

THIS IS MY BRAVE



Production Team Handbook

Version 1.3

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Production Team Handbook

FOREWORD

The Story of This Is My Brave

This Is My Brave was born out of the desire to celebrate inspiring, creative, true stories of recovery from mental illness and addiction in communities to break down the stigma that prevents many from seeking help.

In August of 2011, more than six years after Jennifer Marshall's bipolar disorder first surfaced, she decided to start a blog. It became a place where she turned to write about her life as a wife and young mom to two small kids, and writing helped her begin to heal. She titled it: Bipolar Mom Life. Jennifer wrote anonymously at first, because she was afraid of being judged. She also worried that disclosing her mental illness may make future employment opportunities difficult. For eighteen months, Jennifer wrote and, as a result, found a community online. Other writers who were openly sharing their stories of overcoming mental illness inspired her, and when she landed her first paid writing job, Jennifer decided to stop hiding behind a pen name.

When WhatToExpect.com published her first article with Jennifer's byline, it was also picked up by AOL.com (the parent company). The outpouring of support and gratitude when that piece hit the Internet with her real name was overwhelming. She knew immediately that disclosing was the right decision. She could finally talk about all parts of her life, and not just the shiny, fun moments.

About six months later, Jennifer had the idea to launch a theater show. She wanted to give individuals from the community the same opportunity she had – a stage on which to share their story of living a successful life despite mental illness. Jennifer met her Co-Founder, Anne Marie Ames, at a mutual friend's party and recruited her to help put the project out to the world.

Jennifer and Anne Marie launched [This Is My Brave on Kickstarter](#) in October of 2013 and the excitement surrounding the project grew and grew. They offered tickets to the first show and handmade "BRAVE" bracelets, among other items, as rewards for financial pledges of support. Within 31 days, the campaign had surpassed their goal of \$6500 to fund the first show, ending up with over \$10,000 in contributions. It was clear that the community wanted to help bring this show to life – they believed in the vision and Jennifer and Anne Marie were dedicated to delivering an exceptional production.

It was at the inaugural This Is My Brave - The Show that Jennifer realized the power of storytelling. At the conclusion of the sold-out performance, as audience members and cast members celebrated in the theater lobby, a woman waited patiently to speak with her. When she finally made her way over to say hello, she introduced herself and said, “Hi, Jenn. My name is Susan. My husband and I drove all the way from Philadelphia to see your show. I found your blog in my darkest moments of dealing with depression and anxiety, and your writing saved my life.”

That was the moment that changed everything. She went on to share that she was afraid she’d never be able to have children because of her mental health challenges. Jennifer encouraged Susan to pursue her dreams of becoming a mother by consulting closely with her psychiatrist and therapist to devise a plan for a safe pregnancy.

A year later Jennifer would be brought to tears by an email that arrived in early May. Susan had reached out to say she was about to celebrate her very first Mother’s Day and shared a photo. She was beaming, holding her new baby.

This is the incredible, life-giving power of one person’s story. This Is My Brave has multiplied mental health storytelling across the United States and Australia through the thousands of people who have come forward to share their stories on our stages thanks to the generous volunteers who give their time and talents to organize our shows to create societal change. We like to say, “Brave multiplies Brave.”

This Is My Brave is more than a show. It’s a transformational experience for the production team, the storytellers, the audience members and the community. It’s a movement of people choosing to be open about mental health, creating a more supportive world in which we can not only survive mental health challenges, we can thrive.

It’s our vision that one day we will live in a world where we won’t have to call it “brave” for talking openly about mental illness. We’ll simply call it talking.

Thank you for joining our Brave family. You’re helping us get closer to that vision by stepping forward to lead a production team.

With love & gratitude,

The Team at This Is My Brave

WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF COMMUNITY. WE BELIEVE EVERYONE HAS A STORY TO TELL. THERE'S STRENGTH FOUND IN PEOPLE COMING TOGETHER TO PROPEL A MOVEMENT FORWARD WHICH IS WHY WE CREATED THIS INTERVENTION.

OVERVIEW

Congratulations and Welcome to the Production Team Handbook for This Is My Brave - The Show.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook is to offer you a thorough orientation to how This Is My Brave - The Show came to be and the mission and vision behind its creation. We will also provide you with all the information that you will need to successfully lead your team through the development and implementation of your very own This Is My Brave - The Show for your community.

SCOPE

This Is My Brave is more than just a show! It is also all of the following:

- This Is My Brave is a contact-based stigma reduction program.
- This Is My Brave is an important fundraising event for a charitable organization within your community.
- This Is My Brave is an inclusive and lasting authentic community.

As such, the responsibilities of the Production Team are multi-faceted. In addition to overseeing the planning of your city's This Is My Brave - The Show, you will also be charged with ensuring the establishment of a safe space where the transformative work of This Is My Brave can be accomplished among participants. As well, you will make sure that key fundraising goals are reached. And, finally, you will nurture and encourage a Brave community that will be established in this process and will continue to thrive within your city or town long after curtain calls and cast bows.

This Is My Brave - The Show

From 2014 to 2024, This Is My Brave, Inc. operated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that offered a platform for individuals with lived experience to share their stories of living successful lives despite a diagnosis of a mental illness. This Is My Brave (TIMB) shows are community-based events held at local theaters, where volunteer producers audition and select a cast of individuals who are ready to share their personal stories of living well with mental illness and/or substance use disorder through original poetry, music, comedy or personal essay.

After being successfully funded on Kickstarter in 2013, This is My Brave's debut show was on May 18th, 2014, in Arlington, VA. The inaugural show included readings of touching personal essays, original music performances, and energetic slam poetry. There were incredible stories of inspiration and hope shared through this mental health theater production.

In 2015, TIMB expanded to create six all-new shows (Boston, Iowa City, a second show in Arlington VA, Harrisburg PA, NYC, and Los Angeles). In 2016, This Is My Brave shared new stories through shows in Denver (two unique shows - spring and fall), Iowa City (year 2), Valparaiso, IN (Chicagoland), Greenville, SC, Arlington, VA (year 3), Oklahoma City, Washington DC and Baltimore. In June of 2016, we were featured in The Washington Post in a front-page article and in August of 2016 we appeared in O, The Oprah Magazine in a 4-page feature article.

In 2017, This Is My Brave expanded internationally with the help of mental health advocate Tim Daly who leads our NPO in Canberra, Australia – [This Is My Brave Australia](#), or TIMBA for short. Back at home, This Is My Brave had an incredible year of growth hosting shows in seventeen cities across the US: in the spring, stories were told in Bentonville AR, Boise ID, Cedar Rapids IA, Des Moines IA, Germantown MD, Jacksonville FL, Kansas City MO, Los Angeles CA, Napa CA, Sedona AZ, Valparaiso IN (year 2) and Washington DC. We also hosted our Women's Summit in Washington DC at the National Press Club - an event made possible by a grant from **philosophy's** Hope & Grace fund. In the fall, This Is My Brave shows took place in Boston MA (year 2), Lewiston ME, Los Angeles CA (year 2), and Wheeling WV.

2018 proved to be an equally impressive year of growth, with shows taking place in nineteen cities: Arlington VA (spring and fall), Baltimore MD (year 2), Bentonville AR (year 2), Boston MA (spring and fall), Bethesda MD, Boise ID, Charlotte NC (spring and fall), Elkins Park PA, Fort Lauderdale FL, Iowa City IA, Lansing MI, Los Angeles CA, New York NY, Orlando FL, Philadelphia PA and Sterling, VA.

In January of 2019, our [short documentary](#) debuted in Arlington VA at a screening celebration event. The year may have seen a slow down in the number of shows on the lineup, but 2019 was full of additional projects which supplemented the spring and fall seasons, many shows being held in cities which had previously hosted, and a few new: Baltimore MD, DeKalb IL, Bentonville

AR, Houston TX, Orlando FL, Boise ID, Carroll County MD, Columbus OH, Boston MA and our first official High School Edition pilot took place in Hershey PA. Our College Edition pilot also launched in the fall of 2019, thanks to a grant from the Ruderman Family Foundation and a matching Alkermes Inspiration grant. The College Edition pilot featured 10 student storytellers from universities in the Boston area and was performed on seven campuses throughout the fall and spring semesters before the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic erupted.

2020 was a year we'll never forget, with most of our shows being canceled. Our team pivoted during the spring and summer, learning the ropes to create virtual and live-streamed content so that we could keep sharing stories from our community as mental health took center stage and the world began to recognize the importance of talking about our emotional health.

Our first ever fully virtual show took place in early 2021 with This Is My Brave - Stories from the Black Community. This two-part series provided a virtual platform where Black individuals from around the country could authentically share their Brave while offering their unique perspective on mental health issues for themselves and their community. This event was received with great enthusiasm. As a result of this successful show, it became clear to the team that virtual shows should have a place on our platform. While live shows will always be a mainstay, virtual shows, with their unique positioning, will continue to be an option for production teams in the future.

In the very beginning, Jennifer and Anne Marie put forward a bold idea when they imagined the first ever This Is My Brave - The Show: give people permission to Be Brave and speak openly about their experiences with mental illness and addiction so that they will feel more empowered in their circumstances and others who hear their stories will have hope for themselves or a loved one.

While Anne Marie and Jenn deserve credit for their brilliant idea, the real success of the This Is My Brave movement is due to every single amazing individual who has answered the call to Be Brave on our stage. "It's my opinion that we'll never end the stigma surrounding mental illness and addiction until we put our names and faces on our stories," says Jennifer. We have seen the impact of this movement and the reduction of stigma with every new story shared and with every new Brave cast member on the stage.

This Is My Brave and its community of over 1000 alumni storytellers and producers have done so much to move us closer to achieving our mission and vision. As this movement carries on, we are thrilled to see more and more volunteers expand the reach and impact of Brave in more communities across the nation. We have always said, Brave Multiplies Brave, and now more than ever we are ready to see the exponential growth and impact that we know is possible for This Is My Brave. Thank you for your commitment to the Brave movement!

This Is My Brave - More than Just a Show

As you embark on this journey as a producer, it is important to keep this truth in mind: [This Is My Brave is more than just a show!](#) It is a movement that starts with people and ends with a powerful stage production that features their stories. Please keep these two priorities in mind as you go through the process of show production – the people, then the production. When you do, you will succeed at advancing the mission of This Is My Brave in your community.

This Is My Brave - A Stigma Reduction Program

This Is My Brave is a contact-based stigma reduction intervention in which you engage a group of individuals to speak openly about their experiences and invite others to witness their performances. For many years, This Is My Brave research has been conducted by Dr. Kristin Kosyluk of the University of South Florida (and others, such as Dr. Kyaien Conner of the University of Pittsburgh) to document the impact that This Is My Brave - The Show has on storytellers and audiences. The research has revealed some really great news: when people are encouraged to speak openly about their experiences with mental illness and addiction and they are supported in that process, their sense of empowerment increases. And when audience members hear these stories, their public stigma is reduced and, if they themselves have experienced mental illness or addiction, hearing these stories causes them to feel less alone and more likely to seek help. Increased feelings of empowerment and decreased feelings of loneliness are two critical steps on the path towards overall reduction in stigma.

NOTE

You can help advance research initiatives! Research of This Is My Brave as an intervention is on-going. Of note: Dr. Kosyluk and her team are in the final phase of storyteller research. To support their efforts in storyteller data collection, please follow the guidance provided in these materials to promote storyteller research opportunities among your cast members (see the [calendly language doc](#) for more details). Your efforts to do so are greatly appreciated! For questions about the research process, please contact Dr. Kosyluk at kkosyluk@usf.edu

Theory of Change

To further understand the impact that our show has on its participants and to guide future producers in their storyteller interactions, This Is My Brave, Inc. embarked in 2020 on developing its Theory of Change. A Theory of Change (TOC) is a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular situation. A TOC is

developed by first identifying the desired long-term goals and then working back from these to identify all the conditions that must be in place and how they relate to each other for the goal to be achieved. The TOC maps out what a program's activities do and how these activities lead to achievement of the goals.

We undertook this process because it was important for us to verify what we suspected all along: that This Is My Brave creates positive long-term change in the lives of its participants.

We began by interviewing past storytellers and producers in hopes of identifying some common themes -- we wanted to know specifically, "What has life been like since being a part of This Is My Brave?" These interviews resoundingly resulted in similar responses from our interviewees. Most referenced a similar set of outcomes that they specifically connected to their experience with This Is My Brave. These outcomes that were stated by our interviewees are in fact the outcomes that were imagined for participants from the very beginning, when This Is My Brave - The Show was just in its infancy. So hearing the testimonies from participant after participant was welcome confirmation of the vital importance of the work we do through This Is My Brave.

We can't wait to present to you the details of our findings in the modular training we have prepared for you!

This Is My Brave - A Fundraising Event

This Is My Brave - The Show has the potential to raise thousands of dollars for an organization in your community that is committed to empowering individuals to live authentically and thrive while also managing a diagnosis of mental illness or addiction. The beneficiary of This Is My Brave - The Show in your city will be determined by the Production Team. The team should seek to identify an organization whose mission and vision most align with those of The Show.

This Is My Brave - An On-Going, Inclusive Community

This Is My Brave - The Show will be the start of a long-lasting, inclusive community in your town. Your cast and production team will forge a bond in the production of this show that is unlike any they have experienced elsewhere. As such, you will all carry with you a cherished connection that cannot be broken. Outside of your community, you will join a Brave family that extends throughout the continental United States. This Brave family finds one another online, through a Facebook alumni group that you and your cast are invited to join once your show wraps.

The Mission of This Is My Brave

The mission of This Is My Brave is to empower individuals to put their names and their faces to their true stories of recovery from mental illness and/or addiction. We do this through live storytelling events that are presented on stage featuring individuals from the local area. Our cast members express themselves creatively through the performing arts. Their pieces are most often one of the following:

Creative essay

Spoken Word Poetry

Original Song

Stand-Up Comedy

Dance

The Vision of This Is My Brave

The Vision of This Is My Brave is that one day we will live in a world where we won't have to call it "brave" to talk openly about mental illness or addiction, we will simply call it "talking."

Start with Storytelling

At the heart of it all, This Is My Brave is about storytelling. Something we say all the time and believe with our whole hearts is

#StorytellingSavesLives

Storytelling also increases awareness, creates authentic connection, builds buzz, and is a powerful fundraising tool. If you put Storytelling at the heart of everything you do with your people and in your production, you will build a wildly successful event and create a vibrant, lasting Brave community in your town.

Storytelling Is a Powerful Fundraising Tool

You will tell stories to inspire support for This Is My Brave - The Show in your city. We call this building Brave buzz! When you speak authentically and passionately about your interest in the

work of This Is My Brave - The Show, others will likely respond quickly with, “How can I be of support?”

A former two-time Brave producer said this about the role that storytelling played in her fundraising efforts for her city’s This Is My Brave - The Show,

“I’ve always been a reluctant fundraiser, and I learned in doing TIMB that if my heart is really there for a cause, I speak so differently to organizations, and we share the vision for what we want to create. That made the fundraising so successful. It was my passion for what we were doing. The second show I produced was above and beyond when it came to our success in fundraising. My confidence grew after doing the first show.”

This statement highlights the power of storytelling in building Brave buzz and generating excitement for your show. If you speak from the heart, you will inspire people in your community to want to support this effort.

Storytelling Creates Community and Change

You will tell stories to make important connections within your community to find production team members, partner organizations, show sponsors, cast members, community partners, audience members and Brave enthusiasts.

- ★ Tell your story about why you became interested in This Is My Brave.

You will support others as they prepare to tell their stories. You will provide for them a safe space to craft their piece into a performance-worthy final product. This process will provide participants with the greatest opportunity for transformation and connectedness.

- ★ Create an environment where individuals have permission to speak openly and honestly about their experiences.
- ★ Listen with authentic compassion and curiosity as others share their stories.
- ★ Express gratitude to the storyteller for being Brave and sharing their story.

For this reason, the final performance of The Show is an especially poignant moment for the cast and team because it represents an emotional celebration of the creative work you have accomplished together, the support you have offered one another, and the growth you have experienced in the weeks and months leading up to The Show.

Before You Begin

Brave Glossary

Assets - (in the context of this handbook) marketing material that is stored digitally and makes an organization uniquely identifiable. Examples of digital assets that may be requested in show production are: logos, advertisements, sponsorship decks, ad decks or even audio files or videos; also referred to as **marketing collateral** or **marketing material**

Auditions - In-person meetings between prospective cast members and members of the production team; the purpose of this meeting is to get to know the talents and intentions of prospective performers and provide the production team with info in order to make final casting decisions. Auditions are required for This Is My Brave - The Show in your city and may not be renamed.

Brave Academy - Required online, modular training for all members of the production team that provides an orientation to the key components needed to replicate This Is My Brave - The Show in your city.

Brave Circle - an activity that takes place just prior to taking the stage on the day of The Show. It is a moment for you to help center the cast and offer encouragement and thanks for their Brave!

Brave Way - This Is My Brave, Inc.'s unique method for re-creating in your city the magical experience of our very first Brave show in Arlington, Virginia, in 2014; an in-depth orientation to the transformative principles and practices that make This Is My Brave - The Show a one-of-a-kind community building and mental health storytelling event. The Brave Way represents the Best Practices for producing the highest quality mental health storytelling event.

Casting Call - A call for storytellers that is shared widely throughout the community, on social media, through traditional media outlets and also through word of mouth and should target groups that represent a variety of demographics, conditions and talents.

Cast Member - A person who has been selected to tell their story in This Is My Brave - The Show in your city; also referred to as a **Storyteller**

Cast Welcome Party - A Cast Welcome Party provides your newly formed cast the opportunity to meet one another and the production team in person and share about themselves. This is for cast members only. No additional guests should be in attendance at this event.

Community Beneficiary - the Community Beneficiary is a local organization that you would like to support financially with the proceeds of your show. Ideally, this organization will serve as the Fiscal Sponsor as well. Any profits generated by the show can help fund programs at the Community Beneficiary. Ideally, this partner is a non-profit that provides mental health services.

Communication Partner - a local organization, whose mission aligns with Brave's, that would be willing to promote auditions and ticket sales of This Is My Brave - The Show to their donors and/or constituents; in exchange, partners can be invited to table at the show and possibly be offered 1-2 complimentary tickets to the show.

Fidelity Coordinator - a member of the production team who works closely with the Producer to ensure that This Is My Brave's non-negotiables (the five pillars of the TOC) are being upheld by the production team. In addition, the fidelity coordinator ensures compliance with all show safety and branding guidelines.

Fiscal Sponsor - a local organization that will offer administrative and bookkeeping support for your event. They will collect and redistribute all revenue associated with the show. In return, this partner org will retain a portion of the show proceeds (usually 3-5%); this organization may be able to serve as the community beneficiary as well (see page 37 for more information on fiscal sponsor and community partners)

Five Pillars of This Is My Brave - conditions that must be present throughout the production of This Is My Brave - The Show in your city in order to produce the desired outcomes among all participants; *synonyms **non-negotiables, tenets***

Fundraising Manager - directs the efforts of the fundraising team for This Is My Brave - The Show in your city, overseeing the efforts to generate Sponsorships, Advertising Revenue, P2P Funds and Ticket Sales.

In-Kind Donation - refers to the provision of goods or services to an organization with a financial value in lieu of financial support. For those who donate "in-kind," their charitable giving is not the money to buy the required goods or services, but the goods and services themselves.

Media Partner - local organizations who agree to promote This Is My Brave - The Show in their circles in exchange for similar promotions of their events among ours. Media partners have the opportunity to table at the show to promote their services, their organization or their upcoming event(s).

Media Partnership Manager - the member of the production team who is responsible for making connections with Media Partners in the community in order to promote the show.

Mental Health Professional - a clinically licensed specialist who is present at all meetings and cast gatherings to support individuals who may need support as a result of their Brave experience

Outcomes - the short and medium term effects of This Is My Brave on its participants

PR and Marketing Coordinator - the member of the production team who is responsible for the promotions of the This Is My Brave - The Show in your city and surrounding communities. This encompasses news --TV, Radio and Print -- social media and (when appropriate) distribution of printed promotional materials and flyers.

Production Team Lead - This individual directs the efforts of the production team for This Is My Brave - The Show in your city. The Production Team Lead oversees all aspects of show production from idea to The Show, including team recruitment, team meetings, team progress, team tasks and timelines.

Rehearsals - In-person opportunities for cast members to practice performing their pieces prior to their live performance at the show; rehearsals are also vitally important occasions for authentic interpersonal connection among cast members and production team members. They provide the best opportunity for Brave outcomes to be achieved among all parties.

Show Director - the member of the production team who is responsible for all theater elements of show production; this individual works closely with the Production Team Lead to ensure the highest quality production of This Is My Brave - The Show.

Storyteller - A person who has been cast to tell their story in This Is My Brave - The Show in your city; also referred to as a **Cast Member**

Theory of Change - a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular situation.

TIMB - acronym for the U.S. national non-profit organization This Is My Brave, Inc. (2014-2024) as well as an acceptable acronym for use in slug lines of an individual show's urls.

TOC- an acronym for Theory of Change

Workshop - to experiment with different versions of a storyteller's performance piece. This can be done collaboratively at rehearsals with all cast members or it can be done one-on-one with a mentor. The goal of a workshop is to finalize the piece and to coach on the final performance of the piece.

Frequently Asked Questions about This Is My Brave - The Show

Are there different versions of This Is My Brave - The Show to produce?

This Is My Brave - The Show can be produced at different levels in your city (i.e., small, medium or large scale). It can also, in some situations, be produced virtually. Adaptations of The Show include a College Edition, High School Edition, or an edition featuring the stories of specific communities, such as Stories from the Black Community, Stories from the Veteran Community, etc. The typical show is one which features 10 storytellers and an audience of 300 or more individuals. It is a highly produced event with professional lighting, sound, photography, and videography and can generate \$10,000 - \$20,000 in charitable gifts to a local organization. However, This Is My Brave is adaptable as long as you adhere to the Theory of Change as you engage individuals for storytelling.

Are the Storytellers for This Is My Brave - The Show actors?

This Is My Brave - The Show empowers individuals to put their names and their faces to *their own true stories* of recovery from mental illness and/or substance use disorder. Our Storytellers (also called Cast Members) are NOT actors, they are people from your local community who are ready to talk about their experiences. The pieces that they perform are their own and are expressed in a creative way such as personal essay, spoken word poetry, original song, stand-up comedy or dance.

How are Storytellers recruited for This Is My Brave - The Show?

Local production teams for This Is My Brave - The Show put out a casting call for Storytellers from their area. Auditions are announced in a community via social media, press releases, flyers placed on local bulletin boards and through word of mouth.

I feel uncomfortable with the call for storytellers being named “Auditions.” Can we call that process something else?

We ask that you do use the word “auditions” for brand consistency (from show to show) and because it is important to make clear that that an auditioner might not be selected to join the cast for any of the following reasons:

- 1) Cast Diversity
- 2) Condition Diversity
- 3) Creative Expression Diversity

- 4) Their “readiness” to participate as observed by the production team

It’s important to prepare auditioners for the possibility of not being cast in the show. TIMB Inc. makes available tools in your training for how to do this fairly and tactfully.

Where do the funds raised by This Is My Brave - The Show go?

Production Teams for This Is My Brave - The Show will designate a local organization/program to be the beneficiary of the proceeds from their show. After all expenses associated with the event have been paid, the remaining funds will be dispersed to this local recipient.

Are local production teams paid to produce This Is My Brave - The Show?

Local Production Teams are made up of unpaid volunteers who are passionate about changing the way their community addresses mental illness and addiction and committed to creating a local Brave event and movement.

From Idea to a Show



BRAVE BRAND SAFETY SPECIFICATIONS

Below are required safety standards for each production of This Is My Brave - The Show. These are non-negotiables with no exceptions. Fidelity Coordinators and all production team members should acquaint themselves with these standards and strive to uphold them at all times during the production process.

Event Level Specifications

- Psychological counseling to participants at these events is prohibited. This Is My Brave - The Show and all related activities are peer-to-peer support events only.
- No alcohol or drugs of any kind are allowed at This Is My Brave shows or rehearsals.
- No cash should be exchanged at This Is My Brave events.
- No lobbying or political discussion is allowed at This Is My Brave events.
- All participants in This Is My Brave - The Show must be 18 years or older. (For those interested in creating a show for young people, consider This Is My Brave's College Edition or High School Edition.)

Performance Level Specifications

- Foul language should be avoided.
- No mention of specific drugs should be made.
 - ✓ It is okay to say, "Medication changed my life."
 - ✗ It is NOT okay to say, "Paxil (or any other specific drug reference) changed my life."
- Reference to successful treatments or therapies is allowed.
 - ✓ It is okay to reference success with treatments such as TMS, EMDR, etc.
 - ✓ It is okay to name these treatments.
- No doctors, practices or hospitals should ever be named specifically.
- When talking about suicide, storytellers should never reference means.
 - ✓ It is okay to say, "I made a decision..." or "I made plans..."
 - ✗ It is NOT okay to say, "I gathered [specific items]" or "I went to [specific place]"

First Steps of Show Planning

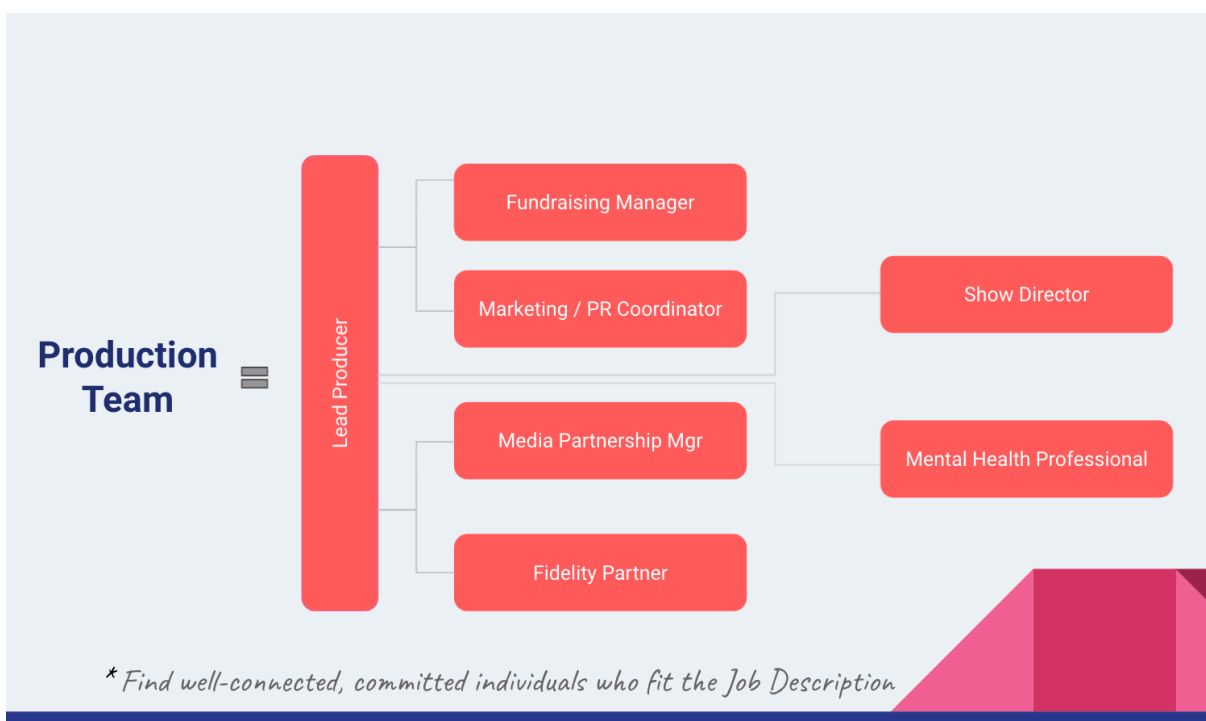
In order to host a successful production of This Is My Brave - The Show in your city, you will need to achieve key milestones as a Production Team Lead early in the production process. Here's more information on how to get there.

The connections you create through storytelling -- the work that you are doing to build Brave buzz -- will yield layers of support for This Is My Brave - The Show in your city. These efforts will allow you to achieve the milestones required to jumpstart your event. They are all of the following:

Building Your Production Team

A strong and diverse team of at least seven individuals (including one Mental Health Professional) is required to bring This Is My Brave - The Show to your city. Use the job descriptions listed in the informational pdf [So You Want to Produce a Show](#) to identify well-qualified and committed candidates to complete your team. For more information about building a production team, review Module 1 in this Handbook.

It is important to note that you should build your team with individuals from varying networks in your area to maximize your reach in your community as a team and be able to draw prospective cast members, sponsors, supporters, and ticket buyers from those groups.



BEST PRACTICE

As soon as you have confirmed all members of your production team, host a Production Team get-together. Use this time to get to know one another, complete one module of Brave Academy together (see more about this in Appendix D of this document), and do some initial brainstorming for building Brave buzz across all your networks.

For more information about building your production team, please check out this video on the topic!



Identifying a Fiscal Sponsor and Community Beneficiary

For a Brave Show, you will need to establish a relationship with a Fiscal Sponsor, a local 501(c)(3) organization. Ideally, the Fiscal Sponsor is an organization whose mission aligns with Brave's. They take on The Show as a program and assist with financial matters such as collection and disbursement of funds, and other administrative support. The Fiscal Sponsor may ask for a small stipend for their services such as 2-3% of the show's net proceeds.

The Community Beneficiary is an organization that you select to be the recipient of the show proceeds. The net proceeds from your event can help fund this organization's programs. Ideally, this partner is a non-profit that provides mental health services or programs. So, in addition to fighting stigma with your show, you help support mental health initiatives in your community. It's especially rewarding if you can fund a new program.

It is possible for the Fiscal Sponsor and the Community Beneficiary to be the same organization. In this case, the Fiscal Sponsor may waive the stipend for their services. For more information about Fiscal Sponsors, please review Module 2, linked on page 40 in this Handbook. You may also watch this [youtube video](#) on Fiscal Sponsorship.

Setting Show Goals

It is important first to envision the scale of your show in order to set fundraising goals.

Decide on Show Scale

As a production team, determine the size of The Show that you want to host – small, medium or large scale. Your choice of show size will dictate your fundraising goals. Larger scale shows will require more fundraising than smaller scale shows because theater costs. Take a look at the image below for guidance.



IMPORTANT NOTE: Regardless of show size, your efforts with storytellers will be the same. Remember, you have two priorities when planning The Show – the people and the production. Auditions, casting, and rehearsals will be a part of the people side of The Show. That process will be the same regardless of the size of the final event.

While the people side of show production is fixed, the production side of the show can be tweaked. Obviously, a larger show is a larger undertaking. Carefully consider the event planning skills of your team and make your selection accordingly. In the past, production teams have planned a small scale production in their first year, then, as their confidence in show planning grew, the team increased the size of their show in subsequent years.

Securing Major Sponsors

To achieve optimal success with This Is My Brave - The Show in your city, you will need to secure at least 3-4 Signature Local Sponsors, as well as several Platinum, Gold, and Silver sponsors. Your fundraising goal for this event should be between \$20,000 and \$30,000.

Your efforts to build Brave buzz will also yield good prospects later in the production process when it comes to recruiting all of the following:

- Cast members
- Additional sponsors
- Playbill Advertisers
- In-Kind Donors
- Community Partners
- Audience Members

For more information about connecting with and securing major sponsors, please review the Sponsor section of Module 2 this Handbook.

Planning Ahead

As you set out to complete the above tasks, it is also important to think about the next set of key decisions about your show. They include the following:

Show Date Selection

Nationally recognized Mental Health Awareness days/months generate momentum you can use to promote the show, especially when working to get media attention. Strong options include May for Mental Health Awareness month, September for Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, or early October during Mental Illness Awareness Week.

The optimal day to schedule a show is a Sunday afternoon, but have also seen successful events on Thursday evening or Saturday late afternoon. Keep in mind holiday weekends or significant local events, such as sporting events or large festivals, steer clear of these conflicts. With these things in mind, select a date that makes sense for your community based on the research you've conducted and on available theater space.

Theater Selection

Identify a local theater for your show based on the show scale you have selected. For smaller scale shows, a black box theater or a school auditorium is a good option. Larger scale shows will most likely require an established theater or a theater at a local community college or university. Theater rental will be one of your largest expenses unless you can get the space donated.

We recommend using your connections in the community to secure a donated theater space. The theater will likely be the largest expense in running your event, so if you keep this cost down, you will be able to maximize the profit of the event and thus the donation you can make to your

Beneficiary Organization. If the theater manager is unable to donate space, ask whether they offer a discount to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, so that we can take advantage of a lower rental rate at the very least.

- Do any of your team members have connections with a local college or high school that has good theater facilities? Some colleges and schools have mental health initiatives and may provide their theater for ‘educational’ purposes at a reduced or free rate.
- Do you have connections with a local arts council that could help you secure a theater at reduced cost? Work our community connections! Secure the date and time, and sign any required contracts.

Important Considerations When Selecting a Theater

Use the form in Appendix C of this handbook when researching and visiting theaters. All of the following should be considered when deciding on a venue for The Show.

Ticketing: Whenever possible, production teams should sell their own tickets to the show (via a site like Eventbrite. Some theaters may require that tickets be sold by their box office. This is not ideal because of the fees added for online or phone purchases, which can often increase the cost to the buyer by \$5 - \$8 per transaction. If theaters insist, ask for an exception to their policy due to the nature of our show (if not on the requirement to sell the tickets, then, at least, on their additional fees). If theaters cannot budge, strongly consider finding another theater.

Additional Fees: In addition to the rental fee, theaters may have add-on costs that cover security, tech support, or cleaning staff. Please be sure to ask about such fees so you understand the full cost of the theater.

Proof of Insurance: Theaters may require proof of insurance to conduct an event. As soon as your theater contract is signed, review it carefully to determine if a Certificate of Insurance is required. If so, You can purchase one-time event insurance through an online vendor like [eventsured.com](https://www.eventsured.com).

Additional Considerations: Refer to the Venue Tab in your master spreadsheet or Appendix C for additional items to consider when booking a theater.

Reserving the Space: If you find a theater you like, ask if they will hold the date and time of your show. Most theaters will offer a “soft hold” on the date, which means they’ll place the hold without a deposit until another party inquires about the date -- at which point they’ll contact you for the deposit.

PLAN AHEAD

Use prompts in Appendix C of this document as you research possible theaters for the show.

Secure funding as soon as possible to use if a deposit is required to reserve the theater.

Congratulations

If you have arrived at this portion of the handbook then, Congratulations! You have already achieved so much. By now you have built Brave buzz in your community that has resulted in all of the following:

- ★ The formation of a Brave Production Team of seven or more qualified individuals – including a Mental Health Professional – who are passionate and committed to the Brave mission and to the creation of an amazing event!
- ★ A Fiscal Sponsorship with a local non-profit organization that will help you manage the finances of your event.
- ★ A local non-profit organization that will be the Community Beneficiary of your event (may be the same organization as the fiscal sponsor).
- ★ Relationships with at least 2-3 major donors that will likely yield Signature level sponsorships.
- ★ A show date and location.

With all of the above complete, you are well on your way to producing a powerful and successful production of This Is My Brave - The Show in your city.

This Is My Brave - The Show is coming to your city!

Brave Academy Orientation

This section of the handbook will orient you to the Brave Way of producing a show. The Brave Way represents the Best Practices for producing the highest quality mental health storytelling event and equips you with all the necessary tools and materials to organize a team to effectively re-create the original production of This Is My Brave - The Show in your own city. It also will offer you an orientation to each of the phases of production that you and your team will face in the months leading up to your show. It is important to follow this handbook closely and engage fully in all of the training in order to become acquainted with and stay true to the Brave brand identity and integrity.

Before you can start on the production elements, you and your team must be properly trained in all the foundational Brave components. To do that, we invite you to begin your journey with This Is My Brave by learning more about The Brave Way.

The Brave Way: A New Beginning for This Is My Brave

The Brave Way was born out of a desire to scale up at This Is My Brave. We have known, based on the research that we've conducted and outlined for you above, that our work has a significant impact on all who participate. Yet, historically, year to year, our impact has been limited by the number of shows that we as a team were reasonably able to support.

The Brave team has always been small. While we're fierce in our passion to change the world one person and one story at a time, we recognize that the model we've employed to produce shows in the past has its limits. We've always wondered how we could get more stories told in more cities around the country so that we can ultimately improve the lives of more people living with mental illness and addiction.

The shutdowns of 2020 from the COVID-19 pandemic offered This Is My Brave, Inc. the perfect opportunity to make a plan to achieve our goal of creating an even bigger impact with This Is My Brave - The Show. The solution we've devised is The Brave Way, the Best Practices for producing This Is My Brave - The Show in your area.

The Brave Way represents our method of producing a one-of-a-kind storytelling event. It offers step-by-step instruction on every aspect of community building and show production. And it includes a complete library of resources and guides that allows us to share our institutional knowledge about This Is My Brave on a much greater scale.

Each member of the production team should strive to maintain fidelity to The Brave.

In all previous years, the show production capabilities of This Is My Brave, Inc. were limited by the capacity of its core staff. The Brave Way provides a scaling solution to that challenge and opens the door to a new era for this movement -- one in which more shows can be produced, thereby multiplying the impact of This Is My Brave nationwide.

With The Brave Way, volunteer Production Teams across the country like yours will have access to an online library of resources and guides that offers a thorough preparation for all aspects of planning This Is My Brave - The Show in their city.

As a production team, you will be trained in the The Brave Way of producing a show through all of the following components:

- ★ The Production Team Handbook,
- ★ Brave Academy - an online modular training program for the entire production team that provides an orientation to the key components needed to replicate This Is My Brave - The Show in your city,
- ★ Templates and Tutorials for all tasks associated with show production and fundraising.

Brave Academy

Brave Academy is your initial orientation to The Brave Way. One of the first tasks to complete as a newly formed production team is the online training program called Brave Academy. Each session of Brave Academy is presented in modular form, is designed to be interactive and inspiring, and will orient your team to all of the necessary components of producing This Is My Brave - The Show. [The Brave Academy Training Overview](#) is available for your review.

Important Updates to Brave Academy

Since the creation of Brave Academy in 2021, production of This Is My Brave - The Show has evolved. Based on feedback from production teams, we have modified how Brave Academy is presented to improve the orientation experience for future teams. In some cases, we have moved on from practices that are highlighted in Brave Academy such as the use of the Brave Academy Resource Page (BARP).

While our show production practices are refined with each season, our updates of Brave Academy training videos lag behind in comparison. So please be patient as you view the Modules as they may contain outdated references.

When in doubt, please refer to this handbook for the most up-to-date language and practices.

References you will hear in Brave Academy videos that are now obsolete:

- Brave Academy Resource Page (BARP) - The BARP is no longer in use. All templates, tutorials, and resources are now linked in this handbook and in show production tasks.
- Producer email accounts - producers no longer are assigned Brave email accounts; we now recommend that you add your show logo in the signature line of your email.
- Facebook pages hosted by Brave - creation of all social media pages is now the discretion of production teams; TIMB will no longer set up social media for production teams.
- Page numbers referenced in Brave Academy videos are no longer current. To find the section referenced in the video, please use the Table of Contents at the beginning of this handbook to find the correct page range.

At the completion of Brave Academy, your team will have acquired a strong understanding of the underpinnings of The Brave Way of producing an unforgettable mental health storytelling event and will be equipped with the knowledge and tools required to make This Is My Brave - The Show an impactful production that achieves our intended goals. Let's begin!

[Introduction to Brave Academy](#)

Training Objective: Become acquainted with all of the following:

1. The Movement of This Is My Brave
2. Show Production Resources
3. Best Practices for Brave Academy Success

Brave Academy is the Production Team's first step on the journey through the Brave Way of producing This Is My Brave - The Show for your community. In addition to getting to know your fellow production team members, we want you also to get to know the history of This Is My Brave, why it was founded, and by whom.

The Movement of This Is My Brave

In 2021, Brave co-founder, Jennifer Marshall, was interviewed by Carson Daly on the Today Show's Mind Matters segment. This [segment](#) provides a very clear overview of the history, mission, and vision of This Is My Brave.

While you engage in all of the details of show production, we hope you remember the most important part of the effort as shared in the above segment – Brave's mission to break down stigma and change people's lives forever!

Show Production Resources

Brave Academy has been created to give you a thorough orientation to the entire process of producing a Brave Show. From working together as a team to identifying your cast, from community building to show production. But what is presented in Brave Academy is only a portion of what we have to share with you about your work as a producer. There are additional resources and materials that we created for you that complement this modular training. Most importantly, there's this production team handbook which is organized to go along with the modular training of Brave Academy. Each of the following chapters correspond with each module of Brave Academy.

Any resources referenced in the Brave Academy modules are linked here in this handbook for quick reference and use (rather than in the now retired “Brave Academy Resource Page of our website” that is often referenced in Brave Academy modules).

Options for Structuring Brave Academy Training

Brave Academy training contains important information for the production team to prepare for various aspects of show production. We recognize that some of this material can be covered independently, while other material is best covered together as a team. To help you plan for your team’s Brave Academy Experience, we have prepared several potential Brave Academy schedules to consider in Appendix D. We invite you to explore the options presented and select the one that best suits your team’s needs.

BEST PRACTICE

Prepare for Brave Academy! Production Team Leads should take time to review all modules prior to the Production Team Get-Together and Brave Academy trainings to become acquainted with the material and the nature of each session. Schedule options for your team’s Brave Academy Training are available in Appendix D of this handbook.

Train Together! To build rapport on the production team, it is important to complete some of the Brave Academy modules together. Brave Academy provides opportunities to connect and collaborate in a way that forges the bond of your team for the benefit of your future cast members and for the Brave movement you are building together.

Drop your questions about Brave Academy in a Parking Lot! As you prepare to get started, you may have questions about This Is My Brave and show production. Record those questions before starting Brave Academy and store them in a Parking Lot. Review parking lot questions regularly at team gatherings and check questions off the list as they are answered in training.

Keep the mission and vision of This Is My Brave your top priority. Create a safe space where people feel empowered to speak openly about their experiences, build Brave buzz in your community, and change people’s lives forever – these are the most important aspects of the Brave Movement!

[Module 1](#): The Production Team

Training Objective: Understand team roles and how to work together effectively.

1. Team Roles & Job Descriptions
2. Team Commitments
3. Functioning as a Team

This Is My Brave Production Teams are made up of at least seven members who each commit to work collaboratively to bring This Is My Brave - The Show to their community. Production teams have a shared vision of success while individual team members are able to communicate the mission of This Is My Brave and how it transforms individuals and communities so they can engage and inspire others in the community.

In addition to the core group of individuals you bring onto your production team, you'll want to keep a running list of individuals who would like to volunteer in the weeks leading up to your show and the day of the show. Keep track of everything in your master spreadsheet.

Team Members

The **Production Team Lead** serves as the main point of contact from your team to TIMB National headquarters. The Production Team Lead is responsible for utilizing their time and talents to build the team and lead all members through the experience of creating the TIMB experience for your community. The Production Team Lead commits to implementing the TIMB model which includes recruiting Production team members, facilitating team training, monitoring all communications within the team for fidelity to the TOC model, and growing the This Is My Brave movement within their community. The Production Team Lead also directs the efforts of your TIMB Production team, overseeing team meetings, team progress, team tasks, and timelines.

Qualifications:

- Commitment to the mission of This Is My Brave
- Commitment to the pillars of This Is My Brave's Theory of Change

- Knowledge of the local community: In order to be successful with this project, you need to engage members of the community. Familiar with a large network of individuals and organizations in the community. Ideally, have connections with people/organizations who are engaged in community mental health, both governmental and non-profit
- Strong leadership and communication skills: Able to encourage, motivate, and support other members of the team
- Strong time management skills: Being the Production Team Lead requires strong project management skills, must be the keeper of the timeline,

Creating a TIMB Show requires a range of talents, and each person plays a critical role in producing a successful show. It's important for the Production Team Lead to identify/recruit people who are well-connected with the community, motivated, and fit the Job Description.

Now we'll discuss the roles and requirements of other Team members.

The Fundraising Manager directs the efforts of the fundraising team for This Is My Brave - The Show in your community, overseeing the efforts to generate Sponsorships, Advertising Revenue, P2P Funds and Ticket Sales.

Qualifications:

- Commitment to the mission of This Is My Brave
- Commitment to the pillars of This Is My Brave's Theory of Change
- Knowledge of the local community
- Strong connections within the community
- A background in sales or fundraising is preferred

Other team members support fundraising by sharing their connections in the community, approaching potential sponsors/advertisers with whom they have strong relationships.

The PR and Marketing Coordinator is responsible for the promotions of the This Is My Brave - The Show in your city. This encompasses news --TV, Radio and Print -- social media and (when appropriate) distribution of printed promotional materials including posters and fliers.

Qualifications:

- Commitment to the mission of This Is My Brave
- Commitment to the pillars of This Is My Brave's Theory of Change

- Knowledge of the local community
- Strong connections with news people and social influencers – Responsible for providing press releases, interview opportunities, public service announcements, etc.
- A background in PR or marketing is preferred

The Marketing/PR Coordinator needs to support other team members who need sales collateral, presentations, flyers, etc. to be effective in their roles.

The Media Partnership Manager is responsible for making connections with Media Partners in the community. Media Partners agree to promote This Is My Brave - The Show in your city in their circles in exchange for similar promotions of their events among ours.

- Local NAMI (Nat'l Alliance of Mental Illness) Chapter
- Local non-profits that provide mental health services
- Local AFSP (American Foundation of Suicide Prevention) Chapter
- Hospital Centers
- Large Mental Health Service Practices / Facilities

The **Mental Health Professional** plays a key role in supporting the production team and cast members (prospective and existing) on issues related to their area of expertise. This Is My Brave recognizes that storytelling related to mental health and/or addiction, while empowering, may produce a strong emotional response in the storyteller or the listener. The Production team's Mental Health Professional is present at all meetings and cast gatherings to support the production team in knowledge of various mental health challenges and to direct individuals to resources for support should they feel overcome by their Brave experience. They also offer professional insight into details such as storyteller readiness and red flags.

Qualifications:

- Commitment to the mission of This Is My Brave
- Commitment to the pillars of This Is My Brave's Theory of Change
- A licensed clinical mental health professional
- Ability to attend at all cast events, show, and production team meetings

The role of the **Fidelity Coordinator** is to work closely with the Producer to ensure that the production team adheres to The Brave Way of show production and to This Is My Brave's non-negotiables (the five pillars of the Theory of Change). To verify, the Fidelity Coordinator will

use a fidelity checklist and conduct check-ins with the Production team and cast members throughout the production of the show to ensure that they are experiencing those elements.

Qualifications:

- Commitment to the mission of This Is My Brave
- Commitment to the pillars of This Is My Brave's Theory of Change
- Attention to Detail
- Strong communication skills

The Fidelity Coordinator will also be responsible for overseeing fidelity to TIMB brand specifications. They will be responsible for ensuring that:

- all publicity and promotion of the show adheres to TIMB Brand specs
- all TIMB rules and regulations related to the show are followed, for example, no alcohol at events, no mention of means in references to suicidal ideation, no mention of specific medications, etc.

The **Show Director** is responsible for all aspects of the show itself. The Show Director will:

- schedule and direct auditions and rehearsals,
- individually coach cast members or assign other Production Team members as mentors to coach them
- work with cast members to refine their stories, such as, editing to meet time requirements, improving the story's focus, strengthening the performance quality, etc. OR supervise mentors to play this role
- work directly with the theater to ensure that technical services such as sound, lighting, and staging are in place to support the show

Qualifications:

Commitment to the mission of This Is My Brave

Commitment to the pillars of This Is My Brave's Theory of Change

Experience in producing/directing live performances

Time Commitment

Production Team Members commit to 90-minute weekly meetings for 6 months. Many weeks will include additional hours of time as team members work on various tasks involved with organizing

the cast of storytellers and bringing the show to the stage. Occasional missed meetings due to vacation, illness, work schedules, etc. are to be expected, but team members must commit to the length of the project and do their best to contribute equally to ensure the success of the experience for all.

Now let's look at the commitments that team members should be prepared to make:

First, team members must commit to the comprehensive This Is My Brave modular training program. Training is best undertaken as a group. This provides an opportunity for the team to discuss each module and their key take-aways.

Each member is expected to complete tasks on a weekly basis. These tasks could require 2-5 additional hours per week depending on what needs to be achieved.

Each Team member is expected to Build Brave Buzz within their respective networks, spreading word about the show to generate awareness and interest.

BEST PRACTICE

Watch our first show! Before beginning team activities, each team member should watch the 2014 Debut performance of [This Is My Brave - The Show in Arlington](#), Virginia, in order to fully understand all about the Show.

Volunteers

The **Volunteer** is someone who is committed to the mission of This Is My Brave and is willing to contribute to the success of the team, but may not be in a position to give the time required of a production team member. Consider engaging volunteers by forming Committees under each of the Team Members for any of the following responsibilities. Volunteers do not necessarily have to attend Brave Academy training or weekly team meetings.

To run a successful show, volunteers will be essential. You will likely come across people who offer to help. Compile their names and contact information in your master spreadsheet. For our inaugural show, we had 12 official volunteers. You may need anywhere between 8-12 volunteers depending on your city and theater size. Suggested volunteer assignments are listed below and a Volunteer Checklist can be found in Appendix O.

Pre-Show

- ★ 1-2 (or more) who can serve on the Fundraising Committee
- ★ 1-2 (or more) who can serve on the Marketing and PR Committee
- ★ 1 to set up Social Media and Eventbrite listings and updates

Day of Show Volunteers

Volunteers should be prepared to arrive **at least an hour before the show** to learn their assigned roles and help set up.

- ★ 1-2 assisting with setting up sponsor tables if theater doesn't do this for you
- ★ 2 at the door checking the attendees off the ticket-holder list that has been generated by the theater or the ticket sales app
- ★ 1-2 selling any remaining tickets
- ★ 1 person handing out show programs at theater entrance
- ★ 1 person manning the Brave Notes board and encouraging people to leave a note
- ★ 2 people ushering or offering to take photos for attendees in front of logo banner (if applicable)
- ★ 1-2 to make social media posts during the show (see below)
- ★ 2 people to recruit individuals to share their reflections on their Brave experience with the videographer for the Highlight Video

Special Volunteer Assignments

Social Media Show-Day Volunteers - It is important to find one or two volunteers who love social media and want to help out on the day of the show. Best platforms for this are Instagram and Twitter/X, and there's always Facebook Live. Your volunteers may only show snippets of the show, not the show in its entirety. One great way to do this is to have a volunteer Live-Tweeting the event (snapping a picture to include with the tweet, and then grabbing a powerful statement and using our hashtag #StorytellingSavesLives). Another person could do something similar to what we have seen done by The Moth on Instagram Stories. We'd love for you to do this for your show, as Instagram Stories is a popular feature that we can cross-promote on Facebook and Twitter/X.

Lead Volunteer - If you have the ability to choose a lead volunteer, you can provide that person with a volunteer assignment document that they can use to assign jobs and make sure everyone knows their roles an hour before the doors of the theater open.

Finalize Team

Once you have your Production team lined up, plan to host a Production Team Get-Together, where team members have the opportunity to meet.

During this time, complete one of the Brave Academy modules together. (See Appendix D for a guide to planning this event).

In addition, each team member will state a commitment to the duties associated with their production team role by completing the [Production Team Pledge and Release Form](#), a personal pledge to the local production team.

Team Meetings

Meeting together is crucial to feeling connected and functioning as a team. Use [this tool](#) to make a Team Meeting plan.

The best way to operate is to select one day a week that is best for everyone to meet. Everyone on the team needs to make this a commitment!

Having weekly meetings will help in keeping the team on track with the timeline, identify problem areas, and maintain accountability for their personal tasks. This should be an in-person meeting.

We recommend rotating meeting leadership and note-taking – this fosters a sense of equality, encourages leadership of all members, and strengthens commitment to each other and to the show.

Prior to the business of the meeting, it's important to have a personal check-in with team members. Team members need a safe place as a team, where all feel committed to each other as well as to The Show and the cast.

Begin each meeting with a personal check-in using the following prompts:

- How are team members doing, personally?
- Are any concerns impacting their personal/business life?
- Are personal concerns spilling into their ability to complete their goals?
- How can the team provide support?

Move on to meeting business by reviewing team accomplishments as they pertain to goals:

- What is the status of your most recent action items?
- What, if anything, has been a challenge?
- As a team, how can we help address challenges?

Celebrate successes.

Review the timeline and set goals for the coming week.

Close out the meeting with some casual time to visit and stay connected. One way to do this is to plan a meal together. Sharing a meal after business is done helps solidify personal relationships and team cohesion. This allows people to bond in a more personal way which supports the transformation process of the TOC.

PLAN AHEAD

Determine how you want to make decisions for the show. Does everyone need to agree, or will a majority suffice? What role does the Production Team Lead have in making decisions? Having a clear decision making process can prevent misunderstanding and resentment.

Identify the best communication method for team members and stick to that method. All Team members need to be included in all conversations in order to make decisions and to maintain a unified team. Consider using a group text message or creating a group on an app that is designed for team communications such as Slack or Whats App.

BEST PRACTICE

Prepare [an agenda](#) before each meeting. An Agenda ensures that meetings run smoothly and conclude successfully. Having an agenda ensures best use of meeting time as it highlights the key areas that need to be addressed. Team members have time to prepare to ensure they are providing information that they need to share. **Create the next week's agenda at the end of each meeting.**

Meet consistently on a specific day of the week and time of day so that everyone has the time reserved in their schedule.

Start and finish all meetings on time. When you do, you communicate respect to all team members. If a meeting discussion needs to continue, carry it to the next meeting. It's important to demonstrate that maybe some things require more time.

Prioritize authentic team connection! Open each meeting with a personal check-in AND a quick team-building activity to foster care and connection within the team.

Share key meeting responsibilities with others on the team. Responsibilities for meeting facilitation and note-taking can be rotated throughout the production team each week. In this way, each team member contributes equally and no one person is overwhelmed.

Celebrate successes. Take every opportunity to recognize the successful efforts of your team. Start all meetings with celebrations.

Create Action Items for the coming week. Action items are tasks to complete before the next meeting. Each team member should be ready to share updates at each meeting on last week's action items.

Agree on the next meeting's agenda before closing the meeting.

Evaluate how things are working on the team at the end of each meeting. Provide an opportunity for team members to share suggestions for improving the process.

Distribute meeting notes within 24 hours of each meeting. This ensures that everyone is up-to-date on decisions made and is reminded of actions that must be accomplished in the coming week.

[Module 2](#): Support from the Community

Training Objective: Learn how to build community engagement for your The Show in your area.

1. Fiscal Sponsorship by a local 501(c)(3)
2. Engagement of show Sponsors
3. Setting of Team Goals

Community Partnerships

Fiscal Sponsor & Community Beneficiary

For a Brave Show, you will need to establish a relationship with a Fiscal Sponsor, a local 501(c)(3) organization. Ideally, the Fiscal Sponsor is an organization whose mission aligns with Brave's. For more information on Fiscal Sponsorship, please see "Identifying a Fiscal Sponsor" on page 22 of this handbook. You can also watch this [youtube video](#) that offers a good explanation of fiscal sponsorship.

You may also establish a Community Beneficiary of The Show. The Community Beneficiary is an organization that you select to be the recipient of the show proceeds. The net proceeds from your event can help fund this organization's programs.

It is possible for the Fiscal Sponsor and the Community Beneficiary to be the same organization. In this case, the Fiscal Sponsor may waive the stipend for their services.

In working with a Fiscal Sponsor, you should have a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) that clarifies the responsibilities of the partnership. You can develop the agreement that best meets your needs and those of the Fiscal Sponsor, but these are responsibilities that have worked for other producers.

The TIMB Production Team responsibilities include:

1. Raising funds to pay production costs and a basic administrative fee to the Fiscal Sponsor to cover administrative and operational costs (may be waived if the sponsor is also the Community Beneficiary, as they will receive the net proceeds of the show)
2. Financial management of the show
3. All aspects of Show Production
4. Show Promotion
5. Appropriate recognition of the Fiscal Sponsor in all publicity, print materials, and signage

The Fiscal Sponsor needs to have skin in the game as well as reward. While you are producing the show and generating financial support for the event, the Fiscal Sponsor will provide the fiscal and administrative support. These services could include:

1. Act as fiscal sponsor utilizing organization's 501(c)(3) non-profit designation.
2. Accept directed donations and sponsorship dollars on behalf of This Is My Brave - The Show and pay invoices for services related to the event.
3. Process each donation and send written acknowledgement to the donor within 5 business days of receipt; copy the TIMB Production Team.
4. Deposit all monetary donations in a timely fashion.
5. Keep a detailed record of all show-related donations and expenses.
6. Help promote the show in its network.

Community Grants

Although not common, some TIMB Production Teams have withheld an amount of the proceeds to disperse on their own. For example, through a community partner, the Napa Valley show created a process where local non-profits could apply for a grant for a new mental health program. The Production Team reviewed the proposals and awarded grants. This process enabled the Team to continue Brave buzz post-show by publicizing the grant opportunity as well as publicizing the final awards. The grant program also reinforced the message that TIMB sponsorships benefit the community by supporting local mental health projects.

Community Stakeholders

Before making requests for funding of your Brave show, you should do some research. Review websites of organizations like hospitals, foundations in your area, and non-profits. Consider all of the following:

- What organizations, businesses, and non-profits in your community include mental health goals in their vision and mission?
- Do they have Sponsorship Program Funding Guidelines that specify a commitment to improving community mental health?
- If organizations have strategies or goals that align with the goals of your show, that organization is an important target for sponsoring your Brave show.

Speaking to how The Show helps fulfill an organization's goals provides a convincing reason for sponsorship and makes it a win-win for you and the organization. As you are doing your research, also pay attention to whether companies have specific guidelines, applications, or timing regarding how their organizations budget for and award sponsorship funds.

Once you identify the local non-profits that provide mental health services, visit their websites and see who is on their Board of Directors. These people have a commitment to mental health, and they, themselves, or the companies that they work for are potential donors. They may have recommendations regarding potential sponsors or advertisers, and they have connections within the community that they may be willing to share.

Community Connections

Your team members have many connections in the community. Create a list of Prospective Sponsors, Partners, Advertisers, and In-Kind Donors, and identify who on the team has connections with those organizations. Use your master spreadsheet to compile this list, assign tasks for reaching out and log progress in securing support.

Communication Partners

For the success of your show it is important to identify potential communication partners within your community. Communication partners are organizations whose mission and vision align with those of This Is My Brave Mental Health non-profits are excellent communication partners. As partners with This Is My Brave - The Show in your city, we ask that they promote the auditions and the show to their donors, mention the show in regular communications, such as a newsletter, and in social media posts on Facebook, Twitter/X and Instagram.

In exchange for their help with promoting the auditions and ticket sales, you can offer them a table at the show for them to display their materials and brochures and information regarding their services and support groups. You can also provide them with 1-2 complimentary tickets to the show for their assistance.

Make sure you are specific with your ask. You'd like them to do the following:

- Share news of upcoming auditions via their e-newsletter, on their website, via their Facebook, Twitter/X and Instagram accounts.
- Help you multiply your reach by re-sharing or re-tweeting any publicity about the show that you post.
- In return, they'll receive a table, 2 tickets to the show, recognition in the program and a Thank You shout-out from the Producers in The Show's [opening and closing remarks](#).

Sponsors

Sponsorships are the leading source of funds for a Brave show. The most important thing to remember in terms of acquiring sponsors is to START EARLY and FOLLOW UP! Build a pipeline of potential sponsors by reaching out via phone first, then if you don't reach the person, leave a voicemail message and follow up with an email. Try to get an opportunity to meet personally (or on Zoom), because your personal passion for The Show's mission goes a long way in selling the benefits of sponsoring the show. Persistence and working your network are the key to winning sponsorships.

You should target a minimum of \$20,000 for sponsorships. Strong community relationships can often generate more.

Some suggestions for sponsors include:

- Hospitals and Hospital Foundations
- Community Foundations
- Psychiatry/Therapy Practices
- Health and Fitness clubs
- Yoga/Pilates Studios
- Reiki practices
- Float Therapy Offices
- Hair salons
- Restaurants (especially any establishments located close to the theater)
- Chiropractors, Acupuncture offices
- Car Dealerships, Banks, Grocery stores

Check with your County Mental Health Department to determine whether they have grant programs for events in “May Is Mental Health Month” or “September - Suicide Prevention Month.”

Reach out to your local Arts Council, because they will likely have connections to performance venues. Some Arts Councils have local talent directories where you can find photographers/videographers. Lastly, does your local Arts Council have a community grant process for performing arts projects that you could apply for?

Advertising

Advertisements allow local businesses to show their support of the mission of This Is My Brave without breaking their banks. Sponsorships may be too costly, but advertisement costs are usually within their reach and yield great success.

If companies balk at the cost of sponsorships, ask them if they would like an ad in the show Playbill. Ads can help pay for costs such as printing playbills and show signage. Be ready to discuss the different ad sizes and costs. Don't forget to ask non-profits if they would buy an ad; they are appropriate targets for playbill advertising in the show. We recommend setting an ambitious \$5000 - \$7,500 goal for advertising. This should be enough to cover the cost of graphic design, layout, and printing of the playbill.

In-Kind Donations

Many organizations are willing to make in-kind donations instead of sponsorships. Start by thinking big. Is there a college that might offer their theater at no cost, a printer that would produce your show program or other marketing materials at no or reduced cost, or a local photographer who is committed to mental health and would offer their services pro bono?

Be creative when thinking about in-kind donations...for example, is there a local bookstore that would like to sell books on mental health in the show lobby and share profits with you? Is there a local cafe, bakery, or coffee shop that would like to sell refreshments in the show lobby and share profits?

Other in-kind donations can include:

- snacks/bottled water for cast parties and rehearsals, meals for cast on show day
- gift cards for miscellaneous costs
- free or reduced cost printing of flyers, signs or showbill

Suggestions for businesses to approach for In-Kind Donations include:

- Chain grocery stores
- Target/Trader Joe's/Walmart - have a specific ask - most have charitable donation request portals on their websites
- Large Restaurant chains like Panera for meal donations

Sponsorship Materials

Templates are available for developing sponsorship materials. These materials provide a professional look for your fundraising. In addition to the materials, plan and practice a sales pitch, so that you can speak about the show, its importance, and your sponsorship plan.

Available templates include:

- Sponsorship Deck
- Playbill Ad Deck
- [Sponsorship E-mail Templates](#)
- [Sponsorship Thank You Email Templates](#)

The Fundraising Manager coordinates the team's fundraising efforts. But every production Team member should be engaged in the fundraising process by sharing and reaching out to their contacts or making introductions to other producers.

Being grounded in TIMB's vision and TOC is essential to successful fundraising.

Everyone involved in show production should prepare an "elevator pitch" that distills the essence of The Show. Having this available enables you to quickly and convincingly talk about The Show with others and opens the door to deeper discussion about supporting it.

Consider practicing your fundraising pitch with other production team members before talking with potential sponsors.

Elevator Pitch

An "elevator pitch" is an essential selling tool. It is a brief and concise speech that tells about who you are, what you do, how you are unique, and what you want to achieve. It is named "elevator pitch" because it should be short and compelling enough that you can introduce yourself during an elevator ride. The elevator pitch is a way to quickly share details about The Show with individuals who don't know anything about TIMB.

An elevator pitch prepares you to make a strong impression right off the bat.

Having an elevator pitch will allow you to communicate what you're doing while having the listener want more. If you don't have your pitch ready, you might get nervous and forget important information. With an elevator pitch, you will say the perfect words when the opportunity arises and will look confident and professional.

Take a moment now to craft your pitch. Consider all of the following:



THIS IS MY BRAVE

Creating An "Elevator Pitch"

- Identify your audience
- What do you want to achieve?
- Why this important to you or for your community?
- Possible questions to address:
 - Who?
 - What ?
 - When?
 - Where?
 - How?



Discuss: Once you've crafted your pitch, share it with a partner. Be ready to give and receive feedback! This is the perfect opportunity to get your pitch just right.

BEST PRACTICE

Ask someone to take the lead on writing and submitting an editorial to the local newspaper or speaking at some local mental health support groups about the upcoming show.

Share sample emails or letters (including sponsor emails, advertiser emails, etc) with team members and encourage them to cast a broad net to recruit sponsors and raise funds.

Communicate! Consider setting up a private text group to keep the team updated on progress. It's motivating to hear that a team member just brought in a big donation or sponsor. It makes for a more successful team overall when you keep everyone informed.

Motivate your team by opening each meeting and rehearsal with updates and celebrating every success and each piece of good news ("We just pulled in our first sponsor!" or "Joe just received a \$150 donation!")

Celebrate the team's success at the Rehearsal and Show.

Peer-to-Peer Fundraising (optional - to be coordinated with the Fiscal Sponsor)

Peer-to-peer Fundraising (P2P) has been a powerful fundraising strategy for your event. Brave participants have always been enthusiastic fundraisers for the cause.

One of the main components of peer-to-peer is the ability it gives fundraisers to practice storytelling! As they fundraise, each producer and cast member will express their reason for being a part of This Is My Brave - The Show and explain why it matters to them. Supporters can connect their own beliefs, values, and identity to The Show's mission and lend their support to the cause.

A motivated cast can raise considerable funds via Peer-to-Peer fundraising, and by raising funds, participants will also recognize that they have a dedicated personal support system among family and friends.

[Module 3: What Is This Is My Brave?](#)

Training Objective: To learn about the founding and mission of This Is My Brave

As we mentioned before, storytelling is at the heart of everything we do at This Is My Brave. The stories of Brave co-founders Anne-Marie Ames and Jennifer Marshall and how they came to create this organization are the most important.



Anne Marie Ames, Co-Founder (1958 - 2017)

Anne Marie held a variety of PR and strategic communications positions throughout her career, but her favorite job was creating and producing This Is My Brave. She found her passion and her mission – to help others share their stories – and made tremendous contributions to the organization from launching the initial concept to strategizing on growth and expansion over the four years of her tenure. Anne Marie’s sudden passing on August 23, 2017, was a shock to the many who loved her, and she is deeply missed.

[Anne-Marie’s Story](#)



Jennifer Marshall, Co-Founder/Executive Director

Jenn was diagnosed with Type 1 Bipolar Disorder in 2006 at the age of 26. She has had four hospitalizations within five years – two in 2005 before any diagnosis was reached, and two more because she was trying to protect her newborn son (postpartum psychosis) in 2008 and her unborn daughter in 2010 – and all were because she was unmedicated at the time. Writing her way through life with a mental illness became her way of healing, and her award-winning blog *BipolarMomLife* became an inspiration to many. Jenn created *This Is My Brave* because she

learned first hand how powerful and therapeutic it was to live openly and not hide her diagnosis. She wanted to give brave individuals from the community a platform through which to creatively share their stories of living with mental illness to educate and inspire others. She lives outside Washington, DC with her husband and two children.

[Jenn's Story](#)

[Today Show Piece](#)

The efforts of our founders have yielded amazing results that neither of them could have imagined at the outset.

Module 4: Theory of Change

Training Objective: Understand the TIMB Theory of Change (TOC)

1. Theory of Change and its Core Pillars
2. Success Criteria for TOC
3. Stories of Transformation

Theory of Change and Its Core Pillars

A Theory of Change (TOC) is a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen. This Is My Brave, Inc. undertook the development of a TOC in order to clarify the framework for This Is My Brave - The Show. A TOC is useful to help us accomplish all of the following:

- To Identify long term goals of a program
- To map out a causal “pathway to change”
- To understand the conditions that will yield “outcomes” within a causal framework
- To develop indicators to measure outcomes and fidelity to the model

Based on the surveys we conducted in 2020, past cast members and production team members report that taking part in This Is My Brave - The Show has resulted in the following outcomes in their lives:

Reduced self-stigma and shame

Increased confidence

A strong sense of purpose

A strong sense of community and support

Feeling valued

These outcomes are the result of the deliberate efforts of our production teams to create an environment that yields them. That environment is made up of the following five non-negotiable pillars:

Social and Psychological Empowerment

Affirmation

Reciprocity

Authentic Relationships

Opportunity for Transformation

When Production Teams uphold the above five tenets throughout the process of producing a show, they are creating a space where the goals of This Is My Brave can be fulfilled, where people's lives can be improved on a long-term basis.


These tenets, the Pillars of This Is My Brave, are non-negotiables. They must be present throughout the production process in order for This Is My Brave to be successful. It is our expectation that each member of the production team will adhere to these Pillars at all times. Fidelity to these principles will be measured at key points among all the stakeholders, including producers and storytellers.

As leaders on a This Is My Brave production team you are being entrusted to carry out this important work for this unique community of individuals that you are forming.

The Five Pillars of This Is My Brave's TOC

The TOC associated with This Is My Brave is defined by five key elements that are necessary to achieve our goal of ending stigma. If these five tenets are at the core of everything the Team does, then there will be fidelity to the model and our desired Brave outcomes will be achieved.


1. Social & Psychological Empowerment: This Is My Brave empowers individuals to put their names and faces to their stories of recovery from mental illness and addiction. The launch point of empowerment in recovery for This is My Brave is storytelling -- the act of sharing our authentic selves and the affirming act of others listening with understanding. Individuals who join our program and community have reached a point in their recovery where they yearn to experience the peacefulness, well-being and feeling of completeness by taking back their narrative and speaking it authentically on the This Is My Brave stage. As a result, self-stigma and shame are reduced, allowing human potential to fill the space.

 Discuss: How can you as a member of the production team create a space where cast members are likely to experience social and psychological empowerment?


2. Reciprocity: This is My Brave believes that individuals and communities heal and reconcile through reciprocity, a human connectedness in which people develop the better lives they envision because they empower each other. For This is My Brave, storytelling is a true form of reciprocity because it creates an invitation for new dialogue, understanding, and engagement. This is My Brave creates a safe space in which all participants come with an individual story, but through the Brave experience they become stakeholders in a shared story of new community.

 Discuss: How does mutual sharing of experiences affect your relationships with others?

3. Affirmation: Affirmation is crucial to the development of confidence that is required for long-term recovery and resilience. People develop confidence when friends, families and a community respond to them by affirming their unique value and by communicating that they are there for them as a judgment-free community of support. When people feel valued and supported, they can move from fear to new, meaningful relationships, personal purpose and growth.

 Discuss: How can you as a member of the production team create a space where cast members are likely to experience affirmation?

4. Authentic Relationships: The process of cast members and producers developing an event and the participation of friends, family and community members creates new relationships through vulnerability and authenticity. Participants, families and communities have a lasting experience that they can reflect back on together to deepen and anchor their relationships. This Is My Brave teaches skills of support system development that prior to the experience, people may not have had. The impact of the relationships formed through This Is My Brave allows cast members to develop the connections all people need to grow into the lives they envision for themselves.

 Discuss: What are the typical barriers to sharing your authentic self? How do you break those barriers in other life situations? How do you feel when you share your authentic self? How can you as a production team member foster the development of authentic relationships among your cast?

5. Opportunity for Transformation: The experience of participating in This Is My Brave is one of transforming pain and suffering to hope and purpose. Thinking about and expressing one's story through the lens of transformation is a cornerstone in the therapeutic process of wellbeing in This

is My Brave. Participants move through reflection and discovery of their own story which leads to personal purpose and offers insight to the greater community. An individual's decision to audition, the development of their story, rehearsals and then the event itself work together to evolve stories from an expression of personal struggle to one of transformation.



Discuss: How can you as a member of the production team create a space where cast members are likely to experience opportunities for transformation?

Success Criteria for TOC

We have established the Five Pillars of This Is My Brave because our qualitative research has revealed that when these tenets are upheld in all aspects of show production, then participants are most likely to achieve our desired outcomes.

To identify the desired outcomes of This Is My Brave, we conducted a survey of past storytellers and producers. We developed a Socially Valid Indicators survey to document the outcomes. The most common sentiments from those surveys are shared below. These are the desired outcomes of This Is My Brave - The Show.

Storyteller Outcomes

We surveyed 135 Brave alumni cast members, and they consistently reported the following outcomes in their lives as a result of their participation in This Is My Brave.

- Their levels of self-stigma and shame diminish.
- They have confidence, optimism about their future.
- They are able to build strong mutual relationships.
- They have created a group of people to lean on for support.
- They are confident in helping others realize that recovery is possible through sharing their own experiences.
- They feel their This Is My Brave experience was meaningful, positive, and enriching to their lives.

Producer Outcomes

This Is My Brave goals have been met at the Producer level, if the following are achieved by the Production team upon conclusion of the Show:

- The production team creates a safe environment for the storytellers to feel heard, supported and appreciated for contributing.
- Producers are open to learning from the experiences of the storytellers, to become more well-rounded in their knowledge of various mental health and addiction challenges.
- The production team gains a sense of pride in knowing they've helped their storytellers grow in their confidence as mental health advocates.
- They feel their This Is My Brave experience was meaningful, positive, and enriching to their lives while also adding value to the community in which they live.

Audience Outcomes

This Is My Brave goals have been met at the Audience/Community level, if the following are achieved by the Audience/Community upon conclusion of the Show:

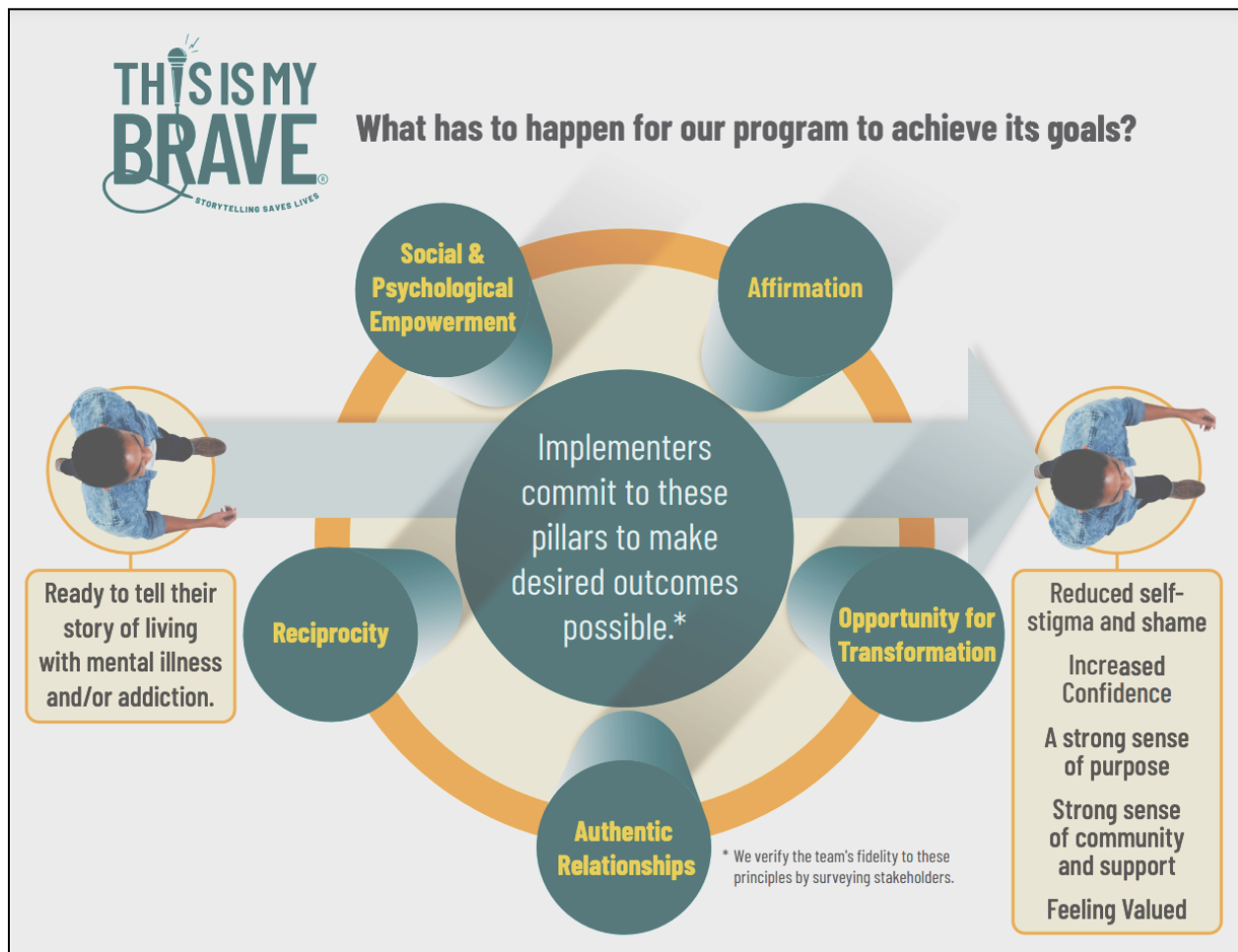
- Their levels of stigma are reduced and their knowledge of mental health and addiction challenges increases.
- They feel their This Is My Brave experience was meaningful, positive, and enriching to their lives.
- They want to share the experience of attending This Is My Brave with others in the community.
- They learn how to support loved ones living with mental illness and/or addiction as a result of new insight provided by the storytellers.

Organizational Outcomes This Is My Brave

This Is My Brave goals have been met at the National level if the following are achieved by This Is My Brave through the productions of This Is My Brave - The Show throughout the nation:

- This Is My Brave - The Show, led by volunteer teams in cities around the country, continues to be produced thereby establishing sustainable and supportive local Brave communities around the nation that are poised to grow and strengthen year over year.
- The This Is My Brave movement continues to exist as a bottom-up, grassroots level growth model.

- The This Is My Brave movement is transforming the lives of individuals and their communities, one person and one story at a time.



This Infographic was developed to help participants visualize the Five Pillars of Brave's Theory of Change.

Module 5: Public Relations, Marketing and Promotion

Training Objective: Learn how to utilize established marketing templates and maintain TIMB brand consistency.

1. Branding Guidelines
2. Collecting Assets
3. Publicity - Building Buzz

Branding Guidelines

Show Logo

Your This Is My Brave toolkit contains the official This Is My Brave logo and past show photos for use on all your marketing and publicity assets. All flyers, posters, and press releases should include the official This Is My Brave logo.

Print

Print media includes all of your printed flyers, playbill, and show posters. Your This Is My Brave toolkit contains samples of the artwork for these media and we will also provide our [branding guidelines](#).

Social Media

Production teams are encouraged to create Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X accounts for your show. One member of your production team or a volunteer should be designated a Social Media Administrator and must consistently make updates with news and info as the show approaches.

BEST PRACTICE

It will benefit your show to **set up Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X accounts**. Use these platforms to promote your show and engage your community in discussions about mental health that will raise awareness and reduce stigma.

As part of their role, the **Fidelity Coordinator should review all media** to ensure that they adhere to Brave brand and community guidelines.

Photodocument all of your cast get togethers and, of course, The Show. This is excellent content to share on social media to build excitement within your community about the upcoming event. This content also is evidence of your emerging local Brave community. Sponsors and Advertisers will appreciate the opportunity to check in and see how things are going.

Collecting Assets

If you intend to produce playbills for the show, you will need to pay close attention to this section and to the Playbill checklist that appears in Appendix P of this handbook.

Production Team and Cast Member Assets

Photos - Headshot photos should be taken at the Cast Welcome party with a consistent background, preferably an outdoor backdrop. These photos are used in the show playbill and other print media. All cast members and producers **MUST** also complete video/photo release forms via the [Participant Release and Consent Form](#). At your first rehearsal, it's helpful to provide a laptop or ipad where cast members can fill out the agreement if they have not already done so.

Cast Blog Intros - Ask each cast member to provide a 1-2 minute video introducing themselves and why they are excited to be telling their Brave story. More information about this piece appears in the Cast Welcome Kit and in Brave Academy Training Module XX. These Cast Intros are used in Social Media prior to the show to build interest for the upcoming show. Share these social media postings widely within your community, and ask all of your community partners to share with their contacts.

Cast & Producer Bios - Each producer and cast member needs to write a short biography about themselves that will be used in the show's playbill along with their photo. We recommend 4-6 sentences at most.

Sponsors & Advertiser Assets

Sponsor Logos - As soon as you have a sponsor commitment, ask who your contact will be for logos and ads. Request the logos immediately so that they can be used on flyers and other media, based on their sponsorship level. (Use the [Sponsor Thank You & Logo Request Template](#)) Obtaining these assets typically requires repeated contacts as well as mentioning the sponsor's benefit of providing them for media exposure.

BEST PRACTICE

Take good care of your sponsors! They enjoy additional benefits as a result of their support. Pay particular attention to the benefit list you send to each sponsor in your thank you email (see Templates referenced above). Be sure to follow up with your contact to confirm all arrangements associated with their sponsorship, including (when applicable): Playbill ad, logo placement on signage and website, special recognitions, tabling at the show, and free tickets.

Playbill Ads - As soon as an advertiser is confirmed, send them the Ad deck which includes ad specifications and the deadlines for publication. Starting about a week before the deadline, touch base with the appropriate person to remind them of the deadline and confirm their delivery schedule. As with the logos, you may have to remind the organization multiple times in order to get these in sufficient time for printing in the playbill.

Publicity - Building Brave Buzz

Flyers & Social Media- The Brave intervention toolkit offers templates for audition and ticket flyers so you can finalize design with your own graphic designer. You may customize the template or ask your graphic designer to develop a new design using the brand guidelines.

Your volunteer for social media can craft posts related to show promotion as well.

Ask your Community Partners and your contacts to share your social media posts. On Facebook, you can also buy a "Boost" for your target audience based on age, geography, or interests. This will provide you with a viewing audience beyond your contacts.

Media List - To build public awareness of your show, you will need to know how to reach media in your community. You can build a media list by doing a little research on the media outlets in your city. Compile email addresses, Twitter/X handles and FB pages.

- Television - go to your local news websites and find the anchors and reporters, their Twitter/X accounts are usually listed.
- Alternatively, you can find a list of local reporters (both TV and print) by going to the Twitter/X account for that network or press outlet, and then looking at their Lists - most all will list their Staff and tweeting directly to the reporters is the best way to get noticed. Reporters who focus on health/mental health or on the arts are most likely to be interested in writing about your show. Ask a local radio station about doing a short interview or a public service announcement about auditions or the show.
- Radio - check the websites for your top 5 local radio stations, including your local NPR station; DJs usually have their Twitter/X accounts listed on their station's Twitter/X List.
- Print - find several local newspapers, magazines, and newsletters; consider writing an Op-Ed piece about why you're bringing the show to your community and include details about auditions, sponsorship opportunities and ticket sales.
- Local websites - anywhere you frequent may be able to help you promote the show
- Local Events Calendars - list your show date and ticket info on community events calendars online.

Press Releases - TIMB provides a template press release for you to customize with your show's information related to [auditions](#) and [ticket sales](#). We have had the most success by mass-emailing press releases, and then following up by tweeting to influential people (news anchors, reporters, etc.) to reinforce our request for coverage. Also, ask your cast members to try to pitch themselves to the local newspapers in their area. Consider inviting a local reporter who covers mental health or the arts to one of your auditions so they can write about the show and build community interest.

Remember, magazines plan their articles months in advance. If you're aiming to get magazine coverage, pitch your story 4-5 months ahead of time for your best chance of getting picked up.

Module 6: Administrative Tools

Training Objective: Review the resources available to plan and create your show

1. Tour of Brave Academy Page of www.thisismybrave.org
2. Brave Show Timeline Calculator
3. TOC Fidelity Index

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT MODULE 6: The Brave Toolkit has many tools that will help your team prepare for your show. This module reviews those tools and how you can use them. However, this module does reference some outdated resources.

Outdated Items include:

- ✗ TIMB email accounts (no longer issued; please use your own with a show logo in your signature)
- ✗ Brave Academy Resource page (all referenced tutorials, templates, and resources are now linked in this document as the BARP is no longer in use)
- ✗ Calendar on website
- ✗ Timeline Calculator

Items still in use:

- ✓ Master Spreadsheet

Brave Resources

Most of the resources you need to produce a show are linked in this document to be used only by members of Brave production teams for the purposes of completing tasks associated with show production. You will also have a Master Spreadsheet with Tabs for different aspects of the show. This Master Spreadsheet helps the Production Team Lead and the rest of your team keep track of all team activities.

Producer Resources

Model producer resources are available to the team, including:

1. [This Is My Brave Logos](#)
2. Sponsorship Decks
3. Ad Decks
4. [Sample playbill](#)
5. [Sample Production Team Pledge and Release Form](#)
6. [Sample Participant Release and Consent form for cast](#)
7. [Opening and closing remarks for the show](#)

Templates: In addition, we have created templates for many of the documents that you are encouraged to use throughout the production of your show. Examples of templated items include:

- [Team Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Sponsor Request](#)
- [Sponsor Thank You](#)
- [Press Release-Auditions](#)
- [Press Release-Show and Tickets](#)
- [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (for partnership with Fiscal Sponsor)
- [Auditioner Info Sheet/One-Pager](#)
- [Storyteller Welcome Kit](#)

Once you have modified the template to create your show specific materials, you will want to share the final document with your Production Team Lead so that a copy can be made available to other team members as well, if necessary.

Tutorials: We also have tutorial documents that offer step-by-step guidance for setting up the tools required for your show. Examples of tutorials available in Producer Resources are:

- Calendly.com Set Up: [Account Set-up Tutorial](#) and [Calendly Set Up Doc](#)

Productivity Tools

TIMB has developed an extensive list of show-planning tasks in the master spreadsheet to help you stay organized and meet deadlines. Your project has task deadlines and interdependencies that are difficult to note by looking at dates alone. With so many shows under our belt, we have determined both the steps needed for production of a show and the optimum timing for completing them. Please use these tools regularly to stay on track during show production.

Gantt Chart: A Gantt Chart is a powerful tool for visualizing your project's tasks and deadlines. Creating a Gantt Chart makes it easy to plan and to track your Team's progress at your weekly meetings in one document. You can also color code the tasks by function or the person responsible if desired to make it easy for each Team member to note their responsibilities

Master Spreadsheet

Master Spreadsheet: The Master Spreadsheet has tabs for all of the different activities. By keeping this Spreadsheet up to date, your Team can keep track of the status of each activity.

1. Add details into the spreadsheet as they unfold
2. Use links so others can refer to docs
3. Add your name so others know who is doing the work

Bonus Content in Module 6

Fidelity to This Is My Brave's Pillars

Throughout the process of producing a show, it is important to ensure that all participants are having the Brave experience that we intend for them to have.

The Fidelity Coordinator of the Production Team is responsible for ensuring that check-ins with the cast and the Production Team are conducted to evaluate how the experience relates to the pillars of TIMB's Theory of Change.

It is recommended that the Fidelity Coordinator conduct check-ins three times during the production process:

1. Post Audition
2. Halfway - after 2 rehearsals
3. Post Show

Storytellers: Fidelity questions for the Storytellers relate entirely to TIMB's Theory of Change Pillars and seek to determine whether the storytellers are experiencing those non-negotiables. Storytellers are asked to indicate to what extent:

- They have felt empowered socially and psychologically by those around them.
- They have experienced a genuine exchange of stories and experiences between them and other cast members and between them and the production team.
- They have felt affirmed by their fellow cast mates and the production team.
- They have experienced authentic relationships with others on the cast and the production team.
- They have been provided with opportunities for transformation.

If at any time a storyteller indicates that they are not feeling empowered, not experiencing a authentic connection or sense of reciprocity with other cast and crew, or are not feeling affirmed, this information should be shared promptly with the rest of the production team. Those conversations should result in immediate plans to course-correct. Be sure to communicate updates back to storytellers to reassure them that their concerns have been heard and adjustments are being made to address them.

Producers: Production Team members will be asked similar questions regarding the extent to which they have observed the pillars of the TOC demonstrated in the production process. These check-ins will take place at the same time as Storyteller check-ins.

Audience: To understand the impact the your show has had on the audience members, you may wish to survey your audience in post-show emails as to the impact that the show had on them. To do this you can link this survey in your post-show email. To learn of results, contact the STAR Lab research team at the University of South Florida at email@usf.edu

[Module 7: Show Logistics](#)

Training Objective: Learn how to

1. Identify & Engage Venues
2. Recruit Professional Talent
3. Make a Theater Lobby Plan

Identify and Engage Venues

Careful consideration should be given to venue selection – audition, rehearsal, and theater space – in order to create an impactful experience for all participants in *This Is My Brave - The Show* in your city.

Audition & Rehearsal Locations

Public places such as a library meeting room or community center are often ‘no cost’ locations that can be reserved for auditions. If you have connections with local nonprofits that provide mental health services, those organizations may also have a space that can be used for auditions. Use your community connections to identify locations and people who can assist you in securing these resources. Try to find a location that is easy to get to and that has convenient parking. All you need for the auditions is a room, a table, a few chairs and a comfortable place nearby outside the room where auditioners can wait comfortably for their turn to enter.

Once you secure your dates and times, share this information with your team to include on your audition flyers.

Theater Venues

Identify a local theater for your show. A theater with 200-500 seats is ideal, but a larger theater can be used if you rope off the seats so that audience members sit up close. Theater rental will

be one of your largest expenses. You may be able to find a good theater at an affordable price. Consider:

- Do any of your team members have connections with a local college or high school that has good theater facilities? Some colleges and schools have mental health initiatives and may provide their theater for 'educational' purposes at a reduced or free rate.
- Do you have connections with a local arts council that could help you secure a theater at reduced cost? Work our community connections! Secure the date and time, and sign any required contracts.

Please be sure to keep the following in mind as you consider which theater will be right for your event. It is important to have a conversation about these items before your make your final decision:

Theater Lobby: Theater lobbies are almost as important as the theater itself! They provide space where attendees and cast members can connect after the show. They are also a great place to set up mental health resource tables hosted by show sponsors and community or media partners. As you tour the venue, be sure to keep an eye out for a space that can accommodate 4-6 tables and mingling guests.

Ticketing: Whenever possible, production teams should sell their own tickets to the show (via a site like Eventbrite. Some theaters may require that tickets be sold by their box office. This is not ideal because of the fees added for online or phone purchases, which can often increase the cost to the buyer by \$5 - \$8 per transaction. If theaters insist, ask for an exception to their policy due to the nature of our show (if not on the requirement to sell the tickets, then, at least, on their additional fees). If theaters cannot budge, strongly consider finding another theater.

Additional Fees: In addition to the rental fee, theaters may have add-on costs that cover security, tech support, or cleaning staff. Please be sure to ask about such fees so you understand the full cost of the theater.

Proof of Insurance: TTheaters may require proof of insurance to conduct an event. As soon as your theater contract is signed, review it carefully to determine if a Certificate of Insurance (COI) is required. If so, You can purchase one-time event insurance through an online vendor like [eventsured.com](https://www.eventsured.com).

Professional Talent

Careful consideration should also be given to the professional talent you will need for the production of This Is My Brave - The Show in your city.

Photography and Videography

Each show is professionally filmed and photographed, so you need to engage a photographer and videographer. If you can find a local photographer who can donate his/her talents to the show, that's the best option. Check with your team to see whether anyone has connections with a photographer. Talk to your local Arts Council to see if they have a creative directory or can recommend talent. Offer ad space in your program or on the website to the photographer and videographer in exchange for their help. Your non-profit Community Partner can also provide an In-kind donation receipt if they provide an estimate of the fair market value. If you do not know anyone, you can hire someone locally through Thumbtack.

We recommend offering \$350 for the photographer and \$1,500 for the videographer. (For budgeting purposes, book these professionals early so you can plan for the cost in your budget targets). TIMB has a templated [photographer contract](#) and [videographer contract](#) that contain specifications on deliverables. It is important to review those specifications with each prospective photo/video professional to verify their qualifications for this job.

BEST PRACTICE

Before meeting with a photographer or videographer, check out their work online. Look for galleries or video samples on their website, vimeo or instagram.

Photographers should have experience shooting live theater events. Ask for samples of their photos from theater productions.

Videographers should be excellent storytellers! Look for samples of their work that shows multiple camera angles, strong editing elements, excellent sound. If examples are not readily available online, ask for samples of their work that demonstrates their storytelling skills.

Trust your gut! If a professional tells you they can easily do the job but cannot provide you with strong examples of similar work, move on to someone else.

Photographer - The photographer should attend the Cast Welcome Party to take headshots of the Cast and the Producers and a photo of the full cast. The headshots are used for the website, social media, and the showbill, so it is important to have them early in the process to avoid delays in marketing and program printing. We recommend a consistent background for the headshots and, if possible, an outdoor background. The photographer should also attend the show to take pictures of cast members as they tell their stories, the audience, the cast bow and sponsor and community partner displays in the lobby. The Cast bow photo should be taken during the dress rehearsal as well as at the end of the show, so that you have an opportunity to get several takes. See the templated [Photographer contract](#) for more details.

Videographer - The videographer will video the entire show. The videographer should be present for the dress rehearsal, the show, and post show interviews. Ideally the videographer will have a 2-3 camera setup in order to record different perspectives of the stage. See the templated [Videographer contract](#) for more details.

Brave Singer

Each Brave show kicks off with the Brave Theme Song. Many previous shows have recruited a Brave Singer to perform the Brave song at the very top of the show. Live performances are always preferable, so put the word out among your network to find a talented, maybe even locally known, singer to perform the Brave song. Your Brave Singer could also be a member of the cast.

Your Brave Singer should be recognized along with all other performers in the playbill! Be sure to collect a Headshot and bio from the Brave Singer as soon as they are booked for the event!

In 2020, TIMB held a competition for an original Brave them song. We received numerous submissions from former cast members and the general public. Our final selection was [“Tell Them I’m Brave”](#) by Natalie Layne & Phoebe Scott which embodies what TIMB is all about.

Music and lyrics for “Tell Them I’m Brave” are available [here](#). In addition, the “Tell Them I’m Brave” [Chord Chart](#) may be helpful to your professional musician.

Make a Theater Plan

As you consider which venue to select for the show, it’s important to consider what you want your final event to look like. Devising a plan in advance will be helpful as you tour sites.

Post-Show Resource Fair

On the day of your show, the theater lobby provides an opportunity to continue your engagement with the audience.

Once you know your venue, you can start planning how you will engage your audience. First, ask for a layout of the lobby, or at minimum, request the dimensions of the area. It's good to know where electrical outlets are and whether any of your sponsors need access to electricity. Check whether your theater contract includes tables for displays, how many are available and how many the lobby can comfortably hold.

Sponsor Displays

Most of your sponsorship levels include an opportunity for Sponsors to set up informational tables in the lobby of the show. In addition, you may be including displays for community partners. These displays need to be set up prior to opening the doors. Contact your sponsors and community partners a couple of weeks before the show to confirm their display plans, determine whether they need electrical power or other considerations, and to inform them that they should set up their table about an hour before the show. Once you have this information, it's helpful to have a map of the lobby and create the layout prior to the show. Print the organizations' names and tape them to their assigned table, so that it's easy for everyone to know where to set up. Plan on having a volunteer working in the lobby prior to the show to provide directions and assistance to your sponsors.

We recommend assigning your biggest sponsors priority placement where they will have the greatest exposure to audience members. If you have organizations that are similar to each other, for example, two hospitals, you may wish to separate them by having other types of displays in between them.

Audience Engagement

After the show, you want audience members to mingle, to meet and talk with the cast, and to continue the conversation about breaking the stigma surrounding mental illness. In addition to the Sponsor and Community partner displays, consider adding other engaging activities.

A display of "Brave Notes" provides a way for the audience to get involved and add their voice to the production. Brave Notes are small postcard sized notes on which audience members can write notes of their own bravery and post them on a bulletin board in the lobby. You will need a bulletin board, a table, blank Brave Notes, stick pins, and sharpies for the day of the show.

Consider a photo booth or a Step and Repeat Banner to hang on a wall so people can take photos of themselves being at the show. Encourage cast members to take photos with family and audience members. And encourage everyone to share their photos on social media using approved hashtags and tagging @ThisIsMyBrave. Think about other ideas that would provide engagement opportunities and fit with your mental health cause:

- This is a great venue for a bookstore to display and sell books about mental health and substance abuse issues. Talk to a local bookstore and ask if they would partner with your team and share the profits in exchange for an ad in the playbook.
- Is there an organization that uses art therapy in mental health treatment that would be interested in having an art show in the lobby?
- Would local bakeries be willing to donate baked goods for a popup [Depressed Cakeshop](#) at the show in exchange for an ad in the playbook?

Module 8: Creating a Safe Space

Training Objective: Learn how to create a safe place for the cast and the producers

1. Mental Health Professional
2. Accessible Venues
3. Local Resources
4. Storytelling

Mental Health Professional

While all Brave events are intended to offer peer support only, for the sake of safety, a Mental Health Professional must be present at all meetings and cast gatherings to be alert to individuals who may feel overcome by their Brave experience. Auditioners and/or cast members may have never told their story to anyone before, and this experience, while empowering, may produce a strong emotional response in the storyteller or the listener.

All team members should be familiar with different mental health conditions and also alert to the well-being of participants. Should anyone have concerns about a participant's state of mind, we encourage you to ask them directly if they need a break and offer to step away with them should one be necessary.

Accessible Venues

The venues you select are important in terms of creating a safe place. When you are planning your venues, they should be centralized and easy to get to, be in a safe part of town, accessible by public transit, have convenient parking, and have sufficient lighting if rehearsals are conducted in the evening.

Local Resources

Provide flyers of some local resources and make them available at auditions and rehearsals. For example, you might provide flyers or information on your local NAMI or AFSP chapters. You can also include information on the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and the Crisis Text Line. Prepare a document that provides information about mental health services. Check the websites of the

local mental health non-profit organizations, because they generally include local crisis hotlines and contact information about other mental health resources.

Storytelling

Producers should consider disclosing about their own journey in order to establish reciprocity with storytellers. Sharing your reasons for producing the show or sharing your own mental health story can reassure auditioners and storytellers. This can start from the first personal contact.

At auditions, the person welcoming and initiating the audition should introduce the team and your reasons for producing the show. He/she should mention something like: “we are all touched by mental health issues, whether they are our own or issues or those of a family member or friend.” Statements like this provide reassurance that producers are empathetic, not judgemental.

This practice should be repeated at the cast welcome party as well, each producer should briefly state why they are involved with TIMB and briefly share something about their own mental health story. This personal vulnerability will help cast members trust you with their story.

As the cast and producers spend time together, a natural support system will most likely start to evolve. People will start to gravitate to others with whom they identify, and they will provide encouragement and empathy to each other.

Module 9: Selecting the Cast of Storytellers

Training Objective: Understand the resources and steps needed to cast the show

1. Audition Logistics
2. Storyteller Guidelines
3. Auditions & Casting Process

Once you confirm your show date, plan to schedule your auditions at least 3 months before your show. You'll need at the very least 3-4 weeks to get the word out about the show and the audition sign-ups to allow people enough time to reserve an audition slot and create and practice an audition piece.

Planning for Auditions

Location

After setting up the room so that it is comfortable for the auditioner and the members of the production team who will be meeting them, it is time to consider the auditioners' experience overall on the day of auditions. Be sure to print a few signs for the day of the audition that help direct people to find your audition room once they arrive. Print a sign for the door of the audition room to ask people to wait outside until you come to get them for their audition, so that they don't interrupt the audition before them.

Local Resources

All team members should be familiar with different mental health conditions and also alert to the well-being of participants. Should anyone have concerns about a participant's state of mind, we encourage you to ask them directly if they need a break and offer to step away with them should one be necessary.

Provide flyers of some local resources and make them available at auditions and rehearsals. For example, you might provide flyers or information on your local NAMI or AFSP chapters. You can also include information on the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and the Crisis Text Line. Prepare a

document that provides information about mental health services. Check the websites of the local mental health non-profit organizations, because they generally include local crisis hotlines and contact information about other mental health resources.

Storyteller Communication

Prior to the auditions you will prepare an [Audition One-Pager](#) to hand out to each person you meet in the process. On that one-pager you will note the dates and locations of all upcoming Cast Events, including Cast Welcome Party, Rehearsals, Dress Rehearsal and, of course, Show date and time. It will be important for all auditioners to have the dates that are required of them at the time of the audition. This way they can verbally commit to attend all or nearly all of the following: Cast Welcome party, three rehearsals, dress rehearsal and show. If a person reveals that they have conflicts, they may not be cast as a storyteller for this show.

Schedule

Plan 2-3 days/evenings for auditions, including at least one weekday evening and one weekend day for a total of at least 8 hours. Schedule auditions at 15 minute increments, and have at least 32 audition slots available.

Use Calendly for scheduling auditions because it keeps everyone's information private. Set up calendly link with your email address (www.calendly.com; here are steps for [user set up](#) and a [calendly set up doc](#) for setting up your audition sign-ups.)

Information that should be included in Calendly:

- Address of audition location
- 15-minute interview slots
- Name, Email, and phone number of participants
- Type of condition they will be discussing
- Creative expression used (essay, poetry, original music, comedy)

We recommend using Calendly's option to send the candidates a reminder about their audition, with instructions on how to get to the audition location and info on parking, plus your contact info in the event they're running late or need to contact you on the day of the audition.

Promotion on Social Media

Once you have your audition dates set and your Calendly.com signup link set up, share audition information on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter/X.

Productions teams do have permission to create a Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X accounts to promote your show. Connect with your community via social media and encourage your media partners, sponsors, and show fans to like and share your promotional content!

Promotion with Press Release & Flyers

A graphic designer can use [Brave brand guidelines](#) to create a flyer for you to print and distribute in the community. Distribute your flyers to a variety of places to attract a variety of performers. Seek to cast a diverse group of performers in terms of gender, age, race, condition and form of expression.

Reach out to key people/organizations and tell them about This Is My Brave. Ask them to share info about the upcoming auditions/show. Examples of places to contact/post flyers, etc.

- Local NAMI Chapter
- Local AFSP Chapter
- Local DBSA Chapter
- Local Mental Health America Chapter
- Join groups on Facebook associated with local musicians, comedians or poets and share the audition information
- AA Meetings
- Slam Poetry Groups
- Share and post in your therapist/ psychiatrist office
- Libraries
- Coffee Shops
- Open mic venues
- Local Universities
- Community event/ audition calendars

If your auditions are not starting to book up by week two, you'll need to step up your promotion efforts. This may be a good time to pick up the phone and connect with people of influence in the areas of arts and mental health in your community. Your impassioned pitch and your story will surely create some excitement and these conversations should offer you some good leads to fill those audition slots!

Production Team Preparation

When conducting auditions for This Is My Brave, it's important to keep in mind what we're looking for, and what we're not. It is helpful if all production team members have at least watched our [debut show](#) (if not more) on our YouTube channel before beginning your own audition process.

Diversity

TIMB shows are meant to educate the audience about various mental health disorders, and should also inspire those in the audience who may be dealing with a similar issue - to let them know there is hope for the future and things can get better if they're able to reach out for help. In order to do this, these stories need to be told from the perspective of someone who has made it through the brunt of the struggle. Mental health conditions featured in the show can and should be diverse. This includes any condition that is included in the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition) including Autism.

Strive for a variety of storytelling methods. TIMB shows should include presentations of original poetry, original music, personal essay, storytelling, comedy, and even dance. Storytellers can be someone with a mental health condition or a family member who has lived experience. Monitor the audition list as people sign up. You may have to do some focused recruiting if you don't have any musicians or poets. Use Twitter/X and Google to find local talent and reach out to them to ask if they'd like to contribute. Churches and other religious communities are another place where you may find talented storytellers for your show. Lastly, check out open mic nights in your community to meet additional artists.

Strive for demographic diversity that represents your community. You want people of different ages, genders, races, and ethnicities. Be sure that your production team and cast are representative of your community!

For more information on this topic, please check out our FAQ video on youtube:



Storyteller Guidelines

Stories shared on the Brave stage should be first-person narrative only.

Stories should be about 5 minutes long. If a cast member has a compelling story that is longer than that, one of the Producers should work with them to edit their story.

This Is My Brave aims to inspire and empower by storytelling. Stories need to focus more heavily on the recovery part of their journey versus the struggle. We do need to understand the pain they went through when dealing with their issue, but we need to leave the audience with a positive message of hope in the end.

A storyteller's wellness is our number one priority. We always emphasize an individual's safety over everything else. Your production team should be mindful of an individual's place in their recovery journey, and you should ask prospective storytellers to consider that too. If anyone feels triggered or even just a little uncertain about being in the show, it is important to have a conversation as soon as possible. Producers should always make clear that we reserve the right not to cast someone in the show (or to reconsider casting decisions) based on personal observations. For more detailed storyteller guidelines, please refer to Appendix XX in this handbook.

Red Flags

There are some things to look out for and address with all cast members:

* Stories that involve suicide should not include means or graphic imagery. Focusing on feelings and not specifics (ie. guns, knives, blood) helps to keep the audience and other cast members from feeling triggered or uncomfortable.

* Stories should avoid curse words and inappropriate language.

* Stories should not name specific medications, treatment centers, or mental health professionals as This Is My Brave cannot speak to the quality of any specific treatment. Mental health treatment isn't one-size-fits-all. Please keep in mind that what works for one person may not work for others watching or attending the show. Instead they could speak more generally, such as, with "an antidepressant" or "at a residential facility."

Day of Auditions

Assign roles to the Production Team to facilitate a smooth casting process. Important roles to plan for are all of the following:

Greeter: Have one person welcome the storyteller and initiate the start of the audition.

Timer: One person should be assigned to time each story as it is presented during the audition.

Audition Panel: The audition panel, as in the members of the production team who will be present at each audition, should be kept small so as not to intimidate auditioners. An ideal panel size would be three, with one of the panelists being your Mental Health Professional.

BEST PRACTICE

Ideally, the **audition panel would be made up of the same three people** for every day of auditions. This will eliminate conflict or confusion in the selection process.

Sharing your reasons for producing the show and sharing your own mental health journey can reassure storytellers. This can start from the first personal contact.

At auditions, the person welcoming and initiating the audition should **introduce the team and your reasons for producing the show**. He/she should mention something like: “we are all touched by mental health issues, whether they are our own or issues or those of a family member or friend.” Statements like this provide reassurance that producers are empathetic, not judgemental.

Note: This practice should be repeated at the cast welcome party as well, each producer should briefly state why they are involved with TIMB and briefly share something about their own mental health story. This personal vulnerability will help cast members trust you with their story.

Note Takers: Each panelist should take notes during auditions, so that you can look back over them when making casting decisions. You may wish to create a standardized list of criteria that each Producer uses to evaluate each story. This can help you compare stories in the selection process.

Before wrapping up the audition, review the [Audition One-Pager](#) with each person. Ask them to confirm that the dates of the upcoming cast welcome party, rehearsals, dress rehearsal, and show are good for them. If they are not, they may not be cast in the show.

At the end of the audition thank each person who shares their story. Tell them how much you appreciate them being brave and how proud you are that they took this step in being brave. You may wish to provide each storyteller with some positive personal feedback on their story.

Before they leave auditions, let them know when they will hear from you regarding final cast selection.

PLAN AHEAD

It's a good idea to print a few signs for the day of the audition which will help direct people to find your audition room once they arrive. You can also print (or write up) a sign for the door of the audition room to ask the person to wait outside until you come to get them for their audition so that they don't interrupt the audition before them.

Print a [one-page document](#) to present to each auditioner that includes all of the following:

- the date and time of the Cast Welcome Party,
- The dates and times of all Rehearsals,
- The date and time commitment for the show,
- the Notification Date for final Cast Decisions
- This statement: *Your self-care should be your number one priority. Please make sure that you are far enough along in your recovery journey to safely participate in the show. If you feel triggered or that being in the show is jeopardizing your health, please talk to your producer as soon as possible. Likewise, if Producers feel as if participating in the show is not beneficial to your mental health, they reserve the right to ask you to focus on self-care and not participate in the show.*
- The following Disclaimer: *We thank you for your brave act of auditioning for our show. We hope that this experience has been positive. While we would love to cast each and every person who auditions, we do have to consider many factors, including type of act, conditions represented, and more. As a result, not everyone who auditions will be cast in our show. This decision is left to the discretion of the local production team and is based on multiple factors. We hope that you understand as you prepare to audition.*

Present this document to every auditioner. During the audition, a producer should specifically address the schedule in the document with the auditioner to confirm that they can commit to those dates. Each cast member must be able to attend at least 75%

of all rehearsals. Those who cannot make that commitment should not be invited to join the cast.

NOTE

It is imperative to book the Cast Welcome Party and all Rehearsal dates before conducting auditions so that each auditioner can review the expected commitment for show production and confirm their availability for all upcoming show-related events.

In the past, Some production teams have believed that it is better to cast the show, then poll their new storytellers to select Welcome Party and Rehearsal dates based on everyone's availability. This seems like a good, inclusive option. However, this approach does not work because of how difficult it is to find even one rehearsal time that works for everyone, let alone 3-4!

Imagine setting a rehearsal time that works for almost everyone, leaving those that are unavailable on those dates to miss out on the community-building time together with their castmates. This can cause hurt feelings for those excluded cast members and impede their ability to establish reciprocity and form authentic connections with their castmates, and deny them opportunities for transformation that are integral to the Brave experience.

By selecting and presenting all dates on the Audition One-Pager, the auditioners who don't have the availability will know immediately that this may not be the best opportunity for them at this time. They can be coached at that time to consider coming out for The Show at a later date when their schedule is more open.

BEST PRACTICE

Distribute your flyers to a variety of places to attract a variety of performers. We seek to cast a diverse group of performers in terms of gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, condition, and performance type.

Take Action ASAP if sign-ups are coming in and they all look very similar. Not enough musicians? Too many of one gender and/or age group?

Make sure that **every single promo piece is shared** or posted!

Reach out to key people/organizations and tell them about This Is My Brave. Ask them to share info about the upcoming auditions/show. **

Examples of places to contact/ post flyers, etc.

- Local NAMI Chapter
- Local AFSP Chapter
- Local DBSA Chapter
- Local Mental Health America Chapter
- Join groups on Facebook associated with local musicians, comedians or poets and share the audition information
- AA Meetings
- Slam Poetry Groups
- Share and post in your therapist/ psychiatrist office
- Libraries
- Coffee Shops
- Open mic venues
- Local Universities
- Community event/audition calendars
- Veteran Administration and service providers

If your auditions are not starting to book up by week 2 of promotions, it is time to redouble your efforts. It is important to fill up your audition spots in advance of auditions to have the best group of storytellers for your show

Log the names of Auditioners into your Master spreadsheet as they come in so team members can follow the sign-ups too. This is the best way for you and your team to stay organized!

Book Dates and Venue for all upcoming Cast Events, including Cast Welcome Party, Rehearsals and Dress Rehearsal before auditions so that you can share this info with auditioners in a one-pager on the day you meet with them.

Present the Audition One Pager to confirm with each Auditioner that they are available for all dates before casting them in your show.

Cast Selection

Selecting the storyteller cast members for your show is probably the single most difficult part of this entire process, because everyone's story deserves to be heard. Read on for more details about final cast selection.

The ideal number of cast members is 8-10 storytellers, and we recommend casting 10 in case a storyteller drops out.

In addition to your cast, you will need to find a Brave Singer to perform the Brave song by Natalie Layne and Phoebe Scott. We recommend having someone who can sing with a guitar and/ or piano. This can also be one of your cast members!

This Is My Brave shows are made up of presentations of original poetry, music, personal essay, storytelling, comedy and even dance. We ask that each presenter keep their piece to 5 minutes, to ensure that the Production team is able to cast 10 people for the show, featuring a variety of mental health conditions and people from diverse backgrounds, including diversity in gender, age, and race/ethnicity.

Additional Considerations in Casting The Show

Prioritize Diversity! As you select your cast, remember to consider diversity in order to make your show the most interesting and educational for the community. This means your cast is representative of your community and that you have diversity of conditions presented as well as diversity in performance styles.

Feature stories of hope! Our shows are meant to educate the audience about various mental health disorders, and should also inspire those in the audience who may be dealing with a similar issue - to let them know there is hope for the future and things can get better if they're able to reach out for help. In order to do this, these stories need to be told from the perspective of someone who has made it through the brunt of the struggle. Mental health conditions featured in the show can and should be diverse. This includes any condition that is included in the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition) including Autism.

The stories you cast need to be the ones that focus more heavily on the recovery part of the journey versus the struggle. We do need to understand the pain they went through, but we need to leave the audience with a positive message of hope in the end.

Keep an open mind! You may have individuals who come into their audition who are eager to share their story, but they are not yet at a good place in their recovery to be able to tell their story in a way that would benefit them and the audience. Use your best judgment when making these casting calls, and rely on the expertise of the mental health professional on your production team.

Some who audition will be very polished and 'ready for prime time.' Often those who present original music or poetry have refined their presentations and need few modifications. However, others may still need some work on their story, perhaps it's too long, not well focused, or it doesn't end on a feeling of hope. Don't automatically dismiss these, because there may be some very compelling stories that just need someone to guide them in reshaping their story. Talking about these concerns after the audition may help you determine who is open to mentoring and whether you are willing to work with them to refine their story.

Musicians must present original songs only. Other artists' songs are copyright protected. Shows containing copyrighted material will be blocked by youtube and other social media outlets. Sharing videos online is the best form of show promotion and is exciting for your participants. It would be a huge disappointment to everyone if your show were banned for copyright infringement.

BEST PRACTICE

Brave stories are presented in the first person and represent the storyteller's own lived experience.

What are you looking for in Auditions? --->> **Diversity Diversity Diversity**

- Gender
- Age
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Sexual Orientation
- Ability
- Condition
- Performance Type

Your ideal number is **10 storytellers in your cast.**

Redouble your promotion efforts if you are not getting the right mix of storytellers on your first round of auditioners.

Things to look out for and address with all cast members:

- Musicians must perform their own original songs. No covers are permitted.
- We do not allow the naming of specific medications, treatment facilities or doctors/therapists. In order to be in the show, they would have to be willing to edit it to a generic term such as "antidepressant."
- When a story discusses suicide, we do not allow graphic imagery or the description of specific method in accordance with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Reporting on Suicide which states: "Do not include details or images of lethal means or method used, which can be triggering for those who are struggling and has shown to cause contagion."
- We do state that **this show is considered PG-13**, however we ask storytellers to keep the cursing to a minimum.

REMEMBER: You may have individuals who come into their audition who are eager to share their story, but they are not yet at a good place in their recovery to be able to tell their story in a way that would benefit them and the audience. Use your best judgment when making these casting calls, and rely on the expertise of the mental health professional on your production team. **The stories you cast need to be ones that focus more heavily on the recovery part** of the journey versus the struggle. We do need to understand the pain they went through when dealing with their issue, but we need to leave the audience with a positive message of hope in the end. Also note: we prohibit the mention of specific medications and treatment facilities.

After each day of auditions, take a moment to debrief with others on the audition panel to discuss each person you saw and address any questions or concerns.

**If you do not get the right mix of storytellers on your first round of auditions, you may also have to do some targeted recruiting. For example, if you do not find any musicians or poets, it would be wise to reach out to groups or organizations of musicians and poets to share the word about auditions and encourage signups with them.

Notifying Cast

This Is My Brave is a program built on putting names and faces on our stories. We are storytellers in various stages of our journeys, but what unites us is the fact that we've all decided we are ready to reveal our identities to others. If a person isn't yet at a place in their life that they're ready to do this, then TIMB isn't the best platform at this time. There are other mental health awareness platforms available on which to publish anonymous stories (The Mighty, etc.).

Prepare to let storytellers know their status as soon as possible following the end of all auditions.

Every auditioner should hear their news -- yes or no -- from a live person over the phone. This is especially important for the No's, of course, so that they can be let down easy and encouraged to continue their very brave journey. Use these [Rejection Talking Points](#) to guide your conversations with those who you have decided not to cast.

Things to Mention during Cast Notifications

Each new cast member will receive a [Storyteller Welcome Kit](#). It contains good information and guidelines as well as several steps that they need to complete as new cast members. Take a moment to talk over each of the items listed below in your welcome phone call:

Cast Release Forms: All cast members MUST complete this video/photo release via Google forms. You can email it to them once they've made the cast: [Participant Release and Consent Form](#).

Headshots: Every cast member and production team member must have a headshot for the show playbill. The best time to take headshots is at the Cast Welcome Party. On this call, let the new cast member know that you will have a photographer at the Cast Welcome Party to take their headshot. They should arrive ready to be photographed!

Playbill Bios: Each cast member must submit a bio for the playbill. Bios should be 4-6 sentences that address basic info about them including their name, where they are from, their reason for coming out for the show and 1 or 2 hobbies or interesting pieces of info about themselves.

Intro Videos: (if applicable) Each cast member may submit a short intro video (less than 60 seconds) that provides their name, how they heard about This Is My Brave and why they are interested in being a part of the show. These videos can be used on your show's Facebook page to promote the show.

Intro Statements: (if applicable) For poets, musicians and dancers, you'll want to ask these presenters if they are cast, to also **prepare a 1-2 minute introduction** to their piece so that the audience has some context to their presentation.

Song Rights: (if applicable) Dancers and singers must perform with original songs that they have written. This rule exists to prevent copyright infringement that will prevent your show from being posted on social media sites.

[Module 10](#): Planning the Show

Training Objective: Learn how to prepare your Cast and Production Team for the show.

1. Cast Welcome Party
2. Rehearsals
3. Take the Stage, It's Show Day!

Cast Welcome Party

The cast welcome party is the first opportunity for all cast members and production team members to meet one another and for the important work of This Is My Brave to begin.

Timing

Hold your Cast Welcome Party within 2 weeks of casting your show. Schedule at least 2.5 hours for this event.

Attendance

Attendance at the Cast Member Welcome Party is required. If a cast member misses this event, there is a risk that they feel left out or disconnected from this emerging Brave community. So getting everyone's commitment at audition time to be at this party, at rehearsals, and at the show is critical.

The Cast Welcome Party is exclusively for cast members and production team members.

The Cast Welcome Party is designed to be an intimate gathering where the transformative work of This Is My Brave begins for this budding community. Individuals will be invited to introduce themselves and share their stories. Due to the sensitive nature of this initial sharing moment, no additional guests (such as spouses or significant others) should be included.

Location

Ideally, your Welcome Party space will be donated and free of charge. Consider these options:

- A local library meeting room or community center are good places for the Cast Party.
- Determine whether your audition space would be appropriate and available for your Welcome Party and/or Cast Party.
- Check with your Community Partner about using a space in their facility.

Cast Welcome Party Agenda

Please refer to Appendix G for the Cast Welcome Party checklist that includes all of the following:

Submission of Participant Release and Consent Form: If a [Participant Release and Consent Form](#) is still needed from one or more storytellers, have copies available to be completed and submitted during this event.

Take Headshots: Headshots of Cast and Producers should be done at the Cast Welcome Party. Schedule your Photographer to arrive 15 minutes before the start time. This way headshots can be taken as each cast member arrives. Your photographer is free to leave as soon as all photos are taken.

PLAN AHEAD

Make sure Cast Members know that headshots will be taken so they come prepared!

BEST PRACTICE

As soon as you receive the photos from your photographer, send them to your graphic designer. There's no need to wait until the appointed time – you'll have lots to do later. When you get there, you'll be glad you checked some items off earlier!

Remember to label each uploaded headshot with the individual's name! You will use these photos for show promotion and in playbills (if applicable).

Offer Refreshments: Schedule the welcome party for at least 2.5 hours and provide some food & drink. Snack items, water, soft drinks, and dessert (if desired) are appropriate for the party.

No Alcohol is to be served since the serving of alcohol at any Brave event is prohibited.

BEST PRACTICE

Try to get food donated for the welcome party; Target, Trader Joe's and grocery stores often prefer to provide specific in-kind donations like this.

Ice-Breaker: Once everyone has arrived, start things off with an ice-breaker.

Production Team Intros and Whys: Your Cast Welcome Party is an opportunity for your Cast members and Producers to get to know one another. Start by having the Production Team do brief introductions and their reason for producing TIMB; this helps create a sense of safety and trust for the cast.

Cast Member intros: After each member of the production team has introduced themselves, then provide each cast member the opportunity to introduce themselves and then present their piece or a portion of their piece. This is a bonding session -- a time for your cast members to hear one another's stories for the first time, to connect with one another, support one another and offer feedback to one another.

Keep in mind the following additional considerations regarding stories:

- Ultimately, each performer's story should be 5 minutes or less.
- Some storytellers may require coaching to shorten the length of their piece before showtime.
- Storytellers' pieces will be listed by their titles in the playbill. During this first cast get-together, remind your cast members to think about the title of their piece if they haven't already done so.
- Ask each performer to start or finish their piece with the statement, "My name is Jolanda Smith and This Is My Brave."

BEST PRACTICE

Because of the intimacy of this event, **please limit those in attendance** to just cast members and producers.

Have Name/Pronoun Tags available for all participants at each cast rehearsal.

Special Considerations

Offer Mentors for Workshopping Stories: Some cast members may need to shorten their stories, may need more focus, or may need to improve their message of hope at the end. Consider assigning each cast member a Producer Mentor who can work with, coach, and encourage them. It's easier for a cast member to have an individual mentor who can talk to them after the rehearsal instead of receiving feedback in front of the entire cast.

Production Team members are likely to be drawn to specific stories or cast members or to specific stories, or a Producer may have personal lived experience with a specific mental health condition that provides empathy with specific stories; these experiences should guide mentor assignment. In any case, each producer should mentor at least one person. This practice also helps to build trust between cast members and producers.

Group Text Messaging: To facilitate group communication, consider creating a group text so that you can communicate easily with your cast members. You could also consider using an app that's designed for group communications like Slack or WhatsApp.

Rehearsals

Even though the show is ordinary people telling their true stories, and the show should feel natural and unrehearsed, rehearsals are necessary in order to provide a well thought out performance and a meaningful message.

Schedule 3 in-person rehearsals PLUS a dress rehearsal. Attendance at rehearsals is imperative!

Rehearsals should be at least 2 hours long. Avoid meal times when planning your rehearsals. On the weekend, choose a block of time either just before or just after lunch or during the week select a time after dinner. Additional rehearsals may be conducted either in person or virtually. Mentors may choose to hold virtual rehearsals with their mentee cast members for practice and coaching.

It isn't necessary to hold your rehearsals at the theater, because that would be costly and difficult to reserve. We recommend holding rehearsals at a local library, a community center or similar venue where you can reserve a big open room with tables and chairs. Request to use a podium if one is available.

Plan to change the story order for each rehearsal. This helps you envision how the stories flow and doesn't put any one person on the spot by being first or last all of the time. Assign a timekeeper who can inform each storyteller whether they need to shorten their story. Always clap after each person's rehearsal and mention something encouraging.

BEST PRACTICE

Assign a timekeeper who can inform each storyteller whether they need to shorten their story.

Always clap after each person's rehearsal and mention something encouraging about their piece before offering constructive criticism.

Time spent together as a cast during the Cast Welcome Party and Rehearsals is one of the main points of This Is My Brave! It is during this time spent together that the pillars of Brave's TOC can be upheld for the benefit of all in attendance! In these moments together, shame and stigma are lifted and replaced by empowerment, a sense of connection and belonging, and a sense of purpose. Please prioritize this time for your cast members and ask them to do the same!

Preparing for the Show

Ticketing

We recommend a ticket price of \$25 with a senior and student rate of \$15, but use your discretion when determining ticket prices based on your area. Tickets should go on sale 6 weeks prior to the show.

We have used Eventbrite for show ticketing and promotion. Set up your ticket sales page as soon as your cast is selected (or sooner).

Some theaters may require that tickets be sold by their box office. This is not ideal because of the fees added for online or phone purchases, which can often increase the fees by \$5 - \$8 per transaction. If theaters insist, ask for an exception to their policy due to the nature of our show. If theaters cannot budge, strongly consider finding another theater.

BEST PRACTICE

Every effort should be made to **sell out the show in advance**. Leaving the majority of seats open to day-of ticket sales is highly discouraged and almost always results in low show attendance. Please do not leave attendance to chance! Your cast members deserve for their Brave to be recognized and celebrated by a full house!

We do our best when we leverage grassroots style marketing to get the word out about the show – word of mouth and social media are excellent tools for promotion. However, you will need to **build a media list** (another tab within the master spreadsheet) and you can do this by doing a little research on the media outlets in your city. Compile email addresses, Twitter/X handles and FB pages. Be sure to have a plan to connect with and follow up with those reporters.

Make invitations to local VIPS - the mayor, city council members or members of local government (board of supervisors, for example), reps from community foundations with an interest in mental, health, hospital orgs, mental health facilities, large mental health practices. You may also want to invite prospective sponsors – if someone turned down sponsorship this year, they may change their mind about next year after seeing The Show!

Playbill

For brand consistency and for your convenience, design your playbill using Brave’s [brand guidelines](#). Use our [sample playbill](#) as inspiration for your final printed program.

Your playbill will include all of the following from your production team and cast members:

- A Thank You Letter from one or more members of your production team
- Production Team Headshots and Bios
- Cast Member Headshots and Bios
- Brave Singer Headshot and Bio
- Performance Order organized in this way:
 - “Piece Title” - Performer Name (ex: “If You Only Knew” - Jasmine Lopez)

Your playbill (if you choose to produce one) should also include all of the following:

Show Sponsors and Partners: Create a logo garden of your show sponsors organized by their level of support. If any organization has agreed to be your presenting sponsor, plan for their logo to be featured in a special way.

Thank You and Special Recognitions: Also, remember to thank any organizations that act as media partners and any special volunteers or additional groups that have been helpful to you in making the event a success.

Playbill Advertisers: Local organizations and businesses should be offered the opportunity to advertise in the show playbill. We have had playbills that have included advertisements from local mental health organizations, mental health practices, hospitals, etc. But also our playbills have included ads from local florists, pizza shops, orthodontists, car dealerships and more! Local businesses have advertising budgets and often are motivated to support the show because it is a cause that they believe in!

Cast and Producer Bios: As soon as you cast your storytellers ask them to complete a short paragraph bio for inclusion in the show program.

Please utilize your city's Master Spreadsheet to list all of your sponsors and local donors on the Ad tab. This tab lists what level of sponsorship gets what size ad in the program and if we need a logo. As soon as you have a commitment from a sponsor, please list them in the tab, even if you don't have the logo/ad yet, and then stay on the sponsor to get the artwork asap.

You'll want to get the program sent to your printer for a proof at least 2 weeks before your show. ALWAYS have the printer print you a proof, this way you can catch any errors before the large quantity of programs are printed.

The quantity of show programs you print will depend on where ticket sales are the week before the show. We recommend printing about 10-25 more programs than the total ticket number sold five days out from the show. So, if five days before the show you have 150 tickets sold, you'll want to print around 175 programs. Keep in mind that the week leading up to the show is when the most tickets are sold, plus you'll sell some at the door. If your printer can do a quick turnaround job, and you want to wait until 2-3 days before the show to print, that's always an option. Just make sure to give your printer a heads up.

Show Structure

The ideal length for This Is My Brave - The Show is no longer than 75 minutes with no intermission. That allows for a flow of show similar to the following:

- 0:00 Blinking lights to announce the start of The Show
- 0:03 Brave Song (shows rarely start promptly at the precise showtime on ticket)
- 0:06 Opening Remarks
- 0:15 Storytellers begin sharing: 10 storytellers @ 5mins per story = 50 minutes
- 1:05 Closing Remarks
- 1:12 Cast Bow
- 1:15 Post-Show in Lobby

For more information on this topic, please review the FAQ video:



Show Order

Setting the order of the show is an important part of production. As you conduct rehearsals you'll start to envision the best order for the storytelling. You should start and end the show on a strong note with pieces that capture the essence of TIMB's message and why it's important to share these stories. The first storyteller should also be someone who demonstrates self-confidence and a certain amount of poise so that the show starts on a positive note.

Think about the sequence of the stories. Break up the musical performances and the poetry, spacing them throughout the show between essays.

Make a point to end the show on a very strong note, with a piece that captures the essence of what our organization is doing - helping people realize why it's important we share these stories.

Our 2015 NYC show wrapped up their show with this powerful piece. Check it out [here!](#)

BEST PRACTICE

Ask each performer to start or finish their piece with the statement, *“My name is Jolanda Smith and this is my Brave.”*

Opening and Closing Remarks

Choose one of your producers to provide [opening remarks](#) for the show.

At the end of the show the same or a different producer will provide [closing remarks](#).

Show Binder

Create a show binder of all prepared remarks and stories in LARGE FONT and DOUBLE-SPACED for the show. This includes:

- [Opening Remarks](#) by Production Team and Sponsoring Orgs (if app.)
- Each storyteller’s performance pieces (in its entirety)
- Script for introducing the next storyteller
- [Closing Remarks](#)

BEST PRACTICE

All remarks should be included in the show binder.

The prepared remarks should be printed in large font so they are easily read on stage.

Organize all remarks and pieces front side only in page protectors.

The first storyteller will be introduced right at the end of the opening remarks. After that, each cast member will introduce the person following them. Cast members should speak with the person that they are going to introduce to determine what to say in their introduction. So each performer will wrap up their moment on stage like this, *“My name is Jolanda Smith and this is my Brave. [PAUSE FOR APPLAUSE] Now please join me in welcoming to the stage, Robert Kim.”*

For more information about this section, please view this FAQ video:



Flow of Show

A flow of show document should be prepared well in advance of the show. This document lays out not only the order of the actual show but also sets the schedule for the entire day in the theater.

Theaters will request your Flow of Show document and expect to see within it the entire day's schedule, including time of arrival at the theater for set up, dress rehearsal start and finish time, start of seating in the theater for the show as well as time you expect to be packed up and completely out of the theater at the end of the day. They use this document to schedule appropriate staff for the show. This document also includes the names and phone numbers of all important points of contact for the Brave production team and theater personnel. A template for this document appears in your master spreadsheet.

PLAN AHEAD

Know your theater's requirements for staffing. Questions to cover with your point of contact at the theater are included in your master spreadsheet in the tab labeled Venue. In that same meeting, take a moment to talk through the flow of show for the day of show.

Ticket Sales

Filling the audience for the show should be the highest priority of your team. Your Brave cast members are doing amazing work to prepare for this event. They need to feel the presence and support of their community when they finally take the stage.

Consider making ticket sales a requirement of each participant in the show. This requirement gives team and cast members additional reason to be dedicated to the show's success.

Set a goal among Production Team Members and Cast Members for minimum ticket sales. Base the target for individual ticket sales on the capacity of the theater. For many areas that could be 15-20 tickets per person.

For the remaining seats in the theater, use the same PR tactics that you used to promote auditions to promote the upcoming event.

We often use Eventbrite for ticketing for our events.

Day of Show

Stage Setup: Keep it Simple!

The stage set up for This Is My Brave - The Show is intentionally simple and is an important part of our brand. We start with a microphone at center stage with a semi-circle of chairs just behind it. This arrangement allows for all cast members to be on stage during the entire show providing support for one another during each performance. Additionally, a podium can be placed stage left or stage right for opening and closing remarks.

BRAVE BRAND SPECS

We have been asked on many occasions if having the entire cast on stage during the show is really a good idea. After over 100 shows, we know the power of having the cast seated together on stage in support of one another. It's a powerful image for the audience and it's an incredible show of support for each performer. This arrangement is a key component to The Brave Way of producing our mental health storytelling event and should not be adjusted. Please see the video linked below for more details.



Dress Rehearsal

Schedule the dress rehearsal the same day as the show, reserving the theater for at least 4 hours before the show starts. If you have enough time, go through everyone's pieces in full with the sound and lighting you'll be using. However, if you are short on time, have everyone read the first couple lines, the last few lines and then focus on the transitions of introducing the person after them.

Then you can give your cast a break to grab a bite to eat (encourage them to eat something before the show even if they're nervous and can't eat, at least something little so that they don't

feel faint. Everyone should drink lots of water which helps with the dry mouth that nerves can cause.)

Show Binder: Have Binder with everyone's pieces and all remarks (including each cast member's introduction) in show order on a podium or music stand at the mic. All content in the binder should be in LARGE font, double spaced and printed on single-sides only. We recommend organizing the contents in page protectors.

Lights and Sound: Conduct your dress rehearsal with the sound and lighting you'll be using, so you can work out any problems.

Photographer and Videographer: Your photographer and videographer should be present for the dress rehearsal. If that is not possible, they should at very least be present for the very end of the Dress Rehearsal.

Cast Bow: Don't forget to practice the bow! We want everyone to enjoy being recognized for their bravery! Have the photographer take two or three photos of the cast bow during the rehearsal to ensure that a good cast bow photo is taken. It is so important to have images of the cast to share immediately after the show!

Food: Finger foods should be available in the green room on the day of show. Encourage everyone to eat something before the show, even if they're nervous and think they can't eat. They need at least something little, so that they don't feel faint. Depending on the time of your show and the location, you may wish to order lunch in for the cast.

Water: Everyone should drink lots of water which helps with the dry mouth that nerves can cause. It also helps to have a bottle of water on the stage for each cast member.

Brave Circle

Just prior to taking the stage, hold a Brave Circle with your cast and production team. Use this time to lead a centering activity that can help calm nerves before the big event. In addition, use this time to remind your cast that The Show is not the end of their Brave Journey. It is in fact the beginning of their new journey as a member of the Brave Family that is made up of alumni producers and storytellers from across the nation. (You will send them more information after the show on how to connect with the wider Brave community.) Speak one final word of encouragement before heading out to take the stage!

PLAN AHEAD

Ask for donations of snack food and water to provide to the cast and production team on the day of the show.

BEST PRACTICE

Practicing the closing remarks and cast bow is a **MUST!** You want to wrap up the show in an orderly fashion, and practicing these last two sections of the show makes all the difference.

The cast bow, when photographed well, is one of the most impressive images of your cast. So you'll want every opportunity to get a good shot! Since you are conducting a Dress Rehearsal, ask your photographer to be set up to take pictures of the cast bow at the end of the dress rehearsal. Do it again and again to be sure that they have a great shot!

Volunteers

Have a plan to organize volunteers for Show Day. Having a lead volunteer who can assign jobs is helpful. You'll need help with setup and cleanup of the lobby, guest check-in, playbill distribution, etc. Also, you'll need a couple volunteers who are social media savvy to share images and quotes during the show.

Sponsor Acknowledgements

Plan to print at least two (2) 16x20 show signs with the Show logo and your sponsor logos. Place one sign on an easel near the theater entrance. The second should be placed on stage during the show.

Post-Show Audience Engagement

There are a variety of ways to encourage connections at the close of your show. So please be sure to arrange opportunities to engage your audience in continuing the conversation about mental illness in the lobby of the theater after cast bows. Invite the audience to meet the

storytellers in the lobby, to keep the conversation going with each other, and to spend time visiting other displays that you've arranged to have there. They may include any of the following:

Sponsor and Community Partner Booths: Several sponsorship levels come with the benefit of tabling at your event. Your audience will appreciate the opportunity to interact with these organizations and learn more about their services or products.

Step & Repeat Banner: Encourage attendees to capture photos with other friends and cast members in front of the Step & Repeat banner. Remind them to share the pix on social media using hashtags associated with the show.

We highly recommend that every show have their own Step and Repeat TIMB Logo Banner. Use Google to locate a local printer - average cost for this should be \$300 including the stand. Use a high res file of the logo to create your banner. It's wonderful for cast photos and publicity. After you have secured 2-3 sponsors, that is an ideal time to order your banner.

Brave Notes Display: Brave Notes are small postcard sized notes on which audience members can write notes of their own bravery and post them on a bulletin board.

Other ideas that could provide engagement opportunities by keeping people at the show for a longer time include:

- Mental Health Bookstore
- Art show
- Depressed Cake Shop
- Refreshments for Sale (if allowed by the theater)
- Silent Auction (requires additional planning spearheaded by a dedicated volunteer)

Enjoy the Show!

Congratulations! You've made it to the day of the show! You and your team have worked so hard on so many fronts to make this event a success. We are so grateful for your dedication to the mission of This Is My Brave and to the people who have been so brave to share their stories on this platform!

After the Show

You did it! You planned and executed a magnificent event that is sure to leave a lasting impression in the minds of everyone in attendance. You should feel incredibly proud of yourself, your team, and your cast.

There are just a few things left to do to wrap up your show. Please review the tasks in the timeline of tasks for guidance on next steps. And thank you for your Brave!

Appendix A: Checklist for Getting Started

- **Find a Theatre** (200-500 seats are ideal). Secure the date and time. Use the **Theatre Booking Tab** in your master spreadsheet or in Appendix B to finalize this step.
 - **Finalize Details with the Theater** (Book Date, Sign the contract, Send Deposit)
 - **Arrange for a Certificate of Insurance** (if required in contract) using an online service such as eventsured.com

NOTE

If you don't yet have a sponsorship to cover the cost of the theater (or at least the cost of the theater deposit), put a SOFT HOLD on the date and time until the funding comes through to officially finalize.

- **Finalize your production team.** Pay close attention to the job descriptions for each position and seek out well-qualified individuals who are committed to the mission and able to excel in this role.
- **Gather your team for an informal get-together** within a couple weeks of team finalization. This is a great way for everyone to get to know one another before the work of training and show production begin. Structure this get-together and subsequent Brave Academy trainings with guidance provided in Appendix D.
- **Decide on Show Scale and Fundraising goals.**
- **Create a list** of Prospective Sponsors, Partners, Advertisers and In-Kind Donors and record them on your master spreadsheet.
- **Post a Headshot and Video Intro** for each producer on your show's facebook page.
- **Secure Funding** for your first major sponsorship.
- **Establish a Relationship with your Fiscal Sponsor** Fiscal Sponsors are local non-profit organizations that agree to receive, process and allocate funds for your show in exchange for a small fee (in the range of 2.5% of show proceeds) or in exchange for being named the Community Beneficiary for your show. Your fiscal sponsor will process all incoming contributions. For more information about fiscal sponsors, please watch [this video](#)

Appendix B: Checklist for Securing Sponsorships and Advertising

Our sponsorship and advertising goal is \$25,000-\$30,000 for each local show.

Once your theater date is booked, it is important to get started on sponsorships right away.

Secure Sponsorships

- Using your master spreadsheet, **create a list of potential companies** in your area that you think would be good potential show sponsors. Between all the members of your production team, you can create a list of several dozen options.
 - Reach out to all prospective sponsors.** Warm leads are the best. So all members of the production team should be building Brave buzz within their networks and connecting directly to those they know.
 - Share your story** -- your why for wanting to be a part of this production team to bring this show to your city.
 - Ask for their support at the sponsorship level that is the best fit.** This is best done by phone or in person but templates are available to help you craft your pitch by email.
 - Share the Local Sponsorship Deck.** It tells them more about This Is My Brave and our mission. It also outlines very clearly the different levels of support they can provide for the show.
 - Remind them that the money raised will benefit your local Beneficiary Organization!**
 - Be persistent and follow up.** Make a plan and follow through on it! Do it for your storytellers!

All progress should be tracked in the master spreadsheet.

Keep in mind that you have multiple ways in which an organization can support This Is My Brave - The Show in your city:

- ★ Signature Level Sponsor at \$5000
- ★ Platinum Level Sponsor at \$2500
- ★ Gold Level Sponsor at \$1000
- ★ Silver Level Sponsor at \$500
- ★ In- Kind Donor of goods or services equivalent to any of the above levels (this could include big ticket items such as theater donations, playbill printing donations, photography or videography services or more.)
- ★ Full Page Advertiser at \$500

- ★ Half Page Advertiser at \$250
- ★ Quarter Page Advertiser of \$100

If an organization says no to one level of sponsorship, ask them if they are able to do the next level down. If they are unable to act as a sponsor, then pitch to them an In-Kind donation or an ad in the playbill.

A “No” is not your cue to walk away. It’s your cue to explore other options that might be a better fit for them! At the very minimum, please extend an invitation to the show to these organizations. Seeing the show this year could seal the deal for their sponsorship next year!

| NOTE

Sponsorships will be invoiced by your show’s Fiscal Sponsor.

Appendix C: Checklist of Questions to Review on Theater Tours

Additional checklists are available [here](#).

| | |
|--|--|
| Venue Name | |
| Event Date | |
| Event Time | |
| Theater Capacity | |
| Add Advance Ticket Price(s) here | |
| Add At the Door Ticket Price here | |
| | |
| Who Sells Tickets? | |
| If Theater, Ticket Rider? | |
| If Theater, Do they use a 3rd party? | |
| If 3rd party, are there add'l fees? | |
| Is a Ticket Release Notification Req'd? | |
| If so, by what date? | |
| Is there a ticket Sale Cutoff Date? | |
| If so, what date? | |
| If Us, Eventbrite Ticket Set-up? | |
| If so, can we sell tickets day of? | |
| If so, can we keep proceeds of these sales? | |
| | |
| Stage Setup, please confirm: | |
| Chairs in semi-circle | |
| Screen behind | |
| Podium with TIMB Banner | |
| Stairs down to auditorium | |
| | |
| Projector & Screen Available to Use? | |
| what is the cost? | |

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| Special Requests - visual | |
| delivery of jump drive-preference? | |
| | |
| Special Requests - audio | |
| permission to plug into board | |
| make & model of mixing board | |
| required cables | |
| | |
| Special Requests - seating | |
| can we reserve VIP seats? | |
| | |
| Staffing Requirements (if yes, qty) | |
| security? | |
| lighting? | |
| sound? | |
| ushers? | |
| ticket booth? | |
| cleaning? | |
| additional? | |
| Are any of the above union? | |
| Must we include breaks? | |
| | |
| Is there a Green Room available? | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Room for Tabling in Lobby Area? | |
| If yes, how many tables will fit? | |
| Can theater provide tables? | |
| And table covering? | |
| Room for Step & Repeat Banner? | |
| | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Parking? | |
| paid or free? | |
| If paid, credit card accepted? | |
| any special deals available? | |
| | |
| this section is if theater sells tickets: | |
| May We Have Ticket Holder Info? | |
| Ok to have it prior to show? | |
| | |
| Fixed Cost | |
| Variable Costs | |
| Split | |
| | |
| Contract Complete? | |
| Proof of Insurance Required? | |
| Additionally insured required? | |
| | |

Appendix D: Production Team Get-Together + Brave Academy Training Schedule

Below you will find several options for structuring your Production Team Get-Together and Brave Academy Trainings. Each option includes a plan for In-Person Sessions, Homework Assignments, and Independent work. Pick the plan that works best for your team.

OPTION 1: SET A SERIOUS TONE at the outset and forge a deep connection among your production team. Use this option for the get-together and Brave Academy training.

Requires: Three (3) Sessions at 1.5 hours each with all Team Members in attendance.

In-Person Sessions:

- 1. Get-Together:** [Module 1](#) - Welcome and Building Your Team
- 2. BA Training:** [Module 2](#) - Support from the Community (with [workbook page](#))
- 3. BA Training:** [Module 4](#) - TIMB Theory of Change (with [workbook page](#))

- Print in advance** and **collect paper copies of pledge forms** from the entire team: [Production Team Pledge and Commitment Form](#)

- Reserve on everyone's calendar** all upcoming Brave Academy training dates and weekly team meetings from now until show time! Use this [worksheet](#) to make a Team Meeting plan.

Homework Modules:

- HW:** [Brave Academy Introduction](#)
- HW:** [Module 3](#): What Is TIMB?
- HW:** [Module 6](#): Administrative Support (with [workbook page](#) regarding Fidelity to TOC)

Modules to Complete independently as tasks arise in show production:

- Building Brave Buzz in the Community:** [Module 5](#) - PR, Marketing & Promotion
- Theater Selection & Engaging Professional Support:** [Module 7](#) - Show Logistics
- Audition & Rehearsal Overview:** [Module 8](#) - Creating a Safe Space
- Audition Logistics & Cast Selection:** [Module 9](#) - Selecting the Cast of Storytellers
- Cast Welcome Party, Rehearsals, & Show Day Planning:** [Module 10](#): Preparing the Show

OPTION 2: FORGE A SENSE OF COLLABORATION at the outset with this option for the Production Team get-together and Brave Academy training.

Requires: Three (3) Sessions at 1.5 hours each with all Team Members in attendance.

In-Person Sessions:

- 1. Get-Together:** [Module 2](#) - Support from the Community (with [workbook page](#))
- 2. BA Training:** [Module 1](#) - Welcome and Building Your Team
- 3. BA Training:** [Module 4](#) - TIMB Theory of Change (with [workbook page](#))

- Print in advance** and **collect paper copies of pledge forms** from the entire team: [Production Team Pledge and Commitment Form](#)

- Reserve on everyone's calendar** all upcoming Brave Academy training dates and weekly team meetings from now until show time! Use this [worksheet](#) to make a Team Meeting plan.

Homework Modules:

- HW:** [Brave Academy Introduction](#)
- HW:** [Module 3](#): What Is TIMB?
- HW:** [Module 6](#): Administrative Support (with [workbook page](#) regarding Fidelity to TOC)

Modules to Complete independently as tasks arise in show production:

- Building Brave Buzz in the Community:** [Module 5](#) - PR, Marketing & Promotion
- Theater Selection & Engaging Professional Support:** [Module 7](#) - Show Logistics
- Audition & Rehearsal Overview:** [Module 8](#) - Creating a Safe Space
- Audition Logistics & Cast Selection:** [Module 9](#) - Planning for Auditions and Selecting the Cast of Storytellers
- Cast Welcome Party, Rehearsals, & Show Day Planning:** [Module 10](#): Preparing the Show

OPTION 3A or 3B: IF TIME IS LIMITED, SELECT A or B below.

- A) **Requires:** Two (2) Sessions at 1.5 hours each with all Team Members in attendance. (Or select the most abbreviated option 3B below with only 1 extended gathering required)

Production team get-together and Brave Academy training:

- 1. Get-Together:** [Module 1](#) - Welcome and Building Your Team
- 2. BA Training:** [Module 4](#) - TIMB Theory of Change (with [workbook page](#))

-----OR-----

- B) **Requires:** One (1) Session at 2.5 - 3 hours with all Team Members in attendance.

Production team get-together and Brave Academy training:

- 1. Get-Together:** [Module 1](#) - Welcome and Building Your Team ***AND*** [Module 4](#) - TIMB Theory of Change (with [workbook page](#))
- Print in advance** and **collect paper copies of pledge forms** from the entire team: [Production Team Pledge and Commitment Form](#)
- Reserve on everyone's calendar** all upcoming Brave Academy training dates and weekly team meetings from now until show time! Use this [worksheet](#) to make a Team Meeting plan.

Homework Modules:

- HW:** [Brave Academy Introduction](#)
- HW:** [Module 2](#) - Support from the Community; Getting Started as a Team (with [workbook page](#))
- HW:** [Module 3](#): What Is TIMB?
- HW:** [Module 6](#): Administrative Support (with [workbook page](#) regarding Fidelity to TOC)

Modules to Complete as related tasks arise in show production:

- Building Brave Buzz in the Community:** [Module 5](#) - PR, Marketing & Promotion
- Theater Selection & Engaging Professional Support:** [Module 7](#) - Show Logistics
- Audition & Rehearsal Overview:** [Module 8](#) - Creating a Safe Space
- Audition Logistics & Cast Selection:** [Module 9](#) - Planning for Auditions and Selecting the Cast of Storytellers
- Cast Welcome Party, Rehearsals, & Show Day Planning:** [Module 10](#): Preparing the Show

Team Meeting Plan

Meeting together is crucial to feeling connected and being a team. Use this [worksheet](#) to make a Team Meeting plan.

Appendix E: Fidelity Checklist

Fidelity to Production Best Practices

The Production Team:

- Is made up of at least 7 team members.
- Includes a mental health professional as one of the team members.
- Consists of a diverse group of individuals representative of your community (i.e., diversity in age, experience, background, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, ability, etc.)
- Gathers together for Brave Academy Training according to one of the options presented in Appendix D of this handbook.
- Understands one another's "why" for producing a show.
- Engages in regular, respectful communication that is collaborative in nature.
- Contributes equally to the success of the Show.

Production Team Meetings:

- Occur weekly on a set day and time.
- Have consistent attendance from all team members.
- Are run with an [Agenda](#) provided in the production team handbook.
- Start and finish on time.
- Begin with a personal check-in and a simple team-building activity.
- Have a rotating Meeting Facilitator & Note-Taker at each meeting.
- Feature reports from each team member of tasks completed since the last meeting.
- Include opportunities to celebrate successes.
- Result in: a) a list of action items for each team member to complete before the next meeting, and b) the next meeting's agenda.
- Allow time for the team to evaluate how things are going.
- Are followed by an email within 24 hours that summarizes meeting notes and highlights team members' action items for the coming week.

Fidelity to the Theory of Change (TOC)

Team Fidelity Planning:

- The team discussed their plans to uphold the TOC throughout the production process during Brave Academy Module 4.
- During Module 4 training, the team noted actions they would take / language they would use to carry out the 5 pillars of the TOC at all phases of production on this [workbook page](#).

Auditions:

- A well-publicized open call for storytellers was conducted and promoted among numerous networks to reach a diverse population in terms of age, race, ethnicity, marital status, national origin, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and Veteran status. (Opportunity for Transformation)
- At least three 3-hour audition sessions (totaling at least 23 audition timeslots of 15 min each) were held. (Opportunity for Transformation)
- The call for storytellers yielded 25-35 auditioners who represented diverse groups, backgrounds, conditions, and story types. (Opportunity for Transformation)
- The call for storytellers / audition flyer included affirming and empowering language (and followed the Brave template). (Social and Psych Empowerment, Affirmation)
- At least one prod team member shared their why for producing a show with auditioners. (Reciprocity, Authentic Connection)
- Prod team members expressed support verbally and non-verbally to the storyteller during the audition. (Affirmation)
- Each Prod team member offered at least one positive comment to each auditioner. (Affirmation)
- The Audition process yielded a cast of diverse individuals, representative of your community, and features diversity of conditions and performance types.

Rehearsals:

- Production team members provided at least one positive comment to each storyteller during rehearsals. (Affirmation)
- Production team members provided encouragement to each storyteller throughout rehearsals. (Affirmation)
- The Production Team shared their own experiences and whys during rehearsals. (Reciprocity, Authentic Connection)
- Storytellers offered first-person narrative only (focused only on their lived experience and feelings) and had editorial control over their own story. (Social and Psych Empowerment)
- Storytellers were offered and received constructive feedback on their stories from production team members and fellow cast members. (Reciprocity, Opportunity for Transformation)
- Each storyteller was present for at least 75% of the rehearsals. (Authentic Connection, Opportunities for Transformation)
- You observed active participation from all storytellers and production team members throughout auditions. (Social and Psychological Empowerment, Reciprocity, Authentic Connection, Opportunity for Transformation)
- You witnessed and experienced authentic connections in the production process. (Reciprocity, Authentic Connection)

The Show:

- The cast received a pre-show encouragement email one day before the event. (Social & Psych Empowerment, Affirmation)
- The Production Team was present and available to the cast on the day of the show. (Social and Psych Empowerment, Affirmation, Reciprocity).

- The Production Team encouraged and supported cast members on the day of the show. (Social and Psych Empowerment, Affirmation, Reciprocity)
- The production team conducted a Brave Circle just before showtime to center storytellers, to encourage them, and to let them know this moment is not the end of their journey with Brave but the beginning of a new one as members of the Alumni community. (Authentic Connection)
- The Show was accessible to individuals with varied levels of ability. (Opportunity for Transformation)
- There was a full house at showtime. (Social and Psych Empowerment, Affirmation)
- All Storytellers were seated on stage throughout the show. (Social and Psych Empowerment, Authentic Connection, Reciprocity, Affirmation)
- The lobby of the theater featured resources tables and space for all to gather after the show. (Social & Psych Empowerment, Affirmation, Opportunity for Transformation)

Appendix F: Auditions

In Advance:

- Secure location** for your auditions (preferably at no cost such as a local library and easily accessible to auditioners) and possibly book this same location for your Cast Welcome Party and your Rehearsals.
- Choose audition dates and times** keeping in mind the guidelines suggested in this manual, including:
 - 3 sessions to include at least 1 weekend day and 1 week night for a total of at least 8 hours
- Set up Calendly link** (www.calendly.com; use [this tutorial](#) for establishing a calendly account and [this template](#) for setting up your audition signup content on Calendly)
- Log the names of Auditioners** into your Master Spreadsheet so all team members can follow the sign-ups too. Please make every effort to use a shared drive throughout show production. This is the best way for all of you to stay organized!

Day-of Auditions

- Post signs** on location to help auditioners find their way to your space.
- Assign the job of greeter** to one person on the production team.
- Assign the job of Audition Panelist** to 3 people on the production team.
- Introduce yourselves and share your why** to make the auditioner feel comfortable and safe.
- Applaud your Brave auditioners** as they complete their piece. Be sure also to thank them for their Brave!
- Hand each auditioner the [Audition One-Pager](#) you've prepared. **Confirm their availability** for all upcoming rehearsal and show times.

BEST PRACTICE

Distribute your flyers to a variety of places to attract a variety of performers. We seek to cast a diverse group of performers in terms of gender, age, race, condition and form of expression.

Take Action ASAP if sign-ups are coming in and they all look very similar. Not enough musicians? Too many of one gender and/or age group? Contact your Program Manager for advice on how to mix things up!

Make sure that **every single promo piece** is shared or posted!

Reach out to key people/organizations and tell them about This Is My Brave. Ask them to share info about the upcoming auditions/show. See handbook for best locations to share!

If your auditions are not starting to book up by week 2, redouble your efforts to get the word out. It is important to fill up your audition spots in advance to have the most successful group of storytellers

Appendix G: Guidelines for Storytellers

Final performances should be **limited to 5 minutes** in length.

This Is My Brave aims to inspire and empower by storytelling. Your story needs to focus more heavily on the recovery part of your journey versus the struggle in order to inspire hope for our audience members.

Be prepared to workshop your piece with producers and other cast members. We want your performance to be of the highest quality and impact. Incorporating feedback is an important part of the creative process and has been helpful for many Brave storytellers.

Stories that reference suicide should avoid reference to means or graphic imagery. Focusing on feelings and not specifics (ie. guns, knives, blood) helps to keep the audience and other cast members from feeling triggered or uncomfortable.

Please do not name specific medications, treatment centers or mental health professionals in your story as This Is My Brave cannot speak to the quality of any specific treatment. Mental health treatment isn't one-size-fits-all. Please keep in mind that what works for you may not for everyone else watching or attending the show. Instead replace specifics with "an antidepressant" or "a residential facility."

It is okay to name specific procedures that worked for you such as CBT, DBT, EMDR, etc.

Avoid curse words and inappropriate language.

Only original music can be played on stage at the show (aside from "Tell Them I'm Brave," the This Is My Brave theme song licensed through the national organization.)

First person narrative is the standard. If other people are included in your story, you must let them know if and how you are referencing them.

Please, no powerpoints! This Is My Brave discourages the use of slideshows/videos playing while you are performing your piece. We want the focus to be on you and your story, not the screen behind you!

Your self-care should be your number one priority. Please make sure that you are far enough along in your recovery journey to safely participate in the show. If you feel triggered or that being in the show is jeopardizing your health, please talk to your Producer as soon as possible.

Likewise, if Producers feel as if participating in the show is not beneficial to your mental health, **producers reserve the right to ask you to focus on self-care and not participate in the show.**

Appendix H: Cast Welcome Party Guidelines and Checklist

Timing

The Cast Welcome Party should be scheduled **within two weeks of the final audition**.

Schedule at least **2.5 hours** for this event.

Attendance is Not Optional

The Cast Welcome Party is a crucial first step for This Is My Brave - The Show in your city.

This gathering is the first opportunity for all cast members and production team members to meet one another and for the important work of This Is My Brave to begin. If a cast member misses this event, there is a risk that they feel left out or disconnected from this emerging Brave community. So getting everyone's commitment at audition time to be at this party and at the show is critical.

Who To Include

The Cast Welcome Party is exclusively for cast members and production team members.

The Cast Welcome Party is designed to be an intimate gathering where the transformative work of This Is My Brave begins for this budding community. Individuals will be invited to introduce themselves and share their stories. Due to the sensitive nature of this initial sharing moment, no additional guests (such as spouses or significant others) should be included.

What You'll Need

- A Room that accommodates 20 people where food can be served
- Access to the Internet -- test it out to make sure it is good!
- Tables, Chairs
- Plates, Napkins, Utensils (or not, if you've planned only finger food!)
- Yummy Food!

PLAN AHEAD

Book a Photographer to shoot cast member headshots upon arrival at the party.

Alert Storytellers that headshots will be taken upon their arrival to the Cast Welcome Party.

Order Food for this event as well as plates, napkins, drinks, whatever else is needed.

Know in advance who needs to complete the [Participant Release and Consent Form](#) upon arrival.

Bring blank copies of forms so that cast members who have not completed their [Participant Release and Consent forms](#) may do so as soon as they arrive.

Prepare a screen to share video content with the group, such as the This Is My Brave Welcome Video.

Event Specifics

Arrival: Assign one member of the production team to be the greeter. As each participant arrives, confirm that you have already received their Cast Member Agreement.

Submission of Participant Release and Consent Form: If a [Participant Release and Consent form](#) is still needed from one or more storytellers, have blank copies available to be completed and submitted during this event.

Take Headshots: The cast Welcome Party is a good opportunity to have cast headshots taken, if your photographer is available and willing to do this. Headshots can even be shot on an iPhone in portrait mode -- no professional photographer required! Make sure to let all cast members know to come ready for photos.

Offer Refreshments: Serve refreshments at your cast welcome party. (Food items can be donated by a local restaurant or grocery chain or covered by a local sponsor.)

Keep it simple and order a couple of pizzas, salad, soda and iced tea, and maybe even a cake with “Congratulations to our Cast!” written on it. You could go even simpler and just do a dessert party.

No Alcohol is to be served since we prohibit the serving of alcohol at any Brave event.

Seating: For the sharing portion of the event, arrange chairs in a circle so that everyone is facing one another.

Agenda

Ice-Breaker: Once everyone has arrived, start things off with an ice-breaker.

Production Team Intros and Whys: Then have the production team share their “why” for volunteering to put on this show.

Cast Member Intros: Next, allow each cast member a few minutes to share why they wanted to tell their story as part of the show and a little about their piece.

All of this will help everyone feel connected and part of something bigger.

We recommend that each cast member do a read-through at your welcome party. Be sure to time each piece so you have an idea of show length.

BEST PRACTICE

Shoot headshots at the start of the Cast Welcome Party so that the photographer’s time can be kept to one hour or less.

Pick a neutral backdrop for headshots and shoot in portrait mode.

- ✓ Choose an outdoor setting (for natural light) with foliage backdrop OR
- ✓ Choose a neutral cityscape
- ✗ Avoid brick wall backdrops (outdoors) or plain white or cinder block wall (indoors)
- ✗ Set lighting so that there are no shadows -- across the faces of cast members outdoors or on the wall behind them indoors

Cast Welcome Party Checklist

What You'll Need

- A Room** that accommodates 20 people where food can be served
 - In an accessible location
 - With decent parking
 - Has a screen
- A Photographer** who can take headshots as Cast Members arrive
- A screen** on which videos can be shared
- An **HDMI cable** (or another method) to connect to the screen
- Tables & Chairs**
- Yummy Food** (preferably donated!)
- Plates, Napkins, Utensils**

Within one week of the Cast Welcome Party, you will need to collect from each cast member:

- A Professional Headshot (for use in playbill and/or social media show promotions)
- [Participant Release and Consent Form](#)
- Cast Member Intro - a 1-2 minute video shot on your phone in landscape
- Cast Member Bio - 4-6 sentences about yourself (for use in playbill and/or social media show promotions)

Appendix I: Rehearsals

Rehearsal Priorities:

Refer to Appendix F “Guidelines for Storytellers” at each rehearsal.

Uphold the Five Pillars of Brave’s Theory of Change throughout all rehearsals. Productions teams must be intentional about the storyteller experience.

The Fidelity Coordinator should note observations of the Pillars employed during rehearsals and will check-in with storytellers to confirm they are experiencing all of the following: Affirmation, Social and Psychological Empowerment, Reciprocity, Authentic Connection, and Opportunities for Transformation.

Rehearsal Logistics:

Attendance at rehearsals is imperative. Each cast member must be able to attend at least 75% of all rehearsals or they should not be invited to join.

Schedule 3 rehearsals PLUS a dress rehearsal which would ideally be the day of show in the same space as the actual show.

Rehearsals should be at least 2 hours long.

Avoid meal times when planning your rehearsals. On the weekend, choose a block of time either just before or just after lunch. During the week, after dinner.

Provide flyers of some local resources for your cast to take away from each rehearsal. For example, you might provide flyers or information on your local NAMI or AFSP chapters. You can also include information on the National Suicide Lifeline and the Crisis Text Line.

Additional Options:

Consider Zoom or other virtual meeting options for workshopping in between regularly scheduled rehearsal times.

Appendix J: Dress Rehearsal

Dress rehearsal is mandatory. Each cast member must be able to attend this critical rehearsal.

Schedule additional time at the theater on the day of show to conduct your dress rehearsal. Work with the theater to book enough time to conduct the rehearsal. Remember that you will need to be backstage in the green room one hour prior to showtime. (Doors will open 30 minutes before showtime.)

Plan for meal breaks and encourage your cast to eat something, even if they don't want to. Provide finger foods and water to all members of your cast and production team as well as the technical crew that is working at the theater.

Many theaters, due to union rules, require you to plan for paid breaks for their staff if their hours meet a certain threshold. Be sure to check on this with the theater in advance.

Practice tech set-ups and sound at your dress rehearsal. This means that tech support and theater crew need to be arranged.

Encourage your Photographer and Videographer to catch some of your dress rehearsal in order to maximize their chance for quality shots for the event. They can capture staged moments or unstaged interactions backstage.

Practice the cast bow numerous times in order to get it right! This is a not to be missed moment and should be one of the best photos / videos from your show. In addition to the photographer, have production team members at rehearsal to capture this moment as well! You really want this shot!

Appendix K Social Media Engagement

You are encouraged to create all of the following to promote your show: Facebook page, Instagram account, Twitter/X.

One person on your team should be designated your city's Social Media Administrator. It will be this person's responsibility to make regular updates to the Facebook page about all things related to This Is My Brave - The Show in your city. This includes building Brave buzz about all of the following :

- The decision to bring This Is My Brave - The Show to your city
- A request for local individuals and organizations to Like and Follow
- Intro video from each member of the production team about their "why" for being a part of This Is My Brave - The Show in your city
- Announcement about each new sponsor who signs on to support The Show
- Event listing for Auditions
- Promo posts about upcoming auditions
- Connections with local organizations that may have members who would want to come out for The Show
- Updates on Production team activities related to show prep
- Photos of cast gatherings
- Celebration when each new Sponsor or Media Partner signs on

The Social Media should avoid all of the following in their posts:

- Political commentary of any kind

All production team members should encourage their contacts on these platforms to like and follow the show-related social media pages.

Appendix L: Videographer Do's

Use [this contract](#) to engage a videographer for the show.

Videographer Do's

Share these examples of excellence with your videographer and ask them for similar work.

In [this highlight reel](#), watch how the videographer highlights each of the storytellers at 1:56, with an image of every performer standing at center stage with their back to the house and a spotlight shining through. We would love to see this replicated so we can share it on our webpage!

Also at 2:36/2:43 to end, pay attention to how he captures the cast bow. This is really powerful!

This Is My Brave Carroll County MD 2019 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kzo2T-XZ9wA>

A video like this requires some set up and time to accomplish. Make time for your professionals to do their best work. Encourage the cooperation of everyone in the cast, your team and in the theater so that excellent work like this can be done!

Appendix M: Photographer Do's and Don'ts

Use [this contract](#) to engage a photographer for the show.

Photographer Do's

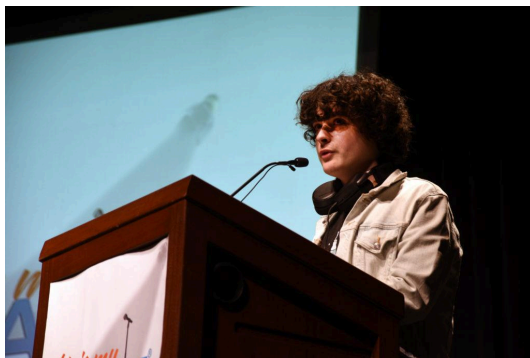
Set your photographer up for success by making sure that your storytellers have good lighting on stage! Talk to your tech crew at the theater about good spotlighting.



Well-framed, well lit



Centered nicely, captures scene well



Side angles mix things up!



Good bow photos are our best asset!

Ask your photographer to come to the dress rehearsal to maximize their chance of capturing good images.

Encourage your cast members to select their outfits carefully. **Jewel tones pop in photos!

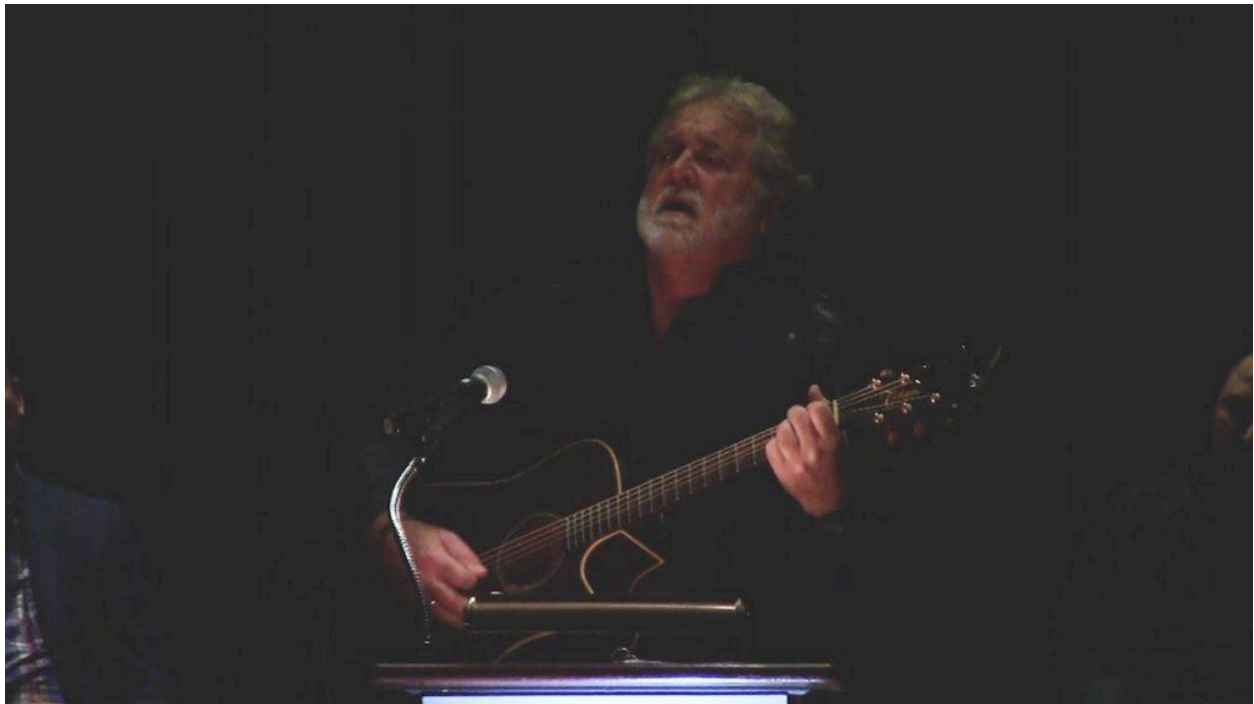
Photographer Don'ts

Many of these photography don'ts could be avoided with good lighting! Ask your photographer what they will need in order to be successful. Then coordinate well with the theater to optimize conditions for your hired professional to do their best work!





Photographer contracts contain important information to guide your photographer.



Some photos of the entire stage are nice to have but closeups of well-lit individuals are ideal!

When you receive the final batch of photos from the photographer and they have done a good job, sing their praises on Social Media and share their content! Your facebook page will come alive, your cast will love to see themselves professionally photographed and when it's time to return to your city for another show, this photo documentation will be essential in building Brave buzz all over again!

Appendix N: Youth Safety Standards for High School Edition

For the safety and protection of both the teens and your volunteer production team, the following standards must be upheld at all times when working with high school students.

Background Check

A background check is required for every production team member of This Is My Brave - High School Edition.

Parental Consent

Teens who sign up for This Is My Brave - High School Edition **must provide their parent's name, e-mail address and phone number** on their calendly sign up form.

Before a teen is permitted to audition, **a member of your production team must contact their parent** to confirm consent.

1. Call the parent to ask if they are aware their teen will be auditioning for the show.
2. Ask them to confirm the best email address to send the release and consent form.
3. Email the parent the [Participant Release& Consent Form](#)

If a Release form is not received from the parent, the teen may not come out for the show.

One Note: **Teens themselves will also need to complete the [Release form](#)** upon being cast for the show.

Auditions and Rehearsals

Before launching into the cast party and rehearsals, schedule a meeting for the parents and teen cast members. Give them an overview of the schedule and activities coming up and answer any questions that they may have about the show. Be sure to touch on the importance of self-care and personal well-being of the teen throughout the production process.

For all additional activities with teen cast members the following must be upheld by every volunteer associated with the show:

- If ever a meeting with one teen is scheduled (whether it is in person or virtual), **two adults must be present** *unless* the meeting is planned for a public space, like Starbucks or the main gathering zone at a library.

- Production team members or other show volunteers are **prohibited from driving teens** in their car to or from any Brave-related activities.

- For in-person meetings, greetings and praise between teens and adults should be limited to safe contact, such as **side hugs, fist bumps and high fives**.

- **All virtual gatherings with the high school students should be recorded** and archived. If needed, TIMB can provide access to its youtube channel where videos can be placed and set to Private. These videos will only ever be viewed if a concern is raised.

Appendix O: Brave Branding

Brave logos and brand guidelines for Brave licensing are available at thisismybrave.org/brand. This [chart](#) offers additional guidance when naming and promoting your show.

Below are required standards for each production of This Is My Brave - The Show. These are non-negotiables with no exceptions. Fidelity Coordinators will be trained to these standards but all members of the production team are expected to understand and uphold them.

Event Level Specifications

- ✗ Psychological counseling to participants at these events is prohibited. This Is My Brave - The Show and all related activities are peer-to-peer support events only.
- ✗ No alcohol or drugs of any kind are allowed at This Is My Brave shows or rehearsals.
- ✗ No cash should be exchanged at This Is My Brave events.
- ✗ No lobbying or political discussion is allowed at This Is My Brave events.
- ✓ All participants in This Is My Brave - The Show must be 18 years or older. (For those interested in creating a show for young people, please inquire about This Is My Brave's College Edition or High School Edition.)

Performance Level Specifications

- ✓ Foul language should be avoided.
- ✗ No mention of specific drugs should be made.
- ✓ It is okay to say, "Medication changed my life."
- ✗ It is NOT okay to say, "Paxil (or any other specific drug reference) changed my life."
- ✓ Reference to successful treatments or therapies is allowed.

- ✓ It is okay to reference success with treatments such as TMS, EMDR, etc. but please share only your personal experience, not blanket endorsements or recommendations.
- ✓ It is okay to name these treatments.
- ✗ No doctors, practices or hospitals should ever be named specifically.
- ✗ When talking about suicide, storytellers should never reference means. It is okay to say, “I made a decision...” or “I made plans...” It is NOT okay to say, “I gathered [specific items]” or “I went to [specific place]” to “do a [specific thing]”

This Is My Brave aims to inspire and empower by storytelling. Your story needs to focus more heavily on the recovery part of your journey versus the struggle in order to inspire hope for our audience members.

Appendix P: Volunteer Checklist

Consider recruiting between 8-12 volunteers for each of the following categories.

Production Team Support

- ★ **Fundraising Committee** (2) _____ , _____
- ★ **Marketing and PR Committee** (2) _____ , _____
- ★ Other Committees
 - _____
 - _____
- ★ **Social Media** (at least 1 for all show promo on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X)
- ★ **Admin Support** (set up Calendly, Eventbrite/Ticket sales outlet, collect assets from sponsors and advertisers, others)

Day of Show

To arrive **at least an hour before the show** to learn their assigned roles and help set up.

- ★ **Volunteer Lead** (1) will coordinate the efforts of day-of-show volunteers
- ★ **Social media Assistants** to post during the show (1-2)
- ★ **Set-Up & Break Down** (1-2)
- ★ **Ticket check-in** (2 - 4 depending on size of show)
- ★ **Theater greeters** to hand out playbills at theater entrance (2-4)
- ★ (opt) **Host of the Brave Notes** board (1)
- ★ Informal Photographers at **Step and Repeat Banner** (1-2)
- ★ **2 people** to recruit individuals to share their reflections on their Brave experience with the videographer for the Highlight Video

Appendix Q: Playbill Checklist

Playbill Graphic Designer: _____

Playbill Printer: _____ Phone: _____

Due Date to Printer for final run:

Format for items submitted (confirm with your graphic designer):

Items to collect for Playbill, see [sample](#) for inspiration:

- Headshots for Production Team
 - Bios for Production Team
 - Headshots for Cast Members
 - Bios for Cast Members
 - Headshot for Brave Singer
 - Bio for Brave Singer
 - Production Team Thank You Letter
 - Order of Show, to include:
 - “Tell Them I’m Brave!” - Name of Brave Singer
 - Opening Remarks, Speaker’s First & Last Name
 - “Title of Piece” - Performer 1’s Full Name
 - “Title of Piece” - Performer 2’s Full Name

Repeat until all storytellers and the titles of their pieces are listed

 - “Closing Remarks” - Speaker’s First & Last Name
- Logos of all Sponsors
- Logos of organizations you would like to include in “Special Thanks To” section
- Photographer / Videographer Acknowledgement
- Full Page ads: Number expected _____
- Half Page ads: Number expected _____
- Quarter Page ads: Number expected _____

Appendix R: Linked Resources (listed alphabetically)

[Anne-Marie's Story](#)

[Audition One-Pager](#)

[Brand Guidelines with Logos](#)

[Brand Guidelines Chart with suggested language](#)

[Brave Academy Training Overview](#)

[Brave Academy Workbook](#)

[Brave Debut Show 2014](#)

[Brave Short Documentary](#)

[Brave Show Highlight Reel Sample](#)

[Brave Show Sample: NYC 2015](#)

[Brave Theme Song, "Tell Them I'm Brave!"](#)

[Brave Theme Song Chord Chart](#)

[Brave Theme Song Lyric Video](#)

[Brave Theme Song Back Track](#)

[Calendly Account Set-Up Tutorial for Auditions](#)

[Calendly Set Up Doc Template with Language for Audition Sign-Ups](#)

[Casting Call - Rejection Talking Points](#)

[Closing & Opening Remarks for the Show](#)

[Fiscal Sponsorship Info Video](#)

[Jenn's Story](#)

[Logos](#)

[Memorandum of Understanding Template for Fiscal Sponsor](#)

[Opening & Closing Remarks for the Show](#)

Sample [Participant Release & Consent Form](#) (for storytellers)

[Photographer Contract Template](#)

[Playbill Sample](#)

[Press Release for Auditions](#)

[Press Release Template for Show and Tickets](#)

[Production Team Pledge and Commitment Form](#) to turn into the Production Team Lead

Sample [Production Team Release and Pledge Form](#)

[So You Want to Produce a Show](#)

[Sponsor Request](#)

[Sponsor Thank You](#)

[Storyteller Welcome Kit](#)

[Team Meeting Agenda](#)

[Team Meeting Planning Worksheet](#)

[Theater Tour Questions](#)

[This Is My Brave Australia \(TIMBA\)](#)

[Today Show Piece](#)

[Videographer Contract Template](#)