Business School
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THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

Creating Out Loud: Wellbeing (Easy Read)

Overview - Wellbeing

Purpose – What are we doing today?

This meeting is to find ways to cope when working in the arts.

We will do three things:

1. Think about how you deal with problems.

2. Think about how we can help each other.

3. Learn together.

You might have strong emotions and feelings.

Focus on what you can control.

Who can you ask for help?

Agenda – Our meeting program

Activity	Timing (60 minute session)
1. Being here	
1.1 Acknowledgement of Country	5 minutes
1.2 Say hello	10 minutes
2. Personal reflection – Hopeful engagement	
2.1 Personal reflection	5 minutes
2.2 Sharing reflection	15 minutes
3. Group discussion – Mutual support	20 minutes
4. What next?	5 minutes

1. Being here

1.1 Acknowledgment of Country

The facilitator can say:

"I acknowledge the Traditional owners of the lands where we work and live."

"I pay my respects to Elders."

"I acknowledge any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people meeting here today."

1.2 Check in – Say hello to the group

Everyone sits in a circle.

Take turns to:

- Say your name.

- What do you do in the arts?

- If you have been before, tell your group about what you have done since the last session.

2. Personal reflection – Hopeful engagement

The facilitator can say:

"Hopeful engagement is a way to cope when things are tough. It helps people to keep going.

"Here are some examples:

- looking after yourself

- being spiritual

- resting

- being kind to others

- making art that shows what's wrong"

2.1 Reflect on what "hopeful engagement" means to you

Think about:

- What do you do to stay hopeful when things are hard or frustrating?

- What helps you to keep working in the arts?

Use the space below to write or draw what "hopeful engagement" looks like in your life.

Your support person can help.

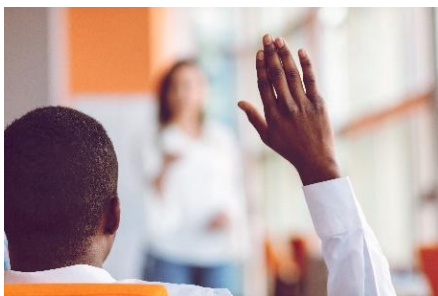## 2.2 Share your reflections with the group.

Tell others what you have been thinking about

You don't have to say anything you don't want to.

Listen carefully to the others in your group.

Ask questions to help you understand what they are saying.

Listen for things that are the same.

3. Group Discussion – Mutual support

Pick one question to talk about.

Artists can often work together to help each other.

- Do you need any help with your art?

- How can you help other artists with their art?

Listen deeply to others.

This means:

- Concentrating

- Focus on the speaker

- Pay attention

- Don't interrupt

- Listen to learn about others in the group.

- Ask questions to find out more. People don't have to answer.

- Be kind to people who share tough or difficult things.

Listen for things that are the same.

- Common interests and ideas

- Concerns shared.

4. What next?

Do something after the meeting.

Things you might like to do:

- Make a list of how you cope.

- Talk to others about managing stressful times.

- Use the internet to find ways other artists cope.

- Help another artist.

- Ask for help.

Next meeting you can tell the group about what you have done.

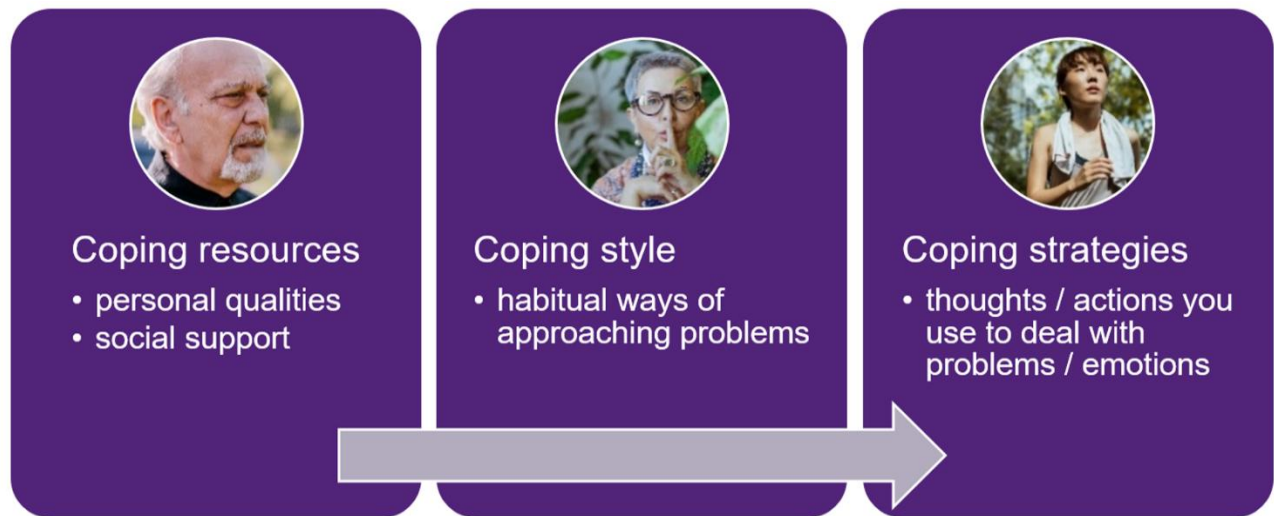# What one step will you take before the next meeting?

Tips:

How to achieve a goal:

- Choose one thing.

- Write it down. You can use the space below. Your support person can help.

- Tell the group.

Even small steps help you work towards your goal.

Additional Resources

Coping repertoires

Coping resources
- personal qualities
- social support

Coping style
- habitual ways of approaching problems

Coping strategies
- thoughts / actions you use to deal with problems / emotions

Active engagement strategies – such as confronting (rather than avoiding) problems, asking for help, focusing on reassuring thoughts, and expressing emotions – can support coping by increasing our sense of control.[1]

By contrast, disengagement often works against us.[2]

Uncertainty has always been a feature of the arts and culture sector. This includes, but is not limited to, precarious employment.

Many (if not most) artists and arts managers "pull together portfolio careers… work as freelancers on a series of unpredictable short-term projects… and compete against one another for funding and other opportunities."[3]

At a personal level, people cope with this kind of uncertainty by drawing on a range of coping resources, styles and strategies:

Coping _resources_ are personal, social, and structural factors[4] that directly affect your wellbeing, but also influence your coping _styles_ and _strategies_.[5]

Personal resources	Social support	Structural support
• Sense of control • Self-esteem • Meaning • Trust	• Family & friends • Employers • Co-workers • Customers	• Equity

- **Personal coping resources** include having a sense of control over your situation and meaning in life[6]; positive self-esteem; and the ability to trust and build cooperative relationships with others.[5,7]

- **Social coping resources** involve having a sense of being valued as a person, and being part of "a network of communication and obligation."[7] Social support may come from family or friends, but can also be found among employers, co-workers, even customers[5] – as well as groups of people with shared values and/or experiences (e.g., neighbourhood or religious groups).[4]

- **Structural coping resources** rely on equity – equal rights, fairness, justice, reciprocity. Therefore, some people have greater access to these resources than others.[5]

Coping _styles_ are "habitual preferences" for dealing with problems, such as being active and approaching or confronting problems, or remaining passive and withdrawing from or denying problems.[4]

Coping _strategies_ are the thoughts / actions you use to manage difficult situations. These might involve focusing on the problem itself and/or your emotional response to the problem.[4]

Additional Resources

Increasing your sense of control

Even when many things are outside of our control, having a general belief that we can and do shape our own life can help us find new ways of coping.[8]

To develop your own sense of control, you might like to:

- read about the connection between mental health and feeling in control

- keep track of everyday events, distinguishing between things you can and cannot control – try to notice even very small things that you are able to control.

- explore these resources about feeling more in control of your situation:

  o Beyond Blue's "Sense of Control" handout

  o Seven Ways to Feel More in Control of Your Life

  o How to restore your sense of control when you feel powerless

  o 6 Ways You Can Feel More In Control During The Coronavirus Pandemic

For extra support…

This Discussion Guide was created to support your wellbeing through peer coaching, but peer coaching is not a substitute for professional medical advice.

- Always seek the guidance of your doctor or other qualified health professional with any questions you may have about your health or a medical condition.

- Never disregard the advice of a medical professional, or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this Discussion Guide or heard in your Creating Out Loud peer coaching circle.

If you are in an emergency, or at immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please contact emergency services on 000.

More information about other support services can be found here:

- New Access Mental Health Coaching Program

- The Arts Wellbeing Collective

- This government website lists the contact details for several organisations that support mental health and suicide prevention:

- This community website offers information about getting professional help for your mental health, if you don't have much money:

- This professional website collates a range of mental health resources for people working in the arts and culture sector

More Discussion Guides

Discussion Guides on other topics related to arts and culture can be found at:

https://creatingoutloud.business.uq.edu.au/

References

1   Dijkstra, M.T.M. and A.C. *Homan, Engaging in Rather than Disengaging from Stress: Effective Coping and Perceived Control*. Frontiers in psychology, 2016. **7**: p. 1415-1415.

2   Carver, C.S., M.F. Scheier, and J.K. Weintraub, *Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach*. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1989. **56**: p. 267–283.

3   Smith, N.T. and R. Thwaites, *The composition of precarity: 'Emerging' composers' experiences of opportunity culture in contemporary classical music*. The British Journal of Sociology, 2019. **70**(2): p. 589-609.

4   Thoits, P.A., *Stress, Coping, and Social Support Processes: Where Are We? What Next?* Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 1995: p. 53-79.

5   Bosmans, K., et al., *Explaining the relation between precarious employment and mental well-being*. A qualitative study among temporary agency workers. Work, 2016. **53**: p. 249-264.

6   Thoits, P.A., *Multiple Identities and Psychological Well-Being: A Reformulation and Test of the Social Isolation Hypothesis*. American Sociological Review, 1983. **48**(2): p. 174-187.

7   Mirowsky, J. and C.E. Ross, *Social patterns of distress.* Annual Review of Sociology, 1986. **12**: p. 23-45.

8   Ross, C.E. and J. Sastry, *The Sense of Personal Control*, in *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, C.S. Aneshensel and J.C. Phelan, Editors. 1999, Springer US: Boston, MA. p. 369-394.

My Coping Repertoire

Coping resources	Coping style	Coping strategies

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The opinions in this Discussion Guide do not necessarily represent the views of The University of Queensland, funding / industry partners, or the individual members involved in the reference groups.

About Creating Out Loud

"Creating Out Loud" is an 18-month Industry Research Fellowship funded by the Queensland Minister for State Development, Tourism and Innovation, under the Advance Queensland Industry Research Fellowship program.

Creating Out Loud was developed to support Queensland's artists and arts managers as they recover from and rebuild business, artistic, and cultural practices following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Industry Reference Group

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This guide includes links to various web material. All links were working at the time of publication. Please note however that these links may become outdated over time.

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