

Creating Out Loud: Facilitator Guide (Easy Read)



This Guide offers tips for running your Creating Out Loud peer coaching circle.

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About Creating Out Loud



Creating Out Loud is a **peer-coaching** program.

Peer coaching means we help each other to do our jobs better.



Creating Out Loud groups choose their own **facilitator**. The facilitator is the leader of the group.

- The facilitator keeps everyone on track.
- Anyone in the group can be the facilitator.
- The discussion guides tell the facilitator what to do.



Creating Out Loud groups are called **circles**.

What to do in the program



There are two sessions to start.

1. Building community
2. Working Agreements for Courageous Conversations

Then Creating Out Loud gives you two choices.

In the first meeting of your Circle, you need to choose what type you want to do.



Choice 1 – Topic based

There are five topics that you can do.

1. Communicating your value
2. Sustainability
3. Wellbeing
4. Business Practices
5. Artistic Practices



Choice 2 – Goal focused



Council Style



Each meeting is the same.

Members talk about something they need help with.

The group gives ideas to help.

Sometimes the group has the one goal. The group works together to reach the goal.

How to run a circle



Choose someone to be the facilitator. The facilitator will need to do these jobs.



1. When to meet

Help the group choose when to meet.

2. Where to meet

Help the group choose where to meet.



- Online?



- Face to face?



- Online and face to face?

3. Tell the group about meetings

Will you use

- email?
- phone?
- a group chat app like Messenger, WhatsApp or Telegram?



4. Choose a timekeeper

The timekeeper has the job of letting everyone know when they have to finish an activity.

If you want, you can choose different people to be the facilitator or the timekeeper.

You can change each meeting.

You can keep the people the same.

It is your choice.



Running a circle

Get started



Make a **Working Agreement**.

A Working Agreement is the rules the circle will use.

There is a guide to tell you how to make a Working Agreement.

Keep the group on track



Keep the discussion on track.

Sometimes people want to talk about other things.

You can say, “That is interesting. Let us talk about that after the meeting.”

Stick to the time for each activity.



Finish on time.



Create a good feeling in the group



Be kind.



Listen to what people say. Don't judge them.



Help circle members to come up with their own ideas.

Understand what people say



Make sure everyone has a turn to speak.



Ask questions if you don't understand what people say.



Summarise what people say.
Check you are correct.



Talk about **common themes**.
That means similar things
people say.

Manage conflict



Sometimes people disagree with
each other. That's ok.



Help people to listen to each other.



Remind the group about their rules.
The rules are the Working Agreement.

End well



Celebrate what you have done together.



Ask the group:

- What was good about the program?
- What could have been better?
- What will they keep doing after Creating Out Loud finishes?

Doing a Topic-based program



This program covers topics that are important for people in the arts.



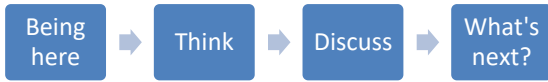
The facilitator must read the **discussion guide** before the meeting. A discussion guide tells you what to do for each topic meeting.



The timekeeper can tell people when they have to stop an activity.



Some groups might like to work on an activity longer.
It is your choice!



Each meeting has the same four steps.

Step 1 – Being here



Time: about 15 minutes



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.”



Check in

Say hello to the group

Everyone sits in a circle.

Take turns:

- Say your name.
- What do you do in the arts?
- If you have been before, tell your group what you learnt in the last session.

Each topic has an activity for members to do on their own.



Step 2 – Personal reflection



Time: about 20 minutes

Step 3 – Group discussion



Time: about 20 minutes



The group talks about the topic.

Groups can choose which questions to talk about.

There are no wrong answers.

It is ok to disagree with others in the group.

If people get angry or upset, go over the Working Agreement again.

Step 4 – What next?



Time: about 5 minutes



Each person decides what they are going to work on before the next meeting.



The guides have ideas to help people decide.



You can write down their ideas so you can ask people what they did next time.

Doing a Goal-focused program



This program uses the **Council Style**. All people in the group get help to solve a problem.

There is a guide to tell you how the Council Style works.



The facilitator must read the **discussion guide** before the meeting. A discussion guide tells you what to do for each meeting.



The timekeeper can tell people when they have to stop an activity.

They make sure everyone gets a turn.

Each meeting has the same three steps.



Step 1 – Being here

Being
here



Time: about 10 minutes



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.”

Check in - Say hello to the group

Everyone sits in a circle.

Take turns:

- Say your name.
- What do you do in the arts?
- If you have been before, tell your group what you learnt in the last session.



Step 2 – Council discussion



One member tells the circle their issue.

Time: 3 minutes



The group can ask questions to understand.

Time: 2 minutes



The group then gives advice.

Time: 10 minutes



Everyone should have a turn to tell the group their issue and get ideas.

Step 3 – What next?



Time: about 5 minutes



Each person decides what they are going to work on before the next meeting.



The guides have ideas to help people decide.



You can write down what they say so you can ask people what they did next time.

Additional resources

- The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has produced these resources, to help you identify whose country you're on:
 - [Map of Indigenous Australia](#)
 - [Whose Country am I on?](#)
- The Groupwork Centre has published these blog posts about:
 - [“Groupness”](#)
 - [“Working Agreements”](#)
- The Australian Human Rights Commission has produced two guidelines for hosting accessible and inclusive meetings:
 - [Hosting accessible and inclusive in-person meetings and events](#)
 - [Hosting accessible and inclusive online meetings and events](#)
- Description Victoria has produced a [Guide to Inclusive Meetings for People who are Blind or have low vision](#)
- Forbes magazine published this short article, including some helpful tips for leading inclusive meetings: [How To Lead Inclusive Meetings](#)
- Various professional associations and networks offer more information about, and standards for, facilitation:
 - [The International Association of Facilitators \(IAF\) Core Competencies framework](#)
 - [The International Institute for Facilitation Certified Master Facilitator® Competencies](#)
 - The Groupwork Centre's free video resource [“Facilitation Hot Spots and Tricky Bits”](#)
 - The [Australasian Facilitators Network \(AFN\)](#) website includes more resources about facilitation

Check in

Set up the best conditions for these courageous conversations, by creating a Working Agreement for your circle helping participants settle into – and know what to expect from – each conversation (see below).

Settling into a conversation

Settling into a conversation involves signalling to yourself and your fellow circle members that you are stepping aside from “the everyday” to enter a different space – a learning space.

You can create a “threshold” for this space by using check-in processes to help people arrive and be present with one another in a fresh way.

This could be as simple as taking a breath together and slowing down. Or you might ask a simple check-in question, to focus attention on the here-and-now. Creating Out Loud Discussion Guides suggest a check-in question for each session, but feel free to be creative! Each group can decide what works best for them.

Setting an agenda can also help people know what to expect from each meeting.

All of the Creating Out Loud Topic-based sessions use the same basic agenda, establishing a familiar rhythm that carries through the whole program. Goal-focused sessions also follow standard agendas, although these are different to the Topic-based sessions.

Facilitation roles

Whether or not your circle has a designated facilitator, all Creating Out Loud circles need one or more people to take on some facilitation roles.

In a nutshell, the facilitator's role is to serve the group by helping circle members to....



Get started

- Choose which program(s) your circle will follow
- Schedule meetings and venue(s) in advance
- Develop a Working Agreement



Navigate content

- Keep discussion on track
- Pace the session
- Finish on time



Create and hold space

- Be gently and compassionately present
- Listen without judgement
- Help circle members arrive at their own insights



Develop a sense of "groupness"

- Value and respect all circle members
- Support safe, self-paced risk-taking
- Acknowledge / validate feelings and experiences



Listen to understand

- Promote and support equal participation
- Invite clarification of confusing statements
- Summarize ideas and identify common themes



Manage conflict

- Don't fear disagreement
- Support conflict resolution
- Remember and act on Working Agreement



End well

- Celebrate what you have done together
- Identify anything circle members want to take forward
- Invite constructive feedback for future groups

Working Agreements

Because peer coaching circles rely on trust, talking about what will help circle members bring their best selves to the group is time well spent.

One of the first things to do with your Creating Out Loud circle is establish a ‘Working Agreement.’^[1]

Working Agreements put down in writing your circle’s shared understanding of how circle members will relate with one another, and what they can expect from each other.

- Some expectations will be very practical, relating to the logistics of the group.
- Others will be more general and focused on relationships.^[2]

Some examples of both types of expectation are listed here below.

General expectations	Practical expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •maintain confidentiality •be authentic •be open •respect one another •avoid judgement •adopt a constructive mindset •support two-way sharing •listen deeply to each other •take care of one another's vulnerability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •commit to the group process •turn off cell phones •be on time •check before inviting anyone new to join the circle •specific details about when, where, how often, for how long the circle will meet •whether / how circle members will stay in touch between meetings •what to do if you can’t attend a session

But it is important to create your own Working Agreement – rather than copy someone else’s – because it is important for everyone to have the chance to speak up and be heard. In fact, just having this conversation is itself a first step towards building trust and respect within your circle.

More information about how to develop a “Working Agreement” is included in the Creating Out Loud “Working Agreements for Courageous Conversations” Discussion Guide.



Creating and holding space

There is no single recipe for effective facilitation. But creating and ‘holding space’ for participants to relate well with one another is a key ingredient.

The success of small groups is often put down to the part played by their facilitator,^[3] whose attributes and behaviours can impact how group members encounter and relate with one another.

“Holding space” involves being gently and compassionately present with others – and listening actively, without judgement, to help group members arrive at their own insights.^[4]
^{5]} To do this successfully, “one must have a high degree of self-awareness and be able to set aside one’s own agenda and ego.”^[6, 7]

Holding space is about listening to and hearing another person’s perspectives and histories without passing judgement, and it avoids disempowering or devaluing another person’s experiences.^[4]

Taking on a facilitator role invites us to do some of our own “inner work”^[8] because “If we are uncomfortable, distracted, or trying to fix things, we fill the space we intend to hold for another person with our own selves.”^[9]

Effective facilitation also relies on

- **attributes:** a positive, non-judgemental, non-defensive attitude; respect for group members; calmness, confidence, authenticity, and flexibility.^[10]
- **behaviours:** listening, observing, and helping the conversation flow; focusing on what works for the group as a whole, rather than one’s own contributions; modelling appropriate interactions, and helping group members manage conflict.^[11]

Meeting – in person or online?

Meeting in-person is often thought to be the most effective way to build personal connections, but online meetings can be a great way to connect with people outside your usual networks, and is especially useful for people in remote locations.

Both types of meeting have their advantages and disadvantages. So, choose whichever type of meeting works best for your circle.

In-person meetings	Online meetings
<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can feel more personal • may be easier to read “body language” • can reduce distractions / multi-tasking / technology challenges 	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • builds connections across diverse locations • can be more accessible • saves time and expense of travelling
<p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to organize (and pay) for a venue • may be inaccessible • public safety concerns (e.g., COVID) 	<p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can cause fatigue^[12] • requires equipment and internet connection

Facilitating online sessions requires many of the same attributes and behaviours as face-to-face meetings. But some additional knowledge and skills can be helpful when meeting online, including the ability to:

- **match technology to group needs and processes**, and help group members use any tools they are not already familiar with; and
- **“communicate with presence online”** – this includes both “being present to the group” and using “techniques and interventions that reduce the effects of time differences, geographical distance, and cultural separation” between group members.^[13]

If you sincerely care about the success of the group and are able to communicate that caring to the group, you can be successful... facilitation is a highly emotional activity. The best facilitators are in tune with their intuition and use this sense as their guide during facilitation experiences.^[14]

Inclusion and accessibility

Creating Out Loud seeks to be both inclusive of and accessible to everyone working in the arts and culture sector.

Deaf and Disabled people were actively involved in developing and evaluating all of the Creating Out Loud Discussion Guides.

To support accessible and inclusive conversations, Creating Out Loud offers:

- **Discussion Guides** – Circle members can download all of the Discussion Guides at once – or just one guide before each session – and either print them out or use them electronically. All Guides are freely available from the program website, and both fillable and visually accessible.
- **Introductory videos** – many people prefer to access information via videos, rather than reading a lot of text. For this reason, all Creating Out Loud Discussion Guides are supported by short captioned videos, outlining key information and activities in the guide. All videos are accessible on the program website.
- **“Program on a page” Guides** – Each Discussion Guide is also summarised in a 1-page visually accessible pdf, available from the program website.
- **PowerPoint slides** – during online meetings, some circle members might find it helpful to view key content from the Discussion Guides. All PowerPoint slides are available from the program website, and facilitators can share these with their circle.



Celebrating diversity

The “Let’s Get R.E.A.L. model” promotes equity in online learning spaces:

- **Recognition** – recognizing participants’ identities and cultural characteristics
- **Engagement** – interacting with and establishing a sense of presence with participants
- **Affirmation** – affirming participants through emotional support and encouragement
- **Learning** – being curious and open to learning.^[15]

Online meetings become more inclusive and accessible when you

- introduce yourself, using your preferred name, pronouns and a visual description
- respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land(s) on which you are meeting
- make sure all circle members have materials in accessible formats ahead of time
- use a hand-raising technique to prevent people speaking over one another
- describe any visual information when sharing your screen, including photos
- read aloud any important details in the Chat
- if an interpreter is present, pin their screen so it remains visible
- send a follow-up email, including any important information shared during the meeting

Additional Discussion Guides

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

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



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About Creating Out Loud

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For further information visit

creatingoutloud.business.uq.edu.au/

Industry Reference Group

Penelope Benton, Executive Director,
National Association for the Visual Arts

Nicole Beyer, Executive Director, Theatre
Network Australia

Kate Eltham, Co-CEO, BlakDance

Melissa Robertson, Program Manager,
Arts Nexus

Zohar Spatz, Executive Director, La Boite
Theatre

Dilshani Weerasinghe, Executive
Director, Queensland Ballet

Academic Reference Group

Professor Polly Parker, Associate Dean
(Academic), Faculty of Business,
Economics and Law, The University of
Queensland

Professor Kim Wilkins, Deputy Associate
Dean (Research) Faculty of Humanities
and Social Sciences, The University of
Queensland

Associate Professor Tim Kastle,
Director of Entrepreneurship &

Innovation, School of Business,
The University of Queensland

Associate Professor Nicole Hartley,
School of Business, The University of
Queensland

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information appears at the end of the
guide and direct attributions have been
minimized.

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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Contact details

Kate Power

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6886-699X>

T +61 7 334 69989

E kate.power@uq.edu.au

W uq.edu.au

CRICOS Provider Number 00025B