



# Imagination Games for Connection and Creativity

Thank you for attending our workshop on Imagination Games. In this handout you'll find the play list for the workshop and directions for the games we played. Following the directions for leading each activity you'll find "Online Tech Notes" with tips on how to lead the activity online.

## **Playlist of music from the workshop:**

Lovely Day, by Bill Withers

Folk Vibe 1, by Tananus Wide Ensemble

You Make My Dreams, by Daryl Hall and John Oats

Eye Know, by De la Sol

Una Vaina Loca, by Boy Wonder CF, featuring Fuego

## **Tips on Playing Music from Your Computer**

When you want to play music without speaking over it, do the following:

- click "share screen"
- click "share computer sound" at bottom left of screen
- choose the "Advanced" tab at top of screen
- choose "Music or Computer Sound Only"
- click "share" at bottom right of screen

When you are speaking over the music

- do not use "share screen"
- use headphones with a good mic
- make sure your song is cued
- make sure that you've turned the volume of your Mic up high. To do this go to the up arrow next to "Mute," choose "Audio Settings," turn up your Mic volume to its highest.

- In “Audio Settings,” click “advanced” at the bottom right. Then “disable” two buttons: “suppress persistent background noise” and “suppress intermittent background noise.” Leave “echo cancellation” in “auto.”
- Turn down your computer speaker volume - probably more than you think. You can do this from the Audio Settings in Zoom, and/or you can also simply turn your computer volume down
- You can play the music on your computer or have a separate device for playing sound loudly near your computer. The song sound quality goes down, but maybe it’s worth it if what you are saying is more important than the music.
- Another option it to send a you tube link to the song to your participants in the Chat Box so that the participants can play the song on their own, rather than you sharing it.
- Speak loudly.
- Practice these audio levels and share with someone online before you lead the activity with your group.

## The Imagination Games We Played

### 1. Group Introductions with a Creative Challenge

After participants have shared their name and whatever other info you’d like them to share, invite them to “mime” (act out) something they love to do. When you demonstrate, mime something very easy, like drinking a cup of tea. But also invite people to take a bigger risk if they choose. You might say, “You can do something as easy as this (mime reading a book or drinking tea) or if you are very adventurous, you can stand up and act something out in a bigger way.” Avoid modeling a complicated mime so that you don’t intimidate people.

### 2. Open the Door: An Imaginative Body Warm Up

This activity activates the imagination and gets us connected to our bodies.

Begin by asking people to simply move around the space. Here’s a sample script: “Notice how you feel? How does your body feel right now? What sensations do you feel? What can you see? What can you hear, or even smell?”

“As you move, I’m going to change some of the qualities of your environment and ask you to respond to your new environment. Now, imagine you feel warm sand under your toes. You are walking on warm sand, and the sun is warm, warming your skin. You are on a beach, and you can see and hear the lapping of waves on the shore. Go ahead and interact with your environment in a new way, whether with the sand, or water... How do you feel? What else do you see? What’s on the beach that you might touch?”

“Now the sand begins to dissipate, and you suddenly find yourself on the moon. A very different texture under you! Gravity is completely different here. Explore that buoyancy...”

Continue to guide participants to explore different environments that are recognizable to them. Notice some of the interesting ways people are interacting with their environment. End the activity with an environment that is calming. And then bring them back. “Now everything fades, and you are back in the room where you started. Take a moment to bring your awareness to this room, this environment where we are now.”

**Online Tech notes:**

- Ask people to turn up their speaker volume and move back from their screen.
- Ask them use Gallery View so they can see others when they choose to or ask them to turn off their video for a more internal experience, depending on your goals.
- Use soft, uplifting music for this activity to create a collective ambience that is normally created by moving in the same space together.

### **3. This is not a....**

This game ignites the imagination, engages the body and voice, and generates a lot of laughter. You'll need a stick, water bottle, marker, or similar object for each group of 8-12 people.

- The leader (A) holds the stick (or other object) and says, “This is not a stick, it is a (fill in the blank—comb, for example). They then demonstrate using the stick as a comb, making appropriate motions and sound effects.
- The leader then passes the stick to the person on their left.
- Person B repeats the leader’s demonstration of the comb, copying their movement and sound as accurately as possible while saying, “This is not a comb...” Person B then gives the stick another identity, saying “This is a (fill in the blank—say, a pair of scissors). Person B demonstrates the pair of scissors with movement and sound and then passes the stick on to the person to their left.
- Person C, repeats B’s demonstration of the pair of scissors copying the sounds and movement as accurately as possible while saying, “This is not a pair of scissors.” They then give the stick a new identity and demonstrate the new object in movement and sound. And so, it goes, around the circle.

**Tips:** Emphasize the importance of using exaggerated movement and a strong sound to demonstrate the object. Encourage participants to copy the person before them as accurately as possible.

**Online Tech notes:**

- Encourage people to use gallery view and unmute themselves before the game starts
- Ask everyone to have a pen or a small object they can use to represent the object
- Create an order (a list of the participants) and type it into the chat box.
- Using both an action AND a sound for this game is particularly important in an online format, as it heightens the sense of shared space and of having been seen and heard.

## 4. Yes, Let's . . .

This game engages the imagination, body, and voice and fosters a “yes” atmosphere in your group.

Begin with your group standing randomly in the center of your room. The facilitator says, “Hey everybody, let’s (and they say an action like: fly around like birds.) The group in unison enthusiastically says, “Yes, let’s.” And then everyone begins to fly around like birds. At a certain point another participant calls out loudly, “Hey everybody, let’s (another action). The entire group stops and says in unison, “Yes, let’s.” Everyone starts doing the new movement. Participants call out “Hey everybody” any time they want to offer a new movement. Continue the game as long as you like. A good way to conclude is for the facilitator to say, “Hey, everybody. Let’s all sit in our chairs.”

Sample of actions: swim in the ocean, climb a tree, walk in deep mud, hop up and down.

### Online Tech notes:

- Mute/Unmute:
  - In groups of 10-40 people, you could unmute all, and let there be a lot of sound and laughter throughout this game.
  - However, if you have a larger group, you need to make sure everyone can hear the person who says, “Hey everybody, let’s...!” One way to do that is to simply tell everyone to watch the screen and to go quiet when they see a new person “spotlighted” in the front of the screen.
  - If you have a very big group, set it up so you can unmute people. To make sure you can unmute everyone say the following: “I need to be able to mute and unmute everyone for this game, so there’s one step I need to do to set that up. I’m going to unmute all. If you see a little box asking you to unmute, please consent. Then I will mute all again.” When you mute all again, UNCHECK the box that allows participants to unmute themselves. Now you are set to go.
- Ask for Volunteers:
  - Explain the activity. Then, for most group sizes, you can simply tell your participants that you are going to spotlight people at random. Before you start playing, give the whole group a chance to come up with an idea they might use if they are spotlighted.
  - If you’re not sure everyone will feel comfortable speaking aloud or even whether everyone is using video, it’s best to get a “hand-raise” from all those who are willing to be spotlighted. (You will need to open your Participants box to see who has raised their hand). The surprise of whether or not they are spotlighted remains the same!
  - Tell them that they will know they are spotlighted when they are the biggest face on the screen.
- Encourage folks to move back from their screen but to remain visible to their camera.
- Technical flow of the activity, if using unmute/mute in a very large group:
  - Facilitator gives the first “Hey everybody, let’s...” suggestion. [unmute all]
  - Group says: “Yes, Let’s!”
  - After 15 seconds, [mute all], [spotlight] one participant, [unmute] that participant. They say: “Hey everybody, let’s...” [unmute all]
  - Group says: “Yes, Let’s!”
  - And so on.

## 5. Yes, And . . .

This imagination-based storytelling game works with groups from 5 years old and up. The game ignites the imagination, develops listening skills, and generates a positive atmosphere in your group.

Begin by asking participants to form circles of 3 or 4 people and decide who will go first (A).

- (A) begins by making up a story. It can be any story, past, present, or future. After setting the stage through three or four sentences, (A) stops at the end of a sentence.
- (B) picks up the story with the words, “Yes, and...” (B) then continues to tell the story in the same voice as (A). This means, if the story was started in the first person, the story continues in first person. (B) adds three or four sentences and stops at the end of a sentence.
- (C) then picks up the story with, “Yes, and...”, adds to the story and stops at the end of a sentence. The story continues around and around the circle with each person picking up with the words, “Yes, and...”
- Let the storytelling go for 7-10 minutes and then call “stop.”

**Tips:** Make sure participants know they are to come to the end of a sentence before passing it on to the next person. Demonstrate what you mean by everyone in the circle using the same storytelling voice. Encourage participants to stand up while playing this game. People naturally add more gesture and energy to their stories when they are standing.

### Online Tech notes:

- Encourage people to use gallery view, and unmute themselves before the game starts
- Create an order (a list of the participants) and type it into the chat box.
- Decide on the amount of time or “rounds” you want to do, or let the group know when there are only a couple more turns left so they can bring the story to a close.
- If you have split your groups into breakout rooms, ask each group to come up with a title for their story to share back with the whole group.

## 6. Dance Circle

This game is a great opening or closing activity. It uncovers the hidden dance talents of some participants, gives others a chance to increase their comfort with dance, and gives everyone the opportunity to take the lead. We have led dance circles with as few as 5 people and as many as 125.

- Ask the group to form one circle.
- Tell the group you will be putting on some danceable music and you’d like someone to volunteer to be the first leader.
- Once the music gets going, person (A) will lead a repetitive dance move for 10 seconds. Everyone in the circle joins in with the same dance move.
- (A) then passes the leadership to the person directly to their right (B). (B) comes up with a new dance move that they then lead for 10 seconds and then passes the leadership on to (C). The group follows whoever is leading.
- The leadership passes around the circle until everyone has had a chance to lead.

**Tips:** Some people will be very uncomfortable when you say everyone is going to lead a dance step. It's important to let people know that they can lead something as simple as waving their hands to the music right and left. They just need to do it as if they think it's the best dance move in the world.

**Adaptation:** ask people to use everyday activities to inspire the dance moves

**Online Tech notes:**

- Ask for Volunteers:
  - Explain the activity. Then, for most group sizes, you can simply tell your participants that you are going to spotlight people at random (or spotlight them all one at a time!).
  - If you have a very large group size and you aren't sure who feels comfortable leading or even whether everyone is using video, it's best to get a "hand-raise" from those who are willing to be spotlighted. (You will need to open your Participants box to see who has raised their hand). You will likely need to explain that not everyone who volunteered will be spotlighted.
  - Tell them they will know they are spotlighted when they are the biggest face on the screen.
  - Encourage folks to move back from their screen but remain visible to their camera.
  - You can encourage folks to use Gallery View - though ultimately when you spotlight people, it will end up in Speaker View anyway.
- Sound: check sound tips at beginning of this handout and practice sound settings before you lead this with a group. For this game, you'll likely want your sound quite loud. Wear a headset with a mic and speak very loudly to give encouraging comments or let another person know it's their turn. They'll also know it's their turn when they see themselves spotlighted
- Technical flow of the activity:
  - Facilitator or assisting facilitator does the first dance move.
  - After 10 seconds [spotlight] someone new.
  - After 10 seconds [spotlight] someone new.
  - And so on.

"Imagination Games" was the 3<sup>rd</sup> free workshop in our Creative Catalyst series. To sign up for future Tuesday workshops go to [www.partnersforyouth.org](http://www.partnersforyouth.org)

**About Partners for Youth Empowerment:** We are an international non-profit organization dedicated to unleashing the creative potential of youth. We do this by providing training for adults who work with youth in ways to lead transformative programs for youth that develop social emotion skills, creativity, social engagement, and a sense of purpose. Our proven Creative Empowerment Model combines creative arts practices, experiential learning, and leading-edge facilitation skills into a framework for designing and leading engaging, life changing programs. To learn about our training offerings or to bring our training to your organization or school either in person or on-line see [www.partnersforyouth.org](http://www.partnersforyouth.org).