

# STRATEGIES FOR USING THE ARTS AS A TOOL FOR SYSTEMS INTERVENTION IN THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

WORKSHOP CONCEPTS AND SCOPE CREATED BY RECESS ART, THE CONFINED ARTS, DANCES FOR SOLIDARITY, PHOENIX PLAYERS THEATRE GROUP, AND OTHER CONTRIBUTORS OF THE

**ARTS JUSTICE SAFETY COALITION.**



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MULTIMEDIA ART AND CONSULTING COMPANY

# ARTS JUSTICE SAFETY COALITION



In 2020 The Confined Arts partnered with the Center for Justice Innovation and Conspiring for Good to MAP, GALVANIZE AND SUPPORT artists, arts organizations, projects, and programs focused on racial justice, restorative justice, transformative justice, and Criminal Justice Reform by forming the ARTS JUSTICE SAFETY COALITION. Our goals are to sustain a community of individuals and organizations working at the intersection of art and justice system reform, with a focus on community resilience and prevention through advocacy and reform:

- To elevate the status of art as a tool for systemic, cultural, and social change and build power among artists who utilize their work to these ends.
- To create lasting change within the criminal legal system by utilizing art and artistry to identify and demonstrate problems and envision and advocate for solutions.
- To persuasively provide evidence to policy makers and funders that investing in the arts is investing in safety (and to create evaluative tools and methodologies for artists in the field.)
- To create relationships between artists and arts and justice practitioners to learn from each other, create shared language, tools, techniques, and make “ecosystem” progress as our society works towards non-punitive responses to trauma.

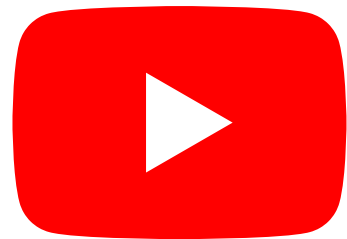
# **INTRODUCTION TO THE ROLE OF ARTS IN SYSTEMS**

## **INTERVENTION**

The goal of systems intervention in the criminal legal system is to identify, then reduce or eliminate the impact of punitive responses to unlawful behavior, and to enhance and sustain those policies, procedures and regulations that move the nation away from reliance on jails and prisons as the false means of restoration or rehabilitation. The purpose of the arts as a tool for systems intervention is to create and sustain a legal approach that advances alternative to incarceration (ATI). By positioning the arts as a necessary tool in prevention, pre-trial, supervised release, and post-conviction sentencing options and utilizing trauma-informed arts practices to inform public safety strategies, the humanity of individuals who are system-impacted can be moved to the center of restoration and rehabilitation.

## **ORGANIZERS/ADVOCATES SHOULD CONSIDER:**

- Having a general knowledge of the system(s) one seeks to impact.
- Understanding one's own individual capacity and skills to effectively conceptualize, prepare, and execute systems intervention work.
- Having a general knowledge of the audience that you seek to work with.



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**Introduction to the Role of Arts in Systems Intervention**

**ARTIVISM 101**

**(STRATEGIC ARTS ENGAGEMENT)**

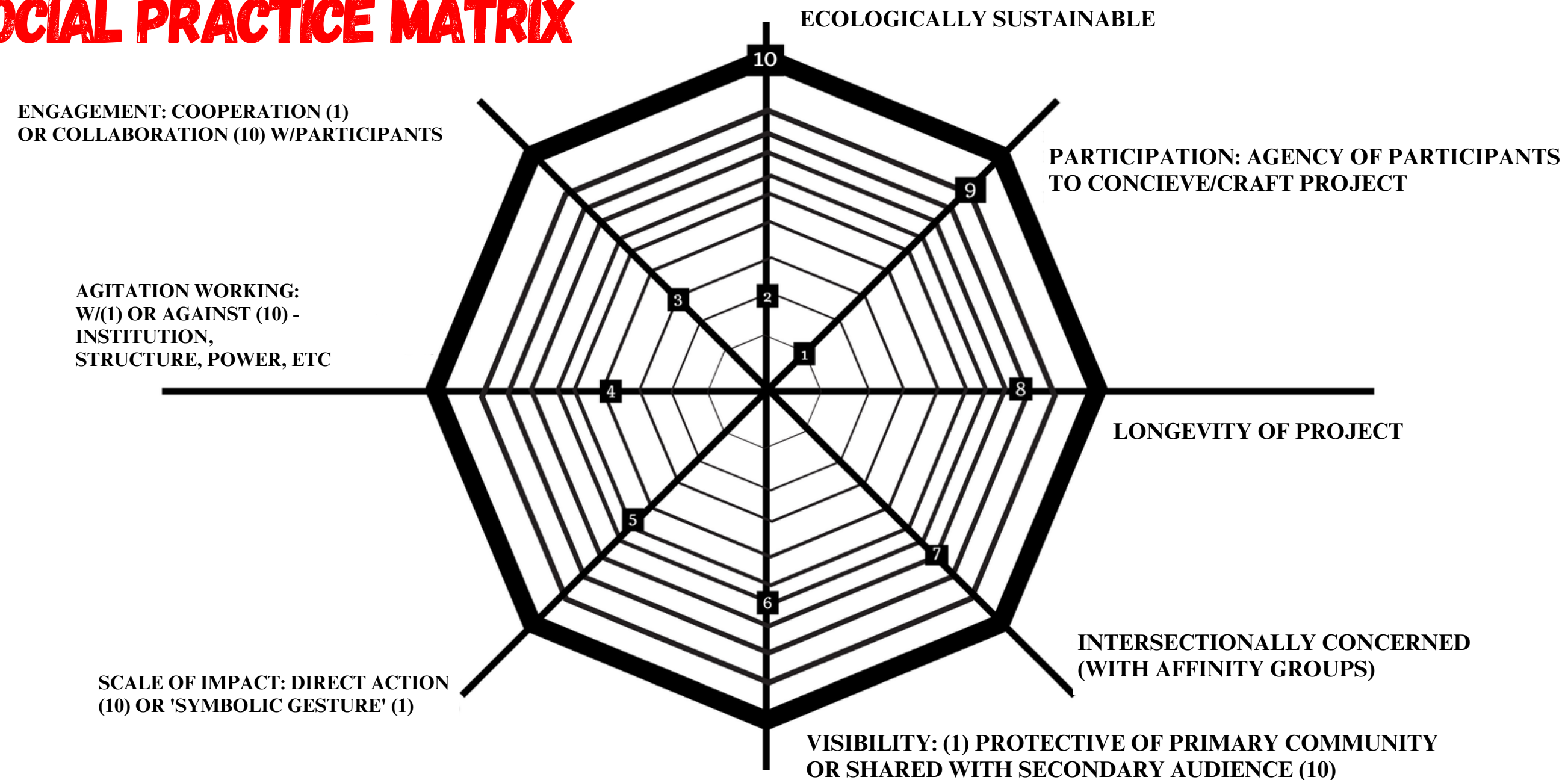


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# ARTIVISM 101 (STRATEGIC ARTS ENGAGEMENT)

## USING A SOCIAL PRACTICE MATRIX

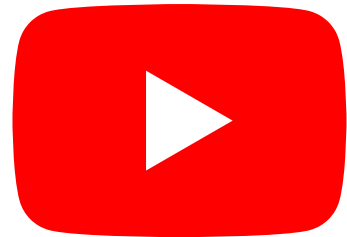


The Social Practice Matrix was developed by Duff Norris as part of A Social Practice Laboratory, Shaun Leonardo's PROJECT THIRD residency at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn NY. The lab offered an investigation into varied forms of creative public engagement through a series of student-driven projects, which explored the interpersonal potential of art in various social spaces, including the community center, prison, classroom, and living room. Learn More Here: [www.pratt.edu/work/a-social-practice-matrix/](http://www.pratt.edu/work/a-social-practice-matrix/)

# Strategic Arts Engagement

## **ORGANIZERS/ADVOCATES SHOULD CONSIDER:**

- Utilizing the Social Practice Matrix as tool for understanding the boundaries of a project rather than Success/Failure framework.
- What does the project(s) intend to accomplish?
- What intended outcomes were not built into the project(s)?
- Address the ways both limitations and priorities are built into project scope and intentions.



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# **TRAUMA-INFORMED TEACHING AND CREATIVE PRODUCTION IN JUSTICE SPACES**



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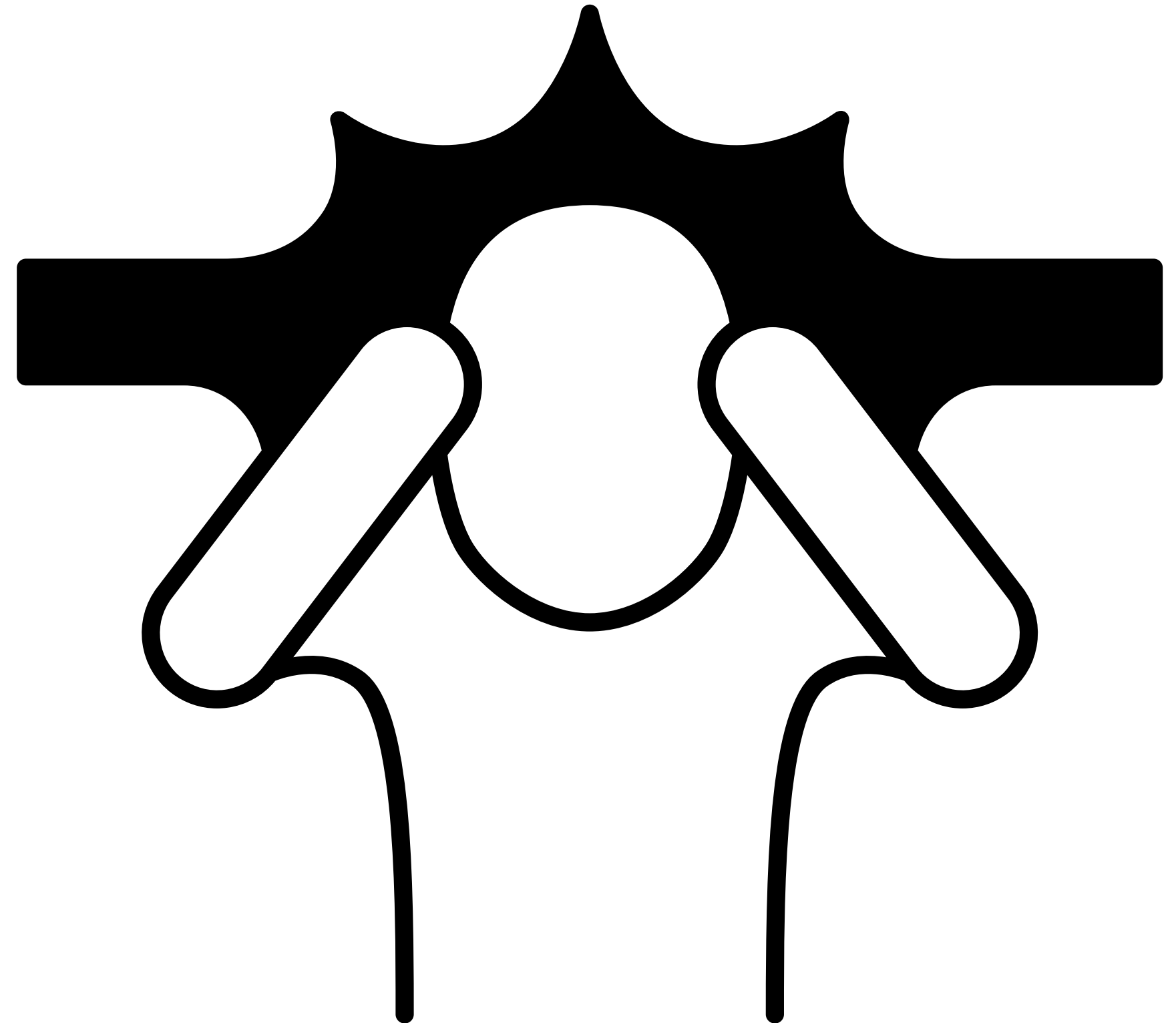
# UNDERSTAND THE POPULATION AND THE TRAUMA

What is trauma?

What is being trauma-informed?

What is trauma from incarceration?

What does it look like in day to day functionality?





Trauma is defined as a psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience

(We use this definition because it is relatable).

Bruce D. Perry, M.D.,Ph.D. is the Principal of the Neurosequential Network and a Professor (Adjunct) in the Departments of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University in Chicago and the School of Allied Health, College of Science, Health and Engineering, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Victoria Australia.



# UNDERSTAND THE POPULATION AND THE TRAUMA (CONT.)

Research Illuminates the negative psychological effects that incarceration has on people in prison.

## NEGATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS INCLUDE:

- A dependence on institutional structure and contingencies.
- Hyper-vigilance;
- Interpersonal distrust, and suspicion;
- Emotional over-control,\* alienation, and psychological distancing;
- Social withdrawal and isolation;
- Incorporation of exploitative norms of prison culture;
- Diminished sense of self-worth and personal value;
- And post-traumatic stress reactions to the pains of imprisonment.

(Haney, 2001)

Additionally, research conducted in 2020 by The Confined Arts with participants at Exodus Transitional Communities has found qualitative evidence that the deprived social environment of prison can potentially impede one's social capacity to navigate various social obligations post incarceration.



\*Emotional over-control is the attempt to control or inhibit emotional experiencing, predict and control future problems, and find certainty in experience. Individuals who struggle with emotional over-control often struggle with uncertainty, unpredictability, and emotional grey areas.

# HOW SHOULD WE LISTEN FOR TRAUMA?

- BIASED LISTENING [Preconceived Notions] ✘
- SYMPATHETIC LISTENING [Demonstrates Pity] ✘
- EMPATHETIC LISTENING [Demonstrates shared experience(s)] ✔
- CRITICAL LISTENING [Note taking for main points] ✔
- INFORMATION GATHERING [Being educated through listening] ✔
- APPRECIATIVE LISTENING [Listening for entertainment] ✘
- SELECTIVE LISTENING [Distracted or Biased] ✘
- RAPPORT BUILDING LISTENING [Building trust through listening] ✔



# AESTHETICS & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

**It is imperative to be informed about the environment you are teaching or producing art in.**

*(Showing the space is safe vs. saying it)*

**Establishing boundaries and privacy to elicit voluntary participation.**

*(Prioritize grounding and transparency)*

**Trauma shows up differently in the body.**

*(Prioritize active listening)*





# ACTIVE LISTENING

Adapted from Kinsey-House et al, Co-Active Coaching (2010).

- **LEVEL 1:** listening primarily to yourself or what is going on in your head. In this Level One listening, you're not really fully hearing the other person.
- **LEVEL 2:** listening while intensely focused on what the other person is saying. Nothing's distracting you. Thoughts about the past or the future don't intrude. Even your own ideas don't get in the way of you hearing the other person.
- **LEVEL 3:** listening is also completely directed towards the other person, but it has a wider focus. You hear more than just the words they're saying. You pick up on different types of information – body language, the inflections and tone of their voice, their pauses and hesitations.

# **PRINCIPLES OF EQUITABLE STORYTELLING IN JUSTICE SPACES**



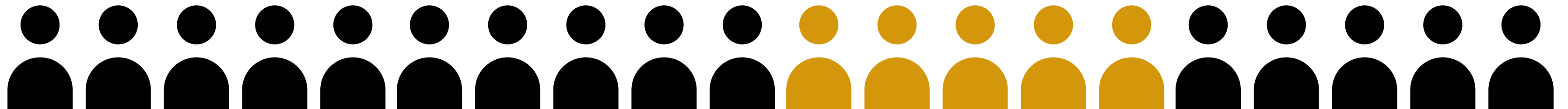
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# **FULL PARTICIPATION IN AN ARTISTIC PRODUCTION**

Ensure that your creative production utilizes a process of collaborative art making that includes the perspective, aesthetics, and insight of people who are directly impacted by the content of the final production. This process of collaboratively creating art must be rooted in cultural representation, ensuring that the aesthetics and messaging of an artistic production upholds the integrity of the people who share that lived experience.

# REPRESENTATION

IT IS IMPERATIVE for arts practitioners working in justice spaces to understand the historic relationships between dehumanizing language in music, stereotypical, and racialized media, as well as iconic imagery, and how different forms of representation have and continue to influence America's present visual culture along with its impact on Black and Indigenous people of color.



# COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP VS INCLUSION FOR QUOTA

## Collaborative Leadership:

1. Ensures inclusivity at every phase of an artistic production.
2. Recognizes and prioritizes the unique perspective of each stakeholder involved in the production.
3. Positions all stakeholders to be co-leaders and change agents.

## Inclusion for Quota:

1. Checking off the (affirmative action) box to avoid outside criticism.
2. Limited creative control relinquished to directly impacted people.
3. Committed to personal vision vs. the vision of the people who are directly impacted.



# **MAINTAINING AND COMMUNICATING TRAUMA-INFORMED CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH PROGRAMMING**



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## **SLOWNESS AND OPTING-IN**

*Avoid prioritizing deadlines over what participants need for effective engagement.*

In order to build a comfortable and trustworthy space for learning and creating, it is imperative to prioritize relationship building, and to meet each individual where they are.



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# DEHUMANIZATION

Utilize and promote affirmative language when dealing with difficult subject matter.

Be equally mindful that engaging with your course material or production content does not foster dehumanizing processes for the participants/contributors/performers.



*THOUGHTS, Mixed Media Visual Art by Isaac Scott*



# DEHUMANIZATION [LANGUAGE]

- LABELS HAVE IMPACT
- LANGUAGE CAN BE EXCLUDING
- LANGUAGE CAN BE MISREPRESENTATIVE [FEARMONGERING]
- THE LANGUAGE WE USE SHAPES THE RELATIONSHIPS WE ARE ABLE TO FORGE



# DEHUMANIZATION [THROUGH YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS]

- IS THE PROCESS OF ENGAGING YOUR WORK RE-TRAUMATIZING?
- IS THE CONTENT YOU ARE USING/EXPLORING RE-TRAUMATIZING?
- IS YOUR PRESENCE OR INHERITED AUTHORITY RE-TRAUMATIZING?



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**PEDAGOGY & CURRICULUM  
DEVELOPMENT  
IN JUSTICE SPACES**



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# PEDAGOGY & CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

WE RECOMMEND THREE EVALUATIVE AREAS WHEN DEVELOPING CURRICULUM

GREETING  
(RELATIONSHIP  
BUILDING)



ART MAKING  
(AGENCY / AUTHORSHIP)



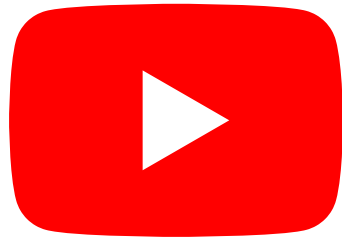
CLOSING  
(DECOMPRESSION)



Pedagogy & Curriculum Development

# **CONTACT US TO GET INVOLVED**

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**[WATCH FULL ALL WORKSHOPS HERE FOR FACILITATED GUIDANCE](#)**

**INTRO TO ARTS IN SYSTEMS INTERVENTION | Workshop 1 of 4**

**STRATEGIC ARTS ENGAGEMENT (ARTIVISM 101) | Workshop 2 of 4**

**TRAUMA-INFORMED TEACHING AND CREATIVE PRODUCTION IN JUSTICE SPACES | Workshop 3 of 4**

**PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR JUSTICE SPACES | Workshop 4 of 4**

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ARTS JUSTICE SAFETY COALITION:**

**[www.theconfinedarts.org/arts-justice-safety-coalition.html](http://www.theconfinedarts.org/arts-justice-safety-coalition.html)**

**WWW.THECONFINEDARTS.ORG**



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