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Performing with Care

THE RITUAL OF THE RUN

An Embodied Framework for Actor Wellness
Across the Production Arc

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Table of Contents

Performing With Care	p1
Table of Contents	p2
Abstract.....	p3
Artist Statement.....	p4
Vision.....	p5
Mission.....	p6
Core Values.....	p7
Context for Curriculum.....	p8
Materials Needed / Resource Links.....	p9
Participants' Prior Knowledge.....	p10
Unit / Lesson Objectives.....	p11
Assessment and Evidence of Learning...	p13
Overview of Curriculum Offering.....	p14
Day 0 - Crossing the Threshold.....	p15
Day 1 - Tuning the Instrument.....	p16
Day 2 - Claiming the Space.....	p17
Day 3 - Showing Up Whole.....	p18
Day 4 - Building the Room.....	p19
Day 5 - Meeting the Material.....	p20
Day 6 - Mirror Work.....	p21
Day 7 - Holding the Charge.....	p22
Day 8 - Cracking Open.....	p23
Day 9 - Ritual of the Run.....	p24
Day 10 - Sustaining the Run.....	p25
Day 11 - Transition / Letting Go.....	p26
Day 12 - What Lives On.....	p27
Day 13 - Returning to the World.....	p28
Thank You.....	p29

Performing with Care is a drama therapy-informed curriculum designed to support performer wellness, sustainability, and ensemble connection throughout the full arc of a theatrical process—from pre-audition to closing night and beyond. Rooted in the belief that care is both a necessity and a practice, this program offers a structured series of reflective and embodied experiences that invite actors to navigate the cycles of performance with intentionality, clarity, and compassion. It recognizes that performer wellness isn't an afterthought—it's foundational to the art itself.

The curriculum mirrors the phases of a typical production timeline, offering tools and rituals tailored to each stage: self-assessment and preparation before casting, identity work and relational dynamics during rehearsals, regulation and rhythm-building during performance runs, and integration and closure after the final bow. Whether navigating the vulnerability of auditions, the complexity of character work, or the repetition of eight shows a week, this program affirms that artistic excellence and personal sustainability are not at odds—they are interdependent.

Designed as a visiting artist-care offering for theatrical institutions, Performing with Care centers pluralism, cultural humility, and somatic wisdom as cornerstones of a thriving artistic ecology. This is not therapy disguised as training—it is a wellness framework grounded in care ethics, ritual, and artistic rigor. It is a living, breathing offering that can adapt to different contexts while holding fast to a core belief: that artists deserve care as part of their craft. By fostering reflection, resilience, and a culture of consent and connection, the project aims to equip artists with practices they can return to again and again—onstage and off.

Abstract

Artist Statement

As a Tony-nominated, MFA-trained performer, registered drama therapist, and arts educator, I've spent the last two decades navigating the dual worlds of artmaking and care work. Despite the rigor of my acting training and the momentum of my professional career, I found that the deeper challenge wasn't how to act well—it was how to live well while acting. My education taught me how to break down a scene, embody a role, and meet the demands of the craft. But when it came to stepping back out of character, re-entering myself, and caring for my emotional well-being in a high-pressure industry, I had to chart that path alone.

That gap—between performance and personhood—is where this work lives.

I know firsthand that theatrical excellence and emotional well-being are not mutually exclusive. And yet, too often, the industry treats wellness like an afterthought, only tending to the artist when they're in crisis or nearing collapse. What would it mean to embed care into the creative process from the very beginning? What if we treated the arc of a production not only as a path to performance, but as an opportunity for reflection, regulation, connection, and transformation?

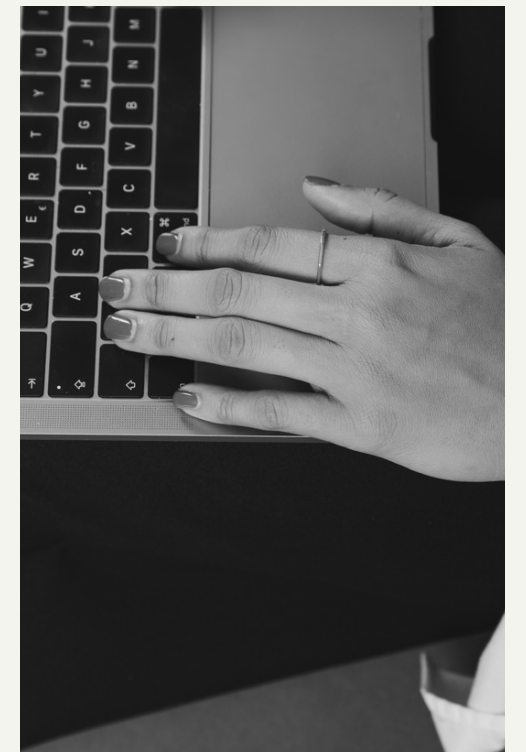
My work centers that belief. Through ritual, rhythm, and relational practice, I create spaces where performers can attend to both the work and themselves. I approach ensemble like ecosystem—each artist's well-being contributes to the vitality of the whole. My lens is informed by clinical training, somatic wisdom, cultural humility, and the unapologetic belief that wellness is not a luxury, but a necessity. Whether I'm facilitating a pre-audition warm-up, guiding character decompression post-show, or holding space for an ensemble to process together mid-run, I aim to offer structures that are both grounding and generative.

This is not therapy in disguise—it's a practice of sustainable artistry. My work lives in the in-between: the moments before curtain, the breath after blackout, the sacred spaces where art and self meet. This project is a continuation of that mission—an offering to the field, to my fellow artists, and to the future we're building: one where performing with care isn't the exception, but the norm.



Vision

Performing with Care envisions a performance culture where theatrical excellence and emotional sustainability are not mutually exclusive. It holds space for the possibility that artists can create brave, bold work without abandoning themselves in the process. This vision centers the belief that care is not a luxury or afterthought—it's a foundation. When care is built into the process from the very beginning, art and artist can thrive together.





Mission

The mission of Performing with Care is to integrate drama therapy-informed practices into the rhythms of the theatrical process, supporting both artistic rigor and personal wellness. This work uses ritual, reflection, and relational attunement to help performers stay connected to themselves and each other—onstage and off. It is designed to meet artists where they are and walk with them through the entire arc of a production, offering tools to regulate, relate, restore, and release. Through this framework, the program aims to cultivate spaces that are brave, boundaried, and rooted in care.

Core Values



Consent

Prioritizing autonomy and emotional safety at every stage.

Somatic Wisdom

Recognizing the body as instrument, archive, and guide.

Ritual

Grounding each phase of the process with practices that center presence, intention, and transition.

Sustainability

Honoring wellness as essential to artistic longevity.

Agency

Honoring each artist's right to shape their own process, boundaries and contribution.

Cultural Humility

Affirming lived experience and resisting one-size-fits-all models of care.

Ensemble Connection

Fostering mutual care and collective vitality through attuned collaboration.

Context for Curriculum

This curriculum is designed as a modular, drama therapy-informed workshop series created for use across academic, pre-professional, and professional performance spaces. Rooted in a commitment to artistic longevity and emotional sustainability, the offering centers the lived experiences of performers and seeks to embed wellness practices across the full arc of a production process.

Performing with Care: The Ritual of the Run can be adapted for a wide range of institutions—including MFA/BFA programs, rehearsal intensives, ensemble residencies, and theatrical conferences. The work is structured around three core phases of artistic labor: entry, embodiment, and exit. Each phase is explored through somatic, dramatic, and reflective practices that support both the individual artist and the collective ensemble.

While the curriculum draws from principles of drama therapy, it is not a clinical intervention. Rather, it is a trauma-informed, arts-based framework that centers consent, embodiment, and collective care. The work honors performers as whole people—not just vessels for story—and invites facilitators, educators, and directors to approach the production process as a space of mutual humanity.

Whether implemented as a single 90-minute session or a multi-part arc, The Ritual of the Run offers a flexible, intentional scaffolding for cultivating healthier, more humane performance cultures—onstage and off.

- **Ideal Participant Profile:** University students, ensemble members, working artists, teaching artists, and professional performers.
- **Recommended Age Range:** 18+; adaptable for emerging professionals and seasoned practitioners alike.
- **Class Size:** 10–20 participants per session (can be adjusted depending on facilitation team).
- **Participant Prior Knowledge:** Prior experience with performance or ensemble-based work is recommended but not required.
- **Admissions:** No audition or entrance interview required.
- **Learning Space:** Flexible; can be held in a studio, classroom, black box, or all-purpose rehearsal space.
- **Materials / Resources Needed:** Minimal tech requirements; whiteboard or easel pad for reflection prompts; optional access to soft movement props or art materials.
- **Facilitation:** Must be led by a trained practitioner familiar with drama therapy principles, ensemble processes, and trauma-informed care.



Materials Needed / Resource Links

Core Materials

These materials are intentionally minimal to accommodate a range of institutions and rehearsal environments:

- Open space suitable for movement (e.g., rehearsal room, studio, black box theater)
- Whiteboard, chalkboard, or easel pad with markers (for communal reflection and check-ins)
- Chairs/Cushions (optional, for seated grounding or reflection practices)
- Journals or paper for individual reflection
- Pens or writing instruments for all participants
- Soft props (e.g., fabric swatches, scarves, yoga mats, bolsters) for embodied activities
- Timer or phone/clock for timed exercises or breathwork intervals
- Printed worksheets or prompts (optional; provided in facilitator packet)

Recommended Sensory Supports (Optional)

To support somatic and sensory integration during each phase of the workshop:

- Battery-operated candles or soft lighting options (for ritual work or transitions)
- Soothing instrumental music or ambient sound playlists
- Essential oils or scent jars (lavender, eucalyptus, citrus—only if scent-safe for group)
- Small objects for tactile grounding (e.g., stones, worry beads, fabric/drapery)



Tech Needs (If Applicable)

- Bluetooth speaker or sound system (if using music)
- Laptop or tablet for facilitator use (if using slide deck or digital notes)



Facilitator Resources

The following materials should be provided to facilitators in advance:

- Facilitator Guidebook: Includes scripted openings/closings, reflection prompts, safety protocols, and adaptation suggestions.
- Digital Slide Deck (if applicable): Optional visual support for conferences or classroom-based delivery.
- Consent & Check-In Templates: Forms or prompts to support emotional safety, boundary-setting, and opt-in/opt-out practices.
- Recommended Readings & Influences:
 - Johnson, D. R. (2009). Developmental Transformations: Toward the Body as Presence.
 - Sajnani, N. (2016). The Intersection of Drama Therapy and Social Justice.
 - van der Kolk, B. (2014). The Body Keeps the Score.
 - Theatre Communications Group resources on artist wellness and rehearsal safety.
 - Intimacy Directors and Coordinators guidelines (optional reference for ensemble safety).

Participants' Prior Knowledge

This workshop series is designed to be accessible to a wide range of participants in performance-based environments, regardless of prior exposure to drama therapy or somatic practices. However, the following baseline understandings will support deeper engagement:

General Expectations

Participants are expected to have some familiarity with the structures and expectations of performance or ensemble work, including:

- Basic rehearsal and production vocabulary (e.g., “call time,” “blocking,” “ensemble”)
- Comfort with movement-based exploration and group process
- Openness to reflective discussion and embodied exercise.

Helpful (but not required) Prior Experience

While not necessary, participants may benefit from prior exposure to:

- Somatic or body-based awareness practices (e.g., yoga, Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, Viewpoints)
- Consent-based or trauma-informed rehearsal processes
- Reflective practices such as journaling, talkbacks, or peer feedback
- Ensemble devising, improvisation, or devised theater modalities
- Working knowledge of artistic process phases (audition, rehearsal, tech, performance, strike).

Facilitator Notes on Inclusivity

Facilitators are encouraged to:

- Offer scaffolding or definitions for any unfamiliar terms
- Allow multiple modes of participation (verbal, written, embodied, silent reflection)
- Normalize opt-in/opt-out culture as part of trauma-informed practice
- Frame prior knowledge as additive—not exclusionary—to reduce performance anxiety and build trust



Unit / Lesson Objectives (Aims, Goals and Outcomes)



Each phase of **The Ritual of the Run**—Entry, Embodiment, and Exit—is grounded in a set of core aims that reflect the values of consent, emotional sustainability, and collective care. This curriculum is intentionally designed to build performers’ self-awareness, strengthen ensemble connection, and introduce somatic tools that foster presence and longevity in the work.

Participants will:

- Explore the full arc of a production process through the lens of wellness, ritual, and trauma-informed care.
- Engage in somatic, dramatic, and reflective exercises that align with the three core phases: Entry (arriving & preparing), Embodiment (performing & sustaining), and Exit (releasing & transitioning).
- Identify personal and collective needs across the artistic process and practice naming boundaries, asking for support, and navigating power dynamics within ensemble structures.
- Develop and integrate wellness rituals that can be adapted to individual, ensemble, or institutional contexts.
- Reflect on identity, labor, and legacy as they relate to sustainability in performance-making spaces.
- Strengthen ensemble connection through collaborative exercises that center attunement, reciprocity, and care.

This work supports both individual reflection and group process, offering participants a set of repeatable tools to carry into future productions and creative practices.

Assessment and Evidence of Learning

Because this is a process-based, arts-centered curriculum, assessment is rooted in reflection, presence, and integration rather than product. Facilitators will track participant engagement, self-awareness, and interpersonal growth using the following approaches:

- **Reflective Writing & Discussion:**

Participants will complete brief reflective prompts after each session (verbally or in writing) to name insights, challenges, and shifts in awareness.

- **Facilitator Observation:**

Facilitators will track changes in group dynamics, participant expressiveness, and use of somatic/emotional tools across sessions.

- **Self-Assessment Tools:**

Artists will be invited to complete a self-inventory at the start and end of the workshop series to assess their sense of emotional preparedness, self-care strategies, and ensemble attunement.

- **Peer Feedback Loops:**

Structured opportunities for peers to name moments of resonance, mutual care, or growth within the ensemble.

- **Creative Demonstration (optional):**

Where appropriate, participants may co-create a closing ritual, short performance, or wellness offering that demonstrates integration of the curriculum's principles.



Performing with Care

THE RITUAL OF THE RUN

An Embodied Framework for Actor Wellness Across the Production Arc

A 13-Day Drama Therapy-Informed Curriculum for Performer Wellness & Ensemble Care

Day 0 - Crossing the Threshold

Establish shared agreements, presence, and purpose.

Day 1 - Tuning the Instrument

Begin somatic, vocal, and emotional attunement.

Day 2 - Claiming the Space

Explore spatial presence and ensemble trust.

Day 3 - Showing Up Whole

Invite full identity and authenticity into the room.

Day 4 - Building the Room

Deepen connection through ensemble dynamics.

Day 5 - Meeting the Material

Engage text with curiosity and healthy boundaries.

Day 6 - Mirror Work

Explore the character as a reflection of self.

Day 7 - Holding the Charge

Build capacity to hold emotional intensity.

Day 8 - Cracking Open

Invite vulnerability and deeper emotional access.

Day 9 - Ritual of the Run

Anchor presence through rhythm and repetition.

Day 10 - Run Rhythm / Sustaining

Maintain purpose mid-process and avoid burnout.

Day 11 - Transition / Letting Go

Support intentional emotional and creative closure.

Day 12 - What Lives On

Identify the personal growth that remains.

Day 13 - Returning to the World

Re-enter life with celebration, care, and intention.

Day 0

Title: Crossing the Threshold

Theme: Laying the Foundation for Brave, Responsive, and Reflective Practice

Goal: Establish a shared sense of trust, presence, and purpose; introduce the arc of the intensive; and co-create the emotional, physical, and creative container for the journey ahead.

Summary

On this opening day, participants are welcomed into the space with intentional grounding practices. Together, the group will explore what it means to build a brave and responsive container for emotional, creative, and collaborative exploration. The facilitator(s) will offer an overview of the intensive’s arc, introduce trauma-informed and somatic tools that will anchor the work, and guide participants in co-authoring group agreements. Through reflective writing, embodied check-ins, and consent-forward exercises, participants begin building the ensemble from the inside out.

NOTES:

- This day should not rush. It invites participants to slow down, orient, and begin from a place of presence.
- You may want to end this day with a visual outline of the 13-day arc posted in the room or included in a handout.
- This also offers a chance to introduce why performer wellness and ritual care matter — before even naming the production arc.

DAY 0: Lesson Plan Format

Opening Ritual (10 min)

- Welcome circle: breath + name + pronouns + one word about how you’re arriving
- Grounding practice (breath, body scan, or anchoring movement)

Framing the Intensive (15 min)

- Overview of the workshop arc (7 phases over 13 days)
- Clarify themes: identity, process, wellness, and ensemble attunement
- Introduce key values: consent, agency, care, curiosity, ritual

Group Agreements & Consent (25 min)

- Group brainstorm: “What do we need to feel resourced and seen here?”
- Introduce/define trauma-informed language (e.g., opt-in, check-ins, pause)
- Co-create a visual or written set of community agreements
- Optional: add individual “creative contracts” for self-accountability

Reflective Prompt (10 min)

- “What do you need to feel creatively brave in this space?”
- “How do you show up when you feel seen?”
- (Write or draw — followed by paired sharing or group popcorn)

Ensemble Connection Activity (20 min)

- Movement or mirroring game that builds awareness, responsiveness, and connection (e.g., flocking, gesture echo, rhythm call & response)

Closing (10 min)

- Somatic regulation tool: orientation exercise, self-hold, or tapping
- Closing question: “What are you carrying forward into Day 1?”
- Optional: journal handout or reflection tracker to begin using

Day 1

Title: Tuning the Instrument

Theme: An Actor Prepares: Somatic & Vocal Readiness for Creative Labor

Goal: Begin attunement with self, space, and ensemble. Explore how performers “show up” before the process begins. Introduce reflective and somatic practices that support sustainable engagement from the outset.

Summary

Before an actor steps into the audition room or rehearsal process, there is often a storm of inner preparation — hope, fear, excitement, imposter syndrome, ambition, and more. This day helps artists attune to those inner voices and physical sensations while exploring what it means to prepare without performing. Participants will explore the liminal space of “almost beginning,” practice embodied self-awareness, and clarify their personal why.

NOTES:

- Keep this session rooted in internal awareness, not performance output.
- Normalize that “readiness” can look different for everyone.
- This day sets the tone for all other phases — it plants the seed that wellness begins before the work.

DAY 1: Lesson Plan Format

Opening Ritual (10 min)

- Welcome circle: one breath, one stretch, one word check-in
- Anchoring practice: guided grounding with a focus on internal “readiness signals”

Embodied Warm-Up (15 min)

- A full-body warm-up that incorporates breath, voice, and rhythm
- Include a body scan for awareness of tension, resistance, or energy levels
- Optional: use a visual metaphor (e.g., tuning fork, mirror, blank page) to introduce the idea of attunement

Reflective Activity: The Room Before the Room (25 min)

- Prompt: “What thoughts or feelings visit you when you’re about to begin something important?”
- Participants draw or write a response; then share in pairs or small groups
- Invite the group to create a collective “cloud” of common feelings on chart paper

Reflective Prompt (10 min)

- “What helps me feel ready to create?”
- “What throws me off balance before I begin?”
- (Write or draw, followed by optional sharing in pairs or triads)

Ensemble Connection Activity (20 min)

- Group mirroring or gesture chain: building relational awareness
- Introduce a shared rhythm or breath-based pulse
- Optional: include a ‘reset’ or ‘retreat’ gesture the ensemble can use throughout the intensive

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- Introduce a shared rhythm or breath-based pulse
- Optional: include a ‘reset’ or ‘retreat’ gesture the ensemble can use throughout the intensive

Day 2

Title: Claiming the Space

Theme: Pre-Audition / Pre-Work – Awakening Presence & Spatial Awareness/Power

Goal: Invite participants to step more fully into the space, activating their relational, physical, and imaginative awareness. Deepen trust within the ensemble and begin exploring how space is held, shared, and claimed in creative processes.

Summary

On this day, participants begin transitioning from internal attunement to external expression. Through movement, spatial exploration, and ensemble awareness, the group investigates what it means to claim space individually and collectively. The focus is on relational presence: how we show up, hold boundaries, and expand our expressive range. This day bridges tuning the instrument with preparing the space for creative encounter, emphasizing agency, consent, and embodied confidence.

NOTES:

- This is a day to emphasize embodiment, not verbal processing. Let the body lead.
- You may want to bring in scarves, floor markers, or fabric to help visualize space.
- Return to group agreements if moments of discomfort or breakthrough arise — this is a natural part of claiming space.
- Be mindful of accessibility needs as participants explore movement and space.

DAY 2: Lesson Plan Format

Opening Ritual (10 min)

- Welcome back: breath + gesture + word for how you're arriving
- Grounding: body scan or movement anchor
- Invite: “What kind of space do you need today?”

Ensemble Spatial Mapping (20 min)

- Movement activity: walking the room with changing prompts
 - (e.g., “take up space,” “notice periphery,” “follow impulse”)
- Practice entering, exiting, and holding presence in space
- Guided discussion: What does it mean to claim space?

Boundary & Consent Work (20 min)

- Partner or small group activities around proximity and touch
- Exercises on saying yes/no, offering/withdrawing invitations
- Normalize changing your mind and checking in

RClaiming the Creative Container (15 min)

- Visualize or create your “circle of power” in the space
- Invite participants to physically mark or take space (e.g., tape, scarf, stance)
- Reflect on how the space transforms with presence and intention

Reflective Prompt (10 min)

- “Where in your life do you feel spaciousness?”
- “What gets in the way of taking up space — and what helps?”
- Invite drawing, journaling, or sculpting followed by paired share

Closing (10 min)

- Somatic regulation tool: shaking, breath patterning, or guided rest
- Closing share: “What are you noticing about how you take space?”
- Optional: journal or reflection tracker update

Day 3

Title: Showing Up Whole

Theme: Casting & First Contact

Goal: Invite participants to bring their full selves—identities, experiences, needs, and dreams—into the space, resisting fragmentation or masking. Build a culture of wholeness, agency, and mutual regard from the outset of creative collaboration.

Summary

This day acknowledges the vulnerability and potential wounding around auditioning, being cast, or entering a room for the first time. Participants are invited to disrupt traditional hierarchies and assumptions around “fitting in” by affirming all parts of themselves—including the parts they’ve previously felt they had to hide or leave outside the rehearsal room. Through storytelling, embodied self-expression, and group witnessing, this day emphasizes being seen, being heard, and being whole.

NOTES:

- This day can stir deep emotion—create time for pauses and journaling if needed
- Avoid performance-based language; this is about authenticity, not impressing
- Validate that “first contact” wounds are real, especially for those from historically excluded communities
- Normalize the tension between wanting to belong and staying true to self

DAY 3: Lesson Plan Format

Opening Ritual (10 min)

- Welcome prompt: “What does showing up whole mean to you today?”
- Breath + centering visualization: calling back disowned parts of self
- Collective affirmation: “I am enough. I bring value as I am.”

Warm-Up: Body & Identity Check-In (15 min)

- Gentle movement with body scan
- Verbal prompts (standing or walking): “Today I bring...,” “I am leaving behind...,” “I want to be received as...”
- Encourage naming identities they want seen and affirmed today

Storytelling & Casting Debrief (25 min)

- Small group reflection:
 - “What has been your experience of being cast or overlooked?”
 - “What narratives have you internalized about where you belong?”
- Share and witness stories without fixing or analyzing
- Optional: Build a constellation of casting experiences (e.g., casting scars and casting dreams)

Centering the Self (20 min)

- Embodied activity: “Claim your corner” — participants mark a space in the room that represents their full presence
- Invite a physical shape, movement, or phrase that affirms wholeness
- Others witness without comment — presence is enough

Ensemble Integration (15 min)

- Group reflection: “What does it look like to co-create a room where everyone can show up whole?”
- Brainstorm norms or rituals that support this goal
- Add to an ongoing 'Room Agreement' banner or wall

Closing (10 min)

- Return to breath and body
- Closing question: “What part of you showed up today that doesn’t always get space?”
- Collective sound or gesture of gratitude

Day 4

Title: Building the Room

Theme: Early Ensemble Dynamics

Goal: Reflect on how we enter rooms — as artists, as collaborators, as whole people.

Explore what it means to arrive with multiple identities, boundaries, and offerings, and to navigate visibility, trust, and shared space in professional creative settings.

Summary

Now that the artist has been chosen, this day focuses on the room they are about to enter. This isn't about ensemble bonding—it's about personal orientation: how do I prepare to walk into a space where culture, power, and unknowns already exist? How do I protect what's sacred to me while remaining open? Through personal reflection and experiential exercises, participants explore how they build or adapt within rehearsal rooms without abandoning themselves.

NOTES:

- This day is about rehearsal rooms not therapy rooms. Keep the lens rooted in the professional artistic process.
- Let people name tensions without requiring resolution.
- You can name your own experience of "fitting in" or "being sized up" in rooms to open conversation.

DAY 4: Lesson Plan Format

Opening Ritual (10 min)

- Anchor breath and check-in prompt:
- "What parts of you tend to shrink in new rooms?"
- "What parts of you want to lead?"

Warm-Up: The Entry (15 min)

- Embodied exercise: physically rehearse entering a room in different ways (with resistance, with confidence, with fear, with neutrality)
- Debrief: How do you recognize your own patterns of entry?

Identities in the Room (30 min)

- Mapping activity: "Who are you before you speak?"
 - Participants create a layered self-map of the identities they bring into creative spaces (seen/unseen, chosen/assumed, affirmed/invisibilized)
- Group dialogue:
 - "What do you share before you're ready?"
 - "What do you withhold as protection?"
 - "What conversations never happen in the rooms you're in?"

Culture of the Room (25 min)

- Discuss invisible rehearsal norms:
 - Who speaks first?
 - How is conflict handled?
 - What bodies are most affirmed or ignored?

Ensemble Circle (15 min)

- Return to the full group
- Each person names:
 - "What I carry in..."
 - "What I need the room to know..."
 - "What I choose not to reveal (for now)..."

Closing (10 min)

- Journaling prompt: "What kind of room allows you to thrive?"
- Group reflection: "What will I practice next time I enter a room I didn't build?"

Day 5

Title: Meeting the Material

Theme: Textual Engagement & Role Prep

Goal: Engage with the script and character with care, curiosity, and boundaries. Begin a conscious relationship with the material—exploring what you bring to it and what it asks of you—while developing tools to differentiate self from role.

Summary

This day marks the beginning of textual and character work. Participants begin to meet the material—not to analyze for performance but to attune to what resonates, activates, or disturbs. What parts of the story feel familiar? What themes land in the body? What parts feel unsafe, confusing, or intrusive? The goal is to deepen awareness of the emotional, psychological, and cultural textures of the text before jumping into character embodiment.

NOTES:

- Keep performance pressure off the table — this is about meeting the story, not “understanding” it.
- Remind participants they don’t have to share more than they’re ready to.
- You can model honesty and boundaries in your own reflections to help set tone.
- If themes are particularly activating, consider adding time for regulation or pause.

DAY 5: Lesson Plan Format

Silent read-through of selected scene(s) or excerpt(s)

- Individual marking: underline or highlight
 - What stands out?
 - What feels like a mirror?
 - What makes you recoil or go numb?

Mapping the Material (30 min)

- Large paper or journal reflection:
 - “What parts of me does this material know?”
 - “What parts of me are untouched by this story?”
- Optional: Use colored pencils, symbols, or body maps
- Small group share: What does it feel like to “meet” this material?

Role-Adjacent Reflection (25 min)

- Instead of jumping into character, participants explore:
 - What are the themes or energies in the role?
 - Who does this character remind you of (in real life or yourself)?
 - Where do you feel yourself resisting or merging?
- Partner or trio discussion using prompt cards

Setting Boundaries with the Material (15 min)

- Group discusses actor wellness vs. emotional exposure
- Introduce the concept of “gateways and guardians”:
 - What gateway opens me to this role?
 - What guardrails or rituals do I need in place?

Closing Ritual (10 min)

- Journaling: “What do I need before I engage this role further?”
- Each participant names one need or intention aloud in circle

Day 6

Title: Mirror Work

Theme: Character Reflection & Boundaries

Goal: Support participants in exploring the character as a mirror of self, and self as a mirror of character—clarifying emotional boundaries and beginning to craft ritual entry/exit strategies.

Summary

This day explores the “double vision” of the actor: holding both self and character in view without losing either. Through guided exercises, participants reflect on what of themselves the character reflects, what projections they may be making onto the role, and how to stay clear about what belongs to them vs. the part. This is the day where inner rehearsal begins—developing tools to safely enter and exit emotional material.

NOTES:

- This day can stir up vulnerability—ensure space for grounding or pauses.
- Reinforce boundaries: “You don’t have to bleed to act.”
- Consider giving an example of your own mirror work to model emotional clarity.

DAY 6: Lesson Plan Format

Opening Ground (10 min)

- Light movement or breathwork
- Check-in: “Where is your energy today, and what are you bringing into the room?”

Mirror & Mask: Identifying the Echoes (20 min)

- Journaling prompts:
 - “What part of me is most alive in this role?”
 - “What part of me do I feel I have to hide in this role?”
- Partner share: each person reflects and listens in pairs

Outer-In & Inner-Out (30 min)

- Activity: explore character from the outside-in (gesture, posture, costume element)
- Then explore from inside-out (core wound, longing, secret)
- Debrief: what felt easier or harder? What surprised you?

Character Container: Entry and Exit (25 min)

- Introduce the idea of ritual entry and exit into character
- Group brainstorm: what have others done before shows or after intense scenes?
- Build individual “entry” and “exit” sequences using physical gesture, breath, word, or object
- Try in pairs and reflect: did it work? What might need adjustment?

Closing Circle (15 min)

- Group check-in: what’s something your character taught you today?
- Optional: share a visual metaphor or draw your “mirror self”

Day 7

Title: Holding the Charge

Theme: Mid-Process / Preview

Goal: Equip participants with strategies to hold complex emotional, energetic, and interpersonal dynamics as the process intensifies—without losing themselves.

Summary

This day focuses on the energetic demands that surface mid-process: tension, projection, burnout, vulnerability, elation, and comparison. Participants learn how to “hold the charge”—that is, to remain present and grounded while navigating rising stakes, interpersonal dynamics, and emotional activation. We explore energetic hygiene, boundaries, and pacing.

NOTES:

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- This day marks the emotional midpoint—expect intensity. Normalize it.
- Encourage participants not to push through but to pace through.
- Can revisit earlier “entry/exit” tools here and adapt them for mid-run intensity.

DAY 7: Lesson Plan Format

Arrival & Pulse Check (10 min)

- Grounding breath or simple shakeout
- Check-in: “What’s charging you right now (in the room or beyond it)?”

Energetic Hygiene 101 (20 min)

- Short teaching: what it means to “hold the charge” (vs. release/dump/deny)
- Discuss concepts of “leakage,” “absorption,” and “containment”
- Mini visualization: identifying where in the body charge is held
-

The Weight & The Wait (30 min)

- Exercise: Repeat lines from a scene holding different energetic stakes
- Debrief: How did your energy shift? What parts of you did you access? What boundaries were needed?
- Optional writing: “What does it cost to keep showing up?”

Pacing & Pulse: Listening to the Body (25 min)

- Somatic self-regulation: Practice paced breathing, tempo mapping
- Explore: What does my natural pace feel like vs. the production’s pace?
- Movement: Find your pulse and move from it
- Partner share: “What helps me stay in rhythm with myself?”

Closing Circle (15 min)

- Share: “What part of me needs the most care right now?”
- Option: build a communal ritual to release charge (e.g., sound, gesture, write & tear)

Day 8

Title: Cracking Open

Theme: Mid-Process / Preview

Goal: Invite vulnerability, truth-telling, and emotional expansion as a way to deepen authenticity and connection—onstage and off.

Summary

This is the emotional apex of the intensive. Participants are invited to soften protective mechanisms, explore what they typically keep guarded, and allow for a deeper level of presence. We hold space for the grief, joy, fear, or anger that may emerge mid-process. The goal is not to fix, but to witness, share, and release.

NOTES:

- Have clear boundaries and aftercare protocols.
- Remind participants they are not performing trauma, but exploring emotional depth safely.
- This day may stir deeper processing—be available for support as needed.

DAY 8: Lesson Plan Format

Arrival & Grounding (10 min)

- Breathwork or simple stretch
- Check-in: “What part of you is emerging or asking to be seen today?”

Crack the Shell: Somatic & Symbolic Entry (30 min)

- Movement ritual: Begin wrapped, restricted, or shielded. Gradually transition into an open form.
- Partner reflection: “What do I protect and why?”
- Invite metaphor: egg, shell, armor, veil—what’s yours?

Truth-Telling Circle (30 min)

- Group activity: “What I’ve been afraid to say is...”
- Options: speak, write and share, or share through gesture
- Clear guidelines: consent, no forced sharing, silent witnessing welcome

Break & Integration (10 min)

- Light movement, hydration, optional journaling
- Invite grounding objects or sensory support

Scene or Personal Monologue Work (25 min)

- Participants work with emotionally charged text or stories
- Prompt: “What truth is under the lines?” or “What’s ready to rise?”
- Coach for containment, not collapse

Closing Ritual (15 min)

- Group breath or chant
- Circle prompt: “What part of me cracked open today?”
- Optional: drop words or objects into a shared vessel or altar

Day 9

Title: Ritual of the Run
Theme: Finding Flow in Repetition;
Anchoring Presence Across Performance
Cycles
Goal: Support participants in identifying
sustainable rhythms, rituals, and pacing
strategies for long-term creative work.
Reinforce the role of embodied tools,
ensemble connection, and intentional ritual in
navigating the repetition of “the run.”

Summary

By Day 9, participants are entering the
repetition phase of performance cycles—be it
during a run of a show, ongoing rehearsals, or
repeated auditions. This day invites them to
examine how they sustain themselves when
the newness wears off. Using somatic and
reflective tools, the group explores energy
management, emotional regulation, and
rituals that restore meaning. Together, they’ll
co-create an ensemble “run rhythm” ritual to
support longevity, wellness, and presence
across the repetition arc.

NOTES:

- Normalize that repetition can create numbness or
autopilot — and that intentional ritual is how
artists stay awake inside the work
- Encourage participants to borrow from spiritual,
cultural, or personal rituals that resonate
- This day may be a turning point for identifying
burnout patterns and naming needs for
restoration

DAY 9: Lesson Plan Form

Opening Ritual (10 min)

- Breath & body check-in with rhythm awareness (e.g., tapping, walking, pulse)
- Prompt: “Where in your body do you feel ‘repetition’ today?”

Framing the Intensive (15 min)

- Brief overview: “We are shifting into the run—the part of the work that asks us to sustain.”
- Clarify today’s goal: Explore how rituals and rhythm keep us grounded in cycles of performance
- Revisit: What keeps a process meaningful when it becomes familiar?

Flow Mapping & Energy Arc (20 min)

- Visual or physical mapping of a personal energy arc across a performance cycle
- Identify peak moments, slumps, and recovery strategies
- Group debrief: “What patterns are emerging in how we sustain our creative energy?”

Reflective Prompt (15 min)

- “What rituals help you stay connected to your purpose during repetition?”
- “Where do you lose presence — and how do you come back?”
- (Writing or drawing — followed by paired sharing or popcorn reflection)

Ensemble Ritual Creation (20 min)

- As a group, co-create a simple, repeatable ritual to mark the start of rehearsal/performance
- Could include breathwork, gesture, call-and-response, music, or movement
- Practice it once and reflect: “How does it feel to enter as a unit?”

Closing (10 min)

- Somatic regulation tool: Grounding sequence for post-performance recovery
- Closing question: “What do you want to carry with you when the work repeats?”
- Optional: Introduce a “ritual log” for tracking personal sustainability practices over the week

Day 10

Title: Run Rhythm / Sustaining – Making Meaning
Mid-Flight

Theme: Staying Present in the Middle; Honoring
the “During”

Goal: Deepen participants’ ability to sustain
presence, purpose, and care once the “run” is
underway. Reflect on how they maintain meaning,
rhythm, and embodied awareness across
repetition, exhaustion, or the plateau of mid-
process. Expand individual and ensemble
strategies for rooting into intention when the
novelty has faded.

Summary

By Day 10, participants are mid-run—whether that’s in a
production, rehearsal arc, or creative process. The energy is
no longer building; it’s being sustained. This day supports
the ensemble in reflecting on how they endure the middle
stretch of the journey without losing themselves. Through
rhythm-based somatic practice, reflective writing, and
ensemble dialogue, participants explore what presence
looks like when they are “in it.” This includes attending to
signals of burnout, joy, and meaning-making in the middle.
The group expands their understanding of “run rhythm” by
rooting into purpose and connection, even when the
repetition is ongoing.

NOTES:

- Normalize the “middle” as a time when presence
and meaning may fade or be challenged.
- Invite participants to define what keeps the work
purposeful mid-run.
- Mid-flight work often requires re-orienting, slowing
down, and recommitting to care strategies.
- Participants may need to reflect individually and as
a group on what gets them through the “during” of
performance cycles.

DAY 10: Lesson Plan Format

Opening Ritual (10 min)

- Somatic pulse check: return to a known rhythm or breath from earlier in the arc.
- Prompt: “What does it feel like to be in the middle of something?”

Framing the Intensive (15 min)

- Brief overview: “We are no longer entering—we are here, sustaining.”
- Clarify today’s goal: Reconnect with meaning and presence mid-run.
- Invite participants to reflect on: “What holds you in place when the path gets routine?”

Rhythm Check & Ensemble Pulse (20 min)

- Group activity: Build a collective rhythm using body percussion or sound (e.g., a rhythm that
builds and holds instead of starts or ends).
- Reflect: “What rhythms are we holding? What do we need to shift?”
- Optional: Use group movement to physically explore rhythm fatigue vs. renewal.

Reflective Prompt (15 min)

- “What keeps the work meaningful when you’re no longer starting or ending?”
- “When do you feel most disconnected mid-process—and how do you reconnect?”
- (Write or draw — followed by paired sharing or small group discussion)

Sustaining Rituals Revisited (20 min)

- Invite each participant to return to a personal or ensemble ritual from earlier days.
- Group share: “What’s changed about how you show up to this ritual now?”
- Optional: Build a new “mid-flight” variation of a previously established ritual.

Closing (10 min)

- Somatic grounding tool: Down-regulation practice for stamina and nervous system care.
- Closing question: “What’s one intention you want to carry through the middle of this process?”
- Optional: Add a reflection tracker prompt: “Where am I in the cycle today?”

Day 11

Title: Transition / Letting Go – Closing the Cycle

Theme: Reflection, Integration, and Closure
—Transitioning with Intention and Integrity

Goal: To support performers in recognizing, honoring, and navigating the emotional, physical, and spiritual arc of closing a show or stepping away from a creative process while still in motion.

Summary

In this session, participants are invited to reflect on the emotional complexity of transitioning out of a creative process—especially when a show is still running. The focus is on the “letting go while continuing” tension that many performers experience. Through guided reflection, embodied practices, and meaning-making exercises, participants will begin to prepare internally for the eventual closure of the production, while staying grounded in the present rhythm of performance. The facilitator(s) will hold space for grief, gratitude, release, and integration, inviting participants to begin releasing roles, expectations, and energies that may no longer serve them in the remainder of the run.

NOTES:

- This is not the final goodbye. Remind participants there are still days ahead in the curriculum—this session is about internal closure, not program closure.
- Some performers may feel resistant—normalize this and give choice.
- You may invite them to write a letter to their character or to the show to be revisited on Day 13.
- This session can be an anchor point for those prone to burnout near the end of a run

DAY 11: Lesson Plan Form

Opening Ritual (10 min)

- Centering breath + short body check-in
- Journaling prompt: “Where am I in the run? What am I holding that wants release?”

Framing the Day (10 min)

- Discuss the purpose of ritual closure within a run
- Share a personal story or example of mid-process letting go
- Affirm that closing is not always final—it’s a cycle within a cycle

Somatic Release Practice (20 min)

- Guided movement sequence to locate and release held energy
- Invite participants to imagine physically shedding a role or pattern
- Optional: use objects (scarves, stones) as symbolic tools for letting go

Reflection & Ritual Creation (25 min)

- Small group shares or solo journaling:
- “What does release look like for you in this process?”
- “What might you need to say goodbye to—even before closing night?”
- Begin creating a personal or ensemble ritual for show closure
- Encourage collective input into what ritual could live at the end of the run

Artistic Anchoring Activity (15 min)

- Sound, movement, or visual art expression of what’s being released
- This may evolve into a group poem, sculpture, or movement score
- Emphasis on embodying transition, not just speaking it

Closing (10 min)

- Gentle guided visualization: stepping out of the room but still on the path
- Invite each participant to speak one word or gesture representing what they’re releasing
- Optional: ritual bell, breath, or physical movement (e.g., shakeout or bow)

Day 12

Title: What Lives On
Theme: Integration, Identity, and Impact
Goal: To guide participants in identifying the lessons, transformations, and personal growth from the creative process that will continue with them after the production ends.

Summary

Today’s session supports participants in synthesizing their journey through the production arc and identifying what aspects of the process—skills, insights, relationships, or rituals—can carry forward into their artistic and personal lives. This is not a space for goodbyes, but for meaning-making, allowing each individual to connect to their evolving identity as an artist and ensemble member. The emphasis is on continuity: what has shifted internally, what will be remembered, and what practices or values are worth holding onto after the curtain falls. This session invites reflection on legacy, embodiment of lessons learned, and individual re-alignment before the final closure in Day 13.

NOTES:

- Be mindful of both the emotional and physical tone today—some may feel energized, others nostalgic or drained.
- This is a good day to distribute any printed materials, photos, or feedback from earlier days.
- The final closure is tomorrow (Day 13). Let this be a harvesting moment, not a farewell.
- Option to offer individualized affirmations or acknowledgments, especially if you’ve tracked each participant’s growth.
- If possible, build in space to revisit participant reflections from Day 0 or 1 and notice what’s shifted

DAY 12: Lesson Plan Format

Opening Ritual (10 min)

- Breath-based grounding or mirror check-in
- Opening prompt: “What is one thing that surprised you about yourself during this process?”

Framing the Day (10 min)

- Briefly revisit the arc of the production process
- Share that this is a day of integration, not closure
- Set the tone of reflection and honoring personal evolution

Legacy Reflection (25 min)

- Journaling or creative writing prompt:
- “What part of you grew through this process?”
- “What do you want to remember about who you were in this space?”
- “What practices or insights do you want to carry forward?”
- Paired or trio sharing to deepen insight and build intimacy
- Optional: memory weaving with fabric, string, or symbolic objects

Ritual of What Remains (25 min)

- Collective creation of a physical or visual artifact (e.g., paper chain, altar of objects, chalkboard wall)
- Invite each participant to contribute a word, image, or gesture representing what they’re taking with them
- Read or move through the artifact as a group, emphasizing shared impact

Sustaining Rituals Revisited (20 min)

- Invite each participant to return to a personal or ensemble ritual from earlier days.
- Group share: “What’s changed about how you show up to this ritual now?”
- Optional: Build a new “mid-flight” variation of a previously established ritual.

Closing Prompt + Circle (20 min)

- Group circle: “What lives on in you because of this process?”
- Each person can offer a gesture, sound, or word as a closing note
- Invite silence, applause, or collective breath to seal the circle

Day 13

Title: Returning to the World

Theme: Final Closure, Celebration, and Re-entry

Goal: To support performers in recognizing, honoring, and navigating the emotional, physical, and spiritual arc of closing a show or stepping away from a creative process while still in motion.

Summary

In this session, participants are invited to reflect on the emotional complexity of transitioning out of a creative process—especially when a show is still running. The focus is on the “letting go while continuing” tension that many performers experience. Through guided reflection, embodied practices, and meaning-making exercises, participants will begin to prepare internally for the eventual closure of the production, while staying grounded in the present rhythm of performance. The facilitator(s) will hold space for grief, gratitude, release, and integration, inviting participants to begin releasing roles, expectations, and energies that may no longer serve them in the remainder of the run.

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- This session can be an anchor point for those prone to burnout near the end of a run

DAY 13: Lesson Plan Form

Opening Ritual (10 min)

- Centering breath + short body check-in
- Journaling prompt: “Where am I in the run? What am I holding that wants release?”

Framing the Day (10 min)

- Discuss the purpose of ritual closure within a run
- Share a personal story or example of mid-process letting go
- Affirm that closing is not always final—it’s a cycle within a cycle

Somatic Release Practice (20 min)

- Guided movement sequence to locate and release held energy
- Invite participants to imagine physically shedding a role or pattern
- Optional: use objects (scarves, stones) as symbolic tools for letting go

Reflection & Ritual Creation (25 min)

- Small group shares or solo journaling:
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Artistic Anchoring Activity (15 min)

- Sound, movement, or visual art expression of what’s being released
- This may evolve into a group poem, sculpture, or movement score
- Emphasis on embodying transition, not just speaking it

Closing (10 min)

- Gentle guided visualization: stepping out of the room but still on the path
- Invite each participant to speak one word or gesture representing what they’re releasing
- Optional: ritual bell, breath, or physical movement (e.g., shakeout or bow)

Thank you

This offering is born from the intersections of my artistry, clinical practice, and deep love for performers. It reflects a commitment to creating spaces where artists are not only seen but supported — not only celebrated, but sustained. Thank you for holding this work with care, for bringing your full self into the room, and for honoring the sacred ritual of storytelling, together.

BY: Crystal Lucas Perry



Performing with Care

THE RITUAL OF THE RUN

An Embodied Framework for Actor Wellness

Across the Production Arc

Presented by:

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