



**Socially engaged art:**

**Extending your  
practice to work  
with the public**

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**Introduction**

**Starter activity**

**Session**

**Break out discussion**

**Final Q & A**

**Virtual tea room**

# Session aims

- What is a socially engaged practice?
- Why is socially engaged practice important?
- How do I work with people inclusively?
- How do I go about it?







# What is a socially engaged practice?

## Working with others

Socially engaged practice describes art that is **collaborative**, often **participatory** and involves people as the medium or material of the work.

## Where and who?

- Schools
- Health settings- hospitals, care homes, recovery services
- Arts and community organisations- BCB, Museums, Portland Inn Project



# Why is socially engaged practice important?

- To share creative and cultural ideas and skills with people
- To help make the arts accessible to all
- It is often described as 'activism' because there is often political issues being dealt with
- Artists working in this setting are vital for social/public services
- It makes people feel a part of something
- Working collaboratively
- It brings people together - increases social engagement
- It can improve health and wellbeing *"As a supplement to medicine and care, the evidence suggests that engagement with the arts can improve a person's physical and mental well-being."* NHS Confederation
- To develop your arts practice





## How do I work with people inclusively?

- Create a safe space and make this clear, it's about ways of working that help develop trust.
- Be open to new experiences, communities and cultures
- Being in correspondence with participants and materials (co-working)
- Make people feel valued by assuming that everyone is new to working with the material, but that they have a wealth of experiences and knowledge to share.
- Think about how people will find out and become involved. Use social media effectively to reach a variety of audiences.



## How do I work with people inclusively?

- Structure a plan that makes people feel safe
- Clear introductions and agree on ways of working to suit the group
- Show people around the place you are working so that they are able to access materials and tools more independently.
- Building in time for evaluation at the end of the session and in the overall plan so that you can adapt as you go along according to the needs of the group.

## How do I go about it?

- Be honest about your motivations. Is this for you?
- Be thorough with planning, delivery and evaluation
- Always consider your environment - for example online/face to face
- Develop relationships with people
- Always welcome your groups
- Ask to meet your groups in their own setting
- Promote your event/workshop eg. social media in plenty of time



## How do I go about it?

- Volunteer, contact organisations/schools
- Consider that the 'doing' could be just as, or even more important than the final result
- Make your participants a part of planning. What do they want to get out of this?
- Be clear with your employer about your fees and agree on a fair payment which includes your planning, delivery etc
- Insurance/DBS/Safeguarding/H&S



- 1) What motivates you to do/consider doing socially engaged work as an artist?**
- 2) How could you share your practice in a useful way to others?**

# RESOURCES / Further Reading

## BCB projects

[Clay Works with Changes](#)

[Growing Cultures - Haywood Hospital on Vimeo](#)

[Growing Cultures - Burslem Jubilee Project on Vimeo](#)

[Pit Pack and Cooking with Clay](#) Resources for working with clay

## Working with clay

Clay in common, Julia Rowntree and Duncan Hoosan ([book](#))

## Websites

<https://arestlessart.com/>

<https://www.artshealthecrn.com/creativeconnections>

## Arts and Health

[Baring foundation Mapping Study](#) This new report focuses on arts and mental health activity in the UK in the two years prior to publication (January 2020), and was produced to help the Baring Foundation prepare for its new funding programme.

The impact on arts and culture on wellbeing: All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Report

[Culture Health and wellbeing](#) (Long)

[Culture Health and wellbeing](#) (Short)

Arts Council England "[Lost without it](#)" - Arts and culture for older people

[West Yorkshire Playhouse Guide to Dementia Friendly Performances](#)

[Dementia and the Arts - Online Course](#)

[Resource pack to help develop care home pen pal partnerships and encourage creative writing activities.](#)

[Doing Good Leeds](#): Fantastic examples of work done in Leeds

## Careers

[Working in museums](#)