for this ritual by ripping off the lengths of masking tape before the activity and attaching them to the side of a table or a corner, so students can easily take two pieces of tape and a piece of paper to find another person to help "cape."

*Warning: Do not use this ritual with participants who experience paranoia or do not have the social skills to know how to write appropriate comments.

Swoosh-Bong*
AKA **Crash-Bang**, **Swish-Boing**, **Whoosh-Whoa**, or **Whoosh-Boing**

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Emotional Tolerance, Following Directions, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Opposite Action Skills, Sensory Integration, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical
Configuration: Group
Description:
The group forms a circle. There are a number of movements and sounds that players can choose to act out. "Swoosh" or "Whoosh" can be passed either to the right or left with both hands as if splashing water on someone. Once a "Swoosh" is started, it continues around the circle in that direction. "Bong" or "Boing" or "Bang" (choose one) assertively reverses the "Swoosh /Woosh" to move in the opposite direction. The gesture that goes with "Boing" or "Bang" is an X made with both arms. "Pow" (a pointing gesture with 2 arms) sends the movement across the circle to another person who can "Whoosh" in either direction. Typically, anyone who receives a "Pow" is not allowed to "Bong" or "Pow" back (but each leader can adapt the rules as appropriate for the group).

Additional movements and sounds can be added once the first three are learned, include:

- "Ramp" (the Swoosh skips over the next player to the player on the other side). The gesture: with hands next to each other (index finger to index finger) reaching up and over the next person.
- "Freak Out" (everyone runs around, yelling, and finds a new place in the circle, then the "Swoosh" starts again with the player who started the "Freak Out").
- "Groovalicious" (everyone swings their hips in a circle and says "Groovalicious" together. Then the original player who said the word does the next command).
- "This is Sparta!" (everyone kicks alternate legs out toward the middle of the circle as if fighting off an enemy and ends with arms raised above head).

*****Warning:** This warm-up will be very difficult for a group with sensory integration issues or ADHD. They will quickly dysregulate.

Symphony, see **Emotion Orchestra**

Tangling*
AKA **Knots**

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Behavioral Regulation, Boundaries, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Emotional Tolerance, Decision-Making, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Sequencing, Social Skills, Teamwork, Trust, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up, Assessment (for leadership, frustration tolerance)
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
The group stands in a circle. Players raise their right hands and reach out to take the hand of someone else in the circle. Then all raise their left hand and reach out to take the hand of a different person (It is very important that two people do not take each other's hands, because they end up cut out from the larger circle or become self-contained rings within the circle.) The result is a big tangle of people.

Working together, the group must untangle themselves without letting go of anyone's hands. They can step over or under the arms of other players. They can also twist or untwist themselves. All tangles can be untangled (except when rings of people are connected in separate but interlocking circles—see helpful hint) if there is enough time to work on the game. This makes it a great metaphor for the problems of life, trusting others when you cannot see part of the problem, and being willing to lead sometimes and follow others.

❧Helpful Hint: Sometimes cliques of people within the group grab onto each other's hands and become smaller circles within the circle or are attached to the circle like the link of a chain. While the group is still in a messy state, it is hard to see that this has happened, but once the tangle begins to unwind, look for those inner chains and don't be fooled by them.

Accomodation:
If participants do not want to hold hands give each one a ribbon approximately one foot long. Each person will grab a ribbon from a participant (instead of a hand). This also provides more room for manuevering out of the tangle.

***Warning**: This warm-up is not appropriate for participants who have PTSD or who are tactilely defensive.

Taxi
Adapted from **The Blind Car** (Boal, 2021)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Decision-Making, Following Directions, Nonverbal Communication, Sensory Awareness, Teamwork, Trust, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The group pairs up. One partner acts as the Taxi, and one acts as the Driver. The Taxi faces away from the Driver. The Driver guides the Taxi through touch. To go left, the Driver puts their hand on the left shoulder. To go right, the Driver puts their hand on the right shoulder. To go forward the Driver puts hands on both shoulders. To stop, the Driver takes both hands off the Taxi. To go backwards, the Driver puts both hands on the Taxi's back. Since there will be many Taxis moving around the room, all Drivers should be careful not to crash their Taxi into another.

Warning: Do an assessment first to see if anyone in the group has PTSD or is tactilely defensive. It could be a good exercise to work on trust and sensory integration during Phase Four, but use it specifically as an intervention rather than a warm-up. Find another activity to warm-up to Taxi.

Advanced Variation: **Blindfolded Taxi***
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Boundaries, Social Skills
Materials: Blindfolds for the Taxis
Description:
Taxis are blindfolded and need to trust their Driver not to drive them somewhere dangerous.

Warning: Do not blindfold participants who are paranoid, who have PTSD, or sensory integration/balance issues.

Telephone

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Listening Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative
Configuration: Group

Description:
The group forms a circle. Player one makes up a phrase and whispers it to a player on their right or left. The phrase is passed around the circle person to person through a whisper and when it gets to the last player, that person says it out loud. If the group has been listening carefully and speaking clearly, the phrase will not have changed. If it is different, try to discover where it changed and if it changed more than once.

Advanced Variation: **Rumors***
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Boundaries, Compassionate Empathy, Reality Testing, Reasoning Skills, Social Skills
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative
Description:
In order to demonstrate how gossip can become distorted, exaggerated, and untruthful, the first player makes up a phrase about either a person in the group or a celebrity everyone knows and whispers it to the player on their right or left. That person hears the gossip and changes it to make it a little bit more dramatic or salacious (however, stress that there should be no X-rated comments). Each time the message is passed, it gets changed a little bit. At the end of the circle, the last person says what the rumor is. Then go back through the circle to see how the rumor changed. Then discuss why spreading rumors in person or online is not a helpful behavior and how it is important to think critically when hearing or reading something about someone else.

*Warning: If there are cliques or people who do not like each other in your group, or if group members have been bullied in the past, feelings could easily be hurt. In this case, do not make up rumors about participants in the group; instead use celebrities only.

Therapeutic Tabletop Role Playing Games (TTRPGs)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Behavioral Regulation, Cognitive Flexibility, Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making, Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Following Directions, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Opposite Action Skills, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness, Sequencing, Social Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Collaborative, Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual

Description:

Most people know about *Dungeons & Dragons*, but there are many Tabletop Role Playing Games, such as *Kids on Bikes, No Thank You Evil*, *Coyote and Crow*, and *Honey Heist*, which provide an inviting, engaging structure for participants to collectively create a fantastical world together and which can be used therapeutically in a strength-based and strength-focused model. The therapist and participants follow the rules of story creation specific to the TTRPG being played

✦Note: Each TTRPG has specific rules for the special worlds that they create. The collaboration between the therapist or game master and the participants allow for practicing social skills, resolving conflict, and learning about self and others. TTRPGs allow participants to explore and uncover strengths that they have never had the means or opportunity to uncover in real life. As the game master, the therapist has the ability to reinforce those strengths through setting up situations in which participants can try out different skills in a distanced way. Because their words and actions affect the story, locus of control is developed as participants realize (often in a revolutionary way) that they are capable of affecting change (J. Adams, personal communication, May 21, 2021).

✦Note: If used one-on-one, the therapist should always be the game master in order to guide the story to help the participant address their treatment goals.

To Tell the Truth

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Flexibility, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Reality Testing, Reasoning Skills, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative, Expressive
Configuration: Group
Materials: Each player needs a pencil or pen and three 3 × 5 index cards
Description:

All players write down three experiences on the index cards that really happened to them, but which no one else in the group knows about. The events could be really bizarre incidents, adventures, or occurrences that stand out or times when they learned something new or had an insight. The group leader collects the cards and looks through them to find interesting events. Then the group leader calls three players out of the room. One will be the player whose event was chosen. The leader tells the three which event was chosen and explains that the two who it did not happen to must try to convince everyone else that it did happen to them. They can make up their own version of the events if they want to. The actual player to whom the event happened is not to lie, but to tell the truth about the event.

All three players go back into the room and sit in chairs facing the rest of the group. Group members may ask questions of the three panelists for five to ten minutes. Then they must vote for the person who they believe is telling the truth. The leader goes behind each player and asks, "Is it Number One?" and everyone who thinks player number one was telling the truth raises their hand, and down the line. If the group members guess correctly, they get a point. If no one guesses correctly, the players get a point. Then in the next round three more players come up.

❧Helpful Hint: One of the reasons to have players write down three events is that in a smaller group, this allows players to come up to the stage more than once. They have turned in three cards, so it is still possible that they could be the truth teller. Another reason is sometimes a player writes down events that are inappropriate to disclose or so nondescript that they would not be interesting for the other group members to ask questions about, so the leader has other choices to use.

Examples of real events shared in games that led to interesting questions and lies:
- George Clooney was my babysitter.
- I went sky diving on my birthday.
- I rode an elephant.
- I walked on fire when I visited India.
- I trespassed on Robert Redford's ranch.

Transportation*
AKA **Group Carries**

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Sensory Integration, Teamwork, Trust, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up, Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
To do this intervention, there needs to be a mixture of body types and strengths. This is a game best done with adults because it requires upper body strength. Divide the group into teams of six to eight players. Each group must figure out a way to transport each member of their team individually across the room using all the rest of the members in their group. "Transport" in this case is defined as moving the person across the space without them touching the ground. Chairs and other objects cannot be used.

Each group must watch the other groups' transporting because once a particular method/structure of transporting a person is used, it cannot be used by another group.

***Warning:** Do not use this game with people who have PTSD or tactile defensiveness . In addition, there are facilities where clients are not allowed to touch each other, so this would not be appropriate in certain prisons, schools, group homes, etc.

***Warning:** If you do not have enough variety of body types and strengths or if trust has not been built to a large degree in the group, do not use this game.

Trust Circle*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Nonverbal Communication, Teamwork, Trust
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Cooperative
Configuration: Group
Description:
The group forms a circle facing in, shoulder to shoulder. The circle should not be large. Between six to twelve people is a good size. One player volunteers to stand in the middle of the circle and do the Trust Fall. The middle player puts feet together, folds arms across chest and holds body as stiff as a board. The middle player will need to try to keep their feet in the middle of the circle. The players making up the circle hold their hands up with palms facing forward so they are ready to catch the middle player. The middle player falls backward, and the player(s) catch them and pass them around the circle or gently tip the middle player across the circle to other players. The middle player must continue to stay as stiff as possible in order to be passed while the players in the circle must keep their attention on the middle player, so they do not miss them. If this is done slowly and gently, the middle player has a wonderful experience. Because the group is working together and paying attention, the middle player remains safe.

✦Note**:** The group should only say positive things to the middle player as they are passed. Trust will not be built if people are making jokes or teasing the person being passed around.

***Warning**: Trust Circles should not be used as a Warm-up or during the first two phases of treatment. Do not use this as a group bonding experience. Trust must exist before this is done.

***Warning:** Diagnostic populations in which this intervention may be contraindicated include PTSD, schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, children with oppositional defiant disorder or antisocial disorder, psychopaths, any of the attachment disorders, sensory integration disorder, tactile defensiveness, or medically compromised clients.

Variation: **Trust Line**
Description:
Another configuration that can be used is for the group to create two long lines facing each other. The middle player walks slowly between the lines, pausing to fall back into the arms of the players in line who catch the middle player and set them back up on their feet before continuing down the line. If a Trust Circle seems too scary, a Trust Line can be an alternative to start with.

Variation: **Trust Carry***
Materials: A heavy blanket
Description:
A blanket is used to carry the middle player. All the other players hold onto the outside edges of the blanket and lift together and gently move the blanket. This can be the safest version as everyone is involved in holding the weight of the middle player simultaneously.

***Warning:** Make sure the group is able to pick up any middle player safely before starting the game so as not to alienate a heavier group member.

✦Note: While Trust Carries, Circles, and Falls are found in every drama game book, the authors have concerns about using them as therapeutic interventions due to physical and emotional issues that participants may be dealing with.

Two Truths and a Lie

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Decision-Making, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Reality Testing, Reasoning Skills, Social Skills, Verbal Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Warm-up, Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Expressive, Cooperative, Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Description:
All players think of three statements about themselves: two of them true and one false. The false statement needs to sound true. Then each player tells the group their three statements, and the group must come to a consensus on which are the true statements, and which one is false.

Tug of War in Slow Motion

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Abstract Thinking, Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Emotional Tolerance, Nonverbal

Communication, Observation Skills, Opposite Action Skills, Sensory Integration/
Awareness, Social Skills, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Dramatic
Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
The group is divided into two teams. They pantomime playing a game of tug of
war in slow motion. Each team needs to work together and pay attention to what
is being done by the other team so there is a physical dialogue between teams.
✦Note: The point of this game is not competition or winning, but reading and
responding to the physical movements of the other team. In a sense, it is practice
in "Yes, and…" with your body.

<center>**Typewriter** (Belt & Stockley, 1989)</center>

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Decision-Making, Following Direc-
tions, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Organization Skills, Problem-Solving,
Reasoning Skills, Sensory Integration, Sequencing, Social Skills, Teamwork, Verbal
Communication, Working Memory
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Description:
One player serves as the Writer for the scene. At least two players serve as Actors in
the scene. The Writer starts off the scene by describing the situation and the char-
acters. As the Writer narrates the plot, the Actors act out the scene. The Writer and
the Actors must share the stage and work together. The Writer creates the action
and allows the Actors to act it out with dialogue and movement. The Actors will
give the Writer ideas just as much as the Writer gives the Actors ideas.
✦Note: If you want to also work on emotional and behavioral regulation, you
will want to put some parameters around the scene, such as going into slow motion
if there is an action sequence or a fight in the scene. Suggested themes could be
given to guide the Writer to scenes of emotional regulation.

*Warning: The leader may need to ban inappropriate material, if they think the Writer
will go there, will make Actors feel uncomfortable, or the facility bans certain topics.

Advanced Variation: **Cutting Room** (Belt & Stockley, 1989)
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Cognitive Flexibility, Emotional Regu-
lation, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Opposite Action Skills

Description:
The Narrator or Film Editor finds a place on the side of the performing area. The Actors enter and begin to improvise a scene. Once the Actors have created characters and the direction of the scene has begun to develop, the Film Editor can say, "Cut," the Actors freeze and listen as the Film Editor provides a new time, place, and/or location for the actors to move to. In this version the actors have more control over the story, while the Film Editor helps them structure the story by moving the scene forward or backwards at an appropriate time. For instance, time could move backward as in a flashback or could flashforward.

Video or Performance Identification of Triggering Events*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Boundaries, Compassionate Empathy, Coping Skills, Emotional Regulation, Locus of Control, Problem-Solving, Recognizing Triggers, Self-Awareness
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Expressive, Associative
Configuration: Group or Individual
Materials: Projector, screen, monitor, or computer; cued up video and film clips
Description:
The therapist brings in videos from movies and TV shows that have events with potentially emotional triggers for participants. Participants watch the videos, identify the triggers, and discuss what they feel when they see them and how they could better handle this trigger if they experienced it in real life.

***Warning:** In choosing the video to be shown, not only must the therapist think about the trigger being represented, but whether the scene being shown is culturally appropriate. For example, if the emotional trigger is gun violence, do not choose a scene that shows gun violence being perpetrated by young men of color.

Walks

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Following Directions, Listening Skills (or Observation Skills if working with Hard of Hearing participants), Nonverbal Communication, Opposite Action Skills, Sensory Integration
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Associative, Expressive, Dramatic

Configuration: Group or Individual
Description:
Participants move around the room pretending as if they are moving in different kinds of shoes, as different kinds of animals, in different kinds of weather, or in different environments. The leader calls out or visually communicates different options in whatever category has been chosen.

✦Note: Assess your space before choosing which type of walk you are doing to make sure you have enough space for the type of walk and that there are not any dangerous items in the room that participants could run into or trip over.

✤Helpful Hint: If you are working with individuals who have physical disabilities, "Walks" can be done in wheelchairs or with assistive devices. Participants who need assistance can also be paired with participants who are able to help.

Variation: **Emotion Walk and Freeze**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Emotional Tolerance, Identify Emotions in Self
Description:
Players walk around the room expressing an emotion the leader has called out. At some point, the leader calls out, "Freeze!" and the players freeze in a position that expresses that emotion. When the leader calls out a different emotion, the players unfreeze and begin walking around with the new emotion.

Variation: **Moving to Drums or Music**
Description:
Players move around the room to a variety of rhythms based on drums/rhythm instruments or recordings of music. When moving to the music, there may be an emotional or cognitive component that influences how participants are moving.

Variation: **Sludge Walk**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Slow down physiology
Purpose: Deroling, cool down, closure
Description:
Tell participants to imagine they are a vat of mud, or they have really heavy shoes on.

What Are You Doing?*

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Cognitive Flexibility, Generating Alternatives, Nonverbal Communication, Opposite Action Skills, Social Skills, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up

<u>Type of Play</u>: Motor/Physical, Dramatic
<u>Configuration</u>: Group
Description:
The group forms a circle. One player starts pantomiming an action in the middle of the circle. A player asks the Middle Player, "What are you doing?" The Middle Player keeps doing what they have been doing, but says, "I'm _____," and says something different from what they are actually doing. The Questioning Player must enter the circle and act out what the Middle Player said (rather than what they were doing) while the first Middle Player takes the place of the Questioning Player in the circle.

❖<u>Helpful Hint</u>: To make sure everyone gets a turn, go around the circle in one direction with each player in order asking, "What are you doing?"

✦<u>Note</u>: The player who is doing the most work in this game is the Middle Player who has to do one action, but think of and say a different one.

*__Warning:__ The leader needs to remind players not to make the Questioner do something embarrassing or inappropriate. Sometimes it is useful to reverse the direction of play around the circle once everyone in the circle has completed each round. This way players realize if they play a trick on someone in one round, that person could play a trick on them in the next round.

What You Think/What You Say

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Anger Management, Conflict Resolution, Coping Skills, Identifying Emotions, Empathy, Impulse Control, Locus of Control, Opposite Action Skills, Social Skills, Understanding Emotions
Purpose: Primary Intervention
<u>Type of Play</u>: Cooperative, Expressive, Dramatic
<u>Configuration</u>: Group or Individual
Materials: Slips of paper with situations on them in which someone might say something rude or inappropriate.
Description:
Participants pick a slip of paper that describes a situation in which they might say something rude or inappropriate. They have to identify what they would really think and want to say, then identify what would be appropriate to say in that situation. Scenes can be acted out to practice responding appropriately.

❖<u>Helpful Hint</u>: Depending on the skills of the group, the therapist may have to provide suggestions or examples of how to respond that are participant and situation specific.

Who's the Leader?
AKA Secret Leader

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Impulse Control, Listening Skills, Nonverbal Communication, Observation Skills, Problem-Solving, Sensory Integration, Teamwork
Purpose: Warm-up, Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative, Competitive
Configuration: Group
Description:
All players sit in a circle, except for one player who leaves the room. While that player is gone, the group decides on a player who will be the leader. The leader begins doing a rhythmic movement and the rest of the players copy it. The player outside the room is called back in and must figure out who the leader is by using sight and sound cues. The leader from time to time changes the movement, and all the rest of the players must try to change as quickly and unnoticeably as possible. The non-leaders will want to avoid looking directly at the leader because that will give the leader away. This can be a difficult task for young players.

The player who is guessing is given a certain number of guesses, usually three. If the guesser is correct, they can rejoin the circle. The next player either volunteers to go out of the room or is chosen. If the guesser is not correct, sometimes they must go out while a new leader is chosen, or there can be no penalty and they can rejoin the circle.

✦Note: This game is good for teaching nonverbal group cooperation; however, if a group is extremely good at nonverbal cooperation, the guesser can become very frustrated. The guesser may need to be coached to watch for changes in movement and sound in order to identify the leader.

Winds Are Blowing, The

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Body Movement Control, Boundaries, Cognitive Flexibility, Decision-Making, Emotional Tolerance, Following Directions, Listening Skills, Observation Skills, Social Skills
Purpose: Warm-up
Type of Play: Motor/Physical, Competitive
Configuration: Group
Description:
The group sits in a circle of chairs with one less chair than the number of players. The player without the chair goes to the middle of the circle and becomes the leader for the first round. The leader looks at everyone and decides on some aspect

of appearance, interest, likes, or dislikes that a number of them (or all of them) have in common. The leader says, "The Winds are Blowing for…" whatever that commonality is. Everyone who matches what the winds are blowing for gets up out of their chair and finds a new seat. However, the leader is also trying to find a new seat, so whoever is left without a seat becomes the leader for the next round. If a leader cannot think of anything or would like to create a lot of excitement, they can yell "Tornado!" or "Hurricane!" and then all players must get up and find a new seat.

The one rule is that if you get out of your chair, you cannot go back to the same one within that round. This rule prevents risk-averse players from standing up and immediately sitting down in the same chair. They could go back to that chair in another round.

If there are no sensory integration issues in the group, Sally has a rule that when someone says, "Tornado!" or "Hurricane!" everyone has to scream as they run for a new chair.

Variation:
A rule can be made that the leader of the round must have the commonality they are calling out.

Variation:
A rule can be made that when you leave your chair, you cannot sit in the chair next to you.

Adaptation:
Description:
If the group has anyone in a wheelchair, do not use chairs for the circle, identify spaces in the circle with masking tape on the floor and have mobile players stand on the tape.

✦Note: From personal experience, if you have multiple players who use adaptive mobility devices and who are very competitive, this may not be a good game to play for safety reasons.

Variation: **Fruit Salad**
Additional Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Working Memory
Materials: A container with slips of paper that have the names of fruit on them. How many fruits are included depends on the working memory abilities of the group.
Description:
Players sit in a circle with one less chair than the number of players. Each player picks a slip of paper with the name of a fruit on it. Then they turn the slip of paper back in and must remember what they are. The middle player calls out the name of a fruit and everyone who picked that name must get up and move to another

chair. As players get better with the game, the middle player can call out more than one fruit at the same time. To get everyone to move, the middle player says "Fruit Salad!" The same adaptations and rule variations work for this game as in The Winds Are Blowing.

Variation: **Step Into the Circle If …**
Purpose: Also Assessment
Description:
Players form a circle with one person in the middle. The middle player says, "Step into the circle if …" and says something that everyone could have in common or like or dislike. If the player really likes or dislikes something, they come in closer to the middle player or stay toward the outside boundaries of the circle. After each commonality is measured, the middle player can go back into the circle and another player can step in until all have taken a turn. Or the middle player can have a certain number of turns before going back into the circle.

✦Note: This game is calmer and allows participants to see where everyone is on the commonality spectrum. It is also a better version to play with older adults or a group that has members who have movement, balance, or sensory integration difficulties.

Wise Mind Enactment (Rubin, 2008; Walters, 2012, 2018)

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Behavioral Regulation, Boundaries, Cognitive Flexibility, Compassionate Empathy, Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making, Emotional Regulation, Emotional Attention Set-Shifting, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Problem-Solving, Reality Testing, Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness, Sensory Awareness, Social Skills, Stress Management/Coping Skills, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Primary Intervention
Type of Play: Cooperative, Dramatic
Configuration: Group
Description:
Wise Mind (Linehan, 1993) is a state where emotion (emotion mind) and reason (rational mind) are in balance, similar to *aesthetic distance* in drama therapy. It helps an individual in making good decisions. It can be achieved because clients are able to think and feel at the same time without one type of knowledge negating or overpowering another. Wise Mind can be dramatized with the Decision Maker witnessing group members representing Emotion Mind and Rational Mind stating their version of a situation or decision. Then from a place of balance, the Decision Maker can sort through the information and make use of wise mind to come to a healthy decision. This could be used in a fictional manner, offering this method to

a character who is conflicted in a scene, or it could be used in a psychodramatic manner to help the client come to a real-life decision.

Variation: **Wise Mind with Empty Chairs**
<u>Configuration:</u> Individual
Description:
Emotion Mind, Rational Mind, and Wise Mind are represented by empty chairs that the participant can go to and enrole in.

Web of Connection

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Boundaries, Empathy, Reasoning Skills, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Trust, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Closure
<u>Type of Play</u>: Cooperative, Expressive
<u>Configuration</u>: Group
Materials: Large ball of yarn
Description:
The leader begins by holding onto the end of the yarn and throwing the ball of yarn to someone else in the circle who they have developed a connection with, explaining the connection or the special quality of that person. That person holds onto the yarn and throws the ball to another person in the circle who they have developed a connection with. This continues until the ball runs out of yarn. Participants can receive the yarn more than once.

✦<u>Note</u>: The leader should be aware of who has not received the yarn and make sure that no one is excluded by chance or on purpose. If it appears that someone has not received the yarn, the leader may need to prioritize throwing to that person the next time the leader receives the ball or make a general comment to the group about not leaving anyone out, as everyone has developed connections with each other as evidenced by all the intercrossing web that is developing.

When finished, the group can lower the web to the floor and see the web of connections they have made with each other.

Word Association

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Listening Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Communication
Purpose: Warm-up, Closure
<u>Type of Play</u>: Cooperative
<u>Configuration</u>: Group

Description:

The group forms a circle. One person starts by whispering a word to the player next to them in either direction. That player thinks of the first word that comes to mind when they hear that word. The word is whispered to the person next to them. Once the word has gone all the way around the circle being changed through the association for each word, the last person says their word and the first person says their word. To find out how the word has transformed, each person says their word in order.

<p align="center">Yes, and …</p>

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Cognitive Flexibility, Listening Skills, Locus of Control, Problem-Solving, Reasoning Skills, Social Skills, Teamwork, Working Memory

Purpose: Warm-up or Primary Intervention

Type of Play: Dramatic

Configuration: Group or Individual

Description:

Practice in pairs: The group divides into pairs. They are asked to decide who will be the Offer Maker and who will be the Offer Receiver. The pairs create a short dialogue with the Offer Maker suggesting something enjoyable for the pair to do together, and the Offer Receiver responding by saying, "No," to all offers. This dialogue will not last long as the Offer Receiver is blocking the offers. Discuss this with the group.

Then have the pairs create a short dialogue with the same offer, but with the Offer Receiver responding by saying, "Yes, but …" and coming up with a reason why the offer will not work. This is really a "no" response hidden under a seemingly positive acceptance. The dialogue will not last long and may be more frustrating for the Offer Maker than the first dialogue. Discuss this with the group.

Finally, have the pairs create a short dialogue with the same offer with the Offer Receiver saying, "Yes, and …" adding to the offer by building on what they could do together. The Offer Maker responds "Yes, and …" and builds on what is offered. A real dialogue will develop as the pair makes their plans. Stop the pairs and discuss with the group the difference between blocking an offer and accepting an offer.

Variation:

Yes, and ... Scenes (aka **Improvisation**): Practice "Yes, and ..." by creating a scene with two or more players in which no one can block any offer. Each actor must accept all offers and build on it. As the actors continue making offers, the group leader may need to help end the scene at a moment that is particularly funny or a high point. The scene may get very improbable and exaggerated and that is alright because the point of the improvisation is to practice saying "yes" and building on it.

Yes-No-You

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Decision-Making, Disorganized Thinking, Following Directions, Impulse Control, Observation Skills, Sequencing, Social Skills, Working Memory

Purpose: Warm-up

Type of Play: Cooperative

<u>Configuration</u>: Group

Description:

Players form a circle. A player can choose to turn to the player on their left or right. If the player turns to the player on their right, they make eye contact, gesture with an open hand (as if to shake hands), and say, "Yes." If a player turns to the player on their left, they make eye contact, gesture with an open hand (again as if to shake hands), and say "No." Play for a few minutes with these two choices. The direction can change depending on the choice of the player who has most recently been gestured to.

The third direction possible is across the circle to any player. In this case, the choosing player must make eye contact, gesture with an open hand to that player, and say, "You." The game continues with the three choices of direction. This game is similar to "Zip, Zap, Zop."

✦<u>Note</u>: The gesture to the player on right or left does not end in a handshake.

✦<u>Note</u>: This game's sequencing component is easier to remember than the one in "Zip, Zap, Zop" for people who have cognitive difficulties, so if "Zip, Zap, Zop" is a struggle, try this version instead.

Zip, Zap, Zop

Therapeutic Goals/Outcomes: Attention, Disorganized Thinking, Impulse Control, Observation Skills, Sequencing, Working Memory

Purpose: Warm-up

Type of Play: Cooperative

<u>Configuration</u>: Group

Description:

The group forms a circle, facing in. Player A starts by looking and pointing at someone else in the circle (Player B) and saying, "Zip!" Player B looks and points at someone else (Player C) and says, "Zap!" Player C looks and points at someone else (Player D) and says, "Zop!" Player D starts back at "Zip" and points to someone else, and the game continues. The Zips, Zaps, and Zops are popcorned around the circle with no specific pattern created or remembered. This game is similar to "Yes-No-You."

Variation: **Competitive Zip, Zap, Zop I**
<u>Type of Play</u>: Competitive
Description:
For participants who can handle competition, players can be eliminated if they say Zip, Zap, or Zop out of order or make another kind of mistake. Instead of the eliminated sitting out, they can be put "in the cookie jar," (in the middle of the circle) where they can stay involved by helping to identify mistakes.

Variation: **Competitive Zip, Zap, Zop II**
<u>Type of Play</u>: Competitive
Description:
Instead of having the eliminated players sit "in the cookie jar," they stay in the circle in a "ready position" as if they are still playing. The actual players have to remember who was eliminated. If an active player zips, zaps, or zops to an eliminated player, then *they* are eliminated.

Variation: **Wah**
Description:
Wah begins with participants forming a circle. Everyone puts the palms of their hands together and holds them in an upright position in front of their chest. The first person, usually the leader, sends the "Wah" or energy to another group member by raising their arms above their head and then "throws" their hands in the direction of another player, saying, "Wah!"

The receiving player "catches" the Wah and raises their hands above their head, and says, "Wah!" This continues until someone does not catch the Wah, hesitates, or the sender is not clear enough with where they wanted to send it. Start slowly and work towards sending the "Wah" faster and faster around the circle.

As the group becomes more confident playing the game, those on either side of the player who receives the Wah, turn towards the person between them and says, "Wah!" while making a slicing motion toward the center person without touching them, until the center person sends the Wah to the next person.

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