

SHARKS!

Objectives

- Students will explore major themes of survival and caretaking in a fun physical way
- Students will create strategies for how to collectively survive in dangerous times
- Students will reflect on and deepen their understanding of how to take care of others

Materials needed

- Large open space where students can move about freely
- Newspapers (or similar) to be spread out in different piles on the floor

Activity

In *Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord*, we learn that in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kristina started a group called the Auntie Sewing Squad. These were “aunties” that she recruited from local neighborhoods to hand-sew face masks for first responders who desperately needed them.

Quote from the show: “Hello human! I’m scared too. Let’s do something about this, shall we?”

- Endow the space as being somewhere tropical
- Designate piles of newspaper on the floor as “islands”
- Designate floor space as “water”
- Invite people to jump into the water (“swim” and “splash”)
- Announce that a shark is coming!
- Encourage people to get out of the water and onto an island ASAP
- Anyone remaining in the water will get tagged (gently) by the shark and become a shark themselves
- Announce that sharks have left and it’s safe for all survivors to jump back in the water
- While people are swimming, remove papers so that the islands shrink slowly
- Announce that sharks are coming back!
- Play several rounds until there are just a couple islands left with survivors on them

Ground rules (to heighten the stakes)

- At least two people must be on an island for them to survive. No one can be on an island alone.
- The entire body must be on an island or the shark will tag them (gently)
- If the shark tags someone, they fall into the water and become a shark

Reflection questions

- How did it feel playing this game?
- How many people survived? How many people did you lose?
- Who or what helped you to survive?
- How did it feel to lose others along the way?

In the play, Kristina Wong says: “Friends. We have survived until this moment. Who are the people who helped you survive this? What do you hope for as we move forward? Will you be more generous in times of crisis?” As you watch the play, reflect on these questions and ask yourself how you can show up more for others during tough times. Please take care of yourselves and please take care of each other.

Lesson Extensions

- The conversations that come up in response to playing this game can be used as prompts for more creative exploration such as through writing and/or devising original theatre content.

Lesson Variations

- Based on the space and materials available, this game can be altered in a various ways. For example, chairs can be used for the islands instead of newspapers and can be removed during each round (like musical chairs). Instead of sharks and islands, the space and materials and roles can be re-designated to be more appropriate for the student population.