



Art for Social Inclusion

A GUIDE FOR ARTISTS WORKING IN CHALLENGING
HEALTHCARE ENVIRONMENTS



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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Definition of Key Concepts.....	5
The Benefits of Art in Challenging Healthcare Environments.....	8
Required Skills of the Artists working in Challenging Healthcare Environments.....	13
Challenges and how they can be mitigated	28
Needs and Limitations of specific categories of target groups.....	31
The importance of the “experience”	35
Case studies connected to each area of research	40
Examples of Art-Based Activities with people from challenging healthcare settings	66
References	83

Introduction

The present manual is aiming to empower artists and other professionals to work effectively with individuals in difficult healthcare areas using art as a tool. It aims to provide approaches and practical examples to artists and professionals in order to be able to work with people facing chronic illnesses, people with dementia, people with disabilities, older people etc.

It has been proven that art can be incredibly beneficial for people in difficult healthcare areas for a variety of reasons. Its positive impact on mental and emotional well-being is well-documented. The ways in which art can benefit individuals in challenging healthcare environments include among others: Stress Reduction, Distraction, Emotional Expression, Sense of Achievement, Community Building, Improved Cognitive Function, Enhanced Quality of Life, Pain Management, Wellness Promotion, Empowerment, Communication and Coping Skills, Family and Caregiver Support. Through painting, sculpting, music, and other art forms, individuals can find solace, express their emotions, and cope with the challenges of their healthcare situations.

On the other hand, artists often do not have the experience or skills to work in such environments. Artists typically receive training in their specific art form, which focuses on honing their creative and technical skills. They may not have formal education or training in healthcare, psychology, or related fields, which are often necessary for understanding the unique dynamics of healthcare settings. Many of them may not be aware of the potential for using their skills in healthcare environments. The integration of art and healthcare is a relatively new and evolving field, and artists may not have been exposed to these opportunities during their education or career development.

The manual has the following objectives:

- To identify and explain the benefits that Art can have for people in challenging healthcare environments
- To identify the skills and resources that are necessary in order for an Artist to be able to work effectively in such environments

- To identify the challenges that artists face when they want to work in such environments and how they can overcome them
- To explore how can professional and/or amateur artists can become part of a comprehensive policy that will enable them to participate. The cooperation of both the professional and amateur artists can lead to synergies that can create further opportunities for more people to participate
- To identify the needs and limitations of specific groups of people in challenging healthcare situations in relation to the use of Art-based methods
- To develop a set of ideas from artists in order to ensure that all forms of Art can become an active part of the Project.
- To assess how specific best practices across the EU can be exchanged by the artists, professional and/or amateur, in order to create synergies that will lead to the best possible results. The assessment of such practices will provide all participant organisations and countries, to exchange knowledge, making the overall project as more sustainable
- To present case studies and specific implementation plans of how different forms of Art can be used in different healthcare environments. These plans could be directly implemented by the readers of the manual.

In conclusion, this manual aims to guide professional artists in effectively working with individuals in challenging healthcare settings while promoting patient engagement. By leveraging artistic expression and creativity, we can contribute to the improvement of emotional well-being, coping, and inclusivity among patients with chronic illnesses. Through collaborative efforts and thoughtful implementation, we can work towards a more equitable and resilient future for all.

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Definition of Key Concepts

In this chapter, we are going to define the key main concepts with which we are going to deal with throughout the manual.

Definition of Art

Art is a very broad concept which has received several definitions throughout the years, and in some occasions these definitions can be considered as controversial. However, the famous Stanford Encyclopedia has identified several acceptable definitions that can be outlined and provide the opportunity to clarify this important aspect, hence, avoiding possible conflict over the real concept which can affect the current work, and obviously, the contribution of Artists within the context of Social Inclusion. Therefore, the following definitions are outlined¹:

- A kind of representation that is purposive in itself and, though without an end, nevertheless promotes the cultivation of the mental powers for sociable communication
- The quality, production, expression, or realm, according to aesthetic principles, of what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance.
- The class of objects subject to aesthetic criteria; works of art collectively, as paintings, sculptures, or drawings
- The making of objects, images, music, etc. that are beautiful or that express feelings, including TV.

However, Aristotle has defined that “Art completes what nature cannot bring to a finish. The artist gives us knowledge of nature’s unrealised ends.” Further, Leonardo Da Vinci suggested that “Art is the Queen of all sciences communicating knowledge to all the generations of the world.” Additionally, El Greco has provided a more accurate approach which includes the nature and clarified that “Art is everywhere you look for it; hail the twinkling stars for they are God’s careless splatters.” Finally, Michelangelo stated that “The true work of art is but a shadow of the divine perfection.” All the above definitions and explanations provide the

¹ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2018)

appropriate background that is essential for the overall examination of the issue and connect it with the concepts of social exclusion and social inclusion, and of course, how artists can actually play a key-role in the specific procedure.

Types of Art

In the framework of the project, we focus on the forms of Art below which we define as follows:

Painting: Painting is an art form made through the application of paint, color, or pigments to a medium or surface².

Music: According to AiC (2020) “Music is created when there is an organization of sounds, as vibrations, that are put together to form an audible composition. Elements of a musical composition include harmony, timbre, melody, and rhythm.”

Dance: the movement of the body in a rhythmic way, usually to music and within a given space, for the purpose of expressing an idea or emotion, releasing energy, or simply taking delight in the movement itself³.

Theatre: Theatre is a collaborative art form which combines words, voice, movement and visual elements to express meaning⁴.

Storytelling: Storytelling is the interactive art of using words and actions to reveal the elements and images of a story while encouraging the listener’s imagination⁵.

People in Challenging Healthcare Environments

With this term, we mean people that face long-term problems with their health either institutionalized or not. This could include, among others, the following categories:

² <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-painting-definition-evolution-major-artists.html>

³ <https://www.britannica.com/art/dance>

⁴ <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Arts/Guide-to-K12-Program-Development-in-the-Arts/Theatre-Introduction-and-CPRC.pdf>

⁵ National Storytelling Network, <https://storynet.org/what-is-storytelling/>

- People with dementia: Dementia is a general term for loss of memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life⁶.
- People with disabilities: According to the United Nations, the term persons with disabilities is used to apply to all persons with disabilities including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others⁷. This includes physical disabilities and mental disabilities
- People with chronic illnesses: Chronic diseases are long-lasting conditions that usually can be controlled but not cured. People living with chronic illnesses often must manage daily symptoms that affect their quality of life, and experience acute health problems and complications that can shorten their life expectancy⁸.
- Older people: People at an older age that have started to experience a reduction of their intellectual or physical abilities

⁶ <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia>

⁷ <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/faqs.htm>

⁸ <https://cmcd.sph.umich.edu/about/about-chronic-disease/>

The Benefits of Art in Challenging Healthcare Environments

Artistic activities serve as a therapeutic outlet for individuals facing difficult health conditions. By engaging in creative expression, patients can articulate their emotions, experiences, and challenges in a non-verbal manner, facilitating emotional release and self-discovery. The therapeutic nature of art fosters emotional well-being, resilience, and coping mechanisms, allowing patients to navigate their healthcare journeys with increased confidence and self-assurance.

1. **Stress Reduction:** Creating or experiencing art, whether through drawing, painting, music, or other forms, can help reduce stress and anxiety. This is particularly important for patients facing serious health issues or long hospital stays⁹. Researchers have investigated the impact of visual art on adult stress levels and found that levels of cortisol hormones reduced significantly after a 45-minute art-making session¹⁰.
2. **Distraction:** Art can serve as a valuable distraction from pain, discomfort, and the monotony of healthcare routines. Engaging in artistic activities can help patients focus on something positive and engaging. Studies show that art has the potential to positively distract patients by addressing them socially, culturally and existentially as individual human beings¹¹.
3. **Emotional Expression:** Art allows individuals to express their emotions, even when words may fail them. For patients dealing with complex emotions related to their health, creating or engaging with art can be a healthy outlet for expression. The use of art methods can help individuals find fresh and creative ways to process and express their emotions. Art is a form of expression without words and can be especially helpful when someone cannot express themselves through verbal communication. The creative

⁹ Creative Arts Interventions for Stress Management and Prevention—A Systematic Review, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5836011/>

¹⁰ Reduction of Cortisol Levels and Participants' Responses Following Art Making, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07421656.2016.1166832>

¹¹ How do patients actually experience and use art in hospitals? The significance of interaction: a user-oriented experimental case study, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5328392/>

process can help a person who struggles with emotional expression to loosen up the emotional barriers and tap into their subconscious mind. This process allows individuals to understand their emotions better, get in touch with their thoughts and feelings, and obtain emotional catharsis through artistic expression¹². In the same time, the art-making process can be an opportunity for self-reflection and introspection as well as a way of communication for individuals who may have difficulty with traditional forms of communication.

4. **Sense of Achievement:** Completing an art project, whether it's a drawing, sculpture, or musical composition, can provide a sense of accomplishment. This can be particularly important for those who may be struggling with feelings of helplessness or a loss of control in their healthcare journey. Creativity can help build self-esteem and improve mental health, especially in older people¹³. Art gives a sense of achievement which makes people, especially in difficult healthcare environments feel good and boosts your confidence. Achievement can come from the process of learning, doing and creating and does not have to be about achieving the end result.
5. **Fostering Social Connections:** Art-based interventions create an inclusive environment that encourages collaboration and social interactions among patients. Through group art sessions, patients have the opportunity to share experiences, support one another, and develop a sense of camaraderie. These social connections enhance patients' sense of belonging, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness commonly experienced during prolonged healthcare situations. Art can also strengthen the connections between the patients and their caregivers.
6. **Improved Cognitive Function:** Engaging in creative activities can stimulate cognitive function and memory, which is essential for patients dealing with neurological conditions or cognitive impairments. It was proved that making art helps produce

¹² <https://aohealing.com/the-benefits-of-art-therapy-for-emotional-expression/>

¹³ Positive effects of art therapy on depression and self-esteem of older adults in nursing homes, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00981389.2018.1564108?journalCode=wshc20>

neurotransmitter dopamine¹⁴ which stimulates the creation of new neurons and boosts the focus and learning process.

7. **Pain Management:** There's evidence to suggest that art therapy can help reduce the perception of pain. Engaging in creative activities may trigger the release of endorphins and other natural pain-relievers. Making art can help the body to release endorphins, the body's natural pain relievers, which can block the nerve cells that receive pain signals, essentially blunting the pain¹⁵. According to Sandra Izhakoff, a painter, art teacher, and art therapist in Forest Hills, NY, "people with chronic pain so often feel that they have lost control—control of their bodies, their choices, and the very fabric of their lives". Izhakoff says that "art materials of different varieties allow a person to gain control or to happily and purposefully lose control"¹⁶.
8. **Wellness Promotion:** Healthcare environments can be focused on treating illness, but art can also promote overall wellness. Art activities encourage self-care and self-expression. The World Health Organization (WHO), states that "The creation and enjoyment of the arts helps promote holistic wellness and can be a motivating factor in recovery"¹⁷
9. **Empowerment:** Engaging in artistic endeavors can empower patients by allowing them to make choices, express their individuality, and regain a sense of control in their lives. According to the psychiatrist Dr. Carrie Barron, this happens through a five-part prescription: insight (self- knowledge), movement (exercise), mind rest (unplug, hang out), your own two hands (make things or make things happen), mind shift (cultivate a useful mindset).¹⁸

¹⁴ Creativity, brain, and art: biological and neurological considerations, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4041074/>

¹⁵ <https://breakthestigma2.weebly.com/science-behind-mental-illness--positive-affects-of-art.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.healthcentral.com/pain-management/art-therapy-chronic-pain>

¹⁷ <https://www.who.int/initiatives/arts-and-health>

¹⁸ <https://www.beaumont.org/health-wellness/blogs/art-and-healing-wellness-and-empowerment-in-the-community>

10. **Family and Caregiver Support:** Art can be a tool for family members and caregivers to connect with their loved ones in healthcare settings. It can provide a means of bonding and expression. Arts activities can improve social connectedness and foster reciprocity between people living in healthcare environments and their caregivers¹⁹.
11. **Breaking Down Barriers:** Art transcends language and cultural barriers, making it an effective tool for breaking down societal barriers. In the context of healthcare, art allows patients from diverse backgrounds to connect on a common platform, fostering mutual understanding and empathy. By promoting open dialogue and shared experiences, art becomes a bridge that brings patients, healthcare professionals, and support staff closer, contributing to a more inclusive healthcare community.
12. **Combatting Stigma:** Chronic illnesses often carry stigmatization, leading to misconceptions and prejudices. Artistic expression enables patients to challenge these stereotypes by showcasing their strengths and resilience. By sharing their creative work, patients humanize their experiences, fostering empathy and raising awareness among the broader society. Art thus serves as a powerful tool in combatting stigma and promoting a more inclusive and accepting society.

Through all the benefits analysed above, art offers a transformative approach to improve the lives of individuals navigating the complexities of chronic illnesses and other challenging healthcare situations. The recommendations put forth in this study aim to advance the integration of art in healthcare settings, fostering a more inclusive, compassionate, and supportive environment for all patients.

Despite their obvious benefits, usually, the use of art-based methods is not very common in healthcare settings and are usually sporadic and not consistent activities that are organized.

In order for the role of artists to become more effective, the following actions need to be made:

¹⁹ How Can the Arts Influence the Attitudes of Dementia Caregivers?, <https://academic.oup.com/gerontologist/article/60/6/1103/5843559?login=false>

- Dialogue with the local and national authorities in order to create the appropriate legal and formal background that will enable both the Artists and the people in the challenging healthcare environments to gain access to the relevant resources. These resources can be technical, infrastructure, human, and financial. The combination of all these can create substantial benefits for all parties involved
- Direct dialogue between the healthcare environments and the society, as this will enable the artists to expand their knowledge about the specific issues that are faced by people living there, and therefore, become more accurate when it comes to designing and developing their practices.
- Develop the social networks of the artists with business and other organisations, such as the Non-Profit Organisations (NPO) and NGO. Developing this network is a real necessity for the Artists and must always be considered as a priority due to the increasing impact that these organisations have in the entire society, in both public and private levels.
- Set priorities for the people in challenging healthcare environments, based on the SMART strategic approach (Specific – Measurable, Achievable – Realistic – Time-bounded). This will help this category of people to understand that Art can indeed provide them with opportunities, however, it will also help them set their own targets and reach their goals²⁰

²⁰ Source: The Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan & Kyushu University Joint Research Team (2020)

Required Skills of the Artists working in Challenging Healthcare Environments

Artists working in challenging healthcare environments require a unique set of skills to effectively engage with patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals. These skills go beyond artistic talent and include many soft skills like interpersonal, communication, and adaptability skills. In the following table, there are presented the main skills that the artists should have in order to be able to work effectively in these environments.

Empathy

The main skill that an Artist should have in order to be able to work successfully in challenging healthcare environments is **Empathy**.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA) Encyclopedia *“Empathy is understanding a person from his or her frame of reference rather than one’s own, or vicariously experiencing that person’s feelings, perceptions, and thoughts. Empathy does not, of itself, entail motivation to be of assistance, although it may turn into sympathy or personal distress, which may result in action. In psychotherapy, therapist empathy for the client can be a path to comprehension of the client’s cognitions, affects, motivations, or behaviors.”* The real challenge for social inclusion and Artists is to develop specific characteristics that will enable them to achieve their goals. Empathy is a major element for the Social Inclusion behalf the Artists as it carries ethical challenges that they need to be followed as the people in challenging healthcare environments are indeed very vulnerable. It must also be noted that despite that Empathy is considered an important element in the process of Social Inclusion, it cannot be considered as the only one as the substantial contribution of other social and professional skills must apply at all levels (AT, 2022). In any case, Empathy is the first and most important characteristic, as without understanding one’s problems will not enable individuals to create the right synergies and empower people.

Communication

Communication Skills is the second set of skills that is necessary for artists that work in challenging healthcare settings.

Communication has been defined as the use of tools and means that will enable individuals, or groups of people under any form, to freely exchange opinions, ideas, concerns, thoughts, etc. Effective communication on behalf the Artists requires the identification of the most important Channels that are considered as the following:

- **Verbal Communication** which according to McDuffie (2013, p.132) has importantly defined that: *‘Verbal communication refers to the production of spoken language to send an intentional message to a listener.’* In addition, the author clarifies that Verbal Communication is divided into several elements/sub-categories such as:
 - ✓ Semantics (vocabulary),
 - ✓ Syntax (grammar), and
 - ✓ Pragmatics (the social uses of language).

Through the Verbal Communication, Artists can manage to approach the people in healthcare settings in a way that they will make them feel comfortable. Given the level of kindness and sensitiveness that usually describes the Artists the application of such skills is considered as of a great importance. However, Artists must also be trained in order to further develop these skills, as Communication is becoming harder in the case of people in such settings.

- **Non-Verbal Communication:** Collins Dictionary (2018) has defined that: *‘Those aspects of communication, such as gestures and facial expressions, that do not involve verbal communication but which may include nonverbal aspects of speech itself (accent, tone of voice, speed of speaking, etc). Nonverbal communication consists of things such as the expression on your face, your arm movements, or your tone of voice, which show how you feel about something without using words.’* It is important for Artists to be able to apply the Non-verbal communication, as in several occasions the people in healthcare settings may not have the ability to understand what others have to say. In addition, given the skills that the Artists usually have, especially actors, the Non-verbal

Communication can be considered as an important tool that needs to be applied. This can be even of a greater importance in cases in which the people in the healthcare settings are persons from other countries, thus, the language will constitute a serious barrier.

- **Oral Communication:** According to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) (2018) *“Oral communication refers to the speaking and listening skills needed to participate verbally in discussions, exchange thoughts and information, make clear and convincing presentations, and interact with a variety of audiences.”* Oral Communication is important for Social Inclusion as it can help Artists to explain in detail and with their own words of how the people in healthcare settings can take part to the overall designed activities.
- **Face-to-Face Communication:** Face-to-Face Communication can be defined as communication when the communicator transmits his/her message in person to the receiver in person verbally and even non-verbally. Thus, face to face communication is both verbal and non-verbal (Drago, 2015). In addition, Face-to-Face Communication can occur in both Formal and Informal forms, therefore, creating an interesting concept which has largely been affected by the rapid technological development (Misra et al, 2014). Ensuring the Face-to-Face Communication by Artist will increase the level of confidence and trust between all participants and create opportunities that can lead to the desired results. This can be considered as one of the most important forms of Communication as it brings Artists closed to the people in healthcare settings.
- **Distance Communication:** The technological development has led to the growth of Distance Communication which is defined as ‘any interpersonal communication in which the physical gap between the participants is beyond the physiological limits of unaided human perception’ (Oxford Dictionary, 2019 – On-line). The use of Technology, especially for those persons fall within the geographically disadvantaged persons is important as it will enable them to participate in alternative forms of Art, without having to be at one single place. Such Communication will require from the Artists to

ensure that the people in challenging healthcare environments will possess the appropriate equipment.

- **Formal Communication:** According to (Zikmund & Babin, 2010) *“Formal Communication refers to the effective exchange of official information that flows along the different levels of the organizational hierarchy and conforms to the prescribed professional rules, policy, standards, processes and regulations of the organization.”* This skill is important as Artists need to develop specific actions addressed to the healthcare institutions or any other formal organization
- **Informal Communication:** According to Business Jargons (2019, On-line) *“The Informal Communication is the casual and unofficial form of communication wherein the information is exchanged spontaneously between two or more persons without conforming the prescribed official rules, processes, system, formalities and chain of command.”* The Artists must apply this type of Communication with both the people in challenging healthcare settings and the other stakeholders in order to help them become more interested and avoid using long-term bureaucratic procedures that will not have any practical results.

In any case, all the above form of Communication are important and interrelated, calling for the Artists to develop all of them. Specific attention must be paid towards the Face-to-Face Communication, as the people in healthcare situations will have the opportunity to feel more comfortable and improve their overs Social Inclusion prospects.

Active Listening

Active Listening is a major Communication skill and is defined as the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process and is considered as key-element in all interactions between people, groups, organisations, etc. (Montgomery, 1981; Iwankovitsch, 2001). Following, the HURIER Model provides the opportunity to understand how Listening is developed and contribute Artists with valuable insight that can be considered as important. Each one is important and all elements are interrelated, making a useful tool for the Empathy skills. In addition to the HURIER Model (see the graph below) which indeed constitutes a

powerful tool in terms of Communication, Listening in Arts carries specific benefits that can be effectively distributed to the target group.

Graph. The HURIER Model

<p>H – Hearing: ‘Hearing’ is used here in a very broad sense. Not only does it refer to the physical act of hearing, but also to picking up on non-verbal and other signals; tone of voice, body language and facial expressions.</p>
<p>U – Understanding: Once the message has been ‘heard’, the next step is to understand. This means tying together all the element of ‘hearing’ to create a coherent understanding of what was communicated. Factors like language and accent may affect your understanding.</p>
<p>R – Remembering: Remembering requires focus. An effective listener needs to be able to remember the message they are receiving in its entirety.</p>
<p>I – Interpreting: Interpretation of the message builds on, and enhances, understanding. Interpretation means considering factors such as the context in which the message was sent. Importantly, here the listener also needs to be aware of, and avoid, any preconceptions or biases that they may hold that may affect how the message is interpreted.</p>
<p>E – Evaluating: Evaluating requires that the listener keeps an open mind on the messages they are receiving and doesn’t jump to conclusions about what is being said. Evaluate all the information and only then start to formulate a response.</p>
<p>R – Responding: Response should be well-measured and demonstrate that you have understood what was communicated. It may be necessary to use techniques such as clarification and reflection as part of the response.</p>

Compassion

Compassion has a lot of different characteristics to other emotional skills (e.g., Empathy and Altruism). In Psychology, Compassion refers “to suffer together”, and it also refers to the ability of people to truly and deeply connect with other people in their most difficult times, and even

to suffer with them, by not pretending but by clearly understanding their problems GGM, 2022). Compassion has found to have a direct and effective connection and impact on people in difficult healthcare settings.

Ability to Recognise Others

The Ability to Recognise Others is mainly referring to the Emotional Intelligence and most importantly to the great skill of Self-awareness which indeed requires a deep personal in-depth self-focus and ability to understand yourself before attempting to truly understand others, and therefore, be able to provide them with your personal support. Specific forms of Arts such as Painting and Photography have been found to massively contribute towards the emotional development and self-awareness of artists as they had to discover their personality and their real interests that would exploit their artistic skills and take them to the next level in terms of both professional and self-development. In order for Artists to be able to improve their Ability to Recognise Others as well as improving their Self-awareness level, they must apply some specific actions that can lead to superior results.

Setting Boundaries

Just like in other form of life, setting boundaries, however, not barriers is considered as a major challenge which is related to a persons ability to control his/her emotions, especially when this is related to specific issues, such as the high level of emotional involvement which can indeed create the inability to judge in a correct way. More specifically, it must be noted that *“Emotional Involvement is the degree to which a media user is emotionally engaged with a media experience, content, or character and is experiencing intense feelings”* (Felton & Jackson, p.8). This approach enables a better critical approach which is considered as an element that can practically enable Artists to understand Emotional Involvement and how this should be applied in real terms.

It is important to understand that any person, including of course Artists, need to Set Boundaries, and this is an extremely healthy process which can be beneficial not only for the Artists, but also for the disadvantaged persons, as they need to be protected. Therefore, the following can be adopted as part of this specific skill:

- Emotional Energy – Do not waste a lot of Emotional Energy as this can create the wrong feelings for both the Artists and the disadvantaged persons, and can potentially lead to some serious problems in relation to the development of a healthy and sustainable relationship
- Time –Artists need to ensure that they do not exceed certain limits as this can work against them
- Personal Space – As a result of the allocation of the appropriate Time, Artists need to ensure the they will allow both the people in challenging healthcare settings as well as themselves, to have the relevant space. This will enable both parties to feel free and not that they are under constant pressure
- Sexuality – The personal attraction is indeed a physical reaction of all people, and this needs to be clearly understood by the Artists. They need to ensure that they do not get involved in unnecessary actions and/or relationships that can cause confusion and frustration, especially to people in challenging healthcare settings.
- Morals and Ethics – Understanding the morals and ethics of people in challenging healthcare settings, especially of those coming from a different background is of a primary importance. Therefore, such barriers must be raised in order to ensure that cultural dimensions shall be fully understood and respected by all parties involved
- Material possessions and finances – Dealing with precious belongings, and most importantly, with money, can indeed lead to confusion and high-tension situations. It is therefore important to ensure that Artists will not get involved in such situations, hence, protecting themselves and the people in challenging healthcare environments.
- Social Media – One of the main pitfalls people fall into when trying to help others, is to develop closed relationships through social media. The use of social media by the Artists must be limited to the needs and requirement of their assistance in order to avoid any unnecessary negative situations

All the above are important elements that must be taken into serious consideration by those that design the actions of the Artists that will be involved in the process. One way of doing so, is the understanding of Signs of Healthy Boundaries and Potential Unhealthy Boundaries, as these

are clearly stated in the following graph and reveals how such pitfalls can be effectively avoided. Especially in terms of Unhealthy Signs, the following Graph is considered as of a major importance.

Signs of Healthy Boundaries	Potential Signs of Unhealthy Boundaries
Protect yourself from getting taken advantage of	Vulnerable to being “used” or taken advantage of
Own your time	Over-commit your time to others and leave little time for yourself
High self-esteem and self-respect	Lower self-esteem and critical inner dialogue
Prioritize time for yourself	Give a lot of their time to other people
You only take on responsibilities you can handle; you don’t overcommit yourself	Feeling exhausted or burnt out by overwhelming commitments and responsibilities
Authentically say “no” if you don’t have the energy or capacity to do something	Have a hard time saying “no”
Set limits for others without feeling bad	Feel guilty for expressing boundaries
Strong sense of identity and direction	Change yourself to fit in with different people
Take care of your own problems and understand that you cannot heal other people’s issues for them	Take on other people’s problems as your own
You clearly communicate your needs and wants; you prioritize your self-care	You put other people’s needs and wants before your own

Source: Science of People (2022).

Disassociation – resilience and avoidance of burn out

Disassociation from specific stressful situations it is indeed considered as an important skill for persons that work with people in challenging healthcare environments. Such situations call for deeper examination of the social and personal situations in order to ensure avoiding possible

physical and mental burn out, common for people that dedicate a lot of time towards supporting others (Di Monte et al., 2020). In general, the term Disassociation refers to *“The state of being unconnected in memory or imagination... a state in which some integrated part of a person's life becomes separated from the rest of the personality and functions independently.”* This identification is indeed important as it raises the need for Artists, to develop such skills in order to protect themselves from physical and mental problems, consequently, ensuring sustainability in their actions. According to several scientific research there are three key dimensions in terms of Burnout, and these are:

- an overwhelming exhaustion which results as a consequence of deep personal dedication in order to achieve something, especially when this is considered to be a noble action and will lead to several social benefits. It is therefore directly associated to the Artists and their attempt to effectively deliver such results
- feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job which works opposite from the previous point and can be the result of personal burn out, both physical and mental, which can drive the person to be fully detached from his/her work, despite that in reality she/he does not want to do so and can have negative effects in the person's life
- a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment which can be the negative result of lack of feeling the appropriate sense of achievement, and/or even lack of appreciation by those that receive this support. This can indeed drive the person that delivers the support to the other end and lead to total disassociation.

As a result of all the above, it is important to identify that specific elements must be followed, as these are outlined in the following graph which creates a comprehensive understanding of the role of Resilience in order to avoid possible threats of Burn out, and therefore, avoid potential disassociation with the broader environment, which includes the people in difficult healthcare situations and their families. For Artists, this can become an effective driver, hence, it is crucial that this must be considered as a major component of their work. Attention must be paid towards all elements, however the Mindful Awareness is considered as a vital component in this process, as it enables the Artists to remain calm and focused on their target. However, all

the other elements remain a powerful tool as they can help Artists to develop their networking skills with the local communities, as well as ensuring professional care.



Source: Veteran Affairs

Facilitation and “animation”

In addition to the previously mentioned skills, the Artists must be able to develop such communication skills that will enable him/her to become more effective in the communication process with the people in challenging healthcare settings. Animation arts constitute an important part of contemporary arts performances that has enjoyed a rapid and healthy growth across the world, enabling thousands of people to incorporate this type of art, either for professional actions or even amateur participation in the specific field. The participation in Animation Arts can provide several sustainable benefits that have a long-term impact on the lives of both the Animation Artists and the people in difficult healthcare settings that see the opportunity of interaction as a unique one that can drive them to eliminating the obstacles that

led to their social exclusion. Several experts have provided the benefits that are included in the process and are related to their professional value, as well as to their impact on the society. This can potentially lead to benefits to the challenging healthcare environments who can benefit from their participation in such actions. It is therefore important to focus on the issue through a strategic approach.

- Animation helps deepen visual understanding better than traditional diagrams.
- Animation omits unnecessary verbiage and visuals.
- It allows you to communicate ideas quickly and sharply.
- Animation is a cost-saving communication strategy.
- It educates & engages the audience through entertainment.
- It also provides real to life scenarios faced in daily life during learning, and so many other activities.

Source: Explain Ninja (2022).

Proper Use of Energy

Energy is considered as a vital component for any arts' activity, especially for those types that are directly linked to the audience, such as theatre and singing, and of course, this applies to the social inclusion of disadvantaged people who need to develop such energy in order to increase their skills. According to Energy Art Movement (2022) Energy in Arts is vital in order to ensure creativity and innovation, especially in contemporary form of arts in which technology is an essential part, and this is related in "...using color, form, and composition to create inventive and expressive works of art that resonate with impact and feeling. These are those works that pulsate with a mysterious force, whether it is a force beyond us or part of our own elemental humanity." In such occasions, the Artists and the people in difficult healthcare areas need to considered specific questions such as:

- What is charisma?
- What is that attracting viewer's attention?
- What characterizes the capacity to act?

- What energy is required in each type of Arts?
- Which people can develop this Energy?
- What is the role of Team work in Energy and Passion?

Answering such questions will enable the development of activities that will help the disadvantaged people as well as the artists to work closely together and create actions that will help them reach out to their goals.

Source: Camurri & Zecca (2015)

Flexibility and Adaptability

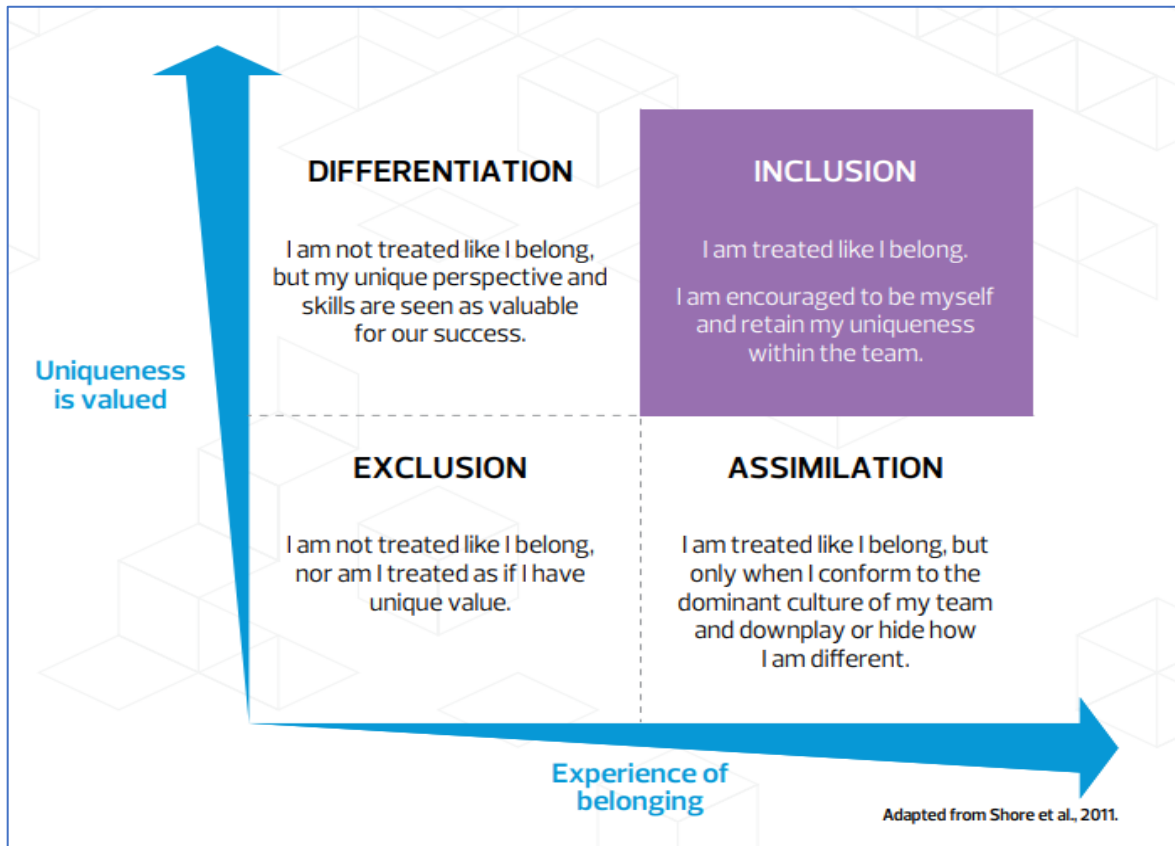
Flexibility and Adaptability are considered as two definitions and concepts which are the same without any significant differences. Especially within the working places, these two terms are usually confused by employers as well as the employees. Additionally, the two terms are also confused in the social environment, leading to conflict between people and working environments that can lead to negative results (Leeds Uni Career Center, 2022). Therefore, it is important to clarify the two terms which are defined as following *“Adaptability is the ability to change (or be changed) to fit changed circumstances”* and *“Flexibility is the capacity to be bent, usually without breaking.”*

Following to all the above, Adaptability and Flexibility have been found to enable Artists of all types to contribute towards helping people in challenging healthcare situations to achieve social inclusion with great effects that expand to a number of other issues that are directly related to the current project.

The role of Artists in order to help the socially disadvantaged persons is indeed important as they are called upon developing activities that are identified within the following graph and create opportunities to become more successful, and therefore, enable the socially disadvantaged person to achieve their goals. As is clearly identified in the specific Graph, Artists must evaluate two specific situations in order to help towards Flexibility and Adaptability:

- Uniqueness is Valued in order to identify not only the position of the people in need, but also, to provide them with the support that will effectively meet their own skills

- Experience of Belonging, as this Belonging can help the people in need to feel safer, especially if these persons have in the past experienced physical and/or mental abuse



Source: Edmonton (2022).

Other Skills

Besides these skills, there are also other important skills that the Artists that need to have and are analysed in the table below.

Skill	Description
Patience	Working in healthcare settings may require patience, especially when dealing with patients facing health challenges. Patience is crucial for guiding individuals through the artistic process, which may take time.

Cultural Competence	Understanding and respecting cultural differences. Artists should be sensitive to the diverse cultural backgrounds of patients and caregivers.
Collaboration	Artists often work as part of a healthcare team, collaborating with doctors, nurses, therapists, and other professionals. Collaborative skills help in integrating art into the overall healthcare plan.
Problem-Solving	Artists may encounter logistical challenges or unexpected issues in healthcare settings. The ability to think creatively and solve problems efficiently is valuable in overcoming obstacles.
Clinical Awareness	Some healthcare environments may require artists to have a basic understanding of healthcare concepts and terminology. This knowledge helps in communicating effectively with healthcare professionals and tailoring art interventions to patient needs.
Adaptation to Diverse Populations	Artists may work with diverse patient populations, including children, the elderly, or those with mental health issues. Adapting artistic approaches to meet the needs of different groups is essential.
Evaluation and Documentation	Artists may be required to evaluate and document the impact of their work. Skills in collecting data, assessing outcomes, and communicating the value of art in healthcare contribute to the evidence-based practice.
Ethical Considerations	Artists should be aware of and adhere to ethical guidelines in healthcare settings. Respecting patient confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, and maintaining professionalism are paramount.
Advocacy	Advocacy skills can be beneficial for artists who want to promote the integration of art in healthcare. This may involve advocating for resources, policy changes, or increased awareness of the benefits of art in healthcare.

Challenges and how they can be mitigated

Artists working in challenging healthcare environments may encounter various obstacles that can impact their ability to effectively implement art programs or interventions. In this chapter we present some main challenges and potential strategies to mitigate them:

Challenge	Description	Mitigation
Limited Resources	Healthcare environments may have limited budgets and resources for art programs.	Seek alternative funding sources, such as grants, donations, or collaborations with local arts organizations. Highlight the cost-effectiveness and long-term benefits of art programs for patient well-being.
Logistical Challenges	Healthcare settings can have strict regulations, security protocols, and infection control measures.	Collaborate closely with healthcare administrators and staff to understand and adhere to the facility's policies. Offer to undergo any required training or certifications to meet healthcare standards.
Resistance to Change	Healthcare institutions may be resistant to integrating art into their care strategies due to traditional practices or a lack of awareness.	Build a compelling case for the benefits of art in healthcare, including research evidence and success stories. Develop partnerships with healthcare professionals to demonstrate the positive impact of art on patient outcomes.
Lack of Awareness	Healthcare professionals and administrators may not be aware of the potential benefits of art in healthcare.	Conduct awareness campaigns, workshops, and presentations to educate healthcare staff about the positive impact of art on patient well-being. Share relevant research and success stories to illustrate the value of art interventions.

Patient Populations	Different patient populations may have diverse needs and preferences	Tailor art programs to the specific needs of the patient population. Consider collaborating with healthcare professionals to ensure that the art interventions align with the therapeutic goals of the patients.
Institutional Bureaucracy	Large healthcare institutions may have complex bureaucratic structures that slow down decision-making	Build relationships with key decision-makers, communicate the value of art programs clearly, and streamline proposal processes. Emphasize the positive impact of art on patient satisfaction and overall healthcare experience.
Sustainability	Maintaining art programs in the long term can be challenging due to funding uncertainties.	Develop a sustainability plan that includes diversifying funding sources, building community partnerships, and demonstrating the ongoing benefits of the art program through regular evaluations
Regulatory and Ethical Considerations	Artists need to navigate healthcare regulations, patient confidentiality, and ethical considerations	Stay informed about relevant regulations and ethical guidelines. Work closely with healthcare administrators to address any concerns and ensure compliance. Obtain necessary permissions and consents before implementing art programs.
Evaluation of Impact	Demonstrating the concrete impact of art in healthcare can be difficult	Implement assessment tools to measure the impact of art programs on patient outcomes. Collaborate with healthcare professionals to gather qualitative and quantitative data, and use this information to advocate for ongoing support

Collaboration	Effective collaboration with healthcare professionals may be challenging.	Foster open communication and collaboration by participating in interdisciplinary meetings, seeking input from healthcare professionals, and aligning art interventions with healthcare goals. Establishing a collaborative mindset can lead to more successful partnerships
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Needs and Limitations of specific categories of target groups

In the context of difficult healthcare areas, art emerges as a powerful tool to promote social inclusion and improve the well-being of individuals facing the challenges of dementia and chronic illnesses. This section explores how artistic engagement positively impacts patients' emotional and social dimensions, providing a sense of belonging and empowerment.

Dementia Patients

Therapeutic Benefits: Artistic activities have demonstrated remarkable therapeutic benefits for dementia patients. Engaging in creative expression, such as painting, drawing, or music, helps in stimulating cognitive functions and enhancing memory recall. Through reminiscence art therapy, patients can reconnect with past memories and experiences, fostering a sense of continuity and identity.

Social Inclusion: Art provides a shared platform for dementia patients to express themselves, fostering social interactions and a sense of belonging. Group art sessions encourage communication, mutual support, and shared experiences, reducing feelings of isolation commonly experienced by individuals with dementia.

Empowering Self-Expression: Artistic engagement empowers dementia patients to express themselves beyond the limitations imposed by language or cognitive decline. This form of self-expression gives patients a sense of control and autonomy over their experiences, bolstering their self-esteem and overall well-being.

Chronic Illness Patients

Coping and Emotional Well-being: Chronic illness patients often face emotional distress and uncertainty. Artistic engagement offers a constructive outlet for patients to process emotions, alleviating anxiety and depression. By expressing their feelings through art, patients can better cope with the challenges of their healthcare journeys.

Building Social Connections: Art-based programs create an inclusive space for chronic illness patients to interact and share their experiences with peers facing similar challenges. These interactions foster empathy, reduce feelings of isolation, and build a support network, promoting social inclusion and a sense of community.

Challenging Stigma: Chronic illnesses can carry stigmatization, leading to social exclusion and misconceptions. Art enables patients to challenge these stereotypes by showcasing their strengths and resilience. Public exhibitions of patients' art can promote understanding and empathy among the broader community, combatting stigma and promoting social acceptance.

Artistic engagement emerges as a transformative approach to promote social inclusion and improve the lives of individuals facing the complexities of dementia and chronic illnesses. Through creative expression and shared experiences, art fosters emotional well-being, social connections, and a sense of belonging among patients. The case studies presented in this section exemplify the profound impact of art in combating isolation and stigmatization, making it a vital tool in enhancing the overall well-being of individuals in difficult healthcare areas.

As a summary, here is an overview of the needs and limitations for specific categories of target groups in relation to art-based methods:

Category	Needs	Limitations
People with Dementia	<p>Stimulation and Engagement: Art can provide cognitive stimulation and engage individuals with dementia in meaningful activities.</p> <p>Emotional Expression: Art allows for non-verbal expression of emotions and memories.</p> <p>Social Interaction: Group art activities can foster social connections among individuals with dementia.</p>	<p>Cognitive Decline: Individuals may face challenges in concentration, memory, and following instructions.</p> <p>Sensory Sensitivities: Some individuals may have heightened sensitivities to stimuli, affecting their preferences for certain art materials or environments.</p>

<p>People with Chronic Illnesses</p>	<p>Pain Management: Art can be a distraction and contribute to pain management strategies.</p> <p>Emotional Support: Creative expression provides an outlet for coping with the emotional aspects of chronic illnesses.</p> <p>Sense of Control: Engaging in artistic activities empowers individuals to exert control over aspects of their lives.</p>	<p>Physical Limitations: Mobility issues or fatigue may limit the type and duration of art activities.</p> <p>Variable Energy Levels: Chronic illnesses may result in fluctuating energy levels, affecting participation in art-based methods.</p>
<p>Older People</p>	<p>Cognitive Stimulation: Art can support cognitive function and memory recall in older individuals.</p> <p>Socialization: Group art activities foster social connections and reduce feelings of isolation.</p> <p>Recreation: Creative activities provide enjoyable and recreational experiences.</p>	<p>Physical Health: Age-related health issues may impact mobility and dexterity.</p> <p>Sensory Changes: Changes in vision, hearing, or tactile sensitivity may influence preferences for certain art materials or activities.</p>
<p>People with Cancer</p>	<p>Emotional Expression: Art offers a medium for expressing complex emotions related to cancer diagnosis and treatment.</p> <p>Distraction: Engaging in art can serve as a positive distraction during treatments.</p> <p>Supportive Community: Group art activities provide a supportive environment for sharing experiences.</p>	<p>Fatigue: Cancer treatments may lead to fatigue, affecting the duration and intensity of art participation.</p> <p>Physical Health: Treatment side effects may impact mobility and coordination.</p>
<p>People with Specific Disabilities</p>	<p>Accessible Activities: Art activities that are adaptable to various abilities and disabilities.</p>	<p>Mobility Challenges: Physical disabilities may impact</p>

	<p>Empowerment: Art provides individuals with disabilities a means of self-expression and empowerment.</p> <p>Social Inclusion: Inclusive art programs promote social connections and inclusion.</p>	<p>participation in certain art activities.</p> <p>Communication Barriers: Some individuals may have communication challenges that need to be considered in art-based methods.</p>
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Understanding the specific needs and limitations of these target groups is essential for tailoring art-based interventions to be inclusive, respectful, and effective. Flexibility, adaptability, and collaboration with healthcare professionals are key in designing and implementing art programs that meet the diverse needs of individuals in healthcare settings. Additionally, involving participants in the planning process can help ensure that art-based methods are tailored to their preferences and capabilities.

The importance of the “experience”

The term Experience has indeed experienced several definitions and approaches that make it a rather complex one to understand, interpret, and therefore, explain in order to ensure a clarified presentation that will indeed contribute towards the strategic objectives of the current work. One of the best definitions provided in contemporary well-acceptable dictionaries, is that of the Merriam-Webster (2022) which identifies the following “Experience is:

- a. direct observation of or participation in events as a basis of knowledge; the fact or state of having been affected by or gained knowledge through direct observation or participation; the practical knowledge, skill, or practice derived from direct observation of or participation in events or in a particular activity, the length of such participation;
- b. something personally encountered, undergone, or lived through; the conscious events that make up an individual life; the events that make up the conscious past of a community or nation or humankind generally;
- c. the act or process of directly perceiving events or reality

Further to the Experience definition, there is the Artistic Experience (IGI, 2021) which states that *“Artistic Experience are states of emotional sensibility experienced directly in the process of artistic acts of perception, interpretation, creation, and reflection. In the process of artistic experience, the personal autonomy of the student emerges through the discovery of spirituality in artwork artistic messages and through creating and fostering cultural values.”* All these definitions and approaches provide a rather clarified understanding, and most importantly, a direction which can be viewed an important tool for the application of unique experiences within the concept of Arts, and of course, how the experiences gained through the participation in artistic activities, can help disadvantaged person to achieve social inclusion.

Simultaneously, this is equally important for the Artists themselves, as it enables them to take their experiences gained from their personal and professional lives, towards those are in need. Contemporary forms of Arts have been found to provide the opportunity for amazing

experiences with very low cost, helping both the Artists and the people in challenging healthcare environments to interact and move towards social inclusion (CAI, 2021).

These Experiences are listed below, however, it must be noted that the list is not exhaustive, therefore, more can be applied as part of the Project as well as practical application between the Artists and the socially excluded persons. Importantly, the latter can become a useful vehicle for Artists of all types in order to enrich their experience portfolio, becoming better professionals and characters:

- Life Experience – Artists usually travel from place to place, or country to country, as this enables them to interact with other people and potentially enrich their overall knowledge. Some Artists have seen their entire lives changing as part of their travelling experiences, as not only these have massively contributed to their overall knowledge, but the transformation was that big that pushed to relocated, as the new places that have experienced provided them with new artistic and life incentives. In addition, such life and travelling experiences have enabled them to explore new (and possibly unknown) parts of themselves, helping them to become more socially aware and help disadvantaged people to obtain a new route in their lives (GAT, 2017).
- Immersion Experience – Immersion Experience refers to the situation in which someone is totally included in something, usually related to a type of Art, triggering all senses to be part of it, leading to unique feelings, therefore, enabling the person/artist, to become an integral part of this situation. This enables Artists to develop not only their already known skills and experiences, but also, to add more that go beyond the typical ones, such as that of Artificial Intelligences (AI).
- Inspiration Experience – Inspiration can vary from one person to another, and of course, this applies for the Artists, as their interests in terms of activities, life, and obviously Arts, can potentially cover a broad range of elements. All these can drive Artists to specific inspirations that can be transformed into meaningful activities within their type of Arts, enabling them to become more creative. According to Balogh (2021) *“Art inspiration is a type of energy or stimulus that inspires creativity. Many artists rely on this form of inspiration to help them create new artwork because it gives them a lot of*

new and original ideas.". Artists must be inspired from people that suffer from disabilities, either physical or mentally, as they both have been identified to enable Artists to become more socially aware and engage in a series of social activities by using their artistic skills, influencing, and most importantly, inspiring others; in the specific situation, the disable people. Importantly, Arts inspirations have led to substantial changes in terms of policies within the public sector, therefore, shifting the interest in terms of Social Inclusion, from the private sector and the several NGOs, towards the need for the several public authorities that have both the legal status and the resources (human, financial, technological, equipment, and land & buildings), to become more socially alerted. In such cases, the inspiration derived from negative experiences artists had confronted when attempting to help disadvantaged people to integrate in the society, and despite their efforts, they faced serious obstacles from the authorities, as they acted within a bureaucratic manner (Hannes, 2021). Furthermore, Inspiration for Artists can indeed derive from a lot of other sources and or incidents such as:

- ✓ Personal physical accidents that have forced Artists to develop new skills and competences, therefore, inspiring their creativity and their human need to belong to a specific group of people. Being socially excluded themselves has become a major driver for several contemporary Artists, not only to develop their own skills, but also, through their work and determination, to inspire others in terms of Social Inclusion
- ✓ Mentally difficult situations, that forced Artists to search deeper into their selves, become more creative and lead themselves out of such unfortunate state. Given that such situations may be more difficult than the physical accidents, specialised support may be required. In this case, and in order for Artists to be able to provide better assistance, they need to be aware of the 'Resistance to Change Curve' (graph below) which enables a better understanding of the situation that the socially excluded persons are, and therefore, which actions to apply.

Events



Participation Experiences – As a final experience outlined for the specific work in order to be considered is the participation in Social Events. Such Events can be developed either by the private sector, several NGOs, and the official authorities (local, regional, and national). The participation in such exclusive and well-focused Social Events has been found to become a major driver for a lot of Artists in order to:

- ✓ Develop their social skills and awareness about several issues related to the entire society as well as specific groups of people that face serious social problems
- ✓ Develop their networking with other Artists that come across same experiences and have the same social sensitivity and willingness to provide support
- ✓ Develop their networking with other social stakeholders from the private and public sector in order to boost their interests about the issues that are in their agenda

All the above-mentioned elements related to the range of experiences, lead to the safe conclusions that:

- Experiences are an essential tool for artists in order to become more innovative and creative in terms of their work, especially when this is related to people in difficult healthcare settings

- Experiences provide a unique opportunity for the Artists to obtain a clarified understanding of the dimensions of Arts in terms of Social Inclusion. Understanding these dimensions can become a key-driver for future success
- It is indeed important for the Project and the Artists in general to ensure that these experiences will be effectively integrated in their work. This integration will also need to be accompanied with effective Communication Channels and types, as these have already been identified and explained. The Communication constitutes an essential tool for the entire process, as lack of it can become harmful for all stakeholders.

Case studies connected to each area of research

In the following section, there are going to be presented some case studies that highlight in a particular way some of the skills that the Artists need to have as identified in Chapter 3.

Flexibility and Adaptability

Artists, often considered 'free spirits,' should possess the ability to adapt and be flexible based on the unique needs of each individual case. The diverse and varied backgrounds of disadvantaged individuals call for tailor-made approaches that accommodate their specific circumstances. Flexibility and improvisation allow artists to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities presented during artistic engagement.

Title of the Case Study: Theater workshops for breast cancer patients

Performances were organised weekly for 12 consecutive weeks. They were lead and directed by the actor Marios Ioannou, the performances had the theme of womanhood. The intention was through improvisation to erase negative feelings and embrace reality and adapt to the new situation in life.

Because of difficult situations the acts were performed in a hybrid mode. We created three kinds of action: hybrid events, online and offline. The theme chosen for the last performance was ***"the art of adapting"***: these days we really need positive inspirations, messages and stories.

We believe that Art generates social transformation, gives courage and inspiration and those who inspire us turn on a light in the dark and help us find or rediscover our path. With our workshops we give voice to this artistic and patients. The first event took place in May 2020, the year of the pandemic, the first part was face to face but quickly we had to adapt to online, we continue in hybrid form.

Artist profile

The performances were led by actors and the participants were past patients or patients through treatment. All the artists we selected with the ability to adapt to real life situations and

design scenarios that will have direct benefit to the target group, people battling cancer and in need for a positive event in their life.

Short-term results

All the performances hosted and created during the project, have brought positive results that can be used to start new activities. The positive results mainly refer to:

- Creating moments of reflection through performing, figurative and literary arts where inclusion is generated in a smart and smooth way, through common artistic passion;
- Promoting wellness at the time of the pandemic by accepting the given situation and working towards a better understanding of the current conditions
- Promoting a local network among artists, cultural operators, institutions and associations, for the enhancement of the skills and the potential of people with disabilities or coming from situation of social disadvantage.
- Connecting artists coming from different parts of Italy and realities operating in the field of serious and long-term illnesses
- Spreading an inclusive culture among young people with educational interventions and workshops;
- Supporting an innovative cultural process of teaching with an unexpected artistic experience;
- Realizing approachable artistic actions with a high level of innovation and creativity, experimenting with new forms of event fruition, and involving the audience digitally or in person;
- Reconsidering art, to deliver it to its purest form of art by art, beyond physical, social, and cultural condition; Enriching the cultural offer for society by enhancing diversity and inclusion themes through art.
- Enriching the cultural offer for society by enhancing themes of *diversity & inclusion* through art.

Long-term results:

The expected benefits are also visible. Patients/Artists claimed that sharing difficult experiences through the role play helped. They received encouragement from it as well during times of anxiety and separation from loved ones. The participants noted that art therapy helped cancer patients feel better and manage their symptoms.

The goal of the session is to give patients a creative boost that will help them write a solo. The participants were guided on a road of art study by their expressive qualities of "artistic creation," beginning with personal recommendations and expressive urgencies, experimenting on stage with various ways of telling through the language of performing art. The path focused on the theme of identity which becomes a narrative tool, and on the body as an expressive vehicle. Through a choral work, the path aimed to enhance the personality of the participants, in search of a personal artistic language, a manifestation of their uniqueness.

Significant improvements in anxiety, depression, fatigue, and ability to participate in social roles/activities were also observed between the start and end of the program.

Main workshop's goals:

- Self-confidence building;
- Creativity and untapped psychophysical potential awakening;
- Overcoming feelings of loneliness and isolation;
- Virtues enhancement;
- Artistic expressive skills enhancement;
- Body-mind rebalancing;
- Learning from others' experiences;
- Acquiring new skills.
- Feelings transformed into artistic actions;

Conductor's creative process steps:

- Explore interests, skills and discover the most hidden.
- Focus on criticism and consider personal values

- Analyze the subjects chosen by the participants and identify appropriate artistic ways with dance, voice, audio recordings, video recordings, theater, musical instruments, and other forms of art

- Participatory design for solo production

- Personal staging rehearsal

Creation of ad-hoc dramaturgy including all solos. The realization of performances made for live audiences is done through the construction of flexible dramaturgy. The improvisational element of the participants is fundamental in both the creative and performance stages to focus on the 'here and now'. ". The essence of directing is to be able to act in a space rich in possibilities between "preparations" (scores, scripts, texts, choreography, recordings, etc.) and "moments" as concrete, non-reproducible performances. Performing arts create beauty, and beauty creates desire. This allows participants to change, be inspired, and ask themselves questions. The audience becomes a participant in the presented work of art.

Short-term results:

Developing the sense of adapting to new situation, accepting cancer and treatment and at the same time doing something not necessary but relieving, belonging in a group that was performing in the middle of a serious health issue and still adapting and facing the situation.

Long-term results:

Contact with art, especially drama and improvisation improved the quality of life of the patients that participated, the time spend in the preparation and the final play were freeing the participants in a way of getting out of the everyday routine and the feeling of having to cope with cancer, it was a break that helped produce positivity and courage.

Concluding thoughts:

The therapy that art offers is multidimensional. In our case offers patients an escape, a way of getting out of the seriously ill mode and feeling like an actor, like an artist, like a creative person. The time spend rehearsing and performing was a break from reality and at the same time a moment of deep realization and acceptance.

Setting Boundaries

This section addresses the significance of setting clear boundaries in artistic engagement with disadvantaged individuals. Boundaries define what can be achieved and establish the scope of the interpersonal relationship between artists and participants. Setting boundaries ensures that the engagement remains focused and productive, promoting a respectful and conducive environment.

Title of the Case Study: Art Therapy for Dementia Patients in the care homes of the municipality

An art therapy pilot program was initiated in a care home that specializes in dementia patients. The aim of the program was to enhance the well-being and quality of life of the elderly patients in the home. The program involved 10 patients of both genders with varying stages of dementia.

The artists that performed the workshop were selected based on their resume and also social work, some of the artists were from disadvantaged groups as well, like low income backgrounds.

Art Therapy Sessions

Over a period of 6 weeks, the patients had weekly art therapy sessions with the art therapist. The sessions were held in a quiet, calm and brightly lit room with soft music playing in the background. The art therapist selected a range of art materials from paint, paper, clay, and colored pencils. The patients were encouraged to express themselves through various art forms produce the best possible results, and thus lead to a truly innovative and creative activity.

Learners' Profile

- Age: typically 65+ years old
- Diagnosis of dementia or Alzheimer's disease
- May have other medical conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, or mobility issues
- May have limited mobility, vision, hearing, or communication abilities

- May experience anxiety, depression, or confusion related to their condition or environment
- May have limited or no prior experience with art or artistic expression
- May benefit from structured activities and routines that provide a sense of purpose and accomplishment
- May have varying levels of cognitive ability, from mild to severe dementia.
- May have different preferences and interests in terms of art styles, materials, and themes.
- It's important to keep in mind that each patient is unique, and their individual needs and abilities should be taken into account when designing art activities and evaluating outcomes.

All of these were taken into consideration during the team-building process, giving the members and the group leader the ability to assure that their participation won't potentially cause issues. Due to the group leader's skill, a productive team environment was established, and unneeded conflict and toxic environments were avoided. This made it possible for the participants to stay on task and produce excellent outcomes while maintaining a sense of unity. The allocated Teacher's example of the online performance represents a trailblazing move in order to facilitate increased interaction between the stakeholders on a variety of levels, including:

- The Group leader and the Group, as this is essential in order to ensure that all participants will feel as an integral part of the project, and therefore, all participants will feel welcomed into the project. This is considered as a vital component for the successful integration of all persons, especially since Arts always focus on this direction
- The Group Leader and each one of the participants on an interpersonal level, as this creates the opportunity for the Group Leader to clearly identify the unique skills and competences of each one of the participants. This will potentially lead towards an improved performance on both individual and group levels
- Between all the individuals on a personal level, as this is considered as equally important as the two previously mentioned levels. Improves interpersonal relationships are

essential in all forms of Arts and can essentially help them to become more effective. This can also lead to positive outcomes for the Group leader

The above-mentioned elements of the innovative Online Performance are based on the major principles of Communication which both the Group Leader and the students have right from the beginning evaluated it as of a great importance. Additionally, the Communication elements that have been applied during this interaction have been effective and are mainly referring to the following:

- Listening – In this setting “Art as a means of contact with people, the artist as an animator”, the skill of effective Listening has enabled all participants to become good listeners, rather than just hear people, they have established better channels and managed to develop empathy skills, as a result of improved understanding. In addition, listening development was transferred in the overall performance, enabling some of the children to transfer these skills to their school environment
- Non-verbal Communication – This was developed as part of the exceptionally unique approach developed by the Group leader who possesses great experience in such activities, enabling the participant students to establish their own code of communication in which the body language has indeed prevailed. The Group leader, through her extensive expertise in the field, ensured and motivated the participant students to emphasise on developing their feelings and personal unique abilities, as Arts’ major objectives refer to these issues, especially when difficult situations arise, and more specifically, when the participants come from several disadvantaged backgrounds, creating serious problems in terms of adjusting. The Project has addressed the specific problem by applying on-line non-verbal communication, through which the participant students have managed to become a lot more sensitive, develop a high level of Empathy towards the rest of the Team, and most importantly, establish solid Team spirit; all essential for further growth in the field of Arts.

As part of this unique online interactive presentation and participation of students, that most of them were experiencing a participation in any Arts events, for the very first time, the Group

leader has managed to transfer some of her unique skills that were used in other similar Arts activities, and refer to:

- Ability to teach Interactive theatrical Plays
- Ability to sing different types of songs
- Ability to express personal feelings through Arts
- Ability to transfer theoretical Arts knowledge
- Ability to focus on several age groups
- Ability to establish diversity through music
- Ability to transfer knowledge from different cultural backgrounds
- Ability to improvise and choreograph, coming from different types of Arts and Cultures
- Ability to participate in group work e.g., choral speaking, group dance pieces, music concerts and choir performances

Further, in order for the Group Leader to ensure that the interactive activity would take place in an effective manner and would produce the expected results, several resources have been utilised, providing useful information in relation to:

- The Quality of the Project, in which the Group Leader had the opportunity to develop new ways of interaction and assist the participants to explore and develop new skills they did not know they had
- The development of social and personal skills in relation to the project, enabling the Group leader to trigger these skills through the specific interactive activities

Collect information regarding the subject's background

Collecting data and information has always been considered as a real challenge for any given organisation and/or project, as this requires the application of ethical and professional skills. This is taking an increasing importance when sensitive matters are included in the project. The Group leader took this into serious consideration prior designing and implementing a strategy that would help towards the Project's development.

In order to become a lot more effective and efficient, due to the limited available time and resources, the Group Leader established solid research which enabled her to obtain valuable data and information. All these came from trustworthy resources that ensured the following important parameters:

- To ensure the unique character of the project which enables participants to become an active part and transfer this to other projects, and possibly to further Arts' development
- To ensure that the participant children will not be exposed to any kind of physical and/or mentally hazard, as this could lead to serious problems, such as ethical and legal, damaging their personality
- Ensuring that the project will be scientifically acceptable and would develop skills such as Empathy and understanding between the Group leader and the participants, especially in situations of stress
- Establish a feeling of inclusion within the participants that can possibly feel 'left-out', as a result of previous participation in other projects, and not necessarily in this specific project
- Attract the attention of others, therefore ensuring that the project will become sustainable and will continue its contribution in Arts with the participation of disadvantaged persons that are looking for a break
- The development of a project that will attract the attention of the local communities, as well as the local societies, therefore, substantially expanding its operations to different levels and activities

Further to all the above-mentioned issues, the Group leader, in relation to the process of gathering the relevant information, has focused on other parameters that can potentially be considered as equally important and refer to the:

- Qualitative – Which ensures that the appropriate quality of the interactive activity shall be established, thus, enabling the project to become sustainable, giving the opportunity to both the Group Leader and the participants to further develop their

skills. This can be achieved either through the development of the specific project, or through the development of a new one. This target has been achieved as the Group Leader and the participants are fully satisfied with the entire project and its activities, and they are already planning further similar actions. These will include more participants with the background to be expected to be even more diversified in terms of skills and culture. This is expected to provide the opportunity to acquire participants from a greater pool with even more qualitative skills and criteria

- Quantitative – Which focuses on attracting enough participants that will wish to become an integral part of this activity.

Therefore, in order to ensure that, the Group leader applied her academic skills and professional knowledge, and gathered data and information from the following trustworthy resources.

- Professional Journals and magazines that provided the appropriate scientific background and created a sense of 'safety' in terms of procedures and the use of the appropriate skills
- Professional organisations that enabled the Group leader to develop solid communication, exchange ideas and concerns, therefore, obtaining valuable feedback from several professional colleagues
- Communication with other professionals in the school environment in order to identify the level of interpersonal connection with the participants, hence, avoiding possible emotional disruption
- Communication with professionals in order to provide the appropriate advice in terms of using the best possible materials and other equipment that have been considered as important for the development of the project

All the forms of Communication that have been used during the project had led to some positive results for all the participants as well as the Group Leader, that can be potentially used in other similar activities. These positive results are mainly referring to crucial point elements such as:

- Developing understanding about others, especially when these persons are going through a difficult situation. This can lead to other benefits such as social empathy which goes beyond the personal interests
- Ability to show tolerance about the views and perceptions of others. During the project, this has been achieved through positive groups discussions which enabled the exchange of ideas and views
- Building relationships with another person. The project's interactivity revealed that positive personal relationships have been developed, as the participants discovered several common interests
- Communication during the project has also enabled the Group Leader and the participants to share their expertise about several issues, hence, creating synergies for future activities

Analyze the data and establish a result. Short- and long-term results

The Project was designed in order to deliver both short-term and long-term results, not only for the participants, but also for the Group Leader. At the same time, the implementation of the Project has also taken into consideration the social environment of the participants which also needs to acquire some of the benefits. This is important in order to ensure the development of both the quality and the quantity of the project, therefore, turning the expected benefits into a sustainable environment.

Short-term Benefits

- Increased engagement and socialization with others
- Enhanced self-expression and creativity
- Reduced anxiety and stress levels
- Improved mood and emotional well-being
- Increased sense of accomplishment and self-esteem
- Improved communication and cognitive functioning
- Enhanced sensory stimulation and perceptual skills
- Increased motivation and interest in activities

- Improved physical dexterity and coordination
- Enhanced quality of life and overall satisfaction

Long-term Benefits:

At the end of the six-week program, the participating patients showed positive results in the following:

1. **Improved Communication:** The patients became more engaged, communicative, and expressive. Their language skills and vocabulary improved as they communicated with the art therapist and other participants.
2. **Minimized Anxiety:** During the art sessions, the patients became more relaxed, focused and present which led to a reduction in anxiety levels.
3. **Increased Self-Esteem:** Through expressing themselves creatively their sense of self-worth improved.
4. **Enhanced Motor Skills:** The patients improved their dexterity and fine motor skills through the use of multiple art materials such as paintbrushes, pencils, and clay.
5. **Positive Feeling:** Patients reported feeling of joy and peacefulness while engaging in art activities.

Conclusion

The art therapy program helped to improve the quality of life and well-being of the elderly patients with dementia. Therefore, it is recommended that art therapy should be integrated into the care plan of individuals with dementia in care homes.

Art as a Means of Contact with People, the Artist as an Animator:

This section emphasizes that art serves as a powerful medium for establishing contact and meaningful communication with disadvantaged individuals. Artists play the role of animators, facilitating artistic expressions that reflect the unique needs and experiences of participants. By serving as communicators, artists can bridge the gap between disadvantaged individuals and the creative process.

Title of the Case Study: Innovative Online Performance

1. Gather information to create a profile for a subject

Gathering Information in order to create a realistic profile for a any form of Arts subject, and this needs to be based on specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic, within a specific time framework. The current project has applied this principle, and in order to achieve this, has applied some well-designed and acceptable pillars that ensure the effective and fair participation of all the stakeholders.

Given the fact that the project included children, issues such as the effective protection of their personal data and their Profile, have been placed as a major priority. In this process, the use of Information Technology has indeed played a key role in order to enable effective Interaction, and therefore, the creation of Interactive Activities that would drive the Online Performance to greater levels.

One of the major objectives of the Online Performance is to ensure that the participants would feel Included in the project. Given the increasing importance of Exclusion that has prevailed in a large part of the contemporary societies, Art in Action can indeed be considered as an important tool that can help the Group Leader and the participants to interact in a way that will deliver the best possible results, and consequently, lead to a truly innovative and creative activity.

Therefore, these Pillars refer to the following:

Learners' Profile

- Included information about a student's skills, strengths, interests, as well as possible obstacles, as this helps the students that participate in such innovative project, to reveal their needs, wants, and most importantly, concerns that may arise as a result of their participation. This has led to positive results for the overall project
- Can highlight potential barriers to learning, which constituted a serious concern to the Group leader. The latter had discussed the specific issue extensively with the students that participated in the project. This has enabled the Group leader to become more focused on both the design and the implementation of the activities

- Make recommendations about what is needed to support learning, especially when the specific action did not occur by physical presence, instead, through online interaction. This required from the Group leader to apply a set of extrovert skills that are essential in order to provide all the relevant learning support, based on individual skills.

A Learners Profile must include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fields that are good at • Interests and Hobbies • Dreams, visions, and hopes • Dislikes • Fears • Willingness to improve • Vision to explore new elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties • Disabilities • Mental and Physical health • Team spirit • Previous experience • Motivated • Ability to adjust in new conditions
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All these were included in the team build-up process, enabling the participants and the Group leader to ensure that their participation will not lead to potential problems. The Group leader's expertise has created the appropriate team culture, avoided conflict and unnecessary toxic environment, which can create problems. This enabled the participants to remain focused and deliver exceptional results within a team spirit.

The example of the Online Performance constitutes a pioneer action by the assigned Teacher who in reality acts as a group leader in order to enable greater interaction between the stakeholders in several levels such as:

- The Group leader and the Group, as this is essential in order to ensure that all participants will feel as an integral part of the project, and therefore, all participants will feel welcomed into the project. This is considered as a vital component for the successful integration of all persons, especially since Arts always focus on this direction
- The Group Leader and each one of the participants on an interpersonal level, as this creates the opportunity for the Group Leader to clearly identify the unique skills and

competences of each one of the participants. This will potentially lead towards an improved performance on both individual and group levels

- Between all the individuals on a personal level, as this is considered as equally important as the two previously mentioned levels. Improves interpersonal relationships are essential in all forms of Arts and can essentially help them to become more effective. This can also lead to positive outcomes for the Group leader

The above-mentioned elements of the innovative Online Performance are based on the major principles of Communication which both the Group Leader and the students have right from the beginning evaluated it as of a great importance. Additionally, the Communication elements that have been applied during this interaction have been effective and are mainly referring to the following:

- Listening – In this setting “Art as a means of contact with people, the artist as an animator”, the skill of effective Listening has enabled all participants to become good listeners, rather than just hear people, they have established better channels and managed to develop empathy skills, as a result of improved understanding. In addition, listening development was transferred in the overall performance, enabling some of the children to transfer these skills to their school environment
- Non-verbal Communication – This was developed as part of the exceptionally unique approach developed by the Group leader who possesses great experience in such activities, enabling the participant students to establish their own code of communication in which the body language has indeed prevailed. The Group leader, through her extensive expertise in the field, ensured and motivated the participant students to emphasise on developing their feelings and personal unique abilities, as Arts’ major objectives refer to these issues, especially when difficult situations arise, and more specifically, when the participants come from several disadvantaged backgrounds, creating serious problems in terms of adjusting. The Project has addressed the specific problem by applying on-line non-verbal communication, through which the participant students have managed to become a lot more sensitive, develop a high level of Empathy

towards the rest of the Team, and most importantly, establish solid Team spirit; all essential for further growth in the field of Arts.

As part of this unique online interactive presentation and participation of students, that most of them were experiencing a participation in any Arts events, for the very first time, the Group leader has managed to transfer some of her unique skills that were used in other similar Arts activities.

Further, in order for the Group Leader to ensure that the interactive activity would take place in an effective manner and would produce the expected results, several resources have been utilised, providing useful information in relation to:

- The Quality of the Project, in which the Group Leader had the opportunity to develop new ways of interaction and assist the participants to explore and develop new skills they did not know they had
- The development of social and personal skills in relation to the project, enabling the Group leader to trigger these skills through the specific interactive activities

2. Collect information regarding the subject's background

Collecting data and information has always been considered as a real challenge for any given organisation and/or project, as this requires the application of ethical and professional skills. This is taking an increasing importance when sensitive matters are included in the project. The Group leader took this into serious consideration prior designing and implementing a strategy that would help towards the Project's development.

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background to be expected to be even more diversified in terms of skills and culture.

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- Developing understanding about others, especially when these persons are going through a difficult situation. This can lead to other benefits such as social empathy which goes beyond the personal interests

- Ability to show tolerance about the views and perceptions of others. During the project, this has been achieved through positive groups discussions which enabled the exchange of ideas and views
- Building relationships with another person. The project's interactivity revealed that positive personal relationships have been developed, as the participants discovered several common interests
- Communication during the project has also enabled the Group Leader and the participants to share their expertise about several issues, hence, creating synergies for future activities

3. Analyze the data and establish a result. Short- and long-term results

The Project was designed in order to deliver both short-term and long-term results, not only for the participants, but also for the Group Leader. At the same time, the implementation of the Project has also taken into consideration the social environment of the participants which also needs to acquire some of the benefits. This is important in order to ensure the development of both the quality and the quantity of the project, therefore, turning the expected benefits into a sustainable environment.

Long-term Benefits:

- The participants can develop essential skills such as learning to respect others as part of the team effort that can include people from different backgrounds. By accepting differences, and acknowledge different abilities, the participants can potentially create opportunities for new friendships within their greater environment. This environment can be their family, school, or any other related, in which they can interact in a social level. This benefit is expected to help the project's participants in the near future, as some of them are planning to proceed to other group works, including the field of Arts, as well as others, such as sports, which all require deep devotion and respect to others in order to ensure the best positive outcomes.

- The participants can learn about abilities they possess, (however, they did not know about them as they never had the opportunity to develop them) related to helping others in order to participate and learn. Some of these can be to be patient and to gain the satisfaction in helping others learn and behave better. The personal satisfaction is evaluated a long-term benefit and has been associated with the fields of Psychology and the person's ability to improve at different levels during his/her life. In addition, this has also been linked to the field of Arts which enables people to become more sensitive about the problems of other people
- They benefit from the cognitive effort required to explain themselves and from the contributions of peers with Special Education Needs (SEN) from which they can learn. During the project, the participants had to opportunity to interact with persons facing SEN, enabling them to realise that not all the children, and of course, not all the people have the same skills. This can be considered as a long-term benefit as the participants can transfer such important skills to several other activities in their lives, making them more tolerant in terms of differentiation at a personal level. At the same time, they can understand that the inclusion of persons with SEN can expand the pool from which as individuals can acquire support and collaboration in relation to the development of several projects. This can be related to our personal, working, and even the social lives, making the specific element as a long-term valuable asset that can substantially improve the overall personality and ability to achieve goals, both personal and team, by effectively collaborating with others.
- In relation to the Group leader, the greater long-term benefit acquired from the specific extrovert and interactive project, is that she will be able to become more aware in terms of designing, developing, and most importantly, implementing such extrovert and innovative projects. The benefits from that participation can be considered as a long-term asset that can help towards attracting other people, either professional artists and/or amateurs, that would wish to be part of such interactive activities. Further, the dissemination of the Project can also contribute towards the creation of a higher-level of sensitivity behalf the societies. Further, in terms of resources, the major benefits is

that similar interactive Projects can be developed, hence, attracting funding from the local authorities and/or businesses, as part of their corporate social responsibility policies. All the above are directly linked to the Group-leader's previous professional and personal working experience, and can be considered as an additional benefit that can have a long-term value. Finally, the major long-term benefit for the Group-leader is the fact that she realises once again that the need for further development and exploration of new ways of improving her professional development, constitutes a perpetual requirement.

Short-term Benefits

- The feeling of inclusion behalf the participants and their families during the Project development. This has enabled all of them to establish a sense of loving and caring when they were facing some specific problems
- Opportunity to identify new skills that can be used in other related projects, and not necessarily be linked to the specific project which of course can be viewed as their major starting point

Understand the impact of acceptance and rejection, especially since the participants are children that are now developing their personality. Hence, this can be potentially transferred to their school environment.

Presence and proper use of energy:

This section emphasizes the importance of artists being present and attuned to the specific conditions and scenes where artistic engagement takes place. The energy artists bring to the engagement should align with the needs and abilities of disadvantaged individuals, creating an atmosphere conducive to artistic expression and social inclusion.

Name of the Case Study: Ability Festival- The Art of Inspiring

Ability Festival - The art of Inspiring - FdA is a festival, centered on art made accessible. A cultural event celebrating social inclusion done by artists with and without disabilities. Promoting a culture that highlights everyone's abilities is our main purpose, alongside valorizing the beauty of diversity. We want to respond to the urge of making art and culture accessible to people with disabilities, both as artists and audience.

For us Accessibility in art is a priority, that's why all our events involve:

1. LIS interpreting - Italian Sign Language
2. Live streaming subtitling;
3. Audio description.

Performances that animate FdA range among sculpture, painting, poetry, music, dance, theater and new technologies, in a game of intertwined performative synergies. FdA is a contemporary symposium, where different forms of art interact.

We created four kinds of action: live performance; workshops; talks; dissemination activities.

The payoff chosen for the last Ability Festival was "***the art of inspiring***": these days we really need positive inspirations, messages and stories.

We believe that Art generates social transformation and those who inspire us turn on a light in the dark and help us find or rediscover our path. With FdA we give voice to this artistic and socio-political vision.

The first festival's edition took place in September 2020, the year of the pandemic, and it was one of the few live events that has been able to take place in Milan. The festival's structure born out of necessity to follow the covid-19 safety protocol about distancing and redistribution of people, became the "critical success factor": it allowed us a simultaneity of performative events, workshops and debates aimed at different audiences and it transformed the shared pandemic experience into an opportunity. Today the festival maintains its hybrid nature, with a format designed in-person and streaming. This allows a double result:

1. Go beyond the hearing disability of those who are not signers through live subtitling of the events;

2. Go beyond the "physical" place where the event takes place.

Link [Ability Festival 2022 Trailer](#)

Link [Ability Festival 2021 Trailer](#)

Link [Ability Festival 2020 Trailer](#)

Artist profile

All the artists we selected are capable of triggering curiosity and dialogue through their art, the first step for a collective change.

Short-term results

All the performances hosted and created during the project, have brought positive results that can be used to start new activities. The positive results mainly refer to:

- Creating moments of reflection through performing, figurative and literary arts where inclusion is generated in a smart and smooth way, through common artistic passion;
- Promoting a local network among artists, cultural operators, institutions and associations, for the enhancement of the skills and the potential of people with disabilities or coming from situation of social disadvantage;
- Connecting artists coming from different parts of Italy and realities operating in the field of disabilities;
- Spreading an inclusive culture among young people with educational interventions and workshops;
- Supporting an innovative cultural process of teaching with an unexpected artistic experience;
- Realizing accessible artistic actions characterized by a high degree of innovation and creativity, to experiment with new forms of fruition of events, and involvement of the audience in digital or in presence;
- Reconsidering art, to deliver it to its purest form of art *by art*, beyond physical, social and cultural condition;

- Enriching the cultural offer for society by enhancing themes of *diversity & inclusion* through art.

Long-term results:

The expected benefits are transformed into a consolidated practice for all events, every artistic and cultural event is designed upstream accessible, these are the long-term results of our project. Those who live with disability do not need new rights, but they simply need to be recognized and guaranteed the same rights as everyone else. Promoting accessible services, encourages paths of autonomy and individual fulfilment, breaks down physical, cognitive, sensory and cultural barriers.

An example of a workshop created during FdA is **Move Lab Play Identity** conducted by Marco De Meo. *A research and production workshop for the creation of a solo, based on the pedagogy of Desire.*

The workshop aims to offer a stimulus to the creative activity of the student, useful for the creation of a solo. Through their expressive characteristics of "artistic making", the participants were led on a path of art research, starting from personal suggestions and expressive urgencies, experimenting on stage with different ways of telling, through the language of performing art.

The path focused on the theme of identity which becomes a narrative tool, and on the body as an expressive vehicle. Through a choral work, the path aimed to enhance the personality of the participants, in search of a personal artistic language, a manifestation of their uniqueness.

The participant, with or without disabilities, is considered as a subject of knowledge, because he is a bearer of knowledge, traditions, experiences, culture and not as an empty container to be filled, corrected or instructed. The participant is also the subject of Desire, where Desire is that engine/power capable of generating transformation, awareness, identity and autonomy to discover oneself as the creator of one's own life project. In this sense, the discovery, or rediscovery, by the subjects of their Desire, has activated a process that led, from an initial situation of inadequacy and sense of failure, to the discovery of the possibilities and potentialities of subverting their condition of social exclusion. This practice has been

configured not only as an educational and formative work but also as a political act, through which the subject can affirm his presence to himself, and to the world around him.

Main workshop's goals:

- Creativity and unexpressed psychophysical potential awakening;
- Self-confidence strengthening;
- Loneliness and isolation feeling overcoming;
- Artistic expressive skills enhancement;
- Feelings transformed into artistic actions;
- Virtues enhancement;
- Body-mind rebalancing;
- Learning from others experiences;
- New skills achievement.

Conductor's creative process steps:

- Investigate participant's interests, skills and discover the most hidden ones;
- Focus the point of criticism and investigate personal values
- Analyse the theme chosen by the participant and identify the suitable artistic medium (dance, voice, audio recordings, video recordings, acting, music instrument etc.)
- Participatory creation of the solo staging
- Single staging rehearsals
- Creation of an ad hoc dramaturgy able to contain all the solos.

The performance realization that will be performed for a live audience, takes place through the construction of a flexible dramaturgy, where the improvisation factor by participants, both in the creative and performing phase, is fundamental in order to experience and let the audience experience the "here and now".

The essential staging trait is the ability to carry out actions in margins densely rich in possibilities, between the "preparation" (score, script, text, choreography, recordings, etc.) and the "moment", as a concrete and unrepeatable performance.

Performing art produces beauty, and beauty gives rise to desire. That allows the participants to transform, get excited and pose questions to themselves. The audience itself becomes a participant in the work of art performed.

Short-term results:

Developing the sense of belonging to a group, in which the core element is sharing your own abilities with others and focus on virtues instead of lacks. This kind of practice rises up a power feeling, very useful for the final performance.

Long-term results:

The Desire stimulated in every participant activates a saving process, useful to their own existences. The contact with art and its expressions has proved to be a path of growth and research, because it stimulates the subjects to recognize their lacks, but this time, to relate to them without fear and suffering.

Concluding thoughts:

It's a long road and the challenge is significant: contribute to change the cultural paradigm and affirm, in a positive way, everyone's right to a full enjoyment of fundamental freedoms, in order to be actually "free to live like everyone else" (festival motto).

References

<https://festivaldelleabilita.org/>

<http://www.fmc-onlus.org/>

<https://movelab.video.blog/>

Examples of Art-Based Activities with people from challenging healthcare settings

In this last chapter, there are presented concrete examples of activities that could be organized by artists when they work in challenging healthcare settings. The activities are divided on the basis of the art that is used. Here we use examples from Dance, Music, Theatre, Painting, Puppet Theatre and Storytelling.

Dance

Two dance-based activities are presented: one is called “Dance on Your Feet” and the other “Dance in Your Seat”. They address people with different kind of physical movement ability.

Activity 1: Dance on Your Feet

Title	“Dance on your feet” - Dance session for the social inclusion of senior citizens.
Duration	45 minutes.
Aim of the activity	To use Dance and movement as a social activity, to connect people, expand social interaction, and provide an overall community feeling of well being and togetherness.
Brief Description of the activity	A fun, socially engaging Dance session to promote and build a sense of community. The participants Dance as a group....line dancing, western barn dancing (partnering /facing each other) and circular dancing. Theme of the session is “Around The World” A) Barn Dance from America (wild west) B) Tango from Argentina C) Syrtaki from Greece D) Virginia Reel from England
Detailed Description of the activity	1) Introduction of the artist with senior citizens. The introduction should be positive, enthusiastic and happy. Pleasant conversation with the participants is very important as senior citizens often experience loneliness 2) Ice breaking welcome circle – We make two circles of people, each circle facing the opposite direction. With musical accompaniment , we move rhythmically forward and introduce ourselves to each other (this can be very entertaining as some people will already know each other, but new members to the group have the opportunity to connect and make new friends – conversation can be just a simple “hello...how are you today?”) 3) Warm up dance sitting on a chair

	<p>Movements and exercises to warm up each individual part of the body, reaching up to elongate the body and stretch the upper torso. Using the arms in a repetitive manner to increase cardiovascular blood flow, exercising upper and lower extremities. Music is uplifting and rhythmic.</p> <p>(Only 2 of the following 4 dances should be chosen to teach at the session)</p> <p>4) Western Barn Dancing – 32 count basic choreography . Holding hands with your partner and moving anti clockwise in a circle. On the last 4 counts we move forward and change partners. Music such as Achy Breaky Heart- Billy Ray Cyrus (slowed down)</p> <p>5) Tango – 64 count basic tango steps . Standing in lines and all facing the same direction. Dancing in a synchronised manner connecting all the participants physically and emotionally forming a single sensorimotor activity. Music such as Santa Maria - Gotan Project</p> <p>6) Syrtaki – a group dance in a circle with all participants holding each other by the hands. Apart from the social element of dancing in a group, dancing improves brain function and boosts memory. Music such as Zorba - Mikis Theodorakis</p> <p>7) Virginia reel - A social dance where partners face each other . Music such as Virginia Reel Blend - Sham Rock</p> <p>8) Cool Down Sitting upright in a chair taking deep breaths expanding the lungs, then with closed eyes the participants imagine their favourite colour washing through their bodies from head to toe. Time to relax.</p>
Materials/Items needed for the activity	Music
Evaluation	Participants will be interviewed (asked questions) to evaluate the outcome.
Other comments	<p>This activity must be very flexible and easily adapted for senior citizens with mobility problems (the dances can be done seated).</p> <p>Verbal instructions must be loud and clear for the hard of hearing.</p> <p>It is important to remind everyone to move within their own comfort zone, pain is a signal to do less or stop.</p>

Activity 2: Dance in Your Seat

Title	“Dance In Your Seat” - Dance therapy for the social inclusion of elderly people with dementia.
Duration	45 minutes
Aim of the activity	To use Dance and movement as a tool to address elderly people with memory disorders (Dementia). To stimulate social interaction, enhance mood, reduce anxiety and increase self expression.

Brief Description of the activity	A fun, colourful, seated in a circle, movement session where participants will use an array of sensory props, and move along to music of various rhythmns and sounds.
Detailed Description of the activity	<p>1) Introduction of the artist with elderly adults suffering with Dementia The introduction should be calm, happy and positive, being aware of the tone of our voice, facial expressions and body gestures. Holding the participants hand as we speak can provide comfort and reassurance. Suffering from memory loss is very frustrating, confusing and frightening so creating a calm atmosphere is very important.</p> <p>2) Warm up dance Movements and exercises to warm up each individual part of the body, reaching up to elongate the body and stretch the upper torso. Using the arms in a repetitive manner to increase cardiovascular blood flow. Music is gentle with a good beat.</p> <p>3) Mirroring dance Dance to engage the upper extremities using colourful scarves. Movements with colourful scarves will improve mobility, build strength, engage the participant and add enjoyment and fun.</p> <p>4) Dance to engage lower extremities using large coloured balloons. A fun activity where everyone is interactive as we try as a connected group to keep the balloon in the air using our legs and feet, and then passing the balloon around to each other in the circle.</p> <p>5) Narrative Charleston dance</p> <p>6) Ribbon dance The participants follow along with the artist, to a dance using music from their cultural background. Music stimulates many parts of the brain at the same time, and has been proven to help memory.</p> <p>7) Improvisation With the use of percussive instruments like maracas, soft drums and homemade instruments (like.. a bottle filled with rice or lentils etc.) Everyone can tap along to the music rhythmically, working as a group and listening to the music. This way we create our own orchestra. In continuation, each person will then take turns to move and express themselves as individuals. The use of a popular song from their youth can bring back memories that are deep inside them.</p> <p>8)Play with a therapeutic parachute. The parachute is used as a way to promote relaxation, socialization, mental stimulation and above all ...laughter.</p>
Materials/Items needed for the activity	<p>Props : chairs, scarves, balloons, maracas, ribbons and therapeutic parachute.</p> <p>Music : a large selection of various styles, rhythmns and tempos.</p>
Evaluation	<p>The success of this activity is measured by the response of the participant, the social interaction and enthusiasm they have to join in the dance session. Seeing eyes light up, hands tapping the musical beat and hearing the participants laugh is a huge success.</p>
Other comments	<p>Use a wide variety of music to keep everyone interested. Be very clear with instructions and keep the tempo slow. Don't be afraid to repeat, repeat,</p>

	repeat, and take time with each section. Be aware of physical limitations and always be ready to adapt the exercises, and flexible to change of music and dance at any moment.
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Music

In this section there are presented, two activities based on Music. These activities are called “My Happy Day with Music” and “Rhythm and Art”.

Activity 3: Rhythm and Art

Title	"Rhythm and Art" - Drumming workshops for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to promote social inclusion
Duration	1 hour
Aim of the activity	To use drumming as a therapeutic tool to engage children with autism spectrum disorder, promote social interaction, improve communication skills, and foster a sense of inclusion.
Brief Description of the activity	A dynamic drumming workshop designed specifically for children with autism spectrum disorder. Through rhythmic exercises, interactive games, and creative expression, the participants will have the opportunity to engage in a shared musical experience and develop social connections.
Detailed Description of the activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction and Icebreaker: Begin the session with a warm and welcoming introduction, ensuring a calm and safe environment. Use visual aids, such as picture cards, to introduce each participant and learn their names. Encourage everyone to share something they enjoy or are interested in. 2. Drumming Warm-up: Start with a rhythmic warm-up exercise using hand drums, tambourines, or other percussive instruments. Guide the participants through simple rhythmic patterns, gradually increasing the complexity as the session progresses. This activity helps improve motor coordination and prepares the participants for the main drumming activities. 3. Call and Response: Introduce call and response exercises where the facilitator plays a rhythm, and the participants imitate and respond with their own variation. This activity promotes listening skills, turn-taking, and encourages participants to express themselves through drumming. 4. Group Drumming: Engage the participants in a collaborative drumming experience. Provide each child with a drum or percussion instrument and guide them in playing a rhythmic pattern together as a group. Encourage them to listen to one another and maintain a steady beat. This activity fosters a sense of belonging, teamwork, and cooperative play.

	<p>5. Drum Circle Games: Introduce interactive games that involve passing rhythmic patterns around the circle. For example, each participant plays a short phrase, and the person next to them repeats it before adding their own contribution. This activity promotes social interaction, communication, and enhances listening and imitation skills.</p> <p>6. Creative Expression: Provide an opportunity for individual expression by allowing participants to improvise and create their own rhythms on the drums. Encourage them to experiment with different sounds and techniques, expressing their emotions and personal style. This activity supports self-expression, creativity, and boosts self-confidence.</p> <p>7. Closing Circle: Gather everyone in a circle for a reflective closing. Ask each participant to share their favorite moment from the session or something they enjoyed about drumming together. Provide positive feedback and appreciation for their participation.</p>
Materials/Items needed for the activity	Hand drums, tambourines, shakers, or other percussive instruments suitable for children. Visual aids with picture cards for introductions. Optional: Visual schedules or timers to help with transitions.
Evaluation	The success of this activity can be measured by observing the participants' engagement, social interaction, and communication during the session. Feedback from parents, caregivers, and the participants themselves can also provide valuable insights into their experience and progress.
Other comments	It is essential to create a sensory-friendly environment by considering factors such as noise levels, lighting, and individual sensitivities. Provide visual supports and clear instructions to assist with comprehension. Adapt the activities to suit the needs and abilities of each participant, allowing for flexibility and individualized support.

Activity 4: My Happy Day with Music

Title	“My happy day with music” – Music therapy workshop for students with special needs, ASD, behavioral issues, etc., listening and playing music with the help of self-made instruments
Duration	1.5 hour
Aim of the activity	The music therapy can benefit the learners with anxiety and other behavioral disorders with its techniques, helping them to feel calm and able to focus on their everyday school tasks in a music therapy setting. After the session the students are more able to overcome their anxiety and return to normal day routine and social communication.
Brief Description of the activity	Playful therapy session in the format of a workshop that has the purpose to restore the physical, emotional and spiritual health of the learners and could be applied in class lessons, therapeutic process as a part of psychological

	work, kinesitherapy, etc. through performing songs and melodies with self-made creative instruments in synchronized playing, directed by the trainer.
Detailed Description of the activity	<p>Music has been proven to tone the central nervous system, improve metabolism and blood circulation which makes music therapy becoming a psychotherapeutic method based on the healing effect of music on the psycho-emotional state of children with special needs.</p> <p>For children who show signs of depression, music therapy as a means of improving mood is quite successful. In fact, children who are exposed to the power of music, especially those who use movement and gesture, find greater satisfaction through the dynamics of physical movement.</p> <p>The training should start in a positive and calm atmosphere with a clear explanation of the tasks: the participants will take their working place and make certain instruments with the offered materials and objects. After they get ready with the instruments they will perform certain songs using musical background.</p> <p>The learners could be divided into 3 groups according to the three types of instruments that should be made by them.</p> <p>Each group will make a musical instrument (drum, harmonica, maracas)</p> <p>Tasks during the workshop:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making musical instruments 2. Divide into 3 groups according to the musical instrument 3. Performance of musical works - "Duck dance", "If you are happy", folk songs, etc. <p>Stages of the music therapy process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Preparatory - building trust between the child and the therapist. II. Enriching the student's vocabulary about the types of musical instruments and their sound (visual and auditory). III. Making a musical instrument from available materials (percussion, strings, brass, etc.) IV. Create groups by type of musical instrument V. Singing together short ready-made musical works or improvising on the spot. <p>Music therapy is a method through which we can maintain and restore the physical, emotional and spiritual health of the student. I am also responsible for specific and individual needs, for various diseases, dysfunctions and special needs.</p>
Materials/Items needed for the activity	<p>The necessary materials are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drum – a balloon, a metal bowl and a wooden ice cream stick; - Harmonica - two wooden ice cream sticks, rubber band, two matchsticks and a shiny block; - Maracas - option 1 - sea salt in a small metal box, option 2 - beans in a small cardboard box, option 3 - lentils in a small plastic box
Evaluation	The successful execution of the training using cooperative work, voice, movements and gestures could lead to a healing effect on the psycho-

	emotional state of learners with special needs, should improve their mood expressing greater satisfaction through the dynamics of physical movement and singing. The trainer should create an atmosphere in which children can reveal their potential, through words, sounds and action.
Other comments	The duration of the music therapy process does not have an exact duration. It depends on the degree of the disease, the capabilities and needs of the child. The "certainty effect" is important for controlling emotions and achieving results.

Theatre

Three activities have been created based on theatre: "Theatre without Barriers", "Play Identity" and "Theatre of Inclusion",

Activity 5: Theatre Without Barriers

Title	Theatre without barriers – theater workshop with professional and/or amateur actors with and without hearing disabilities
Duration	2 meetings a week lasting 2 hours for 4 months
Aim of the activity	Starting from the assumption that one cannot fail to communicate and that there is no such thing as a non-behavior, learning to become aware of one's means of expression within a society is of vital importance. Equally important is also learning to listen to the other and his stories. By putting ourselves in someone else's shoes we discover how similar and different they are to us, thus solving many misunderstandings born simply from different languages or from little training in listening, often favoring a gaze only on ourselves. The laboratory aims to experiment with new forms of fruition of the artistic experience through the contamination of languages, languages and related cultures of belonging and origin and aimed at spreading the beauty of the encounter between diversities. Through the common theatrical practice a constructive cohabitation of the same social space is created aimed at breaking down the cultural, communicative and environmental barriers.
Brief Description of the activity	Artistic path of theatrical research that aims to find a common artistic language for a mixed audience of deaf people who use the Italian Sign Language together with a hearing audience.
Detailed Description of the activity	The theatrical experience allows you to explore the communicative code that arises from non-verbal language, making the body conceive as a privileged tool of communication. This type of setting makes it possible to enhance the spontaneous expressiveness of proposing a structured sign language (LIS) in parallel, which can become a concrete tool for relating to those who are disadvantaged in verbal communication. The path is structured on the basis of the group's own needs, on the concrete communication needs that are indicated.

	<p>The work perspective of the proposed theater laboratory in fact provides that the objectives and contents are agreed with the participants, according to the methodology of creating a path suitable for responding to the needs thought of and reported by the participants themselves.</p> <p>The laboratory is preceded by at least two group design meetings, to collect the information necessary for the development of the project.</p> <p>On the basis of the themes and needs expressed, a path is started which aims to dramatize the themes.</p> <p>This first phase is useful for gradually approaching a different communicative relationship.</p> <p>Everyone is asked not to use words to communicate, so there are no disadvantages.</p> <p>The second phase involves learning the signs of Sign Language by translating some written parts into marked actions. Translating the verbal language with which we refer to thoughts, spaces, actions in gestural mimic language.</p> <p>Stages of work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Meeting and cultural and artistic exchange (practical and theoretical) 2) Identification of the common goal through a text, a subject, a theatrical idea. 3) Experimentation through improvisation of ideas and practices 4) Comparison with a selected audience of experts 5) Staging 6) Feedback among the participants
Materials/Items needed for the activity	Need for adequate space for the laboratory, Sign Language Interpreter
Evaluation	The evaluation of the proposed artistic activity is measured in terms of reducing the disadvantage, transforming the limits into opportunities. The change that we want to trigger is to overturn the perspective of how disability is lived, it is society that has to change, since the disadvantage derives from a wholly or partially inadequate response from society towards people with disabilities and their specific predispositions physical and sensory. Building bridges where minorities tend to ghettoize themselves.
Other comments	The artistic path can be activated not only with deaf people but also with people with language disorders, in contexts of social discomfort, in prisons or multi-ethnic groups of people. A path that is adaptable to different contexts, fluid, which has the purpose, through narration and the encounter, of knowing the diversity to defeat its fear.

Activity 6: Play Identity

Title	Play Identity – performative art laboratory for people with or without disabilities
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Duration	Session can be done starting from one week (2 h. each day), until 6 months (1 day a week)
Aim of the activity	<p>The workshop aims is to offer a stimulus to the creative activity of the student, useful for the creation of a solo. Through their expressive characteristics of "artistic making", the participants were led on a path of art research, starting from personal suggestions and expressive urgencies, experimenting on stage with different ways of telling, through the language of performing art.</p> <p>The path focused on the theme of identity which becomes a narrative tool, and on the body as an expressive vehicle. Through a choral work, the path aimed to enhance the personality of the participants, in search of a personal artistic language, a manifestation of their uniqueness.</p>
Brief Description of the activity	Social practice and artistic research and production workshop for the creation of a solo, based on the pedagogy of Desire.
Detailed Description of the activity	<p>Investigate participants interests, skills and discover the most hidden ones;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus the point of criticism and investigate personal values - Analyze the theme chosen by the participant and identify the suitable artistic medium (dance, voice, audio recordings, video recordings, acting, music instrument etc.) - Participatory creation of the solo staging - Single staging rehearsals - Creation of an ad hoc dramaturgy able to contain all the solos. - rehearsal of the final performance - performance event
Materials/Items needed for the activity	Self-materials from participants useful to create the art piece.
Evaluation	<p>The Desire stimulated in every participant activates a saving process, useful to their own existences. The contact with art and its expressions has proved to be a path of growth and research, because it stimulates the subjects to recognize their lacks, but this time, to relate to them without fear and suffering.</p> <p>Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creativity and unexpressed psychophysical potential awakening; - Self-confidence strengthening; - Loneliness and isolation feeling overcoming; - Artistic expressive skills enhancement; - Feelings transformed into artistic actions; - Virtues enhancement; - Body-mind rebalancing; - Learning from others experiences; - New skills achievement.

Other comments	<p>This practice has been configured not only as an educational and formative work but also as a political act, through which the subject can affirm his presence to himself, and to the world around him.</p> <p>The performance realization that will be performed for a live audience, takes place through the construction of a flexible dramaturgy, where the improvisation factor by participants, both in the creative and performing phase, is fundamental in order to experience and let the audience experience the "here and now".</p> <p>The essential staging trait is the ability to carry out actions in margins densely rich in possibilities, between the "preparation" (score, script, text, choreography, recordings, etc.) and the "moment", as a concrete and unrepeatable performance.</p> <p>The participant, with or without disabilities, is considered as a subject of knowledge, because he is a bearer of knowledge, traditions, experiences, culture and not as an empty container to be filled, corrected or instructed. The participant is also the subject of Desire, where Desire is that engine/power capable of generating transformation, awareness, identity and autonomy to discover oneself as the creator of one's own life project. In this sense, the discovery, or rediscovery, by the subjects of > Desire, has activated a process that led, from an initial situation of inadequacy and sense of failure, to the discovery of the possibilities and potentialities of subverting their condition of social exclusion.</p>
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Activity 7: Theatre of Inclusion

Title	"Theatre of Inclusion" - Drama workshops for young adults with physical disabilities to promote social inclusion
Duration	120 minutes
Aim of the activity	To utilize drama and theatrical techniques as tools for self-expression, empowerment, and social inclusion among young adults with physical disabilities. The workshops aim to foster creativity, build confidence, and encourage meaningful connections within a supportive and inclusive environment.
Brief Description of the activity	Engaging drama workshops where young adults with physical disabilities explore various theatrical techniques, storytelling, and improvisation. Through collaborative activities, participants will develop communication skills, enhance self-confidence, and embrace their unique abilities, promoting social inclusion within the group.
Detailed Description of the activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction and Icebreaker: Create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the participants. Begin with introductions, allowing each young adult to share their name, a fun fact, and their interest in drama. Engage in an icebreaker activity that encourages interaction and breaks the ice within the group.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Body and Movement Warm-up: Conduct a series of gentle warm-up exercises that focus on body awareness, stretching, and mobility. Incorporate elements of dance, yoga, or physical theater techniques, tailored to accommodate different physical abilities. This activity prepares the participants for the physical aspects of the drama workshop. 3. Storytelling and Character Building: Guide the participants in storytelling exercises where they create and develop characters using their imaginations. Encourage them to explore various physicality, gestures, and vocalizations to bring their characters to life. This activity promotes creativity, self-expression, and the development of narrative skills. 4. Improvisation and Scene Work: Engage the participants in improvisational activities and scene work, where they collaborate to create spontaneous scenes. Provide prompts or scenarios that allow them to explore different emotions, conflicts, and relationships. This activity enhances communication skills, teamwork, and encourages participants to think on their feet. 5. Accessible Theatre Techniques: Introduce participants to specific theatre techniques that can be adapted to accommodate different physical abilities. For example, exploring voice projection, facial expressions, or utilizing assistive devices for creative purposes. This activity allows participants to explore their unique talents and abilities within the theatrical context. 6. Inclusive Performance Project: Collaboratively work towards creating a short performance piece that incorporates elements explored in the workshops. Participants can contribute through acting, storytelling, movement, or any other form of creative expression. Emphasize the importance of teamwork, mutual support, and inclusivity throughout the rehearsal process. 7. Sharing and Reflection: Organize a sharing session where participants have the opportunity to present their performance piece to an invited audience, such as friends, family, or other community members. Following the performance, facilitate a reflection session where participants can share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences throughout the workshop process.
Materials/Items needed for the activity	Open space for movement, comfortable clothing, props or costumes for performance piece (if desired), assistive devices or adaptations as necessary based on participants' specific needs.
Evaluation	The success of this activity can be evaluated through observation of participants' engagement, creativity, and their ability to collaborate effectively within the group. Feedback from participants, as well as audience reactions,

	can provide valuable insights into the impact of the drama workshops on social inclusion and personal growth.
Other comments	Ensure the physical environment is accessible and safe for all participants. Provide support and assistance as needed, considering individual mobility requirements. Celebrate the diversity and uniqueness of each participant, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and respect throughout the workshops.

Painting

One activity that was created in the framework of the project was related with the art of painting. It is called “Brushes of Unity”.

Activity 8: Brushes of Unity

Title	"Brushes of Unity" - Art therapy workshops for teenagers with emotional and behavioral difficulties to foster social inclusion
Duration	1.5 hour
Aim of the activity	To use art therapy as a medium for self-expression, emotional exploration, and social connection among teenagers facing emotional and behavioral difficulties. The workshops aim to enhance self-esteem, promote empathy, and encourage a sense of belonging and acceptance within the group.
Brief Description of the activity	A series of interactive art therapy workshops where teenagers with emotional and behavioral difficulties engage in various artistic activities, guided by a professional art therapist. Through the creative process, participants will have opportunities to express their emotions, share their experiences, and develop connections with peers, fostering a sense of social inclusion.
Detailed Description of the activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction and Icebreaker: Create a welcoming and non-judgmental atmosphere for the participants. Begin with a group introduction, allowing each teenager to share their name and something they enjoy or are passionate about. Engage in an icebreaker activity that encourages interaction and builds a sense of unity within the group. 2. Collage Self-Portraits: Provide a variety of magazines, newspapers, art supplies, and large paper sheets. Instruct the participants to create a self-portrait collage using images, words, and colors that reflect their identities, strengths, and aspirations. Encourage them to share their finished collages with the group and discuss the symbolism behind their chosen elements. 3. Group Mural: Collaboratively create a large mural on a designated wall or canvas. Assign different themes or emotions to specific sections of the mural. Each participant can contribute by adding their artistic

	<p>interpretation of the given theme, using paints, markers, or other materials. This activity promotes teamwork, cooperation, and a shared sense of achievement.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Expressive Painting: Provide individual canvases or art boards and an array of paints and brushes. Encourage the participants to express their emotions freely through painting. This activity allows them to channel their feelings, release stress, and communicate non-verbally. Afterward, participants can briefly share the story or emotions behind their artwork, if they feel comfortable doing so. 5. Guided Group Reflection: Lead a guided reflection session where participants can share their thoughts and feelings about the artworks created. Use open-ended questions to encourage meaningful dialogue, empathy, and understanding among the group. This activity fosters active listening, perspective-taking, and promotes a supportive environment. 6. Artistic Collaborations: Initiate small-group or pair collaborations, where participants work together to create a unified artwork. This could involve combining individual art pieces, contributing to a shared sculpture, or creating a joint painting. This activity encourages cooperation, compromise, and appreciation for diverse perspectives. 7. Exhibition and Celebration: Organize an art exhibition or showcase where the participants' artworks are displayed. Invite family members, friends, and other members of the community to celebrate the participants' creativity and achievements. This event serves as a platform for the teenagers to feel acknowledged, valued, and socially included.
Materials/Items needed for the activity	Art supplies such as magazines, newspapers, scissors, glue, paints, brushes, canvases, art boards, and a designated space for the mural. Optional: Easels, protective clothing, and display materials for the exhibition.
Evaluation	The success of this activity can be evaluated through observation of participants' engagement, verbal and non-verbal communication, and their willingness to share their thoughts and emotions. Feedback from participants, as well as their self-perception and social interactions within the group, can provide valuable insights into the impact of the workshops.
Other comments	It is crucial to establish clear guidelines for respectful and empathetic communication within the group. The art therapist should create a safe space where participants feel comfortable expressing themselves. Be mindful of individual triggers or sensitivities, and provide additional support or alternative activities if needed. Flexibility and adaptability are key to tailoring the workshops to the unique needs and abilities of the participants.

Storytelling

One activity that was created in the framework of the project was related with the art of storytelling. It is called “The Yellow Stork”.

Activity 9: THE YELLOW STORK or How we share a miracle

Title	THE YELLOW STORK or How we share a miracle
Duration	60 minutes
Aim of the activity	Use of storytelling and painting to help participants connect with their childhood (since most of the adults think of fairy tales and drawing as “childish” activities), stimulate their creativity, rediscover the joy of expressing through art and the meaning of sharing. Help people who are facing serious health issues connect with meaningful memories and empower themselves.
Brief Description of the activity	Story telling of a traditional Chinese tale called “The Yellow Stork” followed by a simple (no special knowledge is required) and relevant art workshop.
Detailed Description of the activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seat in a circle and introduce us saying our name and our favorite color! 2. Story telling (oral narration can be replaced by reading, if more suitable for the artist/instructor involved) 3. Ask the participants to close for a moment their eyes and think of something that is the miracle in their life – explain that it can be anything, a person, an important moment or an everyday habit. Additionally, listening to Zen music may help to concentration. 4. EXPLAIN THE WORKSHOP: The aim is to make a painting that will represent what they felt and thought as their miracle. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -That can happen starting from a white paper given to everybody where they can work in an abstract or a figurative way, representing her/his idea. -There can be alternatives such as: Give a paper with a ready outline of a stork and ask them to draw in stork’s belly their miracle. -If they prefer, they can use the stork’s outline as a frame and write inside-describe the miracle with words. -Moreover, they can cut the stork and stick it on a colorful paper or use the colors to continue on the background and imagine where the stork is living in their creation. <p>All the proposals should be clearly explained, stressing that are given in order to facilitate and nor to put limits. Everybody shall feel free to play and express him/herself, with the materials in easy access.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Once the given time is over, we are back in the circle again. Ask from everyone, one by one, to show and if wanted say a few words about what she/he made as a meaningful sharing.
Materials/Items needed for the activity	White papers A4, photocopied papers with the drawing of the stork, colorful papers in vivid colors, scissors, glue, markers, oil pastels, pencils, colored pencils, pencil sharpeners and erasers.
Evaluation	The reaction during the storytelling and the participation afterwards will be an indicator if they enjoyed the whole process

Other comments

THE YELLOW STORK- a Chinese folk tale

It is said that a poor student once lived in China. His name was Mi. His poverty was so deep that he could not even pay for a cup of tea. He'd probably starve to death if it weren't for the tea house owner. Pitying the poor man, he fed and watered Mi for free.

Then one day Mi came to the owner and said:

- I'm leaving. I don't have any money, and I don't have anything to pay for everything I've drunk and eaten here but I don't want to be ungrateful. Here, look!

And he took a piece of yellow chalk out of his pocket and painted a stork on the wall. The stork was very much alive, only yellow.

"This stork," said Mi, "will bring you ten times more money than I owe you. Every time people gather and clap three times, it will come down from the wall and dance. **But remember one thing: never make a stork dance for one person.**

And now goodbye !

With these words, the student turned and walked out.

The owner was surprised but decided to try. When the next day the tea was crowded, he asked everyone to clap three times. And now the yellow stork came off the wall and danced a few dances. It was so much fun and fun, and then went back. The guests were amazed, surprised, and could not believe their eyes. And every time they clapped three times happened the same and filled their hearts with pure joy!

Word of the wonder spread everywhere. The tea house was full every night and the owner quickly became rich. Mi's promise came true.

But one day a rich mandarin came into the tea house. He saw only peasants and artisans sitting around. He got angry and ordered everyone to leave.

The mandarin's guards threatened people with use of swords and expelled them out of the tea house. Finally, the official was left alone. He laid out a lot of money in front of the owner and demanded to see the stork dancing just for him. The owner at the sight of money forgot about everything and clapped his hands three times. The stork slowly came off the wall and danced half a dance. It looked sad and sick. Then it went back and didn't move anymore. The mandarin shouted, threatened, but could do nothing.

At night there was a loud knock at the door of the tea house. The host went to open - sees the student Mi standing silent. Mi took the pipe out of his pocket, played and went without turning. The stork trembled, jumped off the wall and followed him. Since then, no one has ever seen the student Mi and his magical yellow stork.

In China old people say that if there is such a miracle somewhere, it is for everyone to share it and enjoy it. When only one person takes possession of it, then the miracle disappears as if it never existed.

Puppet Theatre

Puppet Theatre has also very positive results in the framework of healthcare settings. The activity presented here is entitled “My Puppet, My Show”.

Activity 10: My puppet- my show

Title	"My puppet – my show" - Art therapy workshops for learners with special educational needs, ASD, emotional and behavioral difficulties to improve their social inclusion.
Duration	1.5 hour
Aim of the activity	<p>Puppet therapy could be used as a method for psych corrective impact, in which dolls are an intermediate object in the interaction between a student and the trainer, method of psychological assistance, consisting in correcting the child's or student's behavior and emotional state, used for educational and therapeutic purposes.</p> <p>The workshop aims to develop communicative and educational function of the participant.</p>
Brief Description of the activity	<p>The puppet therapy takes place in the form of a mini performance with usage of self-made dolls during the training the aims are to be improved student's dialogue skills, sense of speech and language, positive emotional attitude to peers and the educational process. The process of making of the dolls and the creation of a magical tale in which all students make dolls can improve the main mental indicators - attention, observation, accuracy in the performance of tasks.</p>
Detailed Description of the activity	<p>The workshop starts with an introduction of the trainer creating a natural play environment close to the learners building trust between the child and the therapist, creating an calm atmosphere in which the student to create his own doll. Then the therapist guides the student in the selection of materials for creating his doll with the materials he likes best.</p> <p>The main task is to get information about the behavioral problem of each participant. Then the students are divided into three or four groups. Each group will draw a sheet with a student's behavior problem like the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aggression, hostility; - anxiety; - fear; - difficult communication with peers. <p>The session precedes through two stages of the puppet therapy process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. „Making a doll” 2. „Bringing the doll to life” <p>Each group will receive materials to make a doll. The student makes the doll himself, guided by the therapist about his choice of materials. The student himself brings the doll to life as best he can with the help of the peers in his</p>

	<p>group and the trainer. The therapist asks questions in order to help the student to create the character of his doll.</p> <p>Sample therapist questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the name of the doll? - Where does it come from? - How does it feel? - What is it dreaming about? - What does it like to do? - Does it want any help? <p>The scenario can be invented spontaneously and the facts and events of the story can be changed constantly, depending on the student's problems. He must reach a solution to the problem himself while he is directed by the therapist.</p> <p>A final stage in which the student play on behalf of the character or characters he has created and experienced in the real life situations finding his way to overcome the problem with the help of the trainer and the peers.</p>
Materials/Items needed for the activity	There is a variety of materials that could be used for the training of paper, pieces of cloth, plastic bottles for the doll's body, glue, scissors, strings, painting materials
Evaluation	The therapy session could be evaluated as a successful one if at its end students are calm and with positive approach and a solution for solving the problems.
Other comments	The puppet therapy process does not have an exact duration. It depends on the degree of the condition, the capabilities and needs of the child. The "certainty effect" is important for controlling emotions and achieving results.

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