



Development Stages of Drama Therapy Program - A Roadmap!

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Abstract

Developing a program isn't a one-time activity but a continuous process that redefines a study at every given step. This paper discusses briefly how the researcher and the guide have managed to chart out a road map to build their Drama Therapy Program. It will give a brief overview of the tenets of the program but focuses more on the building blocks of the program. It is essential to note all the minor things that the researcher has taken into account while developing the Drama Therapy Programme which will be used for preadolescents in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The researcher has finished developing the program and hence, this paper discusses all the steps involved from the planning stage till the evaluation stage.

Keywords

Program Development, Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, Program Design, Step-by-Step Guide, Roadmap of Program Development, Drama Therapy Program, Preadolescents

Introduction

Drama Therapy is a subtype of Creative Arts Therapy /Expressive Art Therapy. With its origin in the UK, it is now being tried and tested for various psychological variables around the world. Drama Therapy is a perfect blend of psychotherapeutic theatrical exercises and creative expressions. Theatre-based activities are carried out for singular individuals or a group under the supervision of a trained individual, known as a drama therapist. Sustained drama therapy can result in personal and social well-being and help an individual lead a fulfilling life. These therapies can be very effective to deal with an array of mental health issues.

The use of drama in counselling may involve acting out fictional scenes from books or movies or real-life scenarios and then, processing the experiences during the session. This provides children with an opportunity to be creative and express themselves in a way that may be new and different. (Smith-Adcock & Tucker, 2017)

Drama Therapy consists of a wide array of activities and setting them in a systematic and logical manner is important so as to assess its outcomes and apply the same in any kind of setting. The core elements need to be articulated in such a manner that the flow is continuous and even a layman can understand the program well. The structure is essential in any kind of activity and the researcher has tried to put down activities step by step so that the population benefits from the Drama Therapy Program.

Need for the Study

This paper will act as a step-by-step guide of how the researcher formulated and validated the Drama Therapy Program so that it becomes a foolproof one to be practiced in the classrooms all across the board. It is essential for every researcher to understand the phases of program development clearly in order to come up with a program that truly and effectively works on the desired domain. It cannot be a haphazard approach and needs a deeper understanding of the various phases of program development. Hence, the study is essential so that the roadmap to an effective Drama Therapy Program can be laid down.

Program development basically provides a strong framework for a plan that needs to be put in action and provides guidance on how to build effective programs to resolve the issues at hand. Program development is not a one-step, but a prolonged and intensive process that has quite a few phases. The program needs to have some scope for flexibility so that it can be modified according to the changing needs. As we set sail on the path, program development ensures that we document every step so that we can evaluate, assess and reflect at any given point in time. This systematic process takes us through every little detail of the planning, defines our objectives, set parameters, prioritize, and leads to a state where the scope for an error is very less. The checking at every level ensures that all the shortfalls are addressed and that the program is pretty much ready to be implemented. It gives a direction, provides a pathway, and ensures that the developer of the program stays on track and doesn't waiver from his objectives.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the step-by-step phases of program development.
- To develop a Drama Therapy program for the preadolescent population of Jammu & Kashmir state.
- To conduct a pilot study and validate if the program can be executed on the sample.

Research Questions

- What are the various phases and stages of program development?
- How can we develop a Drama Therapy Program which is appropriate for the preadolescent age group?
- How to test a program in pilot phase to ascertain its execution in the implementation phase?

Step by Step Roadmap to build a Drama Therapy Program

PHASE 1: PLANNING & PREPARATION

Step 1: Assess the Needs / Gaps

Why Drama Therapy is essential for preadolescents in Jammu & Kashmir to develop their emotional and social intelligence?

A survey was conducted in the research and the need was felt that the preadolescents in Jammu and Kashmir need additional activities to build their emotional and social intelligence. The region is of prime importance here because of the terror activities in the valley. It is imperative that the younger generation be made emotionally strong and socially aware.

Step 2: Define Objectives of the Program

Defining the objectives of the overall program is essential to keep the researcher on track. In the current study, the overall objectives of the program would be:

- To increase the emotional and social intelligence of preadolescents in Jammu & Kashmir.
- To build the confidence of participants through a recreational activity which in reality has a therapeutic effect.

Step 3: Define Parameters

Give operational definitions of all the terms in the main title. The two main variables – Emotional and Social Intelligence and their scope should be defined clearly according to the test that will be used according to the pre and post-test.

Step 4: Identification of Resources

The researcher needs to take into account what all resources – materials and manpower will be needed for the program. This needs to be decided in the beginning for sure so as to adjust the administrative and management bit. The whereabouts of population, the activities, experts on the panel – everything needs to be decided before starting to pen down the actual program.

Step 5: Evaluation Plan

This is a good time to get looking for tests and evaluation tools. The researcher needs to at least have the options ready. It is important to assess that the program was a success and we can follow the model given by Kirkpatrick in which he has laid four levels of the evaluation process as given below in the diagram.

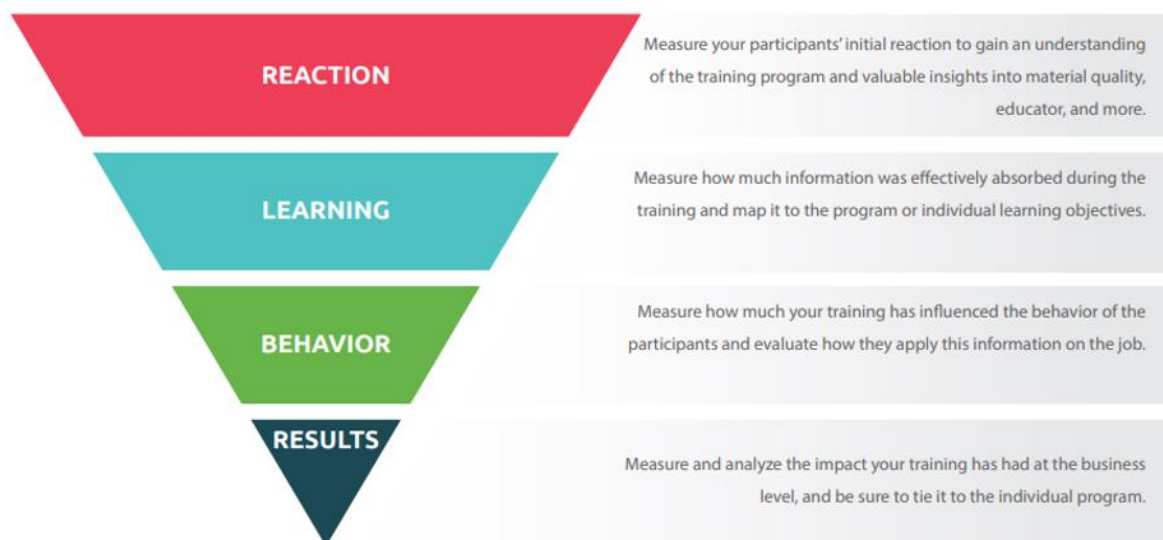


Image from <https://www.bizlibrary.com/blog/training-programs/kirkpatrick-model-training-evaluation/>

FINAL STEP IN PHASE 1: It is a good idea to show the initial plan to experts so as to decide whether the program is worth being taken to the next phases. This would be something like a concept proposal and would be the first stepping stone to the following phases.

PHASE 2: DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Step 1: Establish a timeline for the implementation phase

The researcher after thorough brainstorming sessions with the guide and experts decided the Drama Therapy Program would be conducted twice a week and would span over 8 weeks (tentatively 16-17 sessions). The timeline is important as the modules should be evenly distributed so that the understanding and assimilation of the content can be optimum.

Step 2: Define the learning outcomes module-wise & questions for intermittent testing

The guide and the researcher discussed each activity related to Drama Therapy in deep detail and then classified it module-wise. Three modules were made so that the flow of the program would be maintained. The first module would be about priming the students and getting them to be easy with the researcher. The second module would be introductory drama practices and the final one would have core theatre techniques.

Step 3: Identify Drama Therapy Activities that can be done in the modules

Drama Therapy has a wide scope and one needs to decide on which activities to retain according to the age group of the sample. Preadolescents and adolescents are quite bogged down with studies and extracurricular activity is a space for them to let loose. Activities like puppetry, face painting, psychodrama, sociodrama, etc are interesting and are discussed in detail to finalize which activity will come under which module. Every item must be critically analyzed so that there is no redundancy later on.

Step 4: Delimit the study and understand the prerequisites with respect to the sample

The sample belongs to the preadolescent age group of students in Jammu and Kashmir and there are a lot of socio-cultural constraints to consider. Delimiting the study and understanding the core requirements of the sample is an essential step so as to tweak the program according to their needs. The social scenario in Jammu and Kashmir is sensitive and it is essential that the activities do not hurt the sentiments of people in any way. Some might not wholeheartedly participate in the program and this is a delimitation of the study.

Step 5: Understand the administrative setup and concerns

The researcher for this study had to study the administrative setup very closely. The areas in which these schools are based are sensitive areas and need special permissions from the defence authorities. It was only after quite a few telephonic calls that the permission was granted and guidelines were laid down and the time offered was stipulated. The rough draft of the program was checked thoroughly to assess if no kind of influencing activities were included. The administrative setup was a difficult one to crack and the researcher had to study the finer details about the place, social setup, and mindsets of the general populace in deep detail. This step was an eye-opener and gave a first-hand feel of how it would feel to conduct the final program in real-time.

Step 6: Expert Review

After deciding on all the activities and modules which will be included in the Drama Therapy Program, the researcher sent out the program to experts from the industry. The experts included those from education, educational psychology and theatre. In this step, the experts reviewed the Drama Therapy Program closely and got back with a few suggestions. The placement of activities was perceived a little differently by the theatre experts and the flow had to be reworked. The psychology experts liked the program and were happy that this was initiated as an activity to be carried out in school. Overall, the program was received well and liked by the experts.

PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUTION**Step 1: Putting the plan into action – Individual Try Out on 1 student**

This phase is very important just to get the feel of the program and if there would be any problems/shortfalls in its execution. A student from the sample is selected for this and the program is run on the student to see whether the timeline, the flow, the execution goes well. If any hindrances come about, like paucity of time, a lacuna in understanding the terminology, difficulty level of activities,

Step 2: Small Group Try Out on 5 students

After doing whatever minor changes, this step includes the pre and post-test too. You need to administer the pre-test, conduct the two-month-long Drama Therapy Program, take intermittent assessment tests and then finally conduct the post-test on these 5 students who are from the selected sample itself. The selection should be of average students – not too high/low on emotional and social intelligence as that can yield unwanted results. After this tryout, the study is good to go into the pilot testing stage.

Step 3: Field Try out / Pilot Study – 50 students

This stage is like the perfect mirror trying out the main program in real-time. It will follow the complete process as it would in real-time so that if any modifications need to be made at all, they can be done before implementing the program. It's like a small-scale experiment of the program and will probably yield results like the main program would during implementation. The researcher could smoothly conduct the pilot study without any hiccups and realized that the activities can be brought closer for better flow and understanding.

Step 4: Evaluation

The mean score analysis of the field tryout will help us predict whether the program is effective or not. This is the final step of program development and after considering the mean, we can implement it on the sample.

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