

CONTEXT:

In 2015, Ping Chong + Company was invited by La Casa Mandarinina, an anti-violence NGO based in Mexico City, to offer theater trainings to a group of local participants, both theater artists and social workers, in order to lay the groundwork for a future *Secret Survivors* production in Mexico City, which would use theater to explore the experiences of survivors of sexual violence in Mexico. With support from a NET Travel Grant, Sara Zatz, Ryan Conarro, and Bruce Allardice traveled to Mexico City for a 3-day workshop intensive. Below is a sample workshop outline from the Mexico City training. Workshops were conducted in English and Spanish.

Sample 2- Day Workshop Outline

This is a sample of 2-days of activities. Many of these could be expanded to fill more time. A third day of the workshop in Mexico City was dedicated to staging activities and culminate in a sharing of generated work.

Day 1

Intros/Ground Rules/Agenda (10-15 minutes)

Name Game (20 minutes)

- Round 1 – Go around the circle, each participant says their full name, birthday, and where they were born. [Pick a rhythm – maybe two claps between]
- Round 2 – Go around again, people say their name and the meaning/origin of their name
- Round 3 – Go around again, first name, plus a description and gesture. After each person says their characteristic, everyone repeats the gesture. Go around the circle once, and then again with everyone in unison.

Crossing the Circle (10 Minutes) – Facilitator reads a series of prompts, participants cross the circle if the prompt applies to them.

- I was born in Mexico City
- I was born in another part of Mexico
- One or both of my parents were born in another country other than Mexico
- One of my grandparents was born in another country other than Mexico
- I speak more than 1 language
- I love to perform
- I've never been on stage before
- I use art or media as part of my work
- I work on violence prevention
- I don't always feel safe in my community
- I have felt like an outsider
- I have fought with a family member or friend about politics
- I believe in second chances
- I believe in fate
- I believe in love

FACILITATOR OFFERS CHANCE FOR GROUP TO ADD ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

Pair Intro Interviews (20 Minutes)

Facilitators divide the group into pairs. Each person interviews their partner for 3 minutes and then they switch. The interview prompt is: What brought you to this workshop this weekend? What do you hope to get out of the experience?

Each person then has 1 minute to report back to group and introduce their partner. This is a timed exercise.

Discussion: What was hard about being interviewed? Being the interviewer? Sharing back to the group? What did you learn about each other?

Shake Out/Break (10 minutes)

Context – Sexual Violence in Mexico (1.5 hours-)led by La Casa Mandarinina) – background and discussion

LUNCH (1 hour)

Screening- Secret Survivors Original Performance (1 hour 30minutes)

Screening of the original *Secret Survivors* performance.

Post-Screening – breathing, free write, self-check – 5-10 minutes

Popcorn responses – 5-10 minutes

Post-Screening Discussion (1 hour 30 minutes)

Open Discussion – process, making of Secret Survivors, Q+A –

Closing Circle (15 minutes)

Go around the circle and have participants say one sentence each - what will you be taking away with you from today? Who do you want to bring into the space tomorrow.

Day 2

Opening circle (15 min)

Go around the circle and have each participant state an “I believe statements” of something they believe can make the world a better place

“What do you think of “ writing and small group discussion (30 min)

- Each person is given an index card with one of three words written on it. SILENCE, SURVIVOR, PREVENTION.
- Free write for 5-10 minutes in response to that word.
- Each person then writes one word only on a corresponding flip chart paper to create a list of single words in response.
- Divide the participants into groups – one group per word.

- Each group discussed the words on the paper and selects 3 that they think are representative of the concept.
- Switch the groups over so they are standing at a different word than their original paper. There should now be 3 words circled.
- Have the group now select 1 word from the 3 to represent the concept.
- Switch the group again so they are standing at a new paper, different than their previous 2.

Staging (20 minutes)

- Each group has 10 minutes to stage a tableau (still or moving) with the selected word on their paper.
- After 10 minutes, each group shares their staged image.
- Then, facilitators organize the group into a “Tone Poem” Staging – each concept word is stated in chorus, then the group with the selected word moves into their image. Then the selected word is spoken in chorus. Then the group flows into the next concept word, etc.
- The final image is TRANSFORMATION, which is devised as a group.
- Repeat all the images until it flows smoothly.

SEE VIDEO SAMPLE OF OUTCOME OF THIS EXERCISE IN MEXICO

Link: <https://vimeo.com/130101266>

Password: SSMexico

Discussion (20 minutes)

Break (10 minutes)

***Undesirable Elements* Scripting Techniques (1 hour)**

Facilitator leads discussion on *Undesirable Elements* scripting techniques with examples from the workbook – adapting interview questionnaire to script, adapting interview notes to script, theatricalizing techniques, etc. 5 minute break

LUNCH (1 hour)

Scripting Exercise (1.5 hour)

- Participants listen to two samples of interviews recorded from a Ping Chong + Company *Undesirable Elements* production.
- Participants take 20 minutes to create their own script segment in “*UE Form*”
- Participants return to workshop and share their writing
- Discussion

Break (10 minutes)

River Story – writing/staging (1 hour)

- Facilitators lead participants through a series of memory and writing exercises. Prompts can include “I remember the first day of school.” “I remember saying goodbye” “I remember a victory” “I remember a loss”

- Facilitators work with participants to quickly stage 1-sentence memories in chorological order.

Pair interview (the timing of this activity is flexible and can take 2 or more hours and can be extended into homework)

- Divide group into pairs
- Each person selects one memory from the previous activity to share with their partner. Or they can pick another memory, but it should be one they are comfortable sharing.
- Each partner interviews their partner for 30 minutes and then switches
- After the interviews, each person spends 30 minutes writing a script piece based on their partner's interview
- When the writing is complete, the partners should check in with each other – share the writing, and adjust as necessary to response from the partner's. This is their chance to make sure the memory is reflected accurately, and they are comfortable with the representation. The check in is not about the aesthetics of the writing, but the accountability of the interviewer/writer and agency of the interviewee in how they are represented.
- Partners edit their script segments as necessary
- Group sharing – after the participants have all checked in with their partners and made edits, the group comes back together to share the writing.
- Discussion

End of Day Closing Circle (15 minutes – if this is the final activity of the workshop, this can be extended for more reflection)

- Go around the circle and have participants say one sentence each - what was one challenge and one reward from the work today? Or something similar.

BACKGROUND:

Secret Survivors is an initiative by Ping Chong + Company to use theater to raise awareness of child sexual abuse and join a nationwide movement to end it. It was conceived in 2009 by Amita Swadhin, an anti-violence activist and survivor, and began in 2010 with a theater production in the *Undesirable Elements* series featuring adult survivors of child sexual abuse sharing their true stories on stage. The production explores the diverse ways this violence occurs and grapples with the many reasons that most survivors remain silent. In order to expand the reach of *Secret Survivors* beyond the theater production, Ping Chong + Company partnered with Whistle Films to create *Secret Survivors: Using Theater to Break the Silence*, which explores the *Secret Survivors* theater production, and includes voices of survivors and advocates working in the field of child sexual abuse prevention. Ping Chong + Company published an accompanying **toolkit**, a resource for facilitating workshops and discussion around child sexual abuse. Ping Chong + company also created a national *Secret Survivors* initiative to train non-arts organizations to create their own local theater productions modeled on the original *Secret Survivors*. These productions will become tools for community-based dialogue and action.

Since its launch in 2012, the documentary and toolkit have been used by over 100 organizations nationwide, and internationally. Ping Chong + Company has presented screenings, trainings, and theater workshops at the National Sexual Assault Conference, The New York State Child Abuse

Prevention Conference, and for events accompanying the United Nations Commission on the *Status of Women and Girls*.

RESOURCES:

Secret Survivors documentary and toolkit: LINK <http://www.pingchong.org/undesirable-elements/production-archive/secret-survivors/toolkit/>

[*Secret Survivors: Using Theater to Break the Silence*](#) is a 40 minute documentary film (2012), produced by Ping Chong + Company and Melanie Vi Levy of [Whistle Films](#). The film explores the [Secret Survivors theater production](#), and includes voices of survivors and advocates working in the field of child sexual abuse prevention. The accompanying *Secret Survivors* Toolkit includes suggested activities, workshop outlines, and discussion topics related to the DVDs, and an online resource guide. The toolkit is a comprehensive resource for anyone with an interest in addressing, preventing, and ultimately ending child sexual abuse.

Conducting Safe, Effective and Ethical Interviews with Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence by [Witness.org](#). 6 part video series and pdf guide.

<http://blog.witness.org/2014/09/reporting-ethically-domestic-gender-based-violence/>

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