

# A JOURNEY THROUGH CREATIVE THEATER

**Duration:** 6 sessions (Each session is 2 hours long). Weekly or Bi-weekly

**Target Group:** Adults with intellectual disabilities.

**Mentor Role:** Facilitate exploration with minimal correction, offer hands-on support, and adapt to individual abilities and sensory needs.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Comfortable open space for movement
- Music and sound equipment (optional)
- Props (scarves, hats, simple costumes)
- Paper, markers, or any creative materials for drawing and writing
- Timer or clock
- Whiteboard/Flipchart for group discussions.

### INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

This workshop has been carefully designed to foster self-expression, creativity, teamwork, and confidence through theater exercises and activities. It aims to provide a safe space for participants to explore their voices, emotions, and stories.

The goal is to explore and develop different aspects of theater – from self-expression and storytelling to physical movement and collaboration. Each session builds upon the previous one, encouraging participants to grow, experiment, and express themselves with confidence and creativity.

# DAY 1: "INTRODUCTION TO THEATER AND SELF-EXPRESSION"

**Focus:** Introduction to the group and basic theater concepts (movement, voice, and creativity). The emphasis is on creating a welcoming, inclusive environment.

## Key Activities:

- Name & Gesture Game: Building group cohesion and self-expression.
- Emotion Movement: Exploring how emotions can be represented through body language and movement.
- Story Circle: Starting with simple stories and improvisation.
- Closing Circle Reflection: Group discussion about the experience.

**Takeaway:** Feeling comfortable in the group, basic understanding of emotions in theater, and an introduction to improvisation

## DAY 2 "DISCOVERING CHARACTERS THROUGH MOVEMENT AND VOICE"

**Focus:** Exploring characters using movement and vocalization. Understanding that characters can be expressed not just through dialogue, but through physicality and tone.

### Key Activities:

- Character Walks: Participants choose or are assigned characters (e.g., a lion, a robot, a giant) and explore how those characters move and sound.
- Sound and Movement Game: Use simple sounds and motions to represent objects, animals, or characters.
- Improvised Scenes: Participants pair up and create short improvisational scenes, focusing on physicality and vocal expression rather than words.
- Group Reflection: Discussing how movement and voice shape characters, and how participants felt while embodying different personas.

**Takeaway:** Deeper understanding of how characters are built through physical and vocal expression.

## DAY 3 "TELLING STORIES THROUGH IMPROVISATION"

**Focus:** Developing storytelling skills and improvisational techniques. Participants will build scenes and stories based on group collaboration.

### **Key Activities:**

- Group Story Creation: Collaboratively creating a story one sentence at a time.
- Character Pairing: Pairing up participants to create short, improvised scenes based on different themes (e.g., a mystery, a friendship, an adventure).
- Emotion Through Story: Using physical and vocal expressions to heighten the emotional impact of a story.
- Improvisational Games: Such as "Yes and ..."

**Takeaway:** Strengthening teamwork and creativity through collaborative storytelling and improvisation.

## DAY 4 “PHYSICAL THEATER AND OBJECT TRANSFORMATION”

**Focus:** Developing the ability to tell stories without words, using physical movement and objects. This session encourages participants to explore their bodies and environment as tools for storytelling.

### **Key Activities:**

**Object Transformation:** Participants are given simple objects (a stick, a scarf, a ball) and must transform them into something else using only their body and imagination (e.g., a scarf becomes a snake, a ball becomes a bouncing creature).

- **Physical Storytelling:** In groups, participants use physical movement to act out a pre-chosen story (e.g., a trip to the moon, a magical garden).
- **Slow Motion Scene:** Acting out a scene in slow motion, focusing on exaggerated, clear body movements and emotions.
- **Reflection:** Discussing how physicality and object manipulation can tell stories and how it felt to "speak" without words.

**Takeaway:** Confidence in non-verbal communication and exploring the physical aspect of storytelling.

# DAY 5 "CREATING A GROUP PERFORMANCE: COLLABORATION AND CONNECTION"

**Focus:** Putting together a collaborative performance.

Participants will build upon the skills developed in previous sessions to create a short performance as a group.

## **Key Activities:**

- Brainstorming & Conceptualizing: As a group, decide on a simple story or theme (e.g., a journey through the forest, a magical treasure hunt).
- Scene Creation: Break into small groups to work on different scenes of the larger performance. Incorporate the use of movement, sound, and character.
- Rehearsal: Practice individual scenes and transitions, helping each other refine physicality, timing, and storytelling.
- Sharing: Each group presents their scene to the rest of the group, providing constructive feedback and support.

**Takeaway:** Understanding the collaborative process and the importance of working together to create a shared vision.

## DAY 6: "FINAL PERFORMANCE AND CELEBRATION"

**Focus:** Rehearsing and presenting the final group performance. The final session celebrates the progress made over the series.

### Key Activities:

- Full Rehearsal: Rehearse the entire performance together, paying attention to transitions, timing, and group dynamics.
- Final Performance: Present the performance to a small audience (friends, family, other participants, or an open-house event).
- Celebration: After the performance, have a group celebration, providing praise for everyone's participation and effort.
- Reflection and Closing: Reflect on the experience, with each participant sharing their favorite moment from the series and how they grew during the journey.

**Takeaway:** A sense of accomplishment, confidence, and the joy of creating together.

## MORE ABOUT...

### NAME & GESTURE GAME (15 MINUTES)

**Objective:** To build comfort, establish connections, and promote self-expression. Everyone stands in a circle, each participant says their name and makes a unique gesture that represents something about them (e.g., a thumbs-up, spinning, clapping). The rest of the group repeats the name and gesture, helping everyone get familiar with each other. Encourage everyone to feel proud of their gesture, no matter how simple or complex.

### EMOTION MOVEMENT

**Objective:** To express emotions through the body, helping participants connect to different feelings.

Call out different emotions (e.g., happy, sad, angry, surprised, scared) and ask participants to move in a way that represents that emotion. For example, “How does sadness move? How does joy move?”. Encourage freedom of movement and creativity. If comfortable, discuss how the movement felt and what it represents.

“Yes, And...”

Objective: To build on each other’s ideas and stay in the moment.

How to Play: Two participants start a scene. The first person says something, and the second person must reply starting with “Yes, and...” and add to the story.

**Example:** Person 1: “I just found a treasure chest in the middle of the desert!”

Person 2: “Yes, and inside the chest, there are glowing jewels!”

This keeps the scene moving forward, and the “Yes, and...” rule makes sure everyone stays open to ideas.

# MENTOR CONSIDERATIONS:

Your role as a mentor is to provide a safe, supportive, and creative space for participants to express themselves freely. You're not just teaching them theater, but also helping them build confidence, foster relationships, and connect with their own creativity. Empathy, patience, flexibility, and active listening are key components of an effective mentoring approach.

Remember to:

**1. Foster a Positive, Inclusive Environment: Set the Tone Early:** From the beginning, establish an atmosphere of respect and inclusion. Emphasize that there is no "right" or "wrong" in creativity. Every contribution is valuable. Use Affirmative Language: Replace words like "mistake" or "wrong" with more positive language like "explore" or "try something new."

**2. Focus on Individual Needs and Abilities: Know Your Participants:** Take time to understand the unique strengths and challenges of each participant. Some may be verbal, others non-verbal; some may thrive with physical expression, while others may need more time to process. Personalized Adjustments: Adapt activities based on individual needs. For example, if an activity requires verbal participation but a participant is non-verbal, allow them to communicate through gestures, drawing, or using props.

**3. Create a Safe Space for Expression: Encourage Open Expression:** Give participants the freedom to express themselves without fear of judgment. Reassure them that their contributions are valid and appreciated, no matter how small. Try to understand that some participants may feel more comfortable expressing themselves through movement, gestures, or art, rather than words. Incorporate these modes of expression into the workshop.

**4. Use Positive Reinforcement and Redirection:** Constantly remind the group of how far they've come. Point out specific moments where progress was made, whether it's in confidence, creativity, or collaboration. Redirect Gently: If someone becomes disengaged or distracted, redirect them back into the activity in a gentle and supportive manner. Use humor or a lighthearted approach to re-engage them.

**5. Create a Sense of Community and Belonging:** Encourage a sense of belonging in the group. As everyone engages, create a space where people know they are valued, no matter their abilities. Celebrate milestones together. Whether it's after completing a difficult activity or just at the end of the session, have a group "celebration" moment (like a cheer, high-five, or a group photo). Encourage Emotional Expression: Some participants may have difficulty expressing emotions verbally. Support their emotional growth through activities that let them express feelings safely, such as through movement, art, or shared reflection.