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## Feel It Festival: Guidance for Artists

### **Summary**

From the 17-20 November the [Elizabeth Blackwell Institute for Health Research](#) and the [Life of Breath project](#) will bring together researchers, artists and members of the public to debate and explore University of Bristol research on the experience of being human; with a focus on pain and breathlessness.

The weekend-long Feel It Festival will see pain, in all its forms, and breathlessness explored through performing arts, debated in talks and panels and discussed in creative workshops where participants and members of the audience will have the chance to probe, question and feed into research. This diverse programme will be complimented by an interactive exhibition which will be in situ at the venue throughout the festival. The festival will be hosted at Circomedia on Portland Square, St Pauls. More information on the festival is here: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/blackwell/public-engagement/feel-it/>

As part of the festival the Elizabeth Blackwell Institute is commissioning a new performance piece or visual arts screen work (including animation but excluding documentary film) from an artist or group of artists who wish to collaborate with one of our researchers, Ruth Riley, and create a new high-quality work inspired by her research. The piece should explore and examine the research from a new perspective and give the audience the opportunity to engage with, deconstruct and think about the research and its outcomes in a way that will stimulate discussions and debate. Key to the project will be collaboration and partnership with the research team, GPs and, possibly, patients. Please note that we will not be able to consider applications for documentary films.

### **The Research**

**Exploring the barriers and facilitators to help-seeking by GPs: Improving Access to Support.**

#### **Background**

Doctors, including GPs, are currently experiencing high levels of stress and burnout. Doctors who experience stress or mental distress and have difficulties coping, are less satisfied at work and are less likely to meet patients' clinical and psychosocial needs. The UK currently has 65,000 registered General Practitioners and it is estimated that one in five (or 13,000) GPs currently experience some form of anxiety or depression. There is evidence that doctors are at greater risk of suicide compared with the general population, female doctors being at higher risk.

Little is known about the organisational culture of general practice in terms of what helps and hinders GPs from seeking support. Moreover, little is known about the barriers and facilitators to help-seeking and GPs' experience of returning to work after sickness absence for mental distress.

#### **Our study**

We are in the process of interviewing GPs about their mental health as well as how and where they seek support, with the aim of enabling more GPs who may be feeling vulnerable to reach out and be able to receive the support they need.

### **Using Performance to Communicate Our Findings**

We would like to share our findings through a performance or screen work that will tell a story, communicate and explore what it feels like to be a GP experiencing mental health symptoms, what may be contributing to their emotional ill health and what helps and hinders them when they seek support. We are open to proposals for all forms of artistic engagement with these issues that culminate in a performance of some description, whether that be puppetry, performance poetry, theatre, dance or more. We will also accept screen works such as animation, though we cannot accept documentary pieces.

The performance will need to sensitively communicate the experiences of managing the day-to-day stresses of being a GP and dealing with difficulties around disclosing mental health symptoms, distress or chronic levels of stress. Doctors are not used to revealing their vulnerability and so the performance would have to capture their vulnerability, fragility and desire to be understood and supported.

The artist(s) will be provided with opportunities to meet and discuss (on a limited basis) with GPs, researchers and patients to inform their project and interpret the subject matter through their practise.

### **Further Information**

We suggest you read our researcher's blog and online article about the topic area which provides an overview of the types of issues currently facing GPs:

<http://www.gponline.com/gp-stress-new-study-aims-help-improve-access-support/article/1384837>

<https://capbristol.blogs.ilt.org/2016/02/09/who-do-gps-go-to-when-they-need-help/>

### **Expectations**

- You would be expected to meet with the researcher, her team, patients and GPs in the study several times during the development of your commission.
- The final piece will be unique, powerful and, whilst by no means a literal interpretation of the research, will have the themes and emotions of the research and research subjects at its heart and tell a story about the research.
- There will be at least one post-show discussion to discuss the collaboration, the performance, and the research.

### **Duration, space and technical requirements**

- The final piece should have a duration of between 30 and 60 minutes.
- The performance (or screening) will be hosted either once or twice during the festival between 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of November, inclusive.
- A floor plan of the space and the desired set up can be found below. Alternative set ups will be considered though note that the tiered seating cannot be moved.
- There will be a technician on site to assist with set up and run through.
- The venue has a high specification lighting and sound rig but due to the number of performances and the set up time available we ask that technical requirements are kept to a minimum.
- The space is available for rehearsals on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November if needed.

### **Funding**

Please provide a detailed budget indicating the cost difference of performing/screening one or two performances.

The maximum budget available is £3000 (plus VAT if applicable)

Costs requested can include:

- personnel costs directly related to the project, including artist fees, consultancy costs, project management fees etc
- direct activity and production costs
- travel costs
- Basic publicity (poster, flyer, marketing) and venue costs will be covered by the core festival team but if extra publicity or printed materials are required this should be included in the budget.

What is not covered:

- salary costs of staff who are already funded by their organisation
- core overheads of the applying organisation not related to the project, e.g. heating, rent, etc
- expenses incurred in submitting an application
- costs arising prior to the start date of the project

### **Application process**

The application form can be downloaded from the [artists' page](#) on the [festival website](#).

Please send completed forms, plus a copy of your CV to Georgia Bladon [georgia.bladon@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:georgia.bladon@bristol.ac.uk). These must be received by **5pm Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016**.

**Informal conversations** about your proposal are welcomed prior to submitting an application. If you have questions or wish to discuss your application please contact EBI's Public Engagement Associate Georgia Bladon: [georgia.bladon@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:georgia.bladon@bristol.ac.uk)

Applications will be reviewed by an expert judging panel and those shortlisted will be invited to come and discuss their project idea with us.

The informal discussions will take place on 13 June. If you cannot make this date please let us know in your application.

The successful applicant will be informed of the outcome shortly after these discussions.

If you are not comfortable or able to submit your application in written form we can also receive proposals in formats more suited to your requirements, for example by video. If you feel submitting an alternative format would help with the process then please get in touch and we can discuss how to capture your idea for consideration by the panel.

# Venue Floorplan

- xx - double socket
- \* - fire exit
- (60A) - 60A power outlet
- T - to toilets (upstairs)
- window or screen
- blackout curtain

