CLASSY WAYS OF WORKING

A TOOLKIT OF TIPS, TRICKS AND MUCKING ABOUT

BY KELLY GREEN

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HEY BABES

Firstly, this toolkit is not academic: it is like my practice, conversational, direct and obvs always Classy. It was also written pre-pandemic and the cultural and political landscape has shifted drastically and very quickly since 2019, and rightly so. With more nuanced conversations about the intersectionality of race, gender and the terrifying rise of nationalism in the UK coming to the forefront of debate. As facilitators how do we hold space for these chats and themes to be had? I am not sure I have the answer. I have tweaked this toolkit in places to reflect those changes and challenges. But it is not perfect, as nothing is. Also, just to say, this is not a complete guide about how to work with communities, but some useful ways in with a group, with a soft approach to ways of getting started.

A lot of my suggestions in this toolkit are idealistic; working to no time constraints, or funding demands, or final outputs – which as some you reading this may know, would be the dream with the right group!

Community outreach, social engaged practice, applied theatre, community theatre, working with marginalised groups ... Realistically, it all means the same thing. What you need to be clear on is your aims and objectives when working with a group: Why are you there and what are your intentions?

My practice as a facilitator is to enable the participant to be the artist. I am an artist, but not in this space - leave your artist ego at the door. When you are facilitating and working with a group, this time is not about you, it is about them. They are the artists now. I guide ways of creating work and exploring Class, but I am not there to impose my thoughts and feelings on the participants, sometimes that is challenging and bloody hard work. At other times that is rewarding, and often the exchange is something quite beautiful.

I have been facilitating for over 15 years now and I have pulled together some ways that I explore Class in the creative workshops. The first section, are some tips about Classy Facilitation when working with marginalised groups, and a little touch base about imposter syndrome. In the second section I introduce two warm-up games I like to use: Hula Hula and Anyone Who, (an oldy but a goody) and I let you know what they are useful for. And the third section is made up of three activities that I use to either explore Class, or to generate creative material with participants, fast. Although I discuss these activities in Class terms they can be used to explore any issue that evokes emotions.

Have fun with it. I hope it's useful.
Kelly G x

CLASSY FACILITATING TIPS!

This is an offer of some tips about how to hold the space, some will work for you or the group you're working with, others won't. But they are all things to think about as a community practitioner.

CHECK YOUR PRIVILEGE!

As a person educating or working with marginalised people, be aware of what you are bringing to the space. I would suggest listing your privileges; this should be something you do alone, not in the session, unless you feel that it would be useful with the group. Acknowledge how you will be read and perceived by your participants, who are potentially less privileged than you. There is a power status in the room in terms of the relationship between you and the group, be aware of the implications and the ethics that surround that tension.

For example, when I have taught Race theory to university students, I always start the session by acknowledging that I am a white woman teaching Race politics, and that in itself is a display of white privilege in academia; in those moments it is important to address the elephant in the room with honesty and transparency.

MY PRIVILEGES

1. **I am white**
2. **I am able bodied**
3. **I am safe(ish)**
4. **I have a home & food**
5. **I have family and friends**

MY DISADVANTAGES

1. **Working/benefit class**
2. **I am neurodivergent**
3. **A woman**
4. **I am queer**
5. **I am carer**

SAFE SPACE? NO SUCH THING.

Soz babes but a safe space doesn't truly exist. It is not possible to create a psychologically pure safe space for everyone, and it is very important to know and to acknowledge that. It is your job to create the ***safest space*** you can, and to do that you need to be clear on the boundaries of the space you want to create together. Here are some tips on how to create the safest space you can.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF - CLEARLY.

To build trust with the group you need to be transparent about who you are, but only to the point where you feel safe. For example, if I was working with an LGBTQ+ group I would tell them that I am queer, however, in some community settings I may not disclose my sexuality in that first introduction until I knew I was comfortable and felt safe with the group. But each to their own. You also need to be transparent about why you are there: what the project is and what are you working towards together?

LET THEM TELL YOU WHO THEY ARE!

Allow your participants to self-identify, ensure that you allow space for the individuals in the group to tell you who they are: pronouns, class, sexuality, name, age, etc, to the point they feel comfortable with. You can embed this into a game or invite them to tell the group in the introduction at the beginning of the session.

WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER CONTRACT

I would always recommend creating a group contract with the group to be clear on your ways of working together: what they should expect from you and what you expect of the group, and if you're using it, it is useful to refer back to the idea of a Brave Space. Encourage the group to contribute to the contract and have a few suggestions ready of your own. I like to include, "Everyone is allowed to be listened to." Have this written on flip chart paper and visible in the sessions; that way you can refer to it when needed.

COMMENTS QUESTIONS/BOX

If your group is particularly quiet, or if you are tackling a difficult subject, or if you have some people that you know have things to say but are shy, you could set up a comments questions/box where they can contribute anonymously.

I would suggest not looking at those during the session but reading them afterwards, and embedding the comments or suggestions into the next workshop. However, if you are delivering a one off session, you need to make sure that you allow time at the end of the workshop to look through the box so those contributions are heard.

TAKE A BREAK!

Make sure you schedule breaks into your sessions. Even if your session is in an hour, ensure to have a quick game or energiser so that movement breaks are factored in. Especially if you are delivering a discussion heavy session.

SHARING STORIES

Participants can sometimes want to share stories about themselves or people they know, or what they have seen on TV. It is good to allow a space at the end of each session for people to share stories if they want to. Embed it into the contract and if you feel that a participant is sharing a story that is taking the session off course, reassure them that what they want to share is important but you will come back to it later.

Giving space for the people in the group to share stories is important to their participation and feeling heard, but also to your development as a facilitator. You have something to learn from everyone you work with, may it be about your practice, about simplifying your language, or about a life very different to yours.

BRAVE SPACE

I also like to use the Invitation to Brave Space poem by Micky ScottBey Jones* at the start of a project to ensure that we are starting, or at least trying to, acknowledge the intersections of people's lived experience in the room. I love this poem and this way of approaching conversations with openness and bravery, and is available online

**Micky ScottBey Jones is a Black Queer Woman from the USA who has an international and intersectional understanding of social change - Look them up! The poem is available online too.*

IMPOSTER SYNDROME...

ALWAYS!

Ah, imposter syndrome, my annoying friend and permanent enemy! This is something that I feel all the time, even though I am experienced, and I know what I am talking about. I put this down to being a Woman, defo Working Class anxiety and being Neurodivergent; things that are embodied lived experience. How do you know if you have the imposter syndrome feels?

DO YOU FEEL...

Like you haven't earnt the right to be here?
Like you are not good enough?
Like you doubt yourself?
Like you don't have the fancy words?
Like your voice sounds different?
Like you don't have the right clothes?

And lastly, Like you've done the job for, I dunno, something like 10 years, but feel like a fraud?!?

Yes, babes you've got the Imposter Syndrome feels! This feeling may waiver now and again, but I am not sure that it is a feeling that will ever completely go away.

When you are about to start a project and are feeling the imposter syndrome voice of doubt creeping in, use this quick check list to reassure yourself you are up to the job!

1. You know your stuff?
2. You have researched and planned?
3. Do you have everything you need for the workshop: printed handouts, spare pens etc?
4. Do you know where you are going, the location and time of the event and the timings for the day?
5. Are you confident with the plan?

4-7-8 BREATHING*

Another thing I sometimes do to help with imposter syndrome, but also ADHD overwhelm, is the 4-7-8 regulating breathing technique. This can be done on the tube with headphones on the way to session or at home before you leave to help regulate and help shake off the niggling voice of self doubt.

The excercise:

1. Find a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down.
2. Place the tip of your tongue behind your upper front teeth.
3. Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
4. Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of four.
5. Hold your breath for a mental count of seven.
6. Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound, to a mental count of eight.
7. This is one breath. Repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

THESE ARE JUST SUGGESTIONS AND NOT CERTIFIED METHODS THAT WILL WORK FOR EVERYONE. BUT THESE HELP ME TO KEEP THE INNER IMPOSTER A LITTLE BIT QUIETER. BELIEVE IN YOURSELF. YOU GOT THIS!

*This technique was developed by Dr. Andrew Weil, the 4-7-8 a medical relaxation method.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Everyone is pretending. ALL. THE. TIME.

Words can be a killer in certain spaces; feeling like you don't know the right posh words or that your voice sounds different. But also, language, dialect and hearing someone talk in a familiar way to you can be a gift to a community, and also to you. Find joy in talking differently and taking ownership of your voice and mother tongue.

There are no stupid questions or comments.
Not ever.

Everyone is always learning. Someone may know more than you about something, or be better at something than you, but no one is better than you.

You have the right to be, to do, to make and to take space.

WARM EM UP!

Warm up games help to break the ice with new groups. They are a quick way to find out common values and knowledge too. I will explain how through the warm up games.

THE SUN SHINES ON/ANYONE WHO

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

This is a good exercise to get the group moving around, which can be good to mix up friendship groups or if all the girls and boys are grouped together. I use this exercise to explore how much the participants know about a subject.
(I have not invented this exercise; I have tried to research where it originated from but I can't find out where it came from! A definite oldy but goody!)

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Chairs in a circle with enough space for the participants to move across the circle and change seats.

HOW TO PLAY

Everyone is in a circle sitting on chairs with one person standing in the centre. It is best if you as the facilitator starts in the centre, so that the participants can understand how the game is set up.
The person standing in the middle wants a seat and the way they get one is by saying, “The sun shines on anyone who…” then they must say something that is true about themselves. It's good to start with something visible, so in my case I could say, ‘anyone who has curly hair’ and anyone who has curly hair in the circle needs to leave their chair and move to another.

After a while I would develop the game to things that can’t be seen. For example ‘anyone who likes chocolate?’, then I would develop the game into the topic we are exploring. For example, if the workshop is exploring friendships “Anyone who has a best friend/has had an argument with a friend/has felt pressured by a friend before/who has an online friend?” Then you gauge how the group views friendships.

TIP: If this is a new group you are working with, ask the participants who have a turn in the middle to say their name before they have their go – Helps you to remember their names and who they are!

RULES

- You can’t move to a chair directly to your right or left.
- If you leave a chair in that round you can’t return to your seat.
- Be mindful – No running and pushing. When played with young people they can become excited so be sure to enforce this rule for safety.
-

HULA HULA

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

It is a call and response game led by the facilitator whilst they are still part of the circle. Normally it gets them laughing and enjoying you being silly. I like the simplicity of the game, but also it reminds me of Classy football chants.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

All the participants and yourself in a circle, preferably standing but can be facilitated sitting too.

HOW TO PLAY

Ask all the participants to shake their bodies out and then to focus on you while you explain the calls and the response that can be mixed up, but they have to always do the opposite to you.

THE CLAPPING BIT

This is the easiest to follow; I suggest always starting with this one and developing it from here!

Clap: One clap in front of you

Leg Clap: Bend slightly and clap on your knees twice.

(Should sound a bit like Queen's *We Will Rock You!*)

THE PITCH BIT

It's better if you can get them moving while they do it!

High: Reach up high and say "high" in a high tone.

Low: Bend down low and say "low" in a low tone.

THE DANCING BIT

This one is often met with resistance, over sell it and really over perform it!

Hula: roll your hips round in a circle twice and say "hula hula".
Venger: Put your hands like little claws, then put them to your left and then to your right quickly, saying "venger, venger" in time for when you turn your hands to either side

(think MJ's thriller music video!)

These are the three basics I use but depending on the group, I like to mix up the calls and responses and make up my own. During my theatre piece SLAG, I use this game with the audience but with song lyrics, 'Let's talk about sex baby' a lyric by Salt n Pepper, with the response of Madonna's 'Like a Virgin' – Went down a treat!

GETTING CLASSY

These are some activities that I use when facilitating: the first two are good for groups and for exploring Class, the last one is good for generating ideas for solo and autobiographical performance in a group environment.

1. Top, middle or Bottom?
2. What's your chip?
3. Making Angry Art: workshop

TOP MIDDLE OR BOTTOM

ACTIVITY 1

This is a discussion exercise exploring class, social positions and power through visual interaction. It is a good way to assess the groups' knowledge and understanding of class and intersectionality in relation to power. There are also some suggestions of ways to get some of the ideas on their feet but depending on time, but it might be better to keep this session as discussion based.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BE AWARE OF

This activity discusses jobs and economic position. You as a facilitator must ensure to positively reaffirm all job roles and social statuses that come up in the discussion. You do not know your participants' history or background. Do not make assumptions nor make judgments. You must be aware of the comments that are being made in the space by the cohort's peers, and ensure to address/call out anything that has the potential to harm or to cause upset. Their safety is your responsibility.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Basic knowledge of Marx theory and of cultural capital
- A definition of power that feels comfortable for you. Here is a dictionary definition: ***Power** *Noun* power *noun* (CONTROL) ability to control people and events
- An understanding of the meaning of intersectionality. Here is a dictionary definition: I**ntersectionality** *noun* the way in which different types of discrimination (= unfair treatment because of a person's sex, race, etc.) are connected to and affect each other.
- I would also suggest researching some celebrities, politicians, football players or whoever may seem important or topical, annual incomes to use as provocations and conversation starters.

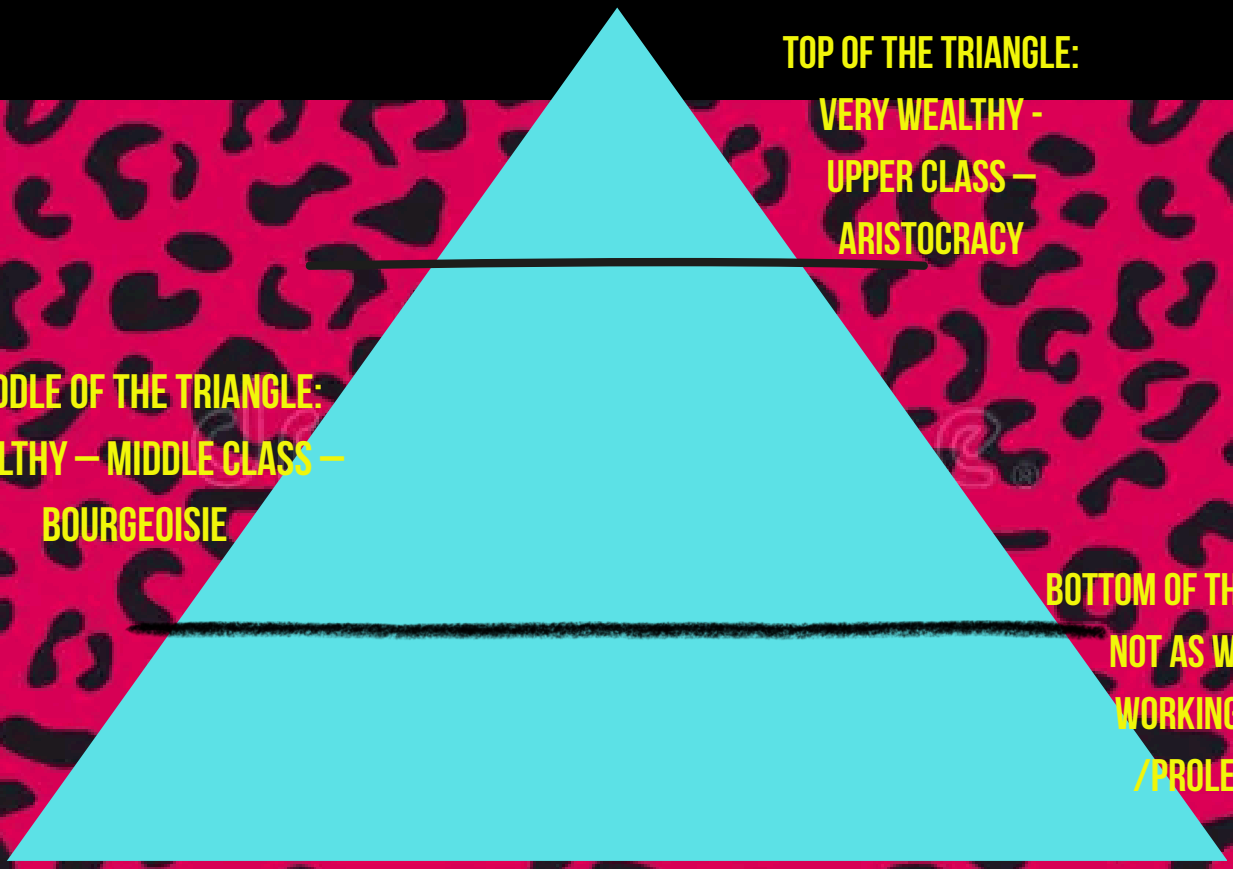
WHAT YOU NEED

Something to write with – Pens/pencils/crayons

Flip chart paper as you'll need to draw a large triangle on a sheet of paper, flip chart, white board - the larger the better.

Cut out of paper people and blue tack/tape or post-its - people cut outs are nicer but post it notes are easier!

Divide the triangle into three areas and label the area appropriately. You can use which term feels more comfortable for you or the group or use your own.



WHAT TO DO

Give everyone a paper person, or a post it note, and ask them to think of a job. Once they have thought of one, instruct them to write it down. Here are two options depending on group size and generosity:

- Ask them to place their person on the triangle where they think the job role is located within the structure of the triangle.
- Ask each participant what job they have and discuss it as a group, deciding where to place the person within the triangle with collective agreement.

ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY

You may want the group to suggest job titles and you facilitate writing them down, and then you can ask the group to guide you as to where to place the job/person on the triangle. This can encourage group discussion if this is not forthcoming, or if reading and writing is an issue; can also be time saving.

Read aloud to the group the jobs, and go through where they are positioned.

What questions to ask and things to talk about:

1. What do we think about where the jobs are positioned?
2. Would we move any?
3. Who sits outside of the triangle?
4. Who doesn't give back to the economy?
5. Does it make a difference if the job gives back to society?

TOPICS AND QUESTIONS THAT MAY COME UP

Cultural capital – Is class simply about economics? You need to be ready.

Levels of experience – early career professionals' vs experienced (teachers/doctors).

The VALUE of jobs - is a job only valued by money or is it valued by how it gives back to society?

Who sits outside of the economic triangle? This includes people reliant on the welfare system, and those who have unstable/insecure social status - immigrants, refugees, gypsies, travellers, people who experienced homelessness and those who may make money which they don't pay tax on. Doing what they need to survive. (Unlike the immorality of tax avoidance of the extremely wealthy)

WHO'S GOT THE POWER?

Ask the cohort to get into small groups or pairs and ask them to discuss what power means to them and to come up with a definition to be fed back to the group. You should maybe write these up so you can see them. Have your own definition of power ready in case you need to refer to it.

Once you have a definition of power as a group, ask them to think about the triangle in relation to power - Who do we think has the most power? Who has the least power?

Some questions you might want to explore:

1. What do the people in power look like; are they able bodied?
2. Are they caregivers; Working mothers/single parents?
3. Do we associate these jobs with specific genders?
4. What race or ethnicity do we relate with the jobs that have more power?

THINGS TO ACKNOWLEDGE

In this space we are not saying that this is how it should be, we are reflecting on current systematic power and how that manifests in society and in our everyday lives. By talking about it and acknowledging our differences, we are opening conversations about the possibility of change.

ALTERNATIVE OFFER TO DISCUSS POWER

In the pairs/groups ask them to pick a job on the triangle and to create it as a character based on the job role. They can draw a person and traits and characteristics around the image. Or they could do a mind map with the job role in the centre.

WAYS TO GET IT ON ITS FEET

Ask the participants to pick a job or person and take that role for a walk around the room. Beforehand, ensure that there is a variation in status within the roles, as the exercise will not work if everyone is a popstar or the Prime Minister.

STATUSES

Ask them to start thinking about bodies in relation to economic status. Would someone who is homeless stand as tall as a banker?
Now to start thinking about voice, how does this person talk? Is it strong and confident? Is it tired? Is it authoritative?
Once they have had some time to think about how their person talks, ask them to start saying hello to each other in their characters; they must stop walking and make eye contact with each other. You can introduce a hand shake or another gesture.

STRIKE A POSE (FREEZE FRAMES)

Tell them, or assign them into groups of three, to demonstrate three different statuses and ask them to each hold a pose in the character in a line, so you and the group can see the status differences visually.

SAY WHAT YOU SEE

Tell them, or assign them into groups of three, to demonstrate three different statuses and ask them to each hold a pose in the character in a line, so you and the group can see the status differences visually.

FOLLOW ON ACTIVITY

: To create action from this exercise you could ask each character to think of a sentence; when they are tapped on the shoulder they are to say it aloud in their character. Each group then creates a scene with their characters interacting, using one of the sentences as a starting point.

Questions to consider:

Where are these characters?
Why are they all at this place?
What has brought them together?
Why are they interacting?

ACTIVITY 2

WHAT'S YOUR CHIP?

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR/DO

This is an exercise that I have facilitated in various settings and is a great way to get political and challenging topics to the forefront of a workshop discussion. This exercise enables you as a facilitator to gain a better understanding of what the common social issues are within the community group and is a great icebreaker or introductory warm up game.

'you have a chip on your shoulder'

informal - to seem angry all the time because you think you have been treated unfairly or feel you are not as good as other people. Example: He's got a chip on his shoulder about not having been to university.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BE AWARE OF

This exercise is based on the saying "you've got a chip on your shoulder" something that I have been told I have as a passionate (angry) working class woman. You need to be aware that some challenging topics and 'chips' may come up. Through this activity you are potentially exploring what makes the participants angry, the small things and the big things.

SIDE NOTE

I wouldn't deliver this activity in a Young Offenders Unit (YOT) or a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or with a group where there is a history of argumentative clashes, as it can be disruptive to the group's cohesion.

WHAT YOU MAY NEED TO KNOW

- You will need to be prepared for challenging topics to come up: misogyny, racism, transphobia, classism, homophobia, ableism, xenophobia, nationalism... All the difficult important stuff.

- An understanding of contemporary issues in the news/social media trends/government policy that could be affecting the participants

- Research terms such as, “working class rage”, “angry black women”, and the term “have a chip on your shoulder” so you have a clear understanding of its meaning.

WHAT YOU NEED

Flip chart paper and pen (optional)

WHAT TO DO

Ask your participants to sit in a circle on the floor, or in a chair, whichever best suits the needs of the group. Now ask everyone to go around the circle and say “Hello my name is ...” and touch their left shoulder, with their right hand. Once everyone has had a go at that, explain that now everyone is now to “Hello my name is... and my chip is...”. Explain this is to be a small chip on your shoulder, not a big political issue but a small everyday annoyance. Examples: cold food, people being late, weak tea, squeaky trainers, rude people on the tube. Once everyone has said their small chip, discuss some of the things that came up. You can write these down and group them together on the flip chart paper during the discussion.

What Questions to ask and things to talk about:

1. What are the similarities?
2. Do our small-scale grievances and annoyances come under similar groupings?

Now ask everyone to think of the ONE big chip on their shoulder; this can be a personal or political chip. Give the participants the space to reflect on what it is before they share with the group. You should be clear on your own 'chip'. Mine is always class and I explain why: being a working class single mum and how I am made to feel by society.

Then repeat the exercise, "Hello my name is... and my big chip is....". Open the discussion of the topics/chips/issues that have come up through the sharing.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/TOPICS

1. Are there 'chips' that crossover or intersect with each other?
2. Can the 'chips' be grouped together?
3. Do they create communities?
4. Are they prevalent to this community?
5. Are there 'chips' that unite the group?
6. How do we feel about the 'chips' that came up?

SAY IT ALOUD

Ask the group to stand up in the circle and to think of a word that their 'chip' makes them feel, or that they associate with it. Go around the circle and get them to say the word aloud into the circle. Now play with different levels of tension: 1-10, saying the words with different emotions, such as shame/happiness/excitement/anger. 1 being the least expression of the emotion, 5 being a marker of middle, and 10 being the extreme point of tension for the emotion.

1. How does it feel saying the words with different emotions?
2. How does saying it layered with shame/happiness/excitement/anger change the word and the tensions in our bodies?
3. Which do you like the best?
4. Which do you like the least?

TAKE YOUR CHIP ON A TRIP

Ask everyone to walk/move around the space in neutral. No talking. Making sure they are aware of the space and ensuring to fill the gaps. Ask participants to think about their 'chip' whilst walking/moving around the room. How does thinking about your 'chip' make you feel? Where are they holding the tension – in their stomach? Their head? Their hands? Their back? Now ask them to imagine that they are frightened of their 'chip' – draw on some of the 'chips' to make examples: racism is scary because there could be a threat of violence.

Whilst still moving around the space, the participants need to choose one person who is their 'chip' and they are afraid of, but they are not to let the person know. The aim is to keep as far away from your 'chip' as possible as it is scary and unpredictable. Allow the group to continue to move through the space with their 'chip' for a few minutes. Then ask the participants to choose someone who is a comrade or protector; this needs to be between you and your 'chip' whilst moving through the space, they are effectively the shield from your 'chip'. Continue this for a short time, then ask the group to freeze where they are and look around the space.*

Who has succeeded in surviving their 'chip'?
How did it feel trying to escape your 'chip'?
How did it feel having a protector? Did it work?
Who/what community is our protection in real life?

*This is adapted from Augusto Boal's exercise from *Games for Actors and Non-Actors,* Bomb and Shield.

BRINGING A CHIP TO LIFE

In small groups of 3-4 (but this can also be done in pairs) they are to pick a 'chip' to explore and once agreed, they need to create the following in response to their chosen 'chip':

- One gesture or movement
- A word - Can be the same as ones used in the circle
- One sentence

Once they have shown the rest of the groups their responses, they need to create a short performance using only the three responses.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITY: STRIKE A POSE (FREEZE FRAMES)

Tell them to get into, or assign them into, small groups to create still images of one of the 'chips'. Tell each group in secret and tell them not to tell the rest of the group which 'chip' they have. Give each group 2-3 minutes to create a freeze frame, then ask each group to hold a pose.

SAY WHAT YOU SEE

Look at a few, or all if you have time, and feedback. What are the differences? Are there similarities or crossovers with other people presenting their different 'chips'.

MAKING ANGRY ART

ACTIVITY 3

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR/DO

More of a writing workshop for working on solo/autobiographical work. I would suggest this with students or participants that are interested in developing their own performance and are at the beginning of ideas, or searching for clarity on an idea. It is a good and quick way to start generating material and thinking about the look/aesthetic of the thing you want to make. This workshop can be facilitated in an hour depending on the size of the group. This exercise would come after a warm-up game.

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

A bit like What's your Chip, this can bring up uncomfortable things for some participants. I would suggest telling the participants/artists to be mindful about the topic they explore to ensure they feel safe with the group and ready to explore the topic/idea. Some people are not angry; those participants you may have to help and guide through the process, or give them something to be angry about.

WHAT YOU NEED

The participants with a notebook, pen or pencil. Or they can make notes or voice notes on their phone. It's better with paper and pen though!

WHAT YA ANGRY ABOUT?

Time the participants for 5 minutes and tell them to write a list of the things that make them angry, big or small. Give them some examples; can be silly or real, it helps to get people thinking. Here's some of mine:

1. I am angry when ... People talk mockney.
2. I am angry about ... the stain on my trainers
3. I am angry when ... Spaces make me feel inadequate.
4. I am angry about ...

Tell them to read back over them. Are there similarities? Crossovers? Is there a theme that pops out? Cross out the ones that you don't like. Can you whittle it down to your top three? Or is there one that really makes your blood boil? You need to decide on one to explore. You can always repeat the exercises with multiple topics.

If you can't decide on one, have a walk/move around the space you are in (or stay still and close your eyes) and repeat your top three aloud, or say them into your phone as a voice note and play them back. Let them fester in their mind for a bit. Then pick one to move forward with; you can always change your mind.

Go around the room and ask the participants to share their topic. Needs to be one they feel comfortable with working on and sharing with the group.

GET IT ALL OUT

Now, time them again for 5 minutes and tell them to write their word/topic/issue in the centre of a sheet of paper and write all the words, theories, sayings, foods, smells, places, clothes, people they associate with it and around it. Tell them to get it all out, the more the better!

Ask them to read back over everything they have put down and to circle or highlight things that they feel are important or that they can visualise.

GET YOUR RAGE ON

Now they have a word/topic/issue that really winds you up, put pen to paper and get your rage on. Again, time them for 5 minutes, or if you think they need it try for 10 minutes, and have a rant.

Writing for some can be challenging, especially for neurodivergent brains like mine. If you space, maybe suggest that they can get up on their feet and say it into their phone instead.

Tell the participants to read back over it.

Read it aloud. Record it on your phone. Listen to it. Are there edits you want to make? Things you want to add, re-write, take out? Do it.

(Writing) Rules:

Don't let your pen leave the paper.
It doesn't have to make sense.
You can swear.
Fck th speling & Gamm'er.
Don't over think it.
It's allowed to change and move between things.
Just allow yourself a space to get things off your chest

SHARING WITH THE GROUP

Ask the participants to read them out, or if they are comfortable with performing give them a few minutes to rehearse how they would perform it and get them to show them to the group.

WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK? PEER FEEDBACK

Ask the group to give each other feedback. Whilst watching, ask them to think about 1 constructive and 2 positive comments to help them to think about what they are witnessing and a supportive way rather than negative.

Questions you could ask:

- How do you feel about your rage topic now?
- Could this be something you take forward?
- Is this the beginning of a spoken word piece?
- Or can it manifest as a poem? Or a song?

WRITE A SHOPPING LIST

Have a think about your word/topic/issue and write a shopping list of all the ingredients or the things you would need to fix it, change it, smash it or blow it up.

Once you have everything on the list you think you might need, have a read over it. Read it aloud. Make it a voice note and listen to it back. Could this be used as the beginning of something?

SHOPPING LIST EXAMPLE

I WANT TO BLOW UP THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT. TO DO THIS I WILL NEED...

1 GUY FAWKES

10 THOUSAND STICKS OF DYNAMITE

6 VERY LONG FUSE

3 DETONATORS

2 ESCAPE ROUTES (IN CASE ONE FAILS)

1 ALIBI ... ETC ETC

WRITE A RECIPE FOR DISASTER

Think about how you could write a recipe (or even a spell!) for disaster. Think of the performance of the task, how do they do it on cookery programmes? Think of it as a performance when you write it.

Think of the seductiveness of Nigella Lawson. Think of the quick speed of Jamie Oliver. Or the cockiness of Jordan Ramsey. Or channel your inner witch or wizard and write a spell - Think Ursula the sea witch, the witches in Macbeth, or any other magical characters that take your fancy... if you like that kind of thing!

Give the participants time to either write their chosen form and get it on its feet or for them to improvise it and record it on their phone so they have the material moving forward.

Ask the participants to perform them back to the group and feedback.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN IN THE END?

By the end of the workshop the participants should have:

- A list of potential starting points to create work that makes them angry that they can return too.
- A mind map of the words, theories, sayings, foods, smells, places, clothes associated with their chosen topic which are starting points of research and possible aesthetic/visual choices.
- A rant, that could be a starting point for a piece of writing for performance.
- The recipe or spell which is another start of a playful performance.

BYE BABES

Well babes, if you've got to this page, I am hoping you have at least read some of the document and I REALLY hope you have tried an activity or two and have found them useful! Here is a quick list of useful things to remember...

Important Classy Things to Remember:

1. Know your shit. Ensure that you have researched and prepared.
2. If you don't have the answers, acknowledge you don't know and learn with your participants.
3. Make it fun and don't be afraid to make a fool of yourself.
4. Keep how you approach things simple, over complication leads to confusion.
5. These activities can be developed for other issues and topics. Be brave and playful.
6. Sometimes you will fuck up, we all do it. Use the wrong word, unintentionally say something that offends someone. Own it, apologise and learn from it.
7. Read the room. Some ways of working will suit a group and others won't, make sure you are aware of how they are responding and adjust to keep engagement.
8. Mindfulness. Issue based ways of working can be draining on the participants, make sure that you offer breaks and let them know that they can leave should they need to take a minute.
9. Self-care. This work can also be draining for you. Make sure you take care of yourself, do something nice after a session or whatever is rest for you: chat to mate, eat cake, have a 5min dance – a simple thing that makes you happy and feels indulgent.
10. Lastly and most importantly... Don't be a dickhead and have fucking fun!

Take care,
Kelly G x

BYE BABES!