

Symptom Scores: Sensing with the Trouble

Exploring Symptoms Together through Creative Workshops

~ Contextual Essay

*Savannah Theis*

## *Overview*

This Contextual Essay accompanies a creative project I produced while completing a diploma in Processwork. It outlines the development of ‘Symptom Scores,’ a series of movement workshops I designed to facilitate collaborative exploration of symptoms in creative ways. I describe the tools and concepts shaping the workshops, drawing from Processwork and artistic approaches.

I share themes in my personal development, insights gained and how my facilitation skills evolved during the process. Throughout the essay, I incorporate descriptions of ‘innerworks’ - examples where I applied Processwork principles to facilitate myself, to help me navigate challenges during the project’s development. To illustrate my reflections and the workshop’s impact, I include selected quotes from participants, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness and reception of the workshops.

Underlying the project is my belief that our bodies offer us access to more ways of knowing and relating than we are often taught. The workshops aim to tap into our multisensory capacities, to open up forms of collaboration and collective sense-making. They explore ways of cultivating trust in our embodied perception. I’m interested in the tools this can offer for navigating individual and collective challenges.

Reflecting on how mainstream Western society often falls short in addressing collective challenges, I see a recurring pattern of disconnection, individualism, and limited imagination. Instead of embracing our interconnectedness and creative potential, we often end up isolated, bound to conventions and restricted in developing alternatives. My project partly grew out of this frustration - from a personal desire to explore different possibilities of knowing, doing and living.

My hope is that it offers practical insights and methods for anyone facilitating multisensory activities across various fields like the arts, wellbeing, education, and social contexts. It is also aimed at people who are curious about creatively exploring their own multisensory awareness and expanding their personal experience.

## *Acknowledgements*

This project emerged from multiple community efforts: ~ lineages of ideas and practices feeding into the explorations ~ organisations and community-led spaces introducing me to improvisation and hosting my workshops ~ exchanges with participants, whose experiences and input shaped the work ~ mentors and loved ones who had my back and enabled the process ~ the dreaming field that inspired and carried the project forward through me...

The ideas and processes described here are not new; they reflect knowledge recognised across different times and cultures. As Audre Lorde put it, “there are no new ideas... only new ways of making them felt.”

I’m grateful to everyone who accompanied me through the highs and lows of developing this work, helping me find my feet and feel my way through:

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*“Our bodies have reasons that we need to learn, rediscover, reinvent. We need to listen to their language as the path to our health and healing.”*

~ Silvia Federici

*“A score is an oar, a tool to navigate.  
It’s an or, an alternative, a bridge between possibilities.  
As a vessel that holds space for time, a score invites us to read and embody it.  
A score cares for the bodies that attempt it.  
The score makes sense: listening to the world that surrounds it, touching and being touched by bodies and materials, looking towards the future.”*

~ Hildegard von Bingen Society of Gardening Companions

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## *Essay Structure*

I begin this essay by providing context to the project, including the collective and personal experiences that have shaped my perspective and interests. This section outlines my background in art and Processwork facilitation. I then introduce my Symptom Scores project, describing the core interests and key Processwork principles guiding my approach. These principles are applied in innerwork exercises interspersed throughout the essay, allowing readers to get to know the internal processes informing my project and understand how Processwork can function. To support navigation, I include simple ‘maps’ of these principles, illustrating how they guide both the innerwork exercises and key steps of the Symptom Scores workshops. I also contextualise the relationship between art and Processwork - both in my personal experience and more broadly - while reflecting on how creativity lies at the heart of Processwork’s approach to ‘following nature.’

In the section titled *Emergence of Symptom Scores*, I explore the creative seeds and influences that gave rise to the project. This includes an emotional encounter with my aunt, my engagement with Processwork studies, my drawing practice and interests in improvisation and ‘scoring’ methods in performance, and my development of workshops blending concepts from art, dance, and Processwork. I go on to describe what the Symptom Scores workshops involve, including their variations and the contexts in which they have been shared.

Next, I provide an overview of Processwork philosophy, detailing its development and central ethic of ‘deep democracy.’ I outline its approach to emergent processes, its emphasis on valuing disturbances and marginalised perspectives, and its unique view of symptoms as sources of meaningful information for individual and collective change. I also explain some of the reasoning behind my project’s focus on symptoms.

I then describe the research methods and materials that form the basis for the insights and reflections in my writing. In *Workshop Methods & Tools: Conditions supporting emergence*, I outline the tools and approaches used in the Symptom Scores methodology, drawing from both arts practices and Processwork. This includes a discussion on the use of scores in performance and participatory practice, as well as framing the workshop process as a form of divination. I situate this within contemporary ritual invention in social arts practice. Following this, I address ethical considerations and the importance of building a container for this kind of body-based exploration. I then describe Processwork tools, focusing on techniques for amplifying signals, following feedback, and using channels to work with edges. To enhance understanding of how Processwork

theory and tools are applied in the workshops, I compare channel work in the Symptom Scores process with its use in broader Processwork practice.

In *Effects of Symptom Scores*, I reflect on the physical, emotional, and relational impacts of the workshop process by drawing on participant feedback, personal reflections, and discussions with Processwork colleagues. I weave in participant quotes to further bring this to life. I explore how the workshop serves as a tool for working with edges - a central concept in Processwork - and reflect on relational, movement-based, and collective edges that emerged during sessions. I also share insights gained for facilitating these dynamics. In *My 'democratic vs expert' edge*, I delve into a tension coming up for me personally throughout the project: balancing my desire to foster democratic participation with bringing in more of my Processwork expertise.

Finally, in *Areas for further exploration and research*, I present ideas for ongoing research and potential applications of the workshop process across various contexts, including performance, education and healthcare. This includes initial results showing improvements in participants' symptom experiences after the workshops, based on data collected from post-workshop feedback forms. After the conclusion, I include an appendix containing workshop materials to further enrich readers' understanding of the project's development and outcomes.

## *Background*

### **Personal and Collective Context**

To provide context for this project, I'll share some of the experiences that have influenced my perspective. I'm writing at a time of mounting global crises, prompting many of us to rethink how we live, learn, and create more livable futures.<sup>1</sup> As the impacts of these crises become clear - even to the most privileged - more people are seeking alternatives to mainstream approaches that have been rooted in colonial and Western-centric views. These dominant perspectives, also described as a 'monoculture of the mind' (Shiva, 2014), have disembodied and disconnected many of us from our environments, relationships, and ourselves.

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of 'livable futures' is interwoven with Black feminist and indigenous liberation perspectives, representing a vision of a world free from systemic oppression where all beings can thrive and live in dignity (Maynard & Simpson, 2022).

Responding to these challenges requires more adaptive thinking and ways of navigating ambiguity, uncertainty and complexity. I particularly speak for myself, from my standpoint as a cis woman who grew up mostly in the UK with German-Swiss roots, racialised as white, currently non-disabled, from a middle-class background. I feel a strong pull to reconnect with knowledges grounded in embodied experience and relational, life-affirming ways of living. These are forms of being and doing that mainstream Western society has devalued or suppressed. My own heritage has played a part in the global suppression of these vital experiences and knowledges.

Disconnection from the body and emotions run through my family. My Central European, Protestant heritage has a strictness and perfectionistic quality, with the ongoing pressure to be productive and self-sacrificing as measures of worth. Often this comes at the expense of joy. While this doesn't fully define me or my family, it influences how I perceive, and the ways I relate to myself and the world. Even with the ways I categorised myself above, which from one perspective feel crucial for acknowledging and understanding how my experiences differ from those of others, I risk reinforcing colonial frameworks (Puar, 2012).

In my early years, during a difficult time when my parents were separating, I moved a lot between Germany, Switzerland, Malta and the UK, which shaped my perspective and experiences of feeling like an outsider. This repeated uprooting, speaking differently and not belonging to communities around me created both longing and fears for me around communication and connection.

Rootlessness and disconnection also influenced my parents' stories. My dad, the son of a Swiss missionary, spent his childhood in Ghana until he was sent back to Switzerland alone at the age of nine. My mum grew up in Palestine, under Jordanian administration at the time, where her parents managed a boarding school for Christian Palestinian orphans. Their move was motivated by my grandparents' desire to escape the rigid Christian community they had come from. They eventually returned to Germany when my mother was twelve, just as the Six-Day War began.

My Swiss grandfather believed he was doing God's work and working in collaboration with the local people. He didn't acknowledge the supremacist attitudes and structures he was perpetuating. My German grandmother became a social activist for refugee and migrant welfare. She focused on helping the world, without much attention to her inner experiences and positionality in the work she was doing.

My mum first moved to the UK to study complementary medicine and homeopathy when I was four. Her decision was influenced by difficult medical experiences that made her want more control over her family's healthcare. After fleeing an abusive relationship in later years, she returned to the UK when I was ten and began researching the 'role of negative experience' and developing an innerwork model to explore this. Later, when I became interested in conflict work, she introduced me to Processwork, which resonated with me in part due to its parallels with my mum's approach to finding meaning in disturbances.

I remember struggling in secondary school with the often narrow, one-dimensional teaching approaches that emphasised clarity and certainty. Welcoming not knowing, or developing trust in one's intuition and own ways of perceiving wasn't generally encouraged. During this time I found it more and more challenging to interact socially, and speaking became progressively harder for me. I began waking up regularly with a locked jaw, a chronic symptom that stayed with me for many years. Finding my way and making decisions about my future during this time often felt pressured and difficult.

In my teenage years my mum raised me and my sister using the self-development model she was creating, which was very enriching, and added to me feeling different to others. In partial response to her own mother's focus on changing the outer world, my mum emphasised the importance of transforming one's inner world. Bringing together and exploring the interconnections between inner and outer worlds, the personal and the collective, have been important themes on my own path. Looking to feel more at home in the world and in myself have been a big part of this journey.

All these experiences and influences flow into my interests in diverse and life-affirming ways of knowing, doing and living - that are not only linear and rational, and include the spectrum of intelligences with which we perceive. My background and positionality affect how I explore and understand this, and influence the context, assumptions, and limitations of my project.

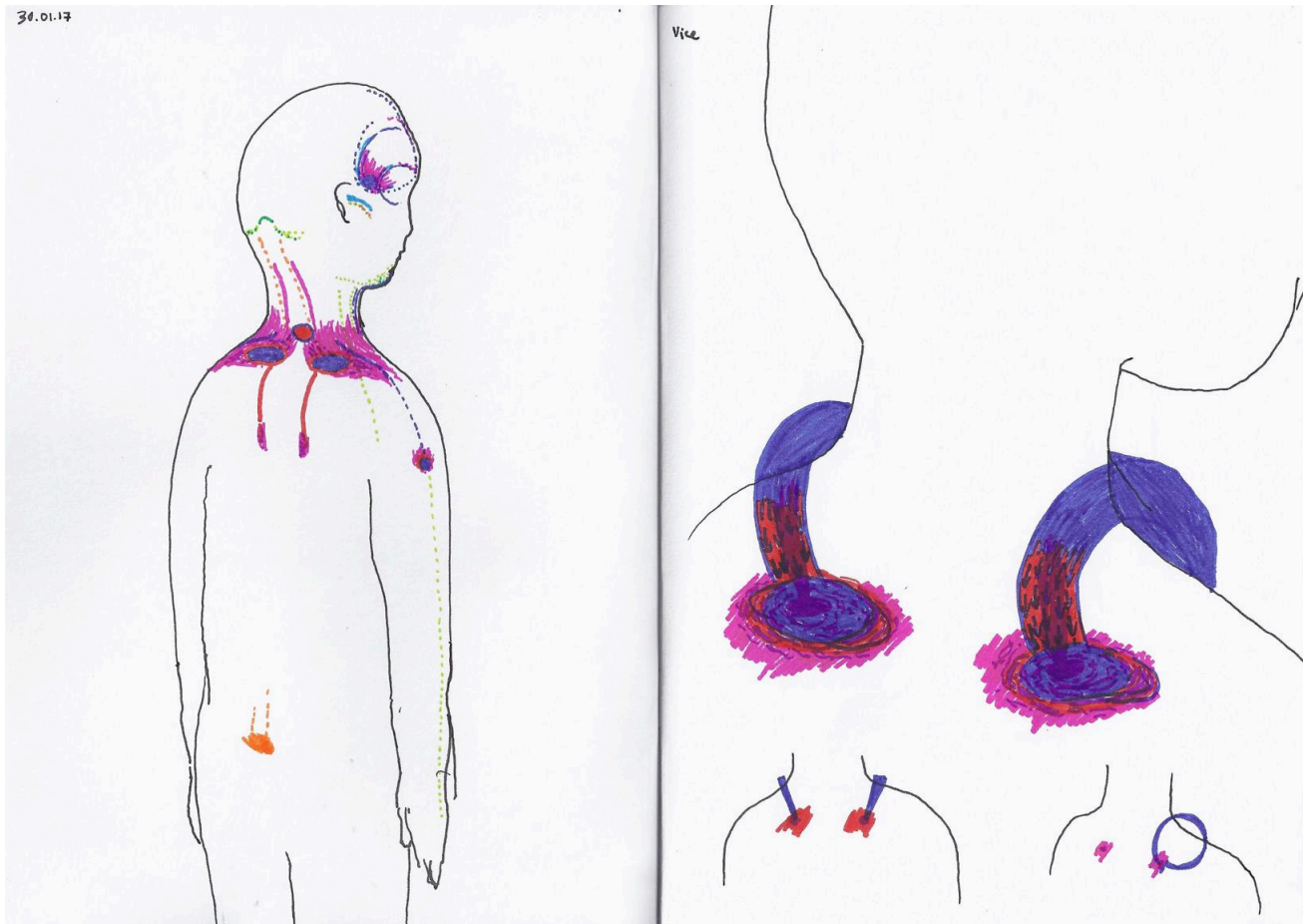
## **Studies in Art and Processwork**

I was fortunate to have people in my family encouraging me to follow my interests in creativity and art. I deeply appreciate and acknowledge the privilege in this. I was drawn to art's interdisciplinary nature and multifaceted possibilities for engaging with the world. At the same time, as I progressed with formal art studies, I became more and more creatively blocked.

During my postgraduate studies in Art Praxis, I was introduced to critical cultural theory and social justice discourses, including feminism and gender studies, postcolonial and critical race theories, and posthumanism, to name a few. This was a formative experience shaping my political consciousness. At this time I began exploring performance processes and participatory exercises, using physical and aesthetic approaches to embody what I was learning. The program was very academic, which I wasn't used to. Not much attention was given to the ways dynamics we were theorising about were playing out within the institution and between us in the classroom.

Prompted by a conflict between a teacher and a class I was part of, I began studying 'Worldwork,' the application of Processwork in groups and conflict work. Inspired by a friend's drawings and Processwork's emphasis on awareness of sensory signals, I started a drawing practice of my body sensations around this time. Creating these drawings helped me complete my art studies and formed the basis of a performance for my graduation. These drawings were a key influence on the workshops I would later develop for this project.

Training in Worldwork and starting the Processwork facilitation diploma deepened my understanding of social justice and personal privilege, leading me to question the relevance of art in the face of pressing societal issues. This is a 'role' or viewpoint in the collective field and one I can feel as I write about this. Despite my doubts and distancing myself from art, I also found myself continually drawn back to it. I missed being creative and gradually rediscovered how the arts energise me and engage my senses and imagination. I began to appreciate again the ways art can address complex problems and experiences in unexpected, innovative and multilayered ways. With time I also recognised that an important branch of Processwork is its application to art and creativity. Developing this project has contributed to me valuing this more deeply.



30.01.17 Vice

Scanned notebook of daily drawings registering body sensations

## *Project Introduction*

Writing about this project has been a challenging process, bringing out a polarity between the structure-seeking and feeling-based, nonverbal parts of myself. This tension mirrors a broader dynamic in Western society, where structured thinking often dominates over more intuitive or emergent approaches. Through the project, I have been integrating these seemingly opposing sides, exploring a balance between structure and emergence in my methods, with each supporting the other at different moments.

The project itself emerged organically, driven by my curiosity about embodied forms of knowing and the interplay between art and Processwork. I was motivated to be in spaces with others where we relate with our bodies as well as our minds. I also wanted more opportunities to explore together in playful ways and have more fun. Engaging with these qualities supports me to feel more creative, resourced and courageous in both my life and work, and live different parts of myself more fully.

The ‘Symptom Scores’ workshops grew out of these aspirations and aim to cultivate multisensory awareness and collaboration. By providing creative tools for navigating individual and collective challenges, these workshops contribute to a broader tradition of artistic and social practice projects that seek to rethink how we live and relate to one another. They respond to societal shortcomings that often promote isolation over interconnectedness, offering an alternative vision rooted in creativity and shared experience.

My interest in exploring symptoms originated from a personal need to pay closer attention to my body experiences. As the project evolved, I recognised its relevance to a widespread Western cultural attitude that often links health problems to personal responsibility. This perspective can imply that symptoms, illnesses, or disabilities result from personal failures or a lack of willpower, leading to stigmatisation and misunderstanding of those facing health challenges.

By engaging with symptoms collectively as common experiences and creating opportunities to reflect on the underlying context and information they convey, this project offers a different perspective. It shifts the focus from individual blame to collective understanding, empathy, and support. This approach reframes health as a broader, shared process of experiences, encouraging deeper connections and fostering a sense of communal care.

### **Core interests guiding the project**

- Bodily sense-making: Fostering multisensory perception and knowing
- Emergence: Exploring the lesser-known, with disturbances as guides
- Collective practice: What possibilities arise when exploring collectively in these ways?

### **Sensing with the trouble, finding meaning in disturbances**

Symptom Scores is a guided group workshop process I've been developing since 2019, combining my background in art and Processwork. It explores the 'dreaming information' in symptoms through drawing, improvised movement, and Processwork tools and philosophy. In this essay I outline the development of these workshops, my influences, things I learned and how my facilitation evolved.

Creativity, experimentation, and staying with and trusting the unknown are at the heart of both the arts and Processwork. Both fields explore what is at the margins of the mainstream and understand this as the site for change and innovation. Processwork's theory of change centres on bringing what is emergent into relationship with what is more known, facilitating the interaction between these aspects in a dynamic.

Below I introduce core principles of Processwork for working with disturbances, which I describe in more depth later in the essay. I illustrate how I apply these in my 'innerwork' practices and in the Symptom Scores workshops. To enhance clarity, I provide simple 'maps' of these concepts that readers can reference for orientation throughout the essay.

### **A map for following the emergent process**

Building on its Jungian roots, Processwork proposes that unintended experiences in our lives are a form of 'dreaming' holding valuable information. It suggests that exploring these lesser-known aspects of ourselves, our interactions, and the world around us with curiosity can lead to surprising keys to creativity, deeper relationships, and new directions. From this perspective, disturbances 'interfering' with our everyday identity and intentions are understood as containing emergent information trying to become more known and lived, counterbalancing our one-sidedness and offering creative ways forward.

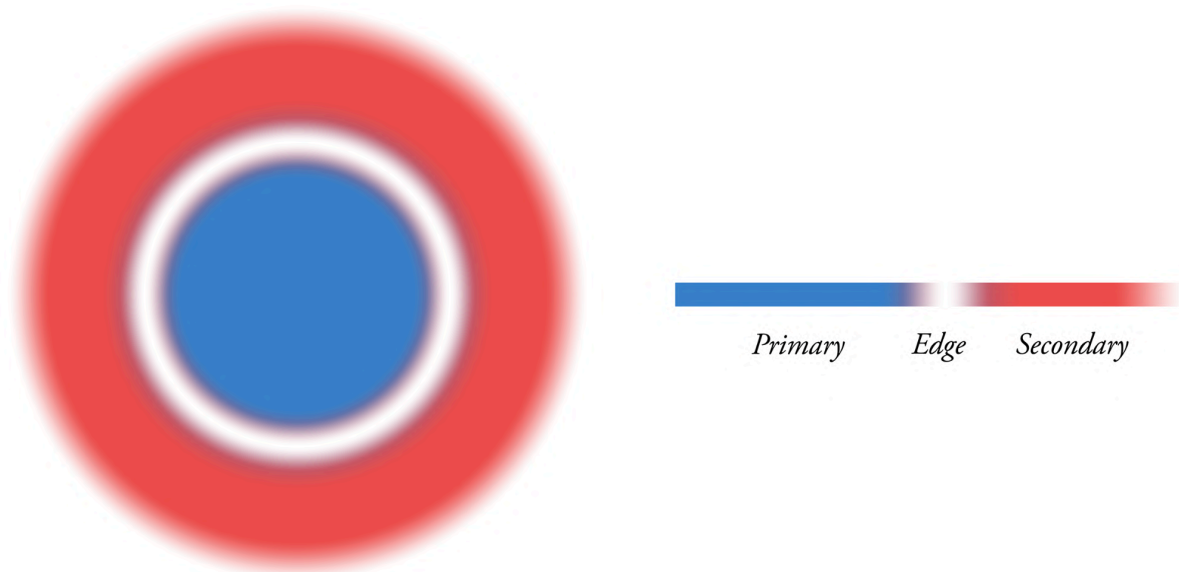
Central to Processwork is the dynamic interplay between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ processes, which exist on a continuum. The primary process refers to our usual sense of self - our identity, intentions, and self-perception. The secondary process encompasses what we consider ‘not me’ - thoughts, behaviours and patterns outside our usual identity, happening against our intentions. Seeking our awareness, these offer opportunities for growth and transformation when explored and understood.

Both primary and secondary processes are continuously evolving. The boundary between them, known as the ‘edge,’ defines the limits of our self-identity and outlook. This edge is shaped by our personal and shared histories, values, and beliefs.

Processwork emphasises the fluidity of these processes, which can shift from moment to moment, creating a spectrum of evolving experiences rather than fixed states. Edges themselves are not static but continually shaped and reshaped by our cultural contexts, belief systems, and personal experiences over time.

From a systemic perspective, our secondary processes reflect disavowed aspects of ourselves arising from a deeper, interconnected ‘dreaming field.’ These manifest through dreams, symptoms, and other unintended experiences. By welcoming and encouraging interaction between more known aspects and emerging ones, new possibilities can arise for us personally and collectively. Processwork offers tools for working at this edge of potential where creativity and change occurs.

### ○ *Process Structure Map*



## Innerworks

These ‘process structure’ principles underpin the workshops I have been developing. I also illustrate them throughout the essay by weaving in my ‘innerworks,’ the Processwork term for exploring internal experiences in the present moment. These innerworks show how I processed disturbances or polarities coming up for me while developing the project. Here’s a brief overview of the innerwork process:

Innerwork can take many forms. My approach to the innerworks in this essay usually began by noticing when I felt disturbed, such as when my intention to do something was interrupted. Exploring this through innerwork requires curiosity about the nature of the disturbance, to get to know the details of the experience in a sensory way. Recognising it as a doorway to deeper information helps with this.

When exploring a disturbance, it can be helpful to start with noticing who in you is disturbed and giving this and your reactions space. Then to become interested in studying the qualities of the disturbance by entering and amplifying the experience. I often encounter an edge while doing this - a point where I might become distracted, lose interest or trust in the process, or feel resistance to the emerging phenomenon. Recognising this edge is itself a significant and helpful step.

When reaching an edge, various options are available. I can examine the thoughts and feelings surrounding the edge and stay there, or I can reconnect with the emergent quality, delving deeper into that experience and its world. When unfolded, this often leads to a shift in perspective that is not cognitive but comes from a deeper embodied place. To gain deeper insights from here, I return to my everyday viewpoint, bringing these two experiences into dialogue. This can facilitate a change in understanding. The aim is not to replace one viewpoint with another, but to experience the evolving process when both are considered together.

In the innerwork below, for instance, I focused on an unintended signal irritating me while writing, my ‘sticky’ space bar. At first I interpreted what was happening in a cognitive way. Then I got more curious and precise about the ‘sensory-grounded’ details of *how* I was experiencing the disturbance and experimented with ‘picking up’ these qualities in an embodied way. In this case, following my experience of stuckness involved becoming very still, not moving. When expanding this into a multisensory experience, I felt like I became the earth.

My everyday self had intended to get the writing done, feeling pressured and impatient. The ‘dreamdoor’ of the sticky space bar supported me to access a dreamlike experience that, when unfolded, connected me with a more loving attitude towards myself that was less known, which I needed to integrate more. Relating back to my everyday self from this emergent perspective helped me go deeper, changing my understanding and experience.

Exploring disturbances in this way can lead to new insights and unexpected pathways that often feel stuck or impassable from one’s initial perspective. This is one of the core principles of Processwork and one of the ways my project explores ‘sensing with the trouble’<sup>2</sup> - being curious about what is happening in the moment and bringing out the information, using different sensory tools to do this. One of my hopes with the project is to make Processwork more accessible to a wider audience, and to inspire further creative ways of applying these tools and ideas.

### ○ *Innerwork Map example*

- ~ Identify everyday self who is disturbed by something (*Primary Process*)
- ~ Study the signals of the disturbance experientially (indication of *Secondary Process*)
- ~ Notice *Edges*
- ~ Deepen understanding of the edge and/or...
- ~ ... return to the secondary material, unfold and ‘become’ this
- ~ Notice emergent perspectives, insights, attitudes, and interact from here with your everyday self

### ○ *Symptom Scores Map*

The same principles guide key steps in the Symptom Scores workshops:

- ~ **Theme:** Identifying the everyday context (*Primary Process*)
- ~ **Symptom:** Noticing a bodily disturbance (indication of *Secondary Process*)
- ~ **Drawing:** Studying and amplifying the signals of the disturbance
- ~ **Movement (by partner):** Embodying secondary material in the drawing, going over *Edges*
- ~ **Inhabiting what partner did:** Becoming secondary material, interacting with theme from here.

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<sup>2</sup> This is an adaptation of Donna Haraway’s (2016) idea of ‘staying with the trouble.’

**\* Innerwork 30.07.24 - sticky space bar dreaming**

*I'm surprised by how challenging it is to start writing, what is getting in my way? The keyboard space bar is getting stuck, how ironic. What's the dreaming in this? Maybe there's something about imperfection, just getting material on the page? Not being attached to the outcome, but dedicated to the doing, the feeling, messiness and contradictions that come through being and doing in the world? Stuck keyboard. What is most disturbing? Not behaving as it should, I want to 'clean' it up, clean up what I'm writing. But maybe that's not where the project wants to go? The key is not yielding to me very easily. I experience it as stuck/ What if I take moment and sense into the experiential qualities of not yielding and being stuck?*

*Innerwork-unfolding the non-yielding/stuckness*

*What disturbs me? What in me is disturbed?*

*My intention is to get moving in a smooth clean way. Here is something unintended, not going along with my plan. non-yielding/stuckness*

*What are the sensory qualities of this disturbance, what sensory channel is it in?*

*Movement channel. Something not moving.*

*What happens when I experience this more, experiment with becoming the quality myself?*

*It takes me a while to feel into it. Part of me is against it, I feel impatient, like I don't have much time. When I negotiate with this part of myself and get permission to spend time on this, I sense into it more. I feel into it and get a sense of becoming a rock or part of the earth. Interestingly I feel like I yield/relax when I do this, connect with something more timeless, beyond time. (and like magic, my key is unsticking as I write this part, I can't believe it! To me that signals I'm on the right track, there is 'positive feedback,' an energetic shift).*

*Connecting with this experience I feel more patient. I stay with it more and sense into being the rock, or earthly object, connected to the earth by gravity. I sense I am 'stuck' on this earth, and what is good or what I like about that is that I belong here, this is my home. I am indigenous to this earth. As I write this I surprise myself by tearing up (another feedback signal helping me trust what I'm connecting with). Themes of belonging and home are really important to me.*

*Staying with the experience a little longer, I feel into being at home on this earth, feeling held. It feels supportive, like I'm part of something bigger than me. I feel more relaxed. I go a step further*

*and think about the parts in this relational system: there's something being held and something holding, which is a bit further away from what I'm identifying with. I feel into being the 'holder,' the earth itself, holding me. As the earth I feel a lot of strength in my back and torso. I experience a deep timeless patience, trust and love towards myself, (and all the interconnected beings that are part of me as the earth, emerging and returning to me again and again).*

*From here I look at everyday Savannah struggling with writing about her project. I feel love, trust, compassion. "I'm always here, whether you remember or not, I'm a part of you. I'm your life force." (Wow, I'm surprised by this inner work. My usual tendency is to move away from this kind of thing quickly and think of criticisms/digs about what I'm writing. I decide not to give these too much space right now).*

*I imagine I'll continue to meet challenges and stuckness as I continue to write. And, the experience of being the earth, feeling this in my body and experiencing the attitude of love and trust that this beingness brings feels like an important support to stay connected with along the way. (If the keyboard gets sticky again, it might be a signal I need to touch base with my inner earth again...)*

## **Bridging art and Processwork in me**

Developing this project has helped me explore what being an artist and Processworker mean for me. It has also involved integrating these aspects more within myself, which, despite their interconnected origins in my history, often felt separate for me. I've had preconceived ideas of what art and Processwork are and can be.

The art training I received put a lot of emphasis on conceptual thinking and engaging with arts and theoretical discourses. I appreciate the depth and rigour of this approach. At the same time, its heady nature often left me feeling stuck and unable to create art. While suffering from this, I also internalised and bought into the hierarchical mindset that this type of art holds more value than spontaneous creative exploration.

I was first drawn to Processwork because of its tools for understanding and working with group dynamics and its focus on body-based approaches. Concentrating my training on therapy and group facilitation, I unconsciously placed greater importance on these orientations in Processwork.

Although I was interested in creative applications of the tools, I didn't fully appreciate the extent to which Processwork has been utilised in various forms of art making and creative exploration.

Even within Processwork, the artistic applications of the approach sometimes get marginalised. This reflects dynamics in the wider collective field. Western culture has historically treated art as elitist, rather than understanding creativity as a common human experience. Individualism, the myth of the 'creative genius,' and professionalisation of the arts have contributed to this (Mould, 2018). As a result, art and everyday creative expression are often considered less important than more productive and functional activities. There are many more layers and angles to this, which go beyond the scope of this essay. It's a 'group process,' as we say in Processwork. These dynamics play out within me, in my relationship with art, and in what I do and don't give value.

During my process developing this project and writing about it, following and nurturing a creative impulse without fully understanding it or knowing where it will lead was important. Many times in the past, I stopped myself from pursuing my ideas, coming up against inner belief systems and attitudes dismissing them. While I still get stuck a lot, I'm grateful for the tools Processwork offers to facilitate myself in these moments. Following and developing trust in the process itself is a central practice in this, relevant to both art and Processwork.

In *The Dreaming Source of Creativity: 30 Creative and Magical Ways to Work on Yourself* (2005) Amy Mindell, a prominent figure in Processwork and co-founder of its first school, reflects on her evolving understanding of creativity, beyond conventional artistic mediums. She perceives every moment as an opportunity for creativity, drawing on Arnold Mindell's concept of the 'intentional field.' This field is described as "a generating, creative force that is always present within and around us," which can be accessed by becoming attuned to subtle tendencies in any given moment (Amy Mindell, 2005, prologue, para. 10).

This is at the heart of Processwork philosophy, which focuses on perceiving, valuing, and engaging with the ongoing 'dreaming process' as it emerges. By recognising the field's inherent creative potential as a fundamental aspect of existence, much of the work by Amy Mindell and fellow Processworkers encourages individuals to connect with and harness this through various forms of creative expression. In this sense, the focus on art and creativity within Processwork is actually one of its key applications and reflects its core principle as a living practice in ongoing development, of 'following nature.'

### **\* Innerwork 19.09.23 - follow the honey...**

*I'm trying to make an account on the Miro app to create a digital mind map of the ways my project developed. The button to sign up isn't working, nothing happens when I click it. It frustrates me. I notice this and decide to explore the disturbance as an innerwork.*

*I identify 'nothing happening' or 'doing nothing' as what's disturbing me. I explore what I call 'doing nothing' as a sensory-grounded experience, feeling into its qualities experientially. I relax, let go, stop working hard. I notice an unintended signal in me that moves back. Following this all the way, allowing the experience to amplify across my body and spontaneously in my imagination, I feel like I'm becoming/dissolving into particles, the universe. There's an atmosphere of something warm and golden and I'm reminded of honey. Trusting what's emerging, I 'become' honey, smelling the sweetness, experiencing the smoothness, thickness and viscous movement, its sacred and sensual substance.*

*From the perspective of the honey, I turn my attention back to everyday me and relate to myself from here. A message emerges for me: 'follow what you enjoy. Enjoy the process, otherwise, what's the point? This is a sacred process, honour it, don't push. Connect with what brings you joy and pleasure, let sweetness be your guide.'*

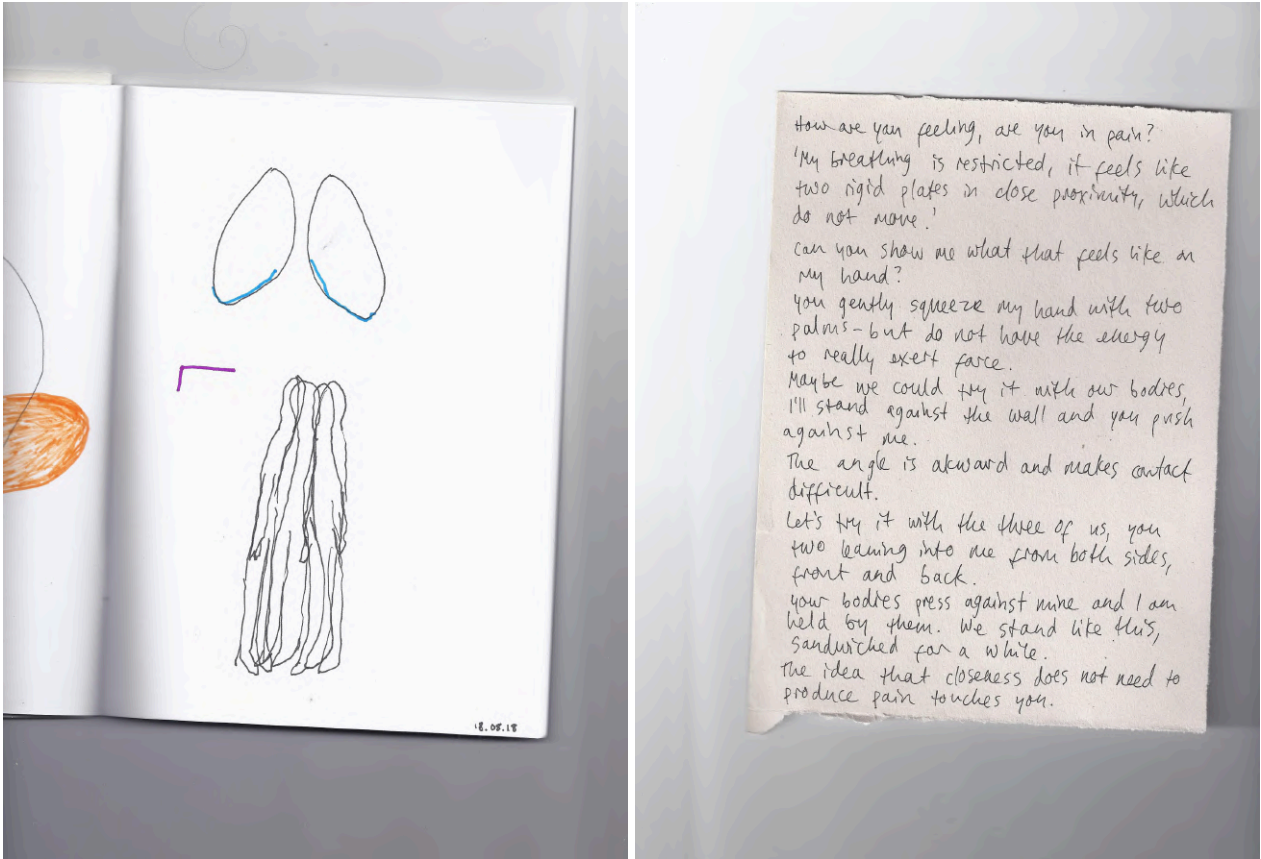
*I have the idea of making a 'honey map' of the project, moments where I experienced joy and magic. Where did I feel alive, sweetness? It's a different lens and attitude with which to get to know my project material. What might it show me? Where might it guide me?*

## *Emergence of Symptom Scores*

### **Embodying Helen's symptom together in hospital**

A honey moment in the emergence of my project was visiting my aunt, Helen, with my sister in hospital in 2018. She was recovering from having had water in her lungs caused by metastasis after ongoing treatment for breast cancer. She spoke about pain in her chest area. I had been on the Processwork diploma for a year and shared a little with her about Processwork's approach to exploring symptoms. The three of us physically explored her symptom together and I created the

following drawings and writings after the visit. (I've translated our interactions, which took place in German). I recently realised this communal exploration of Helen's symptom was one of the seeds for my project. It felt very precious to share this moment and explore together in this way, also countercultural - for my family and more broadly. I don't remember us ever having been as physically affectionate with one another in the past.



*How are you feeling, are you in pain?*

*'My breathing is restricted, it feels like two rigid plates in close proximity, which do not move.'*

*Can you show me what that feels like on my hand?*

*You gently squeeze my hand with two palms - but do not have the energy to really exert force.*

*Maybe we could try it with our bodies, I'll stand against the wall and you push against me.*

*The angle is awkward and makes contact difficult.*

*Let's try it with the three of us, you two leaning into me from both sides, front and back.*

*Your bodies press against mine and I am held by them. We stand like this, sandwiched for a while.*

*The idea that closeness does not need to produce pain touches you.*

*You say that a purple L-shape turned on its side flickers in your vision.*

*You spoke about death, wondering why you had come back. You said you had heard of people feeling ready to pass and hadn't felt it previously. Now a 'kleines Zipfelchen,' a 'little tip' of readiness had opened.*

*'Life can be so exhausting sometimes. You finish cleaning and the dust is already settling again.'*  
*What do you think happens when we die?*

*'I don't think we are as one-dimensional as we think.'*

*We huddled around the hospital bed, seeking touch, crying and cuddling, speaking about death, and the grief and relief of relating to it.*

Helen passed away two months after this. She was always enthusiastic in our exchanges about creativity and encouraged me to try things, even if I didn't fully know where they were going. Tears well up as I write about this and I feel moved by our relationship, I miss her. Connecting with Helen as an ally in my life and 'dream figure' in my inner world is supporting me as I develop my project.

*Helen's presence has come into my writing process and I decide to take a break and find a place in the room to step 'into' her as a dream figure, feeling into how she stands, moves, her attitude and way of inhabiting the space. As Helen I look back at Savannah, sitting at her computer and feel appreciation and interest for her. I feel a conviction and solidness in my torso, and encourage her to keep going with what she's doing. Then I lose it again, it's hard to fully be in the experience - I might have reached an edge. I realise I'm more identified with me, Savannah, and with missing Helen. Following this part of my process, I go back to being everyday me and speak with her, telling her what she means to me. This spontaneous innerwork doesn't feel so 'complete,' though it also felt important to simply give my feelings, grief and our relationship space. Feeling my feelings and including them here, rather than just continuing to write, was more emergent, or secondary, for me at this moment.*

## **Symptom Scores Workshops**

In this section, I will outline key influences in the development of the Symptom Scores workshops, describe where I have shared them, and explain what the workshops involve, including their different variations.

Witnessing deep personal and collective processes during my Processwork studies have often felt to me like poetry or a profound piece of theatre. A shared resonance can be felt when a person or

group goes deeply into the nuances of an experience, highlighting the interconnectedness of our experiences. Interested in the creative, aesthetic, relational and embodied qualities of this work I became curious about using these tools in wider contexts, beyond the therapy and conflict settings I'd experienced them in.

Participating in movement improvisation classes taught by different teachers with diverse influences also shaped my journey. Around 2018, I began offering workshops blending concepts and techniques from art, dance, and Processwork. I was interested in what can happen when we make space to be with our bodies, practice different forms of perceiving, and what playful, strange, unexpected interactions and understandings might evolve from such practices. Experiencing many groups as verbal, rational and discussion-oriented, I was also guided by a desire for more creative and expansive ways of relating to myself and others in groups.

With my continued body sensation drawing practice and interest in 'scoring' methods in performance, I wanted to experiment with using the drawings as starting points for movement. In 2019 I ran the first version of what would become the Symptom Scores process. At my local community centre, I led five of us in each creating a symptom drawing and exploring the drawings as prompts for movement, alone and in pairs. In the last minutes of the session, we tried moving one of the drawings as a group. It felt enlivening. Our movements were in sync, like a shifting kaleidoscope, taking on a life of their own. We joked afterwards about doing this for a whole day next time, and that it could turn into a performance.

The satisfaction of this experience stayed with me, the enjoyment of experimenting with one another, and the surprise of something unknown emerging, as if being moved by something beyond ourselves. I've used this sense of satisfaction as a compass in the development of the project. This is a form of 'positive feedback' in Processwork terms, referring to a positive feedback loop where an emergent signal spontaneously picks up in energy and amplifies.

Trying things out, noticing my inner feedback and inviting responses from others have guided me from one variation to the next, exploring different applications and focuses within the process, sensing that there are many possibilities and directions for developing it.

So far I've offered this workshop around thirty times, mostly in the UK and once in Rotterdam, Zürich and rural Portugal. These have taken place in different settings - including art and

performance, community and wellbeing, teamwork and experimental education - resulting in multiple phases of development with varying emphases.

The central aspect running through all the variations involves participants translating their drawings of bodily symptoms into movement. These drawings then serve as ‘scores’ or visual cues to inspire improvised movement, with the symptom acting as the ‘choreographer.’ By switching roles between mover and observer, participants get to experience both responding to their own and others’ drawings and watching this creative process unfold.

The variations of this process can be grouped into these three categories, while they also overlap:

### **1. Artistic Exploration: Movement in Performance and Choreography**

- This version of the workshop focuses on movement research, uncovering creative possibilities and investigating the poetic, affective, choreographic and performance potentials of the process.

### **2. Wellbeing: Embodied Effects and Shared Experiences**

- This workshop version explores how it feels to do this as a communal practice, its effects on our bodies and wellbeing, and getting to know the commonalities and differences in our experiences.

### **3. Embodied Learning and Intuitive Guidance**

- This variation investigates how the process can aid experiential learning and accessing bodily wisdom. It invites participants to engage their multisensory faculties as channels for information, exploring how this informs new patterns of being and responding to personal and collective questions and themes.

This essay will primarily focus on the third application: *Embodied Learning and Intuitive Guidance*. The steps I have developed most recently for this third application consist of:

- **Theme:** Choose a theme or question you’d like to gain a new perspective on relating to your life, work, the world - using gesture, drawing and writing.
- **Warm-up:** Guided movement warm-up.
- **Symptom:** Notice the experiential qualities of a symptom catching your attention.
- **Drawing:** Register these symptom qualities on paper through drawing.

- **Movement:** Use your drawing as a starting point for movement. How does your body respond to the qualities in the drawing?
- **Pair work:** Take turns in being the mover and observer. The mover moves in response to their partner's symptom drawing while their partner observes. Switch roles.
- **Inhabit partner's movement:** Embodiment what you were drawn to in your partner's explorations. From this new orientation, relate back to your initial theme.
- **Reflection:** Anchor insights through drawing, writing, gesture, and speaking together.

Throughout this project, I've been exploring the conditions that support emergence and ways of tuning in to the information from the 'dreaming field.' This is inspired by Processwork's suggestion that symptoms act as a 'dreamdoor' - a gateway to deeper meaning, both on a personal and collective level. A dreamdoor represents a signal catching our attention or disrupting our usual sense of self. It serves as an entry point to accessing and uncovering hidden or less familiar aspects of our experience.

The workshop process, like a form of mutual aid and embodied dream-work, explores ways participants can sense into and move one another's experiences, becoming channels for the information in one another's symptom drawings.

As an inherently relational process, my intention is to facilitate a space encouraging people to trust in their inner knowing and capacities to perceive, without requiring specialised background knowledge. I've been trying out tools to explore what conditions support this to take place. I'm interested in the effects of such communal practices, and the aesthetic, relational and sense-making possibilities emerging from them.

An important factor to keep in mind is that I have only facilitated this process in European settings, ones that are predominantly white and middle-class. This inevitably influences the assumptions, priorities and limitations shaping how I design, perceive, and reflect on the workshops. While my goal is to develop the skills needed to create a space that feels as welcoming, relevant and safe as possible, my awareness has its limits. The interests I've just outlined may not hold the same significance in settings outside of my cultural context. This also means the reception and impact of this practice will likely vary when applied in settings dissimilar to those I've encountered.

**\* Innerwork 11.03.24 - devaluer and the disembodied ghost**

*I speak about my upcoming workshop exploring combining Symptom Scores with a group process with a Processwork peer. I'm worried about not having enough sign-ups and there's a theme of 'who's in and not in'. My friend asks 'who in you is in and not in?' I realise the aspect of me that is not in is feeling a de-valuer and decide to do an innerwork on this, the criticism I'm afraid to meet.*

*Critical role: "This is privileged, you're not aware enough, it's not my thing."*

*I notice a self-assuredness in this role and feel into this quality to help me pick it up and respond: "I appreciate your directness, I want to meet it."*

*Critical role: "it feels good to be met. I'm still suspicious, not sure you could handle things getting difficult. I experience you as falling apart and not being aware enough of your positionality. People are coming with all sorts of histories. I don't think movement is an appropriate format for this kind of work with diverse groups."*

*Me, noticing my reaction to the criticism: "ouch! You call it falling apart, I stand for being vulnerable while not disappearing, staying committed. And, I'm learning. I won't always get things right, I need to try things in order to grow. I also believe in the knowledge of the group and the awareness they bring, while also not shying away from my role as facilitator."*

*I notice I feel taken by what they said about movement not being appropriate and start feeling a bit hopeless. But then a strong belief rises in me, in ways of being and doing that aren't just believing in the everyday constraints society makes. It touches me, my deep yearning and belief that other, more enriching ways are possible.*

*I make a movement with my hand and exaggerating this signal, I connect with a bursting energy, like a geyser, then a volcano - pppppppphhhhhh!!!!*

*Embodying this more fully, I feel an immense power, uninhibited. Transforming everything.*

*Then I become doubtful and think "that's too powerful, destructive."*

*I do it again and connect with feeling alive, powerful, a life force. I'm reminded of one of my teachers, JC, who was fluid in embodying his power when needed, and able to intervene with a strong 'no!'*

*I sense a bigger role in the field, a collective 'ghost' that says: "stay down, this is not valuable. Stay still, your body and your power are not welcome, stay small."*

*I'm affected by the strength of this strong ancestral algorithm/pattern that destroys life (church, patriarchal, (white) supremacist...)*

*I meet this with the volcano/JC quality: "No more! Not like this. We are all needed in our power! You are too, but you need a new way. No to your pattern of destruction! There is so much richness and vitality possible, we are all needed. Including those who say no to me or say I'm not aware - great! I need your feedback! I need and value your awareness!"*

*It feels like a very deep process, helping me become more curious about whatever comes...*

*The following day I have a therapy session and connect with the deeper currents moving all of us on our paths. The same ghost shows up again. My therapist asks if there's anything I want to say to the ghost.*

*I feel and hold my chest, not wanting to say too many words: "We all have a body, even you." It feels useful to remember the ghost as a body that's been disconnected from it. Us as bodies, meeting. Helps me to see its vulnerabilities and demystify its power, meeting as equals.*

## *Processwork philosophy*

In this section, I provide an overview of Processwork, detailing its development, and core philosophy of 'deep democracy.' I outline Processwork's approach to emergent processes and emphasis on the value of marginalised perspectives and disturbances. I then explain Processwork's perspective on symptoms, viewing them as sources of meaningful information for individual and collective change.

## **Dreaming**

Processwork, created by Arnold Mindell and colleagues, is an awareness practice and facilitation approach supporting people to understand themselves and their relationships more deeply. It can be

applied in diverse settings, including therapy, group and conflict work, organisational development, and creative fields such as dance, music and art. Processwork sees these areas as interconnected, recognising that personal, interpersonal, and collective experiences shape one another and co-arise within a transpersonal field.

Informed by Mindells' background in physics and Jungian psychology, Processwork has continued to evolve since the 1970s, incorporating ideas from various fields, including quantum physics, systems theory, Taoism, and earth-based spiritual traditions. Mindell developed this approach while seeking to understand his own health issues, encountering limits in Jungian dreamwork and medical interventions in addressing his symptoms. Through personal exploration and research with his clients, he noticed a strong correlation between people's body experiences and nighttime dreams. Mindell called this phenomenon the 'dreambody.'

Jung believed everyone has both conscious and unconscious parts shaped by their family and society. These influences can lead us to disavow aspects of ourselves, affecting our identity and well-being. He suggested deeper meaning and fulfillment come from embracing all parts of ourselves, in an ongoing process of individuation, and that our dreams are guides in this process. Dreams reveal insights about ourselves and our collective experiences.

Processwork builds on Jung's ideas by showing how patterns in our dreams also appear in our daily lives. Arnold Mindell (1985, ch. 8, para. 1) writes "the spirit of your body, the dreambody, is a multi-channeled signaler which seeks your attention through your dreams, body symptoms, and relationship problems." This broadens the concept of dreaming to include everyday experiences arising from a larger 'dreaming field.' Unintended experiences, like dreams, are bringing us meaningful, lesser-known information, inviting more access to our multifaceted natures.

## **Deep Democracy, edges and disturbance as emergence**

A philosophy of 'deep democracy' underpins Processwork, which values every part of a system, including what we typically ignore or find uncomfortable. This expands on traditional democracy where the majority wins, by considering not just facts and linear thinking, but also subjective feelings and less tangible aspects of our experiences. Its approach invites curiosity and inclusivity of all levels of experience.

Processwork offers a map of different levels of experience through which the dreaming process manifests, all existing simultaneously and on a continuum, shaping a shared dreaming field:

- Consensus Reality: What is generally agreed upon as reality in a given culture, what we are trained to perceive and focus on.
- Dreamland: Dreamlike, often overlooked, subjective, non-consensus experiences, including background feelings, fantasies and collective histories.
- Sentient/Essence dimension: Subtle, intangible, pre-verbal tendencies, part of an interconnected, non-dualistic intelligence underlying all things.

Deep democracy involves welcoming information from all these levels and supporting these aspects to interact and get to know one another. This process allows the field to know itself better, fostering more meaningful relationships, creativity and change.

‘Process’ refers to the ongoing movement of experience within ourselves and our surroundings. Informed by a Taoist approach, Processwork practitioners attune to this unfolding movement, engaging with whatever arises and exploring the information this carries for the larger system or whole.

Every system, whether an individual, a relationship or a group, has more known (primary) and lesser-known (secondary) aspects that are continuously evolving. The identities of these systems are shaped by ‘edges’ - boundaries created by beliefs, identifications and experiences that define what is considered ‘me’ and ‘not me’.

In the article, “Moving the Dreaming Body: Movement in Process Oriented Psychology,” Amy Mindell (1995, p. 59) describes the edge as the meeting point between primary and secondary processes, appearing when “something new arises and we are confronted with the boundaries of our known world.”

Edges are important as our ability to function relies on prioritising certain perspectives over others (Diamond & Jones, 2004). They outline the borders of our perceived reality and sense of self, beyond which lie the aspects we’ve consciously and unconsciously excluded.

With change as the primary constant, Processwork puts forward that a creative transpersonal dreaming process is always happening, bringing change to apparently stable systems. This is perceivable through unexpected signals catching our attention or troubling our usual primary

identity and intentions. Things that disturb us are edges of ourselves and our known systems, the territory where change happens. They point to meaningful but marginalised information trying to become more apparent to us individually and collectively.

Processwork suggests the less known, often difficult things we meet hold valuable insights for navigating our path and can be understood as a teacher. By suspending our everyday assumptions and sensing into, expressing and integrating the emerging information, including interacting from here with what we already know (our inner or outer mainstream), the system can better understand itself and evolve. This interaction is what supports change to happen in the field.

In practice, this might involve amplifying, with awareness, the polarisation in a group conflict, bringing out the different perspectives, power dynamics and tensions in the background and supporting their interaction. In work with individuals it could mean exploring unintended experiences - such as body symptoms, dreams, movements or relationship issues - to uncover aspects of themselves that are seeking greater awareness. In the innerworks I've shared so far, I've described moments where I've noticed feeling disturbed or something unintended happening, and ways of exploring the emergent information. I describe the approach to this in more detail in the *Processwork tools* section.

## **Symptoms as emergent information**

A symptom can be defined as something felt or experienced indicating the existence of something, particularly something undesirable. They are signals pointing to an underlying cause or condition that may require attention or intervention. Instead of aiming to fix or eliminate them, Processwork sees symptoms and other disturbances as messengers holding valuable 'dreaming' information for personal and collective change. Its aim is to embrace and deepen what is happening rather than resisting or trying to change it.

Processwork looks at experiences in a non-pathologising and process - rather than state-oriented - way, suspending prescriptions of 'health' or 'normality,' recognising these as culturally relative. This doesn't mean ignoring the value of medical help or the pain symptoms can cause. Processwork recognises that health and illness are influenced by many factors, including unequal access to care and impacts of social inequalities.

Complementing other approaches to healing, Processwork offers the lens that symptoms are calling us to connect with less familiar parts of ourselves and the collective field. Audergon (2005, p. 155) suggests, “one reason to focus on the body is that it carries information that is not structured by our intentions and will... The body is a teacher to live life fully.”

Exploring the chronic tightness in my neck and jaw over recent years, I’ve often connected with qualities of firmness, strength, and self-belief. Typically, I’m more identified with being adaptable and self-doubting. It’s a longer term emergent process or edge for me to identify with my power. The framework of edges suggests that where I reach an unknown place or personally can’t go further in my interactions, my body goes further to express something.

This edge is both personal and collective, as the norms in my family culture, and socialisation as a white, middle class, cis woman, for example, shape the range of behaviours considered acceptable for me. In this sense troubling body experiences can be understood as an “internal form of a diversity issue asking for greater consciousness” (Arnold Mindell, 2017, p. 52). This perspective highlights ways symptoms have a social context and are not only our own, but expressions of a wider field of experiences and relations.

Embracing the strength within my symptoms and living this in my daily interactions may not necessarily cure them, but can lead to relief. When I approach my symptoms with curiosity, when this feels accessible, my relationship to them changes. Finding meaning in them can make things easier, sometimes even shift how the symptoms feel physically. I may recognise related patterns elsewhere in my life, helping me clarify my behaviours and motivations. In the example above, it might also help me notice ways I use my power unconsciously, when I don’t identify with it.

***\* Innerwork 21.08.24 - a hot spot affecting my jaw***

*As I work on my dissertation I remember a moment two years ago when my tight jaw symptom amplified. A participant of a Symptom Scores workshop made an unintentionally critical comment about my use of the word ‘flirt’ in my facilitation. I remember my jaw seizing up and having a headache for the rest of the session. For months from this moment onwards my restricted jaw symptom became more constant.*

*I decide to go back to the memory of that moment to explore it. I realise the moment was a 'hot spot,' the Processwork name for a moment of heightened energy, intensity or emotion during an interaction. This signals an edge in a dynamic and indicates there is valuable information here about the emergent process within a group, relationship or individual.*

*I explore role playing the two sides in the interaction, imagining and feeling into each role by stepping into it.*

*The participant making the comment: "I want to protect myself from something, your use of the word 'flirt' feels icky. I associate it with something edgy or sexual. I didn't sign up for this!"*

*My response: "I feel self-critical and embarrassed to have used a word making you uncomfortable, and it being named like this in front of the group."*

*I realise there's a 'ghost role' of a critic here too (a role that isn't consciously or physically present or identified with by anyone, but is implied and in the atmosphere).*

*I represent this: "You made people uncomfortable, that's bad, you're bad! You should be more aware of the impact of your words, and the ways different people are impacted differently!"*

*My response to the critic: "I'm hearing you, I'm learning about diversity, how different people will be affected differently by language. I'm learning. And, if I take my side for a moment, the word 'flirt' - when invited to notice your subtle senses and the ways the world may be 'winking' at you - comes from a context and practice community within Processwork. My understanding is that it expresses a relational worldview. It's not just me - isolated, perceiving things out there in the world - but the world/dreaming field itself is also communicating with me."*

*It touches me to connect with this insight, I'm getting a feeling sense and learning something more deeply that's difficult to fully articulate... Let me get more specific, what's touching me?*

*That 'flirt' relates to something bigger than me - it's not just my individual being taking an impression from the world, but there is communication and exchange happening. It makes me more aware of the reciprocal nature of me and my surroundings. It makes me curious how to become more attuned to this.*

*The participant making the comment: "it's good to hear the context of your language, that changes something for me. And, I still want to protect myself and claim my right to be cautious."*

*Continuing to interact for a while, I notice something still doesn't feel relieved, there's not yet a shifted feeling of deeper understanding.*

*I go back to the previous comment and wonder, what are they protecting themselves from? What's the ghost role? When exploring this, I dream into a dominant predatory figure who does what they want. I realise I have still been feeling polarised towards the person, having a reaction to them. And that the quality disturbing me in their behaviour is a bit related to the one who does what they want. More precisely: Their freedom to say what they like/dislike in front of the group, to follow themselves and not adapt. This is very secondary to me, I'm less identified with being like this.*

*Feeling more into being like this, I notice I feel taller, my rib cage lifts up. More relaxed, not worrying so much, not working so hard.*

*Then I realise, my jaw also does not adapt!*

*Something feels more shifted now that I've had this realisation. I feel lighter and less reactive towards the person making the comment.*

*If I pick up this experience of not adapting and being direct, and respond from here to the initial interaction that disturbed me, what would I say?*

*"I feel a bit embarrassed when you say that about my language! Part of me wants to defend myself - I sense criticism, even if it's unintended. Another is curious about what you're reacting to, so I can learn. Thanks for your directness."*

*I'm curious about my edges to being more direct like this in my life, which is an area for more exploration. And how the process of not adapting might have been relevant to the group during the workshop.*

*Staying close to myself, not being too swayed by others or adapting is relevant for my writing process and project. Though I don't fully know what's emerging and have doubts, I sense it's important to keep going and not hesitate too much, which is my tendency. This also relates to my development as a facilitator, picking up leadership and clarifying what's important to me. (I think this is also why, even though I have a background in working collaboratively, it's been important for me to lead this project alone.) The path of this project is made by walking and following what I'm drawn to.*

## *Why Symptoms?*

Choosing to develop workshops communally exploring symptoms emerged from my drawing practice, interests in improvisation, and desires to experiment with different modalities. They also stem from a personal need to connect more with my body. Although I'm interested in body-based practices and the many ways we can know things beyond just the verbal or rational, I often end up ignoring my own bodily experiences. Sometimes I struggle to trust what my body is telling me, or I find it difficult to connect this with my daily tasks and responsibilities.

The need to centre the body more is personal to me, as well as collective. Our relationships to our bodies are extremely marginalised in Western society. Many of us have been numbed to our body experiences, partly as a means of survival. Even more marginalised are our symptoms, which we commonly want to get rid of, me included, which is understandable. Our bodies and symptoms are intimate sites where we interface with the world, with all the challenges, violence, traumas, pleasures and joys this brings. Working in this area is delicate and over a big collective edge.

I find the Processwork approach to symptoms beautiful and affirming. Framing disturbances as teachers supports us to 'stay with the trouble' (Haraway, 2016), expand our curiosity and attention, and open up to other logics. Exploring the personal, especially symptoms, is often hidden and not spoken about in public. Going there collectively can help us feel less alone, and discover similarities and differences in our experiences, inviting sensitivity and empathy.

Symptoms connect us with our common humanity, and our more-than-human relations. We all have bodies. We all get sick or will get sick some day. Connecting with this supports less siloing of identities, while also holding awareness of them. When entering the dreaming information in our symptoms and on behalf of one another, as in the Symptom Scores workshops, we're relating and being related to in ways that go beyond our fixed identities. This can remind us of our multifaceted natures, that we are not as one-dimensional as we might think.

### ***\* Innerwork 21.10.24 - belly knowing dancing fun***

*Staying with what is, sensing what is there, letting it guide the way...*

*I find myself writing a bit, then feeling overwhelmed again by all the possible ways I could approach this essay. I close my eyes and feel the way with my hand and finger, a forward*

*meandering motion. When I go too fast or my mind wanders, I start to feel overwhelm. When I slow down and bring my attention to the movement, I feel more at ease. I feel the difference in my belly, something relaxes. I wonder how to write from this place, letting that experience be my guide.*

*Staying in touch with the belly as my hand continues to move and trace the air, I get up and move around the space slowly. I remind myself of a qigong practitioner, moving with intention and sensing every movement. I experiment more with becoming like this and moving in the space in this way, hand on belly, other hand sensing the air through movement. I feel my belly as a contact point between me and the universe. I connect with this experience and turn my attention to everyday me, who's struggling to know how to approach writing her essay and finding her focus.*

*I don't have answers here, I'm absent-mindedly moving and feeling. As I stop thinking, I'm spontaneously moving more into a dance, making meandering movements that feel effortless. There's something light and sensual to the movements. It feels flowing and satisfying. I imagine writing in this way, even letting go of full sentences or how I've been trained to understand what a meaningful text or research looks like.*

*I'm writing down what just happened and already start feeling removed again from the experience. Let me get up again and move, enjoy it, be in the experience more...*

*I keep dancing and have the association of a Latin American dance, curving, rhythmic movements and music. I twist and turn, freestyling around the living room, feeling enlivened. Enjoying being and improvising, playing with the movement. There's a lightness and enjoyment, I'm having fun! I also notice a pain in my hip that's been coming and going for a while. I sense from here that having fun is the way to go. (Maybe this will help my hip too?) Play with my material, approach the process with lightness. Keep returning to this place.*

*I'm reminded of a previous thought, that improvisation is structured and unstructured, containing both qualities within it. It's a responsive skill for meeting the ambiguous and unknown.*

## *Research Methods & Materials*

The insights and reflections presented in this essay are drawn from qualitative research materials I gathered throughout the development of the project. These materials include participant feedback, personal reflections, and discussions with Processwork supervisors and colleagues. Many workshops concluded with group discussions, during which I invited participants to share their feedback. With their permission, I occasionally audio-recorded these discussions to ensure I accurately captured their reflections. I also documented my own thoughts and observations after each session.

At times, I followed up with participants who were willing to provide further feedback through one-on-one conversations. As the workshops progressed, I began asking participants to complete an online feedback form after each session. I often took photographs and occasionally collaborated with photographers for professional documentation. In the earlier stages of the project, one part of a session was also filmed. I also collected some of the drawings created by participants when they chose not to keep them.

### *Workshop Methods & Tools: Conditions supporting emergence*

In this section, I will discuss the tools and approaches used in the Symptom Scores workshop methodology, drawing from the arts and Processwork. I describe the use of scores in performance and participatory practice and applications of the workshop process as a form of divination. I contextualise this approach within the broader framework of contemporary ritual invention in social arts practice. I then address ethical considerations and the importance of building a container for the process. Finally, I outline Processwork tools, focusing on techniques for amplifying signals, following feedback and the use of channels for working with edges.

### **Scores and participatory practice**

Scores are a tool used in the arts, particularly in performance, dance and music. They're often a form of playful instruction inviting improvised action from the performer. They can be words, writing, questions, or pictures, offering ideas or tasks as a stimulus for performance. Scores can also preserve and transmit performance processes across time and space.

Rather than a set script, scores give a framework that can be interpreted and responded to in many ways. In dance, scores are often used to support innovation and the exploration of movement possibilities beyond usual habits. They prompt different forms of perception and attention. They can be immersive, keeping the performer engaged with a research task, supporting an indeterminate performance to emerge.

American choreographer Deborah Hay, whose work is influenced by Zen Buddhist ideas, often frames her choreographic prompts as “What if?” questions. The intention is not to arrive at an answer, but for the mover to be expanded and challenged in their perceptual awareness as they dance and embody the question (Goldman, 2007). Open-ended propositions such as “What if where I am is what I need?” encourage diverse interpretations and applications as dancers research the body as a site of infinite ideas and possibilities, sensing the “whole body at once [as] the teacher” (Hay, 2013, p. xv).

These improvisation practices transform dance from a technical exercise into a dynamic, creative act where the dancer becomes both creator and performer in the moment. Generating and responding to improvisation as it emerges, dancers and performance artists who embrace this approach continually discover new possibilities, deepening their connection to their craft and expanding their expressive potential. This complex and layered process is simultaneously an art form, a skill to be developed, a regular practice, and a unique way of learning and understanding.

Some of the origins of using improvisation as a contemporary performance tool can be traced back to the artistic innovations of the 1960s. During this period, Western artists shifted their focus from producing finished works to emphasising shared experiences. Performance scores often included instructions inviting audience participation, transforming art into a more interactive and accessible practice. This approach challenged traditional conventions and the elitism and consumerism associated with the arts.

A notable example is the use of graphic scores in music. These scores employ visual elements - such as symbols, shapes, and patterns - rather than standard musical notation, providing a flexible framework with its own internal logic while remaining open to interpretation. Graphic scores can be performed in countless ways by musicians, orchestras, or even audience members. Bypassing the need for specialised expertise to interpret them, the use of graphic scores fostered a democratic ethos that disrupted the traditional hierarchy between composers, performers, and audiences

(Folkerts, 2016). Everyone involved became equally significant in the creative process. Ideas such as these laid the ground for more collaborative, socially engaged art forms that brought creativity closer to everyday life.

The Symptom Scores workshops follow in the footsteps of socially engaged art. Participants are invited to step into the dual roles of observer and performer, using movement to respond to each other's symptom drawings, which serve as visual scores. The sessions are also rooted in a culture of practice-based research in dance and the arts, fostering a collaborative environment where people learn through doing and explore diverse forms of knowledge together.

Like other socially engaged art practices, the Symptom Scores process employs creative strategies - such as collaboration, participation, and dialogue - to shape experiences and inspire reflection. By fostering improvisation and discovery within a communal setting, it treats human interaction and collective practice as forms of culture-making. Encouraging participants to tune into their bodily awareness and inner responses, the approach opens up diverse ways of perceiving, sense-making, and relating, transforming everyday social processes into opportunities for creative expression and social inquiry. In this vein, the Symptom Scores process invites sensitisation, encouraging participants to attune to their body-knowing and inner feedback while engaging in shared practice.

## **Casting a question**

In light of the pressing issues of our times, many of us are seeking more equitable and inclusive ways to connect with ourselves, others, and our worlds. In this context, artists are experimenting with contemporary ritual creation, to expand possibilities for knowing, doing and existing.

Similarly, Symptom Scores can be seen as a collective ritual for coming together, connecting with embodied and communal wisdom, and exploring “how to be together otherwise?”<sup>3</sup>

One variation of the workshop involves applying the process to gain insights on a personal or collective inquiry by creating the conditions to receive information from the dreaming field. This takes inspiration from dreamwork and divination practices, such as tarot or the I Ching. Some of the art projects also inspiring this include the *Sensing Salon* by Valentina Desideri and Denise Ferreira

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<sup>3</sup> Referencing the BAK - basis voor actuele kunst (2019) exhibition ‘Trainings for the Not-Yet,’ this question invites us to consider art as a platform for reimagining how we live, relate to one another, and envision new ways of coexisting that question current social, ecological, and political norms.

da Silva, *A Question of Movement* by Marcus Coates and Henry Montes, and *Oracle Dance* initiated by a group of dancers at Impulstanz festival in 2014.

Each of these in their own way apply forms of improvisation to navigate the unknown and stay receptive to unexpected insights from our environment and relationships (Danspace Project, 2025). These ideas are not new and bring to mind age-old communal practices for tending to the shared field, combining expressive, relational and spiritual modalities to find meaning, direction and healing (Monteiro & Wall, 2011).

When exploring the workshop process as a tool for guidance and acquiring insights, I start the session by inviting participants to bring a theme or question they want to gain new perspectives on. In Processwork, as in other dreamwork modalities, making sense of somebody's dream comes through understanding the context of the person (Ribeiro, 2022). Posing an inquiry individually or as a group creates a frame to help make sense of the emergent information arising during the process. From a field theory perspective, one could say the theme or question 'constellates' the information in the field. The theme acts as an organising force, amplifying and bringing different elements of the field into relationship with each other.

In recent versions of the workshop, I have invited participants to find a gesture for their question, to help identify the situation more specifically. If someone says they are stuck, for example, this can help identify the *type* of stuckness. Expressing this in movement or a gesture can provide very direct and precise access to this information. Participants then create a quick scribble or 'energy sketch' and add a caption, which supports making sense of this when returning to it later. This helps map out the more known, primary way of relating to the situation. By exploring and embodying the emergent secondary information in the symptom during the workshop, then interacting from here with the primary viewpoint, new understanding can arise.

During the movement explorations of their Symptom Score, participants sometimes notice a coherence between the qualities of the symptom and the qualities of the issue they began with, supporting recognition of a bigger interconnected process. This aligns with the Processwork idea that the same patterns of emergent information manifest for us across different modes in which we experience the world. Discovering this continuity can support a sense of purpose in one's suffering, which can bring relief. Without diminishing the impact of suffering, this can reframe it as a

potential doorway to deeper meaning, vitality and resources trying to come through in our experiences.<sup>4</sup>

## Creating a container

### Ethical considerations

Drawing on tools from art, healing, and communal practices, Symptom Scores bridges multiple disciplines. Like many cultural practices worldwide, this doesn't follow the rigid genre categories emerging from European traditions (Spatz, 2019). It also highlights the narrow scope of Western views on therapy and art, both in how these are defined and the forms they can take.

While there's a lot of potential in the interdisciplinary nature of the project, this ambiguity also brings up ethical questions about my role as a facilitator and responsibility to participants. After one workshop participants asked, "what culture is this? Is it therapy, performance, or something else?" Their question expressed a curiosity and uncertainty about the codes of the space and how to negotiate, frame, and relate to what came up in our shared exploration.

As a communal participatory process centring felt experience, body-based inquiry and the personal material of symptoms, a level of intimacy is involved in the process. Focusing on the body, symptoms and movement in a collective setting are all commonly marginalised in the West and can be vulnerable. For many, the body is a gateway to deep experiences and traumas.

Creative expression, moving from the inside out and being potentially exposed all require an element of safety. As asserted in the film *Racism and Contemporary Dance* (2019) "a lot of the things that afford safety are the things that you get if you're privileged."

Everyone comes to the process with their particular experiences, histories and positionalities. Depending on the setting, different participants will have varied backgrounds and experience in dance and movement. The composition of the group also impacts how at ease and welcome different people feel. Additionally, what feels safe for one person may not be the same for another.

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<sup>4</sup> *"I'm interested in what ended up being quite a close connection between the intellectual process of thinking of the problem, finding the language to write that down and then the expressive mode of drawing it. And then how that actually ended up being really closely connected to the physical expression... The way [my partner] interpreted the [symptom] drawing ended up being very, very close to the energy sketch. So it was really interesting... [it] changed my language around what I thought I needed."* - Participant feedback

Creating an inclusive and trauma-informed environment that takes these different factors into account has been an important part of the workshops I continue to learn about. The need for cultivating more awareness around this is relevant across the arts and dance, as well as in broader Processwork and community contexts.

So far I've approached this through naming and acknowledging these aspects, as well as framing my own positionality and roles as both facilitator and learner, inviting feedback from the group. As I introduce the session, I provide an overview of the steps structuring the workshop, so everyone has an idea of what to expect. I invite the diverse feeling states that may be present, also noticing my own and taking time to slow down and check in with myself as I am speaking, bringing in ways I may be feeling vulnerable and how this also relates to the field we are exploring. I provide choice, encouraging the group to sense their inner responses to my prompts, follow what they're drawn to, and trust this as relevant information. As an experimental space, I suggest participants notice the boundaries of what they do and don't want to explore, and that participation can take different forms. I also mention that as an open research process in a group setting, there is risk involved and unexpected things may happen.

## Warming up

Connecting with our different forms of body-knowing can take time, the body has a different pace to the mind, and for many of us who are disconnected from our bodies, it takes a while to slow down and tune in. In some of the workshops where experimentation with movement and dance was more of a focus, the need for a warm-up also increased to reduce the risk of people injuring themselves. Wanting to try various ideas and feeling short for time, I sometimes didn't include a movement warm-up. This worked for some and less for others. After a recent workshop someone shared how a lot of their symptoms make them feel dissociated and the warm-up helped them get more into their body.

A warm-up can take many forms. One I've used frequently comes from a workshop I attended by a choreographer and movement director called Imogen Knight. What I like about this warm-up is its accessibility for those both with or without a dance background. It begins with different forms of self-touch - rubbing the skin, squeezing the muscles, then knocking the bones - to awaken different areas of the body. I then put on music and guide the group in researching variations of movement with specific body parts, starting with the feet, and eventually exploring with the head and neck. Emphasising research rather than what the movement looks like, the process organically supports

exploring movement possibilities, leading to explorations that resemble a spontaneous dance. It's a fun and supportive way for the group to enter the process, get used to moving together and get to know the space.

After a recent workshop one of the participants shared how the squeezing part of the warm-up felt very stimulating and caused them to twitch. They suggested that an invitation to use rubbing again afterwards would have been helpful as this felt more calming and centring. For me this emphasises repeating the option of choice along the way, for people to veer from my prompts and follow what they need.

Near the end of the warm-up, I incorporate a Processwork exercise for exploring and unfolding the qualities within an unintentional movement. This introduces participants to the perceptual tools I will use when facilitating them later on, to follow and unfold signals they perceive as they respond to the Symptom Scores. This involves applying tools I've learned in the context of Processwork, for perceiving and unfolding signals. It also introduces people to witnessing and being witnessed in their movements, as they share the movements they discovered with the group.

## Reflection and closing

Most of the Symptom Scores workshops have included space for reflection, whether in pairs after moving in response to one another's drawings, or through writing, drawing, and speaking with one another as a group. After a shared multisensory exploration that can feel dreamy and bring up different things for people, this supports anchoring what happened and gaining insights about people's experiences of the process.

This has been an important area of learning and development for the workshops. I've explored various approaches to navigating the transition between nonverbal exploration and verbal meaning-making, focusing on the process of returning to speaking as a group. At times, this has involved creating another drawing or encouraging participants to stay connected to their bodies, expressing their thoughts through a gesture first before immediately reverting to familiar patterns of discussion. This also offers further possibilities to respond if someone prefers not to speak.

Participants have highlighted the need for the workshop to include intentional closing and different variations of this have included each person sharing a word or gesture, moving together, or following their body's needs to find their own way of finishing. As there are diverse perspectives

about and relationships with symptoms, finding an intentional way of framing the exit from the symptom has also been suggested. Often my approach has been to follow what's happening in the group and invite participants to offer ideas as we shape the ending of the process together.

**\* Innerwork 28.02.22 - consent form**

*I've decided I want my workshops to be the focus of my dissertation. My idea is to work towards creating a film sharing the movement research from this process. I introduce the project at a seminar to my student colleagues and teacher and receive feedback that I should get consent from participants to be included in the research. Something in me is against doing this, I have a reaction. I explore processing the roles I'm noticing by going back and forth between them:*

*Official research/therapy role: "you need to work ethically, be careful and explicit about what you're doing. Be very clear so people know what they're getting themselves into. Be like this"*  
*[making a pointed, precise gesture with my thumb and forefinger, moving forward]*

*Artist role: "I don't know yet what this is, what this is going to be, it's a process, emerging, alive, co-created. I don't have that definitive quality you have. I feel restricted and hemmed in by you."*  
*[making a spontaneous movement, pulling my arms close to me]*

*This is closer to my identity in the moment - more open, loose, and feeling restricted, which is a reaction to the official role.*

*"I'm scared of scaring people off by being official. I don't want to be official, I want it to be natural, flowing, going to unexpected places."* *[making flowing movement]*

*Official research/therapy role: [making precise hand movements] "Pin it down"*

*Artist role: "I can't pin it down yet, it's in process!"*

*Official research/therapy role: "Pin it down! This is important, it's the ethical thing to do, otherwise you're being unethical."*

*Artist role: "That deflates me when you say I'm being unethical. Can't I just play and experiment with people?"*

*As I say it, I notice the other side emerging in me*

*Official research/therapy role: "You can play, but have awareness of your rank, people are participating in something you're doing, you're benefitting from it. Take care with that, these are people and deep experiences you're dealing with, this is sacred work."*

*[I'm making a gesture with my hands pulled in close to my chest, moving outwards again and again, like an offering in an ongoing wave, with the forefinger and thumb making the pointed precise form again]*

*"You can use this as an opportunity to metacommunicate. You don't have to include all the details or have it all fixed already"*

*I continue moving my hands outwards and towards one another, feeling into my finger tips, an evolving rotating outward motion*

*"Metacommunicating and giving choice along the way"*

*That brings up the other role in me again*

*Artist role: "Yes, I hear what you're saying. And metacommunicating and giving choice... I want to give them the choice to remove their consent for the video footage or photography, but I also don't want to have that hanging over my head forever - that at any point someone can withdraw their consent when I've already created an artwork with the material etc. So I notice I want to look after myself as well. I need the container as well - about what I'm agreeing to, not just what they're agreeing to."*

*I notice a shift as I realise this is also a container for myself and how this is about taking care of myself, as well as the participants. This is supported by me metacommunicating and noticing my own consent. Knowing it doesn't have to be fully fixed either.*

*[I make a fast downward gesture with my hands, something definitive in its quality]*

*The role I was initially identified with is starting to transform, it's no longer just one sided. It's integrating qualities the 'official' role was bringing. I notice I'm embodying the 'official' role a bit more now, my straight back, making the rotating movement gesture again. I'm no longer one sided but recognising both roles in what's emerging: 'knowing it doesn't have to be fixed, while still having this integrity and structure.'*

*From this emergent place, what would I say when creating the consent form...?*

*My mind wanders to the workshops, thinking about what my desire is for the participants and set-up. Noticing my boundaries, and wondering whether to be more flexible with my boundaries.*

*From here I want to say:*

*“You can withdraw your consent during the workshop process, and check again at the end whether you agree with the footage being used.”*

*It feels relieving giving this agreement a container, rather than it being open-ended.*

## **Processwork tools**

### Unfolding signals and amplification

As a process-, rather than state-based approach, Processwork views all experience as in an ongoing process of emergence and change. According to Processwork, unintended and unknown experiences are directing us towards lesser-known dreaming signals at the margins of our awareness, containing valuable patterns needed in some way for our personal and collective individuation.

To get to know this information, Processwork invites us to suspend our interpretive tendencies, which are often state-based and filtered by cultural bias. Rather than defining an experience too quickly, this approach encourages us to relate with curiosity and a beginner’s mind as we notice, unfold and deepen *how* we experience something through our senses, the ‘sensory-grounded’ information. Exploring how we experience something helps us to understand it more and enter its world. We contact the emergent process trying to be more known ‘in its own language.’ Through this we can access expanded forms of perceiving and being, and gain new insights about our experiences and direction.

To get to know an emergent process involves paying close attention to and amplifying signals, the precise details within the unintended experience. Doing this is like entering a dream-like exploration, working directly with an experience without knowing what it means. To assist working and communicating with the dreaming information within a signal, Processwork distinguishes between a number of modes of perception or ‘channels’ through which we experience the world: visual, proprioceptive (feeling), kinesthetic (movement), auditory, relationship, and world channels.

Each channel has its own ‘language,’ indicating in what way the dreaming signal is manifesting and how it can be experienced, expressed and worked with more fully, through which its meaning makes itself known.

When we pay close attention to the quality of a signal and increase awareness of it - such as seeing, hearing, feeling, or moving the quality more - the experience is supported to unfold and amplify. Stirred to express itself in its own language, as if turning up the volume on the signal, the experience increases in energy, fills out and becomes stronger and more tangible.

Sometimes amplification involves an associative process, or inviting the person to personify the experiential information they are connecting with. This gives permission to enter and shapeshift more deeply into a multi-channeled experience of the emergent process. The information amplifies across the sensory channels into a ‘globalised’ immersive experience, which strengthens and makes it more concrete. By diving into the experiences within these details, we can access new patterns, meanings and ways of inhabiting and perceiving our worlds, actualising the emerging process by picking it up more consciously.

Someone noticing their downward gaze might follow the sensory quality of this gaze, let it express itself, and discover a part of themselves that wishes to be more internal and meditative (Amy Mindell, 2002). Someone exploring a signal disturbing them in another person might exaggerate and embody this, discovering an associated quality that feels meaningful and gives access to a way of being they have marginalised in themselves. This might provide them with a new point of view or attitude for relating to this person, or to other areas in their life.

Similarly, a disturbing signal may show up as a reaction to a belief system or figure in one’s personal and collective field. Noticing the one having the reaction, and what is being reacted to, helps identify parts in the dynamic. Exploring these parts through role play, deeply going into each side and supporting their interaction is another form of amplification that allows the information underlying each side to be fully expressed and evolve. Some of the innerworks I’ve shared demonstrate this.

## Feedback

There can be subtleties, non-linearities and complexities in the ways a process unfolds itself. Because following the process is emergent and without predetermined steps, Processwork

facilitation involves in-depth training to support the ability to perceive and differentiate between signals and track, follow and facilitate the process to unfold across different perceptual channels.

Following ‘feedback’ is an essential part of this in order to be guided by the process and modify interventions based on moment-to-moment feedback. In this way, Processwork training and facilitation sometimes reminds me of a complex improvisational score, offering a diverse range of tools, principles and frameworks with which to perceive and respond to what is happening in the moment.

Positive feedback describes the positive feedback loop created when a process is being engaged and the unfolding information strengthens. Whether facilitating others or themselves through innerwork, a Processworker pays close attention to both inner and outer feedback, making interventions and checking subtle signals in response to identify whether the experience is deepening. This often includes signals that are not so conscious to our everyday mind, such as the spontaneous ways our bodies respond to something in the moment.

## Edges in unfolding signals

When people are supported to unfold and amplify new experiences or aspects of themselves, it is common for them to encounter edges, where the familiar sense of self meets unfamiliar territory. As contacting such territory challenges what we know and believe about ourselves or the world, edges can feel uncomfortable and scary, as well as exciting. Working at the edge is a creative and generative spot where new ways of being arise and systems can be supported to transform.

At our edges, we have a tendency to revert back to what is more known. Noticing when someone is at an edge is part of following a process. Without careful observation of feedback and signals in the person, group, or themselves, it can be easy for the facilitator to miss edges. Processwork offers different tools for noticing and working with edges. This might include exploring and bringing awareness to beliefs at the edge that are against the emergent information, which can foster more understanding and choice, and invite compassion for the edge.

## Channel changing at the edge

Sometimes when we reach an edge in one of the perceptual channels, we can be supported to access and amplify the emergent information by switching channels. For someone experiencing acute pain,

it might be too intense to amplify this in the proprioceptive channel. In this case, the same qualities of the body experience can be explored through a mental image, drawing, or story in the visual channel, or through sound in the auditory channel, for example.

In *Working on Yourself Alone*, Arnold Mindell (1989, p. 74) writes “switching [channels] transforms, translates, and transmutes an unacceptable message or impossible ‘language’ into an acceptable one, not by changing the content but by recreating it in a language which one can ‘speak.’” The direction to take will be determined by noticing which intervention achieves positive feedback.

At an edge, a facilitator may unfold a signal on someone’s behalf, such as through movement, with the person observing. This is another form of changing channels as the person is supported to access the unfolding information and insights through the visual channel, seeing someone else entering the experience. In this situation, the relationship channel may also be relevant to the person’s process, where experiencing another person joining and taking on an experience on their behalf is supporting their secondary process and need for an ally, for example. Unfolding signals in this way on behalf of one another has been another inspiration for the Symptom Scores project.

### ***\* Innerwork 24.08.09 - Processing roles of relaxed vs structured***

*Many times during the workshops, I have had to navigate waiting for latecomers while other participants have arrived on time. With the project relating to body symptoms and the unpredictable nature of our bodies and lives not always going to plan, I’ve sided with a more ‘relaxed’ role, believing I should be accommodating, which also happens during the workshops. It’s been more secondary for me to be ‘structured’ and follow the plan. I realise these sides also relate to wider themes in my project, connecting with emergence and structure. I decide to explore the roles through an innerwork using the movement channel.*

*I explore the structured role through finding a gesture for it: my right hand comes down vertically, fast on my left palm, like a chopping motion. clear cut. Clarity.*

*Feeling into this more, not being against the role, I explore, what feels good about this?*

*Valuing: “this is a sacred, dedicated space, we’ve committed to this, this time is precious, let’s go”*

*I have an association of a dream figure that embodies this quality, a martial artist.*

*I explore the other side, the relaxed one I've been more identified with: "we need to be receptive, responsive, flexible to everyone's diverse needs. Those are the values of this project"*

*When I feel into a gesture for this role, it feels like the weather, agile, flowing, changeable movement, moving the hips.*

*I decide to work with these two viewpoints through movement, bringing the roles into interaction by embodying and going back and forth between moving both qualities. One way to explore how they could co-exist without being polarised is to imagine a place in nature that contains both qualities. This is a more 'Essence dimension' way of exploring. An image comes to me of sharp mountains and the weather.*

*Then I feel stuck, the experience doesn't feel like it's amplifying or evolving further. I've reached an edge. I realise I feel the pressure to get somewhere, a belief system says "this needs to be 'good' and interesting for my dissertation. I need to get somewhere so this innerwork is valuable." This keeps me stuck.*

*I represent the ghost role that's creating the pressure in the background, the 'pressure-maker' and spontaneously interact with it: "no, you need to leave, this is a sacred space!"*

*I realise I picked up the structured one in that moment, the one that stands for a structure that can contain an emergent process. The structure and boundary is needed for this. I feel more into this boundary-maker quality. Fiercely loving, goddess-like. Unapologetic.*

*I return again to the landscape I saw before, the sharp mountains framing the weather flows over the lake. A harder boundary of land over which movements flow. I have a sense of my inner authority, holding this landscape in me.*

*I imagine facilitating from here, playing with this quality, e.g. intervening when people are speaking during a break and we need to transition to the next step.*

*"I love how much energy there is for this! Let's come back to what there is to say when reflecting as a group at the end!"*

*Or with people who are late, "let's get started and if latecomers come, maybe that was the right moment for them to join."*

*From here I feel more able to support both sides, the emergence and the structure. I feel more connected to my inner authority, which feels powerful and nourishing at the same time. I think about ways I can remember and connect with these qualities in myself, to approach the next workshop from here. And experiment with writing from this experience.*

## *Channel work in Symptom Scores and Processwork*

As a guided collective exercise, Symptom Scores differs from a facilitated Processwork session, which is responsive in the moment to tracking signals, feedback and following emergent secondary information. Not every Processwork session will start with focusing on a symptom as this is just one of the possible dreamdoors through which a secondary process appears and may not be the most relevant or appropriate pathway to follow in every process.

With its predefined steps, the Symptom Scores process can be compared more closely to guided exercises typically encountered during Processwork training contexts, where step-by-step templates are provided to support practicing specific facilitation skills and techniques for perceiving in different ways.

While facilitating the Symptom Scores workshop, I apply Processwork tools and principles for noticing, unfolding and amplifying signals. In preparation for creating a visual representation of their symptom, I guide participants in closely observing its phenomenological qualities, the sensory signals associated with the symptom. I offer specific ‘subchannel’ prompts that help participants discern finer details of their experience, bringing these elements into greater awareness. Often experienced in the proprioceptive channel, though not always, this might include observing aspects such as the signal’s location, size, shape, texture, intensity, rhythm, or depth.

The process of drawing these qualities to create the score involves a channel change, making the information visual. Even though this channel change isn’t directly responsive to the emergent process in each participant, drawing still leads to the amplification of an experience, a sense of contacting it more fully, and might already change something in it. Here I introduce noticing what colours people associate with what they are perceiving and invite them to trust the unexpected, framing that the experience may evolve as they draw it.

By comparison, the facilitator of a Processwork session often stays longer with unfolding a secondary signal in the channel in which it is manifesting, if the feedback confirms this direction. The understanding behind this is that staying in the same channel is the most direct way of accessing the secondary process and the heart of its message.

Sometimes during the unfolding process, a channel change occurs unconsciously when the person reaches an edge in the channel. For instance, someone exploring a punching movement might begin to amplify this but then pause and transition into a meditative state, switching to the proprioceptive channel. They might start discussing the need to relax and let go.

As contacting the punching movement is likely more secondary and 'over the edge' for the person, the facilitator might invite them to go back to the last energetic moment - an earlier point in the movement exploration where there was energy. This provides permission to delve deeper into the punching experience, inviting the process to move beyond the edge. This might result in the person connecting with a forceful part of themselves with which they are less familiar, and their deep values behind this force. Another step might then involve exploring the belief systems and collective dynamics getting in the way of the person expressing this force and their power more freely. For the process to deepen, the Processworker distinguishes whether the channel change indicates an edge or is a continuation of the amplification process.

In the workshops, I intentionally transition to the movement channel and guide participants in responding to the visual scores through improvised movement. Through spoken interventions and occasional modelling through my own movements, I provide frameworks supporting them to notice their bodily feedback, follow and trust what they are experiencing, let the information move them, and amplify the movement signals catching their attention. I prompt them to observe how these movements animate their imaginations and feelings, facilitating their exploration to deepen and develop into a multisensory experience. As if entering a world or dream-like story or dance, I invite noticing whether the experience evokes qualities of nature or resembles real or imaginary figures. Personifying the experience in this way can aid in entering and becoming it more fully.

The workshop continues with movement and observation in pairs, which brings in the relationship and visual channels. For those watching their partner respond in movement to their Symptom Score, I guide them to relax and soften their gaze, be receptive to what comes in, and aware of their physical responses, how they might experience what they perceive in their own body. I encourage them to notice the atmosphere, signals, and qualities catching their attention, as well as any associations, narratives, or forms of sense-making arising in them.

While it can be difficult to perceive and track everything happening in a group when facilitating the workshop steps, I pay attention to the group atmosphere and my own and participants' signals. When a participant seems uncertain or I perceive edges in their movements, I offer general

encouragement to the group, inviting staying with a quality longer, trusting the unexpected, following what they are enjoying and taking risks. Sometimes I suggest going further with their finger, hand, or in their imagination, if they are reaching a physical limit. Through this I am encouraging participants' perception of what is emerging, providing a frame for their experience to amplify, and giving permission and space to go further when edges arise. I describe this in more depth in *Meeting movement edges*.

## *Effects of Symptom Scores*

In this section I reflect on the physical, emotional, and relational impacts of the workshop process, drawing on participant feedback, personal reflections, and conversations with Processwork colleagues. This includes reviewing my facilitation and proposing future interventions. I explore how the workshop functions as a tool for working with edges. I then focus on relationship, movement and collective edges that emerged during the sessions, alongside insights I gained for facilitating these dynamics.

### **Becoming an instrument**

Since its beginnings, Symptom Scores was a process I shared and developed to explore as a tool and expand on the effects I was perceiving. Meaningful 'honey moments' emerged in the process again and again that energised me. There have been moments when movers unconsciously embody hidden aspects of the score they are interpreting without realising. I once made a fist while moving my partner's drawing, and they later shared they had tried to draw a fist but weren't able to. Another time, a participant responded to a symptom score by experimenting with tripping movements. We found out later the drawing related to someone's physical experience of a trip and issues they were having with their ankle.

With participants making themselves available to move and be moved, there is frequently an atmosphere of something delicate and poetic happening. Sometimes participants find meaning in the movements they witness and sometimes they don't, perhaps not in a clearly defined way anyway. Often there's surprise in the different experiences that unfold, both in the role of performer and observer.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *"It turned out that somehow I'd very strongly picked up ideas/emotions from [my partner's] inner processes and she recognised them in my movements. I think we were both a bit stunned... your process... evoked a*

Participants discover new patterns and sometimes experience somatic responses in their bodies as they witness the mover, or as they move.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes the symptom is temporarily relieved and often, though not always, participants note a physical or emotional change in how they experience the symptom. People often feel recognised and understood, even moved to tears, or like their life story is being performed by the person moving their drawing. The simple experience of another person committing and giving attention to one's drawing is in itself meaningful and moving.<sup>7</sup> As the mover, it is satisfying to help others discover new insights through one's movements and perceptions.

To have others move a Symptom Score can support gaining new perspectives. In some cases this helps participants notice what else is needed and enter the scene to bring this in. In a group's exploration of someone's Symptom Score, others' movements gave the drawer the impulse to come in and hit the ground with strong force and sound, later saying this was part of the symptom. Here, the process became amplified by the whole group, supporting the person to bring out a secondary quality of strength and power. Someone in the group said they felt relief when the person did this, like it was an energy that had been missing. Another person named how they were worried about the person and their hand.

It could have been interesting to check with the drawer whether the responses from the other people relate to inner attitudes they have towards their powerful nature, as if participants picked up different aspects, the one in them who feels relief when their intensity is expressed, and the one who gets worried when doing this. At the same time, these are shared roles in the collective field that not only relate to the person's own psychology, but to broader attitudes that only permit strong expression in certain ways and contexts, from certain types of bodies. As I reflect on it now, I realise that framing some of these aspects could be a way of facilitating greater awareness of the dynamics around this collective edge to strong expression.

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*deep communication between us in the moment. To me it felt a bit like one of those very rare times when you immediately and intuitively know, upon meeting someone, that there is something special between you.” - Participant feedback*

<sup>6</sup> *“Your movements offered me suggestions for how to be in my body, new ways I hadn't thought of before. It was also very enjoyable, I physically felt your movements in my body.” - Participant feedback*

<sup>7</sup> *“I felt so thankful for the presence of my movement mirror... I felt such care & devotion... The process felt like seeing myself in the mirror after years of not having the time to look.” - Participant feedback*

## Symptom Scores as tool for working with edges

Guiding a group through the steps and offering choice to participants in how much or little they wish to share during group reflection at the end, has meant it is sometimes difficult for me to tell what is happening for people during the workshops. Reflecting on what happened in the sessions personally and in the group, recording what people shared, as well as asking participants to complete feedback forms after the workshops, with varied success, have contributed to me identifying some of the following learnings.

There are a number of ways the Symptom Scores process supports working with and going over edges. For many people, exploring symptoms and doing this in a relational way is already unusual and over an edge, as is the act of drawing or moving in unconventional ways in a public setting. Sometimes people find the initial steps of making a drawing and moving in response to this challenging. Knowing where the drawing comes from, suffering from and having pre-existing ideas about the symptom can understandably get in the way of approaching it freely.

In contrast, moving in response to someone else's drawing or watching someone move yours brings a distance that is often helpful.<sup>8</sup> A partner can support going over the edge to exploring the symptom without preconceptions, amplifying and finding new ways of relating to the material. From a field perspective, we can also understand the partner as being 'dreamed up' by the field, unintentionally embodying patterns in the dreaming process and having fewer edges to this happening. The drawing acts as a nonverbal placeholder and anchor that conveys meaning, without pinning it down. It can be related to and 'read' in different ways. The switches to the visual channel throughout the process, whether through drawing or observing, also support strengthening an internal seer and experience of being seen, which can shift how someone makes sense of their experiences.<sup>9</sup>

Exploring symptoms in this way offers an alternative to conventional medical or therapy contexts based on a professional-client dynamic. Instead, Symptom Scores follows a peer support approach,

<sup>8</sup> *"Drawing it felt a bit hard, but seeing it, witnessing the other person take it into their body, to interpret the picture, helped me feel more connected to it, and more connecting to the other person."* - Participant feedback

<sup>9</sup> *"I discovered the instances in which my symptom isn't as strong and have navigated the ways in which the strength varies and what leads it to vary. Drawing it allowed me to see it however I managed to draw it... Using colours and shapes allowed me to tap into the shades and intricacies of my symptom, it allowed me to explore it deeper. This in turn led me to understand it better, after the workshop."* - Participant feedback

with reciprocity of giving and receiving as central to the process. People explore their own material while supported by and in parallel to the group, and experience themselves in multiple roles, going back and forth between different positions, not fixed in the role of the one suffering from the experience. In this way, the process is a social practice - one that involves collaboration, embodied exploration, and a collective commitment to one another's well-being.

Sharing the process together provides an antidote to the common experience of isolation brought on by our symptoms and facilitates an attitude of curiosity that in itself can bring relief. It highlights the meaningful effects of joining and being joined in one's experiences.<sup>10</sup> It can also provide the opportunity to explore how people's experiences relate and differ to one another.

Although I am in the facilitator role and hold specific responsibilities in this, there have been numerous times when I have also taken part as a participant while simultaneously facilitating. Other times I have shared with the group what came up for me while doing an innerwork before the session using the Symptom Scores process. There has been good feedback to me bringing myself in in this way, which includes sharing my own vulnerabilities, rather than positioning myself as outside of the process.<sup>11</sup>

Meeting one another, often for the first time, and interacting largely non-verbally through creative expression goes over a collective edge in a verbal-oriented society.<sup>12</sup> This can open up different ways of relating, seeing one another, and being seen, beyond our everyday identities and styles of communication. It can also inform different qualities of conversation when the group transitions to speaking with one another as we reflect together and conclude the session.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the

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<sup>10</sup> *"I really enjoyed the collaborative process... Watching [my drawing] be moved by somebody contributed to me feeling less lonely in my experience of the symptom. Seeing the person's interpretation of it showed me the ways in which my experience can be shared by someone, even if they might not understand my symptom as clearly from a drawing."* - Participant feedback

<sup>11</sup> *"Sharing your vulnerability at the beginning was helpful for me. Like with meditation - recognising and staying with what is happening for me. It helped me to know, 'this is allowed', I can recognise my feelings."* - Participant feedback

<sup>12</sup> *"It felt a bit magical to be able to walk off the street, from work and "adult" life and so quickly sink into a playful and vulnerable space with... strangers. It felt liberating to be witnessed when moving another person's work, for judgement to be largely suspended, though I did feel a little self-conscious."* - Participant feedback

<sup>13</sup> *"The discussion as a response to the group moving the drawings was very engaging and probably what I mostly take away... I think that sharing movement so openly with other people allowed us all to be very open and take a deeper journey."* - Participant feedback

workshops, participants have continually emphasised the value of different perspectives shared in the group setting. Different people bring different associations, knowledge, experiences and forms of perceiving, which enrich the process and contribute to new insights.<sup>14</sup>

With the Symptom Scores process involving exploring personal material in a collective setting, the multi-channeled tools allow participants to verbally share as much or as little about their experience as they want to. Working in this way allows for potentially deep exploration and discovery while also respecting privacy. This option of choice feels really important, particularly in contexts outside of a therapeutic frame where participants may not expect to share intimately or expose personal details about themselves.

## **Relationship edges encountered during the workshops**

The largely non-verbal nature of the workshop process can also be challenging for people. In one session a participant named how they experienced the session as overwhelming and needed dialogue to feel more held and grounded. They decided they didn't want their drawing to be moved and laid out sheets of paper around themselves. Noting how they had physically created a boundary, they reflected on how their symptom is also a boundary towards the world. We considered how saying "no" to having their drawing moved was a form of picking up this boundary-making quality.

With the relational aspect being so central in the process, this is another channel where edges arise. Just as people can feel recognised through others' movement responses to their drawing, they can also have reactions to what they are observing.<sup>15</sup> Giving one-to-one feedback after one of the workshops, a participant shared with me they felt they had been care-taking their partner. Their partner had been very moved by the way the participant responded to their drawing. The participant didn't feel the same about their partner's movements in return but felt they needed to give a similar response.

The participant's experience can be understood as a personal edge. It might be difficult for them to bring in their actual experience in relationships, for various reasons. They may have a tendency to

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<sup>14</sup> *"The group reflecting back their diverse knowledge to one another, associations, non-professional... brought in surprising information, planted seeds... created a more diverse field than a one-on-one space. [It] took me out of my own process, in a good way. Helped me be challenged and open up things more."* - Participant feedback

<sup>15</sup> *"One part of my partners movements I couldn't understand or relate to and I felt a bit irritated, maybe misunderstood there (!)"* - Participant feedback

adapt to others, which may relate to the symptom they were exploring. At the same time when thinking systemically, this edge is also informed by collective belief systems and expectations structuring what is and isn't ok to name in a relationship or group context. Power differentials and positionality will influence this, as well as the momentary atmosphere and field created by the group, including myself as the facilitator.

During the group reflection part of the workshop, this same participant named they had found the session tiring. Hearing later about the dynamic they had experienced in their pair work, I reflected on how encountering and feeling stuck at our edges can make us tired. I wondered whether this had contributed to their tiredness. When brought to an edge and experiencing something we are against in some way, this internal conflict takes energy and attention. The facilitation tool of framing dynamics that may be happening is useful here.

Studying this now helps me recognise that their experience is common for many of us when in groups. It's a shared role in the field. To name possible roles and experiences that may be in the air as the group is exploring can relieve someone who is holding a less harmonious experience and free them from feeling stuck in this role. Bringing it out means it doesn't have to stay hidden.

I have started highlighting that people may resonate with certain moments while not with others, and inviting participants to stay curious and value what they notice as relevant information. If reacting to something another person is doing, I could suggest noticing what specifically disturbs them about what they're seeing. If we view the things disturbing us as parts of ourselves that we are rejecting in some way, they might consider how this could be a possible enrichment or area of creative exploration. If they don't want to take it on or focus on it, maybe the act of saying "no" to it is what matters.

I could encourage participants to observe ways they might be adapting and consider what actions they want to take, inviting them to take a risk if they want. I could also pick this up in myself as the facilitator, noticing if I am adapting and what I might be adapting to. This can inform what I name in the group, using my experience to sense, respond and bring awareness to the collective field.

## **Meeting movement edges**

As touched on already, edges shape the boundaries of our more known primary identity and what we consider outside of this. Amy Mindell (1995) explains "all of our fears and beliefs which forbid

us to explore new territory arise at the edge.” When our primary process is confronted with something lesser-known that our more conscious self is against in some way, we often exhibit edge behaviour and feel discomfort. Edge behaviour can include boredom, not knowing what to do next, self-consciousness or self-doubt, confusion, laughter or distraction, as well as feeling something is too much and pulling away.

The concept of movement edges in Processwork relates to the ways our edges show up explicitly in the movement channel. This might relate to the physical inability of sustaining a movement. It could also refer to a moment while moving where we meet a boundary in our experience and a sudden shift occurs, altering the energy that was there before. Movement edges are central to understanding how we express and navigate our internal processes through physical movement.

We are not typically trained to perceive our movement edges. The edge to a movement is often overlooked as many of the feelings that commonly arise around an edge are absent. Without us noticing, a movement might stop or change in quality, direction or body part. All of these are signals for detecting edges in movement. When touching on something lesser-known and secondary, we tend to move away without realising towards what is more known or comfortable. We might find we are repeating a movement but losing interest, not quite going all the way with it. Or change from one movement quality to another in a way that interrupts what was unfolding, reverting back to more familiar movement patterns. The energy in what we were doing dissipates and we lose touch with the original emerging quality.

In one-to-one Processwork facilitation, the facilitator pays attention to these signals and encourages the person to experientially reconnect again with the emerging movement that was there before the edge. Acknowledging the edge itself can also be an effective way to increase awareness of the dynamics surrounding it. Secondary experiences beyond our edges often challenge our primary identity due to personal and cultural factors. Movement offers a way to explore these unfamiliar experiences, enabling access to parts of ourselves that may feel inaccessible within societal constraints.

Engaging experientially in movement can help reframe certain ways of being as valuable rather than threatening, easing fears around self-expression. It can reduce concerns about harming others when expressing oneself with strength and freedom, for example (Jobe, 2016). Edge work is central in Processwork, as it's where transformation, choice, and freedom of expression emerge, through this interaction with the boundaries of identity.

Leading a guided exercise in a group setting as I do in the workshops makes identifying movement edge signals in the individual participants more challenging. While I try to pay attention to this and adapt my interventions to what I'm noticing in the room, such as inviting people to trust what they are doing, affirming there is no right or wrong, and encouraging them to go back to a moment where something 'caught light' if they feel lost, or to take a risk, for example, it's not always easy to know what people are following and whether or not this is more primary or secondary to them.

Edges can also arise in the observer, who may interpret their partner's movements through their own biases, from the perspective of their primary identity, giving preference to some forms of movement and associations over others. As described above, there is the possibility here of inviting curiosity about the movements participants are less drawn to or rejecting, and to consider whether they wish to explore these further, framing these as potential areas for discovery.

### **Collective edges during group reflection**

At the end of each workshop, I give space to talk together about the experience as a group. During these reflections I have started paying attention to whether edges may have come up in the explorations. I am curious about this as noticing and bringing awareness to edges can support potential deepening and access to further information and insight, both personally and collectively. Sometimes this is not so easy to identify without knowing more about each individual's context and experiences.

Edges in the process might be indicated by an apparent mismatch between how someone draws or describes their symptom and what they say they experienced. For example, in one session, a participant reflected on the similarity between their Symptom Score and the energy sketch they created to express their question, both characterised by squiggly, turbulent energy filling the space. They noted they rarely express this energy outwardly and it tends to become trapped in their body, leading to tension. The person found value in physically moving this energy when first exploring their drawing. They said watching their partner move in response to their drawing introduced a softer perspective, opening up the possibility of approaching it in a slower, softer way.

As I listened, I wondered whether the slower gentle quality indicated an edge to something more energetic and intense. I enquired whether the softness in approach could support accessing the intensity in a way that meets it without it taking over, which may be a fear contributing to the edge.

In my intervention I was inviting both qualities, the person's attraction to the gentleness, as well as the more disturbing intensity, curious about how they might both be important.

Having been the person's partner in this session, I shared how when moving the drawing, I experienced strength in it. I framed how many of us, including myself, don't often tap into or express this kind of intense energy, possibly because of personal habits or our socialisation. I wondered what it would be like to access this energy more often, recognising it as a natural part of us. Framing the collective dimension I spoke about ways our experiences in the world might discourage this kind of expression, sometimes for good reasons like keeping us safe.

Framing in this way in the group offers an opportunity to consider the dynamics and belief systems that get in the way of living certain parts of ourselves. These are not just personal but shared edges. Reflecting on them together brings this more into view.

Responding to what I'd said, the person recalled someone in their life who often expresses anger. While they had initially reacted to this, they came to appreciate how this relationship gave them permission to express their own anger. Another participant resonated with this, noting how their symptom score exploration had related to rage and discovering new aspects and choices within this. Through these reflections, the group was highlighting a collective edge towards anger and intense emotions, and exploring different ways of relating to these feelings.

I am keen to deepen this collective edge work in future workshops. Moving forward, such moments could be enriched by more explicitly exploring the underlying dynamics and belief systems at play around intense emotions. Bringing these to light and engaging with the emerging patterns within the group could further utilise the process as a space of mutual learning and consciousness raising.

This approach adds another dimension to the workshop as a socially engaged arts practice, where collective reflection and creative interaction serve as the medium for examining and reshaping our shared social realities. Processwork's concept of edges supports this communal practice by raising awareness of the cultural boundaries shaping our experiences and offering insights that open up new ways of responding.

There is great potential here in exploring the collective dimensions of symptoms, how they interrelate with the worlds we inhabit, and Arnold Mindell's (1985, ch. 7, para. 21) suggestion that "our body problems are also problems of the world around us; we suffer in the way the whole world

suffers. Our illness is a dream; it is a symptom of incongruity of the world we live in... no one is sick by himself; we all live in a field.”

### *My ‘democratic vs expert’ edge*

In this section, I explore an ongoing tension coming up for me during the project’s development, between bringing in my expertise and centring participant’s inner knowing. I relate this to collective dynamics, and recurring themes in my process navigating between seeking structure and remaining open to the mysterious and unknown. I reflect on how Processwork’s Essence dimension interventions can be applied to these dynamics during the workshop, as a way of anchoring experiences by supporting awareness without overly defining them.

This project has been rooted in valuing people’s inner knowing and perception and encouraging belief in this, which aligns with my personal journey of trusting my own insights and ideas. While this is one of my intentions, I have also encountered personal edges with this during the workshops.

In one session, for instance, someone’s drawing looked dense and dark and this person described their symptom as feeling heavy. They then spoke excitedly about having connected with a quality of lightness through their partner’s movements of their symptom score. This made me curious about whether or not the heavy, dense quality had found expression in the process, which seemed more secondary to me. This situation brought me to a personal edge as I hesitated to probe further into the dense heaviness. I didn’t want to undermine the participant’s meaningful experience with the lightness.

I’ve sometimes been worried that if I apply Processwork theory more concretely in the workshops, emphasising what I perceive as the lesser-known secondary process for participants, I might impose my ideas of what’s important onto them. Although Processwork is based on following feedback and doesn’t set a fixed path, I might still get too attached to my hypothesis about the process.

This has created a tension in me, polarising my desire to create an accessible, non-hierarchical, and democratic process against the impulse to bring in more of my expertise. Currently, I’m more identified with the ‘democratic’ role. Thinking systemically, this relates to a shared role in the collective field reacting to the dominance of hierarchical and ‘expert’-driven approaches to

organising the world, which can be seen across the fields of education, healing, and art, for example. These approaches often suppress or devalue alternative forms of knowing and living.

The ‘democratic’ perspective in me argues that incorporating more Processwork thinking might make the process overly reliant on one particular form of knowledge or risk imposing it on others. It emphasises the accessibility of nonverbal modalities like drawing and moving, which don’t require special training and can be easily adopted and expanded upon by participants.<sup>16</sup> For example, I’ve often invited participants to suggest something for us to try towards the end of a session, to experiment with the possibilities of the process together and learn from one another.

My desire to cultivate multisensory forms of knowing and affirm aspects of the workshop that go beyond verbal and rational understanding connects to this ‘democratic vs expert’ edge. This echoes the polarity I discussed in the *Project Introduction*, exploring the balance between seeking structure and remaining open to the mysterious and unknown. It’s also mirrored in some of the dynamics showing up in my innerworks.

The ‘democratic’ role argues that meaningful experiences already occur in the workshops without needing to explain everything or go in a particular direction. This perspective was affirmed by a participant who spoke about the value of staying with experiences as they are, rather than rushing to make meaning or understand them. They suggested the need to go to meaning comes from a need for security. They were bringing awareness to the mysterious aspects of our experiences that are not so easy to put into words, and a collective edge to this.

Interestingly, the ‘expert’ role within me agrees with this, relating it to Processwork’s concept of the Sentient or Essence dimension. To facilitate connection with this level of awareness, I could draw attention to moments during the workshop where we seem to touch upon these more mysterious, sentient experiences. This approach would invite noticing atmospheric changes and offer open questions like “was there a sense of ‘aha?’” “did you feel you dropped deeper into something, to another place that gave you something...?” This could support participants in anchoring their

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<sup>16</sup> *“I’m always fascinated by these experiences where we explore the spectrum of our being. Always reminds me we’re living at such a reduced capacity. There’s so much more scope of our existence and who we are as people. Spaces like this are a container to allow those other things to rise up. We don’t necessarily have a culture of this kind of movement, but it’s still deeply within us somehow, it just needs a space to catalyse... like those images of a desert and rain happens and all of a sudden there’s so much stuff and it was there all along.” - Participant Feedback*

experiences without defining them too concretely, capturing shifts and changes and welcoming the diversity of experiences, including the subtle and nonverbal.

The tension between these roles starts shifting as I engage with them more deeply. In the innerworks below I demonstrate further ways I processed this polarity.

***\* Innerwork 04.11.24 - democratic vs imposing a framework\_belief in the magic***

*I decide to explore the democratic and expert roles. I do this twice as the first time I realise I'm reacting to a critic and process this first:*

*I'm feeling caught by this dynamic between being democratic vs imposing an approach more fully, like an expert who says, "this is the right way". I'm aware I'm more identified with the democratic one that says "if you want to make something democratic and accessible and you're saying..."*

*I go blank... and lose my thread.*

*I slow down, feeling into my experience*

*Big out breath*

*Something is working hard and pushing through and something else says, "let's take a moment" and slows down. I go deeper into myself. I notice I have my arms around my belly.*

*I'm holding myself and notice a critic is around, triggered by a post I just read on social media from an activist therapist. I represent the criticism:*

*Critic: "you're not living up to your values, you're not doing what you're saying you're doing.*

*You're a fraud. What you're doing is privileged, it's some fluff you wanted to do for yourself, you're being individualistic, you need to be more community oriented, ask people in need what they want, rather than impose this creative pursuit you're just doing for yourself, your ego. I see right through you."*

*"Ouch!", I notice my reaction to this criticism and give this space.*

*Then I feel more into the posture and gesture of this critical role to identify its quality.*

*In the role I'm very sure of myself, relaxed and sharp.*

*I pick up and embody those qualities more to help me interact with the critic:*

*“Thanks for your feedback. I disagree with your analysis. Yes, I’m doing this based on a wish for self-expression, but it’s deeper than that. I believe more ways are possible and needed. It doesn’t mean I’m not open to criticism. But to just put me down completely is inaccurate and I disagree.*

*You accuse me of doing this just for myself... Maybe I need to pick that up even more consciously... Something about doing this for myself actually feels important. I’m practicing following myself deeply and believe that’s meaningful. That doesn’t mean keeping myself out of the world and not being accountable. I’m developing tools to support myself to be deeply engaged. When I only think like you in these stricter ways, I feel myself becoming rigid. It’s not sustainable. I need to connect with my resources and creativity.*

*This is also what I want to facilitate in the work. To explore all sorts of possibilities for making sense of things. Because we have access to so many more capacities than we’re often taught we do. That’s deeply important to me. Makes me feel a bit emotional. The richness that could be possible, that is possible sometimes, these moments of magic. We are magic and we have access to magic. Many others are probably much more in touch with that than me, and I’m finding my way, that’s what I’m doing here. Thank you for helping me clarify that.”*

*I notice my strength as I say this and it feels empowering and enriching. I remember this is also where my interest comes from in bringing in more Processwork tools - there’s a precision to them that can really support deeper awareness and transformation, and access to these different capacities in ourselves. The ‘expert’ side is starting to be more known in me and I feel a little less polarised towards it.*

*I take another moment to sense into this belief in the magic, to help anchor and feel this even more deeply. I sense a rising and expanding in my belly, like a pure vitality. Brings up feeling for me. Deeply satisfying and alive.*

***\* Innerwork 05.11.24 - democratic vs expert\_dreamdoor of the ‘imposer’***

*Yesterday I touched on these roles but feel I didn’t yet process their interaction more deeply. I’m trying again today.*

*Roles: ‘democratic and inclusive’ vs ‘expert bringing their specific frame and lens’*

*Representing the democratic one closer to my identity and more primary for me in this moment: “we don’t have enough spaces and education that honour the knowledge we already have and encourage us to trust ourselves; our perception and what we’re already able to pick up in subtle ways, as well as our life experiences. If this was more valued, I believe it would help us navigate collective issues differently. These multisensory ways of knowing can free us up from stuckness at the Consensus Reality level, where we stay at the level of facts and discussion. There is so much more we can tap into when creating the conditions for this to come through. Rather than me imposing that capacity onto people - they already have it!”*

*I get to an edge and doubt myself here.*

*Something says: “by setting up and facilitating the workshops, you’re also guiding and bringing a specific frame and lens, you’re already imposing something.”*

*I respond: “Yes, and I’m guiding access to what’s already there. I’m also learning from other people about their ways, I’m not fixed on it being my way. While also believing in my contribution. It’s one contribution amongst many.”*

*I start thinking about my edge in the workshops when I hesitate to ask about different aspects I’m perceiving. What stops me from suggesting “let’s stay here, let’s go deeper here”?*

*I notice there’s doubt: “is this allowed? Is it what people signed up for? Is it ethical for me to invite that if it might be too personal?”*

*I get distracted, hearing speaking coming from the front room. A handyman has come round giving advice about windows. Rather than thinking this is just a distraction or edge, I decide to be curious and reflect on it as a flirt, which might be an amplification of my emergent process in another channel. Here’s someone who’s bringing their expertise. They’re not imposing something, they’re offering information so the one receiving can be more informed and still find their own way. As I think about this, something changes a little bit in how I relate to the expert role, I’m less against it.*

*Representing the expert role: “I have these great tools to offer! What draws me to them is that they go very deep. Working at the edge and tracking this has a depth and precision. This is a contribution that Processwork makes. It’s energising and connects us with parts of ourselves that get marginalised in our lives and in society. I’m passionate about that, it’s a contribution. If I learn*

*to craft this workshop by bringing these skills in more, that's a powerful thing to do and a gift I have to offer."*

*Democratic: "but I don't know how to do that"*

*Expert: "you're learning by doing it, trying things, getting more precise. That's the research you're doing."*

*Democratic: "but what if people don't want to do that?"*

*Expert: "that's ok, be clear in your invitation in what you want to research and people can decide for themselves. You've got intuition that there's potential here for something meaningful. You don't have to know it all already. Through doing and reflecting something develops."*

*Democratic: "I like how you're giving me advice and helping me honour this process more..."*

*I notice I'm getting something intellectually but not feeling a change or shift... staying more primary, rather than connecting with a secondary process. This makes me wonder - what's the edge here? Is there something I'm still feeling polarised against?*

*There's still something like the activist figure from yesterday around that says: "you need to make this non-hierarchical. It's too elitist if you bring in your expertise or too much theory, this should be accessible to people."*

*Me in response: "I notice I get taken by you... And, I wonder, is it actually elitist? Or is it doing what I've wanted to do this whole time - making Processwork tools more accessible, finding ways of applying them in broad contexts, offering intuitive ways of applying the theory. Being creative with sharing this knowledge, and supporting people to pick it up and also develop it further. If I don't bring in my skills, I'm reinforcing a split. Rather than acknowledging - this is what I can share, these are the tools I'm offering."*

*It feels good to express this, and I still feel at an edge to side more with the expert.*

*I decide to step into the role physically. How does the expert stand?*

*Expert: "I have expertise to share, many of us do. I don't claim to have the knowledge of everything, I don't claim it will be useful for everyone, but I've got skills that are meaningful. I'm an expert and learner at the same time. I'm suggesting the participants are the same, learner and expert."*

*Doubt, another edge comes - "what if participants say one thing and I impose a Processwork analysis?"*

*"I can frame it as both/and: 'From my perspective, where I'm coming from, I might understand it like this.' Offering it as a dialogue rather than imposing it."*

*Something is still not feeling shifted!!*

*I finally notice when I describe the expert as 'imposing,' this is a label given from the perspective and assumptions of my primary process, which is still against it. To be imposing is the most disturbing and secondary thing for me here, so let me explore that more deeply.*

*What's the experiential quality of the 'imposing' one - its beingness?*

*(If I forget about my beliefs against this for a moment)*

*Wide shoulders, confident*

*No doubt, certainty, clarity*

*Fingertips touching*

*Standing fully for what I bring*

*These qualities relate to my long-term secondary process. It might still need more unfolding, and it feels good to reach this spot, something's different. I'm not so bothered about the democratic/expert binary from here. I feel more free to try things when I notice something and also drop the intervention again if there isn't much feedback.*

*Becoming more experiential rather than verbal was helpful. As well as identifying the disturbance of the 'imposer' more precisely.*

## *Areas for further exploration and research*

In this section, I present areas for further research and potential applications of the workshop in various contexts. I begin by exploring the nuances of process structure and the potentials of researching why individuals in Processwork therapy may either embrace the nature of their symptoms or be drawn to symptom relief. Next, I outline the potential benefits of extended workshop practice with the same group of participants, and applications of the workshop process in performance research and group discussion settings. I then consider the workshop's relevance in education and organisational development, especially in light of growing interest in arts-informed and embodied learning. Following this, I focus on improvements in participants' symptom experiences after the workshops, using data collected from post-workshop feedback forms. I discuss the workshop's potential relevance within healthcare settings, highlighting this as an area for potential research.

### **Spectrums of a process**

Together with Kate Jobe, my dissertation supervisor, we reflected on the example above, where the participant connected with a quality of lightness rather than the heaviness in their symptom. While we'd need more context to fully understand the person's process, studying this brought out further nuances in considering process structure during the workshops. Reflecting on this is beneficial as it helps me avoid making assumptions about what I'm noticing. This gives me more choices in framing and offering what I perceive back to the group.

In this case, it's possible that wanting to experience more lightness might have been more intended and primary for the person. A person's primary process needs care and is important to stay with at times. It may also be the case that aspects of *both* lightness and heaviness are less known for them. These might express a polarity in their process, rather than indicating an edge preferencing lightness over heaviness. Both potentially point towards secondary ways of being to which they have edges.

The person saw something that relieves them from heaviness. We might hypothesise that they have a bigger edge to the heaviness, that this is furthest away from their everyday identity. It is also possible that lightness signifies a 'Phase 1' experience, a concept linked to Arnold Mindell's (2017)

‘Four Phases of Conflict.’<sup>17</sup> For some individuals, the attitudes and behaviours associated with Phase 1 - such as being relaxed, unbothered, and having a break from dealing with tensions - may be very secondary.

People respond to their symptoms differently. Some can embrace the quality or nature of their symptom, while others will be attracted to what relieves the symptom. This is a phenomenon that also takes place in therapeutic applications of Processwork. As Kate noted in our conversation, the primary process is also important - we don’t look at why and when enough in Processwork.

It could be interesting to work with the person in a one-to-one session to see what the patterns are in their process. If they are in chronic pain, for example, it may be important to explore lightness. Something to do with the heaviness may then emerge later. What is happening when nature is going in this direction at that moment? This is an area of further research, to enhance our understanding of symptom work and study the effectiveness of Processwork techniques.

## **An ongoing group practice**

So far the workshops have mostly been one-off sessions lasting between 2 - 4 hours. In some cases, like the ‘Moving Conditions’ series I organised in 2024, I offered a series of drop-in sessions. I have twice conducted a ‘movement lab’ to investigate and build on the choreographic possibilities of the process in performance settings, spanning multiple consecutive days. I’d like to expand on this in future by researching how dancers work with the material over a sustained period and utilise the process to develop new performances.

Participants often come as a one-off, and some have attended multiple times. With the shorter workshops, I’ve sometimes received feedback that more time to warm up would be helpful as it takes time to transition from everyday thinking to a deeper attunement with the body and settle into the experience. For some, the dreamy nature of the process can feel ‘floaty’ and could benefit from more time at the end to support more anchoring and reflection.

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<sup>17</sup> Arnold Mindell’s (2017) ‘Four Phases of Conflict’ describes a recurring cycle that begins with Phase 1 (apparent harmony, where issues are hidden or ignored), moves into Phase 2 (tension and overt disagreement), changes to Phase 3 (role-switching, where parties attempt to understand each other’s perspectives), and temporarily reaches Phase 4 (a sense of detachment and acceptance). Rather than following a strict order, these phases repeat, overlap, and shift from one moment to the next.

Some participants have shown interest in exploring for a longer time, such as over a whole day, or for several days over an extended period with the same group. This could allow for deeper study and integration of the effects of the process. It also supports developing a language and practice together and fostering relationships as a group. This has the potential to unlock new dimensions of the process.

Having more time to explore with others could involve experimenting with alternative response modes, such as using sound or poetry to engage with the scores. Additionally, integrating the workshop with Processwork's group process format could enhance the embodied exploration by linking it to interactive discussions around collective themes emerging during the workshop. It would also be interesting to apply the Symptom Scores process to broader, more metaphorical 'symptoms' of societal or environmental conditions. These approaches provide diverse ways to engage with and process the field.

## **Embodied practices in education and organisations**

I have shared the Symptom Scores process in various settings, including experimental education, artist research, and an activist group, to explore its potential for uncovering new orientations towards key themes or questions. One of the members of the activist group noted how the experience of moving in front of one another felt vulnerable. They said they realised the process of 'entering' another's experience was about empathy and found this valuable, stating that empathy was lacking in the group system. The session supported bringing out a range of emotional states and dynamics in the group.

A clinical herbalist participating in one of the education sessions described experiencing plant-related insights while observing their partner's movements. They expressed a recurring struggle to access this intuitive knowledge for themselves, despite frequently offering it to others. The process helped them tap into their knowledge in a different way, reconnecting them with this valuable personal resource.

At times participants have questioned the relevance of their body symptom to the theme they are exploring. In this case I've found it helpful to propose the thought experiment that we have entered the field of their theme and/or group when this is the shared focus of our exploration. "What if what you are perceiving is relevant and needed in some way in this field or system?" Through this I am

inviting systemic thinking and a field theory lens, and encouraging people to trust what they are picking up in relation to this with their senses.

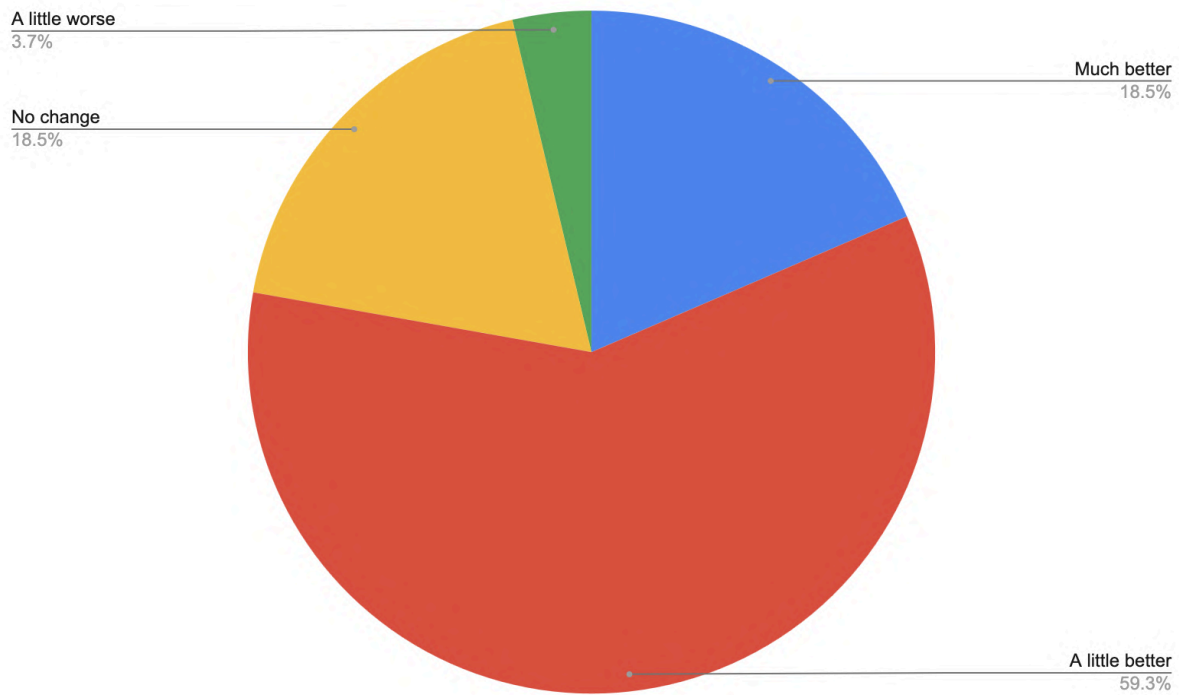
Over the past decade, the British state education system has significantly reduced the importance of arts education. This shift reflects a broader trend in mainstream education that prioritises intellect at the expense of sensitivity and embodied awareness. Nicolescu (1997) proposes that to address contemporary challenges, which include a loss of meaning, education needs to adopt a transdisciplinary approach that “revalues the role of deeply rooted intuition, of imagination, of sensitivity, and of the body in the transmission of knowledge.”

This trend in education appears to contrast with a growing interest in embodied and arts-informed learning in organisational settings. Researchers are exploring the benefits of engaging the body in group work and organisational development to enhance collaborative creativity, team dynamics, and leadership (Ludevig, 2016; Sandberg, Stasewitsch, & Prümper, 2023; Satama, Blomberg & Warren, 2022). In light of these shifts, there is potential to hone the Symptom Scores process for both educational and organisational applications. This can serve as a tool to foster embodied, perceptual, and relational skills while uncovering subtler experiences and insights.

## **Beneficial effects on symptoms**

As this project developed, I started inviting participants to complete a feedback form to gather information about the effects of the process. This included asking, “*Was there a change in how you experience your symptom by the end of the session?*” Possible multiple choice answers to this included: ‘Much better’, ‘A little better’, ‘No change’, ‘A little worse’, ‘Much worse’.

To date, 27 participants have responded to this question, revealing the following results:



- 5 participants selected 'Much better' - 18.5%
- 16 participants selected 'A little better' - 59.3%
- 5 participants selected 'No change' - 18.5%
- 1 participant selected 'A little worse' - 3.7%

One participant who chose 'A little better' explained that they didn't feel their symptom improved or worsened, "it just felt like it evolved." A participant, who attended twice and selected 'No change' both times, noted that they actually didn't know but there was no option to indicate this. Another participant, who left this field blank (and was therefore excluded from the data above) shared that they would never describe their feelings as better or worse, stating, "they simply were." They added that they weren't sure what symptoms are meant to be, finding the concept "a little vague."

While further clarification of terms with participants and the collection of pre- and post-workshop data are necessary to gain deeper insights into the impact of the process on symptoms, these initial results suggest a 77.8% improvement in symptom experience. This highlights significant potential for further research into both the effects of the Symptom Scores process on symptom perception and its practical applications in healthcare settings.

## **Applications in healthcare settings**

The interdisciplinary field of Creative Health and Health Humanities has gained recognition in recent years, promoting the integration of arts and humanities in healthcare. This reflects a broader shift towards more holistic, patient-centered approaches to health and well-being. Many physical and mental health contexts tend to be bureaucratic and prioritise risk management. While introducing less conventional ways of relating to the body in these settings goes over a collective edge and may feel risky, it can also foster more expansive and deeply democratic ways of appreciating and understanding individuals' lived experiences - grounded in a deep curiosity about the experience itself.

Like comparable approaches in art therapy, the Symptom Scores process offers multisensory ways of conveying the depth and complexity of embodied experiences and emotions, beyond the limitations of words. In practical terms, techniques like moving to interpret a drawing on behalf of another person offers a way of working with people with restrictions in mobility. Drawing and movement of a symptom experience also offer nonverbal modes of working and communicating across language barriers.

In the Western context, symptoms are often individualised and medicalised. This is reflected in our language, such as when we say "it's due to my anxiety." We are trained to describe our symptoms in specific ways, which can limit our ability to explore and express our experiences more multidimensionally. It can also keep us fixed in the role of a patient with a pathology. This narrow focus limits the possibility of relating to our wholeness, and recognising the broader context of health experiences and their collective aspects.

Western cultures often perpetuate a pathologising mindset that attributes health issues to personal failings, leading to stigmatisation and misunderstanding of individuals facing health challenges. The social model of disability offers the alternative perspective that disability is a result of societal barriers rather than individual impairments. It emphasises that societal structures and attitudes are the primary factors that hinder individuals, rather than their physical or mental conditions alone.

Providing more opportunities for experiential and collective exploration, as well as space for reflecting on these dynamics in healthcare settings, could enhance understanding of health as a broader, shared experience and practice. Further research could explore how Symptom Scores can

contribute to more holistic and comprehensive approaches to well-being, as well as novel ways of articulating and communicating experiences of illness.

**\* Innerwork 03.03.25 - mossy rock**

*My intention is to finish off my dissertation, write the conclusion.*

*What's unintended is my feeling of low mood, difficulty focusing.*

*Following this signal there's a downward movement internally, like sinking into myself. Like two lines coming together to a point, going down. I sense into this experience more, into something dark and cavelike. Tears well up in me.*

*I'm not sure what the tears are about. It feels relieving though to give them space.*

*Something feels delicate, vulnerable in relation to my work, and my direction.*

*It might be a reaction to something critical?*

*My body feedback is less drawn to interacting with a critic right now. I'm spontaneously very still, inside myself.*

*Staying with this, I become more still and have an association with a mossy rock, something timeless. It's seen many things and will continue to see many things.*

*Turning my attention to 'everyday me' from here, I see how far Savannah's come, her journey of getting to where she is. Sometimes she pushes, tries to get somewhere.*

*From here, I perceive the many flows and processes, over decades, that have brought her to where she is, which will continue. I feel appreciation for her process, and everything she's achieved. As the mossy rock I bring an attitude of trust and appreciation.*

*I sense a critic and represent it: "she's just fooling herself, she's not really an artist, she hasn't created something particularly interesting, she's not even practicing this very much. Others out there are much more legitimate. She's just pretending."*

*The critic is very self-assured and relaxed.*

*I return to the mossy stone and feel into my response.*

*I don't feel reactive to the critic from here, quite detached.*

*"You're entitled to your opinion. And, I see much bigger, wider processes that have been happening here, deep changes and growth. You're not being very perceptive to those. What she's been developing is trust in the dreaming process. That hasn't come easily to her, it's still an ongoing*

*process. And, she is learning to stay with what is and be guided by this, rather than trying to get somewhere. That's huge! This is part of her ongoing journey that will continue to support her. I have deep appreciation for all the opportunities she's had to support this in her."*

*Something here bypasses the critic and connects deeply with appreciation and trust. Let me feel into these qualities and write the conclusion from here.*

## *Conclusion*

After a long and challenging journey to start and finish this essay, it's surprising to be nearing the end. Something in me hesitates to finalise it, bringing up the interplay again between structure and emergence, and my reluctance to pin things down. While the project will no doubt continue to evolve, this marks a completion and an opportunity to appreciate my achievements and development as an artist and facilitator. As someone with a strong "it's never enough" ghost role in my field it feels important to pause and reflect on this moment, letting the experiences, learning and changes in me settle.

The dissertation has outlined how art and Processwork can enhance one another to foster an embodied, collective practice. Combining participatory arts and movement improvisation with the philosophy and tools of Processwork, the project has generated both a research method for improvised performance and a distinctive approach to social arts practice. I view the practice itself as a form of art - one that actively engages participants in creative expression, collaboration, multisensory sense-making, and social inquiry.

Through a multifaceted investigation of symptoms and by encouraging reflection on alternative ways of knowing and relating, the project demonstrates how the intersection of art and Processwork can expand possibilities for exploring both individual and collective experience.

Over the course of the project, my approach has evolved as I've increasingly integrated Processwork principles into my practice. This has allowed me to become more embodied in my thinking and facilitation as a Processworker. I have learned to engage more deeply with emerging, lesser-known processes as they arise, facilitating richer exploration within groups and in my personal process. Blending social practice and art, this has supported me to create a workshop

process that allows participants to engage with collective themes and edges in a unique and meaningful way, with lots of potential for further development.

A key aspect of this work has been incorporating Processwork implicitly, using it as a guiding framework rather than teaching it directly. This has allowed participants to engage with Processwork principles organically, supporting an experiential connection to the material and their own inner processes and forms of knowing. I hope this essay serves as a similar resource for readers, allowing them to engage with the concepts in multiple ways.

An important outcome for me has been integrating art and Processwork, allowing both fields to enrich each other within me. Processwork's focus on embracing the dreaming process - where troubles serve as guides - has helped me to trust in what emerges and equipped me with tools to navigate this. This is an ongoing practice that I will continue to cultivate, following nature and inviting myself and others to embody our rich, expansive selves.

### ***\* Innerwork 13.03.25 - relaxed strength***

*I've been given an opportunity to offer Symptom Scores in a well-known dance space in London. I feel nervous about being in a space with dancers who have lots of experience in learning from professional dancers. I feel self-conscious and insecure about not being a trained dancer. I decide to do a symptom score as an innerwork to explore what could support me.*

#### ***How do I feel?***

*Nervous, excited, being seen in front of experienced people, possibly judged, critiqued. Big group, what if there's little feedback? And, I do think what I'm offering is valuable/interesting. People who I thought were critical in past workshops sometimes surprised me when they shared their experience.*

#### ***What's my question/theme?***

*How to be in a mode where I can enjoy the process, not feel too self-conscious or attached to people's reception of it, but enjoy this opportunity - which is a result of all my hard work and dedication? What can help me settle into and enjoy the experience?*

#### ***Finding a gesture for the question***

*Hands out, palms face down in front of me, lightly moving downwards, a relaxed quality.*

### ***Making a drawing of the symptom***

*I'm surprised the 'symptom' or body signal I notice and am most disturbed by in the moment is my cold feet. I thought I'd choose something else. They feel like cold blocks, especially at the front...*

### ***Moving in response to the symptom score***

*I have some edges come up as I begin. I can't get into it. I can't see beyond what I know the drawing is depicting, my cold feet.*

*I experiment with turning around the picture a few times to make it more abstract, so I forget the origin, this frees me up to discover other things in it.*

*When connecting with an inward motion, the process picks up in energy and I get curious about following it. I start having the association of energy moving inward, towards me, a bit like a force, like gravity. I get more into it when I experiment with speed and direction, start feeling it more when slowing down and sense a 'drawing in' quality.*

*I explore this in different directions and levels, with different parts of my body.*

*Feeling into it more, I become more solid and dense as the force draws inwards.*

*Perhaps like a black hole?*

*When trying to notice what quality in nature this reminds me of, I get a bit in my head.*

*I go back to the experience, going back to the sensory grounded information, feeling, enjoying, noticing the details.*

*I make the drawing in gesture with my arms and have a sense of filling out the space as I become more dense - through this ongoing movement/absorption of energy, a very slow drawing inward motion*

*Big and solid. Whatever happens, I absorb, it feeds/fills me out more*

*It feels a bit like a glacier forming (reverse of melting)*

*Feeling my density, solidity, feet firmly on the ground*

*Fists drawing in slowly. This makes me feel big and solid, like a giant rock-like being (like the Felsenbeisser/rock-biter from the Neverending Story)*

*The experience fills out and evolves into an association with my teacher, JC, a quality of impenetrable relaxed strength, can't be blown over. This feels more full bodied than the previous dreamfigures that came up for me.*

***Is the quality/gesture for my question somehow in this?***

*I recognise the 'drawing in' and 'relaxed strength' qualities as having similarities with the downward gesture I made in relation to my question.*

***Relating back to the question from the emergent experience***

*From the perspective of this JC figure I turn my attention to my everyday self and my question. A message emerges from here:*

*Know the deep value of this, know it's solid. There's no question about that. You've been honing something and it has depth because of that. Don't work too hard. Play with what you notice. Any feedback strengthens the project. Offering it and the exchange with others is a gift. Enjoy your relaxed strength tomorrow.*



13.03.25

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# Appendix A: Symptom Scores Project Map

A non-exhaustive 'honey map' tracing some of the developments of the project.

## SYMPTOM SCORES PROJECT MAP

### Influences

### Method & Project Developments

### Honey Moments

- Symptom - form of dreaming, body expressing something of edge
- Disturbance - contains creative info, lesser known, where change happens
- Symptom - individual & part of shared field, systemic
- Method for signal work and responding in context
- Being a channel for dreaming information
- Joining an experience, not leaving me another alone
- Unfolding essence info for the field to see, bringing back to CR

Introduction to Processwork  
Body Sensation drawing practice

Socially engaged arts and performance research: Interest in collective practices and making relational dynamics visible through participatory movement (dance, performance & music)

Engaging with improvisation - dance and performance classes

Scoring (dance, performance & music)

**Symptom Scores basic method**

- Writing down a question at the start.
- Warm-up
- Body scan leading to abstract drawing of a body experience.
- Exploring drawing as a graphic score for improvised movement.
- With partner, one person moves partner's drawing while they observe.
- Sharing with partner about the experience
- Exploring moving the drawings as a group.
- Individual and Group reflection.

Horizontal Practices Symptom Scores (SS) series leads to 1 week residency at LPS to explore the **choreographic potentials** of SS with performers. Building on basic method with exercises for sensitizing to the essence information of the drawing, building up forms of group movement and exploring choreographic formats. (Less emphasis on asking a question to which process is a response)

Building on the R&D lab, I participate in a 1-week art residency to develop the SS method and test formats for **participant performance** - where the audience draws their symptom and the performers move the drawings. The first day is an open drop-in workshop where I share the basic method. The next days are an extended training with a small group. The last day is a live sharing with a small audience of 3 people.

Studying LPS lab video with Kate in supervision, she suggests exploring **movement edges** with participants next time, really filling out the movement.

Following Research Colloquium 1, formalise the participation process by creating a **contract and feedback form** for participants to complete. I process roles that came up for me around this.

Reaching edges in the project, there's a developer. Apply for residency opportunities to develop the work in a participatory way in performance contexts, for an audience with experience of chronic symptoms. Intention to focus more on movement edges with performers as part of this. No feedback for this so far.

Opportunity to share the project in a friend's studio in Rotterdam. My research interest is to explore the collective aspect of the work - based on PWS concept of systems as having both individual and collective dimensions.

- How to get from experience of the symptom - through this process - into the world and the collective?
- How is this process showing the movement?
- How can the process support the field to get to know this?

Introducing **more in-depth warm-up**. Inspired by workshop facilitated by Imogen Knight at Jerwood Arts.

Plan to apply more steps following Rotterdam workshop to support the transition from 'drawing exploration' to returning to CR question. Exploring how process can inform different forms of learning and knowing in alternative education Antuniversity setting.

Introducing steps **expressing a question through drawing** at the beginning, and returning to this at the end **making another drawing of the question and reflecting on changes**. Also explore different forms of gaze as part of the warm-up. To go to know effects of shifting perception.

Framing of this workshop as 'sensing with the trouble' - offering multisensory ways for exploring our physical and societal troubles - inviting participants to come with a personal or collective question, forming the context for the Symptom Scores explorations.

Following Antuniversity workshop, idea to try out how the format could be applied with a group who work together (have a common focus and are interested in exploring a shared question) regarding this process. What info might symptoms hold in relation to a group's work together?

Thought experiment: What if what you are perceiving through your symptom is relevant and needed in some way in this system?

Reflections afterwards: the process needed more time at the end for reflection and anchoring. Participant feedback that I'd like to try some time, "could exact the different issue images we'd drawn in relation to the questions as a group and write individual and collective response, then reflect on the whole thing."

Experimenting with another variation for further exploration of collective aspects of the symptom - **combining Symptom Scores with group process**. This also makes more multisensory channels into group work, which often centres on verbal interaction.

Plan: Start with sorting a theme, then go through Symptom Scores sequence, then return to the theme and do a group process. (Repeating step of moving scores as a group this time)

Reflections afterwards: diversity in the group about not wanting to do a group process after Symptom Scores sequence, feeling it's enough. Realised afterwards these were related - part of the topic we had chosen. Could frame these and invite noticing if secondary information in symptoms bring any insights to the topic without necessarily needing to do more. Also curious to try visual and spatial ways of sorting another time.

Offering the process for international artists in residence with research-based practices, in an often verbally bound world, how does this process open up new perspectives on their research?

**Updated Symptom Scores sequence**

- Identify research question/subject/theme - finding gesture
- Warm-up
- Drawing, creating symptom score
- Warm-up
- Guided movement exercises, responding to drawings alone and in pairs
- Sharing with partner about the experience
- Embodying what partner expressed in movement, what resonates. Connecting what emerges to the theme.
- Individual and Group reflection.

Exploring transition from more mysterious/dreamy levels to more CR meaning making, introducing **staying in touch with body and gesture as we transition to group reflection at the end**. Sharing gestures that emerged for us, moving towards speaking from here - inviting group's perceptions, reflecting back what they notice, participants can check whether or not this adds something to their sense of meaning in relation to their question.

Tendency at times during group reflection to go into discussion, which can feel quite theoretical. What would it be like to ask a question/be asked one, and feel into it first, find a gesture in response, might be spontaneous, and then speak from here?

Curious another time to explore with a volunteer participant how the quality they discovered supports them around their edge with their question. And note perception of the group.

Continuing to explore the transition between different forms of nonverbal exploration and speaking/reflection.

At end of session, one participant suggests it often still feels like an Actor/Reflector binary with these kinds of somatic explorations. They speak about a practice they use sometimes.

Move > Write (what you moved) - Speak (what you wrote) - ongoing cycle, each for 1 minute. A process of composing, I'd like to try some time.

Intimate shared experience visiting Helen in hospital in 2018.

London Hub Community Centre Workshop, London (2019) (first version of Symptom Scores method)

Workshop taster at Community of Practice group (2020)

Symptom Scores Workshops Online x 2 (2021)

Symptom Scores Workshop at DMRP Artist Residency, Deythorpe (2022)

Horizontal Practices: x 4 Symptom Scores Workshops at London Performance Studios (2022)

Symptom Scores R&D Movement Lab x 4 days at London Performance Studios (2022)

Symptom Scores Research at Ugly Duck, London x 5 days (2023)

Symptom Scores Workshop in Rotterdam (2023)

Symptom Scores Workshop at Antuniversity Festival, London (2023)

Symptom Scores Workshop with activist group at House of Anika, London (2023)

Symptom Scores Workshop with small group of family and friends in rural Portugal (2023)

Symptom Scores and Group Process Workshop at London Performance Studios (2024)

Moving Conditions Series, The Room, London x 3 (2024)

Symptom Scores: movement research workshop at Chiswickale Dance Space, London (2024)

Symptom Scores workshop at Defina Foundation, London (2024)

Symptom Scores workshop at Rote Fabrik, Zürich (2024)

Symptom Scores Workshop at Antuniversity Festival, London (2024)

Honey moment / moment of magic and discovery when moving collectively. Movement taking on a life of its own, emergence in improvisation, feels enlightening

Participant shares that exercise created an atmosphere, spaciousness for conversation, especially when we came to stillness/created an image together, it was very strong. We created something together.

Unusual way of using Zoom together, interesting and strange visual and choreographic compositions forming spontaneously

Two of the male-bodied participants move intensely together, exploring the drawing of one of them. It is a moving and beautiful dance.

Participant witnessed me create a fist while moving her drawing and said to me later, "I wanted to draw a fist but couldn't, and you made a fist"

Magic moment at the end of the lab - Someone suggests we all take turns moving the same drawing. A series of solos follows, each participant entering one after the other without speaking, offering very different dances. Beautiful to watch. Culmination of the past days process, like a closing ritual and performance.

Deep and lively conversation in the pairs after participants have moved each others' drawings surprises me. I give more space for this. Feels like there is energy and something meaningful for people.

C does a trip in response to 's drawing, I said his drawing was about a tripartite movement.

Participant shares: "I was wondering what the relationship was between my second drawing and my initial question that I came in with, if there was a relationship... I had all these ideas but then there was a moment when I felt it in my body, watching other people moving... it's inevitable that what came to me was coming through my own lenses and layers of what I already know. I was sitting with the question, simply put, of how to care for myself and be with the gifts and limitations that I have, so that I can do the work and also care for others in my life that need care in certain ways. And it gave me good information of where to lean in on my own body, and then also what other tools that I have specifically - I'm a clinical herbalist - I had some ideas of plants coming to me (while seeing the movement). It thought, 'very helpful'. This toolkit already have that tend to put forward for others a lot, that I forget how to access for myself. It was really interesting watching people with that. And similar to when you (partner) were dancing my drawing. I had a sense of these are ways that I could be moving or experimenting with moving my own body in these questions, it was very helpful."

"In the MA programme I've just started, it's symbiotic where everyone's bringing things, we're really encouraged to lean into this. I was imagining what if this was a process where we did this for a day or a week and everyone brought their research questions or what we're trying to wrap our heads around together as a group through this process?"

Useful for the group to take some time at the start to discuss, how to formulate the question? A helpful prompt was to approach it like tarot, asking a question that is more open rather than solution-focused

Participants are surprised and share: "It was moving to see (my partner) move my drawing. Went straight to the essence of my drawing and completed the process for me". Their partner responses "It was most moved when I finished moving your drawing and saw the expression in your face, surprised me."

Participant is reminded of social prescribing theatre where you embody stuckness and then embody shapes towards unstuckness. They say it was as if their partner went straight to the unstuckness when moving their symptom score.

Various honey moments including satisfaction in learning from participants through how they read the visual information to drawings - in surprising ways I hadn't thought of, partners picking up information through their movements that surprised the authors of the score, a participant speaking a poem in the group that emerged from the process.

Magic, poetic moments as improvisational performances emerge through participants responding to scores together.

Poetry in the questions explored, which some participants shared in the group: "where does the voice come from?" and "how to learn how to jump" - to which came the insight "by giving"

Struck by insightful perception in the group, when they reflect back what they notice in one another's gestures, and ways this often taps into surprising additional layers for the person who shared their movement.

Participant shares their question and insight in the group: "Will I ever feel a deep emotional connection with a potential partner who does not speak the same native language as me? The process helped me recognize, yes. When we communicate, we communicate with so much more than just words."

## *Appendix B: Participant account*

*At the end of the R&D Movement Lab I led at London Performance Studios in 2022, a participant suggested we all take turns moving the same drawing. The focus of the lab had been to explore the choreographic potentials of Symptom Scores.*

*A series of solos followed, each participant entering one after the other without speaking, offering very different dances. Sarah Kent, the participant whose score we responded to wrote these reflections on us dancing her drawing.*

The drawing was a simple map indicating the areas of my body where I was experiencing pain or discomfort at that moment.

The kind of marks and the colours chosen were an attempt to find a visual equivalent that would convey the quality of the various pains or discomforts.

When it came to moving the drawing, I decided to respond to it as if someone else had made it – as if I had no prior knowledge of the initial stimulus for the graphics.

And rather than illustrate the drawing in movement, I tried to translate the marks into physical equivalents of some kind.

There were two similar areas symmetrically placed at bottom right and left of the drawing. These made me think of standing with legs hip-width apart gently rocking from one foot to the other, as one often does in warm ups. It's a way of slowing down, paying attention and grounding oneself in the here and now ... a beginning and a preparation, if you like, for movement.

Then came some attempts at gloriously free dancing, which soon got snagged by issues (both real and imaginary) such as my physical limitations, old and recent injuries, lack of formal dance training, age and various other sources of self doubt.

Because of the dynamics involved in movement, the element of time crept in and, along with it, the possibility of narrative. So a static image existing in the eternal present was being translated into a narrative unfolding through time that inevitably would come to an end.

At this point, I made the decision that I didn't want an ending embroiled in pessimism so I began opening my arms, moving more freely again and looking up, as if to anticipate future possibilities rather than dwell on current problems – which the whole concept of symptom scores encourages one to do.

So by the end of the process, I felt as though I had expounded a (very brief) resumé of my life as a dancer, which was pretty mind boggling!

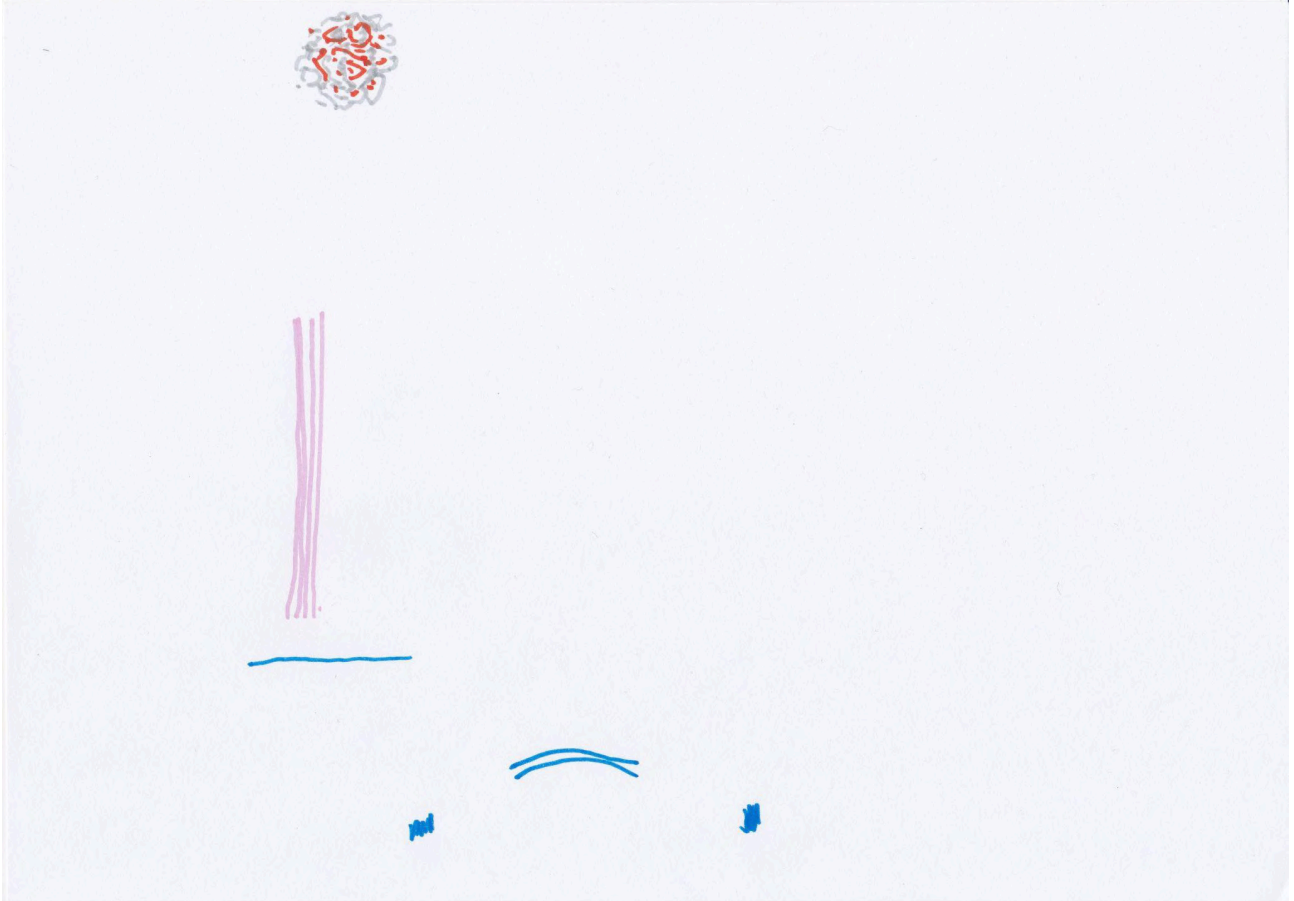
Watching the others moving, I was curious to see if I would recognise any observations they might make about my physical/mental wellbeing. Would they mainly be revealing things about themselves or things they had perceived in me?

What struck me most was the amazing variety of responses to the same stimulus. I would never have guessed that my simple drawing could prompt such an extraordinary range of movements.

I found everyone's contribution very interesting, but none resonated with me especially strongly until it came to Lauren. With almost uncanny insight, she seemed to be dancing a portrait of me that revealed all my doubts, fears and physical inadequacies as well as my determination to ignore or overcome them.

I found it extremely moving; in fact her ability to "read" me from that simple drawing brought tears to my eyes. I think they were tears of relief that someone has "seen" and understood me, but there was also something more profound – tears of sorrow, perhaps, for the human condition in the knowledge that, no matter how brave or strong we think we are, we all face defeat in the end. And it seemed to me that Lauren had grasped that fact.

*Sarah's Symptom Score*



## *Appendix C: Workshop documentation*

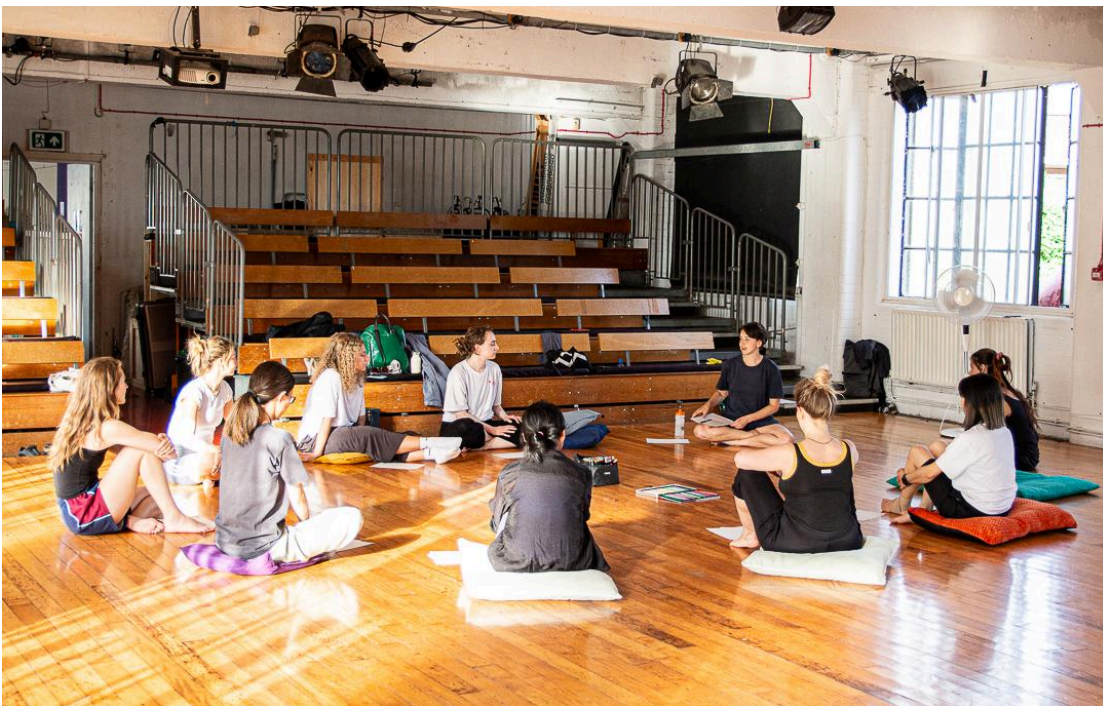
*A selection of photos from recent Symptom Scores workshops.*

***Symptom Scores at Rote Fabrik, Zürich (2024) ~ Photos by Maja Renn***





*Symptom Scores at Chisenhale Dance Space, London (2024) ~ Photos by Cheniece Warner*





## *Appendix D: Workshop structure*

*A sample of the workshop structure used in a Symptom Scores session to gain new insights on a central theme.*

Introduction:

Welcoming us as we are. Coming with own experiences, histories, positionalities.

Framing my interest: how can body-based exploration open up ways of thinking and responding?

What happens when we take our body experiences seriously as forms of knowing?

Structure:

Identify question/quandary/theme - frame for exploration

Drawing, creating a 'Symptom Score', drawing/visual score based on a body experience

Warm-up

Guided movement exercises, responding to drawings (on our own and in pairs)

Break

Connecting what emerges to our theme.

Reflections and closing

Sharing names, and pronouns - if you feel comfortable to share.

Making a gesture to express how you are/or something you noticed today.

Some background about the project:

Visual art, Movement improvisation and Processwork

Some background about Processwork:

Dreams as guides to live more parts of ourselves that have been marginalised.

Expands the idea of dreaming - nighttime dream information is mirrored in our bodies, fantasies, synchronicities, problems. Principle that lesser-known information is trying to come through, it's creative and in some way needed, by us personally and collectively.

Question/Quandary (gesture and energy sketch):

Connect with a theme you'd like to get perspective on.

Find a gesture to show/embody the theme, its energy.

Make a quick sketch

Symptom Score - Drawing:

Scan body, notice a symptom or experience that stands out

Notice its details and specific qualities

Draw it to express this visually

Warm-up (from a workshop with Imogen Knight)

Then exploring unintentional movement - amplifying and repeating, unfolding, involving whole body. Distilling this to a gesture.

Sharing gesture with the group, the group mirrors this to feel into it.

Exploring gaze - focusing and softening gaze, exploring receiving through observing

Symptom Score - Moving in response to own drawing:

Going dreamy, hazy eyed, noticing what you perceive and what catches your attention in the drawing, letting body respond. Following what has energy, repeating and amplifying. Letting the senses and imagination support a full-bodied experience.

Symptom Score - With a partner:

Decide who will first be the mover and the observer.

Observer: soft focus. Imagining being an instrument of nature, what is being shown to you?

Mover: goes dreamy, looks at partner's symptom drawing and follows what they are drawn to.

Following what has energy, repeating and amplifying. Letting the senses and imagination support a full-bodied experience. Going all the way and noticing when it feels complete.

Switch roles. The observer now moves in response to the first mover's symptom score.

Reflecting together on what the experience was like.

Break

Inhabiting - exploring alone again:

Playing with embodying what you were drawn to in your partner's movements

Unfolding and filling out the experience, shapeshifting into an emergent dreamfigure

Is the energy sketch quality from your question/theme somehow in it?

From this perspective, consider your everyday self and energy sketch from before

Notice any insights, perhaps a tip, message, attitude, feeling-sense in relation to your question

Reflect, write, draw

Reflecting as a group

Closing with a word/sentence/gesture, something we take with us

## *Appendix E: Post-workshop feedback form*

*The most recent version of the feedback form sent to participants after a workshop.*

### **Symptom Scores Feedback**

Thank you for your feedback to support the development of this project. Any feedback used in my dissertation will be anonymised, unless you prefer your name to be included.

**Name**

**What stays with you from the session? Is there anything you discovered?**

**What new perspectives or insights emerged about your question? (If any)**

**Was there a change in how you experience your symptom by the end of the session?**

1. Much better
2. A little better
3. No change
4. A little worse
5. Much worse
6. Not sure

**How would you describe the effects of the process? I.e. Drawing your symptom, moving the drawings, witnessing your drawing being moved, relating to the question... (Did the language and structure support the experience, or...?)**

**What was most effective in what we explored and how the workshop was facilitated?**

**Was there anything that could be more supportive or that could be adapted?**

**Additional comments / ideas / feedback**

**Can I use any of your feedback to promote the work I am doing?**

Yes

No

**If you would like to be sent info for future events I am offering please leave your email address below**

## *Appendix F: Recording Consent form*

### **Recording Consent Form**

#### **Purpose**

As part of my Processwork UK diploma project, I am researching creative ways for collectively exploring symptoms and the collective field. Photographs, audio-visual recordings, as well as oral and written statements from workshops and events form part of this research and may be used in the diploma project and materials for promoting the project.

Name: Savannah Theis

Signature:

#### **Participant**

I grant permission to Savannah Theis for the use of any materials produced as a part of the research - photographs, audio-visual recordings, oral and written statements - to be processed in order to facilitate the research being undertaken. I am aware I may withdraw my consent to be photographed and audio-video recorded at any time during the workshops and/or events.

I am over 18 years of age.

Participant Name:

Participant Signature:

Date:

## *Appendix G: Pre-workshop participant mailout*

Hello!

Thank you for signing up to join the ‘Symptom Scores - sensing with the trouble’ workshop! I’m really looking forward to meeting you tomorrow Wednesday 16th October 2 - 5:30pm. Here’s more information for the workshop:

Arrival

We’ll be based in the Main Hall at SET Social Peckham, 55a Nigel Rd SE15 4NP.  
I’ll be at the space around 1:45pm setting up if you’d like to arrive earlier and get settled.

I invite you to come with:

- Yourself, however you are in the moment is most welcome
- Any clothing you feel comfortable to move freely in. Bring warm layers in case it’s cold and anything you need to feel comfortable.
- Something to drink
- A notebook, in case you want to make a note of something

What to expect:

- Welcome and info about the project
- Identifying a question/quandary/theme you’d like to explore
- Movement warm-up and Symptom Scores process, involving drawing and movement
- Individual & Group reflection

Consent and Feedback Forms

The workshop forms part of my Processwork diploma research project. To support me to develop the project, I’d like to photograph and perhaps audio record some of the moments we share - I’ll check with you on the day whether this feels ok to you. As part of this, there are some participant documents I’ll invite you to complete before and after the session, including a consent form and brief feedback form. You can look over the consent form [here](#).

I’ll send the link to the feedback form after the session.

Get in touch if you have any questions.

Really looking forward to exploring together with you all!

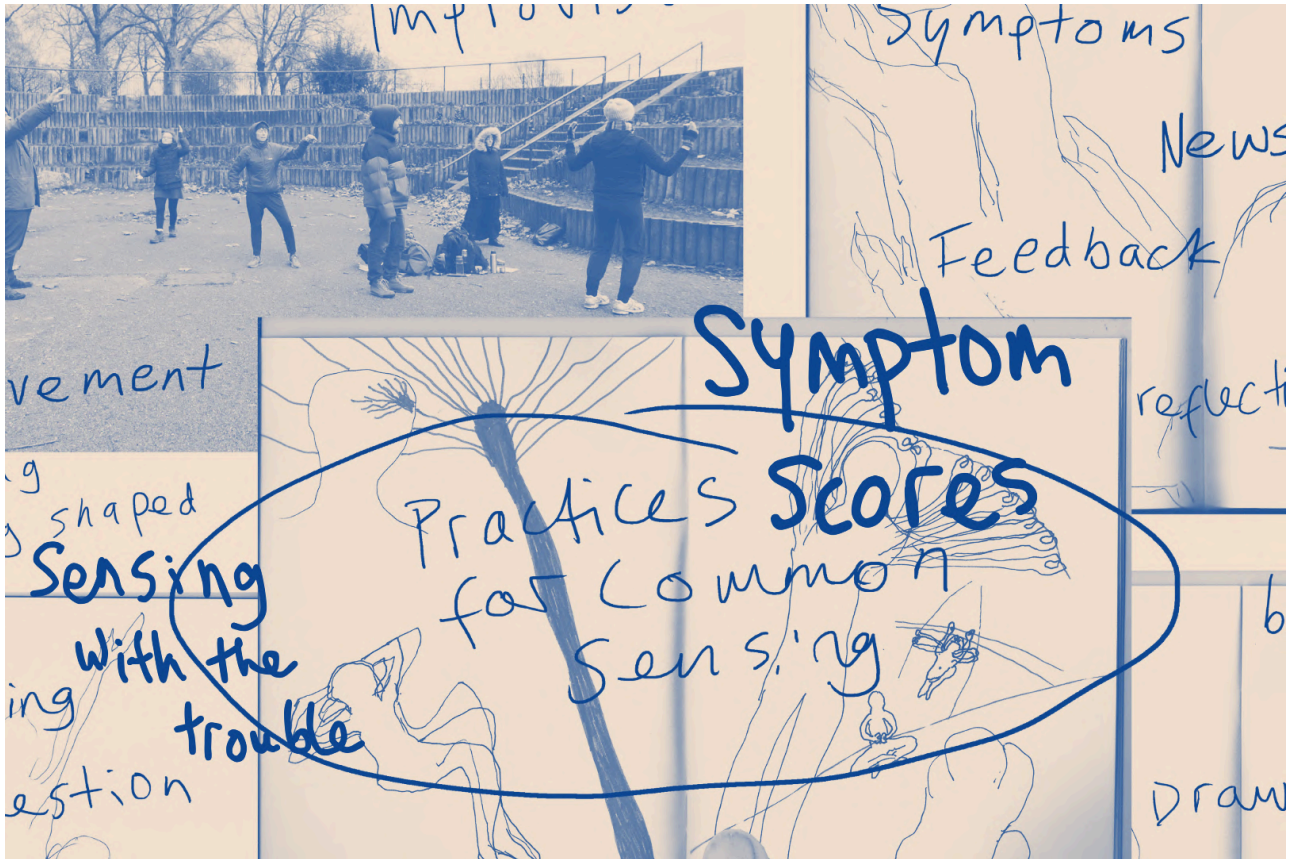
Warm wishes,  
Savannah

## Appendix H: Outreach materials

A selection of outreach materials for recent workshops.

### Symptom Scores - sensing with the trouble, as part of Antiuniversity Now Festival at SET Social, London (2024)

A 3.5 hour long workshop



*“The task is to become capable, with each other in all of our bumptious kinds, of response.”*

- Donna Haraway, *'Staying with the Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene'*

*“Co-sense with RADICAL TENDERNESS and...*

*Make space for the unknown and the unknowable, in ourselves and in others...*

*Engage with creativity beyond the intellect...*

*Be receptive to the teachings of your shadows.”*

- Dani d'Emilia, Vanessa Andreotti & GTDF Collective, *'Co-sensing with Radical Tenderness'*

*“Our body problems are also problems of the world around us; we suffer in the way the whole world suffers. Our illness is a dream; it is a symptom of incongruity of the world we live in. No one is sick by himself - we all live in a field.”*

- Arnold Mindell, *'Working with the Dreaming Body'*

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***In an increasingly disembodied world, how can we reclaim and engage bodily knowledge-forms?***

***What sense-making practices open up possibilities to relate and respond?***

*During this workshop we'll collectively experiment with multisensory ways of attending to our physical and societal troubles. Using symptoms as our teachers, we'll experiment with different ways of 'reading through the body', getting to know what forms of sense-making and knowledge-sharing this opens up.*

*Through drawing, moving, sensing, reflecting together, and with tools from facilitation approach Processwork, we'll explore the 'dreaming' information in bodily symptoms and how this interrelates with the worlds we inhabit.*

*Participants are invited to bring a collective quandary they're currently holding, forming the context for our explorations.*

*The session is open to people with an interest in improvised movement and experimentation. No prior experience needed. Exercises will include moving alone and together while being witnessed at times, and might include touch (which there will be choice around).*

*Participants are asked to come for the full session.*

*Following your body's needs, however you are in the moment, will be welcome.*

*Spaces are limited to maximum 12 people. If you are unable to attend, please cancel your booking so the space can be offered to someone else.*

*Facilitator: Savannah Theis (she/her)*

*Savannah is an artist, Processwork facilitator and trainee psychotherapist living in London. Often collaborating and co-creating settings for participation, she is interested in communal learning processes and the conditions facilitating how we speak, listen, move and make sense together.*

<https://blog.savannahtheis.com/>

[@practicing\\_relationality](#)

*Further info:*

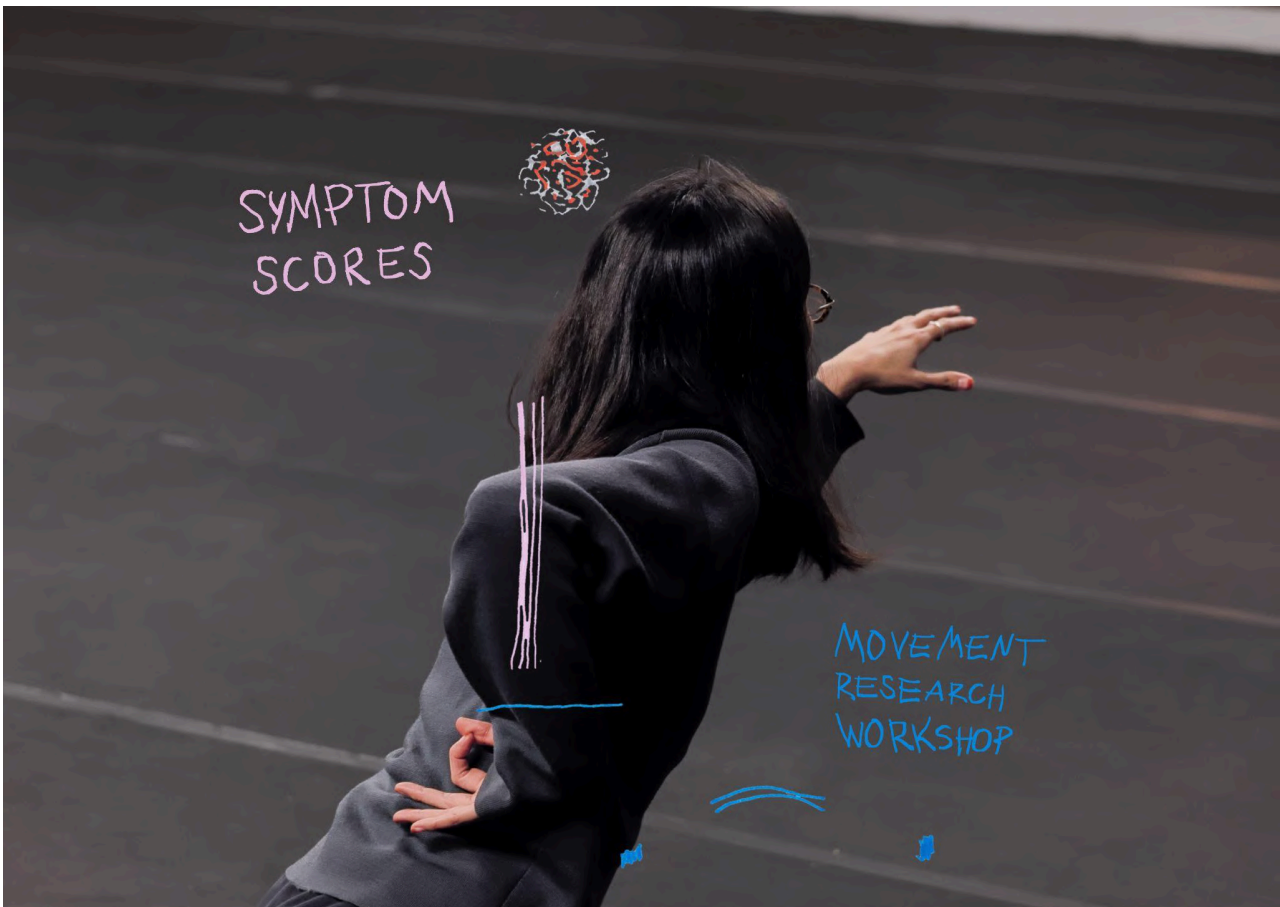
*Symptom Scores is a movement-based participatory research method Savannah has been developing through workshops and movement labs. Some of the research produced during these sessions is forming material for an experimental film and Savannah's Processwork diploma project, studying the effects of exploring in this way collectively, applying techniques from art and Processwork. As part of this Savannah will invite participants to complete a short feedback form. She may also document some of the process, and will check with the group about consent for this during the workshop.*

*This event is part of Antiuniversity Now 2024, an ongoing programme of self organised radical learning and mutual education events. It is a collaborative experiment to challenge academic and class hierarchy - in, outside and against existing institutional structures.*

<https://www.antiuniversity.org/>

**Symptom Scores: movement research workshop, as part of WTF Thursdays at Chisenhale Dance Space, London (2024)**

*A 2.5 hour long workshop*



***Savannah Theis leads a workshop sharing tools from her movement research and space to play with their choreographic potentials.***

*Savannah will share tools from her Symptom Scores practice, exploring symptoms as creative 'dreaming' material. Drawing on art, somatics, and facilitation approach Processwork, we'll use drawing, imagining and improvised movement exercises to play with the choreographic potentials of the practice.*

*Symptom Scores is an evolving research project, comprising movement workshops, collective sense-making processes, and experiments for participatory performance. Informed by a somatic and political lens, the project explores possibilities for experientially unfolding information within bodily symptoms and reflecting on patterns they hold for us individually and collectively. Underpinning this is the idea from Processwork that symptoms have a social context and are not only our own, but expressions of a wider field of experiences and relations.*

*Open to those with an interest in improvised movement and experimentation. No prior experience necessary. Some exercises might include touch and moving alone and together. Following your body's needs, however you are in the moment, is welcome.*

*About the Host:*

*Savannah (she/her) is an artist, Processwork facilitator and trainee therapist living in London. Often collaborating and co-creating settings for participation, she is interested in communal learning processes and the conditions facilitating how we speak, listen, move and make sense together.*

*[linktr.ee/savannahtheis](https://linktr.ee/savannahtheis)*

*@practicing\_relationality*

*Accessibility:*

*Please note, we are on the second floor of a warehouse building, accessed by a staircase only. We regret that we cannot currently adequately support wheelchair users and those for whom stairs are a barrier.*

*There will be a separate quiet space available on site.*

*We are committed to removing other barriers to access. If you would like to talk to us about your access needs, please contact: [frances@chisenhaledancespace.co.uk](mailto:frances@chisenhaledancespace.co.uk). Read more about our commitments to anti-ableism as part of our [Artist Community Culture Document](#)*

*WTF Thursdays:*

*WTF Thursdays is a space creating possibilities for community-building amongst artists. Each Thursday, CDS hands over the keys to the building for an artist to host an event in the spirit of low-stakes, DIY action. If you would like to host an evening, [check out our website](#) for more info.*

**Moving Conditions series at The Room, London (2024)**

3 x 3 hour long workshops



***A series of facilitated group sessions exploring symptoms through drawing, moving, and embodying creative patterns in our difficulties.***

*“All symptoms can be transformed into "advisors" so that they are not just "bad" things to be eradicated. Their meaningfulness itself is often a great relief.”*

*- Arnold Mindell, ‘Working with the dreaming body’*

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*These experimental sessions offer creative ways of relating to our body experiences as a group. Exercises involving drawing, moving and interacting will guide embodying and expanding information in our symptoms, like a form of dream-work. Participants are invited to bring a theme or situation they’d like to gain perspective on, forming the context for our explorations. There’ll be opportunity for one participant to elaborate on what emerges, with support from the group.*

*A process of mutual aid, each session invites sensing into and moving one another’s experiences, interchanging the roles of mover and witness. We’ll consider how ways of being and relating emerging through this might be needed in our wider contexts. This draws on ideas from body- and systems-based facilitation approach Processwork, that symptoms have a social context and are both personal and expressions of a wider field of experiences and relations.*

***Info for participating:***

*Sessions are suitable for people with an interest in improvised movement and experimentation. No prior experience necessary.*

*Participants are welcome to attend multiple or one-off sessions. Please arrive on time and commit to the full session when you come.*

*Following your body's needs, however you are in the moment, will be welcome.*

*Access: There is one step to get into the front door of the venue. The bathroom is up a flight of stairs.*

***Tickets:***

*Spaces are limited to max 8 people.*

*Tickets are offered at a tiered sliding scale.*

*2 tickets are available at £12*

*4 tickets are available at £18*

*Pay-it-forward tickets are available at £24*

*To ensure room hire costs are covered, a session may be cancelled if there is a low attendee rate one week before the event.*

***About the project:***

*These sessions form part of Savannah's Processwork diploma project, studying the effects of exploring symptoms collectively, applying techniques from art and Processwork. She's shared this research in various formats and contexts, including performance venues, art and dance studios, experimental education settings, community centres, wellness spaces, and online.*

*To support this research, Savannah will invite participants to complete short consent and feedback forms before and after the session. She may also document some of the process, and will check with the group about consent for this.*

***Facilitator:***

*Savannah (she/her) is an artist, Processwork facilitator and individual and couples therapist in training living in London. Often collaborating and co-creating settings for participation, she is interested in communal learning processes and the conditions facilitating how we speak, listen, move and make sense together.*

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