Fostering Self-Determination through Social Arts Practice: The Case of the Art Warriors

Authors: Rachel Taylor[1*], Katie Smith[2], Shalane Hodder,[3]Mary Clare O'Connell[1], and Susan Williamson[1]

1- Department of Psychology, University of South Wales, Pontypridd, RCT, Wales, CF37 1DL
2- Independent Social Practice Artist: https://www.katiesmithartist.co.uk/
3- Project Participant

*Corresponding Author – Dr Rachel Taylor: Department of Psychology, University of South Wales, Pontypridd, RCT, Wales, CF37 1DL, Email: rachel.taylor@southwales.ac.uk

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Abstract

The use of artistic and creative expression to support community cohesion, citizen engagement and individual and collective well-being is long established. Every year, many such projects take place, often locally and on a small scale, with particular goals to reach specific numbers of participants or to obtain improvements on outcomes of relevance to the funding or commissioning body. While reporting almost always takes place and a proportion of these projects are even formally evaluated, often it is unclear "why" the effects or outcomes are achieved, "how" these can be best showcased to a wider audience and "whether" the outcome measures are even the best representation of progress or success. This creates a dilemma for arts practitioners regardless of art medium – how to best evidence the impact of the work beyond the production of the output itself.

Based on a recent creative and expressive arts project, the Art Warriors, we would like to share some reflections and suggestions for fostering self-determination. These are contained within a manifesto co-produced with all members of the Art Warriors collective and this accompanying piece explains how these suggestions link to self-determination. We will start by presenting a brief introduction to Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and how this links to motivation, psychological well-being and engagement. Then we will present a brief outline of the Art Warriors project; including its history and process. Next we will explore each of the elements of the Art Warriors manifesto to show how this links to SDT and what challenges this could present when implementing SDT in other practices. Finally we will conclude with a brief set of reflections and lessons learned from the project itself which can be applied elsewhere. We hope that this will act as a guide for other artists and practitioners who may be unfamiliar with the term "self-determination" to robustly evidence the psychological impact of their work. Further we hope that this will encourage funders and commissioners to consider a wider range of outcomes when assessing success. This will include embedding the elements of self-determination – autonomy, competence and relatedness as evaluation criteria for projects commissioned.

What is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Why is it Useful?

"The fullest representations of humanity show people to be curious, vital and self-motivated. At their best, they are agentic and inspired, striving to learn; extend themselves; master new skills; and apply their talents responsibly….Yet it is also clear that the human spirit can be diminished or crushed and that individuals sometimes reject growth and responsibility." (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.68). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is an approach which identifies and fosters those inherent human strengths to encourage growth and resilience, facilitate participation, support the development of internal motivation and develop psychological well-being. A key aspect of SDT is its focus on strengths and needs which are inherent to the person but which are supported or thwarted by social context and environmental conditions. Within SDT, every person has the potential and capacity for growth; but providing the right conditions is crucial to this (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Early research on SDT (see e.g. Ryan & Deci, 2000 for a review) focussed on identifying innate psychological needs and environmental factors/conditions that impact motivation and well-being. Three needs were identified from this research:

- Autonomy: Individuals will flourish if environmental conditions provide opportunities to exercise autonomy and well-being is linked to the attainment of this need. Those who have an orientation towards autonomy will interpret actions as being within their own control and will consider themselves as having the ability to effect changes in their own situation and circumstances. The experience of autonomy is directly linked to motivation and action (Hagger & Hamilton, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Individuals who experience lack of motivation and quickly desist from tasks may see their actions from an "impersonal" viewpoint (i.e. that actions are beyond their control) or from a "controlled" perspective (that external events are controlling their behaviour). Having a control orientation not only means that we are more likely to be motivated by external rewards or benefits but also that we experience negative emotions and frustration when a task becomes difficult or challenging. These effects can be partially combated by providing positive feedback (e.g. Hagger, Koch & Chatzisarantis, 2015) but not completely.

- Competence: Individuals need to feel that they are capable of achieving their goals. Even if they are given the choice (autonomy), individuals may still experience challenges in feeling competent to exercise that choice. Having a competence need met can impact positively on internal (intrinsic) motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and on performance (e.g. Szulawski, Kazmierczak and Prusik, 2021).

- Relatedness: This basic need reflects the importance of having mutually caring relationships (e.g. Martela & Sheldon, 2019). These are characterised by positive regard, trust and mutual respect. They do not necessarily need to be family or romantic relationships; the presence of these characteristics is what is important to meet the relatedness need. This has also been linked to the development of intrinsic motivation and participation (e.g. Bowe et al., 2020; Bozeman & Ellemers, 2009) even in challenging circumstances.

Satisfaction of these needs has been linked to psychological well-being in a range of different groups and using different measures of well-being (e.g. Martela & Sheldon, 2019) including increased life satisfaction and decreased depressive symptoms in residents of nursing homes (Kloos, Trompetter, Bohlmeijer and Westerhof, 2019) and increased

subjective wellbeing for adults with intellectual disabilities (e.g. Frielink, Schuengel and Embregts, 2018). Additionally, meeting the needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are crucial to many trauma-informed approaches when working with those who have experienced disadvantage or who show vulnerabilities. For example a study by Thomas, Wilson, Bedell and Morse (2019) explored the impact of a primary care clinic which utilised a trauma informed approach to support criminal justice involved women. Interviews with these women indicated the importance of their SDT needs being supported within this environment and highlighted this formed part of their choice to maintain contact with the clinic. Similarly embedding SDT principles into a primary care transitions clinic for women on probation was connected not only to more successful probation completions but also to positive feedback from clients regarding support for their multiple and complex needs (Bardin et al., 2022).

The brief literature review provides just some examples of how SDT could be a powerful framework in a range of different situations. Our experience is not the first to embed SDT into a creative intervention. For example a review by Bellazecca, Teasdale, Biosca and Skelton (2022) highlights the importance of this within creative programmes for older adults and a recent paper by Krause, North and Davidson (2019) applied SDT principles to a community music participation intervention for community members. Additionally, we believe that many social and community arts practitioners will already be fostering autonomy, competence and relatedness without being aware of SDT as a theory. They may also be unaware of the strength of the evidence base behind their work. This means that they may be missing a valuable resource that could be used to evidence the wider impact of their practice.

To contribute to this discussion, the current article discusses a project commissioned by the Nelson Trust to support women who had been involved with the criminal justice system and who needed to complete activities as part of their probation requirements. Research on women in the criminal justice system (e.g. Brennan et al., 2012) indicates pathways through substance misuse, experience of domestic and sexual violence, mental health, and socialisation through being embedded within disadvantaged, criminal and abusive subcultures. Having experienced or witnessed violence produces both behavioural hostility and depressive symptoms which lead to the use of alcohol or other drugs to cope (e.g. Lopez et al., 2019) while the cumulative effects of multiple and complex trauma (see e.g. Gueta, Chen & Ronel, 2022 for a recent review) remove actual and perceived control and competence and create low trust in interpersonal relations. Therefore fostering self-determination in this environment would be both challenging and beneficial.

Background to the Art Warriors

The Nelson Trust commissioned Social Practice Artist Katie Smith to facilitate a creative and therapeutic arts project using a traditional workshop-based format. The project took place in a newly opened women's centre and its aim was to identify what was needed in terms of care, support, and encouragement, for women to feel safe and connected when engaging with the centre's services. Participants of the project included both women who had been involved in the criminal justice system and their key workers.

Rather than being constrained by prescriptive or pre-planned activities, Katie used a person-centred, collaborative, process-driven approach. This gave the project the freedom to evolve in a fluid way which could respond to, and accommodate, individual needs and preferences. Katie encouraged participants to use their creativity to work with their hands, think through

ideas and explore their feelings. A co-authored group agreement was central to the project; it not only articulated the participants ambitions for what they hoped to achieve in the project space, but how they would function within it. The group rapidly made the shift from individuals taking part in an art project with defined roles, to a more democratic arts collective with a self-selected identity (the Art Warriors).

By creating an experiential space that encouraged the group to reflect on their engagement in the project, particularly in terms of the impact it was having on their psychological wellbeing, Katie noticed a natural opening to introduce SDT. Working together, the group used it as a framework to identify how their need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness was being met. They discovered that satisfaction of these needs relied on the right conditions being in place and that these conditions broadly matched those outlined in their group agreement.

As a collective, the Art Warriors captured the insights that emerged from their project in a co-authored manifesto. It offers 9 suggestions which can be used to cultivate creative spaces that promote self-determination. It is hoped that the manifesto will be seen as an invitation to anyone working in support services to reflect on how those needing help and those providing support can work together to grow their capabilities.

The Art Warriors Manifesto

As a result of the Art Warriors project, the group produced a collective manifesto. This was a truly collaborative endeavour and contained nine suggestions for promoting self-determination within creative spaces. The finished manifesto with the full text is contained in Appendix 1 and the following discussion demonstrates both the mapping of the nine suggestions to SDT and some points of reflection for creative practitioners when attempting to implement these suggestions. These are contained in Table 1 on the next pages. When reviewing these, it is useful to bear in mind that some of the considerations for implementation will apply to more than one suggestion. These are cross-referenced to previous suggestions rather than being repeated each time. Similarly, where suggestions share substantial conceptual overlap these have been combined in Table 1.

Table 1: Mapping the Art Warriors Manifesto to Self-Determination Theory

Suggestion(s)	Connections to SDT	Considerations for Future Implementation.
Build Respect and Recognise Power	One of the key features of relatedness is that the relations are respectful. Within the Art Warriors, the desire was to create a genuine collective and this would be a foundational principle. However building respect (and therefore taking the first step to relatedness) needs all participants to feel competent to voice their thoughts and to feel that any autonomy within the group is genuine. For this reason the suggestion moves on to highlight the importance of establishing "What's OK and not OK in this space?" and highlights that it is important to "Create an agreement not a set of rules". While this is important for the women who are engaging with the group, there are challenges to create a space where power relations outside of the space are genuinely equalised. Additionally it raises the question of how autonomy can flourish in a space where engagement might be impacted by wider requirements such as those required for probation. Finally, a challenge to building respect for the Art Warriors as a group was presented by external parties may have had different understanding of the term "therapeutic". This could be both a misunderstanding and an implicit downgrading of the actual experience if commissioners and service providers see being "in therapy" as being a positive way forward. It is possible that the words used to describe a group such as this (expressive and therapeutic) fail to fully convey the impact of the work to a wider audience. This labelling was directly linked to the pressure to evidence therapeutic outcomes, adherence and engagement to meet wider targets and outcomes from commissioning bodies.	Discuss what "voluntariness" means before the first meeting of the group. If this is a collective it will have a flat rather than a hierarchical structure and this may be challenging for those who are there in professional capacity; both the arts practitioner and any key workers, criminal justice, health or social care professionals. If this is to be a collective, those supporting it need to have an understanding of how this differs from an intervention that is "done to" a service user. This may also require change in the language used by those in management roles when describing the project or recruiting staff to support it. Discussions about voluntariness also need to take place with those who will be involved as "users" of a service, centre or intervention. We would suggest that the term service user is replaced by "participant" to reflect their more active role within this. While this will not in itself develop autonomy, and therefore intrinsic motivation, the goal of this discussion should be to support a participant's development of "regulation through identification". In other words to facilitate accepting the activity as personally important rather than as something to be complied with to gain reward or avoid punishment. The Art Warriors was not "art therapy". However in any interventions which are more "therapeutic" in nature, the inherent imbalance between a "therapist" who is an expert by qualification and the recipient needs to be acknowledged. Valuing **both** expertise by qualification and expertise by lived experience will be crucial to success.

	These challenges would also arise in the "Recognise Power" suggestion. While this does promote relatedness, this element of the manifesto goes further to explicitly challenge an embedded power imbalance in the process. This particular suggestion is core to the Warrior aspect of the Art Warriors by confronting the assumption that equitable participation can take place without addressing the question of an external hierarchy. It reminds us of what will happen when we step outside of the group and interact on different levels. However it does not argue that external power can be ignored or discarded; instead it focusses on awareness when outside and achieving parity inside. Implementing this suggestion supports the development of self-efficacy and therefore addresses the need for competence.	
Nurture Relationships	This suggestion is again designed to support participants to achieve relatedness needs. However it addresses one of the other challenges when establishing relatedness; namely that this will not be a quick process for those who have experienced mistrust and exploitation in previous relationships. For this reason the current suggestion asks us to "Recognise the impact that past experiences of abandonment, instability and insecure attachments have on our ways of being." This would not just be the participants but also those who are involved in the collective because of their professional role. For participants, this may not be the first time they are engaging with professionals and they may bring their past experiences of relational breakdown to the current group. This may be in the form of low expectations of the professionals involved or of themselves; depending on how they have made sense of these. For professionals, implicit judgements of the participants based on direct previous experience (of that person) or experience by association (of others) may act as a barrier to nurturing relationships. The importance of recognising these experiences is highlighted in the suggestion to "Offer and receive help based on need rather than role."	To achieve the aim of a "relational space where we all care for each other", recognising the impact of these prior negative experiences is crucial. Encourage self-reflection through staff supervision and mentoring for those who are supporting the group as part of their professional roles. This will help to make implicit expectations explicit. However the importance of creating a non-judgemental space within the organisation to recognise and acknowledge these expectations cannot be overstated. The confidential nature of clinical or professional supervision would facilitate this. For those who are working as solo practitioners, identifying someone who could act as a critical friend or reflective sounding board would support this endeavour. For participants, fostering awareness that expectations can impact on all group members is important, as is establishing that the path to relatedness may involve backward steps. Taking time to develop and review the group agreement is crucial to this process – this needs to be recognised when planning the duration of a group experience. For participants and professionals, using questions and narrative prompts from the Power Threat Meaning Framework

		(PTMF Johnstone, 2022) could facilitate these discussions prior to the group commencing. Finally to nurture relationships, the Art Warriors manifesto recognises a "Focus on consistency and reciprocity". Clear group agreement on consistency of participation needs to be established at the outset and, for professionals, this needs to be supported by those in management roles.
Listen Deeply	This suggestion again supports the development of relatedness. This closely connects to the previous suggestion in that it identifies the importance of life experiences. However it extends the process of developing relatedness by highlighting the way to respond to others' behaviour and explicit disclosure. Removing the focus just from the self to "Listen with your eyes" to other people also supports perceptual change. For participants who have experienced threat or exploitation, being able to trust the evidence of their senses may be an unfamiliar experience. Implementing this suggestion will therefore also support a sense of competence and ultimately autonomy. These aspects are recognised in the use of suggestions such as "Be curious" - suggesting mastery rather than achievement. Further the suggestion to "Respond to what people bring with kindness and compassion" is something which is controllable for the person themselves to do; while they may not be able to control others' reactions to them, they can control their reactions to others.	The development of respectful and nurturing relationships in the ways described above will facilitate deep listening. In turn these will support the relational developments. In order to achieve all three, the key features are time, approach and consistency. For deep listening – which requires both awareness of others' behaviour and a willingness from the other party to disclose – consistent engagement with the group is important. This builds confidence that disclosures will be heard, establishes rapport and familiarity and enhances the person's ability to listen both with their ears and eyes. The second consideration here is that professionals and participants both bring a set of expectations to the process – professionals "question" and participants "respond". Therefore it is important to recognise that deep listening may require stepping out of traditional roles. Professionals may also need to be encouraged to understand that silences or slower processes of disclosure or communication from participants are not a failure of the process. This understanding needs to be reflected in how outcomes and impacts are documented and reported by those who are commissioning an intervention.
Act with Agency and Trust the Process	These two suggestions foster autonomy through the development of intrinsic motivation. It identifies the importance of ownership of your own experience – owning this means taking responsibility to change it if it is not working. "Use the law of two feet. If at any time you find yourself neither learning nor contributing, use your two feet to move you to a place that you'd rather be." Similarly "Freestyle, adapt, deconstruct and subvert activities to suit your needs".	There are practical challenges for implementation because success measures are often more suitable for traditional interventions where participants are service user recipients. Those who commission such projects therefore need to move beyond attendance/numbers participating as a sole measure of success.

	This development of autonomy is further fostered by the encouragement to explore and enjoy the unknown contained within the second suggestion. Removing the pressure to gain a clear right answer through the suggestion to "Let stuff emerge, don't force it or try to predict it" is an example of how this is achieved. Knowing that it is OK to "open yourself up to what you don't know yet" encourages the kind of active participation and experimentation that develops competence and enables this need to be satisfied too. Both suggestions immediately suggest challenges for implementation within a traditional framework where activities are often pre-set and outputs are expected to take a certain form (e.g. items produced, sessions attended). Acting with agency and trusting the process require all participants to feel entitled to and capable of recognising when something is not serving their needs. The ability to "Trust yourself and your intuition" is not something which develops overnight but once it does, this will serve a competence need.	One possibility is to separate those evaluating the project from those participating within the group. Although this will miss an "insider" perspective on the evaluation, it will also remove the pressure to achieve externally generated successful outcomes from those within the groups itself. Measures specifically relating to SDT such as the "General Causality Orientations Scale" (e.g. Hagger & Hamilton, 2021) or the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (e.g. Deci & Ryan, 2000) may be useful to apply to this process. Similarly using measures connected to experienced well being (see e.g. Martela & Sheldon, 2019) would enable assessment of self-determination.
Celebrate Growth	Ryan and Deci's work highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation within self-determination. A crucial element of this is how a person perceives behaviours and outcomes to be regulated. Amotivation (a lack of motivation) comes from activities that are not valued, seem beyond our capability or will not produce an effect that we desire. However between this and purely intrinsic motivation are different levels of external (extrinsic) motivation – ranging from compliance to acting because a behaviour aligns with our values and needs. Gaining interest or enjoyment from an action (truly intrinsic motivation) can often be difficult to distinguish from its alignment with our own values. A way of achieving this will be through reflection on change and learning but also on our role and input into this process. This suggestion therefore highlights how time, reflection and recognition can not only promote competence but also autonomy. This suggestion does not reference other people (even those within the group);	Two considerations for implementation are highlighted here. First is that reflection takes time. However this may not be easily achieved within the group itself. If we attempt to address this by building in scheduled reflection time to group activities, we risk undermining both autonomy and competence. This manifesto suggestion is clear that we as participants should "make time" – not that this should be imposed on us. The second consideration is that reflection itself takes courage and practice. Therefore, although scheduled reflection as part of the group's agenda may undermine autonomy and competence in the long-term, the group may wish to negotiate this as a short-term strategy. The group celebration of growth may not be the endpoint of this suggestion but it may be a stepping stone to build confidence and foster self-efficacy.

	shifting the focus to a person's own review of their process removes the pressure to "live up to" an external evaluation.	
Have Courage and Value Authenticity	This final pair of suggestions at first glance seem to be conceptually dissimilar. However these are the two which present the most challenge for all participants to address and implement as well as being those which may emerge later in a process towards self-determination. These suggestions also fully integrate all three of Ryan and Deci's self-determination needs. Both suggestions challenge an individual, whatever their role, experience or history, to expose themselves in ways that could be sanctioned by others. In the first, there is an explicit manifesto commitment from the Art Warriors that you "Don't let fear or complacency hold you back- you will be surrounded by good people who will hold you up". In the second, "Be prepared to flex professional boundaries, dissolve defences and deconstruct walls brick by brick." Being able to "Learn to fail and fail better" requires the type of experimentation and commitment which fulfils needs for both autonomy and competence while the exhortation to "show up as yourself" clearly fulfils a relatedness need.	Both recommendations pose challenges for participants whose previous behaviour has been subject to negative evaluation – whether this is from partners, friends and family members who have exploited them or expected them to behave in a certain way. However they also challenge the professionals – those supporting a project on behalf of the organisation and the arts practitioner themselves – to expose themselves to "not being right". The previous discussion highlights the importance of clearly communicating expectations, encouraging open and honest discussion and reflection, taking the time to build these relationships and not expecting a consistent measure of success. All of these are vital here. However a further consideration when implementing these suggestions is to be realistic about how authenticity will be valued. Will attempts to undermine it be challenged by the group as a whole? If power is distributed equally and one person raises a challenge or breaks the rules in a way that causes discomfort in others, what will the approach be? The answer lies in the group agreement – therefore the importance of taking the time to develop this, and of treating this as a living document throughout the project, cannot be over-emphasised.

Discussion

The Art Warriors manifesto is the outcome from one of many such projects taking place in the UK each year. However its clear alignment to the SDT framework presents useful pointers to how arts practitioners can assess their own projects. Self-Determination Theory was presented to the group as a point of discussion prior to the manifesto being developed. If this had not resonated with the group as a whole, regardless of prior roles and experiences, this would not have formed part of the outcome. The Art Warriors group had complete autonomy in their decision to use self-determination as an outcome. Although no explicit measures of well-being, self-determination or intrinsic motivation were taken from participants, the wording of this manifesto clearly indicates their adoption of SDT as an approach.

The Next Steps for the Art Warriors and for this Collaboration

As well as the positive steps made towards embedding SDT principles within this collaboration, the group are exploring ways to provide further support for arts practitioners and key workers when embedding SDT into their practice. The Art Warriors collective and the partnership will be working to develop a “how to” guide to raise awareness of the psychological impact of this work with artists. This aligns with policy and guidance from Welsh and UK Governments regarding the role of arts and culture in fostering well-being and relatedness.

What is clear from the challenges and considerations listed above is that this was not a straightforward process. Implementing these suggestions requires first and foremost a clear initial communication within an organisation or between the host organisation and a commissioning body about what achievable outcomes look like. This may also require those commissioning the projects to understand whether their measures of success are really the best ones. Future work to assess the long-term impacts of a project such as this is of course needed. The evidence base will be strengthened further with evaluations of other projects by us and other researchers and practitioners. However established measures already exist which would satisfy the more formal evaluations valued by those commissioning the work. Aligning these to SDT, a perspective that has clear value for promoting wider well-being and fostering positive relationships, would promote greater transparency and comparability across evaluations.

Based on our analysis and experience of the project, we would recommend that those who are recruited to support such a project within an organisation reflect on how internally controllable their actions are. Taking on a truly collective endeavour with an external locus of causality undermines the aim. Therefore supporting a wider process of self-determination for all concerned may require a rethink of one’s own professional role; at least with reference to the project.

Similarly, participants will carry their previous experiences into any project. This may be experiences of their own failure with previous interventions, a personal history of trauma or even watching a client fail despite support. Acknowledging these previous experiences and their ongoing impact in an open and compassionate way is an important step on the road to self-determination. None of the needs identified at the start of this piece can be achieved without openness. So “Don’t censor yourself, this space welcomes all of you.”

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Appendix 1

The Art Warriors' Manifesto

Who are we?

We are The Art Warriors, a collective of women who have come together through an Expressive and Therapeutic Arts Project commissioned by the Nelson Trust. We include a social practice artist, key workers, and women with lived experience of the criminal justice system living in South Wales. We use our creativity to work with our hands, think through ideas, explore feelings, and question EVERTHING.

Who is this for?

This Manifesto is an invitation to anyone working in support services to reflect on how those being helped and those doing the helping can work together to grow their capabilities. It captures the insights that emerged from our Art Warriors' project which are offered here as 9 suggestions. We encourage you to use the Manifesto as a starting point; discuss it, challenge it, rework it, and add to it, but above all invest the time to notice the subtle 'under the radar' stuff that happens when we actively build relationships.

9 suggestions to cultivate creative spaces that promote self-determination

Build respect: Start with a conversation. How will you work together? Share your expectations, hopes and fears. What's OK and not OK in this space? What does everybody need in order to thrive? Create an agreement not a set of rules. Invest in it and keep it central to the work. Revisit, rewrite and edit it as stuff comes up.

Nurture relationships: Handle relationships with care and sensitivity. Recognise the impact that past experiences of abandonment, instability, and insecure attachments have on our ways of being. Focus on consistency and reciprocity. Offer and receive help based on need rather than role. In a relational space we all care for each other.

Listen deeply: Our life experiences shape us. Be curious about the kaleidoscope that others see the world through how it might be different to yours. How might it affect the way that we show up in a space? Listen with your eyes. Be gentle with each other. Respond to what people bring with kindness and compassion. A listening space is a safe and trusting space.

Act with agency: You are the expert in your life, bring this sentiment into the space. Freestyle, adapt, deconstruct, and subvert activities to suit your needs. Trust yourself and your intuition. Use the law of two feet. If at any time you find yourself neither learning nor contributing, use your two feet to move you to a place that you'd rather be.

Trust the process: Let go of any preconceptions of what the work should look like. This is the difference between having a really good compass and a detailed route map. Open yourself up to what you don't know yet. Let stuff emerge, don't force it or try to predict it. You will end up exactly where you need to be.

Have courage: Learn the rules and break them. Make mistakes and celebrate them. Learn to fail and fail better. Move out of the shallow end. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Don't let fear or complacency hold you back - you will be surrounded by good people who will hold you up. Progress is made through disobedience.

Celebrate growth: Make time to reflect on what you are learning. Check-in and check-out; focus on your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Notice what shows up when you explore, connect, and interact with the world in a different way. You will be growing your capabilities - measure what's changing and recognise the work you're putting in.

Recognise power: Change happens when there is a shift in the dynamics of power. Observe how power operates in your space. How can you create parity between the roles of helper and helped? If you call yourself a collective and everyone participates in an equitable way, can you dismantle the hierarchy of power you usually exist within?

Value authenticity: Show up as yourself. Step into vulnerability. Be prepared to flex professional boundaries, dissolve defences, and deconstruct walls brick by brick. There is something liberating in being your true self. Let go of external demands and the expectations placed on you to perform a certain role. Don't censor yourself, this space welcomes all of you.