



# MÉTHOD'ARTS

PREVENTING VIOLENCE THROUGH ART



## PUPPETS



## THE PUPPETS

When reality seems too threatening, the imagination can be a valuable vehicle for expressing emotions. Young children see a puppet as a small, living character with whom they identify, lending it their feelings and fears. The child has the ability to immediately project himself into the stories, which offers a good access to his inner self. Thus, when they take a puppet in hand, they can express their emotions without reservation because "it is not for real". Thanks to this transfer, the child can confront situations that he/she experiences by taking distance.

The child can be called upon to react to these situations, to propose solutions, which in the end helps him/her to communicate and develop his emotional management, and to feel less powerless. If he/she can explain to his/her puppet how to react to such a situation, he/she can explain it to himself too.



# VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORKSHOP WITH PUPPETS

While puppets are an excellent way to get messages across to children, a participatory approach is needed to let them express their experiences, emotions and fears, and to carry out violence prevention. The puppet has the capacity to make children laugh, to de-dramatise the situation, and whatever the subject, it is essential that this moment remains playful.



## Human resources

### ***An artist animator***



- Artist from the community
- Mastery of the theme of violence
- In line with the values of the organisation
- Caring and empathetic
- Experienced in workshop facilitation
- Serious and with good references.

### ***A co-facilitator***



- Member of the organizing association
- In charge of violence awareness and logistics
- Increased knowledge of the subject of violence
- Able to welcome children's voices and moderate discussions.

If the workshop is to take place in a school setting, it is not always advisable to include teachers in the workshop sessions. Some children may have held back from sharing experiences or opinions because of their proximity to the teacher.

## Course of the workshop



Participants: Approximately 15 children, from 5 years old.



Duration: 12 sessions of 2 hours.



Inclusivity: Depending on the audience, the workshop will be delivered in simple and accessible language. Written materials should be considered if participants are hearing impaired.



## The preparation

1

### Identification of an artist to lead the workshop:

- Contact local cultural associations.
- Invite the artists to a presentation and discussion on the activity and the theme of violence.
- Choose the artist via a panel from the organization following this meeting.



*This stage can sometimes take several months.*

2

### Organization of an awareness-raising session

Organize basic training for the artist and their team around three key concepts: violence, equality and power.

*If the artist is not already trained in these issues.*

3

### Planning the workshop

- Discuss the program of the workshop and plan the activities in detail (place, duration, materials, distribution of tasks, etc.)
- Choose collectively the modalities for closing the workshop: place, date, guests, and method of restitution.  
3 to 4 sessions



4

### Identifying location for the workshop

- An outdoor or indoor location
- A safe place for the expression of experiences, opinions and emotions
- Accessible to all people with reduced mobility



*The room and equipment must be identified and acquired by the association organizing the workshop, on the advice of the artist, in order to ensure the quality of the equipment. If the workshop takes place with pupils, a space can be envisaged within the school.*

5

### Organization of a violence awareness workshop for teachers

*If the workshop takes place in a school setting*

Raise awareness of the approach among the teaching staff, get them on board and provide them with information for the referral of victims.

6

### Recruitment of participants

Via local associations, posters, or the school system, depending on the target audience identified in the project. If the activity is to take place in schools, allow sufficient time to obtain the agreement of the headmaster, and then of the staff in charge (guidance counsellor, education officer, teachers, etc.). In this case, the children taking part in the workshop are identified by the school management and its teaching staff.

7

### Organization of an information session for parents

*If the workshop is held with children and young people*

Gather the parents' agreement and make them aware of the process in order to ensure the children's presence at the workshop.



## Course of the workshop

1

### Introduction

- Introduction of the artist, the participants and the puppets.
- Introduction of games and songs to create a climate of trust
- Assessment of the children's knowledge of the subject of violence, introduction of the definition and discussion of their daily lives.
- Sharing practical information with the children and parents (times, place, people to contact in case of absence, final feedback).



*Participants should leave this first meeting with the feeling that they have found a safe place with caring people.*

2

### Sharing stories about violence

Familiarize the children with the puppets based on the children's own stories of what they have heard or experienced.

Find out what their understanding of violence is and where to go for help if they need it.

3

### Development of the scenario with the children

The violence that the children may have experienced will be readapted and included in the scenario, to allow this distancing and learning of the children through the play.

4

### Puppet creation

- Children are free to make suggestions for their characters.
- The creation of the puppets can be an opportunity to address the subject of consent, physical and sexual violence.

5

### Becoming a puppeteer

- Teach puppet handling.
- Directing the script.



## After the workshop

### Organization of a closing event

A final performance to close the workshop should be planned. Plan several scenes so that each child can have the opportunity to handle a puppet. The show should also raise awareness of violence among the public (parents or schoolmates).



*This stage has proved to be fundamental for the valorization of the work of the workshop participants and also for broadening the impact of the project. It is also an opportunity to pass on information about gender-based violence and the telephone numbers for victims.*



*In order to reach a maximum number of people, good communication of the event should be considered by the organization.*



## Evaluation

A quick test during the first session of the workshop and during the last session is carried out on the themes related to violence to check that the participants have acquired the right knowledge. The last session is also an opportunity to collect the participants' opinions on the workshop as a whole.



## Materials needed



A large closed classroom, accessible and out of sight, which can be a safe place for the expression of experiences, opinions and emotions.



The material needed to build the puppets: socks, fabric, beads, sticks, wool, thread, etc.



The material needed for the construction of the set: cardboard, wood, fabric, paint, etc.



Musical instruments





## Resources for further information

- Remer, R. and Tzuriel, D. "“I Teach Better with the Puppet” - Use of Puppet as a Mediating Tool in Kindergarten Education – an Evaluation.” American Journal of Educational Research, vol. 3, no. 3 (2015): 356-365.
- Hartwig, E. (2014). Puppets in the playroom: Utilizing puppets and child-centered facilitative skills as a metaphor for healing. International Journal of Play Therapy, 23(4), 204-216.

***For more resources,  
scan this QR code.***



*Founded in 1993, Médecins du Monde Switzerland is a medical association of solidarity active in several countries around the world, including Switzerland. In 2022, MdM Switzerland undertook experience capitalization work on violence prevention workshops through art implemented since 2016 in Benin, Cameroon and Mexico. Similar Method'art sheets on photography, theatre, puppetry, writing/slam, and painting are available at:*

<https://medecinsdumonde.ch/news/atelier-prevenir-la-violence-a-travers-art>

For more information on Médecins du Monde.  
[www.medecinsdumonde.ch](http://www.medecinsdumonde.ch)

**FEDERATION  
VAUDOISE  
COOPERATION**



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