

## DRAMA GAMES

### **Name-ball game**

The group stands in a circle and the players must throw the ball to a person in the circle whose name they can remember, until all players' names can be recalled easily.

### **Be your name**

Players stand in a circle and one by one perform an action that expresses them or how they feel while saying their name. Remaining players must copy this action and repeat their name.

### **Cat and mouse**

The players get into pairs or threes depending on the size of the group and stand in a circle, with pairs or threes one behind the other. Each pair or three is a group of mice in a mice house. One person is the cat and must chase a mouse who, if caught, then becomes the cat. A mouse can run into a mouse house by standing in front of the two mice in a house. However, since only two mice can fit in a mouse house at any one time, the mouse at the back must then run for its life.

### **Cat, mouse and ball**

One player is the cat and all remaining players are mice. The cat tries to catch the mice by throwing a ball at them, whereby the hit mouse also becomes a cat. The cats must then work together to catch the mice until there are no more mice left.

### **Animal-tag**

One player starts by being an animal or thing (such as a monkey or a snake) and all other players copy what they are doing. The 'in' player must try and tag another player, who must then become a thing, and so it goes on.

### **Hug-tag.**

One player is deemed to be the tagger and must try and tag another player who is then "in". Players are only safe from being tagged if they are hugging another player. If a player can see that another player is in trouble, they should endeavour to rescue them by racing over and hugging them madly. If two players are hugging, it is permissible for the tagger to count "1,2,3, - Split!" and the couple must, sadly, go their separate ways.

### **Handicap tag.**

One player is in and must assume a handicap, such as hopping on one leg, crawling etc. They must then try to tag another player and, when they do, give them a different handicap. This player is then in.

### **Tails.**

All players are given "tails" made by platted material, and must attach them to their person by securing them down the back of their pants. The aim of the game is to get as many tails as you can. One wall is bar, where players can go to safely put their tails on, but once attached they must go off bar. The winner is the person with the most tails.

### **Catching fish.**

Two players are in. They are a fishing net and must run around and catch the other players by grabbing them with their free arms. As the nets get larger, they can break into separate nets, and the game ends when there are no fish left.

### **Fish Soup**

Players divide into groups of four and take up a position as though they are at the corners of a square. Each group can choose to be some sort of sea creature such as starfish, jellyfish, stingrays, whales, dolphins, etc. One person is nominated to be the shark stands at the centre of the square. The teacher calls the sea creatures one at a time to enter the 'square' and move around the shark. At any time the teacher can call "change of current" (players must change direction or "fish soup!" (all sea creatures together circling around the shark). At any time the teacher can also call "shark attack" at which point the shark tries to tag as many sea creatures as it can and they then also become sharks. The winner is the last person who didn't get tagged.

### **Number Clusters.**

Players are asked to get into groups of a certain number - three for example, as indicated by the instructor. Variations are introduced such as - move in slow motion, hop to the group, touch a wall or door first, each person in the group touch knees together, toes, elbows, backs, bottoms, etc.

### **Human numbers.**

Groups. The instructor calls out a number and the players must arrange themselves on the floor so that they represent that number. The first and most correct group gets a point.

### **Rhythmic walking.**

Walk on your toes; on the sides of your feet and on your heels. Crumple yourselves into the smallest position you can manage and then spring up from there to stretch out as far as you can. Lie on the floor and stretch like cats - arching your backs, stretching out your arms and legs and then rolling from side to side.

### **Split Bodies.**

Imagine that your bodies are divided down the middle in the sense that each side has different characteristics. One side is graceful, beautiful, kind and loving, while the other side is angry and mean. The angry side is so jealous of the graceful side that it attempts to kill it, but then when it succeeds, regrets its actions and tries to revive it again. Repeat the exercise, splitting the two beings from the waist. Discuss which was easier, how you felt etc.

### **Stop and start walking.**

Walk around the room and everytime instructor shouts 'change', you must walk in a different way. For example, hopping, walking sideways, crawling etc. Walk as children, as though you have never walked before; walk as adolescents; adults and then as old people. Find the main action or area of the body which distinguishes these phases in life and concentrate on this. From old age, explore dying and feel what it might be like to no longer be able to hold your bodies up, how it feels to let go of your bodies and exhale your last breath.

### **Animal sounds.**

Walk around the room in a circle and instructor calls out the name of a particular animal and you must make the sound of that animal - cats, cows, snakes, tigers.

### **Surfaces.**

Shoes off and walk around the room. Imagine the surroundings in different ways. The floor is very hot/cold/sticky; the air is a thick substance. React accordingly.

### **Exploring impulses - sound and movement.**

Task involves exploring impulsive sounds and movement. Instructor calls out things and players must react impulsively with a sound and movement. The idea is not to represent the thing, but rather to express it in a non-stereotyped way. If you find stereotyped reactions coming up, work through them until you find something that is an impulse - not thought about. Examples could be: weapons - machine gun, knife, gun etc. Animals - lion, snake, cat. Feelings - love hate jealousy, anger.

### **Hand Dancing**

Pairs. Players standing up hold the backs of their hands together. First one person leads, making free movement of whatever takes their fancy, then the other person leads. Then neither player leads so that they are both moving freely.

### **Mirroring.**

Pairs. One player is the leader and the other must mirror every action they do. After a time the roles are reversed so that the other player is then the leader. Actions done must be very slow to enable players to mirror effectively. After doing this for a while the other half decide which partner will be the leader and begin the mirroring. The remaining players must wander around and try to work out who is the leader. The roles are then reversed and the above repeated.

Variation. Pairs. Choose a domestic task such as brushing teeth or washing-up and alternate the activity from one student to another.

Variation - distorted mirrors. Same as above, but this time exaggerate the movements to the point where they become hideous and even monstrous.

Variation - pairs of pairs. Given situation of being at the hairdressers so that two people sat on chairs facing each other while the other two stood behind the chairs.

### **Deaf, dumb and blind**

Pairs. One player is blindfolded and the other is deaf and mute and must guide the blind player. After a short time of being guided, the blind player is then allowed to roam freely and is only guided when collision is imminent. The guides then swap their charges by using eye contact with another guide. They continue to do this until all guides have had all charges. Roles are then swapped and the game is repeated.

### **What are you doing? (I)**

Circle. One player in the middle doing a certain activity, such as brushing their teeth. The next person in the circle goes into the middle and asks them "What are you doing?". They then respond "I'm doing.." with something that is nothing like what they are actually doing (eg., riding a bike). Rule: If someone says they're doing something that is too close to what the previous thing was, or to what they are actually doing, they are out. The two players in the middle of the circle have to keep going until one cannot think of anything to do, or the rule is broken. Then they are out and another person is in. It goes around the circle until all players have a turn.

### **Human machine.**

Circle. Select alternate players to be a part of a machine and the noise of that part. Players, one by one, go in the centre and are a machine part, while their partner makes the noise. Continues until all parts are in the centre, then builds momentum until the machine explodes.

### **People versus machine**

Small groups. Make a short play with the theme "man and machine". Some players will be machines, and others people.

### **Blind train**

Groups of four. Stand in front of one another, the first three are blind-folded. They must somehow communicate to the person at the front instructions such as: forward, backwards, left, right, reverse, and then wander around without collision. The ideal way of doing this is to make a link with all the arms so that it is a continuous movement and there is no delay in the instruction received.

### **Jump-sync.**

Stand in rows of six players each row (one behind the other). The first player must jump six times and then on the next beat turn around, whereby the next player jumps six times, turns around and so on down the line. When the last player has done this, s/he jumps five times, turns around, and so on, 5,4,3,2,1. When the last player is down to 1, s/h then just turns around and the other players follow suite down the line. Alternate rows of players then turn to face the other direction and the process is repeated.

### **Blind Ships and a mine.**

Half the players are blindfolded and wander around aimlessly (but carefully!). They are ships roaming on a dark, foggy ocean. Instructor touches one player on the left shoulder and they become a mine. When the mine touches one of the ships it blows up with a loud "Boom"! and makes a great big hole in the gull. The injured ship must then stand still "beeping" its radar madly where upon the other ships must race to its rescue. This can be done by sending down divers to repair the hull, which translates to another player crawling through the "beeping" player's legs. meanwhile, the remaining half of the players are watching these amazing rescues, and after a time they swap roles and repeat the game.

### **Human sculpting - in pairs.**

Players arrange themselves in pairs. Given the themes: childhood, old age, hope, fear, they must alternate between being sculptor and sculptee, to arrange the player into something that symbolises these themes.

### **Human sculpting - in groups.**

Players arrange themselves into groups of 5 or 6, and are instructed to create a sculpture, which is to be veiled two dimensionally, using the players as figures. They must use "war" as the first theme, and "peace and plenty" as the second.

### **The 'no props' letter.**

Players arrange themselves into groups of about seven. They are instructed to make up a short play using the title "the letter". As no props are to be used, the players must themselves be the props, whether it be a table, a door, the letter itself, or whatever. They are given 15 minutes to work on their play.

**The exploding hum.**

Players stand in a circle and join hands. Then they all crouch down and start a low hum, gradually building momentum and volume and standing up at the same time, until they "explode".

**Hum wave.**

Circle. Players stand holding hands with eyes closed. Players start a hum and build momentum while walking into the centre. When players feel the close proximity of other players, they retreat to enlarge the circle again, making the hum quieter as they do.

**The chord.**

Stand in a circle with arms around each other's shoulders and start a hum which grows stronger and louder and then diminishes.

**Guess the instigator.**

Circle. One player goes out of the room and while they are out one person instigates an action such as clapping hands on shoulders and everyone must copy the action. The person outside is then called in and must guess who instigated the action. The instigator may change the action at any time and everyone must again copy the action. When the person has guessed who the instigator is, then the instigator is "in".

**Learn a rhythm.**

Circle. One player must walk around the inside of the circle and begin a rhythm, movement and sound. They must then stand in front of someone in the circle and teach them the ritual movement. This person then does the same, but changes the movement and so it continues.

**Knots and circles.**

Groups of about seven. Stand in a circle. Group puts their hands in the centre of the circle and grab a player's hands that are closest to them. Players must then endeavour to untie their knot so that they are left with a circle with players holding hands with the persons next to them.

**Grannie's cookies.**

The player who is in stands facing one wall, while the remaining players stand at the opposite end of the room facing this player. An object, which represents Granny's cookies is placed on a chair in front of the player who is in. Players must walk up to Granny to try and get the cookies, but if Granny turns around they must freeze immediately. If Granny spots anyone moving, she must call them out by name and they must go back to the starting wall. The player who gets the cookies is then Granny. Variations are - players jump like frogs, crawl like babies, moonwalk, ballet-dance.

**Primitive voice.**

Circle. Yell out "hey" as loud as you can. Mime hoeing to a rhythm and instructor 'sings' a small piece in rhythm to the movement (such as 'hey-oh', and all other players must copy what the instructor sang. Then, one by one, around the circle, players sing a call in rhythm to the movement and all players must repeat it.

**The Leopard and the Monkey.**

Two players are in and are blindfolded. They stand at opposite ends of the room, against either wall. One player is a monkey and the other a monkey-hungry

leopard. the monkey must try to get to the leopard's waterhole without being caught. The only clues they will have about the position of the other, therefore, is by sound.

### **The Spider and the Fly**

Players sitting in a circle. Two players are in – both are blindfolded and stand in the circle. One is the spider and one is the fly. The spider says “Where are you fly?” The fly says “Here spider” and moves three steps in any direction. The spider then can also move three steps in any direction. The object of the game is for the spider to catch the fly. If the spider or the fly look as if they are about to crash into the players who are forming the circle, these children say “boundary!” to warn them.

### **Man overboard.**

Stand in a line, one behind the other. You are the crew on a ship. The captain (instructor) stands at the head of the line facing the sailors and barks out various orders, which the crew must obey. The last sailor to obey the order must sit out and the winner is the last sailor left. The orders are:

Captain's coming - stand in a line saluting  
Man overboard - sit on the floor, legs outstretched and row like crazy  
Scrub the deck - on hands and knees scrubbing the deck  
Hit the deck - drop flat on the floor  
Dinnertime - sit cross-legged on the floor eating furiously  
Port - run to the wall on the left  
Starboard - run to the wall on the right  
Climb the rigging - mime climbing the rigging

### **Musical chairs.**

Players begin by sitting on chairs, each player having his/her own. When the music begins players walk around the room and when the music stops, must sit on a chair. Each time the music is played, one or more chairs are taken away. The players without a chair must make the sound of an animal and be very happy with their performance.

### **Snowball.**

Two players in the centre of the circle with a chair. The first player starts a scenario using the chair as a chair. Another player enters the circle and imagines the chair to be a different object. All three players must then relate to the chair as such and also to each other. One by one, players join the action each changing the relation of the chair as they do so.

### **Meaningful chairs.**

Each player is given a chair. Players must imagine the chair to be some object, such as a pram, a dog, a toothbrush etc, and must relate to it accordingly.

### **Give meaning to an action.**

Players must perform an action, such as bending over, stretching one arm out etc., and keep repeating it. They must then give meaning to that action. For example: if the action is stretching one arm out, they could then act out a policeman directing traffic.

### **Numbers.**

Pairs. Think of a scenario, such as two people gossiping. However, when they perform the scenario for the group, they do not use dialogue as such, but only say numbers between 1 and 10, expressing the meaning of what they are trying to convey.

### **Can you see?**

Players arrange themselves into pairs and, given the following dialogue, must play out a scenario which makes sense to the dialogue.

- a - Can you see?
- b - good heavens!
- c - what is?
- d - that's better

egs: mother and child with something in their finger; two prudish peeping toms looking at something they didn't approve of; two children playing hopscotch who spy something.

### **Hello!**

Pairs. Each pair plays the following dialogue.

Hello

Hi. How are you?

Fine thanks. What have you been up to?

Not much, just enjoying the sunshine. How about you?

Not a lot. I'd better go. See you later.

OK, see you soon

They must perform it with player one being angry/scared/upset/happy/nervous with player 2. Then

parent/child

happy/unhappy

has just woken up to a phone call/has a headache

is always happy/isn't

doesn't want to talk to 2

is the headmistress/is the student

### **Story exchange.**

Pairs. Relate a real story, an imagined one or perhaps something from a dream. Tell the other person's story to the group with colour and movement, either by acting them out or by just telling them.

### **Blind couples.**

Pairs or groups, everyone blindfolded. Choose the sound of a particular animal. Each pair or group must then separate, get on their hands and knees, close their eyes and make the sound they had decided on. Pairs must find one another again by searching for their matching sound.

**Trust falls.**

Groups of three. Two people of about the same size and a smaller person in the middle (like piggy in the middle but very close together). The person in the middle must close their eyes and the two outside people gently rock them from one to the other.

Then split into larger groups and form a tight circle around one person in the middle of the circle. Gently pass the person around the circle while a soft hum or a chanting of their name is being sounded.

**Trust lifts.**

Groups stand around a person lying on the floor. They would begin a hum and gently pick up the person and carry them around the room. When they get back to the position from whence they started, they gently rock the person back and forth as they lower them to the ground.

**Puppet on a string.**

Standing in a circle, stretch your bodies upwards, segment by segment as though you are attached by a string. When your bodies are fully extended the string is cut and you all fall down totally limp and relaxed and then raise yourselves up again slowly, vertebrae by vertebrae.

**The tree of life.**

Imagine yourselves as a tiny seed in the warm earth. Feel yourself pushing through the soil and growing until you become strong and tall. Feel yourself living through the hot summer, the autumn when your leaves begin to fall, through the cold, bleak winter; feel the snow on your branches, the wind, the rain, the lightning; then it is spring and the buds of your leaves start to come out again; feel the warm sun on your branches and your leaves. You live through many summers, autumns, winters and springs. Then feel yourself growing old, withering and dying until, finally, you become part of the earth again. The exercise is not that you are meant to look like trees, but that you feel and express the essence of a tree in the different stages.

**Rebirthing.**

Lie on the ground, get into a comfortable position and close your eyes as though you are asleep. In your own time, begin to wake up and imagine you are seeing everything in the world for the first time. How does the grass feel? etc

**Living Fauna.**

Transform your bodies into flowers, then trees, then bushes. The aim is not to particularly look like these things, but rather to feel the essence of them and become them.

**Head and face massage.**

Pairs. One lying on their back on the floor, the other sitting at their head. The person sitting gives the other player a head and face massage. Starting from the forehead, then the top of the head and hairline. Run fingers around the bones of the eyes, down the bridge of the nose, down the sides of the nose to the cheek bones, massage the soft part of the cheeks, down the sides of the jaw and down along the neck. Gently replace the player's head on the floor. Players swap roles and the other player is given the massage.

### **Group Massage.**

Everyone standing in a circle very close together and facing inwards. Everyone turn to their right and take a step into the circle to the left so that people are very close. Now everyone gives the person in front a shoulder massage and then gentle chopping and patting their back.

### **Creative Visualisation.**

Imagine a paradise for yourselves in great detail and visualize yourselves in the paradise. Share your paradises with the group. Split up into groups and try to create the essence of your paradise by making sound and movement which gives the mood and atmosphere of our special place.

### **Relaxation/Visualisation**

Players lie on the floor and close their eyes. Instructor then "talks" through relaxation of all muscles, one at a time, by alternate tensing and subsequent releasing. Players are told to breath deeply and feel their bodies getting heavy. They are then told to visualise themselves floating down a river on a raft; to feel the warmth of the sun, to touch their hands in the water. They land on a shore and imagine a beautiful spot in nature and relax there.

Variation: Relax different parts of the body; visualise your mind as a black board and see yourselves wiping off any thoughts that come into your minds. Begin humming, firstly from the back of the throat, then from your shoulders and your toes.

When you are all very relaxed choose a bird and visualise yourselves as that bird: how you would feel, experience flying, what are you flying over etc. Discuss the different birds you have visualised. Close your eyes and attempt to be your bird taking off in flight.

### **Piggy in the Middle**

Groups of five. Each group stands with one person in the middle and four people on bases at the four points of a square around that person. You can use books on the floor as bases or anything else you fancy. The people on the bases must try and swap with another player by exchanging places but they cannot talk – they must signal with eye contact. The person in the middle must try to get to a base before the other person does and then the left out player is in the middle.