

Mental Health & Wellbeing and the Role of Teaching Artistry

ITAC THINK TANK: November 2021

Hosted by Yvonne Wyroslawska (UK)

This is the transcript of one of ITAC Collaborative's monthly Think Tank sessions. Each session focuses on a new theme and is hosted by someone from a different country.

This Think Tank focused on the role of the Teaching Artist in supporting mental health and wellbeing within the various cohorts and communities we work by looking at existing research that supports creative arts practice for mental health and wellbeing and drawing a clear boundary between the work of trained therapists and the work of teaching artists.

Using small group exercises generated dialogue between participants to encourage brainstorming around the ways in which teaching artists can use their skills to benefit mental health and wellbeing. Here a greater understanding arose where participants explored the benefits—and challenges—of being a Teaching Artist and its effect on our own mental wellbeing.

Following the session a working group will collaborate and discuss where the current resources and gaps exist in supporting TA mental health and wellbeing (both in ourselves and our participants). The group will collectively determine the way in which we choose to work, but will likely focus on:

- Working to establish a code of effective and ethical practice for Teaching Artists with regards to mental health and wellbeing,
- Collating existing resources in this area for use by Teaching Artists, and
- Identifying areas which require further input/research/professional development opportunities, with a view to then developing these opportunities by identifying individuals or organisations who can produce them, and/or securing funding with which to do so.

With mental health problems affecting a quarter of our population, which are increasing due to COVID, it is timely that Teaching Artists bring this conversation to the forefront.

Instances in which the text is in ellipses in parentheses (...) indicate when the sound was indecipherable for transcription.

Madeleine McGirk

Hello, my name is Madeline, I'm the one that's been emailing you all, I'm the managing director of attack. And thank you so much for joining. This is one of our monthly think tank series. We host these every month with a presenter from a different part of the world each time talking about a different topic really into teaching artistry and the participatory arts. If you're joining today, and you saw this advertised on quit Scotland or some of the other places I know it went out. Please do remember to sign up to your tax newsletter so that you get news of all future events. Like I said, this is one of a series. And we would love to keep it growing and snowballing each time and just growing this community. So please do sign up. A couple of other things before we get started. If you get logged out at any time, you can just rejoin Don't worry, the link will work. If there's any tech issues, and we all get kicked out, just don't panic, rejoin the link. And we will be here to welcome you back hopefully. And also do remember, not everyone in the call might have English as their first language. So try to speak slowly. Please don't be offended if we ask you to repeat anything. My eyes will be darting about while I talk because I'm also admitting people in the background. And your name. That's the other thing I wanted to make sure I say your name and your pronouns. So it would be great to have those in your title because we're going to be doing group chats and breakout rooms. Excuse me, so it'd be great to be able to know how to refer to each other. So please do rename yourself with those three blue dots in the top right hand side of your screen. With that being said, I will pass over to Yvonne who is our host for the day. And if you have any comments, if you want to say anything at any time, please feel free to use the chat function is along the bottom of the screen and you'll see those messages popping up on the right hand side. So without further ado, Yvonne.

Yvonne Wyroslawska

Hello, it's lovely to see all of you this afternoon. I will not be offended if anyone asks me to slow down or repeat. I'm in Scotland. And we speak quite quickly a lot of the time. So my name is Yvonne VideoScribe skirt. I am a musician. I work mostly in music education, with early years. So from birth children from birth and their families until about seven year olds in my in my teaching practice. And then I also work often with musicians or with primary school teachers or other early years educators delivering training in music education. I'm also a doctoral researcher at the University of Edinburgh. And my topic is music and maternal mental health. So that's really what stemmed my interest in this topic of mental health and well being and teaching artistry. I've worked with very young children in their families for many, many years. But my focus was generally on the child and their development through music in all different ways. And the adults were part of the session. They were bringing the children obviously and they were included in the room fault, and I wasn't ignoring them to any extent. But for a long time, I don't think I was really considering the effect that what I was doing with the children was having also on the adult. And that led me a number of years ago into the subject of maternal mental health,

particularly through music, which is now my research topic. So I am a mental health enthusiast. I would say I am by no means an expert, I have Mental Health First Aid training. And as I see I do this a lot in my research work. But if you think something I'm seeing is incorrect. Please do correct me. We're coming from all over the world, we will all have different interpretations of what mental health and well being is. So please unmute or put messages in the chat. If you'd like to ask a question. Madeline, I'll be keeping an eye on that for me. There are no silly questions. This is a safe space really. We're here as a community of teaching artists and I think we all agree that anything that's said in this space is confidential and won't be repeated elsewhere. Within identifiers. I know that we're online but I'd really love you for you to ask to ask you to listen actively. I know often. There are things banging away on your screens demanding your attention from elsewhere.

But we're here so let's be here together and please feel free to share your thoughts. So I'd like to invite you if you are somewhere that you feel comfortable to do so to join me in a little warm up just to, to kind of center ourselves into our own our own bodies or from whatever else you've been doing today, whatever time of day it is, I'm just going to move over so that you can hear me I hope.

Okay, so let me just, I hope you can see me you might need to pin me so you can see me beggar but I'm just going to play some music and I'll try and tell you as we go or you can copy along we're just going to start by taking our arm across and rubbing giving ourselves and listen maths as standards have slipped these days you know we can't get other people to do these things for us we have to just go for ourselves and coffee along okay, let me press play into your shoulder and squeezing down here are some big strokes on the other side strokes you're going to do some big shrug up as high as rolling your shoulders forward you we're going to take our ear to our shoulder. Try your noise to recover backup the other year we're going to do some arm circles one at a time thank you everybody. I'm not sure if you feel the same as me. That was the change to a lot of online working with for the last nearly a couple of years. I'm either being very active, neither crawling around on the floor with very small children and jumping about or I'm sitting very still. So it's nice every now and then take a few minutes to further ourselves and hopefully engage us. Okay. So this think tank will focus on the role of the teaching artist in supporting mental health and well being within the various cohorts and communities we work in. This was what I sort of set out in the description. And these are just some key questions which I'm not going to answer, but I just like you to keep in mind throughout. What are we currently doing well? What could we do better? And what needs to be in place for teaching artists to feel enabled, informed and supported in this work? Okay? So just have those things in your mind as we go as we go through.

So I'm going to start with just a bit of a presentation, and we'll be going into discussion groups as we go along. But firstly, mental health and well being. So just some figures for you, why is it important for us to consider this inner work? So, this our figures from within the UK, one in four people experienced mental health issues each year in the UK 792 million people are affected by mental health issues worldwide. And at any given time, one in six working age, adults have symptoms associated with mental ill health, to the thing, around 10 million adults were well

experienced. Each year, this is within the UK again. So first of all, I think of the size and the scale. And I would, I would be surprised if these figures haven't risen over the last 18 months. As I've said already, my particular interest is in maternal mental health. Which one in five new moms experiences, mental health, poor mental health and well being, including postnatal depression, postnatal anxiety, and emerging research is suggesting that this has doubled within in COVID times. So if you think of knowing two new ROMs, and one of them, at least, is experiencing poor mental health. And I think that's part of really what's drawn me to this as well, that, you know, I could be teaching a group of with 12, you know, 12 infants in it. And if you think that really, you know, the quarter, a third to half of that group of parents are struggling with their mental health, how important is for us to recognize that. So these figures will be different in your own areas, but I'd encourage you to have a look. And just to think of the scale and the size of this. So, we come to arts, mental health and well being. And there is a vast body of research. Mostly relatively recent research, certainly within the last decade, this has grown in body about how our arts can support mental health and well being. So I'm just going to give a quick overview of some kind of key key points.

So there is lots of research showing that arts engagement enhances subjective well being so our own perception of our well being. And that's in sort of three areas to affective wellbeing, positive emotions in our daily lives, evaluative well being so early life satisfaction, and it used anomic well being so our sense of meaning control, autonomy and purpose in our lives. And what's really interesting with all these studies have found that benefits are shown whether people are volunteering to take part in activities if they're doing them through choice, but also if they're referred to these activities, and by health or social care.

So in the UK, particularly in England, is coming in Scotland, I think, over the last few years, there's been a move towards social prescribing. And so non pharmacological may that measures that are recommended by GPS by doctors by healthcare practitioners. And often these are including arts groups aren't sessions. So there's lots of benefits for taking part. And one of the key things really, that they're seeing that they're discovering is that regular engagement of the arts can be showing the benefits of this and well being is evident as early as preschool. So it's really across the lifespan. There's also growing literature on the preventative benefits of arts engagement. So they've shown that making, making music listening to music, dancing art, going to cultural organizations, are all associated with stress management, management and prevention. Arts engagement can help reduce the risk of developing mental illness in adolescence in an older age, and participating in activities can build self esteem, self acceptance, confidence and self worth, which are all helping to protect against me and Wellness. So we have to think of two things. One is the research that's taking place with participants who are already experiencing poor mental health, but also the general more general engagement that's helping to prevent against poor mental health. So there are some really strong reports now, one by the World Health Organization, and this other this was reported to the department in the UK of Digital Culture, Media and Sport within the last year or so. And what I've done here is just drawn out. So we know that the arts can support so many areas of development. And well being that I've just highlighted here, the ones to do particularly with well being, so there is strong This is grid II that they have set out. This was from a series of literature

reviews, the use of the arts to improve wellbeing in adults, there is really strong evidence to support this. promising but not quite so strong grade be evidence for supporting arts will being intelligent in young people, and then weaker evidence here in the use of the arts to manage or treat mental illness and to prevent mental illness. And what this really means is not that these things can't happen, it's that the existing research isn't strong enough yet. And these are where more work is needed to support policy.

So just a quick looking, I'm not going to read all of these to you. These are some of the key research findings in music, that's my area of music and saying can improve wellbeing may improve emotional wellbeing in quality of life, as well as reducing depression in adults with dementia. And you can see the words here community seeing, playing percussion instruments, music listening, singing in particular. So lots of strong existing research in music. Similarly, in dance, dance improving well being in young adults reducing stress and improving quality of life for adults, and sociated with enhanced well being. And sometimes these fields can seem quite narrow, because because the research group of participants that they're done on but we can then take from that, or findings to more general application. A lot of art research is on arts engagement, and so on very strong evidence to show well-being can be improved by arts activities and cultural engagement. So this is over and above maybe your kind of intervention type study where people are taking part in a set activity for a set period of time. This is looking more about how do people experienced that art in their everyday lives? You know, how often do they go to concerts? How often do they go to Belize? How often do they go to art galleries and lots to suggest that this is really beneficial. So this is kind of what they've pulled out here in terms of what research is existing and how strong it is. So you can see here the evidence based on mixed arts and well being an adult is excellent. And they are seeing that it's strong and can be trusted to guide policy development. So in terms of we can see now there is enough evidence for us to put this into our policy and we take things forward. And arts and well being it's really strong, not so much in preventative measures. So some preliminary support for the arts to prevent mental illness, but not enough supportive evidence yet to see a caution advice in the application there.

To fly well, I think we probably all have a good idea of how and why the arts support our well being. But just a few things to pull out your show various components of arts activities, there's aesthetic engagement, imagination, activation of your senses, the emotion that comes from participating in the arts, the cognitive the brain stimulation, the social interaction, which is really key, I believe, physical activity. So what you're for singing, for example, even the way that you're breathing and the physical effects and then obviously it's stance or movement of any sort. And then also the find that through a, you can encourage engagement with themes of health or interaction and through activities. So those are this, the components of that, and then what's coming as a response. There's the psychological, physiological, social, and behavioral. And I think possibly, again, to think back over the last while we all know that our social support and interaction has been reduced. And I think going forwards and I would imagine that this is going to be really key to how we we continue to develop arts and healthcare, research and practice

Madeleine McGirk

I'm sorry to interrupt, we've just had a great question in the chat, which I think is worth clarifying. About, what do you mean by mixed arts? I know it's a term that's coming up a few times. And I think that would be helpful to just clarify at this point.

Yvonne Wyroslawska

Yes, I think those were probably from randomized control studies, where they might have had a kind of, you know, crafts, arts and crafts type group, there might be a kind of general music group, and then but their research does clubbing them all together, to pull out their mixed mixed arts. I think they're just using it as a general a term, I will certainly look that up and check that certainly my understanding, but I will check that for you. And when we're in the breakout room, if that's alright with you. I think what that is, as opposed to so as you can see, there's lots of research in music. There's a lot of research in dance. And then I think from there on, there's because there's not so much of a body of evidence in other types of Arts or circus arts or creative arts, or whatever. And that they're pooling all those studies together to further review. Does that make some sense? Yes, lots of things all together. Great. Okay. So we're off to our first breakout session. And we're just going to go into quite small groups today, so that you've got time to chat with each other. And you're welcome to chat about whatever you would like. But there are some points for discussion and support. Really, what's brought you here today was drawn your interest to this subject of teaching artists and mental health. Any thoughts you might have on the incidence of mental health issues, and I suppose some beginning thoughts on arts and mental health and well being received. So we're going to take 10 minutes, first of all, to go off and have a chat with each other. I would just love if there were any, you know, there was lots of groups who have attempted to hear from all of you, but wondered if there were any other key thoughts or comments that were coming up?

Ruth

Liz, do you want to take it because I thought it was very important what you and Jennifer were commenting on in our group?

Liz

Sure, Ruth. I actually thought I was gonna say what you mentioned was also really good. But I'll start. In my group, we were talking about the notion of, you know, first of all, obviously, well, not obviously, but the importance that we've witnessed of the arts in the mental health and well being of the children, zero to 99. But, you know, more specifically for me, zero to 18, and for others, that childhood range. But the question of how you engage when you're not a psychiatrist, or a psychologist or psychotherapist, or even a social worker, and how important we know we are to the, you know, health of our community, and how excited we are to support and be there and do all the good things. But balancing that with an incredibly fine tuned sense of responsibility and boundaries. And where do you say I can help with this great drama exercise? And where do you say, Okay, this is a moment where I'm going to share an expert's resource with you. That is beyond my capacity.

Yvonne Wyroslawska

That's that's so important, isn't it to think about where we are situated ourselves in our inner Professional capacities. And again, this, this will be different for everyone. And different in your different areas. For example, I know, you know, for me, I'm a musician, first and foremost, that is my role. I'm not a music therapist, I'm often working in their, what I would call like, community therapeutic practices. But at the end of the day, my practice is not rooted in sort of, in, in psychotherapy, which is would be different tastes in music therapy. And I think as well about, as I said, at the start, you know, I'm an enthusiast who would see it in mental health and proclaiming to be an expert of any, any source of thinking about where your own boundaries lie in as much as you as as an artist, but also you as a person. And then we're we need to know, we need to be knowledgeable about signposting. And we're we can pass things on to, or we can go for support for either for ourselves or for our participants. I think that's really important as well have an answer to what you were. So as I say, it's just it's the starting of a discussion, isn't it? But these are the thoughts that are really important for us to have. Okay, thank you.

Was there anything else pressing? Anyone wanted to share? Shall we move on, there are more chances to chat to worry about that actually leads us in quite nicely to the next section about mental health and well being what are we doing for our participants? And we're all working across such a wide range of, of different projects, different arts, and there wouldn't be an answer to this again, for the majority of projects that I work on, I deliver mental health and well being is not the an aim or an outcome. It's happening, but it's not you know that the forefront thing, it's not a you know why I'm brought in to do something. We know that it's there, in a couple of projects that I'm running just snow.

So projects I'm delivering at the moment is for new mums. who are suffering from postnatal depression and anxiety. And in that project, the mental health and well being is that is the key theme. So it's thinking about that, first of all, if it's underlying, it's embedded, or if it's actually, you know, one of one of your aims that you're working towards. So just some practical things, you think, for me that I found from working across these different ranges of projects that I know think carrying forward to any project, whether or not the EMS is doing to support mental health and well being or not. And see, the key one for me is time having extra time. And I've worked in lots of situations where I have to be there at 10 o'clock, and I've got three groups of whoever, students, and I've got 40 minutes for each of them. But then I have to leave because I've got to be another thing as part of the same thing. And you just need you you're going back to that back to back delivery delivery. And what I'm noticing more and more to prioritize is not that a turn up as a specialist to deliver a music session for 14 minutes. And that's it, but that I'm there for the duration of service, some morning's group that I'm there for two hours. And I can only share my own experience here. But what I'm finding is that by being there, having, you know, set up and just being around when people are arriving, and then the part afterwards where we sit and you know, there's maybe a cup of tea or somebody brought some biscuits or there's something else going on. It's not the part that I'm there to deliver but just by continuing to be there is when I think a lot of the more supportive work is coming into CLI and then that those conversations, those dialogues, those relationships that are building are obviously impacting the content and the delivery of of my sessions because really having the time for the people so they're feeling privileged, they're privileged, I suppose in in they're not just there to take part in something

they're being there as as people and that can be really tricky. I find that to be tricky in terms of funding, in order to make sure that that's clear that your time is needed there. So, so that's something I don't know, if anyone else has found that, that's just from, from my experience, I found that to be really important. And that the other thing to kind of just be there is just to be able to listen and to try and see the whole picture, which can be hard when you're delivering because you're thinking, you know, what, what we're doing, what's my plan that I have to get through or what what things that went to record, but to kind of be able to take a bit of a step back and reflect in practice, as things are unfolding and looking and seeing what's happening and when we're connections are building. And, and one thing that I'm finding quite often is that it's not the thing you think it's going to be about that 10 That comes out being important. It's something else. So I just wanted to share this video with you. I'm not sure if anyone will have seen it before. And I think this just let you see it and see what you think...

Woman 1

It's just, there's all this pressure, you know, and sometimes it feels like it's right up on me. And I can just feel it, like literally feel it in my head. And it's relentless. And I don't know if it's gonna stop. I mean, that's the thing that scares me the most is that I don't know if it's ever going to stop.

Man 1

Yeah. You do have a nail in your head. It is not about the nail. Are you sure? Because I mean, I bet if we got that out of there, stop trying to fix it. No, I'm not trying to fix it. I'm just pointing out that maybe the nail that's caused...

Woman 1

You always do this, you always try to fix things when what I really need is for you to just listen.

Man 1

See, I don't think that is what you need. I think what you need is to get the nail.

Woman 1

You're not even listening now.

Man 1

Okay, fine, I will listen fine.

Woman 1

It's just sometimes it's like, there's this achy, I don't know what it is. And I'm not sleeping very well at all. And all my sweaters are snagged, I mean, all of them.

Man 1

That sounds really hard.

Yvonne Wyroslawska

Thank you, oh, oh, just don't try to see things. A little bit of humor in there as well. But I think that one hit home to me as a practitioner thinking I could go in and fix problems, or I would deliver something and it would, you know, things would be better as a result. And that is true. To some extent, I hope that that is true, I hope that what I'm doing is having an impact. But it's maybe not in the way and just giving that time and space to listen and connect with participants, I think is really, really important. I wanted to look at a couple of things that we might think about as triggers and signs of mental ill health. Because, you know, as we know, if someone turned up for a dance group that we were running, and they had a broken arm, we would obviously see that and recognize that and be able to adapt their practice to accommodate that person. And so just wanted to sort of draw some attention to some circumstances which might trigger mental health and maybe just the idea of keeping these in mind with whatever your group of participants are. If some of these things are coming up some of these things are happening just to be aware that they're not may add to the load to their stress.

Some of them you know, as we can see that a lot of these things with some people, they might be able to cope perfectly well. And, and for others that is going to really be to decline. And alongside that, and I will send these to you afterwards and whizzing by them just now, alongside that some scenes to sport. And I thought these were quite interesting to consider. These documents were from for Mental Health First Aid, and it's they're considering we're in kind of workplace environment to what kinds of things you might look for but actually in terms of participants, or participant TX, I think it's really interesting things like, you know, this one here and employee here is normally punctual arriving late if you've got a participant who is normally punctual turning up in groups, and then suddenly there's this series of lateness that that could be a saint could be nothing. It could be that their bus schedule has changed. Or it could be something. So just as a something to sort of keep in your mind to hear.

So how can we support participants and again, it's really important, I think that we keep in our mind that we can take everything on and realize our own limits of knowledge or expertise. Firstly, so just a few things to consider firstly, you know, in cultural, cultural awareness or differences that different cultural groups are, have different levels of openness in discussing anything related to mental health and well being. And being aware as well of stereotyping and stigmatism. And not that whether it's us they're doing it inadvertently, but also that if drawing attention to it can negatively affect others. I think it's really important to consider your own personal or your lived experience if you've had experience of mental health issues. But at the same time, being really careful that you're not transferring that experience onto some, someone else's. Something that was maybe a minor thing that you could deal with isn't the same for someone else. And similarly, you might have had a sort of more of a major experience of something that someone else can cope with. So just trying to, we're, we're all different, aren't we? Empathy, I think is, is really key here. And we're gonna have a little video about that in a second. And just that listening and getting speed and time and understanding and finally signposting and what I will send with the resources is starting kit for signposting. And that's something that we're hoping to develop as a result of these sessions as well. Is when do you know that you don't have any more capacity to be able to manage something weird? Can you

refer people or into or what can you look at yourself? So this very short video has really changed a lot for me, I'm not sure if anyone will have seen it come across it before it brainy brain and it was animated by RSC and let it play for you.

Brené Brown

So what is empathy? And why is it very different than sympathy? Empathy, fuels connection, sympathy drives disconnection. Empathy is very interesting. Teresa Wiseman is a nursing scholar who studied professions, very diverse professions where empathy is relevant, and came up with four qualities of empathy, perspective, taking the ability to take the perspective of another person or recognize their perspective as their truth, staying out of judgment, not easy when you enjoy it as much as most of us do. Recognizing emotion and other people and then communicating that empathy is feeling with people. And to me, I always think of empathy as this kind of sacred space. When someone's kind of in a deep hole, and they shout out from the bottom and they say, I'm stuck. It's dark. I'm overwhelmed. And then we look and we say, Hey, calm down. I know it was like down here, and you're not alone. Sympathy is, oh, it's bad. Uh huh. No, you want to see which is a choice, and it's a vulnerable choice because in order to connect with you, I have to connect with something in myself that knows that feeling. Rarely, if ever, it is an empathic response. Let's begin with at least I had, yeah. And we do it all the time. Because you know what, someone just shared something with us. That's incredibly painful. And we're trying to Silver Lining it. I don't think that's a verb. But I'm using it as one. We're trying to put this over the lining around it. So I had a miscarriage. At least you know, you can get pregnant, I think my marriage is falling apart. At least you have a marriage. John's getting kicked out of school, at least Sarah is an A student. But one of the things we do sometimes in the face of very difficult conversations, is we try to make things better. If I share something with you, that's very difficult. I'd rather you say, I don't even know what to say right now. I'm just so glad you told me. Because the truth is, rarely can a response make something better? What makes something better is connection.

Yvonne Wyroslawska

I can see lots of you smiling and nodding along with that. That video, I have watched that countless times, I have to see every time it gets me. Just yeah, I could see some comments in the chat as well with regards to this. And I think we've probably all found yourself doing it at some point, or well, at least. Or the other thing I know, I used to be very guilty of myself and have really worked hard to change over the last few years is not leaping in with a similar thing that happened to me one time, you know, that's not what that that's not what somebody needs. Think also restrict hours to empathy. As artists, we just assume have really high levels of empathy. And you know, that's what we're doing all the time. We're there receiving we're creating experiences you're taking on other or other people's thoughts and feelings and building them into our work. And I wonder is well, if that then this is just a thought though an overload thought nerve that affects how it or be empathetic, you know, where does that lead us into the creative arts? Or does it come as a result of all that exposure to Creative Arts, and really, that the arts and they're human, and it's that shared experience that we have? Another? So I'm going to write that one down, I'll think about it myself. Time for you. To have some words, thoughts now. How do you feel that we as this teaching artists can support the mental health

and well being of participants? What impact do you think we're having? Whether sex as a key aim? Or if it's as a kind of something that's just happening as part of the experience? What ways do you feel we can use our skills as artists, as creators, as creatives as empathy impacts, to benefit mental health and well being? And what can we change or add to our delivery with mental health in mind, can be could be a big thing could be a very little thing.

We're adding that half an hour for tea and coffee at the end of a session, if it's possible, to allow that extra space, that continued shared dialogue that we have during sessions. So I'd like you please, to nominate a scribe in your group or more than one if you need to, to add some key points or thoughts as you go along to the Padlet. Board. So let me just think about ourselves. And I did leave it to last, maybe she just put it first. We really do need to think about our own mental health and well being. And this is from a report in 2019. And it's so true. But we're always so busy in our serving dinner deliveries, so needs to be positive for us as practitioners as well. So I'd like you to do just a very short exercise, just in your own you can write it down on a piece of paper, or just in your own mind.

So I want you to think about yourself. So this is your MOT which in the UK is what your car is your car's annual check up really to check that your car is fit for function. It's called an MOT what you call it in the States or elsewhere? So this is about your own self mental mental well being So have a think how is your mental health today? You can jot it down if you like. Or you just think in your head I was thinking sort of 10 What am I giving myself city? How am I feeling mentally, physically? When we did the warm up at the start, some people were like, Oh, that bit was sore. didn't realize that was sore. Thinking about your own your own self, your own body, mentally and physically? How did you sleep last night? Some of you have only just got up. I assume here in the UK, we've been up for hours already? Are you eating a balanced diet? Have you had enough water today? I never, never is the answer. How you feel is your stress container. So think of this like a bucket? How you fill up? Is it? Is it about to spill out and crashed and soak the floor? Or do you have a little tap that you can turn on the sides to slip some of that stress come out in a helpful way because we know that some unhelpful coping strategies can make you know pat down a bit but that still continuing to build? How's your thinking today? Or your thoughts? How are they making you feel? You are not your thoughts? That's the one I have to usually keep in my mind. Are your thoughts helping you or not helping you? I'd have to think how can I improve based on how I feel right now? What do I need to put in place to keep to make sure you're safeguarding your own mental well being okay. So how do we safeguard our mental health? So these things in the box here, these are what we're commonly told to do, you know, if you're feeling that your mental health needs a boost, what can you do, you can reach out, make connections, stay connected, chat to a friend, you know, speak to a colleague make make connection, see physical do exercise, look after yourself, get enough sleep, eat a balanced diet, you know, learn new skills, these are the things and actually when you think about that I think in specially as a freelancer I always think wow, but that's such a there's you know, we know these things are good for us. But in in their teaching arts, we're often working to not assess, you know, or know a kind of Monday to Friday nine till five structured timetable where you arrive in one place and you leave at the end of the day, it can be really hard to do even these essential things.

So I'd like you to have a think and Madeline script, put the link in the chat to mentee or you can go to mentee.com and enter this code down here. Can you please enter three benefit 3325 And one foods we really think of one benefits that being a teaching artist has on our own mental well being? What is it doing to help you and then possibly on the other side some disadvantages okay. So a few points just for you to reflect on. How much do you know about your own mental health? You know, when we did the little mot exercise? Are those things you're familiar with thinking about? Are these things that are new to you? Do you think you could recognize symptoms of mental ill health within yourself or within participants? This is an interesting question. Really, would you disclose to your employers and I see employers in a loose sense, you know, or people that you're working for or with if you were experiencing mental health challenges? Again, there's no right or wrong to any of these. There's just things to think about. What are you doing right now to support yourself? And do you have a sort of protective regime that you can practice? I'm here. I don't know that this is something that I can need to continue to build on in my practice. I do like the warm up at the stretch. I do these things. And you know, if I leave a couple of days, I think why didn't I do you know, keep going. We can always do everything, just to have some things to think about. We are zooming towards the end of our session and with all those things in mind and it can feel really heavy way, I just want us to have just a minute here to sit and pause and breathe. Okay.

Woman 2

Hi, and welcome to headspace. So no matter what's going on in your life right now, no matter how many thoughts are racing around your mind, no matter how the body's feeling, just take a moment to sit down. And take a big deep breath, breathing in through the nose, and the mouth as you breathe in a sense of taking in fresh air, the lungs expanding as you breathe out, sense of letting go, any stress in the body. And the mind is feeling muscles soften. And close your eyes if you'd like to one more, breathing deeply in through the nose and the mouth. And just take a moment to pause, allow the thought come on guard. And then just gently opening the eyes again.

Yvonne Wyroslawska

Just a minute. Let's build in lots more of those minutes. I'm not going to talk about these. But these will be sent through these are some 10 keys to happier living. They're put together by mental first Mental Health First Aid England with an organization called action for happiness. And I would really recommend if you're an Instagram person and action for happiness, the poster of daily prompts I would call them provocations, which are just really nice, it's a nice thing to try. Try and think about and Yeah, I would recommend following them for some positive social media well being. I'm also going to send this out to you. This is just the beginning of some signposting. These are UK based policies for that you move where to look more locally to yourself. These are just some starting places. This one at the bottom here is a relatively new site that was launched for musicians actually about balancing remainders worth a look at I haven't looked through it very thoroughly myself yet. But from what I've seen is it looks really useful. So we are we know from today's session, and Madeline is going to send an invitation to you all and anyone who would like to join our working group and thinking around mental health

and well being and being a teaching artist. The intention with this is that we'll meet again online a couple of times, probably in the new year. And from there, sort of Mika, a plan of action. This time, it seems likely that brought this to a focus on is working to establish a court of practice. And for teaching artists with regards to mental health and well being a section of that could be you know, how we support our participants and also how we support ourselves looking to start deleting existing resources in this area, because there are things that are out there. But just we're going to have we need some way of sharing these and making sure that all of us can access them as and when we need to. And then as a result of both of those things, looking at what needs further input and research, is it professional development opportunities? Is it other additional resources? Is there a gap somewhere and then taking and seeing how we can take that forward really.

Okay, so I'm hopeful that some of you would like to join in working on that and spend final thoughts just for you to sit and think about if you have time now or if you have time later in the day or later in the week, some self evaluation, you know how, how are we doing at this stage with regards to meet a well being and in your art practice? what's working well as it is and what could be even better? If we make some changes, if we can add things if you feel that you're supported by people by resources, by policy, by funding. And take it from there. So thank you all so much for your attention, and for your thoughts and your comments.

Madeleine McGirk

And a reminder to everyone that this is one of our monthly sessions. So they're on a different topic and a different theme each time, there are two links that I want to make sure everyone has seen. And that is to join this working group to keep this going with avant and develop a resource for teaching artists who want to be able to signpost better and have a code of practice and that kind of thing. The other is to subscribe to the mailing list, I know some of you joined from different entry points. So if you aren't on that mailing list, that's where you find out about our conferences, our think tanks, all of our projects, stuff like that. Make sure you sign up there because it's, there's a lot coming, especially in the next few months. And finally, this is a totally open format. So in the new year, we'll be hosting monthly think tanks again, and anyone who wants to host one can there's no entry requirements or barriers, you just let us know you have something cool to share. And we will work with you to develop that into a think tank. So if that sounds like something you're interested in, if you have something you think would be interesting to others, and please let us know. I saw some people interested in social prescribing that was a new concept to some people here. Maybe there's a good think tank in there. And either way, get in touch and let us know. I will hang back a minute before I close the call in case you want to save the chat which you can do in the bottom right hand side. Otherwise, thank you so much for coming. Please do visit those links and I will hope to see you all next month again. Thank you everyone!