



# Talking Mimes Experience and Workshop: Facilitator Guide

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## Prep and Delivery of the VR Experience

Use the "TMMD VR delivery (facilitator guide)" document included with this kit, for preparation and delivery of the VR Experience.



### Crew

If at all possible, engage one or more people who identify as having a disability as workshop facilitators.

### Practice

Every facilitator should practice delivering the VR experience, following the VR delivery guide, prior to the day of delivery/workshop. Up to two participants per facilitator can comfortably be put through the VR experience at once. If choosing to run two at a time, practice running through the delivery script and using the two remotes with the two sets of VR gear so you are comfortable starting the VR experience simultaneously for both participants.

### Venue

Ideally a private quiet room should be used for delivering the VR experience. This is for both good immersion during the experience, and privacy for the participants when debriefing immediately after it.

Non-swivel chair(s), ideally with arms (a sturdy portable camping chair can be used if there are no options available on site). One chair per simultaneous VR participant.

### Questionnaires

Distribute the pre-questionnaires to participants before the day of the delivery/workshop, and ask them to bring their completed questionnaires with them to the VR experience.

### Delivery

Allow at least 20 minutes for each session. If possible, aim to run all workshop participants through the experience in the morning and early afternoon, prior to running the group workshop on the same day. Participants must go through the VR experience before attending a workshop.

## Intro to Workshop

Thank you for attending the Talking Mimes workshop, and thank you for going through our experience. The Talking Mimes project is really important to us, because we feel that the representation and understanding of people with disabilities is deeply flawed and harmful. We want to change that. 25% of our population has some form of disability - that's 1 in 4 people. So you will definitely know someone who has a disability (though it may be invisible to you) and it is likely that it's people close to you - in your family, at work, in your community, and you yourself may have a disability or acquire one in your lifetime.

If our society was truly diverse and inclusive, then in this group we would have [calculate 25% of crowd] people with disabilities present in this workshop. Thinking about why that doesn't appear to be the case is a part of what this workshop is about.

Now that we've all gone through Talking Mimes VR, we're going to do some exercises to help you articulate your experiences and relate them to preexisting knowledge and beliefs. The exercises are designed to transform our observations and feelings from the VR experience to make us think differently and more inclusively about individuals with disabilities. We'd like to encourage you to reflect on and implement the information that you've learn today, and share it with everyone you know!

### The objectives of the experience are to:

1. Raise awareness of disability issues
2. Think about and challenge barriers preventing people with disabilities from full participation in society
3. Recognise stereotyping and familiarise people with appropriate etiquette
4. Build disability confidence so people are comfortable and keen to interact with people who have disabilities
5. Develop skills to be effective allies for people with disabilities



## Ground rules for discussions:

**Draw attention to the Ground Rules handout and leave the associated summary slide in the presentation up for the duration of the workshop.**

Due to the nature of topics discussed in these workshops, it is important to set guidelines to ensure people are not offended or alienated and can get the most out of the experience. We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange. We commit to learning from each other and acknowledging the differences amongst us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values.

**Before starting any of the exercises, let the participants know that:**

- ▶ You may leave or return at any time, for any reason, without explanation
- ▶ Everyone is here voluntarily
- ▶ Please don't share stories outside of this group without their explicit permission

**To be respectful to your team during your discussions, make sure you consider the following:**

- ▶ Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- ▶ Listen actively and with an ear to understanding others' views. (Don't just think about what you are going to say while someone else is talking.)
- ▶ Criticise ideas, not individuals.
- ▶ Commit to learning, not debating. Comment in order to share information, not to persuade.
- ▶ Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
- ▶ Allow everyone the chance to speak.
- ▶ Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalisations about social groups. Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.

**We can sometimes get it wrong, when giving and receiving feedback, so make sure you consider the following:**

### **Giving Feedback**

- ▶ Choose your timing
- ▶ Separate the action from the person--assume good intent
- ▶ Be specific--give examples of actions or language
- ▶ Share impact on you and the broader culture

### **Receiving Feedback**

- ▶ Be aware of your emotions - if you're feeling discomfort, consider if there's something to learn
- ▶ Seek to understand & ask questions before responding
- ▶ Thank the other person!
- ▶ It's ok to take time to process

## Warm up before workshop to put people in an open/positive mood: watch awkward moments CP [5mins]



There should be a TV/projector available - pre load these videos before the workshop commences.

▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSMis1ctEHo>

▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZqdBHG6w7A>

## Group share back [10mins]

As a group, we'll answer some questions to help us process the emotions and thoughts that emerged while going through the VR.



▶ Who would like to volunteer to share their reactions and experiences going through Talking Mimes?

▶ Who else had the same experience?

▶ Who had a different experience?

▶ Were there any surprises?

▶ What were you most aware of?

▶ Why is it important to have accurate information and understanding about disabilities?

- ▶ Deal with any "glad it's not me" or other negative reactions - guide them with questions about what specifically made them feel this way (to highlight behavioural and social issues we need to address). Explain that because the experience is brief, while it's a shock to be stripped of your agency, you don't get to experience what happens over a longer period. People go on extraordinary journeys of self-discovery, develop psychological toolkits and strength they didn't know they were capable of. Talk to examples of upsides of disability (<https://talkingmimes.com/pwac>) and the happy, fulfilling, and productive lives of people locked-in with severe physical disabilities (e.g. Stephen Hawking and what it would have meant for humanity if he had given into despair, or not had access to the assistive technology to continue his work in physics and science communication).

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## Exercises (in groups of 2-3)

### 1. Reframing Role Play (15mins):

*Equipment: scripts of the parts from Talking Mimes to reframe*



In this exercise, we're going to revisit a few scenes and characters from Talking Mimes, who had poor disability etiquette.

▶ Mystery support staff

▶ Dr. Brown

▶ New carer, Jack

▶ Teenage girl and her younger brother

Pick one scenario and in your groups, come up with a role play that would show how you would do things differently, or how you would try and change these individual's behaviour.

*Some questions that might be useful to ask after each exercise:*

- ▶ What might we be able to infer/conclude from these exercises?
- ▶ What did you learn/relearn?
- ▶ What does that suggest about disability in general?
- ▶ What biases and preconceptions do you see operating here?
- ▶ Can you relate any learnings from these exercises to other experiences?

## 2. Storyboarding (15mins, start share back after 10mins):

*Equipment: A2 papers and felt pens*

For this exercise we're going to compare how you would attend a concert in town as someone with no access needs vs. someone with a severe physical disability. On the A2 pieces of paper provided, storyboard the steps, actions and activities you'd need to complete for both these scenarios. We'll share back to the group afterwards, to see the differences.



Some things to consider:

- ▶ What accessibility features will you need, from ticket purchase through to the venue?
- ▶ What are some basic needs that you'll need to take into consideration?
- ▶ What are your transportation needs?

To ask after share back: which of these aspects do you think are the easiest to determine and organise? Which most difficult?

## 3. If time, in your groups, discuss (15mins):

- ▶ How can you apply/transfer what you've experienced today?  
Write a list of 5 things that you'll do differently
- ▶ How has your perception of disability changed as a result of going through these exercises? Capture 2-4 ways to share with the group
- ▶ Why is it important to have accurate information and understanding about disabilities?  
[same question as baseline, to see if answers have changed]
- ▶ Share how you think you could support people with disabilities in your community?

4. Give participants the post-workshop questionnaire to complete.

## Closing

Learning is an ongoing process, and we hope that you will continue to question the accessibility of the world around you, and push for change. Be more aware of how people with disabilities are represented in the media, how our environments and language are designed in ways that exclude people with disabilities. Question why you're not friends with, or why you don't work with people who have severe disabilities. Your life will be richer, more interesting and more dynamic when you embrace all forms of diversity.

Give all participants the take-home handout, and collect their completed questionnaires.