

CREATING CONNECTION

Enriching lives through the power of **creative expression**

Establishing Experiences

Questions to help think about, design, and update programs and plans to create connection.

Background

Creating Connection is about changing the conversation so that creative expression is embraced as a recognized, valued, and expected part of everyday life. This represents a shift in how we have traditionally talked about the value of arts and culture. Yet communication is just the tip of the iceberg. It is equally critical that programmatic experiences live up to the benefits promised in our communication.

For example, our research indicated that people value opportunities to engage actively in arts and culture—via personal creation, active participation in museum and theater programming, and others. Yet, these individuals often find that their experiences are too passive and therefore not as closely aligned with their values and interests around connecting. We ask: How can your programs foster more active participation?

Similarly, we found that a key benefit to creative expression is in helping us grow and find personal fulfillment. We ask: How can your programming or work foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills?

To help artists and arts and cultural organizations consider their existing programs (and possibly develop new programs) that create greater connection, we are providing a series of questions, based in our research around public values, that you can use as you think about, design and update your programming and plans.

Questions to Ask

I. Sharing **creative experiences** and **expressing our creativity** build powerful **connections** with the people we're closest to, with our community and the world around us, and with ourselves.

Questions to ask:

- In what ways will this program/experience help participants create connections (to family and friends, to other people they do not already know, to themselves)?
- How can you provide more balanced opportunities for people to be active participants with the work and not only be passive observers?
- What opportunities can you provide for people to “get behind the curtain” witness, observe, and participate in the development process?

II. Creative expression enriches our lives and communities by **helping us GROW and find personal fulfillment.**

Questions to ask:

- How can your programming or work inspire and challenge people, teach them new things, and raise important questions?
- How can your programming or work help people engage with, learn from, understand, appreciate, and/or empathize with other perspectives and cultures?
- How can your programming or work foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills?

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III. Creative expression enriches our lives and communities by empowering everyone to find and share their **VOICE**, and enabling us to experience the VOICE of others.

Questions to ask:

- How can your programming or work help bring and amplify more diverse voices and ideas to the table?
- How can your programming or work reflect, contribute to, or advance diverse culture and heritage?
- How can your programming or work provide opportunities for people to find and express their unique voice?
- How can your programming or work provide opportunities for people to experience or be inspired by the creative expression of others?

IV. Creative expression enriches our lives and communities by promoting our health and **WELL-BEING**.

Questions to ask:

- How can your programming or work help people reduce stress or find balance?
- How can your programming or work promote cognitive development or lifelong brain health?
- How can your programming or work help people to energize and recharge themselves?
- How can your programming or work help people reconnect with themselves or with what's most important in their lives?

V. Creative expression enriches our lives and communities by contributing to our **HAPPINESS**.

Questions to ask:

- How can your programming/ or work provide opportunities for people to create lasting memories?
- How can your programming or work promote interaction between people?
- How can your programming or work help people experience the full range of human emotion?
- How can your programming or work create opportunities for people to have fun?