

## Eating together

*“There is communion of more than our bodies when bread is broken and wine drunk.” — M.F.K. Fisher*



Food, far from being just a basic source for human survival, has proved to have the power of bringing people together, creating commonality among one and other and a sense of belonging. As stated by Fischer (2011, p.533), in many times and places, eating the same food is associated with “producing the same flesh and blood”, making those who share meals “more alike and bringing them closer to each other”. In the same manner, Pladdet (2019, p. 20) points out that “food has the ability to evoke strong emotions and bind people together through space and time.

During the workshops of the project “*Coming together with stop motion animation*”, food allowed us to create physical closeness within a space, that as mentioned by some participants, felt “home like”. We had the opportunity to talk face to face with others, share the same food and sensorial experience and thus forging a sense of social intimacy and the creation of collective memories. And as stated by some scholars, “Social intimacy finds expression through various channels. With increased eye-contact, spacial intimacy, and touch prominent among them. We believe that social intimacy also finds expression through food transfer.” Miller et. Al. (1998, p426) This, as previously stated, was evidenced through our workshops. We realized that during the moment of food sharing, people would naturally get closer and start talking and exchanging in an informal and friendly manner with the others, finding a likeness and diversity among each other, and enriching in this way the depth of our interactions.

Additionally, after discussing sensitive issues, having a space to eat together became an opportunity to decompress and exchange in a light and familiar manner. Furthermore, communal eating in an educative and creative context might allow to generate a welcoming and familiar atmosphere, having in this way a meaningful impact on the type of exchanges that occur during the workshops. On this regard, Lee (2014, p27) states that “eating together with people outside of the immediate family group further creates a bond with other, unrelated individuals. Alongside consuming food, social interaction takes place and brings out a closer atmosphere when a meal is shared”. Taking this into account, it seems relevant to point out the fundamental role that having a “commensality space/communal eating” during the sessions has, when it comes to bringing people together cross borders and fostering the emergence of a welcoming ambiance and empathic interactions during the workshops.

## References

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