

Psychodrama

Psychodrama is a therapeutic approach in which participants are encouraged to continue and complete their actions through dramatic enactment and role-playing.



Gender-based violence



Role-playing, Improvisation



13-30



10-15 participants



Depending on the problematic and the technique to be used, you can use different materials: for example, a chair, fabrics, etc



In general, psychodrama is conducted in a physical space. However, as a result of COVID-19, virtual sessions have started to take place through platforms such as Zoom or GoogleMeet



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In this technique it is very important to delimit the space where the action will take place. This physical space must be delimited and feel as if it is trusted by the audience and the protagonist. In this space the different phases of psychodrama will be developed.



Main structure: (90 - 100 minutes)
1. Warm-up phase: (10-15 minutes)
2. Action phase: (60 minutes)
3. Sharing phase: (30 minutes)

Implementation:

The main goal of Psychodrama is to reflect real life and mirrors the actual behaviour of participants in life situations. In psychodrama, individuals can role-play scenarios or experiences that would otherwise be unattainable. The entire concept in psychodrama revolves around the idea of "acting as if."

According with J.L. Moreno, Psychodrama has five main elements:

- **Stage:** designated place where the action unfolds and is confined within its boundaries. Metaphorically the stage serves as an expansion of life, going beyond the boundaries of real-life experiences and tests of reality.
- **Protagonist:** member of the group chosen to provide the content of the psychodrama based on his/her goals. The protagonist steps out from the group and takes on the central role during the psychodrama performance, becoming the focus of attention.
- **Director:** person who leads the session and assists the protagonist in achieving their objective during the Psychodrama. The director has to create a safe and supportive environment for exploration and expression.
- **Auxiliary egos:** these roles are held by other members of the group. These auxiliary egos embodying a facet of the protagonist's life or an external character (such as a family member, friend, or authority figure). The auxiliary ego aids the protagonist by providing support and enhancing their exploration of their inner thoughts and emotions.
- **The Audience or The Group:** individuals who observe the psychodrama unfold and offer feedback and encouragement to the protagonist. The audience members might also be given the opportunity to join in the performance by taking on roles like auxiliary egos or other characters.

Core Techniques:

- *Role Reversal:* a dramatization in which the protagonist places him/herself in the other's shoes, reversing with other roles.
 - *The Double:* the auxiliary ego plays the role, or an aspect of protagonist's role, by positioning him/herself adjacent to or in the background of the protagonist; expressing the protagonist's unspoken thoughts and feelings.
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- **The Mirror:** the protagonist observes the auxiliary ego, who acts as a reflection of themselves, replicating their role by mimicking their body language, gestures, and speech as they were portrayed during the dramatization.
 - **Soliloquy:** the director prompts the protagonist to think “out loud” and express his/her feelings, thought or intentions.

Theme addressed

- Clinical disorders (depression, somatic complaints, phobic-anxious behaviour, anxiety ...)
- Aggression (direct/indirect) and oppositional behaviours.
- Gender-based violence.
- Attention-seeking behaviours.
- Impulsivity.
- Empathy.
- Self-esteem.
- Parent-adolescent conflict.
- Oppositional defiant problems.
- Burnout and Mobbing.
- Psychological Empowerment and Work Empowerment.

Theater methodologies applied

Soliloquy, double, mirror, role reversal, resistance, interpolation, sculpture, social atom, intermediate objects, games, sociometry, role-play, amplification, concretization, empty chair, etc.

Implementation of a Psychodrama Session:

1. Warm-up phase. During the warm-up phase, the primary objective is to foster trust, strengthen the cohesiveness of the group, and create a feeling of safety among its members. Trust is crucial because it enables group members to feel at ease when participating in action-oriented methods or addressing issues and conflicts that arise. A common practice in the warm-up phase involves role-playing, where group members take on specific roles to introduce themselves. Given that in psychodrama, group members often portray roles from each other's lives, this technique can provide valuable insights to everyone in the group. As the members become more acquainted with each other through this process, one of them may step forward and volunteer to assume the role of the psychodrama protagonist, the central focus of the session.

2. Action phase. During the action phase, the protagonist with the therapist's help construct a scene inspired by the protagonist's current life. The therapist guides the session, while other group members take on the roles of auxiliary egos, representing people from the protagonist's life. The remaining group members assume the role of spectators.

In this phase, the various techniques mentioned above can be used: soliloquy, double, mirror, role reversal, resistance, interpolation, sculpture, social atom, intermediate objects, games, sociometry, role-play, amplification, concretization, empty chair ...

3. Sharing phase. Participants will be given a chance to express their thoughts and emotions regarding the experience. This could entail talking about their discoveries, their emotional states during the role-play, or the insights they acquired concerning their own feelings or relationships. Moreover, the sharing phase allows for a group conversation about what transpired during the action phase. During this discussion, the audience may explore various aspects, including how their observations and thoughts could influence the protagonist's future interactions or relationships with others.

4. Integration phase. The therapist will assist the group or individual in incorporating the newfound insights from the techniques into their everyday existence. This could entail establishing objectives or devising approaches to tackle particular issues that were examined during the role-play.

Tips and notes to the facilitator:

The “facilitator” - director - plays a pivotal role in establishing a safe and supportive environment for participants. Typically, he/she leads participants through role-playing exercises, prompting individuals to immerse themselves in specific scenarios or situations. The director remains attentive and ready to intervene when necessary, offering essential support and guidance. He/she facilitates the processing of participants' experiences through techniques like asking open-ended questions, reflecting on their narratives, and furnishing valuable feedback and insights. Through their guidance and support, the conductor empowers participants to delve into their deeper emotions and experiences, fostering an environment conducive to greater self-awareness and personal growth.