

**Arts, Health & Wellbeing National Seminar, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015**  
**Notes from Breakout 2: Singing out for Health**

*The following provides an amalgamation of delegate feedback in response to a series of questions posed during both breakout sessions.*

What are the benefits of singing for the body?

Change the way the body works

Breathing - increased oxygen to the brain

More oxytocin

Aerobic exercise, COPD benefits

Feel good factor raises endorphins

Deep breathing

Physical activity - stimulate blood flow

Rhythm of music relates to heartbeat

Reduced stress x 2

Concentration

Moving body gently

Body awareness - breathing, meditation, mindfulness

For dementia can improve speech / communication

Fewer falls

Channeling energy

A way to get out of the house and interact

Non-verbal techniques for AAC users

Countless benefits; particularly if used with such practices as Alexander technique e.g. posture, relaxation & breathing, memory...

What are the benefits of singing for the soul/ spirit?

Encouraging participatory practice

Appreciate other culture's music & enjoying something new!

"Singing together" brings people together reducing isolation

Good feelings can last beyond the activity

Better mental health

Friendship x 2

Joy / feel good

Feeling happy

Connecting mind, heart & body

Resilience - out of comfort zone

Contribute in a simple, easy to understand way to local community/ choir sings at town centre events

Recognise choir members outside choir e.g. at the bus stop!

Raises spirits!

Sense of community

Carer/patient: a new activity they can share that is not driven by their condition

Carers relationship improves or is renewed

Societal contact

Inter generational cohesion

### What are the benefits of singing for the mind?

Learning new music

Happiness

Eliminate pre-conceptions, ie I can't sing

Build confidence x2

Mindfulness

Evoke forgotten memories

Stimulus - memory

Raising aspiration

Distraction from illness / stress

Music as a memory trigger

Prove to yourself you can do something new - inspiration

Social engagement- feeling less alone

Increased understanding of others health challenges

Who are the beneficiaries of singing for health programmes?

Carers

Patients

Staff

Families

Theatres

Musicians & music practitioners

Choir masters

Venues & rehearsal spaces

Holders of health budget

The NHS

Government

GP practices - reduction in visits (worried well)

Audiences

Are the arts and health sectors speaking the same language and are we singing in harmony? What are the barriers to developing more singing interventions in healthcare settings?

How can we overcome these?

The conversations are happening but there are budget limitations. Health sector needs to balance programme of preventative measures alongside treating illness.

We need to change the conversation & start talking to others outside of the arts sector. We need to stand up as artists and arts organisations and make the case that the arts can influence / contribute towards big issues in society.

We need to develop self-confidence in practitioners in relation to their standing next to other professionals in society.

What other possible applications are there for singing in an Arts & Well-Being context that have yet to be explored?

Absenteeism at workplaces / schools

Multi- workplace singing activity

Preventions of ill health

Substance misuse services

Health sector can only really understand benefits by experiencing it themselves – then staff members are able to advocate the use of singing.

Important to remember that it is not an experience for “them” (the patient / client group) but for all of us.

How can we inject more creativity into the process? Is this appropriate?

Creativity in creating a harmonic sound together

Depends on size of the group

Creative arrangements of popular songs

Songwriting may be appropriate, it depends on the context

Possibility for singers to influence rep (within reason)

People like singing songs they know

Balance - would singing new work compromise benefits linked to memory / reminiscence?