

**SHOW FIT
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**MELBOURNE
THEATRE COMPANY**
SHOW FIT

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Keeping 'show fit' is about more than physical stamina. Whether your role is onstage or off, it's important to give the health of your body and mind equal focus.

Melbourne Theatre Company Show Fit is a collection of resources that you may find helpful in support of your physical, vocal, emotional and mental wellbeing.

If you ever have a concern, or would like more information on any of the resources contained in this pack, speak to Company Management.

Physically Show Fit

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**If you or someone you know is at immediate risk,
please contact the Emergency Services on 000**

PHYSICALLY SHOW FIT

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Warming Up

Try this 8-minute 'ramp-up' to warm up your body

R

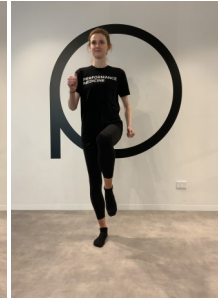
RAISE your heart rate

2mins of getting puffed

Step touches



Jogging



A

ACTIVATE your muscles

2mins of firing-up your body

Glute Bridges



Squats



M

MOBILISE your whole body

2mins of dynamic movements

Thoracic Opening



Squat & Shoulder



P

PLAY in your role

2mins of specific role related activity



PERFORMANCE
MEDICINE

Notes provided for Melbourne Theatre Company by Performance Medicine

Physical tips to De-Role

Try the 3 R's to help de-role

R

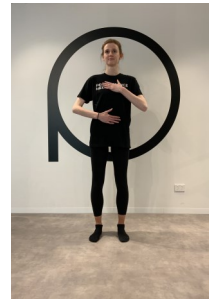
RELEASE

1min to release your character

Shake it out



4 Deep breaths and let it go

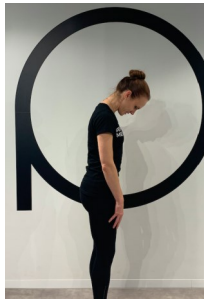


R

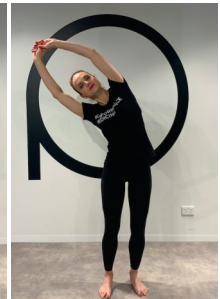
RESTORE

1-2 movements to restore your own body posture

Spinal Roll



Standing Mermaid



R

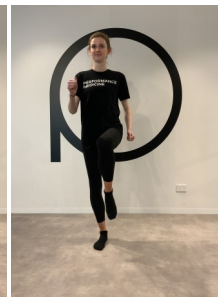
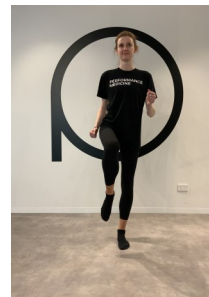
RECONNECT

1-2 dynamic movements to reconnect with your body

Standing Bow and Arrow



Marching on the Spot



Injuries in the workplace

Injuries can occur in the workplace. If an injury occurs, the most important thing to do is to tell a supervisor and seek assistance: whether that be a Stage Manager, Company Manager or other Melbourne Theatre Company Stage Manager.

It's important not to minimise or 'play down' an injury.

When an injury occurs, an incident report will be completed. These forms are very quick and simple to complete, and will be completed on your behalf by your Stage Manager or Company Manager.

Melbourne University Early Support Services

The University of Melbourne has developed and is piloting a new initiative called Early Support Services, to support employees with work-related injuries sustained out of, or in the course of, their employment.

Early Support Services is somewhat akin to WorkCover, in that it provides a framework for financial assistance in order to enable an individual to undergo treatment for an injury. However, Early Support Services are specifically intended for minor injuries or incidents. Where a serious injury occurs in the workplace, a formal WorkCover claim should still be pursued.

The Early Support Services framework imposes a series of 'caps' for treatment: for example, the cap may be "up to a maximum of 6 appointments". These caps are determined at the discretion of Melbourne University.

Applying for Early Support Services

- In the event of a minor injury or incident, an incident report must be filled out.
- Company Management will make an assessment to determine whether the injury or incident may meet the criteria to be considered for Early Support Services.
- Where Company Management feel the Early Support Services criteria has been met, Company Management will work with the Employee to generate and submit a formal application.
- On receipt of the application, Melbourne University will consider the situation and determine whether Early Support Services can be offered in this instance, or if a formal WorkCover claim should instead be pursued.
- Melbourne University must make contact with the injured employee for the claim to be accepted.

WorkCover

The below flowchart should be used as a guide for Employees to understand the WorkCover process at Melbourne Theatre Company

Injury

STEP 1

Employee advises Supervisor that they are injured. Supervisor fills out an Incident Report form. This must be filled out within 24 hours of the incident. Where seeking a WorkCover claim, a WorkCover form must be completed.

Treatment and Application

STEP 2a.

Health & Safety Coordinator or Company Management organise a consultation with a GP to seek a WorkCover Referral or Certificate of Capacity.

OR

STEP 2b.

If the injury requires immediate treatment from a specialist, such as a physiotherapist or chiropractor, Health & Safety Coordinator or Company Management will arrange an immediate initial appointment with the specialist.

STEP 2.5b.

Following the initial appointment with the specialist, Health & Safety Coordinator or Company Management will organise a GP consultation, in order to seek a WorkCover Certificate of Capacity.

Costs

During steps 2 to 5 in the process, the Employee will be required to pay all costs associated with seeing a GP and any specialists.

Pending assessment of the claim, reimbursement can only be processed using itemised receipts or tax-invoices.

Whilst the claim is being assessed, itemised receipts **MUST** be given to Company Management or the Health & Safety Coordinator to forward to Melbourne University as part of the claim.

Assessment of Claim

STEP 3.

Once the claim form is completed and submitted, Melbourne University's Injury Management team have 28 days in which to assess the claim. At this point, Melbourne University will assign an Injury Management Case Worker to the application who will be the primary point of contact for all matters relating to the Employee's injury and claim, rather than Melbourne Theatre Company.

STEP 4.

During the Assessment of the Claim, the Employee may continue to see specialists for treatment. During this period, the Employee is required to pay for the treatment and keep receipts for reimbursement in the event their claim is accepted.

STEP 5.

During the Assessment, Melbourne University may require the Employee to attend an assessment appointment with GP or specialist of the University's choosing. Or to complete a interview to confirm details of the event that caused the injury.

Decision

STEP 6.

An assessment of the claim will be finalised and the Employee will be personally notified of the result by Melbourne University's Injury Management team. Melbourne Theatre Company is subsequently notified of the result.

STEP 7.

If claim is accepted, reimbursement of costs to date, within the pre-set maximum reimbursement limits, will commence within 21 days. Melbourne University's Injury Management team will notify treating specialists and from this point, some specialists may commence direct billing to Melbourne University.

Closure

STEP 9.

Melbourne University's Injury Management team liaise with the treating specialist to determine the extent to which further treatment is required. Once the specialist advises that further treatment is not required, the case will be closed.

Trusted Practitioners

For a full list of trusted practitioners, speak to Company Management

Hospitals

The Alfred Hospital Public Hospital. 24hr Emergency and Trauma Centre	Commercial Road Melbourne, 3004	SWITCH: 9276 2000 EMERGENCY: 9276 3405
Epworth Hospital Private Hospital 24hr Emergency Department	62 Erin Street Richmond, 3121	SWITCH: 9426 6666 EMERGENCY: 9506 3000
The Royal Melbourne Hospital Public Hospital 24hr Emergency Department	City Campus South East 300 Grattan Street Parkville, 3050	SWITCH: 9342 7000 EMERGENCY: 9342 7009
St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne Private Hospital Emergency Department	41 Victoria Parade Fitzroy, 3065	SWITCH: 9231 2211 EMERGENCY NURSE ON CALL: 1300 60 60 24

General Practitioners

Southgate Medical Centre	405 Bay Street, Port Melbourne, 3207 Ph: 8686 0500	Hours: Mon - Fri: 8:30am to 5:30pm Sat/Sun/Public Holidays: Closed
Southbank Medical Clinic	151 Sturt Street Southbank, 3006 Ph: 9645 7775	Hours: Mon - Fri: 8:30am to 6pm Sat: 9am to 12pm Sun/Public Holidays: Closed

Voice Pathology / Triage

All appointments are at patient cost unless Early Support or WorkCover claim is accepted, or authorised by Company Management.

Voice Medicine Australia Debbie Phyland - Speech Pathologist Malcolm Baxter - ENT Surgeon	376 Victoria Parade East Melbourne, 3002 Ph: 9416 0633	Appointment required
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Physiotherapy and Remedial Massage

All appointments are at patient cost unless Early Support or WorkCover claim is accepted, or authorised by Company Management.

Performance Medicine Annie Strauch - Physiotherapist	The Gateway, Ground Floor 312 St. Kilda Road, Southbank, 3006 Ph: 9820 1324 Emergency only: 0413 591 630	Appointment required Hours: Mon - Fri: 8:30am to 7pm Sat: 9am to 2:30pm
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VOCALLY SHOW FIT

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Vocal Tips for Performers

VOCAL TIPS FOR MTC PERFORMERS

- Routinely drink water (2-3 litres per day if performing)
- Avoid menthol-based lozenges as they will dry your throat
- Avoid aspirin within one week of singing due to the increased possibility of capillary haemorrhage. Take paracetamol instead if necessary.
- Do use steam inhalation but not with any additives.
- Avoid throat clearing. Try to do a dry swallow instead.
- Avoid throat gargles that anaesthetise the throat as they may dry/ mask the effect of an infection or strain.
- If mucous is thick/ropey, consider mangoes or pineapples for breaking down the mucous.
- Avoid caffeine-based substances such as coffee, tea and coke (drying effects).
- Monitor fluid levels in general (if urine is pale then balance is adequate).
- Avoid recreational drugs. Both marijuana and cigarettes can be irritating, burning and drying to throat causing swelling of the vocal folds.
- Try not to eat a heavy meal late at night particularly spicy foods as this promotes reflux during sleep that can irritate vocal folds.
- If voice has not recovered the morning after a performance, rest your voice completely for that day to speed recovery.
- Always warm-up before singing and consider warming down after a performance.
- Practice singing in frequent short bursts rather than one long session until you have developed vocal stamina and are vocally fit.
- Consider vocal fitness in the same sense as general fitness---prepare, rest, healthy lifestyle, etc.
- Never push the voice past its limits.
- If experiencing throat discomfort symptoms, recognise these as indications of vocal fatigue and stop singing. If they persist, see a Speech Pathologist. There are many tricks to help reduce the load on the voice and increase vocal stamina for an 8 show week.
- Avoid whispering (this is worse than using a low volume).
- Nothing is as good for the tired voice as **complete** voice rest! So put your feet up, relax and turn your voice off!!!

How to manage the Common Cold

HOW to MANAGE the COMMON COLD

Principles of intervention

- decongest** (decrease the swelling of the glands and mucosal lining of the vocal tract) and **humidify**
- clear secretions, improve nasal airway & decrease coughing
- many over the counter medications work but they may also have significant drying effects so use with caution.

Avoid

- those medications that state '**drying**' effects as they will tend to make your secretions more tenacious (sticky) and difficult to clear.
- some antihistamines if known to cause drying.
- aspirin** or disprin for 8-10 days before performing as these can increase the risk of a vocal haemorrhage. Use paracetamol for pain relief instead or even codeine if necessary (e.g. panadeine).
- betadine** gargles and **menthol/eucalyptus** lozenges within 8 hours of performing as these are too drying and will make voicing difficult
- dairy products if feeling 'sticky'
- corticosteroid sprays unless you are regularly taking these as a preventer for asthma. It is not advisable to start these unless advised by your doctor and only for respiratory reasons-i.e, not for your throat
- performing if coughing persistently or if the voice is inconsistent in quality

Do

- humidify** air
- drink lots of water** including mineral water
- use medications that are pure **decongestants** in the short term including pseudoephedrine (i.e., don't have additional ingredients) if they don't interfere with your sleep nor make you 'racy' and jittery. If they do, consider taking half a tablet or a long acting preparation in the morning and none at night.
- take Vitamin C** as a preventative measure but don't forget it is highly drying so combat with fluids and take early in the day
- use nasal sprays for short term relief. **Saline** nasal sprays are very drying but can be effective. Nasal irrigation with FLO or FESS or similar sprays is better and can be administered 4-5 times per day with five squirts per nostril. Other 'over the counter' decongestant sprays can have a rebound effect, whereby you become more blocked, if taken repeatedly.
- take a **mucolytic** preparation like Bisolvon, Robitussin or Guafenesin if you need to break down sticky mucous but make sure it is the mucolytic version not the drying preparation.
- rest** as much as possible. Most colds and flus are resolved within 5 days but will linger longer if the vocal tract is inflamed by heavy vocal demands. Certainly consider abstaining from singing for the first 48 hours of cold onset and for any times that the voice is deeper in pitch or breaking during sustained phonation.
- When in doubt please consult a medical doctor and let them know you are a performer with special vocal needs. If concerned about your voice, seek expert help with videostroboscopic light and a voice team at a Voice Clinic.**

MENTALLY & EMOTIONALLY SHOW FIT

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Support Options

(People you can talk to)

Mental wellbeing is equally as important as physical wellbeing.

During your time at Melbourne Theatre Company, there are many people available to talk, should you encounter or experience anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, uncertain or unsure. Some of these people include:

- Stage Management
- Company Management (Julia Smith)
- The People & Culture team (Tom Lambert)
- Anne-Louise Sarks
- The Producing department (Martina Murray, Stephen Moore)

The above staff, and many more throughout the Company, are available to talk privately and confidentially and are here to offer support in any way they can.

External Performing Arts Industry support services you can talk to

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Assure

Melbourne Theatre Company offers all employees, including cast and creatives, access to an Employee Assistance Program called **Assure**, during the course of and immediately following their contracts. Information about Assure and how to access it can be found on page 20.

SUPPORT ACT WELLBEING HELPLINE

1800 959 500

www.supportact.org.au/wellbeinghelpline

Free, confidential phone counselling service available 24/7 for anyone who works in the performing arts industry. Call now to make an appointment, or request to speak to someone immediately about any aspect of your mental health and wellbeing.

PRIVATE COUNSELLING and PSYCHOLOGY

Melbourne Theatre Company has established relationships with several external, private counsellors and clinical psychologists, who are available on an appointment-basis to provide confidential, private support.

Several of these counsellors and psychologists have specific connections to, and/or lived experiences, working in the performing arts industry.

Counselling and Psychology options can be discussed privately with Company Management.

Non-Performing Arts Industry support services you can talk to

BEYOND BLUE

1800 512 348

www.beyondblue.org.au

Beyond Blue provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live. In addition to a range of online resources, Beyond Blue offers a dedicated phone service to speak to counsellors, and an online chat service which operates 24/7.

In response to the ongoing pandemic, Beyond Blue has made a series of specific pandemic related resources available, in addition to their regular channels of support.

LIFELINE

13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

13 YARN

13 11 14

www.13yarn.org.au

Free and confidential 24-hour phonenumber offering yarning opportunity and support with trained Lifeline Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis supporters.

MINDSPOT

1800 61 44 34

www.mindspot.org.au

Free telephone and online service for people with anxiety, stress, low mood or depression. It provides online assessment and treatment for anxiety and depression. Note: Mindspot is not an emergency or instant response service.

**If you or someone you know is at immediate risk,
please contact the Emergency Services on 000**

Additional Arts Industry Specific Resources

ENTERTAINMENT ASSIST

www.entertainmentassist.org.au

A national health promotion charity that raises awareness about mental health and wellbeing in the Australian entertainment industry.

MEAA EQUITY WELLNESS

www.meaa.org/campaigns/equity-wellness

A series of online resources, including a national database of health professionals, with specific interest in and understanding of the performing arts and the requirements of performers and crew.

VICTORIAN ACTORS' BENEVOLENT TRUST

www.vabt.com.au

The Victorian Actors' Benevolent Trust (VABT) is a benevolent fund established to provide financial support to Victorian-based professional performers, creatives and crew in times of crisis.

Additional Non-Arts Industry Specific Resources

HEAD TO HEALTH

www.headtohealth.gov.au

An extensive online collection of digital mental health services, including apps, online programs, online forums, phone services and a range of digital information resources. Head to Health is collated by the Australian Department of Health.

HEADSPACE

www.headspace.org.au & headspace.org.au/yarn-safe/

Headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, supporting young people with mental health, physical health, alcohol and other drug services, as well as work and study support.

1800 RESPECT

1800 737 732

www.1800respect.org.au

A 24-hour national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling service. Call 1800 737 732 or visit 1800RESPECT.org.au .

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICE

(03) 9419 3000

<http://www.vahs.org.au/>

VAHS provides a range of health and wellbeing services to Victoria's Aboriginal community that includes a GP clinic, Women's and Children's Health, Men's Health, Dental, Family Counselling, Financial Counselling, alongside a range of other Aboriginal community-specific health and wellbeing services.



Need to chat?

We know your physical and mental health can be positively or negatively impacted by many factors - work, finance, relationships, life at home, physical health, so when it does, we're here to listen.

Our confidential wellbeing coaching and support is provided at no cost to you or your family. Let us help you successfully navigate life's ups and downs.

Get in touch



1800 808 374 AUS | 0800 808 374 NZ

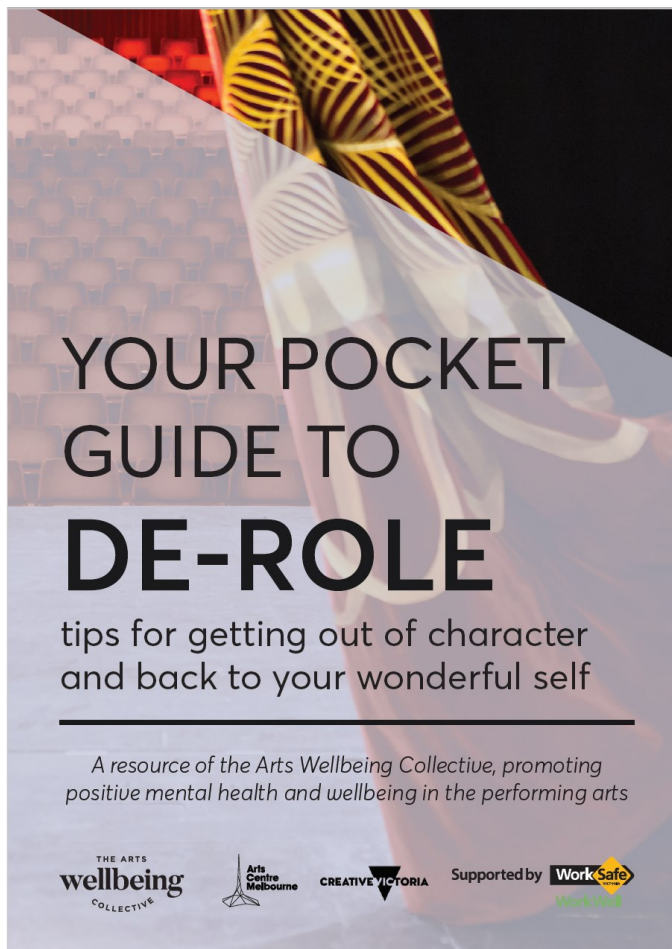


**Download Wellbeing Gateway on
Google or Apple to chat** **COMPANY CODE:**



assureprograms.com.au/appointment

A Pocket Guide to De-Role



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

We spend so much time meticulously getting into character – thinking, feeling, speaking, and moving as someone else – how much time and energy do you spend getting out of character?

It can take more than a quick debrief and a post-show high five! Getting out of character properly can help you avoid:

- Poor mental health and wellbeing from ineffective or absent de-role practice
- Character creep and character bleed
- Blurred boundaries between actor and character
- Intrusive thoughts, feelings or behaviours that are not your own

At the time of writing, there are no formal research-based guidelines for getting out of character. The following ideas are drawn from anecdotal evidence and clinical experience.

Hopefully you will find tips and tricks to help you return to your wonderful self!

This guide is a resource of the Arts Wellbeing Collective. The content was created, reviewed and informed by Arts Centre Melbourne, Alicia Gardiner, Simon Gleeson, Matt Heyward, Bert LaBonté, Daijah Porchia, Dr Alison Robb, Patrice Tipoki, and Deone Zanolto.

IN REHEARSALS

- Discuss the importance of using effective de-role processes. Share tips and techniques with each other that may have been successful in the past.
- Agree as a company to spend time at the end of the day getting out of character before you leave the building.
- Add post-rehearsal group exercises – something fun and frivolous – and make a conscious decision to use each other's names.
- Once you hit the theatre, use 'dress down' time as the signal to start the de-role process!

“

My process for getting out of character can vary - physically I like to 'move it out' – jump, shake and breathe. I will spend time away from others or time with others depending on my needs each day.

And listen to music on headphones! Music that speaks of you or a song you associate with your life and not the character's or the show.

Alicia Gardiner

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PERFORMANCE

- Consciously place the character's props back on the props table.
- Remove the character's costume. Place it consciously on the rack.
- Carefully remove any make-up, wigs, markings etc. worn as the character.
- Physically shake the character off – arms, legs, hands, feet.
- If you have access to a bathroom, have a shower and imagine washing the character off.
- Change into an outfit that is comforting, or expresses your personality, or both.
- Smells can evoke powerful memories – use a particular perfume or deodorant when portraying the character, then rinse it off and use one that represents you.

REINFORCE THE DIFFERENCE

For any post show meet and greet, forum or backstage tour, make sure you are introduced to audience and participants with YOUR name, not the name of your character.

"This is [Name] who plays the role of [Character]."

You could even make mention of the differences between the two:

"You might have noticed everyone in the show is really scared of [Character], but [Name] is actually one of the sweetest people you will ever meet!"

These subtle shifts in language can make a big difference.

NOTICE YOUR THOUGHTS

Sometimes a character isn't a problem until you've been doing it for a while. Notice when your mind supplies you with thoughts or suggestions, or dreams, that are from the character and not you.

- Practice saying to yourself, "Thanks mind, but that's (CHARACTER), that's not me" and then turn your attention back to what you were doing in the present moment.

Over time, the thoughts will come less frequently and you'll be able to identify and deal with them faster.

“

You want what you do to be honest and truthful - but at the same time, you can't let it ruin you.

When I played Fantine in Les Miserables, I felt lucky because I could actually use the fact that she died as a way of letting her go each night. I had the time to lie there on stage during the confrontation to make peace with her, and leave her on the stage when I walked off.

With Elphaba in Wicked it was as simple as taking off the green make up - it was like taking her off.

Patrice Tipoki

CONNECT WITH...

YOUR SPACES:

Pay attention as you move through different spaces - offstage into the wings, into the dressing room, out stage door.

Engage your senses as you leave the theatre and re-connect to the real world - what can you see, smell, hear, taste and feel? Notice all the differences.

YOUR BODY:

Let go of certain physical character traits that are not like your own.

Dance to your favourite music, do a quick yoga wind down, meditate (search the web for a 'body scan meditation' as a good starting point), or simply sit quietly and take some slow, deep breaths.

YOUR PEOPLE:

Call a loved one and find out the details of their day - a good antidote to the epic arc of performance. Plus, you get to speak to someone who loves you for you.

If you are playing a role that isolates you, make a conscious effort to connect with others.

YOUR THINGS:

Some performers create a 'self-kit' to keep in their dressing room.

A collection of things that remind you who you are outside of work - keepsakes from loved ones, objects that represent your hobbies and interests, and photos of friends, family and pets.

YOU ARE MORE THAN THE SHOW

Sometimes we confuse *what* we do with *who* we are.

There's nothing wrong with being passionate and committed, but the risk is that the show and/or the character starts to become your whole world - WHO you are, not WHAT you're doing.

It's just one part of your rich, complex, layered, awesome identity. Have a think about all the other threads - outside of the show - that make you YOU.

What else do you value outside your current role? Connecting with your values can help orient you to goals beyond this current gig.

“

I think the thing you need to do to 'step out of character' after a show is a bit of a post-show action plan. You need to give yourself something to look forward to afterwards.

Whether that be a meal, a drink with a friend, a book, a TV series, supper with your lover, a workout - you need a bit of life post show to remind you what this life is all about.

It is NEVER all about the show. Afterwards.

Bert LaBonté

- Often we label ourselves - "I am an actor," "I am [Character]," - reinforcing that feeling that we *are* our work.
- Keep it in perspective - "I am currently performing in [Show] as [role]." It's just what you're doing right now - not your whole life.
- Cultivate your other interests - a sketchpad, crossword book, journal, hobby, sport - give yourself mental space outside the show.
- Allocate 'me time' the same way you allocate time for daily routines such as brushing your teeth. Make self-care a habit, not a bonus.

“

I consider leaving the character part of my job. But leaving the stress and crippling insecurity of being an artist is something else entirely.

The thing that helps me is to have something outside of the theatre that I am truly passionate about. Painting, writing, whatever.

But a verb, not a noun. They're things outside of the theatre to 'do' not just like.

Simon Gleeson

DE-ROLE IN ACTION

Actor and writer Daijah Porchia interviewed the cast of *columbinus*, a hard-hitting play written by Stephen Karam and PJ Paparelli and directed by Jennifer Vellenga.

The play tells the story of the Columbine High School massacre, and contains difficult and heavy content. Daijah shared some effective de-role techniques that were used by the cast and creative team:

- "Car wash" - the cast would make two lines. Each cast member would take a turn going through the middle and getting the bad feelings "scrubbed off". The sillier, the better!
- Cast members would say their name to themselves in the mirror - as many times as they needed to - as a form of grounding, and to re-establish a sense of self.
- The cast would all hug - all together, individually. In a show with so much hate and violence it was important to counter those feelings with something positive. Care. Affection. "These are characters, the things they do and say are not indicative of how I feel for you."

REACH OUT

It's always ok to ask for help. Performing can be a physically exhausting and emotionally draining job, and you're only human!

If you or someone you know is at immediate risk, call 000.

Support Act Wellbeing Helpline 1800 959 500 (24/7)

BeyondBlue 1300 22 4636 (24/7) or visit beyondblue.org.au to chat online (3pm to midnight) or join an online forum

Lifeline 13 11 14 (24/7)

Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467 (24/7)

QLife (LGBTQI) 1800 184 527 (3pm to midnight)

Mensline: 1300 789 978 (24/7)

Griefline: 1300 845 745 (12pm to 3am)

DirectLine 1800 888 236