

Plurality Theatre

Training Manual
Creative Expression Workshop



Team for transcultural research and intervention

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Foreword

The Transcultural Research and Intervention Team (TRIT) is comprised of child psychiatrists, psychologists, arts-based psychotherapists and researchers specializing in cross-cultural, social and developmental issues. For over 10 years, ÉRIT has developed its activities around three fields of action: prevention programs, therapeutic programs, and training programs.

As part of these prevention programs, the team created and evaluated several projects related to the adjustment difficulties of adolescents from disadvantaged neighborhoods in Montreal, whose multi-ethnic population is growing. This work has often been done in partnership with the schools of the Commission Scolaire de Montréal (CSDM).

This manual, which is intended for secondary school teachers and anyone interested in using creative expression with immigrant and/or refugee adolescents, was developed as part of the "Creativity and Prevention of Mental Health Problems in Multiethnic Schools" prevention project, supported by the Max Bell Foundation and the EJLB Foundation.

The prevention program contains different elements for preschool, elementary and secondary school children. These elements use stories, myths, drawing, sand play, the political forum and theatrical expression. The prevention program focuses on creativity to support the transformative processes that emerge in the face of adversity, and to build bridges between the multiple universes and diverse identities of immigrant and refugee adolescent.

Introduction

This manual is intended as a training tool for secondary school teachers, both in reception classes and in regular classes, and can also meet the needs of adolescents in special trajectories. It is the product of interdisciplinary work between external stakeholders (psychotherapists and drama specialists) and teachers and school stakeholders in various multi-ethnic schools in Montreal. This guide is therefore intended as a basic framework for teachers and others wishing to offer a space of expression to the adolescents with whom they work.

The Plurality Theatre creative expression workshops aim to facilitate the adaptation of immigrant and refugee adolescents to their new environment. They represent the multiplicity of values and references, both internal and external, that adolescents face. The Plurality workshops allow adolescents to share their experiences and give meaning to their lives. These workshops promote the transitions inherent in adolescence and allow the transition to a hybrid identity. They may reduce distress associated with migration-related losses and minority tensions in the host society, mitigate interpersonal and intergroup conflict by exploring perceptions of discrimination and increasing personal and collective self-esteem (related to both cultural and class group), and thus indirectly improve the academic performance of these adolescents.

In order to achieve these objectives, this guide's first part describes the challenges that the school system meets in the face of immigration, the development of youngsters in the developmental phase of adolescence, as well as the various issues related to migration and diaspora faced by adolescents and their families. We discuss the impact of these processes on families, and more specifically on adolescents and their integration into the host society and therefore into school.

In the second part, we explain why we have developed theatre workshops for teenagers as well as the importance of play and play space. We describe the various approaches used in drama as tools to intervene with these young adolescents. Improvisation and dramatic games allow the expression of emotions, thoughts related to cultural values and world views.

In the third part, we describe the various objectives of the Plurality program and the structure of a typical workshop, with the objectives related to each of its phases.

Finally, the fourth part proposes a practical guide including a detailed range of the various theatrical tools used during the workshops and which will allow you to create your own workshops, adapted to your groups and their needs. In addition, you will find four workshops already organized for a class where adolescents do not present particular difficulties, and an example of a workshop for a class presenting multiple difficulties (learning, behavior, etc.).

In the appendices you will find short texts explaining improvisation (1), playback (2) and the theatre of the oppressed (3), as well as an article presenting this creative expression program (4).

We hope that this manual will become a useful and practical reference for all those who work with adolescents in multi-ethnic environments and who wish to offer them a space for expression in order to facilitate relations between them, as well as exchanges with teachers, schools and the community.

You will be able to appropriate and modify the workshops as you wish, once their objectives and methods have been mastered. We invite you to share your criticisms and suggestions in order to continue to improve this manual and thus offer better interventions.

I Plurality: A challenge for the school system

In the Montreal area, more than one-third of children belong to allophone families. In some schools, 95 to 99% of children are immigrants or have immigrant parents. It is an extremely heterogeneous population in terms of culture and diversity of life experiences before migration and during the migration process itself.

One of the major challenges of the school system is to provide schools with the necessary tools to help children from immigrant or refugee families adapt to daily life in the host country. School becomes the main link between adolescents, their families and the society of the host country. Children of multi-ethnic classes are often born here, but carry the culture of the country of origin, which is transmitted to them in a transgenerational way.

1. Development of children and adolescents

Adolescence is generally a difficult time for adolescents. It is the transition period between childhood and adulthood during which there is a movement outside the family that leads the adolescent to his peers, where he can explore various roles that will guide his individuation process. The adolescent needs to surpass himself, both physically and mentally; he is in search of strong emotions, structuring experiences and identity models.

This stage of development takes different rhythms and forms depending on culture. With globalization, traditional forms of transition to maturity are adjusting to new life contexts, both in societies of origin and in host societies. Immigrant and refugee adolescents thus construct themselves in a back and forth movement between collective identities (ethnic, national, racial, religious, gender, group and other) and individual identity. Often grappling with identity issues, adolescents may find themselves faced with a lack of a model of belonging, or they may move towards a single model of identity that defines them as radically different from others.

Moreover, in Western societies and especially in the North American society, the adolescent is considered an important consumer and becomes an advertising target. Advertisements claim that by using such or such products, life is simplified, that one reaches love, friendship, a better social status.

At what age, what where your favorite activities and why?

The process of differentiation in the context of a consumer society generates reflections, adjustments, and negotiations that are sometimes difficult to predict and to do within families. Thus, when the cultural gap between immigrant families and the host society is significant, it forces adolescent to negotiate different ways of being at home, at school, and on the street. Moreover, inhabiting a minority position in the post-migratory period, and in particular the experience of discrimination and social or economic exclusion, also structure identity.

Adolescents build their identity as much through the resolution and integration of the experiences that took place in the country of origin and during the preparation period and the migratory movement, as through daily life in the host country. Consequently, they oscillate between multiple personal and collective stories that they transform in order to reclaim them.

Try to remember different moments of your adolescence: good memories and less pleasant ones...

2. Migrant and immigrant adolescents in secondary school

Unlike at the beginning of the 20th century when most immigrants came from Europe, 80% of newcomers to Quebec now come from other continents and regions (Africa, Asia, Latin America) and immigrate mainly because of the political instability and organized violence that prevail in their country. For children from immigrant and refugee families who attend school, this situation has several consequences:

- Before migration: Their families have often (in 40% of cases) experienced potentially traumatic situations where they have often witnessed violence. In 30% of the cases, the families experienced direct persecution. For several of them, economic precariousness was added to the conditions of departure. Parents often lived and still live with anxiety because of these events and can pass it on to their children.
- During migration: Families leave behind extended family members, parents lose their jobs, social status, and children leave school, and leave behind friends. Adolescents can also experience such dramatic events and often leave behind an environment that they knew and that gave meaning to their lives, despite its inherent difficulties.
- After migration: The majority of children more or less easily overcome the ordeals they encounter, such as the language barrier, the physical environment, the culture of the host country. Some families of these children immigrate to Canada with the assurance they are able to stay, familiarize themselves with their new environment and plan for their future. Others, on the contrary, are refugee families. They often leave their country in conditions of extreme haste, without saying goodbye to their loved ones. Often war or organized violence hasten this departure. The children of these families, in addition to experiencing a very difficult situation on a daily basis, experience several losses: family and relatives and friends left behind in the country of origin, an interrupted school trajectory (if there was one) and everything that gave them a certain security or a feeling of control despite the chaos. When they arrive, they feel disoriented and do not know if they will be able to reside in the host country. These families experience great uncertainty and anxiety until their migration situation stabilizes. The sense of loss experienced by both immigrant and refugee families may persist long after a stable migration status has been achieved. An important part of the support given to these families revolves around these losses and transformations (see references).

In the case of young migrants in adolescence, simultaneously living external changes caused by migration and internal changes due to psychological maturation often overload their integration capacity. Moreover, they will sometimes adopt ways of doing things in the host country fairly quickly, to gain acceptance from their peers, creating a deep gap with their families.

Some young migrants, unaccompanied minors (adolescents who arrive in the country without their families), are particularly vulnerable because of the extent of the losses they experience and the absence of a protective network. These adolescents are cared for by government institutions and placed in foster families. This new family life also brings its share of difficulties in this complex situation.

Newly arrived adolescents (immigrants or as asylum seekers) in reception classes, experience a break with their country of origin more immediate than adolescents in regular classes; this in addition to

the language barrier and the challenge of social and cultural integration.

Many adolescents from immigrant families born in Quebec also experience differences between the family and the host country despite former primary education in Quebec. In adolescence, youth must define themselves and find their own identity, sometimes moving away from family and cultural values, which often leads parents to reinforce the culture of origin, leading to the splitting from the values offered by the host society.

All these characteristics present the school system with a multifaceted challenge and encourage decision-makers and the various stakeholders in the system to reflect on the various means that can help adolescents function better at school in order to finally build a future for themselves within this host society.

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you were the person who was not understood, you didn't know where and how to get somewhere, you couldn't get the information you needed...,

How did you react?

What were your feelings?

Where were the students in your class born?

What do you know about the political situation,
economic and social development of their country?

3. School and family ties

For immigrant and refugee children and adolescents, the school is the main gateway to the host society. One of the school's important missions is to help adolescents integrate into the community and become familiar with the values and rules of this new society. This mission is even more fundamental when it comes to adolescents in reception classes. The school teachers and staff are committed not only to teaching the language of the host country, but also to transmitting the values of the new society. It requires personal involvement and great sensitivity on the part of the teacher. This is why the teacher becomes one of the first guides for these adolescents in this new host society. This responsibility is fraught with consequences and sometimes difficult to bear.

Adolescents, on the other hand, are facing a new reality and are being forced to adapt. The adolescent gradually establishes a link between the past and the present during the first years spent in the host country. This represents a real effort and adolescents make the daily transition between these two worlds: that is why they must develop strategies to reconcile these various cultural frameworks.

One of the important identity issues in adolescence is that of sexuality, the roles associated with it and the various ways of expressing it. The teenager keeps in him

the culture of the country of origin, through which he has learned to see the world and to situate himself as a boy or a girl in a way that is sometimes quite different from the one offered here. He therefore finds himself in a situation where he has to take a certain distance from his own culture to understand the host country's representations and then negotiate a position that will be satisfactory to him.

Another important identity aspect the adolescent will have to face is that of language. Within the family, the adolescent very often speaks the language of his/her parents. Sometimes he does not have the time to master the language of the host country, when he already has to interpret for his/her parents. This situation can become a source of distress for the adolescent, giving him/her power and a role as an adult for which he/she may not be prepared and still has to adopt. Often the family considers the adolescent as the one who will give a new social status to the family: he/she represents the hope of change, and necessarily the adolescent feels an immense responsibility and guilt when he/she fails to meet parental and cultural expectations.

Moreover, like any adolescent, they face challenges in terms of academic and social learning established by the host country. Often, he has to decode the expectations of his teachers and his fellow students,

without the help of his parents. If they feel accepted at school by their teacher and peers, they will develop a sense of belonging, confidence and self-esteem.

In order to avoid conflicts and divisions between the different worlds of these adolescents, it is crucial for the host society to provide adolescents with the means to integrate migration-related experiences, whether they have experienced them directly or not. By providing a space where these issues, as well as those related to the host society, can be explored and developed, this integration can be facilitated.

The school is in an ideal position to offer prevention programmes since it is the institution that bridges the gap between family and society. Its mandate is to develop skills among adolescents that will enable them to participate actively in society and in the construction of their future. This is even more challenging when it comes to young newcomers who need to adjust to their new lives. To do this, prevention programs must take into consideration some important points:

- Variables related to the age and stage of adolescent development, in relation to the specific issues of adolescence.
- Cultural variables, which include not only what relates to the culture of origin, but also the various ways of interacting with the culture of the host country.
- Situational variables, which include the disruptive effects associated with migration and multiple losses, and in the case of refugees, the possible traumas associated with pre-migration as well as the precariousness of the post-migration situation.
- Variables related to linguistic diversity and to learning a second language.

It is important to offer prevention programs that target entire classes and do not specifically target migrant/refugee adolescents, which would only increase their sense of exclusion, of belonging to a minority and increase their vulnerability. These programs use different forms of artistic expression and have nothing to do with performance.

II The prevention program of creative expression plurality theater

1. Why develop creative expression theater workshops?

In recent decades, activities that use creativity as a means of expression have been considered an interesting tool in working with immigrant adolescents. They have been associated with the construction of meaning and identity (Howard, 1991) among young refugees or among those who have experienced armed conflict, because they allow them to express emotions related to losses, integrate trauma and re-establish social bonds broken by repression (Barudy, 1988; Costa et al, 1989; Golub, 1989; Lopez and Saenz, 1992; Lykes and Farina, 1992; Miller and Billings, 1994).

The Pluralité theatre prevention and creative expression program proposed here is a possible way to meet the specific needs of adolescents from immigrant or refugee families in Montréal. Play, oral, physical (mime) and symbolic expression are the preferred forms in these workshops. Adolescents find in acting the means to communicate their thoughts and emotions. The arts in general are often vehicles for expressing too many emotions, whether they are positive, too difficult to bear or taboo (themes submitted to silencing).

As adolescents grow up, they learn that what they feel does not always correspond to what is happening in the world around them. They need to build bridges between their inner and outer worlds, and for this they use what Winnicott, a pediatrician-psychoanalyst, has called "transitional space", a place where they can safely contain their lived experience, give it meaning and transform it. Play and art are the transitional spaces most often used by adolescents. These spaces can be difficult to use in traumatic situations because adolescents cannot afford to imagine a situation without feeling that another disaster is coming. This results in an inability to symbolize, a difficulty to use metaphor or to play in the second degree. Stories can

appear traumatic, literal and sometimes describe situations related to violence that is not yet integrated in a coherent narrative. In a situation of migration or exile, when the gap between internal and external reality is maximal, it is very important that adolescents can have spaces of expression that facilitate this work of integration.

The objective of the Plurality theatre workshops is to facilitate the reappropriation and sharing of collective stories of immigrant and refugee adolescent in order to, as the case may be:

- support the construction of meaning in personal history
- promote mourning processes associated with immigration, and/or transgenerational inheritance (separations, transitions, loss of hope and expectations) and experiences of academic failure;
- support the construction of multiple identities;
- to value difference and the development of resistance strategies without increasing the phenomena of exclusion.

In your opinion, when your students are unable to communicate, what feelings emerge and how do they express them?

2. Play for mental health

For many adolescents, 'play' is often part of the virtual world, through video games and other online games, which they play alone or with others on the Internet. These games offer adolescents the possibility but also the illusion of being in control, of dominating. They can develop strategies and compare their skills to those of other players. Play for teenagers is also linked to activities done together: dancing, sports, graffiti, tags, etc., which create a space for comparison with others, for positioning and reproduction of the adult world in a manner that is more or less safe.

In the creative expression theatre workshops, play and collective physical action come first of all to help the cohesion of the group and foster a common and unique experience that allows for an often more free and more rewarding self-expression. Play often restores energy and can make adolescents rediscover a certain spontaneity (potentially) related to childhood and thus access memories related to this stage of life. This safe space makes you want to be together and share your personal history with others. Play creates a common space between these adolescents with such different pasts; it makes a bridge between the past and the present and offers the possibility of a collective projection.

3. Art and the capacity to symbolize

Artistic and theatrical expression is an important support during adolescence because it can serve to experiment and contain various emotions associated with the transformations of this period of the life cycle while channelling the adolescent's strengths and idealism.

The theatrical expression has several advantages over a group intervention that would be solely verbal: it establishes an emotional distance from reality, it facilitates non-verbal expression, particularly important for adolescents experiencing language difficulties, and allows adolescents to construct meaning from what they feel. Theatre play allows to stage the positive as well as the conflicts, and to explore various pathways, in a secure environment, that may sometimes lead to solutions.

For adolescents, theatre is also a play space where they create metaphors reflecting personal, family and collective experiences. The possibility of simultaneously expressing and appropriating multiple and ambivalent identities is one of the keys to the transforming power of theatre.

This transformation of consciousness takes place in a ritual setting that gives it a playful character. The ritual framework and the playful character contain the stories and images, as well as the evoked affects, and this without overflow. The theatrical experience becomes both a form of knowledge, a way of learning and a way of controlling or influencing events, or at least our perception of them.

4. Theatre and stories

The Plurality Theatre creative expression workshops offer adolescents a space where they can talk about themselves, among themselves, in front of adults, and feel accepted, respected and encouraged. These workshops allow both individual and collective work.

At the individual level, adolescents learn to recognize and express their feelings using tools inspired by theatre. Theatrical play is one of the means by which the adolescent may sometimes express very intense emotions such as pleasure, aggressiveness, anxiety and fear. Adolescents have the opportunity to share their experiences by telling personal stories and thus develop confidence and self-esteem.

The theatrical game allows the young:

- to multiply experiences;
- to transform reality;
- to stimulate imagination;
- to get to know each other;
- to explore sexuality;
- to learn to negotiate;

As far as collective work is concerned, there is a change in group dynamics. It is first and foremost through playing that a climate conducive to openness and sharing is created. It is important for group cohesion to develop listening to oneself and others, assertiveness while accepting the expression of the other, and negotiation of differences.

Theatre generally allows us to explore our own emotions directly and indirectly, but also to imagine what the other feels. This exploration of the self and the other allows us to develop empathy while trying to give meaning to what surrounds us.

Improvisation offers a great flexibility of expression and opens the space on various possibilities, in order to discover alternatives and transformations to the situations brought by the adolescents. This form of play encourages symbolism and makes it possible to pass from the individual to the collective.

The power of image and representation, and the use of fabrics and their colours, of rhythm and musical accompaniment, as well as the use of physical space on various levels, allow adolescents to evoke, to make sense, to create. They can do so through construction in a sensory way, not so much by means of logic, but by means of emotional expression.

III Plurality theatre workshops

1. Objectives

- Develop a creative expression space where adolescents can express various personal emotions:
 - by establishing different relationships between them and their environment;
 - by reducing distress associated with tensions between family, school and community.
- Support the exploration of everyday life: concerns, memories, losses and joys;
- Establish links between adolescents, based on respect for the diversity of identities and experiences;
- Consolidate prior learning and stimulate learning;
- To allow teachers (and other adults involved) as well as adolescents to take a different look at each other.

2. What the workshops are and what they are not

a) They are:

- A space of expression invested in by adolescents
- A space in which the therapist/instructor is leader of the play as well as participant in the play (the participation of the instructor in general is securing and stimulating the interest of the adolescents in sharing their stories, desires and experiences.
- A place to elaborate on encountered difficulties and develop a relative experience of power.
- An opportunity to develop self-esteem and a sense of community.
- A means of stimulating the imagination and offering, by their visual and tactile characteristics, a protective space that allows adolescents to play out their personal histories.
- A source of vocabulary enrichment
- A place to learn how to negotiate

b) They are not:

- A psychotherapeutic intervention
- A screening intervention
- An artistic performance

Do the adolescents in your class confide in you? What emotions do they show when speaking to you? What are yours?

3. Materials and play space

a) Musical instruments and sounds

A range of instruments from different countries is always very pleasant to use for adolescents. It is important that the instruments are in good condition, of good quality. Instruments must be respected and handled with care. Adolescents are generally very aware of the costs and treat them with sensitivity.

Music can begin by exploring rhythms and learning to play together and listen to each other. Music also serves to highlight, provoke and release emotions, and helps to reflect the content of adolescent's stories and other experiences.

b) Fabric

Fabrics of various textures, colours and dimensions promote the emergence of creative play. It is important to wash them and darn them if necessary. Adolescents respect fabrics when they play and certain instructions can be repeated, for example; do not tear them or walk on them with shoes. It is important to offer good quality, clean and soft fabrics.

Fabrics are a tool that helps symbolize an emotional state, and provides visual support to translated emotions while passing through the metaphor. They have a non-verbal and very strong evocative power.

c) Cubes/Blocks

They are made of wood and varnished or painted grey (to make you forget) and can fit together. Ideally, there are four, of different sizes, which allows theatrical play on different levels in space. The cubes are used to symbolize places, accessories. They can also become characters. As with fabrics, it is important to establish respect for the material. If the cubes break or are too dirty, it is useful to repair and repaint them.

In the practical part of the manual, material-related exercises are proposed, which allow for encouraging adolescents to develop their imagination and work together.

d) Play area

It is important to choose a place in which the adolescents will feel comfortable, away from the looks of others, so avoid the cafeteria, student lounge etc.. If the play area is the classroom, it is important to push the desks so that as much space as possible is available. It is useful for the play space to be fairly constant over time and for adolescents to be able to identify the space as being the theatre-play space.

It is useful to sweep the floor so that it is clean, because the floor is often used to play.

4. Process of the intervention

Plurality theatre workshops can be held throughout the year, with one 75-minute session per week (or more if the teacher wishes). They are integrated into the regular class schedule and are facilitated by the teacher in direct collaboration with other school stakeholders (if applicable) and, on the periphery, with the support of ÉRIT and the school administration.

The workshops aim to generate a safe and respectful environment where potential tensions can be addressed, while ensuring that they are contained by the group. Artistic performance is not an objective. The themes and emotions expressed are contained and supported by the group.

- Choosing themes

In order to facilitate the workshops and to help adolescents reflect on their experiences and the world around them, different themes are proposed over the weeks (see List of themes for the workshops in section IV Practical guide). These themes serve as a springboard for finding ideas, connecting with oneself and opening up to the group. Once they know how the workshops work, it is also important to ask adolescents to propose themes.

The theme can also become a useful in addressing certain situations or facts (f.e. war, elections), without launching a

polemic, but rather to talk and reflect together and explore the situation differently.

The different faces of learning (especially learning that comes from lived experience, even adverse, such as in the following themes new situations, travel, etc.) can become important themes for adolescents. In addition, the themes of family and friends are discussed. The themes that evoke issues of solidarity and social networking, and the theme of passage that evokes migration, adolescence or other turning points in adolescents' experience, are also suggested in Stories and Improvisations in Section IV Practical Guide, as well as appropriate exercises to address them with confidence.

Every week, the workshops consist of five parts:

a) An opening ritual: transforming the daily space into an area for play and theatre.

These few minutes are reserved to establish the transition between the school space and the play space during the workshops. The opening ritual creates a climate of active anticipation. (A section is reserved for opening and closing rituals in Section IV - Practical guide of this manual).

b) Working on motivation through fun: relaxing the atmosphere and motivating the adolescents to participate.

A play period of about 10 minutes, inspired by the games of childhood, is allocated at the beginning of each workshop to relax the atmosphere, to position oneself in the present. This period is an excellent trigger for:

- To awaken the body, the mind and make playful energy arise in order to prepare for the expression of emotions;

- Communicate without words;
- Laugh and have fun together;
- Getting to know each other in a different way.

c) Dramaturgical tools: giving tools to express oneself in a non-verbal and theatrical way and encourage learning.

This stage of the workshop lasts about 15 minutes and allows you to learn the basics of improvisation (see Appendix 1 and Theatrical Exercises in Section IV - Practical guide), to work on sounds and rhythms, to speak in a non-verbal manner, to symbolize emotions using tissues, etc. Adolescents will be able to:

- Discover other other ways to express themselves;
- Develop tolerance towards their own emotions and those of others;
- Develop empathy by listening to other adolescent's stories;
- Gradually open up;
- Speak up and express their emotions;
- Encourage the others to trust each other

d) Playing out the stories: create a space to talk and stage experiences.

This stage, inspired by the traditional playback theatre of Fox and Salas (see Appendix 2) and redesigned to meet the needs and objectives of the intervention, invites adolescents to tell personal stories. First in small groups, each person tells a story and then the adolescents choose one that they will stage themselves. These stories can be lived directly or indirectly by them (which makes it possible to respect the sometimes necessary distance and to avoid phenomena of retraumatisation). In addition, the workshop eventually allows adolescents to explore alternative scenarios, inspired by the way Boal's oppressed theatre works (see Appendix 3).

They often start as simple vignettes reflecting their experiences. During this stage, the adolescents co-construct the setting in space of the story of one of them. When returning in large groups, each group presents the story to the others. This step allows one to:

- Develop confidence and self-esteem;
- Encourage listening and non-judgment;
- See opportunities to transform situations;
- Hold power within community;
- Talk about yourself and share your differences.

This stage lasts about 30 minutes with groups that work well and already have the facility to express themselves in French. Working with those having difficulties or less facility, one must often work together on this stage up to 45 minutes.

e) Closing ritual: close the sharing space again.

It is important, during these few minutes, that the adolescents talk about what they experienced in this workshop. Often one word or sentence is sufficient (see Section IV Practical guide, Opening and Closing Rituals).

The workshops trigger certain emotional aspects in the imaginary space. The closing ritual concretely allows to contain these, in order to allow the return to daily life.

For the instructor, this ritual is also important, because it allows him to know what the adolescents are emotional about and to better accompany them.

Do you like rituals?

Do you already use certain rituals in your life?

Did you participate in activities that offered rituals?

IV Practical Guide

1. List of themes for the workshops

New situations (f.e., the first day at school in Québec or in your country of origin)

The trip

Things we love

Things we don't like

An important object

What we say and what we keep to
ourselves

Someone whispers in our ear

A meeting

Familles

Celebrations and
ceremonies

A gift

Friends

The street

Dreams and the future

The night

Goodbyes

2. Opening and closing rituals

1. Opening ritual23

A moment to establish the workshop

2. Closing ritual24

Reflect upon the workshop in a few words

TITLE**Opening ritual***A moment to establish the workshop***DURATION**

5 minutes

CATEGORY**Opening ritual****DIFFICULTY****OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Focus and mobilize attention

Group

Establish group identity

DESCRIPTION

A ritual opens each session

The ritual is used to:

- Open a space in which adolescents feel safe (emotionally)
- Create a new relationship between adolescents and between adolescents and adults.
- Establish a space of respect and sharing

In order to set up a difference from the normal course of school activities, the lights in the room are turned off, the adolescents are invited to enter the room in silence, they place themselves in a large circle and they have a moment of silence. Following this entry, the lights come on and warm-up exercises can begin, such as : "send the ball", "pass the clap", "mirror - move the energy in a circle". These exercises have the particularity of allowing the group to set up, to be together in the here and now. They create a bridge between everyday life at school and the workshop.

TITLE	The kaleidoscope <i>Look back at the workshop in a few words</i>
DURATION	5 minutes
CATEGORY	Closing ritual
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Talk about what was experienced during the workshop
Group	Close the workshop and contain what has been expressed

DESCRIPTION

Just as a ritual opens each session, each workshop ends with a short return period. Here, we propose some possible forms for this ritual, but you can invent other models. The important thing is that, during this ritual, the adolescents can talk about what they experienced in the workshop. Often a few words or a few short sentences are enough.

Adolescents place themselves in a circle. The play leader sends an imaginary ball to a adolescent, this adolescent says something about the workshop: an important moment during the workshop (positive or negative); something that he liked or not; something that he missed; what he wants to keep or not from the workshop; a feeling that he would like to keep for the week; or a privileged moment in relation to the workshop. Then the adolescent must throw the imaginary ball to another adolescent who in turn will say something about the workshop and so on, until all the adolescents have said something.

VARIATION (S) 1

Devide the class in two.

The leader asks the adolescents of the first group, one by one, what they retain from the activity, whether in terms of experience, feelings, or anything else.

Then the adolescents of the second group step forward, all at the same time, and reflect some of the elements reported by the adolescents of the first group. Reflection is done by sounds, words and movements that repeat the emotions or experiences mentioned.

The activity is repeated inversely.

VARIATION (S) 2

The adolescents are in a circle. Some volunteers are invited to the centre (minimum three). One after the other, the adolescents in the circle say what they remember from the workshop, and then the adolescents in the centre reflect one of the things mentioned. The adolescents freeze for a few seconds, as if they were in a group photo. After a few rounds, the volunteers change.

VARIATION (S) 3

The play leader invites the adolescents to form a large circle, backs facing inward (each in their own bubble). He asks them to think about important moments of the workshop, for a few minutes and with their eyes closed.

The play leader invites the adolescent to turn to the inside of the circle and open their eyes. He asks one adolescent what he/she has learned from the activity. The person to their right reflects with sound and movement on what has just been said. This second person turns to the person to his right and talks about what he thought about, and the other student reflects it with a sound or movement. The activity continues until all students have shared and reflected.

VARIATION (S) 4

The play leader invites the adolescents to form a large circle, backs inward (each in their own bubble) and to reflect on the workshop, with their eyes closed, for a few minutes.

The play leader divides the adolescents into two groups, A and B. The adolescents from team A make a line, each standing behind the other, facing the students in a circle from Team B.

A A A A A A A A A



The play leader asks each adolescent of team A to think of a word that summarizes what they liked or disliked doing during the workshop or a feeling they had. The first adolescent of the A line says his word, and the B team at the play leader's signal (1, 2, 3, go!) offers him an improvised, spontaneous, visual and sound gift of his favourite moment. The adolescent goes to the end of the line. The second adolescent in line expresses himself and receives a gift from group B, and so on. Once all the students from team A have passed, the roles of the teams are reversed: the adolescents from group B stand in a line and group A in a circle.

REMARK(S)

- It is important to speak loud enough, so that everyone can hear the words.
- If possible, specify the emotion associated with what you are talking about.
- Encourage adolescents to really look for/think about what is personal to them.
- The last variation (line and circle) takes longer to execute.


3. Games and warm-up exercises

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TITLE	Musical chairs <i>Turning around the chairs and sit down at the signal</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Game
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Enable energy – control
Group	Have fun together

DESCRIPTION

Chairs are placed in a circle, in the middle of the room. There is one chair less than there are participants. Participants walk in a circle around the chairs, following the rhythm of the music. When the music stops, everyone has to sit down. The person who remains standing is eliminated and will take care of the music for the next round. One chair is removed each time the exercise starts again, until only one person is left.


VARIATION (S)

Often two chairs are removed each time to shorten the exercise time.

REMARK (S)

Each adolescent eliminated during a round, takes care of the music for the next round.

This universally known game is very appreciated for its simplicity and its energizing effect.

TITLE	Statues <i>Touch the person without being seen to move</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Game
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Have fun together
Group	Enable energy – control

DESCRIPTION

One person volunteers in the group to be the keeper. The keeper is placed at one end of the class, the rest of the group is on one line at the other end. The keeper must turn his back on the others, who during this time try to get closer to him to touch his shoulder. The keeper may turn whenever he wishes, and any people he has caught moving must return to the start line and start again. The keeper says "one, two, three, " when his back is turned.

VARIATION (S)

Instead of saying "one, two, three, piano" the guardian can say another sentence in the language of his choice before turning around. This sentence can be the translation of "one, two, three, piano" or another sentence.

REMARK (S)

This game is very simple and mobilizing, and can be used in the first workshops, to install a certain group dynamic group and relationship before the start of theater activities.

TITLE	Unmask the leader <i>All imitate the leader, another must unmask him</i>
DURATION	15 minutes
CATEGORY	Game
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Listen
Group	Group complicity and cohesion

DESCRIPTION

Two students leave the room, and the group chooses a leader. This one executes a first movement and the others follow it. The two adolescents from outside enter the room and, observing the group, they try to find the leader. The leader of course varies his movements and the group copies his movements as faithfully as possible. It is often during these changes of movements that the leader is unmasked.

VARIATION (S)

It is possible to have three adolescents stand outside instead of two. It is not recommended to have only one adolescent standing outside, since they may feel isolated and in a situation provoking a feeling of failure.

REMARK (S)

- 1- The challenge for the group is to hide the leader.
- 2 - Precision in movement is very important.

TITLE**Hunter and hunted**

A variation on the cat and mouse game

DURATION

10 minutes

CATEGORY

Game

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Enable energy – control – mobilize attention

Group

Have fun together

DESCRIPTION

In the group, one hunter and one hunted are chosen.

The rest of the group is placed two by two, side by

side. The hunter has to try to touch the hunted. If he is

touched, he becomes the hunter.

The hunted can be put in safety at any time, by catching a person of a couple of two. At this point, the person who is at the end of the triad detaches and becomes the hunted.

REMARK (S)

Since only two people run at a time, this version of the "tag" game can be played in a relatively small space.

In addition to working on physical awareness, adolescents also develop attention, since they can become the hunted one at any time.

TITLE	The beret <i>Bring the beret back to your camp</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Game
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Enable energy – control, group complicity and cohesion
Group	Have fun together

DESCRIPTION

Two teams face each other on two lines. In each team, everyone receives a number, starting from one. In the centre, halfway between each team is the "beret" (a scarf, a hat). The leader calls a number: in each team, the one whose number is called must come to the centre and try to bring the beret back to his camp. But as soon as he takes the beret, his opponent can try to touch it. If he is hit with the beret in his hands before reaching his camp, the competitor has lost. Otherwise he's won. The first team reaching 10 points, wins.

VARIATION(S)

If the situation is blocked, the play leader can call other numbers to the rescue. Adolescents can then develop strategies where they pass the beret before they are touched/caught.

REMARK (S)

Pay attention to respect for others and the limits of the playing space.

TITLE	The telephone <i>Murmuring a word that can change</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Game
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Listen
Group	Pass

DESCRIPTION

The play leader places the students in a circle and suggests a theme for the game.

Examples of themes: your dearest wish, a message or news you received or passed on, etc.

A volunteer called "the source of the message" says a secret message in a low voice and in the ear of his left neighbor (called "the messenger"): a short sentence on the theme proposed by the play leader. The messenger repeats this secret message as he perceives it in the ear of his neighbor and so on, until this message arrives at the adolescent who is located in front of "the source of the message" in the circle. This last messenger then advances towards the source and pronounces aloud the secret message that was transmitted to him. The source of the message in turn repeats the original secret message and explains it aloud.

The activity continues with the adolescent to the left of the person who revealed the secret message. The latter becomes the new source.

VARIATION(S)

The message can be said in a language chosen by the source.

TITLE**Evolution**

A changeable movement is being passed on

DURATION

10 minutes

CATEGORY

Game

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Observation and listening

Group

Passing on

DESCRIPTION

Everybody's in a circle. One person makes a movement, his neighbour makes the same movement again. The third imitates the movement of the second and so on: the movement spreads all around the circle.

The movement will inevitably change since everyone moves differently: this is normal. On the other hand, we must not try to voluntarily transform the movement: on the contrary, we must try to reproduce it faithfully as it is originated by the person in front of us. The transformation will occur naturally.

TITLE**Race to the chair**

Everyone wants to sit, but there's one chair missing

DURATION

10 minutes

CATEGORY

Game

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Losing/finding one's place in the group

Group

Have fun together

DESCRIPTION

All the adolescents sit in chairs, in a circle. The play leader asks a volunteer to place him/herself in the centre of the circle. His/her chair is removed from the circle. At the play leader's signal, everyone changes chairs with the one in front of them. The exercise is done in silence, passing through the centre of the circle and without hitting or touching each other. The volunteer who is standing in the centre, without a chair, will try to take one too. The adolescent who will remain without a chair will be the one who will start the game again.

The exercise is repeated until most adolescents stood in the centre once.

VARIATION(S)

1. The adolescent who remains in the centre, without a chair, will play a character (in a theatrical game) suggested by the play leader or by the adolescents in the circle.
2. The exercise of the theatrical game can be done in different stages:
 - a. Ask for real people (a doctor, a nurse, an elderly person, etc.);
 - b. Then ask for animals;
 - c. And finally ask for fictional characters (an alien, the character from a tale, a television series, etc.).

REMARK(S)

There must be enough trust present in the group to do this exercise, in order to avoid negative comments or remarks about adolescents's acting or how some create their characters. Respect and listening are the basics of this exercise.

TITLE**The murderer – the wink***Unmask the one who murders by a wink of an eye***DURATION**

10 minutes

CATEGORY**Game****DIFFICULTY****OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Observation

Group

Group complicity

DESCRIPTION

The students, placed in a circle, close their eyes. The play leader secretly makes a person the assassin, by placing his hand on his shoulder. At the signal, everyone opens their eyes and starts moving through space. The assassin must try to eliminate victims: to do so, he must cross eyes with the others and wink without being spotted. The person to whom the wink is directed, dies. He/she's out of the game.

If a participant, who has not yet been killed, suspects someone of being the killer, he raises his arm and accuses him by saying: "I think it is...".

If he's right, the assassin is exposed and the game can start again. If he is wrong, it is the accuser who dies and must leave the game.

The assassin's goal is obviously to kill as many victims as possible before being spotted.

TITLE**The knots**

The adolescents hold hands and intertwine, two others try to disentangle them

DURATION

10 minutes

CATEGORY

Game

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Getting closer to others

Group

Collaboration

DESCRIPTION

Everyone is in a circle, holding hands.

A person leaves the classroom. Without letting go of their hands, the participants begin to mix and tie knots with the human chain they form. When the students are tangled, the person who has come out comes in and tries to untie the knots in the chain.

VARIANTION(S)

No one leaves the classroom, but it's the play leader who makes the knots. To make the task more complex, he/she can change the way students hold hands.

This can result in a series of inextricable knots.

REMARK(S)

This exercise is good for bringing participants together. While physical contact can be difficult at first, students tend to quickly forget this barrier, because they have a problem to solve.

In the variation, students cooperate to solve the situation, everyone has their own point of view on what should be done, but no one can really act. We thus work on negotiation and decision-making within the group.

TITLE**Enter or leave the circle**

One or two adolescents in the centre of the circle try to escape

DURATION

10 minutes

CATEGORY

Game

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Losing/finding one's place in the group

Group

Group cohesion and complicity

DESCRIPTION

The adolescents form a circle

One student stands in the centre of the circle. He/She tries to escape.

Adolescents in the circle hold hands and try to prevent the student from escaping.

The group can move in space, widen or narrow, alter its shape.

The student may try to escape by physical maneuvers, but can also be encouraged to use verbal strategies such as pleading, ordering, etc.

VARIATION(S)

1. Instead of try to escape, the student placed outside must try to enter the circle.
2. It is often suggested to place 2 people in the centre, or outside the circle.

REMARK(S)

Notice to the teacher: When a teacher sits in the centre, students can use the opportunity to express their feelings in a symbolic way.

Moreover, some students will give up quickly, others will prefer to stay in the middle, others will persevere. These attitudes may reflect their behaviour towards the difficulties they encounter in life. This exercise can be used to encourage those who drop out quickly, to help them meet challenges by feeling supported by the group. This exercise is not appropriate for students who have very little physical control. You can hurt yourself easily.

Care must be taken, especially when working with adolescents.

This exercise is proposed towards the end of the workshops when basic confidence is already established.

TITLE**One for all and all for one***The adolescents imitate a spreading movement***DURATION**

15 - 20 minutes

CATEGORY**Game****DIFFICULTY****OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Concentration, coordination

Group

Collaboration

DESCRIPTION

The adolescents are placed in staggered rows, forming a zigzag line.

Begin by setting the rhythm. For this, everyone repeats the sentence 'One of all and all for One.' When the rhythm is set, the first kid in the line makes a movement during one reciting of the sentence 'One for all and all for one'. At the next repetition, adolescent number one makes a new move and adolescent number two makes the first movement of number one.

At the next repetition, number one makes a third movement, number two makes the second movement, number three makes the first movement, and so on.

VARIATION(S)

Adolescents can change the refrain and propose other ones.

REMARK(S)

It is suggested that adolescents propose simple movements that can be easily taken up by others. The initiator of the movements is also responsible for the ability of others to follow him. This exercise requires a lot of concentration since each adolescent must memorize the following movement at the same time as he does his movement. Once the first movement reaches the end of the chain, adolescent one is replaced, goes to the tail.

This exercise is long and only recommended when adolescents have a certain ability for more complex exercises.

TITLE**Sending the ball***Throwing an imaginary ball***DURATION**

10 minutes

CATEGORY**Warm-up exercise****DIFFICULTY**

To do at the beginning of the first workshop

OBJECTIVES**Individual**

Self-confidence, discovering others

Group

Group cohesion

DESCRIPTION

Participants gather in a circle. This is an exercise where adolescents take turns throwing and receiving an imaginary ball. In addition to throwing the ball, the play leader asks the adolescent to name the peer to whom they are sending the ball.

Following a first round, the play leader may ask adolescent to share, before throwing the ball to the next person:


Their country of origin;

One of the languages they know;

An activity that characterizes them, that they like or that they do not like;

VARIATION(S)

The play leader can also ask adolescents to add arm movements, markers of a state of stress or calm, when throwing the ball.

TITLE	A new order <i>Regroup in space according to certain criteria</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Warm-up
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Get to know the others
Group	Create new bonds, create an environment of trust

DESCRIPTION

The group are placed in a large circle. The play leader proposes to the group, a series of classification criteria by which to form groups. For example, adolescents need to regroup themselves according to the colour of their sweaters.

VARIATION(S)

All kinds of regrouping possibilities can be invented, for example regroup:

Depending on the country of origin;
According to the number of brothers and sisters;
Depending on the means of transport they have already used;
Depending on the number of countries they know;
By order of magnitude.

TITLE	Worldmap <i>Regroup according to country</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Warm-up
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Get to know the others
Group	Create new bonds, create an environment of trust

DESCRIPTION

The play leader offers a departure point to start with the world map. The departure point can be Quebec or another country. He can lay a cloth on the ground, to represent the point of departure and all four cardinal directions. Then, he asks the adolescents to move to a country of their choice, depending on this point. Thereby, the classroom space becomes a 3D representation of the planet. Adolescents can say why they want to go to the country they name. If they can, they can say something in the language of that country.

This game can be refined: if several adolescents travel to the same country, they can position themselves according to the location of the cities and villages of the country they visit.

VARIATION (S)

Adolescents can make a second trip and still give the reasons for this change.

TITLE **Support the ceiling**
Unite the group in a common effort

DURATION 10 minutes

CATEGORY **Warm-up**

DIFFICULTY 

OBJECTIVES

Individual Mobilize energy

Group Group cohesion

DESCRIPTION

The adolescents stand in a circle. They raise their arms in the air, and the palms of their hands and their eyes are turned upwards as if they had to support the ceiling. The play leader asks them to imagine that the whole group is like one person, and, on his signal, all arms push up together. They imagine that the ceiling falls on their hands, that it is heavy and yet it must be supported. On a signal from the play leader, everyone pushes up, imagining that they are slowly raising the ceiling. The group cannot drop the weight. They must act as if they were one person, one body carrying this weight.

When the play leader shouts, "The ceiling is coming down! "Everyone must redouble their efforts and support the ceiling. When the play leader shouts, "The ceiling is falling to the left! "All must help to raise the ceiling, until the play leader stops the game.

VARIATION (S)

The play leader can change the object to be lifted: for example, he could propose a rock that the group must throw off.

REMARK (S)

It is a precise action which obliges the whole body to take joint action against an extremely heavy weight.

TITLE	Passing the clap <i>Take turns clapping while keeping the rhythm</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Warm-up
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Concentration
Group	Group cohesion, collaboration

DESCRIPTION

Everybody's in a circle. One person claps his hands while turning towards his neighbour. The neighbour claps his hands towards his neighbour and so on, following the circle.

VARIATION(S)


Each time a step is successful, you can add a difficulty with these variations:

1. Before starting, the play leader proposes a rhythm that must be maintained.
2. You can change direction, by sending the clap back where it came from.
3. We decide a course, f.e. zigzag. The clap must follow this predetermined path.
4. We can send the clap wherever we want.
5. There can be two claps going around at the same time.

REMARK (S)

It is an exercise which promotes group cohesion, since the success of the exercise depends on the participation of all.

Thanks to variations, we can make this exercise a warm-up routine that comes back at the beginning of each workshop. At each successful stage, the group can reflect on its progress as a group.

TITLE	Dodge <i>The adolescents move through space avoiding the others</i>
DURATION	10 -15 minutes
CATEGORY	Warm-up
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Finding on's place in the group – control
Group	Create a environment of trust and respect for others

DESCRIPTION

The group walks through space. The play leader can give a rhythm with his hands or with a musical instrument. Adolescents are asked to walk, without running, at the given pace and without leaving empty space in the room. The play leader will make a stop, and at that point, the youngsters freeze in their position. Afterwards, the rhythm and walking are resumed.

Dodging is a significant component of the exercise. The goal is to avoid physical contact (collision) with others.

VARIATION(S)

- 1- When the play leader stops, he asks the adolescents to jump and shout a word, for example the word 'theatre', or to sit down.
- 2- To move in order to become as big as possible and to fill as much space as possible with body and voice. Then shrink as much as possible by compressing the space we occupy, always with sounds. Repeat several times and finish by returning to normal walking.
- 3- Emotions can be added after a few weeks of workshops, such as being shy, angry, dreamy, afraid, etc.
- 4- The play leader says a number, and when he stops, all form groups as quickly as possible according to the given number.
- 5- The play leader says a number and a geometric figure. The adolescents organize the given geometric figure (circle, square, triangle) into groups.
- 6- When the play leader stops, the adolescents look at each other, and they must support the gaze of the person closest to them.

REMARK (S)

In this simple exercise, energy is mobilized quickly. Even the most passive students will eventually engage in the exercise.

TITLE**Mirror – Moving the energy in a circle**

In a circle, one person makes a movement, the others reproduce it

DURATION

5 - 10 min (duration depends on group size)

CATEGORY

Warm-up

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Energy, control, self-confidence

Group

Create a environment of trust and respect for others

DESCRIPTION

Everybody's in a circle. The play leader starts to move. Participants follow him as if they were mirrors. They copy everything the play leader does: physical movement, breathing, sounds and faces. When the play leader decides, he passes on his role as leader, offering it with his arms to someone else. Each in turn becomes a leader.

REMARK(S)

Adolescents may feel a bit ridicule at first. It may take some time to silence the little critical voice we have inside. It should be emphasized to adolescents that this judgment limits us and prevents us from acting. When we overcome the fear of ridicule, trust and spontaneity take over.

TITLE**Safety circle***Visualization exercise***DURATION**

15 minutes

CATEGORY**Warm-up****DIFFICULTY****OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Relaxation, awakening the imagination

Group

Respect for others

DESCRIPTION

Visualization requires establishing a climate of relaxation and recollection.

To help build this calm, adolescents can place the chairs in a circle (backs facing the centre) and then sit down.

The lights in the room are turned off or dimmed.

The play leader, in a calm voice and taking his time, begins...:

"You can close your eyes and breathe deeply, silently. If you are not comfortable closing your eyes, create a bubble around you in which you are alone and comfortable."
(Give a minute here, to establish a climate of tranquility.)

"Breathe deeply 3 more times: imagine a tiny spot of light in front of you that comes closer to you. Imagine it getting bigger until you are in a warm and comfortable light.

Break

"You breathe normally and imagine a place in which you find yourself alone and in perfect safety... no one can come to disturb you, you are at peace and in safety; this place belongs to you, it is yours and you do with it what you want. It can be outside; outdoors or indoors.

It is a place where there is no one else but you; in this place nothing nasty or terrible can happen to you... everything is calm and reassuring."

Break

"Imagine walking: how is the ground, how is the air around you? What's the weather like? The air is calm, calm..."

What are the colours, how is the light around you? Is it day or night? What can you smell? Is there nature around, how is it?

Is there music? What kind of music? Since you own this place, you can imagine what you want, what makes you most happy.

Is there any food? Your favorite dishes?"

Break

"This place is big enough for you to lie on the floor, stretch, walk and maybe run. There may be an animal with you... who is your friend... who loves you... what does it look like? What are its colors?

Break

"Soon you will leave this place... but you know how to return there, you know the magic way... we will take this way again to return to the beginning..."

You take three deep breaths and feel the pleasant warmth of the light and then slowly the light becomes a bright spot in front of you. You know you can find that light point whenever you want, it's always there for you and waiting for you."

Break

"Breathe normally, stretch in your chair or stand."

Break


We turn on the lights in the room.

VARIATION(S)

- 1- Music can be used.
- 2- It is possible to work on different themes (ceremonies, trips, etc.).

REMARK(S)

The play leader should be attentive to the level of emotional comfort of the adolescent. If a adolescent's breathing becomes more restless, he/she may place a protective hand on their shoulder. If the discomfort persists, the adolescent may open his eyes.

TITLE	Pearl necklace <i>Hold hands to test the group's solidity</i>
DURATION	5 minutes
CATEGORY	Warm-up
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Self-respect and respect for own boundaries
Group	Group cohesion

DESCRIPTION

In a circle, the adolescents take each other by the hand. They imagine that they are pearls and that their arms are the thread that unites the necklace. Adolescents stretch to the maximum, the sensation of the necklace breaking is felt but the necklace must not break. After a few seconds, the playmaker asks the adolescents (the pearls) to get closer, then the exercise starts again.

VARIATION(S)

The play leader randomly chooses one of the 'beads' and, by instructing him to descend to the ground, the wire may break, but the other beads must help to straighten the adolescent because the necklace must not break.

REMARK(S)

This game motivates collective attention. The play leader must remember that the objective is to keep the necklace intact. It's a team effort. All adolescents become aware that all of them are important for the team to succeed.

TITLE	Recognize <i>Form pairs then find each other with eyes closed, by making sound</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Warm-up
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Listen
Group	Group complicity

DESCRIPTION

At first, the play leader gives each adolescent the idea of an object, and the adolescent finds a sound that relates to that object. The idea of an object is given to two different people, without both people knowing it.

Afterwards, the adolescents mix while walking. When the play leader gives the signal, they try to find their partner through the sound that they have in common and that is attached to the object.

When they get together, they get out of the game.

VARIATION(S)

Students pair up. They decide together on a sound that will allow them to recognize each other (ex: a whistle, a click of the tongue).

Then they mix as they walk around the classroom with their eyes closed. When the play leader gives the signal, they try to find their original partner with the sound sign they have chosen.

When they get together, they get out of the game.

REMARK(S)

This exercise is more difficult in shy groups, or in groups where there is not much basic trust. It is therefore preferable to do so after several weeks of work.

TITLE**Group story**

The group invents a story by adding one word at a time

DURATION

10 - 15 minutes

CATEGORY

Warm-up

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Listen

Group

Co- construct

DESCRIPTION

The students are all in a circle. The goal is to tell and build a story together.

In a first step, the play leader starts the game with a word, then the following adolescent repeats the word and adds a new word and so on.

In a second, more difficult version, the play leader starts the game with one word, the adolescent who follows him adds another word and so on. However, each person only says the word they add, they do not repeat the previous words. A story is built on the memory of the words spoken and not on the repetition of them.

The play leader asks at the end if anyone can tell the story he has heard.

VARIATION(S)

Instead of one word, each person adds a sentence. The goal in the second version is to be able to construct the story without repeating the previous sentences.

REMARK(S)

Everyone hears the story they want to hear. What is fun is to accept to listen to all the versions, which teaches us that there is not just one way to look at something.

TITLE**Disobedience**

Do the opposite of what the play leader says

DURATION

10 minutes

CATEGORY

Warm-up

**DIFFICULTY****OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Develop self-conscious

Group

Become aware of the existing relationships

DESCRIPTION

The play leader gives "orders" for example: "stay still", "make as much noise as possible",


"Move away from each other." Adolescents must do the opposite of what is required.

The orders can be addressed to the whole group, to one part of the group or even to one adolescent. When the play leader claps his hands three times, the game stops.

REMARK(S)

This exercise helps to create a climate of complicity between adolescents. Disobedience is accepted and even encouraged. This breaks the usual framework of adolescent / adult relationships during the duration of the game.

It's not that easy to disobey. Many adolescents will naturally tend to obey.

TITLE	Physical contact <i>Move two by two while keeping one point of contact</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Warm-up
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Listen, self-respect and respect own boundaries
Group	Trusting others, connecting and discovering others

DESCRIPTION

Students place themselves in pairs and move through space, connected by a part of their body (head, back, elbows, hips, knees or other) chosen in advance by the play leader or the group.

VARIATION(S)

When the adolescents have succeeded in this exercise, they can be given new challenges: increase the speed of the movement or converse with the other while they move.

REMARK(S)

This exercise is fun and engaging. It requires concentration and cooperation because one of the two synchronizes his steps and movements with those of his partner, taking care of changes in rhythm and direction. When walking around, adolescent continue to be aware of their environment so as not to create accidents.

TITLE	Restore the order <i>Identify people who have changed places and replace</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Warm-up
DIFFICULTY	 - 
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Observation, self-confidence
Group	Group cohesion and complicity

DESCRIPTION

The group is placed in a large circle, each seated on a chair. A volunteer remains in the centre of the circle. The play leader suggests that the adolescent at the centre takes a good look at the others and memorize their places. He will then ask him/her to close his/her eyes and the others to change chairs. Then, the volunteer opens his eyes and is asked to put the adolescents back in the original order.

REMARK(S)

- The challenge for the person at the centre is to define a strategy that will help his memory.
- A group spirit sets in.

TITLE

Count to 20

The group must count to 20, without 2 adolescents counting at the same time

DURATION

5 - 10 minutes

CATEGORY

Warm-up

DIFFICULTY



OBJECTIVES

Individual

Listening, concentration

Group

Collaboration, group cohesion

DESCRIPTION


Everybody's in a circle. The goal is to get from 1 to 20 (5, 10 or even 30). Randomly, the students, one by one, count to 20.

If more than one student is speaking at the same time, start from 1.

REMARK(S)

Reaching the given figure is not the most important goal. It's more about developing listening and concentration. It is important to specify this so as not to create a feeling of failure.

At first, participants may want to finish quickly. This doesn't necessarily work: Slowing down and trusting others becomes a safer way. Some may try to establish strategies (for example, only two students count). It is clever but it is not the objective of this exercise.

TITLE	Snapshot <i>Adolescents build complementary actions together</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Warm-up
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Observe, develop imagination
Group	Co- construct

DESCRIPTION

The group is placed in a circle. A volunteer stands in the centre and invents a character with a physical posture that corresponds to a specific action of that character, and freezes (ex: someone washes his face). A second adolescent comes forward and proposes another action that completes the first in time (ex: 1- someone washes his face, 2- he turns off the tap or wipes his face). This continuation must be obvious to the group.

There can be up to 5 people who propose an action to the sequence and then freeze.

VARIATION(S)

- 1- The adolescents who do the enactment can shape it.
- 2- It is possible to divide the group into 3 sub-groups. In each subgroup a series of snapshots is proposed. During the presentations, each subgroup proposes the sequence of snapshots in the wrong order. The other adolescent must reconstruct the original order and verify it with the subgroup.

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TITLE**Sound structure**

Co-constructing a rhythm using musical instruments

DURATION

5 minutes

CATEGORY

Rhythm exercise

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Listening, individual contribution to the group

Group

Co-construct, develop communication

DESCRIPTION

A first person proposes a sound and a rhythm, using a musical instrument.

One after the other, the others intertwine with other instruments and other rhythms. Sounds and rhythms become more complex.

The first person to start, brings the group to silence.

VARIATION(S)

Along with sound and rhythm, movements can be integrated, to make the warm-up exercise more complex.

REMARK(S)

This exercise can become cacophonous: remind the adolescents to listen and respect others.

TITLE **Race with rhythm**

Move at the pace of the rhythm set by the play leader

DURATION 10 minutes

CATEGORY **Rhythm exercise**

DIFFICULTY 

OBJECTIVES

Individual Listening

Group Respect others

DESCRIPTION

The adolescents stand in a circle. The play leader asks them to run according to a rhythm. He asks them to follow their right partner and keep a similar distance from each other throughout the exercise. The play leader asks the adolescents to relax their bodies. Then he produces a rhythm with his hands or with a percussion instrument. Adolescents run, following this rhythm. The rhythm changes: fast and then slower, passing through slow motion and immobility. Then the play leader reverses the pace: slow to fast. The exercise continues until the play leader ends the exercise.

VARIATION(S)

1. If the play leader does not have a percussion instrument, he can use his hands or any other object to produce the rhythm.
2. In this exercise, movements can be added during the run (f.e.: sitting, jumping and/or shouting the word 'theatre'). This mobilizes the group's energy.

REMARK(S)

The challenge for adolescents is to keep the same distance from their partners.

TITLE**Rhythm games**

Two teams face each other and speak through rhythms

DURATION

20 minutes

CATEGORY

Rhythm exercise

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Listening, coordination, self-confidence

Group

Work on group cohesion


DESCRIPTION

The group forms two teams (A and B), facing each other. A leader, chosen collectively, is at the centre of each team.

The first leader 'A' must make a rhythmic movement forward, accompanied by a sound. He repeats that movement six times. The first two times, he does it alone. The third time, his group reproduces his movement and sound by taking a step forward and position itself next to its leader. At the same time, team B has to take a step back (so, team A steps forward, team B steps back). Team A continues to come forward until team B no longer has room to step back.

The exercise resumes with the second group, whose leader 'B' proposes a rhythmic movement, accompanied by a sound, by taking one step forward. After showing the movement and sound twice, team B steps forward pushes team 'A' away, at the same pace as team B comes further forward.

You can continue this exercise for several rounds, switching between team A and B.

TITLE	The rondo <i>Everyone proposes a rhythm that is then taken on by the entire group</i>
DURATION	15 minutes
CATEGORY	Rhythm exercise
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Listening, self-confidence, losing/finding one's place in the group
Group	Group cohesion, respect for others

DESCRIPTION

Everybody's in a circle. We start by setting up a regular rhythm with the feet, which will be continued throughout the exercise. When the basic rhythm is set, each participant takes turns adding a short rhythm with their body (hands, feet, mouth). This rhythm must not last more than four beats. This new rhythm is added after repeating the basic rhythm. Always adding more pieces to the rhythm, the other adolescents always repeat the preceding rhythm.

VARIATION(S)

When the adolescents have integrated the basic rhythm and have proposed a first version of the rondo, you can add some more complexity to the exercise.

You can, for example, add a movement to the basic rhythm. For example: take steps towards the centre of the circle. These movements, along with the rhythm has to be continued by the adolescents.

REMARK(S)

The exercise can be preceded by a simple game using rhythm (see the exercise "rhythm games").

In order to properly set up the alternation of the proposal/response, the play leader may repeat the basic rhythm several times. Only when the basic rhythm is well integrated, the adolescents, propose their rhythm.

It might be difficult to express yourself within the group.

Presenting a rhythm that the others must repeat, requires some courage.

Some will want to make a complicated rhythm, to impress others – but a complicated rhythm is often not well taken up by the group.

In order for the group to get the rhythm right, students need to pay close attention and really listen to each other.

TITLE	Fabric <i>Use fabric to evoke something else: an object, a place etc...</i>
DURATION	10 minutes
CATEGORY	Exercise w fabric
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Self-confidence, listening, develop imagination
Group	Create a symbolic language

DESCRIPTION

The group is divided into several sub-groups. A piece of fabric lies at the centre of each group. The play leader says: "This fabric is no longer a fabric, it is (name of an object...)".

The adolescent to the right of the play leader takes the fabric. He then proposes a movement and a sound that describes his idea of the object. He can not name it.

He leaves the fabric in the centre. The person to his right now takes the fabric and proposes another movement and sound to represent the object and so on...

VARIATION(S)

- 1- This exercise can be done in large groups as well. You can then work with co-construction: The adolescent who takes the fabric, transforms it into a new object. Once the new meaning is understood, another adolescent can go to the centre, communicate with the first adolescent and improvise a scene or situation with the object.
- 2- The second adolescent can also complete the proposal by using another fabric.

REMARK(S)

During the first rounds, adolescents' imagination can be supported/stimulated by suggesting to use the color or texture of the fabric as a source of inspiration (f.e. blue may remind them of water).

This exercise introduces the use of fabrics to represent images or objects, to allow enactments. These skills are also useful when improvising.

TITLE **The fabric becomes an emotion**

Use fabric to evoke an emotion

DURATION 15 minutes

CATEGORY Exercise w fabric

DIFFICULTY 

OBJECTIVES

Individual Self-confidence, listening, imagination

Group Create a symbolic language

DESCRIPTION

The play leader suggests forming small groups of three or four participants. Fabrics of different colours are placed at the centre of each group. In these small groups, adolescent thinks of an emotion or a physical state (fear, joy, hunger, fatigue, etc.). He then takes the fabric and tries to express this emotion or physical state using the fabric.

VARIATION(S)

The play leader can create a bit of context to help adolescents further establish/clarify the emotion. For example: "You're angry because you've just received bad news"; "You're tired because you've been working all day"; etc.

REMARK(S)

What is important in this exercise is that the adolescents learn to express metaphorical images, emotions through the fabrics.

TITLE **The fabric becomes a character**

Use fabric to evoke a character

DURATION 15 minutes

CATEGORY **Exercise w fabric**

DIFFICULTY 

OBJECTIVES

Individual Develop imagination

Group Transmission and communication

DESCRIPTION

Working in small groups, one adolescent places himself at the centre of the circle and chooses a piece of fabric. He makes the fabric move as if it were alive. Then he does something: dance, eat, die, etc. He can talk or make sounds to elaborate his story. At the end, he leaves the centre and returns to the circle.

VARIATION(S)

The adolescent can try to express an emotion or the play leader can propose one to them (f.e. being sick, sad, happy, tired, angry, etc.).

You can also add steps, rhythms, music.

After having gone through the previous steps, you can add interactions between two 'fabric-personnages'. Once a first adolescent has proposed a character/a piece of fabric representing an emotion or a physical state, a second fabric character can come into play. The two look at each other, then they improvise an interaction.

REMARK(S)

This exercise requires a lot of concentration. Adolescents can be asked to work individually at first, exploring the creation of various characters experiencing different emotions. Then afterwards, you work in small groups. You can build the characters collectively as well.

TITLE**What I use fabric for***Use fabric in the construction of a short scene***DURATION**

10 minutes

CATEGORY

Exercise w fabric

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Listen, talk about yourself, develop imagination

Group

Collaboration, respect for others

DESCRIPTION

The group is divided in two. Each group forms a circle and the adolescents sit down. Pieces of fabric are placed in the centre of each circle.

The play leader asks the adolescents to imagine that they are with a friend and that they are playing together, or that they are interacting with an object, that they are manipulating it.

An adolescent who feels ready, step into centre of the circle, takes a piece of fabric and uses it as an imaginary object. He interacts with the objects and develops a short scene.

When another adolescent feels ready, he joins the adolescent in the middle. He then improvises together with the first adolescent, adapting his actions to the actions of the other. This exercise is a variation of the previous exercise, but slightly more complex.

REMARK(S)

This exercise does not seek to develop mime/acting qualities, but aims to reinforce the type of emotional investment needed in theatre.

TITLE**The machine**

Collectively build a machine by adding sound and repetitive motion

DURATION

10 minutes

CATEGORY

Enactment exercise

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES**

**Individual
Group**

Listening, individual contribution to the group
Group cohesion and complicity

DESCRIPTION

Everybody's in a circle. One adolescent goes to the centre and proposes a repetitive movement accompanied by a sound. It is like the first wheel of a gear/machine.

Another student joins him in proposing a repetitive movement and a sound that completes the first. More students add to the movement as the exercise develops.

When the machine is completed (the maximum number of participants is set in advance), the person who has started stops the machine. The others must pay close attention and stop moving at the same time.

VARIATION(S)

This exercise gradually becomes more complex and ultimately becomes a sort of fluid sculpture. The sculpture can be used to reflect and amplify the participants' stories.

We can:

- 1- speed up or slow down the machine
- 2- add a theme.
- 3- add emotions, either all adolescents have the same emotion, or each act out his/her own emotion.

REMARK(S)

This exercise can be introduced gradually, and can be made more complex as adolescents become familiar with it. You can also use it in other exercises.

The fear of sounding/looking ridiculous when making a movement/a sound can block adolescents at the beginning of the exercise. To counter this, you can either plan a warm-up that will make them more comfortable, or do the exercise in small groups.

TITLE**Snapshot***Reflecting an evoked story by gestures, sounds and words***DURATION**

20 minutes

CATEGORY**Enactment exercise****DIFFICULTY** &  in case of the variations**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Listening, self-confidence, develop imagination

Group

Share your history, empathy

DESCRIPTION

The play leader invites five volunteers to play.

The play leader asks the rest of the group to think of a memory, related to the theme he proposes (ex: When you were 5 years old...). He invites three adolescents to share their memories.

In a few seconds the volunteers improvise and reflect one aspect of the mentioned memory with sounds, words and/or movements. This snapshot lasts a few seconds, then the volunteers return to their initial position.

The play leader invites five other volunteers and repeats the exercise twice.

VARIATION(S)**1. The postcard :**

This exercise is similar to the previous one, with the difference that the volunteers do not return to their initial position between each snapshot, but remain frozen and take new positions from one snapshot to the next. The challenge is to reflect/adapt as quickly as possible.

2. The play leader proposes a situation (ex: start school, have a new boyfriend or girlfriend, go to a party where you don't know anyone,...). Adolescents walk through class, while the the play leader counts. When he stops counting, the adolescents get into a pose, related to the proposed situation and they freeze. The play leader invites them to start walking again and proposes a new situation, and so on.

3. Enactment :

The adolescents stand in a circle, backs facing inward. The play leader proposes a theme and gives a signal, f.e. with a musical instrument. The adolescents turn around, facing the centre of the circle and express the situation through a pose and then remain frozen in this position. The play leader takes an imaginary picture of the poses.

Giving the signal, the play leader invites the adolescents to return to their initial position and he starts again.

4. Animated enactment :

Once the enactment has been created and the photo has been taken, the adolescents must create a second enactment by imagining their character ten seconds later in the same situation.

You can try different variations: one minute later, one hour, one day. Every time, adolescents must form a new picture. You can also go back in time.

5. The next step consists of giving life to the characters, starting from the photo. After ten seconds, they stop to form a new picture. A adolescent takes a posture, a second arrives and seeks a posture that is in continuity with the first action (this continuation of postures must be obvious to all). Then, a third adolescent arrives and continues the action with another posture, then a fourth, until all the adolescent integrate into a table of postures.

REMARK(S)

It is an exercise that requires a good level of listening and improvisation. It is advisable to do the exercise only when a good level of trust has been established in the group.

This exercise requires several skills: acting, staging, storytelling. It must therefore be brought about gradually, over several sessions, to give adolescents enough time to truly grasp it.

Once this exercise has been mastered, it can also be used to illustrate/act out stories told by adolescents.

TITLE**Sculpture and movement**

Construct a series of non-verbal enactments

DURATION

15 minutes

CATEGORY

Enactment

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Listening, self confidence, spontaneity

Group

Co-construction

DESCRIPTION

The adolescents are in a circle. The play leader invites a adolescent to the centre; he/she must take a posture that corresponds to a specific moment of an action. A second adolescent goes to the centre and takes a posture that matches/completes the first. When the first adolescent begins to move, the second moves by integrating with the other adolescent's movements. Thus a relationship is established between the two.

After a while, a third person goes to the centre, places his hand on the shoulder of the person he wants to replace (this person returns to the large circle). The third person takes his place and initiates a new movement that will change the movement of the other. Replacecing each other can continue for a few minutes.

VARIATION(S)

You can add a theme or emotion that will serve as inspiration. You can also improvise a dialogue.

REMARK(S)

This exercise requires the ability to adjust to the other and to listen carefully.

TITLE**I'm freezing***Move through class with one immobilized body part***DURATION**

15 minutes

CATEGORY**Theatre exercise****DIFFICULTY****OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Develop self-consciousness

Group

Respect others

DESCRIPTION

As each adolescent walks, they choose a part of their body that gradually freezes. They keep this part frozen, while moving in the class space. They walk, run, turn, roll, fall, get up, etc.

The instruction is thus that they move the rest of the body while keeping this one part frozen. Otherwise the whole body will freeze completely.

VARIATION(S)

Move through space with a sensation (being in the mud, on a cloud, in the water, in quicksand, etc.) or feeling (joy, sadness, fear, anger, pride, shyness, etc.)

TITLE**Salute**

Walk fast and salute the others

DURATION

5 minutes

CATEGORY

Theatre exercise

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Discover others, mobilize energy

Group

Respect the others

DESCRIPTION

The play leader asks the adolescents to walk around, following the rhythm he sets. They are then asked to greet each other in the language of their choice and/or by making a gesture towards the other, while walking and respecting the given rhythm.

The play leader accelerates the pace until the students are all "jumbled up" and ends by saying "Freeze!" ». Then the adolescents freeze in their positions.

After this round, the play leader asks the youngsters if they know how to greet each other (in their country of origin or elsewhere). The game then resumes using the adolescents' greeting suggestions..

VARIATION(S)

Different speed variations can be used, even slow motion.

Add to the greetings the different contexts in which individuals greet each other (in a group of friends, during a ceremony - marriage, funeral - according to the person's age, sex or status, etc.).

REMARK(S)

This exercise is more effective with a large group.

If some offer to shake hands between boys and girls, this may cause discomfort. If this is the case, the play leader may offer to greet each other as everyone wishes or as everyone does in their home country. Ways of greeting can be gestural and/or verbal. The play leader may also invite adolescent to talk about the discomfort associated with certain forms of greeting they have experienced upon arrival in Canada or elsewhere.

TITLE**Find your place**

Move around with a chair, finding its place

DURATION

20 minutes

CATEGORY

Theatre exercise

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Observation, mobilizing attention, losing/finding your place in the group

DESCRIPTION

Each adolescent takes a chair and form a semicircle. At the cue from the play leader, everyone takes their chairs and walks around the room. At the second cue from the playmaker, everyone places their chairs where they are and continues to move around the room. At the third cue from the playmaker, everyone freezes, then picks up their chair and puts it back in the same place in the starting semicircle.

The exercise is repeated, but this time without making any noise and while increasing the rhythm.

The play leader then suggests that the chair is like a living space, in which everyone explores the different ways of sitting, climbing or sleeping on the chair, etc. The chair is also a place to sit. Then, we do the same exploration, but in pairs, looking for symmetry or opposition (up-down, behind-front), we can give open or closed instructions, for example: "Move freely", or "When sitting down, your feet must not touch the ground", etc.

VARIATION(S)

The exercise can be accompanied by music to support/set the rhythm. With a slow pace, we work on control and concentration, while with a fast pace we work on the group's energy.

REMARK(S)

Remind adolescents that the goal isn't to perform/succeed, but to concentrate and control their movement.

TITLE**How I feel**

Express how you feel with a gesture


DURATION

10 minutes

CATEGORY

Theatre exercise

DIFFICULTY

 with encouragement

OBJECTIVES**Individual**

Talk about yourself, develop self-consciousness

Group

Respect the others

DESCRIPTION

The adolescents are in a circle. They take turns making a gesture to express how they feel at the moment. This gesture is repeated by all with the same intensity and at least once.

VARIATION(S)

The adolescents (in turn) make a gesture accompanied by a sound (or rhythm) that illustrates how they feel.

A succession can also be built gradually. A first adolescent makes a gesture, a sound or a rhythm to express how he feels. He directs this action towards another person in the circle. That person observes and responds with a sound, a gesture or a rhythm directed at a third person and so on.

REMARK(S)

Expressing how you feel in a physical and non-verbal way is used in other exercises as well (the machine, the kaleidoscope). It is therefore in our interest to quickly familiarize adolescents with this notion.

TITLE	The coat <i>How to express an emotion with a daily gesture</i>
DURATION	20 minutes
CATEGORY	Theatre exercise
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Develop communication, spontaneity
Group	Share, transmit stories

DESCRIPTION

The group is divided in two, each group gets into a circle, and the adolescents sit down. A volunteer stands in the middle of the circle. The play leader asks him to pretend that he is at home and that he is putting on his coat. Then, the play leader proposes feelings for the adolescent to reflect while putting on his coat. For example: putting on your coat while being very tired; hating that coat; hating that coat and being very late for a class; loving that coat and putting it on for a very important date; loving that coat and being late; etc.

VARIATION(S)

1. The exercise can be done in pairs or in groups, proposing different situations (ex: looking for something in your bag, etc.), or proposing a situation where adolescents have opposite positions. (one wants to get in and the other to get out, one wants to get on the subway and the other wants to get off) For each situation, you have to add the emotional conditions of the action.
2. The group can be divided in two so that the students who are doing the action get comments, suggestions or questions from those watching.
3. The exercise can be done in large groups and students can be asked to pass one by one to do their action. The rest of the group tries to guess the action and emotion that are illustrated.

REMARK(S)

The importance of this exercise (with coat, bag, etc.) is to find the necessary inner justification for each action.

TITLE **Fighting games**

Two groups respond to each other by combat movements

DURATION 15 minutes**CATEGORY** **Theatre exercise****DIFFICULTY** **OBJECTIVES****Individual** Activate energy, control, individual contribution to the group**Group** Group cohesion, respect the others**DESCRIPTION**

Form two rows, facing each other: row A and row B. row A mimics an attack movement with the arms towards row B (without actual physical contact). The response in row B is a physical response (in slow motion) that corresponds to the attack ----- . For example: a adolescent pretends to give a blow to the right shoulder of the one opposite, the latter moves his right shoulder in slow motion, showing the effect of the blow received. Row A moves forward and row B moves back with a response movement until it reaches the wall. B becomes A. The exercise is repeated two or three times.

The second time, the movements are done following the rhythm given by the play leader (the rhythms are set by hand or with a percussion instrument).

VARIATION(S)

1. According to the maturity of the group and the control of the movements, one can add movements with the feet, always without touching.
2. The exercise can also be done in pairs and moving in all directions, as in a real fight, without predicting who attacks first.

REMARK(S)

Remind adolescent to control their movements and respect partners.

TITLE**Pass the box**

Pass on an imaginary box, respecting its suggested size and weight

DURATION

10 minutes

CATEGORY

Theatre exercise

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Listening, observation, develop imagination

Group

Share, collaborate

DESCRIPTION

First, the play leader leaves the room. He comes back mimicking to carry a box. He must choose the size and weight of the box. Once he's moved around a little with the box, he passes it to one of the kids. He looks at what he has received, then puts something else in the box and gives it to another person.

Care must be taken that the person receiving the box respects the original size and weight. The box thus passes through the hands of several people.

VARIATION(S)

When the exercise has been repeated a few times and has been well integrated, the person receiving the box can be asked to open it and imagine its contents. The adolescent must mime what he/she looks at without using words.

REMARK(S)

Adolescents tend to present concrete objects, especially if they are not familiar with this exercise. It's a good way to teach them how to use their imaginations to imagine more abstract things.

TITLE**Meeting***Identify with a sign***DURATION**

10 minutes

CATEGORY**Theatre exercise****DIFFICULTY****OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Listening, discovering others, concentration

Group

Respect the others, collaborate, share

DESCRIPTION

Adolescents are scattered throughout the room. The play leader whispers a word into each adolescent's ear (f.e. a means of transport, a phenomenon of nature, or an animal). The play leader gives the same word to two different adolescents. Each adolescent must then imagine the sound and movement of what has been said to them. When the play leader gives the starting signal, all the adolescents begin to move and act out sound and movements related to what they must represent. While moving, they search for the other person who represents what they represent.

When two people are together they stay together until everyone has found their partner.

TITLE **A gesture that identifies me**
Propose a gesture that identifies us

DURATION 15 minutes

CATEGORY **Theatre exercise**

DIFFICULTY 

OBJECTIVES

Individual Listening, discovering yourself and others

Group Empathy

DESCRIPTION

Adolescents stand in a circle. The play leader asks them to think of an activity that is important to them or that personally identifies them. At the signal, an adolescent introduces himself by making the gesture simply and in slow motion. A slow motion allows to find the feelings and emotions related to the motion. The person next to the adolescent takes up the presentation of the first adolescent and adds his own gesture, always in slow motion. The third takes up the complete series and adds his gesture, and so on.

VARIATION(S)

The repetition of the previous movements is done at normal speed, only each new movement is done in slow motion.

REMARK(S)

Although the exercise is simple, there is a certain difficulty to remember all the sequences, especially in large groups. That is why to succeed, it is suggested to start with small groups.

5. Stories & improvisations

Games

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TITLE**The suitcase**

Evoke the journey through an object in a suitcase

DURATION

15 minutes

CATEGORY

Improvisation

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Talk about yourself, get to know the others

Group

Empathy, sharing stories, co-construction

DESCRIPTION

The class is divided into two groups. A cube (or chair), representing a suitcase, is placed in the centre of the room.

In turn, each student of the first group moves forward to the "suitcase" and drops something that they would like to take with them if they went on a trip: it can be an object, a person, a feeling, an idea.

By depositing his "something", the student must name it and say why he would like to take it with him.

When all the students in the first group have passed, the students in the second group reflect (See "How I feel" exercise) one of the things they heard. They walk forward and make a gesture with a sound.

VARIATION(S)

This exercise can be adapted, using the same principle, to other situations and themes.

REMARK(S)

For students to be familiar with the idea of reflecting an idea, a feeling through a gesture and a sound, they should have already done exercises using this skill (for example, the "How I feel" exercise).

TITLE**Thematic sculpture**

Play out relationships through enactment

DURATION

20-25 minutes

CATEGORY**Improvisation****DIFFICULTY****OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Talk about yourself, express yourself, act out situations

Group

Collaboration, empathy

DESCRIPTION

One adolescent becomes sculptor. He chooses a number of classmates to play the significant members of his family. Then, he places each person in a position that he considers representative of the bond that currently exists between family members. When he places people, he uses gestures to explain what he wants from others, he does not explain verbally. This is the first sculpture of the family.

In a second stage, he places the characters in a new position, which would be the bonds he would rather see develop between the members of his family. This is the second sculpture of the family.

Finally, the adolescent is asked to construct a transitional sculpture: this is to show the way in which it is possible to pass from one situation to another.

VARIATION(S)

1. The adolescent who builds the sculpture could give a word, a sentence or an action to each member of his or her family.
2. Adolescents can be asked to remember each of the images and to go from the real image to the transition image and then to the ideal image (move from one pose to the next).
3. The adolescent who builds the sculpture can be asked to join the group and participate in the construction.
4. The same theatre exercise can be used to discuss other themes.

REMARK(S)

If we see that the adolescent making the sculpture has problems communicating his idea, he can use a minimum of words to make himself understood by other adolescents.

TITLE**The photo**

Illustrate a theme, a story by means of a collective enactment

DURATION

25 - 35 minutes

CATEGORY**Improvisation****DIFFICULTY**

to



for the variations

OBJECTIVES**Individual**

Talk about yourself, express yourself, act out situations

Group

Collaboration, empathy

DESCRIPTION

The play leader proposes situations related to the theme of the day (ex: start school, have a new boyfriend or a new blonde, go to a party where you don't know anyone...).

Students place themselves one by one to create a still picture, a photo, illustrating the situation.

When the 'photo'/enactment is finished, we "take the picture": all we have to do is pretend to take a picture by mimicking the action.

VARIATION(S)

1- The adolescents are in a circle, backs facing each other. After the play leader has introduced the theme/situation, he gives a signal (with a musical instrument). The adolescents turn around and take a position or posture that enacts the situation and they remain frozen in this position. With another signal, the play leader invites the adolescents to return to their original position and starts again with another theme/situation.

2- Enactment with animation :

Once a picture has been created and the photo has been taken, adolescents must create a second painting by imagining their character ten seconds later. You can do several steps: one minute later, one hour, one day. Each time, students must form a new picture. We can also go back in time. The next step consists, in making the characters live. After ten seconds, they stop to form a new picture.

REMARK(S)

This exercise requires several skills: acting, staging, storytelling. It must therefore be brought gradually over several sessions to give the students time to grasp it.

Once this exercise is mastered, it can be used to illustrate stories told by students.

TITLE**I dream that...***Telling and play-out a story starting from 'I dream that...'***DURATION**

30 - 45 minutes

CATEGORY**Story****DIFFICULTY**

with encouragement

OBJECTIVES**Individual**

Talk about yourself, express yourself, act out situations

Group

Collaboration, empathy

DESCRIPTION

In groups of four, the adolescents take turns telling a dream, starting with "I dream that..." (one short story per adolescent).

Then they choose one or more dreams and build the story. Each group presents its story to the others.

VARIATION(S)

1- You can also write down several sentences that begin with "I dream that..." and put them on the wall, then choose one to prepare the improvisation. Adolescents will decide which one they want to hear (see remark 3).

REMARK(S)

1- Explain the notion of dreams:

Sleeping: good or bad dream. Awake: a wish, a desire

2- The use of fabrics and musical instruments should be encouraged to foster symbolization.

3- Make adolescents understand that all stories or dreams are important and if theirs is not chosen, it is because the group is not ready yet, for all sorts of reasons, to listen to this dream, but that it remains important.

TITLE

Enacting a story

Play out a personal story by means of enactment

DURATION

30 minutes

CATEGORY

Improvisation

DIFFICULTY



OBJECTIVES

Individual

Talk about yourself, express yourself, act out situations

Group

Collaboration, empathy

DESCRIPTION

The play leader suggests dividing the class into four or five groups.

He asks the adolescents of each group to tell a short story related to the theme of the day, or a personal memory. In each group, only one story is chosen from those told.

The play leader helps each group to determine the essential moments of the chosen story. For each important moment, a photo (see the exercise "The photo") is created. As the storyteller tells the story (it may be the person who owns the memory or dream), the photo changes according to the story told.

VARIATION(S)

The story can be co-told by group members/groups working together.

TITLE**Story puzzle***Finding the right order for a story***DURATION**

35 minutes

CATEGORY**Story****DIFFICULTY****OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Talk about/express yourself, act out situations, activate energy

Group

Collaboration, empathy, negotiation

DESCRIPTION

The play leader divides the class into groups of four to five adolescents.

He asks the adolescents of each group to tell a story, related to the theme of the day, or a personal memory.

The group chooses one of the stories to tell to the larger group. Each adolescent takes charge of a part of the story.

The adolescents who tell the story stand with their backs to the audience and at the back of the stage. Without logical order, each one turns to the audience and tells the part of the story that has been assigned to him. After having told his part, he returns to his position, with his back to the audience.

The storyteller can remain in a storyteller position and sit down with the play leader when the other members of his group tell his story. He can also participate, being the last one to tell his part.

At the end of the presentation, the other groups should try to reconstruct the story told by trying to put the pieces of the puzzle in order, or by putting each adolescent in the right order so that they can tell the story. The storyteller is the one who will confirm the reconstruction proposed by all the other groups.

REMARK(S)

It's not just about telling a story, it's also important to listen to everyone.

TITLE**The memory room***Tell a story from a known place***DURATION**

30 - 35 minutes

CATEGORY**Improvisation****DIFFICULTY****OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Finding stories through visualization

Group

Create a symbolic language

DESCRIPTION

The adolescents are standing with their arms close to their bodies; with their eyes closed, they must imagine that they are entering a livingroom from their recent past or just any livingroom. They imagine that they are in this room, visualizing it in detail, so that they can see the objects in it and move towards them. Then, they visualize the people and situations associated with this room and recall a particular memory with all its details: the colors, the smells, everything that is felt there.

Then, the play leader forms sub-groups. In a circle, everyone tells the identified memory. At the end, the group chooses a story to improvise.

The adolescent whose story has been chosen is the one who assigns the characters. He must also ensure that everything is consistent with his story. Each group quickly prepares its play and presents it to the other groups.

VARIATION(S)

Someone on the team can tell the story and then the team plays it without words (or vice versa). This is advisable if the team has not integrated the dialogue.

The story can be built starting from the workshop theme.

REMARK(S)

The premises are not neutral. They are often accompanied by situations with things or people. By visualizing known places, it is possible to get closer to memories and stories.

TITLE**The vignette**

Improvise a story from a place and a situation

DURATION

25 - 35 minutes

CATEGORY**Story****DIFFICULTY****OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Talk about/express yourself, act out situations

Group

Collaboration, empathy

DESCRIPTION

The play leader ask the adolescents to form small groups.

The play leader starts a story by setting its place and a conflict/theme.

In each group, the adolescents exchange ideas on possible stories, according to the theme given by the game leader. Ultimately, they choose a story. Each group quickly prepares its theatre play and presents it to the other groups.

VARIATION(S)

- 1- Adolescents decide a place, a conflict or a situation, characters, etc instead of the play leader.
- 2- One can try to construct a story only with one component: the characters, the place or the conflict.

REMARK(S)

This exercise requires a lot of listening, imagination, and is better suited towards the end of the workshops than at the beginning, in order to avoid a feeling of failure or unnecessary judgments.

TITLE	'A' tells 'B' <i>In dyads, adolescents tell their personal stories by exchanging roles</i>
DURATION	20 - 30 minutes
CATEGORY	Improvisation
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Talk about/express yourself, act out situations
Group	Collaboration, empathy

DESCRIPTION

The group is divided into pairs. In each pair, one is 'A', the other 'B'. 'A' tells 'B' an important moment in his life, and vice versa.

Afterwards, 'B' sits on a chair facing the other participants (the audience). 'A' stands behind him, putting his hands gently on 'B's shoulders.

'A' tells the participants the story of 'B', in the first, the 'I' person (as if he becomes 'B'). 'B' listens to his/her story, looking at the audience.

When 'A' ends the narration of the story, both change places and 'B' tells the story of 'A', also using 'I'.
When all adolescents did their turn, they can form new groups.

VARIATION(S)

Themes can be used to guide this exercise, for example: telling the story of your name: who chose it, where does it come/ from, what does it mean, etc.

REMARK(S)

It is important to tell adolescents that even if the narrator distorts or changes their story, not to correct it. There will be time to correct what is essential for the person whose experience it was, when sharing at the end.

TITLE

Co-construction

Play, evoke a personal story through a series of segments reported by the members of the group

DURATION

30 minutes

CATEGORY

Story

DIFFICULTY



OBJECTIVES

Individual

Talk about/express yourself, act out situations

Group

Collaboration, empathy

DESCRIPTION

The adolescents form small groups.

The play leader asks the members of each group to tell short stories related to the theme of the day (ex: "The other day, the players did..."; "A few days ago, the rubbish stayed outside and...", etc).

In each group, one story is chosen from those told. The story is divided among the members of the group (each chooses to play a part of the story). During the game, adolescents use movements and sounds to represent their story.

Adolescents present one after the other. Each brings a new element to the story. Each group plays its story in front of the others following the same instructions.

VARIATION(S)

The storyteller can ask to see variations of his story: something he wants different, something he would have like to say, something he would have like to hear, etc.

REMARK(S)

The use of fabrics can be very interesting to symbolize objects or emotions. Musical instruments can also be used.

TITLE	Transformation <i>Something happened to me; what if it was different?</i>
DURATION	30 minutes
CATEGORY	Story
DIFFICULTY	
OBJECTIVES	
Individual	Talk about/express yourself, act out situations
Group	Collaboration, empathy

DESCRIPTION

The play leader asks the class to tell a story related to the theme of the day such as "a trip", for example: "When I left for..., it happened...".

Some adolescents volunteer to play stories.

The game leader chooses a storyteller (or adolescent volunteer) from among the adolescent to tell their story. This adolescent will be the storyteller.

Players will play the story of the storyteller.

The play leader then asks the storyteller if he agrees with the play presented, and then offers him the possibility of modifying part of his story, for example, if he would like to see a different end to his story. If the adolescent proposes a different ending, or other changes, the adolescent group plays the part of the modified story.

VARIATION(S)

Other adolescents can suggest other changes to the story. If these are accepted by the storyteller, players can play the changes.

Instead of playing history, adolescents can make a series of "sculptures", starting with a first one to represent the story as reported by the storyteller, then a second sculpture to show the ideal sought by the storyteller and finally a third sculpture to represent how to get to that story. It is then possible to check with the storyteller what he thinks of this transition.

REMARK(S)

The storyteller must trust the group to come and tell the story. Trust and listening exercises are strongly suggested before venturing into this exercise.

TITLE**A line of monologues**

Different adolescents tell a personal story at the same time

DURATION

10 minutes

CATEGORY

Improvisation

DIFFICULTY**OBJECTIVES****Individual**

Talk about/express yourself, act out situations

Group

Collaboration, empathy

DESCRIPTION

A group of five or six participants are placed in line, standing, facing the audience (the other participants).

These participants take turns moving forward, telling a story or a moment in their lives.

When someone else in this small group decides to step forward and tell his story, the other stops talking and moves back to his original place. And so on. When the game leader deems it appropriate, he stops the exercise to give the place to other participants.

REMARK(S)

- 1- The number of participants in line remains at the discretion of the play leader.
- 2- The participant who is telling his story does not stop talking, until someone else interrupts him or the play leader stops the exercise.
- 3- Make sure that participants give themselves time to breathe and that they bring rhythm in their stories.
- 4- The one who comes forward speaks immediately, he cuts the word of the person who is speaking.
- 5- The participant stops his story as soon as he hears another speaking, even if he is half a sentence or a word away from finishing it.
- 6- There is no order to follow in stepping forward to speak.

6. Suggestions for constructing workshops

In this section you will find four workshops already organized for a class where the adolescents do not present particular difficulties, and an example of a workshop for a class presenting multiple difficulties (learning, behaviour, etc.).

Workshop 1

Theme : The meeting

DURATION 75

minutes

Opening ritual

1. Start (5 minutes)

The group is welcomed outside the classroom. The play leader reminds the adolescents that it is time to enter the theatre space and therefore to take a moment of silence to be with themselves, before entering the room and placing themselves in a circle. The lights in the room are out. When all are in place, they breathe deeply three times, the lights are turned on again, and the first game begins.

Warm-up exercises and games

2. The ball (5 minutes)

Participants are placed in a circle. The playmaker throws an imaginary ball at a adolescent while naming him, the adolescent receives the ball and throws it back to another person while naming him. The game continues for a few minutes, until all adolescents have participated at least once. After the first few minutes, the playmaker may ask everyone to name their country of origin before throwing the ball to someone in the circle.

Another variation can be to name one of the languages you know and then throw the ball to someone in the circle, always naming them while doing so.

3. The worldmap (10 minutes)

The play leader asks to imagine a world map on the ground, on which he defines the cardinal points and a starting point. This starting point can be Quebec. If Quebec is chosen, everyone can position themselves on the same starting point. The play leader then asks the adolescents to move to a country of their choice, starting from the starting point, and thus the classroom space becomes a 3D representation of the planet. Adolescents can say why they want to go to the country they name and, if they can, say something in the language of that country.

This game can be refined: if several adolescents travel to the same country, they can place themselves according to the location of the cities and villages of the country they visit and discuss among themselves.

Theatre exercises

4. Salutation (10 minutes)

The adolescents walk in the classroom space in no particular direction. The play leader strikes a tambourine and asks the adolescents to greet the person facing them, in the language of their choice and making an appropriate gesture to this recognition of the other. Then they resume to walking around the classroom. After a few minutes and several greetings, the play leader proposes various contexts in which people can find themselves: greeting a friend on the street, greeting his parents on the way home, greeting a grandparent at a party, greeting a younger person, greeting a baby, greeting a person who represents authority, etc.

Remark(s)

If some offer to shake hands between boys and girls, this may cause discomfort. If this is the case, the play leader may offer to greet each other as everyone wishes or as everyone does in their home country. Ways of greeting can be gestural and/or verbal.

To finish the exercise, the play leader may ask the adolescent if they have ever experienced any discomfort associated with certain forms of greeting that they have experienced when they arrived in Canada or elsewhere.

Stories/improvisation

5. Sharing an encounter (40 minutes)

The play leader forms three or four groups. In each group, the adolescents discuss an important encounter they have had in their lives or the first encounter with someone they remember.

Doing this a first time, the idea is that adolescents only share their experiences; improvisation games will be played in the coming weeks.

Closing ritual

6. Kaleidoscope (5 minutes)

The play leader invites the adolescents to form a large circle, backs facing each other (each in their own bubble) and to view the workshop in their heads, with their eyes closed (if possible). They are asked to do this for a few seconds.

The adolescents turn around and face each other; the play leader begins the sharing by inviting the adolescents to say what they liked in the workshop. The adolescent says a word or a sentence representing what they remember from the workshop. He/she then throws the imaginary ball to someone else, and so on.

Workshop 4

Theme : Friends

DURATION : 75

minutes

Opening ritual

1. Start (5 minutes)

The group is welcomed outside the classroom. The play leader reminds the adolescents that it is time to enter the theatre space and therefore take a moment of silence, before entering the room and standing in a circle. The lights in the room are out. When all are in place, they breathe deeply three times, the lights are turned on again, and the first game begins.

Warm-up exercises and games

2. Unmask the leader (10 minutes)

Two adolescents leave the classroom, and the group chooses a leader. This one executes a first movement and the others follow it.

The two adolescents from outside enter the room and, observing the group, they try to find the leader. The leader of course varies his movements and the group copies his movements as faithfully as possible. It is often during these changes of movements that the leader is unmasked.

Remark(s)

The challenge for the group is to hide the leader.

Precision in movement is very important.

Theatre exercises

3. Fighting game (15 minutes)

Form two rows, facing each other: row A and row B. Row A mimics an attack movement with the arms towards row B, without there being any actual physical contact. Row A moves forward and row B moves back with a response movement until it reaches the wall. B becomes A. The exercise is repeated two or three times until the movements are under control.

In a second round, the movements are made following the rhythm set by the play leader (the rhythms are set with the hands or with a percussion instrument).

Variation(s)

Depending on the maturity of the group and the control of movements, it is possible to add movements with the feet, still without touching.

The exercise can also be done in pairs and by moving in all directions, as in a real fight, without predicting who attacks first.

Remark(s)

Remind adolescent to control the movement and respect partners.

Stories/improvisation

4. The photo (35 minutes)

The playmaker groups the adolescents into 3-4 teams. In each team, the adolescents tell short stories related to the theme of the day (their friendship).

The game leader asks each team to choose one of the stories and represent it to the other groups, as if it were a photo: each member of the group adopts a posture and a feeling appropriate to this situation. Then the adolescents freeze for a few seconds in their position. The play leader or another person is in charge of taking a virtual photo at the end of each presentation. Following the presentation of each photo, one of the adolescents from each team tells the story we have just represented.

Closing ritual

5. The Kaleidoscope (10 minutes)

The play leader invites the adolescents to form a large circle, backs facing each other (each in their own bubble) and to view the workshop in their heads, with their eyes closed (if possible). They are asked to do this for a few seconds.

The adolescents turn around and face each other; the play leader begins the sharing by inviting to the adolescents to say what they liked in the workshop. The adolescent says a word or a sentence representing what they remember from the workshop. He/she then throws the imaginary ball to someone else, and so on.

Workshop 8

Theme: The trip

DURATION: 75

minutes

Opening ritual

1. Start (5 minutes)

The group is welcomed outside the classroom. The play leader reminds the adolescents that it is time to enter the theatre space and therefore take a moment of silence, before entering the room and standing in a circle. The lights in the room are out. When all are in place, they breathe deeply three times, the lights are turned on again, and the first game begins.

Warm-up exercises and games

2. The tag (10 minutes)

The adolescents stand in a circle, arms together. Two people volunteer to start the game. One person becomes the hunter and runs to catch the other who becomes the hunted. The hunted, to save himself, runs, touches the shoulder of a third person and reintegrates the circle. The person "attached" to the one who has been touched becomes the new hunted and in turn runs away.

The more chaotic the game becomes, the more fun it gets!

Theatre exercises

3. The suitcase (20 minutes)

The class is divided into two groups, placed face to face. A cube (or chair), representing a suitcase, is placed in the centre of the room.

In turn, each adolescent of the first group moves forward to the "suitcase", and drops something that he would like to take with him if he went on a trip: perhaps an object, a person, a feeling, an idea.

By depositing his "something", the adolescent must name it and say why he would like to take it with him.

When all the adolescent from the first group have passed, the adolescent from the second group reflect (see the exercise "How I feel") one of the things they heard as they walked forward and made a gesture with a sound. Then the second group puts things in the case and the first group reflects.

Remark(s)

For adolescents to be familiar with the idea of reflecting a state/a feeling through a gesture and a sound, they should have already done exercises using this skill (for example, the exercise "How I feel").

Stories/improvisation

4. Travel to discover (25 minutes)

In small groups, the adolescents tell of an important journey they have made or dream of making, based on the following reflections: What do I see, I do, I eat, I experience? Who do I meet and in what language?

Each group chooses a travel story and stages it.

When the groups are ready, the first one is set up, while the others gather in a travel machine that visits and moves and stops in front of the group's play'. This group, after having presented, joins the machine while the second group is set up, and so on.

Closing ritual

5. The Kaleidoscope (10 minutes)

The play leader invites the adolescents to form a large circle, backs facing each other (each in their own bubble) and to view the workshop in their heads, with their eyes closed (if possible). They are asked to do this for a few seconds.

The adolescents turn around and face each other; the play leader begins the sharing by inviting to the adolescents to say what they liked in the workshop. The adolescent says a word or a sentence representing what they remember from the workshop. He/she then throws the imaginary ball to someone else, and so on.

Workshop 12

Theme: Goodbye

DURATION : 75

minutes

Opening ritual

1. Start (5 minutes)

The group is welcomed outside the classroom. The play leader reminds the adolescents that it is time to enter the theatre space and therefore take a moment of silence, before entering the room and standing in a circle. The lights in the room are out. When all are in place, they breathe deeply three times, the lights are turned on again, and the first game begins.

Warm-up exercises and games

2. Their choice (10 minutes)

The game leader asks the adolescents what their favourite games were before and what they would like to play today.

Stories/improvisation

3. Co-construction & transformation (30 minutes)

- The play leader asks the adolescents to form three or four groups.
- He asks the members of each group to tell short stories related to departures (saying goodbye, goodbye, etc.).
- In each group, one story is chosen from the stories told. The story is divided among the members of the group (each chooses to play a part of the story), and one of the members becomes the storyteller of the group.
- When the storyteller tells the story in the language of his choice, each adolescent, one after the other, plays the story as told, uses movements and sounds in their play. If the story is not told in Dutch/Danish, the storyteller translates it after the presentation.
- Each adolescent represents an element in the story.
- When the story has been presented, the storyteller may or may not transform the story, adding an element for example, and the adolescents of his group replay this part.
- Each group plays its story in front of the others according to the same instructions

Remark(s)

The use of fabrics can become very interesting to symbolize objects or emotions.

Closing ritual

4. The Kaleidoscope (25 minutes):

The game leader invites the adolescents to form a large circle and sit down. They share on all the workshops.

Suggestions for construction a workshop for a special trajectory class

Workshop 8

Theme: The trip

DURATION: 75

minutes

Opening ritual

1. Start (5 minutes)

The group is welcomed outside the classroom. The play leader reminds the adolescents that it is time to enter the theatre space and therefore take a moment of silence, before entering the room and standing in a circle. The lights in the room are out. When all are in place, they breathe deeply three times, the lights are turned on again, and the first game begins.

Warm-up exercises and games

2. The tag (10 minutes)

The adolescents stand in a circle, two by two, arms hooked together. Two people volunteer to start the game. One person becomes the hunter and runs to catch the other who becomes the hunted. To save himself, the hunted man runs, touches the shoulder of a third person and attaches himself to it. The person "attached" to the one who has been touched becomes the new "chased" and in turn runs away.

The more chaotic the game becomes, the more fun it gets!

Theatre exercises

3. The suitcase (15 minutes)

The class is divided into two groups. A cube (or chair), representing a suitcase, is placed in the centre of the room.

In turn, passing from one group to another, and on a voluntary basis, each adolescent moves forward to the "suitcase", and deposits something that he would like to take with him if he went on a trip: perhaps an object, a person, a feeling, an idea.

By depositing his "something", the adolescent must name it and say why he would like to take it with him.

Remark(s)

It is an exercise that requires that requires some time, because for some adolescents, it is difficult to name something... or to decide on something.

Stories/improvisation

4. Travel to discover (40 minutes)

In small groups, the adolescents tell of a journey they have made or dream of making, based on the following reflections: What was the situation, who was there?

Each group chooses a travel story and stages it.

Each group presents its story to all. Adolescents can ask questions about the story being played.

Closing ritual

5. The Kaleidoscope (5 minutes)

The play leader invites the adolescents to form a large circle, backs facing each other (each in their own bubble) and to view the workshop in their heads, with their eyes closed (if possible). They are asked to do this for a few seconds.

The adolescents turn around and face each other; the play leader begins the sharing by inviting to the adolescents to say what they liked in the workshop. The adolescent says a word or a sentence representing what they remember from the workshop. He/she then throws the imaginary ball to someone else, and so on.

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Annexes

1 Improvisation

For this stage of the workshop the adolescents are divided into small groups of 4 or 5. Each tells a story on the theme of the day and then they choose one that they will present in large groups.

To do this, the storyteller (adolescent whose story has been chosen) must specify the time and place of the action, describe the events that relate to his story. Then he decides which characters are important to be represented in his story. Finally he assigns the roles to his playmates.

It is important for adolescents to know that boys can play girls and vice versa, that they can represent animals, objects and so on. These concepts are worked on over the weeks as they do the theatrical exercises.

In order to clarify the storyteller's thinking, it is useful for him to give a TITLE to his story, then he can think of :

What is the important event in history?

What do we want to convey as information and emotions in each scene?

How to build the character:

How is he physically? (how does he walk, breathe, does he have special features)

What is his character like?

How does he behave in this situation?

What does he feel during the story.

It is important to clarify and identify the stages of the theatrical game:

What happens first?

Who is there?

What are the important things that must be said and/or done so that the story is understood by the other adolescents to whom they will present it?

By playing the story and his character, the adolescent develops an understanding of how he makes the character and will make a connection with his inner emotions. The adolescent becomes emotionally involved in the situation and develops the ability to listen and empathize.

After having improvised the story, it is important to check with the storyteller if what he has seen reflects his story, his emotions.

It is up to the game leader to offer the storyteller the possibility to explore alternative scenarios, i.e. to check if the storyteller would want another ending or would have liked to say or hear something different than the way it was in the real story. If the storyteller wishes, a new version of his story can be played by the adolescents.

In conclusion, improvisations give adolescents an understanding of other adolescents's experiences and the circumstances in which they took place. Adolescents get to know each other differently and in a generally more empathetic way.

2 Playback

It is a form of theatre that was created in 1975 in New York State by Jonathan Fox and Jo Salas. This young and committed couple of actors knew Moreno and psychodrama. They wanted to communicate directly with the audience, to share their passion for theatre and their desire for a space where spectators could speak for themselves. They founded an impro theatre group where the audience and the members of the group, share stories, events, and personal opinions in order to establish links between them, what they call 'the common thread'. These personal stories, played with respect and understanding in front of their storyteller, bring people together by showing that they somehow touch on each other's personal stories.

This form of theatre offers a unique structure that helps to open up and gain the public's trust so that they can share stories that are important to them and discover different meanings.

An opening ritual launches the theme and sets the tone. Each of the actors (at least 3) tells an anecdote related to the theme and the other actors represent its various facets. Everyone tells something and then a play leader addresses the audience so that the audience, in turn, express themselves in relation to the theme. These vignettes will be taken up by the actors and the musician. Several modes of representation facilitate this stage; fluid sculptures, pairs, vociferation, rhombus etc.

When the game leader deems it appropriate, he moves on to the stage where he asks someone from the audience to tell a story (related to the theme). This story can be real, it can be a wish, a dream etc.. The storyteller himself chooses which actor is suitable for which character in his story. Then, it is played, with an often symbolic, metaphorical narrative that seeks the essential elements of the story. All this is accompanied by music that can in turn become a character, and thus establish a particular climate and intensify action. Music accentuates the key moments of the story, it accompanies and helps to contain emotions.

A closing ritual closes this exchange and offers the public, a final possibility to share how they feel.

Over the years, Fox and Salas have founded a school that offers well-structured training for those who want to form a Playback group, or work in this direction. Playback has multiplied and a hundred autonomous groups around the world have created themselves and thus continue the initial philosophy of this theatrical form; meeting, sharing and becoming more tolerant towards each other.

3 Theatre of the oppressed

The "Theatre of the Oppressed", developed by the Brazilian Augusto Boal in the 1970s, is the systematization of multiple exercises (body monologues), games (body dialogues) and theatre techniques (image, choir, forum) that can be used by actors, as well as by non-actors. For Boal, theatre is a form of knowledge of oneself and the world and must therefore be a means to transform society. According to him, theatre can help us build our future instead of simply remaining passive. Boal proposes two fundamental principles: the spectator must be the protagonist of the dramatic action and must prepare himself to be the protagonist of his own life. To do this, the public must be given the dramatic tools so that they become the protagonists and not the witnesses of the show or by extrapolation, of their lives.

In this form of theatre, the audience participates directly in the performance by proposing the theme of the play and proposing possible solutions to the story represented by the actors. This is in fact what Boal calls "simultaneous dramaturgy". This means that by going through fiction, the spectator tries to transform his own reality, which ultimately prepares him to act in his daily life.

The set of techniques developed by Boal serve to express in a verbal and metaphorical way the social and political reality of the spectators, while offering a safe space to play alternative scenarios to the given situations and thus explore various ways that can help transform the daily experience of spectators.

All in all, we can say that the theatre of the oppressed is first and foremost a social approach to theatre. It functions at the limit of fiction and reality, especially when the spectator participates directly in the scenic solution, proposes themes, conflicts, characters, dreams and interests that make it possible for him to identify with the play and the social group to which he belongs. Moreover, it is important to stress that this methodology requires the theatre artist to assume a social function that requires the actor to have a social conscience. Finally, and on another note, we can conclude by saying that the theatre of the oppressed provides an interesting counterweight to commercial theatre.

4 Article :

« Du jeu des identités à la transformation de réalités partagées »

Du jeu des identités à la transformation de réalités partagées : un programme d'ateliers d'expression théâtrale pour adolescents immigrants et réfugiés

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La migration à l'adolescence est particulièrement délicate à cause du fardeau conjugué que représente à ce stade de la vie l'intégration des multiples pertes associées à la migration et l'adaptation au statut de jeune adulte. Le programme d'ateliers d'expression théâtrale vise à faciliter l'adaptation des adolescents immigrants et réfugiés à leur nouvel environnement à partir d'un travail créatif autour des enjeux identitaires liés à la migration et à un statut de minorité. Ces ateliers conjuguent une approche inspirée du théâtre playback qui permet une mise en scène du vécu personnel et le théâtre forum de Boal qui met l'accent sur la transformation collective de l'expérience. Les résultats d'une évaluation qualitative des ateliers d'expression théâtrale suggèrent que ceux-ci constituent un lieu d'expression où les participants se sentent en sécurité et soutenus par l'équipe ainsi que par le caractère rituel du jeu théâtral. Les ateliers permettent de représenter la multiplicité des valeurs et des références internes et externes de l'adolescent et de les renégocier sans dichotomiser le « eux » et le « nous », en s'adressant aux questions de justice sociale qui se posent à la collectivité. Ils favorisent aussi l'élaboration des transitions de l'adolescence en permettant l'évocation des pertes de la migration et le passage vers une identité hybride.

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L'adolescence est une période de transition entre l'enfance et l'âge adulte définie dans un contexte culturel occidental bien particulier, qui prend des rythmes et des formes différentes suivant les cultures. Cependant, avec la mondialisation, les formes traditionnelles de passage vers la maturité se sont créolisées (Diouf et Collignon, 2001) et les identités des jeunes immigrants et réfugiés se construisent dans un va-et-vient entre identités collectives (ethniques, nationales, raciales, religieuses, de genre, de Group, etc.) et identités personnelles. Deux pôles, soit l'absence d'identité et d'appartenance ou la centration sur une identité unique qui définit la personne comme radicalement différente d'autres humains, peuvent générer des problèmes, personnels et groupaux importants (Nathan, 1994). Entre ces pôles, le jeu des identités va baliser le monde du possible, ouvrant de multiples portes dans le cas d'identités dominantes, suggérant un éventail de stratégies de résistance dans le cas d'identités minoritaires en situation de marginalisation ou d'exclusion (Camino et Krulfeld, 1994 ; Rousseau, 1998).

Si le décalage culturel entre les migrants et la société hôte est évident et oblige les jeunes à négocier des façons différentes d'être au monde, à la maison, à l'école et dans la rue, des éléments contextuels de l'expérience migratoire influencent directement la construction identitaire (Lashley, 2000 ; Rousseau et al., 1999). L'apprentissage d'une position minoritaire en période post-migratoire et en particulier l'expérience de la discrimination et de l'exclusion sociale ou économique, structurent aussi l'identité. La résolution et l'intégration des expériences tant pré-migratoires que post-migratoires se fondent partiellement sur le construit identitaire qu'elles ont contribué à forger. Dans l'espace public, groupal et interpersonnel, les adolescents expriment leurs diverses identités à la fois explicitement et implicitement, de façons verbale et non verbale. L'identité d'un jeune s'élabore dans un va-et-vient entre son histoire personnelle et les histoires qu'il partage ou emprunte à ses Groups d'appartenance. La possibilité d'utiliser de multiples histoires et de pouvoir les transformer est protecteur dans la mesure où elle permet à la fois une réappropriation d'histoires fondatrices et le recours à un large éventail de stratégies d'adaptation pour faire face aux défis et aux DIFFICULTYs qui surgissent (Foxen, 2000).

Le programme d'expression théâtrale que nous décrivons dans cet article vise à faciliter la réappropriation et le partage d'histoires collectives des jeunes immigrants et réfugiés de façon à soutenir la construction du sens et de l'identité dans l'histoire personnelle. La constitution d'identités collectives solides et multiples et leur négociation par le travail théâtral de Group peut favoriser : 1. La construction du sens (après des traumatismes et des séparations) ; 2. Les processus de deuil (des pertes de personnes, de pays, d'attentes ou de rêves) ; 3. La valorisation de la différence et la construction d'une résistance créatrice (qui n'enferme pas dans des cercles d'exclusion encore plus grands) ; 4. Le développement de multiples appartenances qui élargissent le champ des stratégies disponibles.

Expression théâtrale, conflits et transformation personnelle et sociale

L'expression artistique et théâtrale est un levier important au moment de l'adolescence car elle peut servir à exprimer et contenir la souffrance associée aux transformations de cette période du cycle de vie tout en canalisant les forces de l'adolescent et son idéalisme (Emunah, 1985 ; Emunah, 1990). L'expression théâtrale présente plusieurs avantages par rapport à une thérapie de Group verbale : elle facilite l'expression non verbale

particulièrement importante pour les jeunes présentant des limites à ce niveau, et permet de mettre en scène les conflits et l'exploration de diverses avenues menant à des solutions dans un environnement sécuritaire (Shuttleworth, 1981). Pour les adolescents, le théâtre est aussi un espace de jeu avec des métaphores permettant de s'approprier et de prendre des distances avec des expériences personnelles, familiales et collectives (MacCormack, 1997). La possibilité d'exprimer et de s'approprier simultanément des identités multiples et ambivalentes est une des clés du pouvoir de transformation du théâtre. Cette transformation de la conscience s'effectue dans un cadre rituel qui lui confère un caractère ludique (Myerhoff, 1990). Le cadre rituel et le caractère ludique contiennent les histoires, les images et les affects évoqués, sans que ceux-ci ne débordent les acteurs ou les spectateurs. Le rituel devient à la fois une forme de savoir, un mode d'apprentissage et une façon de contrôler ou d'influencer des événements (Brockett, 1977).

Le théâtre « playback » est un courant théâtral basé sur l'improvisation qui mise sur la transformation personnelle et sociale à partir du partage d'une expérience théâtrale au sein d'un espace rituel (Fox, 2000a ; Fox, 2000b). Il s'agit de créer « un monde entre les mondes » qui, en modifiant le cadre temporel et spatial, permet de travailler autour d'une intention partagée qui se fonde sur la conscience d'une responsabilité sociale et éthique, autour d'un thème précis (par exemple, le racisme, la migration, les inégalités) ou de façon plus large autour d'un engagement pour la justice sociale. Le théâtre playback s'inspire de plusieurs courants de théâtre engagé. Ainsi, il emprunte à Moreno (1947) la volonté de rejoindre les silencieux, les isolés, ceux qui se définissent ou sont perçus comme différents. Il rejoint Boal (1979) et Freire (1970) dans leur désir de promouvoir une position de sujet pour les marginalisés et les exclus, qui puisse leur redonner un pouvoir sur eux-mêmes et sur leur environnement. Enfin, il emprunte également aux réflexions de Turner (1974 ; 1981) qui suggère que le théâtre donne accès à un espace liminal qui confronte les structures sociales, parce que la parole qu'il permet n'obéit pas aux mêmes lois. Les liens ainsi générés au sein d'un Group sont « anti-structurels » parce qu'ils sont essentiellement non différenciés, égalitaires, directs et non rationnels. En résumé, le théâtre playback vise à mettre en scène des drames personnels issus de la société contemporaine, en secouant ou en abolissant temporairement les structures établies afin de permettre à de nouvelles relations de Group d'émerger (Fox, 1993). Le cadre rituel doit cependant être maintenu avec soin afin que l'intervention ne dérive pas vers le règlement de conflits personnels ou même vers l'intensification d'affrontements collectifs (Fox, 2000a ; Fox, 2000b).

Description de l'intervention

Le programme d'expression théâtrale a été élaboré par l'équipe de Pédopsychiatrie transculturelle de l'Hôpital de Montréal pour Enfants, le département d'art-thérapie de l'université Concordia et l'école secondaire Saint-Luc. Durant les premières années de sa mise en place, plusieurs projets s'adressant à deux clientèles différentes choisies par l'école, soit des classes d'accueil et de post-accueil et des classes régulières ont été réalisés. La fréquentation d'une classe d'accueil est une étape dans le processus d'intégration scolaire et linguistique d'adolescents immigrants et réfugiés nouvellement arrivés au Québec. L'adolescent qui ne satisfait pas les exigences d'apprentissage de la classe d'accueil durant l'année scolaire, est dirigé vers une classe de postaccueil avant d'intégrer les classes régulières.

Les ateliers s'échelonnent sur 10 semaines, à raison d'une séance de 75 minutes par semaine. Ils sont intégrés à l'horaire régulier des classes et sont animés par l'équipe du projet, qui s'appelle « Pluriel », en collaboration avec le professeur de la classe. Les membres du Group Pluriel possèdent une formation en art (dramathérapie, art thérapie, arts plastiques, théâtre, musique) et/ou en psychologie. Ils ont des origines culturelles diverses (Afrique, Amérique latine, Caraïbes, Québec) et sont habitués à improviser et à contenir des situations parfois délicates.

Le programme s'inspire du théâtre playback et du théâtre forum de Boal au niveau des éléments suivants :

1. Les ateliers visent à générer un climat de sécurité et de respect, où il est possible d'aborder des tensions éventuelles, tout en étant assuré que celles-ci seront contenues par le Group ; 2. La performance artistique n'est pas un des OBJECTIVES visés, ce qui est exprimé demeure dans le Group et n'est pas présenté sous forme de spectacle ; 3. La structure théâtrale est celle du playback : un directeur du jeu coordonne et contient l'histoire qui se déroule, il dirige un Group d'acteurs (quatre intervenants et des jeunes) et un Group de musiciens (1 intervenant et des jeunes) autour d'un récit ; 4. Comme dans le théâtre forum il y a possibilité de transformer les histoires racontées à partir de scénarios alternatifs développés par les jeunes. Contrairement au théâtre playback cependant, les histoires amenées par les jeunes et mises en scène ne sont pas uniquement des histoires directement vécues par l'individu (ce qui permet de respecter la distance parfois nécessaire et d'éviter des phénomènes de retraumatisation), mais aussi des histoires « personnelles », c'est-à-dire, portées et interprétées par le jeune et qu'il amène comme représentant une part de son expérience de vie.

Les ateliers sont structurés autour des mêmes principes durant les dix semaines, bien que l'implication des jeunes ainsi que la complexité des thèmes abordés s'accroissent avec le temps et l'aisance des jeunes par rapport au médium théâtral. Dès la deuxième rencontre, l'équipe propose au Group un jeu qui permet une valorisation de l'identité personnelle tout en encourageant l'écoute et l'appréciation de l'autre et de ses différences. Les jeux proposés varient et se situent parfois au tout début de l'atelier ou en second lieu. Ils servent de réchauffement kinesthésique et d'éveil sensoriel. Ils aident le Group à mieux se connaître et à développer la confiance tout en stimulant l'humour et l'imagination. Ensuite, (ou avant) les intervenants présentent le thème de la semaine en y associant un vécu personnel mis en scène par les autres membres de l'équipe et par les jeunes quand ils sont familiarisés avec le déroulement des sessions. Les thèmes sont très ouverts et stimulent la réflexion et l'exploration de domaines comme l'appartenance ou encore l'exclusion, la migration, les voyages, les passages d'une culture à une autre. Les intervenants s'inspirent aussi d'un outil développé par Rousseau et De la Aldea à Montréal et au Pérou pour travailler autour de thèmes précis (la violence, la migration). Les participants écrivent sur de grands papiers de courtes histoires autour d'un thème (Ces histoires peuvent être des histoires vécues ou entendues, très proche ou apparemment éloignées du vécu du jeune). Celles-ci sont ensuite affichées tout autour de la salle et les participants choisissent celles qu'ils souhaitent mettre en scène. L'ensemble des histoires écrites reste au mur durant tout le travail du Group et constitue une « maison d'histoires » qui représente une partie des histoires portées par le Group. Les histoires qui ne sont pas choisies sont aussi importantes et significatives que celles qui le sont. L'histoire racontée spontanément ou l'histoire écrite et choisie est alors jouée par les intervenants et les jeunes et peut, si le conteur le souhaite, être rejouée en mettant en scène des scénarios alternatifs proposés par le conteur d'abord, puis par tout le Group. Il s'agit de construire une situation transformée où le conteur, et les autres, reprennent un certain pouvoir que ce soit en infléchissant le sens, en construisant une relation en créant une ouverture ou un dialogue avec l'autre qui manquait dans l'histoire initiale.

Méthodologie

Les ateliers font partie du programme de la classe et ne constituent pas en eux-mêmes une recherche. Un projet de recherche qualitatif et quantitatif a été réalisé après une phase de co-développement du programme avec les intervenants scolaires (Rousseau et al., sous presse ; Rousseau et al., 2005a).

Ce texte comprend deux types de données : des données expérientielles qui proviennent des réflexions et observations de l'équipe d'intervention et des professeurs durant les années de développement du programme ; des données provenant de l'observation participante associée à la recherche qui s'est déroulée après la finalisation du contenu du programme. Cette recherche a été approuvée par le Comité d'éthique de l'Hôpital de Montréal pour enfants et les adolescents participants et leurs parents ont signé un formulaire de consentement. Étant donné qu'il s'agit d'une activité scolaire, ceux qui ne désiraient pas participer à la recherche (10 %) ont quand même pu s'intégrer aux ateliers, mais aucune donnée à leur sujet n'a été recueillie. Afin de respecter l'anonymat et la confidentialité, les vignettes rapportées dans le cadre de cet article ont été modifiées de façon à ce que les jeunes impliqués ne soient pas reconnaissables.

L'évaluation qualitative du programme a été effectuée de deux façons. D'une part, durant les trois années de développement du projet, les professeurs participants, les autres intervenants scolaires et l'équipe responsable des ateliers se sont réunis régulièrement pour faire le point sur l'intervention. Une rencontre de concertation s'est tenue à la fin de chaque année, afin de dégager des lignes directrices pour la poursuite du projet et d'identifier les transformations nécessaires. D'autre part, lors de la recherche quantitative et qualitative formelle, les histoires 140 Santé mentale au Québec racontées par les jeunes lors de chaque session ont été transcrites et les interactions et dynamiques groupales documentées par un observateur. Six Groups, réunissant entre 15 et 30 élèves, ont été observés durant un cycle complet d'ateliers. La grille d'observation comprenait de plus une documentation des relations entre les jeunes et du climat général de la classe au début, au milieu et à la fin de chaque session. L'analyse du matériel recueilli lors de l'observation participative des différentes sessions a porté sur : 1. les thèmes dominants abordés par les adolescents, 2. les dynamiques de Group récurrentes en examinant en particulier l'émergence de solidarités en termes de soutien groupal ou de tensions, 3. l'influence d'un contexte extérieur spécifique, la guerre en Iraq. Le contenu et la forme des sessions entourant le déclenchement de la guerre en Iraq ont été analysés de façon à voir dans quelle mesure les ateliers constituaient un lieu d'élaboration collective de cette expérience pour les adolescents.

L'analyse s'est effectuée en trois temps. Tout d'abord, après chaque session une discussion d'équipe en présence de l'observateur avait pour objectif de valider les perceptions de celui-ci et parfois de clarifier les divergences de perceptions face aux dynamiques observées de façon à comprendre les décalages éventuels entre les différents acteurs. Ensuite, 2 personnes non impliquées dans l'intervention ont lu l'ensemble des observations de façon à dégager les récurrences au niveau des thèmes et des dynamiques. Dans un troisième temps, ces personnes ont reflété les résultats de leur analyse à l'équipe d'intervention et aux enseignants de façon à confirmer ou nuancer les profils identifiés.

Résultats

Nous présenterons en premier lieu la perception des professeurs et des intervenants, telle que recueillie lors du développement du projet, puis ce qui a émergé de l'analyse des observations participantes.

La perception des professeurs et de l'équipe d'intervenants

Les professeurs ont dans l'ensemble beaucoup apprécié l'intervention qui leur a permis de mieux connaître leurs élèves. Ils ont rapporté que ces derniers avaient aimé le programme et étaient contents de revenir aux sessions subséquentes. Plusieurs élèves ont directement exprimé aux professeurs que les ateliers leur donnait la capacité de nommer ce qui se passait pour eux et leur apportait un certain soulagement. « Ça m'aide à mieux me sentir ». Dans d'autres cas, ce sont les professeurs qui ont observé des changements positifs dans le comportement des élèves et dans leur perception d'eux-mêmes. Certains Du jeu des identités à la transformation de réalités partagées 141 professeurs ont été surpris de voir s'exprimer des élèves habituellement silencieux.

Les enseignants ont souligné que le côté rituel de l'intervention conférait à l'espace des ateliers un caractère un peu sacré où les élèves se sentaient en sécurité. Le contenu des histoires discutées dans les ateliers n'est pas sorti dans les couloirs et aucun manque de respect relatif à celui-ci n'a été observé. Les élèves avaient pris conscience qu'ils pouvaient décider de leur niveau de participation et ne se sentaient pas contraints à parler. Certains aspects du langage, utilisé par les élèves, étaient cependant questionnés par les professeurs qui ne favorisaient pas ce type d'expression dans leurs cours (par exemple l'emploi d'un langage utilisé dans la rue dans le cadre de dialogues). Après discussion entre les professeurs et l'équipe il a été entendu que les ateliers pouvaient avoir leurs propres règles d'expression de façon à rendre possible l'expression de l'expérience complète du jeune, dans la mesure où il y avait accord au niveau des valeurs fondamentales de respect mutuel.

Les membres de l'équipe ont, quant à eux, été émerveillés par la confiance que témoignaient les adolescents au Group en apportant des histoires très signifiantes pour eux et par le climat de respect qui prévalait en général. Ils ont apprécié le support des professeurs et leurs questionnements par rapport à certains aspects des ateliers. La composition multiethnique, multiâge et pluridisciplinaire de l'équipe s'est révélée un atout important pour comprendre, refléter et transformer les histoires proposées par les jeunes. Certains intervenants se sentaient plus directement interpellés ou repoussés par des histoires spécifiques et l'écart entre les perceptions des membres de l'équipe devenaient une caisse de résonance permettant de mettre en scène de façon centrale la richesse et les tensions liées à la multiplicité.

Les thèmes dominants : du quotidien de l'adolescence à la construction identitaire

Tel que prévu, plusieurs histoires ont abordé les défis de la migration, les enjeux d'une société pluriethnique et les préoccupations personnelles et identitaires propres à l'adolescence. L'équilibre relatif entre les thèmes abordés et leur poids émotionnel est intéressant. Les adolescents appréciaient le rire et la détente associés à des histoires qui abordaient les aspects comiques de dilemmes quotidiens et utilisaient ces histoires plus légères ou carrément drôles pour rompre la lourdeur ou le malaise associés à des histoires tristes ou anxiogènes. Cela leur permettait d'accompagner leurs pairs dans des émotions moins agréables sans toutefois se sentir trop envahis ou écrasés par celles-ci.

La très grande majorité des histoires racontées par les adolescents sont des histoires qu'ils ont vécues personnellement et dans lesquelles ils ont eu un rôle actif ou parfois de témoins. Un premier ensemble d'histoires touche leur vie dans le pays d'origine et évoquent les liens affectifs perdus ou transformés par la migration : les grands-parents, les amis avec lesquels on se demande comment conserver les liens. Des anecdotes d'enfance racontant des petites histoires de courage ou de peur émergent aussi : tomber d'un arbre, sauter dans la mer, « sauver » une fille. Elles se mêlent aux récits de rites initiatiques plus formels (comme la fête de « Quinceñera », les quinze ans des jeunes filles pour les Latino-américains) et semblent constituer des moments de passages qui répondent en écho aux moments qui, dans le pays hôte, constituent les marqueurs de l'âge et de l'arrivée à l'âge adulte. Le moment de la migration elle-même est aussi objet d'histoires : déchirures et inquiétudes face à ceux que l'on laisse, mais aussi tracasseries multiples autour des procédures migratoires (visas, papiers, etc...)

Un deuxième ensemble d'histoires illustre la vie dans le pays hôte. : les jeux, les défis et les transgressions dans les relations avec les pairs, souvent accompagnés d'une affirmation identitaire qu'elle soit discrète ou massive. Les relations amoureuses qui se jouent dans un espace inconnu en franchissant fréquemment les frontières ethniques, religieuses ou linguistiques : être amoureux mais ne pas « savoir » les mots pour le dire.

Un jeune mexicain raconte qu'il aime une fille musulmane. Il est fier d'être mexicain mais n'est pas d'accord avec tous les aspects de sa culture. Malheureusement, il ne peut pas téléphoner à cette fille car ses parents l'interdisent. Il n'est pas religieux et dit ne pas croire comme elle. Il trouve cela difficile et préférerait parfois être au Mexique parce qu'au moins là-bas il connaît les règles du jeu. Il est très touché par la mise en scène de son histoire. Il dit avoir des frissons quand on lui offre de modifier la fin : il imagine qu'il part avec celle qu'il aime, pour un autre pays.

Le quotidien de l'école est très présent : les parents mécontents du bulletin, les pressions des professeurs. Parfois l'atelier devient un lieu pour parler indirectement au professeur ou avoir avec lui des échanges qui n'ont pas lieu dans le cadre des cours. Enfin, un troisième ensemble d'histoires décrit leurs réactions personnelles ou collectives à l'actualité internationale, particulièrement lors d'événements très médiatisés. Le racisme n'est pas directement nommé, les adolescents rapportent plutôt les stéréotypes dont ils sont l'objet et l'inégalité des relations avec la majorité est suggérée en filigrane.

Plusieurs histoires abordent la complexité de la construction identitaire pour les adolescents immigrants et l'influence des pertes significatives et de l'éloignement familial sur ce processus. Les jeunes oscillent entre la représentation d'une identité idéale qui leur restituerait la place sociale ou familiale qu'ils ont perdue à cause de la migration et l'évocation du deuil lié à cette perte.

Guillaume est un jeune garçon de 15 ans de père camerounais et de mère canadienne. Son histoire raconte son plus grand rêve : un premier voyage au Cameroun. Il décrit son arrivée à l'aéroport et sa rencontre avec des membres de la famille étendue. Il parle de tous ces gens qui l'entourent et qui le reconnaissent comme l'un des leurs. Il nomme son sentiment d'arriver enfin chez lui, sa joie et la chaleur humaine dont il se sent entouré. Entre les lignes on peut lire le manque, le fait qu'il ne se sente pas vraiment chez lui dans le pays si froid, si blanc ou il est né, et qui est le pays de sa mère.

Anne est chinoise, elle a 16 ans. Elle veut voir jouer une page de son histoire familiale qu'elle trouve difficile. Sa nièce, qui a à peu près le même âge qu'elle, doit se marier un peu à contrecœur dans le cadre d'un mariage arrangé par sa famille. Elle-même s'oppose à ce mariage traditionnel et souhaiterait pouvoir aider sa nièce, mais elle se sent impuissante parce qu'étant au Canada, elle a perdu l'influence qu'elle aurait pu avoir en tant que tante. Elle manifeste sa tristesse après la présentation de son histoire et l'intervenant lui demande si elle désire que l'on rejoue l'histoire en la transformant. Elle accepte et modifie l'histoire de façon à récupérer, en Chine, son statut de tante et à pouvoir empêcher le mariage. Dans l'histoire d'Anne, modernité et tradition s'affrontent de façon complexe : il y a à la fois désir d'affranchissement face à certaines coutumes (ici le mariage arrangé) et désir de reprendre le pouvoir que lui autoriserait la hiérarchie familiale et qu'elle a perdu au cours de la migration.

Identités rêvées, revendiquées, perdues, implicites se mélangent dans des rapports complexes et complémentaires. Au-delà des différences identitaires de toutes natures qui séparent les adolescents, le partage de ces interactions complexes, d'une identité essentiellement créole et hybride les rapproche. Au travers de la confusion émerge la multiplicité des possibles.

Dynamique de Group et tensions créatrices

Brisant le cadre habituellement harmonieux des ateliers, certaines sessions font émerger des tensions importantes qui révèlent probablement les tâches aveugles de l'un ou l'autre des acteurs impliqués.

Une jeune fille iranienne âgée de 15 ans écrit une histoire dans le cadre de la « maison d'histoire ». Elle mène une campagne bruyante auprès de ses compagnons pour que son histoire soit choisie et jouée. L'histoire est très dramatique. Elle parle d'un homme réfugié du Moyen-Orient qui assassine sa femme parce que celle-ci s'émancipe trop. Elle donne des détails sanglants et insiste sur le rôle du bébé témoin qui pleure de façon déchirante. L'élaboration de l'histoire met en lumière que la femme a reçu sa citoyenneté canadienne la journée avant le crime et que la famille étendue n'a jamais réussi à reprendre les enfants que le tribunal a confiés aux institutions de la société hôte.

Le professeur est très perturbé par l'histoire, il se sent trahi et a l'impression qu'il s'agit d'une mise en scène mélodramatique pour saboter le travail des ateliers. L'équipe au contraire pense que l'histoire, au-delà de son aspect sensationnaliste parle de la violence institutionnelle de la société hôte et de la façon dont celle-ci dérange la vie des familles immigrantes en modifiant les rôles, mais aussi en leur enlevant ce qu'elles ont de plus précieux : leurs enfants. Un travail intense entre l'équipe et le professeur permet de contenir les affects déclenchés par l'histoire.

Durant quelques sessions, un Group de jeunes amène de multiples histoires de poupées robots qui évoluent dans un monde virtuel et fragmenté. Les histoires apparaissent comme une série d'événements plus ou moins déconnectés, d'où ressort surtout une impression de grande confusion. Cette fois-ci c'est l'équipe qui réagit et se sent perdue, et d'une certaine façon, dérangée par ces histoires qui n'ont ni queue ni tête. Une réflexion de Group permet d'émettre l'hypothèse que les histoires présentées par les jeunes représentent sans doute une partie de leur réalité : la DIFFICULTY de reconstituer un univers de sens et la place grandissante du sentiment d'absurdité. Le monde virtuel avec ses nouvelles relations mais aussi et surtout, ses pseudo-relations et sa

fragmentation représente un miroir de cette nouvelle réalité. L'équipe réalise alors qu'il lui est plus difficile de contenir cette confusion et ce sentiment de chaos que d'affronter des signifiants lourds d'émotions comme la colère et la tristesse.

Les tensions du Group ont donc agi comme révélateurs. Alors que tous s'accordaient sur le besoin pour les jeunes d'un espace de parole ouvert, certaines choses s'avéraient difficiles à entendre : la violence de la société hôte pour le professeur, la place de l'absurdité dans la vie des jeunes pour l'équipe. La capacité de ne pas agir ces tensions en termes d'interdit d'expression mais de pouvoir contenir le malaise qu'elles suscitaient a permis d'élargir l'espace d'expression et de transformer la Du jeu des identités à la transformation de réalités partagées 145 perception et la compréhension que les intervenants et professeurs avaient des jeunes.

Parler de la guerre ou ne pas en parler ?

Durant l'hiver 2003, les ateliers se sont déroulés alors que la guerre menaçait d'éclater en Iraq, et ensuite durant la guerre elle-même. Celle-ci a été amenée soit directement, soit en toile de fond par les jeunes et par l'équipe au cours de différentes sessions. De façon transversale, d'une session à l'autre et à l'intérieur d'une même session, on notait un va et vient entre le besoin d'évoquer directement ou indirectement la guerre et les affects soulevés par celle-ci et un désir de dégagement, de se changer les idées en riant et en mettant en scène des sujets légers. La période de la guerre a fait émerger des thèmes évoquant le conflit et l'impuissance, mettant en jeu d'une part la fascination et l'excitation relié au combat, d'autre part la négociation avec des enjeux moraux.

Un jeune romain raconte l'affrontement entre 2 Groups de jeunes engagés dans les cadets de l'armée. L'un des Groups provoque l'autre et cherche à se battre mais son leader se retrouve coincé entre son désir d'en découdre et son obligation de maintenir la paix. Les deux Groups se séparent finalement lorsque le Group qui était provoqué décide de quitter les lieux. Le Group agresseur savoure une demi-victoire tout en regrettant ce dénouement. Il n'est pas vraiment clair s'ils regrettent le fait qu'il n'y ait pas eu de vraie bataille ou plutôt une victoire facile après laquelle ils se retrouvent en position d'agresseur. Le récit est long, très confus, l'équipe essaye de préciser l'histoire et n'y arrive pas. Le jeune n'est pas satisfait de l'interprétation, la classe s'impatiente, un sentiment de malaise diffus domine.

Dans d'autres cas, l'empathie pour ceux qui vivent la guerre est directement nommée, mais aussi le sentiment de soulagement de se sentir à l'abri et en sécurité.

Une jeune fille raconte comment une camarade qui avait du mal à se concentrer lui a confié qu'elle s'inquiétait pour sa famille à Bagdad. Elle a cherché à la rassurer et aussi à l'aider un peu avec ses travaux, mais elle se sentait surtout impuissante à la soulager.

Une maison d'histoires effectuée à ce moment-là rassemble un éventail d'histoires dont certaines d'adolescents irakiens qui parlent très directement de la guerre. Ces adolescents n'avaient pas mentionné ces éléments auparavant. Il semble que l'écrit permet de nommer les choses tout en les maintenant à une certaine distance.

« Bon, tout d'abord je veux dire combien j'aime l'Irak, et le problème c'est que je n'y ai jamais vécu. Bon, c'est beaucoup mieux que je sois à l'extérieur à cause de la guerre, mais quand même, j'aimerais voir ma famille de nouveau parce qu'ils me manquent. En même temps, je suis heureux d'être loin de tout ce qui se passe là-bas. »

Ces histoires ne sont choisies par aucun jeune pour être mises en scène. Elles parlent sans doute de façon trop directe du traumatisme. Le Group ne peut les porter que partiellement.

Discussion

Le programme d'ateliers d'expression théâtrale a été très bien accueilli à la fois par les écoles et par les adolescents. Ce qui reflète probablement le fait qu'ils répondent à la nécessité d'un lieu et de modalités d'expression qui permettent de contenir certaines tensions sociales plus ou moins proches de la réalité quotidienne des adolescents, mais toutes profondément inscrites dans leur expérience de vie. En tout premier lieu les ateliers réussissent à générer un sentiment de sécurité. Adolescents et professeurs soulignent l'aspect ritualisé des ateliers qui confère aux histoires partagées dans ce cadre un certain caractère sacré. Malgré les craintes initiales du milieu scolaire, les ateliers ont réussi à maintenir un climat de respect, un respect qui permet les rires, les désaccords et parfois l'ennui, mais qui représente le statut de sujet de chacun, son droit à une voix singulière. La sécurité d'expression au sein des ateliers est aussi liée à la flexibilité des consignes. Le dévoilement est bienvenu mais personne n'y est poussé. La métaphore permet distance et évocation symbolique. Le va et vient entre des thèmes plus lourds et des histoires essentiellement divertissantes est possible. Cette flexibilité permet au Group de rebondir au sein d'une même séance ou d'une séance à l'autre en élaborant des pertes ou des tensions mais en ayant presque toujours des portes de sortie.

Deuxièmement, les ateliers constituent des lieux où le pluralisme est représenté, nommé et valorisé. La multiplicité des origines ethniques des membres de l'équipe fait écho à la multiplicité des adolescents de la classe et permet de faire jouer le reflet du même autant que des différences. Dans ce processus, chacun est amené au travers de la découverte de sa propre multiplicité, à reconnaître l'autre en lui-même (Dunlop, 1999). Ceci permet de penser la différence d'identité sans dichotomiser « nous » et « eux », mais en resituant les inégalités collectives et la position des minorités dans une perspective de justice sociale et de dialogue (Irving et Young, 2002).

Troisièmement, les ateliers constituent un lieu partagé de mise en scène des passages et des transitions associé à l'adolescence. Cette Du jeu des identités à la transformation de réalités partagées 147 initiation se vit différemment dans divers ensembles culturels mais les adolescents de la classe ont en commun une perte des repères permettant la ritualisation de cette transition. Il est intéressant de noter que l'élaboration des pertes associées à la migration va de pair avec cette évocation des transitions de l'adolescence, ce qui rejoint Akhtar (1995) qui souligne que l'adolescence constitue un moment de réactivation des pertes pour les enfants migrants et réfugiés à cause entre autres des défis que posent les séparations associées à l'entrée dans l'âge adulte. Le discours sur l'autonomie et l'indépendance de la société hôte tranche souvent avec les valeurs des familles immigrantes. Le processus de séparation associé au cycle de vie devient d'autant plus difficile s'il doit se dérouler entre des mondes dont les demandes envers le jeune sont souvent opposées ou contradictoires. Les adolescents utilisent les ateliers pour rejouer ces paradoxes et trouver collectivement des pistes de solutions. La possibilité de transformer une histoire après l'avoir mise en scène semble constituer à la fois un espace d'expression du rêve et, à cause de son caractère collectif, un élargissement du champ du possible. Comme si l'impensable, à partir du moment où il n'apparaissait pas impossible à un autre, rentrait dans le domaine des stratégies disponibles.

En conclusion, les ateliers d'expression théâtrale semblent constituer un outil d'intervention approprié pour relever les défis qui se posent aux adolescents migrants et réfugiés et pour travailler les tensions associées à un statut de minorité. Plusieurs questions se posent cependant. Dans quelle mesure les ateliers influencent-ils à moyen terme le bien-être et l'adaptation des participants à leur nouvel environnement ? De quelle façon les écoles peuvent-elles s'approprier de façon réaliste, une intervention qui demande une équipe assez nombreuse tout en conservant la spécificité de celle-ci ? Au-delà des ces questions, l'expérience des ateliers de théâtre auprès des adolescents rejoint les observations faites avec d'autres Groups d'âge et diverses modalités d'expression (Rousseau et al., 2005a ; Rousseau et al., 2005b ; Rousseau, 2005) et invite à repenser l'enseignement de l'art sous ses différentes formes pour multiplier les espaces d'expression créatrice dans les écoles multiethniques.

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ABSTRACT

Playing with identities, transforming shared realities: School theatre workshop for immigrant and refugee adolescents.

Migration during adolescence represents a challenge for the adolescent who need to simultaneously work through the multiple losses associated with the migratory journey and adapt to a young adult status. The drama workshop program described here was designed to facilitate the adjustment of newly arrived immigrant teens. The aim of the program is to make it easier for adolescents to adjust to their new environment through creative group work around identity issues. The program also seeks to improve intergroup relations in multiethnic schools. The 150 Santé mentale au Québec workshops are inspired both from playback theater and from Boal's form theater which emphasizes the collective transformation of the singular experience. The qualitative assessment of the program effects on the adolescents suggests that the workshops constitute a safe space of expression, in which the team and the ritual nature of the play hold the participants. The workshops facilitate the representation of the multiplicity of values in the adolescent world and invite them to reconsider the way in which they interact, with their environment, without splitting between "us" and "them," but rather creating solidarities around issues of social justice. The workshops also address the life transformation associated both with adolescence and migration and help the elaboration of the losses linked to the migratory journey and the construction of a hybrid identity.

RESUMEN

Del juego de identidades a la transformación de realidades compartidas: un programa de talleres de expresión teatral para adolescentes inmigrantes y refugiados.

La migración en la adolescencia es particularmente delicada a causa de la carga conjunta que representa en esta etapa de la vida la integración de las múltiples pérdidas asociadas a la migración y la adaptación a un estatus de joven adulto. El programa de talleres de expresión teatral busca facilitar la adaptación de los adolescentes inmigrantes y refugiados a su nuevo entorno, a partir de un trabajo creativo relacionado con las cuestiones de identidad ligadas a la migración y a un estatus de minoría. Estos talleres conjugan un enfoque inspirado del teatro playback, que permite una puesta en escena de una experiencia personal, y el teatro forum de Boal, que pone el acento en la transformación colectiva de la experiencia. Los resultados de una evaluación cualitativa de los talleres de expresión teatral sugieren que éstos constituyen un lugar de expresión en el que los participantes se sienten seguros y apoyados por el equipo, así como por el carácter ritual de la representación teatral. Los talleres permiten representar la multiplicidad de los valores y referencias internas y externas del adolescente, y renegociarlos sin crear una dicotomía entre el "ellos" y "nosotros" al tratar cuestiones de justicia social que se plantean a la colectividad. Favorecen también la elaboración de las transiciones de la adolescencia al permitir la evocación de las pérdidas de la migración y el paso hacia una identidad híbrida.

RESUMO

Da representação de identidades à transformação de realidades solidárias: um programa de ateliês de expressão teatral para adolescentes imigrantes e refugiados

A imigração na adolescência é especialmente delicada, por causa do fardo conjugado que representa, neste ponto da vida, a integração das múltiplas perdas associadas à imigração e à adaptação ao estatuto de jovem adulto. O programa de ateliês de expressão teatral visa facilitar a adaptação dos adolescentes imigrantes e refugiados ao seu novo ambiente, a partir de um trabalho criativo a respeito das preocupações identitárias relacionadas à imigração e a um estatuto de minoria. Estes ateliês conjugam uma abordagem inspirada no teatro playback, que permite uma representação da vivência pessoal, e no teatro fórum de Boal, que ressalta a transformação coletiva da experiência. Os resultados de uma avaliação qualitativa dos ateliês de expressão teatral sugerem que estes continuam sendo um lugar de expressão onde os participantes sentem-se em segurança e apoiados pela equipe e pelo caráter ritual da representação teatral. Os ateliês permitem representar a multiplicidade dos valores e das referências internas e externas do adolescente e renegociá-los sem dicotomizar o “eles” e o “nós”, falando sobre questões de justiça social que são colocadas à coletividade. Os ateliês favorecem também a elaboração das transições da adolescência permitindo a evocação das perdas da imigração e a passagem para uma identidade híbrida.



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