



22nd Annual
**Health Literacy
Conference**
Virtual • May 9-11, 2023

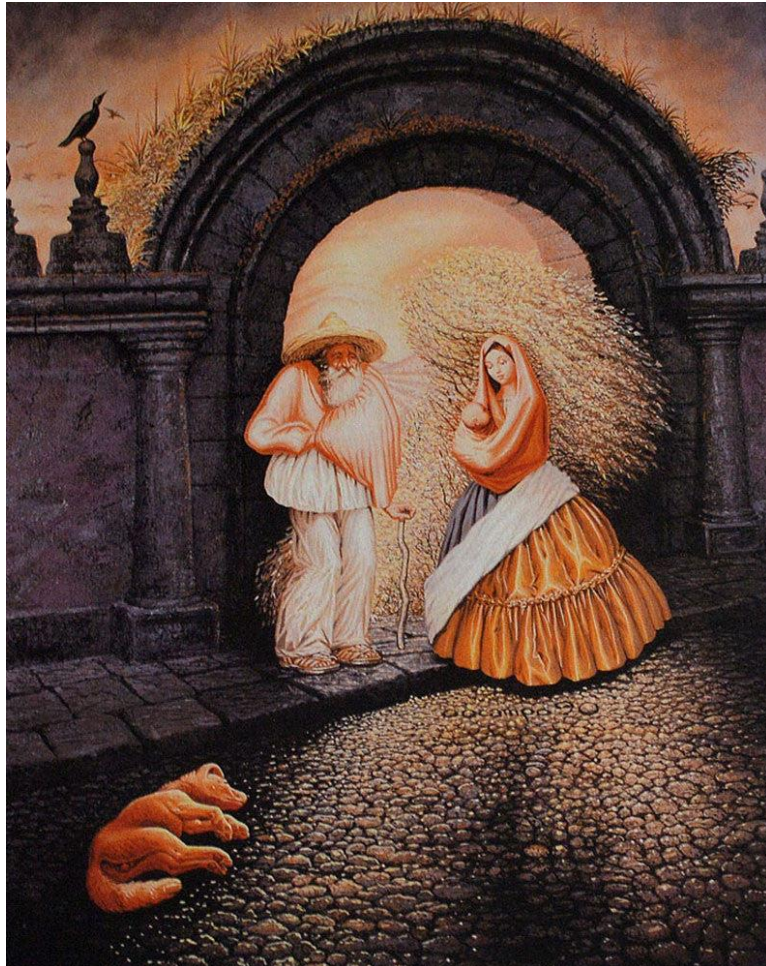
*Working Better Together:
Leveraging the Power of Health Literacy
to Improve Health Equity*



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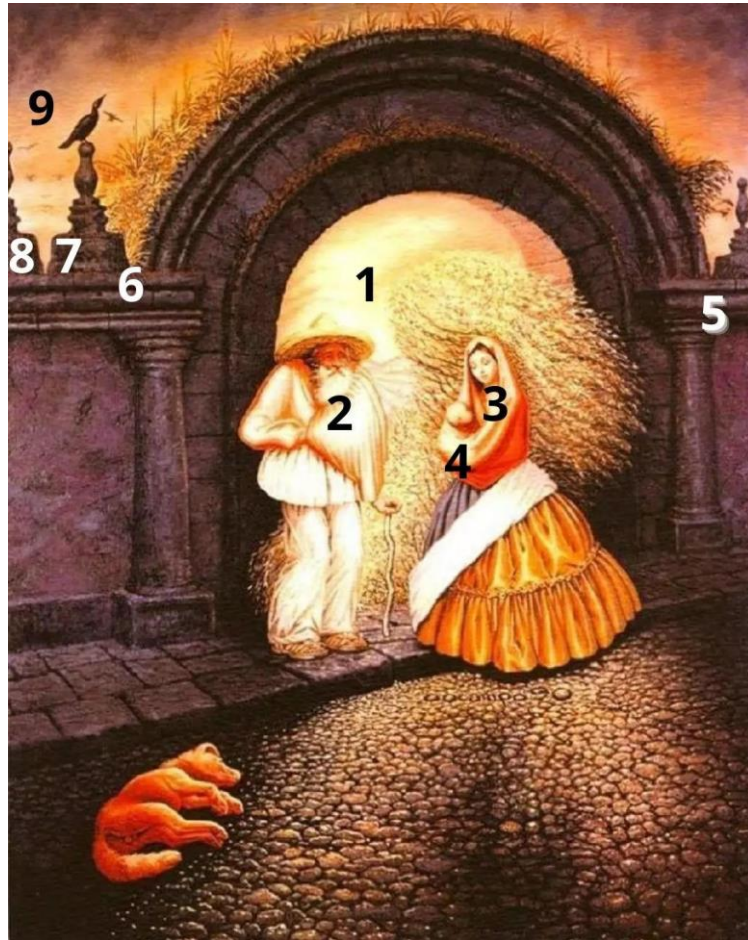
Welcome

WELCOME! While you wait, try this exercise:



- How many faces do you see in this painting?
- Put in the chat how many faces you see in this painting.
- Painting: General's Family by Octavio Ocampo

Answer:



- How many faces do you see in this painting? – Nine!
- Sometimes, we have to step back to see the bigger picture.
- How can we improve our observational skills in our workplace to make changes for the better?



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Using Applied Improvisation to Create a More Psychologically Safe Environment in your Workplace

Dayna Gowan, MPH, CHES (she/her/hers)

Improvly Speaking — Speaker, Improviser, Facilitator of Fun

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Group Agreements

1. Please make sure your audio is muted for this presentation.
2. Please use the chat to connect and engage.
3. Please be respectful to those who share questions and responses in the chat.
4. If you have any questions, please put “QUESTION:” before you type your question.
5. We will be playing some group exercises and games that will involve turning on your camera. If you do not wish to participate, you are welcome to observe. No questions asked!



Psychological Safety Definitions

- “A shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.”
- “A sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject or punish someone for speaking up. This confidence stems from mutual respect and trust among team members.”
 - Amy Edmondson (novartis professor of leadership and management at the Harvard Business School and author of *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth.*)

What Psychological Safety Is:

- A team climate where members feel comfortable being themselves.
- Employees feel free to:
 - “Brainstorm out loud”
 - Voice half-finished thoughts
 - Ask bold questions/openly challenge the status quo
 - Share feedback
 - Work through disagreements together
- Employees know and understand that leaders value honesty, candor, and truth-telling, and that team members will have one another’s backs.

(Center for Creative Leadership)



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What Psychological Safety Isn't

- It is not everyone being nice to each other all the time.
- It is not avoiding discomfort.
- It is not warm and fuzzy, coddling, or guaranteed praise.
- It is not preferential treatment/tolerance of toxic behaviors.
- It is not unearned autonomy.
- It is not a shield from accountability.
- It is not static (meaning it's not a one-time fix).
- It is not just for leadership to worry about.

(Forbes; Learner Lab; NeuroLeadership Institute)



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Benefits of Psychologically Safe Environments

- Increased problem-solving
- Higher engagement
- Inclusive practices
- Higher productivity and lower turnovers
- Better collective well-being
- Lower chance of risky mistakes
- Stronger sense of belonging
- More inclusive and diverse cultures

(PsychCentral)



Picture credit: Canva.com

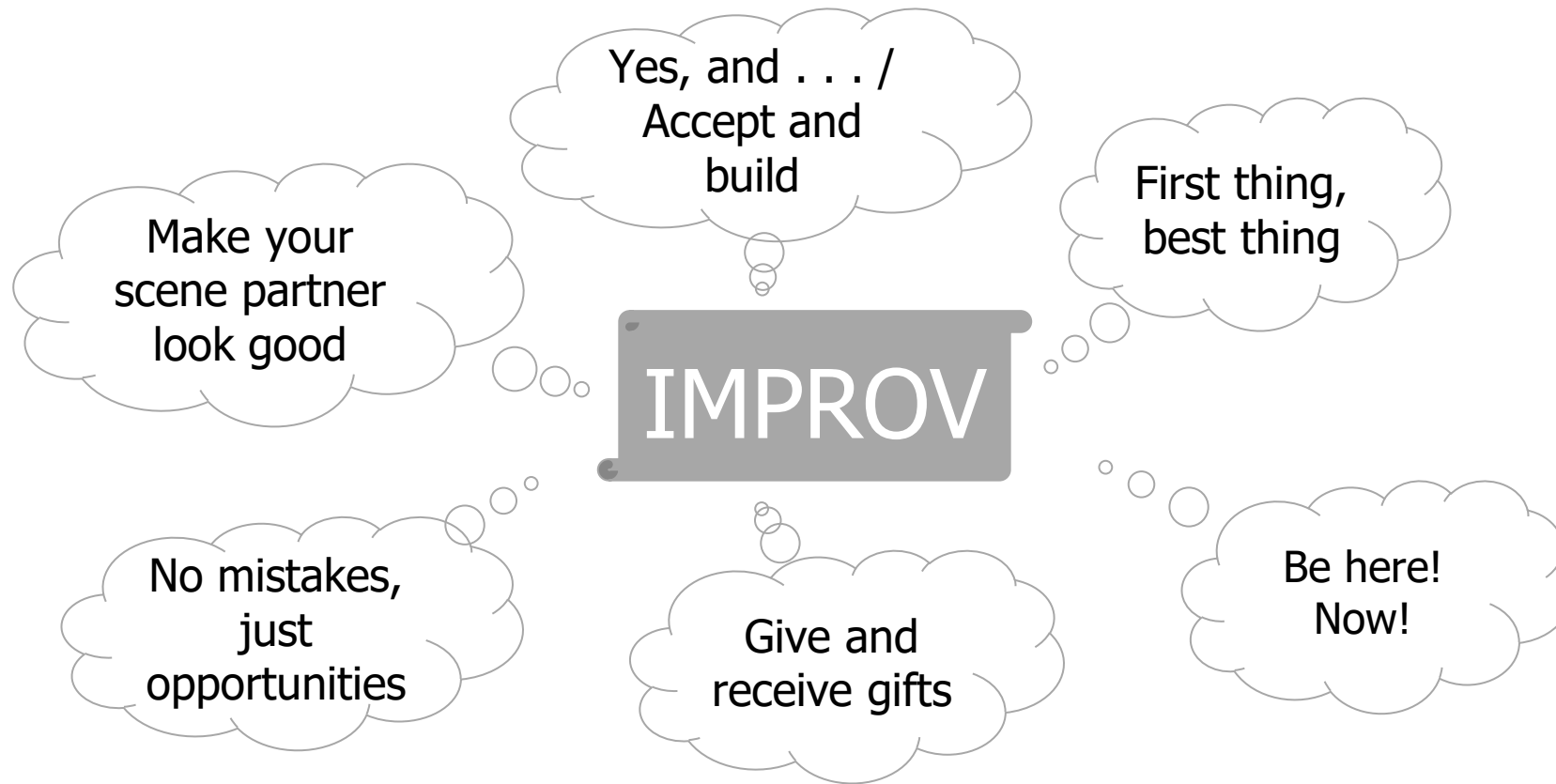


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Where does Applied Improvisation fit in?

- Applied Improv: “The use of principles, tools, practices, skills and mindsets of improv in non-theatrical settings that may result in **personal development, team building, creativity, innovation, and/or meaning**” (Tint and Froerer, 2014).
- “The (improvisation) exercises are open-ended and require students to interact directly with each other through a process of **collaborative problem-solving**. Improvisational exercises stress spontaneous **connection** to one’s partner or audience through the **understanding of the shared experience**.” (Ponzio et al., 2018)

(Loose) Principles of Improv



Let's try it out!



Let's try it out!

Have you ever??

Please turn on camera if you have done this activity or lived this experience.



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Let's try it out!

YES, LET'S!

Put in the chat a few activities that we can do together as a group.



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What did you notice in these exercises?

- Low-stakes environment to make mistakes and learn
- Established connection, even over Zoom and at a virtual conference
- Simple, playful exercises that allowed you to experience some profound takeaways
- Laughed and had fun (memorable experience...hopefully)
- What else??

Benefits of Improvisation

The skills of improvisation can not only help sustain a scene on stage, they can also help in our personal and professional lives.

- Growth mindset
- Active listening
- Connecting with others
- Letting go of perfection
- Trusting yourself and being more confident in your choices
- Communication and collaboration skills
- Creativity and PLAY!
- What else??



Benefits of Improvisation

- “Accept and build” is a mindset/tool for:
 - Growth
 - Curiosity
 - Dealing with change
 - Collaboration
 - Managing and Leading
 - Innovation and experimentation
 - Situations where we want to connect, create, support, expand, and explore

Yes =

Acceptance
Appreciation
Acknowledging
Encouraging
Respect
(Does not always have to be agreement)

And =

Builds Off
Adds to
Expands from
Where it becomes collaboration and co-creation

How Leaders (and Everyone) Can Cultivate Psychological Safety in their Organizations

- Set the Stage
 - Acknowledge the uncertainty
 - Give permission to feel
- Invite Action and Model
 - Ask people to give feedback
 - Modeling shows vulnerability
- Monitor Your Response
 - Being aware of our actions and how they send a signal
 - Evaluate how you handle negative outcomes



Picture credit: Canva.com

(Learner Lab)



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If you enjoyed this session, check out:

- Practice Makes Progress: Using Creative Play and Applied Improvisation to Develop and Reinforce Psychological Safety within our Organizations
- May 24, 2023 – 9:00am-10:30am
- 90-minute workshop to practice these improvisational skills and discuss how they apply to psychological safety.



Key Takeaways:

- Applied Improvisation is not the only way to teach psychological safety skills. There are many methods out there, and it's important to find the best method for your team/workplace.
- We know Psychological Safety is important, but implementing it amongst our teams can be difficult.
- Applied Improvisation exercises and principles can help employees and leaders to experience these skills and take away lessons learned.
- Applied Improvisation can have a positive impact in providing tools and skills for teams to improve their psychological safety.
- On a deeper level, the improv exercises can help employees develop an improv mindset overall, which can benefit their teams, departments and companies.
(Maykowskyj Nordean, 2020)



Contact Information

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Question & Answers



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Thank You

Appendix – Articles/Websites Referenced

- Center for Creative Leadership - <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/what-is-psychological-safety-at-work/>
- Forbes article - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/timothyclark/2021/06/21/what-psychological-safety-is-not/?sh=1a14485e6452>
- Learner Lab - <https://thelearnerlab.com/a-guide-to-psychological-safety/>
- NeuroLeadership Institute - <https://neuroleadership.com/your-brain-at-work/5-things-psych-safety>
- PsychCentral - <https://psychcentral.com/health/psychological-safety-at-work#tips-for-leadership>



Appendix – Research Studies Referenced

- Maykowskyj Nordean, Marne, "Assessing the impacts of work-related applications of improvisation training on psychological safety in teams" (2020). Theses and Dissertations. 1171. <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/etd/1171>
- Ponzio NM, Alder J, Nucci M, Dannenfelser D, Hilton H, Linardopoulos N, Lutz C. Learning Science Communication Skills Using Improvisation, Video Recordings, and Practice, Practice, Practice. J Microbiol Biol Educ. 2018 Mar 30;19(1):19.1.15. doi: [10.1128/jmbe.v19i1.1433](https://doi.org/10.1128/jmbe.v19i1.1433). PMID: 29904514; PMCID: PMC5969400.
- Tint, B and Froerer, A. (2014), Delphi Study Summary presented to the Applied Improvisation Network. Available online: <https://apin.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/Delphi-Study-Summary.pdf>



Appendix – Other Resources to Check Out

- Amy Edmondson's List of Resources - <https://amycedmondson.com/recommended-resources/>
- Google's Project Aristotle - <https://rework.withgoogle.com/print/guides/5721312655835136/>
- TedX Talks. (2014). Building a psychologically safe workplace | Amy Edmondson | TEDxHGSE [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhoLuui9gX8>
- *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth* by Amy Edmondson (2019).
- *The Culture Playbook* by Daniel Coyle (2022).

