

Youth Arts Open Fund Case Studies



Other Ways to Care



**YouthLink
Scotland**



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Other Ways to Care

About us:

We are a constituted, voluntary group gathering diverse people residing in wider Aberdeenshire with the aim to support and empower each other and create a positive personal narrative. We have 75 active members at the moment, mostly coming from immigrant background, identifying as neuro-diverse and disabled and keen to engage in peer support activities.

Our activity planning has always been focused on providing new opportunities for all, irrespective of walks of life, experiencing and learning tools, by removing barriers like disability, ethnic background, or socio-economic factors, in order to enable anyone to live up to their full potential.

Our Project:

Exploring the nexus of arts and well-being, we used the concept of 'Sound Sandpit' to co-create music workshops with local autistic teens in Aberdeen. With a small working group of four, we hosted six co-designed music improvisation workshops. Using the "sound sandbox" concept.

The concept of a "sound sandbox" in musical improvisation refers to a defined set of musical parameters or constraints within which musicians are free to explore and create. It's similar to a sandbox in a playground, where the boundaries are set, but within those boundaries, there's freedom to play and experiment. This approach helps musicians focus their creativity and develop a coherent piece of music while still allowing for spontaneity and experimentation.



At the first session the young people experienced the 'Sound Sandpit' and thought about how it would feel for them, what kind of environment would make it easier for them to participate. They got an understanding of the theory and practice of musical improvisation.

At this session young people picked up instruments, trying them reluctantly, then soon giving up saying 'they didn't know how to play that instrument'. In the second and third sessions dynamics started to shift. Participants were invited to put themselves into the shoes of musicians.



Rather than leading the workshop using clear motifs or chord progressions, facilitators collected music elements and textures which emerged from prompts and discussions, such as the introduction of interludes and rhythm, physical posture and gestures, the use of percussion instruments, and the creation of chords on keyboard instruments.

More participants went to their seats as soon as they arrived, declaring confidently 'Today, I want to do this', and immediately began to make sounds.

Few had an idea of what kind of sound they wanted to make, making signals with their eyes (for example 'I want a wave sound' and looking for an ocean drum)

In the fourth to sixth sessions the young people started really playing with sound and music. They began to understand the concept behind the 'Sound Sandpit', making it their own, shaping and enriching it with their insights. By thinking about simple music creation, they co-created rules which enabled everyone in the room to be themselves and enjoy the process.

Gradually the group created a soothing soundscape that brought them together musically.

Impact:

- We worked with 52 young people and delivered 65 hours of arts based developmental work.

