

Using Drama and Action Methods

Drama and action methods are effective means of working with young people and very often succeed where other approaches fail.

Three things to remember when using drama:

- There is no wrong and no right. Instead think of it as a sharing of perspectives and opinions.
- Drama and action methods often give young people a voice, a chance to articulate thoughts and feelings in a place where they feel challenged but not interrogated.
- Sometimes it's not helpful to use the term drama. It has different connotations for different people and while acting is part of what we do, it's not all that is involved.

These are drama and action methods that you can use in more than one session:

Games

There is a Games Glossary at the end of this chapter to help you start, end and punctuate your sessions. Games serve a variety of purposes such as giving you information about the group, energising the group when it is becoming lethargic, team building and helping to warm the group up or ending the session to name a few. They are so useful, in fact they are integral to the Flower 125 Health Programme!

Frozen Pictures

(also called Freeze Frames, Sculpting or Tableaux)

A frozen picture is the cell of drama. It has three main uses:

- You can build on it to create a scene or even a whole play.
- It can be used as a warm-up.
- It gives a group the chance to say a great deal while not uttering a word. Even the shyest people can feel comfortable participating.



Facilitating a Frozen Picture

1. Divide the group into smaller groups.
2. Give each group a title and explain that they are going to create a frozen picture of the title, much as a tabloid newspaper might. Remind the group that there is no movement nor speech and that each person has a specific role of their choosing. If it's the first time with a group you may want to give them titles such as 'Fans Go Wild at Pop Concert' or 'The Winning Goal' as these touch upon topics that young people respond to quite readily.
3. Once the groups have created their pictures, have them show their pictures and ask the other group or groups what they think the title is. Encourage the group to come up with as many possibilities as they can. The group who is showing will often shake their heads or nod to indicate how 'right' the guess is.

This is an opportunity to remind everyone that opinions cannot be wrong and even if the guess is not correct, hearing different suggestions gives the group a chance to know what they look like to others - it's not always what we think!

The Three-Picture Scene

Frozen Pictures can be used to help young people think about the build up to a conflict and the consequences of it. We have found it especially useful in the alcohol session but it may be applied to any of the sessions in the programme. It has one main message - Nothing just 'happens'. There's a build up to the problem and consequences of it.

1. Divide the groups into smaller groups with no more than 5 in one group.
2. Ask them to create a frozen picture with at least one person in the group having a problem concerning the central topic.



3. Ask one group to show their picture to the rest of the group, asking about the thoughts and feelings of the characters in the picture. Ask the group to guess what they think the problem is, what the nature of the relationships is between the characters and also where they think the picture is set.
4. Once all of the groups have shown their pictures but - most importantly! - not explained them to the others, ask them to go back into the same groups and create the picture that happened before the one they have already created and the picture that would be likely to follow.
5. Ask the groups to show their three picture scenes discussing each in the context of a before, middle and after.

Stop! Think!

The main objective of this exercise is to demonstrate how people talk about acting on impulse to their own detriment. If they can understand what leads up to an impulsive action, perhaps they can alter or arrest it.

1. After the group has shown their scene, ask them to show it again.
2. During the second showing of the scene any audience member can shout "Stop, think _____!" (the name of the character).
3. The action stops and the character who has been chosen then starts speaking aloud their thoughts until the audience member is satisfied and says "carry on".

This allows the audience to get an inside view of that character's thoughts and feelings and often explains why a character is behaving in a certain way. It enriches the actor's performance and gives them a more clear idea of why they are doing what they are doing.



Carousel

This exercise has two main objectives:

- To provide inspiration for frozen pictures rooted in real life experiences
- To allow each person in the group to have a chance to speak and to listen

1. Create two circles of chairs, one inside facing out and the other outside facing in. (You will need even numbers of people for this exercise - use a facilitator if you are one short).
2. Suggest a topic to talk about e.g. alcohol.
3. The person in the inner circle tells their partner their story for 1 minute-partner listens. One facilitator keeps time.
4. Partner then tells the story back that they have just heard.
5. The outer circle then moves one chair to the left and the people on the outside tell their story to the people on the inside, they listen and then tell that story back again.
6. The group faces the flip chart and calls out headlines that sum up the stories that they have heard. The facilitator records the headlines.
7. The facilitator organises the whole group into smaller groups that will work together.
8. Instruct them that they have to choose a headline and turn it into a frozen picture-a few minutes will be needed to discuss this.



Sculpting Others

Sometimes it's useful to ask people to 'sculpt' a partner. This technique can help an individual share a perspective or idea with someone else. It can help with empathy as the person who is being sculpted is literally placed in the position of the sculptor. Sculpting also creates a three dimensional representation of an idea that can be considered from more than one angle.

There are three basic ways of sculpting:

1. Tell the person how you wish them to move into the sculpt.
2. Model how you would like them to move into the sculpt.
3. Move them gently into the sculpt.

