

Thank you for sharing your time and your talent with EST. We welcome you to the process!

At EST, we are committed to creating a safe, equitable, anti-racist environment for all of our theatre practitioners. In this document you will find a statement of our values and some guidelines to keep in mind as you are in process.

In 2018, EST Membership voted to adopt a new mission statement that reflected our community standards:

The **Ensemble Studio Theatre** was founded by Curt Dempster in 1968 with a group of 20 theatre artists. It has since grown into a company of over 600 actors, directors, playwrights and designers.

The Ensemble Studio Theatre develops and produces original, provocative and authentic new plays. We engage and challenge our audiences in New York City and across the country. EST is a dynamic community committed to a collaborative process and dedicated to inclusion across all aspects of identity and perspective, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexuality, physical or mental ability, physical or mental health, and recovery. We acknowledge and work to end systemic marginalization and oppression at all levels of our organization. EST discovers and nurtures new voices and supports artists throughout their creative lives. We believe that this extraordinary support and our commitment to inclusivity are essential to yield extraordinary work.

This Mission statement was just one step towards our goal of becoming a truly equitable theatre. Among other initiatives, in 2020 we began the practice of including a *Community Facilitator* in projects presented or developed at EST. The *Community Facilitator* serves as a BIPOC advocate, mediator, communication counselor and resource for each artist involved in the process. For the duration of your time on this project, you can reach out to the *Community Facilitator* with any questions, concerns or thoughts about the process. This person is not a part of the main staff of EST and is outside of the artistic hierarchy of the project, allowing for a separate route to find solutions without traditional HR action. Any contact with the *Community Facilitator* remains completely anonymous unless you decide otherwise, and the *CF* will work with you to find resolution to any issue with consideration of your needs. The anonymity does not extend to situations where physical harm is a possibility. The *CF* is also a resource to further enrich the artistic experience at EST and is available to hear feedback and suggestions to help keep the institution accountable to its goals of inclusion, equity and anti-racism.

In addition, EST has adopted a community agreement that should set the tone for all rehearsals, meetings and performances. Developed by Rebecca KellyG, an outside equity and justice consultant, this agreement is intended to provide a platform of values upon which to build our work, placing emotional and creative safety first in our minds.

During this process, your Community Facilitator will be:

Sharina Martin (she/her/hers) / sharinamartin@gmail.com / 917.692.2257

Please take time to familiarize yourself with the Community Agreement prior to your first meeting.

Community Agreement:

- **There is one mic:** when a person is speaking, we allow them to complete their thought or idea.
- **Step up for the Collective:** In order to utilize the full talent of the team, we want to encourage every member to contribute. If you are one to lower your voice in a collective space, feel empowered to take space. If you are one who dominates a discussion, feel compelled to make space for others. Recognize when those around you communicate differently: gestures, movement, and written word are all examples of communication and should not be overlooked in conversation.
- **Knowledge and Experience:** Every member of the collective can only speak based on their own knowledge and experience. Understand that your knowledge and experience may not line up with others'. Expect that anyone speaking can only be making reference to their own knowledge and experience. Our limited views combined are what make a fuller, more vibrant discussion.
- **We speak in drafts:** When we speak we are writing in real time. Our thoughts are new and unpolished. We allow room for mistakes. If someone misspeaks, we can take the time to question what they are trying to say. If someone asks for clarification we can embrace that as an opportunity to edit our draft.
- **Intention:** In entering into this agreement, we commit to removing harm from our intentions. We should never *intend* to cause distress. But it happens. When it does, we acknowledge that we cannot know the speaker's intention, and therefore we cannot assume that the intention was to inflict pain.
- **Impact:** Whatever our intention (however well-meaning), sometimes the impact of our words or actions cause harm or discomfort. In these moments, the priority is mitigating harm, not defending intentions. We can further discuss a comment or action to achieve reparation for the harm. We can utilize the resources of the Community Facilitator to resolve the conflict.
- **WAIT: Why Am I Talking?** Is my contribution helpful or clarifying to the discussion? Does it help achieve the stated goals of the session? Have I deferred to those who do not usually have a platform? Am I aware of body language, agitation or other signals of those around me? Have I taken a moment to collect my thoughts before contributing?

- **Listen to Understand:** When someone is speaking, take the time to truly process what it is they are saying. If you don't fully understand, take the time to ask questions and help them clarify their position. Before responding, allow yourself the time to process their words, the impact they have made and clarify your own response.