

Activity Plan



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NAME OF THE ACTIVITY: STOP THEATRE

OVERVIEW

THIS ACTIVITY USES STOP THEATRE (FORUM THEATRE) TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE RECOGNIZE EMOTIONAL DISTRESS IN THEIR PEERS AND PRACTICE OFFERING SUPPORTIVE, NON-JUDGMENTAL RESPONSES. PARTICIPANTS WATCH A SHORT SCENE IN WHICH SOMEONE IS SHOWING SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL STRUGGLE. AT ANY POINT, A PARTICIPANT CAN SAY "STOP," STEP INTO A ROLE, AND TRY A DIFFERENT WAY TO RESPOND. THE GOAL IS TO EXPLORE HOW EMPATHY, PRESENCE, AND CAREFUL COMMUNICATION CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHEN SOMEONE IS SILENTLY ASKING FOR HELP.

OBJECTIVES:

- RECOGNIZE EARLY SIGNS THAT SOMEONE MAY BE STRUGGLING EMOTIONALLY
- PRACTICE EMPATHETIC LISTENING AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNICATION
- EXPLORE HEALTHY BOUNDARIES AND LIMITS OF PEER SUPPORT
- UNDERSTAND WHEN AND HOW TO REFER SOMEONE TO A TRUSTED ADULT OR PROFESSIONAL
- BUILD CONFIDENCE TO ACT WITH CARE, NOT JUDGMENT

GROUP SIZE:

YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15-25 YEARS

THEMES ADDRESSED:

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS
EMOTIONAL LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION
PEER SUPPORT AND EMPATHY
BOUNDARIES AND HELP-SEEKING

TARGET GROUP:

TEENAGERS AND YOUNG ADULTS (14-25), SUITABLE FOR USE IN SCHOOLS, CAMPS, YOUTH CENTERS, OR WORKSHOPS. KEEP IN MIND THAT FOR WORKING WITH UNDERAGE YOUNG PEOPLE, YOU NEED TO HAVE CONSENT FROM THE PARENTS.

COMPLEXITY AND TIME:

MEDIUM – SUITABLE FOR GROUPS WITH SOME EXPERIENCE IN YOUTH WORK, DRAMA, OR SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

90 MINUTES (EXTENDABLE TO 2 HOURS WITH MORE SCENES OR DEEPER DEBRIEF)

RESOURCES:

PRINTED HANDOUTS OR CARDS WITH DEPRESSION DEFINITIONS AND SYMPTOMS
MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, GLUE, SCISSORS, MARKERS, PAPER
OPTIONAL: MUSIC, POETRY BOOKS, SYMBOLIC ITEMS, MULTIMEDIA TOOLS
STICKY NOTES AND PENS FOR DEBRIEF
A QUIET AND CREATIVE-FRIENDLY SPACE

MATERIALS:

SCENARIO CARDS AND ROLE CARDS –
[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGJWJC2E3Y/IRNT9KE9JZ2-0XCHMG1JQ/VIEW?](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGJWJC2E3Y/IRNT9KE9JZ2-0XCHMG1JQ/VIEW?utm_content=DAGJWJC2E3Y&utm_campaign=DESIGNSHARE&utm_medium=LINK2&utm_source=NIQUELINKS&utm_id=H21B24605B4)
[UTM CONTENT=DAGJWJC2E3Y&UTM CAMPAIGN=DESIGNSHARE&UTM MEDIUM=LINK2&UTM SOURCE=NIQUELINKS&UTLID=H21B24605B4](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGJWJC2E3Y/IRNT9KE9JZ2-0XCHMG1JQ/VIEW?utm_content=DAGJWJC2E3Y&utm_campaign=DESIGNSHARE&utm_medium=LINK2&utm_source=NIQUELINKS&utm_id=H21B24605B4)

SUPPORTIVE SENTENCE CARDS
"SIGNS SOMEONE MIGHT BE STRUGGLING"
CARDS
PRINTED "WHAT TO SAY / WHAT NOT TO SAY"
LIST
STOP SIGN OR PAPER FOR VISUAL CUE

SPACE WITH OPEN FLOOR AREA (NO STAGE NEEDED)

OPTIONAL QUIET CORNER WITH PILLOWS,
GROUNDING TOOLS

FLIPCHART OR BOARD FOR GROUP AGREEMENTS
AND DEBRIEF

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INSTRUCTIONS

1. PREPARATION (BEFORE THE SESSION):

- SET UP A QUIET AREA OR EMOTIONAL REGULATION ZONE FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO MAY FEEL OVERWHELMED.
- PREPARE AND REVIEW ROLE CARDS, SCENARIO CARDS, AND SUPPORTIVE SENTENCE CARDS.
- CREATE AND DISPLAY A GROUP EMOTIONAL SAFETY AGREEMENT.

2. WELCOME & EMOTIONAL SAFETY AGREEMENT (10 MIN)

WELCOME PARTICIPANTS AND LEAD A LIGHT WARM-UP.

CO-CREATE A GROUP AGREEMENT (E.G., “RESPECT,” “NO PRESSURE TO ACT,” “THIS IS A LEARNING SPACE”).

BRIEFLY INTRODUCE STOP THEATRE:

“STOP THEATRE IS A WAY FOR US TO EXPLORE REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS WHERE SOMEONE MIGHT BE SILENTLY STRUGGLING—AND TO PRACTICE HOW WE COULD RESPOND WITH CARE AND EMPATHY.

YOU’LL WATCH A SHORT SCENE BETWEEN A FEW PEOPLE. IF YOU SEE SOMETHING THAT COULD GO DIFFERENTLY—MAYBE SOMEONE MISSES A SIGN, SHUTS SOMEONE DOWN, OR AVOIDS A HARD CONVERSATION—YOU CAN SAY “STOP” AND STEP INTO THE SCENE. YOU CAN TRY A NEW RESPONSE, ASK A QUESTION, OR SUPPORT SOMEONE IN A BETTER WAY.

YOU DON’ T NEED TO BE AN ACTOR OR HAVE THE PERFECT WORDS—THIS IS A SPACE TO EXPERIMENT, REFLECT, AND LEARN TOGETHER. IT’ S ABOUT BEING BRAVE ENOUGH TO TRY, EVEN IF IT FEELS A BIT MESSY. WE’ LL EXPLORE REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS. YOU DON’ T HAVE TO ACT PERFECTLY—JUST BE WILLING TO TRY.”

3. SKILL-BUILDING: RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS (10 MIN)

IN PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS, HAND OUT “SIGNS SOMEONE MIGHT BE STRUGGLING” CARDS.

DISCUSS: “HAVE YOU SEEN THIS IN REAL LIFE? WHAT MIGHT BE GOING ON UNDERNEATH?”

SHARE HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL PHRASES. USE A QUIZ OR MATCHING ACTIVITY TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT.

4. SCENARIO SET-UP & ROLE PREPARATION (10 MIN)

- INTRODUCE A PREPARED SCENARIO (E.G., ALEX IS WITHDRAWING, SKIPPING ACTIVITIES, AND MAKING NEGATIVE JOKES).
- ASSIGN ROLES AND DISTRIBUTE SHORT ROLE CARDS.
- LET ACTORS PREPARE A 2–3 MINUTE SCENE.

5. FIRST SCENE PERFORMANCE (5–7 MIN)

- ACTORS PERFORM WHILE THE GROUP WATCHES SILENTLY.
- AFTERWARD, ASK:
- “WHAT DID YOU NOTICE? WHAT SIGNS SHOWED UP?”

6. STOP THEATRE REPLAY (30–35 MIN)

- INVITE PARTICIPANTS TO SAY “STOP” AND TAKE A ROLE TO CHANGE THE SCENE.
- ENCOURAGE DIFFERENT APPROACHES: CHECKING IN, LISTENING, ASKING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS.

USE POST-INTERVENTION DISCUSSION:

- “WHAT CHANGED?”
- “DID THIS FEEL MORE CARING?”
- “HOW WOULD THIS PLAY OUT IN REAL LIFE?”

7. DEBRIEFING CIRCLE (15 MIN)

USE THE FOLLOWING REFLECTIVE PROMPTS:

- “WHAT DID YOU LEARN TODAY THAT SURPRISED YOU?”
- “WHAT MADE YOU HESITATE TO INTERVENE OR ACT?”
- “HOW CAN YOU CHECK IN ON A FRIEND WITHOUT PRESSURING THEM?”
- “WHEN IS IT TIME TO BRING IN A TRUSTED ADULT?”

OPTIONAL CLOSING: HAVE EVERYONE WRITE ONE THING THEY MIGHT SAY TO SUPPORT SOMEONE TOMORROW.

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DEBRIEFING AND EVALUATION:

HOW DID IT FEEL TO STEP IN OR WATCH OTHERS STEP IN?
WHAT WOULD BE HARD TO DO IN REAL LIFE?
WHAT MOMENTS MADE THE BIGGEST IMPACT? EVALUATE LEARNING BY ASKING:
CAN PARTICIPANTS NOW IDENTIFY EMOTIONAL WARNING SIGNS?
CAN THEY NAME AT LEAST 2-3 HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL RESPONSES?
CAN THEY EXPLAIN WHEN TO INVOLVE AN ADULT OR PROFESSIONAL?

TIPS FOR FACILITATOR

- CONSTANTLY CHECK IN WITH THE EMOTIONAL TEMPERATURE OF THE GROUP.
- NORMALIZE IMPERFECTION—THIS IS ABOUT PRACTICING, NOT GETTING IT RIGHT.
- HAVE GROUNDING TOOLS (FIDGET ITEMS, BREATHING CARDS) READY.
- IF A MOMENT BECOMES TOO HEAVY, PAUSE THE ACTIVITY AND REGROUP.
- COACH ACTORS GENTLY TO AVOID STEREOTYPES OR MOCKING TONE.
- USE LIGHTNESS AND CARE TO HOLD SPACE—NOT TO AVOID THE TOPIC, BUT TO MAKE IT BEARABLE.

FOLLOW UP

- CREATE FOLLOW-UP SESSIONS WHERE PARTICIPANTS EXPLORE BOUNDARIES IN HELPING OTHERS
- RUN SKILL-BUILDING WORKSHOPS ON ACTIVE LISTENING OR PEER SUPPORT
- INTRODUCE A CREATIVE JOURNALING OR STORY-SHARING ACTIVITY ABOUT BEING SEEN AND HEARD
- INVITE A YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL TO RUN A Q&A OR DROP-IN HOUR