

## Launching the creative practices for wellbeing framework: an international Q&A

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### Abstract

This article is an edited transcript from the launch event of the Creative Practices for Wellbeing Framework in 2020 (Wall and Axtell, 2020). The guidance is now free to download in 20 languages through these web links [here](#), including in [English](#), [Welsh](#), [Chinese](#), and [Russian](#)).

### Key words:

*Barbara Bloomfield (Chair of Lapidus):* Welcome to the launch of our new creative practices for wellbeing framework, a two-year study. We are delighted to have the people who carried it out, Professor Tony wall from the University of Chester and our own Lapidus coordinator Richard Axtell today. I am Barbara Bloomfield and the acting chair of Lapidus. Let's start by a general question. Can you give us some sort of overview of what the consultation was all about, what you were setting out to achieve?

*Tony Wall (Professor at University of Chester):* This started around two and a half years ago when the discussion about safe and effective practices had already been lingering for some time. At conferences we were seeing and hearing about practices that we wouldn't have necessarily have used ourselves. We could see that even though certain organisations, like Metanoia Institute, were dealing with these sorts of practices on a daily basis, a lot of practitioners and researchers were not talking about the sorts of arrangements that trained practitioners were putting in place. For example, using a simple ground rules acronym tool at the start of an activity is actually quite a sophisticated way to put boundaries about around what's about to happen for the participants. So the project came from a space where we thought that there were gaps in the ways a wide range of people were using creative processes, specifically, for the outcome of wellbeing.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* I know you've looked at different frameworks but what were the boundaries of that? Because how can you compare an art therapist with a counsellor, or somebody who works in a hospice or somebody who works on a boat? So how did you mediate that?

*Tony Wall:* One of the other things we noticed was the diversity of people who were utilising these sorts of tools and practices. If you look at Lapidus membership, you can see a huge diversity of people using techniques, from marketeers using activities to gain a profit, through to their therapeutic work in a hospital or psychiatric wards.

One of the things we realised early on was that nobody actually owns these practices - these are practices that come through lots of different routes; if you're a poet you might be working in the community with certain tools, if you're a teacher, you might be developing certain activities, yet neither of them might even call them "creative" or realise their impact on "wellbeing".

With this in mind, the boundary was set around professional organisations that have a history of using creative practices in its different forms. We had to acknowledge that even if you are a dance practitioner, some of the processes are still words based so this sort of intersectional crossover work is something that we couldn't ignore. So the boundary that informed us in terms of an initial framework were the professional bodies' own practice or ethical frameworks as a guide, to then take to the diversity of people who use them, to refine or redevelop into something that would be more applicable and relevant to the people who actually engaged with the practices across different settings.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* So did you find a lot of crossover in the different areas such as art, music, writing, therapy, did you find a lot of crossovers in terms of attitudes to safeguarding supervision that kind of rule-based side of things?

*Tony Wall:* Yes, there were some commonalities; the initial framework was 20 statements which were common to most if not all frameworks; statements that we thought, if implemented, would enable the practices to be implemented safely and effectively. However, when we took these statements into the diversity of people using these tools and practices, through the consultation, that was whittled down to 10 (see the guidance [here](#), including in [English](#), [Welsh](#), [Chinese](#), and [Russian](#)).

However, there were also divergences: views about practice could be seen in two main extremes; one absolutely and unambiguously saying that the more precision we could get the better – and the other saying that 'I am not a medical professional...I am using these tools for my personal interest so I don't need to consider 20 or 10 things when I just want to write a poem for myself'. Linked to this was the notion of *scale*. If you're doing an activity for 10 minutes as a teacher, and after that ten minutes they don't consider anything else across the academic year, then, the considerations for safe and effective practice will be different to

somebody using these processes for psychiatric purposes with people with dementia and using it as an enabler for memory or other aspects of wellbeing.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* I just wanted to pick that up because I wonder how we can establish guidelines in a world where people are operating in such new fields, 'so I might do a session writing for wellbeing with Yoga next week', it is almost like anything goes. Whereas frameworks for counsellors are pretty well established because most counsellors do similar kinds of things. So, what's the answer to that, how prescriptive do we need to be with our people?

*Tony Wall:* We have taken this into account in the way we have written the guidance; these are ten pragmatic practical reflective prompts. In other words, this isn't an instruction, these are almost domains of reflection to think about: rather pragmatically, 'do I need insurance to engage with this activity that I am about to engage with?' Actually many people who were consulted told us they hadn't given it thought, but as soon as it was mentioned in the consultation, actually practitioner did consider it. It highlights a view that 'for the protection for everyone, I need a number of different types of insurance and that is fundamental'. Another key point from the 10 prompts is consideration of the actual creative activities used forms only *one* part of the whole set of considerations when designing for safe and effective practice. I think that was one of the big points for many people who attended the consultations; that moment when people said 'oh yes I hadn't thought about that'.

One of these, for example, related to whether or not we think about what happens to our participants *after* our sessions. Some had a view that 'well that's not my responsibility', others said 'how are you checking that you have not created some harm?', and others reframed the issue as 'well, how do you know what impact you have created?'

The intention was to create a set of prompts to feed into whatever frameworks they currently work in, bearing in mind some of the people will already have very prescriptive frameworks. For example, one framework had a definition of an apology, how to do an apology, and that an apology should not imply liability – a very detailed and prescriptive policy and procedure. But you can still operate our ten guidance points within a reflective process alongside that level of detail. In that sense, the 10 point reflective prompts create some structure without being overly instrumental and stifling in practice. It is meant to be light in that sense but structured enough to have some sort of meaning and guidance for those who do not have that.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* Yes, thank you. We are riding this wave of interest in creative practices, I'm amazed by it and delighted, but why now, what is it in the Zeitgeist that makes this something that people can resonate with?

*Tony Wall:* I think there are a number of things going on; I think *more* of us are *more* aware of the people around us becoming *more* ill. Illness and health have become much more part everyday language and in the things we see around us such as products and adverts. Health and wellbeing have become part of the sort of daily narrative.

I also think that formal systems are recognising creativity as a pathway to wellbeing. The All Party Parliamentary Group report that was published in 2017 (APPG, 2017) was quite a moment as it recognised that creativity and creative practices were no longer hidden in certain areas of practice. The report was good at exposing the diversity of creative practices and their link with wellbeing. There is still a lot of work to be done in the area, like evaluation work, but it really raised the profile of art and health within the UK. But I also think there is something about more of us are wanting more meaning in our life, amidst high levels of stress in society and at work. I think that arts and aesthetics are particularly strong at providing a route to something more meaningful in life.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* I agree and I think it is the poetic register that words for wellbeing, for example, can give, and other creative practices can give as well. It is a poetic register, a transcending register. There is something extraordinarily valuable about the poetic register as a way of bringing ambivalence into our life, and not being absolutely sure. It is what I think a lot of people are resonating with, it is an antidote to what is going on in our news programmes and a lot of the fear that we feel about the future of the world.

*Tony Wall:* Yes, it is interesting because this is not new, it hasn't just been invented, there has been some seminal work in the 90s. I always remember Yiannis Gabriel, an ethnographer and narrative researcher said 'stories and organisations are there to help with the trauma of being in an organisation now' (Gabriel, 2000). I think this is really interesting. I was in an organisation recently co-creating a collective story, but the amount of trauma that presented itself was noticeable - not that the story was designed to reveal the trauma or do anything with it, but the amount of trauma that was presented in that sort of team was so interesting. It wasn't as if any effort was required to reveal it, it was like people were needing some sort of channel to deal with what it means to work in an organisation today.

*Jeannie Wright (Lapidus Board):* Thanks Tony and Barbara it's a fascinating conversation so far. One of the things I would like to ask about is the future for an organisation like Lapidus. If I

put myself in the shoes of a member who's perhaps relatively new, perhaps comes from a creative writing background, and has discovered Lapidus, where would you say this report takes us for the membership, for this new member I am imagining?

*Tony Wall:* I think that one of the things we have talked about for some time, in various forms, is the notion of some sort of recognition or accreditation in a broad, fuzzy sense. I need to be very clear that there was no strong appetite for an instrumental form of accreditation. I think it's associated with prescription, and prescription goes against - to some extent - creativity, but I do think it masks those two extremes where, as a member, I might place myself. One extreme is that I, as a member, am engaging with Lapidus because I want to meet other people who were interesting in talking about creativity or writing together, and that is fine. At the other end of the extreme, we have practitioners who are working in hospitals, hospices, or homes who are perhaps more medically or health orientated in their work context. I think there is a stronger appetite, amongst these practitioners, for some sort of system that recognises the competence that they have built.

Overall there wasn't a strong appetite for accreditation as a prescriptive thing. I think there was more of an appetite for recognition of capability. So for example, where the ten guidance prompts in the framework are used to evidence capability in a variety of ways, without a precise 'one answer fits all'. A form which seeks a demonstration that you've: clearly reflected on certain aspects of practice; reflected on which aspects of your context make certain prompts more important than others; and reflected on the level and depth that has informed your thinking and practice about effectiveness and safety. So, I think there is a possibility for the notion of recognition of achievement and demonstration of the thinking around an activity that somebody engages in.

*Jeannie Wright:* Well, I have to say that I am relieved about that, and it brings up another question about a very practical choice I have to make. I have been invited to run a short writing activity for a workshop next week. My habit is long standing: I negotiate guidelines, based on safety. Then I go to a pub where they run Poetry Slams on a Monday evening and most people start out by saying what their psychiatric diagnosis is to a room full of strangers. To me it's kind of shock 'gasp' but clearly there is a whole new practice afoot and that's great, I welcome the energy of it and how the people reading are taking control. I just don't quite know as a practitioner what to recommend, so I would really like to know how you would play it? I'm going into this room full of people I won't know next week, do I follow my usual practice, which is about safe-guarding and confidentiality to some extent, or forget that and go with what happens down the pub with the Poetry Slam?

*Tony Wall:* So, it's really interesting because it reminds me of one of the groups that we engaged with during the consultation. This group has been established for some time, they meet fairly regularly. It's not a particularly large group, less than half a dozen, and sometimes it's the same group, sometimes it differs. The group has fairly few explicit rules, ways of working, confidential agreements, it's non-explicit, but when you dig into it, the backgrounds of these peoples are very similar and they have a shared understanding when they come to the table or come to the room. This means they have a common and shared background with commonly shared notions of what safeguarding is, what confidentiality is, what consent is.

I asked members of the group, 'how does it work when there are new members?' It was interesting that members were *selected*; it is not as if somebody asks 'oh can I join your group?'. I think that this is part of the way that the group maintains a consensus of certain implicit rules because I, as a member of the group, am only going to invite you because I know about you, I trust you.

I also asked members of the group 'what happens when a member does something which doesn't fit your group?'. Interestingly, they couldn't remember a time when that had happened. Now isn't that interesting? So for me, a prescriptive approach would make sure X, Y and Z were in place before you did anything, but we found that there were also other ways of doing things.

One of the contexts that came out of the consultation was where you are joining an established group, a space where the group has a long-standing etiquette, ways of operating, and that they've all agreed to that. I think this is an ethical practice, when anyone is parachuted into an existing group with a history, a tradition, a heritage, to do some situational knowledge gathering rather than imposing own views. There might be exceptions to that, but you might ask: How does it work? Do we already have ground rules and what are those? How do you deal with confidentiality? how do you deal with consent?

It sounds like a lot of questions but you can quite quickly get a feel for what you may need to do, and equally if there is something that you need for your own wellbeing as the facilitator of that group, that needs to be part of that initial conversation. I think we have all seen for example, the importance of initial framing of a session can be done quite quickly without intimidating or making people feel uncomfortable.

So for me, in this particular context where there is an established group who have been doing it for some time, they have their preferred way of working, where they have agreed to certain ways of working, whether it is implicit or explicit. Just doing that checking, 'well how

do you do this?', and even at the start, doing a quit situation check-in, 'what do we do about this?', it might take a few minutes but at least you have placed your boundaries, at least for you.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* You're making me think that the empowerment movement for people with mental health difficulties or for people with autism relies on people breaking the old rules. If I want to tell people about my autism, I am going to do it and I will shout it throughout the twitter stream. I would say as a long-standing practitioner if you set up safe rules at the beginning then you're setting a platform where people can express themselves and that's my belief. I work quite a bit with Claire Williamson who is here today, and she always does that really well, and really clearly, quite formally and I really appreciate it. Whereas at the moment I must say that a huge number of events recently where there is no setting up of any boundary whatsoever and when I come away from it I think, is that private what that person said or not, am I allowed to talk about it or not because it hasn't been set up.

*Claire Williamson (Programme Leader - MSc in Using Creative Writing for Therapeutic Purposes, Metanoia Institute):* Well, it brought up that question really: who is taking responsibility. I think when you're facilitating a group, as a facilitator you are taking responsibility. Perhaps when you're organising the event down the pub, you're taking some responsibility, although it is a bit looser, isn't it? I did run Poetry Slams for years and it was very much on the basis of self-empowerment, people decided on what they were going to say and they said it, the only real boundaries were the time limit and it was very infrequently that issues arose. However, occasionally an issue would arise say, for example, somebody performed a poem that offended a particular group of people. Suddenly as an organiser you're thinking, 'Oh, I need to stand up for this and say it's something we don't agree with, as organisers' or something like that. So, I think there may be a case even, you know, in a very casual environment like a pub, to maybe have a disclaimer at the beginning about what the organiser's role is.

So yes, that sense of responsibility, and I was also interested in what Tony was saying early around the idea of recognition for individuals. What popped into my head was the Higher Education Academy (now Advance HE), which is huge now, it's a very big organisation but what it is doing is accrediting academics who are already in practice, via a kind of appraisal system where they have to produce certain pieces of writing and references which is something that Lapidus had many years ago. Yes, so a fairly simple structure perhaps, I guess the difficulty, which has always been the same, is if somebody is practising without the education you'd hoped they'd have and it is putting people in harm's way, how do we support those people or how do we support the people they are working with if something

goes wrong? know that's not Lapidus' remit at the moment, but there isn't a body that's doing that as far as I know.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* So, what do you think Tony, should there be some kind of accountability framework for Lapidus?

*Tony Wall:* My comment about recognition is really in relation to accreditation in terms of a different notion of reward for demonstrating achievement, but absolutely, underpinning it need to be opportunities to develop that knowledge, rather than assuming that people can demonstrate it. Let's say that someone who has been a Marketeer, they wouldn't necessarily have had the counselling or therapeutic training. To expect somebody to achieve the ten points without some form of development is a tall ask and unfair. There are also areas, which are not necessarily easily accessible in terms of training or development.

The other thing for me about the report - and the consultation process – are the *transition* processes, between groups of participants. So you may be using creative practices for wellbeing work with friends and family and then you decide, 'I'm so good at this, I'd like to work with people with dementia' or 'I want to work with young children'. Actually, there is some quite specialist knowledge and requirements to work with all of these groups and to assume that people have that level of understanding without some development is problematic. Transition spaces, where you move from maybe generic, less risky, and less vulnerable groups to vulnerable groups, that's just an example.

The other aspect I think is important, because it was quite widespread in the consultation, relates to understandings of *consent*; we noticed discussions about what consent means, the nuances of what we meant by *informed* and *valid* consent, and why we would need to ask for it as a practitioner. The idea of everybody signing a form when they go into the session seemed fairly straightforward for most, but what was new for some - but familiar to those in some health fields - was whether a person had the capacity to give their consent. For example, if somebody is medicated and you're asking for their consent for something, do they understand what the consequences are of what you are asking them to do? This isn't to say that this is really niche and this isn't important, I think that awareness is fundamental if you're doing this kind of work with people.

It is knowing about the people who are in *your* space, the space you do have a responsibility for. If you aren't collecting information when participants join something that you're facilitating, how do you know that somebody *should* be in the room? What signs are you looking for, as there can be very subtle signs. I joined a session recently and someone's

eyes were quite wide for the entire session. I checked with the session organiser afterwards to see if that person was okay; they confirmed that that person was not in a good place. This led to a conversation and mitigations with the organiser, but my point relates to the knowledge and awareness - by somebody's eyes - that's a subtle thing which has probably come from some element of training somewhere in my history.

So, I think any recognition scheme needs to be underpinned by key areas. Practitioners may already know some of this, they may know it intuitively or implicitly, and many practitioners are aware of these practices to be effective and safe. So, recognition is not just about 'we'll train you to get this qualification', it's about demonstrating achievement through experiential learning or through some training.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* Thank you that's great Tony, can we bring in Nikki, would you like to ask a question from Australia?

*Nikki (Lapidus Member):* A couple of things. I noticed a comment about a ground rules framework. In Australia we don't have any at all, which is shocking; there are few opportunities for tertiary training for anyone interested in writing as a modality of any form of therapy. Although there are other therapies that are being very well catered for, writing does not exist beyond one centre over in Western Australia. So all the work that I have been doing is based on my teaching experience, my mental health qualification, and essentially intuitive. So in effect, I've been self-taught from reading books like Gillie Bolton and Nicholas Mazza and just getting my hands-on bits and pieces to pull it all together. I know that what I am doing is reaching people and connecting, but I feel insecure because here in Australia everything is about, at this stage, the medical model and if I want to work within say a health system, or more broadly in the community.

If I am not an art therapist, I won't get much kudos. I need something that recognises that the way that I am working is actually creating value, adding value into people's lives, even simply as a self-care tool. The idea of having a ground rules framework is really helpful for someone in my situation.

Also, I am an affiliate member of Anzacata, which is the art therapy body for Australia, New Zealand and Asia. When I first joined I was a student member because I was an enrolled in the GradCert in Mental Health which was the foundational part of the master of mental health art therapy, but they since changed their structure so I don't qualify as a member or a student member, because I am no longer a student. I am an affiliate member which means I am not 'a professional'. I don't have the level of training that the art therapists do but I do

have some recognition within that structure, so I don't know whether the conversation before about whether there can be a stepped approach to the membership so that everyone is catered for, and when people are coming to Lapidus saying 'I want someone who wants to do writing therapeutically' they can choose what level of expertise they want, based on the client population.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* Yes, well if I could just say something from the point of view of the Lapidus Board, it is something that regularly gets talked about. We have a practical problem because a stepped approach to membership requires us to put into place checks and balances, and at the moment, we can't make that work as we don't really have enough members who would make it worth employing somebody to do the work. That's one element of it. Another element is the stuff that Tony has been talking about, which is how light or heavy do we wish regulation to be and what form do we wish it to take? There is a lot of disagreement among the members about this question as exemplified by Tony's consultation framework.

*Jeannie Wright:* My somewhat bitter experience in the psychotherapy and counselling field years ago was really such a waste of time. All that work that went into working towards accreditation and then regulation and it has left us with something that is still very loose - there is still no regulation of the talking therapies. Something called accreditation, which if you're applying for a job would mostly stand you in good stead, is one step forward. I would go so far as to say that, if I were looking for a new therapist, accreditation would give me a sense that they weren't just putting up the brass plaque having done a ten-day, online course.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* I agree, but I have to say, in 25 years of being a counsellor I have never been asked what my qualifications are. Never, once. I don't think the general public is as interested as we are in this subject.

*Jeannie Wright:* Well I am not sure, because I think the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy has found otherwise when they publish their list of accredited practitioners, I think those lists might be heavily used when people are looking for a therapist.

*Tony Wall:* One of the findings from the consultation was about the diversity of who engages with creative practices and talking, word-based activities; you have people who do it out of personal interest and people who are doing this full-time and would perhaps need some sort of credibility through some sort of recognition. There is definitely a group of people that want and feel they need that. I think the other reflection is whether there are enough people outside of that group to justify its existence; is there enough demand internationally for that

sort of scheme? As I say, I think there is a group. It might be small, but even if it's small there may be enough people involved to use a peer-review approach to the recognition scheme, rather than it being fully managed by a body in particular. So it could be the host or the organisers with a nominal charge in putting reviewers in touch with each other.

There is also a strong appetite for a peer-review form of supervision and became particularly interesting during the process of translating the guidance. For example, what is "supervision" in Poland? Well, we don't really have that notion, but we do have something that might be called "expert counsel". To us it might essentially be supervision, but I think supervision affords us a layer of security and credibility that may be linked with recognition; to say that you have full supervision is one element of credibility for paying audiences.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* Yes, Claire Williamson has just mentioned CPD; CPD is something that we can offer, Nikki, which might be of use to you. CPD is an important aspect of words for wellbeing education. We can do that easily, what's not quite so easy is this question of how to make a framework that is meaningful that confers recognition of experience and helps people to get more work and feel more confident about what they are doing.

*Nikki:* Yes, that's great, it is linked to that isn't it because if you get the recognition then it will lead to work and ultimately anyone who is working in this field wants to be able to share the good that comes from it by working. The more work you do the more recognition there is for everyone in the field and it will have a ripple effect. I love the idea of supervision, I don't know if there is someone here in Australia, we don't have any connections at the moment, we have the seeds of things happening. For me to say I could easily find someone who could supervise me for the work I do, is not so easy.

And how do I solve the issue of that person's time. Do they simply have to donate it to me, there are all these sorts of other things that come up because, here in Australia, it is pioneering work. I know it is happening in lots of different little pockets, but all the threads have not come together yet and it's ironic that we're coming to the UK to tie up our parcel nicely, hopefully into the future.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* I really hope we will be able to offer you something that will be useful. It is not quite there yet but we're certainly working on it.

*Tony Wall:* I think that would be really helpful. Linked with that is that a sustainable model is developed. I remember distinctly that there were one or two practitioners who absolutely believed 'if I have to pay for supervision, I won't make any money from this'. Now, this poses ethical questions as it is like saying 'I am not going to pay for supervision to secure myself

and the people I am working with because I won't make money from it if I do that'. I think that is a problematic attitude and it's raising the value and function of supervision. There are so many different models of supervision, not all costing money. Maybe that is another role that Lapidus can offer, and it might be part of this stepped relationship model; for a particular membership, you have access to one hour of supervision, integrated it into the membership so that actually there is a sustainability to it.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* Again, we are showing members the value of supervision. People who may not have had or experienced conversational supervision before. I would like to mention that a group that meets in the Somerset, Wiltshire area have a great model for peer-supervision, they build into every single meeting about 45 minutes for a practice issue, they do a writing exercise, they do a check-in, they cover all the basics. I am so impressed by the way that they do that; it is a very safe setting and it is a very enriching model that they have got, that perhaps, Nikki, there are people who you could bring into your world, counsellors perhaps, art therapists, whatever. You would get a lot of support from a group like that.

*Tony Wall:* Just to answer Claire's question, we've not yet found a peer-recognition model, we've seen peer-to-peer supervision type models but not recognition models.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* I have a question from Lisa Rosetti, 'what are the current fields where creative practices are having the greatest impact, Tony?'

*Tony Wall:* That's partly challenging to answer because a lot of the work is still hidden. I mentioned before that the all-party parliamentary group exposed practices on a national level. So I can't claim that we know about the biggest *impact*, but what we are aware of is how more social systems like local government organisations are engaging with creative practices for wellbeing, which has become perhaps the biggest *movement* that we have seen. In terms of the impact, it is hard to tell because a lot of the other stuff that falls outside of that system isn't necessarily shared or recognised beyond the local impact. So, we know there is work in tackling poverty, we know there is work in relation to people with dementia, we know there is work in libraries.

Even though we now have more evidence from the all-party parliamentary group, one of the big criticisms is the quality of the research that's being done to measure impact, and that might be an area for further development again for Lapidus. It certainly came out in the consultation; there were, in some areas, some notable voices which said that research was not really the remit of what 'we do', and in some ways, it was a reliance on an intuitive feel that 'oh yes that was a good session, that worked well'. But perhaps we need to expand on

how we are making judgements on evaluation and research because a session may have had a reverse effect to what we had intended. So, yes, for me it is about raising the profile of evaluation and research to be able to demonstrate that impact.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* We had a question about ground rules for creative practices. I don't know if you feel you have answered that?

*Tony Wall:* It seems to me that this is one way of using the ten points in the guidance framework; in setting up sessions, designing sessions, designing interventions over longer periods of time. The intention was that the ten points could be used as ways of designing and sharing that design with others should it be a collaborative effort. Indeed, some of the points are about ensuring that there is collaboration in different contexts, in agreeing the ground rules.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* I have a question from Lisa; 'what are the future challenges for writing for wellbeing as a professional and do you have any potential strategies to address those challenges'?

*Tony Wall:* I am not sure if I would call it a profession yet because of the diversity of people who use creative practices and in fact, I avoided calling it a profession. I suspect there is a group of people who identify strongly as a words for wellbeing practitioner, or creative writing for therapeutic practice practitioner. I think one of the future challenges is how you position Lapidus against, with, or alongside, other arts-based interventions. Some of these fields do have a very strong profile like art therapy, and have regulated, well-articulated competences and, the perceived credibility of somebody who is qualified as an arts therapist. Equally, the art therapy world is such a small profession and, in some ways, that's an implication of regulating something so much. By the very nature of regulation, it is exclusive; it intentionally excludes. So, one of the challenges will be how to position with, alongside, or against those therapies, and the implications of that.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* Okay, we have a question from Geoff Mead (Lapidus Member):

'I am a current year two CWTP MSc student, I carry a continuing question about the balance between formalising practice to safeguard clients on the one hand and unhelpful pathologising of the human condition on the other. I think the guidelines manage to steer a useful and balanced course for non-clinical practitioners, thank you for a fascinating discussion'.

This is the question that we face as Lapidus, if you had to sum up in a sentence or two, Tony, for the Board of Lapidus, what should we be doing in 2020 to make writing/words for wellbeing a success, what is the first thing we should do?

*Tony Wall:* I think part of it is providing a structure in place for a step-change. Part of it is a structure around CPD and linking that to mechanisms for supervision. That might be stage two, but certainly, we now know some areas where we can say there are gaps, and Lapidus could help link CPD in some way to supervision in this next year. I think that that would build credibility, build confidence, and build a way forward for the next step which might be more formalised processes.

*Barbara Bloomfield:* Yes, I think we would probably all agree with that. Well, I have really enjoyed it and I hope you have all really enjoyed the discussion too. This video link will be on the Lapidus website and on Facebook pages, so you are very welcome to re-listen to it. Thank you, really well done to Tony and Richard for all your hard work, you've done an incredible job. I think it has taken us forward definitely.

## References

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## Author Biographies

Professor Wall is Founder and Head of the International Centre for Thriving, a global scale collaboration between business, arts, health, and education to deliver sustainable transformation. He has published 200+ works, including articles in quartile 1 journals such as The International Journal of Human Resource Management, Journal of Cleaner Production, and Vocations & Learning, as well as global policy reports for the European Mentoring & Coaching Council in Brussels and Lapidus International which have been translated into 20 languages. His academic leadership and impact has attracted prestigious recognition through The Advance-HE National Teaching Fellowship (awarded to less than 0.2% of the sector) and multiple Santander International

Research Excellence Awards. He actively collaborates and consults with large organisations and is developing licenses to enable wider global impact of this work.

Dr Henry Sidsaph is a Visiting Lecturer in the International Centre for Thriving at the University of Chester. He has expertise in social network analysis in the context of sustainable development, particularly within Alternative Food Networks. Henry also works in a consultative capacity as Head of Research for an internationally operating Executive Search company, Hybrid Search, where he leads research projects for multinational companies across various sectors. Henry has experience of working on several European Commission level research projects including the European Guide Dog Federation and ERDF projects, has published in peer-reviewed journal articles and presented at international conferences. He is also an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.