

KEEP YOUR PROJECT AND PEOPLE SAFE

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Health and safety is not just about the physical wellbeing of your participants. This is especially true when working with vulnerable communities. It also considers ethics, privacy and confidentiality, and physical and emotional safety. A plan will help you to be well prepared for any issues that may come up – and they will!

Project leaders are responsible for the care of all participants within the project, including yourself. This is both a moral and legal responsibility. What you are responsible for depends on the size of your project, whether you started the project, or have been contracted. But don't be put off as it's almost all common sense. Once you have created your first health and safety plan you'll have a template saving you time in the future.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SAFE PROJECT

I. ARTISTS OR PROJECT LEADERS ARE CLEAR ABOUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

The project leader has a responsibility to the people they are working with. When working with a community you need to:

- have skills to work with individuals and groups (especially if working with vulnerable people)¹
- be well prepared and organised in your work
- have appropriate artform skills
- undertake safe practice
- know what your health and safety requirements are
- evaluate and reflect on your work
- maintain your professional competence.

Tip: Identify where you have specific knowledge or skill gaps. Fill those gaps through additional training, mentoring, shadowing and/or volunteering on a community arts project. You can learn group work skills through community development, youth work and teacher training. Many other practitioners are also willing to share information about best practice.

¹ A vulnerable person is any child [tamariki] or young person [rangatahi] under the age of 18 or any adult who, by reason of disability, age, illness or non-English speaking background, are more vulnerable than the ordinary person.

Tip: Check what your health and safety responsibilities are and write a simple health and safety plan. [Worksafe has information that will help you](#). You can call them on 0800 030 040 to find out more. Writing health and safety plans can seem a bit daunting, but it's worth taking the time to get your head around what you need to include.

2. THE NEEDS OF THE PARTICIPANTS HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED AND PLANS ARE IN PLACE

Participants will come to a project with a wide range of needs.

Tip: When you are planning a project make a list of all the possible needs participants have. Make sure that plans are in place to attend to these. Use this checklist example as a starting point.

1. Physical needs:

- refreshments
- appropriate venues
- toilets
- safe transport
- physical risks (and how these will be mitigated)

2. Emotional needs:

- consistency
- familiar rituals
- opening and closing sessions – for some communities familiarity and continuity is very important

3. Vulnerable or high-need communities:

- have appropriate support in place for participants and project leaders
- be aware of issues that may arise and how to work with them or refer them on

3. THE ETHICS UNDERPINNING THE PROJECT ARE CLEAR

Ethics are a set of principles or agreed values/beliefs which guide a community arts project. They are rules for working together that outline a formal or informal 'code of conduct' to help maintain the safety of participants. Develop them at the start of the project, with the participants, and apply them

throughout the project (see tipsheet: 'Make the community the centre of the project').

The scale of the project and who you are working with will decide how formal the code of conduct needs to be. It could range from a 10 minute discussion at the start of the project through to an agreement that all participants sign.

Tip: Start by asking the community participants what is important to them. You can use the following checklist as a prompt.

- Values of kaupapa Māori such as whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, rangatiratanga, kotahitanga, mōhiotanga, māramatanga, tuākana/tēina
- Inclusiveness and equality – respecting diversity and inclusive of differences and needs
- Active participation and personal responsibilities
- Creative collaboration, generosity and empowerment of participants
- Respect, trust and confidentiality
- Transparency, clear processes, honesty and open communication
- Community and/or collective ownership
- Development of skills, knowledge, capacity and capability

Tip: As an artist or organisation you should also be clear about your own values or principles. Take time to review these, to understand the whakapapa of these principles and how you enact them.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY ARE MAINTAINED

The leaders of a community arts project often need to gather personal information about participants. Organisations, artists and project managers should only collect personal information needed to manage the project. This could be home addresses, phone numbers or medical information. This information shouldn't be given to another party without that person's consent.

However, if a vulnerable person reveals something to you that leads you to believe they may be at risk of harm, you need to refer this to the appropriate care giver.

5. COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ARE CLEAR

When working in groups copyright and intellectual property can be complicated. The ownership of art and creativity is protected for the creator at the moment it's recorded or created.

Intellectual property laws protect the creative products that people have created. You don't have to apply to anyone or register to make this happen. Copyright gives the owner exclusive control over certain uses of the work. So, if people want to use the work or the creative product the copyright owner can negotiate payment.

During a project with a community you need to be clear about who owns the work created. Individuals that create work during a community project can keep copyright and allow the project to use it for a time frame or purpose. The copyright of work created when someone is employed or under commission may belong to the employer or commissioner.

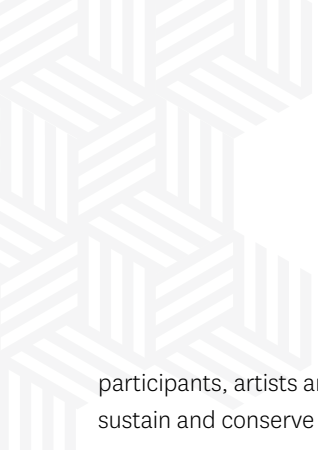
Tips:

- Consider a simple collective copyright agreement between all members of the group, especially if the creative work is of a collaborative nature.
- If many people own the creative work, consider having one or two people who can give the project permission for its use. This is often important after the project is completed if the work will have an ongoing lifespan.

6. THE ARTIST OR CO/LEADER TAKES CARE OF THEMSELVES

Working with communities can take a lot of time and energy. It can sometimes be emotionally draining, especially when working with high-need and vulnerable communities.

Artists who work with communities often do so because of a strong belief in the values of equality. Highly devoted artists and project leaders risk over committing themselves. Burnout in this sector is common. To maintain the health and safety of



participants, artists and project leaders need to know how to sustain and conserve themselves.

Tips:

- *When undertaking voluntary work, make sure you know how much you can realistically do. Be clear on what motivates you to do this extra work. Make sure you stop before you reach your limit.*
- *Make sure you have good personal support structures and routines in place that will keep you healthy in body and spirit.*

MORE INFO

For more resources on keeping your project and people safe, see our Community Arts Toolkit > [Tools to develop your project](#)

Is something missing from these tipsheets? Email us: website@creativenz.govt.nz