

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 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

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).
- Those who hold the space typically sit in a circle and players embody roles in the center of the circle.
- There are typically 8-12 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, therefore both types of roles are equally important.
- The roles in the system should be predetermined. Determine the roles together with your team or with the problem owner 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. Use labels with tape on the back to help everyone remember the roles. It's helpful to be specific with roles.
 - 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.

Co-Initiating

- Facilitator/host takes a moment to remind the group of the intention and the system the group is about to map. Use the time as an opportunity to sense back into the current reality.
- Pause for a moment and practice mindfulness of body. Connect to the feeling of the body, especially the back of the body.
- 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

- The facilitator says the name of the role and holds up the first card, with a pre-determined role written on it.
- One-by-one, a person from the circle will stand up and volunteer to embody that role. The only guideline here is not to choose the role you actually play in your daily life.
- The player takes the card with the name of the role and affixes it to his/her shirt so it is visible to others.
- 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.

- 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.
- Then, the facilitator calls the next role, and the process is repeated until all roles have been embodied.
- 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 so that it more accurately embodies current reality to do so.
- The space-holders in the circle are very important because they hold the space without judgment.
- Once everyone has found a place and shape, that is Sculpture 1. Sculpture 1 represents a feeling of the current reality of the system.

Co-Preencing

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

Crystallizing

- 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.
- Nobody is directing the movement of the sculpture.
- From Sculpture 2, each player says the name of their role and one sentence about their experience. The scribe can record what is said.

Generative Dialogue (20 min)

- As a whole group, without moving from the sculpture, reflect on what was experienced.
 - Describe your experience: I saw, I felt, I did... Suspend interpretation.
- The following reflection questions are useful after 4D mapping:
 - Origin of movement—where did the movement begin?
 - When did the sculpture shift?
 - What was the difference between sculpture 1 and sculpture 2?
 - What surprised you?
 - What were the dynamics in the system?
 - What was not spoken?
 - What was holding us back?
- Hear data points from the scribe
- The facilitator can invite people from the circle (those who remained seated and didn't embody a role) to also offer one sentence.

Small Group Discussion

Keep your role card on. Turn to small groups of 3-4 people and discuss. Continue making connections to your real experience and what happened in the sculptures.

- What did you learn about your system?
- What are the key differences between Sculpture 1 (current reality) and Sculpture 2 (emerging reality)? What are the top three features that changed?
- Given the shift that you saw from sculpture 1 to sculpture 2, what prototyping possibilities would allow you to explore that shift by doing? What might such a prototype look like?

Circle Conversation

Assemble back into a large circle. Have each group share some of the major shifts they noticed in the 4D map and some of the possible prototyping areas that could be explored as a group. Build on each other's ideas. Crystallize your prototyping ideas into one or several that could be explored further in the next steps of the Lab.

If you have time, conclude by developing a mini plan of action for the remainder of the month:

- Clarify intention for each of the prototype ideas
- Identify the main stakeholders that need to be involved
- Identify how to connect with these stakeholders through stakeholder interviews or other methods.

Step out of roles

VERY IMPORTANT: Bring your role card back to the middle of the circle and, having connected with that role in some way, share a comment, appreciation and/or closing remark. This process helps each person to consciously step out of the role they have embodied.

Closing

Close the process with a one-word checkout from each participant.