

# Tracing Autonomy

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## Workshop Guide

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# Introduction

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# Introduction

The Tracing Autonomy Workshop offers practitioners a structured method to support and stimulate discussion on how to support a person's autonomy. That person may be a participant of a project, a patient, a client, a service user or a colleague.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Tracing Autonomy Framework, available to download from [our website](#).

The workshop format provides structured time for practitioners to reflect and discuss key issues relating to autonomy.

It uses creative methods to open up new ways of thinking. This enables different perspectives on complex subjects to emerge through discussion and the practice of making.

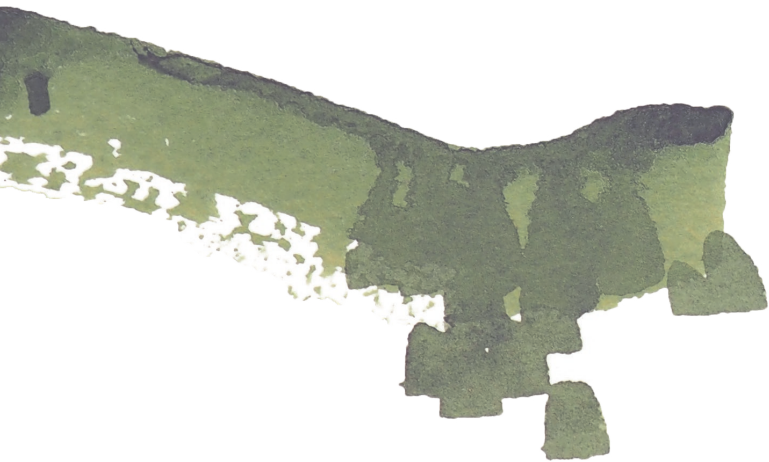
Its structure is effective in bringing together a range of multi-disciplinary perspectives. It achieves this by offering participants the opportunity to have a practical and embodied experience. When an experience is embodied or 'felt', rather than observed from a distance, people can develop their own insights and knowledge based on first hand experience.

The Tracing Autonomy workshop provides a shared experience that supports participants to act as connected and to identify what we have in common. It establishes a common ground that takes into account the wider context and experience of each participant. The workshop establishes a platform to open up discourse, enabling participants to move beyond pre-formed pre-conceptions and to formulate new knowledge around the concept of autonomy based on practice and first hand experience. The reflective insights gained can be applied to each participant's own professional context.

# Aims and Outcomes

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## Workshop aims and outcomes



### Workshop aims and outcomes

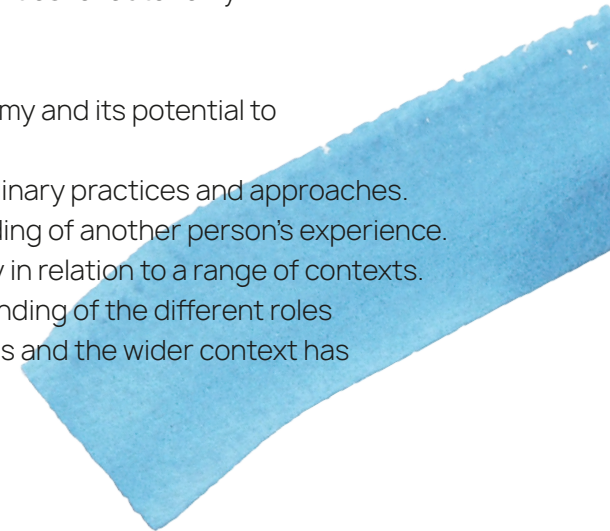
The workshop starts from the simple act of making a mark – a mark in its widest possible sense.

#### Workshop aims:

- To bring the theory of autonomy together with practice, for example: clinical, arts and health or participatory practices.
- To establish a platform for multidisciplinary perspectives and discussion around autonomy.
- To strengthen reflective practice.
- To influence policy promoting autonomy for an individual in relation to others and an institution.
- To explore the threats and opportunities for autonomy.

#### Anticipated outcomes:

- Increased understanding of autonomy and its potential to influence practice.
- Wider knowledge of different disciplinary practices and approaches.
- Increased empathy and understanding of another person's experience.
- Strategies for supporting autonomy in relation to a range of contexts.
- Increased awareness and understanding of the different roles within practice and the influence this and the wider context has on a person's experience.



# Workshop Structure


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## Invitation to make a mark

In the Tracing Autonomy workshop participants are invited to make a mark – a mark in its widest possible sense. This could literally be a mark on a piece of paper, it could be a gesture in space, the placement of an object, or it could be a vocal statement or sound. This simple invitation opens up the subject of autonomy for a facilitated discussion.



## Set up and organisation of the space

The arrangement of the space where the workshop takes place will influence the marks people make.

The time available will also influence what kind of marks people make. A longer time frame allows greater immersion in mark-making, whereas having a shorter time promotes more instinctive, improvised responses.

Where possible aim to create an environment that is non-directive in its arrangement, for example: avoid having tables and chairs set out in advance. If possible, make flexible table and floor space available. People may choose to move around the space in order to make their mark as a gesture or movement.

Have art materials or any other materials to work with laid out to one side so that people can make a choice about what they would like to work with and where they would like to work. This promotes choice based on individual preference.

Tailor the session by adding additional reference material, for example: placing relevant quotes on cards around the space. This can aid discussion or signpost themes to be discussed.

Each individual's mark and approach to making their mark will be unique.

# Outline structure for workshop

## Guide to support discussion

Tailor these questions to the time available, making sure to leave enough space in the schedule for reflection and discussion.

### Preparation:

In advance of the workshop read through Tracing Autonomy Framework, available to download from [our website](#). It may be useful to print out the Visual Summary, (included at the back of the Tracing Autonomy Framework PDF) to share with participants.

### Notes for facilitator:

This workshop is most appropriate for a small number of participants, for example a maximum of ten. A smaller group usually allows for more voices to be heard and more discussion.

The invitation to make a mark is the vehicle through which to discuss autonomy, not the mark itself. Give prior consideration to how you invite people to make a mark, as how you phrase and present this invitation will influence people's experience.

The facilitator can join the group in making a mark. This offers common ground from which to support discussion.

Support members of the group to relate their experience to the context in which they work.

The Tracing Autonomy Workshop has taken the form of a one-hour workshop and a two-hour workshop. It could also be adapted to a three-hour workshop giving more time for discussion and mark-making.

**Step by step guide:**

The suggested time schedule given below is for a 1-hour workshop. These times can be adapted to fit the time you have available.

1. As facilitator briefly introduce yourself and your motivation for hosting the workshop. (1 minute)
2. Remind people to respect the voices and opinions of others in the workshop, not everyone will be confident in speaking in a group setting. (1 minute)
3. Ask each person to briefly introduce themselves, their name and their job and the context they are working in. (5 minutes)
4. Ask the group, "What is autonomy?" Invite comments from participants. (5 minutes)

5. **Offer the following definition of autonomy:**

"Central to living a good life is the value of autonomy: deciding for yourself what is valuable and living your life in accordance with that decision.

Autonomy is an ideal of self-authorship <sup>(1)</sup>. Being author of your life means shaping it to reflect your values and ambitions, taking responsibility for the course it takes, and forging reciprocal moral relationships (of trust, care and need) with others, helping shape their lives and letting them shape ours too." (Ben Colburn)

6. Invite people to make a mark using the art materials, using spoken or written word, gesture or movement. State that the marks people make will not be analysed and no explanation will be asked of them. Reassure people that they can opt out. (at least 15 minutes)

**A starting point for mark-making could be:**

- Following your intuition.
- A reflection.
- An observation.
- Relating to your journey here or your professional experience.
- Pluck it out of the air or the first thing that comes into your head.
- Give it some time.
- Try a range of marks.
- Explore the parameters of the mark, for example: take it from one extreme to another.

1. The idea of self-authorship comes from the philosopher Joseph Raz.

7. Guide a group discussion and reflection structured around the characteristics of autonomy: choice, value, relationships, and authorship. (18 minutes)

**For example:**

- Reflect on the choices you had available in order to make a mark.
- What was of value within the invitation to make a mark?  
Focus on the invitation itself and not the mark created.
- Consider this quote in relation to your experience of participating in the Tracing Autonomy workshop:  
"....being able to forge reciprocal moral relationships (of trust, care and need) with others, to help shape their lives and to let them shape ours too." (Ben Colburn)
- Can you reflect on the experience of being author of the mark you made?

8. In relation to your experience of making a mark, what were the threats to your autonomy and what might the ideals have been? (5 minutes)
9. In what ways does autonomy relate to your professional practice and the people you are working with? (8 minutes)

10. **Task to take away with you:**

Next time you have a session or interaction with someone that felt significant in some way, either positively or negatively, apply the Tracing Autonomy Framework, available to download from [our website](#), as a way of reflecting on this situation. This may help you gain a deeper understanding of what took place and what you can do next time to either avoid or replicate an approach or situation. (2 minutes)

# Background

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## Background

The Tracing Autonomy Workshop has been developed in use with practitioners and academics from a range of backgrounds including: palliative care nurses, paediatric palliative care, nursing education, arts and health, creative and participatory practice (visual art, writing, performance), philosophy, Alzheimer support, child bereavement, social work and anthropology.



# Tracing Autonomy

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