Common Ground Manual

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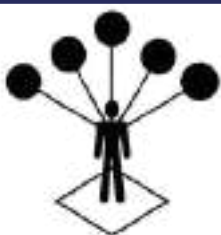
Values and Code of Conduct

Respect
Respect or everyone who is involved in your project.

Excellence
Trying to be the best in all that we do.

Professional
Always working in a responsible way.

Commitment
A promise to make the best project you can for everyone.

Supportive
Helping everyone to work together to be their best.

Glossary

- **Values -** Values are individual beliefs that motivate people to act one way or another.

Artistic Mission

Decide what you would like your project to look like. This is called your **Artistic Mission**.

Picture **the end result** of your project and **what you have to do to get there.** You can do this in any format. For example, a Scrapbook.

Create a short statement that sums up **your aims and goals** for the project. This will be shared with everyone in the project.

The Challenge
**Set yourself a challenge –** something that you want from your project.

Recruitment

You will need to **find people to take part in your project.** Consider the best way to make this happen.

When recruiting, it is a good idea to **give people a taster** of what they will be doing during the project so they know what to expect.

Think about **where your recruitment will happen**. Is the location easy to find? Is it accessible?
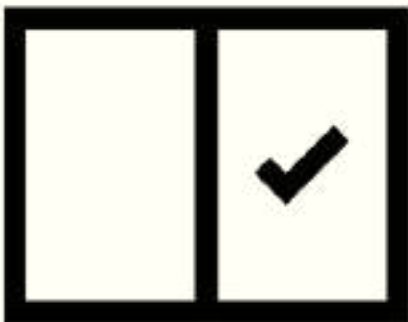
Create an **easy-read welcome pack** for participants, ideally in several formats such as large print. This will tell them more about the project and the expectations of the project.

Glossary

- **Recruitment -** finding people for a specific job or role.

Strategy and Making it Happen

Ask people involved to **share their ideas** – so everyone has a part in the project.

Create something that everyone does **as a group** and make sure that **everyone** has a say.

Once you have made your plan (strategy) now you have to **make it happen.**

This may be the **first time** for people to be performing and doing **something no one else has done before.**

Glossary

- **Strategy -** Different ways to make your project succeed.

Strategy and Making it Happen

Encourage everyone to **'shine'** in their performance**.**

Help people to take **pride and power** in their performance.

Look at what **success** means to each of your participants.

Outcomes

How you would like everyone to **see your project** when it is finished?

Do you want people to see **how amazing it was**, or to see **how everyone felt** who was involved in the performance?

Unexpected things may have happened that you had not planned for at the beginning ...but this is good and you can learn from this.

And finally, do you think you have **achieved everything you want to achieve?**
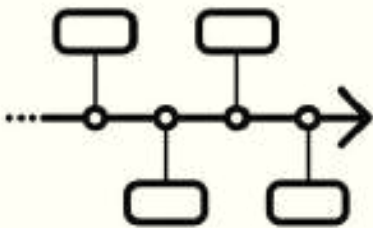
Timelines

Try to make sure that you can **keep to the time** you decide.

Be realistic about how long it will take and **leave yourself extra time** as this will take away the pressure.

A timeline is useful as you can see the end goal and how to get there in stages.

Volunteers and participants in your project will have **other commitments** (jobs, personal lives).

Don't have **too many rehearsals or sessions** in a short period.

Glossary

- **Timeline -** A list of events in order of when they will happen.

Template for rehearsal and performance schedule

Use the example of this **rehearsal and performance schedule** to see how you can create your own.

Date	Who is involved?	What will they be doing?	What do you need to make it happen?
//****	All participants	First rehearsal	Extra support

Deadlines

When working with lots of **people with different needs,** there will be many things that **need to be organised at the beginning** to help people – for example: transport, access needs, childcare.

It is important to send this information out **as early as possible** so people can make plans or ask for help **early on.**
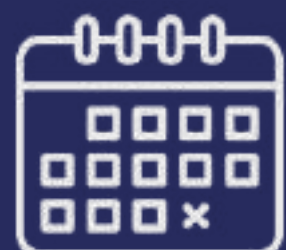
At a production meeting you need to **invite the different people** who help put on the show, such as the lighting and sound, company manager, and room booker.

Make time for extra parts of the schedule – e.g. getting the room organised, or extra chats with the production team.

Glossary

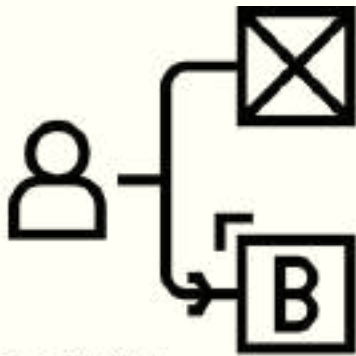- **Deadline** - the latest time that something should happen.

Deadlines

Think about **what equipment you need** and how far in advance you need to buy it.

Organise to **have a sound system** even for rehearsals if a lot of people are involved. Know what is available and what sort you may need.
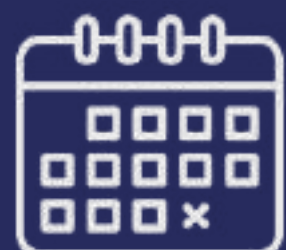
Always have a plan B – what to do in case you have to change plans – for example, if it rains outdoors can you move indoors? Your production manager will be prepared for plan B.

You may need to **let other people know** if there is a change – for example, coach companies.

GLOSSARY

- **Deadline** - the latest time that something should happen.

Roles and Responsibilities

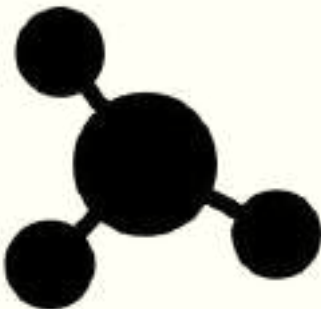It is important to decide at the very beginning of your project **who does what.**

It is important to make sure that everyone knows **what they have to do.**

Be flexible in the roles you offer – you may need to explain they may change.

You may want to **create your own chart** to explain everyone's roles - as some people find charts easier to understand. It is important that people feel that can talk to everyone.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is important to decide at the very beginning of your project **who does what** and **how you will work together** to complete the project.

Participants

Parents/ Carers

Production Team

Inclusive Champion

Artistic Director

Producers

Support Workers
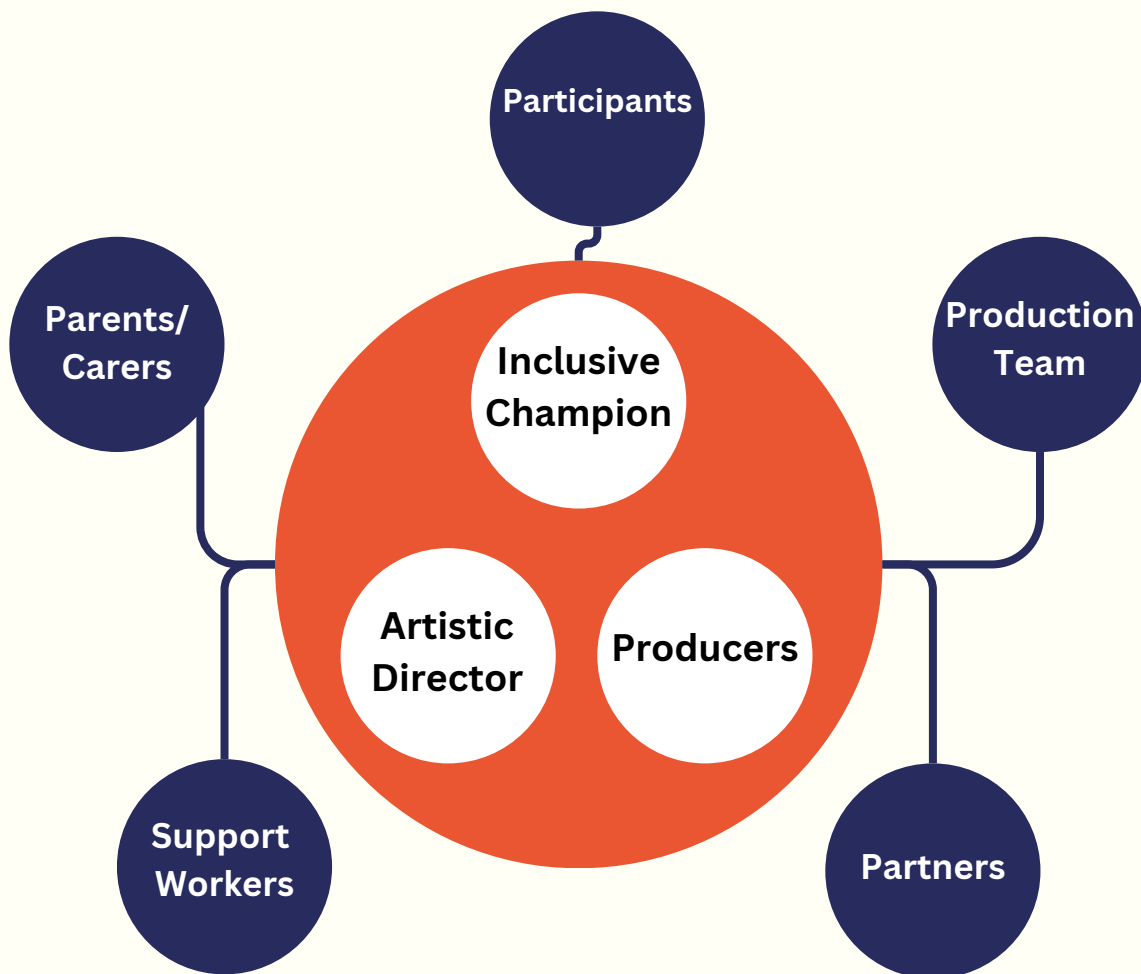
Partners

Glossary

- **Partners -** People who believe in your project and might've provided space or money to
- support it. They will want to know how the project is going.
- **Producers -** make everything happen (admin, booking rooms, etc.)

Physical and Environmental

There are lots of **things to think about** apart from the main performance when running a project.

Some of your participants **may need help** to get to the rehearsal place.

Create a **travel pack** for all your participants. This could include **information about travelling** to your place by bus, train or car. It may include information about parking and the place they will be participating in.

It may be helpful to **offer travel expenses** or **organise transport** for your participants. Perhaps a coach or taxi. Think about wheelchair accessible transport, as well as dropped kerbs.

Glossary

- **Participants -** people that take part in something
- **Rehearsal -** practising work for a later performance

Weather Conditions

Weather Conditions can alter your performance. If it is outdoors, it is very difficult to know what the weather will be like.

You may have to perform in a certain **outdoor place** which makes your performance more interesting. For example in the **ruins of a castle**. Think about how the place is connected to your performance. You will also need to do a risk assessment.

It may be too cold, too dark, too hot, too wet. **Make sure you are prepared** for these different weather types.

If you are working on **a very large project with lots of people** – there may be someone else making the decision about whether to cancel the performance if they think it is too dangerous to go ahead.

Glossary

- **Risk Assessment -** this is where you identify things that could be a danger or cause harm e.g. uneven flooring might cause a fall.

Public Engagement

Your performance may be in a place where the **public walk past and may ask questions** about what you are doing.

It is a good idea to make sure that you have **someone who can chat with them** and explain what is happening.

Some of the participants may find this **distracting and may become overwhelmed.** Think about who your participants are and how they will react to this place.

Costumes
Think about **how everyone will look in their costume** and what the material is made of. Leave time for participants to try costumes on and feedback.

Accessible Space

When choosing a space to rehearse and perform in, **make sure it is an accessible space**. Consider things like ramps, lifts, step-free access, accessible toilets, sound and lighting.

Make sure to have a **break-out space or quiet space** for your participants to use if they need to.

You may want to create an **access pack** that has photos and videos about **how to get to the space**. You could also invite participants to see the space before rehearsals begin.

Delivery and Inclusive Practice

It is important to **create a rehearsal checklist** to make sure that you do not forget to do everything.

Things on your checklist may include:

- Tell participants what **group** they are in (if there are lots of people).
- Let them know **who they will be dancing with** – perhaps pictures of people in their group to reassure them.
- Check with people in advance to find out if they will need **any extra support.**
- Decide where the extra support will be - **will they be watching or participating too?**
- Will the extra support be **pushing wheelchairs** as part of the performance; or **guiding dancers** who are visually impaired.

Glossary

- **Participants -** people that take part in something

Rehearsal Planning

Other things to think about when planning your rehearsals:

- What do you want to **achieve** with your rehearsals? How should the sessions go?
- Have you created a plan with what to do in an **emergency** if things go wrong?
- **Where** will you rehearse? Is it big enough? How will people get there?
- What time will your **breaks** be?
- What is everybody's **role**?
- What do people need to **bring with them** to the rehearsal?
- Have you made a **Risk Assessment**?
- Do you have a **Safeguarding Policy**?
- How will you **structure** the session? Keep this the **same every time** so people know what to expect.

GLOSSARY

- **Safeguarding Policy -** a document about how you will keep the people you work with safe

Rehearsal Delivery

It is important that whoever is leading the rehearsal **speaks clearly and positively.**

Listen to and watch the people who are performing, especially people who may need extra help.

Make sure **everyone is concentrating** – it helps to keep people safe as there may be a lot of people in the room.

Help people if they are having problems. But don't touch them unless they have said it is OK. Encourage everyone to join in. Some people **may need extra encouragement.**

Rehearsal Delivery

Make sure that people let you know **if they are leaving the room.**

Keep **checking on people** who are not joining in and just watching – **they may need more help.**

You may have to **demonstrate what you mean** in a clear way. Keep telling them what you are doing and how everything is going.

Encourage everyone to listen to instructions from the people leading the performance. Encourage them to always share their problems – you are not on your own.

Glossary

- **Demonstrate -** show people what you mean by giving a practical explanation or example

Top Tips for the First Rehearsal

Everyone needs to know **who is who and what they do**. You could share photographs and names of everyone (including support workers) on the wall of the space – or if outdoors, on an easel. Everyone could wear badges, T-shirts or lanyards.

Everyone needs to know **what time to come and what will happen**. Make sure there is **enough time** to show people around the space.
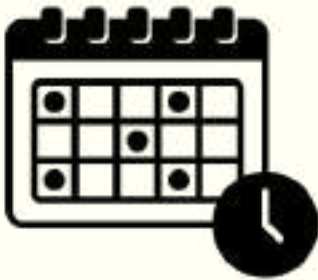
Create a **map to hand out showing special areas** and walk participants around the space using a map. People need to know where the toilets and break out spaces are, and where to keep their things.

Top Tips for the First Rehearsal

Create a **saying that everyone can create together** about how they all expect to be treated.

Give everyone a **colour-coded timetable** of the rehearsals so that everyone knows the times and plans, including break times.

Introduce who the support workers are there that day and who they will be working with. They could **wear a special coloured T-shirt** or badge.

Have **special games to play** if there are times when people are waiting.

Ideas to help with Rehearsals

Tell everyone **what you think the main event will look like** - so that everyone can **picture the same thing. Use visuals** and **involve your participants** to help bring your idea to life.

Remind everyone what they did in the last rehearsal.

Create **special warm-up sessions** based on the rehearsal– this helps participants to know what is to come.

Make your rehearsals **fun and creative.**

Ideas to help with Rehearsals

Encourage participants to **work in groups but also on their own.**

Sometimes **counting may be too distracting and worrying** for some participants.

Try not to rush. People need time to understand instructions. To help explain things, you could use pictures, films or sensory objects.

Keep everything simple especially if working with a large group.

Helping people learn

Get to know everyone and what support they may need before you start the rehearsals. Everyone helping will also need to know.

Trust - Everyone needs to know how to behave with each other and that **trust is two ways.**

At the start of the rehearsals, everyone needs to know **what they will be doing** and **what is expected of them.**

Safeguarding and Welfare

Make sure that your staff have **up to date training on safeguarding.** You may want to choose a couple of people to be in charge of Safeguarding during your project.

Have **clear plans in place** for if a safeguarding incident happens.

Adult safeguarding arrangements apply to anyone **over 18 years old**, whereas child safeguarding arrangements apply to participants **below 18.**

Glossary

- **Safeguarding -** how you will keep the people you work with safe

Thanking your participants

At the end of your project, there are lots of ways of saying thank you to all your participants.

These could be:

- **Having a social event** - inviting everyone who helped to a special event with refreshments and even speeches, where you can thank everyone who took part.

- **Creating certificates** - everyone likes to be thanked and it is a lovely idea to give people a special certificate with the event and dates and a special message written on it.

- **Photo book** - There may have been lots of photos taken throughout the project. It would be great to put all these together in a book for each person. However, this can be expensive so it is important to check in the budget if there is money available for this. And also don't forget to get everyone's permission if you are using their photos.

Thanking your participants
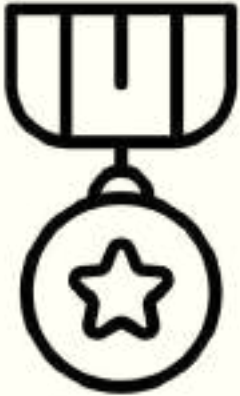
- **Medals/ medallions** - these can be made for each person to keep as a special reminder of their time and participation in the project with a simple phrase written on them. For example, 'Thank you for helping at [your project]'.

- **T-shirts** - if you have not given t-shirts at the beginning of the project, it is a good idea to give them to people at the end to say thank you. This will make people feel a part of the whole project.

Useful Information

Adult Safeguarding Easy Read Guide

The Social Model of Disability

Easy Read Health Guides

Contact Us

FABRIC offers Midlands-based freelance artists, creatives, and producers that are working in dance, at any stage of their career, time to meet, connect and share ideas with members of the team.

If you would like to discuss how this document can be used for your own project, please contact FABRIC.

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