

Video: Shaila Essley

## Performer

*This worksheet was created as a part of Center Theatre Group's Theatre Artist Classroom Connections video series, accessible via [CTGLA.org/ClassroomConnections](http://CTGLA.org/ClassroomConnections).*

## Reflection Questions

- What is the one statement or piece of advice from this conversation that spoke to you the most, and why?
- Essley talks about the importance of respect in the theatre. What does "respect" mean to you? Can you think of a time you weren't respected? Would you handle it differently today?
- Essley uses breath work to center herself when she gets nervous onstage. What advice would you give to a fellow artist who was feeling scared to share their work?
- Do you believe working in theatre makes a person more empathetic? Why or why not?

## Learning Activities

### **Class Charter: Safety, Dignity and Belonging in Ensemble**

How can we foster a sense of respect and belonging in our classroom and rehearsal space? Learners and instructor will work together to define what respect feels like for them and create a list of guidelines that will help ensure that their learning and rehearsal spaces foster this feeling. Learners will also decide what restorative steps should be taken when an ensemble member steps outside of these guidelines. Learners and instructor will sign and date the charter, and keep it displayed in their space. The charter should be treated as a living document that can be reviewed and amended as needed.

### **Role Playing Scenarios for Practicing Self-Advocacy Skills**

Self-advocacy is a skill that can be practiced and improved. Learners will use the following scenarios to begin strategizing responses to issues they may face as professional theatre artists. Learners can also generate further scenarios that are discipline-specific.

- A friend is pressuring you to take on a project when you're already overloaded. How can you turn the project down, but keep the relationship strong?
- You just found out a fellow theatre artist is getting paid more than you for the same project. What are some next steps you can take to address this discrepancy?
- A theatre artist you're working with on a project has made several comments around you that make you feel uncomfortable. What are some next steps you could take to ensure that your working environment feels safe and respectful?