

Costume

Dressing up is enjoyed by adults and children alike, so it is worth considering its use. Always make sure you have enough articles for everyone, so that it is a shared experience. Items should be easy to put on, especially for wheelchair users, so open-sided tabards are ideal, as they can be simply popped over the head. Never impose costume, just offer choices. For some participants it takes time, but eventually they come to enjoy, even demand their own hat, scarf or other item.

Using costume can help to:

- Unify a group, not only looking good together, but wearing the same costume helps an individual feel part of the whole, with shared aims and experiences.
- Enable access to part of the set, e.g. a market stall or sushi bar.
- Reinforce a theme, whether that be a specific era, country, occupation or event.
- Enable tactile exploration, for example by using furry hats, sparkly shower caps, feather boas or hessian waistcoats.
- Encourage movement; scarves and sarongs can be used like streamers or flags enhancing and inspiring movement.
- Add sound qualities; by simply attaching small bells to waistcoats or using belly dancer scarves for example, every movement is amplified and enhanced with sounds.
- Elicit role play, take on individual characters, or become part of a team e.g. of workmen/fishermen.
- Reflect light e.g. using white costume means that colours or projections can be picked up on bodies and in UV.
- Increase self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence.

Useful costume items:

- Hats - a huge favourite and easy to acquire, coming in a variety of colours, sizes, textures.
- Tabards - easy to make from a variety of materials to suit your theme. Take a 2m by 20" strip of material, fold in half and cut a slash across the fold, leaving enough material either side to hold on shoulders. For children, or if you just require 'collars', use half the length.
- Sarongs - smooth, shiny, lining material is good for making these. It comes in a variety of bright colours and is simply placed under one arm and knotted over the other shoulder. This material is great to dance with.
- Small capes, simply made from rectangle of cloth with ribbon thread through one side
- Sets of variously sized t-shirts - white will reflect light, black can be enhanced with UV/white painted symbols
- Coloured baggy trouser which can be worn over participants' own clothes...with sashes
- Arm/leg bands - elasticated, fringed armbands create an instant effect, are easy to slip on and enhance movement beautifully.
- Headbands - strips of material, coloured or decorated to suit your theme, can be quickly and easily tied around the head and are so light participants forget they're wearing them.
- Head/neck scarves/sashes. easy to put on and can be colour-themed
- High-vis jackets - light and cool, reflect beautifully in UV.
- Disposable white coveralls, a great science/space look, come in all sizes and help to keep clothes clean underneath which is sometimes useful. Also come in black and blue.
- Coloured plastic rain ponchos - cheap, light and easy to wear, having tactile/sound qualities too. Watch out, can make you hot!
- Accessories - lots of participants enjoy accessorising their costumes with make-up, jewellery, feathers, flowers, scarves and so on, which gives additional opportunities for 1-1 adornment and tactile exploration.

Links

Movement (Activity)

Workshops - Macbeth, Marchand de vin, Buddhist Monk, Hindu Wedding, Bob, Cabin

Videos

Hats

Overalls, ponchos and tabards