**AGPA Connect 2023 Presenter Information**

**Course Code:** 20

**Course Title:** The Power and Effectiveness of Psychodrama: Using Action Techniques in Process Group Psychotherapy

**Course Times:** 2:30 PM - 5:00 PM

**Course Dates:** Thursday, March 9

**Instructors:** Sue Barnum

Shelley Firestone

**Course Description:** Group psychotherapy can be a life-changing experience, and psychodrama experienced in a process group is perhaps the most powerful and effective modality in our therapeutic repertoire. This largely experiential workshop includes warm-up exercises to teach basic psychodrama action techniques followed by a process group experience to demonstrate their use in group psychotherapy. This workshop showcases the use of psychodrama and sociometry, while teaching theory and technique invaluable for becoming a psychotherapist, and for anyone working towards self-improvement.

**Learning Objectives**

The attendee will be able to:‎

1. ‎Distinguish between the use of the therapy session for a report of events vs. creating imaginary ‎experiences that take place in the “here and now” during the session.‎
2. ‎Explain Doubling, Role Taking and Role Reversal.‎
3. ‎Use one psychodrama technique as a therapeutic intervention in individual, couple, family or group ‎psychotherapy to facilitate access to emotions or conflict resolution.‎

**Significant Articles:**

1. Blatner, A. (2000). Foundations of Psychodrama: History, Theory and Practice, 4th Ed. New York: ‎Springer Publishing Company.‎
2. Blatner. A. (Ed.) (2019). Action explorations: Using psychodramatic methods in non-therapeutic ‎settings. Seattle: Parallax Productions.‎
3. Dayton, T. (2014). Emotional and developmental repair through psychodrama. The Journal of ‎Psychodrama, Sociometry and Group Psychotherapy 62(1), 9-27.‎
4. Lotze, E. & Barnum, S. (2013). The therapist's creativity handbook: introducing action and play into ‎process groups. Self-published.‎
5. Wysong, W.H. (2017). The psychodrama companion, Vol 1 & 2. Colorado Springs, CO: William H. ‎Wysong.‎

**Agenda:**

Throughout this outline, two names are given for each presentation. The lead facilitator is named first, and the second facilitator will provide doubling, role play and auxiliary work, monitor the group dynamics and suggest an intervention when important, and co-facilitate as useful.

1. INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHODRAMA (Didactic) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (Firestone and Barnum)
   1. (8 MIN) Psychodrama Concepts (Firestone and Barnum)
      1. What are participants seeking from this Workshop
      2. Introduction to Psychodrama, and Expressive Therapy Groups; these facilitate the expression of thoughts, feelings, and experience --which may be difficult or impossible to convey through spoken words alone-- using action and creative experience. In contrast to a verbal exploration of a situation that occurs outside the therapy sessions, these groups focus on creating (or recreating) experiences within the sessions.
      3. Shifts in emphasis from traditional psychotherapy: a) from verbal to ACTION: b) from cognitive to experiential; c) from reporting there and then to being in the here and now.
      4. Invitation into the “magical” world of experience, where connections are experientially created and explored, personal truth emerges, and growth and change facilitated.
   2. (4 MIN) Sociometry and Confidentiality (Barnum) This part of the didactic presentation addresses the importance of safety and confidentiality. The Facilitator also states that all exercises are voluntary, while suggesting that usually one gets more from participating than merely observing.
2. PAIR AND SHARE WARM-UP (13 MIN) (Experiential) (1, 2, 4, 5) (Barnum and Firestone, taking turns) The participants are directed to pair up and share with their partner about themselves according to various facilitator-generated topics: what is one STRENGTH you bring to experiential work; what is one FEAR you have about participating in this way; what is one thing (tool, affirmation, etc.) that can help you with this fear.
3. III. ENCOUNTERS (25 MIN) (Experiential, Role Play, and Demonstration)(1, 2, 3, 4, 5)(Barnum and Firestone, taking turns) The group is instructed to form triads. We will be focusing on the psychodrama action techniques of auxiliaries, doubling, and role reversal, but also introducing concretization, soliloquy, interviewing, doubling, mirroring, and amplification, not only to demonstrate the techniques but also to guide the encounters, helping the protagonist access and modulate his or her emotion, and explore the relationship from multiple perspectives. (All these techniques can be used in traditional individual psychotherapy, couple and family work, and process group psychotherapy.)
   1. ROLE PLAY AND ROLE REVERSAL Then the participants are asked to think of someone who delights them or upsets them (or perhaps someone who has been more distant than they would like), and imagine that person in an empty chair, and to talk with the person. Participants are asked to role play the other person they are imagining, and tell their group the story of what happened from the role of the other person.
   2. AUXILIARY ROLE PLAY The protagonist is directed to choose someone from the group to play the role of the Other, and to continue the conversation, role reversing back and forth. The conversation that ensues is generally a powerful experience for the protagonist and also for many or all of the other participants. Emotion is accessed and insights emerge, especially as the participant experiences being in the role of the Other and sees the conversation from an entirely new perspective. Empathy for both oneself and the Other emerges, and rifts are often suddenly healed, even without the real person actually being in the room. NOTE: All these techniques can be used in traditional individual psychotherapy, couple and family work, and process group psychotherapy.
   3. DOUBLING Doubling is a technique in which someone in the group (called the “audience”) who is resonating with the protagonist offers a statement that is true for the protagonist but hasn’t been said, helping the protagonist become conscious of a wider repertoire of experience. The facilitators ask others in the group to offer any doubles they might have, by saying what they believe is true for the protagonist but has not been said.
4. SHARING (10 MIN)(Barnum and Firestone)(1, 2, 3, 4, 5)(Experiential, Discussion): The participants are directed to de-role if they played one or more roles, and to each share at least one thing that resonated for them from someone else's work. This allows the participants to release the emotion built up during the experience of watching the work of others, and for those who risked a deep level of vulnerability to feel seen, heard and joined. Sharing deepens the cohesion of the group as the members disconnect from their individual roles and reconnect with each other, and everyone integrates multiple aspects of the psychodrama experiences, while recognizing the universality of our struggles.
5. PROCESS GROUP I (20 MIN) (Experiential, Role Play and Demonstration) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (Barnum and Firestone): The leaders will facilitate a classical process group experience, which will include opportunities for short psychodrama vignettes to help group members to help group members with their real-life dilemmas, while demonstrating the use of psychodrama action techniques in process group psychotherapy. We will be inviting group members to put their stories into action, directing them in using psychodrama techniques, such as role play and role reversal, interview, and soliloquy. Roles are chosen, auxiliaries named, and the conversations deepen.
6. PSYCHODRAMATIC SHARING (10 minutes) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)(Barnum and Firestone)(Experiential, Discussion, Role Play, Demonstration): Several vignettes have by now been enacted during the session. The participants are directed to de-role if they played one or more roles, and to share what resonated for them with each others’ work. This allows the protagonists to feel joined after they risked a deep level of vulnerability, and for everyone to release the emotion built up during the experience. Sharing fosters cohesion in the group as members disconnect from their role play and reconnect with group members, and everyone integrates aspects of the psychodrama experiences, while recognizing the universality of our struggles. Generally many participants are loaded up with feelings, and do well to have a brief role play during the sharing with a brother or mother, etc., (whom he or she imagines to be present) in an empty chair. If there are questions regarding the techniques used, they can be addressed at the end of the Psychodrama Sharing.
7. PROCESS GROUP II (25 MIN) (Experiential, Role Play and Demonstration) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (Barnum and Firestone) The leaders will facilitate another classical process group session, which includes opportunities for short psychodrama vignettes to help group members with their real-life dilemmas, while demonstrating the use of psychodrama action techniques in process group psychotherapy. We will be inviting group members to put their stories into action, and directing them in using psychodrama techniques, such as role play and role reversal, interview, and soliloquy. Roles are chosen, auxiliaries named, and the conversations deepen. Sometimes a chair is brought out for a mother or father, significant other or other person who either modeled or molded an attitude or behavior (such as when an angry, critical parent molds an intimated child); the protagonist may be directed to choose someone from the group to play one of these formative roles, and to have a conversation.
8. PSYCHODRAMATIC SHARING (20 minutes) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)(Barnum and Firestone)(Experiential, Discussion, Role Play, Demonstration): Several vignettes have by now been enacted during the session. The participants are directed to de-role if they played one or more roles, and to share what resonated for them with each others’ work. This allows the protagonists to feel joined after they risked a deep level of vulnerability, and for everyone to release the emotion built up during the experience. Sharing fosters cohesion in the group as members disconnect from their role play and reconnect with group members, and everyone integrates aspects of the psychodrama experiences, while recognizing the universality of our struggles. Generally many participants are loaded up with feelings, and do well to have a brief role play during the sharing with a brother or mother, etc., (whom he or she imagines to be present) in an empty chair. If there are questions, they are addressed at the end of the Psychodrama Sharing.
9. CLOSURE (15 MIN) (Discussion, Q&A)(Barnum and Firestone)(1, 2, 5) We will form a circle and each name one thing we each want to take with us from the day. We may each participant to sculpt their body to express how they are feeling in the moment, or name a symbol, image, phrase or other way to symbolize what we got (such as an eagle for flight or freedom, or flowers for joy). Participants are encouraged to fill out their evaluation forms. We ask if there are questions or thoughts from the workshop.

Assessment Questions: Question 1 (include possible answers)

Question 1 (include possible answers)

1. "Surplus reality" refers to: A. the experience of an imagined time, place, or scene as if it were here and now. B. the extra group members who could not be in the drama. C. the extra time necessary when the psychodrama runs into overtime. D. the extra money from multiple members paying for the same group session. E. all of the above.

Correct Answer 1

A. the experience of an imagined time, place, or scene as if it were here and now.

Question 2 (include possible answers)

2. A "double" in psychodrama might: A. use their tele to experience what the protagonist is feeling. B. help ground the protagonist by offering empathy and clarity. C. offer the protagonist language for their experience.. D. help the protagonist discover a blind spot. E. all of the above

Correct Answer 2

E. all of the above.

Question 3 (include possible answers)

3. In "role reversal": A. a stubborn husband can develop empathy for his or her wife, and a parent can identify with his or her child. B. we take on the psychological role of the other person. C. we have the opportunity to see our situation from a new perspective. D. a protagonist may get an objective perspective by taking the role of an inanimate object in the scene. E. all of the above.

Correct Answer 3

E. all of the above.

Question 4 (include possible answers)

4. The "auxiliary role" offers the opportunity for a group member to: A. work with some aspect of the protagonist’s experience. B. get training in playing a new or unfamiliar role, as when a nice person plays a mean person. C. practice spontaneity and creativity. D. differentiate his or her personal “baggage” (unresolved transferences) from the experience of the protagonist. E. all of the above.

Correct Answer 4

E. all of the above.

Question 5 (include possible answers)

5. The "empty chair technique" can be used for: A. helping the group member isolate and explore parts of themselves, by addressing that particular part of themselves in an empty chair. B. helping a group member practice talking with an adversary, someone who isn’t actually in the room, or perhaps someone who is deceased. C. helping a hostile or angry patient experience become an ally by venting to the role of the therapist in an empty chair. D. engaging a “difficult” patient. E. all of the above

Correct Answer 5

E. all of the above.

Question 6 (include possible answers)

6.The members of the "audience" in a psychodrama support the work of the protagonist: A. by being present and encouraging to the protagonist. B. by serving as auxiliaries when requested. C. enhancing the work by resonating from their own experience (similar to the function of a greek chorus). D. by defining the boundary between the surplus reality on the stage and the reality of the rest of the world. E. all of the above.

Correct Answer 6

E. all of the above.

Question 7 (include possible answers)

7. "Sharing" after the psychodrama enactment: A. allows auxiliaries to de-role from the drama and return to reality. B. helps the protagonist rejoin the group. C. helps clarify for the group members that as human beings, we all have the same basic struggles. D. helps everyone in the group integrate their experience of the drama. E. all of the above.

Correct Answer 7

E. all of the above.

Question 8 (include possible answers)

8. Moreno created the following techniques: A. Psychodrama, as a way to explore the myriad aspects of an encounter B. Role theory, role play and role reversal C. Sociogram, a chart of the likes, dislikes and neutralities among group members D. Sociometry, as a way to measure the feelings between group members (likes dislikes, and neutralities) E. all of the above

Correct Answer 8

E. all of the above.

Question 9 (include possible answers)

9. Moreno coined the following terms: A. group psychotherapy B. psychodrama C. surplus reality D. sociometry E. all of the above

Correct Answer 9

E. all of the above.

Question 10 (include possible answers)

10. The "Father" of Psychodrama was A. Sigmund Freud B. Jacob L. Moreno C. Fritz Pearls D. Virginia Satir E. Aristotle

Correct Answer 10

B. Jacob L. Moreno