



Creating Well

Working Sustainably in Communities

Recommendations for practitioner wellbeing in the
Community Arts and Cultural Development sector





How can CACD practitioners look after their mental, physical, and emotion health while delivering high quality meaningful projects to communities that are disenfranchised?
Experiences trauma or disaster, or are disenfranchised?
2. What do we want to achieve? What is our ambition for our health, or are disenfranchised?
Outcomes in say 5 years?

Image credit: Susie Blatchford

Wellbeing

“We were able to connect, to be vulnerable and real. This is the key to change, where the growth happens, when we share the challenges of our journeys, not just the successes.”

Fiona Sinclair

The Creative Recovery Network and Community Arts Network acknowledge the country, culture and traditional custodians of the land and waters upon which we walk, work and live. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future of Indigenous nations in Australia and abroad. We acknowledge that Australian Aboriginal sovereignty was never ceded. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this publication may contain images of people who are now passed away.



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Creating Well

“This [work] has shown me how beneficial it can be to be guided by others and to surrender. It’s about letting go of “I know how to do this for others, so of course I can look after myself”, and recognising the need to ask for and receive help.”

Brooke Small

Foreword

Recommendations for practitioner wellbeing in the Community Arts and Cultural Development sector.

Never before has it been so important to recognise the value of community to our wellbeing as humans and societies. The important work of building these communities is often overlooked, but as the pace of change accelerates in the 21st century, so too are the challenges to those doing this work.

This report is a welcome step towards a framework for the professional skill-set that underpins best practice community arts and cultural development. It shows us as a sector, how to build resources to ensure programs are responsive, impactful and sustainable.

Research by WA academic Dr Christina Davies has shown that it is this level of artistic and cultural participation, creative expression and social interaction that has the most impact on measures of personal wellbeing.

But for arts workers who design and facilitate these experiences there are a myriad of complex issues to navigate and this report clearly shows the need to understand and equip practitioners with a professional toolkit.

We are proud that Western Australia is at the forefront of this important research and hope that it leads to a greater understanding of both the value and needs of community-based arts practitioners at a national level. Within Western Australia, Community Arts

and Cultural Development programs span a vast range of settings from rural and remote communities, and across one of the most culturally diverse populations in the country. Very importantly, strong Aboriginal leadership continues to drive conversations about the critical value of arts and culture in First Nations communities.

Congratulations to Community Arts Network (CAN) and Creative Recovery Network (CRN) for their commitment to advocating for change in the sector, and being at the forefront of social innovation.

The partnership between CAN and CRN has yielded valuable insights, fortified by rigorous methodology and a considered approach to the specific needs of community arts and cultural development professionals and the organisations they engage with.

Creating Well maps a clear pathway toward better support structures and to raising awareness of the value of these programs. I look forward to seeing the next steps that evolve from ongoing national collaboration on this vital work.



**Shelagh Magadza, Executive Director
The Chamber of Arts and Culture
Western Australia**



Image credit: Scotia Monkivitch

Creative Recovery Network

In 2015, a group of Community Arts and Cultural Development practitioners came together to present the 'Making Time: Arts and Self-Care Forum', at the Footscray Community Arts Centre in Melbourne. This was the first national gathering to directly address what had been a long history of minimal conversation or action around mental health, self-care and support across the CACD sector.

Community arts practitioners work with and for communities that carry complex political, social and cultural scenarios, oftentimes through the experience of trauma - both direct and vicarious. They often work in isolation under stressful circumstances with tight timeframes and heavy expectations for successful outcomes.

This 'coalface' of intense responsibility is also the space in which social services and emergency management work, with the support of multi-layered professional supervision and wellbeing programs they are required to participate in. Yet artists and artworkers are regularly left to fend for themselves with little to no support structures or self-care frameworks to ensure they maintain balanced physical and mental health, and the capacity to support themselves and the communities they work with.

It was clear from this 2015 gathering that a change in the sector needed to occur and that achieving sustainable working practices must be a shared responsibility between individual workers as well as the funding bodies and organisations contracting arts practitioners for socially engaged projects.

Building on this first initiative, we continued to present subsequent 'Making Time' activities across the nation to support and grow the conversation.

The evolution of this work into the Professional Supervision Pilot Project, in collaboration with Community Arts Network, set out to develop a deeper understanding of the specific support needs for community-based creatives and was designed to be grounded in the realities of community-based practice.

Our hope is that through this deeper understanding, the sector can mobilise and together, map a pathway towards policy development for new standards of practice that better support practitioners in high performance environments.

It is a great privilege to work with Community Arts Network and the CACD practitioners from across Western Australia. Their drive, advocacy and investment in building a sustainable sector for all is commendable. I would like to especially thank the practitioner group who I worked with, and through their personal persistence, began this work in 2015 – Karen Hethey, Bec Masey, Jade Lillie and Isabel Fitzgerald.

This conversation is ongoing and collaborative and we wholeheartedly invite practitioners, organisations and artists from across Australia to join us in building stronger frameworks for sustainable, ethical and responsive work environments.

Scotia Monkivitch
Executive Officer
Creative Recovery Network





Community Arts Network

For the past four years CAN has partnered with Creative Recovery Network to progress initiatives that address the self-care and wellbeing needs of practitioners in CACD. The passionate discussion at the first Self-Care forum in October 2017 highlighted the consistent physical and emotional challenges people were facing in community-based practice, reinforcing the need for action and advocacy.

CAN was privileged to work with CRN in the development that followed, opening up learning opportunities for Western Australian practitioners and supporting the advancement of a national conversation regarding effective self-care for artists and artswriters within the CACD sector.

The ‘Making Time’ Artist Self-Care Retreat in August 2018 offered participants practical actions, time for reflection and rare moments of care. As one participant shared,

“After 20 years of professional practice devoted to the arts, I had my first experience of the arts industry REALLY caring about my wellbeing. This is a profound shift.”

All participants anticipated that they would make changes to their practice after the retreat and this flowed on to bi-monthly self-care online conversations for practitioners across WA, under the continuing banner of Making Time.

This on-the-ground action informed CRN’s national advocacy and the shaping of the Professional Supervision pilot that is detailed in this report.

Throughout this time CAN has been proud to partner with CRN and coordinate the delivery of the many elements to artists and artswriters in WA. The learning has led to changes in our own organisation and we will continue to work towards the wellbeing of artists and artswriters in CACD. There is still a long way to go...

Our sincere thanks to the many Western Australian practitioners who have been part of this experience and the learning. Special thanks to Jill Brown, who worked hard to keep the program on track here at CAN and has had such a longstanding commitment to practitioners.

Finally, thank you to Scotia and the CRN team for their foresight, persistence and great collegiality in realising this work. CAN will continue to support national change for CACD.

June Moorhouse and Monica Kane
Co-Chief Executive Officer
Community Arts Network





Executive summary

“The honesty, vulnerability and inspiration of other practitioners; being able to observe and reap the benefits of two strong practitioners who delivered the sessions; being heard, when we are often listening in creative community development, was gold.”

Natalie Scholtz



The Professional Supervision Pilot was established by Creative Recovery Network, in partnership with Community Arts Network, in recognition of the gaps in support services and benchmarks of practice to support the achievement of excellence within the field of Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD).

In encompassing the mental, physical, and emotional health of high performing creatives, it was proposed that professional supervision and wellbeing programs would support sustained excellence in high performance work environments as well as healthy work/life balance.

Federal and state legislation – including the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth) – requires businesses to safeguard the physical and psychological health of workers. It is overtime that the CACD sector puts into place just such a responsive safeguard.

Through this research we sought to present and test a range of material for building understanding of self-care methodologies specific to the needs of CACD practitioners and to test a range of presentation modes: in-room group engagement; online group engagement; and individual sessions. From this we aimed to build:

- Recommendations for the CACD sector in relation to good practice for CACD practitioner health and wellbeing
- A Professional Supervision program specific to the service needs of the CACD sector
- An overview of potential professional development programs in response to gaps and needs for CACD practitioners
- Establishment of a network of experienced practitioners to offer peer support, and an associated community of practice to nurture these peers

**Scotia Monkivitch, Dr Shona Erskine
and Dr Peta Blevins (The Research Team)**



Acknowledgements

Image credit: Susie Blatchford

We would like to thank all the creatives and community leaders who have contributed to this work.

“The Professional Supervision Pilot came along at the perfect time. I was leading a massive community dance project and there was Dr. Shona Erskine teaching me all the skills I needed to be resilient, avoid compassion fatigue and support my community in a new and enhanced way. It has transformed how I work and strengthened my resolve to continue in CACD practice.”

Annette Carmichael

Creatives engaged in the Pilot program

Ann Sorenson, Annette Carmichael, Brooke Small, Carrie McDowell, Fiona Sinclair, Gwen Knox, Jessica Wraight, Marcelle Riley, Natalie Scholtz, Poppy van Oorde-Grainger, Scott Griffiths, Sete Tele, Silvano Giordano

Sector research participants

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Chad Creighton
Aboriginal Arts Centre Hub
David Doyle
DADAA
Jamie McGleave
Propel Youth Arts
June Moorhouse & Monica Kane
CAN
Zac James
Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company
Jeremy Smith
Australia Council for the Arts
Miranda Stephens
Awesome Arts
Ryan Taafe
CircuitWest
Sarah Weber
Art On The Move

Independent practitioners: Ron Bradfield, Steven Finch, Barb Howard, Sandra Krempf, Gabby Loo, Bella Ndayikeze, Lex Randolph, Susie Waller

Special thanks to: Jill Brown, CAN, for her drive and commitment in supporting the development and implementation of this project.



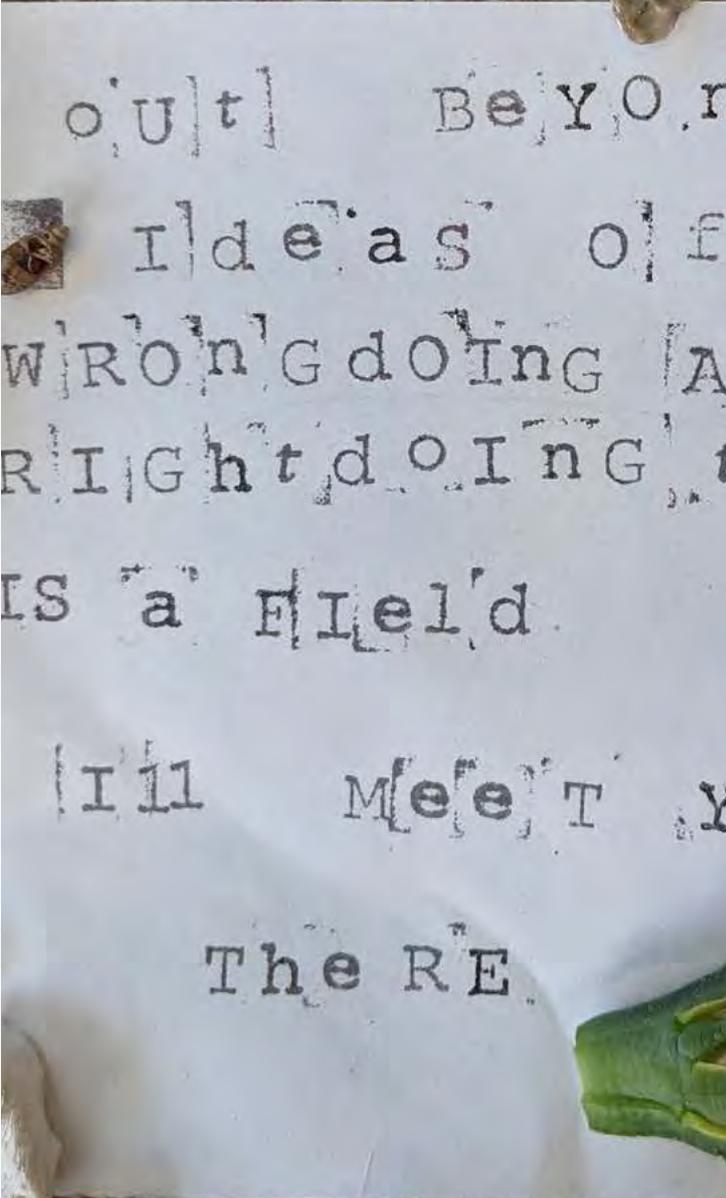
Is supported by the Australian government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body



Is supported by the State Government of Western Australia through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.



Image credit: Scotia Monkivitch



Background and context to the project

The arts play a deep, enduring role in supporting communities and individuals to tackle life's twists and turns. Community Arts and Cultural Development programs have the capacity to affect meaningful change by harnessing creative expression to contribute to the social, economic and personal wellbeing of communities.

An arts and cultural response can mean many things - a way of sharing stories, connecting, reducing isolation, giving voice to experience, empowering, making sense of the unimaginable and generating creative engagement, participation and problem solving.

Community Arts and Cultural Development is an approach that creates physical, mental and spiritual spaces where people feel safe and connected to one another. Spaces where stories are told, decisions can be examined and worked out, and dreams and plans come into being. At their finest, CACD projects express communities' hopes for the future and provide a steadying force through turbulent experiences.

CACD, as a framework and a process, requires skilled facilitation, consistent support and resourcing. It is a process of connecting and embedding creative approaches within the broader community, particularly local decision-making in collaboration with community members, community organisations and private industry. When implemented, this approach creates more effective opportunities for sustainable delivery and community support.

It is clear that CACD artists and artworkers working in complex community settings are often at risk of stress, trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder and burnout. This is especially so for artists and artworkers who work in relative isolation in remote and regional communities. These practitioners are regularly engaging with communities facing complex challenges including: poverty and racial injustice; asylum seekers and refugee

communities who have experienced traumatic dislocation, war and torture; and communities affected by the impacts of natural disasters and other significant environmental challenges.

This is an issue not only for artists and artworkers, but also for organisations who are contracting workers to deliver socially engaged community projects and outcomes, often under short time frames, with limited resources and within contexts where the communities are experiencing high levels of complex trauma.

The Professional Supervision Pilot aimed to bring the experience and wisdom of our leading community arts and cultural development practitioners together to grow a deeper understanding of the specific support needs for community-based creatives and articulate a fluid professional supervision framework that can support the development of practice across Australia.

In comparable professional sectors involved in frontline activation, most notably social services, medical and mental health sectors, transference and countertransference of traumatic experience, as well as exposure to direct traumatic events has been recognised as having real and complicated impacts on the practitioner (Herriman, J. 2001, Trauma and Recovery. London: Pandora).

Practice methods, professional training and professional peer debriefing/mentoring networks have been developed within these sectors to support and sustain the wellbeing of the practitioners and subsequently the quality of their practice, which most importantly flows through to relationships with the people and communities they serve. The CACD sector, though working in the same conditions, does not have a structured and supported program or model of engagement for professional supervision or peer support.

In partnership with psychologist Dr Shona Erskine and researcher Dr Peta Blevins, the research process aimed to reality test our professional supervision theories, in order to revitalise and deepen sector practice.

The pilot aimed to articulate and make visible the diverse and valuable expertise existing within our CACD sector.

CACD creatives in Australia face unique challenges in working with diverse communities across urban, rural and remote settings. Simultaneously, creatives juggle dual relationships, personal boundaries and high visibility. A lack of awareness of and access

to professional supervision, and limited competency in self-care has been identified as directly contributing to high worker turnover, burnout, stress and conflict.

Supervision has the potential to build the knowledge base of the CACD sector by articulating and validating the practice experience of CACD workers. Reflecting on the similarities and differences in experience, the presenting characteristics, the nature of projects and the outcomes, can generate propositions from 'practice wisdom', which may lead to the development of forms of 'practice theory'.

Supervision is a crucial part of reflective practice and vital for the growth and sustainability of our sector and its practitioners. Unless the necessary resources, accountability and authority are provided, adequate supervision is unlikely to occur, with supervision becoming a low priority in resource scarcity.

Professional Supervision provides a foundation to support the development of critical practice and identify and respond to professional needs. The Pilot aimed to build and trial a practical program to develop and maintain excellence across the scope of professional CACD practice.



Image credit: Fiona Sinclair



How do you experience
— JOY
— PEACE
— LOVE
FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

The world is not what it is
when you step outside yourself
and into the chaos of the sun
illumination's mystery and love
and energy to apply to others
verbally.

Methodology

Image credit: Susie Blatchford

Methodology of the Professional Supervision Pilot

The pilot project had three phases.

Phase 1. Sector consultation

A structured, full day sector conversation that was solutions focused to ensure a range of perspectives informed our framework.

Face to face interviews were conducted with significant individuals from the sector.

The core question driving the investigation and interviews was:

How can CACD practitioners look after their mental, physical and emotional health while delivering high quality, meaningful projects to communities that are isolated, have experiences of trauma or disaster, or are disenfranchised?

Phase 2: A pilot professional development and professional supervision program

A development and implementation of group and individual programs to test themes, methodology and impact of dedicated professional supervision targeted to CACD artists.

Six group sessions were developed, and presented to CACD peers to unpack practice provocations together. Themes were garnered from the sector consultation: Stress, Compassion Fatigue, Values, Committed Action, Resilience, and Creative Leadership.

The group process was interspersed by six professional supervision sessions for each participant with Dr Shona Erskine, picking up on key points and personal perspectives.

Phase 3: Follow up survey

A follow up survey was distributed to all professional supervision pilot participants to gather personal feedback on their experience of the program.

Phase by phase

Phase 1

Sector consultation

Sector consultation included a full consultation day and one-to-one interviews with key members of the CACD sector.

Participants

Practitioners at the consultation day were drawn from a diverse range of backgrounds, experience, and practice within the sector. The five-hour process canvassed information on the issues currently faced within the sector and sought to generate solutions to improve support for practitioners in the sector.

A further nine industry experts and practitioners who were unable to attend the consultation day were invited to participate in a one-to-one interview, with five individuals agreeing to be interviewed.

The participants in the sector consultation and interviews represented a range of roles and functions within the sector, including:

- Community based practitioners
- Recent graduates / Early career practitioners
- Managers / Directors of artistic companies and organisations
- Government bodies
- Indigenous artists and practitioners
- Youth Arts practitioners
- Practitioners from rural and remote regions
- Practitioners working with culturally diverse communities

Methodology

The Process Enneagram methodology was employed to guide the conversation and gather data. The interview format also followed the Process Enneagram. This conversational process elucidates complex problems where people have to come together to solve the matter because:

- The problems are important,
- The solutions are unclear, and
- The process of working on problems can circle around and around or go in many directions before solutions emerge.

In the case of the Professional Supervision Pilot the core question was:

How can CACD practitioners look after their mental, physical and emotional health while delivering high quality meaningful projects to communities that are isolated, have experiences of trauma or disaster, or are disenfranchised?

The Process Enneagram provides a multidimensional approach. It helps people solve complex problems, build the social connections needed to get the work done, and release the emotional energy and commitment required to do the work quickly and well. It allowed Creative Recovery Network and Community Arts Network to obtain a snapshot of the sector they are examining and are a part of, how their collegiate organisations and individual artists function within the whole, and what future actions to consider.

This Process Enneagram conversation revolved around nine factors including: Identity, Intention, Tension and Issues, Relationships, Principles and Standards, The Work, Information, Deep Learning and Sustainability, Structure and Context.

The conversation started by exploring the current state of the issue (the core question), followed by further conversations about desired relationships and the nature and quality of information. After exploring this triangle, the facilitator followed the full sequence of **Intentions > Principles > Tensions > Strategies > Work > Deep Learning**

The questions asked in this order were:

1. What are we collectively and individually as a group of practitioners? What do we currently do to look after our mental, physical, and emotional health when delivering projects?
2. What do we want to achieve? What is our ambition for our health while engaged with communities that are isolated, have experienced trauma or disaster, or are disenfranchised? Outcomes in 5 years?
3. What principles and ground rules need to guide how we engage with each other and how we operate as a sector to look after our mental, physical, and emotional health?
4. What are the dilemmas, tensions, and issues facing CACD practitioners? What are the challenges facing our health when delivering projects to communities that are isolated, have experienced trauma or disaster, or are disenfranchised?
5. What sort of relationships, connections and partnerships do we need to support CACD practitioners to be successful at looking after their health while delivering meaningful projects?
6. How can we share information between CACD practitioners to foster better health and assist CACD practitioners to advocate for their communities?
7. What changes do we wish to create in our context, or the environments in which we work, to support our health and the nature of the work we do? What changes do we wish to see in our structures, or the way our work is structured, to support our health and the nature of the work we do?
8. Who will do what, when and how? What actions will be taken?
9. How shall we keep learning and growing as CACD practitioners? How shall we ensure the results and outcomes of this research OR of the pilot program are sustainable for us and the sector?

Following the morning conversation, participants were invited to work in teams at one of the points of the Process Enneagram to generate possible solutions to the complex problem stated in the core question.



Phase 2

A pilot professional development and professional supervision program

Participants

Thirteen participants agreed to participate in the professional development and professional supervision program. Participation followed a direct invitation process to ensure a strong committed group with diverse backgrounds took part in the pilot program. The target participants were mid to late career practitioners with diverse experience working in and with complex communities.

The participants took part in two groups. The In-room group consisted of six CACD creatives local to the Perth region. The online group consisted of seven regional/remote CACD creatives from across WA.

One in-room participant left the study before the completion of the program.

Methodology - Professional Development Program

The Professional Development Program consisted of six two-hour workshops targeting content areas of importance to self-care and creative practice. The six areas of content were:

1. Stress – Referencing the Stress Vulnerability Model (Zubin and Spring, 1977) and the Stress Bucket Metaphor (Brabban and Turkington, 2002)
2. Compassion Fatigue – Referencing Figley (Figley Institute 2012)
3. Values – Referencing Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, specifically Ciarochi, J. and Hayes, L.L., (2015) *The Thriving Adolescent: Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Positive Psychology to Help Teens Manage Emotions, Achieve Goals, and Build Connection*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger., and Russ Harris (2009) *ACT Made simple*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger
4. Committed Action - Referencing Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, specifically Ciarochi and Hayes (2015), and Russ Harris (2009)
5. Resilience – Referencing Linda Graham (2013) *Bouncing Back: Rewiring Your Brain for Maximum Resilience and Wellbeing*. Novato, CA. New World Library and Brian Walker (2019) *Finding Resilience - Change and Uncertainty in Nature and Society*. CSIRO Publishing
6. Creative Leadership – Referencing the neuropsychology of creativity research

Each workshop consisted of the presentation of information, a slide pack and a companion document containing self-reflective questions, suggestions for activities and relevant materials.

The In-room group received all information face to face. The first part of the session was information delivery and the second part was reflective. Due to COVID-19 the final two in-room sessions were held online.

The online group was sent a presentation video with the information and all materials prior to a 1 hour gathering via Zoom, focused on discussing the materials in relation to the participants' individual CACD practices.

All materials were accessible online to all participants. They could access them at any point during the Professional Development and Professional Supervision Program.

Methodology - Professional Supervision Sessions

All 13 of the Professional Development Program participants were offered six 50-minute supervision sessions over the course of the pilot. This amounted to 78 hours of one to one sessions with Dr Shona Erskine. All participants were invited to attend sessions either in-room or online, depending on their capacity to be in Perth. Many of the in-room participants chose to access supervision online due to COVID-19 restrictions, their level of self-isolation due to COVID-19, or the vulnerability of the populations they worked with.

The 13 participants accessed a total of 43 hours of Professional Supervision. Seven hours occurred in-room and 36 hours were provided online.

Follow up Survey

Participants

The 13 participants who took part in the Professional Development Program were invited to complete a follow up survey. Seven of the participants completed the survey.

Methodology

A survey link was sent using Survey Monkey. The survey asked four questions in relation to the Professional Development Program and four questions relating to the Professional Supervision. A final question allowed participants to provide any other comments, observations, or reflections about their experience of the whole participatory program.

The four questions were:

1. What was most significant for you about participating in professional development/ one-to-one supervision?
2. What changes have you experienced in your self-care practices following participation in the group sessions/one-to-one sessions?
3. In what other ways have the professional development sessions/supervision sessions impacted your practice as a CACD artist?
4. What were the barriers, if any, to you participating in the group professional development/one-to-one supervision sessions?



Image credit: Susie Blatchford

Key recommendations



The Professional Supervision Pilot aimed to bring the experience and wisdom of some of our leading community arts and cultural development practitioners together to grow a deeper understanding of the specific support needs for community-based practitioners and articulate a fluid professional supervision framework that can support the development of CACD practice across Australia.

The recommendations for CACD professional practice from the pilot program address three processes

1.

Professional development. High quality professional development contributes to:

- a. High standards: performance and practice frameworks that are consistently and overtly upheld by the sector
- b. Expectations: meeting expectations of participants, community, and organisations in relation to quality and content of practice
- c. Culture: developing a learning culture through education and experiential learning across the CACD sector

2.

Professional supervision. High quality professional supervision is a guided reflection on practice, undertaken through a supportive relationship that is safe enough to positively challenge thinking and practice, and occurs in a time-protected setting. It is the shared responsibility of both the supervisor and the CACD practitioner.

Professional supervision is:

- a. Formative: enabling the development of the practitioner's expertise and skills
- b. Restorative: enabling the practitioner to sustain effective work
- c. Normative: ensuring the practitioner maintains established quality and content of practice

3.

Peer supervision. High quality peer supervision includes:

- a. The sharing and articulation of practice: the provision of coordinated opportunities for ongoing discussion of best practice models, areas of interest, and shared concerns
- b. Growth of the CACD ecology: building a community of peers and information as a vital support for CACD practitioners

The following six recommendations have been formulated from the Professional Supervision Pilot research, arising from conversations with a broad cross-section of the arts sector involved in community participation, and best practice models in the health and social services sectors.

1.

Establish a Practice Framework and Code of Conduct

Adequate professional practice is developed in accordance with organisation and professional standards. Currently the CACD sector does not operate under an agreed framework of practice. A Practice Framework including a Code of Conduct for CACD practitioners and organisations to support ethical and safe engagement with each other and communities is a long-identified need within the CACD sector.

Practice Frameworks define essential and aspirational elements of practice. Practice is understood to describe the way in which professionals work within their profession, in order to carry out the specified tasks or purpose. Best practice is the description of the best way of working based on the context and needs of the work scenario.

Codes of Conduct outline the norms, rules and responsibilities of an individual or an organisation to ensure clarity of expectation for all engaged in the work scenario.

A CACD Practice Framework will establish a vision for CACD practice that is grounded in the realities of community practice, supported by research and embedded in a set of principles and values that are essential to the work. It will provide a clear understanding of what underpins the work, and how this informs practitioners' engagement with communities. As a tool for CACD practitioners, it would provide a theoretically and practice-informed standard and set of principles and values to support best practice.

A CACD Practice Framework can represent and create an accepted, standard articulation of our CACD body of knowledge, the set of principles, terms, processes and activities that make up our professional domain.

This conceptual map, a broad approach to CACD practice, can then be consistently applied to ensure that processes and services are fit for CACD project/program purpose. It can be used by CACD practitioners and employers/organisations for the negotiation of contractual arrangements, terms and conditions of work, establishment of project/program protocols, and for the induction of CACD practitioners into the community and work context. It will work to ensure safe and best practice engagement and service provision by employers, organisations, contractors and independent practitioners presenting CACD programs.

Working within a Code of Conduct that provides clear guidelines for a strong ethical framework is essential in a sector that works with some of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups of people in our society. A Code of Conduct will set the tenor for exemplary work practice and lay down the expectations of professional work within the CACD sector.

Given the diversity of learning approaches and the variance of practice across the CACD sector, a Code of Conduct for the sector which guides communication, negotiation and establishment of projects and programs is a necessity for clear, safe and ethical future growth.

Practice



Image credit: Susie Blatchford



Mentoring

Image credit: Susie Blatchford

2. Build targeted professional development programs

Professional development

CACD practitioners need specific knowledge and awareness about entering and engaging with communities, and they need support in dealing with what they may face when working in and with diverse communities. Whilst there is a limited range of one-off opportunities for professional development there are no coordinated approaches to understanding and unpacking the role of a CACD practitioner.

Professional development through training, experiential learning, and knowledge acquisition must address the specialised knowledge and experience required of CACD creatives.

A database of current opportunities across the sector needs to be established so a clear understanding of gaps to be addressed can be articulated, and a coordinated development of specialist programs can be achieved.

Formal mentoring

Formal mentoring for active professional development needs to be designed to support the identification, development and networking of CACD practitioners to work within the community context within Australia. With limited structured training the knowledge and experience of seasoned practitioners is a vital resource for our sector. The connection to dedicated practitioners highlights and encourages emerging practitioners in the import and value of working within a CACD context.

Mentoring or shadowing opportunities need to be identified, supported and costed into project funding as a recognised and necessary cost.

3.

Establish a professional supervision network

The primary aim of professional supervision is to promote optimal care, safety, and wellbeing for practitioners in accordance with organisation and professional standards. Supervision is one aspect of professional development activities that are designed to support workers, and manage and monitor the delivery of high-quality services and effective outcomes for project communities/participants.

In addition to improving project outcomes and developing effectiveness, having an active supervision relationship in place can assure contractors/employers that workers are developing their professional growth and the ability to cope with the demands of the work.

Key to effective supervision is a trained supervisor. This role in the context of CACD would focus on wellbeing and practice support, therefore the supervisor needs sound psychological skills and an understanding of the context of CACD practice.

With a Practice Framework in place, a supervisor with a clinical psychological background could be inducted to work within the CACD context.

However, there is no specific supervision training available for an experienced CACD practitioner who might wish to take on a supervision role to develop the necessary psychological skills. A mandatory supervision training course that meets this need should be developed for those wishing to become supervisors.

Professional Supervisors should:

- Complete appropriate mandatory training in psychological skills (such as psychological first aid, listening skills, thorough knowledge of community and clinical referral options) and participate in ongoing training, supervision and review
- Demonstrate and maintain a sound understanding of the CACD Practice Framework and the established Code of Conduct and other relevant guidelines or standards, that may be applied to the CACD sector
- Clarify the purpose of supervision, the parameters of confidentiality, and the appropriate mechanisms for addressing any difficulties or concerns about the supervision process
- Work with the CACD practitioner to agree on goals for supervision sessions and put in place processes for regular reviews of progress
- Facilitate a safe and trusting environment for supervision sessions
- Validate good practice and provide constructive feedback
- Challenge practice that is inappropriate and facilitate the development of sustainable skills and ethical practice
- Be remunerated for their agreed contribution

Professional supervision should normally be offered as the initial point of contact after exposure to a high-risk incident unless the employee/contractor requests otherwise. In other situations, employees/contractors should be able to self-select their supervisor from a pool of accredited supervisors.



Network

Image credit: Michelle Troop



Engagement

Image credit: Susie Blatchford

4. Embed wellbeing plans and professional supervision into CACD programs and projects

Recommendation for Funding Bodies

National and state government arts sector bodies and philanthropic organisations have a role to play in supporting and funding professional supervision, along with specific wellbeing training for CACD practitioners and organisations. As key funders for the presentation of CACD programs and projects, they are central to developing a practice framework to address the needs of an increasing population of CACD practitioners working in current and emerging community settings. It is recommended that:

- All funded projects engaging communities are supported to include a budget line for professional supervision
- Professional supervision is promoted as best practice for all CACD projects and programs
- A Community Engagement Protocol is developed by Australia Council for the Arts in collaboration with the CACD sector, as they have done for working with Children and using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts. This will ensure leadership across other government and philanthropic bodies and highlight:
 - The need for alignment to the established Code of Conduct
 - Specialist practice knowledge of CACD
 - Provision of a pathway for safe and healthy work processes that protect CACD practitioners and participant communities
- Projects demonstrating alignment with the Community Engagement Protocols are preferred within funding programs for CACD projects/programs

Recommendation for Organisations

Contracting organisations need to lead by example. To do this arts and community organisations presenting CACD programs/projects need to ensure professional supervision and wellness support are embedded into all CACD activity. This includes:

- Having a transparent commitment, plan and process for achieving the CACD Practice Framework, upholding the Code of Conduct and supporting professional supervision
- Adequate funded time for reflective practice across the project/program team
- Appropriate funding for appropriately trained practitioners to undertake agreed hours of professional supervision for contracted/employed CACD practitioners pre, during and post the period of the project/program
- Prompt, appropriate attention by organisations to issues raised by practitioners during CACD work, including any issues requiring investigation or disciplinary action
- Organisational knowledge of and access to appropriately trained professional supervisors who can be matched with CACD workers
- Embed wellbeing plans and professional supervision into CACD programs

5.

CACD practitioners create individual wellbeing plans

CACD practitioners have an individual responsibility to maintain their own level of professional competence, improving and updating knowledge and skills through the life of their career. Independent CACD practitioners have an imperative to ensure they are building short and long-term professional supervision and wellness programs for themselves and when they are working with contracting organisations.

Responsibilities of CACD practitioners participating in CACD projects/programs include:

- Engaging in at least 20 hours of professional development each year. This includes taking action in relation to any developmental needs identified through professional supervision or lack of knowledge in the practice area
- Engaging in at least 5 hours of professional supervision each year. This includes negotiating the purpose of supervision, the parameters of confidentiality, and the appropriate mechanisms for addressing any difficulties or concerns about the supervision process
- Ensuring adequate time for reflective practice during all CACD projects/programs
- Developing self-care contracts with themselves and in conjunction with contractor/employers planning.
- Maintaining records related to professional development and supervision sessions as set out in the Practice Framework.

Future





Support

Image credit: Susie Blatchford

6. Build and maintain a community of practice

Peer support is a process where practitioners with similar amounts of experience work together to reflect on practice, learn from each other and grow professionally through the relationship. Peer support is not designed to be a substitute for supervision.

It is recognised that experienced workers may benefit from a non-supervisory link with other workers and that relatively new workers may feel more comfortable problem-solving professional issues and grappling with their transition to the workplace with other workers. Peer support programs are becoming more common as part of an overall approach to psychological health and safety in the workplace, especially growing as standard practice in high-risk organisations.

“Peer Support is a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility and mutual agreement of what is helpful. Peer Support is not based on psychiatric models and diagnostic criteria. It is about understanding another’s situation empathetically through the shared experience.”

Mead, S. Hilton, D. & Curtis, L. 2001 Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal 25(2):134-41

The provision of a coordinated opportunity for ongoing interaction examining areas of shared concern or the sharing and articulation of practice, discussion of areas of interest and building of a sense of community, is a vital support for the continuation and building of best practice in the CACD sector.

All high-risk CACD projects should have a well-planned, integrated, and tailored peer support program for their current employees/contractors, as well as, for a limited time, once employment/contraction with the organisation ceases.

Given the weight of work on individual CACD practitioners it is seen as a role that can and should be coordinated and supported through established organisations.

Recommendation for Funding Bodies

Supporting the CACD sector with the addition of specific budget lines to develop peer-to-peer support programs, and encouraging this best practice within government and philanthropic organisations.

Recommendation for Organisations

Ensuring a culture of growth and depth of practice across the CACD sector is an imperative for organisations responsible for the development and presentation of CACD projects/programs. Supporting CACD practitioners working across the sector through opportunities to meet, share practice and grow connections to sustain themselves across their careers, needs to be part of the organisations’ mandate.

This includes:

- Having a transparent commitment, plan and process for growing long-term peer-to-peer support programs
- Adequate funded time for reflective practice across the project/program team
- Supported safe spaces for peers to come together to share practice

Appendix One

Research outcomes



Image credit: Michelle Troop

Artists

The consultation conversation painted a picture of a CACD practitioner as a creative individual, with vision, who is driven by a desire to work with communities. They are deeply committed, model passion and compassion, and hold respect as a central value in their work with communities.

Collectively, CACD practitioners are diverse in identity, practice, and location. Practitioners may apply different labels to themselves depending on the work they are doing or the role they play in a project. **“You can be an artist, you can be an arts worker, you can be a producer...and a raft of other things as well.”** A consequence of this is that CACD practitioners identify their work, their practice, and their approach to CACD as something that **“is quite fluid at the moment and something that is changing.”**

CACD practitioners were informally and formally connected to each other and communities as they engaged in their different roles. One participant noted there is a **“fairly strong network of practitioners, connected by organisations such as CAN in WA and informal networks.”**

Ultimately, CACD practitioners are **“great artists making great art within a community.”**

Communities

Despite the flexibility and commitment of CACD practitioners they believed they were on the whole misunderstood by communities and marginalised as artists.

They believed the public had misconceptions about community arts work.

For example, within the youth subsector, the community often saw CACD work as small isolated workshops or events. The attitude was often that CACD was **“Just something fun to do on the weekend.”**

Communities failed to understand that CACD projects could facilitate great internal benefit for larger mental health or community benefits. CACD practitioners believe the work they make with communities is underestimated in terms of the social benefits and social cohesion impacts.

Current definitions of community, and what a community is and constitutes, is something that is in flux and being redefined. Participants

indicated that **“the notion and the context of what a community is, is something that’s changed quite significantly in the last period of time. It’s sort of moved and shifted from something being geographic or quiet place based but to be now looking at sort of broader representation around shared experience or trying to sort of incite change within a certain sector.”** Others discussed differences between types of communities (e.g., geographical, work, artistic), highlighting the importance of providing a voice of CACD practitioners on boards and within various contexts to contribute in different ways and in different stages of your career.

Industry

CACD artists articulated a sector that had historic and entrenched ways of working that demanded high workloads and high productivity. CACD practitioners wanted to see attitudinal and relational change within the system in order to build and develop practitioners and the sector.

Work pressure was combined with financial instability inherent in the financial constraints of projects and the precarious nature of the industry. This created a tug of war for practitioners. On one hand they were led to consider **“easier”** options while on the other hand feeling pressure to take on **“all opportunities where they fall.”**

Self-care

On the whole CACD practitioners reported poor self-care practices including overlooking personal needs, poor work/life balance, and martyrdom as a consequence of their commitment to practice and ingrained industry practices.

“There were challenges in terms of how artists approach their work more generally. There is a level of martyrdom demonstrating practitioners have low self-efficacy and lost a sense of power in their work, self-flagellation in which artists see themselves as responsible for community action or consequence, and working beyond the contracted scope of the project in terms of hours and resources.”

This was seen to exaggerate the highs and lows of being a CACD practitioner. There was a constant need to know how and why you were doing the work. Questions of choice and self-doubt had knock on effects on the family.

It was acknowledged that dropout occurred and practitioners were lost to the sector because it is not sustainable. The practitioners have not been able to manage balance.

Intention – what are we trying to do? What is future potential?

During the consultation process, CACD artists identified various mechanisms that could assist the work they do and tap into future potential for individuals and the industry at large.

Structures for support

Debriefing

Debriefing was identified as an essential part of the process within CACD projects, providing an important opportunity to reflect on success and challenge within projects and provide information on how things have worked. Opportunity for learning and growth.

Debriefing allows for effective aftercare, celebration, reflection. Provides opportunities for mentoring and handover. For ongoing projects, it allows for continuity and maintaining relationships.

However, CACD artists noted that debriefing is often left out of the project process. It gets pushed to the side when timelines and funding get tight.

There is a need to advocate for more effective debriefing practices both within and outside of project scope and budget. There is a need to advocate to the government and funders about the necessity of debriefing as part of the project and let them know what is involved in this kind of work.

The sector needs safe spaces for open and honest conversation, with a trained facilitator. Through this, we can identify what could be done better and both offer and gain constructive feedback.

There is a need to acknowledge different cultural ways to perform debriefing. For

example, First Nations debriefing is called “Fire Talk”. This space allows for distancing yourself from the work and to talk practically about what you’ve seen. Is there scope as Australian artists to incorporate global ways of debriefing?

Mental and emotional support

CACD artists recognised a need for destigmatising help-seeking and improved access to professional supervision. Participants noted that CACD artists needed to “adopt much more proactive behaviours around help-seeking behaviour”.

It was noted that there is a need to broaden “people’s scope and awareness of what support is needed”.

CACD artists recommended improved access to resources and support and that this should be included in project budgets. That pre- and post-project support should be written into funding costs and there should be an identifiable referral plan to deal with project scope.

Participants also identified support could be obtained through informal community connections with other CACD practitioners or with allied health in other industries. CACD artists valued connection with other community artists through means such as social media, online forums, etc.

Better training

Artists spoke about areas for improvement encapsulating both professional development opportunities and self-care knowledge.

Cultural awareness is of paramount importance for CACD artists and greater support is needed so that artists are not “dropped in the deep end anymore”. Artists need knowledge and awareness about entering and engaging with communities, and in particular emerging artists need support in dealing with what they may face.

Mentoring emerging artists is important for allowing new practitioners to shadow, assist, and observe more experienced CACD artists. This will allow for development of new practitioners in a gentle and supportive manner, and help emerging artists recognise that community work is not just about a contract they need to take on.

Artists also need greater knowledge, training, and support related to self-care practices. Artists need to know how to take care of themselves, not only physically and managing physical demands of the work, but also

cognitive and emotional health. Support structures and practices, and avenues for accessing support should be clearly identified.

Information sharing

Community driven

Ways of working need to be undertaken in consultation with and in consideration of the perspective of the community. Information that is generated needs to come from the community itself, and in doing so create a sense of being part of a community that thinks about best practice in CACD and creates opportunities for people to make that connection.

When working with communities, finding people within the community that can be asked **“how do you like to be interacted with?”** At a community level it can be very challenging working with people who have had varied past experiences and levels of comfort in sharing information and having that information shared with others.

Networks

There is scope for greater development of CACD networks to assist in development and support for artists in communities. Artists spoke of the benefits of having online databases and making connections with others in the CACD community that have the knowledge and resources to share. For example, finding people who have experience with grant writing in a particular area or to assist a practitioner developing an independent show.

The development of a database has been discussed and attempted to be developed for many years, however, there are issues around updating and maintaining databases to keep them current. It was acknowledged that you need **“to have organisations to maintain it and funding to do so otherwise it’s difficult to keep it current.”**

Informal networks and vehicles for connections, particularly for remote or isolated CACD practitioners are highly valued and artists indicated a need for continued and further involvement using models such as the one developed by CRN. Artists highlighted the importance of sharing all experiences - **“sharing success, sharing failure, so that people do feel a lot more comfortable and celebrating success too”**.

Online connections such as social media, podcasts, and videos were identified as valuable ways for those who aren’t based in metropolitan areas to pursue an interest and continued participation in community arts. One suggestion was **“podcasts that have interviews or maybe videos that have people talking about specific projects that they’ve worked on.”**

Networks were also seen as important for ongoing professional development for CACD artists. Professional development could take the form of regional or national conferences to allow for **“points of national connectivity”** and assist with developing cultural awareness. It is also important to allow for intergenerational knowledge sharing and acknowledging the history of both CACD and the communities in which artists are working. Finally, but most importantly, professional development needs to consider the needs of artists at various stages of their careers.

Challenges & Issues

Financial

CACD artists face large financial challenges related to working in the not-for-profit sector. Artists engage in high workloads with small returns. There is a real risk of overload and there needs to be caution that recommendations around mentoring does not mean an additional burden to an already overloaded workforce.

The nature of the work means that artists incur costs of traveling and working remotely. There are also issues around being a casual/contract workforce. Artists may **“feel that they have to take on as many projects as they can even though it means that they’re not going to get a break”**. Thus, there is a threat of overload and burnout for the workforce.

Project budgets need to have structured pay rates and include mental health support within costs. This is particularly important for touring artists who may also need to manage homesickness and isolation, along with other factors more directly related to the project work itself.

Participants felt pressure relating to having to be an **“all-rounder”** and the difficulty of being an individual worker managing all aspects of the project while feeling pressure around not making enough money.

The process and application for grants needs to be a collaborative process with the intended creatives to ensure all processes and impacts are acknowledged, planned and implicated within application budgets.

“Support requirements around [seeking support within project] so that that’s met from the beginning in the scoping of the project, so it’s part of the budget, a core sort of consideration you know - salary, on costs, leave loading and all that sort of stuff. Support becomes part of that behaviour”

“Applying for grants when it comes to community arts projects ...I would like to see a change in process for how community arts projects get funded..”

Ways of working

Safety

Safety issues were identified as a challenge for CACD artists. Parallel concerns around having enough time to “loiter” within the community before beginning a project, allowing yourself to become embedded and familiar with community and context. But also, identifying time in the project timeline to physically remove yourself from the community when needed. It’s important to be able to rest and reflect separately from the community and the work and then return refreshed.

Participants acknowledge that **“...despite often best efforts, we’re not necessarily well prepared to go into communities”**.

Physical safety and safe working guidelines are often not acknowledged. A lack of designated work spaces; low costs, affordable and accessible for freelancers means that often we work in unregulated and potentially dangerous situations.

Participants identified a need to advocate and **“to identify (safety needs) in contracts. They may not always be available, but somewhere that is close to the car park, well lit. If you’re leaving a venue at night it means being safe.”**

Self-care

There are issues with self-care getting dropped when project timelines are tight. The work in the community will most probably be prioritised over personal needs.

This may result in an increased risk of burnout for CACD workers who **“take on an enormous amount of project activity and also enormous**

responsibility for communities, but probably don’t plan any wellbeing strategies or time for themselves formally.”

It was acknowledged that these ways of working are culturally entrenched in the industry. Artists acknowledge there should be more downtime between projects/within projects, and there should be structures and funding in place to support this.

Relationships

Artists spoke about challenges around developing relationships and working collaboratively with others. This mode of working takes a lot of energy and time, making sure that there is a ‘greeting phase’ of work within the community and acknowledging how big that process is.

Cultural awareness of communities is important. Community advisors (e.g., Noongar elders/ advisors) for the first few meetings with the community play an important role. Advisors help with access and can provide advice for the initial phase of the project. Advisory groups can help throughout projects as issues arise. Elders within the community can advise on appropriate methods of communication with community members and facilitate home visits where required.

“Two-way conversations with First Nations about different cultural ways that we can be doing our work. We haven’t always embraced the opportunity to have conversations about how to do things – how do you run a meeting in your culture – more cultural appreciation for how community works. Sometimes our work is continuing to colonise, it’s a missed opportunity.”

“We need to take respectful action. In Noongar country you have to go to the women. We are the bosses.”

“What is the practice for me to be welcome to this place, I don’t want to be disrespectful. I have to ask permission to travel to different Country. A lot of art workers have been working up in the Kimberley and then just travel back to Noongar country. And then everything changes. We need to be respectful of borders even if you can’t physically see them. Other Countries are going through different challenges than us, we need to be respectful of this.”

Establishing boundaries within relationships was identified as important, particularly for young artists who may feel connected with the communities they engage with. Skills need to

be developed in order to establish healthy boundaries and prevent over identification with participants and help artists not to take on too much emotionally; to be able to process what they are doing and seeing within the community.

Physical demands

Acknowledgement that climate and physical demands of the work have an impact on CACD artists' health. They often have to carry large amounts of equipment without much help and have to work in harsh climates. When working individually it can be difficult to know what kind of conditions are acceptable and when it may be okay to stop. Because if you stop then the work won't get done, so people may just "suck it up and just do it because...you believe in what you're doing and you don't want to make a fuss."

Isolation/Geography

Remote working was identified as an issue and isolation and homesickness are problems that require support. Artists also reflected that sometimes they are sole arts workers within their communities and they need to accept work and partnerships with anyone who is interested in working with them.

"I don't know any other CACD workers where I am. I'm just hustling trying to get anyone I can on board with what I'm doing. I'll work with anyone! If they're going to allow work to happen in the way it needs to."

Project Management

Business Knowledge

Participants noted challenges around working as individuals and needing better support around small business practices. CACD artists need to understand business structures, how to negotiate, and manage contracts. Better support is needed in developing skills as a small business/sole trader. Also need to know about legal obligations if you're employing people.

Project Variation

It was acknowledged that within projects there is a lot of variability and different projects require different support. On some projects, artists won't feel the need for additional support but other projects may affect sleep or physical activity and require support from a psychologist. Some projects may have support available while others require practitioners to source support independently.

Peer support/network

More formalised peer support networks may be valuable in sharing best practice for CACD projects. It is important that CACD artists, especially emerging practitioners, know how to access these networks.

Acknowledgement that many artists "fall into" community arts and that a more formalised network would be beneficial in connecting with other practitioners. However, it was also noted that formalised networks require funding and management, which has time and financial implications.

Relationships and Key Players

What is the importance of relationships in this context?

Who are the key players involved and where are the significant relationships that need to be forged?

Multilevel relationship building

CACD practitioners noted the importance of building relationships across multiple levels and sectors. Relationships influence projects through funders/organisations, communities, and local government. Relationships and relationship building can be a source of stress or strain for CACD artists. CACD practitioners need self-awareness and balance in approaching and creating relationships.

There is a need to build good relationships and expand relationships with funders and organisations in order to fund the work you want to do and have access to funding in the future. Practitioners need relationships beyond a specific organisation or department. The sector needs to move into philanthropy, sponsorship and different funding avenues.

Practitioners need to build personal and professional relationships within communities. This helps to build knowledge, provide information to help enter into the community. In remote communities relationships are very much personal and professional. Relationships with the community and how you roll out a project has to be real, not just a professional relationship - and then you go home and need to leave this behind.

It's a "dance of maintaining a good personal relationship with people so that our best work can happen in a professional way."

Acknowledgment that there are many levels of relationships and relationships across multiple sectors within the industry – arts, cultural workers, funding bodies, media, local government. They all have many levels and multiple needs.

Quality of relationships

There is recognition that building quality relationships is fundamental to community arts work. Long term relationships are a priority and bringing in outside artists for cultural exchange is important.

Creating meaningful, authentic, open and vulnerable relationships is essential. Relationships within remote locations have to be solid and meaningful as you will experience highs and lows within the community. Regional communities tend to be very interconnected and **"everyone knows everything that's going on. You're not just 'the arts worker'."** There is therefore a need to recognise people's investment in projects and try to deliver back to people the outcomes that they want.

Authenticity within relationships is also important at an organisational level. It is important to stay open and vulnerable with funders as well as communities, so that, for example, when things have been difficult and projects need more time for development or completion you can have honest conversations and funding bodies have an appreciation and understanding of the work involved and the demands on the artist.

"Good practice CACD is obviously long term, collaborative, deep relationships".

Internal and external relationships

Relationships are important within the sector, with other arts areas to share solutions and ideas; with CRN and others developing support for arts workers; and for mentorship among CACD artists. Strong relationships within the sector can provide an **"...opportunity around profiling best practice..."**

Peer-to-peer support is important for professional development, professional supervision and profiling best practice. Artists value formal and informal opportunities for connection, where conversations allow for sharing of respective experiences in community. CACD practitioners value the opportunity to share experiences and opportunities to connect with other artists working in the industry. Particularly in relation to isolated practitioners, **"initiatives like Creative Recovery Network are really vital particularly for connecting more remote arts workers on a very regular basis."**

Relationships are also important for developing mentoring both within and beyond the CACD network/community. Within the CACD community, artists value the opportunity to shadow experienced artists and learn what are acceptable practices or best practice models for emerging CACD practitioners to follow. There are also opportunities to develop mentoring relationships with allied sectors outside of CACD, such as health and mental health sectors, **"Particularly in that sector where there might be the ability to skill share, in terms of people like art therapists being part of a network who are also connected to other mental health services and things like that, which might become a connection point where there's a cross over in those sectors."**

Furthermore, the CACD sector can establish relationships with health, social services, and allied sectors (i.e., others working with communities) to facilitate support and guidance. These sectors may have already established protocols and procedures that CACD can borrow from and learn from so that we don't have to **"reinvent the wheel but have those opportunities outside of it to really provide support for independent practitioners."**

Policy

Principles and Standards

The sector needs to develop an agreed set of national principles that would become “Indicators of Good Practice” in CACD. These principles would include clearly defined artist roles, governance of hours of work (e.g., Fair Work Australia), and an employee assistance program. The principles should be formulated through a co-designed model by government agencies and CACD artists themselves and will provide both artists with an understanding of what is **“reasonable out there in the industry, and then people know [to include] those things into funding applications and have them funded as reasonable.”** Conversely, the principles would provide funders with a better understanding of the elements that need to be considered and funded within the scope of a CACD project.

In conjunction with this, there needs to be a multilayered approach to projects. Projects need to be responsive, with different needs addressed at different times or stages of the project, and for different individual artists. CACD practitioners should enjoy autonomy over their project and have access to training that allows them to recognise the multiple layers of support necessary within a CACD project and when (and how) to access them.

CACD requires a bespoke model of support related to the challenges of working in the industry, not least related to the nuances of participatory art making; the fact that many projects, artists, and participants are geographically dispersed; the diverse practices and focuses of CACD artists and their work; and a disparity in project resources and access to these resources. There needs to be bespoke models of support for each version of work you encounter and each community you enter. A standardised model will not necessarily work as each project is unique and approaches to CACD projects can vary immensely. However, if artists are aware of the options available to them they can **“select from these options what fits with your needs at the time.”**

Risk management processes need to be embedded throughout CACD projects, from conception to implementation, and at completion. **“Risk management planning is really, really critical as part of any CACD process. And I think that if you do that well then you’re preparing yourself as the**

arts worker or your teams to identify the community issues that they’re going to face and the safety issues that they’re going to face. And you’ll start to develop interventions around all of those plus start putting resources around all of those. And I think that’s something that is really missed in a lot of CACD projects.”

CACD artists must consider the complexity of the communities they are working with and think through the support that needs to be put around both the community and the artistic team throughout the project process, and then be able to put a dollar value on those resources for funding.

The inclusion of practices that help CACD artists be prepared and identify potential risks throughout the project cycle, such as debriefing and including mental health support, is something that **“needs to be ingrained and embedded and become a core behaviour of the sector [and] the practitioners within it.”**

Solutions – what are the next steps?

The following data is from the afternoon group session where the participants were asked to come up with pathways forward based on specific questions and points in the Process Enneagram.

Safe spaces, nourished artists, good work

Points to address:

- Time frames, boundaries, contracts
- Sabbaticals, long service leave, time off instead of overtime pay

Ways forward:

- Sector to work towards forming a two ways values-based model – incorporating social impact (community/evidencing our work) and advocacy (influencing change in the sector)
- The CACD sector needs to educate funders so they understanding connection between long term funding and long term outcomes

- An holistic view of projects needs to be adopted, including pre and post care access to psychologists (budgeting for self-care; pre-project check in; project debriefing throughout and at the end) and project debriefing . All methods need to inform ongoing project planning.
- Work life balance needs to be supported though funded parental leave, mental health days, professional training and development and annual leave - coordinated for employees and contractors.
- Establish fixed term contracts.
- Build a stronger focus on inclusivity, diversity and equity in work environments.
- Advocate for best practice self-care.
- Lobby for mental health services in the arts.
- Practitioners need to know the history of Country – walk on Country. Why are you here? What do you want? What are your expectations? Don't bring experience from one Country and assume it is the same in another Country
- Start every relationship, with one person or a whole community, new, open, curious, almost as if it's the first. You're there to learn too. What are you doing? What do you do? Link in with the local organisations and meet people
- Work with the principle of the Yarning circles - don't stand above, sit with
- When you walk into a community, know what has happened. Be prepared.
- Work for the principle of equity, not taking sides. Reconciliation takes time

Community and culture

Points to address

- Working with the community towards achievable outcomes, setting clear boundaries around expectations and reality.
- Celebrate cultural transmission of knowledge
- Building quality, safe, respectful community relationships

Ways forward

- Mentoring models - Cultural practitioner 'elders' transfer knowledge of CACD to newer practitioners, inspired by Indigenous models of cultural transfer between the generations
- Build an understanding of the specifics of the community being engaged; utilise understanding of community specifics when planning projects
- Transparency – involve community and be clear with intentions; adapt to community context; strive to be genuine and truthful
- CACD organisations could partner with artists on projects they lead with communities the artists already have a relationship with
- Acknowledge the history of more than forty years of CACD practice, and also the history of the organisations, areas and communities you are working with

Development

Points to address

- Learning opportunities – artistic practice and career planning/development
- Sharing processes used in CACD projects
- Learning and sharing together
- Placements in other sectors
- International placements
- Career planning
- Training in sustainable project design

Ways forward

- Establish practice sharing through labs – like choreographic labs; sharing processes used in CACD projects; no pressure environment, not delivering to a community but learning and sharing together experientially
- Build cross sector learning opportunities – opportunity for placements of artists in other sectors like police, health, heritage, economic development. E.g., OzAid international development - International placements
- Career planning for CACD artists requires support– development time, delivery time, reflection time

- Build or identify pathways for artists, currently one job leads to the next and they follow an unplanned trajectory; career plans
- Build opportunities for professional development and network development
- Support experiential learning, building transitions between different phases of career: emerging; mid; mature
- CACD orgs could support individual artists to build skills in running their own business including administrative skills relating to tax and super requirements

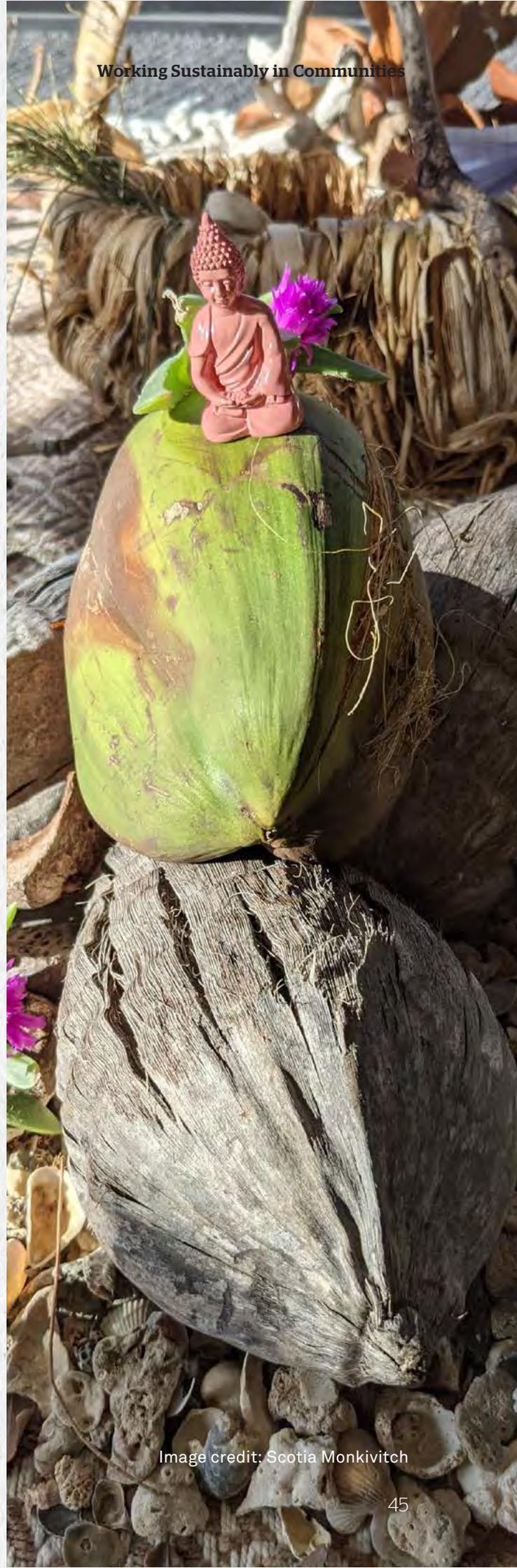
Financial stability

Points to address

- Pay scales, super, leave, time off instead of overtime pay, insurance
- \$100/hour at National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) rates, Employee Assistance Program needed

Ways forward

- Build long term financial stability for CACD practitioners and artists into contract arrangements so that artists work on projects that sustain the work and themselves - identify a pay scale to cover down time; build in super and leave; time in lieu
- Establish a special artist health insurance;
- Pay CACD practitioners/artists \$100/hour or establish/link to a rate scale like NAVA. CACD practitioner remuneration rates are currently low and unrealistic. We/the sector/outside the sector need to value the work we do and pay/remunerate appropriately
- Fund career sabbaticals and long service leave - potentially through State departments or philanthropic support. This should not be project driven, but allow for experimentation of process, time to pull back, rest and gain perspective



Appendix Two

Evaluation

questionnaire

Group Professional Development Sessions

Practical skills

Participants reported improvements in their personal skills around coping with stress, compassion fatigue and creative leadership.

Application of skills learned in sessions meant participants felt better equipped to deal with the situations they found themselves in throughout the course of the pilot. They could apply them to the work they were currently doing. Participants reported an increased confidence in knowing how to care for themselves, deal with stress, and advocate for best practice.

Connection with others

Participants reported feeling more connected to other artists through listening to others experiences and having a space where they could meet and spend time with peers. They reported feeling heard, validated, and acknowledged/supported by sharing experiences with others. Feelings of isolation were reduced.

Personal reflection

Participation allowed for improved reflection both on personal practice as CACD practitioner and in personal self-care practices. Reflection was beneficial in terms of recognising what they currently do which works and is valuable, and areas where there could be improvements or changes made to the way they approach certain situations/challenges.

There were improvements noticed in self-awareness and the ability to self-monitor. Reflection allowed for participants to monitor how they were tracking in given situations.

Homework provided good prompts for reflection, however, this wasn't a universal experience. Others found the homework component of the program too time consuming and difficult to fit in.

They noted broadened knowledge and understanding of self-care and supervision, what this may constitute for individuals, and how this could be applied to different people in different contexts.

Individual Supervision Sessions

Support

Participants felt supported and validated by having access to individual sessions. They reported increases in confidence and self-awareness, improved knowledge of personal needs and ways of working. There was a recognition of patterns in self and strategies/ approaches to deal with this. There was an improved clarity of issues impacting individuals – the ability to reflect on self meant that they gained better understanding of themselves/ current situations.

These sessions also provided a sense of community to some participants, a sense of belonging to a community of interest and connection with other CACD practitioners.

Practical advice

Practical advice and skills meant that participants could take skills and apply them to work immediately.

Practitioner knowledge

Participants emphasised the importance of having access to a practitioner who understood the specific demands they faced as artists working in the community. There is value in the perception that the facilitator already understands the space in which you're working and "gets" the challenges that you're facing.

Individual needs

There was an appreciation of the ability to tailor sessions to individual needs. That the sessions did not necessarily need to focus on one aspect of support. They could use the session to focus on specific issues that you wanted to work on, whether that be career coaching, crisis support, skills based work, etc.

Barriers and Challenges to Participation

Personal circumstances

Some encountered difficulty participating due to changes in personal circumstances, life constraints.

Technology

Technical issues with connecting remotely, preferences with different forms of technology.

There was a variance of preference around connecting via Zoom, by phone, or face-to-face. Digital technology was sometimes challenging for individual sessions and would have been preferred to have been face-to-face.

Time and logistics

It was noted that it was difficult to fit in sessions when conflicting with work commitments, difficult to fit in the "homework" or additional reading packs.

It was felt that artists' time should be paid for participating in these sessions.

Understanding CACD and supervision

There were challenges in establishing 'baseline' for what CACD is and reaching a group understanding of this at the outset. This was important to create group cohesion.

They also reported that they may not have fully understood what kind of support was available for the individual sessions, and what could be covered in a session. That you didn't need to be experiencing a 'crisis' but it could also be used for a wide scope of issues/topics you wanted to explore further related to yourself or your practice.

Appendix 3

Professional supervision modules

The primary aim of professional supervision is to promote optimal care, safety, and wellbeing for practitioners in accordance with organisation and professional standards. Supervision is one aspect of a wider framework of professional development activities that are designed to support workers, and manage and monitor the delivery of high-quality services and effective outcomes for project communities/participants

...a forum for reflection and learning... an interactive dialogue between at least two people, one of whom is a supervisor. This dialogue shapes a process of review, reflection, critique and replenishment for professional practitioners. Supervision is a professional activity in which practitioners are engaged throughout the duration of their careers regardless of experience or qualification. The participants are accountable to professional standards and defined competencies and to organisational policy and procedures.

Davys, A. & Beddoe, L. (2010) Best Practice in Professional Supervision: A Guide for the Helping Professions, London. Jessica Kingsley P. 21

Professional supervision is a formal process of support and reflection and is separate to a formal system of individual performance appraisal. It is about empowerment, not control.

The secondary purpose of the supervision process is to provide duty of care for staff/contractors by creating safe and supportive opportunities to engage in critical reflection in order to raise issues, explore problems, and discover new ways of handling both the situation and oneself. The process aims to:

- Develop knowledge and skills competence
- Reflect and receive feedback on the content and process of their work
- Explore ethical implications and associated work dilemmas within community engagement settings
- Identify measures to manage workplace stressors
- Assume greater responsibility for their practice
- Clarify boundaries between the creative, community participants, organisation, project manager
- Plan and utilise their personal and professional resources more effectively
- Develop accountability for the quality of their work and offer assurances to those who monitor that accountability

For an organisation the professional supervision process supports:

- Co-ordination of the recruitment and selection process of new staff/contractors
- Co-ordination of the orientation and training of new staff/contractors
- Consideration of the personal and professional welfare of the staff/contractors
- Establishment of good communication between members of project groups
- Conduct and coordinate the performance appraisal of staff members
- Address needs of departing and remaining staff/contractors when projects/roles are concluding

Quality supervision processes have been linked with better problem-solving skills, decreased burn-out, enhanced work performance, and increased job satisfaction, identifying gaps in training; directing career development; providing checks on workload, and monitoring work/life balance.

Group sessions

The purpose of group supervision can be collective problem solving and team development, and practice and service delivery. The supervisor's role in group supervision is to facilitate a process whereby supervisees can learn from and support one another.

The purpose of group supervision can be collective problem solving and team development, and practice and service delivery. The supervisor's role in group supervision is to facilitate a process whereby supervisees can learn from and support one another. We have developed a series of six engagement modules that focus on the provocation of key areas of identified need presented by the CACD community.

This content knowledge will ensure that the participants have a tool kit of effective models and understandings to support decision making, articulation of key support needs, points of tension and concrete plans to ensure risk minimisation and response strategies in times of high stress.

Each workshop is designed with one hour of presentation content followed by a further one hour reflection conversation.

Session One: Stress

- The functionality of stress and how particular stressors are present in your work
- How you respond to stress and how to manage stress
- What self-care looks like for you and how to integrate self-care skills with flexibility and compassion
- How mindfulness, grounding, and compassion align with self-care and stress management
- Physical, psychological, professional, and spiritual self-care

Session Two: Compassion Fatigue

- An overview of compassion, its definition, and associated concepts
- A breakdown of the four stages of compassion fatigue and what sign to look out for in your work
- What we mean by burnout and how we use self-care contracts to protect ourselves from burnout
- What sustainable caring looks like for you in your work

Session Three: Values

- Definition of values and their components
- Tools to uncover and explore your values
- Examine what values you are guided by in your work or community

Session Four: Goal Setting

- Lay the foundational work of valued action and goal setting
- Understand how to develop value driven community engagement in projects
- Define and discuss the concept of willingness in valued action

Session Five: Resilience and Transformation

- The definition of resilience for people and systems
- The practices that build resilience
- The relationship between resilience and transformation

Session Six: Creative Leadership

- Frame creativity in neuroscience
- Learn creative practice skills that everyone can engage in no matter the situation
- Building creative skills into your repertoire for community projects

Group supervision is most often used to complement or enhance individual supervision. It may reduce how often one-to-one supervision is needed; however, it is rarely sufficient on its own to meet the individual supervision needs of practitioners.

Online vs in-room

These content sessions can be presented either in-room or via an online conversation platform.

Where there are specific challenges to traditional face-to-face, discipline specific supervision, a 'one size fits all' approach is unlikely to work. Developing a relationship face-to-face first or have some prior interaction before commencing online communication is highly recommended to improve perceptions of the quality of supervision received and the relational connection to the group. For practitioners in rural and remote contexts the feedback suggests that supporting practitioners to access support interventions by means of financial reimbursement, travel subsidies, backfilling and organisational commitment would highlight commitment to practitioner care and could influence retention of practitioners and the quality and safety of programs/projects.

It is recommended that initial sessions where goals and expectations are discussed and a supervision contract developed, be undertaken face-to-face before transitioning into online engagement. If this is not feasible, alternative time for relational engagement, planning and sharing of experience is recommended additionally to the presentation of the six sessions of directed material.

Individual face-to-face sessions with professional supervisor

Sessions are client led within the focus on either the content of the group sessions or within the context of the practitioner's work.

The nature of supervision may need to change over time depending on the experience of the supervisee. With no established standards within the art sector, we can look to aligned sectors for standards. The Queensland Department of Health recommends that newly graduated allied health professionals with less than two years' experience are expected to undertake one hour of formal supervision per week; those with two to five years' experience, a minimum of one hour per fortnight; and those with over five years' experience, a minimum of one hour per month (Queensland Health Service Directive Guideline, 2014).

Supervision should be ongoing, disregarding experience, in recognition of professional lifelong learning and professional development requirements.

Organisation's directive

The culture of an organisation, its general commitment to professional values, will permeate the behaviours of the participants in supervision. An organisation that understands and promotes the values and benefits of supervision for all its stakeholders is critical to its implementation. Supervision has a part to play in delivering positive outcomes for community, contractors, employees, and the organisation. Practitioners therefore need to be allowed planning, preparation and supervision time as part of their workload.

In principle organisations need to

- Embrace professional supervision providers as vital and valued service providers who are structurally embedded into their teams supporting CACD creatives – staff and contractors
- Support and encourage all staff and contractors to develop a good working knowledge of the role of professional supervision and the responsibility to activate professional supervision/self-care plans
- Ensure professional supervision providers an

appropriate level of access and visibility in the daily organisational and project planning and activation

- Evaluate the resources required to assess, design, and implement professional supervision measures and initiatives in response to identified needs, in line with organisational and sector processes and priorities
- Support all stakeholders in the collaborative creation of environments that promote wellbeing at all times and encourage the long-term personal and professional growth of creatives alongside the demands of a CACD career
- Support CACD creatives in transition
 - Acknowledging that transitions into, between, and out of CACD programs represent periods of heightened wellbeing risk, professional supervision providers proactively deliver targeted and customised professional supervision servicing to creatives in transition
- Support creatives during their time in CACD projects – professional supervision providers take an individualised approach to professional supervision services to support creatives during the course of their CACD project/program journey, including effective planning for life after the program/projects. Professional supervision needs to be integrated into the CACD projects/program to contribute to the overall performance outcomes of individual creatives

Creative's directive

Acknowledging that CACD is always an evolving field, and that best practice expertise is complex and interdisciplinary, all practitioners have an individual responsibility to maintain their own level of professional competence and each must strive to improve and update knowledge and skills. Maintaining and developing your knowledge, skills and professional behaviour are core aspects of good practice. This requires self-reflection and participation in relevant professional development, practice improvement and performance-appraisal processes, to continually develop your professional capabilities. These activities must continue throughout your working life, as understanding of practice develops and society changes.

Good practice involves

- Keeping your knowledge and skills up to date through educational and professional skills building opportunities to support your practice
- Regularly reviewing your continuing practice education and continuing professional development activities to ensure that they meet the requirements of the sector and the proposed CACD Practice Framework
- Ensuring that your personal continuing professional development program includes self-directed and practice-based learning
- Build progressive understandings about the tools, programs, resources, and support available to you through appropriate organisations, agencies and governing bodies
- Initiate appropriate self-evaluation processes at regular intervals, including with supervision, to maintain and enhance the quality, capability, and professionalism of your practice
- Support all stakeholders in the collaborative creation of high-performance environments that promote wellbeing at all times and encourage the long-term personal and professional growth of creatives alongside the demands of a CACD career
- Model uncompromising standards of ethical, empathic, and respectful behaviours, developing relationships in which confidentiality is paramount and professional boundaries are strictly observed

As most CACD practitioners operate as independent practitioners, support for and access to self-care models and practice methodologies will support better practice across the sector. Commitment to learning and implementing practice of self-care and improved work methodologies is the imperative of each individual practitioner who wishes to be part of the CACD ecology.

Research team

Dr Shona Erskine

Dr Shona Erskine is a registered psychologist in private practice and an Adjunct Lecturer at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University. She is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts and retrained as a psychologist through Deakin University and The University of Melbourne following an extensive career as a contemporary dancer.

Shona has an expertise in delivering psychology for performing artists through professional companies, universities, and in private practice. Dr Erskine has developed curriculum in areas of mental wellbeing and creativity with an interest in disseminating best practice models to performing artists, teachers, and directors.

Shona has dedicated her work as an organisational psychologist to understanding creativity and innovation. She leads workshops on the neuropsychology of creative practice and runs facilitation processes that attend to complexity and perspective. In particular she coaches artists and directors in thinking processes for their artistic endeavours.



Scotia Monkivitch

Scotia is a cultural leader and community arts and cultural development practitioner with major programs and partnerships developed in and with national and international communities, organisations and government. She has diverse experience in training, mentoring, strategic planning, project management and research covers all levels of formal education and community engagement. As a facilitator of community cultural development programs and strategies, she has experience in working with people experiencing disability and disadvantage, mental health, creative aging and rural and remote communities.



Scotia is currently Executive Officer of the Creative Recovery Network, the national agency advocating for and supporting the role of culture and the arts in disaster management - preparedness, response and recovery. The Creative Recovery Network aims to gather, critique, develop and share the knowledge gained nationally and internationally for engagement of the arts in disaster recovery, along with developing tools and support for artists working in this field.

Scotia has a performance background spanning 30 years in movement-based theatre, devised performance, and coordination of projects and theatrical productions. Her performance crosses through traditional theatre forms, installation performance, film, live-art and online exchanges.

Scotia is committed to artistic and executive collaborations and partnerships which privilege the contributors to develop their vision, their art, their audience and the cultural and social relevance of their work – creating art and experiences that changes the way people see their own and others lives.

Project leads

Dr Peta Blevins

Dr Peta Blevins is a researcher and performing arts educator, specialising in psychological skills for performance and safe dance practice, and is a sessional lecturer in performance psychology at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA). Peta has a BPsych from the University of Western Australia, a MSc Dance Science (with distinction) from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, and a PhD from WAAPA.

Peta has worked with organisations in Australia and the UK, delivering workshops and lectures for performing artists and professional development sessions for dance teachers. She has worked as a researcher on projects spanning a range of performance and health related issues, including overtraining and psychological recovery in dance training, mindfulness and acceptance dance training for dance students, the health benefits of dance participation for high school students, and the effect of physical activity on cognitive impairment in older adults.



CAN COMMUNITY ARTS NETWORK

Community Arts Network creates positive social change through the arts, building inclusion and understanding between people.

Community = we connect deeply with communities to create art that builds on strengths, shares stories and inspires social change

Arts = we create outstanding art with artists and diverse communities that engages and impacts broader audiences

Network = we build sector knowledge, capacity and influence through reflective practice, professional development, partnerships and national advocacy



Creative Recovery Network is a specialist service provider and advocate for culture and the arts within the emergency management sector.

We partner with government, community service, and private sector providers who work in disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

“Meeting with peers on a monthly basis to support each other was invaluable.”

Poppy van Oorde-Grainger



“I continually return to the work to deepen my understanding and practice new ways of strength-based thinking and being. Equally beneficial was the opportunity to build and learn from a highly-skilled peer network and debrief monthly with a psychologist to explore and apply new perspectives in my own work practice.”

Brooke Small



Image credit: Michelle Troop



What can I do?

- 1. Talk** with your colleagues about your wellbeing and share good practice. Activate your peer-to-peer networks and build the sector conversation to drive change.
- 2.** As both a contractor or contractee for CACD projects, **question** and **review** contractual arrangements to ensure time and resources are allocated for best practice wellbeing support.
- 3. Talk** to your state government arts and cultural department about the importance of wellbeing support for practitioners and ask for their plans to fund support within CACD projects.
- 4. Join** the working party to develop the CACD Practice Framework. Sign up at www.creativerecovery.net.au/creatingwell



CREATIVE
RECOVERY
NETWORK

www.creativerecovery.net.au

CreatingWell

Working Sustainably in Communities

Recommendations for practitioner wellbeing in the Community Arts and Cultural Development sector

CAN COMMUNITY
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www.can.org.au