

HOW TO HOST SPACES

***THIS EVENT HAPPENED IN PERSON ON 13TH SEPTEMBER - HOSTED BY
1525 COLLECTIVE WITH SONIA TYRNA AT NOTTINGHAM CONTEMPORARY***

Delve into the intricacies of designing and hosting spaces with a consideration of the unique needs and wants of your community or audience. This session will be largely fuelled by our conversations, focusing on our shared knowledge and experiences through which we'll explore:

- the experience you want to provide for those joining
- creating a space where everyone feels able to speak and collaborate
- choosing exercises to engage different ways of thinking
- ways of bringing energy or focus into a group
- your ideal + less ideal attendee and how to pivot your approach
- how to ensure your space has positive long term impact

Lastly, we'll discuss on how to do all this while communicating your own needs and values as an organiser.

WHO

who are you inviting to the space? is it your community? is it a community defined by the funder?

character? interests? demographics?

a 'non' demographic

Who might your people be?

18-25

pssst. You might only have the answer to one element - that's okay as **these can inform each other!** For example, the experience you create will determine who comes to the space - then you'll know the 'who'! And if it's not the right 'who' then you can tweak the experience you create.

BUILDING BLOCKS

IMPACT

what are you building towards with your event?

short term - e.g. maybe you just want to provide a space that is missing?

long term - e.g. maybe you want to create a collective/community group to help with people's mental health through connection?

EXPERIENCE

what experience do you want to create for people joining your space? what senses do you want to involve?

what do you want them to see? e.g. performance/talk/film/artwork
what do you want them to think? e.g. about self/the world/past/future
what do you want them to feel? e.g. together/heard/inspired/cared for
what do you want them to do? e.g. move body/build/talk/draw

pssst. you might not have the words yet - maybe images or hand gestures? draw these too!

multicultural, environmentally friendly, relaxed and cosy, different ages and backgrounds

not work! not overly punctual - flexibility?
different times in the day to reach more people

giving choice - activity options

calm mind - simple materials - going back to childhood - encouraging plan and discovery - googly eyes and pipecleaners

within college - collaboration of the autistic people

immersive experiences that involve you/your actions as part of the 'thing'

seeking discomfort / encouraging people to learn / break through / reframe how we see bodies
[live drawing]
clothed/unclothed / style being part of identity / social and drawing each other

What experience would you like to create?

not overwhelming - easy to engage with - find art spaces and events hard and focus intensive - need a place to distress

practical hands on training / workshop

I want them to find a calm and safe, quiet space

NEEDS + VALUES

YOURS AS A HOST

what are your own needs?
what brings you joy from
hosting spaces?

Facilitating
someones first
experience of a
space - making it
good and valuable

understanding
of dyslexia /
speech
impediments

YOUR COMMUNITIES

what might they need from the
event? what things might make it
easier for them to take part?

breaks / self-
management

atmosphere
/
transported

alt text not included
and harder for
people to read -
more appealing to
youth and
neurodivergent

QTIPOC

more intimate
space - chill
vibe -
socialising

DM me -
adding link
on the poster
/ form

chairs
always - no
sitting on
the floor

first aid,
safeguarding,
accessibility,
emotional
support

sensory
sensitive

clear
sign
posting

transport links,
accessible
routes, dialogue
and
communication

HOW TO KNOW

there are a few ways to think about others
needs and values before and during an event..

- conversations - if you know who might be coming, can you run them through your plan and get feedback?
- sign ups - add a question on Eventbrite [or wherever you're asking people to be signing up] about their needs. You could ask "do you have any needs, requirements or wishes you'd like to share to so you're able to join fully?"
- shared container - collaboratively, at the beginning of an event, spend 5 mins and as a group write a list of:

'things I value..'
'things I am mindful of..'

This can be used as a more flexible code of conduct
that flexes with whoever is in the room.

here's an example

- check ins - at the beginning of the event use a check in to see where everyone is at coming into the space you've created. You could use metaphors like 'what colour/pattern/texture/weather are you today?'
- anticipate - complete a risk assessment of a kind for the event. For example, if I use X exercise, then X might happen.



THE HAPPENINGS

GROUP SIZE

what is your comfort level as a host? how could group size affect the people's experience of your space?

- **small groups**- do you want to / need to be involved in the conversations? is it beneficial for everyone to have space to share? do you want to create the feel of intimacy?
- **big groups** - could you set people off with a prompt/exercise, and ask to come back together to share with the group?

psst. you could use a 1-2-4-all rule. Start with a reflective activity, pair people up for sharing, then into groups for developing an idea, then all together to feed back

ENERGY + FLOW

how could you engage people with different ways of thinking?

- **laughter and joy** - quick and silly activities e.g. use plasticine to make an avatar in 60 seconds
- **connection** - sharing, building stories e.g. versions of simon says
- **championing** - complimenting skills and ideas
- **grounding** - using all senses e.g. 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste

PIVOTING

sometimes things shift / don't go to plan.. that's part of learning but you can prepare yourself in some scenarios

what could throw you off?

someone not understanding instructions / what you need them to do

tip : have a session plan written / sketched out and printed. helps if people zone out or go to the loo. have different ways to phrase the activity

something big going wrong like venue falling through

tip : you could include this in a risk assessment. What cafe/park/space could be an alternative?

body mapping / collective labyrinth making / deeply transformational / some sort of workshop in relation to artwork

reflective, speculative, future space

pen paper exercises in remote spaces

1. for encouraging brains that thrive with big picture thinking and brainstorming try exercises of large scale mapping / improv / imagine if.. questions [i.e. start from a blank slate]
2. for encouraging brains that thrive with grouping, sorting or analysing try exercises with post its, adding, voting or making connections [i.e. something that's not a blank slate]
3. for encouraging brains that thrive with planning and deciding, try exercises like 15% solutions, what I need from you, what/so what/now what [look up [Liberating Structures](#)]

EXERCISES

how could you engage people with different ways of thinking? try to pepper a bit of each into your space.

AFTERCARE

FOR YOU - check in with yourself, what do you need? Maybe a debrief / chat / silence / treat?

FOR THEM - do you need to share resources, services, links or connections with those who joined?

IMPACT

COMMS

FOR YOU - have you got all the right things to ensure comms with the group? phone numbers/emails/socials?

FOR THEM - what do they need to know about next steps? where are the photos or ideas going? future events?

REFLECTION

FOR YOU - how was it for you hosting the space? was anything stressful? what gave you joy? was the flow okay?

FOR THEM - get those who joined the space to feedback on the session. it could be as simple as asking people to complete the sentences : "I like, I wish, I wonder.."