



ARTS PARTICIPATION FOR REDUCING STRESS AND PROMOTING  
ORGANIZATIONAL WELLNESS

Serena Pandos

Major Paper submitted to the Faculty of Goucher College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Arts Administration

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## ABSTRACT

**Title of Thesis:** Arts Participation for Reducing Stress and Promoting Organizational Wellness

**Degree Candidate:** Serena Pandos

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Welch Center for Graduate and Professional Studies  
Goucher College

The negative impact of stress and the positive impact of making art was researched for this paper to benefit nonprofit leaders and the organizations they serve. Stress is believed to be associated with poor individual health, burnout, reduced job satisfaction and a driver for turnover within the nonprofit organization. High levels of leadership turnover can lead to unsustainable operating conditions for the nonprofit organization. Conversely, new scientific research is emerging that demonstrates engaging in arts activities is associated with individual wellbeing, stress resistance, increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover. Participating in an art form plays a positive role for the nonprofit arts administrator by reducing stress. Likewise, arts participation plays a positive role for the nonprofit arts organization by helping to reduce stress induced turnover.

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Readers' Committee:  
Rachelle Browne, JD, Chair

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Ramona Baker, MFA

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Gregory Lucas, MBA

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Amy San Pedro, MA

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## FOREWORD

Less than one hundred years ago, medical scientists discovered that stress has a negative impact on individual wellness. In today's world, stress is a topic of global concern because it is associated with causing serious mental and physical health problems that are impairing peoples' ability to function in healthy ways in and out of the workplace. High levels of stress in the workplace are associated with poor individual health, absenteeism, injury, job dissatisfaction and turnover.

Within the context of the nonprofit arts organization, scholarly research indicates high turnover among arts administrators in leadership positions, because of job-related stress. Because leadership turnover can be disruptive to the developmental success of the nonprofit organization, ways in which to reduce workplace stress and turnover are believed to contribute to organizational wellness.

Recent developments in the field of medical science reveal that arts participation is associated with individual wellness, improved cognitive functioning and reduced stress. The term arts participation, in this paper, refers to the arts administrator or nonprofit leaders' active engagement in their arts practices. The individual wellness benefits that are being realized through arts participation are believed to contribute to organizational wellness by reducing the effects of workplace stress and turnover. Because scientific developments on arts participation for wellness is continuing to emerge rapidly, it is important to note that research for this paper concluded on January 25, 2017.

This paper is dedicated to nonprofit arts administrators who persevere  
for the benefit of the greater good.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Overview of Research and Organization of Paper

Scholarly research indicates that nonprofit leaders who face ongoing, job-related stress risk harming themselves and the organizations they serve. Job stress is associated with poor health outcomes and dysfunctional turnover that leads to unsustainable operating conditions. Also, there is evidence that active participation in the arts has a positive impact on wellness which is believed to translate positively for stress management. Research for this paper demonstrates how stress negatively impact the arts administrator and the organizations they serve as well as how arts participation can help ameliorate job stress and promote organizational wellness by being a factor for reduced turnover.

This paper is divided into four chapters, with the first two chapters being devoted to the problem of stress and its impact on the arts administrator and the organization. The final two chapters are devoted to the solution of arts participation for stress reduction and organizational wellness. The research for this paper consists primarily of sources such as: journals, statistics, surveys, blogs, interviews with arts organization leaders and oral histories. Secondary sources include government documents, in-field and out-of-field reports, reviews of research and other scholarly articles from the field of medicine, psychology, social sciences and nonprofit administration.

## Chapter I THE PROBLEM: JOB RELATED STRESS

### Defining Stress

The word *stress* was coined as a medical term by Dr. Hans Selye in the 1950s and subsequently introduced into many of the world languages during that time. *Stress* is “one of the very few words that are preserved in English, except in Chinese and in other languages that do not use the Roman alphabet” (Rosch). The closest word to *stress* in Chinese is composed of two characters that represent both “danger” and “opportunity” which translates to “crisis” (Rosch). The word *crisis*, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is a “difficult or dangerous situation that needs serious attention.”

Defining stress leads to a wide range of definitions, depending upon the context. Kakoli Sen, in the *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, provides three different definitions of stress from various contexts. In the psychological context, Sen defines stress as: “a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important” (14-15). In the context of medical science, Sen defines stress as a disturbance of the body’s natural health regulating systems when the mind and body are faced with unremitting changes (15). In the organizational context, stress is defined as being characterized by something that is experienced by employees

who face “job insecurity, performance expectations, technology changes, and personal and family problems” (15).

In 1999, the US Department of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), published a report called *Stress at Work* to help employers learn about the causes of job stress and provide preventative health and safety measures for addressing job stress. NIOSH defines job stress similarly as, “the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker” (NIOSH 6). NIOSH postulates that stress is an important issue that demands serious attention because job stress is believed to “lead to poor health and even injury” (6).

NIOSH states that:

The concept of job stress is often confused with challenge (opportunity), but these concepts are not the same. Challenge energizes us psychologically and physically, and it motivates us to learn new skills and master our jobs... The importance of challenge in our work lives is probably what people are referring to when they say, “a little bit of stress is good for you.” (6)

NIOSH attributes the condition of job stress to be influenced by three factors: working conditions, situational events and individual characteristics. According to NIOSH, working conditions play the primary role in causing job stress but both situational events and individual characteristics can either increase or decrease the effects of stressful working conditions. An employee’s caring for an ill family member, for instance, is a common situational event that may increase the effects of stressful working conditions. Conversely, an employee who has invested energy and time in developing a

supportive network of friends and coworkers, for instance, exhibits individual characteristics that may decrease the effects of a stressful working condition. Likewise, an employee exhibiting a healthy work-life balance or a relaxed and positive outlook, for instance, is attributed to an individual characteristic that may also decrease the effects of a stressful working condition (8).

NIOSH articulates six different types of job conditions that help identify working conditions that may lead to job stress. The first type of job condition is called the “design of tasks” and is defined by a working condition in which there are ongoing heavy workloads, excessive working hours and infrequent rest breaks. The second type of job condition is described as “management style” and stems from poor communication within the organization, a lack of participation in decision-making or perhaps a lack of family-friendly policies. NIOSH defines the third type of job condition believed to cause job stress as “interpersonal relationships.” This condition pertains to a lack of support from supervisors and coworkers. The fourth condition believed to lead to job stress concerns “work roles” and is used to describe job conditions in which there are too many responsibilities or uncertain and conflicting job expectations. The fifth condition is called “career concerns” and this relates to working conditions where there are rapid changes in which the workers are unprepared or where workers experience perceived job insecurity. NIOSH identifies the sixth job condition for stress as “environmental conditions” and this is used to define an unpleasant or dangerous working environment (9). The terms for these job conditions are used throughout portions of this paper to help the reader identify some of the job conditions that signal danger for job stress, as well as opportunities for reducing job stress wherever possible.

Although NIOSH articulates job conditions that cause stress as well as provides examples of situational events and individual characteristics that can either increase or decrease job stress, it did not discriminate between nonprofit or for-profit job characteristics. Further investigation into the medical field yields similar information on working conditions that lead to stress, as well as provides additional information on individual characteristics and situational events specific to the nonprofit sector.

### Stress and the Nonprofit Sector

Dr. Patricia Fisher, a clinical psychologist who offers assessment, consultation and employee wellness services to high-stress workplaces, states that nonprofit working conditions are inherently stressful because, “Nonprofits are typically subject to system stressors like heavy (workloads) and minimal resources” (qtd. in Shupac). Another physician, Dr. Carolyn Dewa, head of the Work and Well-Being Research Evaluation Program at Toronto’s Center for Addiction and Mental Health, concurs with Fisher, and suggests that all human service workers and nonprofit staff members experience high levels of job stress. Dewa similarly attributes the high levels of job stress to the design of tasks, associated with excessive workloads and limited resources. Furthermore, Dewa states that individual characteristics are a factor, “To the extent that the service sector or nonprofit sector attracts people who believe in the mission of their organization, they would be subject to higher chronic (ongoing) stress” (qtd. in Shupac). In a general way, these observations relate to the NIOSH definition of job stress which occurs when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker.

The *Review of Public Personnel Administration* article “Human Resource Challenges in Human Service and Community Development Organizations” contains observational summaries about what some nonprofit leaders participating in a focus group report to be feeling about their nonprofit working experience. The article demonstrates that nonprofit leaders are experiencing stress associated with five of the six job conditions that NIOSH describes as being causes for job stress. These pertain to the design of tasks, management style, interpersonal relationships, work roles and career concerns. The authors write:

Participants mentioned stress from several types of job pressures, including fundraising, interaction with coworkers... and excessive workloads. Many nonprofits face the challenge of working without long-term funding commitment. Those who do mentioned the extreme instability of never being able to guarantee that projects will continue into the next year. A second stress comes from interaction with coworkers and supervisors... in organizations with internal conflict...One focus group participant stated that people can work in his organization for only a few years and then get burnt out and have to go to a less demanding job. (Ban et al. 149)

Research on job stress within the nonprofit arts sector is a well-documented issue amongst nonprofit leaders, particularly within the museum industry. John Wetenhall, current Director of the George Washington University Museum and the Textile Museum, in a presentation to the American Association of Museum Directors, agrees with medical and scholarly research on stress and the nonprofit sector. Wetenhall suggests that nonprofit arts leaders face stress due to the inherently stressful working conditions of the

nonprofit arts organization. Additionally, Wetenhall postulates that the requirements of the museum executive director position demand an excessively large skill-set. Excessive job responsibilities, according to NIOSH is defined by the job condition pertaining to work roles and is attributed to workplace stress. Wetenhall states that, “The demands of the position have outstripped the talent pool”. He adds that ongoing stress associated with burnout is not a new problem to arts administrators, particularly amongst museum professionals. Kirk Varnedoe, former chief curator of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art and currently a professor at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, stated in an article for *Artnews* in 2003 that every one of his visiting guest curator peers “was the embodiment of demoralization, resentment, anxiety, stress and alienation over what was happening in his or her museum” (Wallach 112).

Elaine Gurian, author of *Institutional Trauma* and executive director of the Harvard Art Museum, suggests that organizational change relates to a situational event for increasing the effects of stressful working conditions. Gurian suggests that changes to the building, as well as changes within the staff or within governance matters lead to increased stress. For example, she explains that building changes, such as a construction project of any kind, can lead to dangerous environmental conditions that can cause injury or health problems. Other examples involving staff changes, such as turnover or staff discontent impedes the design of tasks due to increased workloads for other staff members. Similarly, staff changes that negatively impact interpersonal relationships, work roles and career concerns increase stress. Gurian adds that changes pertaining to governance issues, such as budget cuts, staff layoffs and cancellation of projects or programs can also lead to stress evolving around career concerns because sudden or

unplanned changes may disrupt a sense of job security (18). Gurian notes that although these descriptions of change are written within the context of the art museum, any number of these events can happen for other types of nonprofit arts organizations.

Further investigations on job stress amongst nonprofit leaders revealed that ongoing stress is an area of concern for grant funding agencies such as The Meyer Foundation. In 2013, The Meyer Foundation surveyed nearly one hundred nonprofit leaders to learn how it could best fund programs to further the effectiveness of nonprofit leaders. One of the most frequently cited challenges to their effectiveness was cultivating a healthy work-life balance amidst the inherent stressors of nonprofit leadership (Bartczak). Julie Rogers, President of the Meyer Foundation from 1986 to 2014, stated, “These people (nonprofit leaders) are sacrificing so much to take on the executive roles of these groups. We are watching people not just burn out but make themselves sick in the service of their communities” (qtd. in Bartczak).

### Stress and Individual Wellbeing

Since the release of the NIOSH publication in 1999, the World Health Organization named workplace stress as the “health epidemic of the 21st century” (Soleil). Dr. Robin Berzin, functional medicine physician states that, “We are living in an epidemic of stress” due to the modern society’s lifestyle. Berzin suggests that a stressful lifestyle has “become the new normal” because everyone is affected. She attributes the epidemic of stress to constant cellphone use, social media and job expectations. Furthermore, she adds that the addition of a situational event, such as a family member becoming ill, can lead any family into crisis. Berzin states that, “the problem is that this

new normal is unsustainable, especially when you layer on unique personal stressors—the things life throws our way...a sick family member; an irritating colleague at work; a move; a financial crisis” (Berzin).

Berzin describes stress as being symptomized by depression and anxiety and suggests that the United States population has a serious problem with stress. Berzin claims that widespread depression and anxiety in the United States is demonstrated by the fact that in 2011 nearly seventy-five million new prescriptions were made for anti-anxiety medications Xanax and Ativan, for one-quarter of the US population. Berzin also reports that one in ten Americans now takes antidepressant medicine and that among women in their forties and fifties, that number increases to one in four.

Dr. Esther Sternberg, rheumatologist researcher and author of *The Balance Within*, explains that wellbeing (homeostasis) is compromised when the stress response is ongoing. NIOSH concurs and defines the stress response as a biologically preprogrammed function that works by setting off alarms in the brain, which stimulates an increase of a stress hormone called cortisol as well as an increase of adrenalin to prepare the body to cope effectively. While short-lived episodes of stress pose little threat because the body is designed to handle short-lived episodes of stress without harm, ongoing stress is problematic (NIOSH 10). Sternberg describes ongoing, unresolved stress as being akin to warfare on the immune system because the hormones and chemicals being released during the stress response impair the biological system’s ability to defend itself from mental and physical illness (Sternberg, “Interview with Krista Tippet”).

Dr. Steve Bressert elaborates on the symptoms of stress and describes that a compromised stress response system will manufacture cognitive, emotional and behavioral symptoms as early indicators of overexertion. Bressert describes early cognitive symptoms of stress manifesting as: lethargy, confusion, a negative attitude, difficulty concentrating, constant worry and forgetfulness. Bressert reports that early emotional symptoms of stress signal as: irritability, helplessness, over excitability, apathy and feelings of being overworked or overwhelmed. He attributes early behavioral symptoms of stress as being signaled by poor work relations, crankiness, and failure to maintain a healthy work-life balance or set aside time for restoration through activities such as hobbies, music, art or reading.

Authors Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter of “Early Predictors of Job Burnout and Engagement” which is published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* explain that unresolved, ongoing, chronic stress leads to job burnout characterized by early physical symptoms such as “gastrointestinal disorders, muscle tension, hypertension, cold/flu episodes, and sleep disturbances” as well as in “decreased work performance resulting from negative attitudes and behaviors” (499). Research conducted by NIOSH supports these medical findings and affirms that ongoing job-stress causes harm to mental and physical wellbeing. NIOSH adds that symptoms such as “headaches, sleep disturbances..., short temper, upset stomach, job dissatisfaction (and) low morale” (NIOSH 10) are signals for a compromised stress response system. Furthermore, NIOSH reports that scientific evidence is rapidly accumulating to suggest that ongoing stress negatively impacts the body’s ability to defend itself against autoimmune diseases such as: “cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, and psychological disorders” (10).

## Stress and Job Satisfaction

Sen describes job satisfaction as a combination of psychological, physiological and environmental conditions that cause a person to say, “I am satisfied with my job” (14). Sen adds that job satisfaction and job stress are inversely related; greater stress leads to less satisfaction. The “2015 Nonprofit Employee Engagement and Retention Report” published by the Unemployment Services Trust (UST) organization concurs with Sen. The organization’s 2015 survey of over one thousand nonprofit supervisors and non-supervisory staff members of which 6% represent nonprofit arts administrators, also illustrates that job stress and job satisfaction are inversely related. Sen explains that because stress is associated with anxiety, depression, fatigue and irritability, it leads to lowered self-esteem and reduced job satisfaction. Sen also notes that there are debates around the concept of job satisfaction. Sen raises the discrepancy that many scholars also believe that job satisfaction describes “a feeling that is experienced after a task is accomplished” (Sen 14).

Other studies on stress and job satisfaction within the context of the nonprofit organization disagree with the findings of Sen and the UST and furthermore reveal high levels of job satisfaction among nonprofit leaders, despite stressful working conditions. The 2012 publication *Driving Change* published by the HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector contains a survey conducted by GlobeScan Incorporated of over one thousand nonprofit leaders, of whom 12% represent nonprofit arts leaders. The survey reveals high levels of job satisfaction notwithstanding challenging working conditions associated with job stress (3). Authors Carlo Borzaga and Ermanno Tortia of “Worker Motivations, Job Satisfaction and Loyalty in Public and Nonprofit Social Services” published in the

*Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* cite similar findings and reason that many nonprofit leaders report high levels of job satisfaction because of the good feelings associated with nonprofit service work. Borzaga and Tortia suggest that the nonprofit leaders' high level of job satisfaction despite job stressors such as excessive workloads, low wages, limited resources and staff shortages is associated with their strong belief in the mission and "meaningfulness of the work" (225).

As previously discussed, Dewa observes that the same individual characteristic, defined by a passion for nonprofit service work and a belief in the mission, can also be a factor for an increased risk of burnout associated with ongoing stress (Shupac). As Sternberg previously described, the body is not designed for ongoing stress (Sternberg, "Stress and the Balance"). Sternberg attributes ongoing, chronic stress to warfare on the immune system which leads to illness and disease. The discrepancies found in these studies of stress and job satisfaction suggests that an arts administrator or nonprofit leader who exhibits a high level of belief in their work may experience high levels of job satisfaction associated with accomplishing meaningful work, however without the opportunity to de-stress or recover, they become more susceptible to the negative consequences of ongoing stress which is believed to impede the experience of job satisfaction (Sen).

Similarly, the UST organization concurs with this observation and explains that a nonprofit leader who forgoes taking "well-deserved breaks" ("7 Simple Steps") does so because of a high level of commitment and belief in the organization. This behavior, as previously discussed, leads to poor outcomes for the nonprofit leader because the body's stress response is not made to endure ongoing stress (NIOSH; Bartczak; Berzin;

Sternberg, “Stress and the Balance”). Excessive working hours, for instance, compromises the body’s biological stress response system which leads to poor health outcomes associated with reduced job satisfaction (Sen). The UST organization reasons that, “Often equipped with fewer resources and a smaller staff, nonprofit (leaders) tend to feel overworked and stressed” (“2015 Nonprofit Employee” 8). The authors of *Driving Change* similarly conclude that despite the discrepancy of high levels of job satisfaction in high stress working environments, “executive directors who are experiencing a high level of stress are less satisfied than those experiencing low levels of stress” (8).

The Meyer Foundation president’s observation of nonprofit leaders making themselves sick in the service of their organization relates to this study of stress and job satisfaction. Nonprofit arts leader John Killacky, Executive Director for the Flynn Center of Performing Arts, states that “stress is self-induced” and suggests that it is incumbent upon the nonprofit leader to self-regulate if he or she wishes to experience job-satisfaction and survive the stress of working in the nonprofit sector. Killacky reports that he works anywhere between fifty and sixty hours a week but self-regulates his stress by maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Killacky also reports a high level of job satisfaction.

Other research suggests that nonprofit leaders should monitor their working hours when working in-excess-of forty-five hours per week. The GlobeScan survey in *Driving Change* reveals that over one-half of the executive directors surveyed working more than forty-five hours in an average week are reporting excessive or approaching excessive amounts of job stress. The survey furthermore reveals that for those who work less than

forty-five hours a week, the levels of stress are relatively low and job satisfaction is relatively high (10).

The *Driving Change* survey also suggests that other factors, beyond working hours, contribute significantly to nonprofit leadership stress and reduced job satisfaction. According to the survey, “board support has a clear relationship to overall satisfaction. Where executive directors feel less supported for ...key tasks..., significantly lower levels of job satisfaction exist” (9). Similarly, the “2015 Employee Engagement and Retention Report” links executive director job satisfaction to retention and job dissatisfaction to turnover (9). The authors conclude that, “Stress... reduces job satisfaction and drives higher turnover” (“2015 Nonprofit Employee Engagement” 9). This examination of job satisfaction may help demonstrate the significance of self-regulating stress to reduce the susceptibility of ongoing stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction and turnover, particularly for nonprofit leaders exhibiting a strong belief in the meaningfulness of their work. It furthermore demonstrates that there are significant challenges associated with the job conditions involving the design of tasks and interpersonal relationships.

### Job Dissatisfaction and Turnover

The authors of the “2015 Employee Engagement and Retention Report” as well as *Driving Change* observe that nonprofit workers who are experiencing high levels of job dissatisfaction associated with high levels of stress, have a greater willingness to leave their position. Author Elaine Gurian notes that Carry Cooper, in his book *Psychology at Work* associates non-participation at work as being a primary indicator of job dissatisfaction. Gurian adds that other signs of job dissatisfaction are made evident

through escapist drinking, depressed moods, low self-esteem, low life satisfaction, low motivation at work and intention to leave one's job (19).

The authors of *Driving Change* agree that increased stress reduces job satisfaction and leads to increased turnover. Over half of the executive directors surveyed state that they are experiencing high levels of stress, reduced levels of job satisfaction and furthermore plan to leave their positions within four years (8). Among those executive directors surveyed, 13% state that they are likely to leave their position within one year. The authors concluded that executive directors who indicated higher levels of stress were experiencing lower levels of job satisfaction and were therefore more likely to leave their jobs earlier than those who indicated lower levels of stress and higher levels of job satisfaction (*Driving Change* 8).

The authors of *Driving Change* furthermore reveal that among those executives surveyed, only four in ten (39%) plan to look for work elsewhere in the nonprofit sector. Of those remaining, only one in four plan to retire while others plan to leave the nonprofit sector altogether. The survey suggests that the "high level of likely attrition from the nonprofit sector" (10) is caused by reduced levels of job satisfaction associated with the inherently stressful working conditions associated primarily with the design of tasks and interpersonal relationships. As previously discussed by Gurian, turnover resulting from high levels of individually experienced stress signifies changes to the staff which leads to increased stress within an inherently stressful working environment. The increased stress, because of turnover, in an already inherently stressful working environment is believed to be a factor for organizational stress.

## Chapter II THE EFFECT OF JOB STRESS ON THE ORGANIZATION

### Stress and the Workplace

Scholars attribute individually experienced stress to workplace stress. Cooper summarizes that ongoing job related stress characterized by non-participation at work can be seen in: overall poor physical health, escapist drinking, depressed mood, low self-esteem, low life satisfaction, low job satisfaction, low motivation at work and intention to leave one's job (qtd. in Gurian 19). John Sosik and Veronica Godshalk, authors of "Leadership Styles, Mentoring Functions Received, and Job-Related Stress: A Conceptual Model and Preliminary Study" in the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, suggest that individually experienced stress is believed to relate to workplace stress because of its negative impact on employee retention, finances and organizational productivity. Gina Soleil, author of "Workplace Stress: The Health Epidemic of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" published in *The Huffington Post* reports that the World Health Organization (WHO) names workplace stress the twenty-first century health epidemic that is "costing American businesses up to \$300 billion a year" (Soleil). While no information was found to be associated with the dollar cost incurred to American nonprofit organizations, WHO suggests that workplace stress presents a significant challenge to the US workforce because it is "a threat to employee engagement, productivity (and) retention" (Soleil).

The resulting nonparticipation at work, lack of productivity and turnover collectively lead to organizational stress that is characterized by poor outcomes for the organization.

Within the context of the nonprofit arts organization, Gurian predicts that “unremitting and untreated stress within an organization will produce a collective response in 18 months” (19). For instance, Gurian observes that excessive employee illnesses or absences, large numbers of family problems such as marital separation and divorce, as well as excessive drinking or substance abuse will lead to debilitating workplace stress. She expounds that the collective response of individually experienced stress is characterized by workplace outcomes such as: staff complaints to board members, secret meetings, rumors, scapegoating and “grumbling so consuming that it interferes with work progress” (19). Sosik and Godshalk concur that individually experienced stress harms the organization because it decreases the effectiveness of an organization (365).

Similarly, Susan Jackson and Christina Maslach, authors of “After-Effects of Job-Related Stress: Families as Victims” published in the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* describe some of the after-effects of individually experienced ongoing stress and job dissatisfaction into feelings of “frustration, tension and psychological fatigue” which are believed to translate into the workplace as depersonalization and deviant behavior (64). Farah Radzali and Aminah Ahmad, authors of “Workload, Job Stress, Family-to-Work Conflict and Deviant Workplace Behavior” in *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* also reveal a “positive relationship between job stress and deviant workplace behavior” (112). These scholars suggest that feelings of frustration and irritability contribute to deviant behaviors such as absenteeism,

alcoholism and drug abuse. The authors describe other forms of deviant behavior as being characterized by low job motivation and low productivity (112).

Deviant behavior leads to poor interpersonal and organizational outcomes. Figure 1, below, illustrates how deviant workplace behaviors disrupt interpersonal relationships and impede workflows.



Figure 1. "A typology of deviant workplace behaviors: A multidimensional scaling study," by Robinson, S. L., & Bennett, R., 1995, *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(2), 555-572. Copyright [1995] by the Academy of Management.

As illustrated, deviant workplace behaviors are associated with poor working conditions characterized by challenges in the areas of interpersonal relationships, work flows, career concerns, design of tasks, work roles and harm to the organization. Many of these behaviors can contribute to turnover by resignation or termination, depending upon the severity of the deviance. The next section of this chapter explores the challenge of

turnover within the nonprofit organization towards furthering the need to address the problem of stress within the nonprofit sector.

### Stress and Workplace Turnover

Dr. David Allen, Associate Professor of Management in the Fogelman College of Business and Economics at the University of Memphis, and the Director of the Management Ph.D. program writes that it is important to understand the aspects of turnover in terms of avoidable and unavoidable turnover to understand its impact of turnover on the organization.

Voluntary turnover is initiated by the employee; for example, a worker quits to take another job. Involuntary turnover is initiated by the organization; for instance, a company dismisses an employee due to poor performance or an organizational restructuring.... Another important distinction is made between functional and dysfunctional voluntary turnover. Dysfunctional voluntary turnover can be harmful to the organization. Dysfunctional turnover can take numerous forms, including the exit of high-performers and employees with hard-to-replace-skills.... that can lead to high replacement costs. (Allen 2-3)

Figure 2, below illustrates aspects of turnover:

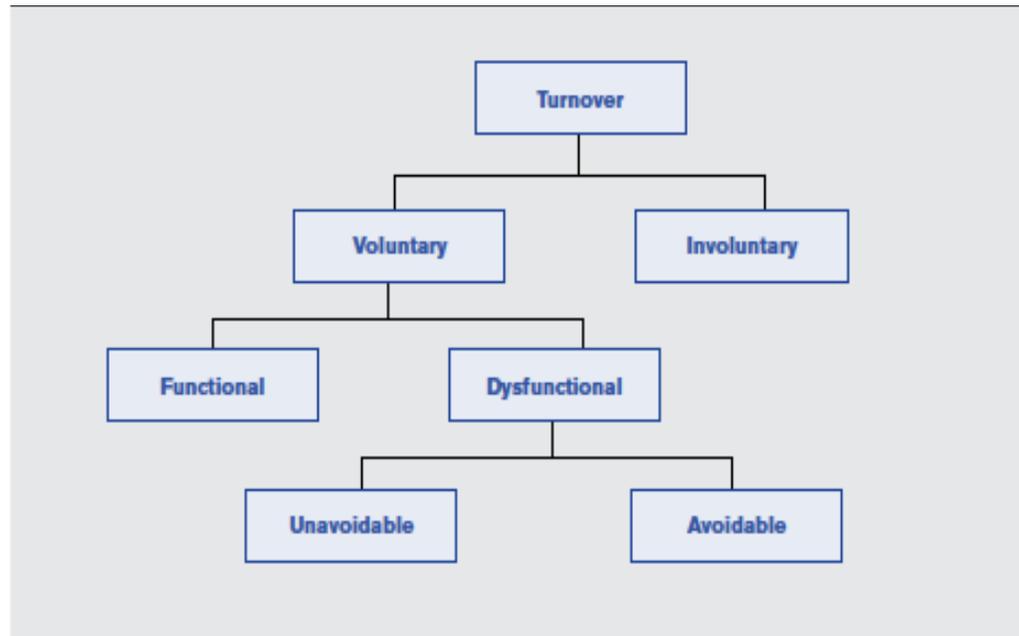


Fig 2. Aspects of Turnover from *Retaining Talent: A Guide to Analyzing and Managing Employee Turnover* by David Allen, p. 2.

A 2011 publication by Jean Bell and Marla Cornelius called *Underdeveloped: A National Study of Challenges Facing Nonprofit Fundraising* includes the term *turnover intention*, which can factor as a precursor for dysfunctional voluntary turnover. Within the context of the nonprofit organization, the publication cites a high incidence of turnover-intention amongst nonprofit leaders in the position of development director and executive director. The authors refer to a survey published in *Daring to Lead* that reports similar findings to the HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector publication, *Driving Change*.

The survey in *Daring to Lead* indicates that over 50% of the development directors participating in the survey “anticipated leaving their current jobs in two years or less” (Bell and Cornelius 6) and that “34% of executive directors anticipating leaving in two years or less” (6). The causes for the turnover intention are explained in detail

through survey feedback and professional peer review, for which an entirely separate thesis could be written. Throughout the discourse, the word *stress* is not cited however, the word *burnout* is. “(The) divergent opinions on issues that are so fundamental to fundraising success could partially explain the high levels of frustration, burnout, and premature departure among development directors” (Bell and Cornelius 19). The opinions that are examined throughout the thirty-seven-page report, *Underdeveloped: A National Study of Challenges Facing Nonprofit Fundraising*, suggest that burnout induced turnover is a result of unresolved leadership stress within five of the six job conditions that cause stress, as characterized by NIOSH. These job conditions relate to: the design of tasks, management style, interpersonal relationships, work roles and career concerns.

Bell and Cornelius furthermore suggest that it is the responsibility of leadership to address these challenges by adopting a new work culture that is team oriented and that engages board members as well as non-supervisory staff members, to help address the high level of stress induced turnover being experienced by development officers and executive directors. The authors agree with other nonprofit sector professionals and suggest that the ongoing stressors associated with the dependence upon third party funding is believed to be the primary factor for workplace turnover within the nonprofit workforce. The lack of supply in funding and human capital coupled with an increase in workload demands are job characteristics that are expected to continue and increase. The report states, “Our data confirms that the supply .... is smaller than the demand... across the nonprofit sector” (Bell and Cornelius 8).

Keith Harding, a regional director of a family service enterprise that provides employee assistance programs to nonprofits, suggests that the lack of supply in funding and human capital represents an area of concern. “Burnout is increasingly prevalent sector-wide due to an unrelenting shortage of resources. He stresses that no nonprofit group is any worse off than another when it comes to burnout susceptibility” (qtd. in Bell and Cornelius 8).

Additionally, Bell and Cornelius suggest that burnout induced dysfunctional voluntary turnover leads many nonprofits to be “working on the edge of a knife”. Bell and Cornelius state that, “nonprofits cannot just hire their way out of the problems they face” (2). The authors explain that the dysfunctional workplace turnover and turnover intention being experienced in the nonprofit sector “disrupt(s) the relationship building that is key to individual donor cultivation, and prevent(s) organizations from developing and sustaining the conditions for development success” (21).

While definitive information is lacking about the actual turnover rate in nonprofit arts organizations, the *2016 Nonprofit Sector Leadership Report* indicates that “the nonprofit sector is experiencing a seismic demographic shift as Baby Boomers reach retirement age. This shift already is creating a vacuum in leadership that will continue for the next two decades” (6). Moreover, the *2016 Nonprofit Sector Leadership Report* survey of 1,006 international nonprofit leadership respondents of which 13% represent arts organizations reveals that “more than one in three (36%) nonprofits reported a “high” turnover of staff and difficulty attracting new talent (22).

Authors, scholars and nonprofit leaders suggest that high turnover is leading to unsustainable operating conditions for the nonprofit organization (Bartczak; Allen; UST). In 2015, Sally Selden and Jessica Sowa, authors of “Voluntary Turnover in Nonprofit Human Service Organizations: The Impact of High Performance Work Practices” published in the *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance* journal explore the important role that leadership plays in managing organizational stress. The authors suggest that high voluntary turnover, associated with high levels of job dissatisfaction stemming from high levels of stress is a result of the nonprofit leaders’ failure to invest in their human capital. As previously stated, because some dysfunctional turnover is avoidable and disruptive to the relationship building that is vital to the nonprofits’ development success, scholars suggest that it is the responsibility of leadership to manage stress effectively (187). The next section of this chapter investigates the cost of turnover to help demonstrate the significant responsibility of leadership in addressing workplace stress for reducing turnover.

### Stress and the High Cost of Turnover

The “2015 Nonprofit Employee Engagement and Retention Report” recommends that, “Nonprofits should monitor the stress of their employees—before burnout makes employee turnover a costly problem” (14). David Allen, author of *Retaining Talent: A Guide to Analyzing and Managing Employee Turnover*, agrees and estimates that direct turnover costs range between 50% to 60% of the employee’s annual salary. Furthermore, Allen estimates that total turnover costs range between 90% to 200% of the employee’s

annual salary (3). Allen notes that the variable ranges contributing to these costs of turnover relate to the position being vacated or filled during the turnover process.

Allen furthermore explains that direct and total costs associated with turnover incur during the off-boarding and onboarding process. Specifically, these costs can include severance and administration for record keeping and payroll. Also costly is the advertising for new positions, which can include expenses for out-of-state interviews and time associated with conducting interviews, checking references and training of new incumbents. Additionally, the loss of productivity associated with hiring a new person can disrupt team based work and can set an organization back one to two years, depending upon the time required to reach the productivity of the replaced employee (4).

Seldon and Sowa also concur and furthermore suggest that the cost of voluntary turnover is imperiling for the nonprofit organization because it significantly challenges the financial stability of the organization. The authors furthermore suggest that turnover costs, depending upon the social capital, tenure and position of the exiting employee, can pose a significant liability to the nonprofit organization in terms of damage or loss of institutional memory. For smaller staffed organizations, this loss could severely affect organizational operations. In addition to the costs associated with off-boarding and onboarding, turnover can negatively impact the overall performance of the organization, because workloads and work roles must be adopted by existing staff until the position is filled. The authors moreover suggest that for the smaller nonprofit organizations, turnover can lead to unsustainable operating conditions because it is not easy for smaller staffed organizations to take on new duties without impeding performance. Additional costs associated with training new hires may not be budgeted items. Their research also

indicates that many nonprofits budgets do not account for turnover costs and this can challenge sustainability. In summary, the authors suggest that high voluntary turnover is unsustainable for nonprofits (185).

As previously discussed, the Chinese translation for the word *stress* refers to both danger and opportunity. Elaine Gurian, in her book *Institutional Trauma* suggests that the danger of ongoing stress, inherent in nonprofit work, is great because it harms the individuals and organizations they serve. She also suggests that stress presents an opportunity for nonprofit leaders to cultivate effective leadership and management styles to self-regulate stress for themselves as well as reduce stress for the employees within the organization. Gurian furthermore postulates that the nonprofit leader must be “introspective enough to differentiate our needs from those of our staff” (19). She adds that leadership must learn a management style that will help staff “ultimately survive the painful situation(s)” (19) incurred by job-related stress.

John Rodwell and Stephen Teo agree with Gurian in their article for *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, reasoning that human capital is the most important asset in the nonprofit sector. Gurian contends that it is the responsibility of the nonprofit leader to be able to forecast and prepare for the impact of stressors on the staff members and on the organization, and to “ameliorate the situation whenever possible” (19). Gurian writes that for the nonprofit arts leader, “Most important, this attention to staff discomfort *is* our work. It is neither an interruption nor an intrusion” (19). She adds that, “The consequences of *not* helping our staff through a sustained (challenge) may be an exacerbation of disturbances within the staff and, ultimately, disruption of work” (19). She furthermore writes that, “Because management

is a lonely business, we may need our own external support system of colleagues and professionals in order to do that” (19).

The next portion of this research explores the function of arts participation, which is the nonprofit leaders’ engagement in an art form of their choosing, for helping to address the problem of stress induced leadership turnover. Recent developments over the past decade within medical science, mental health communities and national arts organizations are demonstrating that arts participation promotes wellness by reducing stress. These developments present arts administrators who are already artists or who may not be practicing an art form opportunities for exploring arts participation as a resource for cultivating individual and organizational wellbeing.

### Chapter III

## ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS FOR REDUCING STRESS

### Scientific Developments on Arts Participation for Wellness

In 2010, Heather Stuckey, from the Department of Medicine at Pennsylvania State and Jeremy Nobel with the Department of Health and Policy at Harvard School of Public Health published a review of research that investigated new developments and scientific discoveries emerging about the relationship between arts participation and wellness. The *American Journal of Public Health* published the review in “The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature.” The impetus for their research was said to be for the concern for both “individual and community health-enhancing efforts worldwide” (254). The authors suggest that health or wellness means more than the absence of illness; that life satisfaction means more than the absence of stress. The authors state that, “Investigating the relationship between art and health offers some interesting ways to bridge these two important areas of inquiry and perhaps provide timely and important insights into each” (254).

“Arts and health have been at the center of human interest from the beginning of recorded history” (Stuckey and Nobel 254). However, only recently have researchers, scientists and medical professionals begun to address the need for more robust evidence. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, medical developments have enabled greater scientific research on arts participation as a source for health and wellbeing (254).

Over the past few decades, research on arts participation for wellness has accelerated and the results are leading to positive outcomes, primarily due to its stress reduction properties (254-263).

Stuckey and Nobel's review focused on finding the potential of four types of arts participation activities to promote well-being: music engagement, visual arts therapy, movement based creative expression and expressive writing. Their work focused on reviewing the research that was conducted amongst an adult population, in a clinical setting between 1995-2007, as documented in research medical journals, health journals, psychology journals and nursing journals. Their review suggests that music engagement, visual arts making, movement based creative expression and expressive writing, within a clinical setting, reduce stress and increase introspection by lowering blood pressure, altering thinking patterns and reducing serum cortisol levels (261).

Around the same time as the Stuckey and Noble review, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Society for the Arts in Healthcare collaborated to produce another report in 2009 that similarly demonstrates how arts engagement activities promote wellness within the clinical setting. Their report, "The State of the Arts in Healthcare in the United States" includes a business case for arts participation programs within the healthcare industry. The report indicates that arts participation is positively impacting the US healthcare system by reducing hospital costs and increasing patient recovery. The report also contains an unexpected observation on the positive influence of arts participation activities on workplace staff. The authors state that arts participation activities positively impacted healthcare employees by "improving the health and safety

for staff, increasing effectiveness in providing care, reducing errors, and improving job satisfaction” (Sonke et al. 2). Moreover, the Executive Summary states that:

...there is a rich and growing body of research connecting arts in healthcare programs to improved quality of care for patients, their families, and even medical staff. Studies have proven that integrating the arts into healthcare settings helps to cultivate a healing environment, support the physical, mental and emotional recovery of patients, communicate health and recovery information, and foster a positive environment for caregivers that reduces stress and improves workplace satisfaction and employee retention. (Sonke et al. 1)

Furthermore, the field committee observed that:

For students in the medical field and other healthcare fields, the arts can enhance their skills (by) improving their observational, diagnostic, and empathetic abilities. It helps them to understand patients in a different way and connect with them on a more humanizing level. (Sonke et al. 2)

The discovery of arts participation on patient wellness and the surprising discovery of its benefits to caregivers as well as to employees and the organizations they serve by improving cognitive functions, fostering job satisfaction and increasing retention leads to further investigation. The next portion of this chapter explores some of the scientific research that has emerged outside of the clinical setting, which will demonstrate how visual arts and music participation can factor into reduced stress and increased job satisfaction for nonprofit arts leaders.

### Arts Participation for Reducing Stress

In 2011, the NEA and the US Department of Health and Human Services, produced a publication called *The Arts and Human Development* to investigate and raise the visibility of the positive impact of arts participation on public wellness as a national agenda item for future research. As part of these efforts, the NEA began awarding grants to fund additional research on arts participation and wellness, outside of the clinical setting. To help enhance research efforts, the NEA furthermore developed and published research guidelines to assist applicants in developing more winning proposals. While there were no studies obtained, for this research, measuring the stress response in relation to movement based creative expression and expressive writing outside of the clinical setting, included are nonclinical studies on visual arts participation and music engagement for stress reduction.

One of the studies obtained on visual arts participation for reducing stress, within a nonclinical setting, was awarded funding by the above-mentioned NEA research program. Author David DiSalvo, in his 2016 article “Science Suggests an Artful Way to Reduce Stress” explains that the study was conducted at Drexel University and involved measuring stress levels by examining the blood cortisol levels of forty healthy individuals between the ages of eighteen and fifty-nine before and after participating in a visual arts activity. The study group engaged in any sort of visual arts activity for forty-five minutes, utilizing materials such as clay, paper, markers, glue and scissors, as they wished. The research concluded that among study participants, the majority had reduced levels of stress, as signified by reduced levels of cortisol, after making art than before. Furthermore, factors such as age, race and artistic experience were found to be

insignificant. DiSalvo states there is “compelling evidence that adults seeking stress relief, no matter how artistically gifted or experienced, should stop making excuses and start making art.” The author also writes that the study “adds more evidence to a well-supported argument: To battle stress, do some art” (DiSalvo).

This visual arts participation study was so successful that in December of 2016, the NEA awarded an additional \$150,000 to the same research group to continue studying arts participation for wellness. This award will make possible “the first-ever arts and health research lab established by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts” (Otto). The program plans to launch in March 2017 and has been awarded \$150,000 for two years with “the potential to be renewed three times, so that it could possibly run for eight full years” (Otto). The lab, called “Arts Research on Chronic Stress (ARCS)” will examine how creative arts participation activities can benefit those who have experienced long-term stress, including chronic pain, trauma, academic stressors and extended caregiving. (Otto) The program will have two components, one in the visual arts and the other in music. Community arts partners for the project include the Settlement Music School and an arts organization called ArtWell. ARCS spokesperson and program developer Dr. Girija-Kaimal states that their work “could prompt the integration of arts practices in everyday life as a means to sustaining health and wellbeing” (qtd. in Otto).

Dr. Cathy Malchiodi agrees with Girija-Kamal and explains in her article, “Creativity as a Wellness Practice” for *Psychology Today*, that new scientific evidence is continuing to accumulate which demonstrates that arts participation has a positive impact on maintaining wellness, even in the absence of illness. In December 2016 Malchiodi

announced that, “Creativity (arts participation) is a wellness practice and we now know there are numerous reasons to make it part of your wellness resolutions” (Malchiodi).

Another group of medical students in Bavaria, Germany, at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg have taken interest in examining the impact of arts participation for stress reduction on a neurological level. This research group observed that visual arts participation represents a “powerful resource for mental and physical well-being” however little was known “about the underlying effects at a neural level” (Bolwerk et al.) until recently. In 2013, the group undertook the endeavor and began a neurological examination of the brain at rest and again while engaging in the visual arts. One criterion to the study was whether “visual art production and cognitive art evaluation may have different effects on the functional interplay of the brain’s default mode network (DMN) (Bolwerk et al.). The neuroscientists used functional magnetic resonance imagery (fMRI) to examine the effect of visual arts making and cognitive art evaluation on the DMN function of the brain. Further research on brain studies revealed that the DMN function of the brain is responsible for creative thought, introspection, self-regulation, executive functioning and mindfulness (Ellamil et al.).

The medical student study group’s research methodologies and subsequent findings were published in the article “How Art Changes Your Brain: Differential Effects of Visual Art Production and Cognitive Art Evaluation on Functional Brain Connectivity.” Their research methodology consisted of twenty-eight healthy adult individuals and took place within a non-clinical setting over a ten-week period. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups: a visual arts participation group and a cognitive evaluation group. In the visual arts participation group, fourteen

participants actively produced art in a visual arts class setting. The cognitive evaluation group, also consisting of fourteen participants, evaluated artwork at a museum (Bolwerk et al).

The research team evaluated the neurological images of the participants' brain activity before and after art making sessions over the ten-week period. Evaluation of neurological activity before and after the ten-week period revealed greater functioning neurological activity in the brain imagery of group participants involved in the visual arts participation group. By observing the brain's neurological activity, the medical team concluded that the visual arts production group showed greater psychological resilience and greater resistance to stress than the cognitive art evaluation group. Their findings, in 2013, were the first to demonstrate the neural effects of visual arts participation on stress resistance (Bolwerk et al).

Music engagement, defined by listening to music and playing music, is also believed to have stress reduction properties. "We've found compelling evidence that musical interventions can play a health-care role in settings ranging from operating rooms to family clinics," says Dr. Daniel J. Levitin, author of the book *This is Your Brain on Music*. His analysis articulates, in scientific terms, how music positively influences health. Dr. Levitin reports that medical researchers have found that listening to and playing music increases the body's production of the antibody immunoglobulin A and natural killer cells — the cells that attack invading viruses and boost the immune system's effectiveness. Music engagement was also found to be associated with reduced stress as well as relaxation by scientifically demonstrated reduced levels of the stress hormone cortisol (Levitin).

Author Maria Popova explains in her article “How Playing Music Benefits Your Brain More Than Any Other Activity” that over the past few decades, neuroscientists have also been examining the effects of music engagement on the brain. Popova furthermore indicates that neuroscientists have recently discovered that playing music benefits cognitive functioning more than listening to music. The neurological studies on music engagement have demonstrated that playing music engages practically every area of the brain, simultaneously, “especially the visual, auditory, and motor cortices. And, as in any other (practice), disciplined, structured practice in playing music strengthens those brain functions, allowing (people) to apply that strength to other activities” (qtd. in Popova).

Moreover, the same article suggests that that playing music benefits the brain more than any other activity, including any other arts activity because “playing music has been found to increase the volume and activity in the brain’s corpus callosum—the bridge between the two hemispheres—allowing messages to get across the brain faster and through more diverse routes” (qtd. in Popova). Educator Anita Collins explains that, “This may allow musicians to solve problems more effectively and creatively, in both academic and social settings.” She furthermore conveys that because music making involves understanding and formulating the compositions emotional message, “musicians also have higher levels of *executive function*—a category of interlinked tasks that includes *planning*, *strategizing*, and *attention to detail*, and requires simultaneous analysis of both cognitive and emotional aspects” (Collins).

## Arts Participation as a Wellness Practice for Nonprofit Leaders

Scientific developments that have emerged over the past decade imply that active participation in the arts by nonprofit leaders promotes individual wellness by reducing stress, creating stress resistance as well as by enhancing cognitive development. Additionally, it is believed that arts participation can help in the development of a healthy work-life balance, particularly when introduced into a wellness routine. Further research reveals that arts participation activities play a positive role in nurturing interpersonal relationships.

In a presentation to MAAA graduate candidates at Goucher College in July 2016, Robert Lynch, CEO of the Americans for the Arts for the past thirty-one years, spoke about arts participation and suggested that “50% of the public today enjoy the arts by doing it, rather than seeing it” perhaps due to its “transformative value types of experiences with the arts.” When asked about his mention of playing a musical instrument and what that type of activity does for him, he exclaimed without hesitation, “Sanity!” Lynch explained that playing music alone, as well as with other nonprofit leaders, and even with political leaders and other musicians is “a way into people’s hearts and minds.” He suggests that the arts are a bridge to making connections with diversity, complex concepts, people of different value systems and a way to achieve harmony in division. He urges nonprofit leaders to, “Find out who are artists (musicians), people bond with people.” Lynch also suggests that making art is associated with longevity, that his “mother is ninety-two years old and has been painting every day for the past twelve years.”

In an article for the Americans for the Arts in December 2016, Lynch also describes his music playing and poetry writing as “an antidote for when I am feeling low, or my energy source for when I am working through challenges” (Lynch, “The Arts”). In December of 2016, post-election time, Lynch writes:

This election season has brought to light challenges in our country, divides that I have always believed the arts can bridge. And so I find myself sitting at the keyboard and playing tunes by artists I admire like Bob Dylan, or trying out some dark Leonard Cohen pieces on guitar, or writing some of my own poetry in order to help me get from one state of mind to another. It also makes me imagine how to better convey the power of the arts during these difficult times as part of the solution for our country, much like my own art does for me. It doesn't matter whether I am great at it. It matters that I immerse myself in the different and creative healing space. The American poet William Carlos Williams once wrote that “it is difficult to get the news from poems yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there”- the line has always been a favorite. (Lynch “The Arts”)

In the same article, Lynch states that,

We are in a time once again where our need for the arts is growing more and more apparent. Controversy and anger and fear seem to swirl around us these days in large supply. This has happened plenty of times in our history. We have needed and sought the healing and teaching power of the arts for a long time, perhaps forever. (Lynch “The Arts”)

Another nonprofit leader, John Killacky, who survived the stress of the culture wars in the 1990s, and as previously discussed now works approximately fifty to sometimes sixty hours a week successfully, expressed that he self-regulates his stress through creative writing projects as well creative movement exercises with his Shetland pony. Killacky enjoys his work as a nonprofit leader and believes that activities such as these are vital to his wellness by helping him maintain a healthy work-life balance. Killacky has been the Executive Director for the Flynn Center of Performing Arts for the past seven years.

Other professionals in and out the field believe that active participation in the arts is an effective form of self-care that can reduce the effects of stressful working conditions. Dr. John Arden, in his book *Surviving Job Stress*, writes, “If art had been an important part of your life before experiencing job stress, now is the time to rekindle your interest. Though you do not feel like painting, drawing or throwing pots, now is the time to push yourself to use these talents” (151) as a form of self-care. Arden agrees with other peers in the medical field that arts participation is not just for artists, that it is effective even without any artistic training at all as a form of self-care, or wellness practice, primarily due to its stress reduction and stress resilience properties (151).

In an article published on the Americans for the Arts website, Alexandra Milak interviews post-graduate artist-administrators who suggest that making time for one’s own art is a critical component of stress management and self-care because of the possibility of burning out. These artist-administrators suggest that their arts practices, despite long working hours in the nonprofits they serve, enables greater job satisfaction and productivity:

Practicing and performing our art is a pleasure and is fulfilling — it's why we do what we do. But when you're maxed out, make sure you make time for yourself. Take the time to push your limits and get to know your boundaries. Learn how to make the best use of your time so you can get more done while still having time for you. (qtd. in Milak)

As discussed in the previous chapter on stress, The Meyer Foundation survey reveals that a healthy work-life balance was one of the greatest challenges that nonprofit leaders face today in dealing with the inherent stressors associated with nonprofit work (Bartczak). Similarly, a Gallup survey included in the “Millennials Want Jobs that Promote Their Well-Being” article indicates that a work-life balance is rated as one of the greatest concerns amongst the US workforce for 2016 (Rigoni and Nelson). Julie Rogers, President of Meyer Foundation agrees and suggests that nonprofit leaders should think about what steps they are taking to avert burnout.

The Meyer Foundation believes that maintaining a healthy work-life balance enables more effective leadership, reduces burnout and builds retention. To this end, in 2016, The Meyer Foundation created the Julie L Rogers Sabbatical program that awards nonprofit leaders up to \$50,000 to take three or four month sabbaticals, before burnout occurs; not as a crisis intervention but as a reward for their outstanding professional work. The Meyer Foundation believes that when nonprofit leaders take time for self-care, they come back refreshed and that benefits the organization by reducing burnout induced, dysfunctional turnover (Scott). Because the sabbatical program began late in 2016, the information on recipients' use of sabbatical funds for arts participation activities is unknown at the time of writing this paper. The Meyer's Foundation sabbatical program

however, validates the significance of cultivating a healthy work-life balance as a factor for reducing turnover amongst nonprofit leaders. Paired with other medical professionals' advice and nonprofits leaders' demonstration of arts participation as a component of a healthy work-life balance or wellness routine suggests that arts participation presents an opportunity for averting burnout, increasing resilience and therefore reducing turnover.

Authors Beth Kanter and Aliza Sherman, in their book *The Happy and Healthy Nonprofit: Strategies for Impact Without Burnout* provide additional testimonies of nonprofit leaders using arts participation for reducing stress as well for enhancing cognitive functions. One testimony suggests that drawing helps with concentration. Susan Nesbit from the Make School states:

I wasn't as creatively alive as I wanted to be because I just didn't give myself permission. I started drawing, and I find that it lights up my brain in different ways, and it helps me focus. Rather than being a passive consumer of entertainment, creating something by sketching has had enormous benefits.

(Kanter and Sherman Ch. 4).

Kanter and Sherman add that adult coloring books have become another popular stress reduction activity in recent years. Psychologist Gloria Martínez Ayala attributes coloring to reducing stress because of what happens in the brain during the coloring experience. She explains that coloring involves logic, by selecting forms to color and creativity, by selecting colors. She states, "This incorporates the areas of the cerebral cortex involved in vision and fine motor skills [coordination necessary to make small, precise movements]. The relaxation that it provides lowers the activity of the amygdala, a basic part of our brain involved in controlling emotion that is affected by stress" (qtd. in

Brooks). Martínez Ayala attributes coloring to be de-stressing because the act helps people to detach from stressors. Additionally, she describes coloring as an activity that helps many people associate with good childhood experiences which “immediately and unconsciously” promotes wellbeing. Clinical psychologist Scott M. Bea agrees and adds that coloring provides pleasure as well as helps one’s brain to relax. He states, “Adult coloring requires modest attention focused outside of self-awareness. It is a simple activity that takes us outside ourselves” (qtd. in Kanter and Sherman Ch. 4). Creative director at Beaconfire RED, Eva Simon, learned about adult coloring books through social media and considers herself a “coloring book convert” (Kanter and Sherman Ch. 4). One of Simon’s favorite adult coloring books is Johanna Basford’s *Enchanted Forest*. She states:

As a designer, I love scribbling, so the idea of just grabbing some pens and a coloring book in my free time sounded really appealing. The book was so popular that it was back-ordered on Amazon, so I bought a basic pattern one and some gel pens. I instantly fell in love. I think I spent that whole weekend coloring. (Kanter and Sherman Ch. 4).

Simon appreciates coloring books because they provide her an opportunity to focus on one thing at a time and take a break from other tasks (Kanter and Sherman Ch. 4). Susie Bowie, president and executive director at the Mantee Community, also enjoys adult coloring books because for her, she states:

It’s an exercise in mindfulness...the act of moving a colored pencil or pen across the paper, without any worry about whether I am producing a masterpiece creation, is calming in itself. Meditative in midst of so much busy...Coloring and

drawing brings us back to our childhood love of making art... this kind of association can be comforting while stimulating creativity. (Kanter and Sherman, Ch. 4)

Other scholars concur that arts participation, meaning the nonprofit leaders involvement in an artistic activity of their own choosing, promotes overall wellbeing because of its ability to enable the participant the opportunity to detach from external stressors. Clause Bernard, in the nineteenth century, recognized that it was necessary for an individual “to attain some measure of independence from the vagaries of the external environment” (qtd. in Greenberg et al) in order to maintain well-being or homeostasis. Because the body’s healthy stress response depends upon homeostasis, his findings suggest that detaching from external stressors through arts participation, can help with maintaining a healthy stress response which is believed to translate into feelings of wellbeing. The next portion of this chapter explores arts participation for fostering feelings of wellbeing and job satisfaction.

## Arts Participation and Job Satisfaction

Studies have discovered that artists enjoy life, and that a degree in the arts yields “relatively high levels of employment and satisfaction” (Grant). In 2013, *The Wall Street Journal* published an article “What Does a Fine Arts Degree Get You? The Punch Line: Maybe a Job.” The article reports that:

The Curb Center for Art, Enterprise and Public Policy at Vanderbilt University conducted a survey of 13,000 graduates of visual and performing college-arts programs between 1990 and 2009; 2,817 were in the fine arts. Among the findings: Almost 83% worked the majority of their time in some arts occupation, such as art teaching or in a nonprofit arts organization. (Grant)

“Arts graduates are resilient and resourceful,” says Curb Center Associate Director Stephen J. Tepper. Sixty percent of the fine-arts graduates in the survey work more than one job, he says, “but they are happy with what they put together.” (qtd. in Grant)

Bruno S. Frey, research director of the Center for Research in Economics, Management and the Arts at the University of Zurich, concurs. Of all arts professions, fine artists, writers and composers were found to be the happiest, because “the profession they have chosen gives them autonomy, and that makes them happy,” he says. (qtd. in Grant)

An organization called Createquity that is dedicated to exploring how the arts create a better quality of life suggests that “arts participation is associated with subjective well-being, or one’s perceived quality of life” (Tsegaye et al.). The organization’s collective group of authors conducted research that reveals that active participation in arts as well as passive participation in the arts is associated with greater life satisfaction.

Passive arts participation, for the purposes of this research group, is defined by attending a cinema, performing arts production or museum. Their studies suggest that active and passive arts participation is the second most important determining factor for psychological wellbeing, second to the incidence of disease and more significant than factors such as occupation, education and income (Tsegaye et al.). This research also indicates that while not all people who participate in the arts are well, there is evidence to suggest that “unhappy people might be worse off if not for their cultural activities” (Tsegaye et al.). As an example, for instance, a 2008 study of 1,124 choral singers in England, Germany, and Australia found that among respondents who scored on the lowest third of the psychological well-being scale, singing in a choir had a significant impact on their ability to cope with physical and mental health issues, among other personal challenges (Tsegaye et al.).

Further research suggests that the feelings of wellbeing achieved through arts participation leads to workplace wellness because individual wellness is associated with organizational wellness. The next chapter includes research that explores how arts participation by nonprofit leaders promotes organizational wellness.

## Chapter IV EFFECT OF ARTS PARTICIPATION ON THE ORGANIZATION

### Arts Participation for Workplace Wellness

The NEA funding on the impact of arts participation for “building a culture of health” (Hagan) led to the publication *How Creativity Works in the Brain* which emerged in July 2016, to “investigate the arts measurable benefits for individuals and communities” (14). The working group of authors consisting of scientists, professors, artists and physicians, declared that, “Research on how creativity works in the brain has strong value for US health and education, the workforce and the economy” (9). Other countries are discovering similar connections between arts participation and workplace wellness.

A team led by Töres Theorell at the Stress Research Institute of Stockholm University postulates that arts participation in cultural activities, outside of the workplace, can have a positive impact on workplace wellness. For some, attending a cultural event is another enjoyable approach to arts participation for wellness. An experiment conducted in 2005, during a short-term study of Canadian emergency services employees found that “higher levels of frequency in cultural leisure significantly predicted greater physical health” (Gordon-Nesbit 45). The authors explain:

Cultural leisure was taken to embrace concerts, ballet, theatre and museums, and thought to be a palliative means of coping with stress... More recently, (broadly

defined) creative activity undertaken outside of work has been found to hasten recovery from work strain and enhance work-related performance. (Gordon-Nesbit 46)

Similarly, Perla Ni, CEO of Great Nonprofits, in her remarks about the book *The Happy, Healthy Nonprofit: Strategies for Impact without Burnout* states that, “Great nonprofits create a culture of well-being in their workplaces that encourages self-care because they know that their people are mission critical” (Kanter and Sherman 5). Kanter and Sherman, in *The Happy, Healthy Nonprofit: Strategies for Impact without Burnout* suggest that developing a culture of wellbeing starts with the nonprofit executive director. The authors write, “If a nonprofit director models self-care and views it as a mission critical (element), this outlook becomes the cultural norm throughout the organization” (Kanter and Sherman Ch. 6).

In the February 2016 article “Promoting Healthy Workplaces by Building Cultures of Health and Applying Strategic Communications” published by the *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*, the authors wrote, “Key elements that contribute to a culture of health are leadership commitment, social and physical environmental support, and employee involvement” (Kent et al. 114). Kanter and Sherman concur and suggest that a wellness or well-being program is not enough. They write, “if employee self-care is being ignored, or even worse, ridiculed or penalized...you don’t have a workplace environment conducive to wellness and well-being (and) your organization must change” (Kanter and Sherman Ch. 6). The authors share a story about this dynamic, as an example:

Amber and Julie shared a story about the importance of leadership making self-care a cultural norm. They got feedback from staff about what types of activities might help them avoid burnout. Many told them that sometimes they just need some “creativity time,” that is to go to a museum or walk around. The organization formalized “creativity time” in its employees’ handbook and established a policy that staff take “creativity time” as half-day per month. But as Amber points out, no one was actually using it since no one on the senior management was taking creative time. As a result, staff didn’t feel as if they had permission to use it. After the CEO sent out an email to everyone to remind them about this benefit, and also shared how they were planning to visit an art museum as part of their creative time, staff members started to use this benefit. (Kanter and Sherman Ch. 3)

In their eBook, *The Happy and Healthy Nonprofit: Strategies for Impact without Burnout*, Kanter and Sherman state that leaders and staff must be unapologetic about self-care, recognizing that self-care equates to organizational care (Kanter and Sherman Ch. 1). Other scholars agree that individual wellness equates to organizational wellness. Maddie Grant, founding partner of WorkXO and an expert in workplace culture, states that, “People in the organization need to believe that wellness is just as good for them as it is for the organization” (qtd. in Kanter and Sherman Ch. 6).

Conversely, Jennifer Edwards, a stress management specialist and founding partner at Edwards & Skybetter suggests that individual wellness does not necessarily translate to organizational wellness if the organizational culture doesn’t value wellness.

She postulates that both the employees and the organization need to “understand the benefits and create the space to shift the culture” (qtd. in Kanter and Sherman, Ch. 6).

In 2016, the Americans for the Arts published two articles that suggest arts participation in the workplace can help boost employee engagement by engaging the employee’s emotional commitment to the organization. Author Jordon Shue defines employee engagement as “the emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals” and suggests that arts participation programs are having a positive impact on employee engagement in the business sector. Kanter and Sherman concur, stating that, “Studies confirm that creative activities – painting, drawing, dancing, playing music, theatre, or singing – can improve employee productivity and skills”. In another testimony, Kanter and Sherman quote Randi Zuckerberg, sister of Mark Zuckerberg who is the co-founder of Facebook, on the benefits of arts participation on the workplace. Zuckerberg writes within the context of arts participation that, “The ability to think on your toes, see things differently, notice something interesting where others see nothing, problem solve in new ways—these are all things that make a terrific employee, a great leader, and a successful entrepreneur”.

Eric Kendal, Professor of Brain Science at Columbia University agrees and suggests that the engagement of the right side of the brain, during active participation in the arts, is associated with increasing cognitive functions such as problem solving (Erickson). Kanter agrees and furthermore suggest that, “Creativity is a muscle that needs to be exercised like anything else. Why not encourage creativity in the workplace through organized activities? The benefit is not only stress reduction, but improved productivity” (Kanter, “Why Creating Space”).

On June 29, 2016, Wolf Brown, an organization that works to bring creative solutions to address some of the most challenging issues facing nonprofits today, published an article by John Carnwath on “Employers and the Arts.” Carnwath suggests that just as arts participation is enhancing workplace productivity in the business sector, it can work for the nonprofit sector as well. Carnwath gives an example of how a retail corporation is celebrating the creativity of its employees through a company organized staff talent show involving a maintenance worker who is a visual artist, an accounting officer who is a musician and a sales associate who is a writer. The retailer then produced a magazine that reported on their company-wide annual talent contest which included additional recognition of their company choir. He suggests that this example is a case in which the artists in their workforce are being recognized and valued for their roles as artists. The talent show program resulted in “boosting workplace morale and increasing the bottom line” (Carnwath). He notes that this type of program demonstrates that the “company’s executives believe that their employees artistic practices benefit the company and “that such activities are worth celebrating and supporting” (Carnwath). He notes:

Americans for the Arts has recently released a series of essays addressing why businesses might want to integrate the arts into their workplaces. One article sites research on the importance of employee engagement in reducing staff turnover and increasing productivity, and maintains that arts programs can keep employees engaged. Another argues that involvement in the arts increases critical thinking skills and leads to more creative problem solving. (Carnwath)

Carnwath believes that the arts participation programs within the workplace, such as a company sponsored talent contest, is one way to cultivate a healthy work culture.

Carnwath furthermore concurs with Gordon-Nesbit and suggests that employer sponsored cultural activities outside of the workplace benefit the organization by increased productivity and employee engagement.

In December of 2014, Gallup published the article “Memo to Executives: Well-Being Boosts Employee Engagement” authored by Justin Heifetz and Jade Wood. The authors report that organizations benefit by encouraging employee wellbeing programs. The authors write, “In an (organization) that supports employees’ well-being and engagement, workers are more likely to be thriving overall, which helps boost their individual, team and organizational performance” (Heifetz and Wood).

#### Arts Participation and Nonprofit Leadership

Within the context of the nonprofit arts organization, Aaron Dalton with The Arts Partnership Movement Organization in association with the Americans for the Arts writes that, “the arts can strengthen employee engagement by encouraging personal growth, providing opportunities to develop new leadership skills, and by inspiring employees to innovate and collaborate in solving problems” (Dalton). The Arts Partnership Movement is demonstrating that arts participation is helping to cultivate and engage nonprofit arts organization board members. In one case study, the Arts & Science Council (ASC) of Charlotte, North Carolina, developed an arts participation program in 2005 to help train nonprofit leaders serving on nonprofit arts organization boards through its Cultural Leadership Training (CLT) Program. “The impetus for the program originated with the arts organizations we support,” says Katherine Mooring, Senior Vice President of Programs & Services at ASC” (qtd. in Dalton 3). Mooring explains that the arts

organizations in Charlotte were challenged in finding qualified candidates for board positions. Mooring conveys that arts organizations in Charlotte expressed a desire for help in training executives who have never served on a board to get educated on the responsibilities of board membership. In response to this need, the ASC developed the CLT program involving arts participation that has yielded some positive outcomes (Dalton 3-8).

In “Engage Your Employees”, Dalton offers details of this case study which involved a class of thirty executives who participated in the nine months Cultural Leadership Training (CLT) program developed by the Arts & Science Council (ASC) in Charlotte. Meeting once per month, they begin with an orientation of the Charlotte art community. During the orientation, they are provided with information concerning how the nonprofit art sector works and the role of the Arts & Science Council in Charlotte. Following orientation, they begin focusing on important nonprofit issues such as “board governance, legal and fiduciary responsibilities, board-staff relations, and financial statements.” Mooring explains that the program evolved from a classroom model of instruction to a hands-on experimental model when they learned they could increase engagement and enthusiasm of participants with hands-on, arts participation activities. “We made the decision to shift the curriculum so that when students visit a dance organization, they actually are able to dance,” says Mooring. Likewise, when the participants visit a music organization, they play instruments; when they visit a museum, they actively produce art and when they visit a theater company, they improvise. Mooring was unsure on how the hands-on, arts participation learning would work, and feared the program participants, consisting of bankers and lawyers would refuse to

participate. Surprisingly, all participants were enthusiastic. Mooring exclaims, “Not only did the executives enjoy the participatory and creative elements of the CLT program, it turned out that the experiential aspects of the program actually made the education part ‘stickier’ or more memorable.” The instructors noted that when participants were asked about recalling a class discussion, those memories were connected to their arts participation experience. “For example, when students recalled their musical jam sessions, that helped them remember the class discussion about board-staff relations that took place the same day” (Dalton 4).

Additionally, the arts participation experience provided the CLT student the opportunity to discover their own artistic interests. “It’s one thing to hear an arts organization board president talk about the importance of dance, but quite another to actually experience the emotional thrill that comes from leaping, tumbling, and running around a room as part of an impromptu dance performance,” says Mooring. “They could discover which artistic disciplines really resonated with them on a personal level and figure out in which organizations they wanted to apply their leadership skills.” (Dalton 5)

At half way through the curriculum, CLT arranges a match making session that is compared to a “speed-dating” session where the CLT participants meet with arts organizations looking to recruit new board members. In response, the nonprofit arts organizations identify the students who are best matched to the needs of their organizational board. The CLT students also identify the top three organizations in which they would like to serve as board members. That information is given back to the arts organizations, and then CLT assists with the matchmaking. Upon completion, by graduation, all the participants are serving on one or more boards. (Dalton 6)

Hannah Grannemann, Executive Director of the Children’s Theater of Charlotte believes that her organization has benefited greatly from being a part of the CLT program. Grannemann states that, “Some of our most dedicated board members have come through the program.” Grannemann observes that board members who go through the program are ready to serve immediately because the CLT program provides them the training and experience to be ready to serve as responsible board members. She adds that the CLT training program has helped create a “pipeline” to a substantial volunteer leadership base that is dedicated to serving the nonprofit arts organizations of Charlotte. (Dalton 6)

Many of the executives who serve on the boards, as graduates of the CLT program, report that applying their talents to the organizations they serve has allowed them the opportunity to deepen their engagement with the community by being able to help organizations in need of their services. Jami Farris, a partner in a law group, elaborates that her employer sponsored her training in the CLT program. Farris graduated from the CLT program in 2005 and began serving on the board of the Children’s Theater of Charlotte in 2006. In 2013, she became Chair of the Children’s Theater board. Farris says that her law firm has “embraced CLT and arts board service as fulfilling the firm’s strategic commitment to community service.” (Dalton 7)

Brandon Neal, another CLT graduate serves on the board of the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art both as a member of the Development Committee and as Vice Chair of the Nominating Committee. Neal’s employer, Wells Fargo, gave him the opportunity to participate in the CLT and has subsequently supported him in his board service. Neal

feels that the experience has deepened his engagement within the arts community.

(Dalton 7)

These testimonies speak about one way in which arts participation activities are helping to foster organizational wellness by attracting community executives into board leadership positions. One could speculate that the nonprofits arts organizations in Charlotte are benefiting by being able to recruit from a pool of board candidates who are ready to serve. As previously discussed, because nonprofits inherently operate with a lack of supply in funding and human capital, the CLT arts participation training program helps by meeting this need. Advancing the development capabilities of these nonprofit arts organization by burnishing corporate relationships and augmenting board involvement factors into reduced leadership stress. This is believed to help contribute to reduced turnover because, as previously discussed, board support has a significant impact on reducing the effects of stressful working conditions. The next and final portion of this paper includes research that explores how arts participation factors into reducing turnover.

### Arts Participation for Reducing Turnover

Nonprofit leaders who actively participate in an art form of their choosing, as a wellness routine or as a situational event, report to be experiencing greater wellness and job satisfaction which is believed to translate positively for reduced turnover. Scientific research demonstrates that arts participation promotes individual and organizational wellbeing by reducing stress, increasing problem solving capabilities, boosting productivity and increasing engagement. As previously discussed, arts participation as

part of a wellness plan for reducing the negative impacts of stress, or as an activity shared with friends and peers can contribute to the cultivation of a healthy work-life balance, which factors into reducing burnout, job dissatisfaction and turnover. As Lynch explains, one of the transformative benefits of arts participation is in bringing people together and strengthening interpersonal relationships, especially during challenging times. Arts participation for the development of effective leadership skills, such as in the cultivation of introspection, resilience and improved problem solving capabilities can also help contribute to the experience of greater job satisfaction, which again, factors into reducing conditions that lead to turnover. Nonprofit arts leaders who actively participate in an art form of their choosing are effectively contributing to reducing the risk of turnover.

Incorporating an arts participation practice into a wellness routine may be a challenge for the nonprofit arts leader who finds it difficult to take well deserved breaks. The challenge of slowing down and taking time for arts participation, even when not feeling like participating, may be less daunting than the challenge of ongoing stress and organizational unsustainability caused by the ensuing high turnover. Introducing arts participation activities or projects into the workplace culture may seem equally daunting particularly when operating with a lack of supply in funding and human capital. The demonstrated success however, of arts participation programs in the corporate workplace, for reducing stress, boosting employee morale, increasing engagement and as well as productivity suggests that it would likely lead to similar results within the nonprofit sector.

The Society of Arts in Healthcare and the NEA publication “The State of the Arts in Healthcare in the United States” reports that arts participation programs within the

healthcare industry help to cultivate job satisfaction and reduced turnover amongst nurses because “the arts create safer, more supportive and functional environments in healthcare facilities” (Sonke et al. 2). Additionally, the report suggests that healthcare environments that had an arts participation program were important factors for nurses when considering new employment opportunities as well as a factor when considering remaining in their current positions. Healthcare organizations that have arts participation programs are believed to be less stressful work environments for nurses and other healthcare professionals (Sonke et al. 8). Reviewing this committee’s research on the positive impact that arts participation programs are said to be having on increasing job satisfaction and thereby reducing turnover for nurses within the healthcare units suggests that it can happen in other contexts.

While the work of the nonprofit is to serve the public, and not its own employees or leadership, there is a demonstrated need for addressing the problem of nonprofit leadership turnover because high turnover is a threat to organizational sustainability. To help address the problem of leadership turnover, The Meyer Foundation suggests that nonprofits need to create leadership development programs that educate, promote and fund nonprofit leaders to incorporate wellness practices into their lives (Scott). The NEA’s funding of research programs that investigate arts participation for community wellness presents further impetus for exploring leadership development programs that use arts participation for individual and organizational wellness. Nonprofit organizations that create leadership development programs that incorporate arts participation for wellness may continue to demonstrate correlations between arts participation and reduced

turnover. This represents an area where further research and development could advance the role of arts participation as a resource for individual and organizational wellness.

## CONCLUSION

### Summary of Research

Active participation in the arts by nonprofit leaders results in substantially lower stress levels which leads to increased job satisfaction benefiting the organizations they serve through lower turnover. Although arts participation reduces stress and promotes wellness, it is not a widely-recognized practice for wellbeing when compared to self-care activities such as diet and exercise. It is not unusual for the stressed arts administrator to forgo self-care activities like these to fulfill excessive employment requirements which often leads to burnout, disability, poor job performance, increased job dissatisfaction and a high incidence of turnover. Just as ongoing stress is unsustainable for individual wellness, ongoing turnover is unsustainable for nonprofits.

Turnover can be costly in terms of finances as well as in posing a threat to organizational effectiveness by impairing institutional memory, disrupting key funding relationships and by increasing the effects of existing stressful working conditions. High levels of voluntary dysfunctional turnover lead to unsustainable working conditions for nonprofits. Because turnover is avoidable, it is incumbent upon leadership to effectively manage workplace stress for themselves and their staff.

A nonprofit leader's ability to effectively manage stress for themselves can prevent an individual health crisis. Biomedical and neurological findings are increasingly growing, outside of the clinical setting, to demonstrate that arts participation results in substantially lowered stress levels and increased stress resistance. Medical professionals now believe that arts participation factors positively as a wellness routine. The nonprofit

leader who practices an art form as part of their wellness routine increases opportunities for cultivating a healthy work-life balance and reducing the effects of inherently stressful working conditions.

Just as arts participation presents an opportunity for individual wellness, it also presents an opportunity for enabling organizational wellness. Research has demonstrated that arts participation abates symptoms of stress, strengthens problem solving capabilities, can encourage workplace engagement and boost employee morale. Moreover, arts participation can foster introspection as well as help people connect in adverse times. Robert Lynch's urges to arts administrators to find the artists in their communities and engage in arts activities with them, as a unifying element in adverse times, helps demonstrate how arts participation can strengthen work roles and interpersonal relationships fundamental to nonprofit operations. Additionally, the CLT board training program demonstrated the important role that arts participation is playing in leadership development programs and board recruitment, helping to strengthen nonprofit developmental success.

Nonprofit leaders who practice an art form of their own choosing, alone and with others, cultivate opportunities for individual and organizational wellness. Research revealed that creating a workplace culture of wellness begins with leadership. As previously discussed, arts participation helps in the cultivation of effective leadership skills involving problem solving, introspection and stress management. Arts participation as a wellness routine helps cultivate a healthy work-life balance which is a key factor for enabling effective leadership and contributing to organizational sustainability. Arts participation also provides the nonprofit leader who faces the challenging stressors of

nonprofit work the opportunity to avert burnout for themselves. A nonprofit leader who averts burnout through arts participation is positioned for effective leadership and thusly, organizational wellness.

This paper, therefore, urges nonprofit arts leaders who are experiencing stress to take some music lessons, color, draw or paint; start by introducing arts participation activities into personal wellness routines for enabling the transformative benefits. As previously discussed, the word *stress* in Chinese is defined by both danger and opportunity. This paper has demonstrated that stress, within the context of nonprofit arts administration, also represents both danger as well as opportunity.

Arts participation for ameliorating stress presents an interesting opportunity for the nonprofit art sector. The relatively new biomedical and neurological studies that are connecting arts participation to wellbeing, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, previous artistic training, health conditions, or any other discriminatory factors is helping to raise the visibility of arts participation as a resource for community health. Because workplace stress is now perceived as a health epidemic, nonprofit arts leaders may benefit by considering ways in which their arts organizations may help by addressing this public need.

While the scope of this paper was not about introducing art participation programs into arts organizations for the benefit of the public, there appears to be increasing opportunities for arts organizations to partner with universities and healthcare establishments to develop arts participation programs which may help address the epidemic of workplace stress. Programs such as these may also increase or develop new funding streams that will help relieve some of the stressors associated with the inherent

lack of supply in nonprofit funding capital. Arts participation programs invite community participation and expand opportunities for developing community partnerships that work together in building cultures of health. These discoveries suggest that further research and developments may continue to provide nonprofit leaders inspiration and opportunities for fostering individual and organizational wellbeing.

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