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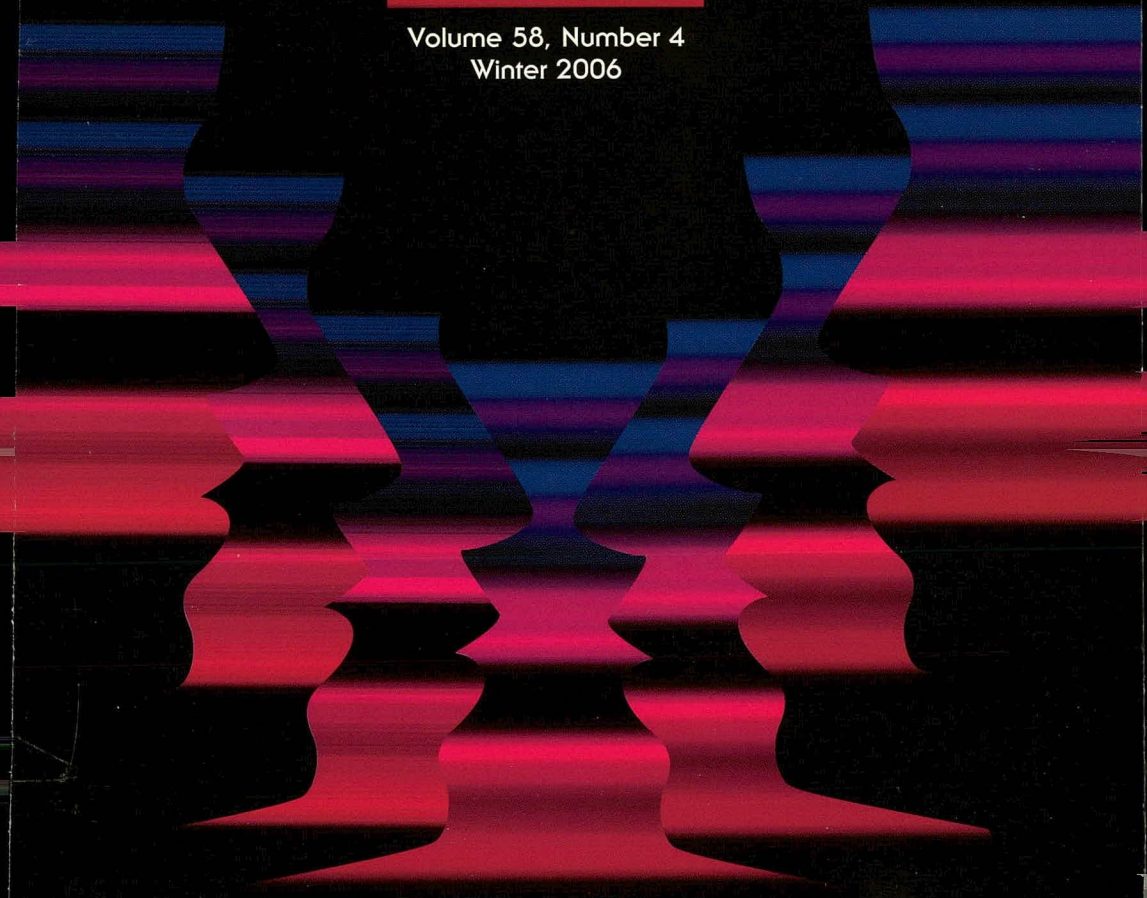

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Contents

Founded by J. L. Moreno

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Introduction to the Special Issue on Using Group Action Techniques With Children and Adolescents

In the group psychotherapy literature, there is a scarcity of practical applications of group action techniques with children and adolescents. Articles in this special issue, designed to alleviate the scarcity, focus on children and adolescents within educational and therapeutic settings.

Zachariah and Moreno, the authors of the first article (pp. 157–167), use sociodrama and sociometric techniques to reduce classroom conflict and teach students to be more compassionate toward one another in a classroom environment. The results of their case study support the use of action sociodramatic and sociometric tools. They also provided students with opportunities to practice and implement conflict resolution skills in the classroom.

The subject of the second article (Armatruda, pp. 168–181) is a special education program at a public elementary school that focuses on psychodrama-based conflict resolution and skill-building training. Action techniques and psychodrama methods were used on a biweekly basis to help students communicate more positively with one another, allowing them to improve their status with peers in the classroom. Students' negative behavior in the classroom decreased, interactions with one another were more positive, and attitudes toward their own potential changed from a negatively skewed focus to one fostering positive self-images.

In the third article (pp. 182–194), Cossa explores the use of sociodrama to help educational communities investigate, understand, and decrease bullying behaviors of adolescents. By training community members as youth auxiliaries or peer mentors in sociodrama, they learned to respond appropriately and effectively to uncivil behavior and to investigate the interrelationship of various sectors within the community. Furthermore, Cossa addresses how

each community segment contributes to the problem and how youth auxiliaries or peer mentors make the most of sociodrama, which offers them practice in addressing and handling the conflict in civil ways.

Daniel, in the fourth article (pp, 195–205), focuses on the uses of a role theory framework, sociometry, and psychodrama with adolescent women and their family members. The author describes four case studies in which the therapist used sociometry and role theory in one-to-one psychotherapy. She also describes how she uses the social and cultural atom as well as investigative action techniques. The investigative action techniques are roles, designed by the author, that she plays to glean clarifying data from her clients and to assist them in recovering the healthy roles they had once maintained or in developing new ones.

Marlo Archer reviews Mario Cossa's book *Rebels With a Cause: Working With Adolescents Using Action Technique.* She reports that Cossa distills his experiences and his knowledge down to a primer for practitioners to help them understand adolescents' unique needs and how action methods must be modified to work effectively with this population.

V. K. KUMAR
THOMAS W. TREADWELL
Guest Editors

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Finding My Place: The Use of Sociometric Choice and Sociodrama for Building Community in the School Classroom

MIRIAM ZACHARIAH
REGINA MORENO

ABSTRACT. The case study concerns issues in a 4th grade public school classroom in Toronto, Canada, where certain children were being excluded, placed in an unpopular subgroup based on physical attributes (hair color, weight, size, or skin color), alternative ways of thinking and behaving, or limited academic abilities. The authors used sociodramatic and sociometric techniques to reduce conflict and teach students to be more compassionate toward one another in the classroom environment. The results of the case study support using action sociodramatic and sociometric tools and providing students opportunities to practice and implement conflict resolution skills in the classroom.

Key words: inclusion/exclusion sociodrama, role play, scene setting and reenactment, sharing circle, sociometric choice and sharing in action, trust and safety,

WHEN MORENO TOLD STORIES AND PLAYED GAMES with children in Augarten Park in Vienna, he called on the young children's spontaneity. In brief, Moreno used many socio- and psychodramatic techniques when telling tales to the children. For example, he challenged the values inherited from their parents and teachers and inspired the children to invent tales or find new names for themselves (Marineau, 1989).

In 1932, Moreno was appointed Director of Research at the New York Training School for Girls in Hudson, where he practiced the sociometric and

psychodramatic methods. [He also] introduced the young women to role-playing to foster a change in their ways of thinking and their negative behaviors (Marineau, 1989). Although the term sociometry was coined by Moreno and used as early as 1916, it played no role in his works until his arrival at Hudson (Bjerstedt, 1956). It was here at Hudson that role-play training was born. "Moreno's experience with the girls at Hudson can be considered as one of the most important movements in the history of group psychotherapy" (Marineau, p.113).

Researchers have documented the use of role-play as "a technique especially useful in helping students in school settings improve their social understandings and their social relations skills" (Gronlund, 1959, p. 259). When therapists are identifying issues to be explored in a classroom, interpersonal difficulties emerge from the students' experiences or may be obtained from stories illustrating problems in interpersonal relationships. Most role-playing situations arise spontaneously from classroom events and occasionally from discussions that trigger issues to be explored. Researchers assert that role-play ing, as an action technique, has the unique advantage of creating healthier social relationships. For example, putting a conflict into action allows students the opportunity to act out the dilemma and gain insight into various possible constructive solutions. Thus, the role-playing technique is extremely safe for use with students in human relations and social skill training because it fosters healthier human relationships. Once students are identified, the situation must be clearly defined and roles cautiously illustrated (Gronlund).

According to Blatner (2002), "[r]ole playing isn't to be viewed as a particularly psychological procedure. Certainly it has been used as a part of many different types of therapy, but this is because it is a natural vehicle for learning" (p. 2). That view supports the appropriateness of role-play ing as a vehicle for dealing with social issues in school classrooms. Blatner goes on to point out some of the problems that arise when teachers try to do role-playing in the classroom. For example, educators who experienced difficulty when using role-playing techniques usually have not described the modality fully to students, failed to describe the situation in detail, and were not explicit about the roles to be enacted (Blatner, 2002).

The classroom teacher or facilitator needs training and experience in doing sociodrama with students. Students need experience in the development of roles and in the inclusion activities that build a sense of trust and safety among class members. Gibbs, the author of *Tribes: A New Way of Learning and Being Together* (1995), has developed an excellent structure and series of activities focused on building a classroom community. Included in her program are warm-up games and role-training activities for elementary students, which can be used for any age group. That type of program, when carefully implemented, provides a social network in which role-playing activities can begin

to resolve conflicts and provide a better understanding of the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion in groups.

Role reversal is another dramatic device that involves the players changing parts so they can begin to develop many practical and emotional insights into the others' situations (Blatner, 2002). In *Lessons for the Living* (Clark, Dobson, Goode, & Neelands 1997) , the authors point out that role-play is the imaginative extension of the self into the "shoes of the other"(the role reversal), and that the experience provides the potential for a significant broadening of viewpoint. The technique works well, particularly with older elementary students, because it helps them become more conscious of their ambivalence. It is our experience that children below the age of 6 years have not developed strong enough egos to make the most of the role-reversal procedure. However, we have found that the use of puppets often provides a way for young children to express the role of the significant other, such as mom, dad, or friend.

Sociometric Position Within the Classroom

Aware that sociometry is a multidimensional method, we chose to use descriptive sociometry to implement the method in education because it allows the investigator to learn the various social structures within the classroom. In the context of this article, we use sociometric choice to refer to an individual's perception of his or her role position in the enactment and reenactment of a group sociodrama. "Probably foremost in Moreno's writings has been his insistence that sociometric choices should be based on criterion which reflects an actual situation or activity in which the group members have a real opportunity for participation" (Gronlund, 1952, p.7). We have used sociometric choice and sociodrama in the classroom as a way of forming work groups and have found classroom conflicts are connected to students' personal issues. We found that the younger the children the more readily they express their concerns and conflicts in an uninhibited and spontaneous manner.

Background of Case Study

We report on a case study that took place in a fourth-grade public school classroom in Toronto, Canada. The 24 pupils were heterogeneously grouped with respect to ability levels. There was only one child of color and two children from Sephardic Jewish backgrounds. Six of the students were from gentile backgrounds, and the rest were from upper middle class Jewish families. One of the authors, trained in role-playing and sociodramatic techniques, worked directly with her students in the classroom and was assisted by a teacher's aide. The students met daily in the classroom for a sharing and

check-in circle meeting that lasted for 40 min in the morning and was coupled with a 10-min closing session at the end of each school day. In addition to being a source for the accumulation of interpersonal conflict data, the sharing circle and closing sessions result in another outcome, a sociodrama that lasts for 1 week. The number of sociodramas that emerge during the academic year average roughly two per month.

Purpose of the Sociodrama

In this case study, our purpose in using sociodramatic and sociometric exploration was to reduce conflict in the classroom and on the playground and to explore the dynamics involved in the exclusion of certain students. Our hope was that after the class's exploration, the students would move toward a more inclusive classroom community in which individual characteristics were valued and appreciated.

The Problem in the Fourth-Grade Class

Some students in this fourth-grade classroom teased their classmates and excluded them from group play activities. The conflicts usually occurred in nonacademic spaces such as on the playground or in the lines before school. Parents and the students themselves were reporting the incidences to the classroom teacher. Some children were traumatized to the point of not wanting to come to school.

Our Hypothesis. We predict that teaching children classroom sociometry and specific role-training techniques will cause a decrease in the unstated hierarchal structures that foster exclusion within the classroom and playground and cultivate a supportive and less antagonistic student environment.

Implementing Sociodrama and Sociometry in the Classroom

Sociodrama can be adapted to any age group, but it is essential that students have daily experiences in activities that facilitate inclusion and build a sense of trust and safety in the group. Gibbs (1995) describes opportunities for providing inclusion activities and games in classrooms. For example, each morning students sit in a circle in the classroom with the teacher and teacher assistant. As an object, such as a special stone that can be called a talking piece, is passed around the circle, only the student holding the stone is allowed to speak. The activity is called a sharing circle, and it is in the circle that the participants engage in inclusion activities. The children have the opportunity to introduce themselves by describing themselves, not only their

physical characteristics but also their interests, feelings, talents, or special qualities. Individual students describe their expectations of what will happen during the group sharing. Each student receives acknowledgment from the group as having been heard, welcomed, and appreciated.

An example of a sharing circle inclusion activity is "When the Wind Blows." The activity provides group members with the opportunity to find out what they have in common and also what makes them different from one another. Topics for sharing in the circle are the following:

- What makes me happy?
- What makes me scared?
- What worries me about school?

The students may also give a compliment to their neighbors in the circle. The procedures in the sharing circle, as well as in class sociodramas, are governed by a clear set of rules that students review, practice, and then agree to follow. The rules are outlined in the manual *Tribes: A New Way of Learning and Being Together* (Gibbs, 1995). They include the following: (1) attentive listening (focusing on and showing interest in what the speaker is a saying), (2) appreciation and no put-downs (acknowledging the positive value of each student's contribution and avoiding negative responses), (3) mutual respect (valuing each student's statement), and (4) the right to "pass." When students can choose not to share, the facilitator always gives pass participants another opportunity to speak.

After teachers have involved students in weeks of community inclusion activities, the information put forth gives teachers insight into classroom dynamics and helps them identify class leaders, particular friendships, less popular students, and possible behavior problems. As a result of that information, teachers can organize class learning groups based on an informal sociometric choice test. The first step is to discuss with the students the concept of class groups and what people need to learn to work together. The teacher discusses with the students the criteria for making choices such as the following: With whom can I write stories, or who can help with math or social studies projects? Because younger students tend to make choices based on who is their best friend at that time, it is important to spend time on the differences between someone with whom a person likes to play and someone who can help with the editing process in writing a report or can listen carefully to one's ideas. Then the teacher distributes four—a number that varies with the size of the group—index cards to each student. The students write on each card the name of a class member with whom they want to work in a group. Younger children can be interviewed one at a time as they give the names of their choices. The teacher makes it clear to the children that only one of their choices will be in the group with them. In that way, the teacher can distribute the isolates, the behavior problems, the negative stars, and the stars among the various groups.

The children engage in a number of role-playing and role-reversal experiences in their group. Some of the activities involve taking the roles of characters in a story that the children have just read and being interviewed in role by the group. Each student in the group reverses roles with different character types in the story and then shares with the members feelings of being in the role and as oneself.

"Roles People Play in Groups" is an activity from *Tribes:A New Way of Learnign and Being Together* (Gibbs, 1995 pp. 342–343). For the activity, we give the students written descriptors of the helpful and unhelpful roles that people play in groups. With the younger children, we use cartoon pictures to show the different roles. Helpful roles include the encourager, the organizer, the peacekeeper, the helper, and the idea person. The unhelpful roles include the joker, the boss, the sitter, the put-downer, and the talker. The purpose of the activity is to promote an awareness of helpful group roles. We ask the children to study the descriptors and to decide which role they usually play when working with others in their group. They write their responses and share them with a partner. Then each group plans and presents a brief role-play in which one of the students chooses to play an unhelpful role. The children in the groups watching are to guess which unhelpful role is being demonstrated.

After each group has had a turn to perform its role-play , sharing takes place, guided by the following reflection questions:

- What happens when even one individual is acting in an unhelpful role?
- What roles do people play in your group?
- How do these roles make working together easier?
- What did you learn about yourself in the role-play ?

We have found that these activities provide students with the necessary interpersonal skills to explore in greater detail the effects of being excluded in a classroom environment.

The Sociodramatic Exploration

The following technique, sociodrama, is designed to manage group conflicts. It is important to mention here that this type of sociodrama may take a week to develop with elementary school children and may need to be revisited several times a year.

The Warm-Up

For the warm-up, we use the poem *When the Wind Blows* and adhere to the following rules and procedures:

1. Participants sit in a circle, preferably on chairs or desks (each person

must have a seat). Each participant is asked to think of a characteristic that makes him or her feel different from others or of something about which he or she has been teased at school. The students are to give examples.

2. One person volunteers to be first. It often helps if the teacher or group leader goes first to provide a model of the statement. The person's chair is removed so there is one less seating place in the circle.

3. The volunteer stands in the middle of the circle and thinks of an attribute that is true of him- or herself and says: "The great wind blows everyone who has been teased about not being able to run fast or wearing glasses."

4. Everyone who has been teased about either of those attributes, even if it is only one other person, moves out of his or her place and finds an empty chair, and [that includes the student who made the statement] If no one moves, the volunteer thinks of another characteristic that is more inclusive, such as hair or skin color. Each students only gets two turns to be in the middle. If he or she ends up without a place for the third time, he or she needs to choose someone in the circle who has not had a turn. If a volunteer can not think of an attribute, he or she can choose a friend to help or say "Pass."

5. Once the students move, there will be one person without a place to sit and that person is the next volunteer.

Sharing and Reflection Questions

In the sharing segment, the children consider the following questions:

- How easy was it for you to participate?
- What are some other characteristics that might be the subject of teasing in the classroom or on the playground?

The students in the fourth-grade class of this case study mentioned physical attributes, such as not being able to run fast or kick a ball. Children had also been teased about skin color and being fat.

The Literacy Exploration

For literacy exploration, an anonymous poem, "There Was No One Left to Speak for Me," is printed on a chart, and the class reads it together. We altered the criteria for using this poem so that it fits the age group. Other exclusionary characteristics could include homelessness, gender, and physical disabilities.

There Was No One Left to Speak for Me

They came first for the Jews—
But I didn't speak because I wasn't a Jew.
Then they came for the Catholics—
But I didn't speak because I wasn't a Catholic

Then they came for the "people of color"—
But I didn't speak because I wasn't of color.
Then they came for the fat people—
But I didn't speak because I wasn't fat.
Then they came for the skinny people—
But I didn't speak because I wasn't skinny.
Then they came for the old people—
But I didn't speak because I wasn't old.
And then they came for me—
And by that time—
There was no one left to speak for me.

—Anonymous

Before going to the next activity, it may be necessary to go over any questions or reactions that the students have about the meaning of the poem.

The Opinion Map

The opinion map contributes to the student's empathy-building process.

1. The teacher instructs the students to take a position in the room according to their agreement or disagreement with the following statements about the poem. The Yes position is on the left side of the room, and the No position is on the right side.
2. Once the children have moved to the yes or no position, they are to share why they made that choice with the other class members at the same spot.
3. The teacher or facilitator states the following criteria:

- "I feel angry at the one who didn't speak." (Move to yes or no position and share)
- "I connect (or understand) the one who didn't speak." (Move and share)
- "I have been one of the excluded." (Move and share)
- "I have been one of the ones who excluded someone else." (Move and share)

Children may be reluctant to own up to the last statement, and therefore, it is helpful if the teacher or other adult participants volunteer information about the times when they have excluded others.

4. For the reflection and sharing segment, the students share some of their reactions to the questions with the whole class.

The Sociodrama: Scene Setting

Students have an opportunity to role-play the sociodrama scenes experientially, focusing on the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion of class members. The three scenes take place in the classroom. The time periods are before

recess, during playground recess, and after recess when students are back in the classroom reporting behavior.

1. The first step involves brainstorming the types of roles that can be depicted in the enactment. The students in this class have had role-play and scene-setting training as well as the experience of reversing roles. It is helpful for the group to have students take turns acting out each role type that is chosen for the three scenes. This type of sociodrama is most successful when it is conducted well into the school year, perhaps in January or February, when students have developed a feeling of safety in the class community.

2. The children are divided into three groups, one for each scene. The students take about 10 min to decide who will play each role in the action, using role choices offered during the brainstorming session. As a reminder, the role types are written on a chart. The students in each group develop a 10-min action scene for their group, using available props such as scarves.

3. The participants freeze as a group in the posture of the action. The teacher takes the role of the camera recorder, and when the camera approaches their group, the students begin the speaking and interacting in their roles. The first group portrays the classroom scene, and the other two groups watch. The teacher moves the camera to the playground scene for action and finally back to the classroom group, which are reporting the playground behavior. Each group has had an opportunity to observe and act.

Sociometric Sharing: The Four Corners

This technique provides an opportunity for the students to make an action choice on the basis of their individual perception of their positions in the classroom or in the sociodrama enactment, according to the following criteria:

Instruct the children to move physically to one of four corners. The signs posted in each corner are read aloud. The corners are designated as follows:

- Corner 1—I am popular.
- Corner 2—I have only a few close friends.
- Corner 3—Nobody likes me.
- Corner 4—I don't care if anybody likes me.

2. Then ask the children to move to the corner that best describes the role that they played in the sociodrama. Have them share their perceptions about the role they depicted with the people in their corner. If a child is the only one in the group, he or she can share with the closest group.

3. Next ask the students to move to the corner that best describes their perceived position in the school classroom. The children share their perceptions about bing in this position with the others in their corner. It has been our expe-

rience that younger elementary school children are not always able to distinguish between their position in a role and their perception of their position in the classroom.

The Reenactment

The sociogram in action. Instruct the children to make a human sculpture with their group (e.g., the playground scene), portraying their sociometric positions in that original scene. There will be three human sculptures, one for each scene.

A one-step change. Ask the students to make a one-step change in their position in the scene toward their understanding of inclusion. It may be necessary to discuss what is meant by inclusion.

The closure. Invite the students back into the circle and have each share one statement about what the process was like for him or her and what each learned. At that point in our case study, the children were ready to come up with solutions to the playground conflicts and to work toward implementing them.

Results From the Sociodrama and Role-Playing Activities

The use of sociodrama and role-playing with this class provided a powerful technique for getting the students and the teacher in touch with the group dynamics involved in the inclusion and exclusion of class members. We, the facilitators, learned that some of the students were inviting exclusion and teasing from class members by isolating themselves from group activities. Some children did that because of their fear of being rejected, and others did it because they did not mind playing by themselves. After the sociodrama experience, the teacher noticed that children were making an effort to include all the class members in play activities and to make more appreciative remarks to one another. The children began to come up with their own solutions such as supporting classmates during a conflict situation by making strong statements in the double role, such as "I don't like to be teased; it hurts my feelings" or "How would you like it if someone said that to you?" As a result of this experience, these fourth graders and their parents began to request that conflict resolution activities be included as part of the school curriculum.

Ideas for Implementing Conflict Resolutions Activities in the Classroom

It is helpful to have a school psychologist on site to observe and participate in the sociodramatic activities. The school psychologist can subsequently work in small groups with students who are being excluded by classmates and may be exhibiting behavior problems as a result. It is also effective to invite

the parents without their children to an evening meeting at the beginning of the school year and to have them experience some inclusion activities and sociodramatic games as way of explaining the need and rationale for a community-building curriculum.

We believe that a teacher or facilitator has to have sufficient training and experience in using role-playing and sociodrama in school classrooms. It is our experience that the most successful results occur when there is a strong feeling of trust and safety within the class community. Even without these prerequisites, role-playing conflict situations can provide valuable insight into the social dynamics in a classroom. However, students who lack trust and support from class members are often reluctant to share honest and negative feelings because of their fear of being laughed at or ridiculed by classmates.

Some psychologists suggest training students as peacemakers who would intervene in conflict situations, particularly on the playground, and help students resolve issues. Many schools in Canada and the United States have developed programs for training students for the role of peacemaker. The goal is to build a classroom and eventually a school community in which each voice is heard, understood, and accepted. The increasing occurrences of bullying, teasing, and violence in schools should make training of teachers in sociodramatic and sociometric process techniques mandatory so that each child can find his or her place.

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Conflict Resolution and Social Skill Development With Children

MARY-JO AMATRUDA

ABSTRACT. Conducting psychodrama groups for children in an elementary school setting are extremely challenging because the interpersonal issues that emerge are complex and the institutional guidelines are limiting. The author recounts experiences with 10- to 13-year-old children placed in an elementary school special education program. The author used action techniques and psychodrama methods on a biweekly basis to help students communicate more positively with one another, allowing them to improve their status with peers in the classroom. Students' negative behavior in the classroom decreased, interactions with one another were more positive, and attitudes toward their own potential increased as a result of the psychodrama-based conflict resolution and skill-building training.

Key words: action methods with children, action techniques with special education students, conflict resolution with elementary school students, psychodrama with elementary school children

IN THE EARLY PART OF THE 20TH CENTURY, groups of children in the Augarten helped form some of Moreno's first impressions of spontaneity and creativity. From children came the spark that ignited what came to be psychodrama. It is, therefore, fitting that psychodrama be used to help students step out of the negative cultural norms (Kellar, Treadwell, Kumar, & Leach) of their classrooms and express empathy for one another, experiment with new and positive behaviors, and allow their creative, imaginative minds opportunities for expression. There is testimony to the effectiveness of using action methods with children. Slavson, as early as 1930, wrote about the effectiveness of activity group therapy in providing psychotherapy treatment for children (Lomonaco, Scheidlinger, & Aronson, 2000). In the early 1970s, Standford and Roark (1974) wrote about using role-playing and other action methods in the classroom to create cohesion and a good working environment. Specific to the special education population, Mishna and Muskat

(2004) noted that children and adolescents with learning disabilities are vulnerable to experiencing various social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties that can best be helped in group settings. To that end, using the groups that already exist in special education classrooms can be effective. Moreno and Zachariah (2005) focus on the use of sociodrama and psychodrama methods to promote inclusion in the classroom. Their work reinforces the value of J. L. Moreno's techniques in helping children see in what ways they connect with one another and develop empathy for one another. When children stop defending against the similarities and differences and accept one another and themselves, the level of conflict in the classroom is diminished.

Psychodramatists intent on bringing action methods to schools will find little in the literature specific to using psychodrama with children in groups. In addition, there is minimal institutional support in elementary schools for the use of action techniques to help students learn conflict resolution and social skills and to increase children's self-esteem. In this article, I introduce the use of action methods as a means of teaching conflict resolution and social skills in a public school environment. This use was prefaced by an in-service training session presented to the elementary school faculty and staff members to demonstrate how action techniques are used to deploy interpersonal conflicts in the classroom and reduce tension among students.

Project Background

In an in-service training program workshop, I presented instruction on using action methods to reduce interpersonal conflicts in the classroom and tension between the students and the elementary public school's faculty and staff members. As a result of that workshop, one of the social workers respected the sociometry experience to the degree that he included psychodrama groups in a grant that he was writing to secure funds to provide conflict resolution and self-esteem groups to the children in his school. The thrust of his program design was that conflict resolution groups, using action psychodramatic group-building activities, along with empathy training, would break down the unstated, hierarchal structures that foster conflict and would cultivate a supportive and less antagonistic student environment.

For the past 2 years, on invitation from the school social worker, I conducted psychodrama sessions with children in an elementary school on a biweekly basis as part of a grant awarded by the state education department for enrichment in the areas of self-esteem and conflict resolution. The public school is located in a New England city of about 150,000 people that has slowly lost its once-thriving industrial base, leaving a high concentration of unemployment. The kindergarten through eighth-grade school serves mainly

a minority population, and many students are from immigrant families where English is not spoken in the home. Also, it is not unusual to find a portion of the students living in foster homes. Most of the families live below the poverty level, which strengthens the notion among the students that they are different. The specific population addressed, 10- to 13-year-old boys and girls who have learning or emotional disabilities or both, received various diagnoses from school or private educational psychologists. The diagnoses included depression, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and behavior dysfunction including impulse control and thought disorder. Those diagnosed with educational disabilities run the gamut from being very intelligent to borderline intellectually challenged and with dyslexia or without. Most of the students struggle in the emotional and learning areas and present behavioral challenges to the teachers and staff members who interact with them.

The severity and complexity of the diagnoses qualify the students to be placed in special education, self-contained classrooms. Most of the families of these children are economically, culturally, and socially deprived, having minimal association with the community in general. That insulation and isolation is replicated in the school setting, where special education students attend school and create their own world in their self-contained, special education classes. In those classes, hierarchal structures are based on financial status, living situations—whether with a foster family or one's biological family—and physical prowess. The ultimate goal of the psychodrama sessions was to provide students with opportunities to perceive themselves and their peers more compassionately and in positive roles.

Demographics and Logistics

According to the contract, I was to come to the school every other week during the academic year and conduct 30- to 40-min sessions for three separate classes for groups of 6 to 17 students. Because of the student's short attention span and their high level of distractibility, the 30-min session proved to be optimal. Many of the students have repeated grades, some stay with the same teacher for 2 years. For those reasons, I was able to work with several students over the course of 2 years.

The groups are identified as Class A, Class B, and Class C, with each having one teacher and one aide. I invited teachers and aides to participate in the psychodrama group, and they did so to a varying degree, depending on the class. Class A was a large class of 17 fifth and sixth graders with educational and emotional difficulties. Given their behavioral problems, the 17 students in Class A proved to be too large a group. An offer to facilitate two groups for

this classroom was rejected because of the students' compact curriculum. Instead, I recruited volunteer participants, and five girls and one boy agreed to form a group. In the immediate weeks that followed, more of the students wanted to volunteer, but the integrity of the original group of six was preserved. The group met in the social worker's office, the library, or an empty classroom. This smaller Class A group emerged as an extremely focused, cohesive group that was without chaos and polite to one another. We were able to start and finish an activity within the time allotted. Although they often brought in their struggles with one another to be addressed during sessions, I had the time to balance the sessions with structures that led to developing social skills and role growth.

Class B was a class of nine fourth and fifth graders, also with emotional and educational limitations. There were two girls and seven boys, and the group sessions were always held in their classroom. Class C was made up of six sixth-grade students with primary emotional diagnoses. The range of the diagnoses were thought disorder, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, ADHD, and depression. Five of the students were boys, and one was a girl. This group's session was initially held in the classroom, but because of the children's lack of attention and their interpersonal conflicts, we moved the psychodrama group either to the social worker's office or the library, depending on availability. In those rooms, I as the facilitator had more control. The room could be prepared, props laid out, and a warm and soothing atmosphere created, which was novel and compelling for the students. Here the group became more focused and cohesive.

Without their teacher, the students in Class C acted the most responsibly. They took responsibility for letting me know the kinds of limits they needed and how to set up a reward system that replicated what they had in their class. They communicated with one another without getting offended or offending the others. In the sessions with Class A and Class C, which were away from the home classroom, the teachers and aides were not present. The social worker attended group sessions on an as-needed basis.

One challenge in running the psychodrama groups was that all the subjects of the dramas had to be educationally and not psychotherapeutically oriented. I was in the school to provide opportunities for specific skill development. There were no signed consent forms from parents or guardians, and the program was considered an enrichment program for special education students. The psychodrama structures that I introduced to them focused on conflict resolution, social skill development, and role training for present and future school life and work life. When the children talked about their families, common themes were highlighted and discussed in terms of their effect on students' schoolwork. When they talked about their behaviors at home, that as well was connected to their behavior in school.

Dynamics of Special Education Children

The developmental concerns intrinsic to 11- to 13-year-olds that facilitators must take into consideration within an educational environment are numerous. There is enormous discrepancy in physical maturity between 11- and 13-year-olds, and within each age range, there is a wide spectrum of sexual development. Peer group and status in the group are paramount concerns. Although I observed one or two students in each class who were recognized for their academic abilities, most students competed to be the funniest or the cruelest. Those with seemingly more material possessions were looked up to, as were those who showed signs of more advanced physical maturity. Special education children bring the additional problems of low self-esteem, poor social skills, limited educational skills, and often, multiple daily crises. These elements demonstrated themselves in the high reactivity of the students and the rapidity with which things could get out of hand. They were always on guard against anything that they might perceive as shame inducing. They were careful about what they shared in front of their peers and reacted aggressively to any perceived insult or threat.

Building group cohesion was my first goal with the students. The undercurrents of competition that can ignite relations at any given moment in these groups challenged class cohesion. For example, those who are just a hair above economically scapegoat the poorest child; the educationally challenged child is mocked for liking academics; and other children wait for veiled insults from classmates. With those issues in mind, I selected warm-ups that are easy to do, with directions that are easy to follow and ensure that everyone can experience success. This protocol usually minimizes the potential for feeling shame and serves to warm up the students along with allaying their anxieties while setting the group agenda.

Warm-ups That Meet the Challenge of One's Inability to Focus

The Spectrogram

Given the students' limited attention span, I asked them to pull their chairs away from their desks to form a semicircle for the group. I invited the social worker, the teacher, and the aide to sit in and participate. Not only did the children have the opportunity to see and hear the teacher, aide, and social worker in the roles of group members, but they also had a model for participation in the exercises.

I often begin a warm-up while watching and listening for conflictual or negative explosive interactions between students. I use the spectrogram (Kole, 1967), explaining that there is an imaginary line in the room with numbers on it from 1 to 10, with 1 meaning *very difficult* and 10 meaning *very easy*. The

group members have to place themselves on the imaginary line. I ask them to select a number that indicates how easy it is for them to get up in the morning, and then the chairs are arranged according to that level of ease. I ask the social worker to be the first to participate. In that way, the children hear the directions and see them in action twice before doing it themselves. In some instances, I concretize the spectrogram line with a scarf or rope. The criterion question about the ease of getting up in the morning yielded interesting results. One student immediately stated how easy it is for him to get up, and two students challenged him. Two other students began nudging one another with teasing, conflictual comments that nearly erupted into conflict. Thus, in a few seconds, there were two arenas of potential conflict. Rather than proceed with the conflicts, I had the students sit down and think of a number from 1 to 10 (1 meaning *very difficult* and 10 *very easy*) to indicate the ease with which they got up in the morning. Once these data were collected, students were placed in chairs on the spectogram line according to their level of ease.

Name Games

Of the numerous name games (Dayton, 1990), those that I find most useful for special education students focus on students' first names. Usually they all know one another's first names; thus, I ask them to recite classmates' names at different speeds. First, I ask the students to say the names as fast as possible, which is safe because one can hide behind speed. I then ask them to say the names as slowly as possible; this is riskier because each is asked to take more time and have more attention focused on him or her for a longer period of time. Slow motion also encourages students to be silly. Next I request that they say the names as if they are surprised, and then as if they are sad. Depending on the responsiveness of the group, I continue to ask them to say their names under a variety of moods. This is something everyone can do well. This exercise helps them name feelings and identify the facial expressions that accompany each feeling. I end by asking them to say the names with a feeling that they decide to express and which the group has to guess. This focuses on the connection between body language and feelings.

Adjectives Attached to Names

Another name game requires remembering the group members' names with some identifying quality or adjective in front of each name. This is useful in helping children concentrate and focus on the adjective that assists them in remembering classmates' names. The students took great delight in repeating this every time we met and remembered the adjective that was identified with my name.

Weather as Mood Barometer

I find that using the weather is helpful to get a reading on how students are feeling and the type of mood they might be in. I ask, "What weather are you today?" The students often need coaching to understand the concept. I give them several examples, asking, for instance, how someone who says he or she is a hurricane might be feeling. The exercise introduces them to the use of metaphors and engages their creativity. When expanded, it leads to a discussion of how fast feelings change, like the weather, opening the door for mood and feeling exploration. Although name games build group cohesion, emotional games focusing on feeling awareness help children better understand how classmates think and feel in a disruptive classroom.

Warm-Ups Lead Students Into Action

When I sense that the students are warmed up to explore ways of thinking, I ask them to remember times in school when their feelings were changing quickly. This technique gets students talking and sharing experiences regarding difficult feelings and mood changes within their school environment. In that way, students contribute easily, and the opportunity to select a protagonist to explore anxiousness and mood changes becomes second nature to the group process. Through role reversal, the protagonist can experience what it is like for the students who are observing this quick mood change. Using doubling, other members of the class help the protagonist expand his or her expression of feelings and thoughts. We often moved from the general discussion of feelings and shifted quickly to talking about conflictual feelings about a person or an event. Then I invite them to think of a example of when they felt two ways about something. To assist the students, I give an example: I am enjoying the book I am reading, but I am nervous about having to take a test on it. To place the situation in action, I use two chairs to concretize those feelings and invite a student to sit in the chair and pretend to be me. When the student is in the first chair, I instruct him or her to express the feeling of enjoyment, and in the second chair, I tell the student to express the nervous feeling of taking a test. The students get the idea and generate their own examples. The teacher commented that this was helpful because during the week, she could ask a student which chair he or she might be in when a problem emerged. In both of these exercises, we are legitimizing students' experiences of emotional shifts and their having differing feelings about the same thing. We are also giving them a concrete reference point, the two chairs, when they notice negative emotional and mood shifts.

Social Skill Building

An exercise I use with success is the mirror exercise (Hale, 1968; Spolin, 1999) because it builds focus and student collaboration and offers the experi-

ence of encountering another by looking directly into the person's eyes. Partners sit close and directly opposite one another. Each student takes a turn as leader, moving hands and changing facial expression. The partner, as the follower, moves his or her hands and changes his or her facial expressions to match those of the leader. At a prompt from the group facilitator, the two shift roles, and the leader becomes the follower and the follower the leader. In the next segment of the exercise, the facilitator asks the participants to shift the leadership between them without direction and without speaking. Toward the end of the school year, when the students had developed greater interpersonal skills, I used this exercise with Classes A and C; they are older and therefore better able to follow directions, plus their attention problems and social skill problems could be helped by practicing the skills needed for this activity. The act of sitting in close proximity and facing another suggests some interpersonal development for these students who normally talk through one another. To confront one another directly with no belligerence is a step forward. Concentrating, looking directly at their partners, and allowing the experiences of leading and following are necessary components of this exercise, which stresses connecting with others in a positive way. That is ultimately a move toward effective communication.

The mirroring exercise can be expanded into daily life situations in which we create a short sociodrama to explore group conflicts (Sternberg & Garcia, 1989). I ask the students to think about a situation that involves sharing leadership responsibilities. In addition to being a hard concept for the children to understand, it taps into their sense of shame and insecurity, and the struggle plays itself out as classroom chaos. I have students assume the roles of leader and follower, whereby many thoughts and feelings are flushed out and expressed. I ask them to create characters that have to exchange leadership roles in school. On one occasion, we came up with the situation of two students collaboratively working on a school project. That required exchanging ideas and collaboratively working together to create a map of the United States with magazine pictures. The changing of roles allowed the students to see the other person's perspective. This gave them the opportunity to see that each person had a valid point and that in order to come to a mutual working relationship, each one had to listen and share his or her ideas with the other for a collaborative experience. Role reversal is the technique used to aid in developing insight into leadership and worker interpersonal relationships.

Classroom Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution

Crisis situations are more the rule than the exception in special education classrooms. For example, as I was entering the classroom to run a group session, a student was leaving for a mainstream class. As the student was exiting he threw all the books off another student's desk. That student got up and

threw objects off the desk of the parting student, and a third student got up and put everything back on the desks. After gathering the obviously anxious and angry students, I asked them what had happened. To limit their stories, students had to express what they saw by using only four words.

Locograms

To summarize their perspectives, the boy who left angry had been happy on the bus in the morning, but his mood had drastically changed when he walked into the room. Despite my challenge to limit the length of the classmate's descriptions of what happened, it was clear that verbal explanations were heading toward an argument over the details. Thus, I used sociometric locograms (Beglen, 1983) to shift focus from the boy who left the room to the students who remained. I asked class members to stand at a designated place in the room representing two conditions. The first locogram was ways of thinking about the conflict. The thoughts were subdivided into four feelings: angry, scared, excited, and embarrassed. I had them stand at one place if they felt angry, another place if they felt scared, another place if they felt excited, and another place if they felt embarrassed. Five of the students put themselves in the angry category, three in the excited, and one selected the scared emotion. They were then instructed to look at where their peers located themselves and to tell me what they saw. With coaching, they were able to do this. The second locogram involved behavioral reactions. The following were the possible situations: I want to get in on the action, I want to hide, I want to help calm down the angry person, and I want to get the person who is upset more angry. Four of the nine students placed themselves in the position of wanting to incite more anger, one wanted to calm things down, one wanted to hide, and three wanted to get into the action.

From that point, I asked the students to reenact the disruptive entrance into the classroom. Each student had to leave the classroom and return acting as upset as he or she could. The rule was that the acting student could not touch anyone or do anything to hurt him- or herself, others, or property. If the student were going to throw a book, it had to be his or her own. Then I asked each student to enter the room a second time with the same explosive behavior. This time, however, I asked the classmates to demonstrate what someone might do to make the anger smaller. They said things such as, " Chill man, it's OK" or "Why don't you come and sit next to me; it's OK." Others ignored the behavior and pretended to be reading a book.

The opportunities to experience the two different types of reactions to disruptive behavior precluded us having to talk about it; for these children, less talk meant greater focus. In the sharing, one reaction was that when someone calmed down, the incident became less exciting and, in fact, boring. I acknowl-

edged that and then asked if there were any advantages to a calm atmosphere. Some said none, whereas others said that no one got in trouble and the students were able to finish their work and have free time. That suggested that achievement had a calming effect emotionally. This exercise, as a lesson in conflict avoidance, gave the students another experience for their conflict resolution toolbox: an example of someone exploding and their not being drawn into the explosion. It was a role-training session focusing on de-escalating anger.

In another psychodrama session, the students in Class C, who have limited attention spans, had just witnessed an out-of-control, verbally abusive, and potentially violent outburst from a new female student. The other students did not like her. She was scapegoated because of her antagonistic attitude and provocative behavior. Her attitude could be seen as a response to her status as the new student in a group of boys and one girl who were tightly bonded to one another and to the teacher. I walked into the room just after she had been sent to the office. I could see that the students were angry and upset about the threats and comments that the girl had made to their teacher. I asked them if they would like to look at this issue with the help of some psychodrama. They were willing.

Human-Sculpted Images

I guided the students in creating human-sculpted images that reflected a student new to Class C who feels she does not fit into the class and a human sculpture of classmates ignoring the threats of verbally abusing a new student. Accompanying the second sculpture, I asked the students to think of some things they could say to themselves to help them keep control of their angry feelings about someone else's outbursts.

The exercise got the students out of their seats and shifted the focus from the incident in the classroom to a relatively fictionalized situation and their reactions. Their mood shifted from anxiety to concern about their well-being and their teacher's. Creating a human sculpture of the classroom situation required the use of their bodies, allowing some of their angry energy to dissipate. The human sculpture was an aid in translating the classroom situation into action and thereby helping the children generate some calm in the midst of a storm. It must be kept in mind that for many students at this school calm waters are unfamiliar territory. Thus, by providing opportunities for students to translate feelings into words and build a healthy repertoire of action responses, the action method gave them a new point of reference, which can be reinforced in their classroom.

Using Literature

Class C students were completing a test on a reading assignment as I entered their classroom. The teacher asked me if they could have a few min-

utes to complete it. I noted how involved the students were in the assignment. When they finished their work, rather than asking them to change focus, I began an activity centered on the book that they were reading. My objective was to learn more about what interested them and have them verbalize that interest in a group environment. I carry a bag with props such as scarves, medieval figures, small toys, and some stuffed animals. On this day, I asked them to pick a scarf to represent their favorite character in the story that they had just completed. The scarf acted as a transition from schoolwork to action, from pencil and paper to action, from the cognitive to the emotional, from a social (student) role to psychodramatic (the character) role. I asked them to think of their favorite character in the story, which had them engrossed when I walked into the room. For the set, I placed a chair in the center of the room and instructed the students to take on the role of their favorite character and introduce the character to the group. One student took on the role of a little duck that did not know how to swim, whose mother would not teach him, and at whom the other ducklings laughed. Ultimately, an older duck, who was a friend, taught him how to swim. That role enactment was parallel to the student's own life. After the role play, the student told the class that she was like the duck that could not swim and that the teacher in this classroom, to whom she was very attached, was the one who taught her. Another student spoke as the Cinderella character in her story. She, aside from loving to wear her beautiful gown, talked about being embarrassed to have anyone come to her house. Both girls, the only girls in the class, had been teased and often treated badly by the boys. Each of them was able to represent herself honestly through the characters they chose. The boys in the class, who were often mean to the two girls, became kind and asked questions of the characters that demonstrated their sensitivity to them. As each person spoke in character, I asked the witnesses to respond as their own characters from their own stories, stating whether they experienced the emotion the presenting character may have felt. That allowed for honest sharing and bonding, whereby the characters in the stories helped the group to achieve a new level of cohesion.

Future Projection

In addition to social skill development and conflict resolution, I use the psychodramatic method of future projection to help the students see themselves in a future state. That is a way for the students to imagine themselves differently, to verbalize their dreams, and to speak those dreams aloud to their peers. One of the techniques I use for this is a reunion. I bring in a REUNION banner and hang it in the room. When the children from Class A walked into the social worker's office where we were meeting, I greeted each of them with these words: "It's 2010, and I am so glad you have come to the reunion; it's

so good to see you again." I had a chair in the middle of the semicircle decorated with streamers and informed them that they each had a chance to come and sit in this chair and tell the group what had been going on with them for the past 5 years and what they were doing in their projected future state. The strategy presented them with a chance to state how they solved past problems and to express their dreams.

My social worker colleague was always willing to do the exercise first and to model what was expected. Some students did not have anything to say, and others had goals that in most situations are clearly out of reach.

I noticed that these children responded favorably to literature and made useful connections with their own world through the words of others. I believe the following poem (Moss, 2003) reflects the children's inner emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, and I used it to help the students focus on their feelings, thoughts, and actions. Before reading the poem aloud to them, I had them check their moods, using the weather report technique to aid them in warming up. Once they reported their emotional and behavioral forecast, I read the poem to them.

On the Other Side of the Door

On the other side of the door
I can be a different me
As smart and as brave and as funny or strong
As a person could want to be.
There is nothing too hard for me to do
There's no place I can't explore
Because everything can happen
On the other side of the door.
On the other side of the door, I don't have to go alone.
If you come too, we can sail tall ships
And fly where the wind has flown.
And wherever we go, it is almost sure
We'll find what we are looking for
Because everything can happen
On the other side of the door.

After reading the poem, I took one of the scarves from my bag and hung it up to make a door. I then invited the students to step through the door, telling them that when they were on the other side of the door, they could be whoever or whatever they wanted to be. Before each person walked through the door as the protagonist, one of the other students reread the poem to that person. Each student had an opportunity to walk through the door and rehear the poem as she or he walked in. After each one walked through, I instructed each child to be, rather than say, who they were on the other side of the door. They could select auxiliaries if they needed them. From the other side of the door, we heard dreams put into the context of what the children wanted to achieve. The

contents of the students' goals were indeed realistic for them. The girl who wanted to be a veterinarian talked to the animals as she took care of them, saying she was rescuing them from abuse and neglect. The girl who was a singer sang. Although her continual, attention-seeking behavior alienated her classmates, they were able, in this activity, to clap and cheer for her, something she was desperately needing from them. A third student wanted to be president so that she could get enough food for children who were hungry. In these and other examples during this session, I was struck by the modulating of goals that had taken place and the understanding that the students had gained of themselves and what they needed and wanted. The opportunity to participate in an enrichment program gave them time to express themselves with words and actions and to develop increased empathy for each other.

Conclusion

Summarizing the accomplishments of the 2 years of this grant for developing action groups with special education children was challenging. When psychodrama works, there is nothing like it. That is not to say, however, that there are not days when it does not work. I recall stopping a session full of distracting behavior in which students were talking and teasing one another. Any activity or intervention that I made was dismissed and only provided more opportunity for disruptive behavior. I said to the children, "I am not getting it right, and I have some hard thinking to do. I will come back next time and offer you something more worth the time." That verbal intervention turned things around because they stopped acting out. How I handled a "failed" situation became a model for them. Rather than letting all their defenses clamp me down, I acknowledged my imperfection and that opened a door. It showed and expressed that limitations are part of being human.

With this school project, I had the opportunity to explore a variety of action techniques with learning and emotionally disabled children within a public school environment. The level of affiliation that the students felt toward me and the deepening bond they developed with one another were apparent in the final sessions. They now had the ability to talk without reacting aggressively to one another and had increased their levels of trust and self-esteem.

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How Rude!: Using Sociodrama in the Investigation of Bullying and Harassing Behavior and in Teaching Civility in Educational Communities

MARIO COSSA

ABSTRACT. In this article, the author explores the use of sociodrama to help educational communities investigate and deal with bullying behaviors. The contents include using trained youth auxiliaries to support the sociodramatic process; exploring parameters of bullying and harassing behaviors and creating an operational definition of bullying; communicating the community's expectations for civil behavior and the consequences of uncivil behavior; investigating the interrelationship of various sectors within the community and how each contributes to the problem and the solution; training members of the community to respond appropriately and effectively to uncivil behavior; and providing practice for dealing with conflict in civil ways. The article is based on the author's work in educational settings in the United States and in Australia.

Key words: bullying and harassing behavior, teaching civility in schools, training youth auxiliaries for sociodrama, using sociodrama with school children

WHEN THERAPISTS USE ROLE PLAYS FOR BULLYING and harassment training with young people, they can use sociodramatic techniques in their workshops. However, the training required for youth auxilaries (YAs) extends beyond that required for improvisational actors working with issue-oriented theater. At ACTINGOUT, we begin with the process of general improvisational training to develop acting skills and the ability to move quickly from one topic or character perspective to another (Cossa, Ember,

Glass, & Hazelwood, 1996). We also provide basic knowledge about a variety of content areas, while realizing that characters did not always have to be well-informed as long as the facilitator can clarify and correct any misinformation that might be offered from the character's perspective.

The crucial part of the training is to support the actors' becoming YAs focused on developing their skills in engaging and supporting the audience to become as fully involved as possible. To that end, we practice developing dramas with some of the troupe as audience members and others as the YAs, and we brainstorm ways to support the audience participants and keep the scene moving without dominating the action. The actors also learn to deal with the frustration of having a scene frozen at moments of intense affect.

Because we do not require auditions to become members of the troupe, all interested teens can participate. The only selection made by staff members is deciding which of the available YAs to cast in a given presentation, always with an eye toward balancing the use of the more and the less experienced. Our practice at ACTINGOUT is to use four YAs at most performances because that number can be easily transported, along with a facilitator, in one car. It also assures that each YA is used maximally at the presentation.

Using Youth Auxiliaries

The YAs warm the audience up to the topic(s) to be explored and to participation in the process, support audience members in becoming integrated into the action of the drama, and step out of the way and allow the audience members to become the principle role players in the drama. The facilitator or director works with the audience to develop the subject matter and character descriptions for the required roles and invites active participation from the audience. The facilitator and YAs work as a team.

In school settings, especially for a "one-shot" presentation or for the first in a series of workshops, the use of YAs is a tremendous asset to the process. Primary and elementary students generally have instant warm-up and are ready to jump in without really understanding what the content or the process is about. The YAs help contain that energy and guide it in a productive direction. With middle- and high-school youth, there is often a reluctance to become involved in the action, and having the YAs available to take on needed roles allows the entry process to occur at its own pace. Once the first audience member makes it to the playing space, others follow. Generally, smaller audiences (e.g., one class) are easier to warm up to action than are larger audiences (e.g., an entire school). In either case, the YAs provide a crucial connection between the facilitator and the audience.

An additional benefit to having YAs supporting the process is that they can be used for roles in which it might be counterproductive to have audience

members engage. In working with issues of substance abuse, for example, the role of the abuser may be an overdeveloped role for members of the audience and one for which the director does not want to support further warm-up for those participants.

That final consideration was certainly true in the project whose description follows. I had received a call from the Director of Health Services for a school district serving a major city and a number of surrounding towns in southwestern part of New Hampshire. One of the elementary schools wanted support in dealing with students' rude behavior, which had been identified by staff members as an issue of concern. That request led to the development and implementation of a project titled "HOW RUDE!"

Working at the Elementary-School Level

The project began with an ACTINGOUT theater presentation or workshop for all fourth- and fifth-grade students (the "elders" of the school), their teachers, and school administrators. The performance started with a series of brief scenes presented by the YAs in which people were treating each other uncivilly. At the end of each scene, the director invited the audience to shout out, along with the actor who had been the victim in the scene, "How rude!" This was a relatively simple way of participating in which everyone could be (and was) involved.

In the next section of the presentation, the audience was further involved as actors along with the YAs and as idea generators for minisociodramas exploring typical ways that students in those classes were mean or rude to each other and to teachers. As the scenes progressed, more students, as well as teachers, became involved, and the YAs moved into the background, offering encouragement and continuing to facilitate the process by modeling good audience behavior. Most scenes involved two to four characters. Scenes with more characters, especially those before younger audiences, are more likely to become chaotic and difficult for the audience to hear or understand.

In the accompanying discussion, participants observed that teachers were also sometimes mean to each other or to students. The teachers were able to "own" their rude behaviors. By the time the students were asked directly, "How many of you have ever bullied someone else or were mean to them in some way in this school?" students candidly responded. The warm-up to the overall project was well under way.

Over the next few weeks, all the fourth- and fifth-grade students and teachers participated in a number of workshops in which sociodrama was the instrument for exploring the types of bullying encountered in the school community and the possible reasons and causes for it. A few YAs accompanied the facilitator to each session to assist the process, but the focus was on student and teacher involvement.

Students also explored the differences between passive, aggressive, and assertive responses to bullying behavior through movement and drama. Passive responses were marked by a physical shrinking in size and movement away from the bully and by a softening or absence of voice and a giving-in to demands. Aggressive responses were marked by a physical swelling in size, movement toward the bully, being ready to fight, and raising the voice. Assertive responses were marked by maintaining a vertical position, keeping eye contact with the bully, and claiming one's own space and rights in a firm voice.

The workshops devoted a good deal of time to practicing the assertive response. During those practice sessions, the YAs took on the bully roles to avoid further role training in bullying behavior for the fourth- and fifth-graders. Often, when students were practicing assertive responses, perhaps in response to a bully who wanted to take a piece of playground equipment away from them, they slipped into the aggressive mode, noting that it was easier than being assertive. Therefore, sociodramas were created to explore the possible consequences of aggressive responses, which helped create greater awareness of the benefits of assertive responses over aggressive responses.

As the workshops were being conducted, the fourth- and fifth-graders were simultaneously in rehearsal for a school-wide assembly that they were to present to the entire school community, particularly those in kindergarten through third grade. We invited parents to witness the work that had been done and to "learn the language" so that the practiced behaviors could be reinforced at home.

The assembly presentation was similar to the one that began the project, except that the situations were geared toward younger students, and there was a section on what to do if one is being bullied or sees someone being bullied. In addition to presenting role training on how to be assertive and ideas for challenging bullying behavior, the assembly actors stressed the importance of getting adult support. During the presentation, the fourth- and fifth-grade students served as the YAs to facilitate and support the involvement of the kindergarten through third-grade students.

Although not every fourth- and fifth-grader could participate directly as an actor in the assembly, all those who wanted to were able to participate in some way because of having a number of crowd scenes and rotating principle players frequently. The older students were reminded that they had the role of modeling civil assembly behavior for the younger students.

All the older students felt involved in the creation of the assembly and were proud that they were having a chance to teach the younger students. In the weeks that followed the project, teachers reported that there was an increase in civil behavior and a decrease in rude behavior. The greatest effect reported was that victims of bullying were more likely to seek support from a teacher.

Expanding the Project

The director of Health Services was pleased with the result and was interested in a program for the entire school district that would be more than just a one-shot approach. With funding from a New Hampshire State Department of Education Safe and Drug-Free Schools grant, we at ACTINGOUT developed a project to introduce a violence prevention curriculum within all the schools in the district for kindergarten through eighth grade.

A computer search led to the Second Step Curriculum, developed by the Committee for Children in Seattle, Washington. Grossman et al. (1997) demonstrated that using the curriculum leads to decreases in aggression and increases in neutral and prosocial behavior at school for participating students. In later research, McMahon and Washburn (2003) found an increase in knowledge of social skills and empathy skills for youth who received the curriculum, with a positive relationship to lower levels of aggression reported by those students. In addition to its demonstrated effectiveness, the curriculum made extensive use of action role training and was extremely user-friendly. School administrators in New Hampshire, however, were reluctant to impose yet another curriculum on their teachers and wanted to develop the project as optional.

The shootings at Columbine High School occurred the following week, and the New Hampshire parents began asking what their school district was going to do about preventing violence in the schools. The project had a new degree of support, although it was still up to the individual school principals to determine the extent to which the curriculum would be used in their schools.

Over the next 2 years, my staff and I worked with the school district to implement the curriculum, which is divided into the following three segments: Empathy Building, Anger Management, and Problem Solving. It is offered at a number of levels to serve students from preschool through middle school. The core of the curriculum is sociodrama.

In the section on empathy building, students might enact scenes of various events (e.g., getting gifts at a birthday party or being told that the upcoming picnic was canceled), and their peers identify the feelings displayed. Other scenarios lead up to a climax (e.g., a best friend relating that he or she cannot go to the movies that evening), and the class predicts what the characters might be feeling.

In the section on anger management, students might enact scenes of situations that often lead to anger (e.g., pushing in line or not sharing equipment on the playground) and then practice various techniques for calming down, such as counting to ten or taking deep breaths. Posters with suggestions for dealing with anger are generally posted throughout the school.

In the section on problem solving, students practice skills for resolving conflict in civil ways. In a situation such as several people wanting to use the

same game during recess, students learn to identify the problem, come up with possible solutions, and evaluate the solutions for safety, fairness, and effectiveness.

Although we saw the curriculum as user-friendly, many teachers were reluctant to take on the task of conducting role-play activities in the classroom because of lack of experience and confidence. My staff and I worked with teachers to develop their directing and facilitation skills. The curriculum is designed in such a way that the teachers and students develop their role-playing skills as they move from simple units to more complex ones. With the technical assistance provided by our staff, the teachers quickly gained in skill and confidence.

To teach the use of sociodrama in a classroom, it is important that the instructor makes it simple and progressive. Teachers generally possess the skills and experience necessary to facilitate a sociodrama; they just may not know it. It was fascinating to watch teachers and students become engaged with the process. One teacher, who had been skeptical the first year and insisted she did not have the specialized skills to conduct the lessons, stated offhandedly during a training session the following year with new teachers, "Oh, it's really easy. You'll love it."

Second Step continues to be an integral part of the curriculum for the schools within that school district, and a number of neighboring districts have incorporated the curriculum as well.

Sociodrama at a Private School

Not long after the elementary school project was underway, I received a call from a counselor at a nearby private high school. A recent event had staff members in a quandary. A young woman had come forward and brought charges of sexual harassment against a fellow student who, with due process, was suspended from school. The suspended student had been quite popular, and the student body reacted by ostracizing the young woman. This was a job for ACTINGOUT!

We began our presentation with a series of short scenes to warm the audience up to the topic and to the idea of entering into action. Having high-school aged, and slightly older, YAs was an important way to help audience members connect to the action.

In the first scene, two students argued about a lost CD. The action was loud and aggressive on both sides. We asked, "Is this scene about sexual harassment?" "No," was the reply, "it is an argument. There is no sexual content, and no one is imposing his or her will on anyone else." Although the volume of the argument was attention getting, some audience members were still "playing it cool" and remaining disengaged.

In the next scene, a young woman greeted a young man with a big smile and the line, "Hey, nice butt!" He looked at her and smiled back, replying, "Thanks! Great breasts! I'd like to get to know them better." "Sounds like a fun idea," came the reply. The audience, fully engaged at this point, decided that this was not sexual harassment, despite the overt sexual content, because the exchange was mutually agreeable. Then one young woman in the front of the auditorium spoke up. "It appears mutually agreeable, but do we really know that for sure? Sometimes people go along with something because they aren't sure how to respond." So we asked the actors what was going on for them (in role). The young man admitted that he (his character) was actually kind of embarrassed by his friend's comment, but he did not want to appear uncool so he answered in kind. This realization, that harassment can be happening even if unintended and whether or not it is apparent, was an important step in the process.

We were then able to look at ways that individuals can let each other know that comments or behavior are not all right, even if intended with no malice. Various members of the audience were invited to the stage to try out different ways of responding to the initial sexual overture. The transition from performance to sociodrama was beginning. As that part of the presentation developed, the audience members were also getting the message that it is all right not to want to be sexually involved with someone or anyone at a given point in time.

The scenes continued, evolving from the comments and discussion that were occurring, and showed the range of ways in which someone can be harassed or harassing. We were creating an operational definition of sexual harassment. We were sure to include examples of homophobic slurs as well, and our definition was expanded to include unwanted talk about someone's sexual preferences, regardless of the truth or falsehood of the statement. A particularly intense discussion occurred around the use of the phrase, "That's so gay!" to indicate something that was stupid or uncool. "It's just an expression," argued one young woman, "it has nothing to do with people who actually are gay." One of our actors responded, "All right then, how about if we decide that to indicate something is not cool, we all start saying 'That's so XYZ School!'" (using the name of the school at which the presentation was taking place) "It has nothing to do with people who actually go to XYZ School!"

The audience really warmed up to the topic and was participating fully in the scenes and discussion. The YA's involvement in the dramas at that point was minimal, except to play the "harasser" roles, so as not to have the students engage in inappropriate role training.

We then developed a more complex sociodrama. The characters were a female student who was being sexually harassed, a male student who was harassing her, some friends who felt she was making a big deal out of nothing, other friends who felt she should report the incident, and a school counselor.

We first developed a character sketch for each character with suggestions from the audience that included ideas about why the characters felt and acted as they did. We used a YA as the "harasser" and one in each of the "friends" clusters to help support the scenes theatrically (if needed), but we used audience members for all the other roles. For the role of the school counselor, we enlisted one of the school counselors because we wanted to be able to demonstrate the way an actual complaint would be handled. We also made it clear to the audience that the students were playing roles developed by the group and would be expressing feelings and enacting behaviors that were not necessarily their own. Because we often had a relatively large number of players on stage at the same time, the facilitator directed certain characters to freeze as others expressed opinions or soliloquized to hear the inner thoughts of specific characters.

The action began with a few short scenes of the actual harassment that displayed the students' understanding of the principles of harassment. The young woman was clear in letting the young man know that his behavior was unacceptable and asked him to stop. He would not. Although the YA playing the harasser was doing his role more in a teasing than threatening manner, a soliloquy by the young woman allowed the audience to see that she was feeling extremely threatened and upset by his behavior.

The next scene took place with the young woman's confiding in some friends about what had happened. The nonsupportive friends made statements such as, "He's one of the most popular and hot guys in the class. You should be flattered that he is paying attention to you!" and "Loosen up! Don't you think it is time you got laid?" The supportive friends made statements such as, "It's not all right for him to treat you like that, especially after you asked him to stop," "It's your choice if and with whom you want to be sexually involved," and "You should talk to the school counselor about this and report him." The young woman decided to follow the latter advice and went to see the counselor, accompanied by one of the supportive friends.

It was extremely important that the scene that followed be an accurate representation of the way the school and its staff handled such complaints. The young woman was told all her options and was not pressured to reveal the name of the harasser or to make the decision to bring formal charges against him. We were then able to play out several options, including having the counselor confront the young man and tell him what the consequences would be if he refused to stop the behavior. By the time the session was finished, the school community understood more clearly the policy, the process, and the consequences concerning sexual harassment.

Before the session ended, however, we were thoughtful about de-roling each of the actors publicly, especially those who played negative roles. We explained that this was the way we made sure that the actors did not carry pieces of their roles with them out of the auditorium or that audience mem-

bers did not continue to see them in the roles they had played. We heard later from the counselor that the young woman whose situation had prompted the initial call was no longer being put down by her classmates.

Working With Staff Members of Training and Further Educational Sites in Rural Victoria

In September 2004, I had the opportunity to develop and present a series of workshops for the staffs from four Training and Further Education (TAFE) sites in rural Victoria, Australia. A TAFE is similar to what is called a vocational–technical college in the United States and generally serves adult learners. In recent years, because of changes in the vocational programs offered at the high school level in Victoria, the TAFEs have seen an influx of younger students, aged 15 to 19 years. With younger students has come an increase in visible incidents of bullying that not only upset the learning environment but also resulted in the withdrawal of young students from the program.

My communication was with the staff members from student services, who customarily dealt with those kinds of issues. It was their opinion that the teaching staff often did not respond to bullying incidents because they felt it was "up to the kids to work it out for themselves." There was a clear policy and procedures document on sexual harassment, and it was well enforced. It appeared, however, that there was no policy to deal with harassment that was not of a sexual nature, such as bullying.

It was interesting that as the project was underway, we discovered that there was a policy and procedures document on workplace bullying, which came under the regulations for occupational health and safety. Members of the staff were unaware of the document's existence or, if they knew about it, did not realize that it applied to student behavior as well as staff behavior.

The project began with a training session for counseling services staff members, who would be assisting me during the staff-training workshops. They were serving a similar role function as my Youth Auxiliaries, and I called each a Trained Auxiliary (TA).

A portion of the training was focused on clarifying for the TAs the structure for the workshops, and for me, the different personalities of each of the four TAFEs involved. The greater portion, however, was spent in giving the counseling staffers the opportunity to practice role playing and to become bullies, victims, and TAFE staff members in many different situations. That allowed them to warm up to the roles they would be called on to initiate (as the goal would be to get workshop participants to move into these roles) as well as to discover the personal inhibitions they had about treating each other, even from within role, in ways that were unkind or threatening.

As we worked through the inhibition issues, we explored the importance of warm up and de-roling and of clarifying intentions through what, in ACTINGOUT, we called our disclaimer. Although the actors may use their own names in the scenes, the ideas they express and the experiences they represent are not necessarily their own. We were ready for the workshops, which were to begin the following day.

The workshops began in a similar manner to the one on harassment, with brief vignettes, enacted by the TAs depicting various types of behavior and having the participants tease from them a list of the elements that constitute bullying behavior. The official definition of bullying contained in the TAFE Policy and Procedures document was "repeated, unreasonable behavior directed towards an employee or student, or group of employees or students that creates a risk to health and safety." (Terms were then further defined, and it was clarified that mental health and safety are included.)

One of the workshop groups came up with a slightly more user-friendly definition: "aggressive, threatening, or intimidating behavior, by an individual or group toward an individual or group, that occurs over time through verbal, physical, or emotional means that results in physical or psychological harm to others." Regardless of the definition used, watching and participating in the sociodramatic vignettes allowed the teachers to develop a clearer operational definition of the kinds of behaviors that needed to be challenged.

Another part of the workshops focused on using sociodrama in a role-training capacity to explore effective and appropriate interventions to observed bullying behavior. We were able to have some fun with that by first playing with interventions that were neither effective nor appropriate, such as walking by with a shrug and doing nothing. Then we played with interventions that might be effective but not appropriate, such as "out bullying the bully." Those scenes served as a good warm-up for participants to engage in action without having to be concerned about "getting it right." Finally, we had participants try out different strategies in a more realistic manner, and we were able to evaluate them.

Participants at one of the workshops generated the following guidelines for effective and appropriate interventions to bullying behavior.

1. Elements of effective intervention with the bully should include the following:
   - Respond immediately when you notice the behavior
   - Place yourself in proximity to both parties in a position that allows you to make eye contact with the bully but that does not put you at physical risk
   - Ask the bully to go with you to a neutral and private place (perhaps the hall outside the classroom, if that is the site) so that you can talk to them in private. (The thought here was that the bully is fueled by rein-

forcement from onlookers and will often escalate behavior if in a place in which others can see him or her. Removal from the scene, however, may not always be possible.)
- Be thoughtful and conscious about physical contact
- Use "Voice of Authority," which is firm but calm
- Label and affirm that the behavior you witnessed was bullying
- Do not get caught into the reasons for the behavior—just reaffirm that it is not acceptable. (If the issue is legitimate, you offer conflict resolution support at a later time if needed.)
- Acknowledge and affirm the bully's feelings and emotional state, while reinforcing that bullying behavior is not an acceptable response
- Give consequences for such behavior if it continues
- Ask the bully to take a few minutes to cool down before returning to classroom
- Go back and offer support to the victim

2. Elements of effective support for the victim should include the following:
   - A genuine offer of direct support and/or referral to student services
   - Acknowledgement and labeling of the problem
   - Work out a plan if future support is needed; for example, a signal to indicate the need for help
   - Possible assertiveness training

The fact that the participants generated the lists in action by the participants gives the elements greater practical value than a set of instructions provided by the workshop facilitators. The instructions are also more likely to be remembered because participants had the chance to witness and participate in the role plays from which they were generated.

Another way that we used sociodrama, in its most conventional sense, in those workshops was in exploring the system within which the bullying occurs. Four key roles were identified by the participants: the bully, the victim, the administrator, and the teacher. The group divided up according to the role to which they were most warmed and created a chart of "things that are true for this role." After the group shared their charts, the drama began.

I chose one of my favorite formats for the exploration, "The Talk Show" (much more "Jerry Springer" than "Oprah"), and set things up. I assumed the host role and welcomed my four guests to the show. One member from each subgroup had volunteered to initiate the role, and everyone else knew that they could "tag into" a role at any point. Participants completely very warmed up at this point and moved into roles quickly; the victim wasted no time in moving her chair to the opposite end of the panel from the bully. After chatting with my "guests" for a bit, I told them that today's audience was composed entirely of people who had been victimized by bullies while at TAFE and

opened the program up to audience questions and comments, after securing a commitment that no one would throw furniture or engage in violent physical activity on the show. The drama took on a life of its own at that point, and I had little need to facilitate.

After a time, I used a favorite trick within this format and told the guests that they had each been given a delayed-acting truth serum before the show and that it was kicking in about now. Answers to questions and comments from that point on had to be the absolute truth. That brought the drama to a deeper level for each of the characters as they explored the motivations for their actions.

When we concluded the four workshops, we prepared a report to be shared with the participants and their respective communities. It included an operational definition of bullying behavior, thoughts on how to identify bullies and victims when one does not see the behavior happen, effective strategies for countering bullying when one sees it, reflections on the TAFE system within which the bullying occurs, and the next steps to be taken to deal with the problems caused by bullying within the TAFE communities.

Now that the project is completed, the Student Services Unit plans to keep using the format that we developed for this project for future training on a yearly basis to keep staff members refreshed and also to train new personnel.

Summary and Conclusions

Sociodrama is an exciting and effective tool for dealing with issues of bullying and harassment within educational communities. Trained auxiliaries can support the therapist's use of sociodrama within groups unfamiliar with exploring issues in action. Training young people to work in that capacity with peers helps create a stronger program, while also providing social skills training to the auxiliaries.

Sociodrama engages community members of all ages and offers a process for examining social issues that is nonjudgmental, easily implemented, and, most of all, fun. It can help clarify definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and inform the community of the range of consequences for noncivil behaviors. It also provides a process for stepping back and looking at issues more objectively, which can be difficult when one is trying to deal with issues as they occur in the educational community. This process can be especially helpful when used as a tool for writing policies and procedures.

Although researchers have found that outcomes-based prevention programs are effective for practicing positive behaviors, educators whose training and experience do not include facilitation of role play may be reluctant to engage in the process. Developing programs that invite participation, rather than demand it, and provide adequate technical assistance can help the most reluc-

tant teacher or administrator to become an efficient sociodramatist and to discover the effectiveness and the delight of working in action.

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Day by Day—Role Theory, Sociometry, and Psychodrama With Adolescents and Young Women

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ABSTRACT. In this article, the author portrays the judicious use of the psychodrama method with four young people. The author uses a role theory framework, sociometry, and psychodrama in her brief psychotherapeutic work of 1 to 6 sessions with young women and their family members.

Key words: brief psychotherapy, family, psychodrama, role clusters, role theory, sociometry

BEING PRESENT IN THE MOMENT AND WORKING IN the here and now are central to the psychodrama method. Every moment is new. I find that looking at people, not just making eye contact, but looking at them and seeing them—which may mean seeing beyond the surface—is one of the most important factors for being in the here and now. How people sit, what they wear, and what they do from the moment that one meets them is grist for this mill. A second factor is listening to and hearing not just the person's words, but the tone, texture, and cadence of the voice. It is an active, rather than a passive, listening because the therapist makes sense of what he or she hears. The roles of clear seer and active listener assist me in being spontaneous and creative. A third factor is to have or cultivate a creative imagination, which basically means the ability to create pictures in one's mind or to note the fragments of a song. In another discipline, this might be called free association. These three factors help me to see what is happening in front of me.

The mirror technique can be applied in a variety of ways. Although all techniques have the potential to serve well, their efficacy is limited without the establishment of a two-way mutual relationship with protagonists, clients, and patients. Now, I invite you to enter the lives of four people and the various scenarios in which I have engaged with them.

The Use of Sociometry and Role Theory in One-to-One Psychotherapy

Case 1: Imogene*

When I opened the door, my first view of Imogene revealed a pint-sized young woman full of the freshness of spring, with pink cheeks and light brown shoulder-length hair and wearing modern, colorful clothes. Yet, she was somehow cowered, as if she had received a blow to the stomach or had been hit over the head with a newspaper and was attempting to skitter away. Her blue-grey eyes were bright and shining but with a shifting wariness and hopefulness in their expression. My image of her in that first moment, and my subsequent role-theory hypothesis, was of a young and innocent kitten that had had a cruel encounter with a human being. First meetings are always important, beginning with the first telephone contact and the meeting at the door for the first consultation. After more than 25 years of experience working as a role trainer, psychologist, and psychodramatist, I find the first few moments of contact with a person or group contain the seeds of the problem or the theme of the group.

The Purpose for Coming and Social and Cultural Atom Exploration

Imogene settled herself in one of my chairs and spoke of how she was given my number by her sister, who was a friend of a friend of mine. She said her sister was worried about her and thought that I might be able to help her. Why was this? She had not been able to attend her university classes. Some days, she would get herself ready and go out of the door and down the street, but as soon as her mother was out of the house, she would return and spend the day by herself at home. She said that her mother was worried about her too but did not understand her, and she said that she was worried about her mother. Her parents were divorced, and her father had a new wife. Her mother, however, had no one and was angry, always complaining and unhappy with herself. She said that she could not talk to her mother but could talk to her father and that she confided in her sister a lot. Imogene reported that she was afraid of going to the university and afraid of what her friends would think of her. She thought that they were laughing at her and finding her odd.

*The names and details of the people in this article have been changed significantly to retain confidentiality.

Social Investigation: The Roles of the Naïve Inquirer, Active Listener, and Clear Seer

Throughout the early interview stage of the session, I portrayed my naïve inquirer role, not assuming anything, simply asking how, why, what, and when questions, and listening intently to Imogene to ascertain her story. The roles of naïve inquirer, clear seer, and active listener I find very useful in my work as a psychologist and psychodramatist. I was in the clear seer role, when I described how I first saw Imogene and made my first hypothesis. The active listener role is one in which the listener mirrors back or asks pertinent questions so that the client gets to know that the listener is interested and mirrors back certain aspects of the story so that the client can see and hear himself or herself.

Imogene also told me that she had just broken up with her boyfriend and was very unhappy about meeting him at the university. She said that she was afraid of being bullied by her university friends. Although nothing seemed to indicate that they were bullying her, she felt that they were laughing at her and that, in some way, not having a boyfriend indicated that she was lacking or deficient. She felt embarrassed. As we talked, Imogene told me that she had been bullied at school when she was 13 years old. She described that incident in detail, and I noticed that she turned pale. She told me the incident had been dealt with by the teachers and that her parents had been involved and had assisted her at that time. She also said that she felt that she had never got over it and was always nervous in groups. I commented that that incident was a frightening thing to have happened to her, and she agreed that she had been very frightened. I told her that I understood how she felt at that moment and wanted to show her dramatically what I saw. She reported that she knew a little about psychodrama. I got up slowly from my chair, and after a second, quickly crouched down on my knees, covering my head with my hands. I did not speak. I stayed in that position for about 8 s. I then looked at her from that position. She had regained her color, and her eyes were soft and moist. "That's exactly it," she said quietly.

I got up and sat down again in my chair. She looked at me. For a few moments, she was reflective. We then talked for a while about how I had seen her inner self, that my action had brought this role fully into her awareness, and that it had been "inside her" for a long time. At the end of the session, Imogene appeared calm, yet was more flexible in her actions. There was a bounce to her step, and she looked taller. She smiled at me when she left.

I saw Imogene for two more sessions. In the next session, she talked in detail about her mother and her worries about her. She talked about the breakup of her family and the guilt that she felt when her mother was not happy. She also said that all members of the family were worried about their mother, and I told her that I wanted to talk to her family. She said that her

father and her sister would be willing to see me but that her mother probably would not come because she did not believe "in this stuff."

The Family

I had three sessions with her immediate family before I saw Imogene for the third and last time. I saw her sister first, and she bore out the story about the mother. She said that she did not worry about her mother, understood her but had her own life, had a boyfriend, had recently moved out of home, and was planning to go overseas for a vacation with her father. She said that Imogene was meant to come too but that their mother was worried and did not want Imogene to go. She offered to talk to her father and see if he would come to see me. I talked to the sister about Imogene and suggested ways in which she could talk to Imogene that would allow her to feel her sister is listening. She found the suggestions useful.

Next, I saw the father. He was financially well-off and enjoyed his money. He talked about his ex-wife and said that he could not help her. She had always been a worrier and that was part of the reason he had left, saying nothing was good enough. He was in pain as he spoke, and I could see that he was concerned for his family and their predicament. We discussed what he was doing with Imogene and what worked and what did not. He agreed to do more of some of the things that he had been doing and to stop doing other things, such as giving her advice. He loved his daughters and was looking forward to taking them overseas. He was open to receiving my ideas about relating to Imogene and accepted the idea of listening to her and staying focused on her.

Although wary, the mother did come for a session. She had taken great care of her appearance, and I noticed a slight defensiveness in the beginning of the session. She talked about her mother and upbringing, her values, her dreams, and the loss of her husband. It was a tender, gentle session. I was gentle with my inquires and she relaxed and talked about herself, what she liked, what she wanted to do, who her closest friends were, and what she denied herself. Near the end of the session, I took an educative approach and had a conversation with her about not sharing her worries with her daughter and not constantly going into Imogene's room and telling her to come out. I said that perhaps her daughter was not the best person with whom to share her worries about her ex-husband and not having the kind of life that she had wanted. Imogene perhaps was feeling worried and responsible for her mother. Referring to Imogene's spending time in her room, I encouraged her mother to leave her alone. Perhaps she could show trust in Imogene. She understood and accepted that with a smile and a nod of her head. She appeared relaxed by the end of the session and thanked me on her way out.

Imogene's Final Session

For the final session, Imogene arrived with a smile and was relaxed. She thanked me for seeing her family. She was happy that her mother had come to see me and had liked me. She said that she had never imagined that her mother would come to a therapist. From Imogene's description, I could see that the mother had gained from the session and that her dignity, integrity, and authority as a mother were intact. Imogene loved her family and had not wanted anyone to hurt them, least of all on her account. She reported that her mother had, to a large extent, stopped hassling her about all the things that had nothing to do with her and that she had stopped feeling overwhelmed by her mother, stopped retreating to the bedroom, was going to the university, and was going to go to Europe on the skiing vacation with her father and her sister. She said that her mother still complained but to a lesser degree, was attending an art class, and was going out more with her friends. She reported that she did not feel so responsible for her mother. Imogene said that she felt sad when she saw her ex-boyfriend at the university but realized that people were not looking at her in relation to him. She did not feel it necessary to come for therapy anymore, and I agreed. She left, a happy young person.

Discussion

Imogene had three sessions, and her immediate family of three had one session each, making six sessions in all. The pivotal point for Imogene was the mirroring that she received when I concretized the role of the frightened, curled-up kitten. The fact that all members of her family came to a session with me showed her that they were interested in her well-being. Her mother's coming, despite her fears, was especially important to Imogene. That session required my working with much delicacy. I considered the mother and daughter to be the primary clients. Being able to work with all members in the family system was useful for the recovery of the young woman and was a healing factor in itself.

Case 2: Jane

Jane goes to an alternative school. Her mother referred her to me because Jane could not make up her mind which school to attend. I had seen the mother previously, and she had told me her concerns about Jane. She had been in one school and had left, not only because she had been bullied but also because her mother thought that at an alternative school Jane would get the art instruction that her mother thought she required. Her brother Jason goes to another school and is doing well, according to the mother and Jane. Jason is like his mother,

whereas Jane is more like her father. Jane's mother does not understand her. Jane has had suicidal thoughts and has been on antidepressant medication for 6 months. In the first session, I noticed Jane's artistic ability because of the way she dressed. She had put color, texture, and fashion together in a subtle and casual, yet beautiful, way. I told her what I thought, and we had a long discussion about fashion, clothes, art, and music. That put us on an even keel, as I revealed my likes and dislikes and was able to enter Jane's world. By the end of the first session, she had unwound and managed to talk about her brother and her parents' favoring him, saying that he could do no wrong. She was able to express her anger, pain, and resentment about that. We discussed in full Jane's feelings about school, the disjointedness of changing schools, missing friends, traveling long distances to the alternative school, and the lack of structure in the new school. We also talked about how she might let her mother know what she wanted. "If Mum doesn't know how you feel, what chance has she got with you?" I said. Her response was reflective; she simply looked at me.

The Second Session

Jane came on time. She was dressed again in a smart, grungy, casual style. This time, however, she had a light in her eye, and her head was upright. She did not play with her cuffs or look down into her lap. She said that she had just about decided on a school and had definitely decided to leave the alternative school to try another one closer to her brother's school. She said that she could do math and art, her favorite subjects. She talked about the party that she had and about how her mother had helped her organize it and had spent lots of time with her. I mirrored back to her how important that was, and she nodded. She appeared lighter after this, as if she had come out of a shadow. She told me in detail about her dress and the accessories that she had worn for her party and that she had a new boyfriend. She did not think that she needed to come anymore. I told her that I was delighted to have met her and enjoyed her immensely. She gave me a quiet, warm smile.

Discussion

Although no action was used in those two sessions, my major intervention was mirroring Jane and especially mirroring her progressive roles. Two of the roles were *open sharer of self* and *passionate lover of life*. In response, I was an *enjoyer of life* and a *warm confidant*. I also challenged her. She came to see herself through my eyes and raised her estimation of herself. I am sure that if she ever felt the desire or need, she would make another appointment and know that there was someone to listen to her and in whom she could confide.

Case 3: Ritta

In my first interview with Ritta, she told me that she had been a heroin addict since she was 12 years old. She had finished her schooling, survived the streets, went on to the university, studied philosophy before dropping out after 6 months. She was now working in research at a drop-in addiction center. She attends Narcotics Anonymous and has been drug free for 5 years. Ritta, now age 25, is involved in the performance field, lives by herself, plays the guitar, sings, and has a new girlfriend. In the first session, she was laid back and nervous. However, I noticed determination and quiet pride in her. "I have to do something," she said. "I have a mind that constantly talks to me and says I can't do anything, that I am a useless human being." I asked her to take on that role for a while, which she did, still sitting in the chair. That had a confirming effect, and she said, "This is exactly what it is like."

The mind role was derogatory and doubting. I countered that role by taking the role of interviewer, asking, "Why are you doing this to her?" Although the mind-role aspect of herself wanted the best for her, it was going about it in the wrong way and causing her much angst. All of Ritta's family valued study and making money. Singing, performance, and feelings were not valued as serious things, and nothing compared to a university degree.

Toward the end of the session, she said something about faith, and I mirrored her back, saying, "Blind faith got you through." Yes, she said, "Blind faith—without that, I would have got nowhere." She looked me directly in the eye, and I felt a strong connection with her. I took her hand and asked her to get up and come forward because I was in the role of blind faith. She took my hand and came forward out of the chair and away from the doubting, carping critic. She said that she felt a lot of relief from this work. We talked about doing some more psychodrama, and I told her about a psychodrama group that was starting in a few weeks. She was delighted, phoned the next day, and arranged to join the group.

Discussion and Role Analysis

The first session was important because we were able to meet one another. Ritta was desperate, yet proud and intelligent. She assessed me and found me to be acceptable for her, strong enough yet not overwhelming. We had a positive mutual encounter. At the end of the session, I thought that being in a psychodrama group might help her to socialize and see that others have similar patterns, thoughts, and fears. I predicted further that Ritta would develop empathy, insight, and confidence by being an auxiliary ego in other people's dramas and come to value her own choices and journey in life.

In the first session, I observed a range of some of the progressive, coping, and retrogressive core roles. Therapists may use a role framework to diagram and analyze role systems and show the operational links within and between them. Progressive roles are so named to reflect unity and quality of life, coping roles reflect the best means of survival in a family or social system, and retrogressive roles contain fragmented aspects of the personality (Daniel, 2004). The following analysis of roles may help to illustrate the categories. Not all the roles are in relation to other roles within this client's role system because, as Moreno (1994) said, "Every psychodramatic session demonstrates that a role is an inter-personal experience and usually needs two or more individuals to be actualized" (p. 184).

An Analysis of Two Roles and the Counterroles in the Role System of Ritta

Ritta had developed a role, which I called the *strong adventurous spirit.* I have placed it in the progressive role category under the subcategory of developing because it is a sturdy core role, and is well grown and used. It brought her to my door. It also keeps her going forward in life, trying new things, following her heart, and going into the unknown. She has used it many times in her life; it may have developed when she was living on the street, but also she may have had that role as a small child.

I identified strong adventurous spirit as a core role in a role cluster, which might include performer, doer of new things, taker of paths previously untrodden, dancer, actor, and challenger. The core role overcame the role of the *anxious doubter,* whose purpose was to stop her doing things. In some situations, that role might be a coping role, especially if it was endeavoring to keep her safe from something dangerous. In a situation in which she wanted to do something that was good for her, however, it perceived danger where there was none. I hypothesized that she picked up the role from her family, who no doubt would have been most anxious about her and her life in the past and, maybe, her life now. According to her, they were anxious that she become what they wanted and believed was of value, rather than what she wanted to do. The reason I placed the role in the diminishing subcategory rather than the fixed one is because I could get a toehold on it. When she was in that role, she listened, had a conversation with me, and was not immovable. I think it helped that I was not critical of this role but rather demonstrated my interest in it. I have not depicted my role in the role chart, but I was mostly a *naïve inquirer* as I interviewed the role in the session. For example, "Why are you doing this to her?"

The role of *blind faith* took Ritta beyond the perception of herself as a useless human being. That perception came from the role of the *derogatory carping critic* who displayed superiority and put down all the things that Ritta wanted to do and found enjoyable, such as loving her girlfriend, expressing

her feelings, and singing and performing. *Blind faith* had a pure life force; therefore, in this session, I saw it as a progressive role. The *derogatory carping critic* was a fixed role, and I placed it in the retrogressive role category. That aspect of herself was not conducive to healthy functioning and caused her much angst. In that role, she makes choices that do not serve her well. For example, she will start something to please that role and then drops it a little while down the track, because she did not want to do it in the first place. The role plays havoc with her life force, and she cannot win with it.

Ritta continued to see me every 2 weeks and then once during the four weekly psychodrama group meetings. In our fifth and final session, Ritta told me she had confronted her mother about some of her comments and let her know how hurt she had felt. The mother had listened, and now they have a positive relationship. Ritta feels comfortable visiting her mother and is happy to be reunited with her, someone whom she loves very much.

Working With Somatic Roles

Gina

I am writing in particular about our second session because Gina's pattern is to get anxious the more that she gets to know someone. Gina is very tiny, and as she settled into the chair, I noticed that she seemed to get lost in it. She spoke about her lack of confidence in herself in everything except singing. She loves performing and is in several choirs, including a favored type of choir. She said that it was harder to come the second time and that her mouth was quite dry. I asked her if she would like a glass of water, and she said yes. I focused on Gina's account of her anxiety and lack of confidence in areas other than singing. She said that she has a lovely time at the favorite choir and that she enjoys having a coffee by herself in the café down the street. She reported that she gets frightened of what other people think of her and that she feels weary by this constant checking of herself. She started to cry, and I asked her to breathe. She did that and soon had control, yet she stayed soft and open. She felt calmer because, once breathing, she was more in contact with herself and not so frightened. I took an educative approach at that point and told her that holding one's breath causes the body to tense up and that causes one to get more frightened. As a singer, she was able to understand the nature of breath quite well, and she digested what I had said. I asked her the nature of what held her back from expressing herself, and she said the tension in her body, especially the pain around her chest. She indicated a spot near the sternum. When I asked her to imagine being that tension, to describe it, to say what it is doing and what its purpose is, a remarkable change came over her. She sat differently at the front of her chair and fully took on the role of the

tension. I mirrored back the role to her, and we had a good dialogue. After that, we spoke about the changes that had occurred. She said that she felt less tight and felt that the role was way out in front of her, separate from her, and that the role taking had given her space. She was delighted. She could hardly believe that she was free of the force that had been on her body. We were in full eye contact throughout the conversation.

I then asked her where else she felt tension, and she indicated her mouth, covering it. Again she took on the role, and we had a dialogue. This time the aspect or entity easily moved to the side, and we discovered its relationship to the other tension. After that, she noted that her jaw, neck, and upper body were not so tense. She laughed and said that it was easy to wipe it off, not like the other. I told her that the word hallelujah appeared in my head and that I thought of a song by Leonard Cohen by the same name. "Oh yes," she mused and then sang a few bars. Her voice was sweet and lilting. She made another appointment for 2 weeks hence.

Discussion

In this work, a link was made between the physiological role cluster and the psychological role cluster, if not also the social role cluster, because Gina's anxiety in social situations other than singing caused a heightened disturbance within herself. I looked forward to seeing how my intervention worked, how much was maintained, and what other things may have emerged in Gina between Sessions 2 and 3.

Gina arrived for the third session, smiling and walking with a bounce and a flow. She had maintained her new state of being and was utterly delighted to be free of the bodily tensions that had plagued her for so long. By the fourth session, she had gained confidence, attended to her appearance, added a shade of red to her hair, and painted her nails. She told me that she had been on a date with a man from work to whom she had felt attracted. She was eager to continue to work in action. I added some role training to the fifth session to assist her with some social interactions with her peers. She looked forward to being involved in a psychodrama group, which, I think, will assist her to enhance her ability to develop further social relationships.

Conclusion

A most significant act is when one is present to the person in front of him or her. Observing and noting the significant roles that are full of life, that hold a person back, or that help a person cope give the therapist a sound framework with which to work. A role framework furthers that process. From this work, I am ever mindful of the value of being in the moment with new and ongoing

clients, patients, protagonists, and all people in everyday life and of the value in working as much as possible with progressive roles to build on the healthy aspects of a person. I am also aware of the spirit in these particular young women and know that it is natural to want to be happy, be able to express oneself, and be free of old roles that are stultifying and sometimes dangerous. To work with "what is" is a pleasure because it is real. Role theory, sociometry, and psychodrama serve that life force.

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BOOK REVIEW

Rebels With a Cause: Working With Adolescents Using Action Techniques, by Mario Cossa. 2005. London: Jessica Kingsley

In the foreword to this book, Zerka Moreno endorses the contents as a "very fine and complete guide to using action methods effectively and appropriately" (11). Well, who am I to argue with Zerka? She is absolutely correct. Mario Cossa is clearly a practitioner well versed in working with adolescents and in using action techniques, thus rendering him particularly qualified to offer this resource to the community.

As someone who works with adolescents myself, I laughed out loud when I read the following: "In running action groups for young people, it is almost foolhardy (although in some settings, perhaps unavoidable) to lead a group solo" (62). I felt an instant kinship with Cossa as someone who not only knew how difficult it is to run an adolescent action group by oneself but also as someone who has, no doubt, discovered that morsel of wisdom the hard way, as have I, in one or more of those unavoidable settings.

It has been my experience that practitioners either love working with adolescents or they hate it, generally based on whether or not they truly understand how teenagers work. Cossa not only understands how teenagers work, he celebrates and revels in the things that make adolescents an exciting and rewarding population with whom to work.

After many years of conducting his ACTING OUT program of expressive arts group therapy with training and performance opportunities in issue-oriented, audience-interactive improvisational theater, Cossa now distills his experiences and his knowledge down to a primer that practitioners can use to begin to understand adolescents' unique needs and how action methods must be modified to work effectively with this population.

The book is as well organized as a psychodramatic session would be, starting with a warm-up that touches on philosophical and theoretical issues, moving into an action section that speaks of using different techniques at different stages of group development, and ending with a sharing section in which Cossa addresses how to adapt action methods to specific subpopulations within the realm of working with adolescents.

The entire book is written clearly and simply enough for beginning clinicians to understand, and it is my opinion that sophisticated laypeople would also find this material fairly accessible. The book, however, does appear to have been written for clinicians or paraprofessionals who already work with adolescents.

My only detracting comment is that it is somewhat unclear what people should do with this book. The information given about adolescents is outstanding but primarily for people who do not yet have a good understanding of how adolescents work. The information that is offered about action methods is also good but, again, somewhat primary, seemingly best suited to people with little experience with action methods.

In that case, I consider the best consumer for this book to be someone who is inexperienced with action methods and with working with adolescents and who is going to undertake adolescent action groups in the near future. I would caution that person about the foolhardy nature of trying to do such a thing on one's own. I suggest that anyone inexperienced in action methods and inexperienced in working with adolescents strongly consider working with a cotherapist.

I make that suggestion partly because of the damage one can do to clients when one does not know what one is doing. My strongest caveat goes to the person foolhardy enough to go into the lion's den of an adolescent group without the proper armament of competence and confidence. One is not safe there without it! This book is a fantastic guide for those about to start that adventure, but a coleader and supervision are also strongly recommended.

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