

ACTIVITY PACK

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Let's #CreateToConnect

Our current situation is an extraordinary one. It is a situation that many of us have never had to navigate before, and a situation that can open the door to anxiety and confusion, but also to hope and connection - and at [64 Million Artists](#) we feel like we're in the business of hope.

Create to Connect is a month of challenges for each day of May, specifically designed to keep communities connected, curious and creative in uncertain times. Thousands of people have signed up to receive our daily challenge emails in May - and with this pack you can further engage your networks and communities in ways that are local and responsive.

The challenges have been set in collaboration with 31 different partners - including schools, libraries, museums, community groups, care homes and more. It is a celebration of some of the brilliant creative work happening around the country and an invitation to do, think and share alongside them.

Who is this pack for?

This short guide is designed for community leaders looking to run creative challenges through their local networks, online and offline.

The current situation means that right now, we can't meet up in the same way as before. These challenges inspire practical, accessible ways to get creative, and work as a vehicle for conversation, reflection and sharing.

Use this pack to engage the communities that you belong to, or the people that you work with and for - your youth groups, library visitors, colleagues, religious groups, choir, volunteers, wellbeing groups, students, service users, neighbours and friends. This is far from an exhaustive list!

As well as information about the project, it contains tips for facilitating a simple creative session online, and ideas for offline distribution.

Most importantly, however, is that this pack contains all of the 31 creative challenges - meaning that you have the inside scoop! This pack is an active resource for you to swap around, adapt, edit, play with and prepare for the challenges to use them in a way that works for you and your communities.

CREATIVITY, WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH.

Create to Connect champions accessibility, diversity, fun and creativity.

64 Million Artists have been exploring the relationship between everyday creativity and mental health and wellbeing.

Our flagship campaign, The January Challenge, engaged over 30,000 members of the public in a month-long creative challenge earlier this year, and 98% said the experience has a positive impact on their wellbeing.

When times feel uncertain and everything seems like it's shutting down rather than opening up, how do we begin to talk about creativity? Scary times often make us want to retreat but our recent data shows that when we create it can be an opening up for connection and can significantly improve our mental health and wellbeing. And what we need more than anything right now is to stay connected (just not by holding hands).

A creative challenge is a playful prompt to inspire accessible creative action. Challenges are varied and explore all sorts of creative forms from dancing to writing and building to exploring. A challenge can take you as long as you like - it might take 5 or 10 minutes, or you could take your time and see where it takes you.

Some people will do 1 challenge, others will do 31 challenges. Some people will share their work online, some offline, and some will choose not to share at all. Some people like to think about how they would approach the challenge, and some people simply love to watch what other people get up to.

All of the people that take part are doing it right!



ENGAGING GROUPS OFFLINE.



Create to Connect champions accessibility, diversity, fun and creativity.

7% of households have no internet access, and many people – often those with existing vulnerabilities – are unable to access or are unfamiliar with digital technologies.

All of the challenges in this pack are downloadable. None of the challenges rely on having access to the internet, or solely on having electronic devices..

You could:

- Print out the challenges and post them to others with a letter or note - down your street or across town.
- Print out the challenges and pop them in your window, and around your local area.
- Ring your community members and share the challenge details. Check back in - how did they find it? What have they been thinking about?
- Share the challenges in local papers, newsletters, ring your local schools, library services, neighbours - or pop a list of challenges on a postcard and post it down the road.
- Let your local radio station know about Create To Connect. Radio is a brilliant way to join the conversation for those offline (and for those taking time offline.) Have a look at [BBC Up for Arts](#) to see if they operate in your local radio, or find a number or email address for your local station.

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**I STARTED TO SEE ART EVERYWHERE, AND I STARTED CREATING AGAIN! AND, I COULD DO IT ALL ALONE AT HOME IN CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HAVE PREVIOUSLY MADE ME FEEL ALONE AND LONELY.
I FELT VERY CONNECTED AGAIN TO PEOPLE AND LIFE!**

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ENGAGING GROUPS ONLINE.



A lot of our shared spaces have had to move into digital spaces.

You could use your social media channels or mailing lists to share challenges. You could set up a Whatsapp group (or join one of ours [here](#)). The challenge partners will be promoting and animating their challenge on their day. There will be zoom workshops, Facebook lives, Twitter Q+A's..so keep your eyes peeled!

You could introduce challenges into online sessions you might be running, or looking to start running.

They might make a good warm up activity, or you might adapt a challenge to form your talking points or the basis of a session. You might like to invite participants to do a challenge in advance, and use your session to share and reflect.

Here are some pointers to running effective, creative online sessions:

- Plan your session and allow plenty of time. Remember to leave time for people to 'check in' at the beginning and 'check out' with their reflections at the end.
- Learn the ropes of the platform you're using. Sharing your screen or using breakout rooms on Zoom? Get the hang of it first.
- Participants' will all have different comfort zones around online meetings. Some might only want their audio and not their video switched on. Allow people to 'show up' as they wish.
- Set some gentle Principles of engagement. We often suggest a few 'rules' including: Have fun!; Turn off phones; Take risks, etc.
- Be sensitive to vulnerability. We're all experiencing the effects of distancing and isolation and we'll all be experiencing this time differently. Creativity is a way to imagine the new, the possible and the best, as well as process the dark, the difficult or distressing.
- Keep to time and let everyone speak. Some of us love to contribute whilst others of us are shy and need a gentle invitation to express our opinions, feelings or thoughts.
- Sharing is the point. Make sure you leave as much time for sharing, feedback and discussion as the creative activities themselves.
- How did it go? Take time to reflect, on your own or with others, how the experience went for you?
- Follow up. Will you follow up with your participants to share information or resources?

OVER TO YOU.



Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about protecting the safety of the people you are working with and may involve issues upon which you have a duty to act. Safeguarding will apply particularly in the case of children and vulnerable adults. If you're working with young people or vulnerable people what was your sense of their situation? Did you find anything unusual or alarming in their behaviour or environment?

If you are working with vulnerable groups you should be familiar with a safeguarding policy or ethical code for online working. Do not work with any individual or any group you do not feel safe or qualified to work with.

There are many useful online resources including this [Guide to Working Online](#) from The Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance, Arts Marketing Association, 64 Million Artists and Real Ideas. You can always signpost individuals to support services (local authority websites are useful) mental health services or the Samaritans after the session. Do not make any interventions on your own without talking to qualified colleagues, friends or professionals first. Safeguarding interventions should be made by teams, not individuals.

FAQ's

Can I adapt the challenges?

Yes - absolutely. The value in having them ahead of time means that you can sift through the challenges, choose your favourites, adapt and swap them about.

Do I have to do them in order?

No - but you might like to consider that the order is curated in a way that keeps it varied and engaging. Also, consider that 64 Million Artists will be sending the daily emails and social media posts in order, and that those following along like the daily surprise! So, try to keep your public posts in the same order.

Does my group have to sign up?

No - no need to sign up to the challenge emails - you have the challenges, and now you can get ready to roll them out through your networks.

How do we share online?

If you would like to share online, you can post on Social Media with the hashtag #CreateToConnect, so that we and others can find your posts. You could also email your responses to us, or upload them onto dothinkshare.com, 64 Million Artists' site for creative activities. Some challenges invite you to send yours/others work to an organisation to form a gallery or mass art piece, which you might like to do.

FIND AND DOWNLOAD THE CHALLENGES BY CLICKING **HERE!**



The challenges are very varied - a chance for you and your groups to explore your thoughts and ideas and have a go at something new.

Keep feeding back, asking questions and remember - Create To Connect is yours to run with. These challenges, and this pack, are simply a framework for you to be playful and creative with. Have fun!

Keep in touch at jemima@64millionartists.com

