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Centre for Social Justice and Community Action

Collaborating in research for social justice

PERFORMING ETHICS:

Using participatory theatre to explore ethical issues in community-based participatory research

Sarah Banks and Frances Rifkin
with Heather Davidson, Claire Holmes and Niamh Moore

Centre for Social Justice and Community Action
Durham University, UK

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Photos: Lois Perry
Design: Carrie Gilroy, Designbyhpm, www.designbyhpm.co.uk

Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, School of Applied Social Sciences, Durham University, 29 Old Elvet, Durham, DH1 3HN, UK.

www.durham.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice
socialjustice@durham.ac.uk

CONTENTS

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 4

I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION 5

1. Background 5
   What are these materials? 5
   How can the materials be used? 5
   Why use theatre to explore ethical issues? 5

2. Introduction to Forum Theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed 6

3. The role of the facilitator and preparation 7
   The role of the Facilitator 7
   Preparation 7

II. POSSIBLE FORMAT FOR A SHORT SESSION OR WORKSHOP 9

4. Outline for a workshop 9

5. Notes on the role of the Facilitator during the workshop 10

6. Introductory session 11
   Exercise 1: Occupy the space 11

7. Introducing an ethical framework and agreeing ground rules 12
   An ethical framework: ethics and ethical issues in CBPR 12
   Creating ground rules 13

8. More exercises/games 14
   Exercise 2: One, two, three 14
   Exercise 3: Homage to Magritte 15
   Exercise 4: Soft hands 16
   Exercise 5: Follow the sound 17

9. Preparing and acting out scenarios using Forum Theatre 18
   Working on scenarios 18
   Using Forum Theatre to re-run scenarios 19

10. Ending the session 20
   Exercise 6: Occupy the space and debrief 20
   Exercise 7: Passing a hand squeeze 21

APPENDIX: EXAMPLE OF A SCENARIO 22

REFERENCES 23

OTHER RESOURCES 23

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These materials were developed from a series of workshops involving community and university-based researchers, young people and a theatre practitioner during 2013-14. They form part of a set of materials developed as a result of two projects on ethics in community-based participatory research (CBPR) funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK through the Connected Communities research programme. Other materials include ethical guidelines, case studies, films and podcasts, which can be found on the websites: **www.durham.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice/ethics_consultation** and **www.publicengagement.ac.uk/about/ethics**

The project was initiated and coordinated by Sarah Banks, Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, Durham University, working with Frances Rifkin, Utopia Arts, a long-established theatre practitioner in the Boal tradition. The exercises written up here draw on Frances's work with Augusto Boal, Brazilian theatre director, and her many years of work in Theatre of the Oppressed. The key community partner in this project was LGBT Youth North West, based in Manchester, with Claire Holmes and Heather Davidson taking a lead as co-facilitators. Niamh Moore, Manchester University supported the group and contributed to workshops.

We are very grateful to the participants at workshops held in Edinburgh (July 2013), Durham (November 2013), Manchester (December 2013) and Chicago (April 2014), who gave us valuable feedback. We are particularly grateful to the young people from LGBT Youth North West, who not only participated in a workshop, but agreed to be filmed: Sam Cairns, Cliodhna Devlin, Harriet Gibson, Hebe Phillips and Rachel Roantree. We also owe a huge debt of gratitude to Lois Perry, Manchester-based documentary film-maker, who filmed one of our workshops and made a short film to accompany these materials.

I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1. Background

What are these materials?

This booklet comprises guidance on how to work with a group of people to explore ethical challenges in collaborative research settings, using performance-based exercises. After a brief introduction to the approach (based on the work of popular theatre director, Augusto Boal), suggestions are given about:

- how to work with a group as a facilitator;
- how to introduce a range of exercises and games based on movement and conversation between people in a group;
- how to use the Forum Theatre method to explore, reflect on and open up possibilities for addressing specific ethical challenges in community-based participatory research (CBPR).

We have also made a short film (eight minutes) showing some of the exercises in use during a workshop. The film, *Forum Theatre: Participatory ethics through participatory theatre,* was produced by the Centre for Social Justice and Community Action (2014) and is available on the website: **www.durham.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice/ethics_consultation**

How can the materials be used?

These materials contain exercises suitable for use by groups of people involved in community-based participatory research (CBPR). The exercises are a means of encouraging and enabling people from community organisations, research organisations and others to explore together some of the ethical challenges that arise in research involving some degree of partnership or collaboration. They can be used in the following ways:

- as part of a workshop on ethics in CBPR, which might entail an introduction to ethics and ethical challenges in CBPR (using some of the other materials developed on this topic) followed by a session using participatory theatre;
- to plan a standalone session or sessions on exploring ethics in CBPR through participatory theatre.

Some of the text boxes in Part II can be used as hand outs, and the short film can be shown during the workshop, or to prepare a group for a workshop.

Why use theatre to explore ethical issues?

A group of us had already been involved in compiling a selection of written case studies and case examples about ethical issues in CBPR, with guidance on how to use them in learning, teaching and reflecting on ethics (see Banks and Armstrong, 2012).

However, we realised that discussion and analysis of cases tends to rely on group-based discussions, with participants examining reasons for action, weighing up consequences and developing arguments that justify a right course of action. While people discussing or analysing a written case study can understand and share the feelings and emotions of the people depicted to some extent, those discussing it are always on the "outside".

However, if a specific event and the associated relationships depicted in a case study are acted out, with participants representing different characters and groupings, then the possibility for feeling similar emotions and gaining wider understanding is enlarged, along with the potential for creating change. Participants can explore the emotions and habitual responses triggered by the situations. They experience, in the moment, the impact of elation, curiosity, power, embarrassment or sadness on the part of themselves or others. They experience, too, the capacity of theatre and performance to transcend particular situations. The work creates significance beyond the purely individual experience, through creative, collaborative working, which is unique to the group.

The ethical aspects of a situation can then be understood as embedded in the broader context, while embodied by the people in the scenario. This helps develop ethical awareness, enabling people to reframe and re-enact situations. They can experience how they might achieve different outcomes and link this to work for social change. People can also see and feel successes, achievements, humorous moments, ironies, injustices, oppressions and indignities that they may not have noticed or fully appreciated before.

Acting out a scenario also allows the possibility of thinking through and rehearsing how certain requirements of ethically conducted research (e.g. partnership agreements or consent forms) can be introduced and used in practice. As a university researcher said: "My University tells me to ask for informed consent, but nobody tells you how to do this with a group of young people, who have never been involved with research before."

2. Introduction to Forum Theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed

The exercises and methods outlined here are based on the Forum Theatre process developed by Brazilian director, Augusto Boal (1931-2009), as part of his theatre system known as "Theatre of the Oppressed" (Boal 2000; 2002). We only offer a very brief outline here (see Babbage, 2004, for an accessible introduction to the history, theory and practice of Boal's methods).

Box 1: What is Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theatre?

Theatre of the Oppressed focuses on using theatre in social and political contexts as a tool for promoting education and social change, drawing on both personal and group perspectives. For Boal, the term "oppressed" embodied the notion of resistance, rather than passivity or victimhood.

Forum Theatre involves performance of a scenario showing "an oppression" - a problematic or unjust use of power that is experienced as a difficulty or obstruction. The scenario focuses on a particular situation relevant to the group that allows the possibility to deal with, and reflect on, difficult problems. The actors may be professionals or, as is described here, participants in a workshop: people who are themselves familiar with the kinds of events and relationships depicted in the scene. Theatre makes "an image of reality", in what Boal designates "the aesthetic space". This allows groups to work freely and safely with "the reality of the image" and to extrapolate their learning back into reality.

In Forum Theatre, a scenario may be generated by participants in the workshop or performed to the workshop participants by others. Further scenes may then develop as a result. The aim of the work is creatively, and often entertainingly, to resolve, or review and re-frame, issues participants may not have previously analysed or expressed clearly. The structure needs to focus on a protagonist, a baffled but determined hero, "the oppressed". The hero does not solve the problem. The scenario raises the problems for the group to play with and explore. As Boal says, it is "a spectacle of a defeat". However, it is an image, not direct reality: it is an optimistic spectacle aimed at resolution and new discovery. It asks questions, it is a creative act.

The scene is played once through – it can be short (three minutes) or longer. It is then re-enacted. Members of the "audience", the group, become "spect-actors" (spectators and actors combined). They call out "stop", or clap once to signal that they would like to try another strategy. The facilitator encourages them, showing how to do it. It is crucial that their voices be heard. The person who calls "stop" then replaces the hero, or "oppressed", to explore a new approach. This encourages maximum participation. Boal coined the term "spect-actor" to refer to the fact that the audience (so often condemned to passivity in the theatre) can also become actors, both in the theatre and in the "real" world. They play a role in the performance as a "rehearsal for change" and also reflect on and learn from the experience: "The actor exists in each person".

Box 2: The basis of Forum Theatre in Theatre of the Oppressed

- The participants and audience become actors/spectators: *spect-actors.*
- The spect-actors take the stage in their own theatre.
- They learn to use theatre to make an image of reality to work with, in a safe space, enabling them to:
  - work creatively;
  - enjoy participation, talk and discussion;
  - break silence on important issues;
  - reflect on and explore times and places where it is difficult or even impossible to speak out;
  - rehearse change with a group and find creative ways to effect it, individually and/or collectively;
  - challenge power structures that keep people silent;
  - challenge automatic assumptions about the nature of society;
  - develop critical thinking;
  - challenge the way things are, the status quo.

3. The role of the facilitator and preparation

The role of the Facilitator

For the purpose of these workshops, as in all participatory theatre work, it is important that someone takes on the role of facilitating the group. Co-facilitation is also possible, but it is a good idea for one person to have overall responsibility for the coordination and safety of the group. In Boal's system, the person who facilitates is called "The Joker". The term "Joker" is used because of the different roles the Facilitator may have to play (like the Joker in pack of cards), such as: supporter, provocateur, interpreter or friend.

Box 3: Some key responsibilities of the Facilitator

- Offer, or work with the group to develop, a clear framework of aims and objectives appropriate to the work;
- Ensure ground rules and expectations are agreed at the start, including physical involvement and touching;
- Hold the boundaries of the group, ensuring it is both a safe space and open enough for creativity;
- Use the exercises to assist exchanges between all participants;
- Listen, watch and support participants;
- Be alert to the unexpected and new, and be able to use ideas emerging from the group;
- Balance the aims and objectives of the workshop with the needs of the group.

Preparation

Advance planning

It is important to think carefully in advance about what is required and how the workshop should be run. It may be planned by a group of people, or by a Facilitator coming from outside.

Box 4: Questions for the Facilitator to think about in advance

- **Who** are the participants? Clarify the make-up of the group (e.g. age, gender, abilities).
- **What** are their interests and needs, and what benefits will they gain? What are my interests and needs, and how will I benefit? Do we have the same or different interests, needs and benefits?
- **Why** am I doing it? Why might the participants be involved? Do we share objectives?
- **Where** will the workshop take place? Whose is the territory, both intellectually and in terms of workspace?
- **When** is this happening? If this workshop is part of an already existing research project, at what stage is the project? When is it taking place in the history of my work with the participants?
- **How** do I set a contract with participants, myself and any relevant institutions? Is there any conflict of interests? Is there transparency between the parties? What will achieve this?
- **How** do I run the sessions?

Adapted from Rifkin (2010, pp. 21-2)

Information given to participants in advance

It is important to let people know that the method involves people moving around a room, and doing exercises individually and in groups. Comfortable, loose fitting clothing is advised. Ask if anyone has any mobility or other issues they wish to let the Facilitator know about. All the exercises can be adapted to include people with a range of different abilities. However, for an inexperienced facilitator this would require some prior thought and planning, so that anyone who has difficulties walking, seeing or hearing, for example, is not excluded.

Room layout and materials

A large space is needed, in which people can walk around and work in small groups without disturbing each other.

- Ideally choose a large, clean room with enough chairs for the group, placed initially round the edges of the room.
- Keep the space flexible, so that chairs can be placed in small groups for some of the work and then moved again.
- Several tables at the sides can be useful for props, the Facilitator's papers and refreshments.
- Have at least one flipchart stand, flipchart paper, pens, bluetack/pins/tape or another method of sticking sheets of paper on walls/boards for participants to view.
- Provide writing paper and pens for participants to make their own notes.

On the flip chart at the start

It can be useful to have written on the flipchart in advance:

- Aims and objectives of the workshop.
- Start and end time, break times.
- Some draft ground rules, or ground rules as an agenda item.
- A summary of the ethical principles for CBPR.

II. POSSIBLE FORMAT FOR A SHORT SESSION OR WORKSHOP

4. Outline for a workshop

The workshop outlined here will last about three and a half hours. All the exercises can be used, or a selection can be made if less time is available. However, the workshop works best if it is a minimum of three hours, including a break of 15 minutes. For best use of time, and to create maximum opportunities for everyone to be heard and participate, the group size should be between six to 20 people. The ideal group size is 12-16.

The workshop includes a series of exercises, followed by work in small groups to develop and perform scenarios. Many more exercises, categorised into different types, can be found in Boal (2002). It is important to note that the exercises are not warm-ups as such. They are devices for developing communication and trust on an intuitive as well as a cognitive level, and for encouraging creativity and spontaneity by disrupting participants' automatic responses and habits.

Box 5: Outline programme for an afternoon workshop

12.30 Exercise 1: Occupy the space (10 minutes)

12.40 Introductions to each other and debriefing from Exercise 1 (20 minutes)

13.00 Introduce ethical framework and agree ground rules (20 minutes)

13.20 Exercise 2: One, two, three (10 minutes)

13.30 Exercise 3: Homage to Magritte (10 minutes)

13.40 Exercise 4: Soft hands (10 minutes)

13.50 Exercise 5: Follow the sound (10 minutes)

14.00 Break (15 minutes)

14.15 Working on scenarios (30 minutes)

14.45 Using Forum Theatre to re-run scenarios (45 minutes)

15.30 Occupy the space and debrief (25 minutes)

15.55 Hand squeeze (5 minutes)

16.00 Close

5. Notes on the role of the Facilitator during the workshop

During the workshop the Facilitator has to take on the general responsibilities described in Box 3, as well as giving clear instructions and encouraging participation in the exercises.

Box 6: How to facilitate the exercises

- It is best if the Facilitator does not join in the exercises, except to demonstrate. Demonstration is quicker and clearer than explanation.
- The ideas that emerge need to be stimulated by the Facilitator, who can ask questions and develop the exploratory process. However, the ideas emerging must be those of the group. This will help with creating equal exchange. Of course, the Facilitator can be honest about their own views, but this must be done as part of the group process, as part of a conversation, not presented as definitive.
- To get people to stand still, explain that the Facilitator will call out: "Freeze!" To move again: "Go!" This is not a rule, but monosyllables are clear and immediate in a large group situation.
- Make clear that the ground rule of "no talking" applies to all the exercises. The exercises work best without any discussion before or during them.
- There may be people in the group with visual, hearing or mobility challenges. The exercises can generally be adapted to fit individual needs, but the Facilitator will have to be alert to this. For example, making a sound in Exercise 1 with a touch on the arm or elbow (in addition to, or instead of, eye contact) works well for everyone, including people who cannot see. People who find moving difficult can sit on a chair, with other participants moving to and from them. The Facilitator can guide people who are unable to see.
- Avoid perfection! For example, if the Facilitator asks for sounds and some group members use words rather than sounds, encourage them anyway. They will have joined in and done something new.
- If group members seem nervous or shy, encourage them to go as far as possible. This is best done by sticking pleasantly to the form of the exercises: in the end it is clearer and focuses people's minds. People usually enjoy the work a lot after the first few minutes.

6. Introductory session

At the start, before any introductions, this exercise can be used to get people moving and then talking.

Exercise 1: Occupy the space (10 minutes, plus 20 minutes feedback/debrief)

Purpose

To encourage participants to: talk and get to know each other; get used to the space; see the space as a creative space by performing with each other; and begin to look together at the content of the workshop. This exercise offers the opportunity to talk about hopes and expectations. The final questions under stage 11 can be varied according to need.

The exercise

This exercise is shown in the film (1.15 minutes). The description below includes the words the Facilitator might use in quotation marks, to give an idea of how the Facilitator might give instructions. The wording can, of course, be varied.

1. "This exercise is called 'occupy the space'. It involves everyone walking around the room, using as much of the space as they can."
2. "Please walk round the room covering the space equally. No talking, please! Laughing is allowed. Walk with me, let's go walking!" Facilitator walks with them.
3. "Don't leave big gaps!" … "The way to do it is to look downwards so as to see the spaces and fill them" … "Fill the gaps! Look, there's one!"
4. Just encourage people to keep walking. Once they have got the hang of it, stop walking with them. There is no longer any need to look at the floor, as people will walk naturally in the space.
5. "Freeze!" Facilitator demonstrates the following and drops out when people have got into a flow: "Now, please walk a bit faster and catch each other's eye. Greet and contact each other. Greet and touch hands, slap palms, pat arms, tap shoulders. Say 'Hi!', 'Hey!' or 'Hello!' Plenty of noise, friendly. Go!"
6. "Freeze!" Demonstrate. "Now walk around, but this time, quickly look away from people, frown slightly, instead of smiling. Be a bit shifty, make dismissive sounds: 'Huh!', 'Ha!' or whatever comes into your mind. A flick on the elbow with it or a brush-off gesture! Go!"
7. "Freeze!" Divide the group in half: A and B. "Now I want you to walk round again. This time members of group A look at everyone, smile and greet; people in group B look away after a quick glance. Use 'Huh' or sounds you used before. Go!"
8. "Freeze! Now, swap round so that those who smiled, frown, and those who frowned, smile. Go!"
9. "Freeze! Now just walk round, greet each other warmly, by shaking hands, friendly gestures, hugs, names – use culturally varied greetings! Go!"
10. "Freeze! Now just choose a partner from near you. Take turns to tell each other your names, occupations/interests and a favourite food you have. Then share your expectations and hopes for the day. Remember your partner's information. You'll be introducing each other to the group. You have three minutes each. I'll time it for you. Go!"
11. Call the time after each three minutes. End the session by asking people to get chairs and sit in a circle.

Feedback and debrief

Introductions - Ask each person to introduce their partner to the group. If desired, the Facilitator can write on the flipchart, where all can see, the names, food, hopes, concerns and expectations for the work. This is a useful reference point for the later work, but be aware that recording the responses takes time.

Feedback from introductory exercise - Look at the issues emerging from the exercise and explore them. For example, discuss the change of atmosphere as greetings altered; and the change of mood as people joined in exercises and saw each other in different ways. How did it feel? Did relationships change? What was it like? Did you include all your ideas or expectations when talking at the end to your partners? Are there any more?

7. Introducing an ethical framework and agreeing ground rules

After the introductory exercises, people will have a feel for what the work is like and the Facilitator will also have an idea about what people want from the workshop and how easy or difficult they may find it.

An ethical framework: ethics and ethical issues in CBPR (20 minutes)

Introduce the subject matter of the workshop – ethics in CBPR. At the start, it is important to consider what we mean by 'ethics' and 'ethical issues', and also consider how the group session/workshop can itself be conducted ethically. The description of 'ethics' given in the ethical guidelines for CBPR is in Hand out 1. The second description is taken from the EasyRead version of the guidelines and is suitable for use with people with learning disabilities, children and others who appreciate plain language.

Hand out 1: What is ethics?

1. "Ethics is a topic that covers questions relating to what kinds of lives we should lead, what counts as a good society, what actions are right and wrong, what qualities of character we should develop and what responsibilities humans have for each other and the ecosystem. In the context of research, ethics as a subject area traditionally covers topics such as the overall harms and benefits of research, the rights of participants to information, privacy, anonymity, and the responsibilities of researchers to act with integrity."

Taken from: Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, Durham University and National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (2012a p. 6)

2. "Doing things in a right and fair way is called ethics. So a right way is ethical and a wrong way unethical. When people do research together, it must be done in a right and fair way, it must be ethical.

   This means looking at:
   - how researchers behave.
   - what harm or good does the research do?
   - the rights people have to information and privacy."

Taken from: Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, Durham University and National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (2012b, p. 6)

In conducting research, there is potential for abuse of trust, misuse of power, infringements of rights, disrespect and harm. The same applies in participatory theatre. We recommend that the ethical principles contained in the guidelines for CBPR are introduced to the group, with some discussion about what they mean in practice in the context of participatory theatre work as well as in community-based participatory research.

Hand out 2: Ethical principles for CBPR

1. *Mutual respect* – being respectful to each other, including listening to different perspectives.
2. *Equality and inclusion* – ensuring people with different backgrounds and skills are able to participate; challenging discriminatory and oppressive behaviour.
3. *Democratic participation* – sharing power and decision-making.
4. *Active learning* – ensuring an atmosphere is created so that people learn individually and from each other.
5. *Making a difference* – working towards positive change.
6. *Collective action* – working for common and complementary goals that promote social change and social justice.
7. *Personal integrity* – being honest, open to challenge, and working within the agreed ethical principles.

Summarised from: Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, Durham University and National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (2012a, p. 8)

Frances Rifkin has developed a specific ethical framework for participatory theatre work, which facilitators might find it useful to consult (Rifkin, 2010). However, to avoid confusion in CBPR workshops, we advise that participants are just introduced to the ethical principles for CBPR.

Creating ground rules

The facilitator should explain briefly the nature of participatory theatre (drawing on p. 6) and invite participants to think of, and agree, some ground rules for how they will work together. These ground rules are a way of putting the relevant ethical principles into practice in the workshop. If time is short, then the facilitator can suggest a set of ground rules, already written on a flipchart and ask participants to add more and expand on what is written. It may be useful to have some discussion of whether people are comfortable touching each other during the exercises, the fact that they can request not to be touched or they can choose to work in pairs with people with whom they feel comfortable.

Hand out 3: Example of ground rules

1. Listen to each other.
2. Challenge each other supportively (don't be rude, but feel free to disagree).
3. Use material you are comfortable with.
4. Check out that other people are OK with touching.
5. Confidentiality (don't repeat names of people, or details of situations that participants have asked to remain confidential, outside the group).
6. Negotiate any difficulties (no violence).
7. You can say "no".
8. Have a go!
9. Ask for help if you need it.
10. No talking when you are asked to be silent.
11. Be on time.
12. Switch phones off.

Adapted from Rifkin (2010, p. 26)

8. More exercises/games

Having agreed the ground rules, the chairs can be moved to the edges of the room and all or some of the following exercises/games can be used. The main purpose is to look at situations from new perspectives and for participants to discover more about their thoughts, feelings and ideas about possibilities for action (and consequences of inaction) in relation to the workshop aims.

Exercise 2: One, two, three (10 minutes)

Purpose

This exercise encourages participants to look at, and listen to, each other; and to enjoy the exchange. It stimulates people to try new ways of standing and moving and be aware of new feelings and perceptions of themselves and others that emerge. It focuses attention on the coordination of bodily movements and sounds, and collaboration with a partner. The exercise is premised on the fact that we all tend to stand and move in habitual ways. Simple sounds and movements change the body shape and reach out into the space physically, with humour and feeling. It can be difficult the first time, but good support and the notion that there's no such thing as getting it wrong ("it's only a game – there are no mistakes!") produce an accidental dialogue. Something surprising and unexpected emerges. Thinking is jolted out of its tracks.

The exercise

This exercise is on the film (2.00 minutes). It looks very informal, but a lot of focus is involved, and it is fun.

1. "This exercise involves working in pairs, counting and then making sounds and gestures in turn."
2. "Let me show you". Ask for a volunteer to demonstrate. "What happens is that we count up to three in turn and then start at one again. So I say 'one', then you say 'two', I say 'three' and you say 'one'."
3. "Please, no talking or discussion at all during this. We'll feed back afterwards. Giggling is fine."
4. "Please take a partner and call yourselves A and B. Stand facing each other with space around each pair."
5. "Looking at each other, in your pairs count: 'one, two, three' between you. No discussion." Clearly, the numbers alternate from A to B as they count.
6. "Practise to get a steady rhythm. Speak the numbers in sequence. Go no higher than three."
7. "Freeze! Please would A replace the number 'one' with a sound and gesture. The sound should be vocal like 'Hi!' or 'Ooh!' rather than a word or a click or whistle. The gesture should change the shape of the person: a hand-wave, a step, jumping on one leg. Teach B the sound and gesture you have chosen."
8. "There is no talk, just a quick improvisation. It's only a game – mistakes are not a problem!"
9. Number one is now replaced with a sound plus gesture, and B learns it. Both practice the sequence: sound plus gesture, two, three.
10. "Freeze! Please would B replace the number two with a sound plus gesture. Teach this to A, and then continue the sequence."
11. "Freeze! Please would A replace the number three with a different sound plus gesture, so that the number sequence is replaced by three different sounds plus gestures - a sort of conversation."
12. The Facilitator will see that different people work at different speeds on this, with different levels of completion. That's OK. Just encourage people.
13. "Practice your sequence. Perform to rest of group if you want to."
14. "If you go back to simple 'one, two, three' at this point, it has usually become easy."

Debrief

Ask for feedback. What was your experience of your partner? What did it remind you of in terms of other conversations and relationships? Look at issues of power, equality, feelings of taking part in a process. How did it feel to work together? How did this connect with the first exercise?

Exercise 3: Homage to Magritte, or When is a cup not a cup? (10 minutes)

This exercise can be omitted if time is short.

Purpose

This is an improvisation exercise designed to explore the capacity of theatre to transform objects and relationships in a creative space. It shows that what might look ordinary on the tea table, can become anything we want it to be in the theatre. This stimulates imagination and playfulness, brings the group together to exercise imagination, and helps to create the space where both cognitive and intuitive working can be opened up. It prepares the group to think laterally and inventively. The exercise is entertaining; good for group trust and communication; and helps to reduce self-consciousness.

The exercise

This exercise is on the film (2.42 minutes). This time, the instructions for the Facilitator are shorter and do not give the exact words a Facilitator might use.

1. This exercise involves people taking a cup and acting as if it is something else.
2. Place a cup or mug on the floor in the centre of the space.
3. Ask the group to form a circle.
4. Go into the centre of the circle, pick up the cup and demonstrate how a cup can become a hat (wear it), an ice cream (pretend to eat it) and so on.
5. Ask participants not to talk. But they can use a word or sounds to express the transformation of the cup into another object. “Woof woof!” would indicate a dog, for example. This is crucial in mixed ability groups.
6. Ask participants to take turns to have a go, one at a time, by walking into the centre of the circle and doing something with the cup. Be patient. Encourage people both to touch and not to touch the cup. It might be a snake, a fire or a kitten. It is how people handle or behave towards it that shows what it is.
7. Do the exercise with a chair or another object.

Debrief

Ask for feedback. How did it feel? Were you surprised? Relate it to the theme of the workshop: how often do things transform into something else, is this good or bad? Do all of you see things the same way? What might be the different viewpoints? Who between you has the power to change things? How much of this is shared?

Exercise 4: Soft hands (10 minutes)

Purpose

To explore power, trust and sensitivity to each other; and the tensions between support and control in relationships. This works by opening up the complexities of trust: for example, the differences between trust of self, others and institutions. It reveals the subtle variations of trusting and the exercise of power between person and person, including the need to recognise differences in the perceptions around trust between individuals and groups. It can open up a basis for analysing cognitively what has been intuited.

The exercise

The Facilitator should practice this and be ready to demonstrate it. It is not shown on the film.

1. This is an exercise done in pairs, and involves one person following the hand of another.
2. Ask participants to take partners and call themselves A and B. A should be the leader first.
3. Remind them: "No talking. Giggling is fine."
4. Ask A to extend one hand upwards, to their partner. Ask them to keep their hand relaxed and soft, extending their arm so they feel as if it is floating and gentle.
5. Ask B to place the palms of one hand lightly on the back of their partner's hand. Their hands should float like butterflies, maintaining light contact, but not exerting pressure.
6. Ask A to lead their partner around the room.
7. The Facilitator needs to watch carefully to see that each A guides their partner around the room, while the partner consents to follow the hand wherever it goes. Both hands float.
8. Remind A to look carefully to prevent collisions, and to ensure their follower is OK.
9. A should pay attention to the feelings of B, as experienced through their hand: are they nervous, confident or uncertain? A should lead accordingly, to create trust.
10. Ask participants to freeze and swap leaders.
11. The Facilitator can invite the people being led to close their eyes and follow. The leaders should pay good attention to the followers. Some people love closing their eyes, but it is not compulsory.
12. The Facilitator can support those with little sight in leading their partners. People who are immobile can sit in a chair opposite a partner and follow each other's hands from a seated position.

Debrief

Ask for feedback. What was the experience like for the leader and led? How did the hands feel? What was it like being leader? Being led? What other experiences does it remind you of? How much do you need to know in different situations? If you are involved in research, what do you need to know about the research relationship that you don't know? What assumptions are being made by different research partners?

Exercise 5: Follow the sound (10 minutes)

This exercise is not on the film. If there are people in the group who are immobile or who cannot hear, the exercise should be omitted or adapted.

Purpose

This complements the previous exercise. It creates questions about dependency and about the consequences of apparently unequal knowledge. What can be the roles of a leader and the led? What are their needs and responsibilities? What does it tell us about trust? This exercise challenges the emotions and the imagination in a safe space, and creates trust and communication.

The exercise

1. This is an exercise done in pairs, involving one person following a sound made by another.
2. Ask the group to find new partners and call themselves A and B.
3. Ask A to agree a guiding sound with B. It should be a sound based on the voice rather than mechanical like a click. It could be a hum or a laugh. It might be themed (e.g. a sound from the rainforest or from a journey) or just random. The sound is agreed in a short pair discussion. Then there should be no talking.
4. B should shut their eyes and follow the sounds made by A, who moves about the space calling to B, using the sound. B moves only when they can hear the sound.
5. Whatever happens, A should take great care in guiding B. A looks after B, making sure B does not bump into anyone or anything.
6. A may also challenge B, depending on their confidence in each other. A can become more elusive – making softer sounds, moving further away or even stopping the sounds while moving to a different place.
7. Swap roles.
8. People who cannot see may require guiding when they lead. For those who are immobile, or who cannot hear, repeat the soft hands exercise with a partner.

Debrief

Ask for feedback. How did it feel? What other experiences does it remind you of? If we apply what we have experienced to the research process, what might it tell us about the relationship between the various participants where knowledges are different and overlap the boundaries between our different spheres of existence?

9. Preparing and acting out scenarios using Forum Theatre

The next stage involves inviting participants to form small groups to prepare scenarios linked to ethical issues from their own experience. The number of sub-groups will be governed by time as well as the size of group. Working through the scenarios of five sub-groups is too much unless there is a whole day. Three sub-groups is probably the maximum.

Two scenarios are featured in the film. Looking at the film may help the Facilitator and/or the group see what kinds of situations may be chosen. For example, one scenario is about a University researcher presenting research data to community partners. The community partners feel undervalued and bored, and are threatening to leave. A summary of this scenario is given in the Appendix.

Working on scenarios (30 minutes)

Purpose

The purpose of this part of the workshop is to explore ideas and issues in action. The enacting of scenarios reveals issues and themes not easily put into words. For example, emotional, power and other relationships may be sensed but not rationalised verbally. They can profoundly determine outcomes. Implicit assumptions about power, expertise and contexts can be explored. The creative act of performing and inhabiting the situations enables critical reflection, enjoyment and shared understandings alongside recognition of differences.

The task

1. Break the group into sub-groups to tell stories about ethical issues they have encountered when they have been doing CBPR. Ask each person in the group to contribute a story if possible. If some participants have not been involved in CBPR, ask them to think of a story about ethical issues in another kind of research project, or in their work with a community organisation. This will usually be something that sticks in their minds as being unfair, or where someone was disrespectful. Or it may be an occasion when a difficult decision had to be made, when some people were harmed or upset. For example, Scenario 2 in the film (5.40 minutes) is about a group of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people working with a rather domineering artist to prepare for a parade.
2. Ask the groups to make brief notes about each story on a sheet of flipchart paper.
3. Ask groups to choose one story to work on. It should be a story that resonates with everyone, and in which there is a particular incident that can provide a focus. The chosen story has to be turned into a conversation or scene lasting three or four minutes.
4. The Facilitator asks each group to decide the details of their chosen story: Where does it take place? When? Who is there? What is the problem? What is being said? Why has the difficulty arisen? This will give clues as to the layout of the scene. Is there a table with someone exercising power behind it? Is the location a community centre with nowhere to sit? Does it centre around a flip chart with people looking at it in rows. Where are the exits? How many people are there and what positions do they hold, if any? Groups usually find this quite easy as they are usually very involved in the stories they have evoked.
5. Ask each group to make a still image of the key moment. This might involve a difficulty experienced, where people are a bit stumped, confused and are finding it hard to resolve and cannot find a way round it. Then they could add words and the moments before and after the key moment. For an example, see Scenario 2 in the film featuring the artist and the LGBT youth group.
6. The Hero of the scene is the person or people annoyed, troubled and trying to change what is happening (in Scenario 2, this is the young people). The scene poses the question about what the Hero should do.
7. Where the relationship is between professional and community researchers, or researchers and researched, then both sides of the debate may feel that they are the Heroes. This is fine. Explore the scene from both angles. It may be useful to remember the earlier exercises, *Soft hands* and *Follow the sound,* which involved partners working together.

8. Ask the groups to look at how issues of status, assumptions, power, understanding and personal beliefs manifest themselves.
9. The role of the Facilitator will involve both giving instructions to everyone at various points, and also touring around the small groups offering assistance in choosing a story, identifying a moment, and creating a scene.
10. The Facilitator should ensure that this session connects strongly with the aim of the workshop – for example, by encouraging people to choose scenarios where ethical issues are played out, and as far as possible scenarios relating to collaborative research.

Once the scenes are ready, then the whole group should be brought together to watch, comment on and engage in each other's scenarios.

Using Forum Theatre to re-run the scenarios (45 minutes)

Purpose

The aim of this session is to look at the issues and feelings in the scenes and encourage participants in each group to try different ways of dealing with them. This involves going into the scenes and changing them to see what happens if different tactics are tried, as recommended by the audience or spect-actors.

Forum Theatre

1. Create a performance space and a circle of chairs for the audience/spect-actors.
2. Ask each group in turn to play out their scenarios to members of the other groups. Assuming three groups, each group could have 15 minutes or so to show and work on their scenarios.
3. After a group has shown the scenario once through, ask them to play it again and ask members of other groups to say "stop!" or clap once to stop the scene. The person who says "stop!" should then take the place of the Hero, the person trying to change the situation. If people find intervention difficult, the Facilitator can stop the scene, ask questions and encourage people to try different answers by going into the scene and playing the Hero.
4. This process provokes a lot of discussion and intervention. It is important that the ideas should come from the participants. This varies very much from group to group and the Facilitator has to use their judgement about how to do it. Some groups are shy, others are irrepressible.
5. The role of the Facilitator is to extrapolate ideas and themes in collaboration with the group. This might range between jokey, "magical" or symbolic interventions and more mundane changes. A magical intervention might involve a sabre-toothed tiger, for example, which eats the obstacle-maker/oppressor. A mundane intervention might entail a practical re-arrangement of the layout of the furniture to change the power relations; or the re-positioning of the characters, or of the stage and its relationship with those watching. It might also be necessary to find out who is not there and who may be hidden as a source of power and decision-making. Should another character be brought in? Discussion is important, but is secondary to action and joining in.
6. The Facilitator makes sure that ideas and themes are recorded on flipchart sheets, where people can see them and add to or change them.

Debrief

Ask for general feedback about what people learnt from working on the scenarios. What did they learn about the nature of power and oppression? How easy was it to intervene in the scenarios as a spect-actor?

10. Ending the session

In order to close the session, here are two exercises for participants to debrief and evaluate the learning as a whole and say goodbye to each other.

Exercise 6: Occupy the space and debrief (25 minutes)

Purpose

This exercise offers participants a chance to reflect on what they have learnt from the workshop as a whole and how they might use the learning in the future. It enables people who have been acting in scenarios to distance themselves from the characters they played and defuse any emotions before they leave the workshop. It also gives valuable feedback to the Facilitator about what worked well, what people gained from the workshop and what might be improved in the future.

The exercise

1. This exercise starts by asking participants to return to the *Occupy the space* exercise they did at the start, and then asks them to go into pairs and discuss and record their learning.
2. Ask people to walk around the room, occupying the whole space, smiling at each other, for about half a minute.
3. Ask people to freeze, look nearby and find a partner (or form threes if there is an odd number of people) and sit down together.
4. The pairs/threes should then exchange impressions of the day. The Facilitator can write these questions on a flipchart to help people remember them:
   - What will I take away?
   - What will I leave behind?
   - What would I like to change?
   - What I would like to see next?
5. Ask pairs/threes to summarise the key points of their responses on flipchart sheets.
6. After 10 minutes, the Facilitator asks the groups to place their sheets on the floor in the centre of the room, so the whole group can walk around, read them and reflect together.
7. Ask participants to form a seated circle with the sheets in centre. Go round the circle and ask each person to say what they are going to take away from the day, what they will remember/value, and what they are going to leave behind.
8. Once most or all have had a go, encourage a discussion. Record all this on a flipchart if there is time. Summarise the key points and thank everyone for their participation.
9. Hand out individual evaluation sheets for participants to complete, if required. These are not essential, but they do allow individuals to comment honestly without others hearing, and may include comments on the venue.

Exercise 7: Passing a hand squeeze (5 minutes)

1. Ask everyone to stand up in a circle, close their eyes and hold hands.
2. The Facilitator explains they are going to pass a hand squeeze around the circle in a clockwise direction. The Facilitator starts by squeezing the hand of the person next to them. This person passes it on to the next person and so on.
3. After one or two rounds, the Facilitator can pass extra squeezes in different directions if desired, which usually results in giggles.
4. Stop the exercise after a few minutes and say goodbye to everyone.

APPENDIX: EXAMPLE OF A SCENARIO

The graph: Tensions in community-university research partnerships

(Scenario 1 in the film, 4.14 minutes)

Scene

The setting is a research meeting of academics and community partners. In the room there is a flipchart with a graph drawn on it. There are three chairs facing diagonally between the flipchart and audience.

Characters

1. ***Researcher –*** a research assistant employed by the University. She has just completed a literature review on the topic of the research project (debt in low-income households). She is very meticulous and enthusiastic.
2. ***Research Supervisor –*** a senior member of staff from the University, who is in overall charge of the project.
3. ***Community partner A –*** a volunteer from a local community organisation that works closely with people on low incomes, particularly in relation to debt.
4. ***Community partner B –*** also a volunteer, who is quite shy and does not say much.

Action

- The researcher is standing by the flipchart. The other three people are sitting on the chairs. The researcher points to the graph, explaining the relationship between levels of debt and income in detail.
- The supervisor points to her watch, struggling to catch the researcher's attention, mouthing that it is time to stop.
- The community partners look bored and a little disgruntled.
- Eventually the researcher says that it is time to stop. She is sorry that she seems to have over-run.
- The community partners immediately get up and go out of the room. They light up their cigarettes, shrug, sigh and say they feel out of their depth, the material the researcher presented is irrelevant, they think they should leave.
- Meanwhile the researcher and the supervisor are miming a conversation in which the supervisor says she thinks the community partners were a bit lost, and that she will go out and talk to them.
- The supervisor goes to the door and asks community partners how they are doing. A says the session isn't useful, it's not understandable, a waste of their time. They spent a long time travelling, and had to get child care. They think they should leave. The supervisor asks them to stay. She says their presentation is next, everyone is looking forward to hearing it, and what valuable work they do mentoring people in debt and organising campaigns. A goes on at length saying she doesn't think people will want to hear them after that presentation, that it's a waste of their time. B agrees.
- A and B leave the room.

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Additional ethics materials produced by the *Tackling ethical issues* group in the UK

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Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, Durham University and National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (2012b) *What is doing research together?* Bristol: NCCPE, **www.publicengagement.ac.uk/about/ethics**

Case studies of ethical issues from UK and across the world, films and podcasts relating to ethics in CBPR on these websites:
www.publicengagement.ac.uk/about/ethics
www.durham.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice/ethics_consultation

www.durham.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice

Centre for Social Justice and Community Action

The Centre for Social Justice and Community Action is a research centre at Durham University, made up of academic researchers from a number of departments and disciplines and community partners. Our aim is to promote and develop research, teaching, public/community engagement and staff development (both within and outside the university) around the broad theme of social justice in local and international settings, with a specific focus on participatory action research.

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