



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

**Creative Community
Health Worker
Curriculum**

JUNE 2021

Creative Community Health Worker Curriculum

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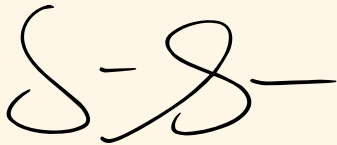


PROVIDENCE
CITY COUNCIL

Welcome to Providence

Welcome to Narragansett land, today known as Providence, the Creative Capital of the United States. Here in Providence, we believe that public art and policy can be courageous in intent and, with the right support, equitable in implementation. Work in the public realm can enhance civic space and encourage collaborative opportunities for people to enjoy shared experiences. Collaboration is exactly what the Sowing Place initiative is about. By connecting City departments and community partners, Sowing Place has allowed us to deepen our work to address the social determinants of health in the Southside and West End and support innovative projects in the arts, food and health sectors, while promoting inclusive and thriving communities, and economic prosperity for our residents.

For updates and information about how you can utilize this curriculum, check back at artculturetourism.com



Mayor Jorge O. Elorza



MAYOR JORGE O. ELORZA
CITY OF PROVIDENCE



Welcome to Sowing Place

Stephanie Fortunato, *Director, Department of Art, Culture + Tourism*
Ellen Cynar, *Former Director, Healthy Communities Office,*
City of Providence

Sowing Place is a creative placemaking initiative organized by the Department of Art, Culture + Tourism (ACT) and the Healthy Communities Office (in partnership with the [Providence Healthy Communities Office](#), the [African Alliance of Rhode Island](#) (AARI), West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation's (WEHDC) [Sankofa Initiative](#), and [Southside Cultural Center of Rhode Island](#) (SCCRI). Supported by the Kresge Foundation's FreshLo initiative, as well as with funding from the Rhode Island Foundation, Sowing Place has been facilitated by Providence-based poets [Vatic Kuumba](#) and [Laura Brown-Lavoie](#). Over three years it has supported a unique set of food and arts activities to promote an expansive perspective on health and wellbeing.

Our collaboration has centered communities, vendors, and artists of color to support an inclusive local cultural economy and a resilient local food system. Working as a team of municipal workers, artists, and farmers, we have shared bread, poetry, and consensus organizing with the aim of shifting the way the City works in relationship with community partners. In early 2020, with continued support from Kresge's FreshLo program, ACT and HCO invited artists with a social practice to participate in a new pilot training in Artist Facilitation and Community Health Work followed by a three-month residency in a community-based organization. The *Creative Community Health Worker Fellowship* provided a cohort of five Providence-based artists 70 hours of training under Dr. Dannie Ritchie, Director of [Community Health Innovations of Rhode Island](#) and three artist facilitators, [Laura Brown-Lavoie](#), [Vatic Kuumba](#) and [Valerie Tutson](#). This pilot program was designed to support artists to become [RI certified Community Health Workers](#), expanding the impact of the



SOWING PLACE

The City of Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism (ACT) ensures the continued development of a vibrant and creative city by integrating arts and culture into community life while showcasing Providence as an international cultural destination.

The Providence Healthy Communities Office (HCO) is the City's lead agency for health policy, health promotion and substance abuse prevention. The HCO works to ensure that Providence residents have equitable access to the resources they need to lead healthy lives.

arts on the social determinants of health. Awarded fellows began weekly sessions in core competencies on February 12, 2020, and continued meeting virtually with the artist facilitation team through the first week of July. We then matched each fellow with a community-based organization. Fellows were provided a \$1000 stipend for their participation in the training and up to \$5000 in compensation for time spent completing their residencies; partnering organizations received a small host-site stipend as well.

Our collective approach on this pilot project reflects our desire to connect creative workforce development to a shared address of social determinants of health in our neighborhoods. We hope that by sharing out the amazing work of our artist facilitators that we will inspire other communities to take on the challenge of reconnecting cultural work to public health work.

Meet our Artist Facilitators



Laura Brown-Lavoie



Vatic Kuumba

Photo by Atomic Clock



Valerie Tutson

Meet the Creative Community Health Worker Fellows



Anthony “AM” Andrade (he/him/his) is an interdisciplinary teaching artist and passionate youth advocate from Providence, RI. A music production and digital media instructor at AS220 Youth + Industries, Andrade also works with incarcerated youth at the Rhode Island Training School. With mindfulness and breathing practices as a leading force in his art, work, and life, Andrade explores systemic illusion and the health of “Self” and identity. He is a Yoga Alliance Certified Yoga Teacher (CYT-200) and a founding member of The Haus of Glitter Dance Company.



Magnolia Perez became an advocate of the Latino community as a bilingual teaching artist in Providence after moving from the Dominican Republic as a child. She has partnered as a teaching artist with Rhode Island Latino Arts and the Children’s Youth Cabinet in the Providence School Department, where she focuses on trauma-sensitive schools. Perez uses poetry and theatre arts therapy to connect with the community and to give youth opportunities to create safe and judgement-free outlets to express themselves. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Rhode Island College.



Raffini has always been strongly involved in her community. When she was only sixteen, she started an early learning program for children of young mothers in Pawtucket called Start Ahead Stay Ahead. There she taught children reading, counting, and art with the women in her neighborhood before being hired as a teacher at Head Start. Raffini later became involved with the Langston Hughes Theatre and Rites and Reason Theatre. Since then, she has used the arts as a platform to help countless youth and elders. For the last decade, Raffini has been involved in supporting farmer’s markets throughout Rhode Island and Massachusetts, introducing her communities to gardening, farming and farmer’s markets.



Satta Jallah is an accomplished entrepreneur, writer, artist, and holistic health practitioner. She is extremely passionate about impacting communities and organizations by building awareness and advocacy around issues like domestic violence, health disparities in communities of color, and reproductive justice. Jallah has been able to combine her art and activism through performing and co-writing the two time Congressional Award-winning play “Behind Closed Doors” and writing her book *Made From S.O.Y.L.* She is also the founder and CEO of Holistic Roots LLC, whose mission is to empower women to reclaim and own their health, wealth and beauty from the inside out.



Sussy Santana is a poet, performer, and cultural organizer born in the Dominican Republic. Author of *Pelo Bueno y otros poemas* (2010). In 2012, she released *RADIO ESL*, a poetry cd, and the chapbook *Poemas Domésticos* (2018). Her poems have been featured in various anthologies and magazines. She has been coordinating La Feria, an artisan’s market since 2014. Santana is a 2015 MacColl Johnson Fellowship recipient, the first Latina writer to win the distinction.

Where We've Been, What We've Learned

Gina Rodríguez-Drix, *Cultural Affairs Manager*
Dr. Micah Salkind, *Special Projects Manager*

In the spring of 2016, the Kresge Foundation awarded the City of Providence and its partners \$75,000 through its newly formed Fresh, Local & Equitable: Food as a Creative Platform for Neighborhood Revitalization (FreshLo) program. The funding was intended to support the design of neighborhood-scale projects demonstrating creative, cross-sector visions of food-oriented development. As a first order of business, the City and its community partners worked together to hire a team of artist facilitators to guide a planning process. Farmer Laura Brown-Lavoie and Vatic Kuumba, both local award-winning poets with strong ties to the project neighborhoods, came on board to use the literary and visual arts to grow the creative spirit of the project team and support project managers to think in new and exciting ways. They began all of our meetings with poetry and fresh bread baked by Brown-Lavoie and often adorned with flowers from her farm. Well fed by verse and food, we collaboratively imagined our future projects, and came up with a list of values for the work we would soon undertake.

Our first collaborative event, the Cultural Extravaganza, brought one hundred community residents to SCCRI during a snowstorm to purchase art and gifts from local vendors while listening to performances by African and Latin drummers. Some young visitors took their pictures with Black Santa. Our second collaborative event brought vendors again to SCCRI, this time in the spring for Earth Day. At each event, our artist facilitators engaged neighborhood residents to better understand how they would combine art, food, health, and economic development in a place-based project. These ideas

influenced the next iteration of the project, which included a flagship market, along with other strategies that we hoped would integrate artists across all of the food-oriented events promoted by our partners.

The City of Providence then received an award to implement our FreshLo project from the Kresge Foundation in the fall of 2017. The Sowing Place collaborative moved forward with plans to develop a signature market event at SCCRI's Southlight Pavilion, which ran monthly from May to October that year. Additionally, artists were better integrated into WEHDC's weekly Sankofa market and AARI's monthly pop-up events. In its third year, the Cultural Extravaganza continued to be a well-attended community event connecting local residents and vendors.

During the project's second implementation year, Sowing Place partners worked to develop opportunities for vendors to expand their small operations. Providence growers interested in cooking, catering opportunities, or developing value-add products were supported in their use of the newly opened Sankofa commercial kitchen. Caterers who cooked meals for monthly Community Flavors convenings at SCCRI had a chance to experiment in the newly finished space and share their creations with event participants. AARI officially opened its Bami Farm in nearby Johnston, RI, creating new opportunities for local immigrant growers to expand their farming operations. Performing artists continued to take advantage of opportunities to perform at markets, working with a Sowing Place curator that connected them to opportunities at SCCRI as well.

In the third year of Sowing Place, we worked with our core artist facilitators to develop both the emerging practice of artist facilitation, which we see as being key to the development of healthy, thriving neighborhoods where all people feel connected to arts and culture, and the expanding field of community health work. We remain indebted to the many artists and administrators who we have worked with to bring this model to where we find it in our work today, including but not limited to the consultants at New York City-based EMC Arts, whose Community

Innovation Lab model implemented in Providence in 2015–17 in conjunction with our Illuminating Trinity project was predicated on the essential work of ‘artist facilitators.’ Big thanks to Val Tutson, Sussy Santana and Kuniko (Kuni) Yasutake who helped implement this foundational work with our team as well as the community champions who participated in the work.

At its core, artist facilitation is rooted in social practice and, as is evident in the curriculum that follows, lends itself well to certain arts disciplines even if it is not limited to a particular disciplinary skill set. We see the intersection of art and wellbeing as key to the collective betterment of our City and are thrilled to share the pilot curriculum created by the Sowing Place artist facilitators. From here on out, these materials will be written in their voices with some minor copy-editing by us for legibility. We hope you will join us in building from this work and perpetuating a dialogue around creative community health work and artist facilitation. We also hope you will take this template for artist facilitation and apply it broadly to different kinds of community and municipal settings, exploring the ways that artists can help us see the unseeable, and say the unknowable, in the service of justice, equity, and collective liberation.

Growing as Artist Healers Together

CREATED BY
VATIC KUUMBA, VAL TUTSON, AND LAURA BROWN-LAVOIE

Who We Are

Our names are Vatic, Valerie and Laura — we are:



and many more identities.

The activating question is how are we as artists building a world of less harm and greater harmony.

The historical context of this curriculum is the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the era of Trump, the climate crisis, and the 2020 summer of uprisings in defense of Black lives.

The Big Idea Behind This Curriculum

Art is
community
health work.

Artists are
healers.

Artists are
essential
workers.

Everyone
has creative
potential.

It is
empowering
to discover the
creator within.

Artists can
help inspire the
creative potential
in the people
around them.

We distinguish between upper-case *Art*, the sometimes elitist and exclusive institutional practice and presentation of artwork often learned through formal training, from lower-case art, or modes of self-expression and sharing that are accessible to everyone. Little “a” art is like the air we breathe, it’s around us all the time — the way we shake our hips to music or season our food, for example. When we become creators, we are no longer confined to passive consumption, and this affects our communal health.

We foreground the social determinants of health — the conditions of where people live, learn, work and play — and consider how artists can affect these conditions. In this work, we are defining ‘community’ as the neighborhoods in which we live, and the people with whom we interact on a regular basis. We have oriented ourselves towards community work that happens within neighborhood institutions like libraries and senior centers, and among people who come from diverse affinity and identity-based groups.



Retreat Film

Photo by Ray Londres

COMMUNITY ARTISTS ARE ARTISTS WHO:

- ♦ share their art in their communities;
- ♦ make art that tells the stories of their communities and represent their communities' needs and dreams;
- ♦ inspire others to create;
- ♦ use their skills to bring their communities together and/or get things done in the community;
- ♦ bring joy and beauty to their communities;
- ♦ address social, environmental, political, and economic justice issues as they relate to their own communities.

THE SKILLS THAT ARTISTS PRACTICE such as

VISIONING

REVISIONING

COLLABORATING

and

COMMUNICATING

are useful for community projects. To this end, artists can be hired by community organizations and local governments to bring these skills into communal use. An artist facilitator is an excellent example of hiring an artist in this capacity. See the “What is an artist facilitator?” section for some group definitions that we have developed in the last few years of doing this work, and with our recent cohort.

We have piloted this curriculum and provide it here as inspiration and source material for future practitioners.

Who is this Curriculum for?

We designed this curriculum to be facilitated by people who are already working artists, and who ideally already have facilitation experience.

We envision participants in this training to be people who already identify with the “creator within” in some way, but they do not have to be capital “A” artists. Certainly an interest and investment in doing community work is necessary.

In keeping with the popular education model, we see everyone in the classroom playing each of the following key roles in the course of the training:

- ♦ artist – creates and shares art
- ♦ peer – responds and shares perspectives
- ♦ facilitator – evokes what is there and eases collaboration
- ♦ teacher – shares skills and adds information

These roles guided us in the outline of each session, which follows the basic arc of: invitation — instruction — inspiration — evaluation. We don’t always indicate where the hard breaks are between these sections, but feel free to name them when adapting as you see fit.

How Each Session Looks

OPENING

INVITATION gathering the existing knowledge of the group based on the objectives of the session

INSTRUCTION adding skills and information

INSPIRATION sending our peers forth into the world to share their gifts and return with feedback

BREAK/BREATH is life! We emphasize the need for adequate breaks in each session and plenty of space for tasting, digesting and releasing from the collective work

FIELD WORK the prompts we send participants home with, to prepare them for the next session

CLOSING/EVALUATION

There are nine sessions in this curriculum that shift between a focus on **Art Practice** **AP** and **Social Practice** **SP**.

Every session should have an intentional and embodied opening and closing of space.

Every session incorporates art practice by providing opportunities for theater-making, painting, writing, storytelling, dancing etc.

We encourage future facilitators of this curriculum to find local and/or contemporary and/or historical case studies that provide examples of artists doing work that aligns with the subject at hand. The material has to be relevant to the communities where participants are working, and we find that people are most motivated when they recognize what they are studying as part of their own local ecosystem.

We have sought to empower participants to step into facilitation roles throughout the course of the curriculum.

Every session ends with group evaluation ([see “Jamboard template.”](#)) If you’re interested in collecting data about how your participants grow in their relationship to the material, you may consider facilitating written opening evaluation opportunities to gauge their initial knowledge.

We documented each session by recording them, since we were facilitating virtually. We encourage documentation through recording, note-taking, archiving of artwork created, and evaluations.



Future facilitators of this curriculum should add their special sauce! You are artists, you don’t want to follow someone else’s plan! As artists, we don’t really believe in the supreme value of certification, but we do believe in skill-sharing and mutual inspiration, as well as building a repertoire of techniques to facilitate the creative blossoming of the people around us.



We include examples and narratives from our pilot in this curriculum where possible.

We hope each session drops from the head to the heart. Facilitators should notice the energetics of the space they are co-creating and ask questions like: “how do you feel after we just did that/learned about that?” They should address the emotional tenor of the group in a given moment (eg. heavy/light); make space to acknowledge what the group is going through individually and collectively; and make time for check-ins and processing in real time. Facilitators will be working with a group of artists/feelingful people, so being in the moment will be key.

Consider what documents or objects or portfolios people will leave the training with to help them retain and replicate its principles for new groups. We hope that those who participate in this training will be able to replicate individual activities and techniques and replicate the process of training other artist facilitators.

As much as possible in this curriculum we avoid a liturgical scripting because we encourage future facilitators to find their own words and to make their own personal connections to the content.

Don't forget about eliciting a physical response!

ON ART DAYS

it is a minimally physical art practice | drawing, journaling, photo, poetry

ON SOCIAL DAYS

it is a facilitation tool | mapping, sociodrama, fishbowl dialogue

or

ARTY / FACILITATION

it is a more physical practice | dance, gesture, sound

Please feel free to share this introductory letter with future participants. This curriculum is a collaborative tool, not a *Wizard of Oz* behind a curtain.

The Basic Arc of the Nine Sessions

AP SESSION ONE: Centering Your Practice

In which all participants arrive as their artist selves and share their techniques for keeping that self alive and well in this harsh world.

SP SESSION TWO: History of Local Community Arts

In which local artist/organizers tell the story of the community arts of this city, answering questions like:

- ◆ Why were these organizations necessary?
- ◆ What need were they responding to?
- ◆ What was the community response to their founding/work?
- ◆ What was an unforgettable art experience that took place there?
- ◆ How were they funded?
- ◆ Where are they now?

AP SESSION THREE: Public Art

We do not include our own curriculum for this session, as it was guest-taught by a curator at the Newport Art Museum, along with a Newport, RI-based community health worker. We encourage facilitators to identify examples of public art in their area, and to collaborate with local public artists and arts administrators to build a session that is specific to the considerations of public art projects where they are.

To learn more about the City of Providence public art program visit:
<https://artculturetourism.com/art-in-city-life-commission/>



SP SESSION FOUR: Environmental Racism and Food Justice

In which we study local, national, and global issues of environmental racism and food justice, and find ways to embody just transition principles.

AP SESSION FIVE: Poetry is not a Luxury

In which we free our tongues and seek mutual liberation through lyrical text.

SP SESSION SIX: Facilitation

In which we collaboratively practice the art of facilitation.

AP SESSION SEVEN: Storytelling

In which we recover the storyteller within, telling our own stories, and learning skills to retell one another's while creating new ones together.

SP SESSION EIGHT: Intergenerational Art Spaces and Preparing to Devise

In which we discuss how artists can help reweave the fabric of connection between generations and prepare for our final session of a group devised art work.

AP SESSION NINE: We Devise

In which the group curates a performance/opening to share the artwork we have created together over the course of the preceding sessions.

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facilitators followed by materials
for participants

These outlines are specific to our place and time (Providence, RI, spring 2020, COVID epidemic, Zoom meetings, etc.) but include guidance for future facilitators who may adapt these sessions to their places, times and purposes.

the first question I ask myself is do I have everything I need to do this facilitation ... what do I need for this specific one?

space open for people to express their views and feelings and what's coming up for them as the meeting progresses

be culturally aware and try to prepare myself when I go into a space and have a clear understanding of what is being asked of me as a facilitator

uses their art to facilitate conversation ... by posing questions ... listening attentively and with empathy

FOCUS ON YOUR ART MEDIUM AS A GUIDE

NOT JUST A RESIDENCY ... USING OUR ARTISTIC SKILLS TO GET A REAL WORLD THING DONE

“What is an artist facilitator?”

SPEAK AHEAD OF TIME TO THE PEOPLE ORGANIZING THE MEETING

really good at recapping the things that are said, taking notes, saying out loud what they just heard to verify what they understood in the consensus of the group ... allows everyone to speak

HOLD SPACE

not judge anybody

BRINGING YOUR OWN STYLE AND PERSONALITY ... BRING ALL OF WHO WE ARE AS ARTISTS

great way to speak to a group of people about the arts and the work that we do

I like to do my homework before I go into a place ... how many people are there ... what their setbacks and positive things that happened there ... the times people are most cohesive

GATHER WITH
OTHERS LOOKING
TO LEARN

we need spaces to unpack our thoughts and emotions ... understand how to alchemize that and create a new narrative for themselves

be able to collaborate with others that can introduce the same art medium or another medium that can help you make something new

taking notes or reflecting at the end so that we can really gather their thoughts and have the time to understand what came up for them and how to use that for their benefit

**a very
good
listener**

“What is an artist facilitator?”

**A SIMPLE
CYCLICAL
AGENDA THAT
WILL WORK
FOR EVERYONE
INVOLVED**

engage people to listen and learn how to better guide ... a workshop that you're doing with students ... it's always great to add the arts element. it works every time

**POSE HARD
QUESTIONS IN
A WAY THAT IS
NON-THREATENING**

using the imaginative capacity that I have as an artist ... and my ability to inspire people's imagination collectively ... it's not my own vision, not my art piece

MAINTAIN A
SPACE OF SAFETY
FOR EVERYONE

space open for people to express their views and feelings and what's coming up for them as the meeting progresses



Sowing Place Artist Facilitators, Laura Brown-Lavoie and Vatic Kuumba

“What is an artist facilitator?”

Below are some notes that Vatic and Laura wrote about artist facilitation with the City of Providence’s Sowing Place Initiative in 2018:

Artists facilitators bring active and empathetic listening; we hear people where they are at. As poets, we love the multiplicities of self-expression, and we know that every person at the table has their own poetry. Our job is to listen to every voice for its wisdom and contribution to the (artistic!) collaboration before us. We practice understanding the many voices of a group, and saying things back to them in a way that helps the picture of our work become visible to all, that helps everyone at the table arrive at a shared language that can help the word of what we are doing spread. This work is challenging, and we are eager to learn more strategies for presenting a synthesized vision of how to do it to diverse publics.

Our role has been to see the big picture, and to present it visually. We bring agendas and posters to the meeting that materialize the work we are doing in a way that helps everyone see their place in the collaborative web. As artists we practice flexibility of vision — our maps are always being redrawn based on new ideas and inputs from our collaborators. We help jostle people out of the rigid ways work is

often done, and ask questions out loud: why are we doing this? Should we revise? The ability to revise a poem and adapt a scene can be applied to a market season too. We ask again and again, what direction are we moving in and give license to people to be open.

We demonstrate collaboration and respect one another as artists. Our one-on-one meetings are always also an artist check-in — we like to hear about each other's work, we attend each other's shows, we read what the other is writing and give feedback, we help each other envision the trajectory and possibilities of the work. We bring music, flowers, bread, oranges, and poetry to meetings. We seek to jostle people out of a bureaucratic mindset and into a creative, collaborative one, so we make Sowing Place meetings into aesthetic experiences.

We are marginally embedded in city government and our roles have given us glimpses of the way the City works in terms of funding, communication, decision-making, slowness, quickness. It is useful for the artists of a city to see some of its inner workings. Cities are interesting examples of humans working (or not working) together. This work is a stimulating life experience that influences our art. And the individuals we meet in the Sowing Place project are mostly artists! And elders. It has been rich to deepen these relationships beyond our official work into friendships. We relate to our collaborators as creative people, and members of our communities, rather than just as those we are required to work with as independent contractors hired for a gig. These relationships help us shed the sometimes stymying administrative distance between facilitator and participant. We are all invested in the project as artists, and we respect each other as equal collaborators, each with valuable skills to share. Friendships are procreative; people listen better when they care about each other.

Intersectional analysis is profoundly connected to the ways we understand our individual art practices, and the mindsets we bring to our work as artist facilitators. We are determined to create work spaces that are antiracist and anti-sexist. The multiplicities of identities in the room, and the multiplicity of identities in the communities we are working in and for, are fundamentally reverent contextual elements of our work.

Someday we will both be people who speak nothing but poetry; until then it is valuable to be given jobs where our identities as artists are essential and named. We mean this as opposed to, say, being poets and a waiter/waitress, when no matter how eloquently we recite the menu, our lyricism is stifled by the service relationship.

BEING AN ARTIST FACILITATOR in

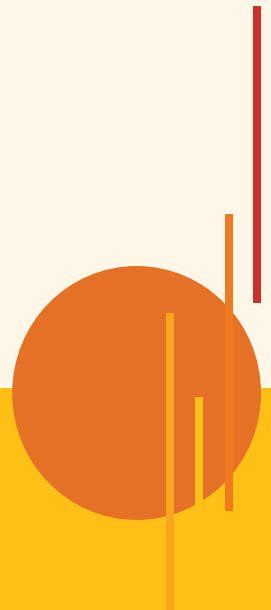
Providence keeps me here! Just as I have been rooted as a farmer, I have been rooted by this work, where my city affirms me as a poet and values the skills I possess based on that identity.

- Laura

The job also facilitates our art, inasmuch as it is some portion of our income that we don't have to get in other ways. For example, over the past two winters, Laura has not had to take on other winter work, and has instead lived off Sowing Place income between farming seasons. This has concretely resulted in her writing more poetry. That being said, it is a lot of work! It would be awesome if someday artist facilitators for a part-time city job could receive a full-time salary — the rest of that time could be spent actually producing our work. We would then be being paid for both the “artist” and the “facilitator” part of the job, not just the facilitator part. That would be extremely cool.

The artist and facilitator sometimes feel like two rams facing each other: artists have a vision and execute it, facilitators ease the sharing of vision between people. But a really good artist can do both, so... that's what we're aiming for in our personal work and in our Sowing Place gig. In the future, it would be good for artist facilitators to put aside some time for facilitation training in advance of starting the job. Perhaps even just a retreat to study *Emergent Strategy* or other contemporary facilitation writings. We admit we were winging it some of the time.

Finally, artists should be embedded in all city departments. Including young artists! There should be on-call artists the way there are on-call cops — they should have studios in City Hall with a good view. Actually there should be no cops, just artists on every block.



Facilitator Session Outline Template

How the Sessions Go

FACILITATOR PREPARATIONS

PARTICIPANT PREPARATIONS (FIELD WORK)

OPENING/INTENTIONS

- ♦ invocations, offerings, welcome
- ♦ having intentions for our time together (GOALS AND OBJECTIVES)

INVITATION

- ♦ gathering what we already know

BREAK/BREATH (TASTING)

INSTRUCTION

- ♦ adding information
- ♦ building skills
- ♦ more tools

BREAK/BREATH (DIGESTING)

INSPIRATION

- ♦ we *create* based on what we talked about and learned

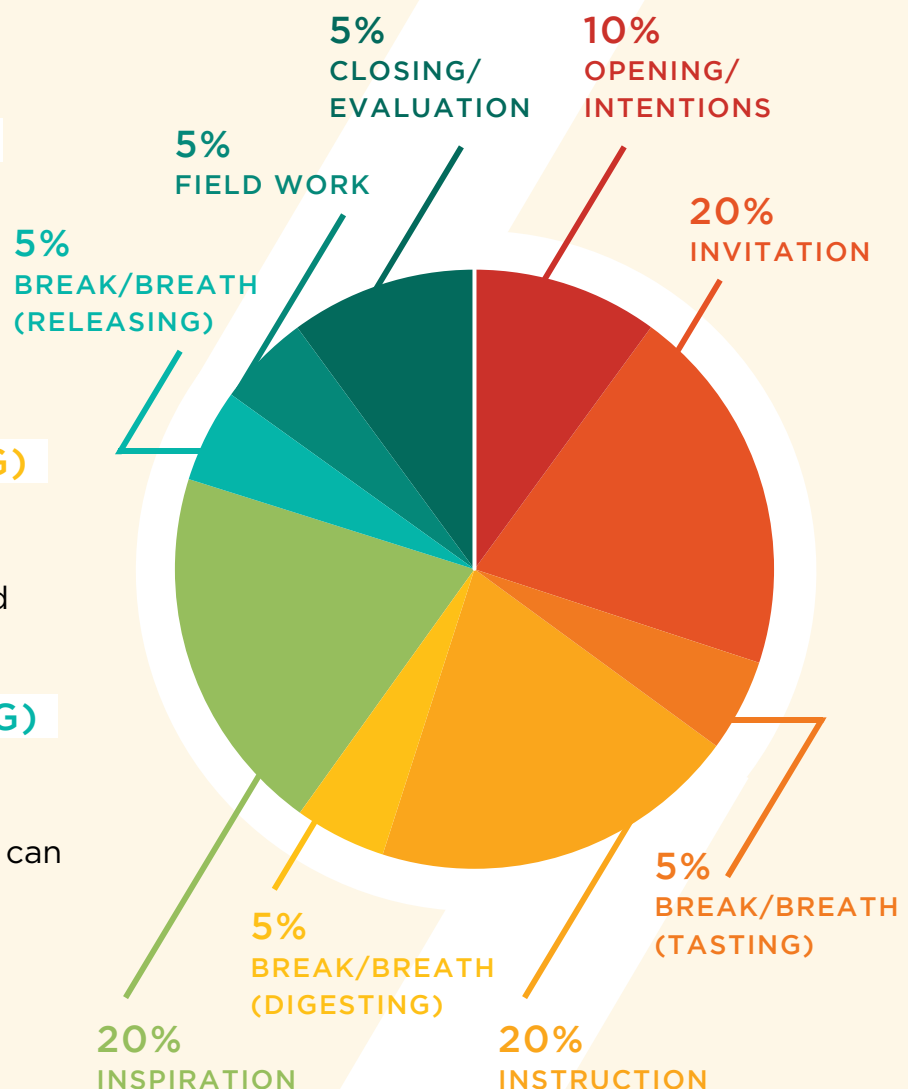
BREAK/BREATH (RELEASING)

FIELD WORK

- ♦ preparatory work that participants can do for the coming session

CLOSING/EVALUATION

- ♦ evaluation of that day's session
- ♦ ending with words of blessing and gratitude



Participant's Agenda Template

SESSION NUMBER

SESSION TITLE

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES

INVITATION

INSTRUCTION

INSPIRATION

FIELD WORK

CLOSING/EVALUATION

Evaluation Jamboard Template

POST
EVALUATION

WHAT WAS
CHALLENGING
FOR YOU AND HOW
CAME?

DID WE HIT THE
OBJECTIVES?

IN THIS
WORKSHOP
SESSION:

WHAT ARE SOME
CONNECTIONS TO
OUR COMMUNITY
HEALTH WORK?

WHAT WORKED
WELL FOR YOU
AS A LEARNER /
ARTIST?

Facilitator Session I

Centering Your Practice

FACILITATOR PREPARATIONS

For the opening, write your own guiding words to say along with a centering video and choose music to play along with it, or choose your own visual for centering that inspires your opening of the space.

Familiarize yourself with Malidoma Somé's work, and the passage we selected from his book *The Healing Wisdom of Africa* or choose another text to bring into the session which connects the role of artists with healing/community/health/spiritual work in the community — for Session #2 field work, you can share the video we found about the Celebrity Club in Providence, or find footage of a different community arts organization local to you.

PARTICIPANT PREPARATIONS (FIELD WORK)

In this session, we will focus on sharing who we are as artists, and how we sustain our art practices in the context of all the other ways we engage with the world.

To prepare for this session, we ask that you come ready to give a mini “artist talk” — you can show imagery or video if you want, or you can read your work aloud, or simply talk about the art you make.

The main questions are:

- ◆ What do you make?
- ◆ How do you make it?
- ◆ Why do you make it?
- ◆ What is your practice? (place, time, schedule, collaboration)
- ◆ How do you maintain your practice?
- ◆ What are the main challenges to your practice as an artist?

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

“Over the next nine sessions of learning together, we will be deepening our definition of ‘artist facilitation,’ and our understanding of how artists can be community health workers. An essential starting point for this work together is to center our practice as artists — both the quiet inner practices that help us make the space for creation, and the practices that we use to engage with our communities, share what we create, and use our skills as artists in the community.”

Play a muted video of a ceramicist spinning clay on a potter’s wheel; provide your own appropriate sound/music. Say some words as the video starts (example below):

VAL

the clay starts to spin
take a deep breath and go within

LAURA

the clay has to be centered before it can become a bowl
firm hands guiding the clay to the center of the circle
confident thumbs open the space
the emptiness of the bowl is what makes it useful

VATIC

the wheel
the world spinning
what are the hands which guide us to our center?
the hands of support, of opening
the hands outside of us
the inner hands

Watch the video for a few minutes in silence with music.

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES (3 MINUTES)

- ♦ To get to know each other as artists.
- ♦ To build a sense of the healing roles that artists can play in their communities.
- ♦ To study the relationship between being an Artist and an artist.
- ♦ To share strategies for centering our art practice.
- ♦ To develop the artist identity that we carry with us into the world.

INVITATION: ARTIST TALKS

Let's begin defining "artist facilitator" (10 minutes)

"Over the course of these nine sessions, we will collaboratively build a definition of artist facilitator. Here at the beginning of our time together, we invite you each to jot down a few notes answering the following questions:"

What does a facilitator do?

- ◆ When you think of an artist facilitator, what comes to mind?
- ◆ How would you define an artist facilitator?
- ◆ How is it different or the same as standard facilitation?

Have a quick popcorn style shareback, with someone taking notes on a living document that will track your collaborative definition of artist facilitator during the course of the training.

Artist talks: (1 hour, or adjust for number of participants)

Facilitator introduces the plan to do artist talks. Facilitators start with just two minute self-intros/mini-showcases, and model answers to the questions below. Then each participant gets about ten minutes — they can showcase some of their work in addition to addressing the questions:

- ◆ What do you make?
- ◆ How do you make it?
- ◆ Why do you make it?
- ◆ Where do you practice?
- ◆ When do you practice (amount of time, schedule)
- ◆ Do you collaborate? If so, how?
- ◆ How do you maintain your practice?
- ◆ What are the main challenges to your practice as an artist?

Make sure there is a little time for a group Q+A with each artist. Our participants found it was inspiring to get to know one another this way.

BREAK (10 MINUTES)

During the break, please look over pages 95–97 in Malidoma Somé's book *The Healing Wisdom of Africa*, in which he describes the orientation that people in his village in Burkina Faso have towards artists.

INSTRUCTION (55 MINUTES) ARTISTS AS HEALERS, ART AS COMMUNITY HEALTH WORK

Read aloud and conversation (20 minutes)

“First we will read aloud the Somé passage. Please share your reactions.”

Pair share (15 minutes)

“Now we will break into pairs to talk about our experiences as artists in the communities we are part of, and how we experience our work as healing work. Use these questions to guide you:”

- ◆ How do you carry your artist identity and values with you into institutional spaces and community spaces?
- ◆ In what ways have you noticed your artwork to be healing, for yourself or others?
- ◆ In what ways do you identify as an Artist with a big A vs. an artist with a little a?
 - ◆ big A — presentation of my work, it’s about me, working with institutions
 - ◆ little a — in and with the community, meeting community needs, cultural humility
- ◆ How do you nurture, center, or ground your art practice?
- ◆ How do you keep learning, growing, and deepening as an artist?
- ◆ What do you think about the statement: “to produce beauty consistently requires a healthy community?”

Share back (10 minutes — just one minute each!)

INSPIRATION (20 MINUTES)

If the artist talks run longer and you don’t have time to do this together, then this can be part of the field work, and people can bring their Personas when they reconvene as the opening of the following session.

“We will now take 10 minutes to design our Artist Healer Personas/Superselves through drawing, paper, pen, paint, fabric, costume etc. This exercise is designed to help us think about how we prepare ourselves; how we develop a sense of who we are in the world. It should help you think through how you theatrically play the roles of artist and community health worker.

Create your visual/textual/envisioned ‘Sasha Fierce’ Artist Healer Persona/Superself using the following questions as guideposts:

- ◆ Who are your ancestors?
- ◆ What is your outfit?

- ♦ What are your tools?
- ♦ What are your values?
- ♦ What is your ritual of preparation?

When we return, let's share our Super-Selves. We will each have two minutes to share."

Facilitators, don't forget to document this part! Video is best or at least still photographs. This activity will be the first contribution to a creative portfolio that the participants are producing.

FIELD WORK

Session Two: History of Local Community Arts in Providence

"Please come to class prepared to share the history of an arts organization that you've been part of in Providence, ideally one that has been/was around for at least a decade.

If you can make time to have a phone call with someone who was there in the early years of the organization and bring notes or recordings from your call, that would be great.

In class together we will be building a living map of community arts past and present in Providence, with the goal of all becoming oral historians of our city, and honoring the work that has come before us.

Another option is to research the history of the organization where you will be placed in your residencies this summer. Get a sense of the work that they have done in the community, and where they are at now.

Watch the trailer for 'Do It Man' about The Celebrity Club.

Prepare to come to the next session dressed as your Super-Self persona, and be prepared to present yourself to the group.

Prepare to bring some art supplies to our session (colored pencils, paint, markers, glue, collage stuff)"

CLOSING/EVALUATION (5 MINUTES)

- ♦ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ♦ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ♦ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ♦ Did we meet our objectives?
- ♦ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?

Participant Session I

Centering Your Practice

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES

- ♦ to get to know each other as artists;
- ♦ to build a sense of the healing roles that artists can play in their communities;
- ♦ to study the relationship between being an Artist and an artist;
- ♦ to share strategies for centering our art practice;
- ♦ to develop the artist identity that we carry with us into the world.

[Link to virtual jamboards](#) for pre- and post-evaluations and group brainstorm.

Somé, Malidoma Patrice. *The healing wisdom of Africa: finding life purpose through nature, ritual, and community*. New York: J.P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1999. 95-97.

INSTRUCTION

Questions for pair share:

- ♦ How do you carry your artist identity and values with you into institutional spaces and community spaces?
- ♦ In what ways have you noticed your artwork to be healing, for yourself or others?
- ♦ In what ways do you identify as an Artist with a big A vs. an artist with a little a?
 - ♦ big A — presentation of my work, it's about me, working with institutions
 - ♦ little a — in and with the community, meeting community needs, cultural humility
- ♦ How do you nurture your art practice? (centering, grounding)
- ♦ How do you keep learning, growing, and deepening as an artist?
- ♦ What do you think about the statement: “to produce beauty consistently requires a healthy community?”

FIELD WORK

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In class together we will be building a living map of community arts past and present in Providence, with the goal of all becoming oral historians of our city, and honoring the work that has come before us.

Another option is to research the history of the organization where you will be placed in your residencies this summer. Get a sense of the work that they have done in the community, and where they are at now.

Watch the trailer for "Do It Man" about The Celebrity Club.

Prepare to come to the next session dressed as your Super-Self persona, and be prepared to present yourself to the group.

Prepare to bring some art supplies to our session (colored pencils, paint, markers, glue, collage stuff...)

CLOSING/EVALUATION

- ♦ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ♦ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ♦ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ♦ Did we meet our objectives?
- ♦ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?

Facilitator Session II

History of Local Community Arts

To do useful work in a place or a field you need to know the history that you're stepping into. The overall goal of this session is to have an introductory understanding of the history of community arts in Providence, which will help us better understand how we got to this moment, and prepare us to better shape and build a future as artists and community health workers.

FACILITATOR PREPARATIONS

Seek out two or three long-time community artists in your area and invite them to be guest speakers. Ideally these are people who have been organizing community art over some time and/or have experience running/participating in community-based arts organizations. It is important to secure the funding to compensate them for their time and for sharing their wisdom with the group.

Prepare to offer a land acknowledgement and facilitate conversation about why and how to include that practice in our work.

Prepare an interactive Google map with local arts and culture organizations pinned. Also worthwhile to include public art sites and arts institutions.

Order to be printed a large map of the city/town where you are working, and prepare to get a copy to every participant for the art-making portion of the session.

Create a working document of resources/assets for local artists (arts organizations, grant-making organizations, venues, etc.) to build on with the group.

OF COURSE, WRITING NOVELS ABOUT THE FUTURE doesn't give me any special ability to foretell the future. But it does encourage me to use our past and present behaviors as guides to the kind of world we seem to be creating. The past, for example, is filled with repeating cycles of strength and weakness, wisdom and stupidity, empire and ashes. To study history is to study humanity. And to try to foretell the future without studying history is like trying to learn to read without bothering to learn the alphabet.

– Octavia Butler

PARTICIPANT PREPARATIONS (FIELD WORK RECAP)

“Arrive prepared to share the history of an arts organization that you’ve been part of in Providence, ideally one that has been/was around for at least a decade.

If you have made time to have a phone call with someone who was there in the early years of the organization and bring notes or recordings from your call.

Arrive prepared to co-create a living map of community arts past and present in Providence, with the goal of becoming an oral historian of your city, and honoring the work that has come before you.

You may have also researched the history of the organization where you will be placed in your residency to come. Be ready to share the work that they have done in the community, and where they are at now.

Arrive at session two dressed as your Super-Self persona, and be prepared to present yourself to the group.

Bring some art supplies to our session (colored pencils, paint, markers, glue, collage stuff...)

OPENING (20 MINUTES)

Participants share Super-Self personas — everyone gets 2 minutes (be sure to set a timer and move things along so it doesn’t lag!)

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES (3 MINUTES)

Read the Octavia Butler quote above.

To do useful work in a place or a field you need to know the history that you’re stepping into. The overall goal of this session is to have an introductory understanding of the history of community arts in Providence, which will help us better understand how we got to this moment, and prepare us to better shape and build a future as artists and community health workers.

How we will get there today:

We will discuss the practice and purpose of acknowledging the Indigenous people and history of the territories where we live, learn, work, and play.

We will listen to histories of community arts in Providence from people who were there, to situate our work as community artists here.

We will fill out a mental/digital map of community arts in our city past and present asking ourselves to consider:

- ♦ What neighborhoods are included?
- ♦ What communities are represented?
- ♦ What audiences are elevated?
- ♦ What “consumers” are prioritized?
- ♦ What funders are relevant?

We will examine how different projects are founded, funded, and profiting; we will consider who they benefit, and who is excluded or exploited.

We will Share our personal experiences as community artists here.

We will develop a shared resource list of the contact people / person for local arts organizations.

INVITATION (15 MINUTES)

Land acknowledgements

Facilitators should begin by doing a land acknowledgement. This can be collaborative with the group — after modeling with words about the territory where you are meeting and the history of the people there, you can open it up to the group to include what they know of the Indigenous history and people, or how their own people got there.

The purpose of this section is to have a conversation about the importance of the practice of coming into a group space with an awareness of the history of coloniality and indigeneity, and the humility necessitated by acknowledging that the group is only the most recent gathering in a place.

Land acknowledgment resources

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT LAND, land is part of who we are. It's a mixture of our blood, our past, our current, and our future. We carry our ancestors in us, and they're around us. As you all do.

– Mary Lyons, *Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe*

The Native Land Map tool and app can help you to identify the Indigenous nation/s on whose land you are working/living/convening: <https://native-land.ca/>

US Department of Arts and Culture (2017) “A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=240&v=ETOhNzBsiKA&feature=emb_logo

A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgment (2019)
<https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-Indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

Save our Sovereignty — Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe (2018 and present)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0IYAx5T5-c>

Rhode Island Expansion Arts
<https://rhodeislandexpansionartsprogram.org/>

Steps for a land acknowledgement:

- ◆ Start with self reflection and study:
 - ◆ Why is this acknowledgment happening?
 - ◆ How does this acknowledgment relate to the event you are involved in or work you are doing?
 - ◆ What is the history of this territory? What are the impacts of colonialism here?
 - ◆ What is your relationship to this territory? How did you come to be here?
 - ◆ What intentions do you have to disrupt and dismantle colonialism beyond this territory acknowledgement? [from native-land.ca]
- ◆ Learn:
 - ◆ about the present day circumstances of the peoples of this land, the names of people you work with who are Indigenous here, the treaties, place names, and pronunciations.
- ◆ Find the right words:
 - ◆ Find meaningful words for the occasion for which you are making this acknowledgement.
 - ◆ Don't sugar-coat the history.
 - ◆ Use past, present, and future-tense.
 - ◆ This should be a celebration of Indigenous people, not grim or victimizing.



- ♦ Deliver:
 - ♦ When saying the words out loud, be grounded in their meaning, and the ongoing relationship that these words imply.
 - ♦ This is different than telling people where the exits are and asking them to turn off their cell phones!

Group tour of local arts and culture (20 minutes)

Share the group's collaborative map of local arts that they prepared, and invite participants to share knowledge about sites of art-making using the following prompts:

- ♦ Where is this organization?
- ♦ What drew you to this organization?
- ♦ What did you need at that time?
- ♦ What community need did the organization fill?
- ♦ How does this organization inform the work you do in the community as a big A/little a artist?
- ♦ Do you emulate their approach? Do you reject it?
- ♦ What was/is the community around this organization?
- ♦ What is the wider institutional circle the organization is a part of?
- ♦ Who founded it?
- ♦ Who funded it?

Add other events/places:

- ♦ What are places that matter to you in Providence for arts and culture?
- ♦ What are cultural events that happen in Providence that you love/attended?

Add organizations where you will be placed during your CCHW residency

BREATH (10 MINUTES)

INSTRUCTION: GUEST SPEAKERS (1 HOUR)

Introduce the guest speakers, and encourage participants to listen and collect their own questions as the presentations happen.

Our guest speakers were:

Cleveland Kurtz: Afro Arts Center

Ramona Bass-Kolobe: Rites and Reason Theatre at Brown University

Marta Martínez: Rhode Island Latino Arts and Southside Cultural Center of Rhode Island

Guests speak freely for 10 minutes each; facilitators ask the primary questions below and invite questions from the group. Dialogue continues until the end of the hour.

Primary questions for the guests:

- ♦ Why were these organizations necessary?
- ♦ What need were they responding to?
- ♦ What was the community response?
- ♦ What was an unforgettable art experience there?
- ♦ How were they funded?

we discussed other historical examples in Providence:

The Celebrity Club — white people getting rich presenting black art

compared to: Langston Hughes jazz on the grass

or Jazz Masters (black run music)

or Black Rep

who gets to tell the story / profit off the history / documentaries

BREATH (10 MINUTES)



INSPIRATION (30 MINUTES)

Take a few minutes to invite reactions and takeaways from the guest speakers:

- ◆ How did their stories shed light on the work you are doing as artists in the community today?
- ◆ What inspired you?
- ◆ What frustrates you in the light of what they described?

Share the Past/Future Map Art assignment.

Because our sessions were virtual, we had copies of a historical Providence map sent to each of our participants' houses. If you are in person, hand them out. Depending on the time left in the session after the guest speakers, you can invite participants to begin the map assignment below during class. Otherwise it can be given as field work, and fodder for the Devising Day at the end of the program.

Map art assignment

We invite you to transform this historical map into a future map. What do you envision for the shape of our city? For the water, the air, the land, the people, the animals, the buildings, the neighborhoods ...

Feel free to use whatever materials and mediums you wish (drawing, painting, written words, collage, photographs, natural objects, sculpture, animation, or however you are inspired!)

FIELD WORK

Session Three: Notes on a Street Corner

Take a walk through a busy neighborhood. This could be your neighborhood, a friend's, the neighborhood around your workplace, or a neighborhood that is new to you. Bring a pen and notebook with you to make notes.

On your walk, be mindful of what roads you choose. When you reach a corner where you need to determine your next direction, pay attention to what is motivating you to choose a left turn, over a right turn or continuing straight ahead. Pause at the corner where you find yourself making this choice, and take a close look in each direction, seeing new details with new eyes. Pull out your notebook and write down some notes:

Are you choosing to move towards something on one street, or choosing to move away from or avoid something on the other streets?

Notice the people around you: are there lots of people? Who are the people? What are they doing?

Imagine how the streets could look — what changes would you make? What would need to happen for you to choose to walk down those other streets next time?

List five specific observations about each direction — positive and/or negative — look carefully at the buildings, roads, traffic, sidewalks, green spaces, cleanliness, safety, etc.

What positive or negative feelings do you notice standing at that corner as a visitor, resident, or worker?

How might those changes impact the residents and workers in that neighborhood, positive and negative?

Write down the corner you are on, and take photos in each direction if you wish.

CLOSING/EVALUATION (8 MINUTES)

- ♦ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ♦ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ♦ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ♦ Did we meet our objectives?
- ♦ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?

Participant Session II

History of Local Community Arts

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of this session is to have an introductory understanding of the history of community arts in Providence, which will help us better understand how we got to this moment, and prepare us to better shape and build a future as artists and community health workers.

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- ◆ We will fill out a mental/digital map of community arts in our city past and present:
 - ◆ what neighborhoods
 - ◆ what communities
 - ◆ what audiences
 - ◆ what “consumers”
 - ◆ what funders
- ◆ We will examine how different projects are founded, funded, profiting, who they benefit, and who is excluded or exploited.
- ◆ We will share our personal experiences as community artists here.
- ◆ We will develop a shared resource list of the contact people / person for local arts organizations.

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[from native-land.ca]

- ◆ Learn:
 - ◆ about the present day circumstances of the peoples of this land, the names of people you work with who are Indigenous here, the treaties, place names, and pronunciations.
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 - ◆ Don't sugar-coat the history.
 - ◆ Use past, present, and future-tense.
 - ◆ This should be a celebration of Indigenous people, not grim or victimizing.
- ◆ Deliver:
 - ◆ When saying the words out loud, be grounded in their meaning, and the ongoing relationship that these words imply.



This is different than telling people where the exits are and asking them to turn off their cell phones!

Adding our organizations to the map of community arts

- ◆ Where is this organization?
- ◆ What drew you to this organization?
- ◆ What did you need at that time?
- ◆ What community need did the organization fill?
- ◆ How does this organization inform the work you do in the community as a big A/ little a artist?
- ◆ Do you emulate their approach? Do you reject it?
- ◆ What was/is the community around this organization?
- ◆ What is the wider institutional circle the organization is a part of?
- ◆ Who founded it?
- ◆ Who funded it?

INSPIRATION

Map art assignment

You received in the mail a large printout of a map of the city of Providence in 1950. In the coming days, we invite you to transform this historical map into a future map. What do you envision for the shape of our city? For the water, the air, the land, the people, the animals, the buildings, the neighborhoods ...

Feel free to use whatever materials and mediums you wish (drawing, painting, written words, collage, photographs, natural objects, sculpture, animation, or however you are inspired!)

When it's finished, please take a picture and send it around to all of us so we can look at each others' work.

FIELD WORK

Session Three: Notes on a Street Corner

Take a walk through a busy neighborhood. This could be your neighborhood, a friend's, the neighborhood around your workplace, or a neighborhood that is new to you. Bring a pen and notebook with you to make notes.

On your walk, be mindful of what roads you choose. When you reach a corner where you need to determine your next direction, pay attention to what is motivating you to choose a left turn, over a right turn or continuing straight ahead. Pause at the corner where you find yourself making this choice, and take a close look in each direction, seeing new details with new eyes. Pull out your notebook and write down some notes:

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What positive or negative feelings do you notice standing at that corner as a visitor, resident, or worker?

How might those changes impact the residents and workers in that neighborhood, positive and negative?

Write down the corner you are on, and take photos in each direction if you wish.

CLOSING/EVALUATION

What did you notice? What stands out to you?

What worked well for you as a learner/artist?

What was challenging for you and how come?

Did we meet our objectives?

What are some conscious connections to our community health work?



Facilitator Session IV

Environmental Racism and Food Justice

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES

The intention of this module is to offer participants a greater understanding of structural oppression and how residents in communities we work in are affected by the harms of pollution in our air, water, and earth. This module is an expedition that brings participants through a series of specific examples of environmental racism and introduces them to creatively engaged justice work and art making as tools to mitigate, eliminate and transform systems that perpetuate harm. This section could be split into two, and can be expanded.

Objectives:

- ◆ Develop a good understanding of specific examples of environmental racism in each element (air, water, earth).
- ◆ Define examples of justice work and creative art work in response to environmental racism.
- ◆ Understand creative responses to environmental racism.

FACILITATOR PREPARATIONS

Assign each participant an element. Ask them to dress in a way that communicates something healing/nurturing about the element.

Research, interview and invite a local community environmental activist to be a part of your learning community.

PARTICIPANT PREPARATIONS (FIELD WORK)

Adorn yourself in a way that conveys the healing/nurturing spirit of your element.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Play music that brings in the elements (land, air, water) such as “I Be Your Water” by Sweet Honey in the Rock

Share invocations, offerings, and welcome — develop intentions for time together.

INVITATION (45 MINUTES)

Gathering what we already know:

Have participants collect thoughts on the questions below and focus their thoughts on the element that they have been assigned in pairs. Encourage them to collect ideas on paper not on a screen. This can be done through writing a song or story anyway that a person chooses. (7 minutes)

- ◆ What is a sweet healthful experience you have had of the element?
- ◆ What is the goodness of the element?
- ◆ What is an example of the degradation/environmental racism surrounding that element?
- ◆ How have you witnessed this degradation?

As a large group, report back highlights from the pairings popcorn style. (15 minutes)

Continue the conversation by addressing the following questions. Remember to have participants continue representing their elements throughout:

- ◆ What are the largest polluters in Providence?
- ◆ What neighborhoods have the highest asthma rates?
- ◆ Where does your water come from?
- ◆ Where are we not allowed to swim?
- ◆ What are the pollutants in the ground?
- ◆ How do pollutants get into the soil?
- ◆ How does climate change threaten communities?
- ◆ What are the obstacles to growing food in Providence?
- ◆ What communities have the lowest number of emergency room visits?
- ◆ What communities have the most access to food?



BREATH (TASTING)

INSTRUCTION

Adding information, building skills, and engaging tools:

Define racism for and with the group using the “racial prejudice + power = racism” framework used by Joseph R. Brandt in his book *Dismantling Racism*.

Move through the elements and address how racism affects the environments we live, work, and play in. Be sure to acknowledge the teachers who have helped you develop the knowledge you hold as you develop new knowledge with the group.

“We need these elements to drink and grow our food with; to live and breathe but also to have access to clean outdoor spaces for recreation is important for our quality of life. Consider each one’s:

- ♦ Natural state
- ♦ Harmed state
- ♦ Healing state

“The big question? What is our creative response?”

Water group (15 minutes)

“Providence is a city at the meeting point of 3 rivers: the Moshassuck, Woonasquatucket, and Seekonk Rivers — they meet at the Narragansett Bay”

Natural state: “Where does our water come from?”

- ♦ Share video explaining the history of your local water supply: <https://www.provwater.com/about-us/history>

Harms: Share materials that speak to the specific contamination causes and effects in your watershed.

- ♦ “In Providence, there are heightened levels of lead, as described in a 2019 Providence Water Board quality report.”
- ♦ Find explanatory tools to help unpack the scientific data in local reports, such as: <https://youtu.be/M5at4WykVEA>
- ♦ Find explanatory tools to help you show how water quality correlates to recreational access for different racialized communities, such as: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10t_XEgkV11TW6kvJwguOdkomebNdMblEatsfGiGVzw8/edit

Healing: Share case studies showing how artists and creative practitioners in your area, and nationally, have addressed harmed waterways.

- ♦ Local to Providence: Urban Pond Procession at Mashapaug Pond: <http://rhodetour.org/items/show/14>
- ♦ National: Water Protectors organization: http://www.honorearth.org/welcome_water_protectors

Earth group (15 minutes)

- ♦ Harms: Share materials that speak to the specific land contamination causes and effects in your area.
- ♦ Soul Fire Farm visual timeline of history of racism and resistance in the US food system.
 - ♦ Address the legacies of manifest destiny, colonialism, slavery, emancipation, sharecropping, jim crow, great migration, Black land loss, redlining, food apartheid, diabetes/heart disease, migrant labor. Emphasize resilience and resistance.
 - ♦ “In the early 1900s, African American families owned one seventh of the nation’s farmland, 15 million acres. A hundred years later, Black farmers own only a quarter of the land they once held and now make up less than 1 percent of American farm families.”
- ♦ Interactive redlining map: <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58>
- ♦ Julian Drix, MPH on soil contamination hazards specific to Providence, RI:
 - ♦ “Rhode Island is the birthplace of the American industrial revolution. This long history of industrial activity left a toxic legacy in the soil and sediment and resulted in a large number of brownfield and superfund sites with varying levels of contamination. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is responsible for overseeing the investigation and clean up of contaminated sites. They note that many of these sites are in urban centers, communities of color, or low-income communities subject to historical inequities. DEM’s site inventory lists sites in and around the Port of Providence that are in the Federal CIRCLIS program (brownfield sites or sites being investigated for hazardous substances), waste management sites with Environmental Land Use Restrictions (ELURs), active solid and hazardous waste sites, and an inventory of Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUSTs). Risk of exposure to contamination at these sites is increased when they are not properly capped or remediated, when work activities are conducted that disturb the soil, or when contaminated sites are impacted by severe weather.” (Drix 11)

Healing: Share case studies showing how artists and creative practitioners in your area, and nationally, have addressed harmed land:

- ♦ Cooperative Community of West Jackson: <https://www.coopnwj.org/groundwork/farms/>
- ♦ Soul Fire Farm Reparations Map: <https://www.soulfirefarm.org/get-involved/reparations/>
- ♦ Southeast African American Farmers Organic Network: <https://saafon.org/about-us/>

Air group (15 minutes)

Harms: Share materials that speak to the specific air contamination causes and effects in your area.

- ♦ NO LNG PVD Campaign Video: <https://youtu.be/5lXj2QHYZ-A>
 - ♦ When the fuel truck overturned on the Route 95 Allens Avenue ramp in Providence Wednesday evening, it leaked as much as 11,000 thousand gallons of volatile fuel back down the ramp and into Providence River. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) elected to allow the fuel to flow with the outgoing tide.
 - ♦ “The tanker truck that rolled over and spilled thousands of gallons of gasoline onto Allens Avenue and into the Providence River further demonstrates the risk transporting fossil fuel places on the Port of Providence and adjacent neighborhoods,” said Monica Huertas, coordinator for NoLNGinPVD, a group fighting environmental racism in the Washington Park area of Providence. “This accident is the third in the area in the last 18 months, including a massive gas leak and an ethanol train derailment, both in March 2017. Huertas led a group of about a dozen people in a protest at the corner of Allens Avenue and Ernest Street, which was as close as clean-up crews were allowing the public to be. Representatives from at least four environmental groups attended, including the Sierra Club, the Environmental Justice League, Climate Action Rhode Island and No LNG in PVD.” (Steve Alquist, Uprise RI: <https://upriseri.com/2018-10-05-uprising/>)
- ♦ Slides showing geographic distribution of asthma in Providence: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/546d61b5e4b049f0b10b95c5/t/5c65f25353450a82b2e0a4e9/1550185066098/Community+asthma+presentation+-+Greater+Providence+Area.pdf>
- ♦ Land uses in relation to mapped air pollution around Port of Providence (Drix, Port of Providence, 14): https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=10p_9SS8jBi0hKzvi0jGPeXNFeLbGGOlh&ll=41.80732484618561%2C-71.40532495951857&z=14

- ◆ “Air quality hazards in ports are complex to characterize because of the multitude of both large and small sources, the variation in types of sources and pollutants emitted from those sources, and the overlapping and interrelated nature of the different sources. Sources of air pollution in the Port of Providence include the engine exhaust from marine vessels (ocean going vessels, barges, tug boats, and other harbor craft), train engines, trucks, cranes, and other equipment used in port operations, in addition to stationary facilities.
- ◆ Broad categories of these sources of air pollution include:
 1. point sources, such as facilities with smokestacks, tanks with vents or leaks, or ocean going vessels that are “hotelling” in operation while docked;
 2. area sources, such as cranes and port equipment that move but operate within a given area; and
 3. mobile sources, such as trucks, trains, and ships that move along defined linear routes. Complex modeling algorithms are used to predict the air quality impacts of each of these sources, estimating concentrations of various different air pollutants based on the emission from each type of source, how they vary across time and space, and how those emissions disperse under different meteorological and geographic conditions.
- ◆ The size and characteristics of the populations exposed to the air pollutants are critically important. Some populations, such as children or people with asthma or other respiratory conditions, are more sensitive to air pollution and will experience greater health impacts than others that are exposed to the same concentrations of air pollution.” (Drix, Port of Providence, 10)
- ◆ Global picture:
 - ◆ Read introduction from Tessum et. al. and review table on p.6002:
 - ◆ “Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) air pollution exposure is the largest environmental health risk factor in the United States. Here, we link PM2.5 exposure to the human activities responsible for PM2.5 pollution. We use these results to explore “pollution inequity”: the difference between the environmental health damage caused by a racial-ethnic group and the damage that group experiences. We show that, in the United States, PM2.5 exposure is disproportionately caused by consumption of goods and services mainly by the non-Hispanic white majority, but disproportionately inhaled by black and Hispanic minorities. On average, non-Hispanic whites experience a “pollution advantage”: They experience ~17% less air pollution exposure than is caused by their consumption. Blacks and Hispanics on average bear a “pollution burden”

of 56% and 63% excess exposure, respectively, relative to the exposure caused by their consumption. The total disparity is caused as much by how much people consume as by how much pollution they breathe. Differences in the types of goods and services consumed by each group are less important. PM2.5 exposures declined ~50% during 2002–2015 for all three racial-ethnic groups, but pollution inequity has remained high.”

- ♦ Collectively review particulate matter inequities, asking and answering:
 - ♦ Who generates the pollution?
 - ♦ Who consumes the pollution?

Healing: Share case studies showing how artists and creative practitioners in your area, and nationally, have addressed harmed air.

- ♦ Use side-by-side photos from pandemic air quality change to stimulate discussion:
<https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/22/world/air-pollution-reduction-cities-coronavirus-intl-hnk/index.html>

BREATH (DIGESTING)

INSPIRATION

Collectively read aloud from the introduction of Fairchild chapter 3: The Case for a Just Transition by Michelle Mascarenhas-Swan, p.37–39.

Read the Just Providence Framework and collectively address the following prompts:

- ♦ Give each person a principle from the framework; then give them time to read and think about what it means;
- ♦ Have each person develop a gesture or tableau and an activating sound that represents the principle;
- ♦ Have everyone activate their motion on camera at the same time;
- ♦ Debrief by allowing everyone to either guess what principle others had or allow folks to repeat their motions and explain them;
 - ♦ This is a good opportunity to move and communicate dynamically outside of a regular seated structure;

- ♦ By the end of the exercise the group will have a choreographic phrase depicting all the principles;
- ♦ Repeat the phrase a couple of times so that the group can get a good recording of it, using whatever tools or tricks needed to ensure the proper order is followed.

BREATH (RELEASING)

FIELD WORK

Session Five: Poetry is not a Luxury

Write in marker on a piece of paper: ONE LINE TO FREE MY TONGUE (in honor of the Audre Lorde essay of the same name)

Find a poem or set of song lyrics that you love

CLOSING/EVALUATION

- ♦ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ♦ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ♦ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ♦ Did we meet our objectives?
- ♦ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?



Participant Session IV

Environmental Racism and Food Justice

[Link to virtual jamboards](#) for pre- and post-evaluations and group brainstorm.

INVITATION

Small group conversation:

In small groups take seven minutes to collect thoughts on the question and focus your thoughts on the element (earth, air, water) that you have been assigned. Thoughts are encouraged to be collected on paper not on a screen.

- ♦ Why is it important to understand environmental racism and food justice as a community health worker?
- ♦ How, specifically, does environmental racism manifest in relation to your element?
- ♦ What is a sweet, healthful experience you have had of your element? Something that expresses the goodness of the element?
- ♦ What is an example of the degradation or environmental racism related to the element?

INSTRUCTION

Prejudice + Power = Racism

“Racism is a system of social structures that provides or denies access, safety, resources, and power based on race. Racism is different from discrimination or racial bigotry. Racism is discrimination plus power. Its complexity and structural nature has allowed racism to recreate itself generation after generation, such that systems that perpetuate racial inequity no longer need racist actors or to explicitly promote racial differences in opportunities, outcomes, and consequences to maintain those differences. It is a form of oppression based on the socially constructed concept of race exercised by the dominant racial group (whites) over non-dominant racial groups.”



Resources for creative water work:

- ◆ Providence Water Supply Board History: <https://www.provwater.com/about-us/history>
- ◆ PVD Port Water access slideshow
- ◆ 2019 Report by Providence Water on elevated levels of lead.
- ◆ Local creative response: video by Kei Soares Cobb and Laura Brown-Lavoie at Mashapaug Pond <https://vimeo.com/362592329>
- ◆ National creative response: Water Protectors: http://www.honorearth.org/welcome_water_protectors

Resources for creative earth work:

- ◆ Soul Fire Farm visual timeline of food justice history
- ◆ <http://www.soulfirefarm.org/>
- ◆ Farming While Black by Leah Penniman https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=14&v=B0-DS6qnFTk&feature=emb_logo
- ◆ Soul Fire Farm Reparations Map: <http://www.soulfirefarm.org/get-involved/reparations/>
- ◆ COOP Community of New West Jackson: <https://www.coopnwj.org/groundwork/farms/>
- ◆ Ron Finley, Gangsta Gardener: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzZzZ_qpZ4w
 - ◆ “To change the community, you have to change the composition of the soil. We are the soil.” – Ron Finley
- ◆ Northeast Farmer’s of Color Network: <https://nefoclandtrust.org/>
- ◆ Southeastern African American Farming Organic Network: <https://saafon.org/about-us/>
- ◆ BIPOC led how-to farming videos: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/18Wa3UJ3xHvMrsvRLy38qXyPsX5BWfj4NgVcgMolfZfA/edit>
- ◆ BIPOC farming skill shares: <https://www.facebook.com/events/223069832357315/>

- ♦ Ask a Sista Farmer! Recordings of episodes:
 - ♦ One: <https://www.facebook.com/soulfirefarm/videos/2602449370081060/>
 - ♦ Two: <https://www.facebook.com/soulfirefarm/videos/234565521281952/>
 - ♦ Four: <https://www.facebook.com/soulfirefarm/videos/807342636419235/>
 - ♦ Five: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1094830417543687>
 - ♦ Six: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1677062932418066>
 - ♦ Seven: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=256375169064620>
 - ♦ and eight: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=871242796707262>
- ♦ Dr. Booker T. Whatley, inventor of the CSA model: <https://www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/csas-rooted-in-black-history-zbcz1502>

Resources for creative air work:

- ♦ Consider particulate matter inequities globally and locally:
 - ♦ Who generates the pollution?
 - ♦ Who consumes the pollution?
- ♦ Tessum et. al. "Inequity in consumption of goods and services adds to racial-ethnic disparities in air pollution exposure" https://drive.google.com/file/d/1x0YdiQNNwok5Y6_4SwTW1hXGIGHyTxY
- ♦ Land uses around mapped air pollution by Julian Drix, MPH.
- ♦ "Port of Providence" thesis by Julian Drix, MPH: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lewywdrX_mClk3Y8UtYMnFeIFQfbTJJ3/view?usp=drivesdk
- ♦ Greater Providence area asthma prevalence slideshow: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/546d61b5e4b049f0b10b95c5/t/5c65f25353450a82b2e0a4e9/1550185066098/Community+asthma+presentation+-+Greater+Providence+Area.pdf>
- ♦ No LNG in PVD video: <https://youtu.be/5Ixj2QHYZ-A>

FIELD WORK

Session Five: Poetry is Not a Luxury

- ♦ Write in marker on a piece of paper: ONE LINE TO FREE MY TONGUE (in honor of the Audre Lorde essay of the same name).
- ♦ Find a poem or set of song lyrics that you love.

CLOSING/EVALUATION

- ♦ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ♦ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ♦ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ♦ Did we meet our objectives?
- ♦ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?



Facilitator Session V

Poetry is Not a Luxury

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES (5 MINUTES)

This session is a workshop about poetry — its uses in a community context and techniques for facilitating poetry.

This session is also a writing workshop, for creating and sharing texts with each other. Through it, participants and facilitators aim:

to free our tongues

to meet at the source

to destroy the cages language has made around us

by finding our true voices

and inspiring others to do the same

Following this session, participants will have practiced:

writing and sharing poetry;

facilitating conversations about poetry and language;

facilitating generative writing opportunities;

naming examples of useful communal contexts for poetry;

identifying ways that language can be liberatory;

identifying ways that language can be oppressive or confining;

(and ways to resist!)

and articulating why POETRY IS NOT A LUXURY.

FACILITATOR PREPARATIONS

Read “Poetry is Not a Luxury” by Audre Lorde and develop your own relationship with her ideas. Get familiar with some of her poetry, and learn about her life.

Find an Audre Lorde poem you want to share. Examples include:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42581/movement-song>

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42587/who-said-it-was-simple>

Choose an opening song to sing as a group (we did “Ella’s Song” by Sweet Honey in the Rock), and designate who is going to lead it.

Come to the session with a document for participants to black out during the erasure poem prompt. This can be a news article or another primary source — we used the transcript of a call between Donald Trump and US governors — or any other piece of writing. If meeting in person, print it out. If meeting virtually, include the text in the participant’s manual for session five.

Prepare yourself to facilitate an open writing session, either using the prompt included here or with a prompt you invent/find elsewhere.

PARTICIPANT PREPARATIONS (FIELD WORK)

Write in marker on a piece of paper: ONE LINE TO FREE MY TONGUE (in honor of the Audre Lorde essay of the same name).

Find a poem or set of song lyrics that you love.

OPENING (20 MINUTES)

Sing “Ella’s Song” (or your choice) with facilitator leading.

- ♦ If meeting in person, make sure lyrics are provided in the participants’ manual.
- ♦ If meeting virtually, have participants remain on mute, singing along with the unmuted facilitator.

Facilitate the group poem beginning with “One line to free my tongue.”

- ♦ Participants should arrive with their line written on a piece of paper;
- ♦ If meeting in person, sit in a circle and have participants read their line, followed by the person to their left. Facilitator copies the whole poem onto a piece of paper.
- ♦ If meeting virtually, assign an order and have participants take turns holding up their line and reading it aloud. Facilitator will type the resulting poem into the participants’ shared doc/manual.

the poem our cohort wrote

sometimes it's heavy like really heavy
the utterance of my mouth shall pierce the atmosphere
create your path by walking it please
listening to your pain
the pain of silence can only be cured by feeling
embers burn eternal
flame climbs the inner wick
i open my mouth and the spirit of my ancestors are liberated
ahhhh the life's breath that breaks my mouth wide open

INVITATION (30 MINUTES)

Connecting with poetry/how we share poetry

“The purpose of this part of our workshop is to share ways that we connect with and talk about poetry. This is both a personal exercise, and a practice opportunity for facilitating conversations about poetry. Each participant and facilitator will have about 3 minutes to share about their poem, why they care about it etc.”

The big questions are:

- ♦ Why did you bring the poem you brought?
- ♦ What is an example of a language being liberation for you?
- ♦ What is an example of feeling like language is a cage/oppressive to you?
- ♦ What is the value of poetry in terms of community? community health? freedom? rebellion? consciousness-raising?

Facilitator takes notes on what people are saying and after everyone shares, reports back on some of the uses/roles of poetry in our lives. If there's time, the group can zoom in on one of the poems that was brought to the space and collectively practice close conversation about the text using some of the facilitation techniques listed below:

"Let's also share some strategies and discussion questions we have for helping people connect with poetry and talk about it."

eg. good tactics/prompts to get people talking about a poem/poetry:

- ◆ Listen to it out loud ... twice!
- ◆ Read it on paper.
- ◆ Memorize it!
- ◆ What do you remember about what you've just heard?
- ◆ What stuck out to you?
- ◆ What moved your emotions?
- ◆ What did you love?
- ◆ What did you relate to?
- ◆ What confused you? What made you feel left out of the poem?
- ◆ Where did you space out?
- ◆ What offended you?
- ◆ What made you feel outside of the poem?
- ◆ How did the poem sound?
- ◆ Strong images or rhythms?



TRANSITION/ADDING INFORMATION (5 MINUTES)

"It's almost time for a break. We're going to have a long-ish break, and we invite you, during your break, to read "Poetry is Not a Luxury" by Audre Lorde. Does anyone have a relationship with Audre Lorde and/or her work?"

Take responses, build a group understanding of Lorde's life and work.

"Okay, let's break. We welcome everyone's ways of learning and pacing — some people might have time to read the whole essay. Other people might focus on a couple of paragraphs or even one great line. It is a beautiful, packed essay so just go at your own pace. And please return to the meeting with the one line that spoke to you the most."

BREATH/BREAK (TASTING) (20 MINUTES)

INSTRUCTION (20 MINUTES)

Share-back people's take-aways from "Poetry is not a luxury," and the group conversation. Some prompts for discussion include:

- ◆ What line spoke to you the most?
- ◆ What are the uses of written poetry?
- ◆ What are the uses of spoken poetry?
- ◆ What are some useful contexts for poetry?
 - ◆ Eg. classrooms, public performance, murals, audio, graffiti, lyrics to music, open mics, ciphers, writing workshops, prisons
- ◆ What are the roles poetry plays in community health?
- ◆ What are some community health spaces for poetry?
- ◆ How in your current work in the world can you imagine using poetry?

INSPIRATION/INSTRUCTION (40 MINUTES)

In this section, participants will have a chance to demo a few writing exercises that they can add to their toolboxes as facilitators, and simultaneously generate some of their own writing.

Pass-around poem

This is the tool used for developing the group poem at the beginning of the session. It is a good activity for warming up a group — if you are in-person with people, you can have everyone begin a poem on a piece of paper, and literally pass the papers around the room so that everyone has a chance to add a line. For an added element of suspense, have participants fold down the paper so only the preceding line is visible to the next writer. The pass-around poems can have a shared theme, or can just unfold from the content of the authors themselves.

Erasure

Using a sharpie, black out all the words on an existing document (eg. a newspaper article) until only a poem remains. For this activity, we brought a long transcript of a Donald Trump call with US governors.

Found poem

You can notice text in the world that already makes a poem, or make a collage of words pulled from one or more text sources, such as billboards you saw while driving.

Facilitated brainstorm

Facilitating a brainstorming session is a key skill of a creative community health worker. It involves asking questions to help participants access their own imaginations. Brainstorming also helps by getting participants to assemble ideas together first, before committing them to writing. It provides a forum for a writer to develop a list that they can draw from.

“As artists we develop our own response to what is going on in the world. How do we help the community respond? Why is it important to have a creative response?”

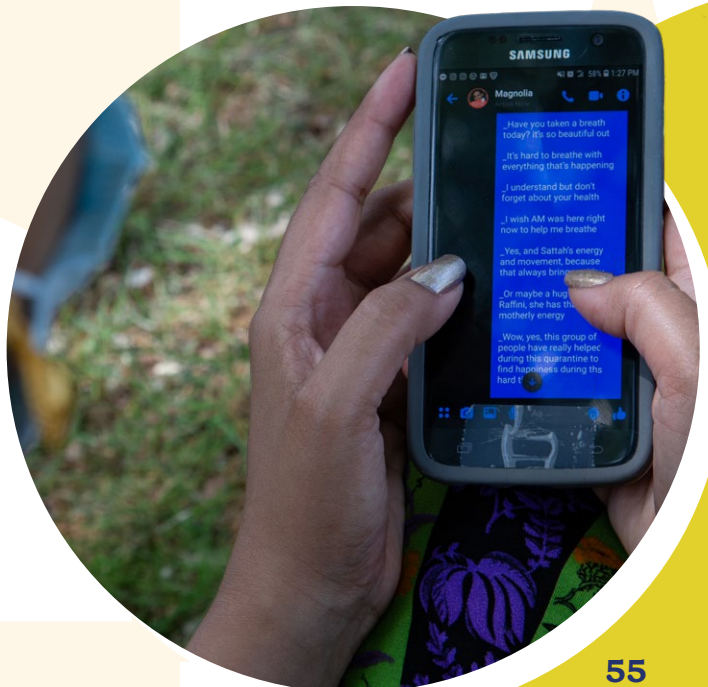
Offer a prompt for a list and follow it up with a free writing prompt. Brainstorming should take about 10 minutes and should be followed by a breathing break before the facilitator sends participants off to write. Below is an example that follows this structure:

List five objects that represent the current week.

Choose one of the seven.

1. How does the object feel?
2. Use your other senses to describe the object (how does it look, smell, taste, sound?)
3. What surrounds your object?
4. What is trying to destroy your object?
5. What is keeping your object alive?
6. What is “home” for your object?
7. What does your object love?

Now write a Persona Poem in the voice of your object.



BREATH/BREAK (DIGESTING) (20 MINUTES)

“The greatest challenge for me as a poet is opening the door at the beginning of my writing time, especially in the chaotic moment we are in, surrounded by our families and affected by a lot of intensity in our world. One of my strategies is to enter my creative space having transformed me/it with some intentional breathing candlelight, incense, or by inviting the people around me to join me in quiet writing/creative time.”

At this point in our session, a facilitator led the group in a Tonglin breath practice, but future facilitators can lead any type of intentional breath practice they are comfortable with.

“We will have another longer off-screen break now. I encourage you to do your best to create a cocoon of listening around yourself and continue tap into the inspiration (in-spirare).”

CLOSING (15 MINUTES)

Invite participants to share something from what they wrote. To ease the vulnerability of sharing new work, you can give the following options:

- ♦ Read the whole thing you wrote.
- ♦ Read your favorite line or section.
- ♦ Share what you were writing about without sharing the actual text.
- ♦ Simply say “pass.”

EVALUATION (5 MINUTES)

- ♦ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ♦ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ♦ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ♦ Did we meet our objectives?
- ♦ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?

FIELD WORK

Read 213–270 of adrienne maree brown’s *Emergent Strategy* (tools for Emergent Strategy facilitation).

Participant Session V

Poetry is not a Luxury

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES (5 MINUTES)

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(and ways to resist!)

and articulating why POETRY IS NOT A LUXURY.

[Link to virtual jamboards](#) for pre- and post-evaluations and group brainstorms.

OPENING (20 MINUTES)

“Ella’s Song” by Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, Sweet Honey in the Rock

We who believe in freedom cannot rest

We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes

Until the killing of black men, black mothers’ sons

Is as important as the killing of white men, white
mothers’ sons

That which touches me most

Is that I had a chance to work with people

Passing on to others that which was passed on to me

To me young people come first

They have the courage where we fail

And if I can but shed some light as they carry us through the gale

The older I get the better I know that the secret of my going on

Is when the reins are in the hands of the young, who dare to run against the storm

Not needing to clutch for power

Not needing the light just to shine on me

I need to be one in the number as we stand against tyranny

Struggling myself don’t mean a whole lot, I’ve come to realize

That teaching others to stand up and fight is the only way my struggle survives

I’m a woman who speaks in a voice and I must be heard

At times I can be quite difficult, I’ll bow to no man’s word

We who believe in freedom cannot rest

We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes



INVITATION (30 MINUTES)

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The big questions are:

- ♦ Why did you bring the poem you brought?
- ♦ What is an example of a language being liberation for you?
- ♦ What is an example of feeling like language is a cage/oppressive to you?
- ♦ What is the value of poetry in terms of community? community health? freedom? rebellion? consciousness-raising?

eg. good tactics/prompts to get people talking about a poem/poetry:

- ♦ Listen to it out loud ... twice!
- ♦ Read it on paper.
- ♦ Memorize it!
- ♦ What do you remember about what you've just heard?
- ♦ What stuck out to you?
- ♦ What moved your emotions?
- ♦ What did you love?
- ♦ What did you relate to?
- ♦ What confused you? What made you feel left out of the poem?
- ♦ Where did you space out?
- ♦ What offended you?
- ♦ What made you feel outside of the poem?
- ♦ How did the poem sound?
- ♦ Strong images or rhythms?



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Audre Lorde

February 18, 1934 — November 17, 1992

Self-described “Black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet”

Author of *Sister Outsider* (1984) and *Zami* (1983), as well as many other poems and essays

Audre Lorde – “Poetry is Not a Luxury”

<https://makinglearning.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/poetry-is-not-a-luxury-audre-lorde.pdf>

Audre Lorde – “Who Said it was Simple”

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42587/who-said-it-was-simple>

INSPIRATION/INSTRUCTION (40 MINUTES)

Pass-around poem

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Using a sharpie, black out all the words on an existing document (eg. a newspaper article) until only a poem remains. For this activity, we brought a long transcript of a Donald Trump call with US governors.

Found poem

You can notice text in the world that already makes a poem, or make a collage of words pulled from one or more text sources, such as billboards you saw while driving.

Facilitated brainstorm

Facilitating a brainstorming session is a key skill of a creative community health worker. It involves asking questions to help participants access their own imaginations. Brainstorming also helps by getting participants to assemble ideas together first, before committing them to writing. It provides a forum for a writer to develop a list that they can draw from.

FIELD WORK

Read 213–270 of adrienne maree brown’s *Emergent Strategy* (tools for Emergent Strategy facilitation).

EVALUATION

- ♦ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ♦ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ♦ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ♦ Did we meet our objectives?
- ♦ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?



Facilitator Session VI

Facilitation

Facilitation is a dance. There is a rhythm that we want to find with a group. In this session the facilitator is working to create space for participants to exercise this dance with each other using new tools.

FACILITATOR PREPARATIONS

Choose a tech person.

Identify roles.

Identify space, if able to present in a physical space; it could be advantageous to set up centers or predetermined areas in a space to experiment with various tools and exercises.

Be prepared to explain the facilitation tools below, or add your own to the mix.

Bring an empty circular agenda, and a numbered list of the activities (including breaks) that you hope to include in the agenda, and be prepared to collaboratively create the agenda.

PARTICIPANT PREPARATIONS (FIELD WORK)

Read 213–270 of adrienne maree brown's *Emergent Strategy* (tools for Emergent Strategy facilitation)

OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Creating Space/Circling

If you are in physical space always consider the spatial elements. Music, light, temperature, food, location of restrooms, availability of childcare, language fluency and other potential obstacles to access. It's more difficult for a participant to focus on workshop content if they are uncomfortable. Music, lighting, and visual elements are tools that can help a facilitator communicate with participants.

Understand what the needs and resources are in a space.

In what shape are the seats placed?

How loud or efficient is the heating and cooling?

Consider these and other questions as you open the space together as a group. In the invitation, to share you, as the facilitator should be very curious; capture the information shared and share your own curiosity.

As you arrive as a group, form a circle in the space you've created; facilitate a collective moving together in circles, circling:

- ♦ heads
- ♦ arms
- ♦ hips
- ♦ screens (if virtual)

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES (5 MINUTES)

To situate ourselves as “artist facilitators” in a growing field of artists hired as civil servants/community health workers.

- ♦ To acknowledge and understand the conditions that this work in the field has come out of, such as the fact that community health and social determinants of health are now being talked about by policy makers, and the arts enhances the conversation.
- ♦ To develop situational analysis: the analysis of different conditions (emotional, political, cultural, religious, geographical) that help curriculum planners define objectives.
- ♦ To practice doing no harm by selecting learning materials and evaluation procedures that are useful and culturally relevant.
- ♦ To identify elements that help to build a curriculum: including situational elements, learning objectives, content scope and sequencing, activities, strategies, method of teaching, and evaluation goals.
- ♦ To understand the context and purpose of the work: artists are being brought in to do what we do best; communicate.
- ♦ To evaluate the stakes at play in being a vessel for prioritizing community goals over institutional priorities or missions.



- ♦ To avoid doing or perpetuating harm in the work that we're doing or creating.
 - ♦ Harm could be displacement, or could be placating organizations or groups rather than listening to them and prioritizing their interests.
- ♦ To practice being a facilitator who acts as a "holder of space" and "holder of values."

INVITATION (20 MINUTES)

What is an artist facilitator?

- ♦ Adding to the brainstorm we started.
- ♦ Having our own response to conditions.
- ♦ Developing strategies for helping the community respond creatively, and understand why is it important to have a creative response.

"In today's session we will share several facilitation tools and practice them together. The first is the circular agenda, which you may have noticed is the way we make our agendas for these sessions. Today we will collaborate on creating a circular agenda to plan out the way we will use the rest of our time together."

Tool A: Circular Agenda

Share the ideas about circular agenda-making from the table below (adapted from adrienne maree brown's *Emergent Strategy*).

Collaboratively build the agenda for this session with participants using an empty circle drawn on a piece of paper if working in person, or digitally if online.

Label each of the goal activities/tools with a letter (A,B,C...) and give a brief explanation of them.

Let participants fill in their own circular agenda and facilitate a brief shareback where the group decides which activity to do when, and remembers to include breaks.

Draw your finalized collaborative agenda and move on in whatever order the group has agreed on.

Tools	Content	Time
A. CIRCULAR AGENDA	<p>Inspired by adrienne maree brown's facilitation chapter in <i>Emergent Strategy</i> (p.244).</p> <p>Brown writes: "The circular agenda shows that there is a continuous arc to the work we are doing, and presents the suggestion for when and how that arc will flow, but it also allows for things to move and for everyone to focus on the importance of the flow more than the time slots." It helps people "see the space of the meeting as a finite time within a larger arc of change."</p> <p>The idea is to create a visual representation of the goals of the gathering which is round rather than linear, with plenty of space around the planned activities for input from participants. Spaciousness makes meetings so much more easeful and productive!</p>	20 MIN
B. IMPROV SPEECH (PRACTICE IMPROVISATION, CO-DEFINE ARTIST FACILITATOR)	<p>This activity will invite participants to speak about their relationship to facilitation. Each participant will have two minutes to respond to a set of questions provided on the spot.</p>	
C. SEE & BE SEEN (BODY LANGUAGE ACTIVITY)	<p>In this activity, participants are put in pairs (or online in digital breakout pairs) for three minutes of silently sitting together, gazing into each others' eyes. The effect of this activity is different for everyone, but often involves a softening, feelings of discomfort/self-consciousness, and an increase in inner observation. It is important to seek consent from all participants for this (and all!) activities.</p> <p>'See & Be Seen' is a good activity for opening space with a group, as it tends to result in openness, empathy, and greater tenderness, plus it provides an added benefit to the nervous system by giving it some space for silence.</p>	

Tools	Content	Time
D. ACTIVE LISTENING	An exercise in deep listening and building conversation through an interview ‘in a fishbowl.’	
E. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP	A conversation about community voice and community power. Examine the relationship an artist facilitator has to institutional power and community accountability.	
F. HUM CYPHER	<p>The purpose of this activity is to sing and listen. It is a great way to energetically take a break from mental activity, and drop the group experience into a lower register of the body. This can be done digitally (if people unmute themselves) or in person.</p> <p>Humming together gives people an opportunity to observe decisions that they make in community collaboration. When you hear a sound, do you: match it? Answer it? Repeat it? Harmonize with it? Slow it down? Drown it out? Let yourself be drowned out?</p>	
G. WAYS OF BEING	Ways of being are a tool to guide a room and hold space in an antiracist way. This involves laying out antiracism as a principle and allowing for that to be the foundation from which the rest of the session can flow.	

Tool B: Improv Speech/Co-defining artist facilitator

Two minute presentations on each participant's definition of 'artist facilitator'

Roles: notetaker, timekeeper

Reminders:

- ◆ Establish the order in which participants will occupy the roles of notetaker, timekeeper, and speaker.
 - ◆ Use a fresh jam board or other tool to keep track of notes.
- ◆ Ensure participants understand that each speaker will be asked their question just before they are going to present.
- ◆ Ask the timekeeper to give each speaker 30 seconds to think before starting the timer.
- ◆ Encourage participants to adhere to the confines of two minutes exactly — no longer or shorter.
- ◆ Make sure the time keepers understand and are able to use some conventional hand signals:
 - ◆ a raised hand for one-minute;
 - ◆ one finger for 30-seconds;
 - ◆ a spinning finger for the final 10-seconds.

Questions:

- ◆ What are the questions you ask yourself before you facilitate?
- ◆ Who are the people that you work with as a facilitator?
- ◆ What are the tools you use to encourage participants to engage with one another as a facilitator?
- ◆ What do participants need from facilitators, and each other?
- ◆ How do you build relationships with/among participants as a facilitator?
- ◆ How do you listen as a facilitator?
- ◆ How do you capture notes as a facilitator?
- ◆ How do you work with a partner as a facilitator?
- ◆ How do you plan as a facilitator?
- ◆ When things in a session don't go as planned, how important is it to be able to improvise as a facilitator?

- ◆ What are some ways you've adapted work as a facilitator because something is not going according to plan?
- ◆ How does time factor into the process of facilitation? How do you keep track of time?
- ◆ As you are preparing to facilitate, how do you incorporate:
 - ◆ spontaneous inspiration from the day?
 - ◆ additional nutrients you are bringing to your participants and yourself?
 - ◆ a spacious agenda?

The group can share additional questions that it generates collectively.

After all participants have shared, unpack the experience:

- ◆ What are some general observations?
- ◆ How did your body feel?
- ◆ Was there tension?
- ◆ Was your sense of time altered?
- ◆ Were you able to present the things you wanted to say?
- ◆ How was your experience if you took on other roles?

Note on time keeping: The spirit of this exercise is to encourage participants to connect their experiences to the conversation of artist facilitation, in an improvised way, not to rush them into a poor performance. Remind participants to speak from their experiences and breathe.

Tool C: See & Be Seen

Introduce the activity by segmenting participants into pairs.

Make sure participants know that they should practice seeking consent from their partner for this activity.

Invite participants, once they have consent, to sit facing each other in silence, gazing into each other's eyes.

Encourage participants to observe their own experiences, including:

- ◆ the thoughts they have during the 3-minutes;
- ◆ their partner's body language;
- ◆ their own body language, their emotions and reactions, the questions they have, their impressions.

Facilitate a report back from a few participants about how the experience was for them.

Tool D: Active Listening: Interview in a Fishbowl

Invite each pair of participants to conduct an interview while other participants observe.

Roles: interviewer, interviewee

Using active listening and open-ended questioning, the interviewer will try to engage the interviewee in a conversation with questions that can't be answered simply yes or no.

The interviewee will attempt to answer the questions using the fewest number of words, and least amount of time possible.

Cycle through pairs of participants every 2–3 minutes so that each participant gets a chance to be the interviewer and the interviewee.

Possible Themes:

- ◆ conflict in collaboration;
- ◆ the process of visioning a project;
- ◆ the relationship between artistic ritual to selfcare.

After each participant has had a chance to occupy both roles, unpack the experience:

- ◆ What things did you learn from the questions you asked?
- ◆ How did it feel knowing others were listening?
- ◆ Was your pair able to find a rhythm in the conversation?
- ◆ Did you know the answers to your interviewer's questions?
- ◆ Were there long pauses in your interview?
- ◆ Was there space for listeners to process information?
- ◆ Were there missed moments because of different literacies?
- ◆ Did observers in the fishbowl have enough information to follow each interview?



Tool E: Community Engagement to Ownership

Often an artist facilitator is brought in to do work with a community by a powerful institution. It's important to understand the spectrum of power as we participate in community engagement.

Open a pdf or a printed copy of Rosa González and Facilitating Power in partnership with Movement Strategy Center's *Community Engagement to Ownership Spectrum* too.

Invite participants to read page 3 aloud together; cover the whole spectrum, beginning with "ignore" and continuing on to "defer to."

Ask participants to think about examples of each level of engagement.

Remind the group that the spectrum builds. One can't "defer to" without cultivating "involvement" and "collaboration" first.

After reading the description of the final stage in the spectrum, discuss what "defer to" means:

- ♦ What does community ownership look like?
- ♦ What does it look like for a community to have power over a project, system, or institutional process?

Tool F: Hum Cypher

Share the ideas behind the activity (outlined in the table above) before you start.

Start to hum.

Invite participants to add their own hum to the group sound.

Invite participants to close their eyes. Explain that closing the eyes helps people feel less self-conscious, and sometimes better at listening.

Invite reactions from participants after the hum cypher comes to silence.

Tool G: Ways of Being

A facilitator is a holder of space, and a holder of values. What are the values of the group under the conditions in which it is convening?

Begin with an antiracist framework. If you are working in a space or context that isn't actively antiracist, it is important to co-articulate ways of being that are antiracist.

Co-create communal ways of being as a covenant. It can be powerful for a group to assume accountability and co-ownership.

Facilitators should be prepared to vet suggestions for adding ways of being to the list, and to ask whether they are aligned with antiracist and/or anti-oppressive principles.

Collectively answer questions about the process with participants:

- ♦ What is the job of the facilitator in the process of creating a list of 'ways of being?'
- ♦ Why start with an existing list?
- ♦ Why make the list a shared covenant?
- ♦ Does everyone have to agree to the list?
- ♦ How will the group hold people accountable to the agreed protocol for accountability?

Example Ways of Being to use in your template:



EVALUATION

- ◆ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ◆ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ◆ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ◆ Did we meet our objectives?
- ◆ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?



Participant Session VI

Facilitation

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES (5 MINUTES)

- ♦ To situate ourselves as “artist facilitators” in a growing field of artists hired as civil servants/community health workers.
- ♦ To understand the context and purpose of the work of artist facilitation.
- ♦ To evaluate the stakes at play in being a vessel for prioritizing community goals over institutional priorities or missions.
- ♦ To practice being a facilitator who acts as a “holder of space” and a “holder of values.”

[Link to virtual Jamboards](#) for pre- and post-evaluations and group brainstorm.

INVITATION (20 MINUTES)

Take a few minutes to draw a circular agenda for the day; Make it spacious.

If you want to propose additional content, go ahead and we'll see how it all shakes out!

- A. **Develop Circular Agenda** (B-I in no particular order)
- B. Practice improvisation/Co-define artist-facilitator
- C. Practice addressing body language
- D. Conduct partner interviews in a fishbowl
- E. Review *The Spectrum of Community Engagement* tool
- F. Create a humming circle
- G. Develop ways of being as a group
- H. BREAK ONE
- I. BREAK TWO



INSTRUCTION

Tool B: Improv Speech/Co-defining artist facilitator

- ◆ Questions for co-defining 'artist facilitator' to be asked randomly in the interviews, and for group reflection:
- ◆ What are the questions you ask yourself before you facilitate?
- ◆ Who are the people that you work with as a facilitator?
- ◆ What are the tools you use to encourage participants to engage with one another as a facilitator?
- ◆ What do participants need from facilitators, and each other?
- ◆ How do you build relationships with/among participants as a facilitator?
- ◆ How do you listen as a facilitator?
- ◆ How do you capture notes as a facilitator?
- ◆ How do you work with a partner as a facilitator?
- ◆ How do you plan as a facilitator?
- ◆ When things in a session don't go as planned, how important is it to be able to improvise as a facilitator?
- ◆ What are some ways you've adapted work as a facilitator because something is not going according to plan?
- ◆ How does time factor into the process of facilitation? How do you keep track of time?
- ◆ As you are preparing to facilitate, how do you incorporate:
 - ◆ spontaneous inspiration from the day?
 - ◆ additional nutrients you are bringing to your participants and yourself?
 - ◆ a spacious agenda?

COMMUNITY ART is artistic activity that is based in a community setting that evolved from the idea of **CULTURAL DEMOCRACY** after the first world war.

Tool E: Community Engagement to Ownership

Rosa González and Facilitating Power in partnership with Movement Strategy Center's *Community Engagement to Ownership Spectrum* tool.

Tool G: Ways of Being

Tips for building Ways of Being with a group:

- ♦ Say aloud the antiracist/anti-oppressive goal of having a Ways of Being that all agree on;
- ♦ start with an existing list and build on it together;
- ♦ include some ritual of commitment (hand raising, signatures) to confirm the covenant;
- ♦ and agree on a protocol of accountability!

Example Ways of Being:



Additional Resources:

Cohen-Cruz, Jan and Pam Korza. *Municipal Arts Partnerships*.
A Blade of Grass, 2017. <https://municipal-artist.org>

EVALUATION

- ♦ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ♦ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ♦ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ♦ Did we meet our objectives?
- ♦ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?



Facilitator Session VII

Storytelling

This session explores storytelling as a tool for community health work by foregrounding how it connects us to ourselves and one another. Facilitators and participants will think about the stories they hear around them, the stories they choose to tell, and the stories they need to hear and create now to affect communal health and wellbeing.

The workshop begins with an examination of the self as storyteller. Facilitators will share storytelling techniques that participants can use to uncover their own stories, and the stories of the people they work with. Participants will tell their own stories, listen to each others' stories, retell each other's stories and work together to create a new story — a “future story” that speaks to the collective in its time and place.

This session also provides brain science resources that help explain why storytelling is such a potent tool, and explores how artist facilitators can use brain science findings in their work.

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES

- ♦ Explore how storytelling is and can be used as a tool for community health work.
- ♦ Recognize the role storytelling plays in one's own life.
- ♦ Identify how participants are using storytelling in their work already.
- ♦ Learn techniques to uncover stories in oneself and in the groups they facilitate.
- ♦ Understand why storytelling is a powerful tool for personal and community transformation by examining the science behind it (“our brains on story.”)
- ♦ Identify 3 different types of stories:

The True/Personal Story

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

and

THE MYTH

- ♦ Examine the difference between (personal) narrative and story and the role each can play in community health work.
- ♦ Create a group story together.

OPENING/INTENTIONS: STORYTELLER AS PART OF COMMUNITY (10 MINUTES)

The facilitator tells the story, or invites participants to read/tell it in turn:

“The Storyteller Knows Us”

Once there was a man from the West who wanted to do good. So, he went off to the other side of the world to live and work and help “poor people” in a remote village far from his own homeland.

He lived and worked there for several years and taught and learned many things. When it was time for him to return to his home, he thought, “if I can ever go back, I am going to bring them something special. They have so little.”

The time came, when he was able to return for a visit. He thought about what great gift he could bring. He remembered that in the village they didn’t have much: No electronics, or access to media. Imagine, no television or YouTube or (fill in the blank). He remembered that every night the village would gather around the fire and listen to the storyteller tell stories. He noticed over time that the storyteller told the same old stories over and over again. Clearly the storyteller didn’t have enough tales to tell. The man decided to bring a television to the village — a television has so many stories!

He got the finest TV he could and brought it back overseas; he made it to the village with his gift; the chief of the village was grateful. It is always good to receive a gift. They attached the television to the one generator in the village and that night everyone gathered around and watched. The man felt good.

The next night, everyone gathered around the TV again, and watched. This time he noticed some of the people distracted in the back. On the 3rd night, when the TV was on, the man saw the storyteller leave the group and go start a fire. As the blaze grew, the folks around the TV drifted over to the warm fire, where the storyteller was telling one of the old stories. The man could hear people laughing.

He turned to the chief, bewildered, “I don’t get it. Here I have brought you the latest technology: a TV with access to so many stories. Way more stories than your storyteller could ever know. Why in the world would they leave this and go over there to hear the same old stories your storyteller always tells?”

The chief replied, “it is true that your TV/technology knows many stories... But our storyteller knows us.”

The End.

Facilitator-led discussion questions:

- ◆ What does this story make you think of?
- ◆ What stood out for you in this story?
- ◆ How does this relate to the concept of cultural humility?
- ◆ What does it say about the relationship between storyteller, story, and community?

Note to facilitator: You will likely find a common theme in the responses that stories and storytelling are all about relationships.

INVITATION

I Remember (15 minutes)

Explain that this is an exercise to spark one's own memories and reminds us that we all have stories to share; mining our memories helps us uncover them.

Oftentimes people feel as if they don't know or have any stories to tell; this is a "low risk" activity and can be used as an icebreaker or "chispa." It is adapted from an exercise used by InterPlay (interplay.org), an organization based in California that uses storytelling and dance for community building.

Move it quickly; do at least three rounds.

This activity is designed to do in person but was adapted for a virtual platform. If you do this virtually, the facilitator will give the prompt and call on the first person to respond. The facilitator will also keep time, and stop the first person after 30 seconds. The facilitator will then call on the next person, repeating the prompt and saying, "Go." After 30 seconds, again the facilitator will call time, and call on the next person to go, keeping it moving quickly until all participants have had a chance to go. The idea is to keep the activity moving as quickly as possible and to have everyone participate. Because people's faces don't show up in the same space on everyone's device, it can be easier to have the facilitator call the names. An alternative could be to give everyone a number, and have people take turns numerically.

"We are going to work in pairs for this exercise. I invite you to stand facing your partner, and move yourselves so the whole group can create a circle within a circle. Decide which of you will be Person A, and who will be Person B.

I will be giving you a prompt using these words: 'I remember ...' followed by a word to spark your memory.

Person (A) will speak for 30 seconds, saying whatever comes to mind in response to the prompt; Person B's job is simply to listen.

I will say STOP at 30 seconds; person A will stop talking, even if they are in the middle of a sentence/thought. I will then say SWITCH. Person B has 30 seconds to respond to the same prompt, beginning with 'I remember ...'

At 30 seconds I will say STOP. Person B will stop speaking. The partners will thank each other. Then, the inside circle will move one person to the right, so everyone has a new partner for the second round.

We will do this for several rounds."

"I remember ... (here you add in words or phrases such as "hot summer nights" "apples" "snow fall", etc.)"

I Remember debrief (5 mins)

Ask the group to respond to the following questions:

- ◆ How was that for you?
- ◆ What did you notice as you went along?
- ◆ What was revealed about us and you in those bits of stories?
- ◆ Why do this?
- ◆ How might you use this activity in communities you work with?
- ◆ What questions/prompts would you include? (Who? What? When? How)
- ◆ How might you adapt the activity?

Personal storytelling in pairs and/or breakout rooms (20 mins)

Half of good storytelling is good listening. Personal stories will help participants get to know one another.

"We are hardwired for storytelling and we use story to shape and give meaning to our experiences. When asked to remember something from our past, we choose a beginning, middle and end in order to convey what happened. We do this with our own personal stories.

In this next activity we will do more personal storytelling, but each of you will have more time to reflect on the prompt and think about how you want to tell your story. I will invite you to imagine the details of your story by asking you more questions. Your job is simply to enter into your memories as fully as you can, using all of your senses.

We will then work together in pairs where you will each have the opportunity to tell your story fully. You will each have about 5 minutes. I will give you warning when you have 1 minute left to finish your story, and call time. After the first person is finished, the second person will take a turn.

Half of good storytelling is good listening. Your job as the listener is simply to listen.

I am about to give you the story prompt. Remember to allow your mind to wander and remember as fully as you can.

Think of a time when you stood up in the face of injustice.

- ◆ Describe where you were.
- ◆ Describe what was happening.
- ◆ Describe how old you were and how you felt about what was going on.
- ◆ Describe what you did.
- ◆ Describe what happened as a result.

Take another minute or two to allow yourself to relive the experience.

Now, I am going to invite you to get with your partner and share your stories with each other. I will note the time.”

The facilitator will choose a story prompt depending on the focus and goals of your group. In this instance, we were addressing social justice issues. However, you will need to ask a question that relates to your work with the group. For example, when working with an intergenerational group whose goals were to get to know one another across generations and to create a garden and meals together, one prompt used was “Think of a time when you planted a seed.”

Personal storytelling in pairs debrief

After the allotted time, bring the group together to respond to the following questions:

- ◆ How was it to be invited to remember your story?
- ◆ What was it like to share it with your partner?
- ◆ What was it like to hear your partner’s story?

“Now we are going to take the next step in developing our storytelling skills. We are going to re-tell a story we hear.”

Telling each others’ story: a “S/Hero’s Tale” (30 mins)

“Now I am going to give you another prompt. (Repeat prompt sequence as above). You and your partner will share your stories as before. Only this time, when you return, you will share your partner’s story. So, please be sure to share something you don’t mind having the whole group hear. And, when you are listening, just listen. It is not a time to take notes.”

When the pairs return, have them take turns telling each other’s story to the entire group.

A “S/Hero’s Tale” debrief:

What was it like:

- ♦ to remember your own story?
- ♦ to tell your own story knowing it was going to be retold?
- ♦ to hear your partners knowing you were going to retell it?
- ♦ to retell/reframe your partners’ story?
- ♦ to hear your story re/told?
- ♦ What does this make you think about the power of telling stories?

BREATH

Read aloud the “Story of The Lion” (2 min)

A mother lion was out hunting with her cubs when they came across a campfire. She hushed them and they crept up close to the fire, still in shadows so they could see but not be seen, and hear. There were hunters gathered around telling stories. One after the other they boasted about the game they had hunted, the lions they had killed, each one’s story bigger than the other. The cubs listened, wide-eyed. One finally said, ‘Mother, why is it when they speak they don’t say anything about the ones who got away, or the ones that chased them down? Why is it that the hunter always wins?’ The mother lion looked at her cubs and said, “It will be that way, until the lion tells the story.”

INSTRUCTION (30 MINUTES)

The Neuroscience: Why Your Brain Loves Good Storytelling

Research shows that our brains align when we share stories. When we hear the same story, our brains develop similar pathways that correlate with one another. Research also shows that our brains don’t know the difference between the actual event itself when it is happening, or the story when it is being told/heard. Our physiological response is the same.

Screen Hasson, Uri. “This is your brain on communication.” Ted February 2016.

https://www.ted.com/talks/uri_hasson_this_is_your_brain_on_communication

NEURAL COUPLING

A story activates parts in the brain that allow the listener to turn the story into their own ideas and experience thanks to a process called neural coupling.

DOPAMINE

The brain releases dopamine into the system when it experiences an emotionally-charged event, making it easier to remember and with great accuracy.

CORTEX ACTIVITY

When processing facts, two areas of the brain are activated (Broca's and Wernicke's area). A well-told story can engage many additional areas, including the motor cortex, sensory cortex and frontal cortex.



How Storytelling Affects The Brain

MIRRORING

Listeners will not only experience the similar brain activity to each other, but also to the speaker.

Use the following questions to prompt a discussion about Hasson's talk:

- ♦ What was your take on this presentation and argument?
- ♦ What about this presentation challenged you?
- ♦ What does this research suggest to us about language, listening and communication?
- ♦ Why is this important in Community Health Work: What stories are we hearing? What stories are we telling? What is that doing to our brains? Beings? How might this idea inform how we think about trauma in the work we do?

Research shows that storytelling is more effective than providing “just the facts” for communication.

Put the following text table from the JRG Communications article on a shared screen/poster/projection and have participants take turns reading:

STORYTELLING V. JUST THE FACTS

Stories activate multiple senses in the brain; motor, auditory, olfactory, somatosensory and visual.

Stories use words that spark the senses making it easier for the brain to imagine, elaborate and recall. Each person develops their own unique experience from these experiences.

Stories are easier to recall due to the power of their sensory associations.

Stories create characters we can identify with.

Stories invoke emotion which is a neural activator. Emotional associations trump other forms of processing.

Stories come in recognizable sequence – introduction, rising action, climax, falling action.

Stories provide motivation for action.

Facts are more linear and don't easily form a recognizable temporal sequence.

Facts activate two parts of the brain – Broca's and Wernike's areas.

Facts use abstract, conceptual language that is more difficult for the brain to find associated sensory images.

Facts are difficult for the brain to record and remember. This is why acronyms are popular because they help recall.

Facts don't create characters and don't generate emotional associations.

Facts are difficult to recall without emotion.

Facts are not inherently motivational unless knowing about something has additional benefit to us in terms of our ability to survive or thrive.

Power of Imagination: Group Storytelling

“Storytelling takes time. Now that we have had the opportunity to mine our own memories and share personal stories with one another, and retell one another’s stories, it is time for us to create new stories together.”

Instructions (5 minutes)

“In this session we are going to co-create stories. This can be an exciting and fluid process; it can also be very frustrating. You will have to work together to make something new. It is not an individual exercise, but a collaborative effort. You will need to access your own individual memories and imagination, as well as your active listening skills.

First we will go over basic story structure and elements. Then we will brainstorm some possible themes to inspire our storymaking. We will do a brief improvisational storytelling warm up activity and you will have 30 minutes in groups of three to create a story that you will bring back and share with the larger group.

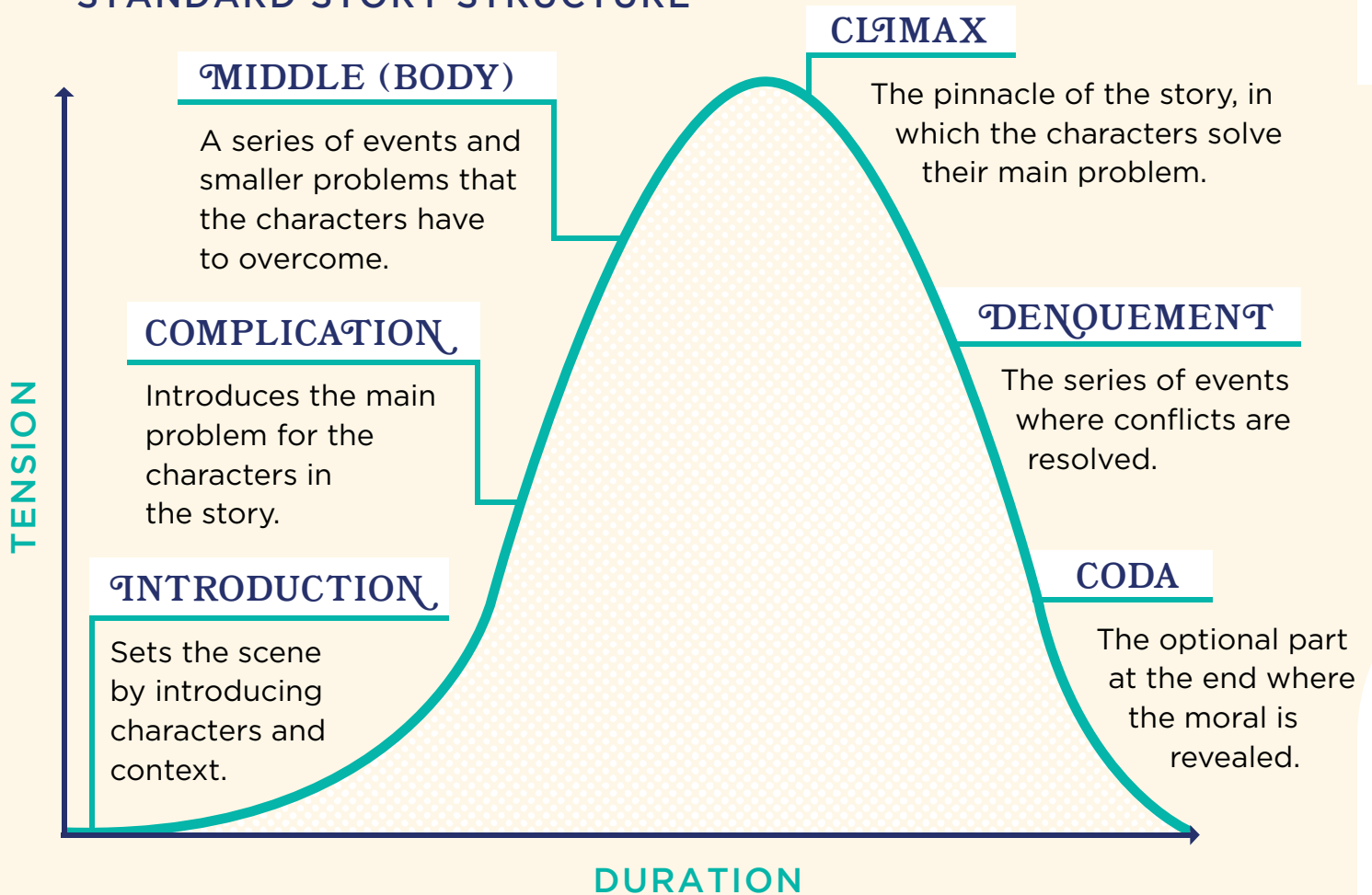
Let’s brainstorm together the elements of stories.”

The facilitator or notetaker can write words where the group can see them (either a large sticky pad or a shared doc/screen). Once the brainstorm is complete, review the list and make sure the following basic story elements are covered:

- ◆ There is a beginning, a middle and an end (generally).
- ◆ There are characters in a specific place and time (a setting).
- ◆ There is a problem that needs to be solved.
- ◆ A protagonist or protagonists step up or are called on to solve the problem.
- ◆ They begin the journey.
- ◆ They encounter obstacles such as physical challenges (“monsters along the way.”)
- ◆ They get help (eg. information, food, rest, tools).
- ◆ They get what they need.
- ◆ The problem is solved.
- ◆ The world is newly made.



STANDARD STORY STRUCTURE



INSPIRATION

Co-creating a story for a new day

“Now we will co-create a story. This is different from what we have been sharing; this is not a personal narrative. This is where we need to engage our imaginations. This is where we can explore the “s/hero’s journey” and the power of myth.

What comes to mind when you hear the words ‘sh/hero’s journey’ and ‘myth?’”

Invite and record answers.

Then share web definitions:

In narratology and comparative mythology, the monomyth, or the hero’s journey, is the common template of a broad category of tales and lore that involves a hero who goes on an adventure, and in a decisive crisis wins a victory, and then comes home changed or transformed. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero's_journey)

Myth: a usually traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/myth>)

“In this case we are talking about myth as cultures around the world have known it from the beginning of time, not as something ‘not true’ but as something that speaks to a ‘greater truth.’

Our inspiration today is to figure out how we move from a singular “sh/eroe’s journey” to a communal journey to victory.

Let’s look at our world right now, our moment in history, and examine some challenges to our communal wellbeing.”

Collective brainstorm (5 minutes)

- ♦ What do we see around us that is causing us harm?
- ♦ Where do you see something you would like to see changed into something more positive for the community?

Participants may say things such as “police brutality” “the lead in the water/soil” “gang violence” “bad schools” “no jobs” “Covid 19.”

Once the ideas are generated it is important to return to the basic story structure, and the power of the imagination.

“We are not telling a story of today. We are creating a story that will be told in the future about how this problem was solved by the people.”

Divide the entire group into groups of three.

Two-minute Story Exercise (10 minutes)

From the list of ideas generated about the problem to be solved, take two minutes to quickly imagine:

- ♦ a name of a fictional place;
- ♦ some characters who will undertake the challenge to do the necessary work;
- ♦ some of the challenges they may face;
- ♦ who might help them along the way, and how they succeed.

Write/post the list in a place where all can see.

“We are going to do a practice improvisational storytelling activity. In your group of three decide who is first, second and third. You are each going to have 30 seconds to tell a part of the story. We will go through your order two times. The first person starts with “Once upon a time” and introduces the beginning of the story. When I say “switch,” the second person picks up where the first left off and continues until I say “switch” again. Then the third person will continue. I will say “switch” and the story will go back to the first person, who continues and so on until the third person ends the story.”

Begin the activity and keep the time for two minutes.

Debrief (4 minutes)

- ◆ How was that?
- ◆ What was challenging?
- ◆ What might you do differently?
- ◆ What worked?
- ◆ What did you learn about yourself?

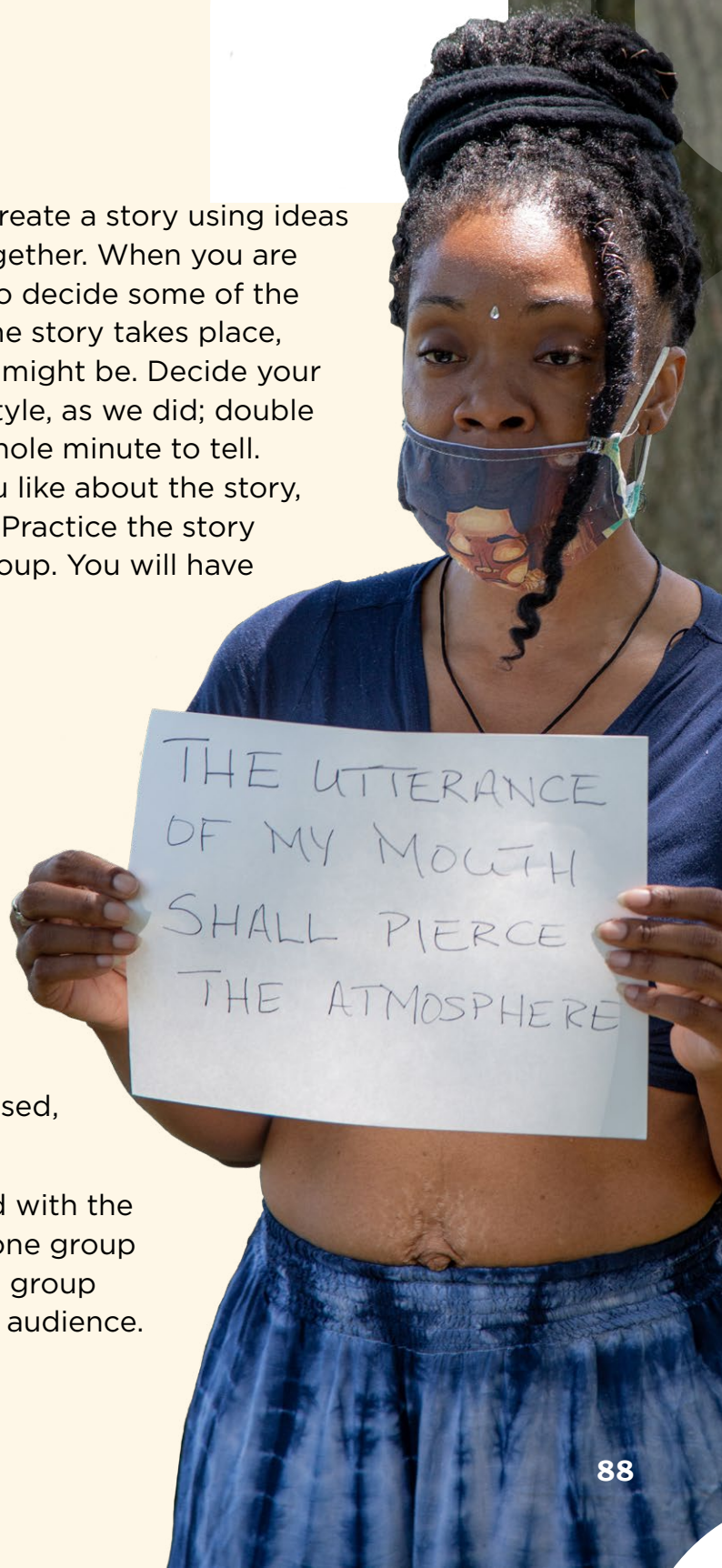
“Now you will have time in your groups to create a story using ideas from our list, or new ones you decide on together. When you are in your group you can take time as we did to decide some of the key elements: what the problem is, where the story takes place, and who the protagonist and/or antagonist might be. Decide your order and then tell your story round robin style, as we did; double the talking time, so each time you have a whole minute to tell. Once you have finished, talk about what you like about the story, and what needs fixing. Work on it together. Practice the story a few times and then bring it back to the group. You will have twenty minutes to work.”

Group story share (20 minutes)

Debrief

- ◆ How was that?
- ◆ How did you determine the problem to be solved and the story elements?
- ◆ What conflicts do these stories speak to that are happening now?
- ◆ How do you feel?
- ◆ Other thoughts on the process, issues raised, or future possibilities?

This activity can also be expanded and used with the whole group to work collectively to create one group story in response to a community issue. The group could then work to perform the story for an audience.



Additional Resources:

Cox, Elaine. "Narrative Medicine: the Importance of Storytelling in Health Care." US News and World Report Online. November 19, 2019.

Mehl-Madrona, Lewis. *Healing the mind through the power of story: the promise of narrative psychiatry*. Rochester, VT: Bear & Co, 2010.

Mehl-Madrona, Lewis, and Barbara Mainguy. *Remapping your mind: the neuroscience of self-transformation through story*. Rochester, VT: Bear & Co, 2015.

Mehl-Madrona, Lewis and Thom Hartmann. *Narrative medicine: the use of history and story in the healing process*. Rochester, VT: Bear & Co, 2007.

FIELD WORK

"Think through all the art you have made in the training thus far and identify the prompts and creations you loved the most.

Interview an elder and a child asking them the same question. Bring a photo of an ancestor (blood, land, or lineage) and a photo of a child you love."

EVALUATION

- ◆ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ◆ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ◆ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ◆ Did we meet our objectives?
- ◆ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?

Participant Session VII

Storytelling

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES (5 MINUTES)

- ♦ Explore how storytelling is and can be used as a tool for community health work.
- ♦ Recognize the role storytelling plays in one's own life.
- ♦ Identify how participants are using storytelling in their work already.
- ♦ Learn techniques to uncover stories in oneself and in the groups they facilitate.
- ♦ Understand why storytelling is a powerful tool for personal and community transformation by examining the science behind it ("our brains on story.")
- ♦ Identify 3 different types of stories:

The True/Personal Story

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

and

THE MYTH

- ♦ Examine the difference between (personal) narrative and story and the role each can play in community health work.
- ♦ Create a group story together.

[Link to virtual jamboards](#) for pre- and post-evaluations and group brainstorm.

INVITATION

I Remember

This activity is adapted from an exercise used by InterPlay (interplay.org), an organization based in California that uses storytelling and dance for community building.

Active Listening

People want and need to be seen, heard and known. This storytelling activity can be used in many ways to help people to share their stories with one another.

Think of a time when you stood up in the face of injustice.

- ♦ Describe where you were.
- ♦ Describe what you did.
- ♦ Describe what was happening.
- ♦ Describe what happened as a result.
- ♦ Describe how old you were and how you felt about what was going on.

NEURAL COUPLING

A story activates parts in the brain that allow the listener to turn the story into their own ideas and experience thanks to a process called neural coupling.

DOPAMINE

The brain releases dopamine into the system when it experiences an emotionally-charged event, making it easier to remember and with great accuracy.

CORTEX ACTIVITY

When processing facts, two areas of the brain are activated (Broca's and Wernicke's area). A well-told story can engage many additional areas, including the motor cortex, sensory cortex and frontal cortex.



How Storytelling Affects The Brain

MIRRORING

Listeners will not only experience the similar brain activity to each other, but also to the speaker.

INSTRUCTION

Screen Hasson, Uri. "This is your brain on communication." Ted February 2016.
https://www.ted.com/talks/uri_hasson_this_is_your_brain_on_communication

STORYTELLING V. JUST THE FACTS

Stories activate multiple senses in the brain; motor, auditory, olfactory, somatosensory and visual.

Stories use words that spark the senses making it easier for the brain to imagine, elaborate and recall. Each person develops their own unique experience from these experiences.

Stories are easier to recall due to the power of their sensory associations.

Stories create characters we can identify with.

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Stories come in recognizable sequence - introduction, rising action, climax, falling action.

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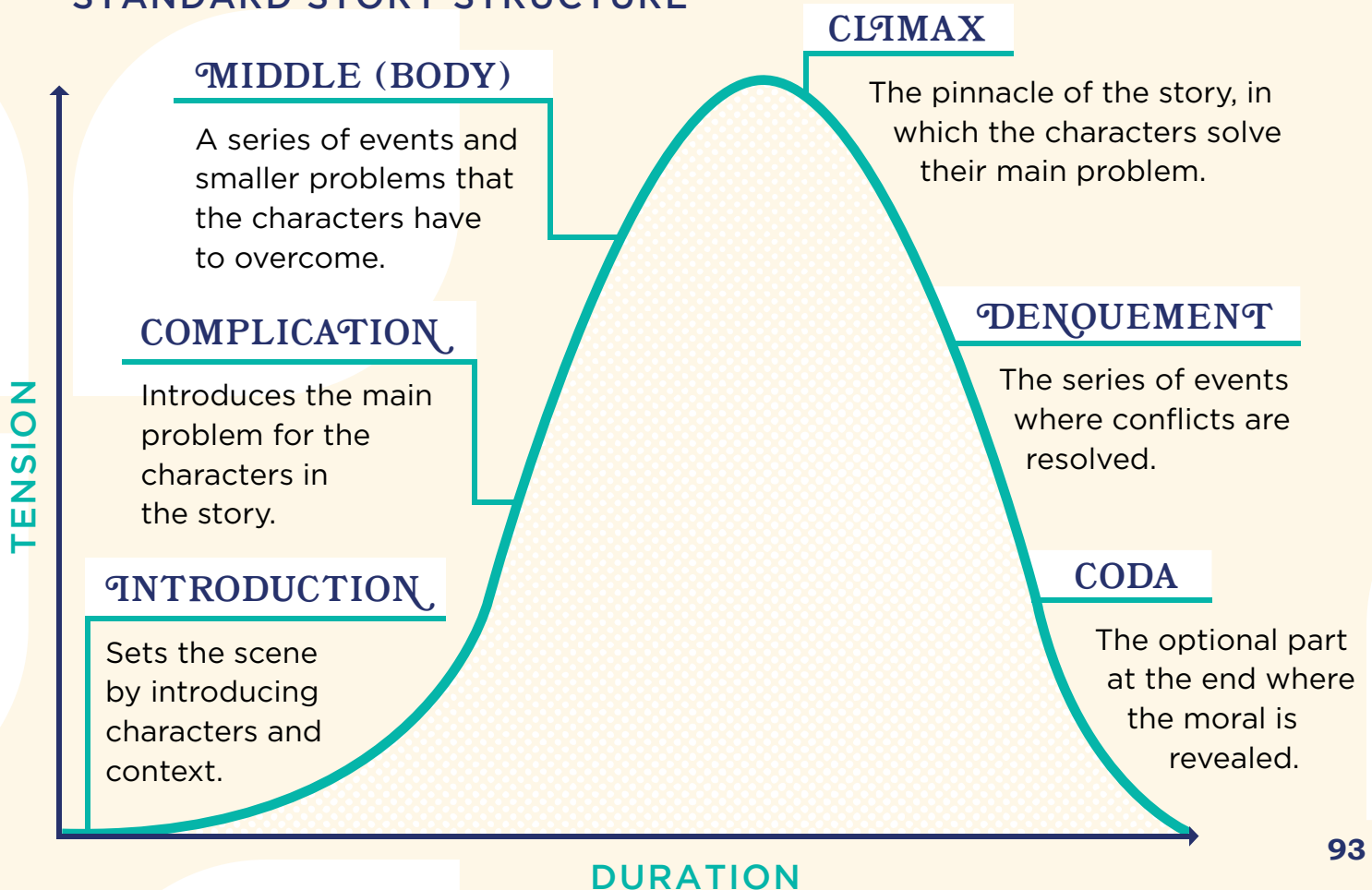
Facts are not inherently motivational unless knowing about something has additional benefit to us in terms of our ability to survive or thrive.



STORY STRUCTURE BASIC ELEMENTS: PEOPLE, SETTING, SITUATION

- ◆ There is a beginning, a middle and an end (generally).
- ◆ There are characters in a specific place and time (a setting).
- ◆ There is a problem that needs to be solved.
- ◆ A protagonist or protagonists step up or are called on to solve the problem.
- ◆ They begin the journey.
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STANDARD STORY STRUCTURE



INSPIRATION

Co-creating a story for a new day

In narratology and comparative mythology, the monomyth, or the hero's journey, is the common template of a broad category of tales and lore that involves a hero who goes on an adventure, and in a decisive crisis wins a victory, and then comes home changed or transformed. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero's_journey)

Myth: a usually traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/myth>)

How do we move from the singular s/hero's story to a collective story of victory?

In groups of three, you will build a story and share it with the group.

Prompt:

- ◆ Think of something around you that is causing harm to the community (the problem to be solved).
- ◆ Create a story where that which is causing harm is transformed by the community.
- ◆ Tell the story in groups of three:
 - ◆ One person tells the beginning.
 - ◆ A second person relates the middle.
 - ◆ The third person presents the resolution.

FIELD WORK

Think through all the art you have made in the training thus far and identify the prompts and creations you loved the most.

Interview an elder and a child asking them the same question. Bring a photo of an ancestor (blood, land, or lineage) and a photo of a child you love.

EVALUATION

- ◆ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ◆ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ◆ What was challenging for you and how come?

Facilitator Session VIII

Intergenerational Art Spaces and Preparing to Devise

FACILITATOR PREPARATIONS

The first half of this session was for discussing and brainstorming about how artists can facilitate intergenerational space-sharing and creativity, with an eye to the necessity of including our elders and young people in communal gatherings in service of community health. The second half of the session is preparatory for the group devising that takes place in Session Nine.

Prepare an example of an intergenerational creative project that has happened in your community. If appropriate, invite the artist who did that work to visit class and share about it and answer questions.

PARTICIPANT PREPARATIONS (FIELD WORK)

Think through all the art you have made in the training thus far and identify the prompts and creations you loved the most.

Interview an elder and a child asking them the same question. Bring a photo of an ancestor (blood, land, or lineage) and a photo of a child you love.

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES (3 MINUTES)

Participants will be able to:

- ◆ Define “intergenerational work.”
- ◆ Explain why senior isolation is a public health issue.
- ◆ Identify intergenerational activities they have done and can do to address senior isolation.
- ◆ Define “adultism” and explain how it manifests in intergenerational work.
- ◆ List key components and principles of doing intergenerational work.
- ◆ List their creative work from all sessions and choose the “juiciest” one.
- ◆ Plan a program to present in our final session that includes individual and group work.

OPENING (20 MINUTES)

Share back from field work interviews with elders and children. In two minutes each participant shares:

- ♦ what their question was;
- ♦ who they asked;
- ♦ what answers they received.

Play “The Wooden Bowl” video — a children’s story about a family whose grandfather and grandson teach the adult generation about intergenerational care: <https://youtu.be/VOehoKYxWLA>

INVITATION: (20 MINUTES)

Facilitated conversation with visible note-taking.

Define ‘intergenerational work’ collectively on a shared document or projected/shared screen using the following prompts:

- ♦ What does it mean to do an intergenerational project?
- ♦ What intergenerational work have you done?
- ♦ What has worked for you?
- ♦ What hasn’t worked for you?
- ♦ How do you plan for an intergenerational event?

INSTRUCTION: (20 MINUTES)

Elders

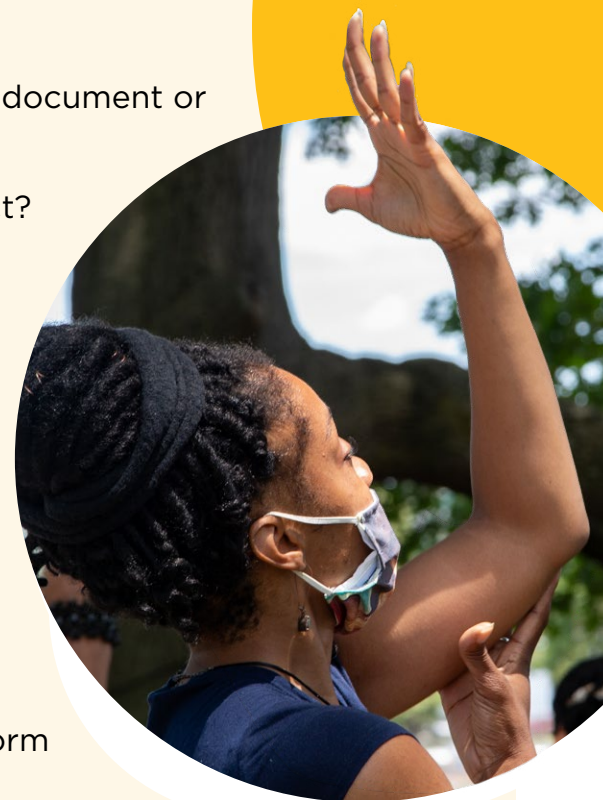
Invite participants to use a notebook to quietly brainstorm their answer to the question:

“Elders in the community are dealing with isolation, which has a concrete effect on their physical and mental health. What is an idea you have as an artist to address elder isolation?”

Everyone gets five minutes to think about the question and take some notes.

Participants then come back and share for two minutes each.

Share a local community example, such as Rhode Island Black Storytellers’ intergenerational farmer’s market project: <https://www.tuftshealthplanfoundation.org/newsroom.php?page=grantees/bridging-generations-RI>



Youth

Split the group into pairs for a pair share about adultism and empowering youth.

Each participant gets minutes to speak on the subject while their partner takes notes. Pairs can use the following prompts:

- ◆ Who was an adult who empowered, supported, influenced, or ‘saw you,’ and how did they do that?
- ◆ Who is a young person that mentors you and how do you open yourself up to their mentorship?

Participants come back together and the facilitator shares notes as people talk to develop a group list of the principal ingredients of intergenerational work.

The list we came up with can help facilitators ask targeted questions to solicit responses that build collective knowledge and understanding of the work:

Key ingredients for working across generational lines:

- ◆ Be in the same room together.
- ◆ Have conversations in general, or guided conversations.
- ◆ Remove or minimize technical and physical obstacles.
 - ◆ If an event is online, organizers can reach out to elders to ensure they have access to necessary technology/tools.
 - ◆ If an event is in person, it can be made easier to get to if organizers provide transportation or accommodations for the elderly.
- ◆ Advocate for the community that you’re working with.
- ◆ Use music, words, or poetry to create a connection through culture.
- ◆ Bring a whole lot of patience and love.
- ◆ Remember that one day you’ll be that age.
- ◆ Acknowledge the physical aspects of aging that affect hearing, vision, etc.
- ◆ When serving younger kids prepare shorter activities to account for shorter attention spans.
- ◆ Prepare fun stuff! Bored kids can ruin an event.
- ◆ Make younger kids feel like they are needed by giving them a job.
- ◆ Make sure teenagers have roles distinct from those held by younger kids.

- ◆ Facilitate exchanges where a child makes something that an older person can take.
- ◆ Give teenagers opportunities to mediate between young children and elders.
- ◆ Practice rituals of togetherness using food, storytelling and brainstorming.
- ◆ Focus on oral communication.
- ◆ Be flexible.
- ◆ Celebrate commonalities.
- ◆ Find ways for young people to become facilitators, and for elders to become facilitators.
- ◆ Partner between age cohorts to support relationship-building.
- ◆ Foster cultural humility!

Additional resources:

Citadel Youth Center and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. “Old’s Cool: Intergenerational Practice Toolkit.” <https://citadelyouthcentre.org.uk/intergenerational-work/>

BREAK (10 MINUTES)

INSPIRATION: DEVISING PREPARATIONS

Review the art/creative work you have been generating throughout the training. Examples from our cohort include:

- ◆ The super-self persona;
- ◆ A map/collage of Providence;
- ◆ Writing about a neighborhood corner;
- ◆ Shared choreography set to the just transition principles;
- ◆ A group poem “To Free My Tongue;”
- ◆ Persona poems that use five objects from the pandemic;
- ◆ A group poem created from selective erasure of Donald Trump’s July 4th speech;
- ◆ The group humming exercise;
- ◆ A shared definition of artist facilitator;
- ◆ Individual “I Remember” stories;

- ◆ Group “three card” stories;
- ◆ Individual stories of standing up against injustice;
- ◆ Interviews with elders and young people;
- ◆ Group ingredients of intergenerational work.

Have each participant choose three things that they have created that they want to include in the group’s devised work.

“Pick the “juiciest” one to polish, revisit, or work on for fifteen minutes.”

FIELD WORK

Make a final version of whatever artwork you wish to share publicly in the final devising session (eg. poetry, storytelling, singing, movement, breath, etc.)

Publicize the group’s performance to people you know who might want to come.

EVALUATION

- ◆ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ◆ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ◆ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ◆ Did we meet our objectives?
- ◆ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?

Participant Session VIII

Intergenerational Art Spaces and Preparing to Devise

INTENTIONS/OBJECTIVES (5 MINUTES)

Participants will be able to:

- ◆ Define “intergenerational work.”
- ◆ Explain why senior isolation is a public health issue.
- ◆ Identify intergenerational activities they have done and can do to address senior isolation.
- ◆ Define “adultism” and explain how it manifests in intergenerational work.
- ◆ List key components and principles of doing ‘intergenerational work.
- ◆ List their creative work from all sessions and choose the “juiciest” one.
- ◆ Plan a program to present in our final session that includes individual and group work.

INVITATION

“The Wooden Bowl” video — <https://youtu.be/VOehoKYxWLA>

Define intergenerational work:

- ◆ What does it mean to do an intergenerational project?
- ◆ What intergenerational work have you done?
- ◆ What has worked?
- ◆ What hasn’t worked?
- ◆ How do you plan for an intergenerational event?

Elders

Use a notebook to quietly brainstorm their answer to the question:



“Elders in the community are dealing with isolation, which has a concrete effect on their physical and mental health. What is an idea you have as an artist to address elder isolation?”

Example: Rhode Island Black Storytellers’ intergenerational farmer’s market project: <https://www.tuftshealthplanfoundation.org/newsroom.php?page=grantees/bridging-generations-RI>

Youth

Instructions for pair share about adultism/empowering youth:

- ◆ Each person in the pair gets 3 minutes to speak on the subject.
- ◆ Question 1: As a young person, who was an adult who empowered, supported, influenced, or “saw you,” and how did they do that?
 - ◆ Take notes on your partner’s answer.
- ◆ Question 2: Who is a young person that mentors you and how do you open yourself to their mentorship?
 - ◆ Take notes on your partner’s answer.

Additional resource:

Citadel Youth Center and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. “Old’s Cool: Intergenerational Practice Toolkit.” <https://citadelyouthcentre.org.uk/intergenerational-work/>

FIELD WORK

Make a final version of whatever artwork you wish to share publicly in the final devising session (eg. poetry, storytelling, singing, movement, breath, etc.)

Publicize the group’s performance to people you know who might want to come.

EVALUATION

- ◆ What did you notice? What stands out to you?
- ◆ What worked well for you as a learner/artist?
- ◆ What was challenging for you and how come?
- ◆ Did we meet our objectives?
- ◆ What are some conscious connections to our community health work?
- ◆ Think of a time when you stood up in the face of injustice.

Session IX

We Devise

The goal of this session is to create a live, collaborative art work that can serve as a culminating statement that speaks to the learning and creating that facilitators and participants did together during the previous eight sessions. Making work as a group requires participants and facilitators to employ the skills of collaboration and facilitation they have practiced throughout the training. Another goal is to revisit the content of earlier sessions, so as to reiterate the ideas and skills that were covered. The “devising” is an opportunity to take the tools and put them into practice in real time — a practice that will ultimately serve the work of a creative community health worker as they create unforgettable communal experiences. The form the devising takes will be influenced by the particulars of the group’s personalities, its collective art practices, and the social and contextual conditions of the moment.

In the case of our group, the sessions began at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, so all of our collective art-making happened in our own houses over Zoom. Originally, we had hoped to organize a public performance for this session, to which the cohort could invite its family and friends. The idea was that the community health and artist facilitation principles that we studied and practiced together could be engaged for the event in our community.

In the end, we decided as a group that our devising would be in-person, which itself was a sensitive decision under the circumstances of quarantine, but we did not publicize the event or invite an audience.

We hired a video and camera team to document the afternoon for us and we encourage future groups to document their final show with video even if they do have a live audience.



Our approach to developing the content for the devising involved encouraging training participants to revisit the art and learning they did in the previous eight sessions, and pull forward the pieces they were the most inspired by. We gave them a chance to further develop those pieces, and, as facilitators, we took it upon ourselves to put the performances in an order, interspersing group pieces with solo works. The result was a rare and sweet in-person convening of a group who had been gathering virtually for months. We got to see each others' embodied extrapolations of artwork that happened in our earlier sessions, and mark the end of our time together with a recorded piece.

Future facilitators of this curriculum are encouraged to take the devising in whatever direction their group is going — perhaps one single piece or prompt was rich enough for everyone to want to return to it and focus the whole final presentation there. Hopefully these final presentations can be open to the public again soon.



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