

Appendices

A. Physical Warmup Activities

Physical Warmup Activities 1 *Walkabout*

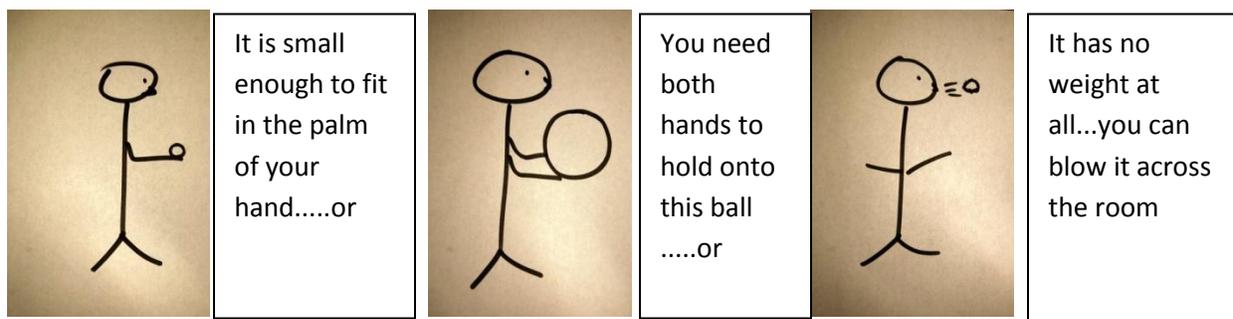
Materials required- none

- You are Gulliver in the Land of Lilliputians so it is necessary to watch your step
- You are walking on ice
- You are on a moon walk
- You have concrete blocks strapped to your boots
- It is pitch dark
- You are looking for a lost pet
- You are pushing a giant rock
- Your feet are rooted to the ocean floor and your movement is only in the swaying of your arms and body
- You are a cat burglar
- You are using a periscope to determine where you walk
- You have a secret which no one else is to see
- You are walking knee deep through a fast-moving stream

Physical Warmup Activities 2 -*Space Balls*

Materials required-none

Space Balls are invisible and thus can be any size you want them to be. Generally they begin by fitting in the ACTors' pocket. Once the actor brings the ball out, it gains its definition. Initially it works best if the facilitator describes the ball....as a drama exercise we want the ACTOR to visualize the ball, its weight and substance.



When you see that ACTors have visualized their balls, have them form pairs and pass the balls back and forth. The activity will depend on the nature of the balls...for example

- The balls may be weightless and be blown back and forth across the room
- They may be balloon-like and not have any sense of direction
- They may be beach ball-like
- They may be medicine ball-like and only be passed a short distance

And....

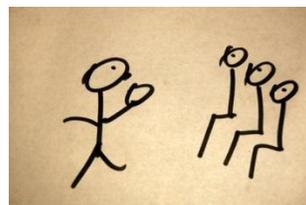
- The balls may get mixed up with the balls of others
- They may collide
- They may do all of the things that a room full of balls will do.

However....when the facilitator calls freeze, every ACTor should know the location of the invisible ball.

The Space Ball exercise has unlimited applications



We may have to work together to push a giant space ball across the room.



We may explain the unique characteristics which make our space ball special

Always remember to put the space ball away at the end of the exercise.

Physical Warmup Activities 3 -Balloons

Materials required- none



1. PLAYers stand in a slouched, relaxed position with knees slightly bent and imagine inflating themselves by blowing through pursed lips. Blow up to being larger than life and barely able to remain on the ground. Then deflate and slowly return to the original position.
2. Blow up a partner using the same process. The player doing the blowing and the player being "blown up" need to synchronize the blowing and inflating. Try having the balloon deflate in stages to get the synchronicity.
3. PLAYers imagine having a helium balloon on a string. It is a windy day, and the balloon wants to explore. Add balloons until the PLAYer is being controlled by the balloons. Close the exercise by having the balloons released and the PLAYer watching them disappear.

Physical Warmup Activities 4- *Joining In*

Materials required- cards (preferable) or sheets with activities prewritten

Players are in a circle. Facilitator has a card on which is written an action. The card is handed to one PLAYER who must begin that action. Other PLAYERS join into the action as soon as they think they understand what is being done. Examples of these activities are:

- Reshelving books in a library
- Putting studs into snow tires
- Grooming a very large animal—or a whole group of small animals
- Conducting an orchestra and trying to discover the instrument which is out of tune
- Harvesting fruit/vegetables

The activity should not change until all PLAYERS are involved. If there is a PLAYER who has not joined, one of the others should give that person something to do in order to join in.

As soon as it is clear the activity has run its course, stop, debrief and then facilitator gives another card to another PLAYER.

Physical Warmup Activities 5- *Sculpture*

Materials required- List of projects to be sculpted

PLAYERS work in groups of three to five. One PLAYER is nominated as the sculptor, and the others are the medium. The facilitator calls out the image to be sculpted and sculptor moves the other PLAYERS into positions to create the image. The sculptor **cannot show or tell** other PLAYERS how or where to move, they must be **physically manipulated** into position **without touching**. When the sculpture is complete, sculptors move about the gallery to look at the work of other sculptors. The process continues until all have had an opportunity to sculpt.

Physical Warmup Activities 6- *Blind Trust*

Materials required- None

PLAYERS work in pairs. One PLAYER is the guide and partner has eyes closed. The guide moves the partner around the room using only verbal clues. As the group “matures” this exercise can move to one sighted person moving a train of “eyes closed” participants about the space.

B. Cognitive Warmup Activities

Cognitive Warmup Activities 1-Storytelling

Materials required-topics to be shared by facilitator

Over a period of time, the storytelling can move from recalling previous events to envisioning. For example:

- If you were a divine being, how would you remake men/women?
- If you could only have three books from now until the end of time, what would they be?
- What would have been the best thing about living in the time of King Arthur? (or any other time period)

And then to opinion pieces:

- What change would make it more enjoyable to live in our community?
- Is it acceptable to love one grandchild more than another?

The most important part of the activity is giving PLAYers an opportunity to tell a story or speak their truth, and having it repeated by and heard by others.

Cognitive Warmup Activities 2-First Lines

Materials required- Series of opening lines

Rationale- Quick response and working with a partner to make something happen. Listening to partner is critical.

Cognitive Warmup Activities 3- The Great Debate (5-10 minutes)

Materials required-Debate topics, noisemaker loud enough to cut through the discussions.

Rationale-Multi-tasking, keeping more than one “think” going at a time.

PLAYers work in pairs and decide who is affirmative and who is opposed. When facilitator calls out the topic, partners immediately begin to argue. The intention is to speak down the opposition and not to listen to the other argument or to respond to the other argument because that would indicate the PLAYER had been listening. At the sound of the noisemaker, PLAYers immediately change positions and argue the opposite of what they had been saying.

“This is hard to do. We have always been taught to listen to other people, and now we are supposed to shout them down. It sounds like Christmas dinner at our house!”

It is not as easy an exercise as it sounds. Typically, at the sound of the noisemaker, there is a moment of silence as PLAYers scramble to get their heads around the other point of view.

This is a quick change exercise so let it go for only a minute or so, then change partners and do it again. A good exercise for getting people to work with lots of partners in a short time.

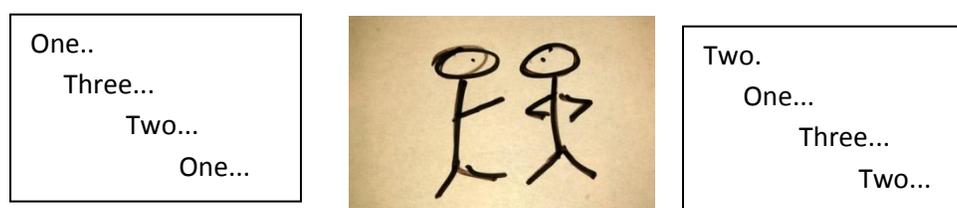
C. Physical-Cognitive Warmup Activities

Physical-Cognitive Warmup Activity 1 *One Two Three*

Materials Required- None

Rationale- **Rationale-** Now that the brain is in high gear, and we have warmed up the body parts, it is time to put them both together. These exercises are designed to test our focus and our ability to multi-task. Generally, these are also very challenging exercises and end up in a lot of laughter.

Format- PLAYers work in pairs facing each other. Taking turns they count to three.



The objective is to get as quick at this as possible. The facilitator then has PLAYers substitute a handclap for One so the exercise becomes Clap-Two-Three-Clap-Two-Three.

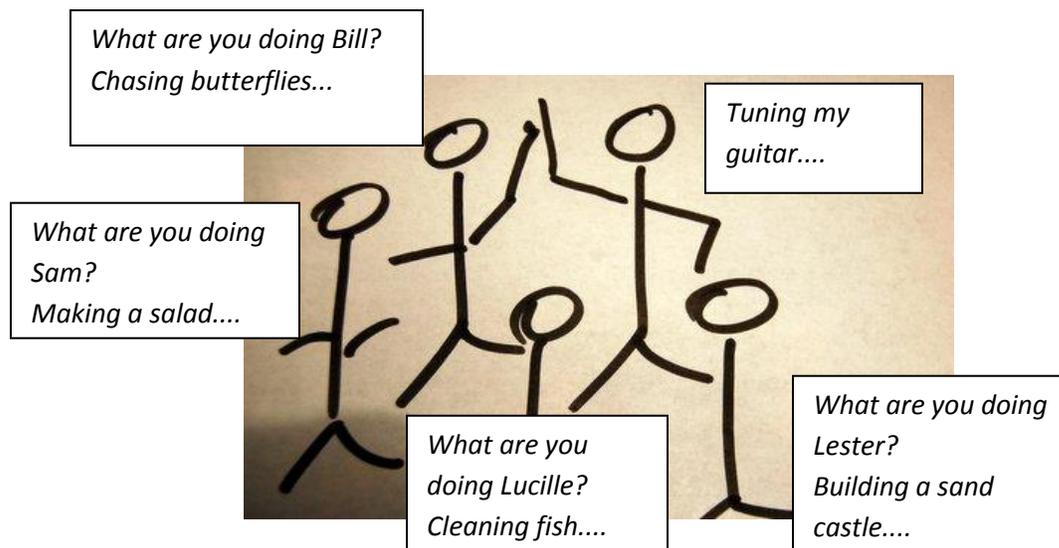
A finger-snap or head-tap or foot-stomp or some other physical activity then takes the place of Two and the mayhem is unavoidable.

Physical-Cognitive Warmup Activity 2 *What Are You Doing Ida?*

Materials Required- None

Rationale- Much like chewing gum and rubbing your tummy, these exercises are designed to test our focus and our ability to multi-task.

Format- PLAYers stand in a circle. The facilitator begins an action such as tuning a guitar. The PLAYER to the right of the facilitator asks "What are you doing Name." The facilitator must continue **doing** the initial action, but must **say** he is doing something else. "I am chasing butterflies Name." That PLAYER must then begin chasing butterflies. The PLAYER to his right asks "What are you doing, Name," and again the response must be something different than chasing butterflies.



The activity continues going around the circle. The biggest challenge that PLAYers encounter is trying to say they are doing one thing while continuing to focus on doing another. Even when we start by having all our PLAYers have a number of actions in mind before the action begins, most of us forget what we were going to say.

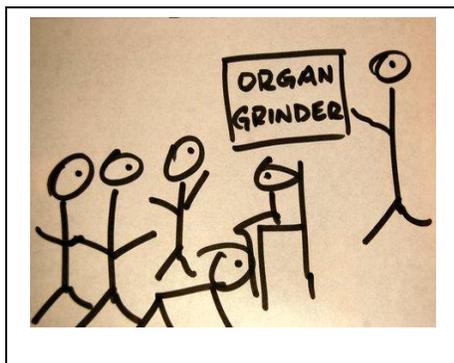
Physical-Cognitive Warmup Activity 3 *What's My Line?*

Materials required- 8 x 11 sheets with occupations clearly printed. These can be prepared by the facilitator ahead of time. Ida and Old Baldy use this exercise as a team game as well, and in those cases the teams prepare the list of occupations so you would require markers and paper.

Rationale- A great team-building exercise which requires quick mental processing, movement, and a willingness to appear silly in front of your mates. Similar to charades, except that one person is guessing and everyone else is moving and acting.

Format- We have just been given a new job but we don't know what it is. The other PLAYers are going to act out our new job for us. A single chair is set facing the group and PLAYER One takes the seat. Facilitator (or if it is teams, a member of the opposing team) holds up the occupation behind the seated PLAYER and the rest spring into action to create the work environment. No one is allowed to talk other than the PLAYER who is guessing. As soon as the correct response is given, the second PLAYER takes the seat and we go through until everyone has had a turn.

Early stages, the occupations are relatively simple. However, as the skill level increases so does the complexity



You are a

- Tree hugger
- Fishmonger
- Bodyguard for Queen Elizabeth
- Door-to-door trombone salesperson
- Fast-food drive-through person
- Violin maker

Improvisation ACTivities

Ida and Old Baldy's uses improvisation as an instructional activity as well as a creative activity and PLAYers are reminded that they are playing to an audience. Masking, projection, basic positioning, use of gestures all become part of the conversation.

Ida's General Improvisation Rules

- Always open and close. Never end an improvisation with "That's it, we're finished." Generally works best by insisting on starting and ending with a clear stage.
- Talk is cheap....the fewer words the better. Learn to convey meaning without using dialogue.
- When working in a hall without a stage, define the playing area.
- If you have to tell us the backstory....start again.
- Improvisation is a shared activity—Facilitator needs to ensure that everybody has input into the outcome.

Improvisation One *Half Life*

Materials required-none

Half Life is not an exercise unto itself, it is used in combination with other activities and when PLAYers hear that it is going to be half-life, the focus goes up incredibly. It can be done with any presentation piece but works best when there is a lot of movement. When a group has completed their presentation, a second group is told to present the same piece of work in half the time. When they have completed, a third group is told to do it in half of half the time. We continue going until there is not time to do anything.

Group One takes 2 minutes, Group Two must take 1 minute, Group Three must take 30 seconds etc.

Improvisation Two *The Letter*

Materials required—props for mail, one envelope with a mystery piece of information

PLAYer One enters with mail and puts it on a table/bench. PLAYer One then opens the mail and sets it to one side. The third letter is opened accidentally, as it is not addressed to PLAYer One, but rather to her partner/roommate. The letter contains information of a very confidential and private nature. PLAYer One is not aware of what is in the letter until it is read. PLAYer One is holding the letter when PLAYer Two enters.

Improvisation Three *Exits and Entrances*

Materials required- none

Choose a situation in which there are likely to be numerous naturally occurring entrances and exits. In groups of three to five PLAYers create a scene in which:

- There must always be at least one PLAYER on the stage
- There can never be a time when all PLAYers are on the stage at the same time
- No PLAYER can be offstage for more than five seconds at a time

Improvisation Four *From A-Z*

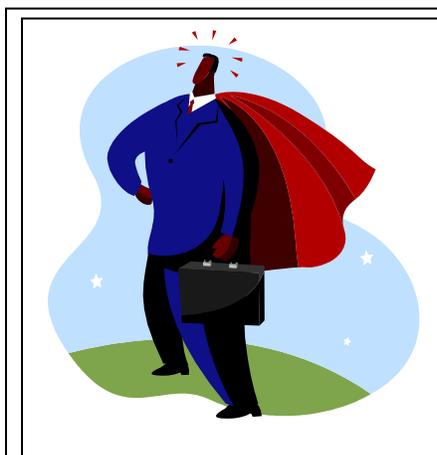
Materials required- none

PLAYers are given a setting. They must then create a conversation/scene in which each successive line begins with the next letter of the alphabet. The number of PLAYers can be as few as two, and as many as you believe can anticipate where the scene may go.

One Are you feeling better Mr. Norton?
 Two Be better if I wasn't stuck in this cell.
 Three Can you just sign here sir? (shows One sheet of paper)
 Two Disturbing the peace?! I was not!
 One Easy Mr. Norton...it's just a formality.
 Two Formality?!

Improvisation Five *Superhero*

Materials required- none



Superhero

This is a quick and fun improv exercise. Facilitator creates a problem which must be solved by a Superhero. For example ACTors are trying to read a book and keep coming up with big Words which they don't understand. To the rescue comes Literacy Girl/Boy/Man/Woman. Then have ACTors create their Own situation and solution.

Improvisation Six- *Scripted Opening*

Materials required- Set of Opening Lines

Each group is given the same opening from which to develop their improvisation.

Example One

PLAYer One enters, clearly looking for something.

PLAYer Two Can I help you?

PLAYer One I'm looking for something.

PLAYer Two I can see that. What have you lost?

PLAYer One Three pounds.

Example Two

Set consists of a bench. PLAYer One enters and sits. Checks the time and takes novel out of handbag and starts to read

PLAYer Two enters and sits at unoccupied section of bench.

PLAYer One is absorbed in book.

Two My doctor told me that I should get out and meet people. Instead of sitting at home.

One *(looks and smiles but says nothing)*

Two She says I have depression. She says that meeting new people is better than medication.

One Oh.

Two For depression....

One I see.

Two It's not contagious.

From here the improvisation can go in many directions. Players are given a short preparation time and then present to the group.

When you create a set of opening lines, make sure to file them. Over the period of several years. these things become invaluable.

Improvisation Seven- *First Line, Last Line*

Materials required- paper and writing equipment

PLAYers are in divided into groups. On each of two pieces of paper they write a line of dialogue. They then give the lines to two different groups. Each group now has two lines, one of which must open an

improvisation, the other of which must close the improvisation. The facilitator sets a theme for the improvisation and the amount of time for preparation.

Or...

Facilitator provides an opening line and a closing line for an improvisation and each group builds their improv based on those two lines chooses from a set of possible themes.

Or...

Improvisation Eight-Improvisation based on Scenario

Materials required- Scenario which will allow the PLAYers to build a scene and characters.

Facilitator provides the scenario and PLAYers explore the situation.



Examples-

Scenario One

Jane's mother/father has been becoming more scattered over the past several years. Jane generally visits once or twice a week and her mother comes to her home on Sunday for a family dinner. Their relationship is positive.

Jane's only real concern is the safety of her mother's driving. She has driven with her several times recently and has noticed that she doesn't see everything and is often caught by surprise by things going on around her. Mother has become careful to the point of being hazardous.

Last month there was a dent in the rear fender of Mother's car. When Jane asked about it, her mother said she had no idea how it had happened.

Jane received a call today from her mother's next-door neighbor. She indicated that the rest of the neighbors had asked her to phone. Quite a few of the houses in the area are occupied by young families with children who are often playing on the street. There have been a number of incidents in which her mother has come close to hitting a child and yesterday she ran into a hockey net which the kids had moved to the side of the street, but which she apparently did not see. When the neighbours have

talked to her about her driving she just shakes her head and says “I suppose I had better be more careful.”

Jane’s mother is fiercely independent and takes pride in being able to manage for herself and her car, and the ability to drive is critical to her.

The closest bus service is four blocks away, not impossible, but certainly a distance longer than she would be able to carry groceries. Mother’s means are adequate and when Jane and her partner have explained that the amount her mother spends on fuel, maintenance, and insurance every year would probably pay for quite a few taxi rides, she agrees but dismisses the idea immediately. Her response is “Oh, I couldn’t do that dear.”

Her mother is coming to dinner , and Jane needs to have the conversation tonight.

Scenario Two

Agnes has lived alone for a number of years, quite successfully. She manages all the household chores, goes out to her bridge club twice a week and to the center for exercise class three mornings a week. She stopped driving several years ago and as she lives reasonably close to shopping, she is able to walk most places. Her doctor’s office is on the bus route and she has the schedule memorized. She has a pull cart that she takes to the grocery store and when she has to go a greater distance than the bus or walking, she generally goes with a friend or friends, and they share the cost of a taxi.

Her only daughter, Dina, has had a rough go of things. She has been married twice, and both marriages ended in rancorous disputes. The last marriage dissolved six months ago, and Dina was left with very little.

Dina asked to move in with Agnes while she got things straightened out. While Agnes was not happy about the idea, she agreed. Her daughter said that it would be good for both of them, and that she could help Agnes around the place.

While the initial weeks went reasonably well, Dina has now been in Agnes’ home for almost a year, and the past months have been a strain on Agnes. She is accustomed to her own way of doing things and gets frustrated when her daughter does them differently. Where her days were once driven by her own schedule, she is now feeling confined and trapped by another person, and another person’s things in the house. She feels a sense of responsibility to her daughter but her daughter is not showing any signs of moving on. When Agnes came home from bridge club this afternoon, her daughter had rearranged the living room furniture to make room for the bed for the dog she brought from the shelter. She thought it would be good for Agnes.



It is time to talk!



Scenario Three

There is no question that Lucille is forgetful. She has always been slightly scatterbrained. Even as a child she had to be reminded of things. It is not that Lucille is not smart—in fact she is probably quite brilliant—it is just that she is always thinking about something else and not paying attention to what is in front of her. That's what Jim says.

However, things are starting to happen that are worrisome. Right now she is looking for her purse. Lucille is certain that she put it on her bedside table last night so that this morning she would know where it was. She very clearly remembers doing it. And now it is not there.

Lucille can't go anywhere until she finds her wallet which is in her purse. Not that she goes anywhere anyway. Jim likes her to stay in the house just in case she forgets where she is.

Yesterday she left the stove on again. Jim said he didn't like having to yell at her but she can't keep leaving the stove on. The strange part is that she doesn't even remember turning it on. Who turns the stove on in the middle of the afternoon? She put the kettle on to make tea and remembered to unplug that, but she can't remember using the stove for anything.

Jim wants her to go to one of those homes where they look after you. He says he can't focus at work because he is worried about her burning the house down. He'll look after the house. He does most of that already. He pays the bills. It's her money but he takes care of writing the cheques from her account. He picks up the mail.

Maybe one of those homes would be okay. At least there would be people to talk to. She used to have friends but they have stopped coming over. Jim told them they were making her “condition” worse. Jim should be home any minute now. He’ll find her purse. He always does.

Lucille checks the stove to make sure it is off. She sits in the living room.

Not all scenarios need to be so thoroughly built. The following shorter versions have also been used with good success.

Dad is very happy living in the beach house. He has all of the things he loves around him. Julia, his daughter is less happy. The weekly trip out to take him shopping and to help do the little things he is either unable or unwilling to manage on his own, has become a burden. She would prefer that he move into town and share their space.

Loretta and Allan were romantically involved in their 20’s. Now, both seniors, they meet again at a Singles Dance.

Improvisation Nine-Improvisation based on Entrances

Materials required- Set of criteria which will inform the entrance made by the character.

PLAYers make an entrance which involves no words. Prior to the entrance they must internalize the emotions/actions which will demonstrate their backstory. They then make an entrance using that backstory. Audience responds by describing what they say. *(The intention is not to guess an answer, but rather to indicate the message which was delivered. Not—you just bought a new car but rather you have just concluded some kind of arrangement which made you excited)*

Examples

- You are leaving an office in which you just had an interview for a great position. You know you did an amazing job!
- This morning you checked that you had everything you needed for your important presentation on co-biotic fluorides. Now you are starting to wonder...
- As you entered, a very beautiful woman/ handsome man said hello to to you by name. You have no idea who she/he is but you think you would like to.
- You borrowed a car to get to this meeting. You noticed a big scratch on the fender as you were getting out. Was it there when you borrowed it?
- Just outside the door to the building a street person asked you for spare change. You refused. You have change in your pocket. You are not sure why you refused.
- For the past twenty two years you have passed through this doorway. Today is the day the wreckers take the building down.
- You passed your boss in the hallway and he said “Remember, 10:45 sharp.” You said, “Right!” You have no idea what your boss was talking about.

- You just stepped in to get out of the cold. You are not sure if you are allowed to be here, but the wind outside is awful.
- When you pulled up in front of the building a young woman told you it was complimentary valet parking. She gave you a slip of paper, took your keys and took your car. The paper is blank.
- You auditioned for the Vivace choir seven months ago. Last evening they called to invite you to rehearsal this morning.
- You jumped at the offer of the “little place” he/she offered to rent to you when you were talking at work...you didn’t think it would be in such a high-end /rent building.
- You have done everything you can. There is nothing that will prevent the meteorite from crashing into earth and causing the end of civilization...in about three seconds.
- They obviously didn’t hear you in there...you went in to resign and walked out with a car, a bigger office and a raise. What happened?
- All your life you have wanted to see Emily Carr’s *The Mountain*. You have just left the gallery where it was being shown.
- Either you love jazz or you hate it. You thought you loved it but after that concert you are not so sure.
- Your partner is in the washroom. You know he/she is going to say “Didn’t you just love that show” and you are trying out several different options—including the truth.

Improvisation Ten- Improvisation with Props

Materials required- set of common props

a. Improvisation with Props as a tool

PLAYers are given a hand prop(s) which must be incorporated into a scene. The facilitator models with several groups how to incorporate the prop without the prop becoming the focus.

Eg. One character enters to table and begins to play solitaire. PLAYer Two enters and PLAYer One asks if Two wants to play a game. Two responds “No, I’ve got to study for this exam.” Cards get set aside for scene to continue.

b. Improvisation with Props as the focus

PLAYers are given a hand prop(s) which must be a focal point for the improvisation.

Eg. PLAYers are given a key and some bills. The ensuing scene must be about the key and the money.



c. The improvisation is the prop

PLAYers are given a hand prop which will function as something other than what it is.

Eg. Players use a tennis ball as a visitor from another planet.

Exercise- Set out a tennis ball in the space for each player. Advise players that they are to look for a tennis ball that is calling to them. The ball is actually a visitor from a distant planet who has come to learn about our planet. Then have players “find” a tennis ball. They are to talk with the ball to find out its name and discuss with the ball how long it has been here, when and to where it is returning, and the strangest thing they have discovered about our planet during their visit. (*the discussion with the ball should be vocal*) When it is clear that each player is actively involved give a 15 second warning. Then have players move about the space and introduce their visitor to other players. Have them exchange visitors (balls) and introduce that visitor to a new person. After three exchanges, bring the group back to a circle and have each person introduce their visitor to the whole group.



I'd like to introduce Verity...she is visiting from the planetoid Sprig which is in the Random galaxy. She has been here for three weeks and is returning tomorrow. What she finds strangest about our planet is that until today, nobody even talked to her or asked why she was here.

Note- this also works well as a warm-up exercise

Improvisation Eleven-We've Got to Talk

Materials required- None

PLAYers form pairs. PLAYer One is given an occupation which has some physical component that can be demonstrated—pilot, gynecologist, TV repairperson. PLAYer Two is given a relationship to PLAYer One that is a family or close friend relationship.

The audience then provides the complication..*We've Got to talk about.....?*

PLAYer One enters and takes up occupation. PLAYer Two then enters with the line "We've got to talk!"

D. Research Base

Cognitive Skills & Normal Aging-Emory University Alzheimer's Disease Research Centre

A commonly held misconception is that aging results in an inevitable loss of cognitive abilities and that nothing can be done to halt this decline. Research, however, does not support these claims. While certain areas of thinking do show a normal decline as we age, others remain stable. Moreover, interventions may actually slow some of the changes that do occur.

- **Intelligence:** "Crystalized" intelligence, i.e., knowledge or experience accumulated over time, actually remains stable with age. On the other hand, "fluid" intelligence or abilities not based on experience or education tend to decline. Examples of "fluid" intelligence include ability to think and react quickly, mental flexibility or mental "multitasking", and learning of new information.
- **Memory:** Remote memory or recall of past events that have been stored over many years remains relatively preserved in old age. Recent memory or the formation of new memories, however, is more vulnerable to aging. Most often, this means that older individuals take longer (i.e., have to hear/see it more times) to learn new information than they may have when they were younger.
- **Attention:** Simple or focused attention such as the ability to attend to a television program tends to be preserved in older age. Difficulties may be encountered, however, when divided attention is required such as trying to pay attention to the television and simultaneously talk on the telephone.
- **Language:** Verbal abilities including vocabulary are preserved as we age. Common changes have to do with word retrieval or the process of getting words out. It takes longer and is more difficult to find the words one wants when engaged in conversation or trying to recall names of people and objects. The information is not lost but it is more difficult to retrieve.
- **Reasoning and Problem Solving:** Traditional ways of approaching solutions are maintained in older persons. Wisdom of experience in older age can lead to better approaches to some of life's problems than some younger individuals. However, problems that have not been encountered during the older individual's life may take extra time to figure out, and it may be difficult to think of alternative ways of solving a problem.
- **Speed of Processing:** Aging does affect the speed with which cognitive and motor processes are performed. This does not mean that the activities cannot be performed, but rather that they take longer!

What Other Factors Affect Cognitive Aging?

All of the above abilities can be affected by factors that change the efficiency with which older adults process information. These include:

- Medications which may produce side effects such as drowsiness and mental dullness;
- Sensory changes which can interfere with the processing of information (e.g., loss of hearing which can affect whether or not someone's name is heard when introduced);

- Health related changes such as arthritis and pain which can affect cognitive areas such as concentration and processing speed; and
- Changes in mood such as depression and anxiety which can alter one's motivation to learn new information and to apply active learning/memory strategies. Such feelings can also limit one's ability to solve problems and make it more difficult to concentrate.

Can Anything Be Done to Compensate For or Slow Down Age Related Changes?

A previous view was that as we age, brain cells inevitably die off and are not replaced. This concept led to the belief that nothing could be done to alter the inevitable. We now know that certain interventions can sharpen cognitive processes. These include:

- **Reducing Stress:** Researchers have found that high stress levels impair learning and memory in both animals and humans. Strategies to reduce stress such as relaxation and exercise may be beneficial. In fact, a growing body of research suggests that exercise may be one of the most best ways to improve the health of your brain.
- **Maintaining Good Health:** Regular visits to the doctor are critical to make sure that medical conditions which can themselves impair thinking are under good control. In addition, possible interactions among medications should be evaluated by letting your physician know all of the medications you are taking, even if not prescribed by that particular doctor. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables containing antioxidants such as blueberries, strawberries, and broccoli as well as certain fats such as olive oil may be neuroprotective.
- **Keeping Mentally Stimulated:** Studies have found that engaging in challenging cognitive tasks can protect against age-related declines in thinking and the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. It is important to keep oneself stimulated through activities such as playing bridge, reading, and attending adult education courses. There is no proven magic in doing a particular type of cognitive task (like crossword puzzles), just pick something you enjoy doing that challenges your brain, and do it!
- **Using Active Strategies:** There is evidence that some of the difficulties in storing new memories are due to the fact that older persons do not spontaneously use strategies to encode this information. When they do, age differences are weakened. In addition, older adults demonstrate good recognition of new information when they are helped with cues to jog their memory. Strategies that can be helpful to facilitate memory include following a routine (e.g., always putting one's keys in the same place), using external techniques (e.g., a calendar, a pill box), and taking more time to actively process new information (e.g., when introduced to someone, pay extra attention and try to come up with an association to recall that person's name)