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MamaDances- Rhythms of Connection
Improvisation on a 6 beat loop.

Begin by sitting in a circle, cross -legged if possible. If not, chairs can be used.

“ Let’s begin by counting to 6. Lets repeat the count to establish a 6 count beat. So establish the speed by playing that rhythm on our thighs.

Let’s clap our hands maintaining that 6 beat loop.

*Now lets just feel the rhythm in the body, counting inside our head, without making a sound. You can move your body freely on the spot while practicing this. **This is a groove.** (*

Let’s groove on that 6 beat.

Good. Now let’s clap again.

Now lets begin learning some variations of rhythm with that 6 count beat.

Let’s rest, (not clap) on 1. “ Rest, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6”

Now let’s rest, (not clap) on 2. “1, rest, 3, 4, 5, 6”

Now let’s rest, (not clap) on 3. “1, 2, rest, 3, 4, 5, 6”

Now let’s rest (not clap) on 4. “1, 2, 3, rest, 5, 6”

So we can shift that silent beat around.

Lets try resting for 2 counts now.

Let's **rest on beats 1 and 2**. Lets snap our fingers on 3, 4, 5, 6...."Rest, rest, snap, snap, snap, snap"

Lets **clap and rest on beat 3 and 4 ...**" clap, clap, rest, rest, clap, clap

Lets rest on beat 2 and 4... "clap, rest, clap, rest, clap, clap"

Now lets play with finding other ways to explore sounding the 6 beats

And we can also play with double time

We can play with making sound with the cheeks, snapping, hitting the floor, the voice, mouth (cluck, choo, whooo) sounds, adding other gestures...

Continue playing with that. Now we are beginning to have an improvisation jam with ourselves. Practice by yourself (solo) varying your rhythms.

(see example of leading this with group)

Now let's bring it into group exploration.

First lets go around and **each person can offer a variation on the rhythm** of the 6 beat. You can all copy the variation or **you can accumulate**. Accumulation means one person begins by establishing the beat, the next person offers a variation of the rhythm , the next person offers something different, another variation... If doing accumulation, perhaps, listen to what the others have offered and add something in relation to it.

But listening and playing at the same time can be hard sometimes.

You can change your variation at any time.

Sometimes people get shy, because they are not feeling comfortable. **Bring in music.**

Recorded music, in this rhythm, can be played to ease the tension of a too silent room and allow everyone the opportunity to play with these ideas supported by music.

I use Abadou from Adventures In Afropea 1 by Zap Mama

Enjoy! Have fun!