**Handouts for Presentation**

**Creative Interventions: Using Theatre and Creative Arts to Help Support Children and Teens Throughout the Grief Process**

**Jill Meyers MA, CCLS**

**2/21/2015**

**1:00pm**

***“Every human being is an artist and in the moment of creation, we are at our most sane, most healthy, and most fulfilled. When we share a piece of our vision of the world with others, we are better able to see ourselves, to interact with others and to make our own choices. The act of expression is an act of connection – through it we become positive, active participants in our lives and in our communities.”* (**Rhod, 1998, p. xix**)**

**A Bit of Theory**

**Therapeutic theatre transcends culture, time and perceived limitations. Through its use of action, theatre-related activities provide an avenue of seeing and experiencing the world through multiple perspectives.**

**Today’s workshop is based on a combination of activities inspired by theatre exercises and the work of Augusto Boal. Similar to art therapy, there is an essential difference between the use of therapeutic theatre techniques and drama therapy. Today’s workshop is focused on the use of theatre and drama as a therapeutic tool. This presentation is not focused on the application and use of drama therapy.**

**The late Augusto Boal was a Brazilian theatre director, writer and politician who developed a form of theatre known as Theatre of the Oppressed. Theatre of the Oppressed includes a number of formats each with their own therapeutic intent. Some of today’s activities are drawn from Augusto Boal’s creation: Image Theatre.**

**Boal’s techniques aim to teach individuals and communities how to redefine the struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor; guiding individuals and communities to solve problems in a manner that best supports self-efficacy and empowerment. From a grief perspective this enhances the power of hope, agency and actualization. Re-imagining what is possible.**

**“*Theatre is the capacity possessed by human beings to observe themselves in action…They can see themselves here and imagine themselves there; they can see themselves today and imagine themselves tomorrow…humans are able to identify and not merely recognize…To identify is to be able not only to recognize within the same repetitive context but also to extrapolate to other contexts; to see beyond what the eye sees, to hear beyond what the ear hears, to feel beyond what the skin feels…..Theatre is the art of looking at ourselves; a form of knowledge; Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.”* (**Boal, 1996, p. xxvi, xxx, xxxi**)**

**“The beauty of this work as a medium for dialogue is that it is specific to the individuals with whom it occurs and to the moment in which it occurs.” (**Rohd, 1998, p.xvii**)**

**Steps toward Building Resilience**

**The following information is inspired by Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg’s theories from the book Building Resilience: Giving Kids Roots and Wings.**

**Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg writes about “Seven Crucial “C’s” which he notes as integral, interrelated components toward enhancing and cultivating resilience. Per Dr. Ginsburg’s theory, the 7 C’s are: competence; confidence; connection; character; contribution; coping; control. His theory asserts that children “*Are born with strengths and abilities to cope with adversity, learn from their mistakes and mature into responsible, competent adults….but they need opportunities to do so*”. (**Ginsburg,2011, p.21**)**

**Therapeutic drama techniques respond to all of the 7 C’s. In reference to this workshop, some activities will touch upon three of Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg’s “Seven Crucial C’s”: competence, connection** **and contribution. Dr. Ginsburg speaks to the enhancement of cultivating competence through the opportunity of “*free and* *open play*”. Ginsburg states, *“Play builds many assets that children need to develop and remain resilient. Spontaneous, creative, unstructured play is a terrific opportunity for children to become more competent on their own and thus more confident….benefits of play: creativity, negotiation and a sense of control”* (**Ginsburg, 2011, p.51**)**

**These exact elements are brought to life through the art of improvisation and creative, dramatic opportunities. Through these creative modalities individuals are able to explore; identify feelings; identify coping strategies; identify strengths; assess and evaluate choices; make connections; and develop a sense of agency. This work allows individuals to bear witness and acknowledge how past experiences can prove helpful through current struggles – resilience building.**

**ACTIVITIES**

**Creative Interventions: Using Theatre and Creative Arts to Help Support Children and Teens**

**Throughout the Grief Process**

**Jill Meyers MA, CCLS**

**Ice Breakers/Bringing the Group Together:**

1. **1-20 (Therapeutic Value: Attunement)**
2. **Buzz-Zip (Therapeutic Value: Connection/Spontaneity)**
3. **Zip-Zap-Zop (Therapeutic Value: Connection/Spontaneity)**
4. **Yes And - Hopes for the day (Therapeutic Value: Group Assessment)**
5. **Group Mirror (Therapeutic Value: Connection/Attunement/Assessing Group Dynamics)**
6. **1-2-3 Body Space: (Therapeutic Value: Physical Expression/Spatial Awareness)**

**\*\*Feelings Walk: (Therapeutic Value: Accessing Feelings/Embodying Feelings)**

 **\*\*Melting Feelings (Therapeutic Value: Accessing Feelings/Feeling Identification)**

1. **Feeling Chairs: (Therapeutic Value: Feeling Identification/Feeling Expression/Grief Wave Discussion)**

**(Additional Connecting Activities: Feeling mirrors can be done in either a group as noted above or with two individuals A/B. A is the lead person. Lead person (A) moves in slow motion beginning with hands, slowly adding the face and if comfortable slowly adding entire body. The partner (B) mirrors the action at the same time. Switch leaders. (Therapeutic Value: Feeling Recognition Self and Other/Empathy Building/Attunement)**

1. **Image Theatre: (Therapeutic Value: Connection/Feeling Recognition/Reflection/Witnessing/Re-imagining)**
2. **Collaborative Group Writing Activity (Fan Poem): The group can choose a leading line or facilitator can choose a leading line. Have everyone read a line upon completion. (Therapeutic Value: Collaboration/Connection/Competence/Contribution)**
3. ***Showing of DVD segment: FEAR CIRCLING HOPE:* example of poem expressed in dramatic form**
4. **Closing: Physical Gesture and Sound: (Therapeutic Value: Self-Awareness/Concretizing Experience/Self-Expression/Reflection)**

**References**

**Rhod, M. (1998) Theatre for Community, Conflict and Dialogue, p. xix**

**Boal, A. (1996) Games for Actors and Non-Actors, p. xxvi, xxx, xxxi, p. 2-5 (Image Theatre)**

**Spolin, V. (1963) Improvisation for the Theatre**

**Ginsburg, K. MD. (2011) Building Resilience: Giving Kids Roots and Wings p. 21; p. 51**

**Greenland, S. (2010) The Mindful Child**

**Tharp, T. (2003) The Creative Habit: Learn it and Use it for Life**

**Jill Meyers MA, CCLS**

**Safe Crossings Counselor**

**Jill.meyers@providence.org**