



# MILK CRATE THEATRE

## GUIDELINES PACK



# CONTENTS

<b>4</b>	Artistic Vision
<b>5</b>	Artistic Guidelines
<b>10</b>	Creative Space Guidelines (Long form)
<b>14</b>	Creative Space Guidelines (Short form)
<b>15</b>	Creative Space Guidelines (Accessible)
<b>16</b>	Production Guidelines
<b>18</b>	Facilitator Position Description & Guidelines
<b>20</b>	Support Performer Guidelines
<b>23</b>	External Support Worker Guidelines
<b>25</b>	Community Partner Guidelines

This document is not for distribution

This document is for the informational purposes of Milk Crate Theatre employees only  
The intellectual property of this document belongs to Milk Crate Theatre

Trauma Informed Community Development information reference:

Local Community Services Association (LCSA), Bridge Housing in San Francisco and Health Equity Institute (2014 and the 2018 update) -  
Trauma Informed Community Building (A Model for Strengthening Community in Trauma Affected Neighbourhoods)



# ARTISTIC VISION & GUIDELINES

# ARTISTIC VISION

Milk Crate Theatre has existed since 1999 as a unique and respected arts organisation, working with people who have lived experience of homelessness, housing instability, mental health conditions and disability. We support people who have not had traditional access to the arts as makers, performers, producers and audiences. We respect each other as conveyors of thought and feeling, and as artists.

We offer programs and projects that encourage skills development, and stimulate creative and personal growth. We provide public platforms for expression, performance and presentation. We utilise a variety of art forms and make multi-disciplinary work, so that people can engage in practice as best suits them.

Our process is as profound as our output.

We balance Strengths-based Practice with Trauma-Informed Care. We are conscious of issues and content that may be triggering for people in the space, but balance this with a desire to address challenging issues in our art.

We do not use people's personal or traumatic stories to make material.

We believe we have the right to tell any stories we want – and they do not have to be about our trauma, they do not have to have an educational purpose, and we do not have to serve as a source of charity or inspiration.

We believe in ourselves as strong people and brave artists, with excellent stories to tell and to show. Our work is rough around the edges, and that is our beauty.

We are shifting the lens. We are disrupting expectations about who gets to make theatre, and the paradigms by which it is judged, experienced, and enjoyed.

We focus on how we make audiences feel a part of our story, and how together we create an energy in the theatrical space that is purposeful, meaningful, present and alive.

Artistic Director  
Margot Politis





# MILK CRATE THEATRE ARTISTIC GUIDELINES

Our expectations around PROCESS and OUTCOME are essential to our overall mission, vision and values.

Core aspects:

- The safety of, and respect for, the people in the space
- The overarching aesthetic and professionalism of Milk Crate Theatre's artistic outputs
- Our ethical and political positioning within the CACD sector, and the arts industry as a whole
- Financial viability and staffing resources

## Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) to us means:

Social Impact and Artistic Impact are of equal value

PROCESS is as important as OUTCOME | OUTCOME is as important as PROCESS

Skills development is a part of everything we do

Cultivating decision-making skills is key – we always explain the WHY

All Collaborative Artists and Facilitating Artists/Directors are involved in decision making

Our framework is a structured SCAFFOLDING, within which people can feel held, and thereby safe and free to create

### We balance:

Trauma-Informed Awareness

Duty of Care

Knowing where someone is at

Genuine Expression

Making work our way

with

Strengths-Based Practice

Dignity of Risk

Encouragement of challenge

High level production value

Connection with audiences

# TRAUMA-INFORMED AWARENESS

## Acknowledgement

- We respect and acknowledge any traumatic events/situations a person may have experienced, or may be currently experiencing in their life
- We do not use people's experiences of trauma as direct material for works - we explore wider thematic possibilities and seek to express those
- Having to 'tell your story' many times can allow it to become a narrative that traps or defines a person
- We welcome people into MCT so that they can engage in something different to, or separate from, their lived experience of trauma
- We acknowledge and accept a person however they present on any given day (and this may change)
- We acknowledge that people may not wish to, or simply cannot engage with our programs at particular times because of what they are experiencing in their personal lives
- We remain flexible and responsive, because plans may change, and often do. Contingencies must form part of overall planning

## Safety

- The Creative Space Guidelines exist to protect everyone working in our spaces, and we are all accountable to them
- We have a Social Worker on staff who will either be in space or is contactable by phone
- If people are in breach of Guidelines, we have processes for taking action

## Accessibility

- We come prepared with multiple variations of tasks so that everyone can participate
- We use a range of art forms so that people can access expression in a way that suits them
- Outside of encouraging challenge, we do not facilitate exercises that leave anyone behind
- We aim to be consistent with time, timing, plans and structure, as this offers reliability

## Do No (further) Harm

- It is fine for someone to talk about their lived experience, but we must remain aware of the potential to trigger other people in turn
- We listen carefully and kindly, and acknowledge this person's experience
- We do not engage in these conversations for too long because we are not psychologists or mental health professionals, and in offering specific advice, we could be doing more harm than good
- We practice Mental Health First Aid, and then refer people to the Social Worker or other services as required
- After acknowledging a person's experience, we then remind them of the power of creative practice in gaining our strength (not in a toxic positivity way!!)
- We then move on, including everyone in the room in the planned tasks

# STRENGTHS-BASED PRACTICE

## Respect

- We respect a person's right to be acknowledged for more than their lived experience
- We respect a person's right to the freedom of artistic expression
- Terms like "professional" and "not professional" or other words that allude to rank of skill, are not a part of our working paradigm
- We choose not to tell rags-to-redemption stories, and we do not use people's personal stories of pain, trauma or difficulty to make material
- We care about people's interests, skills, ideas, opinions and artistry
- Our purpose as artists is to use our practices to transform experiences into expression
  - We explore the core feeling, issue or theme within a personal story, and explore that, instead of the actual personal story
  - As much as possible, utilise characterisation as a way for CA's to separate themselves from the story, or issue. This also prevents CA's from being judged for these stories or issues by an audience
  - We want to challenge people creatively, not around their trauma

## Challenge and Raised Expectation

- We work with professional standards as an arts organisation working within community, which is different to "Community Theatre"
- We do not assume, predict or underestimate what someone can or cannot do
- We do not shy away from creative challenge
- We balance big dreaming with realistic expectations, and explain the editing process clearly and respectfully
- For people who haven't been doing this a long time, it can become a point of anxiety or contention if their idea cannot be actualised or included exactly as wished. This is one of the challenges of making work, and forms part of our skills development – we face these challenges

## Dignity of Risk

- We believe in people's right to make their own judgements of risk-to-self
- We do not assume to know better, but consider from Duty of Care perspective
- We do not infantilise people
- Within a good scaffold, it should be safe for people to take their own risks – especially creatively

## Social Model of Disability

The Social Model says:

- Disadvantage is created by systems, and it is up to the institutions facilitating these systems to make the changes necessary for a fully accessible society
- Perceived disability is not a 'fault' of a person, but of the social system in which they live

# PROCESS

- Everything we create is made by, with and for our community
- We do not use pre-existing texts or creative material to make shows
- We ask
  - *What do you want to explore or express?*
  - *How do you feel about the world in relation to a particular theme or issue?*
  - *What kind of performance do you want to make? What artforms are you interested in?*
- We then work COLLABORATIVELY through devised theatre practices to explore or express this
- Directors or facilitators use their expertise to shape this material, in consultation with Collaborative Artists, always explaining the WHY
- We do not rest on the first creative offer: We do not presume that a person cannot get deeper, or explore the boundaries of an idea. *What else? How else? What next?*
- We look at the bigger picture, discussing how one person's ideas or decisions affect the surrounding characters, narrative, or world of our creations
- We repeatedly come back to the purpose of the show, piece, or workshop as our anchor
- Our projects and programs are about the CA's only – directors should not perform in any MCT work they are directing, unless filling in for a CA or in another situation very specific to the project. i.e. do not insert yourself into the work.

# AESTHETIC

**We believe that if the above processes are followed for genuine engagement and collaboration, our MCT aesthetic will be achieved.**

- Our timing, spatial reasoning, elocution or remembering of lines will be different to what an audience might see in mainstream theatre; but this is our beauty, and our edge
- We work by professional standards, and execute public facing works with high-level production values. This houses our people and work in a respectful and dignified way

**When facilitating or directing a work, please:**

- Refrain from using cheap and easy props such as feather boas, funny hats, coloured wigs etc - the options for creativity here are limited, and sometimes patronising. Please be intentional.
- Explore spaces and places to film or record, that are more interesting than the community centre room, if it is slightly stark. Or create backdrops, or prop set ups - shake it up!

**Our work is:**

Accessible - Beautiful - Intriguing - Engaging - Comedic - Insightful - Poignant - Resonant - Important - Powerful - Dignified - Bold - Immersive - Connected - Non-traditional - Expansive



# CREATIVE SPACE GUIDELINES & VERSIONS

Image: *SOLACE*, 2023 Robert Catto



# MILK CRATE THEATRE CREATIVE SPACE GUIDELINES

These guidelines apply to everyone working in our space.  
We are all responsible for our own conduct.

## RESPECT

### At all times we respect each other's:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Personal space                            | • Financial background                 |
| • Disability                                | • Educational background               |
| • Personal stories, information and privacy | • Ethnicity, culture and heritage      |
| • Creative contributions                    | • Bodies                               |
| • Right to speak                            | • Gender and sexuality                 |
| • Age                                       | • Housing situation or background      |
| • Mental health situation                   | • Personal or religious belief systems |
| • Physical appearance                       | • Time outside of MCT                  |

### We will not tolerate:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Bullying, insults or judgement   | • Abusive or aggressive behaviour  |
| • Yelling or voice raising intended to intimidate                                      | • Covert/underhanded negative commentary   |
| • Physical intimidation  | • Undermining gossip and rumour-spreading  |
| • Physical violence  | • Touching without consent   |
| • Sexually inappropriate behaviour, commentary or touch                                | • Being under the influence of recreational drugs or alcohol in workshops, rehearsals or presentations |
| • Possession or use of weaponry, or any other dangerous items that can be used to harm |  |

# COMMUNICATION

## We're into:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listening to each other</li></ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supporting everyone to speak and contribute</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offering feedback respectfully and contributing to solutions</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letting staff and facilitators know if you are not feeling good and need support or a break</li></ul> |

If you feel unhappy, angry or frustrated about something, it can help to:



### STOP

Pause, and take some space if you need



### BREATHE

A few deep breaths can help relax the body



### LISTEN

Check in with yourself and ask, how am I feeling? Why am I feeling this way?



### RESPOND

Talk it over with someone – a Facilitating Artist, Support Artist, Staff Member, or the Social Worker who can help with next steps in addressing the issue

# SELF CARE

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure you get enough sleep before an MCT day</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be conscious of drug and alcohol intake the day and evening before MCT events, which may influence your behaviour</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be on time</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be aware of how much you have going on in your life, and if working with us is manageable for you right now</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pay attention to personal hygiene - showering, brushing your teeth, wearing deodorant, etc</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure you have access to support like a therapist, psychologist or counsellor should you need it. Let us know if you need assistance with finding or accessing support!</li></ul> |



# BOUNDARIES

## Personal Space and Needs

- We encourage stepping out of comfort zones, but if an activity doesn't feel right, you don't have to do it
- Respect everyone's personal space, and decisions around participation

## Time

- MCT staff will only answer emails, calls and messages within office hours. This includes social media platforms. We encourage all Facilitating and Collaborative Artists to have boundaries around their time to ensure space for rest and other commitments

## Photos and personal stories

- Only facilitators are allowed to take photos in workshops – with the permission of those involved. These photos must only be shared by Milk Crate Theatre, and are not for the facilitator's own use
- Please be respectful of Milk Crate Theatre and our community on social media. Don't share anything about other people's personal stories and situations shared at MCT, even if you aren't mentioning names

## Between Facilitator and Collaborative Artist

**In order to maintain safety, stability and equity in workshop environments, this relationship must be a PROFESSIONAL one. The Facilitator:**

- Leads artistic processes, incorporating skills development in performance making
- Is responsible for Duty of Care
- Must notify MCT staff about disclosures or indications that someone may be of harm to themselves or others
- Provides Mental Health First Aid only, and then refers people to the Social Worker or emergency services if extra support is required
- Makes sure everyone in the space is seen, heard, valued, and allowed to contribute
- Uses their artistic experience, knowledge, and expertise to shape material into a format for presentation
- Is transparent about these processes with the Collaborative Artists, always sharing the "why"

**We do not allow Facilitating Artists to engage in ways that could blur boundaries with Collaborative Artists, such as:**

- Providing private workshop or tutoring sessions
- Private conversations on messaging or social media platforms that go beyond friendly banter
- Sharing details about their private or personal issues
- Organising social events for Collaborative Artists outside of MCT
- Giving individuals a lift home, giving or lending money, or buying items for individuals

# FUN!

## We have a positive focus

- We encourage stepping out of comfort zones, but if an activity doesn't feel right, you don't have to do it
- Supporting everyone to speak and contribute

## We are strengths-based

- We see the best in ourselves and each other
- We focus on our skills and ideas
- We encourage meeting difficult challenges





# MILK CRATE THEATRE CREATIVE SPACE GUIDELINES

The Milk Crate Theatre community and staff made this agreement so we can all be safe and happy when we are together.

## RESPECT

- Everyone is welcome, and we respect all backgrounds, histories, disabilities, ages, genders and sexualities
- Everyone in our spaces has the right to be creative and contribute
- No mean or insulting words or actions, bullying, yelling, hitting or intimidation
- No weaponry or dangerous items that can cause harm or fear
- Leave the space clean and tidy when you leave

## COMMUNICATION

- Listen to each other with patience and kindness
- Offer feedback respectfully
- Communicate as calmly as you can when you're upset
- Let someone know if you're not feeling good or need support

## SELF-CARE

- Be on time
- Get enough rest the night before
- No drugs or alcohol
- Take care of hygiene
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes

## BOUNDARIES

- Respect everyone's personal space, and decisions around participation
- Only Facilitating Artists take photos/ videos in MCT spaces. These are only shared by MCT.
- Maintain professional boundaries between Facilitating and Collaborative Artists

## FUN

- Appreciate and encourage each other's strengths
- Look for the positives
- Have fun and enjoy

If you repeatedly behave outside of these guidelines, staff will talk with you, and you may be asked to leave. If you would like more details on any of these points, please talk to us!

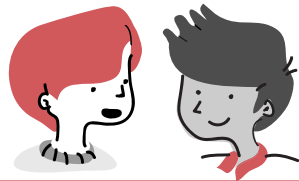


# MILK CRATE THEATRE CREATIVE SPACE GUIDELINES (ACCESSIBLE)

The Milk Crate Theatre community and staff made this agreement so we can all be safe and happy when we are together. When I come to Milk Crate Theatre I agree to:

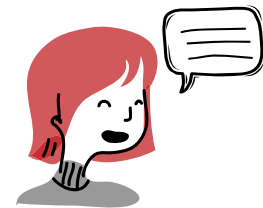
## RESPECT

- Be kind to each other
- Be patient
- No bullying, yelling, swearing or hitting
- No taking photos or videos unless it is part of an exercise or task
- Respect everyone's personal space and decisions



## COMMUNICATION

- Listen to each other
- Share your ideas
- Communicate as calmly as you can when you're upset
- Tell us how you feel and what you want to do



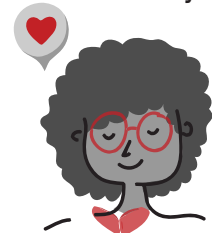
## FUN

- Encourage each other
- Look for the positives
- Have fun and enjoy



## SELF-CARE

- Be on time
- Get enough rest the night before
- No drugs or alcohol
- Take care of hygiene
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes
- Leave the space clean and tidy when you leave



I understand that if I repeatedly behave outside of these guidelines staff will talk with me, and I may not be allowed to participate in any further activities.



# MILK CRATE THEATRE PRODUCTION GUIDELINES

## SELF CARE IN PREPARATION

- Please do not have a big night before an event, or on evenings during a season. Please make sure you are adequately rested and have eaten well, and are ready for your work.
- MCT is a dry company, and under no circumstances are you to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol for the entirety of your time with us. This includes being under the influence from the night before.

## BRING

- Clothing that is easy and comfortable to move in for rehearsing and breaks during the day
- All costume items you have said that you will bring yourself
- Anything nice you would like to wear for after the show if you wish – not mandatory!
- Your own water bottle and snacks
- Your lunch – or prepare to purchase in the lunch break
- Phone chargers if you need
- Deodorant

## GROUP RESPECT

### PERSONAL SPACE

At all times, please honour and respect the personal space of your fellow performers. This includes physical space (being wary of standing too close) and emotional space (giving space to people who don't want to engage in conversation or would like some time to themselves). Active and on-going consent is non-negotiable in all MCT spaces.

### BACKSTAGE AREA

Everyone will have a place for their personal belongings and costumes in the backstage areas. Please be respectful of other people's things, or how they may have them organised. Some people need to have everything in order to feel safe and confident before a performance.

### CHANGING

It is inappropriate for anyone to be changing in front of each other (e.g. being undressed or walking around in underwear). We will ensure that there are privately sectioned spaces for you to get changed. There are people in our community for whom having someone undress in front of them may be triggering, so please keep this in mind.

### HYGIENE

Please ensure that before coming into the space that your hair is washed, that you are showered, and wearing deodorant. Please prepare to reapply during the day and evening. Please avoid wearing very strong-smelling perfumes or sprays and do not spray them in enclosed areas.

### UNDERWEAR

For performing on stage, everyone needs to wear underwear. So please make sure that you have shorts-style underpants and/or you are wearing a bra if necessary.

### SOCIAL MEDIA AND PRIVACY

Do not post images or videos from the rehearsal and production process on your personal social media accounts. MCT will be capturing footage at all stages, and you are welcome to share this content when publicly released.



# FACILITATOR DESCRIPTIONS & GUIDELINES



# MILK CRATE THEATRE

## Facilitator Position Description & Guidelines

### BASIC EXPECTATIONS

- Once you have committed to a Milk Crate Theatre schedule, it is expected that you will put that schedule before other commitments that may come up
- Arrive early for every session according to your call time, and allow time afterwards to pack up and debrief
- If you cannot make a session due to an emergency - ie, injury, car issues, accident, etc - contact MCT staff *as soon as possible* via the mobile on 0481 348 218, followed by an email to the contact listed on your Project Description
- In the event of illness, contact us at *first sign* of ill health so that we can arrange a replacement for you. As we work in vulnerable communities, it is preferred you do not come in if you are unwell.
- Timesheets and invoices must be delivered on time - or you risk not being paid
- Participate in briefing, debriefing and evaluation
- Go through the Creative Space Guidelines with Collaborative Artists at the beginning and middle of your workshop series, and when anyone new joins the space
- Ensure you also uphold and maintain MCT values, and all health and safety policies and procedures
- Maintain professional boundaries with Collaborative Artists as detailed below
- If you take images or footage in the space, they should only be in service of your work (e.g. to remember an impro for future reference, etc) and not shared, or kept on your phone for longer than necessary
- Do not post images or video from MCT spaces on your personal social media accounts. Send them to MCT to post, so that we can share them via our social media channels.

### YOU MUST NOT

- Be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at any MCT program, workshop or event
- Used sexualised language, behaviour or body language
- Touch anyone without permission

### BOUNDARIES

In order to maintain safety, stability and equity in our environments, the relationship between Facilitator and Collaborative Artist must be a PROFESSIONAL one. The Facilitator:

- Leads artistic processes
- Is responsible for Duty of Care
- Must notify MCT staff about disclosures or indications that someone may be of harm to themselves or others
- Provides Mental Health First Aid only, and then refers people to the Social Worker or emergency services if extra support is required
- Makes sure everyone in the space is seen, heard, valued, and allowed to contribute
- Uses their artistic experience, knowledge, and expertise to shape material into a format for presentation
- Is transparent about these processes with the Collaborative Artists, always sharing the “why”

We do not allow Facilitating Artists to engage in ways that could blur boundaries, or foster “special relationships” with Collaborative Artists, such as:

- Providing private workshop or tutoring sessions
- Private conversations on messaging or social media platforms that go beyond friendly banter
- Private conversations during breaks or before/after workshops
- Sharing details about private or personal issues
- Organising or accepting invitations to social events with Collaborative Artists outside of MCT
- Giving individuals a lift home, giving or lending money, or buying items for individuals
- Discussing MCT staff, staffing decisions or office/company issues

You are employed as a representative of Milk Crate Theatre, and must notify staff of any details that have arisen that would affect a person’s participation. You may advise CA’s that your conversations are not confidential.

## ROLES

At MCT, we employ a Lead Facilitator and Support Artist for all programs.

### Lead Facilitator

- Work with your Program Manager to design, plan and implement a workshop series or creative development for the MCT Artistic Program
- Deliver the project in the timeframe outlined in the project schedule, and address specific outcomes as advised by your Program Manager
- Use best practice Community Arts and Cultural Development methodology
- Design programs that are accessible and engaging
- Provide your Program Manager with a plan at least three business days before commencement of the program (this can be broad to start and shaped by you as the program progresses)
- In the space – identify external support workers and engage with them accordingly
- Communicate and collaborate with the Support Artist, ensuring they are aware of your plans and have everything they need to support you
- Notify staff as soon as possible if any issues arise, keeping your Support Artist in the loop
- Allow the Support Artist to attend to any Collaborative Artists experiencing unrest – your job is to continue leading the workshop and ensure the maintenance of group energy and avoidance of further triggering
- Your job is to support the Collaborative Artists, but also the Support Artist. You are a team. In some cases, the Support Artist will still be learning, and so please continue to advise them of your practice, reasoning and decision making where possible.

### Support Artist

- Assist the Lead Facilitator to deliver the workshops or creative development
- Be responsible for setting up the project venue – complete any sign ins, and collect tags, alarms or first aid kits as required by the venue partner
- Set up the sign in sheet for Collaborative Artists and assist with any scribing needed
- Manage MCT Intake Forms
- Support Collaborative Artists to engage in the creative process, and with scribing, reading, or further explanation of tasks as required
- Encourage participation and be aware of the support needs of Collaborative Artists
- Attend to Collaborative Artists experiencing unrest, by quietly and calmly moving with them to another space if required. The aim being to attend to an individual so that the group can remain focused and not also become triggered
- Identify external support workers in the space and engage with them accordingly
- Be responsible for time keeping, monitoring hours and breaks
- Complete the weekly workshop report online, within 48 hours of the workshop or session
- Be available to step in to lead a session in the event of the absence of Lead Facilitator and in consultation with your Program Manager
- Be available to step in to a performance or presentation in the event of the absence of a Collaborative Artist in consultation with your Program Manager
- Notify staff as soon as possible if any issues arise – keeping your Lead Facilitator in the loop
- Your job is to support the Collaborative Artists, but also the Lead Facilitator. You are a team. If a situation arises in which things go awry (it happens!) be sure to communicate your support to the Lead Facilitator and step in where necessary.



# MILK CRATE THEATRE SUPPORT PERFORMER GUIDELINES

These guiding principles acts as a safeguard for you and our community, and are designed to inspire responsive and collaborative arts practice. They should be read in conjunction with the expectations outlined in your position description.

## The role of Support Performer is unique, and differs to the role of Support Artist.

The **Support Artist** works in assistance to the Lead Facilitator and Collaborative Artists in the room, essentially forming the periphery and safeguarding of our creative space.

The **Support Performer** however, provides support *within* the creative process, and alongside the Collaborative Artists.

The role is a combination of **co-creator** and **support person**. You are an equal creative, but you are also called upon to support your fellow performers. This includes:

- Scribing assistance where needed
- Repeating or clarifying direction or tasks for people where needed
- Co-creating with each other - as opposed to instructing
- Supporting people in remembering lines, cues, blocking and choreography
- Engaging in tasks with a positive attitude
- Providing a model of creative courage

## Expectations

Milk Crate Theatre is a unique company, and therefore we utilise unique and specific methodologies and processes. You may have ways that you have learned to make work (in your training or with other companies), but in our space, you will be required to practice flexibility around those learned paradigms.

- We do not carry an “us and them” perspective, and we acknowledge that all people bring diverse lived experiences into the space
- We do not consider experiences of institutional training and education to be of greater validity than the lived experience or inherent artistry of the people in the room. So please feel free to share your knowledge and expertise as offerings of possibility, rather than of status quo
- We ask that you respect the MCT process and direction, and focus on the ways in which this is offering Collaborative Artists their rightful expression in ways that are accessible for them

The creative development, rehearsal and performance season of a new work are intensive periods, spent in close proximity with Collaborative Artists.

As such, we ALL need to be cognisant of doing our best to leave our own stuff at the door.

**Our work should be creatively generative, fun and delivered within an ecosystem of care that applies to everyone.**

# Accessible Practice

At the core of everything we do, the safety, expression and platform of our Collaborative Artists comes first.

## **EVERYONE, TOGETHER**

As much as possible, every task should be accessible to everyone – ie there should be no one left behind or left out. This can be achieved by using exercises that are adaptable, allowing people to create material in different ways but with the same impetus.

By the same token, it is important for any professional or practising artists working or performing with us to be aware of “outshining” other members of the ensemble. At MCT, we are not a group of individual stars, we perform as an ensemble and our strength is in collaboration. The key throughout everything is awareness and interpersonal focus.

## **Strategies for creative care at MCT**

Everyone is deserving and responsible for the equitable provision of care in our working environments. We propose that the following strategies are embedded into our practice together.

### **SET AND RESPECT BOUNDARIES**

Boundaries send a message to ourselves and to the community that we’re alive to what we need, that our lived experiences matter and that safety comes first. Boundaries inspire rest, the processing of creative juices and healthy working relationships. When we exercise care for ourselves, we are also in a much better place to extend this care to others.

### **SHARING IS CARING**

Sharing is transparency and accountability. Sharing is about acknowledging inherent power structures and playing our part to actively challenge them. We are responsible for ourselves, but we are also responsible for the effects our energy have on the people around us. If you need support, be honest about what you need and intentional about who you share this with.

### **ATTITUDES OF GRATITUDE**

Making art is hard but we make it easier, by making it together. We honour the vital care and hard work it takes to make new work that delivers artistic excellence. We make art together knowing that it is a radical act worthy of celebration. We collaborate in faithful pursuit of fun and the joy of realising our shared creative vision.

**In practice, our work together is always the start of a conversation.  
We will always do the best we can do with the resources and energy that we have.  
We give ourselves permission to be imperfect, to ease, in, and to be patient.**



# EXTERNAL SUPPORT & PARTNER GUIDELINES



# MILK CRATE THEATRE

## External Support Worker Guidelines

The following guidelines are applicable for all Workshops, Rehearsals, Performances, or any other Events hosted by Milk Crate Theatre. We ask that you read and agree to these guidelines, to best contribute to providing a safe space where wellbeing is first and foremost, and our Collaborative Artists can express themselves.

Note: we use the term 'Collaborative Artist' (CA) for people who attend our workshops and form our community, rather than other terms such as 'participant' or 'client'.

### **FOCUS ON SUPPORTING EXPRESSION AND STRENGTHS**

If you've worked with someone for a long time, you might know them very well and have lots of great insights into what might get them involved and what might put them off. This is so valuable!

#### **It's wonderful if you can:**

- Use your connection with the CA to encourage their participation
- Know what kinds of challenges are likely to be positive for the CA
- Help the CA with access needs while also encouraging independence where relevant
- Join in with exercises if asked to by facilitators, especially if that provides a model of courage and enthusiasm for the CA
- Hang back a bit from exercises if asked to by facilitators, especially if the CA might benefit from having more space and time to get their own groove and ideas going

#### **Familiarity can get in the way if you:**

- Assume a CA cannot do something, or answer for a CA before allowing them enough space and time to consider a question or challenge, and find their own form of answer
- Put your own ideas ahead of the CAs ideas
- Insert your own sense of what's correct, 'normal' or non-disruptive (outside of any group guidelines agreed to) onto the CA's responses
- Interrupt a workshop, lesson or exercise to give direction or critique
- Unnecessarily "do for" rather than "do with" a CA, e.g. cleaning up after a CA when they could do it themselves

### **WE ASK THAT YOU**

- Identify yourself as a support worker to a MCT facilitator or staff member (this can be done quietly and privately if you feel that is best for your CA)
- Read the Creative Space Guidelines and comply with the boundaries and direction of the Lead Facilitator, Milk Crate Theatre staff and Support Artists
- Agree to maintain confidentiality
- Leave the room to answer or make phone calls
- Report all incidents immediately to Milk Crate Theatre staff regarding: disruptive, violent or aggressive behaviour; arguments; disclosure of personal information where you believe a participant might be in danger to themselves or others. This includes suicidal ideation and/or any mention of self harm

## **YOU MUST NOT**

- Take photographs, film or record sound in the workshops
- Engage in threatening behaviour - this will result in suspension from MCT
- At any time ask facilitators, staff or anyone involved in any of our programs any details regarding:
  - Private information
  - People's relationship status, or details of their personal relationships
- Make any commentary on your personal social media pages (whether you include names or not) of any participants, staff or Milk Crate Theatre in general, that may cause indemnification, or may reveal their personal information or stories
- Post photos of any participants, workshops, or performances to personal social media platforms (outside of just sharing events and posts from MCT's accounts)
- Use sexualised language, behaviour or body language
- Touch any CA without their permission. Touch can trigger a participant due to previous trauma. Equally, participants are not permitted to touch you without your permission
- Be under the influence of drugs or alcohol

Unless dictated by specific arrangements within your organisation and directly regarding the CA(s) you are supporting, you must not:

- Exchange personal information with CAs
- Give, lend or exchange money with CAs
- Share or buy any goods for participants, this includes: coffees, food, lunch, snacks, or any other items. If you are concerned that someone does not have access to food, please speak to MCT staff so we can refer people to food provision services
- Provide any participants with any kind of medication, be it: prescription, herbal, or other. This includes Panadol, pain patches, tablets or sprays. You are not covered if anyone has an allergic reaction to any items

**MILK CRATE THEATRE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REMOVE ANYONE FROM THE SPACE  
WHO HAS ENGAGED IN UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT  
OR HAS ACTED IN BREACH OF THIS AGREEMENT.**



# MILK CRATE THEATRE

## Information & Guidelines for Community Partners

### **ABOUT US**

Milk Crate Theatre provides opportunities for people whose voices are under-represented to engage in artistic practice to build confidence, skills and connections. We then share bold and resonant stories created through our programs to build empathy and break down barriers. We achieve this through free workshops partnered with various community organisations and through our major productions and artist development programs.

We use the term 'Collaborative Artist' (CA) for people who attend our workshops and form our community, rather than other terms such as 'participant' or 'client'.

### **ABOUT OUR WORKSHOPS**

Our workshops are led by practicing professional artists, who provide CA's with training, performance and technical skills, through a range of creative practices. These workshops are open to beginners, through to those who have had longer engagement with Milk Crate Theatre, or have previous or existing artistic careers. We work collaboratively as a group and provide the opportunity for people to connect with fellow creatives and have fun.

We tailor programming to suit particular groups of people depending on age, accessibility and interest. We are able to engage a wide range of community members, ranging from ages 10 – 60+ and with a wide scope of lived experience, including but not limited to: homelessness or risk of homelessness, housing instability, mental health, disability, domestic violence, refugees, LGBTQIA+.

We offer workshops in a range of art forms, including theatre, movement, writing, or general creative play. Most of our workshops tend to utilise a range of creative outlets in order to encourage exploration and expression that is accessible to everyone.

Programs typically run weekly, for 8-10 weeks on week days.

### **OUTCOMES**

Workshops can be just a space of play for the duration, or sometimes groups find that they would like to present something at the end for friends and/or family. We can arrange any in-house showings with you, but they must be planned at the beginning of the program.

Please also note, that it is not possible to put on a full stage production within a workshop setting. Putting on a production is a lot of work and takes a lot of resources – both human and financial! They are also planned well in advance. If you are interested in longer term partnership, please discuss with MCT staff.

We find that the benefits of our program are always high, regardless of whether there is a showing or not.

### **IMAGE CONSENT**

Milk Crate Theatre will manage consent around images and sharing of work publicly. We are able to engage participants who do not want their image shared publicly in the program and manage our outcomes to ensure safety and personal boundaries are protected. Because of this we ask that our partners don't share any imagery from the workshops without Milk Crate Theatre permission.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT OF US!

- Hire of professional practicing artists to deliver each program – we will always schedule a Lead Artist and Support Artist for every workshop program.
- Creation of a safe and inclusive space that encourages participation and creative expression.
- Access to our Artistic Program Manager to discuss scheduling, art form focus, workshop progression, future collaborations, any incidents that may arise within the program etc.
- Accountability and delivery of the Creative Space Guidelines.
- A professional relationship between Facilitating Artists and Collaborative Artists at all times (this includes not sharing personal information/contact details or workshop images directly with CAs and Support Workers; following on social media channels etc.)
- Making sure everyone is seen, heard, valued, and allowed to contribute!

## WHAT WE NEED FROM A PARTNER

### SUPPORT

- Support workers from the partner to be in the space throughout the workshop duration – your knowledge and experience is so valuable to us, and supports the engagement and bravery of Collaborative Artists
- Identify Support Workers to the MCT team when entering the workshop space
- Liaise with the Facilitating Artists (where appropriate) on specific needs and issues that may arise or need to be addressed, in a way that is respectful of the individual
- Encourage participation and join in with exercises if asked to by facilitators, especially if that provides a model of courage and enthusiasm
  
- We ask that all support workers engage in the spirit of supporting CAs to participate and that they do NOT
  - Answer/speak for the CAs
  - Take centre stage in an exercise
  - Put their own ideas ahead of the CAs
  - Interrupt a workshop, lesson or exercise to give direction or critique.
  - For more detailed information please read our External Support Worker Guidelines document
- We expect everyone to adhere to our Creative Space Guidelines to maintain a safe and fun space. We work hard at creating an inclusive environment and any violent behaviour (verbal and/or physical) is strictly unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Milk Crate Theatre reserves the right to remove anyone from the space who has engaged in unprofessional conduct or has acted in breach of our agreement.

### THE SPACE

- We need you to provide us with a suitable accessible space to host the program, that is:
  - Safe to move in and clear of furniture/clutter;
  - Has good air ventilation;
  - Somewhere quiet or privacy can be maintained (i.e. not a common area/thoroughfare);
  - Some access to natural light if/where possible

## SPREAD THE WORD!

We need you to circulate information on the program to your relevant clients, groups, community members and actively promote on your social media channels. We are happy to provide flyers, images, social tiles at your request.