

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ARTS FACILITATION DURING CRISIS AND UNCERTAINTY

Artists from all over the world bring forth inspiring, comforting, and provocative works in response to crisis. When arts organizations and facilitators use **the arts as a path to health and wellness**, there are additional factors that we have a *responsibility* to consider.

THESE ARE TIMES WHEN STRESS IS EXACERBATED

ARTS ADMINISTRATORS, FACILITATORS, **AND** PARTICIPANTS

MAY **ALL** EXPERIENCE COMBINATIONS OF THESE CONDITIONS **SIMULTANEOUSLY**:



Worry
Anxiety
Uncertainty



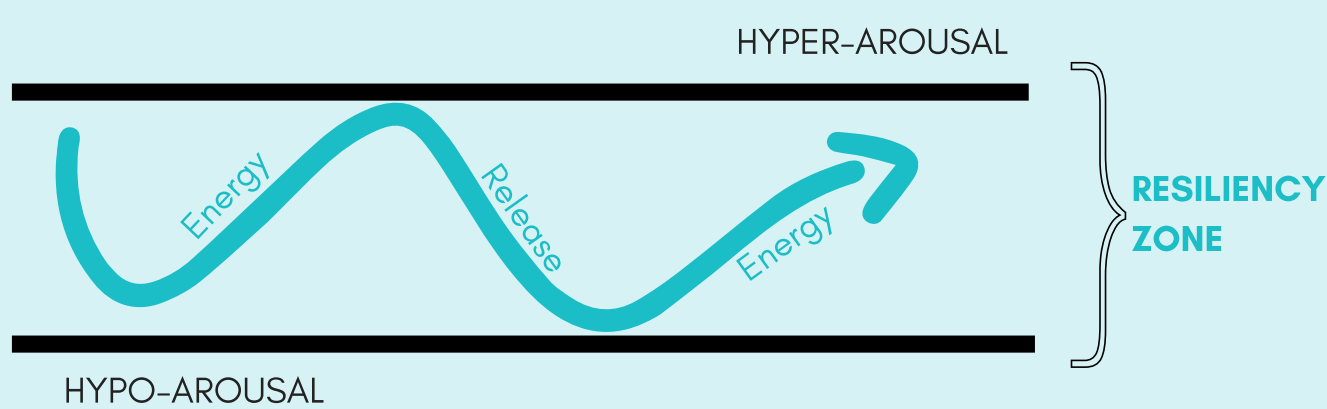
Vicarious trauma
Acute trauma
Prolonged trauma



Anticipatory grief
Personal grief
Collective grief



Conflicting experiences
like joy during suffering
or shelter without safety



Miller-Karas, E. (2015)

Intentional **design** and **implementation** of arts programs and practices can help people find a **zone of resilience**

Did You Know?



Arts processes, media, and activities can impact mood, behavior, and coping at an unconscious and body-based level *especially* during times of stress.

For example:

- Watercolor can make people tearful or frustrated due to its fluid, hard-to-control properties.
- Head or neck movements and movements that challenge balance can cause additional destabilization when senses are already overwhelmed.
- Music can elicit intense emotions in unexpected ways – even music that used to be pleasurable.
- Crisis changes context so, topics that previously brought joy, like family, might now trigger thoughts of fear for a family member's health and wellbeing.
- Arts groups or prompts that tell people to "express themselves" during this time may invite painful or difficult content that is more suitable for therapy.

ENGAGE IN SAFE AND EFFECTIVE ARTS PRACTICES

BY FRAMING PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES AROUND THESE RESILIENCY-BUILDING GOALS THAT WILL SUPPORT HEALTH & WELLBEING DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES

STABILITY & SAFETY

CALM THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

BELIEF IN SELF-EFFICACY

GRATITUDE & MEANING

Participant-led engagement is the best-practice

Use these themes and approaches to protect participants' and facilitators' emotional & physical safety



Themes and topics:

- Relaxation
- Skill building, mastery, and competence
- Cultivating routine and ritual
- Focus on the present (not past or future)
- Self-compassion
- Gratitude
- Inspiration and hope
- Empowerment through repurposing and up-cycling
- Connecting to community

Approaches to facilitation:

- Offer choices within each activity
- Allow an opt-out at any time
- Keep things simple and clear
- Utilize creativity mindsets as artists' strengths
- Look to the lessons artist from the past can teach
- Reframe what "isolation" means for artists who retreat to do creative work
- Use the arts to build and strengthen community
- Remember, we **all** need grace during this time

LEAN INTO CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS IN TIMES OF EXTREME STRESS. PARTNER AND CONSULT WITH LOCAL CREATIVE ARTS THERAPISTS & MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.