



Care Game

How do you care?

**Transcript:
Introductory Video**

July 12, 2024

Plain English





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Welcome

Hello, everyone!

Welcome to an introduction to “The Care Game: How do you care?”

This video by ArtsPond is presented in Plain English with image descriptions and closed captions that are made by people, not machines.

On screen is an illustration on a light grey background. On the right side is the title of the presentation in large dark pink and black text. On the left is a graphic of a jigsaw puzzle with four pieces in dark pink that are connected together into the shape of a heart. A smaller heart is in the center of the image filled with light blue and stroked with white. ArtsPond’s logo in light blue and black is displayed at the bottom.

People

My name is Jessa Agilo. I’m the Founder and CEO of ArtsPond. I am a white, transgender woman with a shaved head. On screen is a photograph of myself on a light-yellow background. I’m wearing a black top with speckled blue glasses and two small rings in my one ear. My head is tilted slightly to one side with my brown eyes looking towards you and smiling slightly.

I am also joined today by Alex Haagaard. Would you like to introduce yourself, Alex?

Hey everyone. I am Alex Haagaard. I am a designer, an artist, and a Care Plan Doula at ArtsPond. I am an invisibly disabled, white, non-binary person with short, wavy blonde hair. On screen is a photo of me against a blurred city street on a sunny day. My head is turned to one side, and I am smiling slightly while looking away from the camera. I am wearing a black t-shirt, round black eyeglasses, a silver neck chain, and dark red lipstick. In my ear, I am wearing four silver hoops that get progressively smaller in size.

Acknowledgements

Before proceeding further, I would like to acknowledge the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples who have cared for this land now known as Canada for a very long time.

From our offices in Tkaronto, we are grateful to live, work, and travel on the ancestral lands of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Mississaugas of the Credit. We are also grateful to connect communities across Canada online and respect the many Indigenous Nations that cross all of Turtle Island, otherwise known as North America. We honor their traditions, cultures, and care as the traditional guardians of all living things on our planet Earth.

I also want to acknowledge and thank our current funders, including Canada Council for the Arts, Government of Canada, Ontario Arts Council, Government of Ontario, and Agilo Arts. Their support makes our work possible.

On screen is a light grey background with the funder logos displayed horizontally from left to right. They are in white inside a dark blue banner.

Agenda

This video consists of five parts.

The first, Purpose, seeks to answer the question what is the Care Game for?

In the second, Seeds, we will discuss where the Care Game came from.

In the third, Instructions, we will introduce the Care Game itself and how to play it.

In the fourth, Examples, Alex and I will share a few personal reflections on how the Care Game relates to our own lives. We hope this will help guide you as you begin to play the game in your community.

In the fifth and final section, we will share some recommendations for next steps, including ways to participate and share your learnings from the Care Game with others.

Purpose: What is the Care Game for?

There are three main purposes for the game.

- 1 – To help participants talk about their own experiences in seeking or supporting change and care.
- 2 – To help participants expand their usual understandings of both change and care in an uncertain world stressed by multiple complex threats in all parts of human and natural life.
- 3 – To deepen appreciation and understanding of the ways creative practices in arts and culture can, and do, guide positive change and care, while also illustrating the gaps and barriers that prevent them from doing so.

Seeds: Where did the Care Game come from?

One of the sources of inspiration for the Care Game is Peter Hayward's "Polak Game", or "Where do you stand?" Hayward based their game on sociologist Fred Polak's ideas about how people's images of the future influence their present behaviour.

For example, this game has two key questions:

- 1 – Do you see the world as getting better or worse? and,
- 2 – How capable do you feel of personally affecting or changing the future?

For the first question, we can say we are feeling pessimistic if we believe things are getting worse, or we are feeling optimistic if we see the world as getting better. We do not need to feel just one way or the other. We can have mixed feelings where we see things are getting better in some ways and getting worse in others.

For the second question, we are asked to consider whether we believe we can't make a difference, or we can make a difference, in affecting or changing the future for the better. Like the first question, we may have mixed feelings where we believe we can make a difference in some ways, and we can't make a difference in others.

Seeds: Part 2

The Polak Game is designed to help us explore where we stand on the complex questions from the previous slide when faced with different opportunities and challenges in our lives.

For example, we might ask ourselves if we feel things are getting better or worse around the affordability of living and workspace in arts and culture, and whether we can do anything about it or not. Our feelings about racism, gender inequality, low wages, the climate crisis, and many other challenges could also work here. Our feelings about positive opportunities like increased access and care with disabled people, or increased pride in communities through engagement with arts and culture, and other prompts would also be appropriate.

To help us categorize our responses, broad categories are displayed on screen as a four-quadrant diagram with pessimistic and optimistic on the vertical axis (from bottom to top) and can't and can make a difference on the horizontal axis (from left to right).

In the bottom left, we are feeling powerless if we are both pessimistic about things getting worse and we believe we can't make a difference in the future.

In the lower right, we are feeling realistic if we are pessimistic about things getting worse and yet we believe we can make a difference in the future.

We are feeling passive, in the upper left, if we are optimistic things are getting better but believe we can't make a difference in the future.

Lastly, in the upper right, we are feeling powerful if we are both optimistic things are getting better, and we believe we can make a difference in the future.

Seeds: Part 3

A second source of inspiration for the Care Game is the link between change and care. At ArtsPond, we see this as a lively place where new ideas and kindness can grow together. This approach can help lead us to a better future by ensuring we take care of everyone and everything along the way.

Seeds: Part 4

The link between change and care forms the basis of five core beliefs for the Care Game.

1 - Everyone can make a positive difference in the lives of people, communities, and nature.

2 - Everyone can help those in need to thrive and make changes in their own lives and communities.

3 - Everyone needs and deserves care at some point in their lives to either survive or thrive.

4 - Change doesn't always involve creating something new; sometimes, it entails bringing back something valuable from the past or lifting up wise actions in the present.

5 - Care isn't just about physical health; there are many ways to give and receive care, especially in these uncertain times.

Instructions: How to play the Care Game?

Like Hayward's Polak Game, the Care Game consists of two questions that invite participants to explore their perspectives on the future. However, instead of focusing on how we feel about the future alone, the Care Game seeks to illustrate the ways we want to seek out or support change or care in our lives and communities.

We invite you to consider these two questions by taking notes in your journal or discussing your thoughts collaboratively with a small group for 30 to 45 minutes.

The first question reads: Do you experience the world as precarious or prosperous?

If you experience the world as precarious, then you are most likely seeking changes to the status quo that will reduce the vulnerability or uncertainty in your life or in the world around you.

If you experience the world as prosperous, then you are most likely seeking out ways to expand the types of care that is available to help deepen the prosperity not only in your own life, but in the world around you.

Like the Polak Game, we do not need to see things just one way or the other. We can have points of view where some parts of life are seen as prosperous (and can help deepen the availability of care) while others are precarious (and need to be changed for the better).

The second question reads: Are you focused on the present or future?

If you have a short-term perspective, then you are most likely to be focused on the basic needs for survival in the present moment.

If you are focused on long-term growth, then you are most likely to be focused on ways to deepen a flourishing or thriving life for everyone in the future.

We do not need to see things just one way or the other for this question either. We can have points of view where we prioritize short-term survival and others where we prioritize long-term growth and thriving.

Instructions: Part 2

Here are nine additional questions for you to think about as you work through the Care Game:

- 1 - In what ways do you seek out or support change and care in your personal or professional life?
- 2 - How do you seek or support change and care in other realms of life, such as real, digital, natural, dream, or ancestral life?
- 3 - Where are you eager to never to give up? Where is the abundance and love?
- 4 - Where are you fearful or burned out? Where is the vulnerability and loss?
- 5 - What types of changes or care are critical, common, or nice-to-have?
- 6 - What approaches to care require things to be challenged or changed?
- 7 - What ways of caring demand protections for the collective good?
- 8 - What kinds of care will help strengthen your feelings of personal security, safety, comfort, respect, trust, reciprocity, or happiness?
- 9 - What types of changes will help you become a better caregiver with individuals, communities, and the planet?

Instructions: Part 3

The next stage of the Care Game is to categorize your responses from the previous step according to one of five personalities.

These personalities are displayed on screen as a five-segment diagram with change and care on the vertical axis (from bottom to top) and survive and thrive on the horizontal axis (from left to right).

In the bottom left, we are a careseeker, or a person in need, if we experience the world as precarious and are focused on survival in the present moment.

In the lower right, we are a caretaker, or a guardian of care, if we experience the world as precarious and are focused on making plans for a more caring future where more people not only survive but thrive.

We are a caregiver, or nurturer of care, in the upper left, if we experience the world as prosperous and are focused on helping others to survive in the present moment.

We are a caremaker, or a builder of care, in the upper right, if we experience the world as prosperous and are making plans for a more caring future where everyone can thrive.

Lastly, in the middle, overlapping all other categories, we are a careshaper, or a visionary of care, if we experience the world as both precarious and prosperous and are interested in the growth of both short-term changes and long-term care.

Instructions: Part 4

The next step in the Care Game is to summarize your reflections. We invite you to gradually work towards capturing your thoughts in a visual illustration or using other methods that are appealing to you. Here are three recommendations for preparing your summary:

1 - Try to group your thoughts according to the ways that you are seeking or supporting change and care in your life and communities. Identify the critical, common, and nice-to-haves within each area.

2 - Also reflect on various gaps or barriers and opportunities within each personality. Consider how your personal needs and strengths might be similar or different from others in your community. Reflect on those that feel the most important to you now, and those that you might want to think about more in the future.

3 - You might also want to consider creating different summaries for where you were in the past, where you are now, and where you hope to be in the future.

Instructions: Part 5

Here are four more recommendations for creating your summary:

4 - You might also want to create different summaries for your various roles in the industry, such as a creator, curator, educator, producer, manager, and so on.

5 - You may only be able to place yourself in one personality now but might hope to introduce several others in the future.

6 - Remember to consider different aspects of your life as well, including your real and virtual life, the ways you engage perhaps with nature, your dream life, connections to your ancestors or future generations, and other realms of life.

7 - Be sure to check-in and update your thoughts over time as your journey in care evolves and grows.

Instructions: Part 6

The next step is to visualize your reflections in a way that can be shared with others.

Onscreen is a visual graphic with a potential structure for your summary. It includes many of the elements that were described in the previous two slides. It is a five-segment diagram with headings for each of the five personalities of care. Within each personality there are subheadings for barriers, opportunities, and the ways we are seeking or supporting change and care, including critical, common, and nice-to-haves.

Feel free to add other areas of interest with a title at the top to describe the topic or focus area for your illustration. I also encourage you to explore other creative ways to

adapt this basic structure to help link multiple perspectives on care together in an engaging manner.

Examples: What are examples of the five care personalities?

I would like to invite Alex to join us for this section. Here, Alex and I will discuss how the Care Game's five personalities relate to our own personal and professional lives. We hope this will help guide you as you begin to play the Care Game in your community.

Alex, would you like to start us off by sharing what being a careseeker means to you?

Alex

For me, seeking care looks like creating care.

I've often needed care, but I rarely gotten it. Growing up, I noticed many people offer care that makes them feel good, whether or not it's what you need. If you say, "I need help," people may ignore it if you don't fit their mental image of someone in need. Some people offer care so they can take advantage of you, and other people who really want to help may not be able to give what you need.

Seeking care is looked down on, but sometimes so is being overly independent. People think independence is a choice, but some are forced into it. Seeking care can be risky and expose us to harmful people and systems.

In a world where getting the care you need depends on having luck and privilege, I seek care for myself and others by trying to make it more available to people who don't have those things.

Jessa

For me, being a careseeker entails acknowledging when we need help and being open about it. It involves recognizing our vulnerabilities and advocating for the care we need, while doing our best at our own pace when we struggle to be our best advocate.

On a personal level, embracing my disabilities has been an important part of my journey though I've hesitated in the past due to stigma. During unhealthy periods, I tend to procrastinate and feel overwhelmed, often stuck in bed for long periods of time due to my compromised immune system.

Professionally, these challenges make me doubt my place in the arts. While some understand my need for time off, extended breaks are hard to manage. Leadership roles often do not allow for unscheduled rest, which have led me to quit my job in the past rather asking the organization to slow down or adapt their resources.

Additionally, I see myself as a careseeker in some areas of life, such as learning about ways to be a better ally in addressing colonialism, while I feel more comfortable as a guide or leader in digital topics.

By sharing my experiences as a careseeker, I hope to inspire others to do the same.

Examples: Part 2

For our second example, what does being a caretaker, or a guardian of care, look like for you, Alex?

Alex

For me, caretaker is the most emotional role. It's how I express my anger and frustration with the way things are.

I take care by writing explanations of how and why systems are harmful, and by being a patient advocate who says things that make the powerful people in the room uncomfortable. Sometimes I also argue with my doctors about the prejudices that show up in how they make decisions.

It takes privilege to be confrontational with powerful people. I can say things that would be dangerous for other people because I am white.

I do also think carefully about how I show my anger. I try to make people uncomfortable enough to think but not so uncomfortable they shut down. I argue with doctors only when it's obvious I won't get the care I need no matter how nice I am. Being a caretaker is "realistic" for me, even though it's emotional. It's about recognizing when I can't improve my own situation, but feeling better because maybe my words will improve things for people in the future.

Jessa

For me, being a caretaker involves accepting that real positive change might not happen in our lifetimes, yet never giving up the effort to deepen resilience and hope for the future.

Professionally, as a caretaker, I have aimed to support and serve those in need, providing resources to help individuals, groups, and communities not only survive but thrive. This has entailed strengthening connections between caregivers and those who need help. With the support of others, I have been able to establish a large mutual aid network, for example, but growing and sustaining it long-term remains a challenge.

On a personal level, I find being a caretaker is both incredibly rewarding and taxing. It often involves a lot of unpaid volunteer work and collaborations with others that are nearing the limits of what they can do. I have struggled to balance being practical in the moment and hopeful for the future. My heart and mind are also often split, seeking out ways to respond to existing dangers and disasters while trying to bring people and communities together around a positive vision for the future.

Examples: Part 3

For our third example, what does being a caregiver, or a nurturer of care, look like for you, Alex?

Alex

Being a caregiver is challenging for me because chronic pain and fatigue make it hard to take any kind of action. Even giving myself care can end up feeling like self-harm because everything I choose to do means giving up something else. I always have to think about what I need most in the moment, and what I can most afford to lose.

It's hard for me to plan to do anything - whether that's committing to a project, showing up to a protest, or hanging out with friends. The first problem is that I never know how I'll feel when it comes time to actually do the thing. The second problem is that it's hard to commit time and energy to anything because I might end up needing it more for something else.

So, giving care to others comes down to, what can I do easily and without much planning. For me, that usually ends up being donations of money or goods - to unhoused folks, local shelters, or causes where I wish I could be doing stuff 'on the ground.'

Jessa

For me, being a caregiver is a job that many people don't fully appreciate or understand. I'm reminded of The Care Collective's 'Care Manifesto' from 2020, which begins with, "Our world is one in which carelessness reigns." While I agree there's a lot of carelessness in society, I also believe there's a lot of unrecognized care happening privately or in ways not typically seen as care.

For example, some see making art as selfish, not realizing its value. For me, creating art is a hopeful and empowering act that inspires us to reach for tough goals we would otherwise be too discouraged, perhaps, to tackle. It also helps deepen our understanding of those who experience harm and those who cause it. It also offers creative remedies and therapies that helps us on a path towards a better future. This looks a lot like care to me.

In recent years, I've struggled to balance caregiving in my personal and professional life. When my parents were near the end of their lives, I had to pause most of my work to care for them full-time. This put me in a precarious economic position akin to a careseeker. At the same time, as I begin to broaden my understanding and vision of care, I have found it challenging to decide which types of caregiving to focus on with different communities.

Ultimately, it's important to me that caregivers are valued and paid fairly for their efforts without worsening the economic precarity of those they are caring for.

Examples: Part 4

For our fourth example, what does being a caremaker, or a builder of care, look like for you, Alex?

Alex

My gut reaction to the caremaker role was, "I don't even know what to make of this, because it seems so far outside the realm of anything I can do." Being optimistic about the future *and* taking concrete action is so not my wheelhouse.

But after thinking about the caregiver role, I can see where the caremaker fits in. If I can only give care when it's easy and spontaneous, being a caremaker is about finding and planning opportunities where that can happen.

I'm thinking about how I always carry a few bills on me, so if I see someone in need, I can give them a bit of help. This takes almost no effort in the moment because I planned and budgeted for it beforehand. Similarly, stocking up on healthy freezer dinners or writing detailed to-do lists for when I have brain fog are ways I make care for myself.

For people who are less affected by poverty or precarity, caremaking might involve finding ways to make caregiving easier for people who are struggling with it right now because they lack time, money, energy, or social supports.

Jessa

For me, being a caremaker entails using a human-centered approach to cultivate change, ensuring that all realms of life are cared for, and no one is left behind.

While the terms "caremaker" and "changemaker" sound similar, they are very different to me.

For example, changemaking often feels patriarchal, exploitive, and extractive, with new or "hyped-up" opportunities being forced upon us, regardless of whether we're ready or not. I think about the "changemakers" being celebrated in artificial intelligence who are currently driving massive speculation and causing harm without clear safeguards in place. This approach lacks care to me.

On the other hand, caremaking feels more nuanced, slow, and intentional. It balances the urgency of the moment and the future with the needs and potential of those in need in a mindful and creative way. I see caremakers as people who bring careseekers, caretakers, and caregivers together in meaningful ways. They listen to diverse perspectives and co-design tangible actions that improve access to care in the short to medium term, with results that are easy to measure and share.

Examples: Part 5

For our fifth and final example, what does being a careshaper, or a visionary of care, look like for you, Alex?

Alex

Along with careseeker, careshaper is the role that resonated most with me right away. As a designer and sociologist, I like to understand how our actions and interactions are shaped by the complex systems we are all part of. For social change to happen effectively, it's important to look at how these systems work.

I recently moved into a new building and something that stood out to me was that this building has three times as many garbage and recycling bins as my old one, despite having half as many apartments. My old building had a lot of poor and disabled people living in it. People left garbage in the halls and elevators and then complained about how dirty everyone else was.

Using my new garbage room, I started thinking about how, when you're poor, society literally makes it harder to do something as simple as throw out your garbage. So you let your garbage pile up in your apartment or you leave it in the halls, and then people get angry with you, and you get angry with them for judging you when you're struggling, but you also get angry with yourself. And something as simple as the number of garbage cans in your building ends up having a big impact on your physical and mental health.

To me, being a careshaper is about asking how small interactions like that emerge from patterns in big systems and how we can make good interactions that work effectively within these messed up systems, and maybe even feed back into them to create change.

Jessa

Being a careshaper is incredibly rewarding but also challenging for me. I love thinking about complex systems and making them accessible so more people can engage with them. It's easy to feel discouraged by the many societal issues we face, especially when we might not see much progress in our lifetimes. However, focusing on shaping the evolution of care, rather than just imagining changes I may never see, inspires me.

I see one of the roles of a careshaper as planting seeds of hope and approaches to care that can be passed from one generation to the next, ensuring everyone benefits from positive change. Traditional strategic planning often focuses on future changes, which can leave some people behind. Shaping a care plan, however, is a more open and flexible approach that welcomes everyone's potential, even those who may not know how to contribute, until they receive the care they need.

Careshapers are like "kindness and compassion engineers". They envision future solutions to challenges while catalyzing communities to deepen their commitments to care. They act like "relationship grandmothers," connecting the efforts of all other care personalities. They balance slowness with urgency and, perhaps like artists, they inspire people and communities to shape their lives for the better.

Next Steps

As a next step, I would like to invite you to share your experiments and learnings from playing the Care Game with your community.

If you are comfortable to do so, I would also like to invite you to share your thoughts and illustrations via social media. You can use the hashtag, #HowWeCare in English or #CommentNousSoignons in French with a link to ArtsPond (@ArtsPond8) on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube.

We look forward to seeing what you have to share.

Next Steps: Part 2

There are two upcoming activities that you are invited to participate in if you would like to explore what care looks like to you in more detail.

First, meet one of our Disability Care Doulas, Alex Haagaard, in one of our four online meetings on Wednesdays, July 17 and 24, at 12 noon or 1 pm Eastern. Other dates will be announced in the future. During these one-on-one conversations, you will be invited to explore how care relates to your own life and career. Visit our website to apply to receive an honouraria of \$250. This goes towards two hours of self-reflection, the 1-hour conversation, plus 1 hour of additional follow-up and communications.

The second activity is happening on Wednesday, July 31, at 1 to 2:15 pm Eastern. This is a free online workshop where participants will be guided through the Care Game itself in a collaborative way. This event will be hosted in English with CART and ASL available upon request.

Conclusion

In conclusion, please visit our website at ArtsPond.com for more information about these and other upcoming activities. Thanks for watching and have a great rest of your day.

