



# **Special Talents, Special Needs: Drama for People with Learning Disabilities**

*Ian McCurrach, Barbara Darnley*

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'A wonderful book to help set up a drama group for those with learning difficulties, to help them express themselves through drama. It is a step by step guide to running a group from the basics of finding the setting right through to the final performance. Covering all topics from creative expression, acting skills, working with others to eye contact and character building. Great encouragement for those who would like to explore drama as a part of a therapeutic learning programme.' - Adders.org

Special Talents, Special Needs is a handbook for teachers and facilitators working with people with learning disabilities who are interested in creative expression through drama. Based on their considerable experience working with the Strathcona Theatre Company (Europe's leading professional company of actors with learning disabilities), Ian McCurrach and Barbara Darnley have created a step-by-step guide to running a drama group. Beginning with the first steps of finding an appropriate setting and assessing the group, this guide progresses through five parts and thirty different sessions to conclude with the planning of a showing or performance. Each part covers a general topic such as introducing creative expression, exploring theatre skills and working with people with profound disabilities, while the individual sessions have a diversity of themes from trust and eye contact to building a character. The course may be followed step-by-step or simply used as a foundation upon which to base individual ideas. Although drama workshops of this kind do not provide formal therapy, the authors' experience has repeatedly shown that such work with people with learning disabilities not only increases communication skills but also promotes independence and self-esteem.

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