

HeartSong Strategic Framework

Definition: HeartSong is a singing group that focuses on fun and inclusiveness. Its main priority is to be a welcoming and creative environment for people with mental illness. It encourages volunteer participation, in order to strengthen HeartSongs's social and musical capacity, and be available to the wider community.

Mission: For people with mental illness to be empowered and thrive, and for the community to be strengthened, with group singing projects.

Vision: For HeartSong to be an artistic and social exemplar of the skills, humanity and stories of people living with mental illness.

Group Values:

- Social inclusion and acceptance of diversity
- Respect for opinion's and beliefs
- Sober and clean behaviour (alcohol/drug free, hygienically clean, no aggro)
- Safe and secure environment
- Opportunities for creativity, imagination and expression
- Learning and skill development
- Commitment to group work and project goals
- Group "visioning", decision making and problem solving about projects and artistic decisions
- Refer to other services for health and welfare support of participants
- Working together
- Care and encouragement
- Nourishment and health of mind, body, spirit and community
- Attendance and participation that is right for each individual
- Initiative – stepping forward when the time is right for us
- To be exposed to the broader arts community and encourage participation

Artistic Values

- Pursue artistic excellence and contribute to a diverse body of Australian music
- We can all make music: singing 'with', not necessarily 'to'
- Meaningful relationships between art and people

Who:

- People living with mental illness from the Frankston region ("participants")
- Volunteers committed to supporting people with mental illness and HeartSong
- Staff (Arts Access and Impact)
- Other community visitors

Where CityLife Cafe, Clyde Street Mall, Frankston

When Thursdays 11am – 1pm (during school term)

Cost \$2 towards refreshments

Contact Cherie Baxter email: cheriebkeys@gmail.com

Tel: Arts Access (Thurs & Fri) 9699 8299 or Cherie Baxter: 0425813309

General Aims and Objectives for Participants

To provide people with a mental health issue the opportunity to:

- Develop new techniques and artistic skills and develop creativity
- Have access to professional artistic advice and support
- Have access to quality tuition at a low cost
- Develop social networks and meet other people including those with mental illness who are interested in singing
- Develop the ability to contribute to and influence the direction and repertoire of the group

Volunteer Role

The role of the volunteer with HeartSong is to be an enthusiastic group singer who has reliable attendance and is capable of actively supporting participants. Volunteers may “buddy” participants and support them in relevant ways eg cuing their attention to the group process, discussing their musical interests, acknowledging their participation. Volunteers may take on other roles with negotiation with the singing leader e.g. practical tasks such as setting up/packing up or musical tasks such as leading warm-ups or selecting repertoire or promotional tasks etc.

Induction process: Volunteers need to read the documentation in the City Life volunteer pack, and the HeartSong Strategic Plan. Volunteers then sign/complete the volunteer pack forms and have a short induction meeting with the singing leader. To be discussed at this meeting: duration of attendance, closure, communication lines, other concerns.

Group Format

The following description provides a “standard” workshop. When working towards specific performances, or during special workshops, this format may be altered.

- Set up and participant registration 9.45am
- Singing between 10am – 11 am, 11.10-pm – 12noon
- Break – approximately 10 minutes at 12 noon.
- Tea/coffee is provided by CityLife. Snacks are bought by HeartSong people, and may be purchased utilizing the HeartSong sundries money (see Suzanne).

- Commence with vocal warm ups and games – to prepare for optimal use of the voice, develop aural/musical awareness and skills and group participation
- First half of workshop: singing leader leads a variety of songs in parts and unison, using a mixture of familiar and unfamiliar repertoire. Establish goals with the group and focus on them.
- Second half of workshop: participants are encouraged to select and lead songs in the second part of the session. Lyric sheets may be brought into the group, or the existing song books utilized. Inclusion of all participants and providing appropriate leadership (tempo, key and style) are encouraged.

Participant Registration Process

All participants/volunteers are to register with Suzanne prior to participation

- Complete participant information sheets
- Be introduced to the group format
- \$2 contribution to be used for HeartSong refreshments
- If participants do not have a mental illness, they are to be encouraged to become a CityLife volunteer after approximately X3 sessions.

Partners:

Arts Access Victoria creates opportunities and promotes access to the arts and cultural activity for people with a disability. Arts Access receives funding for Arts Access Arts Classes (AAAC) from the Department of Human Services, Southern Region – Mental Health Services, to provide programs for people with mental illness or psychiatric disability. Arts Access is supported by Arts Victoria, the Australia Council for the Arts and Department of Human Services. Staff: Program Co-ordinator (Susan Doel), Singing Leader/Music Facilitator (Cherie Baxter), Support Artist (Suzanne Gardner). Head Office tel: 9699 8299 South Melbourne

Impact is a contemporary, community-based social profit organisation that provides support services to people with psychiatric disabilities. Staff: Support Worker (Tom Cooper). Tel: 9770 6155 Address: 1 Douglas Grove, Frankston

City Life Inc is a Christian charitable organization with DGR & ITEC status with a mandate to assist people in distress through food support and other means. Staff: Social Inclusion Officer (Crystal McDonald), Co-ordinator (Janet Reid), Volunteer kitchen manager on Thursdays (Ron). Tel: 9770 0660

Current Project Goals

- 1) To attract a larger group of core group "HeartSingers" to 10+ regular participants
- 2) To encourage the participation of casual singers
- 3) To attract a larger group of volunteers who can actively support HeartSong
- 4) To pursue community performance, song-writing or recording goals

Staff Role

- Support and encourage participants in attending the workshops
- Work with participants towards meeting their singing goals
- Work collaboratively with staff and other community members in order to develop and implement the project
- Communicate difficulties to the singing leader outside of the singing workshop – participate in regular discussion about leadership objectives
- To refer participants to other artistic opportunities in the wider community

Performance Plan

Participation in performances or other community activities are negotiated with the group participants. Performance Notice – To be distributed 3-4 weeks prior to performance and includes: where, when, transport arrangements, dress etc

CityLife Venue

The singing workshops are held in the area of the CityLife cafe. Staff and volunteers of CityLife are likely to be in, or pass through this vicinity during our workshops. Queries about CityLife services can be referred to the CityLife office. Toilets are available through the kitchen areas, however CityLife encourage clients to utilize toilets in the food court of the nearby shopping centre. HeartSong participants are discouraged from frequenting the kitchen areas.

There are several tasks that require attention in setting up and packing up. Please liaise with Suzanne to assist.

Strategies

- 1) OH&S Emergency/Safety Procedures, all staff/volunteers to:
 - Have access to emergency phone in CityLife's kitchen
 - Be orientated to emergency evacuation points
 - "Remove/isolate/distract" with behavioural problems – coordinate efforts, avoid confrontation, seek further help (CityLife/emergency services)
 - Be aware of who has first aid training
 - Utilize the CityLife volunteer induction process
 - Utilize the CityLife risk assessment, incident reporting and complaint procedures
- 2) Promote and publicize HeartSong
 - Mental illness to be implicit in signage, explicit in verbal discussion in group
 - Community notice in newspaper – supporting people living with mental illness, to encourage those who are "supported" and those who are "supporting"
 - Develop appropriate photo/icon
- 3) To develop community links and partnerships eg

- Regular meetings and review
- Utilize tertiary students on placement
- have “face to face” meetings with local service providers
- “pre” cafe music/singing to attract participants

Philosophy of Singing Group

The approach to HeartSong has been informed by the following agencies, domains and approaches –

Arts Access Victoria – people with a disability creating art, experiencing art and working in the arts. Arts Access Victoria is a disability arts organisation providing access, participation, engagement and professional development in the arts and cultural life across Victoria for people with a disability

Community Music – as described by Sound Links (Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre) and community singing as described by Community Music Victoria

Music therapy in rehabilitation and recovery – utilizing resource-orientated music therapy and recovery models, and aligning with community music therapy practices.

Mental health promotion (Vic Health): interventions that increase social connectedness such as Community Arts Programs and ensure social inclusion and social justice. Programs emphasise local needs, democratic relationships, striving for excellence.

Music Education – utilizing vocal care and eg some Kodaly, Orff and Dalcroze principles

Community Cultural Development – eg as supported by local councils

Primary Healthcare Partnerships – involving community based services for people with disability including GPs, community health and agencies such as Impact