

Community Acting Together Workshop Plan **Workshop 1 & 2**

Workshop 1: **(2hrs)**

Focus: Provide a community engaged arts workshop for residents to promote dialogue and active rehearsal around strategies for community mediation, bystander intervention and community development as positive responses to low-level violence.

Designed by: Naomi Tessler, Branch Out Theatre as part of **Community Acting Together**, in partnership with Community Development Framework and Community Mediation Ottawa, funded by Crime Prevention Ottawa

Facilitated by: Community Residents with support of community development staff

(5min) Introduction: (sample) Hello everyone, my name is _____ and my name is _____ and we are grateful that you have joined us for our Community Acting Together workshop today. This will be the first of two workshops. Our goal for this workshop is to work with you as community members to create a safer community, and increase positive and effective responses in our neighbourhood in addressing low-level violence (i.e., constant street harassment, intimidation, retribution, common assaults, incidents linked to the drug trade). This need was identified within the Ottawa Street Violence and Gang Strategy. This low-level violence and safety concern often includes day-to-day conflicts and tensions. We'll be working creatively, using some theatrical tools to help us in our exploration today, but no theatre skills are necessary—just a willingness to participate and learn together. We also have _____ from Community Mediation Ottawa here with us today to provide additional support and feedback when we talk about these conflicts and how to work through them.

(7min) Check-in: Participants are invited to share their name, their gender pronouns, and share how they're feeling on a scale from 1-10 (eg-1=terrible, 10=Amazing!) OR Participants are invited to share their inner weather: choose a weather word to describe how they're feeling emotionally eg: stormy, sunny, rainy, foggy, cloudy etc. (Optional next step) and participants are invited to make the sound and movement that expresses their inner weather.

*After each person shares, the facilitator can verbally or non-verbally thank each participant to acknowledge their contribution.

(10min)Community Agreement: *Knowing their community, the facilitators will come prepared with a few community agreements that are already on the Community Agreement. The group will be invited to reflect upon what they need from themselves and from the group in order to fully participate in a theatre-based workshop that will involve talking about personal life experiences and stories and rehearsing how to address conflicts, ie: support, right to pass, sitting with discomfort, confidentiality. They will then be invited to share what they've come up with, with the person sitting beside them in the circle (5minutes). Each pair will have a few minutes to share with each other and then they'll choose who will be the spokesperson for their pair. After 5min,The facilitators will indicate to the group that the time for sharing with their partner is up. The facilitators will share with the group that each spokesperson will have the chance to share with the group what they'd like to have on the community agreement. The facilitators will include it (as long as it's in line with the focus of the workshop/bringing community together and encouraging a positive experience) and share that our collective goal today will be to keep these agreements in our minds and our hearts as we work and explore together. The facilitators will begin by sharing what they've already included on the community agreement. They will then invite each spokesperson to share (this can all be done sitting down, spokespeople do not need to stand up when they share). If someone shares something that others have concerns or questions about—the facilitator can guide a short discussion around this and see how the group feels, the facilitator can make the final decision as to what gets included based on the goals of the workshop and what's been named by participants. (Spokesperson sharing and facilitators' sharing their community agreement items=8min)

Games for Community Building:

(5min) Ball Name Game: The facilitator will start to mime a ball they are playing with and saying a participant's name, they will throw the 'ball' to that participant. The participant will have to catch the exact ball thrown to them and will have an opportunity to transform that ball into their own ball and then saying another participants' name, they throw that ball to that participant. The game continues until each person has had a few opportunities to receive and throw the ball. If someone says someone's name incorrectly, they have to throw the ball again until they say the name right. Emphasize to the group that it's important to first receive the ball that's been passed to them before they transform it and if someone makes a mistake and gets someone's name wrong—that's okay! It's an opportunity to learn and grow together. **Debrief:** How did it feel to use mime? How did it feel to come up with your own ball and to see each ball that our group came up with? How did you feel when you got someone's name/didn't get someone's name?

(7min) Making Connections: The facilitator will invite participants to walk around the space *in silence*, tune into their bodies and notice their breath. The facilitator will invite them to move between level 1 (extremely slow) and level 10 (extremely fast), and the facilitator will call out the number and give the group 15-20 seconds to walk at that

pace. They will be asked to think about how they're feeling and to move in a way that expresses how they're feeling. They will then be asked to begin to make eye contact and greet each other with their eyes. Participants are asked to continue moving around the space, the facilitator will say freeze and ask participants to connect with **one** person with their pinky finger, (participants-reach out and connect to one person with their pinky finger), facilitator will then ask participants to move around the space again and when the facilitator calls freeze, the next time the facilitator will ask participants to connect with **two** people with their pinky fingers. Participants may have to stretch or move a bit to be able to make those connections.

The exercise continues up until participants have been asked to reach out and connect to 4 people. **Debrief:** The facilitator will ask the group: how did it feel to make those connections? The facilitator will ask for up to 3 responses. When someone offers a 1-word response, the facilitator will ask them to elaborate to invite each participant to share further. Eg: Participant: It was fun? **Facilitator:** Can you share what was fun about it? Participant: I have never connected with people in our neighbourhood with my pinky or any touch, it feels like it's brought us closer in some way...

(10min) Follow the Leader: The Facilitator will ask the group to break up into 4-5 small groups or choose the small groups (each group should have max. 6 people, so you may need more than 4-5 groups). The facilitator will ask for one person in each group to self-select themselves as the first leader. Participants in each group will stand in a line behind the leader. The facilitator will explain that the leader will lead their group around the room doing a repetitive sound and movement and the group will join in and repeat the sound and movement with the leader. The facilitator will share that they will clap their hands or yell '**switch**' to indicate the rotation of leaders and the first leader will safely move to the back of the line so the next leader can begin. The game continues until each participant has had 1-2 opportunities to lead. **Debrief:** How did it feel to be the leader? How did it feel to follow the leader? How did you work together? How did that feel? Etc. Can you think of any examples of times in your neighbourhood where you worked together/supported each other? Did anyone feel conflicted by any of the movements? Eg—did you not want to do one of them? Were you having trouble coming up with one? How did you get through that? Can you share any examples of experiences of conflict in your neighbourhood and what helped you get through those conflicts?

(12min) Columbian Hypnosis: Facilitators will invite the group to find a partner. The facilitators will demonstrate the exercise before guiding participants to do it. The facilitators will invite each pair to choose who will be partner A and who will be partner B. The facilitator will ask participants to ask their partner if they have any body needs: eg.—my back hurts, I don't want to bend too low etc... The facilitator will ask participants to be mindful of their partners' body needs as they go through the exercise. Participants are asked to stand facing their partner and each participant will take a turn leading and following. The leader will bring their right arm up and stretch it out at shoulder height and bend it slightly. They will be asked to move their right hand wherever they choose and their partner needs to follow their partner's hand with their

eyes: as the hand moves, the person following with their eyes must move their body to continue following the hand.

The Facilitator will invite partner A to begin. After 1minute, the facilitator will call freeze. They will invite the group to take a deep breath together. Then they will invite partner B to begin. After 1minute, the facilitator will call freeze and invite the group to debrief together.

Debrief: How did it feel to be the leader? Follower? Can you think of any examples of experiences within your neighbourhood when you felt you had to follow a 'leader' (a person, a comment, a way to do things, an opinion) even if it felt unsafe/scary/uncomfortable/exclusive?

Can you think of examples when you were the leader and you made someone feel unsafe/scared/uncomfortable/excluded/unwelcomed whether intentional or unintentional?

(8min) Stand With Me: Participants form a standing circle. One person begins by stepping into the centre of the circle, and states one thing that is true for them eg: I have siblings. If this is a true statement for other participants, they join the caller in walking around/stepping into the inside of the circle. Anyone who's in the inside circle can take a turn calling out their own true statement, if it is true for people in the inside circle they continue to walk/stand with if it is not true for them they re-join the outer circle. Those who are in the outer circle walk in the inner circle if it is true for them. The exercise continues with new callers calling out different true statements. After a few rounds, once participants are comfortable with how the game works, the facilitators will share that they will now guide the group into talking about experiences with conflict. They will make the following statements: 1. Stand with me if you like working through conflict. 2. Stand with me if you have a hard time working through conflict. 3. Stand with me if you avoid conflicts. 4. Stand with me if you have a hard time standing up for yourself. 5. Stand with me if you stand up for others in conflict. Etc. The facilitators can come up with a few more and/or invite their participants to suggest a few. **Debrief:** What did you learn about yourself and others in this game? What surprised you? What disappointed you? What inspired you?

OR

(8min) Mapping—The group will be invited to reflect upon their own relationships to conflict and to map themselves accordingly: conflict will be in the middle and participants will be invited to place themselves as far away from it if they avoid conflict, or close to it if they like working through conflict or anywhere in between. Participants will be invited to speak about their choices and their experiences with conflict. **Debrief:** What did you learn about yourself and others in this exercise? What motivated you to choose your spot? Do you think your spot changes depending on the conflict and who is involved? Etc.

(12min) Dialogue: The facilitators will share their definition of low-level violence (as created/shared in the training.) The facilitators will engage participants in a dialogue about low-level violence specific to their communities. They will ask: what examples of low-level violence exists in our community/neighbourhood. What have you heard, seen, felt, experienced... (If the group is having a hard time sharing as one large group, you could break the group up into small groups and invite everyone to share as a large group).

(20min) Images of low-level violence: Participants will work in small groups and each have a chance to sculpt an image of low-level violence. Participants are asked to sculpt the characters in the image to clearly determine the experience. The exercise will continue until all participants in the small group who wish to do so have sculpted their own image. Participants will then present their images to the larger group in a gallery style. Participants witnessing the images will be asked to make observations of what they see in each image and the facilitator will ask the participants in the image to do thought-tracking—bringing the image to life with the actors saying a word, I feel statement or a sentence to express their character’s feelings and explore how it makes people feel in the neighbourhood. Participants witnessing the image will be invited to identify with each others’ experiences by standing in the image next to the person who represents their experience/role in a conflict The facilitator will then ask the sculptor to provide a title for their image. **Debrief:** How did it feel to create and witness these images? What do you think are the drivers motivating the ‘oppressor’s’ actions? How can we create different opportunities to shift behavior/attitude/, recognizing cycle of oppression and low-level violence? How can we build bridges in our community?

(15min) Image, Ideal Image and Images of Transformation. Participants will then be asked to sculpt a new image that reflects their ideal image of how their image of low-level violence could be completely resolved. Participants will then be asked to reflect on what steps are needed to move from the image to the ideal image. The facilitator will count down 5,4,3,2,1, and the participants within the image will be asked to organically shift the image to reflect the steps (1-4)-images of transformation, that would move the image of oppression to the ideal image. Once they have created the images of transformation and have reached the ideal image, the facilitator will do more thought-tracking and invite the sculptor to share a title for their ideal image.

Debrief: Participants are invited to reflect upon the images they created and the process of identifying their images of transformation and their ideal image. How did it feel to create these images of transformation and ideal images? What did you learn about yourself and your community?

(7min)Closing Circle: Participants will be invited to share their closing reflections. They’ll be invited to share one thing they’re taking from the workshop and one thing they’re letting go of.

(3min) Pass the Clap: Participants will pass a clap around the circle to thank each other for their contributions and presence.

Workshop 2:
(2hrs)

Focus: Provide a community engaged arts workshop for residents to promote dialogue and active rehearsal around strategies for community mediation, bystander intervention and community development as positive responses to low-level violence.

Designed by: Naomi Tessler, Branch Out Theatre as part of **Community Acting Together**, in partnership with Community Development Framework and Community Mediation Ottawa, funded by Crime Prevention Ottawa

Facilitated by: Community Residents

(3min) Introduction: (sample) Hello everyone, my name is _____ and my name is _____ and we are grateful that you have joined us for our second Community Acting Together workshop today. Our goal for these workshops is to use forum theatre to talk about the day-to-day conflicts that impact your experience of living here in our neighbourhood, and to work together creatively to rehearse potential resolutions. Once again, we'll be using some theatrical tools to help us in our exploration today, but no theatre skills are necessary—just a willingness to participate and learn together. We also have _____ from Community Mediation Ottawa here with us today to provide additional support and feedback when we talk about these conflicts and how to work through them.

(5min)Check-in: Participants are invited to share their name, their gender pronouns, and share how they're feeling on a scale from 1-10 (eg-1=terrible, 10=Amazing!)

OR

Participants are invited to share their inner weather: choose a weather word to describe how they're feeling emotionally eg: stormy, sunny, rainy, foggy, cloudy etc. (Optional next step) and participants are invited to make the sound and movement that expresses their inner weather.

*After each person shares, the facilitator can verbally or non-verbally thank each participant to acknowledge their contribution.

(5min)Community Agreement: The facilitator will review the community agreement and invite anyone to suggest any other items they want the group to be mindful of in the workshop today and the facilitators can add other items if needed.

(5min) Ball Name Game: The facilitator will start to mime a ball they are playing with and saying a participant's name, they will throw the 'ball' to that participant. The participant will have to catch the exact ball thrown to them and will have an opportunity to transform that ball into their own ball and then saying another participants' name, they throw that ball to that participant. The game continues until each person has had a few opportunities to receive and throw the ball. If someone says someone's name incorrectly, they have to throw the ball again until they say the name right. Emphasize to the group that it's important to first receive the ball that's been passed to them before they transform it and if someone makes a mistake and gets someone's name wrong—that's okay! It's an opportunity to learn and grow together. Debrief: How did it feel to use mime? How did it feel to come up with your own ball and to see each ball that our group came up with? How did you feel when you got someone's name/didn't get someone's name?

(7min) Making Connections: The facilitator will invite participants to walk around the space *in silence*, tune into their bodies, notice their breath. The facilitator will invite them to move between level 1 (extremely slow) and level 10 (extremely fast), and the facilitator will call out the number and give the group 15-20 seconds to walk at that pace. They will be asked to think about how they're feeling and to move in a way that expresses how they're feeling. They will then be asked to begin to make eye contact and greet each other with their eyes. Participants are asked to continue moving around the space, the facilitator will say freeze and ask participants to connect with **one** person with their pinky finger, (participants-reach out and connect to one person with their pinky finger), facilitator will then ask participants to move around the space again and when the facilitator calls freeze, the next time the facilitator will ask participants to connect with **two** people with their pinky fingers. Participants may have to stretch or move a bit to be able to make those connections.

(1hr) Forum Theatre: The facilitators (jokers) will explain that they will be presenting a worst-case-scenario scene addressing low-level violence in the community. They will share that the scene will be presented twice. The first time through, the audience is invited to witness the scene and think about what kind of change they would make if they were in the victim or the bystanders shoes. The second time, the audience will be invited to 'call stop' and step into the action of the scene to rehearse creating change. Before the scene is presented, the facilitators (jokers) warm up the audience by having them practice yelling stop. The audience will be told that they're role is to break the cycle of oppression in the play and to keep that in mind as they witness the show. The actors will be asked to introduce themselves and their characters. The joker will then ask the actors to get into position and the audience will count down: '3, 2, 1, Action' and the play will begin. After the play has been performed once, the joker may ask the audience to identify the forms of oppression they witnessed in the scene. They will be reminded that they will watch the scene a second time and this time, it is their time to step into the action of the scene as a spect-actor to rehearse making a change in the scene for the protagonist and/or the potential ally. They will encourage the audience to

become an ally to each character in the scene—to acknowledge the cycle of oppression. They will be taught Boal’s term ‘magic’ and encouraged to try out interventions that are realistic. The Spect-actors will be reminded to yell ‘stop’ as soon as they identify the conflict and they have something that they would like to try out to make a change. The scene will restart and the joker will encourage 3-5 spect-actors to intervene. When a spect-actor yells ‘stop’, the joker will stop the scene and encourage everyone to applaud the spect-actor. They will have the spect-actor replace the protagonist or the potential ally (whichever the spect-actor chooses) and ask them what moment they’d like to start from. The joker informs the spect-actor that if they would like to stop their intervention, they can make the time-out signal, and the joker will again stop the scene to relieve the spect-actor. After each spect-actor intervenes, the joker will ask the spect-actor what change they felt they brought to the scene. They will then ask the audience the same question. The joker will then ask the audience to applaud the spect-actor. *It is vital that if a spect-actor escalates the oppression that the joker name it and encourage discussion amongst the audience about what they observed. If a spectator begins talking in detail about what they saw, followed by what they would do, that is the joker’s tip that that person can be the next spect-actor. The joker can say: In forum theatre we show not tell, why don’t you show us what you mean? And the joker will invite that spectator to become a spect-actor. If no one is ready to go onstage through the discussion process, the joker restarts the scene from the moment it ended off at and waits for someone else to yell stop. If no one yells stop, the joker will stop the play again and encourage a spect-actor to step in. If the audience is absolutely quiet, the joker can warm the audience up again, having them stand up and practice yelling stop all together. Each time a spect-actor intervenes, they are asked to intervene based on the original play so as to address the escalating oppression in each scene rather than intervening on what a fellow spect-actor has enacted.

After 3-5 spectactors have intervened, the facilitator will **debrief** the interventions further with the group: what worked, what didn’t work, what else could work?...

How did it feel to rehearse and witness the changes that were made?

How did the interventions shift the situation? What else could be explored? What did you learn about power dynamics? What did you learn about the cycle of oppression/low-level violence? Thinking about the conflict resolution that’s already happening in our community- what needs more work/attention/practice?

(25min) Next Steps for CAT:

Participants will be invited to share what they think went well and what could be improved in the workshop. Responses will be flip charted.

Participants will be invited to dialogue and share their ideas for possible next steps of what actions they can take beyond the workshop.

(7min) Closing Circle: Participants will be invited to share closing reflections and one thing they're taking from the workshop and one thing they're letting go of.

(3min) Pass the Clap: Participants will pass a clap around the circle to thank each other for their contributions and presence.

Thank you for everyone for coming. Before you leave, we invite you to share any additional feedback about the workshop on a short evaluation