Improvisational Theater Tools ("Serious Play")
to Strengthen Communication and Collaboration

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FUN!, "Serious Play" activities can help educate and develop individual “soft skills”, while creating and promoting a positive company culture

- Deep listening, cooperation, observation, adaptability, speaking up, trust, respect, empathy, team building, problem-solving

Experiential Improv Exercises Emphasize:

- **Listening** (words aren’t even necessary; body posture, expressed emotions, eye contact, and disposition are powerful communicators)
- **Cooperation** (it’s a “team sport” that celebrates dialog and shared respect)
- **Observation** (the ability to process large amounts of crucial information and translate it into action)
- **Adaptability** (letting go of preconceived notions and being open to new ideas)
- **Empathy and Status** (how individual thought processes / judgments / actions show (dis) respect, which affects our ability to trust and feel “safe”)

What are some of the principles for applying Improv in health and wellness settings?

- “Yes and...” (to affirm and add to dialog, rather than negate)
- A need to surrender individual “plans” and co-create together
- To see “failure” as opportunity (to learn, be human, forgive, help)
- To be “present” for others with mindful listening (questions often stop interpersonal communication, and halt the support and growth of your team’s ideas)
RESOURCES:

“Perspective: Serious Play: Teaching Medical Skills With Improvisational Theater Techniques”, Professor Katie Watson, JD, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Academic Medicine, *Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*, October 2011, Vol 86, Issue 10, pp 1260-1265


*Quality and Safety Intersection: Medical Improv& Health Care!* (article by Stephanie Frederick, M.Ed., RN) [http://stephaniefrederick.com/?p=439](http://stephaniefrederick.com/?p=439)

Yes, And….How Improvisation Reverses “No, But” Thinking and Improves Creativity and Collaboration (2015) by Kelly Leonard & Tom Yorton

Training to Imagine: Practical Improvisational Theatre Techniques for Trainers and Managers to Enhance Creativity, Teamwork, Leadership, and Learning (2012) by Kat Koppett

Search You Tube for Applied Improv and Improvisational Theater exercise demos

**Stephanie Frederick** attended the first Medical Improv “Train the Trainer” intensive at Chicago’s Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine. She collaborates with colleagues across the U.S., and travels with her Tucson Improv team to assess, facilitate, and support organizational communication and collaboration. Improv applications are used in many health and wellness areas: professional training and development, public health/clinical settings, community and worksite wellness, integrative healthcare, coaching sessions, customer service, risk management, academic electives, and many others. Healthy cultures are supported and nurtured with the fun, interactive principles of applied Improv.

For recommendations and collaborative possibilities across the U.S. and Canada, visit:

[www.improvtoimprovehealthcare.com](http://www.improvtoimprovehealthcare.com)

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