

# Yes, And...eXercise!

*It's funny how much this can help*

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## Overview

Define and explore improv (online!?)

What does this have to do with PD? Quality of Life

Show some games from previous classes

For more information - [www.yesandexercise.com](http://www.yesandexercise.com)

But before any of that...[let's move.](#)

Why did we do that?

Improv is a full-body, collaborative experience.



## Why this matters so much to me?

It starts with one word:

*Dad*

Diagnosed 2001

Baseball + PD odyssey 2004

More on Boys of Summer at:

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

I have taught & played improv for 25+ years.



At the Field of Dreams, Dyerville, IA - 2021



## What is improv?

What do you think it is?

Unplanned collaborative response.

No jokes.

Key skill: listening...and responding in a manner that demonstrates you are supporting your partner (Yes, and...).



## Roots of Improvisation

Neva Boyd (early 1900s) - Play for the sake of social development

Viola Spolin (1930s) Social Work

Paul Sills (1950s) Theatrical

How it integrates: Rob Beulshi

How this fits with PD?

- We are a community - PWP, Care Partners, wellness & medical providers.



## Game 1: Mirroring - unplanned, collaborative movement



Note: Online improvisation is a new offering as of Covid. Seemingly antithetical...

Follow or lead. This starts with me leading, then...



## PD + Improv = Yes, And

PD is unknown

- improv teaches us to trust the unknown

PD is marked by rigidity

- improv is all about fluidity (mind, body, awareness)

PD can make us feel isolated

- improv is built to bring us together - *ensemble*.

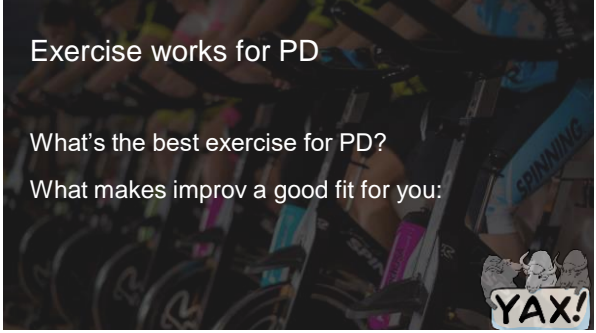


YAX!

## Exercise works for PD

What's the best exercise for PD?

What makes improv a good fit for you:



YAX!

## Improv is already yours

Not all PD issues are motor symptoms.

Improv is a unique exercise that can help with some of the more common PD quality of life issues: Isolation, stress, anxiety, depression and stigma.

Improv can help increase self-confidence and self efficacy while having fun at the same time.

Again, it's an exercise grounded in two simple words:



YAX!

# YES, AND

Acceptance of the situation; this is your foundation.

What you'll do with it; this is your power.



YAX!

## Epic Fail!

Improvise (proudly) fail a lot...and right out loud.

Why do you think we do that?

Follow the failure, fear, fun... (F it!)

*"Failure isn't fatal, but failure to change might be."* - John Wooden



YAX!


## Practicing Failure?!

*Yes, and...* it helps!

PWP commonly report feeling their bodies and minds are failing them.


Getting back up leads to resilience.

Improv helps us shift from survival to resilience, thriving and joy.



YAX!


### Game 2: Collaborative - we fail together



"Dr. Know it All!"

Brief description

The woman in the bottom-mid square isn't part of this game...



### The first known improv research for PD

Northwestern / Second City (2016)

100% completed the study

100% would recommend the class to others with PD

Highly rated in satisfaction and perceived benefit.

Many appreciated that others in class found them to be funny.




### Recent Clinical Trial

"It has energized and informed the way I train daily."

"Witnessing everyone light up and come to life during and after these classes was fascinating. Yes, it works! also it's multi-generational and helps us feel less isolated. Humor a bonus!"


"I'm sure that improv helps with neuroplasticity every bit as much as the warrior-style physical exercises I've been doing. I came away from the verbal workout as breathless and energised as if I'd been boxing for an hour."

Three groups:

- 1) Improvisation +
- 2) Improvisation
- 3) Watching Improvisation


Quantitative data still being analyzed

Qualitative feedback was strong



### Yes, and...improv is being studied in other fields, too:

- Alzheimer's
- Autism
- Medical Student training (empathy)
- Aging
- Anxiety & Depression in college students
- Communication & Team building for primary & middle schools



### Related research

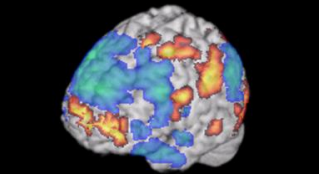
Dr. Charles Limb (UCSF)

Jazz musicians, rappers & improvisers (oh my!)

They're "in the zone". Flowing. Capable, in that moment of greater collaboration, connections, creativity and insights.


Why does that matter?

#### A brain while improvising



Yellow = medial prefrontal cortex (creativity & expression).  
Blue = dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (self-inhibition and control)

(Limb, C & Braun, A. (2017))



### Creativity makes us feel...

#### Neuro-improv fMRI study

Dr. Charles Limb - UCSF

Rappers, jazz musicians, theatrical improvisers

While improvising: The areas involved with judgment got quiet, the areas involved with creativity were active

Hypothesis: Improv is a pathway into flow

Flow is where we connect the previously unconnected.





### When PD says no...

Improv reminds you "Yes, and".

Improv allows for discovery and transformation.

You've got buried gifts - improv helps you unearth them.

You can help others, too, by giving them gifts - building ensemble.



### Game 3 - Response: gratitude



What's not wrong with your life?

Reactions - feedback.

We learn together.




### Improv for PD - Really?

#### Boxing for PD?

Along comes Rock Steady...


RSB: Oh, we're not actually hitting each other (that's good).

YAX: Oh, we're not standing up telling jokes by ourselves (that's good).



### Modeling & Mirroring

	RSB	YAX
This is collaborative	✓	✓
We're going to move together.	✓	✓
We're going to use our voices to show our power.	✓	✓
We're going to laugh.	✓	✓




### Yes, And...

This is an exercise.

I get better at it as I do it more.

I'll do it more often if I'm enjoying it.

Care Partners can play too!



### Known issues for People with PD


Isolation - inflamed by COVID

Access & Transportation

Unsatisfactory Support Group results

Online improvisation can help with all of these

P.S. "online" improv?!



## What you'll need

YAX does NOT require:

- Special equipment
- Special facility
- Previous training
- Any particular skill

YAX DOES require

- The ability to say "Yes, And"



For more information and to play along:

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