

Funky Llama Effect Toolkit

Training Workshop – Inclusive Movement and Drama Techniques in association with Active for Life and Far Flung Dance Theatre Company.

The Funky Llama Effect aims to increase the number of adults with learning disabilities benefiting from performing arts activities in the region and to sustain those opportunities beyond the life of Funky Llama. If you would like further effect training or more information please contact the Community Projects Producer sara.baldwin@theatroyal.com

The training is offered free of charge but there is a contractual agreement to ensure that you are establishing a regular performance activity with a group of adults with learning disabilities so that the ‘effect’ of the training is benefiting a wider group of adults. We also request that you / your service partake in the requested Funky Llama evaluation and ensure that your ‘Effect’ group are adequately supported to attend and perform /participate at Funky Llama events. **The Funky Llama Festival is Saturday 11th June 2016.**

The training demonstrated the possibilities of working inclusively with different abilities offering access levels within a session and creative ways to get everyone involved. This post-training document will act as a refresher from the training and offer you simple ideas and techniques that can be adapted to suit your group’s needs in everyday settings.

Space and preparation.

When leading a drama or dance based workshop it is important that you prepare your space to make a welcoming and accessible environment for your participants.

Things to think about:

- Eliminating any potential distractions presented in the space
- Hazards – chairs, spillages, type of floor

- Appropriate and accessible welcoming – music, lighting, room temperature.
- Be prepared and confident with the workshop
- Specific needs of the group – physical, medical – body and mood check-in at the start of a workshop is always a helpful indicator

Language

It is important to think about your use of language when delivering a workshop. Example of words you might find useful to use are:

Move- (rather than walk)"Move around the space"

Circle

Reach

Journey

Fold

Open

Close

Explore

Never say "if you can't do this... then just do something else!"

Always give everyone the same choice, with flexibility and exploration surrounding it. Offer explorations not ways of adapting, everyone explores their body in their own way, we are all different.

Warm up circle exercises

Be non-body part specific, using creative language rather than instructing direct actions.

1. rather than move your left leg or lift your right arm you could say something like – ‘choose a body part and circle it’ - this gives people a choice and it doesn't set people up to fail from the start. We all have very different ways of moving the body, it is about finding new possibilities not barriers.

2. Stretch a body part towards someone in the circle

3. Open and close the body, how small can you make your body? How big?

Body check-ins

-Start in a circle

-Do a body check in by going around the circle and asking:

1. How are you feeling today?

2. Is there anything we need to know about your body or equipment?

e.g. I have a sore back today or please don't touch my controls on my wheelchair.

It is a great way to learn about each individual.

How to support a session and work effectively with support workers

If you are supporting an individual or group to attend an arts-based workshop it is useful to speak to the practitioner when possible beforehand to communicate any information they may need to know and to find out how they would like you to participate.

As a practitioner leading a workshop where people may attend with support it is important to introduce yourself before the start of the session and get any useful information from them about the participant they are supporting.

During this conversation it is helpful to establish the role they will play within the workshop and highlight any 'ground rules' about helpful ways they can get involved.

How to physically support a session:

Think about where you are in the space in relation to the person you are supporting. If they do not need your assistance, participate and support someone else.

Remember the three exercises we did in the session:

- Personal space, think about where you stand, next to someone is more comfortable than behind, not too close.

- Offer your hands, try not to do everything for the person, if they need your help offer open hands rather than always placing your hands on them and offer first before you begin to support physically.

-If working with a wheelchair user think creatively how to help them move around the space:

1. Hand to hand leading
2. Side to side weight sharing/pushing together
3. Moving parts of the wheelchair together
4. Push the chair with direction instruction from the chair user.

You can give out carer cards to everyone supporting the class with brief instructions on how to actively and positive support the group.

Everyone in the room should be a participant.

Layering and developing

Exercise examples:

Props

Using props can help stimulate movement ideas, create a sense of play and develop imagination and creativity. Any object can be used however being aware of safety is important. Everyday items can be fun, although can challenge literal thinkers. Items such as dusters, cloths, sponges are great as well as considered items such as hats, balloons and scarves.

Prop oriented dance sequences can be used to improve memory and to encourage each participant to be involved in the production of movement and the sequence. Depending on the participants' ability and confidence you can invite more or less of a contribution. For some a simple movement with the prop is an accomplishment, for others you can offer options of variation, eg how many times, one way then the other, faster / slower, always offering questions so they can give you their decision /direction.

Props can be lots of fun. With groups up to ten making a sequence in the order like the shopping list memory game works nicely, with more than ten it may be more suitable to jump around asking for participants to offer ideas. This can be seated or not.

Emotion

When developing drama skills and making theatre it is important to establish the notion of 'acting'. Sometimes it can be tricky for participants to differentiate between real emotion and performed emotion. Using props such as a hula hoop can be useful to help understanding eg when the hula hoop is taken over the head of the participant they perform the emotion instructed, when the hula hoop is removed they go back to their real/neutral emotion.

Emotional chairs – label four chairs with a symbol that represents one of the following emotions – neutral, angry, sad, happy. Invite each participant to sit in each chair and show the audience what each emotion looks like. Once this is understood you can then add in a new instruction where two participants sit in the chairs, moving through each emotion and asking your audience to identify some possible stories/relationships that were displayed/interpreted.

A development would be to then add a setting for the scene to be taking place eg a doctor's surgery – this way the audience can start to build more of a story that they can relate to and later be used to devise from. A further development is to introduce speech, providing the two performers with a line each for them to deliver in the emotional chair they are sat eg "Tell me the truth" "I already told you the truth". Encourage them to experiment with moving through the chairs and responding to each other. As an addition they can then be encourage to move into an improvisation with the two lines being used as a starting point.

You can move this exercise into performance work by taking away the chairs and identifying sections of the stage to be an emotion, or to choose a colour that represents the emotion and have the 'angry' character wearing red so that the actor performing associates the red with the emotion he should be performing.

These exercises can be developed over a long period of time and there are many other layers you could add in to help your group to understand 'performed' emotion. Speech can be replaced with the use of gesture and body language.

Movement

Freeze and Melt - in a circle, one person enters the circle and makes a shape, one at a time people enter the circle and jigsaw together to make one big shape, one by one people leave. To develop this, here are some examples from our group discussion of how we can add access layers and levels:

- Change speed
- Sit face to face and look at hand shapes
- Add an entrance and exit movement
- Add a physical connections
- Try different pieces of music

Music tips

Instrumental music is great as a blank canvas for everyone. Music and artists such as:

Bonobo

Yann Tiersen

Cinematic Orchestra

Vitamin String Orchestra

Mr Scurff

Restless Leg Syndrome

Caravan Palace

Fourtet

Basement Jaxx