



## The Multiform Pedagogy in Arts, Health and Well-being ARTHEWE:

### Arts and Well-being for Personal and Professional Growth

#### Description of the course

**Keywords:** creativity, imagination, arts-based methods, exploring well-being, self-knowledge, embodied knowledge, stress management, body awareness, self-care, community development.

#### The aims of the programme

- to support GBHI in integrating well-being skills into the learning experience;
- to implement a set of arts-based and arts-informed actions to support fellows' well-being and community development.

#### It is done by creating a space for the learners:

- to increase body awareness into a cognitive “preventive skill” to be able to better take care of yourself;
- to explore well-being and mental health, the emotional impacts of their work on themselves;
- increasing awareness of their own emotional responses, and to develop skills to help navigate those responses, especially under stress.

**Values and principles.** The programme is developed considering the following values and principles:

- Creativity, arts and well-being are closely connected.
- Nourishment of authentic relationships among the learners supports the learning process.
- Considering well-being as an integral part of learning experience brings value to all levels individual / community / organisational.
- Accessible and meaningful learning experiences values multiple ways of learning.
- Embodiment is within every learning experience we shape – *we feel before we learn*.
- Meaningful learning experiences consider cross-disciplinarity, co-learning, self-guided and self-reflective practices.

**Content.** GBHI fellows engage in challenging equity-based advocacy work globally. While we often focus on supporting the brain health of our communities, we too frequently overlook the need to support the health and well-being of ourselves so that we can stay productive, engaged, and thriving as fellows.

#### Components of “Arts and Well-being for Personal and Professional Growth”:

1. **The Life Story Workshop Programme** led by Atlantic Fellow Karin Diamond (Wales) and piloted as part of the on welcoming programme supports connection building and well-being through imaginative sharing of our life stories.
2. **Exploration of well-being through reflective and creative process** – a learning modality developed together by Atlantic Fellows Anne Browning and Ieva Petkutė looks into well-being skills development through creative and reflective process.



## The life story workshop programme

The programme is oriented to help fellows to get to know each other as they on-board the training programme at the Global Brain Health Institute (TCD/UCSF), and thus support the overall experience of the fellowship as the year unfolds.

**The programme aims** to build and strengthen relationships among the fellows; strengthen the sense of their community and support fellows' well-being. Four-life story programme provides a supportive and confidential space for the fellows to share elements of their own story and hear stories of their colleagues.

**The lead - Karin Diamond**, Senior Fellow, Artistic Director of Re-Live, an award-winning Arts in Health Theatre Company based in Wales, UK, providing a program of creative engagement with underrepresented voices in our society. Karin has devised theatre productions alongside people living with dementia and family caregivers, veterans living with complex PTSD, older people, and people at the end of life.

## Exploration of well-being through reflective and creative process

It is an overarching framework to explore well-being at the level of the individual, cohort, and at the level of our broader communities. This exploration is done through workshops, which combine diverse approaches – individual, group reflection, discussions, and creative process. The workshops have an open space for critical reflection, encouraging observation, discursive exchange, and also include creative practices aimed at increasing body awareness into a cognitive “preventive skill” to be able to better take care of yourself. The preparation for the Live Sessions is inviting the learners to engage with the flow – a process of applying creative forms of practice, such as flow writing, taking notes, photography, etc.

### **Components of the programme:**

**Foundational exploration of well-being** - open discussion bring fellows together to explore our individual and collective understandings of well-being and share experiences, which have an impact on our well-being. The workshop informs the development of other four thematic sessions of the programme.

### ***Theme 1: Resilience and Emotional Intelligence***

- **The preparatory material invites to explore our individual experiences of independence and support.** Independence and support are connected to our physical bodies and to our family cultures and our broader cultures.
- **In the live workshop we expand on that looking into ways we typically respond to perceived stress and threats.** By looking into the keys to resilience and the behavioral practices that support individual resilience, we will discuss how we can leverage emotional intelligence as a tool to disrupt our typical neurobiological responses to these harsh situations.



### ***Theme 2: Compassion, Empathy, and Pursuing Kindness to Ourselves***

- **The preparatory material invites to explore the stories we tell ourselves and those that impact on our self-image and the perspective towards the world.** When we start to notice, and start to question those stories and reframe them, we can experience a greater freedom, more options, and a deeper acceptance of circumstances that we can't change, bring more peace and more contentment.
- **In the live session we will revisit our neurobiological response to threats and stress through the lens of self-compassion as a way of disrupting our fight, flight, and freeze response with self-kindness, common humanity, and mindful awareness.** Looking into the differences between empathy and compassion, we will explore the difference between how these pro-social emotions impact our well-being and those around us when expressed. We will look at how mirror neurons operate and amplify emotions around us with a focus on how calm is just as contagious as fear and anxiety.

### ***Theme 3: Exploring Gratitude: Positive Emotions and Expansive Thinking***

- **The preparatory material invites to explore awe walks. What is an awe walk?** Awe is a feeling we have when we are in the presence of vast things that surprise us and that we don't immediately understand. Awe often shifts your attention away from yourself and helps you to appreciate the wonders of the world around you. With the right outlook, awe can be found almost anywhere, but it is most likely to occur in places that involve two key features: physical vastness and novelty.
- **In the live session we will explore pro-social emotions and their role in our well-being and our ability to think creatively, innovatively, and to stay open to different perspectives.** We will examine the factors and role of psychological safety in establishing trust and a thriving community culture that embraces exploration and risk taking. We will deepen our understanding of the ways in which we can impact the culture of well-being and learn creative practices to shift our thinking and perspective when we are getting stuck ruminating on challenges and setbacks.

### ***Theme 4: Coping with Uncertainty and the Effects of Chronic and Acute Stress on our Well-Being***

- **The preparatory material invites to explore the link between food, eating and our unique abilities to absorb, receive, be nourished, and our ability to discern, let go, and eliminate.** How can we learn to trust that our guts know?
- **In the live session we will look at the impacts of uncertainty on our well-being.** Examine the shift in impacts of stress on our well-being through exploring both acute and chronic stressors in our environment. Change and transformation is a constant cycle in our lives and occupations. In the workshop we will explore ways to recognise the limits of our agency, to strengthen our sense of control in difficult situations.

**The leads: Anne Browning (US)** – Assistant Dean for Well-being, University of Washington, School of Medicine; a resilience and well-being researcher, with experience of integration of evidenced-based programming into and across the learning environment to support the well-being and productivity of the learners. **Ieva Petkutė (Lithuania)** – an arts researcher, facilitator, and manager focused on accessibility and inclusion.