

Social Presencing Theater: 4D Mapping

Overview

In Social Presencing Theater, the word theater is used in connection to its root meaning – a place where something significant becomes visible, or where a community of people can see a shared experience. 4D mapping makes visible the current reality in a social system, such as a school system, health care system, or government.

Purpose

We use 4D Mapping with groups who are looking to gain new insights about their own system, and with clients who have a case they want to explore using this method.

Principles

- 4D mapping explores how the highest aspiration in a system might come forward. We assume there is an underlying wisdom – in spite of the diverse values or goals of stakeholders in a system – that could come to the surface and be visible as we move from Sculpture 1 to 2.
- Participants apply mindfulness of the body and awareness of the surrounding space. 4D mapping is not about acting out preconceived ideas or concepts we have about a system.
- 4D mapping is about surfacing and noticing what shifts in a system might be significant in going from a current reality to an emerging future reality.
- Movement is based on what is actually emerging, not based on manipulation or what we think something should be.

Process

Set Up

Roles & Space

- There are two basic types of roles in 4D mapping: players and space-holders. There is also a facilitator and a scribe (the scribe writes down the sentences that people speak from their shapes).
- If you are practicing 4D mapping in person, those who hold the space typically sit in a circle, and players embody roles in the center of the circle. If social distancing measures where you live mandate physical distance, consider practicing this via videoconference.
- There are typically 10-12 players, and everyone else remains in their seats in a circle (once the movement from Sculpture 1 to 2 begins, space holders can move around the periphery of the circle).
- 4D mapping is a co-created event that depends on the quality of everyone's attention; so both types of roles are equally important.
- The roles in the system should be predetermined. Whether you are working with a group looking to gain new insights about their own system, or with a client, determine the roles together with the group or client prior to beginning 4D mapping.
- Important: Always include roles that represent the 3 divides: the earth/environment, marginalized groups or individuals, and the highest future possibility of the system.
- Write the name of each role on a card and use labels with tape on the back to help everyone remember the roles - or, if using videoconferencing software, ask participants to change the way their name appears to include their role. It's helpful to be specific with roles. See the u.lab 4D mapping Part 3 video for examples.

- Decide the order in which the facilitator will call out the roles. We find it helpful to begin with the more powerful roles in the system.

Sequence

Co-Initiating

1. If working with a client, invite them to describe their case to the group, just as they would in the case clinic method, so everyone can sense into the current reality. This should take ten minutes or less.
2. Pause for a moment, and practice mindfulness of the body. Connect to the feeling of the body, especially the back of the body - this is particularly important if connecting through virtual space, with video conferencing software.
3. The facilitator may remind everyone: When we step into the space, we let go of concepts of 'how it should be,' or 'how it should transform' – we don't know the answers. We step into an open space with an open mind, and we embody our element of the system. We make a shape with our body that we feel expresses some quality of the role we're playing.

Co-Sensing

1. Facilitator says the name of the role and holds up the first card, with a pre-determined role written on it.
2. One-by-one, a person from the circle will stand up (or raise their hand on the video call) and volunteer to embody that role. The only guideline here is not to choose the role you actually play in your daily life.
3. The player takes the card with the name of the role and affixes it to his/her shirt so it is visible to others, or else changes their name's appearance on camera.
4. If practicing in physical space with other people, that player finds a place in the room and a shape that embodies the experience of that role in the system. Each player comes in, finds a place in relationship to the center, the edge, and the other players. They may find it helpful to ask themselves, "Am I bigger, smaller, in the center, to the side; do I feel powerful, weak and vulnerable?" Whatever it is, they embody it in the space so that others can see it. Remember not to act, but to empathize, identify with the role, and embody it. If practicing on video, stand sufficiently far from your camera, so others can see your whole body.
5. Once in the shape, the player says one sentence from the experience of that shape, in the first person "I" voice. The scribe writes these down.
6. Then, the facilitator calls the next role, and the process is repeated until all roles have been embodied.
7. Once all players have entered the space, the facilitator invites anyone who feels they need to adjust their place, level, or direction in the space to make it more accurately embody the current reality to do so.
8. The space-holders in the circle are very important because they hold the space without judgment.
9. Once everyone has found a place and shape, that is Sculpture 1. Sculpture 1 represents a feeling of the current reality of the system.

Presencing

1. The players let go of any idea of the outcome and stay with the stillness for a few moments.
2. Somewhere in this sculpture, movement will arise.

Crystallizing

1. Then the sculpture begins to move and continues moving, until the social body comes to a stop in Sculpture 2. This whole process could take about five minutes.
2. From Sculpture 2, each player says the name of their role and one sentence about their experience. The scribe can record what is said.
3. The facilitator can invite people from the circle to also offer one sentence

Generative Dialogue

As a whole group, reflect on what you experienced. Describe your Sculpture 1 to Sculpture 2 journey. Emphasize real data. What did you notice, see, or do? The following reflection questions have proved to be helpful:

- Where did movement begin in Sculpture 1?
- When did the Sculpture shift? Where did the process of transformation originate?
- What did you notice about how your attention evolved over time?
- How did your sense of Space, Time, Self, and Other shift over time?
- If the journey from Sculpture 1 to 2 were a film, what would you call it? Give it a title or name.

You might also reflect on the following questions:

- What was your experience as a “player” or as a holder of the space? What surprised you?
- What are the key differences between Sculpture 1 (current reality) and Sculpture 2 (emerging reality)? What are the top three features that changed?
- What next steps will you take as a result of this experience?

Step out of roles

Before ending 4D mapping, invite everyone to step out of his or her roles. We've found it helpful if everyone briefly says (to themselves) that they appreciate the opportunity to embody this particular role, and that they will take the lessons to be learned and leave all else behind.