

EDUCATION PACK A



We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we create our work, the Wadawurrung People of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and to emerging leaders, recognising their continuing connection to land, water, culture and community.

This production contains themes and images that reference anxiety, depression, loneliness, social isolation and domestic violence and contains occasional coarse language. If you require assistance please reach out to the following services:

Lifeline 131114

Beyond Blue <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

SANE Australia 1800 187 263 <https://www.sane.org/>

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

NOTE TO TEACHERS

This pack is designed to be downloaded and interacted with electronically. You will find hyperlinks throughout that take you to extra resources. Should these hyperlinks be blocked you can also access the resources here:

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvIDJsW2IxDB9QDWyibwp0-Mkl6pR9Fke&si=vxKKAJkc1wd2svO2>

VIMEO: <https://vimeo.com/user215785914>

a/lone CREDITS

Devised by Project Connect Ensemble

Writer/ Director: Janine McKenzie

Composer/Musician: Sheshtin Honey

Performer A: Stacey Carmichael

Performer B: Xavier McGettigan

Performer C: Emily Jacker

Designer (Set/ Costume): Alard Pett

Original Projection Design: Melinda Chapman

Additional Projection: Stacey Carmichael & Sheshtin Honey

Graphic Design: Sheshtin Honey

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Film Actors

Tess: Maggie Evans

Steve: David Wilkie

Nicole: Julie Fryman

Producer: Stacey Carmichael

Tour Producers: Stacey Carmichael & Janine McKenzie

Production Assistant: Maggie Evans

Education Resources Stacey Carmichael & Janine McKenzie


We thank all those in our community who gave their permission for their interviews to be used in the development of this work. This production is supported by Geelong Arts Centre's Creative Engine, La Mama, Back To Back Theatre and Clonard College.



CONTENTS PAGE



Click on the subheading to take you straight to that section

p1	<u>Company</u> 
p2	<u>Creatives</u>
p5	<u>Synopsis</u>
p6	<u>Context</u>
p9	<u>Themes</u>
p10	<u>Process</u>
p15	<u>Style</u>
p16	<u>Before the show</u>
p17	<u>Activities</u>
p25	<u>Curriculum Links</u>
p26	<u>Terminology</u>
p29	<u>Sources</u>



Click in this icon throughout the pack to return to this page.

COMPANY

Project Connect Ensemble is a group of independent Australian artists that use group-devised physical theatre processes to explore the human condition.

Founded by long time collaborators Stacey Carmichael and Janine McKenzie, Project Connect began its first creative development in December 2022 with a theatrical exploration of the universal experience of loneliness. This resulted in the company's first full length work, *a/lone*, which premiered at the Geelong Arts Centre before making a successful international debut at the 2023 Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

The Project Connect Ensemble has developed a unique style of story telling that brings together elements of verbatim theatre, physical theatre, improvisation, original music, sound design and spoken word.



Visit our website

[CLICK HERE](#)

CREATIVES

STACEY CARMICHAEL: PRODUCER / PERFORMER A



Stacey is a director, choreographer, actor, dancer and teacher. She has directed award-winning productions of *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Exit the King* (Best Director, Geelong Theatre Awards). She was also awarded Best Female Actor in a Lead Role for her performance in *The Savages of Wirramai*. Stacey's most recent credits include Cecily (*The Importance of Being Earnest*), Pretty Femme (*Shadows of Angels*) and Daughter (*The Bleeding Tree*). Stacey traveled to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2023 to perform in Anglesea Performing Arts production of *Shadows of Angels* and Project Connect's *a/lone*. Stacey has completed short course studies in acting and directing with RADA (London), NIDA, Brave Acting Studio and Frantic Assembly (London) and holds a Bachelor of Contemporary Arts in Dance/ Drama. For 10 years she ran her own contemporary dance company "Collision Dance". www.staceyccreative.com

JANINE MCKENZIE: WRITER / DIRECTOR



Janine has worked with various theatre companies as an actor, director and designer, including Back to Back, Comic Genius, APA, Geelong Repertory Theatre Company, TTT and Theatre of the Winged Unicorn. Her work as an actor includes roles in *The House of Bernarda Alba* (Poncia), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Lady Bracknell), *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Diane de Poitiers) and *Romeo and Juliet* (Nurse). Janine's directing credits include *Emma Celebrazione!*, *The Crucible*, *Under Milk Wood*, *Medea*, *The Tempest*, *Top Girls*, *Love and Information*, *Shadows of Angels* (Edinburgh Fringe Season) and *Masquerade*. Janine is an award-winning drama educator, receiving the Drama Victoria Regional Teacher of the Year Award in 2015. In addition to receiving multiple nominations for her acting by the VDL, Janine was awarded the Geelong Theatre Best Director Award (with Iris Walshe-Howling) for *The Hope Song*.

ALARD PETT: DESIGNER (SET/COSTUME)



Alard has enjoyed his time over the last 15 years designing multiple theatrical productions. In Geelong and surrounding regions. He works as a designer in the production areas of set, lighting, props and costume, as well as in the area of set construction. He has worked on plays in intimate spaces, and musicals in much larger theatrical places as well as working in large arenas. He thrives when working with diverse teams, both on and off stage, and lives for collaborative theatre-making. He welcomes the challenge of production design across mediums and genres.

SHESHTIN HONEY: COMPOSER/ MUSICIAN/ SOUND DESIGN



Sheshtin Honey is a composer, musician, sound designer, producer and visual artist. They are an award-winning artist who has toured both nationally and internationally with theatre productions and rock bands. In the last 12 months they composed / designed, an electro opera score for Back to Back Theatre's *REDHEALER*, an electronica score for *a/lone* and a dark gothic murder ballad score for Angus Cerini's *The Bleeding Tree*. Their composition history ranges from live improv, soundscapes, Alt Classical, Post Rock, Doom, Electro, Alt Folk, Appalachian Thrash, Witch House and Dark Wave. Theatre composition highlights include working with Back to Back Theatre, Glen Shea, Skin of Our Teeth, APA and Project Connect. Sheshtin has worked with bands including; Whiskey n Snacks, Made of Steam, Presbyterian Merrimaker, Seascapes of the Interior, Dandelion Wine and Winter Palace. www.sheshtin.com

XAVIER MCGETTIGAN: PERFORMER B



Xavier is a Geelong-based choreographer, director, actor and musician and is the director of Attitude Dance Company. He graduated from Ministry of Dance in 2012, trained at Brave Studios and has appeared in multiple productions including *Saturday Night Fever* (Stage Art, 2016) as a musician and ensemble member, made his international debut both as an actor in *a/lone* (Project Connect Ensemble) and as a director/choreographer in *Perfect Pairing: A Wine Tasting Dancegustation* (Attitude Dance Company) at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2023. He directed *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* (Geelong Repertory Theatre, 2022) winning "Best Sound Design", "Best Director of a Comedy" and "Best Production of a Comedy" at the 2022 Victorian Drama League awards.

EMILY JACKER-LAWRENCE: PERFORMER C



Emily completed a Bachelor of Music Theatre at Federation University in 2018. 2023 marked her international debut, performing in *Perfect Pairing: A Wine Tasting Dancegustation* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. 2022 saw her perform in a new Australian work *You're A Catch; Why Are You Single?*, written and directed by Sarah Wynen, and take part in *Show Some Respect*, a theatre-in-education program within Victorian Secondary schools. In 2021 she filmed a live stream performance of *Songs for A New World* with Staged by Creatives, and performed a new children's work *The Junior Detective Collective: The Mystery of the Golden Scoop* with the Juicy Orange at the Adelaide Fringe Festival.

MELINDA CHAPMAN: PROJECTION DESIGN



Melinda began her career in advertising and design before shifting into the computer games industry. Melinda began as a pre-production illustrator at Creative Edge in Edinburgh, Scotland. She returned to Australia to work for Atari Melbourne House and I.R. Gurus as an environment artist and level designer for several game titles for PC, Playstation and Xbox. A sea change brought Melinda to the Surfcoast, where she worked freelance in commercial 3D, game art and graphic design. The highly creative culture in Geelong and its surrounding regions soon introduced her to theatre-making. She has since ventured into acting and directing for stage and has written three plays.

MAGGIE EVANS: PRODUCTION ASSISTANT/ TESS



Maggie's love of theatre began at a very young age, which led to joining the GSODA Junior Players. Maggie's recent onstage credits include *Summer of the Aliens* (Geelong Rep. 2022), *Persuasion* (Theatre of the Winged Unicorn 2023) and most recently playing April in Someone New Theatre Company's *Why They Stay* (2023). She currently works in the Commercial Events team at Deakin University and is in the ensemble of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* with Theatre of the Damned.

JULIE FRYMAN: NICOLE



Julie completed a Bachelor of Performing Arts at Monash University back when phones weren't smart. Now she performs with community theatre groups Anglesea Performing Arts and Theatre of the Winged Unicorn. She has recently appeared in Anglesea Performing Arts' production of *The Bleeding Tree*, and their Edinburgh Fringe production of *Shadows of Angels*.

DAVID WILKIE: STEVE



David Wilkie has worked with a number of theatre companies, performing in productions of *Three Pears* and *12x12 with 3222*. He has performed with the Portarlington Players and appeared as William Buckley in *The Pioneers*. David loves the creative process and has a particular interest in mime. In his spare time, David writes poetry.

SYNOPSIS

“In the experience of profound disconnection, when there are no more floors to crash through, I found my way out by going in”.

This dynamic Australian work is a humorous and moving theatrical cycle that explores the painful depths of loneliness, the profound joy of aloneness and the impact of social isolation. *a/lone* combines physical and verbatim theatre, poetry, improvisation, dialogue and spoken word, with an evocative live original score.

Project Goal: Open up the conversation about loneliness and social isolation, confront shame and improve connection.

“Research has found that ‘people who are disconnected lead sicker, sadder and shorter lives.’ We wanted to have a conversation about the epidemic of loneliness. Audiences will see themselves and people they love in the stories we tell. This performance resonates deeply and continues to stay with you long after you leave the theatre.”

Janine McKenzie, Director



Meet our 2024 Creative Team:

[CLICK HERE](#)



Watch the show trailer:

[CLICK HERE](#)

CONTEXT

Beyond Blue

but...

1 in 4
Australians think
loneliness is a sign of
weakness

beyondblue.org.au 1300 22 4636

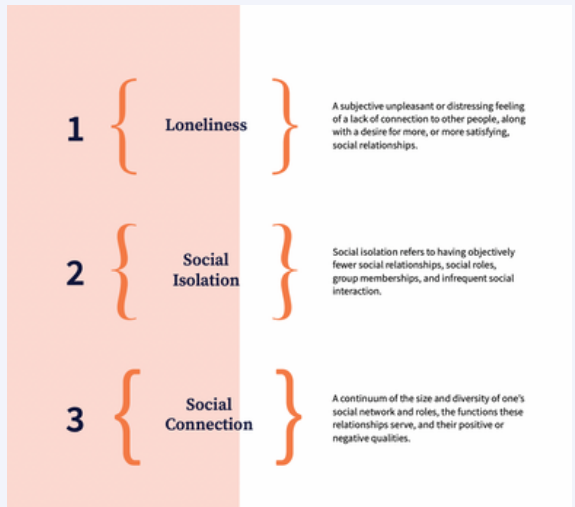
Beyond Blue

1 in 3
people in Australia
are feeling
lonely

beyondblue.org.au 1300 22 4636 swiipe for more >>>

Connection is why we're here. We are hardwired to connect with others, it's what gives purpose and meaning to our lives, and without it there is suffering.

Brene' Brown, *Daring Greatly*

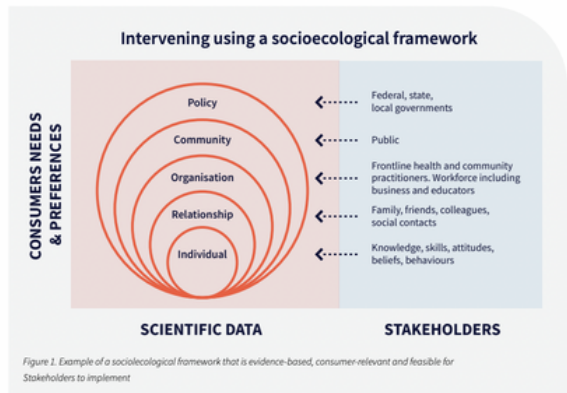


BRENE' BROWN

Living with air pollution increases your odds of dying early by 5 percent. Living with obesity, 20 percent. Excessive drinking, 30 percent. And living with loneliness? It increases our odds of dying early by 45 percent.

@TRACYMALONE

Understanding that One Size Does Not Fit All



CONTEXT

From the outset, this project aimed to explore the following questions:

How do we connect to others?

Has this changed in the current climate?

How do we connect to self, others and the world outside ourselves?

How do we connect as artists to explore concepts and ideas?

What is that point of connection where our different art forms meet?

Here is what we found...

Members of Project Connect came together in December 2022 and pretty quickly, we decided that we wanted to explore people's diverse experiences of being alone. We knew it was a universal experience, that it could be a source of delight as well as a source of despair, but we didn't often hear people talking about it openly. We were curious to hear what people had to say when we asked them to share their experiences.

As artists with diverse training and creative interests, we used the rehearsal room to respond to the conversations we'd had with members of our community. We also contributed our own experiences and insights as part of the development process.

As a company of theatre makers, we have a long history of working with each other in various capacities. The chemistry between original performers Stacey and Xavier provided a physical language that showed some of the themes that emerged from the interviews we conducted, and the organic way in which Sheshtin responded to and shaped much of the physical work through their music was extraordinary to witness.

Some of the key ideas that came through that initial development stage addressed the initial questions we sought to explore, finding their form through non-verbal movement, voice overs, poetic interpretations of verbatim text and monologues (both internal and delivered as direct address to the audience).

In response to those questions we asked from the outset, we found answers and wisdom through listening carefully, reading widely and sharing honestly.

When we considered the experience of loneliness, we were curious to understand what it meant to be connected to oneself. We knew that this kind of connection means different things to each of us, but it seems that at the heart of connecting to oneself is self-awareness and self-care. We noticed that some people fill their buckets through activities such as meditation, journalling, spending time alone, talking with friends or a counsellor and engaging in fun, fulfilling hobbies or pursuits.

Many people find that spending time with others and being active contributes to a stronger sense of connection. We found that many organisations exist that can alleviate a sense of social isolation and we found that people feel less lonely when they find their tribe.

Some other things we learned were:

- We can connect to others in real life and online. Local governments websites often have directories that list community groups with contact information, and public notice boards have upcoming events and information about local activities.
- Many community activities are driven by volunteers. Over the past few years, volunteer numbers have dropped away, but there are still many diverse community groups that meet and share common interests.
- Online communities increase the opportunities for people with diverse interests to connect, often without financial and geographical constraints.
- Some people know what they like and go in search of others that share these interests, but some people want to try something new or meet people they wouldn't otherwise encounter. Sometimes, working out where to start looking is the biggest hurdle to finding our tribe.

Whether we seek healthier relationships with ourselves, others or the wider community, one of the key findings of Project Connect's exploration of loneliness and social isolation is that there are many options that each of us can find or create to connect, and often a good way to start is to reach out.

THEMES

a/lone explores psychological and behavioural landscapes that shape our sense of identity, belonging and connection.

Each vignette in *a/lone* explores one or more of the following themes:

- Loneliness and social isolation
- Belonging and connection
- Community (finding your tribe)
- Managing change and stress
- Judgement and shame, acceptance and growth
- Boundaries and hurdles
- Public and private worlds
- Wisdom and support



Watch an interview with the Director of *a/lone* about the themes explored in the work:

[CLICK HERE](#)

PROCESS

PHASE 1 - CREATIVE EXPLORATION

Description of Phase 1...

Project Connect was a proud recipient of the Geelong Arts Centre Creative Engine JUMP START Grant. Through this grant, we underwent an initial development phase for this piece, exploring the experience of loneliness through research and interviews and exploring these discoveries on the floor using a series of workshops and theatre-making exercises. We were fortunate enough to have a small showing of our discoveries at the end of our five day exploration. This enabled us to gain valuable feedback and reflect on the potential of this piece.

Discoveries from Phase 1...

- The intersection between physical theatre, verbatim text, improvisation and live music is a powerful form of storytelling.
- This is a topic that people want to discuss, hear about, and see on stage. It resonated with the test audience and opened up conversations.
- Areas of focus in further development need to focus on capturing more voices, the overall arc of the work, dramaturgy, refined transitions, the relationship with the set and adding text soundscapes and projection.

Play-making techniques



Play-making techniques are used to extract and to explore the dramatic potential of stimulus material and to develop ideas, roles, dramatic action, story and themes to construct devised performances. There are many play-making techniques. For the purposes of this study, play-making techniques are:

- researching
- brainstorming • improvising
 - scripting
 - editing
- rehearsing
- refining.

Feedback from audience members at the showing...

"The piece is so rich with feelings. I felt myself taken back to my earliest sense of loneliness - as a child when all there is, is the raw emotion and a strong sense of muteness - no words - just all-encompassing emotion. Well done, Project Connect."

Lina

"So much of this resonated with me. It was wonderfully captivating."

Nikki

"Congratulations on a beautiful and delicate work in the making. I found myself in all the scenarios; the obtuse, uncomfortable, tense, stuck and then the joyful, playful, free. Keep going and growing this project. You are all amazing, profoundly connected performers/creators and this was a privilege to be a part of."

Lisa



PHASE 2 - DEVELOPMENT

Description of Phase 2...

In phase two we:

- Interviewed additional community members to capture our community's more mature and younger voices
- Worked on the narrative arc of the piece through dramaturgy, improvisation and scripting
- Continued to develop episodes for the piece using different storytelling devices and play-building techniques
- We engaged a digital visual artist to respond to the piece and develop projection/animation to accompany the work
- Further built the live instrumentation of the work
- Create an accompanying soundtrack of recorded conversations (taken from verbatim developed scripts) in ambient places to develop an interesting additional element to the sound design
- Rehearsed and refined a 50minute work
- Showed it to a preview audience at Geelong Arts Centre.

“Geelong Arts Centre is committed to showcasing extraordinary stories and championing connections through the making and sharing of art. We are so proud to have supported the development of *a/lone* through the Creative Engine grant initiative. The Edinburgh Fringe Festival is internationally renowned for presenting high calibre emerging works, and this milestone performance opportunity serves as a testament to the exceptional talent born and nurtured in Geelong, as well as the immense dedication and tenacity of the Project Connect team and all involved.” – **Joel McGuinness, Geelong Arts Centre CEO & Creative Director.**



PHASE 3- INTERNATIONAL SEASON

Description of Phase 3....

The 2023 Edinburgh Festival Fringe brought together artists, arts industry, media and audiences from nearly 170 countries, with 2,445,609 tickets issued across the Festival to 3,553 shows. 288 venues hosted a diverse selection of work from Scotland, the UK and the rest of the world, with 67 countries represented, and performance showcases from 17 countries.

The Project Connect team travelled over to the 2023 Edinburgh Fringe. Performing at Greenside Infirmary Street, the work premiered in a 40 seat black box venue, and performed to over 200 audience members across seven performances.

The design and direction of the show had to be considered carefully. We were taking equipment in suitcases, purchasing set pieces in country, using only basic technology that was available in the space and we had ten minutes to bump in/out between shows! It was fun!

'a/lone is realised with warmth and generosity, as it considers whether a greater engagement with the self might be a worthwhile and effective means of combatting loneliness, asking: if you are attending to and investing in your own company, are you ever really alone?'

Josephine Balfour-Oatts, The Scotsman

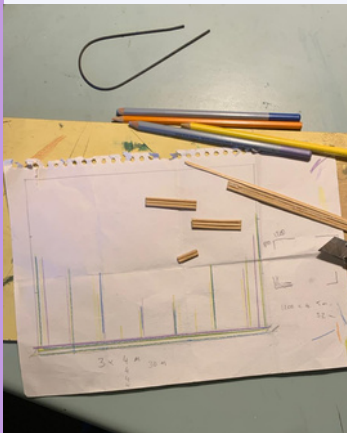


PHASE 4 - REDEVELOPMENT

Description of Phase 4....

Changes to the original production included:

- The addition of a third performer
- Extending the work to 70 minutes
- Exploring the statistics around social isolation and adding these to the work. This included new 'episodes' and the addition of three filmed performances.
- Engaging with a designer to develop a touring set and cohesive costuming.
- Rehearsing and refining new structure with additional material
- Tour regional Victoria and metro Melbourne



Watch an interview with the Project Connect Team
about the process of creating the work:

[CLICK HERE](#)

STYLE

STYLE	DEFINITION	CONVENTIONS TO LOOK OUT FOR
Eclectic Theatre	Draws inspiration from a wide variety of historical periods, theatrical movements, styles, fashions and cultures. The fusion of all these disparate sources ultimately creates concepts that result in truly eclectic contemporary theatre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple styles evident • Use of technology • Use of sound
Verbatim Theatre	Verbatim theatre is like a mirror reflecting the world as it is, using real-life interviews, transcripts, and testimonials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text developed from interviews • Soundscape using recorded interviews • Direct address
Physical Theatre	Physical theatre uses the body and movement to tell a story. It often uses improvisation, acrobalance, circus, dance and little dialogue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement sequences that tell a story with no text • Acrobalance to compliment or highlight text. • Tableaux
Absurd Theatre	In this style, the nonsensical becomes profound, and the seemingly meaningless takes centre stage. It's like the theatre version of a Salvador Dali painting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both presentational and representational modes of acting • Sometimes stereotypical • Elements of circus, vaudeville and acrobatics • Often sombre and serious, then highly comical
Epic Theatre	Enter the world of Bertolt Brecht, the master of alienation and Epic theatre. Epic theatre breaks the fourth wall and challenges the audience to engage critically with the performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Episodic Structure • Breaking fourth wall • Use of music/song • Audience engage critically



Watch an interview with the Project Connect Team about performance styles:

[CLICK HERE](#)

BEFORE THE SHOW

Before the Show:

1. Arrive early: It's a good idea to arrive at the theater at least 20 minutes before the start time on your ticket.
2. Read the program/ education notes: Take a moment to read the program. It contains valuable information about the play, the cast, and the creative team. You might discover interesting facts or insights that enhance your theatre experience.
3. Turn off your mobile phone: Before entering the auditorium, ensure mobile phone is silenced or turned off. Distractions can disrupt both the performers and fellow audience members.
4. Be seated before the lights go down: Once inside the theatre, find your seat promptly. The lights will dim when the performance is about to begin. Avoid moving around during the show.

During the Show:

1. Be attentive: Pay close attention to the stage. Listen carefully to the dialogue and watch the actors. Live theatre is a unique experience, and every moment counts.
2. No talking or whispering: Refrain from talking or whispering during the performance. Even a quiet conversation can distract those around you.
3. No food or drinks in the theatre
4. Respect the actors and crew: Remember that the applause at the end of the show is for everyone involved. While actors take their bows onstage, the backstage crew, stage managers, and designers have also contributed to the production's success.
5. Be mindful of others: If you need to cough, cover your mouth discreetly. Unwrap cough drops beforehand to minimise noise. Be considerate of fellow audience members.

After the Show:

1. Stay seated during the curtain call: Wait until the actors have taken their final bows before leaving your seat. Applaud enthusiastically to show your appreciation.
2. Exit the theatre quietly: When the show ends, exit the theatre quietly. Avoid rushing or pushing.

Remember, live theatre is a collaborative art form, and your respectful behaviour contributes to a positive experience for everyone.

ACTIVITIES



Project Connect Ensemble used variations of the following exercises and activities in the process of developing *a/lone*.

PHYSICAL THEATRE WORKSHOP 1

The following exercises are inspired by FRANTIC ASSEMBLY.

PHYSICAL WARM UP: [LINK HERE](#)

Warm-up: Push Hands

There is also a video example of this in the 'Learning how to fly' video, created for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*; it can be found [here](#) . The exercise is 40 seconds into the video.

In pairs, one person has their palm facing down towards the floor, the other person puts their hand underneath, facing up. The person with their hand underneath adds pressure going upwards and the person on top pushes down to create some tension. The person with their hand on top is leading and must move together with their partner around the room. Explore levels and pace. If some pairs are particularly confident with this, they can move to the next step, which is for the person whose hand is underneath, to close their eyes and focus solely on the touch.

Task 1: Sensory memory exercise 'HYMN HANDS' by Frantic Assembly ***A video example of it can be found [here](#) (5 mins 50 secs into the video)***

Facing a partner, decide who is going to go first. The person going first has two choices: put their hand on their partner (stick to the upper body and make the moves very simple, such as a hand on the shoulder) or put their hand on themselves. Once they have done this, the other person in the pair now has three choices: put their hand on their partner, put their hand on themselves, or remove the hand from themselves or from their partner. They should now have two moves. They continue, until they have a sequence of 10 moves all together. Take some time to create a sequence, then repeat it and loop it until it becomes muscle memory.

PHYSICAL THEATRE WORKSHOP 2



The following exercises are inspired by FRANTIC ASSEMBLY

Chair Duet Workshop

Start by watching the following three videos that explain the chair duets:

Video 1: [CLICK HERE](#)

Video 2: [CLICK HERE](#)

Video 3: [CLICK HERE](#)

Task 1

Work in pairs and play a music track whilst you rehearse. Play around with the moves. The chair duets can be done on blocks or chairs depending on what the actors want to do.

Task 2

Once the actors are familiar with the routine, aim for a focal point (in front of you, so it almost looks like you are watching TV).

Task 3

Combine the groups of two into groups of four. Work at how to incorporate other performers and add the two routines together.

Rehearse

Play with pace. Vary it, or find a moment to speed up/slow down dramatically.

Perform

Each group should select a piece of music they want to use.

As you perform, notice if a storyline starts to develop?

Discussion: Is the way you view your work different from before? Does it now tell a different story?



VIEWPOINTS

The 9 Physical Viewpoints:

1. Tempo: The rate of speed at which a movement occurs; how fast or slow something happens onstage.
2. Duration: How long a movement or sequence of movements continues.
3. Kinaesthetic Response: A spontaneous reaction to motion which occurs outside you.
4. Repetition: The repeating of something onstage, whether it be of the body or outside the body.
5. Shape: The contour or outline the body (or bodies) makes in space.
6. Gesture: A movement involving a part or parts of the body e.g. the hands, the legs, the head, the mouth, the eyes or any other part or combination of parts that can be isolated.
7. Architecture: The physical environment in which you are working and how awareness of it affects movement. Architecture also encompasses light, texture, color and sound of the space and how the actors interact with the surrounding space.
8. Spatial Relationship: The distance between things onstage.
9. Topography: The design made with movement through space e.g. floor pattern.

Activity: Viewpoints Improvisation

Step 1: Actors walk in 'neutral' on the grid around the room (straight lines)

Step 2: Introduce variations of Tempo, Duration and Shape. eg 'Now play with tempo; you can walk fast or slow.'

The following instructions build on Step 2 (So you are 'adding' elements)

Step 3: Introduce Kinaesthetic Response

Step 4: Introduce Gesture

Step 5: Introduce Repetition

At this point, actors should be improvising on the grid using all of the above-mentioned viewpoints. You might like to add music and let the improvisation play out for a couple of minutes.

This can be repeated in two groups so actors can watch each other.



HOT SEATING

What is Hot Seating?

A character is questioned by the group about his or her background, behaviour and motivation. The method may be used for developing a role in the drama lesson or rehearsals, or analysing a play post-performance. Even done without preparation, it is an excellent way of fleshing out a character. Characters may be hot-seated individually, in pairs or small groups.

How do you do hot seating?

The traditional approach is for the actor playing the character to sit on a chair in front of the group (arranged in a semi-circle), although characters may be hot-seated in pairs or groups. It is helpful if someone takes on the role of facilitator to guide the questioning in constructive directions.

Your task:

A number of scenes in *a/lone* were devised using the playmaking technique of hot seating. Using some of the following statistics, create a character that was living with one or more risk factors for social isolation and find one or more strategies to help your character connect with existing community groups (online or in real life). Then conduct a hot seating session.



Loneliness and social isolation in Australia

A recent snapshot from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare collates data on Australian experiences of social isolation and loneliness since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights the impact of the pandemic in exacerbating pre-existing risk factors for social isolation and loneliness. In this infographic, we share some of the findings.

Loneliness and social isolation: what is the difference?

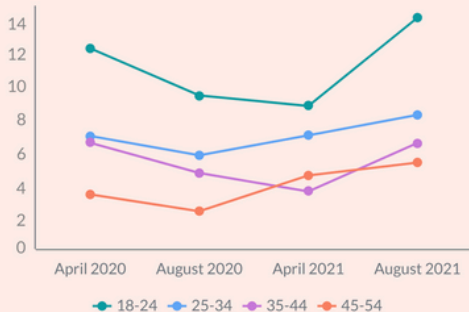


Loneliness is a subjective state of negative feelings about having a lower level of social contact than desired.



Social isolation is seen as the state of having minimal contact with others.

Percentage of people reporting feeling lonely 'most or all of the time' during the past week by age group (April 2020 to July 2021)



Impacts of COVID-19 on loneliness

54% of respondents in a 2020 Australian survey reported feeling **more lonely** since the start of the pandemic

In April 2020, 49% of respondents in an Australian study said they had not met with others socially since the start of the pandemic

In October 2020, during their third consecutive month of a Stage 4 lockdown, Victorians were **twice as likely** to report feeling lonely compared to those living in other Australian states

Factors identified to reduce the risk of loneliness



Having paid work



Caring for others



Engaging in volunteer work



Maintaining community memberships



Owning a pet



Being in a relationship



Living with family

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). *Social isolation and loneliness*. Accessed January 2022 via: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/social-isolation-and-loneliness-covid-pandemic>

wellbeing
by Teacher

www.teachermagazine.com/wellbeing



INTERPRETING TEXT

A number of scenes have very little direction included in the script.

If you had to perform the SIIC (sic) scene:

- How could you interpret it to show status, character traits and performance style/s?
- Where are there opportunities for comedy in performing this scene?
- How is this scene different from other scenes in *a/lone*?
- How could you use costume and props to interpret this scene?

(2)

Montage.

A and C stand and move, trying to come up with ideas. They awkwardly write on Post-It notes, screw up bad ideas; show each other and workshop possibilities together. Screw up these ideas. A and C work separately, together, race around, look at their watches, become increasingly desperate, worried and defeated by the task.

B sits in a spot with their phone, occasionally laughing and taking selfies with various poses and facial expressions.

(3)

A and C are exhausted, surrounded by Post-It notes and reports. B is making a paper plane.

C
It's no use. I've wacked my brain. I can't think of a single new initiative that the Minister can take to the meeting to counter the claims of incompetence, lack of transparency, economic and environmental mismanagement and social inequality that are at the heart of the Senate's findings.

A
We have to come up with something. Maybe we can re-brand existing programs. What's currently funded that works?

C
Public or private money?

A
Either.

B
Ha! Wee! *[throws plane]*

C
B, we are facing a crisis. Is it too much to ask that you focus on our common problem and suggest some solutions?

B
Bro, chill. I just put it out to my peeps on social media and I got tons of replies. Like this, from *my Uncle Dom*. He says that he does stuff at the *cricket club*, and *my cousin Louise* liked it but she wrote, 'Don't forget the *netball club*, *dad*,' and my *Uncle Dom* 'lied that' Ha!

And my friend Brendan says that he volunteers at the Surf Lifesaving Club and they are always looking for more people to help out.

*And there's a post here from someone who's with the Torquay Theatre Troupe, which is in Torquay, I guess. They said they found 'a great bunch of people when they turned up to a 'show one-night' and thought they'd give community theatre a go for something different.' *[Insert local references]**

There's loads here – people who reckon community houses are good if you're new to an area or you want to try something new, and, like, bushwalking and orienteering challenges and community gardens. And pub choir, even if you can't sing in tune. A. (Ha!) Heaps of ideas.

A
That's all very well, but the government can hardly take credit for not-for-profit community organisations that build social capital and maintain a sense of belonging for diverse members of society, can it?

C
To be fair, A, some of those organisations do receive public money and benefit from in-kind support, such as infrastructure building and maintenance.

A
The Minister really needs a Big Idea. C. Something that will make the rest of the Cabinet sit up and take notice, while also cleverly diverting their collective attention away from the almost complete lack of substance at the heart of the Big Idea.

C
And we have precisely two minutes to formulate this Big Idea and dress it up in enough Razzle Dazzle that will simultaneously leave everyone begging for more while also bamboozling them.

A
Yes, we need to give them an Act with lots of 'flash' in it, hoping that the reaction will be passionate.

C
How can they see with sequins in their eyes?

A
Precisely!

Beat.

C
We're doomed!

B
[To A] Bro, how wedded are you to the idea of a Big Idea.

C
B, why don't you keep up? It's essential. The Minister's head is on the block. We are running out of time to fix this problem.

B
Chill, bro. I was just asking (for clarification).

Beat.

Cos, like, I was thinking... maybe there isn't just one idea. Yeah, you know, like I was looking at Lifeline's website before, and they have all of these resources, and they can link people up with services for whatever is going on.

15

16



PLAY MAKING ACTIVITY

In groups of **three or more** actors, devise, develop and present a 30-45 second public service infomercial that promotes involvement in community groups.

CRITERIA

Play-making techniques

Use **two or more** of the following play-making techniques

- Research
- Improvisation
- Hotseating
- Scripting
- Editing
- Rehearsing

Conventions

Use **two or more** of the following conventions

- Song
- Use of fact
- Exaggerated movement
- Heightened use of language
- Caricature
- Pathos

Dramatic elements

Use **two or more** of the following dramatic elements

- Contrast
- Rhythm
- Conflict
- Space
- Sound
- Climax

Performance styles

Use conventions from **one or more** of the following performance styles

- Melodrama
- Musical theatre
- Physical theatre
- Commedia dell' Arte

Production areas

Use **one or more** of the following production areas

- Costume
- Props
- Set pieces
- Mask
- Theatre technologies

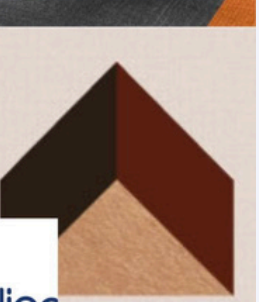
USE THE STIMULUS IMAGES ON THE NEXT PAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR WORK.





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CURRICULUM LINKS

Area of Study 3

Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance

In this area of study students analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance selected from the prescribed VCE Drama Unit 3 Playlist. Students analyse the actors' use of expressive and performance skills to represent character and to communicate meaning in the performance. They consider how the actor-audience relationship is created and manipulated and analyse and evaluate how the conventions, dramatic elements, production areas and performance styles are used in the performance.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance. To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

- performance styles and conventions and their use in performance
- the actors' use of **expressive and performance skills** to represent characters in performance
- manipulation of **dramatic elements** and production areas to enhance performance
- drama terminology associated with performance styles and practitioners from contemporary and/or historical and/or cultural traditions relevant to the performance.

Key skills

- analyse and evaluate the representation of characters within a performance
- analyse and evaluate the manipulation of conventions, **dramatic elements** and production areas within a performance
- analyse and evaluate the use of performance styles within a production
- analyse and evaluate the actors' use of expressive and performance skills in a performance
- analyse and evaluate the establishment, maintenance and manipulation of the **actor-audience relationship** in a performance.

TERMINOLOGY



Performance skills

Performance skills are used to enhance performance and together create an actor's presence. For the purposes of this study performance skills are:

FOCUS	Focus is the ability of the actor to commit to their performance and to use concentration to sustain characters. Focus may also be used to create an implied character or setting through the manipulation of the audience's attention towards a specific place. The manipulation of focus may assist the actor to develop an effective actor-audience relationship.
TIMING	Timing is used to control or regulate the pace of a performance. Timing may be manipulated in drama to build dramatic tension, to evoke feeling, to coordinate effective synchronisation within an ensemble and to develop the comic potential of a scene.
ENERGY	Energy is the intensity an actor brings to a performance. At different times, an actor will use different levels of energy to create different performance dynamics. An actor may use low energy to create pathos. Conversely, an actor may use high energy to create a moment of tension.

Expressive skills

Expressive skills are used to express and realise a character. Expressive skills may be used in different ways in different performance styles. They include:

VOICE	for example diction, pitch, pace, tone, resonance, muscularity and vocal sounds.
MOVEMENT	for example gait, posture and stance.
GESTURE	for example using the body or body parts, usually the hands, to create symbols and meaning.
FACIAL EXPRESSION	for example manipulating facial expressions to communicate emotions, reactions and meaning.

Actor-audience relationship

The actor considers what impact they intend their performance to have on the audience. The actor-audience relationship is the way in which an actor deliberately manipulates the audience's moods, emotions and responses to the action. This may be done through the placement of the actor in relation to the audience, the way the actor addresses and engages the audience, and the emotional and intellectual response to the character's situation. An actor-audience relationship only exists as part of an actual performance.



Dramatic Elements

Dramatic elements are essential features of every performance. Actors manipulate dramatic elements to shape and enhance meaning. The dramatic elements for VCE Drama are:

CLIMAX	Climax is the most significant moment of tension or conflict in a drama and often occurs towards the end of the plot. Multiple climaxes and/or an anti-climax may also occur. The action of a drama usually unravels after the climax has transpired but the work might finish with a climactic moment.
CONFLICT	Conflict generally occurs when a character cannot achieve an objective due to an obstacle. This obstacle may be internal or external and between characters or between characters and their environment. Conflict may be shown in a variety of ways, for example through physical, verbal or psychological means. Conflict may be embedded in the structure of the drama.
CONTRAST	Contrast presents the dissimilar, or opposite, in order to highlight or emphasise difference. Contrast may be explored in many ways and may include contrasting characters, settings, times, themes, elements, production areas and performance styles.
MOOD	Mood is the overall feeling or emotion that a performance may evoke. This may be achieved through manipulation of acting, conventions or production areas.
RHYTHM	Rhythm is a regular pattern of words, sounds or actions. Performances have their own rhythm that may be influenced by the emotional nature of the plot, the pace of line delivery, the dialogue (long and/or short lines), the pace of scene transitions and the length of scenes.
SOUND	Sound is created live, by the actor, in the performance. Voice, body percussion and objects can be used individually or in combination to create sonic effects in performance and to enhance meaning. Sound may include silence or the deliberate absence of sound.
SPACE	Space involves the way the performance area is used to communicate meaning, to define settings, to represent status and to create actor-audience relationships. This may be achieved through the use of levels, proximity and depth. The use of space may be symbolic.
TENSION	Tension is the suspense that holds an audience's attention as a performance unfolds. The release of tension may have a comic or a dramatic effect.

SOURCES

Ending Loneliness Together Website

www.endingloneliness.com.au

Frantic Assembly Youtube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJjONPhHJeYnDlnBzLjP5OvefXpixhcQn>

Frantic Assembly Website

<https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/>

Home of Theatre Website

<https://www.theatrehaus.com/2023/09/13-dramatic-forms-and-styles-beginners-guide/>

National Theatre Youtube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUDq1XzCYONIOYVJvEMQjqw>

VCAA Website

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Drama/Pages/Index.aspx>

Beyond Blue Website

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>



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