



DANCE WORKSHOP

HandBook for educators





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INTRODUCTION

Dance & movement

Dance can be a tool for empowering and connecting people, locally as well as globally. It is a cultural expression spread across all parts of the world, which can create meaning for people. Dance and movement are known to have positive physical, mental and emotional effects. It is often popular among young people, since it can be a way for them to channel their energy in a creative and constructive fashion. However, also older people are a fitting target group for dance and movement, as it helps the body and the mind to stay in shape, and can also be part of a stimulating social environment. There is evidence that points on a positive association between dance and mental health. Additionally, trauma and Parkinson's disease can be treated with the help of dance and movement therapy. An increased well-being as a result of dance, is plausible at all ages.

This dance workshop is developed by people with long experience in dance and social work. The process involves aspects such as physical-, mental-, spatial- and self-awareness, cooperation, team-building and the understanding of yourself in relation to others. It can be a way for expressing emotions and enjoying movement, as well as music and rhythms, individually and together as a group. The workshop aims to create a safe space where the participants feel welcome to be creative, express themselves and take action, as well as to empower individuals and groups through dance. This dance workshop can generate:

“A fun, creative, energetic and strengthening process on a group and individual level.”

Participants & facilitator

The workshop can include anyone who is interested, and the participants do not need experience in dancing. It does not require verbal expression, which can fit a group that speaks different languages or have reached different levels of the same language. It is also open to people with different movement abilities, with a little creativity most people can participate. It is good if the group consists of at least six people.

The workshop requires mainly simple movement and verbal instructions from the facilitator. Some of the exercises require some basic skills in teaching dance, and considerable skills in pedagogy and leadership. It is also important that the facilitator is open to receive thoughts and experiences that the participants might want to share.

Method & exercises

This dance workshop consists of a reflexive part that the facilitator should consider before, during and after working with the group. Further, the method gives an advice of how to start and end the workshop, “Check in” and “Check out”. The main part of the workshop consists of a number of dance and movement exercises. Most of the exercises are conceptual and they are divided into the different sections “Warm-up”, “Dance & movement” and “Final part”.

The workshop can be given only once to one group, but in order to create a safe space together, the facilitator will probably need to meet the same group at least three times. The various exercises of the workshop can also be used separately in any other type of workshop or group process, for example as energizers or for team-building.

Proposed structure of the workshop

For the best result from the dance workshop, the structure of the session should go from calm to slowly warming up, to energetic, and then back down to a calm ending. The workshop is designed to be done as one whole session, but it is also possible to pick parts of the workshop and do them separately. Keep in mind that it is good to choose at least one exercise from every section. The workshop's length should be between 40 and 90 minutes, depending on the target group and context.

Proposed structure of dance workshop, energy levels

ENERGY LEVEL	CHECK IN	WARM-UP	DANCE & MOVEMENT	FINAL PART	CHECK OUT
HIGH					
MID					
LOW					

GENERAL PART



WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

General Objective/s of the workshop:

- Physical-, mental-, spatial- and self-awareness
- Cooperation and team-building
- Leadership
- Individual and group empowerment
- Creativity and self-expression
- Enjoying movement and music

Workshop general indicators:

- 1 Level of Integration in the group – I feel part of the group
- 2 Decreased prejudices – I have a different perception of the other
- 3 Ability to create relationship and team work – I feel self-confident and I have new relationship
- 4 The workshop as safe and protected environment where important topics can be discussed
- 5 Active participation – I actively participate in the workshop
- 6 Capacity of reflection on positive aspects and criticism of own and hosting culture ameliorated
- 7 Self-consciousness on personal aspects increased

Target group: Any kind of group, but particularly youth.

Duration of the workshop: 1-6 sessions, 40-90 minutes/session

Number of participants: 6-30

General description of the workshop/instruction: 1) Reflexive part to be considered before, during and after the workshop. 2) “Check in” & “Check out”. 3) Main part of the dance workshop: “Warm-up”, “Dance & movement” and “Final part”. (See Method & exercises above, for detailed information.)

Material/space: A space big enough for the facilitator and participants to move around freely. Possibility to play music.

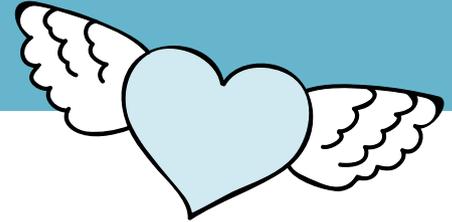
Questions for debriefing: See “Check out” and specific questions for some exercises. If it is relevant to have a more extended debriefing, you can let the participants discuss their experiences by using the four keywords THOUGHT, FELT, DONE, LEARNT. By using these words, we are interested in knowing what the participants thought, what they felt, what they did and what they learnt when they experienced/lead/took part in an exercise or full workshop.

Let the participants first think for themselves for a few minutes and then let them share their thoughts with one other person, in smaller groups or all together. (The sizes of the groups depend on how big and secure the group is.) The workshop facilitator can walk around in the smaller groups and listen and ask questions (if appropriate/needed). In the end it is nice if the whole group can share some of the discussions and thoughts that came up. An alternative is to do this as a written exercise.

Tips/variations: Give the workshop as a full experience to a group or use one or some of the exercises as part of an ice-breaker or team-building session.

Activities / Sections

REFLEXIVITY



Objective of section 1

- Reflecting on power-relations
- Reflecting on differences within the group and between the leader and participants
- Reflecting on one's own ways of leading a group

Indicators of section 1

- 1 Level of Integration in the group – I feel part of the group
- 2 Decreased prejudices – I have a different perception of the other
- 3 Ability to create relationship and team work – I feel self-confident and I have new relationship
- 4 The workshop as safe and protected environment where important topics can be discussed
- 5 Active participation – I actively participate in the workshop
- 6 Capacity of reflection on positive aspects and criticism of own and hosting culture ameliorated
- 7 Self-consciousness on personal aspects increased

Duration of section 1 _ 20-60 minutes

Description/instruction: As a facilitator and group leader using dance (or another activity) as a tool for social work or integration, it is important to reflect on a series of critical questions about the interaction. Therefore the component of reflexivity is included, as an integrated part of every exercise and planned session.

When working with youth, migrants, or other disenfranchised groups in society, it is very important to consider different power-relations. An example of this is the different characteristics of the specified target group and their relation to each other, as well as your own identity in relation to them.

Two questions that you can use when reflecting upon your facilitation of a specific group are:

- Who am I in relation to the group I'm meeting?
- Who are they in relationship to one another?

To answer these two questions, you need to consider how power structures (such as social class, gender, sexual orientation, culture, religion, ethnicity, age, physical abilities, lived experience, etc.) could affect the communication and interaction.

Referring back to the stated objective and purpose of your activities with the target group, we suggest that you always try to plan and adapt the exercises in order to keep this awareness.

Two more questions that you can use when reflecting on how to best adapt your exercises to a specific group:

- What do I want to share?
- How do I make that happen with this particular group?

Do I want to teach skills/technique, build an atmosphere, give encouragement, build trust, empower the participants, have a fun time, etc.? Let this aim lead the adaption of your exercise.

A last question to consider is:

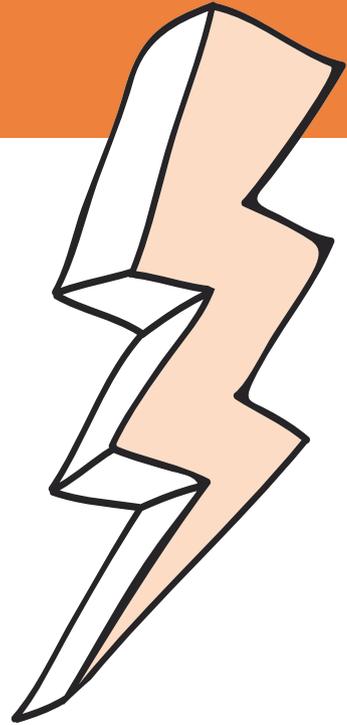
- If things don't work out as planned: how do I work around it?

Do you push your presumptions on the group? Do you dare to change your idea and concept? If you meet resistance from or within the group - be sincerely interested in the "why"? What motivates the resistance? Fear, different understandings, cultural differences? Return to the initial purpose and adapt the session from there.

Material/space: Papers and pens/digital writing tool.

Tips/variations: These questions can be reflected upon on your own or in a group setting. If done in a group you can let the participants write down their thoughts and then open up to a bigger discussion in pairs, smaller groups and/or the group as a whole.

CHECK IN



Objective of section 2

- Inclusion
- Letting everyone be heard
- Mental- and self-awareness

Indicators of section 2

- 1 Level of Integration in the group – I feel part of the group
- 2 Decreased prejudices – I have a different perception of the other
- 3 Ability to create relationship and team work – I feel self-confident and I have new relationship
- 4 The workshop as safe and protected environment where important topics can be discussed
- 5 Active participation – I actively participate in the workshop
- 6 Self-consciousness on personal aspects increased

Duration of section 2 _ 3-10 minutes

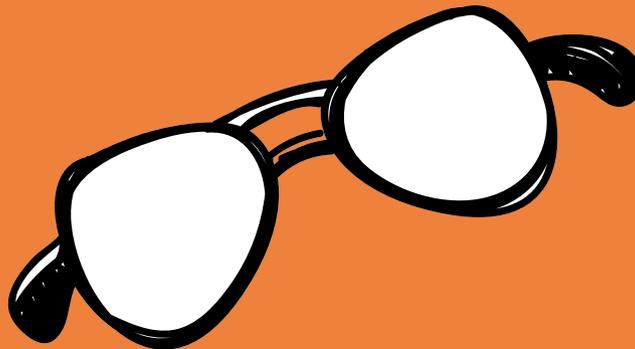
Description/instruction: Assembly sitting in a circle, preferably on the floor and at the same level. Each participant is asked to share a couple of words regarding either how they feel, what brought them there or their expectation. They can also just say “I’ll pass” if the person does not feel like sharing something. The workshop facilitator also participates in the exercise. Do not comment on anything being said.

The exercise’s only goal is to have an inclusive, personal and safe start of the session, letting everyone’s voice be heard and feel part of the group. Any other expectations or fixed ideas about certain outcomes might interfere with the exercise. This is an opportunity to create and feel the characteristics of the group. By letting everyone check in to the situation, the idea is to let everyone enter the space exactly as they are at that exact moment.

We cannot stress enough the importance of keeping an open mind and being ready to let the participants share whatever they need or like.

Material/space: Chairs or a floor to sit on, quiet atmosphere.

Tips/variations: A shorter version is to let everyone share only one word that best describes them in the situation for the moment. You can also ask them to share their expectations or fears.



WARM-UP:

RUBBING



Objective of section 3

- Relaxation and warm-up of the body
- Interaction between the group members
- Observing/checking how the group relates to physical contact

Indicators of section 3

- 1 Level of Integration in the group – I feel part of the group
- 2 Ability to create relationship and team work – I feel self-confident and I have new relationship
- 3 Active participation – I actively participate in the workshop
- 4 Self-consciousness on personal aspects increased

Duration of section 3 _ 5-15 minutes

Description/instruction: The participants divide themselves into couples. One is asked to find a comfortable standing position, the gaze can rest on the floor to create some privacy. The other person in every couple is asked to place her/himself behind their friend and start rubbing the person who is standing still. Rubbing shall be performed with safe and sure hands since any reluctance might create insecurity or tickling etc. The rubbing can be seen as similar to grooming a horse or cleaning a dirty bathroom wall. The person engaged in the rubbing goes from rubbing the muscles on the back, to neck and shoulders and then the arms. Be aware that we focus on the muscle tissue, be careful around the skeleton bones and joints. After rubbing we move on to clapping/patting in the same order as before. This way of touching is a bit rougher and really gets the blood circulation going. The exercise is completed by giving 3 "shower-strokes" (with fingertips from top of the head running down the whole back side of the body to the heels).

The aim of this exercise is to make the group relax, interact with each other, warm up and create a presence in their bodies.

If people are not used to touching it is important to comfort them by being calm and open to different reactions. It is good if the workshop facilitator first demonstrates a part of the exercise on a participant so that the others get a clear idea about what is going to happen. If you are not sure how the participants feel about the exercise you can ask them before, during or after, for example: How does/did it feel to touch someone? How do/did you feel being touched? In what way?

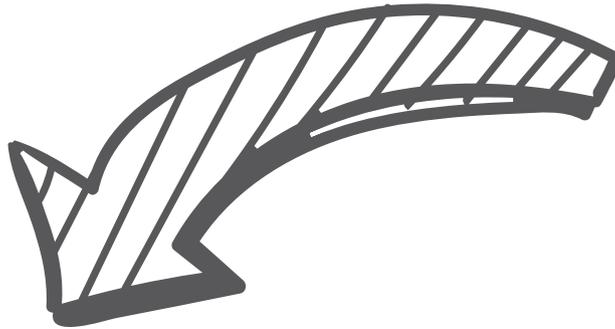
Material/space: Enough space for all participants to stand and move quite freely.

Tips/variations: Depending on different needs and values of the group, the exercise can be modified so that it suits the participants. The facilitator can think of her/his own ways of touching and give suggestions (e.g. softer, harder, slower, quicker) and describe that in her/his own way.

* This exercise involves touching each other, so be aware of the group dynamics and how comfortable the participants are with touch. For example, some people do not want to be in direct contact with other people. Planning how you divide the participants into smaller groups can solve this. Participants who don't want to be in direct contact with another person, can rub themselves instead of being with another participant.

WARM-UP:

CREATING MOVEMENT



Objective of section 4

- Introducing movement and dance
- Creating interaction and energy
- Dividing leadership
- Possibly learning names

Indicators of section 4

- 1 Level of Integration in the group – I feel part of the group
- 2 Ability to create relationship and team work – I feel self-confident and I have new relationship
- 3 Active participation – I actively participate in the workshop

Duration of section 4 _ 10-15 minutes

(depending on the number of participants)

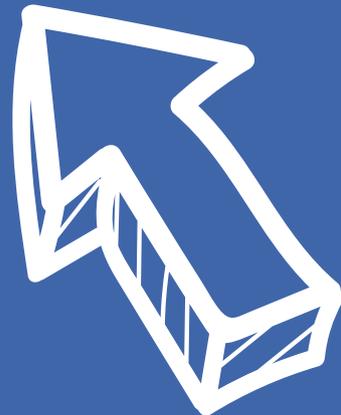
Description/instruction: Standing in a circle, the participants are asked to create a movement. It can be anything, like shaking the head, raising one arm, spinning, jumping, etc. The facilitator puts on some music with a clear, not too fast pace. When the first person has displayed their movement everyone in the circle copies it, all together. After that the next person comes up with a movement and the task is passed on to everyone in the circle. A person can of course pass, but the facilitator can try to tell that person that any movement is ok, even a tiny one.

This exercise is a simple introduction to dance and movement. It is interactive and energizing and contributes to a divided leadership.

Material/space: Enough room for participants to stand in a circle, music player and suitable music.

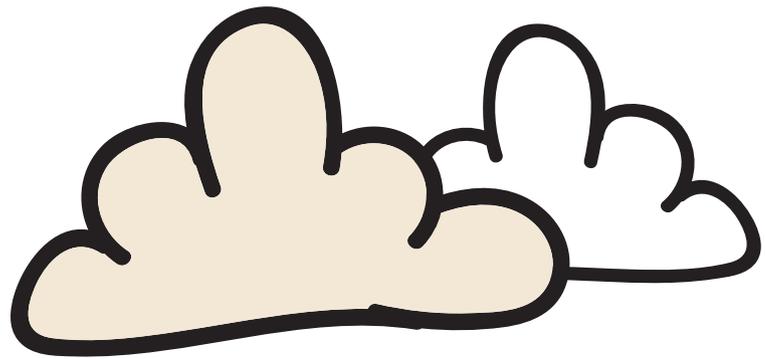
Tips/variations: This game can be a foundation for continuing to create movement or simple choreography. In that case all the movements can be repeated after each other, creating a longer movement phrase that can be “danced” by everyone.

It is also possible to do this as a name game. Then the person who creates the movement says their name and everyone repeats the name and movement at the same time.



WARM-UP:

BALL GAME



Objective of section 5

- Spatial and physical awareness
- Keeping focus
- Warm-up of the body
- Having fun together
- Possibly learning names

Indicators of section 5

- 1 Level of Integration in the group – I feel part of the group
- 2 Ability to create relationship and team work – I feel self-confident and I have new relationship
- 2 Active participation – I actively participate in the workshop

Duration of section 5 _ 5-15 minutes

Description/instruction: Everyone walks around in the room and throws a tennis ball or other prop to each other. This may sound as just a simple and fun game, but it is important for the leader to make sure that the participants keep calm and serious. Otherwise the game loses its point and, most importantly, people can crash into each other! If needed, the leader can suggest to the participants to throw longer to develop the game. With that said this IS a game to make people relaxed and have fun together. But it is also a good way of making everyone see each other, take control over the room, keep focus, open their gaze, warm up physically and practice their simultaneous capacity.

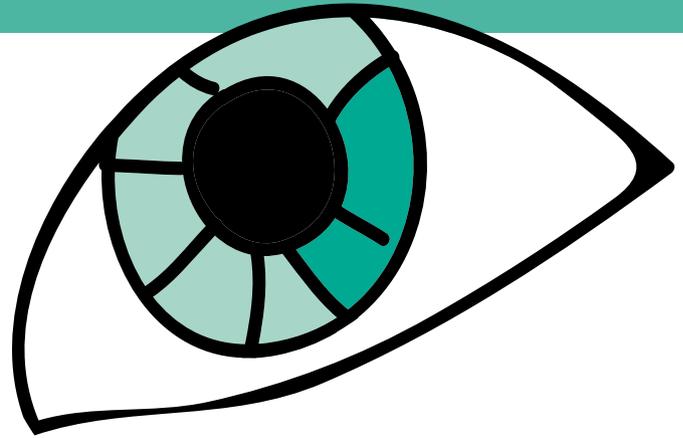
Material/space: Enough room for participants to walk/run around, tennis ball or other prop.

Tips/variations: The participants can start to softly run instead of walking. The leader is responsible for guiding them on how fast they can run so that they don't lose control. It is also possible to add more balls to the game, start with one extra and add more depending on how it goes. Furthermore, this game can also be a way of practicing each other's names. Then the participants say the name of the person they throw the ball to.



DANCE & MOVEMENT:

BLINDFOLDED



Objective of section 6

- Building trust
- Spatial awareness
- Using several senses

Indicators of section 6

- 1 Level of Integration in the group – I feel part of the group
- 2 Ability to create relationship and team work – I feel self-confident and I have new relationship
- 3 The workshop as safe and protected environment where important topics can be discussed
- 4 Active participation – I actively participate in the workshop
- 5 Self-consciousness on personal aspects increased

Duration of section 6 _10-20 minutes

Description/instruction: Divide the participants into couples (or trios). One person closes her/his eyes and the other holds the blind person's shoulders, arm or hand with a soft grip. Now the seeing person leads the other one around in the room. It is important that the seeing person "earns" the trust, so start slow and let them think about how they can be the safest leader possible for the other person. Let them do this for a while (approximately 3-5 minutes) and then change roles.

In the end it is good to do a de-briefing, where the participants get a chance to express how it felt to be blind and to lead, since this can be a strong experience. The questions can be: How did it feel to lead? How did it feel to be blindfolded and led?

This exercise can build trust between the participants and within the whole group. It is a nice way to explore movement, spatial sensitivity and the feeling to move around, using other senses than the sight.

Material/space: Enough space for all participants to move quite freely.
(Music player and music if wanted.)

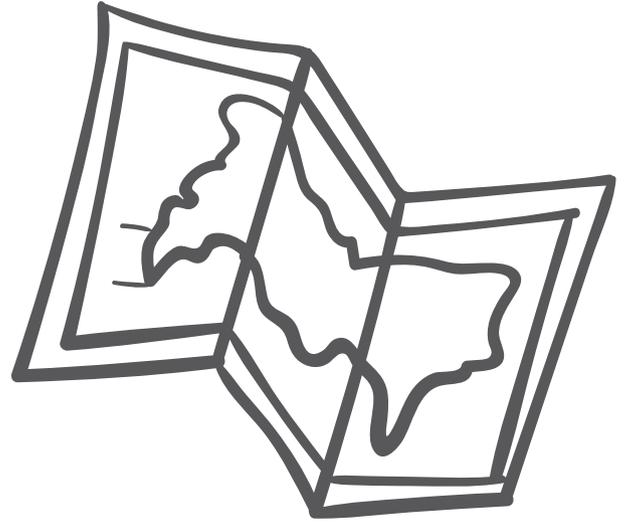
Tips/variations: You can develop this exercise by letting the seeing persons be a bit more creative: Can they move faster? Can they use more space in the room? Can they use different heights (e.g. be low on the floor)? The seeing persons can also "move away" from the blind persons. For example, they can now lead each other with soft pushes in certain directions. They can also lead each other with sounds (e.g. clapping, snapping their fingers, whistling) that the blind persons follow. Or can they make up their own way of leading each other? Be clear with that they still have to earn the trust and therefore be aware of the space and other participants so that there are no accidents.

A nice variation can be to add some calm music, which can add to the experience of the blind person.

* This exercise involves touching each other, so be aware of the group dynamics and how comfortable the participants are with touch. For example, some people do not want to be in direct contact with other people. Planning how you divide the participants into smaller groups can solve this.

DANCE & MOVEMENT:

THE MIRROR



Objective of section 7

- Creativity
- Improvisation
- Getting to know each other

Indicators of section 7

- 1 Level of Integration in the group – I feel part of the group
- 2 Ability to create relationship and team work – I feel self-confident and I have new relationship
- 3 Active participation – I actively participate in the workshop
- 4 Self-consciousness on personal aspects increased

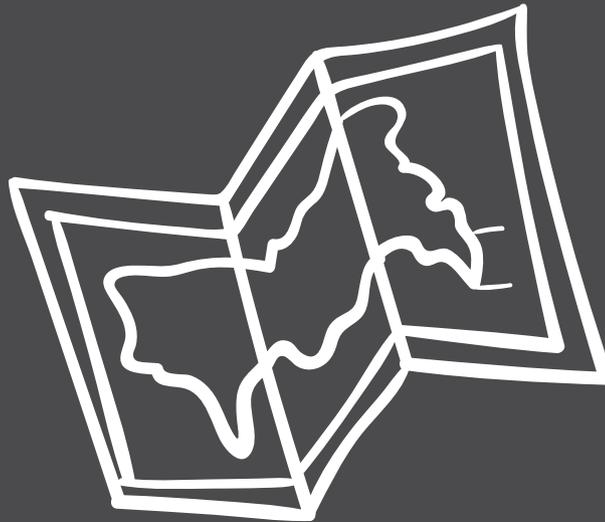
Duration of section 7 _10-20 minutes

Description/instruction: Divide the participants into couples. One of them is the mover and the other one gets the role of the mirror, which means that she/he copies everything the other person does. The mover can move how small/big/slow/fast that person wants but is it important to be “nice” to the mirror, so that the person can follow. They cannot touch each other. Explore (approximately 5 minutes) and then change roles.

This exercise can help the participants to create movement and improvise, as well as getting them to know and be comfortable with each other.

Material/space: Enough space for all participants to move quite freely. Music player and suitable music.

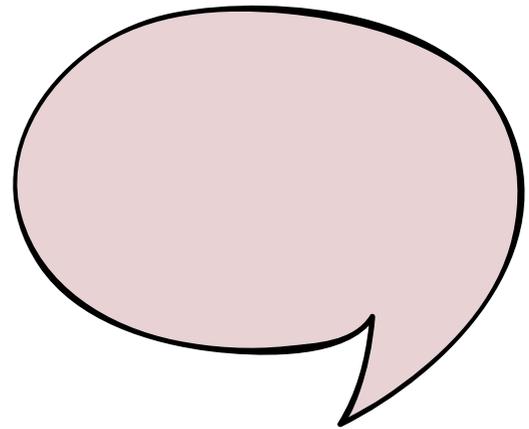
Tips/variations: You can develop the exercise by for example letting the participants switch roles quicker, do more difficult movements, listen to different types of music or move bigger in the room. It is important to remind them of their spatial awareness – where they are in relation to the other participants and the room, so that no one crashes.



DANCE & MOVEMENT:

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

in a style of dance



Objective of section 8

- Learning dance technique
- Physical workout
- Team-building
- Memorizing dance steps

Indicators of section 8

- 1 Level of Integration in the group – I feel part of the group
- 2 Ability to create relationship and team work – I feel self-confident and I have new relationship
- 3 Active participation – I actively participate in the workshop

Duration of section 8 _ 20-40 minutes

Description/instruction: If the workshop facilitator knows a particular dance style (salsa, hip hop, voguing, ballet, jazz, zumba etc., etc.) she/he can teach some steps/movements or a whole phrase or choreography to the group. If the facilitator does not have particular experience, but still feels comfortable with teaching dance, YouTube has loads of combinations that can be learnt and taught. Otherwise, perhaps one of the participants knows a style of dance and would like to teach the others. Feel free! Have fun! If it suits the group this can also be a moment to share or show the group something that someone already worked on - as a little performance.

This exercise is good for creating choreography, learning specific techniques, physical workout, learning to replicate steps, team-building, etc.

Material/space: Enough space for all participants to move freely. A mirror wall is a good asset for teaching steps. Music player and suitable music.

Tips/variations: This exercise is the only exercise that requires a bit more of the facilitator than just explaining and facilitating the exercise. The facilitator, taking the role of a leader and instructor, should be comfortable in showing and explaining the movements, to direct the group and to include all participants in a friendly and helpful way.



FINAL PART:

GYPHER

Objective of section 9

- Individual empowerment
- Having fun in a social and interactive way
- Understanding social dynamics
- Creativity
- Taking and giving space

Indicators of section 9

1 Level of Integration in the group – I feel part of the group **2** Decreased prejudices – I have a different perception of the other **3** Ability to create relationship and team work – I feel self-confident and I have new relationship **4** The workshop as safe and protected environment where important topics can be discussed **5** Active participation – I actively participate in the workshop **6** Capacity of reflection on positive aspects and criticism of own and hosting culture ameliorated **7** Self-consciousness on personal aspects increased

Duration of section 9 _10-20 minutes

Description/instruction: The participants are standing in a circle, not too far apart. The facilitator explains that the circle is a space created by all participants, by their presence and energy, and where everyone takes turns to enter individually (or in couples) and dance. The cypher is meant to be an inclusive, fun and energetic space, where everyone is encouraged to enter and try some movements or a dance. However, nobody can be forced to enter, since it can be quite scary the first times. As it can be frightening to enter the cypher, this exercise can begin by taking turns to enter the cypher one at the time, without music and without dance, to just see how it feels to be inside.

It is important that the participants standing in the circle also need to be active, moving to the music, clapping and cheering in support of the person inside the circle. The facilitator needs to explain this and also to keep reminding the participants of this during the cypher, best done by leading by example. The facilitator plays music (choose a song with a clear pace and rhythm that makes you want to move ;)) and invites the participants to start moving where they stand in the circle.

Now the facilitator invites the participants to enter the cypher when they feel like it. Hopefully this is all that is needed for the cypher to take off. However, if the participants won't enter the circle, the facilitator can try out some different things. One is to do "switches" where the participant starting, finishes her/his dance by giving a high-five to a participant that hasn't yet entered. This is a randomized and interactive way of providing an easier way for the participants to enter. Also, the facilitator can give support to insecure participants by entering together with her/him and do some moves together. When the time is out, or when the energy of the group is fading, it is time to finish the exercise. The facilitator leads the participants in applauding and giving high-fives to everyone.

The cypher is an interactive exercise that might be appropriate to do in the end of a session, when the participants have been moving around and are familiarized with the others. The objective of the cypher is to encourage the participants to experience the feeling of dancing together individually, in a social, interactive and creative way. A sub-objective might also be to provide the participants the possibility to freely present a dance that they like to the group. A third objective is to allow the participants to experiment with both taking and giving space and to be empowered in relation to pressure and exposure. Key words are social, freedom and empowerment.

Material/space: Enough space for all participants to form a circle. Music player and suitable music.

Tips/variations: As written in the description, some participants might be reluctant to entering the cypher, feeling too insecure to dance in front of others. If this is the case, the facilitator can instruct the participants (preferably in the beginning) to take turns to take one step into the cypher and just stand there for a few seconds – this can neutralize the scariness of entering. After achieving this, the group can be tasked with taking turns to enter and to walk around the cypher before returning to their place. While doing this, the one entering can try to make eye contact with the participants in the cypher – further neutralizing the awkwardness of being in front of everyone. If some participants refuse to enter the cypher, the facilitator can also encourage them as they stand by the side and cheer, dance together and clap, etc.

If a debriefing is needed, questions to be asked could be: How did you feel entering the cypher? What made you feel good/bad? Can you recall the feeling from the cypher from any other experience in your life?

CHECK OUT

Objective of section 10

- Inclusion
- Letting everyone be heard
- Mental and self-awareness
- Wrapping up the workshop

Indicators of section 10

- 1 Level of Integration in the group – I feel part of the group
- 2 Decreased prejudices – I have a different perception of the other
- 3 Ability to create relationship and team work – I feel self-confident and I have new relationship
- 4 The workshop as safe and protected environment where important topics can be discussed
- 5 Active participation – I actively participate in the workshop
- 6 Self-consciousness on personal aspects increased

Duration of section 10 _ 3-10 minutes

Description/instruction: See check in above.

Material/space: Chairs or a floor to sit on, quiet atmosphere

Tips/variatiions: A nice way of checking out is to let the participants say if they would like to bring something from the session, e.g. a nice moment that they would like to remember, or if they would like leave something there, e.g. a bad experience that they would like to not think about.



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