

Warm-up Definition – background, short form, and long form.

## **The concept of the individual warm-up state**

### **Background**

There are four distinct concepts of warm-up being employed in psychodrama and elsewhere. The first three of these are generally used in a wide variety of professional practices. These are 1) the concept of a group warm-up process, 2) an estimation or assessment of a group's warm-up state at a moment in time, and 3) an individual warm-up process. There is a fourth concept that is used primarily in psychodrama and this is the concept of an individual warm-up state and it is used as an estimation or assessment of a person's current functioning.

This research is principally interested in conceptualising *the individual warm-up state*.

The concept of the individual warm-up state, as it is used here (which in this survey questionnaire will be referred to as warm-up, warmed-up, and warming-up) arises in the unique setting of a psychodrama group. Perhaps for this reason it is unfamiliar to many people. In a psychodrama group session the director is interested in how a person relates to others and to the sub-groups that may be present in the group setting. This attention of the group leader is similar in many other circumstances, such as group-work, team based work, training, facilitating, managing meetings, and the like. However, distinct from these other settings, the psychodrama setting encourages the group leader to investigate these relationships in great detail, and consequently to pay attention to a vast range of visual and auditory information that each person presents in response to being in a group and all the factors present in a group. When the work moves to being with one person, the protagonist, on the psychodrama stage area, the director is then very interested in the dramatic context being created. They are required to follow and be sensitive to how the protagonist relates to others and what they have produced in that context where they are enacting a life situation of importance. In these circumstances the psychodrama director is required to pay particular attention to the moment-to-moment responses of the protagonist, and again, to pay attention to, and make some sense of, the information being presented. This is called following their individual warm-up state.

### **Warm-up: short form definition**

Warm-up is a psychodramatic concept proposing that an individual's total functioning state in the moment is readable in a comprehensive and accurate manner. Reading of a person's warm-up may allow it to be utilised while working with them in a wide variety of ways. Each person has their own individual warm-up in response to their context, at each moment.

Warm-up Definition – background, short form, and long form.

A person making such a holistic inference, for instance a psychodrama practitioner, on deducing the warm-up of another, will be able to say that this person 'has a particular warm-up'. The language for such a statement may contain metaphorical and stereotypical elements that convey considerable inferences as to the potential state of the person and their cognitive, affective, conative, and action functioning in the presenting context.

Warm-up is relevant in psychodrama because the psychodrama director is producing moments of action and interaction between the person they are working with, the protagonist, and other people and objects on the stage. When such actions and interactions are being produced in the moment and live on stage, the director is required to have the ability to immediately grasp the warm-up of the protagonist, not just their response in language, or their non-verbal responses. Without this ability the psychodramatic enactment may have little therapeutic or creative impact. With this ability, the director is able to give immediate production directions that increase the spontaneity, and the capacity of the protagonist to creatively generate new solutions to old problems.

### **Warm-up: long form definition**

#### *Warm-up the phenomenon*

Warm-up is a psychodramatic concept proposing that an individual's total functioning state in the moment is readable. The reading of the warm-up may be done with some accuracy by a trained professional and be utilised while working with them in a variety of ways. It is conceived that the state they are in is a direct and intimate response to their context. Thus each person has their own individual warm-up state in response to their situation from moment to moment. In general it is not likely that a person is self-consciously aware of their warm-up state, though they may become so.

Warm-up is used in psychodrama as a heuristic, or rule of thumb, for judging an individual's total state of functioning, their state of being, at a moment in time, in the entirety of their context. It includes their range of responses, such as their conscious, unconscious, non-conscious, pre-conscious, cognitive, conative, affective and action responses. It assumes that this warm-up has a concomitant effect on a person's subsequent cognitions, conations, affect and actions. For instance, if a person warms-up to being judged critically they will likely then experience critical judgement as coming from those around them and themselves, as a consequence of their warm-up.

Warm-up is relevant in psychodrama because the psychodrama director is producing moments of action and interaction between the person they are working with, the protagonist, and other people and objects on the stage. When such actions and interactions are being produced in

Warm-up Definition – background, short form, and long form.

the moment and live on stage, the director is required to have an ability to immediately grasp the warm-up of the protagonist, not just their response in language, or their non-verbal responses.

Without this ability the psychodramatic enactment may have little therapeutic or creative impact. With this ability, the director is able to give immediate production directions that increase the spontaneity, and the capacity of the protagonist to creatively generate new solutions to old problems.

#### *Warm-up may be read*

Warm-up may be read through an inferential process based on perceiving a variety of responses exhibited by a person. This list is illustrative rather than exhaustive and includes: (1) the speech and types of language a person exhibits; (2) language content; (3) paralinguistic factors (factors other than language), such as timing, tonal modulation, sound quality, pitch, pace, rhythm, loudness, intensity, resonance, accent and inflection, vocal and delivery styles, etc; (4) attendant non-verbal cues, such as placement of attention through body positioning, head positioning, gaze direction, and the timing of these factors; (5) body tonus and movements, such as jerky, fluid, rhythmical, tense, speedy, or slow movements and the overall rhythmicity of bodily movements; (6) posture, such as sitting, standing, slouching, and movements between postures; (7) gestures, including hand, facial and limb gestures, and their interplay; (8) other physiological factors, such changes to pupil size, skin colour and skin colour changes; (9) a person's use of space between themselves and others and the objects around them; (10) the objects with which a person is surrounded or where their warm-up is occurring, including such factors as place, lighting, and surroundings; (11) a person's presentation, including such things as clothing colour and style, accoutrements, such as jewellery or wallets, watches, or bags, their hair colour and style, and; (12) the relationships and timing between all these factors. The warm-up heuristic, while clearly an approximation, through the inferential process allows for the development of a holistic hypothetical representation of a person. For instance, a person seen to slump their shoulders, drop their head, turn away slightly, cast their eyes down, speak in a quiet voice, breath shallowly, or have minimal eye contact may be considered, as an initial hypothesis by the director, to be warming-up to being judged.

#### *Learning to read warm-up accurately*

Learning to read warm-up accurately requires a professional to consciously infer another person's warm-up and this capacity is developed through extensive training in noticing and imaginatively inferentially making use of the factors mentioned in a wide variety of situations. Additionally, the capacity for accuracy and immediacy in their ability for judging another's warm-up, is enhanced by

Warm-up Definition – background, short form, and long form.

the higher the degree of diversity of a person's lived experience and their personal knowledge of impinging cultural and contextual factors on the individuals they work with. This occurs as a result of broader life experience allowing a greater variety of plausible inferences to be developed from the same observed data.

The inference of another person's warm-up is a holistic response, which, for idiosyncratic reasons to do with the director's own life experience and training, may rely on only some factors (for instance, speech delivery, vocal tone, and volume) rather than others (for instance, posturing and gesturing, and language content). It is, nevertheless, complete in the sense that such an inference produces a hypothetical judgement which is a complete picture of the person's response to their context in the moment. The emphasis is given for 'in the moment' as the hypothesis of a person's warm-up may change from moment to moment: as new factors are noticed by the person making the inference, or as the hypotheses does not stand up to scrutiny from enquiry of the person, or as the context becomes modified through actions of the person. For instance, a person with slumped shoulders and head, with downcast eyes, speaking in a quiet voice, having minimal eye contact may be seen as having a warm-up to being judged critically, but in the next moment may bring their head up, their shoulders back, and may glare around them and this may be seen as a warm-up to active defiance or self-preservation.