Jacob Moreno & Psychodrama

STARRING (in order of appearance):

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Before the show starts...

Let's see what you know!
1. Who is the founder of psychodrama?
   A. Fritz Perls  
   B. Zerka Moreno  
   C. Jacob Moreno  
   D. Eric Berne  

2. What are the three main roles in psychodrama?
   A. Protagonist, director, auxiliary egos  
   B. Protagonist, producer, auxiliary egos  
   C. Main character, supporting characters, director  
   D. Protagonist, supporting characters, producer  

3. Which of the following is not a psychodrama technique?
   A. Role reversal  
   B. Mirroring  
   C. Empty Chair  
   D. Doubling  

4. Psychodrama has been found to be effective with which populations?
   A. LGBTQ community  
   B. Young children on inpatient psych units  
   C. Married couples  
   D. Earthquake victims  
   E. All of the above  

5. What is the professional organization for psychodrama?
   A. The American Academy of Psychodrama  
   B. The Moreno Foundation of Psychodramatists  
   C. The Psychodrama Association  
   D. American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama  

6. Psychodrama has found to be NOT effective with children. TRUE or FALSE.
Pre-Test

7. The underlying theory associated with psychodrama is called the Theory of Interpersonal Relations.
   TRUE or FALSE

8. All of the following are associated with the Theory of Interpersonal Relations *EXCEPT?*
   A. The moment
   B. Freedom
   C. Spontaneity
   D. Flexibility

9. The founder of psychodrama was born in which European city?
   A. Budapest
   B. Bucharest
   C. Berlin
   D. Vienna

10. The founder of psychodrama was especially fond of which American city?
    A. Los Angeles
    B. Miami
    C. Chicago
    D. New York
Jacob Moreno
Jacob Moreno - Early Life

- Jacob Levy Moreno was born May 18th, 1889 in Bucharest Romania to a Sephardi Jewish family.

- In 1895 his family moved to Vienna to escape political turmoil and embrace the intellectual creativity of Vienna at this time.

- He was very fascinated by interpersonal relationships at a young age, which he explored through his siblings and neighborhood friends.
Jacob Moreno - Early Adulthood

- He studied Mathematics, Medicine, and Philosophy at the University of Vienna, becoming a Doctor of Medicine in 1917.
  - He was particularly interested in the social ties that bind and separate people.

- Rather than focusing on clients’ pasts, Moreno preferred to focus on the present and future with particular attention paid to interpersonal relationships.

- During the end of WWI, he was assigned to a children’s hospital in the refugee camp of Mitterndorf in Austria.
In 1925 Moreno moved to the U.S. to take a teaching position at Columbia University.

- He loved the freedom he experienced in New York City, thus believing it was the ideal place to develop his theories.

- He continued researching and diagraming interpersonal relationships in various settings, such as the Hudson School for Girls and Sing Sing Prison.

- In 1932 Moreno introduced group psychotherapy to the American Psychiatric Association.
Any given moment is involved in change, thus demanding a reaction.

He believed “the moment” to be often undervalued, for it serves as a gateway to creativity and authenticity, which is best accessed via spontaneity—an inherently genuine expression.

- Spontaneity demands flexibility, which in turn brings us in contact with inflexible aspects of our self.
  - These aspects are connected to our values, fears, and most protected and defended parts of our self.
- Increasing our capacity for spontaneity increases our ability to connect with our true values—our authentic self—and helps free us from the constructs associated with our fears.
- Spontaneity is attitudinal and may happen through thought, emotion, or action.

Equilibrium is established by a balanced proportion of spontaneity to momentary change.

- When spontaneity is reduced in proportion to change, disequilibrium arises.
- Disequilibrium may manifest from, and in, mind, body, or emotion.

Does this remind you of any other theories we have discussed?
Moreno continued to develop his theories and establish teaching centers and institutes, with a focus on working within university settings.

He continued to revise and develop his work until late in his life.

Moreno died in New York City in 1974, aged 84. He chose to die by abstaining from all food and water after a long illness.
Basic Elements of Psychodrama

Director
- the catalyst, facilitator, analyst

Protagonist
- the person who works on stage during the action phase of the group
- Considered the group's representative, working with the theme that is most relevant for the group at the time

Auxiliary Egos
- anyone in the group that plays a role representing a significant other in the life of the protagonist

Stage
- constructed reality the protagonist's individual space

The group
- usually 10-15 members
- Many societal roles represented
Stages of Psychodrama: Warm Up

- Serves to produce an atmosphere of creative possibility, it creates a safe place in which the individual can establish trust with the director, the group, and the method of psychodrama
- Designed to increase spontaneity in the group
- Important for director to warm-up as well in order to:
  - be aware of any resistances
  - be aware of expectations for the group
- Warm-up exercise fall into four categories:
  - Introductory
  - Physical
  - Intimacy
  - Protagonist-centered
Stages of Psychodrama: Action

- Role-playing portrayal of various key scenes
- Uses various techniques to reveal the problem and move towards its solution
- The director and the protagonist together set out to create scenes that give examples of the problem in the present, past or future, looking for a possible behavioral pattern
- The aim is to see the problem as it exists in the present and trying to resolve it by establishing the core or roots of the issue
A time for group catharsis and integration

The group is not diagnostic or analytic; share emotional reactions which pertain to the session

Captures the learning process; members learn how they are like or unlike the protagonist

Helps normalize the experience of the protagonist
Psychodrama Techniques

- **The Double**
  - "the heart of psychodrama"
  - assists the protagonist in finding words to express feeling and thoughts he or she could not adequately express

- **Role reversal**
  - "engine of psychodrama"
  - allows the protagonist to see themselves through the eyes of another (A becomes B, B becomes A)
Psychodrama Techniques

- **Mirror Technique**
  ○ An auxiliary ego portrays someone who is reluctant or unable to perform for himself

- **The Soliloquy**
  ○ Subject recites his thoughts out loud in the middle of the scene; useful for expressing hidden thoughts and action tendencies

- **Future Projection Technique**
  ○ Protagonist acts out a meaningful situation in which the subject expects to act in the future
Moreno in Action

Psychodrama with Marriage:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvgnOVfLn4k

Therapeutic Theater:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ok9Hb5m4r7E
Strengths of Psychodrama

- Active involvement, alternative to talk therapy
- Easily integrated with other theories
- Influenced other theories
- Used with many populations
- Client engages with many modes
- Multi-purpose: can be used once or as brief intervention
- Emotionally powerful, teaches empathy
"With the passing years, I stopped thinking of myself as a psychotherapist because it became clear I do not heal any psyches. Protagonists themselves do the healing. My task is to find and touch that autonomous healing center within, to assist and direct the protagonist to do the same. I am merely a guide in the wilderness, clearing away obstacles so protagonists can find their very own path."

- Zerka Moreno, To Dream Again
Limitations of Psychodrama

- Anxious or introverted clients
- Training clinicians (experiential format)
- Physical contact in sessions
- Confidentiality
- Multiple people typically
Who Benefits from a Little Drama in Their Lives?

- Difficulties in relationships, self-management, social & emotional functioning
- Unresolved loss, trauma, mood disorders (anxiety & depression) (Chimera & Baim, 2010)
- Used in diverse settings (trauma and abuse recovery, medical training, group homes, prisons, refugee centers, marital counseling)
Younger Populations

CHILDREN
- "I used to walk through the gardens of Vienna gathering children and forming impromptu play. I began to treat children's problems by letting them act extemporaneously." - Moreno
- Warm Up: How big are you? What color are you? What sound do you make? (feelings)
- Love of play, props, scene setting

ADOLESCENTS
- Warm Up: smaller groups, TV Announcer
- Action Spectrogram (place on continuum)
- Intrapsychic Psychodrama (exploring self and feelings of ambivalence)
- Interpersonal Psychodrama (relationships)
- Weary with victims of childhood trauma, antisocial & sociopathic youth, differently abled youth
Other Populations

- Clients with HIV/AIDS diagnoses
- Veterans
- Istanbul Earthquake trauma
- LGBTQ community
- Grieving miscarriages and abortions
- Straight & gay couples
Professionalism

- American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama (www.asgpp.org) [1942]
- Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama, & Sociometry
- Zerka T. Moreno Foundation (not-for-profit offering training, research, and education)
How to Become Certified

- Need M.A. in relevant field
- 780 hours minimum of training in psychodrama, sociometry, and group psychotherapy from certified individuals
- 52 weeks of supervised experience, 80 psychodrama sessions each a minimum of 60 minutes in length
- 40 minimum supervision sessions
- Professional memberships & activities
Training Centers

- Psychodrama & Creative Arts Therapy Institute in NYC
- South Florida Center for Psychodrama, Action Training, and Groupworks in Miami
- Graduate School of Creative Arts Therapies, University of Haifa in Israel
- Trainings in Canada, New Mexico, California, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Texas; can use directory to find one close to you
References


Activity!

Let's divvy up roles and practice using psychodrama ourselves....
Were You Paying Attention?
Post-Test

1. What is the role of the auxiliary ego?

2. What are the three stages of psychodrama?

3. Name two techniques commonly used in psychodrama:

4. Name two populations psychodrama has shown to be effective with:

5. Moreno influenced future theorists, including Fritz Perls. TRUE or FALSE.

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