

The Game to Grow Method of Therapeutically Applied Role-Playing Games

A Level Two Training for Mental Health Professionals

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Session 3



The DOTS System of Narrative Construction

Desire

Obstacle

Tactic

So Then...

The DOTS System of Narrative Construction

Desire

What object or outcome do the characters want?

The DOTS System of Narrative Construction

Desire

What object or outcome do the characters want?

Obstacle

What is between the characters and the object or outcome they desire?

The DOTS System of Narrative Construction

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What object or outcome do the characters want?

Obstacle

What is between the characters and the object or outcome they desire?

Tactic

What *might* the characters do to overcome the obstacle?

The DOTS System of Narrative Construction

Desire

What object or outcome do the characters want?

Obstacle

What is between the characters and the object or outcome they desire?

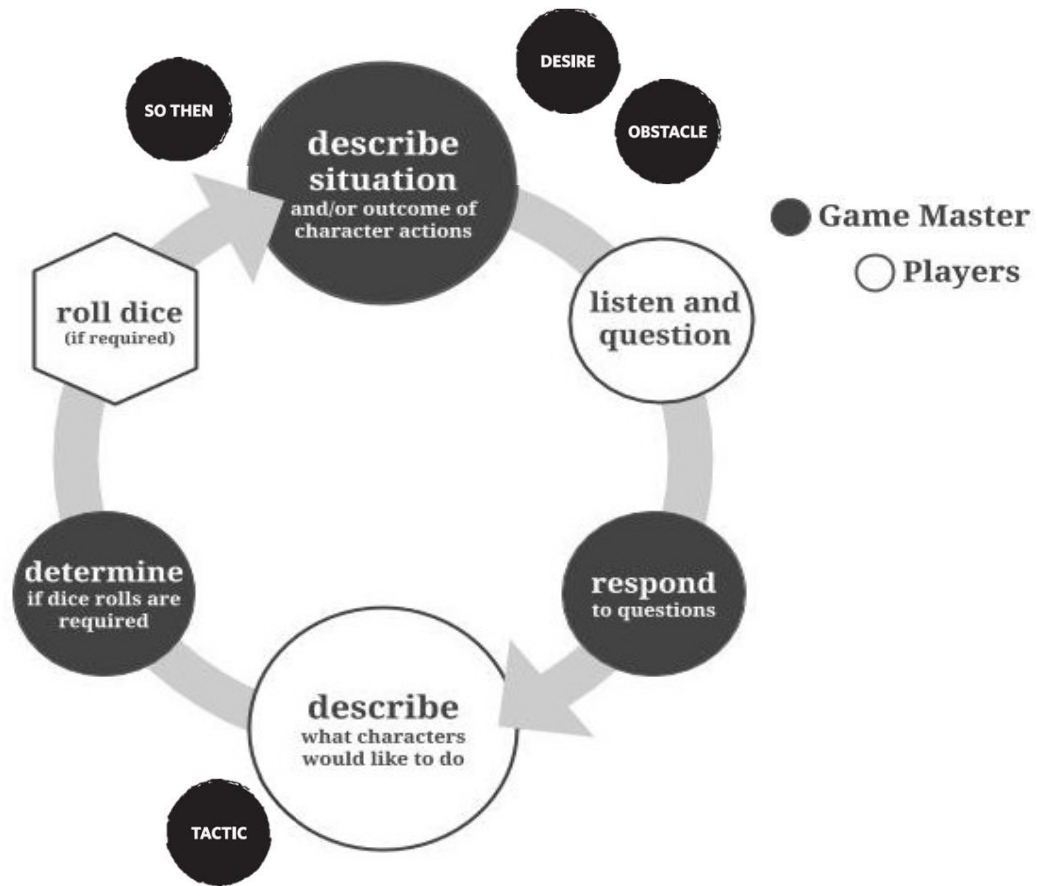
Tactic

What *might* the characters do to overcome the obstacle?

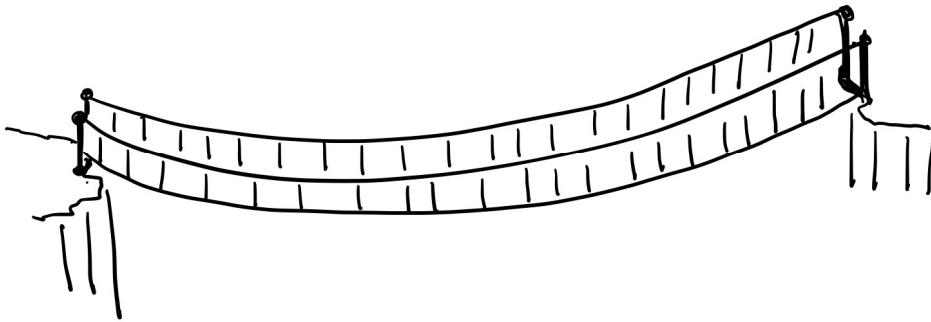
So Then...

What happens when the characters use the tactic (*successfully or unsuccessfully*)?





“The Bridge”



Cross the canyon.



The bridge is rickety and unstable.

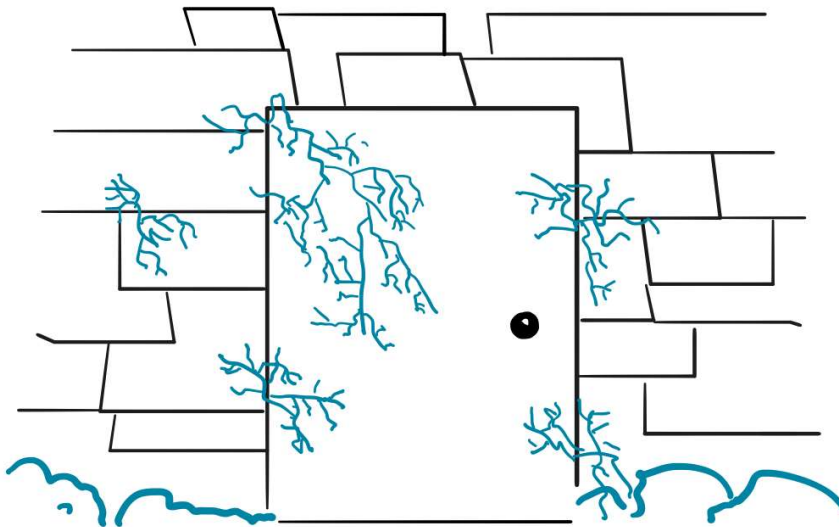


Walk carefully, stabilize with rope.



You safely cross the bridge!

“The Frozen Door”



DESIRE

Enter the hut.

OBSTACLE

The door is frozen shut.

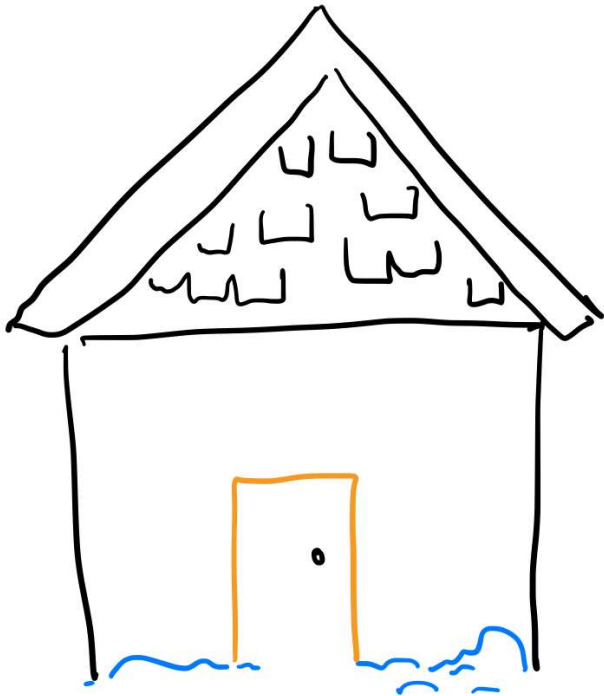
TACTIC

Pull hard, melt the snow, or
explode the wall with a fireball!

SO THEN

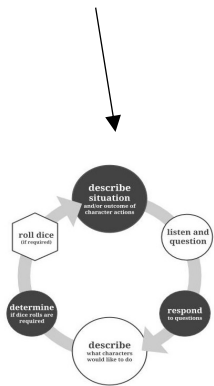
You enter the hut.

“The Person in the Hut”

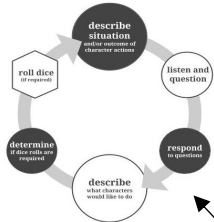


The Adventure Continues

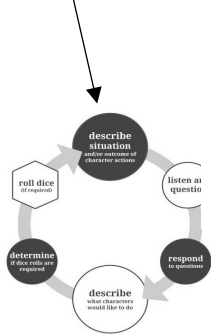
Crossing the Canyon



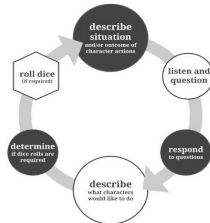
The Frozen Door



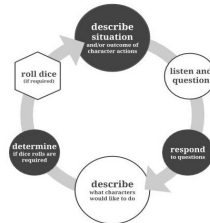
Person in the Hut



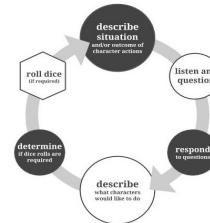
Bones in the Catacombs



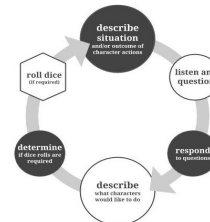
Enter the Crypt



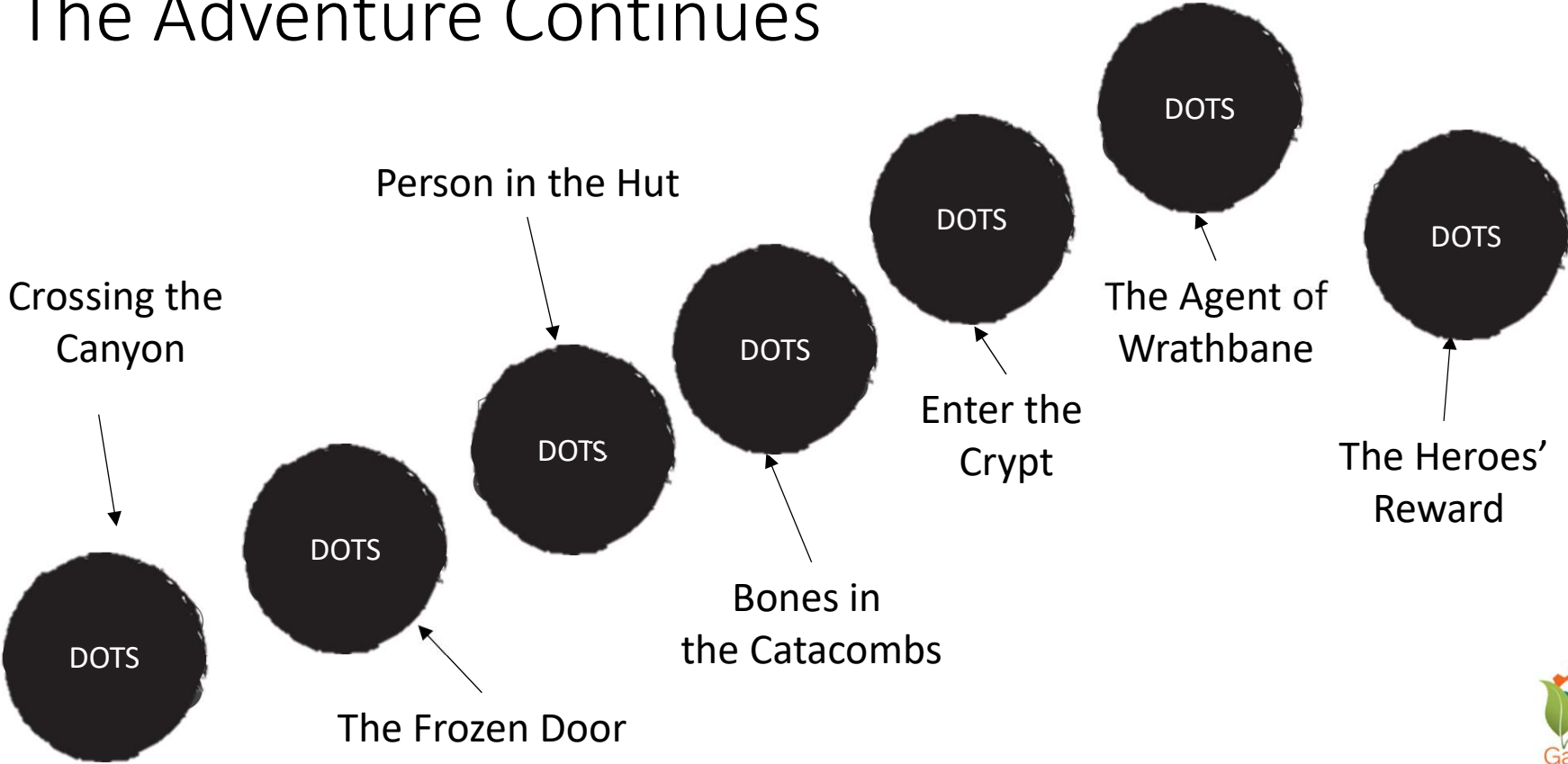
The Agent of Wrathbane



The Heroes' Reward



The Adventure Continues



Encounter Types

Exploration

Combat

Role-play

Exploration Encounters

- Obstacle is the environment.
- Includes linear puzzles (riddles), open-ended challenges, and quantum quandaries.
- Tactic may be solving a puzzle, creatively using abilities and inventory items, etc.

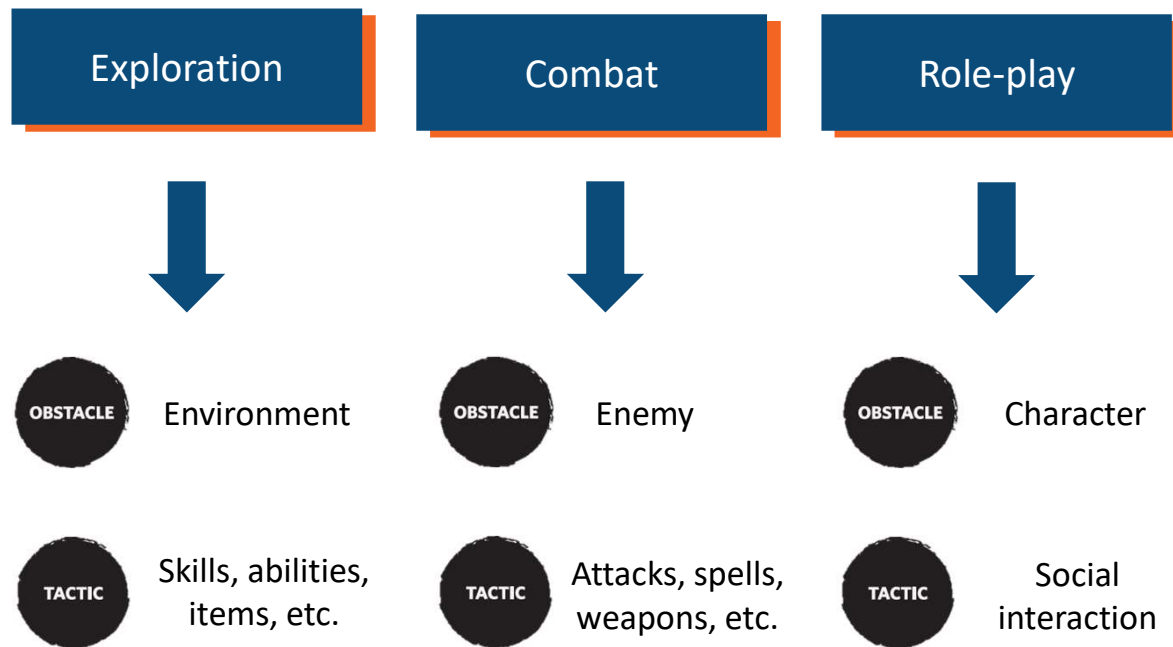
Combat Encounters

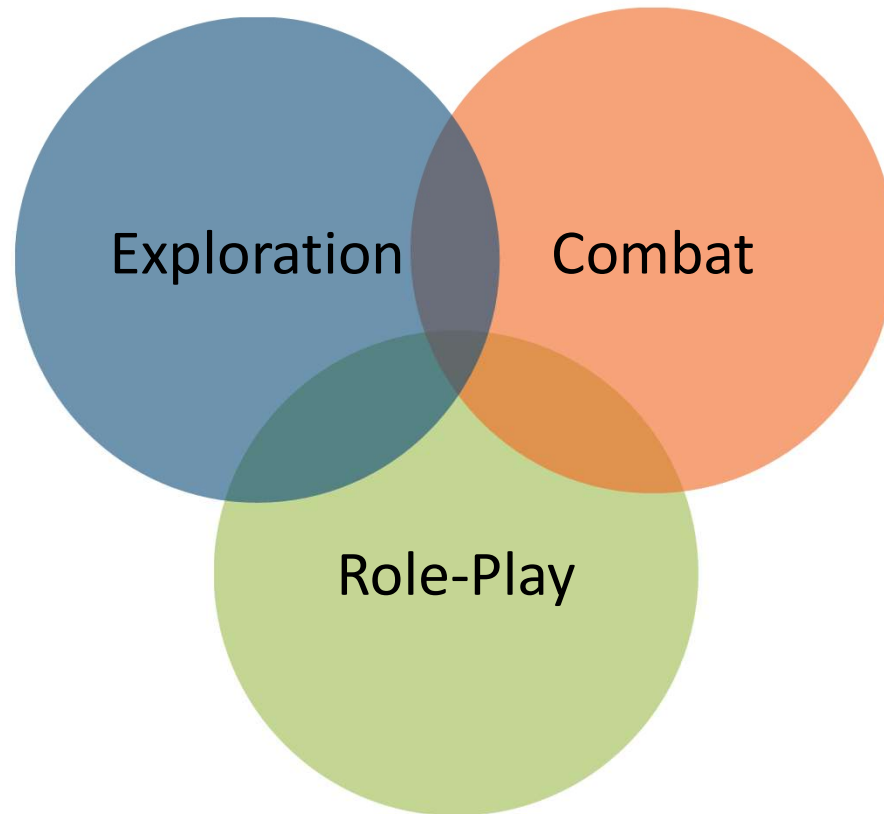
- Obstacle is an enemy NPC or a monster.
- Tactics may include using weapons, spells, or other attacks to defeat opponents or escape danger.

Role-Play Encounters

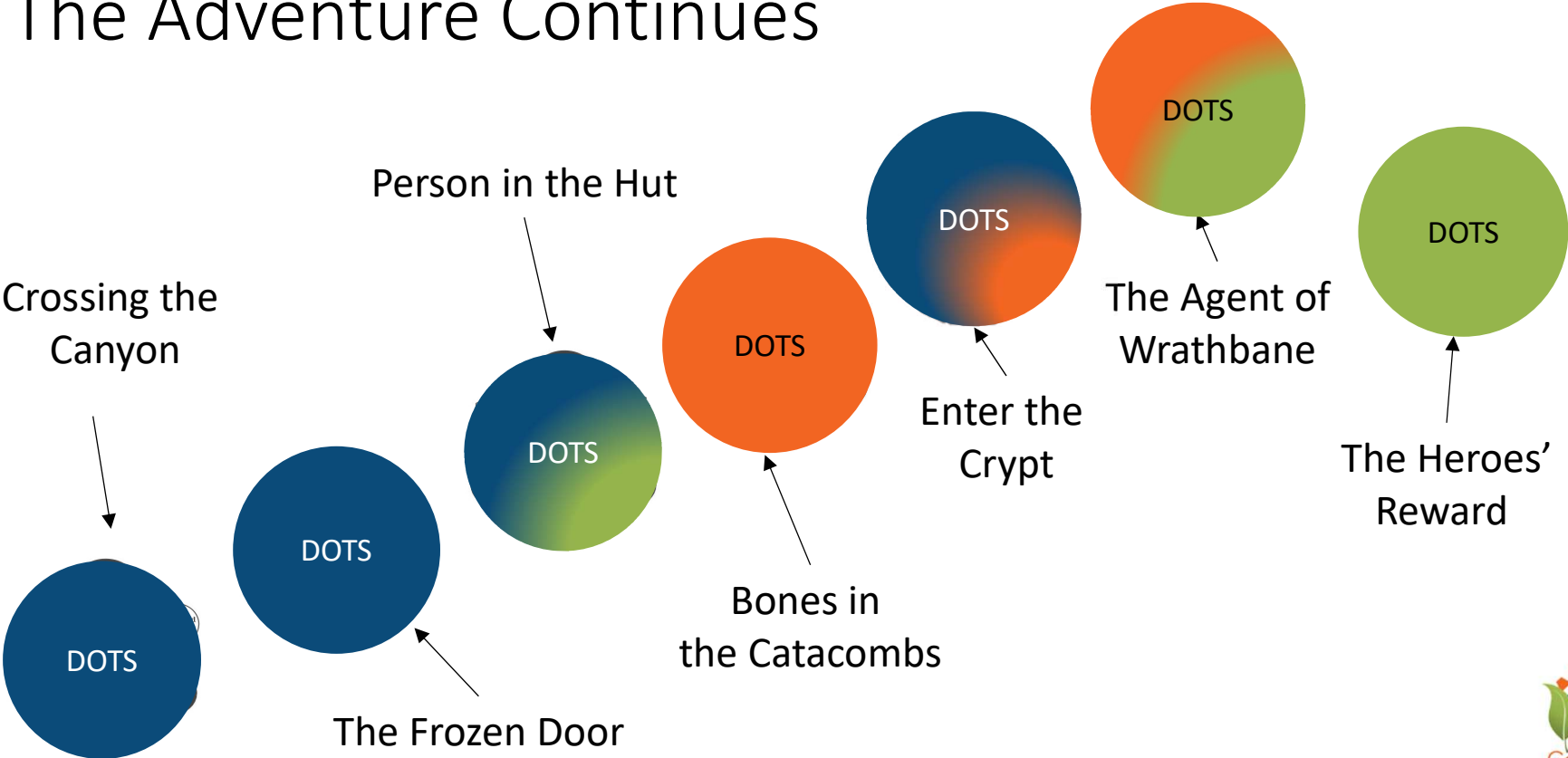
- Obstacle is another character.
- Tactic may be charm, persuasion, deception, intimidation, etc.
- In order to resolve conflict or reveal information; players may describe, narrate, or act out their tactics.

Encounter Types





The Adventure Continues



Great DOTS = Great Stories

- Vary encounter types.
- Mix encounter types.
- Respond to player input:
 - Flexibly respond to player curiosity.
 - Failure adds flavor to the story.

DOTS in every CASE

Campaign

Stop the ascension of Wrathbane the lich.

Adventure

Stop Wrathbane's agents from harnessing death magic from the crypt.

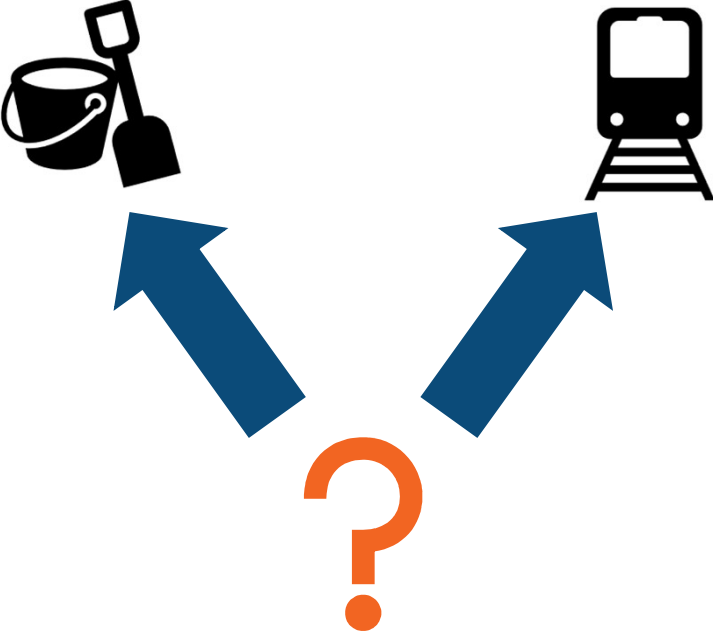
Session

Discover the **X** on the map leads to catacombs.

Encounter

Cross the canyon.

Sandbox or Railroad?



Sandbox *on Rails!*



Create a DOTS encounter
for your rumor!

How do I know I've zoomed down to an encounter-level DOT?

- Iterate this question:

What to the protagonists need to do to achieve that desire?

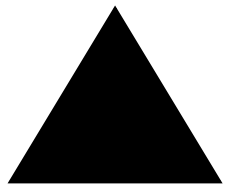
- When it's time to roll dice or roll camera, it's an encounter!

Using DOTS Intentionally

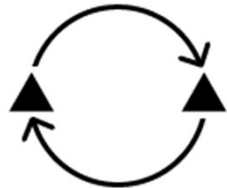
- When designing DOTS, consider one or more ways the structure can support a goal for the group. Do you want the group members to:
 - Overcome a specific type of obstacle?
 - e.g., “Effectively navigate the overbearing NPC.”
 - Use a specific tactic?
 - e.g., “Use friendly social tactics, such as validation.”
 - Achieve a specific outcome?
 - e.g., “Help player Carl be celebrated for their original contribution.”
 - Participate in a specific way?
 - e.g., “Protagonists will build on each others’ ideas to overcome the obstacle.”



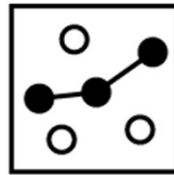
Core Capacities



Regulation



Collaboration



Planning



Perspective



Pretend Play

Treatment Goals

Strengths:	Challenges:
Participant Goals:	
Parent Goals:	
Facilitator Goals:	
Facilitator Interventions:	Observed Participant Growth:
Support Provided By Group:	
Support Provided To Group:	
Recommendations/ Next Steps:	



Adjust your DOTS for the Core Capacity goals of your group!

- Sola
 - Strengths: Enthusiastic
 - Challenges: Talks over others
 - Goals: Improve social awareness
- Sam
 - Strengths: Strong D&D knowledge
 - Challenges: Fear of failure
 - Goals: Improve distress tolerance
- Kiel
 - Strengths: Great strategist
 - Challenges: Difficulty valuing other's opinions
 - Goals: Increased collaboration
- Carl
 - Strengths: Strong D&D knowledge
 - Challenges: Anxiety around speaking up
 - Goals: Assertiveness



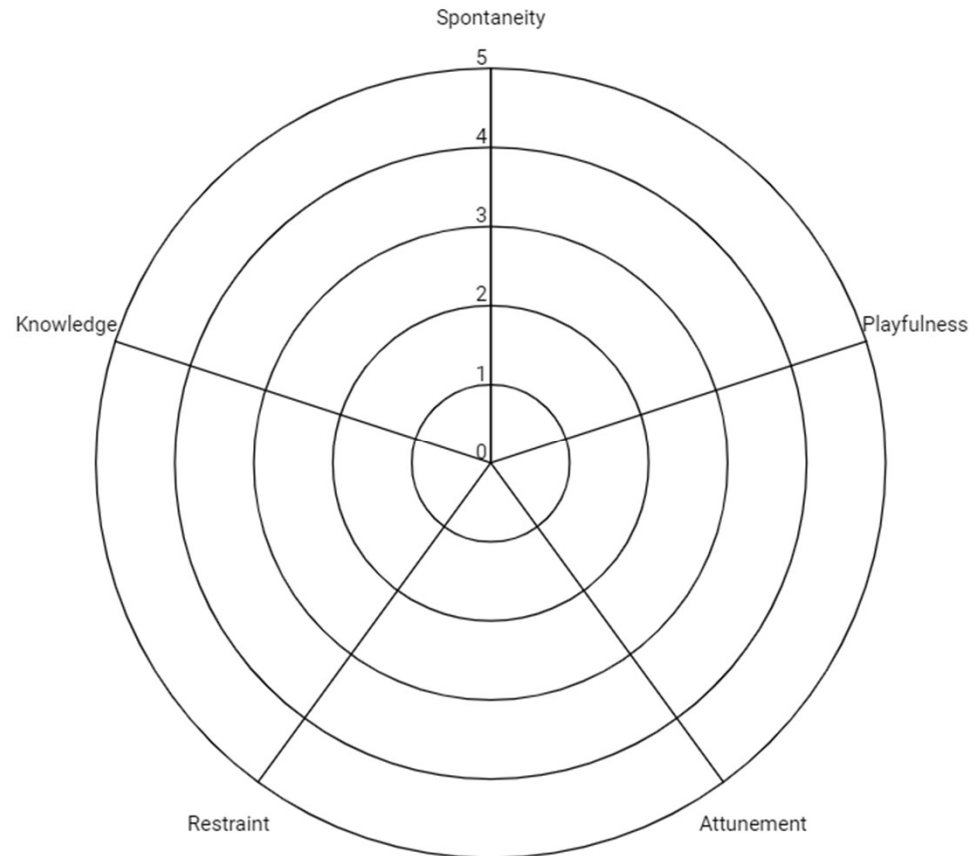
Screening, Session Zero, and Tutorial Dungeons

- Develop a screening framework
 - 15-20 minutes
 - Strengths-based
 - Identify potential risks and concerns
- Session Zero
 - Consider including safety tools commonly utilized in your setting.
 - Include participants in decision-making conversations
 - Model with your own boundaries as appropriate
- Tutorial Dungeons
 - Teach the rules, introduce concepts, and check in on process as you play!



Chart your SPARK

- Where are you now?
- Where do you want to be in six months?
- How do you plan to get from here to there?



Cultivate your SPARK

- Engage in play.
- Push yourself outside your comfort zone.
- Connect with a learning community.
- Reflect often and openly.
- Seek more opportunities for growth .

Looking Towards Level Three

- More small group activities
- Character voice exercises
- Improvisation skills exercises
- Documentation and marketing
- Case conceptualization exercises

GameToGrow.org/training



Relevant Literature - SPARK

Anderson, T., McClintock, A. S., Himawan, L., Song, X., & Patterson, C. L. (2016). A prospective study of therapist facilitative interpersonal skills as a predictor of treatment outcome. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 84*(1), 57–66. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000060>

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Davelaar, P., Araujo, F., & Kipper, D. (2008). The revised spontaneity assessment inventory (SAI-R): Relationship to goal orientation, motivation, perceived self-efficacy, and self-esteem. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 35*, 117-128.



Relevant Literature – SPARK, cont.

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King, G. (2017). The role of the therapist in therapeutic change: How knowledge from mental health can inform pediatric rehabilitation. *Physical & occupational therapy in pediatrics*, 37(2), 121-138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01942638.2016.1185508>

Mallinckrodt, B. (2010). The psychotherapy relationship as attachment: Evidence and implications. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 27(2), 262-270. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407509360905>

Sternberg, P., & Garcia, A. (2000). *Sociodrama: Who's in your shoes?* Westport, CT: Praeger.

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Wampold, B. E. (2015). How important are the common factors in psychotherapy? An update. *World Psychiatry*, 14(3), 270-277. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20238>

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Relevant Literature – Core Capacities

Angel, C. M., Smith, B. P., Pinter, J. M., Young, B. B., Armstrong, N. J., Quinn, J. P., Brostek D. F., Goodrich D.E., Hoerster K.D., & Erwin, M. S. (2018). Team Red, White & Blue: A community-based model for harnessing positive social networks to enhance enrichment outcomes in military veterans reintegrating to civilian life. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, 8(4), 554-564. <https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/iby050>

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Vater, A., & Schröder-Abé, M. (2015). Explaining the link between personality and relationship satisfaction: Emotion regulation and interpersonal behaviour in conflict discussions. *European Journal of Personality*, 29(2), 201-215. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.1993>

Wentzel, K. R., & McNamara, C. C. (1999). Interpersonal relationships, emotional distress, and prosocial behavior in middle school. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 19(1), 114-125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431699019001006>



Other Relevant Literature

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Further Reading

Play by Stuart Brown

Game Play 3rd Edition by Jessica Stone and Charles Schaefer (eds)

Interpersonal Neurobiology of Play by Theresa Kestley

The Functions of Role-Playing Games by Sarah Lynne Bowman

Together by Vivek Murthy

Acting for Real by Renee Emunah

Theatre for Community Conflict and Dialog by Michael Rohd

Play Anything by Ian Bogost

The Well Played Game by Bernie DeKoven

Acts of Service: Spontaneity, Commitment, Tradition in the Nonscripted Theatre by Jonathan Fox

Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor E. Frankl

Fate Accessibility Toolkit edited by Elsa S Junneson

The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy (6th Edition) by Irvin Yalom and Molyn Leszcz



Relevant Links

Level Three: <https://gametogrow.org/training/gtgmethod/mentalhealth3/>

Consultation Groups: <https://gametogrow.org/training/consultationgroups/>

Certification: <https://gametogrow.org/training/gtgmethod/mhcertification/>

Game Master Workshops: <https://gametogrow.org/training/gmworkshops/>

Critical Core: <https://gametogrow.org/criticalcore/>

Newsletter: <https://gametogrow.org/newsletter/>

Discord: <https://discord.com/invite/NA5agck>

Knowledge Check/Feedback: <https://forms.gle/9ghBMsJyEokYPu4i7>

