





# Working with enemy images using role-play

## Role-play to receive empathy

### Setting up the role-play

1. **Situation:** I have an issue with someone. I have something to say in complete honesty (uncensored).
2. **Intentions:** I will use role-play in a safer place to deal with my triggers than in the heat of an uncomfortable conversation with the other person, so I get to identify my feelings and needs with my NVC practice partner.
3. **Roles:**
  - Me: The person who wants to process the issue.
  - My partner: The person who receives and responds with empathy and needs guesses (giraffe ears).
4. **Things about role-play:** Yoram Mosenzon stated that...
  - Role-plays create space where we are speaking it (the heart of the matter) instead of speaking about it.
  - Therefore, the dialogue is spoken in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person (you and me), not in 3<sup>rd</sup> person (he/she/they). The language of he/she/they creates distance.
  - Intentions: It's you and me. This is not acting. I will not disconnect from my pain. I will express my pain fully, meaning *"until the end of words."* Then, I will put myself in the shoes of the other person.

## ROUND 1 (Empathy): Receiving empathy for my pain

Me as myself (the player)	My partner as the other person
<div>Orientation:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be myself</li><li>• Speak uncensored</li></ul> 	<div>Orientation:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Play the enemy image</li><li>• Wear giraffe ears</li></ul> 
<b>Before we start:</b>	<b>Before we start:</b>
1 "You will be ____."	1 "Who am I?"
(Don't go into the story. The story will be in the role-play.)	2 "I will be ____ now so that we have a LIVE conversation."
	3 "I'll be wearing these ears (gesture putting on the pretend ears). Is it OK if we do this?" (encouraging choice)
	4 "This will be your space to say whatever and however you want to express. You don't have to be nice, kind, or spiritual. Speak with complete honesty (uncensored). You can blame, judge, complain, demand, or say something nasty."
	5 "When I put on my giraffe ears, I will be your _____. And when the role-play is over, your _____ will take off the ears."
<b>Begin the role-play</b>	



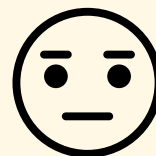
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### ROUND 1 (Empathy): Receiving empathy for my pain – cont'd



Me as myself  
(the player)



My partner as the  
other person

#### How to start:

2 “\_\_\_\_\_.”  
(Start expressing. Keep going. Say everything.)

4 “\_\_\_\_\_.”  
(Keep telling everything.)

6 “\_\_\_\_\_.”  
(Keep telling everything.)

8 “No....”

#### How to start:

1 “So, you have something you wish for me to hear.”  
“What is it that you would like me to hear?”

(Hold empathic space with feelings & needs guesses.)

3 (If an observation hasn't been identified, ask...) “What did I do or say that you didn't like?”

5 (Once observations have already been identified, say something about the observation.) “You invited me to come spend time with Mom and I didn't come.... I want to hear how that affected you then. And what's left in your heart right now about that incident.”

(Hold empathic space with feelings & needs guesses.)

7 “Is there more you wish me to hear?”  
(Keep listening “until the end of words.”)

**End the role-play**

#### After we finish:

2 (Change chairs before going to round 2.)

#### After we finish:

1 (Take off the ears.)



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### ROUND 2 (Compassion): Seeing the human behind my enemy image

#### Before we start:

- 1 Role-plays round 1 and 2 are to transform enemy images.
- 2 The purpose of round 1 is to receive empathy fully first. Express pain until the end of words. If I'm ready, I switch chairs to move into round 2. If I'm in too much pain, I disconnect from my enemy's humanity (an element of unsafety).
- 3 The purpose of round 2 is to understand what it might be like to be in the other person's shoes. It's about discovering, "What's the humanity in my enemy's heart?"
- 4 Speaking as the other person, I take in their experience and allow myself and my body to be affected by what's shared.

#### Orientation:

- Be the other person
- Start with jackal (but let empathy come in)



Me as the other person  
(the player)



My partner as me

#### Orientation:

- Be me
- Wear giraffe ears

#### How to start:

- 1 (Change chairs before round 2.)
- 2 (Change chairs before round 2.)
- 3 "\_\_\_\_\_."  
(Feel how it is to be this person. Start telling everything.  
Try to uncover the humanity behind this person's behavior.  
Discover things this person may have never expressed  
before. What's underneath their behaviors?)

#### How to start:

- 1 (Change chairs before round 2.)
- 2 (Invite the player to step into the other person's shoes.  
Begin the role-play with the observation.)  
"So, you're upset that I didn't come to see Mom...?"  
(Hold empathic space with feelings & needs guesses.)

(NOTE: If the player keeps acting out the static image they hold in their mind about this person, offer these 2 options.

1. Invite the player to return to round 1 for more empathy.
2. Restate the intention of role-play round 2.  
"You don't need to act how this person normally behaves.  
Can you allow yourself to feel how this person is, from deep within? What might this person say to you that has never been expressed?"

End the role-play



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### ROUND 3 (Practice): Dress rehearsal of a dialogue with the other person

#### Orientation:

- Be myself
- Wear giraffe ears



Me as myself  
(the player)



My partner as the  
other person

#### Orientation:

- Play the other person
- Speak uncensored

#### How to start:

- 1 (Change chairs before round 3.)
- 2 (Start with the stimuli/observation. Use information you gathered in role-plays round 1 and 2.)
- 3 Be the other person with complete honesty (uncensored).
- 4 Have a LIVE conversation and see what happens.

#### How to start:

(Change chairs before round 3.)

End the role-play

#### During the large group debrief:

- Would you be willing to report out what you experienced in the role-play? No matter how small, how intense, what you think is insignificant, no matter what you think about it?

**Session objectives:** By the time you exit the room after 90 minutes, you will have...

1. Said what you haven't said to the person before.
2. Given empathy to the pain being expressed. Used street giraffe.

**Lofty goals:** A year from now, what audacious and empowering thing will you be able to **do**?

1. Identify another's perspectives besides your own.
2. Speak with more clarity and with more honesty when you choose to interact with the person.