

Peter Rowan's Warm-Ups And Techniques To Be Used With Children And Adolescents

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I asked for materials on psychodrama with children in March 2002 and July 2001 on the psychodrama list serve (grouptalk) and also offered a summarization of the responses I had received through March. Subsequently, at the suggestion of another grouptalk participant, I contacted Peter Rowan, Dean and Associate Professor, Expressive Therapy Program, Lesley College Graduate School. He had taught at a course at for a number of years on action methods with children and adolescents and was quite willing to share his ideas. I have updated his list of warm-ups. I am pleased to offer it with Peter's endorsement.

Peter noted that his students occasionally would ask for more specifics about using these ideas. He would decline to offer more details because he wanted to encourage his students to be created. He acknowledged some of his references (as listed at the end of this document) may list more details.

The purpose of this article is to provide the beginning student a reference for using warm-ups with groups. The article is based on the stages of group development model created by Gene Stanford and Albert E. Roark (1974). Some warm-ups are useful at more than one stage of group development.

Stages I and II (Beginning and Norm Development)

Balloon Play: (a) Individual; (b) Groups; (c) Collective Groups (Balloon = Problem)

Become Someone Else in the Group and Introduce Yourself – Verbally / Non-verbally

Become Your Hero: (a) Introduce yourself to the group; (b) Interact with others

Disco

Create a Band (Trio, etc.)

E. S. P. (being "IT")

Emotional Drawing

Fantasy Machine

Inner Circle – Outer Circle: Share with person you are facing – (a) a time when you were happy; (b) a thing you really like to do; (c) the kinds of people that annoy you

Move an Object too Big for: one person, two persons, etc.

Movement Through Various Environments

Name: (a) who were you named after; (b) How do you feel about your name; (c) How would you like to be called?

T.V. Enactment

T.V. News Interviews: Ask people to interview each other as if they were doing it for a T.V. audience so the audience could get to know the person being interviewed

Pass the Psychodramatic Object

Share a Favorite Place

Stages I through III (Beginning, Norm Development, Conflict)

Action Sociogram (a) Choose the person you know best; (b) Choose the person you would like to know; (c) Choose the person you would like to share a secret with

Become Your Favorite Animal: (a) Living in the forest; (b) Natural calamity (e.g. Bambi); (c) Hunters come to the forest

Charades

Create Using Other Members of the Group: (a) Letters of alphabet; (b) Numbers; (c) Geometric shapes

Spectrogram: (a) Individual position self; (b) Group by consensus position; (c) Individual position other group members; (d) Future projection (Use movement, sculpting in a certain direction, etc.)

Entering or Leaving Fantasies

Stage I through VII (Beginning, Norm Development, Conflict, Transition, Production, Affection, and Actualization)

Milling: (a) Eye contact; (b) Body parts contact

Mirroring

Self-Presentation: (a) By self, using empty chair; (b) By best friend; (c) By parent or sibling; (d) By favorite toy from childhood; (e) By another group member

Empty Chair

Magic Shop: (a) Run by leader (b) Run by individual group member

Spontaneous Role Play

Social Atom of Body: (a) Pictures of body parts; (b) Draw body parts; (c) Body Tracing

Sociograms

Technique of Deliberate Distortion

Using Time of Year: (a) Independence day; (b) Thanksgiving; (c) Valentine's Day; Season of the Year

Write a Letter

Stages II (Norm Development)

Role Reversal and Introduction

Back-to-Back

Blocks: (a) Pair up; (b) What is there about you that will prevent you from getting to know the other person

Find the Person or Partner: (a) By saying name; (b) By identifying hands

Dance: (a) Hand dance; (b) Elbow dance

Play

One Word Communication (with Observer)

Stages II and III (Norm Development and Conflict)

Cocktail Party: (a) Be selling something or trying to communicate a message

Communication: (a) Back-to-back; (b) Gibberish

Killer

Troll Bridge

Tug-of-War

Role Drawing

Puppets: (a) Chalk puppets

Saying Name: (a) As your (angry, happy) parent; (b) As a teacher; (c) As your spouse; (d) As your lover

Scribble: (a) People in pairs; (b) Individual identifying parts of scribble

Tag: (a) Throwing ball; (b) By hand; (c) Tagging with specific part of anatomy; (d) Safety by touching someone else; (e) Safety by hugging someone else

Stage III (Conflict)

Bataca Fights

Become Your Favorite Villain

Clock: (a) Group creates a circle; (b) People locate themselves at their favorite hour of the day; (c) Can enact the activity that makes this hour their favorite

Escalation of Emotion (let group pick emotion)

Fairy Tale Enactment

Interact with the Dummy (Cushion, etc.): (a) Have the individual see dummy as a person they are angry with; (b) Have them beat dummy up; (c) Have another member of group voice

person being beaten

From Here to There: (a) As a 5 yr. old; (b) Like it was Christmas morning; (c) Like you were bringing your report card home

Harold and the Purple Crayon

Throw the Ball: Ask a question

Yes-No Chorus

Closed Circle

Frustration Test

Group Mural

Pinching Game

Stage III through IV (Conflict and Transition)

Pot Party

Structured Role Playing: (a) Employment interview; (b) Teacher/child; (c) Parent/teacher; (d) Therapist/parent

(Importance of polling group)

Trust Walk: (a) One to one – any way – individual chooses to lead; (b) Behind, holding onto shoulders of leader; (c) Combine pairs, changing leaders; (d) Have individual identify objects, etc.

Matriosha (“Matryoshka”) (Russian Nesting Doll)

Stage IV (Transition)

Introduce Another Group Member to Group, Stressing Individual’s Positives

Group Social Atom

Group Story

Honorary Degree

Psychodramatic Wishing Well

Sculpting Other Person: (a) Face; (b) Body

Self-Presentation: (a) From object in pocket

Tap-Out

Rag Doll

Stage IV and V (Transition and Production)

Coat of Arms

Family Sculpture/Tableau

Form a Club: (a) Name; (b) Goals; (c) By-laws; (d) Recruit other members

Lifeline: Draw a line on a piece of paper (6-8 inches); (b) Divide line into 4 sections to represent the major periods of your life; (c) Write one work in each section that best describes that period of your life; (d) Share paper with partner or group

Guided Fantasy: (a) Tree in forest; (b) Trip to museum (c) Relaxing muscle groups and finding a safe place inside body

Help Me/Help Me

Massage: Dyadic or Triadic

Sharing Warm-Up to Coming to Group: (a) Verbally; (b) Action

Spontaneity Test

“Wanted” Poster

Action Lifeline (Chronological Progression): (a) Of a specific individual; (b) Of a mythical individual; (c) Of a group

Stages IV to VII (Transition, Production, Affection, and Actualization)

Talk to a Photograph of Yourself at Some Time

Change in Life: Share with a partner in what area you have changed the most in the past five years

Come into Group and Locate Self

Dynamics of a Family Warm Up: Optimal amount of comfort with each person touching in physical contact with every other person – nonverbal

Family Warm-Up: Each individual optimally comfortable but maintaining physical contact with each other

Paper Bag Collage

Self Portraits: (a) Share with individual or group; (b) Leave and see if group can identify individual; (c) Hand tracing

Social Atom: (a) Primary or Family; (b) Psychological; (c) Collective

Ego Building

Stages V and VI (Production and Affection)

Groupings: (a) Have group mill about, stressing no talking; (b) Inform large group that they are to break up into groups of 4 or 5 members, still no talking ; (c) They are all to mill about until they feel they are in the group they are maximally comfortable with; (d) Go meet with small group and share experience; (e) Come back and share with large group

Behind the Back

Stage VI (Affection)

“I Am” Posters

One-Downmanship

Positive List of Attributes: Make a list of five things you or other people like about you

Judgement or After Death

Cool-Downs

“Bad” Word Contests

Door Slamming

Mad Dance

Noise Contests

Pillow Fights

Yelling Contests

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For additional information I would recommend the journal *The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training and Role Training*, the official journal of the American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama.