

## My Banff Centre Residency: A Self-Reflection Exercise

Taking part in a Banff Centre program is a wonderful opportunity to connect with other participants, to work on your art and professional skills, and to reflect on your personal and professional life. For many, a program also represents a “gift of time”; a break from your everyday life that allows you to focus on your creative endeavors. At the same time, this opportunity can sometimes be accompanied by obstacles and distractions; anything from unfinished business in your life, to stress, motivation, and time management issues.

To help you make the most of your Banff Centre program, we have created a worksheet with questions to consider before your program begins. The idea behind this simple, but powerful reflection exercise is to give you a chance to pause and reflect on your current situation and circumstances. You may find it helps you gain self-awareness, identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, and manage stress and emotions. By taking the time to reflect on your experiences, you can improve your personal and professional growth and development.

In addition to the self-reflective exercise, below are some ideas, suggestions, and resources to help you *do well* during your residency:

- Make note of your support system, networks, and self-care strategies (this can include names and phone numbers of friends and professionals, and notes to self).
- Identify items that bring you comfort and consider bringing some of these with you.
- If applicable, bring enough of your prescribed medication to last for duration of the residency.
- Create a Banff routine:
  - Try to wake up at the same time every day.
  - Plan your day: It is about creating a nice balance between your program obligations, your work, your other life responsibilities, and your down-time.
  - Remember the basics: Eat nutritious food (ideally 3 meals/day); take breaks; drink plenty of water; move your body (e.g., exercise). And leave time for other self-care activities like spending time outside and practicing calming breathing techniques.
  - Set time aside every day to check in with yourself - on your physical, emotional and cognitive state.
- Familiarize yourself with the Banff Centre campus and its surroundings.
  - Ask for a map; walk around; get to know the physical space.
  - Identify activities, resources, and services available to you on campus or in the Banff townsite.

Stop by the Participant Resources Office (located in the Sally Borden Building) to discuss your non-program-related needs or to find out more about Banff Centre services and support. You can also call (403) 762-6269 or email [participant\\_resources@banffcentre.ca](mailto:participant_resources@banffcentre.ca).

**1) What does this residency mean to me?**

**2) Current State of Mind and Preparation:**

- What is my current "state of mind"?
- Is the timing of this residency in my life optimal or sub-optimal?
- What steps can I take to prepare myself for the experiences ahead?

**3) Leaving Behind and Expectations:**

- What am I leaving behind, both literally and figuratively, to be present at the Banff Centre?
- What are my expectations for this residency?

**4) Objectives and Planning:** What are my objectives for this residency? (Be specific and realistic)

a) **Professional Objectives:**

- What am I working on? What do I hope to accomplish? What is my process? What steps will I take? Are there deadlines?

b) **Personal Objectives:**

- Is there anything specific I want to do, learn or accomplish on a personal level?
- Anything that I would like to reflect on, address, or challenge myself with?

**5) Time Management and Schedule:**

- How will I manage my time during the program?
- Do I have a plan of action and a schedule in place to optimize my productivity and balance?

**6) Strengths, Weaknesses, and Learning Style:**

- What are my strengths and weaknesses as an "adult learner"?
  
- Where are my "pressure points" or vulnerability zones when it comes to learning?

**7) Anticipating Challenges and Warning Signs:**

- What potential challenges do I foresee during the program?
  
- What are my warning signs or red flags that indicate I am facing challenges?

**8) Stress Management and Self-Care:**

- How will I deal with stress or difficult situations during my residency?
  
- What are possible solutions, actions, and self-care strategies I can implement?

*\*Remember that Participant Resources at Banff Centre is there to help and support you during your residency, by facilitating access to resources and services, if need be.*

**9) Motivation and Focus:**

- What strategies can I use to ensure that I stay motivated and focused throughout the residency?
  
- What steps do I need to take to stay on track and make the most of my learning experience?