Rehearsing Conflict

UBC HUMAN RESOURCES: BUILDING CONFLICT RESILIENCE & CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THEATRE FOR LIVING

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Background

Rehearsing Conflict is a unique workplace learning opportunity created through a partnership between Human Resources and the Department of Theatre and Film at the University of British Columbia (UBC). This initiative was a free workshop series (or, summer intensive) for UBC employees that used forum theatre to play out and explore real stories of conflict from the UBC community in order to shift how they approach them.

Rehearsing Conflict ran from June 23-29, 2017 at the Dorothy Somerset Studio with 11 program participants and 40 audience participants. The core staff team included Amrit Mundy, Megan Ryland, Nihan Sevinç, and Tom Scholte. In addition, the planning team supporting this core group was composed of Fran Watters, Kathleen Cheng, and Maura De Cruz. The

Program Dates	Times
Friday, June 23	9:00am to 5:00pm
Saturday, June 24	9:00am to 5:00pm
Monday, June 26	1:00pm to 5:00pm
Tuesday, June 27	1:00pm to 5:00pm
Wednesday, June 28	1:00pm to 5:00pm
Thursday, June 29	9:00am to 11:30 (Rehearsal) 11:30 to 1:30 (Performance)

evaluation team included Stuart Murray and Tanja Maiers, as well as Amrit Mundy and Megan Ryland. Although Julia McLaughlin was initially part of the core team, Nihan Sevinç joined the team in June in her place. Taken together, this is the current Conflict Theatre staff team.

Rehearsing Conflict represents only a portion of the two-year Conflict Theatre pilot project running from 2017-2018. Within the project, each year the team will:

- Develop scripts for plays that attend to present challenges UBC employees face across campus
- Offer these plays to the UBC community as a resource and safer context for practice of conflict engagement and emotional intelligence
- Support a growing team and the wider community to build the skills necessary to shift conflict engagement and sustain Conflict Theatre on campus
- Build a community of practice that is engaged in Conflict Theatre and can provide long-term support, mentorship, and shared growth

Approach

Rehearsing Conflict is an arts-based approach to building the emotional intelligence and skills necessary to constructively engage in difficult conversations. By offering a safe place to experiment with conflict, participants can use the theatre setting to explore their own capacities and take on the perspective of others in conflict. The workshop series uses *forum theatre* techniques established by Brazilian activist Augusto Boal, developed by Vancouver's David Diamond (*Theatre for Living*), and specifically tailored to the UBC workplace by Professor Tom Scholte of the Department of Theatre and Film in collaboration with UBC Human Resources. Drawing on the experience of participants and stories from the community, the Rehearsing Conflict workshop series uses forum theatre to explore, interrupt, re-create, and change these community stories through rehearsal and performance. At UBC, this approach is called Conflict Theatre.

Forum theatre is a type of performance that arises from the life of a community and it can be used as a tool to engage with difficult situations. In forum theatre, a play is created and performed by community members, not professional actors, and it tells a story based on real events. During a performance, the play is presented to an audience, who is then welcomed to intervene in the scenes to explore how the story might play out differently. The spectators thereby become "spect-actors." Through this interactive process, forum theatre provides a unique opportunity to rehearse challenging moments and apply new strategies to real problems. Forum theatre also includes a series of exercises, like Cops in the Head and Rainbow of Desire, with key related lessons.

Origins at UBC

Conflict Theatre was introduced in 2011* to allow UBC employees to incorporate the principles of *UBC Respectful Environment Statement for Students, Faculty and Staff* into day-to-day difficult conversations and high-stakes conflicts. Since 2011, Workplace Learning & Engagement (then called Organizational Development and Learning) has worked with partners like the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology to bring this learning strategy to UBC employees to address workplace conflict. In 2011 and 2014, 6-8 week workshops were held to train troupe members in forum theatre and build short scripts based on the experience of employees. This material has been performed in programs and units across campus, offering a new way to explore our community

narratives of conflict and practice alternative engagement strategies. After two successful summer series and integration into the Managing@UBC and Academic Leadership Development Program, Rehearsing Conflict represents the next step to bringing the Conflict Theatre approach to UBC.

During each initiative, research has been done to understand the place and impact of this work. With support from Sustainability Scholars and the work of Workplace Learning & Engagement staff, brief literature reviews have been completed to understand the context for strategies addressing workplace conflict, arts-based learning, methodological considerations in research, and the tradition of forum theatre. In addition, qualitative research, including interviews, was conducted in 2014 to explore how the program has impacted participants' engagement with conflict. Evaluation of Rehearsing Conflict is intended to continue developing an understanding of what competencies the program offers participants and how to measure them, as well as to determine whether project objectives have been met.

Rationale & Objectives

All teams and units naturally encounter difficult conversations and conflict as they strive to meet challenges, solve problems, and incorporate people with different skills and experiences. UBC is an intercultural workplace with high standards for excellence, professionalism, and productivity; to function at its highest capacity in a sustainable fashion, constructive conflict is necessary for innovation, troubleshooting, project management, employee satisfaction, and authentic relationship building. By preparing to engage with this conflict effectively and constructively, we are preparing for success.

In providing a place to explore community stories and practice courageous conversations, Rehearsing Conflict hopes to influence how these conversations play out across campus. While the *UBC Respectful Environment Statement for Students, Faculty and Staff* provides solid principles and several professional development opportunities on campus provide information, employees also require support to practice concrete strategies that can uphold these principles and enact new knowledge about conflict. Policy alone is not enough to shift the patterns of how employees approach day-to-day difficult conversations and high-stakes conflicts. In each iteration of Conflict Theatre, it has been important to provide a new script and rehearsal space for conflict (literally and figuratively) for this kind of transformative practice.

Objectives

Rehearsing Conflict had a series of ambitious objectives. Previous iterations of Conflict Theatre have established the value and potential of this kind of work, and this two-year pilot is intended to take Conflict Theatre to the next level. Sustainability is a key feature of the next phase of this work each item is connected to the sustainability of a) the Conflict Theatre program and principles, b) the UBC workplace as a respectful and effective environment for all, and c) UBC itself, as both a community and an institution.

1. **Advance the principles** of the *UBC Respectful Environment Statement for Students, Faculty and Staff* through training UBC employees in an approach that can support them.
2. **Advance a philosophy** of conflict engagement in the UBC workplace that normalizes conflict and emphasizes engagement that centers on insight, self-awareness, other awareness, compassion, self-regulation, and thoughtfulness. Intellectual, emotional, and embodied knowledge are all a part of this kind of conflict engagement.
3. **Create a learning experience for multiple parties**, including program participants, audience members, jokers, supporters, and community members.
4. **Deliver an effective summer intensive program** for UBC employees that could attract and teach new troupe participants; build on and enhance joking and directing skills among advanced participants; and establish the groundwork for future efforts.
5. **Explore and establish a sustainable expansion** of the initiative to create a "ripple effect" beyond the summer intensive program that would be practical long-term and might be integrated into other areas of the university.
6. **Provide a public good** (community resource that we all can access) that could benefit the UBC community at large and might be spread either formally or informally as a "social contagion" to make a difference on campus.

*For further information on the 2011 initiative please see Mundy & Chan, 2013:

https://celt.uwindsor.ca/ojs/leddy/index.php/CELT/article/view/3764

Participation: Recruitment and Applications

Recruitment

The goal of recruitment communications was to reach as broad and diverse a UBC audience as possible, because forum theatre requires sharing community stories (which cannot be done if sections of the community are not present) and because broad impact and uptake of this work is a project objective. An additional objective of the communication strategy was to connect with current and potential sponsors or partners for the initiative, so it was important to build bridges with those who received our calls outs. Communication had two key waves: program recruitment and performance recruitment. Our communications were well-received with generally positive feedback and enthusiasm for the project.

Recruitment Challenges

- Time Commitment

  The main concern expressed by potential participants who wanted to apply was the substantial time commitment. In addition, due to wanting to create and maintain group cohesion, maintain momentum, and cover necessary content, there was almost no flexibility for the scheduling offered to participants. Therefore, a single conflicting commitment excluded a potential applicant. Although the summer intensive was free, and therefore theoretically low-barrier, its required time commitment was significant and proved to be a substantial challenge for potential applicants.

- Timeline

  Recruitment began in early May and concluded roughly a month later, with the summer intensive running only a month and a half after first issuing a call for applicants. Given the substantial time commitment involved, not all interested people could re-arrange their calendar or take time off with limited notice in advance.

- Access

  Although the team was committed to reaching a diverse group with our call, some employee groups were harder to access than others—particularly those without a formal organization that could be a point of contact.

- Lack of Familiarity

  Although previous iterations of Conflict Theatre exist, there is only an emerging awareness of this work on the UBC campus. Conflict Theatre work is easier to understand through

experience than through explanation. While all people experience conflict, theatre and/or conflict engagement might be outside of many people's comfort zones. Therefore, without prior experience, interest (in either conflict resolution or theatre), or personal openness, the initiative may not have immediate appeal.

Application Process

With only a small number of available spots in the program and a goal of bringing a diverse group of people from all over campus, it was critical to have an application process. The application was intended to incorporate the values of the planning team while being easy to complete, as to avoid unnecessary barriers to participation. Minimizing the burden of the application process is a key recommendation if diversity and a high number of applicants is desired.

When evaluating an application, the planning team considered the following:

- Availability: Can the applicant attend all workshop dates for the entire period?
- Diversity: Does the applicant diversify the types of employee and life experiences in the room?
- Commitment: Is the applicant likely to continue to take part in a long-term commitment to this project at UBC or otherwise support its growth? For example, are they orientated towards service and/or learning, in a leadership role, or invested in improving the UBC community?

Acceptance decisions were made by consensus among the planning team. In order to allow for participants to request the time off from work, decisions were made at the earliest opportunity. Although 18 applicants were accepted, several had scheduling conflicts arise and the final total of attendees was 11. The majority of participants were staff, with the exception of 1 graduate student, 1 senior instructor, and 2 retired staff (a faculty member and a staff member). Although there was emphasis in Human Resources, the staff hailed from across the campus. The School of Nursing, Department of Educational Studies, Equity and Inclusion Office, Development and Alumni Engagement, Provost's Office, and UBC IT were all represented in the group. In addition, participants were a variety of ages and had held various kinds of positions, from service to management. It is worth noting, however, that all 11 participants were women.

Additional participation and diversity was provided by the inclusion of the Friends of Conflict (FOC), which was a category of engagement that emerged naturally throughout the process. FOC were

invited to take part as audience members for our final rehearsal on June 29 and practice interventions with the troupe. FOC were invited based on three potential criteria: they were a) influential voices or leaders on campus who could advocate for the program in future, b) members of an otherwise-underrepresented part of the UBC community, c) accepted as a participant, but unable to participate in the full program for some reason. In total, 11 FOC were invited and 7 accepted, participating in both the rehearsal and the workshop performance. Within the FOC group that attended, additional parts of the university were represented: Building Operations, Food Services, Theatre, CUPE 2950, CUPE 116, and the Faculty of Computer Science. In addition, while our troupe included only women, men composed the slight majority of FOC.

Recommendations

Given the specific challenges of the program, some additional steps might be helpful to support the goals of recruiting a diverse group of participants who can then champion this conflict engagement strategy throughout the UBC community:

- Develop awareness of the summer intensive throughout the year and begin the call for applications two to three months in advance of the application closing date, with increasing urgency over the last month of the timeline
- Begin outreach with the most difficult to access groups as early as possible, as this avenue is the most labour intensive and requires more relationship building
- Locate partners or sponsors with personal networks in the harder-to-access employee groups on campus. These sponsors might be in positions of leadership, but may also simply be influencers with a wide social network
- Use multimedia communication strategies, like a promotional video, to give people a stronger sense of the kind of work and value of the program
- Recognize that this type of program is likely to attract a smaller number of highly committed participants, rather than many participants who are moderately interested or committed. There is significant value in creating a tight-knitted group with high investment in this work, rather than using the intensive to build new bridges. Although expanding this committed and practiced group is very valuable, other strategies may be necessary to bring Conflict Theatre to those less committed and not willing to put aside so much time
- Do not presume familiarity with the program in promotional materials. Pitch the promotional information to the widest audience reasonable and ensure that the value proposition is clear

Evaluation

Evaluation for the two-year pilot for Conflict Theatre has been a key discussion. An evaluation team was formed from the small group of Amrit Mundy, Stuart Murray, Tanja Maier, and Megan Ryland. The team identified some key features of a useful evaluation and implemented several different strategies in hopes to gather the information necessary to determine if the project was meeting its goals. While both results and strategies will be forthcoming, the approach and preliminary results are described in this section

Levels of Evaluation

As a project with both immediate and long-term goals, evaluation has been and will continue to look different for different aspects of the process.

Individual evaluation is conceptualized to address the internal change (learning) processes happening for program participants. Individual learning is happening in the program in the sense of building skills as a troupe member, joker, or director, but the greatest investment is in evaluating the skills of participants regarding conflict and emotional intelligence.

Program operations are important to evaluate to ensure the program itself is working well and meeting goals for creating a positive participant experience within given funding parameters. It is acknowledged that the program will influence individual and community learning, but it is its own piece to measure as well.

Community engagement evaluation is important to the future of Conflict Theatre on campus, as this pilot is invested in the "ripple out" of the program within the UBC community. Conflict Theatre

presents a set of skills and an approach to conflict that is unique and arguably most valuable when it is a shared language (and tool) within a community. To create that good, however, it must spread beyond the participants in any one program and through the workplace. Therefore, goals and plans have been set to bring Conflict Theatre beyond the intensive experience. Evaluation must be completed of these aspects of the project as well. Although this level of evaluation is the most incomplete, we have begun by requesting feedback from audience participants in our rehearsal process and workshop performance on June 29th. By hearing from this first circle of people being introduced to the work beyond the program, we hope to gain insights into how others might encounter this work.

Approach & Methods

Evaluation of Rehearsing Conflict was very important to the team, although the practicalities of evaluation had to be balanced with interests in outcomes. Within the scope of the project, the team was interested in evaluations that completed the following goals:

1. A *defensible* model for measuring the value of the program to its participants
2. A *feasible* model that could be integrated into the moving pieces of program preparation and delivery with limited additional cost
3. A *practical* model that used the data already gathered and would provide future data that would be valuable to the team

Our approach was influenced by academic research processes and organizational development strategies, creating a blended approach. Our work in this aspect of the project takes place in a space where theory meets practice. That said, an action research framework is likely the most useful description of our methodology in evaluating.

In **action research**, work is completed in a spiral pattern that locates a problem or question, gathers input or feedback, which then requires reflection and analysis, followed by conclusions or recommendations. Although we are only in year one of the program, we already see this process beginning. The program will continue to iterate in large and small ways as a result of this spiral.

Grounded theory is also an influence on this work, as the evaluation team felt that valuable data would arise from the field and experience, and then we could seek to place our work in the literature. This instinct towards valuing community knowledge is connected to Paulo Freire's logic of bringing

people together to build critical consciousness from the knowledge already present. We hope to bring greater context to our findings, but the preliminary theories and concepts are based in the team's prior experience with Conflict Theatre.

Our key question for evaluation has been, "Is this program doing what we think it is?" because the program has arisen from prior knowledge and experience. However, the team hoped to move beyond anecdotes to a more evidence-based understanding of what was happening in this work. We are investigating and naming the value of the work to better understand and support that value.

However, the working theory of Conflict Theatre focused on outcomes that were difficult to capture, self-awareness and other awareness, and an understanding of conflict itself that is nuanced. Within the team, there is a sense that we have key concepts and connected concepts that could be explored through the data generated in the evaluation process.
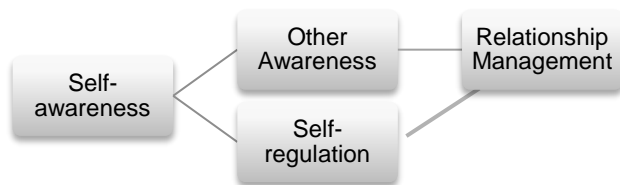
We currently define these key concepts as:

- **self-awareness:** Awareness of your own emotions, triggers, patterns, context, and perspective.
- **other awareness:** Awareness of other people's emotions, triggers, patterns, context, and perspective.

Other concepts will be developed more fully within the process of analysis and comparison with the standing literature.

Evaluating subjective internal experiences or changes is a challenge that we hoped to meet with creativity. It is difficult to test for internal qualities and directly questioning participants about these concepts appears liable to bias the data towards confirmation of our theories. Within the given program and evaluation environment, asking participants if they are more "self-aware" for example is arguably likely to illicit a positive response if only because the participants would a) be predisposed to give a pleasing answer, and b) potentially understand "self-awareness" through their own definition of the

term. Instead, the evaluation team decided to use a less direct method of evaluation of these concepts.

Pre-program and post-program interviews and qualitative content analysis of the transcripts were chosen as the main method for individual evaluation. Participants were asked to speak about an experience of conflict and would, in the course of the explanation, be asked to speak about how they approached various aspects of a conflict. This would be done before and after the program, and then responses would be compared. By asking for participants to relate a story of conflict and speak to their experience of it, the team hoped to allow participants to demonstrate the concepts we were evaluating. The approach of using stories to do this was influenced by behaviour-based interviewing, which is often found in hiring to use prior behaviour to predict future behaviour. Using this method, two questions could be asked: First, how did participants approach conflict initially, and second, do participants approach conflict differently, even in conversation, following this program?

Surveys were used for more direct questions regarding program experiences, as well as providing some space for participants to directly describe what they felt was valuable. Surveys were also used for the audience members, considered a part of the community engagement level, as this was the most efficient way to request feedback from those who took part in the performance. These two surveys, one for program participants and one for audience members, were quite different. The former focused largely on concrete experiences. The latter also directly asked about the two key concepts, as conducting interviews with audience members was not feasible at this time. Initial survey results are summarized in this report, but interview analysis is forthcoming.

Preliminary Survey Outcomes

Participant Feedback

Program participants were provided an opportunity to complete a feedback survey, which largely focused on the concrete aspects of the program that might influence their experience. The survey was intended to provide information about logistics and procedures that might be changed in future. Reponses were received from nearly all of the participants and are summarized below.

Basic Program Features

Participants were asked to rate the following aspects on a scale from 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied), but all responses fell in the top range of "Somewhat Satisfied" to "Very Satisfied," as you'll see below.

- Location
10% Somewhat Satisfied (4)
90% Very Satisfied (5)

- Workshop Schedule
30% Somewhat Satisfied (4)
60% Very Satisfied (5)

- Facilitation and Instruction
100% Very Satisfied (5)

- Activities and Content
20% Somewhat Satisfied (4)
80% Very Satisfied (5)

- Refreshments
20% Somewhat Satisfied (4)
80% Very Satisfied (5)

- Process and Communication
10% Somewhat Satisfied (4)
90% Very Satisfied (5)

- Group Size and Composition
30% Somewhat Satisfied (4)
70% Very Satisfied (5)

Within the comments, additional emphasis and clarity was available. Participants consistently found the program positive, effective, and well-run. Tom's facilitation and knowledge was highly regarded in particular (eg. *"Tom was instrumental in my learning as skilled joker, facilitator and instructor/professor. I felt he did an excellent job creating a safe space for us to experiment, to learn and to ultimately be a 1/2 shade braver through all of this!"*) and the core team was lauded for their work (eg. *"The team that coordinated the workshop was fantastic!"*).

Participants had few areas that they felt could be improved, as the major concern was fitting the program into their schedule and being short on time during the program—two intertwined problems that participants themselves recognized were difficult to solve. Feedback acknowledged that this workshop schedule, while not ideal, was likely the best to accomplish the program goals (eg. *"I don't think the schedule could have been reworked much differently, but it was the only thing I noted that could be improved at all!"*).

Two participants did express a desire for a more diverse group, particularly wider gender representation, and this aligns with the wishes of the Conflict Theatre team as well. Although the group composition and size was generally satisfactory, this is an area for improvement that might take some creative thinking.

A barrier to participation was identified by a participant who found the physical movements challenging at times. It is important feedback to point out that the activities in this program were highly physical and not suited to all people. Although the facilitator was open to adjusting activities to meet physical needs, in the future this challenge might be acknowledged more fully and accommodations might be considered in advance.

Participants expressed happiness with having chosen to participate and were very complimentary. In general, although the program is "*intense*" and more time for creating skits would be ideal according to several people, the participants felt that the program ran well and provided a lot of value.

What did participants report learning or practicing through the program?

The lessons drawn from this program were wide in variety, but similar in category. Part of the interest in evaluating the intensive was based on the prior experience that Conflict Theatre provides many different kinds of value to participants, some of which are not easily anticipated by our team. Participant responses to this section spoke to their individual response to the material provided by Tom and the experiences shared by their peers; their take-aways were nearly unique. However, they described different aspects of emotional intelligence, and especially conflict engagement.

Personal insight into emotions or conflict patterns seems to be a key outcome for some participants. The use of theatre, images, and nonverbal strategies for accessing emotions, conflict, and expression was highlighted in several comments as powerful and critical to success (eg. "*The best aspect of this program is the way we are encouraged to embody the conflict and express it in ways that bypass our cognitive filters.*") Several participants also spoke about trying on or learning different approaches to conflict, such as taking time to breathe and using silence. Exposure to the stories and struggles of others was identified as valuable to several participants, especially in the shared UBC context. Finally, exploring the UBC culture, professionalism and systemic challenges seems to have struck a chord.

What did participants think they would bring into their daily life?

Participants again expressed a variety of ideas for what they would be incorporating into their life, but there were some similar responses. Two participants said that they would be trying to be more open minded and better listeners in a conflict. Two participants felt prepared to bring these techniques and resources into other areas of their life. Two participants felt that they were more emotionally aware of conflict, nuancing their experience of these tense situations. Others were more in touch with their own emotions and perspective during a conflict, and would bring that awareness into their daily life. Two participants highlighted the importance of the embodied knowledge and experience, indicating that they would continue to draw on that. Finally, asking questions or being curious in conflict was mentioned by several participants as a practice to be incorporated in their daily life.

Specifically focusing on their work, what did participants think they would change as a result of this program?

Participants reported more consistent answers to the question of what they would change in their work. Patterns I noticed were that they would enter conflict more thoughtfully (eg. "*Wonder what is below the surface, what about personal experiences and what else might be impacting on the dynamic.*") with an ear towards considering different perspectives or that there might be something going on outside of the immediately obvious or their own emotions. A shared goal appears to be engaging with the other person in a conflict as a whole person in an authentic way (eg. "*Trying to keep an open channel of non-violent communication, and engaging with the others without forgetting that each one is living a whole universe of situations that have direct effects in all their life aspects.*"). This seems similar or supported by an interest in "*putting oneself into other's shoes*" and attending to their own emotions as well as the perspective of others. Two participants in particular said that they anticipated directly bringing knowledge and exercises from the program into their work, as well.

Were there any skills that participants might want to see incorporated into future programs?

In general, participants were happy with the content as presented, but there were a few different suggestions. There wasn't a clear pattern in the responses, but there was a desire expressed for:

- Learning how to be a joker

- More emphasis and exploration of the body, embodied knowledge, and learning through movement
- More group building activities to build trust, appreciation, and communication
- More conceptualization and explicit discussion of conflict, how it works, escalation, and its causes
- More explicit self-exploration about individual responsibility in conflict
- Tips for de-escalating conflicts
- Learning how to make systemic changes and address that level

Although there wasn't a consistent request for changes to program content, it is interesting to see what other interests participants had.

Finally, participants were asked to rate their likelihood for continued participation in the Conflict Theatre troupe, recommendation of the program, and recommendation of attending a performance. They were asked to use a scale from 1 (Very Unlikely) to 5 (Very Likely). For each question, all responses fell in the top range of "Likely" to "Very Likely," with a strong majority of participants choosing "Very Likely." Critically, 100% of participants said that they would be "Very Likely" to recommend this program to others.

When participants were asked for additional comments, they were very complimentary (eg. "*it was genuinely a pleasure to have been encouraged to be a part of this program*"). However, one important comment is the point that this kind of program "*does require a willingness to step off the deep end, establish trust with strangers, try new things, be vulnerable.*" This is an important observation, and may explain part of our main challenge: recruitment of participants. Not everyone is ready to enter this kind of intensive experience. This should encourage the Conflict Theatre team to consider how to create a series of experiences and levels of intensity in their programming so that those who might not be immediately prepared to join a full program can dip their toes in. Participants were clear during the process that this is intense work; that is the power of the work, but also creates challenges for bringing outsiders into the fold.

It may also be worth pointing to another comment that recognizes some of the things I heard from participants: things are "*still percolating*" at this point. There was a clear sense that this work was valuable and generative, but several of the participants were not yet clear about where the work

would lead them when they had a chance to process it. This features into understanding the evaluation process. The dividends of this program may not be seen immediately and we should be prepared for participants to gain perspective on their experience over time.

Audience Feedback

A workshop performance was held June 29th from 11:30am-1:30pm. A rehearsal for this performance was held in the morning from 9:00am-11:00am. Friends of Conflict were invited to the rehearsal as well as the performance. All audience members who provided their contact information for further contact regarding Conflict Theatre were provided the opportunity to complete a feedback survey about the performance. Responses were predictably low, but are summarized below.

Type of Participation on June 29th for Survey Participants	
Attended the Performance (11:30am-1:30pm)	2
Attended the Performance (11:30am-1:30pm) and made an Intervention	2
Attended the Performance & the Rehearsal (9am-1:30pm)	1

What was the most useful takeaway from this performance, according to participants?

Survey respondents spoke about:

- Reflecting on how they might do conflict differently
- Exposure to conflicts from around campus
- Showing how small changes in behaviour can cause a different outcome
- Noticing that interventions tried to change the "antagonist," rather than the "victim" who might be easier to support in change
- Reminding them that all perspectives must be considered in a conflict and empathy is important to creating a solution that works for everyone
- Increased emotional awareness of others
- Shift in perspective as a result of participating in an intervention on stage

How did the performance influence the audience members' approach to conflict engagement?

Responses brought up:

- Identifying systemic issues in conflict
- Bringing awareness to how personal reactions influence others (and the outcome), and encouraging emotional self-reflection
- Using the tools presented during a conflict, when appropriate
- Their approach being reinforced, rather than changed
- Their approach growing in its nuance and emotional sophistication

How were audience members planning to use what they learned?

Responses included a variety of aspects, like:

- Incorporating lessons into coaching conversations,
- Bringing curiosity into conflict situations to supporting teamwork,
- Taking more time in conflict, especially to analyze the emotional level of both themselves and others
- Making more room for emotions in processing and decision-making

Within the audience survey, we hoped to receive feedback about two key concepts we are exploring as outcomes of this work: "self-awareness" and "other awareness." You can see the responses in the charts below, as well as additional comments received in the survey.
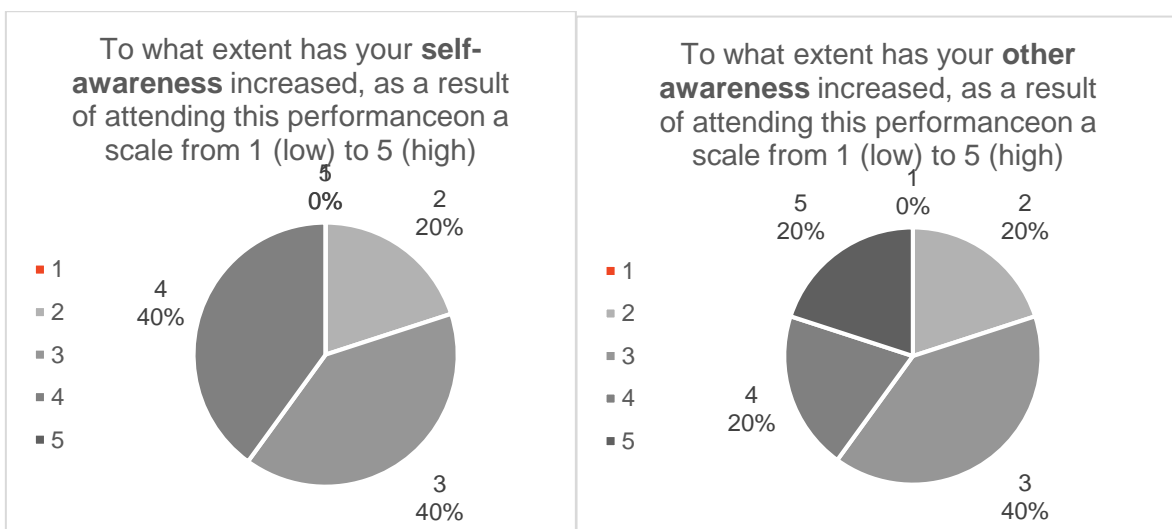
Additional comments:

- *I am far more sympathetic to people in the position that I adopted during the intervention.*
- *[I had] good self-awareness to begin with*
- *This was a fantastic workshop and I would definitely recommend to others to attend this workshop.*
- *Congrats to the planning team!*
- *It was a little scary getting onto stage, so there might be selection bias that the interventions are being made by those who are courageous in the first place. Perhaps a smaller and less intimidating setting would be better for some prospective participants.*
- *Fabulous work! Hope to see more of it!*

Reflections

It is difficult to draw broad conclusions from a small sample with a variety of responses. However three elements appear to be suggested:

1. Audience members, especially those who made interventions, likely are connected to this work already, or otherwise already primed to be involved
2. Whether audience members were new to the approach or familiar, the performance encouraged self-reflection
3. Audience members could benefit from both attending the performance and intervening in it. Intervention is a more significant (and high-stakes) engagement, but not the only way to learn from the process.

Recommendations

Although the surveys represent a small number of responses, some preliminary recommendations might be possible based on that information and observations from the program.

- Tom Scholte was an outstanding contributor to the success of this program. His continued involvement as a facilitator, joker, and mentor is important to building on this success (although, building additional capacity in these areas besides Tom is also vital).
- The framework of the program is a solid foundation and can be largely maintained as is. The basics of location, facilitation, curriculum, catering, organization and application processes were essentially strong.
- In general, the workshop schedule was effective. Although the time commitment is a significant challenge, both for participants and applicants who could not meet its demands,

the participants acknowledged that the time was a) well-spent, and b) difficult to re-distribute effectively. There is a significant workload, but the compressed intensity of the program allows participants to focus, build quick group ties, and prevents inconsistent attendance.

- Two full days are necessary at the start to establish group dynamics, but later the half days allow for more balance for the participants. However, half days should be afternoons, not mornings, as participants were typically exhausted by the end of the workshop and returning to work would have proved very difficult. The Sunday off was also described as an important rest day.

- Different kinds of workshops and performances with different sized audiences might create different kinds of opportunities for engagement. Making an intervention or joining the intensive is a significant step out of one's comfort zone; setting up a variety of ways to take part in this work will offer more opportunities for people not yet ready to intervene in a scene or commit to the intensive.

- Consider more fully the challenges that the movement-based activities might create for those people with limited mobility. How might these individuals be more fully accommodated in future renditions of this initiative? Although the embodied nature of the learning is key to the success of the program, there must be alternative exercises that could be used or strategies to ensure that people with limited mobility feel included in the group learning. Exploring this further can only strengthen the potential impact of the program by widening the accessibility of it.

Next Steps

Pre-program and post-program interviews must be transcribed, coded, and reported. In addition, a literature review to understand where the project findings fit in the larger picture of this area would be beneficial. Although this work is time consuming, a thorough evaluation of that kind of value the program holds on an individual level helps the team to understand what the program accomplishes and how to present its value in future to various stakeholders or community members. This is important to the sustainability of Conflict Theatre in the long run.

Concluding Remarks

Following the completion of the program and its first steps of evaluation, planning has begun for the sustainability of the current troupe and "ripple out" for this initiative to bring Conflict Theatre to a wider UBC audience in the fall. Planning for 2018 is already beginning, as joker and director training is planned for January to keep developing a sustainable pool of jokers and build directing capacity. The lessons of this summer will be fully evaluated for adjustment and implementation when possible for next year's intensive and related initiatives.

There is no question that Conflict Theatre offers a valuable approach to conflict engagement that honours the experiences of UBC employees in conflict. Although the evaluation process will continue to explore how we might label this value, the present feedback is clear that participants do feel keenly impacted by this work. The embodied and affective elements of the program appear especially unique among the resources available at UBC for similar workplace challenges, making theatre an outstanding strategy.

Although this group was smaller than initially expected, this cohort was able to invest deeply in the experience and work through the process together in ways that might not have been possible with more participants. As the initiative expands and as applicants are chosen for next year's summer intensive, it is worth considering the importance of depth and breadth in the success of this project. Some strategies might address depth or breadth better; identifying which goal is more important for specific aspects of this project might be a helpful step.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to have taken part in this initiative. Acting as both a member of the staff team and attending the program itself was incredibly valuable for both my professional and personal development. The insight into conflict in the workplace was a very useful learning experience. The interpersonal connections made throughout this process were also a meaningful benefit of taking part, which I think all participants mentioned appreciating. Rehearsing Conflict is a very special initiative on many levels.

As the pilot continues to run and additional initiatives are planned, lessons can be used from Rehearsing Conflict to continue strengthening the foundation of Conflict Theatre at UBC. Given the enthusiasm expressed by program participants, audience members, and Friends of Conflict, this program has a bright future and significant potential impact.