

## Activity #7: Forum Theatre Improvisation

*In this exercise, students improvise a scene based on a monologue from **Outside**. They are then exposed to the technique of Forum Theatre, in which audience members stop the action and take over roles in order to suggest new ways for characters to solve their problems. The goal is for students to use role play to explore personal and social issues, such as analyzing conflict situation and applying conflict resolution strategies through the use of Forum Theatre conventions.*

### **Materials Needed:**

Excerpt, Exit Card (found at bottom of attached document)

### **Instructional Procedures:**

To begin the class, explain to students that they will be improvising a scene from *Outside* based on an excerpt about Daniel's experience on the school bus.

Assign students to groups of four or five and give each group a copy of the excerpt provided.

Instruct groups to dramatize the excerpt as a multi-actor scene that occurs on the school bus. (E.g. one actor plays Daniel, another plays the bus driver, etc.)

Ask for a volunteer group to present their scene to the entire class.

Tell the students that the scene will be replayed with a major twist added. This time, a student in the audience may yell, "Stop!" at any time and take over a role from one of the actors. If a student takes over a role, they must change the dialogue or action in order to improve Daniel's situation. Suggestions for changes include using different language, reacting differently, or being silent instead of speaking/speaking instead of being silent.

Run the scene and wait for someone to stop the action. If students seem hesitant to do so, the teacher should stop the action at an appropriate time and ask for a volunteer to take over a role.

Each time the scene is stopped, ask the class to suggest the most logical outcome of the change in action or dialogue.

Continue to work through the scene a few times. It often requires repetition for Forum Theatre to develop workable solutions. **At the end of the exercise, ask:**

Who was the bully in the scene? Why have you labelled this person a bully?

Who were allies of the person being bullied (Daniel)? Did the allies offer any help in the scene?

Who were bystanders in the scene who witnessed the bullying?

Which strategies do you think could have provided the most help to Daniel? Why?

How did you feel about playing your character in the improvised scene?

Did the Forum Theatre activity offer any suggestions for behavior in real life?

To end the activity, ask students to complete the Exit Card provided.

## Forum Theatre Improvisation-Excerpt

**DANIEL:** Right. Got it. Middle school. Where dreams come true. Ha. I'm sitting on the school bus with these girls, who were my friends, 'cause I've always had girls as friends. And we're listening to that song, you know the one by that super trashy pop star who, like, won that competition and then had the one song about, well, doing it? (sings) "I wanna do it, do it, do it, all niight, with yooooou"- and my friends are imitating her, kinda trying to sing like her and kinda making fun of her at the same time. We're laughing so hard, and then Joni says "make Daniel sing it, he sings it the best". Which was true. Joni's begging me to do it, and her friends are now begging me to do it, and so I do it I sing it and it is...awesome, and it fills the bus...and then...silence. And then Jared, who I'd just met that year, at the start of grade 7, who was way too tall for his age and looked like someone stretched him overnight, sitting at back of the bus, he says, "hey, Daniel, are you a faggot?"

## **Forum Theatre Improvisation - Exit Card**

Please write one new thing you learned after experiencing the Forum Theatre activity.