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Ethics in Arts-Based Research: Drawing on the Strengths of Creative Arts Therapists
L'éthique en matière de recherches fondées sur les arts : tirer profit des forces des thérapeutes en arts créatifs

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ABSTRACT
Arts-based research (ABR) continues to grow as a dynamic practice that is deeply influenced by critical theory and entwined with social justice aims. This article addresses three important topics at the intersection of ethics and ABR: how researchers and members of research ethics boards articulate and perceive uncertainty within the creative process, who is involved in the research, and how the arts may be incorporated into research in a manner that attends to risks of potential harm and to ways of mitigating these risks. Creative arts therapies will be highlighted regarding skills and training that promote ethical practice in ABR.

RÉSUMÉ
La recherche fondée sur les arts (RFA) continue d'évoluer vers une pratique dynamique bien implantée dans la justice sociale. Dans cet article, on aborde trois sujets importants au croisement de l'éthique et de la RFA : de quelle façon les chercheurs et les membres des conseils d'éthique de la recherche formulent-ils et perçoivent-ils l'incertitude inhérente à une démarche créative, quelles sont les personnes impliquées dans la recherche et de quelle façon les arts peuvent-ils s'intégrer à la recherche en tenant compte des risques de préjudices et des manières de les atténuer. On y présente les thérapies en arts créatifs sous l'angle des compétences et de la formation favorisant la pratique éthique en RFA.

In response to historical abuses of power in the name of knowledge creation such as German Nazi medical experiments on prisoners of concentration camps (Weindling et al., 2016) or nutrition experiments carried out on children of residential schools in Canada (Mosby, 2013), researchers and research institutions have increased awareness and regulations concerning the ethical conduct in research involving humans (Deaver, 2011; Hammersely & Traianou, 2012). In Canada, the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2) was created by the federal government to guide researchers and members of institutional research ethics boards in their decisions concerning risk to human research participants (Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR] et al., 2018). A significant underlying

value presented within this policy is "respect for human dignity" (CIHR et al., 2018, p. 6). This important value is outlined by three core principles: Respect for Persons, Concern for Welfare, and Justice (CIHR et al., 2018).

Tension exists, however, concerning how principles and practices are interpreted by members of overseeing institutional research ethics boards (referred to often as REBs or IRBs), particularly when applied to qualitative and arts-based research studies (Deaver, 2011; Hammersely & Traianou, 2012; Mason, 2018). A central concern of qualitative and arts-based (AB) researchers is that reviewers of REBs may not have the capacity to understand research practices within the social sciences and humanities because ethics guidelines were designed originally to focus on biomedical research and thus are rooted in traditional scientific methods (Deaver, 2011). AB and social justice researchers may be more likely to work with populations deemed "vulnerable," which may create tensions between researchers and ethics reviewers surrounding matters of recruitment, community-based participation, anonymity, consent, collaborative data analysis, and ownership of data and of dissemination materials (Blaisdell et al., 2019; Gustafson & Brunger, 2014). In a study that interviewed 36 AB researchers, participants expressed that although there was a need for some guidelines, the focus on the traditional structure of doing research was limiting (Boydell et al., 2016).

Exploration of creativity and uncertainty tends to evoke caution, perceptions of risk, and assumptions that one cannot understand or know the meaning of a liminal, transitional, and/or relational space that cannot be seen or described factually. This article contends that uncertainty in the creative process does not have to be viewed as a dangerous space. For those who dare to engage with the arts, this space is very real, holds infinite meaning and knowledge, and can be, despite its intangible nature, the space where some feel most comfortable.

This article addresses three significant areas of focus that arise within the context of ethics and arts-based research (ABR). The first relates to how researchers and members of REBs perceive and articulate uncertainty within the creative process of artmaking. Due to the spontaneous and emergent nature of creativity that is drawn upon while individuals engage in artmaking, researchers may be unable to predict and therefore to communicate precisely what will happen at this stage of their research. This element of uncertainty that is inherent to the artmaking process does not prevent researchers from being able to implement measures that attend to possible risks. However, uncertainty may evoke fear or discomfort for some ethics reviewers who are more familiar with traditional research methods.

The second area of focus relates to *who* is involved in the research and artistic process and what ethical dilemmas this may pose. ABR methods can be conducted through various arts modalities and through various stages of a research project. Therefore, different individuals may be involved in artmaking at different stages in a project. Examples might include the researcher, research participants, a community group, and a professional artist.

The third area of focus addresses *how* the arts may be incorporated into one's research design in a reflexive manner that attends to risks of potential harm and to ways of understanding and mitigating these risks. Areas of knowledge and skill will be identified that may support a researcher in their decision-making, as well as ethical principles and standards of practice that a researcher may use to guide their decisions and to support communication between researchers and ethics reviewers. Themes examined will then be discussed within the broader context of ABR practice, and recommendations will be provided concerning raising further awareness of arts-based approaches to research and how creative arts therapists (CATs) can support this aim.

Throughout this article, I will highlight ways that creative arts therapies have a great deal to offer to the emerging practice of ABR from the perspective of ethics. CATs are trained in the ethical use of self, concerning their clients and their work, as well as the ethical use of art materials and the creative process combined with themes of accessibility and representation. It is important in the context of ABR to identify that the roles of psychotherapist and researcher hold different meanings, responsibilities, and forms of power. These roles are not interchangeable. However, I would argue that there are areas of overlap that benefit AB researchers from an ethical viewpoint when they have training (or if they collaborate with an individual who has training) in creative arts therapies.

For this article,[1] ABR will be used as a term that includes a wide variety of AB genres incorporated at any stage of the research study design. These stages include data collection, data analysis, and dissemination. A shared value among many AB researchers is the promotion of social justice, social inclusion in research, and the desire to evoke social change (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). Other terms are commonly used to describe the use of the arts in research. These terms include (but are not limited to) arts-informed research, arts-based inquiry, and creative methods (Leavy, 2015; Mason, 2018). Some researchers use these terms interchangeably, and some define them separately (Leavy, 2015; Wehbi, 2015).

It would be important to acknowledge that researchers and REBs are working at present within the context of a neo-liberal era that scrutinizes perceived risk and promotes increased alignment with economic market ideology. Many academics express concern that institutional REBs are being placed under increased pressure to protect the economic interests of their institutions over the freedom

1 I am positioned as a registered art therapist and a certified member of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. I teach an art therapy ethics course, am a former member of the review committee on my university's REB, and am a PhD candidate employing ABR methods in my study. I am writing this article in response to the documented need for engagement in reflective practice about tensions and possibilities with respect to risks and benefits inherent in research that involves the arts. I appreciate some of the challenges that both researchers and ethics reviewers pose in examining potential risks of harm to those involved and in weighing these risks with potential benefits that the arts can bring to the pursuit of knowledge and social justice.

and pursuit of knowledge (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). Dominant capitalist regimes have shifted the academic landscape, placing pressure on scholars to narrow the ways that they design their research, adhering to specific practices that they perceive will afford them legitimacy in a competitive environment where tenure-track careers and funding are increasingly scarce (Boydell et al., 2016).

It is at this historical juncture that critical AB researchers, including CATs, are taking up the call to challenge unethical and unjust practices that oppress those most marginalized in our society. Over the past two decades, AB researchers have been renewing awareness of a vast, unlimited source of potential for learning. At the same time, they have been interrogating and tracking ways to engage with vulnerable populations through the arts, both ethically and rigorously, in alignment with the core ethical principles of Respect for Person, Concern for Welfare, and Justice.

Articulating Uncertainty Within the Creative Process

The topic of uncertainty within the creative process is likely to cause feelings of discomfort and questions for both potential ABR practitioners and members of REBs (Boydell et al., 2016; Deaver, 2011). In this section, I unpack the theme of uncertainty within the creative process as it relates to members of REBs, researcher/facilitators, and artist/participants. Particular attention will be given to ways that uncertainty within the creative process supports the desired outcomes of ABR and upholds the integrity of social justice epistemologies.

The creative process of artmaking depends a great deal on tacit, sensory, and embodied knowledge (Allen, 1995; Barrett, 2007; McNiff, 1998). Examples of this kind of knowledge include riding a bicycle, painting, or speaking a language. Tacit knowledge, theorized by Polanyi (as cited in Budge, 2016, p. 434), is difficult and sometimes impossible to articulate verbally in a mechanistic or factual way (e.g., trying to explain how the creative process unfolds and what will happen next) (Budge, 2016). The Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge University Press, n.d.) defines *tacit knowledge* as "knowledge that you do not get from being taught, or from books etc. but get from personal experience." The creative process of artmaking is spontaneous, characterized by unpredictable multi-sensorial emotions and physical experiences (Boydell et al., 2016; Malchiodi, 2018). Experienced artist researchers and artist facilitators tend to be familiar with these qualities, and they bring an appreciation that one's experience engaging in the art form will differ based on personal, social, and/or political context (Sutherland & Acord, 2007).

It should be noted here that CATs receive training and supervision relating specifically to ways in which to navigate the creative process ethically that attends to the safety of and respect toward the client or participant within their specialized modality (such as visual art, dance, drama, or music). For example, one master's

degree program in art therapy at a Canadian university requires as a prerequisite an undergraduate degree that combines a foundation of coursework in studio art, art theory, art history, art education, and various psychology (clinical and research) courses (Concordia University, n.d.). This foundation provides familiarity with the creative process and with the ways in which the arts connect with psychological theory and practice.

A 2-year graduate degree in art therapy can include 60 credits (three credits per semester course), including a major research paper or an applied project, in addition to 800 hours of practicum (including 350 direct client contact hours) and clinical supervision hours provided by both an on-site practicum clinical supervisor and an academic faculty clinical supervisor. Students acquire knowledge about various populations and psychological and social theories through course readings and discussion. Knowledge about the safe and respectful application of creative projection techniques and about the symbolic and metaphoric function of artistic representations is gained through guided experiential artmaking and through an exploration of personal imagery.

Through practica and supervision, students gain skills in implementing theories and uses of artistic media in safe and respectful ways that attend to the welfare of participants. Students develop skills in observation, assessment, program planning, the establishment and maintenance of therapeutic relationships, ethical documentation, effective collaboration within multidisciplinary teams, and self-evaluation. These skills are supported through case presentations and analysis within a group setting that allows for collaborative feedback. Knowledge about ethics in the contexts of clinical work and research are obtained through awareness of legal and practice standards, of ethical decision-making models, and of ways in which one's values influence the ethical decision-making process. Finally, students acquire knowledge in qualitative and quantitative research methods, including arts-based methods, and develop critical reading and analysis skills that are then implemented through their own research paper or project (Concordia University, n.d.). Following graduation, CATs commit to ongoing professional development and peer consultation throughout their careers.

The depth of knowledge and skill acquired through these years of training cannot be extracted easily or condensed into a linear set of steps to be followed by another clinician or researcher. Instead, this knowledge is context specific, relational, accumulated over time, and acquired through a great deal of critical analysis and personal reflection. There is much knowledge and skill that can be learned, however, by collaborating with a CAT through group discussion, shared observations, experiential learning through artmaking, and shared critical analysis of the creative process within the research project.

Incorporating the arts into one's research design involves a level of comfort with uncertainty on behalf of researchers, participants, and audience members

(Neilsen, 2008; Sinding et al., 2008). It also involves ethical challenges in being able to articulate exactly what will happen within the research design process so that distanced members of an REB can assess potential risks and offer helpful suggestions. In the context of uncertainty, members of REBs may also run the ethical risk of enforcing inappropriate methodology and undermining the epistemological ethics of the researcher (Mason, 2018).

The discomfort with uncertainty and potential emotional distress can be traced back to Cartesian mind–body duality. A long-standing Western tradition has been to place reason and emotion in opposition to one another, overvaluing reason and disavowing emotion (McIntosh, 2015). In recent decades, a robust body of neuroscientific evidence has emerged in support of the view that reason and emotion are inextricably entwined and necessary for learning (McIntosh, 2015). Despite these findings, the historical binary between reason and emotion remains deeply entrenched within our psyches, resulting in fear surrounding experiences of emotion, the senses, and vulnerability (Gilson, 2016; Mackenzie et al., 2014).

Given the potential discomforts that arise for REBs and given challenges involved in communicating about the uncertain aspects of the creative process, why would researchers choose to incorporate the arts into their research practice? How might researchers demonstrate that the benefits of the creative process (often situated and emerging) outweigh potential risks associated with uncertainty? Scottish philosopher John Macmurray (1891–1976) argued for the education of emotions through the arts in an influential paper he presented in 1958 at the Mornay House College of Education's annual public lecture at the University of Edinburgh. Macmurray (2012) asserted that developing the capacity for a sensory experience in education and learning is integral to the process of collecting data that allow us to think and to plan.

Uncertainty within the creative process offers space for imagination and discovery that can lead to novel ways of thinking and doing. Individuals who practise ABR are encouraged to be very intentional in their practice. They tend to value epistemological frameworks aligned with human ethics and social justice aims (Ignagni & Church, 2008; Leavy, 2015; Neilsen, 2008). These aims are aligned with the principle of Justice outlined in the TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018). AB researchers view embodied, sensory, non-discursive, and multi-dimensional ways of knowing as imperative to deepening our understanding of one another and of the world we live in (Boydell et al., 2016; Gadow, 2000; Taiwo, 2013).

ABR methods can increase accessibility to marginalized individuals and groups (e.g., adults with intellectual disabilities or homeless youth) who may experience exclusion through traditional approaches to knowledge creation. The TCPS2 states that "inequity is created when particular groups fail to receive fair benefits of research or when groups, or their data or their biological materials, are excluded from research arbitrarily or for reasons unrelated to the research question" (CIHR et al., 2018, p. 8).

Incorporating diverse ways of knowing has been documented to elicit more accurate, nuanced responses from participants, thereby generating rich and meaningful data (Mason, 2018). To exclude such knowledge is believed to be unethical as it limits our scope of understanding human experience, particularly marginalized experience (Neilsen, 2008). This is an important matter to those who view ABR in opposition to traditional research methods that have been experienced by some marginalized communities as controlling, violent, and discriminatory (Ignagni & Church, 2008; Neilsen, 2008).

Let us consider how, by whom, and for whom knowledge is shared. What are the ethical responsibilities of REBs concerning accessibility and inclusivity in knowledge sharing communities? AB researchers strive to make research findings more accessible, to broaden conventional audiences, and to illuminate localized knowledge as a means of creating social impact (Leavy, 2015; Sullivan & Parras, 2008). ABR, as a form of knowledge translation, aims to promote resonance and self-reflection and to evoke attitudinal change toward social justice efforts (Boydell et al., 2016; Fudge Schormans, 2010).

Individuals sharing knowledge through the arts may include research participants, interdisciplinary researchers, artists, CATs, and community members (Fudge Schormans, 2010). The inclusion of those with lived experience provides individuals with the opportunity to contribute to social change that impacts their community (Boydell et al., 2016). Examples of ways that knowledge may be shared through the arts include research-based theatre, photography and visual art displays, dance performances, and poetry readings (Fudge Schormans, 2010; Neilsen, 2008; Sinding et al., 2008).

AB researchers claim that the creative process of artmaking is powerful. It would be important then that researchers be able to acknowledge how this process is powerful and in what ways it could potentially lead to harm for participants (Deaver, 2011; Konrad, 2019). The researcher must be familiar with the uncertainty inherent in the creative process to anticipate risks of harm to those involved and to feel confident in managing risks as they emerge. Uncertainty within the context of artmaking in research can be described as a liminal "play space" where knowledge emerges through deep engagement with imagination and expression (Neilsen, 2008). If this is not an area of familiarity for the researcher, collaboration with a CAT would be of benefit, allowing for a review of contextual factors and possible risks that could emerge within the chosen modality.

The Canadian Art Therapy Association (CATA) requires members who conduct research to engage in four practices that align with central guidelines within the TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018). These practice standards can be found in Section E.12 of the CATA (2004) *Standards of Practice* guide and can help clarify or reduce areas of uncertainty. The first guideline requires that before commencing a research study one must consult competent professionals connected with the community or with the study topic in order to determine the value and feasibility

of carrying out the proposed research. The TCPS2 defines research as "an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation" (CIHR et al., 2018, p. 5). Through community consultation, a researcher could determine what knowledge would be important to extend to the community and to the broader society, shaping the design of their AB study.

The second CATA (2004) guideline requires the researcher to assess possible risks to research participants and to take steps to eliminate or mitigate these risks. The TCPS2 describes the welfare of a person as "the quality of that person's experience of life in all its aspects" (CIHR et al., 2018, p. 7). "Concern for Welfare means that researchers and REBs should aim to protect the welfare of participants, and, in some circumstances, to promote that welfare in view of any foreseeable risks associated with the research" (CIHR et al., 2018, p. 7).

In their assessment of potential physical, social, or psychological risks associated with ABR practice, CATs employ their knowledge and experience as psychotherapists who draw on the use of the arts, and they would have unique perspectives on how these risks may be avoided or mitigated. For example, if the use of paint was deemed to be a potential physical risk to participants, then a way to mitigate this would be to ensure that painting is done in a well-ventilated area, that the paint is non-toxic, and that there is a sink nearby to wash hands or eyes if necessary and to provide a brief training session to participants before they engage in painting.

The third CATA (2004) guideline states that all members of the research team, all participants, and all forms of artwork are to be shown respect. This commitment aligns with Article 1.1 of the TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018) pertaining to the core principle concerning of Respect for Persons. Although this principle may be familiar to researchers across disciplines, learning to be respectful of the artwork is a unique aspect of training that CATs receive as the art is perceived as an extension of the individual or the group who created it. Respect toward the artwork would include storing the artwork in a secure and confidential space, labelling pieces appropriately, and protecting the artwork from potential damage due to light, water, or mistreatment.

Finally, the fourth guideline for art therapy researchers is the requirement to obtain informed consent from research participants or their legal representative and to ensure this consent is provided in writing (CATA, 2004). Chapter 3 of the TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018) outlines various factors involved in the process of obtaining informed consent. Informed consent requires that the researcher must disclose fully any necessary information about the study or risks involved, and the consent must be documented. Supervised clinical training and experience familiarize CATs with the informed consent process, including aspects relating to artwork creation, documentation, and ownership.

Art therapists, for example, often include a checkbox list of items relating to the artwork to ensure that clients have the choice to consent to some items and

not to others. Examples of items would include permission to take pictures of the art for documentation purposes, permission to share art images for educational purposes, permission to share art images for publishing purposes, and information provided about ownership and length of retention of the art. By clarifying these various aspects of the study from the beginning and demonstrating alignment with TCPS2 guidelines, a researcher may satisfy concerns that REB reviewers may have about areas of uncertainty within the design and implementation of one's ABR project.

Standardized procedures are not characteristic of ABR practice because creativity occurs in a situated relationship between the researcher and their topic of research (Mason, 2018). Some researchers may be challenged to engage intentionally with uncertainty in the creative process due to dominant forms of research training that prioritize the search for answers through objective means over the search for questions through relational connection (Boydell et al., 2016; Neilsen, 2008). A commitment to reflexivity and to anti-oppressive praxis within the creative process will support a researcher in practising ethically by responding to power imbalances and to privileged assumptions that may arise within the creative process among the members of the research team and among the audience (Crouch, 2007; de Freitas, 2008).

For the individual making the art, the creative process may be pleasurable and/or may cause distress. Immersing oneself in this process can allow questions and knowledge to emerge (Neilsen, 2008). This knowledge may then be deconstructed in collaboration with an artist or a CAT and reconstructed differently. Such a process has been described to elicit empathy through "inhabiting others' worlds" (Sinding et al., 2014, p. 190), thereby shifting how the artist or the audience understands a particular population or study topic (Fudge Schormans, 2010; Sinding & Barnes, 2015).

Emotional distress may arise when participants feel vulnerable within the context of uncertainty or because of the study topic, experience fear of being judged in some way, experience feelings of incompetence with the art form, or engage with difficult emotional material as part of the process (Kapitan, 2018; Lyon & Carabelli, 2016; Mason, 2018). It would be important to acknowledge that emotional distress cannot automatically be equated with harm.

Macmurray (2012) argued that through our emotions and senses we are educated about humanity, we learn to become human, and our emotions are entwined deeply with our capacity for thinking, planning, and taking action. Participants and audience members of ABR have described emotional distress as integral to their experience of resonance, insight, and shifts in attitude about the topic being studied (Sinding et al., 2008). Researchers have found that this risk can be mitigated by communicating common feelings of distress that participants may experience through an ongoing informed consent process (Sinding et al., 2008).

Who Is Doing the Art? Ethical Considerations of Roles, Intention, and Ownership

This section addresses the question of *who* is doing the art. Roles and necessary knowledge/skill will be explored first, followed by intentions of the researcher and a discussion about ownership and creative licence. Ethical considerations and dilemmas will be examined relating to each theme.

Ethical Considerations of Roles

A researcher using AB methods may also identify as an artist or as a CAT (if they have the necessary training), may be collaborating with an artist or a CAT, or both. The researcher may be engaged in artmaking or may be facilitating research participants to make art as a form of knowledge generation (Mason, 2018). Konrad (2019) documented a common ethical concern that the use of the arts in untrained hands may cause harm unintentionally. Ignagni and Church (2008) cautioned that the arts have the potential to reproduce harmful dominant ways of understanding marginalized communities. From an ethical perspective, it is important to understand *who* is engaging with the uncertainty of the creative process and what skills and knowledge are necessary to conduct ABR in an ethical manner that prevents harm to those involved.

The TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018) outlines that it is the role of the principal investigator of a research team to ensure that an informed consent process for participants is followed. This person is also responsible for ensuring that other team members follow this process (Cox et al., 2014). If the head of the research team is unfamiliar with the creative process or art form being employed and is collaborating with an artist (who is not a researcher or bound to ethical guidelines or standards of practice), how would this researcher be able to manage emerging risks and the duty to ensure ongoing consent with participants and audience?

Konrad (2017) conducted a review of potential ethical hazards in ABR. She stated that "most artists do not purport to consider the ethical risks or harms that their artwork may produce" (p. 4). An argument could be made then that it would be vital for the principal investigator to be knowledgeable and practised in the use of the art form that is being employed within the research. Increased skill and practice will give the researcher more insight into possible risks that may emerge within the creative process as well as insight into what exactly participants are consenting to engage with. CATs, as researchers or collaborators, would be competent in the use of their art form and trained to consider the impacts (and potential protective qualities) that the use of the modality could have on participants or on audience members.

Competence can be described as "the quality or state of having sufficient knowledge, judgment, skill, or strength" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Given the diverse breadth of research designs, theoretical frameworks and methods, and the

unique contexts within each study, is there a particular set of competencies that a researcher can possess to practise research well? What areas of knowledge or skill development might benefit one's research practice? How might we understand competence in the context of ABR?

The TCPS2 asserts that a "researcher's commitment to the advancement of knowledge also implies duties of honest and thoughtful inquiry, rigorous analysis, commitment to the dissemination of research results, and adherence to the use of professional standards" (CIHR et al., 2018, p. 5). These commitments relate strongly to practices of personal self-reflection, which involve the willingness to interrogate one's own decisions within the research process and to demonstrate a motivation to share knowledge with others. Ongoing practice relating to personal self-reflection and a commitment to ethics guidelines are familiar to CATs, who are required to "maintain professional competence by utilizing such means as ongoing self-evaluation, peer support, consultation, research, supervision, continuing education, and personal therapy to evaluate, improve and expand their quality of work with clients, areas of expertise and emotional health" (CATA, 2004, p. 4).

AB researchers apply these practices also. AB researchers strive to build awareness of their social location, their lived experience, and their underlying value systems (Leavy, 2015). From the position of ethics and social justice, AB researchers must practise reflexivity in each stage of their research design. Reflexivity challenges researchers to examine their social locations and the ways that their positions of privilege and power may influence their assumptions, decisions, and behaviours (Leavy, 2015). The ongoing practice of self-awareness, empathy, and reflexivity skills would help researchers make decisions regarding intersectional forms of oppression and research with participants or communities who may be vulnerable to exploitation (Deaver, 2011). Leavy (2015) encouraged researchers to build these skills through journaling about choices that are made by the researcher and returning continually to interrogate these responses.

Various areas of overlapping knowledge were identified in the literature regarding doing art, doing clinical or community practice, and doing ABR (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Seligson, 2004). *Practical knowledge* allows one to act spontaneously within a unique context. *Theoretical knowledge* refers to competency in the skill and technique of the art form. *Productive knowledge* relates to meaning making and to the ability to create a sense of cohesion through the art form. Finally, *knowledge about the use of self* in relationship with a research participant, audience, or client is important in being able to gauge ongoing consent and ethical boundaries.

Each of these forms of knowledge is important in the ethical practice of both ABR and creative arts therapies. Practical knowledge would support the researcher in responding to risks as they emerge in the creative process. Theoretical knowledge would allow the researcher to anticipate risks and to support participants and collaborators in their involvement in artmaking. Productive knowledge would

be useful concerning the ethical representation of a marginalized community or a sensitive topic. Self-knowledge is important in terms of prioritizing the well-being of vulnerable participants and being mindful of any dual roles or potential conflicts of interest that may arise (CIHR et al., 2018).

Ethical Considerations of Intentions

How does intentionality relate to ethical practice in ABR? Individuals are drawn to incorporating the arts into their research practice for various reasons. Mason (2018) discussed the importance of intentionality in ABR as a means of ensuring alignment with epistemological and ontological values that support ethical practice and social justice aims. One is encouraged to consider the methods used to align with the needs of the participants and community as well as what they can offer the researcher and the study as a whole (Mason, 2018). How does the researcher understand and make meaning of their reality? What kinds of knowledge or epistemologies are valuable to the researcher? The use of the arts in research fits well with understanding reality in terms of aesthetics, emotions, senses, and embodiment (Mason, 2018).

AB researchers tend to value knowledge that offers a multiplicity of meaning and perspectives, nuance, and a desire to explore questions and connections (Gadow, 2000; Mason, 2018; Neilsen, 2008). One may claim that employing the arts in one's study design allows one to access these ways of knowing in a manner that other methods cannot achieve (Mason, 2018).

The kind of knowledge and meaning that can be generated through the arts is an ethical matter as hegemonic forms of truth and harmful assumptions about individuals and communities can be challenged (Leavy, 2015). Empathy may be elicited through learning about the position of another, while acknowledging respectfully the impossibility of claiming to know that individual or group fully (Fudge Schormans, 2010; Neilsen, 2008).

Researchers who wish to challenge accessibility barriers to knowledge creation and knowledge sharing within hierarchical systems are also drawn to ABR for its potential to incorporate collaborative efforts. Collaboration may occur with academics, policy-makers, and community members (Mason, 2018). These aspects of intention relate directly to the TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018) core principles of Respect for Persons, Concern for Welfare, and Justice. Intentions grounded in epistemologies aligned with ethical and social justice values must be incorporated into each step of the study design. Each decision made, in a situational and emergent manner, must be interrogated in alignment with the epistemological framework.

Ethical Considerations of Ownership

The consideration of ownership and creative licensing in ABR will now be discussed. The TCPS2 requires informed and ongoing consent from research

participants throughout one's study (CIHR et al., 2018). The degree to which a researcher will be able to plan for tensions that may emerge around ownership of the artwork will vary depending on the research design and on the ways in which the arts are employed within the study.

When possible, written consent must be obtained from participants regarding the purpose of the artwork being created and how it will be used before commencing the research. If the arts-based methods are more emergent in nature, consent must be obtained before any artwork is displayed, informed by the balance of risks, benefits, and the participant's freedom of choice (see Section J of CATA, 2004).

Recognizing that consent is an ongoing process, the researcher must be transparent and collaborative with research participants throughout the study as decisions are made and as tensions may evolve. Various ABR scholars identify that tensions may arise between the desire to conduct ethical research and the desire to produce high-quality artwork (Leavy, 2015; Sinding et al., 2008). When artwork is created based on the artist's interpretation of a given community or topic, what responsibility does the artist/researcher have to minimize harm in how that community or that topic is represented?

CATA (2004) encouraged its members to prioritize the dignity of the individual who created the artwork (assuming here that the artist would be the participant) and to share interpretations of the artwork in an accurate manner that avoids misleading the public. Sinding et al. (2008) encouraged researchers to incorporate feedback from the represented community before the art is released to the public. Leavy (2015) encouraged researchers to contextualize the completed artwork and to share the process of its creation.

CATs are often familiar with discussing the context and the impact surrounding art creation based on therapeutic group and community work. If artwork is created in a collaborative or participatory manner, to whom does the art belong and who makes decisions about how the artwork is treated or how it is shared? These elements must be articulated clearly within the informed consent process (Cox et al., 2014; Mason, 2018). The following section of this article will address additional ways that the researcher/artist/facilitator/CAT may incorporate ethical decision-making into their work with collaborators, participants, and audiences to promote safe and intentional practice.

Facilitating Within the "Space Between": Ethical Dilemmas and Guidelines

In this section of this essay, I discuss how AB researchers develop safe grounds to create a physical and emotional environment in which artmaking and creativity can take place. This environment can be thought of as a symbolic space or atmosphere that fosters comfort, trust, lack of judgment, and inclusiveness. I

discuss how this space is held during the creative process and how it is respected through the provision of measures intended to mitigate or avoid risks of harm to participants, community groups, and members of the research team.

Neilsen (2008) described the abstract concept of *liminality* in the practice of lyric inquiry. She identified liminality as a "play space" (p. 98) in which qualities of fluidity and imagination have the potential to illuminate questions, foster connections, and challenge dominant notions of what counts as legitimate knowledge. The "space between" has also been described as a "transitional space" (Warner & Gabe, 2004) and as an "aesthetic space" (Gray & Kontos, 2018). Bergum (2003) identified the concept of "relational space" (p. 125) as a shared space between two individuals that must be considered by a facilitator concerning skill, technique, and attention to power imbalances. Bergum's concept may also be understood in terms of intersubjectivity (Scotti & Aicher, 2016).

It was mentioned earlier in this article that ABR tends not to have procedural steps to follow as this is not characteristic of the spontaneous nature of creativity (Budge, 2016). To ensure intentionality throughout the study, creative methods must be tailored carefully to the topic of study, to the population of participants, and in alignment with an ethically informed epistemological framework (Leavy, 2015). Concerning the welfare of research participants, the research design should support each individual's maximum level of functioning and quality of life and should reflect the participant's needs and strengths; at the same time, the participant should understand the goals of the project and be involved in the formulation of the project planning (adapted from Section K of CATA, 2004). An arts-based researcher will still be required to wade through some uncertainty in terms of anticipating the potential harm to participants and the measures that can be put in place to initiate a safe research process. It would be important at this initial stage to assess what skills and knowledge are needed within the study and who may possess these.

For this article, *artist* will be defined as someone who possesses disciplined practice knowledge of an art form (Kapitan, 2018). This definition does not exclude those without artmaking experience to engage in the creative process of artmaking. From an ethical perspective, however, it would be important to have someone on the research team, such as a CAT, who is experienced with liminal and intersubjective space within the context of the creative process and the art form being employed. Another important skill set relates to working with vulnerable populations and with emotionally evocative topics that are likely to be included in social justice–oriented research (Cox et al., 2014).

Research ethics applications often require researchers to explain what relevant experience they or their research team have concerning the scope of the project and the necessary skills or knowledge needed to conduct the study ethically. Kapitan (2018) is an art therapist who identified that the risk of emotional

distress to participants would be higher if the study focused on an emotionally charged topic with a researcher who had little experience conducting ABR with vulnerable populations. It would be important then that researchers avoid misrepresenting their qualifications, education, and training and that they engage only in the parts of the study in which they are qualified (adapted from Section C of CATA, 2004). It would also be important to consider how anticipation of ethical dilemmas and measures to mitigate risk would be negotiated within collaborative or participatory partnerships between an artist and a lead researcher of a team, particularly if the lead researcher does not identify as an artist or a CAT. In such a collaboration, it would be beneficial to work from a shared value of respect for the research participants and the community as outlined in section E.12.3 of CATA's (2004) *Standards of Practice*, in alignment with Article 1.1 and Chapter 9 of the TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018).

Previous experience can be utilized by researchers in preparing participants about unanticipated distress or challenges that arose for those involved in past similar studies (Sinding et al., 2008). This ethical measure pertains to the values of autonomy and informed consent outlined in chapter 3 of the TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018) and in section E.12.4 of the CATA (2004) *Standards of Practice*.

By informing participants (to the best of one's ability and knowledge) about potential risks connected with taking part in the study, individuals are then able to make an informed decision to engage in the research process or to withdraw voluntarily without consequence. Researchers strive to offer transparency and freedom of choice regarding potential risks and participation as a means of respecting human dignity and ensuring that participants are not feeling manipulated or pressured to participate. Discussing and normalizing common feelings of discomfort that may arise within the creative process, before artmaking or viewing, is another respectful measure that can be taken to alleviate unanticipated emotional distress that participants may experience following their engagement with the study (Sinding et al., 2008).

The inclusion of collaborative and participatory approaches in ABR is good ethical and moral practice as this allows for more individualized and frequent communication surrounding consent (Cox et al., 2014; Mason, 2018). This can occur on both an individual level and a community level (Cox et al., 2014). Chapter 10 of the TCPS2 discusses the varied nature of research partnerships in the context of qualitative research. Item h under Section A acknowledges that research partnerships with participant populations and settings are built over time and that collaboration within the research process is common (CIHR et al., 2018).

Researchers would not want to avoid such practices simply due to the potential of risk and uncertainty inherent in liminal and relational space. Section E.1 of the CATA (2004) *Standards of Practice* outlines the importance of attending to undue influence between researcher and participant to avoid exploitation of trust

or dependency and thereby discourages dual relationships that potentially could impair the researcher's judgment. Potential risks associated with power dynamics and the development of dual relationships must be mitigated and balanced with the ethical and social justice benefits that can come from collaborative creative action (Cox et al., 2014; Sakamoto et al., 2015).

Holding the space while engaged in the creative process with participants will now be discussed. The context of this space will vary from study to study. Important ethical facilitation guidelines will be outlined here that have been documented by AB researchers in various contexts. The researcher is encouraged to begin facilitating by reintroducing the focus of the study, the tasks participants are being asked to do, and the risks they may be exposed to (Sinding et al., 2008). One should review voluntary informed consent agreements and the right to withdraw from participation before engaging in artmaking (Leavy, 2015). This recommendation is aligned with Section E.12.4 of the CATA (2004) *Standards of Practice* and outlined in further detail in Chapter 3 of the TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018). Training and support regarding the use of the art form will help to increase feelings of comfort, competency, and empowerment for participants in their use of art as a tool of knowledge generation and communication (Sakamoto et al., 2015).

Exercising reflexivity and relational self-awareness is imperative in how facilitators respond to power, privilege, and the need to balance perspectives between knower and known (Bergum, 2003; Sakamoto et al., 2015). The TCPS2 views power imbalances between researchers and the communities they research as a significant threat to justice (CIHR et al., 2018). Sections C.4, C.5, and C.6 of the CATA (2004) *Standards of Practice* urge art therapists to practise self-awareness and to develop their level of knowledge relating to cultural diversity, social oppression, and relations of power through self-evaluation, research, personal therapy, and peer consultation.

Empathy and relational sensitivity are important skills in building trust, gauging when a participant may be experiencing emotional distress, and knowing when and how to intervene if necessary (Leavy, 2015). A common ethical measure that would mitigate psychological risk would be to include a list of culturally appropriate emotional support services for participants at the outset of the study (Sinding et al., 2008). Finally, as part of an ongoing informed consent process, it is important to be checking in with participants continually to ask how they are doing and to address any questions or concerns that may arise. This commitment aligns with the principle of Concern for Welfare, as outlined in the TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018).

Respecting the space means that the AB researcher values strongly the symbolic significance of the relationships between participants, the creative process, and evocative materials that may arise within this process. One of the core principles of the TCPS2 is Respect for Persons, which "recognizes the intrinsic value of human beings and the respect and consideration that they are due" (CIHR et al., 2018,

p. 6). This respect can be demonstrated through the treatment of participants, the physical space, the artwork, and the ways in which generated knowledge is represented (Mason, 2018; Sinding et al., 2008).

CATs are trained to appreciate the value of respect toward participants and the artwork (see Section E.12 of CATA, 2004), enacted through the use of opening and closing emotional grounding exercises, maintaining appropriate boundaries, arranging materials and objects intentionally in the physical research space, ensuring physical safety and privacy, paying attention to how the finished artwork is stored, and paying attention to the respectful representation of the artwork (see Section I relating to Environment and Section J focused on Public Use and Reproduction of Client Art of CATA, 2004). Informed consent measures should be carried out with specific considerations regarding the creative process and the risks that may arise relating to the art form being employed (Kapitan, 2018).

Confidentiality, anonymity, and ownership considerations must be negotiated concerning the artwork while considering the ethical integrity of the data (Cox et al., 2014; Deaver, 2011; Leavy, 2015). Sections A.9, B, and J.1 of the CATA (2004) *Standards of Practice* require art therapists to obtain written consent that documents matters of ownership, representation, and confidentiality relating to both verbal and visual information created by or with participants. Chapter 5 of the TCPS2 addresses the topics of privacy, confidentiality, and secure data storage.

Privacy is a human right in democratic societies. "Privacy is respected if an individual has an opportunity to exercise control over personal information by consenting to, or withholding consent for, the collection, use and/or disclosure of information" (CIHR et al., 2018, p. 57). Confidentiality refers to the researcher's obligation to safeguard the identifiable personal information of research participants. Anonymity refers to the removal of identifying information in connection with research data (CIHR et al., 2018).

Anonymity in the context of ABR may be protected by removing identifiable information digitally or by asking participants to represent their experiences through metaphors (Cox et al., 2014). Physical art objects and digital documents such as video, images, and audio files should be stored securely and confidentially (Kapitan, 2018). Data storage methods and length of retention should be communicated to the participant (Deaver, 2011). Sections K.6–9 of the CATA (2004) *Standards of Practice* provide guidelines for the ethical storage of written, visual, and electronic data, legal considerations regarding limits to confidentiality, and the retention of records. Public sharing of the artwork must be portrayed sensitively and with permission from the participant (Deaver, 2011; Leavy, 2015), like a community art exhibit organized by a CAT (see Section J of CATA, 2004).

Cultural sensitivity should be considered through collaboration with community stakeholders who can be invited to engage in the research process and to review the completed representation (Cox et al., 2014; Leavy, 2015). This recommendation aligns with Chapter 9 of the TCPS2 that focuses on research with

Indigenous communities as well as respectful collaboration with other distinct communities (CIHR et al., 2018).

Section E.12.2 of the CATA (2004) *Standards of Practice* requires art therapists to assess possible risks of harm that may arise through participation in one's research study and to respond accordingly to avoid or to minimize risks within the unique context of the research. Creating opportunities to incorporate feedback from participants and from audience members is an ethical consideration intended to address unanticipated distress and concerns about representation (Howard, 2004; Hynes, 2017). Reflective dialogue with participants and audience members also aligns with the core principle of Justice outlined in the TCPS2, as this action promotes the exploration of diverse ways of knowing and prospects for social change in the context of justice (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Fudge Schormans, 2010).

Conclusion

This article has discussed numerous ways that ABR can be understood and practised within an ethical context that promotes beneficence toward a broad range of individuals and communities. Three points of interest were explored. The first is related to articulation and perception of *uncertainty within the creative process* of artmaking. The second point focused on ethical dilemmas relating to *who* is involved in the research and artistic process. The third point addressed *how* the arts may be incorporated into one's research design reflexively and ethically. This author highlighted areas where the knowledge and the skill set of a CAT would benefit the research process from an ethical perspective.

AB researchers are calling upon members of REBs and the academic community to expand upon ideas of what can count as knowledge. Arts-based methods must be incorporated into post-secondary research courses through exposure to literature on arts-based approaches to knowledge creation and examples of visual art, music, and theatre performances that are created by researchers to disseminate their work. Students can explore their research questions through experiential arts-based practice and reflective discussion in the classroom.

Arts-based experiential learning must be guided, however, by ethical principles that value respect, welfare, and justice. Educators must also attend to themes discussed throughout this essay relating to power dynamics and the creation of a safe and non-judgmental atmosphere in which creativity can emerge freely. Students, as researchers, are encouraged to maintain a journal as part of an ongoing reflexivity practice that supports social justice aims.

For researchers interested in building knowledge and skills toward the use of arts-based methods, it would be important to start with existing literature that can be located throughout various scholarly journals that cover diverse disciplines. Two leading collections to consult would be *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative*

Research (Knowles & Cole, 2008) and *Handbook of Arts-Based Research* (Leavy, 2018). Another suggestion would be to develop a peer reading group for AB researchers, to share ideas, to support one another's work, and to collaborate on writing projects to increase scholarly literature in this under-theorized area of research. Finally, I argue that it would be of value to consult with CATs in support of experiential learning and ethical application of the arts with community populations of research participants.

CATs are in an ideal position to ensure the core ethical principles of Respect for Persons, Concern for Welfare, and Justice are reflected in ABR practice. Through extensive graduate training and supervised practicum placements, CATs gain foundational knowledge and experience concerning mitigating risks associated with uncertainty within the creative process. CATs are also trained in the use of a variety of arts-based modalities while prioritizing the best interests of their program participants. It would be of benefit, then, to include a CAT on one's research team as either a collaborator or a consultant to review the research design, data collection process, analysis, and dissemination. Each study would, of course, be unique and employ the arts in context-specific ways. However, regardless of how the study is designed or at what stage the arts are used, a CAT would likely be able to offer important insights into ways that the research may be carried out safely, accessibly, and respectfully.

REBs often strive to assign ethics applications to reviewers who are familiar with the epistemologies and methodologies used in the proposed study. Article 6.4 of the TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018) states that it is the responsibility of REB reviewers (at least two) to have "the relevant knowledge and expertise to understand the content area and methodology of the proposed or ongoing research, and to assess the risk and potential benefits that may be associated with the research" (p. 73).

This author recommends that AB researchers be recruited actively to sit on review boards. These scholars or community members could offer valuable perspectives when reviewing applications and within board discussions. Article 6.5 of the TCPS2 (CIHR et al., 2018) advises REBs to consult with ad hoc advisors in cases where reviewers of the board lack expertise or knowledge necessary to assess that the research is ethically sound. If existing reviewers are not familiar with ABR methods, it will benefit the board and researchers to invite a CAT and/or an AB researcher to provide an educational workshop to the reviewers or to consult on the review of the application. Understanding must continue to be fostered concerning how scholars can incorporate embodied, sensory, and relational ways of knowing into their research practice safely and purposefully. With this momentum, novel ways of understanding the world may be expanded, and pathways of knowledge may be illuminated, toward a more just, attuned, and relationally responsive society.

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