



## PLANNING FOR YOUR SINGING GROUP IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Sing Ireland suggests and recommends that groups take their time returning to rehearsals to ensure the protection of their singers and conductors by completing a thorough risk assessment. In any case currently it looks like singing is considered by many experts as more dangerous than other cultural activities. As long as the opposite has not been proven (research is ongoing), people deciding whether and how a live rehearsal may be possible again will carry a responsibility to ensure the safety of their groups. It also means that regular rehearsals of choirs as well as regular performances may not be possible for quite a while and there might be a difference between how and when groups restart activities (differing age demographics, presence of members with underlying conditions, and rehearsal space suitability being important considerations). How we do things now may necessarily have to change again so we ask that groups continue to monitor advice from Government, the HSE (ROI), HSC (NI) and Sing Ireland and that you continue to be adaptable.

### STEP ONE — RECENTER YOURSELF

- If you're in panic mode, try to take a step back. Make a shift from reacting to responding
- Review your framework policies and your singing group's ethos — your mission, core values, vision
- Review your goals and plans for the coming year
- Think through the kind of experience you want your members to have

### STEP TWO — TAKE INVENTORY

Make a list of your choir's assets, including such things as human resources (paid or unpaid), recordings (audio or video), photos, special skills within your group, finances, section leads, communication tools.

### STEP THREE — ESTABLISH PRIORITIES

- Think short term — Month- 2 month blocks of time are often effective.
- Avoid getting too specific at this stage. Priorities might include such things as member engagement/retention, audience retention/development, fundraising, creating an artistic product, singers' skill development, building/strengthening community, or listening skills.
- If you create a long-list of priorities, it is imperative that you narrow it down so as to not exceed resource availability
- If you're struggling, consult other members of your team and/or some of your singers.

### STEP FOUR — SET YOUR EXPECTATIONS

- Keep in mind that, while valuable, many current activities are a temporary measure.
- You may find that you're not feeling gratified by the experience with your choir the way you usually do, but that doesn't mean your singers aren't enjoying and thankful for what you're doing.
- Not everyone will take part. There are many reasons for that, and it doesn't mean they won't return at some point.
- Recognise that choir in the context of COVID-19 is a learning experience for everyone.
- The bottom line is partially about essential things like preserving what you've built, continuing to nurture relationships, and giving people hope through music and their choir community.

### STEP FIVE — CREATE A PLAN

- Set goals and indicators of success.
- Establish a timeline.
- Think outside the box, but remember you don't need to reinvent the wheel for everything you do — look to your colleagues for input and ideas!

### STEP SIX — GO!

- Implement your plan.
- Utilize your team and lean on your support network as much as you need to.
- Aim to create the same calibre experience as in normal circumstances, even though the experience will be different.
- Evaluate the extent to which you've achieved your goals, making special note of things that worked particularly well.

Note: Framework originally developed by Choral Canada and adapted with permission