

Empathy Machines

Innovative new digital workbook, using powerful theatre & film pieces to provide one full week of practice learning experience for student nurses

The Play

- *The Possibility of Colour*, has been co-developed over 14 years with input from mental health professionals, lecturers, student nurses and experts by experience.
- Funding from Health Education England meant 1,350 student nurses were given the opportunity to watch the play and take part in post-show discussions as part of the play's first full production and tour in 2022. This counted as official practice hours towards their nurse training.
- Themes explored by the play include mental health treatment, coercive control, forced treatment, re-traumatisation, voice hearing, neurodiversity, normalisation, use of AI in healthcare, and more.
- Universally high praise from student nurses, lecturers, clinicians, course leaders and experts by experience. Average audience score – 4.8 stars out of a maximum of 5.
- Calls from members of the above groups for the play to be included in the training of all health professionals, especially those working in mental health.

'It made me feel the emotions that the patient would feel.'
(Student Nurse)

'Should be mandatory for all mental health professionals, student mental health nurses, trainee nursing associates; and an option for other healthcare students.'
(Trainee Nursing Associate)

'An excellent educational tool for students & window into mental health. Real life experience - delivered in a safe environment.'
(Registered Nurse)

'I no longer feel so alone in who I am.'
(Expert by Experience)

The Possibility of Colour

'1984 meets *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* meets *I Daniel Blake*'

'So funny'

'Terrifying'

'Urgent'

'Just a wonderful play'

Average audience rating:

4.8/5 stars



'A fantastic piece of drama which draws out the joy of everything it is to be human and the value of experiencing the world in your own unique way'



North West End

Digital Workbook

- Early work is underway to co-develop a new digital workbook that will utilise a recorded performance of the play, as well as some of Pete's previous film work, as the foundation of a week-long practice learning experience for student nurses.
- This workbook, which will use specific clips from the play and films to open up deeper exploration of the themes, will be co-developed and tested with senior mental health nursing lecturers, student nurses and experts by experience.
- Course leaders and lecturers with direct experience of Pete's work have described the option for schools of nursing to licence the eventual workbook for student nurses as 'a no brainer' and 'a quick win'.
- Course leaders already finding it increasingly difficult to find enough placement opportunities for the 30,000 student nurses trained each year.
- Workbook could potentially be used by all 30,000 student nurses trained each year, rising to 50,000 each year by 2031.

Pete Carruthers

- Pete is a writer, director, producer, and actor with over 10 years' experience creating dramatic films and theatre pieces that have been used to train health professionals all over the world.
- One of Pete's films, *Fallout*, has been used within the training of health professionals and volunteers in the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Canada, USA, Australia, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.
- Pete is also a PhD student at the University of Central Lancashire. His thesis title is 'Empathy Machines: Using theatre and film in the training of compassionate and reflective health professionals.'
- Recently awarded an early career research fellowship (mental health) by ARC NWC.
- Before retraining as an actor, Pete spent 10 years as an engineer, seven of which were as an aircraft avionics technician in the Royal Air Force.

Link to watch clips

- Below is a link to watch 3 short clips from:
 - The Possibility of Colour (theatre)
 - Fallout (short film)
 - Unload (short film)

<https://youtu.be/z26e-UCtAd0>



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