



# SMASHINGTIMES

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
THE ARTS & EQUALITY

## Remembrance Storytelling Workshop

### Overall Aims of Workshops that Support Storytelling

- Generate shared storytelling by providing a safe, supportive, non-judgemental space for people to come together to hear and talk about the issues and experiences they face
- Provide a space for shared storytelling where all types of stories are told, shared and listened to sympathetically
- Hear, explore and understand different perspectives in a safe, non-judgemental space
- Encourage dialogue and build new relations by identifying ways forward that can be used to promote mutual understanding – and building positive relations
- Document stories told by those who wished to speak about their experiences and issues they face in their communities.

### Option 1

#### Workshop Structure

**1. Drama Games and Exercises: 50 minutes**

- Introduction
- Name Game
- Partner Walks
- Moving Together
- Complete the Image
- Image of the Hour

**2. Verbal Storytelling: 90 minutes**

**3. Image Work and Improvisation on Stories: 60 minutes**

Wind Down and Evaluation: 10 minutes

Insert breaks as required: 30 minutes

The workshop can consist of Parts One and Two only or Parts One, Two and Three. Part one of the workshop focuses on warm-up games and exercises and image work to explore bringing forward personal experiences. Part Two, Verbal Storytelling, involves the group telling and sharing individual stories in relation to personal experiences of historical conflict. Part Three is optional and involves further exploration and discussion through image work and improvisation, of one or more stories, selected by the group themselves. The aim is to promote dialogue and facilitate positive and challenging discussion on the issues raised.

Time: The timelines for this workshop are a guideline only and can vary. Two hours are allocated but it may be possible to do all three sections within shorter timeframes depending on numbers present and length of stories.

## **1. Drama Games and Exercises**

### **Introduction**

Workshop facilitators introduce themselves, highlighting their experience and expertise in the relevant areas. They explain the project and the aims of the workshop and the processes in which the group will engage. Fill out any necessary forms, for example registration forms with names and contact details of those in attendance and complete a 'Group Contract'. The facilitator then says the work will begin by warming up our bodies and learning names.

### **Group Name Game**

#### **Aims:**

- To break the ice and connect with a sense of fun and playfulness in order to free up the group
- To get our bodies moving in space
- To provide a fun and quick way to learn names
- To synchronise energy

#### **Instructions:**

1. Participants spread out in the space. The facilitator demonstrates the 'exchange' with someone from the group, the 'exchange' between two people consists of making eye contact, doing a handshake and each person saying their first and second name. All move around space, the facilitator says 'go' and each person now finds someone to conduct the exchange with (eye contact, shaking hands and each person in pairs saying first and last name). Once the exchange is completed they move on to a new person to conduct the exchange and so on.
2. On 'freeze', you freeze, on 'continue' you continue. When you continue pick up exactly where you left off.
3. Then do on the run, complete introductions before running to someone else and repeat.
4. Then do on the run and also hysterically shout out names. This should be done with speed, everyone moving quickly through the space, and encourage participants to call out their names loud and clear.
5. The group returns to a normal pace and is asked to continue making 'exchanges' (making eye contact, shaking hands and saying your first and last name). However, this time you can only let go

of the first person's hand when you have a second hand in your grip so that as you move around the room shaking hands, you are always shaking at least one person's hand.

## Partner Walks

### Aims:

- To develop concentration
- To develop awareness of each other

### Instructions:

1. The group walk freely around the space.
2. On an instruction from the facilitator the participants pair up with the person nearest to them. In pairs the participants continue to walk around the space side by side, walking close to each other without actually touching.
3. Each participant observes their partner's walk, attempting to get a sense of how they move. Does your partner walk fast or slow, lead with their legs or hips or head, what is the rhythm of their walk? Become aware of the connection between you and your partner.
4. Now try to link up your walks, to walk and move like your partner. There is no leader as each person tries to walk like their partner with each pair attempting to find a common walk.
5. Now ask them to respond to random shifts of direction initiated by either of the partners. Either one can take the initiative and slow down or speed up, stop walking, or start walking or change direction at any moment. The instant one of the two makes the slightest change the other follows. Either partner can change the pace, level or direction at any time, they can crawl, run or walk normally, on tiptoe, etc.
6. After a while instruct the participants to walk on their own and then find a new partner and carry out instructions from 3 to 5 above.

## Moving Together

### Aims:

- To break the ice and connect with a sense of fun and playfulness in order to free up the group
- To get our bodies moving in space
- To get the group moving together as one and to generate shared feelings
- To develop concentration

### Instructions:

1. Participants walk randomly around the room always walking towards an empty space. The facilitator says 'Freeze' and participants stop. The facilitator calls out an instruction and participants immediately carry out the action associated with the instruction.
2. The facilitator says 'Walk' and participants walk freely around the space.
3. The facilitator says 'Point One' and each person stops, chooses a specific spot in the room to look at, and immediately points to it with their arm and index finger stretched out holding the point until the next instruction is called. During the game, every time the facilitator repeats 'Point One' the participants will look at the same spot initially chosen.
4. The facilitator says 'Point Two' which is the same action as 'Point One' except you point to a different spot in the room.
5. The facilitator says 'Wall' and all the participants have to imagine the whole floor has suddenly disappeared, vanished into thin air and each person must get to the wall, touching it with their whole body as quickly as possible or else they will fall.

6. The facilitator says 'Centre' and participants dash to the centre of the room and huddle together.
7. The facilitator says 'Hug' and everyone hugs one other person, then another, and so on, until the next instruction is called.
8. Once everybody knows each instruction/action the participants walk randomly around the room. The facilitator now calls out the instructions in random order as quickly as possible and participants carry out the instructions as soon as they are called out, for example 'Walk', 'Point Two', 'Centre', 'Run', 'Hug', 'Wall', 'Point Two', etc. Finish with the instruction 'Hug'.

## Complete the Image

### Aims:

- To introduce image work
- To generate a sense of play
- To develop the imagination as a source of inspiration without the pressure of full performance
- To make physical use of our bodies to create, looking at the body/ imagination connection
- To develop observation

### Instructions:

1. Participants form a circle.
2. The facilitator stands in the centre of the circle and asks for a volunteer. The volunteer stands in front of the facilitator and they shake hands and freeze in mid-action. The facilitator explains that they are frozen and with their bodies they are making a still picture or image. The facilitator then steps out of the image and the participant continues to remain frozen like a statue.
3. Everyone observes this new image consisting of one person only. A second person now enters the image, they 'complete the image' by adding themselves in, striking a different pose. They are placing themselves within the image and making a shape with their bodies that compliments and gives meaning to the first shape so as to create a two-person tableau. The shape/image can be abstract or representational.
4. Once the second person has entered and frozen in the image the first person then steps out. Everyone now looks at the new image and a third person now enters, adding themselves to the image by making a shape that compliments and gives meaning to the shape or image already there. Again the image is held for a moment and the second person sits down leaving the third person in a new image to which a fourth person now enters and so on. Continue until everyone in the group has entered at least once.
5. After everyone has had a go in creating an image the facilitator now adds the following: the second person who enters freezes in their shape and then says a sentence to make clear what the tableau is. For example the first person's shape could be a bent back, with their arms flopping downwards. The second person could complete the tableau by pretending that the first person is carrying something heavy and needs help. The sentence could be 'Oh, do you need a hand?' The first person then exits the circle and a third person enters to make a new tableau with the second person's shape...and so on. Continue until everyone in the group has entered the image and said a line.
6. When you reach the last couple, both people stay in the image and the facilitator now asks all the other group members to join in the image one by one to complete a group image.
7. When everyone is inside the still image, invite each person to reflect on who they might be within the image and what is the story of the image. Invite each person to create a gesture with their body that can be repeated and to think of one word to reflect who you think you are within the image. On a signal everyone at the same time repeats his or her gesture three times. On a signal everyone at

the same time says their word and then one by one each person says their word with the gesture. To finish ask for thoughts on the final group image.

## **Image of the Hour**

### **Aims:**

- To encourage participants to act out the 'story' of their daily activities
- To make physical use of our bodies to create, looking at the body/ imagination connection

### **Instructions:**

1. Participants walk freely around the space.
2. The facilitator calls 'Freeze' and participants stop. Ask participants to ensure they are equally spread out around the space.
3. The facilitator now calls out times of the day for example 8am, 9am and so on, starting early in the morning and moving through the day and into evening. The entire group, all working at the same time, and spread out around the space, carry out the activity they would normally be doing at that time of the day, the activity they associate with that time of the day. The activity is carried out through mime. Everyone is creating a living clock...building up a group picture of the day by sharing daily routines.
4. After going through the day, divide the group in two and one half now watch the other mime the activities associated with the times of the day called out, ie 8am, 11am, 2pm, 5pm, 8pm etc. When finished, swap over and repeat.

\* Adapted from Augusto Boal, Games for Actors and Non-Actors.

## **2. Verbal Storytelling**

This section is conducted by a drama facilitator with experience in storytelling workshops. Outlined below are two processes and the drama facilitator carries out one of them:

### **Storytelling One:**

1. The group sit in a semi-circle facing the facilitator.
2. The drama facilitator explains that, in a few minutes, participants will divide into groups and each group will share their stories and memories that are related to conflict or historical timeframe being discussed.
3. Before doing so, place a number of blank sheets of flipchart paper randomly around the space. Ask the participants to close their eyes and think about the conflict being discussed and what the legacy means to them. What images come to mind?
4. After a minute ask participants to open their eyes and to come up and take a marker and write down any words that come to mind on any one of the flipchart sheets. The participants write down as many words as they can to build up a vocabulary around the legacy, the memory of the conflict. Encourage the group to write down as many words or phrases as they want.
5. Ask all the participants to now look at the flipcharts as the drama facilitator reads out the different words. Use the words on the flipchart to generate discussion. What do you think this word means? How has it impacted on our lives within the particular country? Ensure the group that there are no right or wrong answers and all comments are welcome. If a specific theme is raised generate debate further by asking probing questions.
6. Divide participants into groups of five to tell their stories. Ensure each group has a diversity of experience. The groups spread out around the room. Within each group individuals are invited to share their stories and memories that are a consequence of the historical conflict.

7. Agree the length of time allocated for each person to tell the story (a cut-off time). A suggested minimum time is ten minutes. Agree that each person has the opportunity to speak without interruption. Remind participants about the 'group contract' agreed at the beginning of the workshop with reference to confidentiality and other issues and each person is under no pressure to speak about experiences they do not wish to talk about.
8. When they are ready each person, one at a time, verbally relates a story originating from the person's own personal experiences or memory of the 'historical conflict'. When each person is finished telling their story they are congratulated by the rest of the group members and thanked for sharing their story and experiences. If the storyteller is in agreement, the other group members are given the opportunity to ask questions before moving on to the next story.
9. As participants are telling their stories to the other group members, the drama facilitators move from group to group to enquire how participants are doing and to offer any support that may be required.
10. When the stories are finished the group sits in a circle again and discuss the stories told. To finish thank the whole group for sharing their stories and experiences.

### **Storytelling Two:**

1. The group sits in a semi-circle. The facilitator places four flipchart pages around the room, either on the floor or attached to the wall with Blue Tack. On each page is written one word - Discrimination, Gender Equality, Non-Violence, Conflict.
2. Explain to the participants that a key aim of the workshop is to explore the stories and experiences of people who have lived through or been affected by the legacy of conflict. Ask the participants to take a marker and to walk around the space. As they see the headings to brainstorm the first words that come to mind and to write those words down on the flipchart page underneath the heading they are brainstorming. Encourage the group to write down as many words or phrases as they want under each of the four headings.
3. Then ask the participants to go around and look at each page and silently read all the words that have been written down and to reflect on them. After a few moments the facilitator or members of the group can read the words out loud.
4. Then ask the participants to think of a personal experience or story linked to one or more of the words that are written down. Each participant is to then stand beside the headings/flipchart page that is the closest to their story, to stand beside the page that has one or more words that relates to their story.
5. Within each group divide the participants into pairs. If there is an odd number make one group of three. Designate A and B. In pairs and at the same time each person tells their story, so all the A's tell the B's their story and then the B's tell their story to the A's. If a person is listening only and not telling a story ask them to sit in with one of the pairs and listen to the two stories being told. Agree a time limit of maximum ten minutes for each story. Remind participants about the 'group contract' agreed at the beginning of the workshop.
6. When the stories are finished the group sits in a circle again and discuss the stories told. Ideally allow time for all the participants to tell their stories again to the wider group. Depending on time and particularly if you are doing improvisations, you may have to ask participants to recount a summary version of the story. To finish thank the whole group for sharing their stories and experiences.

### **The Next Stage**

After thanking the whole group for sharing their stories the facilitator may wish to end the workshop here. The workshop up to this point is about individual 'Storytelling' and shared listening in relation

to personal experiences of the conflict, providing a safe and non-judgemental space for people to tell their stories and to have those stories acknowledged and listened to within a safe and supportive environment.

The next stage is 'Improvisation' which is moving away from personal storytelling into an active physical engagement with specific stories selected collectively and decided upon by the group themselves. One or more stories are presented through improvisation. An improvisation is where the participants prepare and act out a scene in their own words. The aim is to promote dialogue and facilitate positive and challenging discussion and exchanges on the issues raised that relate to the legacy of the conflict.

### **3. Image Work & Improvisation**

Each group now prepares a short five-minute improvisation based on one or a combination of stories shared in the workshop. Improvisation provides an opportunity for each group to collectively draw out issues of concern to them, particularly difficult or contentious ones, that they would like to explore further and is not about choosing or prioritising one story over another.

- 1.** When using the Storytelling One process, the following is the structure to use for improvisation. As you divide participants into groups to tell their stories (see point 6 under Storytelling One), within each group one person is designated a 'speaker' and his or her job is to sum up each story with a title and a one-line sentence to identify the topic of the story. After telling the stories within the smaller groups the whole group comes back together in a circle to form one big group and to share information on the stories told. Each designated 'speaker' reads out the name and one line description of each story in their smaller group. If a number of stories are similar in content or share similar themes, then the people telling these stories are put into one group. The remaining people return to their groups and each group must now choose one story or a combination of stories that will be taken further and dramatised through image work and improvisation and performed for the whole group.
- 2.** When using the Storytelling Two process, after the whole group have sat in a circle and discussed their stories, divide the participants back into the four groups based on the themes of Discrimination, Gender Equality, Non-Violent and Conflict. Each group now chooses one story or a combination of stories to act out in the form of an improvisation. The aim is to build on what the group are giving, to create four stories based on the participants own experiences.
- 3.** Once each group has chosen a particular story to dramatised, they then listen to the story again and discuss it. Other members of the group can add their own experiences to the story. While the stories that form the basis of the improvisation may be real, the participants are 'fictionalising' the story. Participants do not use their own name in the improvisation; they use a made-up name for their 'characters'. The participants discuss and recount the story several times so all the members of the group can become active participants in the shaping of the story, the more the group tell the story, the more they will 'become' the story.
- 4.** In terms of developing an improvisation, ask each group to work on defining the different stages of the story as follows:
  - a.** Write down an outline of key events within the story;
  - b.** Identify the order of the sequence of events (three to six) from which the group will be able to build a scene;
  - c.** Encourage the group to identify who (key characters and relationships to other characters), where (location), when (time), objectives, actions, images, and objects to be used in the telling of the story;
  - d.** Discuss and share descriptions of key events, people, places, objects, the weather, clothes etc so that each member can 'see' the story and have discussed the details in depth;

- e. Ensure that each key scene has tension and conflict, a conflict of wills/desires and that there is narrative development, that each scene moves the story forward;
  - f. Unless necessary, encourage the participants not to have too many of their characters sitting down as you want to create scenes that are dynamic and active.
5. The groups have 15 minutes to develop the improvisation and the drama facilitator moves from group to group offering advice and encouragement as required.
  6. The facilitator can ask each group to begin their improvisation with a still or frozen image similar to those in Complete the Image. Image Theatre involves using our bodies to create still images or tableaux to tell the story. After deciding on the story in terms of who, where, when and what, each group works on their feet to create the opening still image using their bodies in the space. Working in this way provides the participants with the opportunity to create and express ideas physically using their bodies through a fun and 'safe' way of working. The still image or tableaux, a sort of three-dimensional snapshot is created by the group working together collectively and should ideally show a key moment of action and is the starting point for the improvisation. Everyone within each team contributes to the one picture and agrees on the image to be shown.
  7. The drama facilitator calls 'One minute remaining' and then 'Time's up'. Seats for the audience are arranged so that they face on to the designated playing area. The drama facilitator decides the running order and each group, one at a time, now present their improvisations.
  8. To begin each group strikes and holds the first image. On a signal from the facilitator they then begin the improvisation by bringing the image to life and playing the scene. Each group should aim to bring the scene to a natural conclusion or the drama facilitator can call time saying 'please finish the scene in one minute please', 'thirty seconds left' and so on.
  9. After each improvisation is performed the facilitator thanks all those involved and can then ask those watching to comment.

Some questions the facilitator might ask:

- Did you identify with any of the characters in the story and which characters did you most identify with?
- What difficulties, if any, did the people in the story have to face?
- How did they cope with these difficulties?
- Can participants suggest ideas to support people in that situation to cope with these difficulties?
- If the improvisation is showing a conflict situation or confrontation, is there a way to change the outcome and how?
- Can you identify specific moments in the play where the characters could have taken different and more effective action? Would these alternative actions have been more effective? Why?
- Ask the group to discuss how to deal with conflict when it happens?
- While some stories are painful, it may be that the story needs to be told and perhaps the telling and hearing of the stories can play a role in generating discussion on ways to create stories for the future that are positive and hopeful. Are there ways in which individuals, communities and governments can play a part in promoting lasting peace and reconciliation?

## **Wind Down**

At the end allow time for evaluation and discussion, for participants to give verbal feedback or ask for further information and for the participants to ask any questions they may have. To finish the workshop, a written evaluation form and pens are distributed to participants to complete and the facilitator can ask the questions on the evaluation form, as the participants fill them out. Distribute and discuss the handout with a list of Support Services.



End the workshop on a positive note by bringing the group into a circle. Congratulate everyone for participating and thank him or her for sharing his or her stories. Ask everyone in the circle to turn to the person either side of them and to congratulate them on their contribution and to say well done. Finally ask everyone, on a signal from the facilitator, to clap together to end the workshop.

## Option 2

### Workshop Structure

#### 1. Drama Games and Exercises: 50 minutes

- Introduction
- Name Game
- Partner Walks
- Moving Together
- Complete the Image
- Image of the Hour

#### 2. Verbal Storytelling: 90 minutes

This section is conducted by a drama facilitator.

Outlined below are two processes and the drama facilitator carries out one of them:

#### **Storytelling One:**

1. The group sit in a semi-circle facing the facilitator.
2. The drama facilitator explains that, in a few minutes, participants will divide into groups and each group will share their stories
3. Before doing so, place a number of blank sheets of flipchart paper randomly around the space.
4. After a minute ask participants to open their eyes and to come up and take a marker and write down any words that come to mind on any one of the flipchart sheets. The participants write down as many words as they can to build up a vocabulary around the theme.  
Encourage the group to write down as many words or phrases as they want.
5. Ask all the participants to now look at the flipcharts as the drama facilitator reads out the different words. Use the words on the flipchart to generate discussion. What do you think this word means? How has it impacted on our lives? Ensure the group that there are no right or wrong answers and all comments are welcome. If a specific theme is raised generate debate further by asking probing questions.
6. Divide participants into groups of five to tell their stories. Ensure each group has a diversity of experience. The groups spread out around the room. Within each group individuals are invited to share their stories.
7. Agree the length of time allocated for each person to tell the story (a cut-off time). A suggested minimum time is ten minutes. Agree that each person has the opportunity to speak without interruption. Remind participants about the 'group contract' agreed at the beginning of the workshop with reference to confidentiality and other issues and each person is under no pressure to speak about experiences they do not wish to talk about.
8. When they are ready each person, one at a time, verbally relates a story originating from the person's own personal experiences or memory of the 'historical conflict'.

When each person is finished telling their story they are congratulated by the rest of the group members and thanked for sharing their story and experiences. If the storyteller is in agreement, the other group members are given the opportunity to ask questions before moving on to the next story.

**9.** As participants are telling their stories to the other group members, the drama facilitators move from group to group to enquire how participants are doing and to offer any support that may be required.

**10.** When the stories are finished the group sits in a circle again and discuss the stories told. To finish thank the whole group for sharing their stories and experiences

## **Storytelling Two:**

**1.** The group sits in a semi-circle. The facilitator places four flipchart pages around the room, either on the floor or attached to the wall with Blue Tack. On each page is written one word related to the theme.

**2.** Explain to the participants that a key aim of the workshop is to XXX

Ask the participants to take a marker and to walk around the space. As they see the headings to brainstorm the first words that come to mind and to write those words down on the flipchart page underneath the heading they are brainstorming. Encourage the group to write down as many words or phrases as they want under each of the four headings.

**3.** Then ask the participants to go around and look at each page and silently read all the words that have been written down and to reflect on them. After a few moments the facilitator or members of the group can read the words out loud.

**4.** Then ask the participants to think of a personal experience or story linked to one or more of the words that are written down. Each participant is to then stand beside the headings/flipchart page that is the closest to their story, to stand beside the page that has one or more words that relates to their story.

**5.** Within each group divide the participants into pairs. If there is an odd number make one group of three. Designate A and B. In pairs and at the same time each person tells their story, so all the A's tell the B's their story and then the B's tell their story to the A's. If a person is listening only and not telling a story ask them to sit in with one of the pairs and listen to the two stories being told. Agree a time limit of maximum ten minutes for each story. Remind participants about the 'group contract' agreed at the beginning of the workshop.

**6.** When the stories are finished the group sits in a circle again and discuss the stories told. Ideally allow time for all the participants to tell their stories again to the wider group. Depending on time and particularly if you are doing improvisations, you may have to ask participants to recount a summary version of the story. To finish thank the whole group for sharing their stories and experiences.

## **The Next Stage**

After thanking the whole group for sharing their stories the facilitator may wish to end the workshop here. The workshop up to this point is about individual 'Storytelling' and shared listening, providing a safe and non-judgemental space for people to tell their stories and to have those stories acknowledged and listened to within a safe and supportive environment. The next stage is 'Improvisation' which is moving away from personal storytelling into an active physical engagement with specific stories selected collectively and decided upon by the group themselves. One or more stories are presented through improvisation. An improvisation is where the participants prepare and act out a scene in their own words. The aim is to promote dialogue and facilitate positive and challenging discussion and exchanges on the issues raised.

### **3. Image Work and Improvisation on Stories: 60 minutes**

Each group now prepares a short five-minute improvisation based on one or a combination of stories shared in the workshop. Improvisation provides an opportunity for each group to collectively draw out issues of concern to them, particularly difficult or contentious ones, that they would like to explore further and is not about choosing or prioritising one story over another.

### **Wind Down and Evaluation: 10 minutes**

At the end allow time for evaluation and discussion, for participants to give verbal feedback or ask for further information and for the participants to ask any questions they may have. To finish the workshop, a written evaluation form and pens are distributed to participants to complete and the facilitator can ask the questions on the evaluation form, as the participants fill them out. Distribute and discuss the handout with a list of Support Services.

End the workshop on a positive note by bringing the group into a circle. Congratulate everyone for participating and thank him or her for sharing his or her stories. Ask everyone in the circle to turn to the person either side of them and to congratulate them on their contribution and to say well done. Finally ask everyone, on a signal from the facilitator, to clap together to end the workshop.

Insert breaks as required: 30 minutes

The workshop can consist of Parts One and Two only or Parts One, Two and Three.

Part one of the workshop focuses on warm-up games and exercises and image work to explore bringing forward personal experiences.

Part Two, Verbal Storytelling, involves the group telling and sharing individual stories in relation to personal experiences.

Part Three is optional and involves further exploration and discussion through image work and improvisation, of one or more stories, selected by the group themselves.

The aim is to promote dialogue and facilitate positive and challenging discussion on the issues raised.

Time: The timelines for this workshop are a guideline only and can vary. Two hours are allocated but it may be possible to do all three sections within shorter timeframes depending on numbers present and length of stories.