



THEATRICAL WORKSHOP:

PLAY WITH THE VOICE!



INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

Play with the Voice!" is a dynamic, full-day theatre workshop that focuses on vocal exploration as a creative and expressive tool. It's designed to help participants unlock the full range of their voice through play, movement, and performance exercises. Whether you're an actor, a student, a performer, or just curious, this workshop invites you to experiment, take risks, and connect with your own voice in new and fun ways.

Why Voice?

The human voice is one of the most powerful and personal instruments we have. It carries not only words but feelings, memories, and identity. For individuals with intellectual disabilities, voicework can offer:

- A safe way to express emotions and needs
- A tool for connection and storytelling
- A sense of empowerment and creative control
- Opportunities for non-verbal or semi-verbal expression

In theater, the voice is not limited to speech. It includes breath, sound, rhythm, volume, silence, and song. This opens the door to full participation, no matter one's verbal ability.

Objectives

- Explore and enhance the use of the voice as a tool for expression.
- Encourage autonomy, self-confidence, and group listening.
- Improve verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Stimulate creativity through theatrical play.

WORKSHOP TITLE

PLAY WITH THE VOICE!

DURATION

7 HOURS WITH A LUNCH BREAK.

FOCUS

VOCAL EXPLORATION, EXPRESSION, CHARACTER WORK, AND CONFIDENCE.

TARGET GROUP

ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES 8-20 (FLEXIBLE)

MENTOR ROLE:

THE MENTOR IS THE HEART AND GUIDE OF THE WORKSHOP EXPERIENCE. MORE THAN JUST A TEACHER, THEY ARE A FACILITATOR OF EXPRESSION, A BUILDER OF TRUST, AND A COMPANION IN CREATIVITY.

TIPS FOR A GREAT MENTOR:

- ✓ BE PATIENT.
- ✓ STAY PLAYFUL.
- ✓ LET GO OF CONTROL—FOLLOW THE GROUP'S ENERGY.
- ✓ KNOW THAT VOICE WORK CAN BE VULNERABLE—HONOR THAT.
- ✓ LAUGH. A LOT.

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP BEGINS

REVIEW THE SESSION PLAN AND ADAPT TO THE GROUP'S ENERGY AND ABILITIES. PREPARE THE SPACE: WARM, SAFE, OPEN, WITH NO OBSTACLES. SET UP ANY MATERIALS: PROPS, SOUND TOOLS, VISUAL AIDS. GREET PARTICIPANTS INDIVIDUALLY, USING NAMES AND SMILES TO BUILD CONNECTION.

CORE VALUES

How is the day structured?

The workshop is divided into 7 segments, each building on the last:

1. Welcome & Warm-Up (9:30 AM – 10:00 AM)

We start by creating a safe and playful space. Participants introduce themselves and set personal intentions for the day. Light movement and breathing exercises begin to warm up the body and voice.

2. Body & Breath Activation (10:00 AM – 10:30 AM)

Participants engage in exercises to connect the voice with the breath and body. This includes stretching, humming, and grounding techniques to prepare for vocal work.

3. Vocal Warm-Ups & Games (10:30 AM – 11:15 AM)

Fun and engaging games like “Pass the Sound” help participants explore pitch, tempo, volume, and rhythm in a playful, low-pressure way. Group connection is emphasized.

4. Voice & Emotion (11:15 AM – 11:45 AM)

Participants begin to connect the voice to feelings through emotional expression. Using simple phrases, they experiment with how vocal tone and energy can transform meaning.

5. Character Voice Lab (12:00 PM – 1:00 PM)

After a break, we dive into voice for performance. Participants explore different character voices by changing pitch, resonance, tempo, and accents. These skills are applied to text or improvised scenes.

6. Text & Ensemble Sound Work (1:45 PM – 3:15 PM)

Using poetic or theatrical text, participants explore vocal delivery through emotion, subtext, and vocal layering. Group soundscapes help build ensemble awareness and vocal imagination.

7. Final Sharing & Reflection (3:30 PM – 4:30 PM)

The workshop ends with an informal sharing of vocal moments or short performances, followed by reflection on what was learned, enjoyed, or discovered.



STRUCTURE OF SESSION

09:00 AM Welcome and Warm-up

- Registration, name tags
- Informal introductions

Set intentions: “What do you want to discover about your voice today?”

It is recommended to start with a welcome circle and continue with the Conscious breathing exercises and Gentle body activation and movement.

10:00 AM – Body & Breath Activation

Goal: Prepare the voice by awakening the body and breath.

- Full-body shakeout
- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Spine rolls and jaw release
- Gentle humming and sighs

Vocal Games (30 min)

- Exploring vocal sounds (pitch, volume, rhythm)
- Echo and repetition games (e.g. “Pass the Sound”)
- Using the voice to express emotions (e.g. “happy voice,” “sad voice”)

11:15 AM – Voice & Emotion

Goal: Use voice to express emotion authentically.

- “Emotional rollercoaster” lines (e.g., say “I don’t know” with sadness, joy, fear)
- Tempo & pitch shift games
- Exploring volume and silence
- Partner mirror exercise: match each other's vocal emotion



11:45 AM – Break (15 mins)

12:00 PM – Character Voice Lab

Goal: Discover and develop unique voices for characters.

- Vocal transformations (age, accent, animal-inspired)
- Use of physicality to affect voice
- Scene or monologue exploration in new voices
- Group feedback and reflection.

1:00 PM – Lunch Break (45 mins)

1:45 PM – Text & Subtext

Goal: Play with meaning through vocal delivery.

- Read short texts (poems, monologues, phrases) with different emotive energies (whisper, shout, sing) and Contexts (e.g., say “I’m fine” after winning vs. after a breakup).

2:30 PM – Vocal Soundscapes & Ensemble Work

Goal: Build vocal confidence and ensemble rhythm.

- Group creates a “sound story” using only voice (e.g., jungle, storm, city)
- Ensemble harmony and rhythm exercises
- Group storytelling with layered voices

3:15 PM – Break (15 mins)

3:30 PM – Final Exploration & Mini Showcase

Goal: Celebrate learning, share creative outcomes.

- Participants choose a favorite exercise or short piece to perform vocally
- Optional “duet” or ensemble share
- Group affirmation circle: What did you discover today?

4:30 PM – Wrap-Up & Reflection

- Reflective journaling or sharing circle you can use feedback cards or group comments
- Thank yours, photos, and goodbyes

Closing Ritual (15 min)

Final circle: free or guided sharing (“What voice did I discover today?”). It’s possible to do a vocal relaxation with soft sounds or silence and conclude with a song or nursery rhyme to end the session.

Materials need

Sound objects (bells, drums, maracas)
Illustrated books, evocative images
Toy microphone to celebrate each voice
Recorder for playback (if welcomed by participants)

Methodological Notes

It’s important to focus on empowering abilities, not correcting limitations. Use clear, simple language and respect each participant’s pace and comfort.

Remember to use positive reinforcement and celebrate playfulness.

Recommended Staff

One theater facilitator with experience in disability work one support educator and optional volunteers for individual attention and inclusion.



**IN OUR WORKSHOP, THE VOICE IS LIKE A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT —
AND JUST LIKE MUSIC, WE CAN CHANGE THE WAY IT SOUNDS USING
THREE FUN TOOLS:**

Vocal Circle / Sound Bath

Group improvisation using harmony, layering, and vocal intuition.

How it works: One person starts a simple sound or note (e.g., "Ah" on a steady pitch). One by one, others add layers — a harmony, a rhythm, a hum, a percussive syllable. Build a spontaneous soundscape that rises and falls.

The facilitator can signal when to add or drop out sounds

Heartbeat Chant

Purpose: Connect breath, rhythm, and group energy.

How it works: Start by patting your chest or thigh in a slow, steady heartbeat rhythm. Add a chant, like:

“Breathe in... Breathe out... Speak true... Speak loud...” Emphasize rhythm and breath working together. Optionally build harmony by assigning different lines to different voice groups.

Pitch – *How high or low your voice is*

- A **high pitch** sounds like a bird or a whistle
(Try saying “Wheee!” in a squeaky voice)
- A **low pitch** sounds like a bear or a big drum
(Try saying “Boom” in a deep voice)

Activity: Make a sound and move your hand up for high pitch, down for low pitch. Try saying your name with a high voice... now with a low one!



“Pass the Sound” is a classic and versatile vocal exercise used in theatrical voice workshops to promote listening, ensemble awareness, spontaneity, and vocal play. How it works: Gather everyone in a circle and explain: “We’re going to pass a sound around the circle. The goal is to stay connected, react in the moment, and have fun.” The facilitator starts by turning to the person next to them and making a simple, nonverbal sound (e.g., “Boo!”, “Zah!”, “Mmm!”) that person immediately repeats the sound and passes it to the next, and so on around the circle. After one round, let the next person invent a new sound to pass. Keep going until everyone has created and passed a unique sound. Introduce Gesture add a physical gesture with each sound and the next person copies both the sound and the gesture before passing it on or creating a new one.

“Happy voice,” “Sad voice,” and more

One of the most engaging ways to connect participants to their voice is by exploring how feelings can change the sound of what we say. This activity uses simple emotional prompts to help participants discover how their voice can express emotion, even without words. You can invite participants to say the same word (like “hello” or “my name is...”) in different emotional voices: Happy voice: Light, fast, maybe higher in pitch. Add a smile! “Hello!” Sad voice: Slower, softer, maybe with a sigh or downward tone. Angry voice: Louder, sharper, more forceful. Shy voice: Very quiet, maybe whispered or with hesitation. Excited voice: Fast, bubbly, full of energy.

“Humpty Dumpty” is a classic nursery rhyme that’s full of rhythm, character, and drama—perfect for a vocal exploration activity in a theatrical workshop. Below is a detailed breakdown of how to use “Humpty Dumpty” in your “Play with the Voice!” session.

Rhyme Text:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king’s horses and all the king’s men
Couldn’t put Humpty together again.



Speak it Clearly (Baseline)

Recite slowly with proper enunciation, clap or tap to the natural rhythm and explore where breath naturally falls

Ask: "What happens if you slow it down like a dramatic speech?"

Play with Emotion

Performing it in Terrified (afraid of falling), Gleeful (loves the drama), Depressed (tragedy of the fall), Confused (doesn't understand what happened), Heroic (as if it's an epic battle)
Encourage exaggeration! Use the voice to heighten emotional contrast.

Change Tempo & Volume:

- Whisper the entire rhyme
- Shout it like a town crier
- Say it robotically (equal beats)
- Rap it with a beat
- Sing it with a made-up melody

Character Voices:

each participant performs the rhyme as:

- A royal guard
- A small child
- An elderly professor
- A villain
- A news reporter
- A Shakespearean actor

