Care Well

❝ Explore your care personality and how it shapes your life and community.

These are Care Personalities. Change to Care Plan ancestors Rights, Respect, Reconciliation, Reparation, Reciprocity.

What is it?

ArtsPond's Care Well is a framework designed to explore how care manifests in diverse communities and individuals. It expands conventional definitions of care by introducing five interconnected care personalities, including careseekers, caretakers, caregivers, caremakers, and careshapers.

These personalities represent different roles in the ecosystem of care, providing a lens through which individuals and groups can examine their relationships with care in a broader context. Each personality offers a unique perspective on how care is sought, provided, and transformed across personal, community, and systemic dimensions.

For example:

Careseekers (recipients or beneficiaries of care)

Careseekers are recipients of care provided by others. They often view the world as precarious and focus on immediate to short-term needs (approximately a one-year horizon). Their goal is to reduce their personal vulnerability and meet thier basic requirements for security and survival. Careseekers are often seen as vulnerable. And yet, they are also resourceful and possess valuable insights into self-care that can guide those offering or shaping care. Despite limited capacity to effect systemic change, their first-hand experiences provide critical knowledge for identifying authentic care solutions.

Caretakers (guardians or protectors of care)

Caretakers act as guardians of care, protecting access to essential care resources for others. Like careseekers, they also perceive the world as precarious but focus on the medium-term future (around three to five years). These individuals work to safeguard care amidst present harms and future threats, often by uniting diverse groups. Caretakers are perceived as champions or companions to both careseekers and caregivers, though they may face risks to their own wellbeing due to resource gaps or insufficient support. With adequate assistance, caretakers play a pivotal role in identifying and implementing changes necessary for thriving futures.

Caregivers (providers or nurturers of care)

Caregivers nurture care by providing direct and empathetic support to individuals and smaller communities. Unlike careseekers and caretakers, they tend to view the world as prosperous and prioritize helping others in the present to near-term future (approximately two years). Though perceived as selfless and often overburdened, caregivers excel in fostering personal connections and offering essential care despite limited capacity to address systemic issues. Their patience and empathy inspire others to care and help maintain crucial support networks.

Caremakers (engineers or builders of care)

Caremakers are builders of care who focus on creating conditions for thriving futures over the medium to long-term (five to ten years). Seeing the world as prosperous, they lead and support both individual and collective approaches to care that strengthen the vitality of individuals, communities, and ecosystems. Often perceived as ambitious and empowering, caremakers confront resistance to push for transformative changes. Their creativity and compassion enable others to achieve accessible and sustainable care.

Careshapers (visionaries or architects of care)

Careshapers are visionaries of care who see the world as both it is and what it could become. They navigate its vulnerable complexity while imagining hopeful possibilities over the long-term (ten to twenty-five years or more). Careshapers prioritize understanding the causes and consequences of precarity and testing solutions, remedies, and therapies to cultivate systemic prosperity across ecosystems. Often seen as idealistic and innovative, careshapers challenge norms and encourage communities to envision better futures. Their ability to demystify complexity and share broad perspectives ensures knowledge and inspiration are passed across generations.

How to use it?

Follow these general steps to apply the Care Well framework in expanding awareness of care at all levels, including personal, familial, community-wide, and planetary. For another more detailed approach, take a look at the resource guide for ArtsPond's Care Game.

Expand awareness of care needs

- Begin by identifying the types of care needed across various levels:

- **Personal care**: Physical, emotional, and mental health support.
    - **Family care**: Interpersonal connections, support systems, and shared responsibilities.
    - **Community care**: Resources, equity, accessibility, and shared infrastructure.
    - **Ecosystem and planetary care**: Sustainability, biodiversity, and global health.
- Reflect on how these needs intersect and influence each other, creating a holistic view of care.

Identify care roles and dynamics

- Explore the roles individuals and groups play in care ecosystems. Consider how care is given, received, and shaped across different contexts:
    - Who are the recipients or beneficiaries of care?
    - Who protects or safeguards care resources?
    - Who provides hands-on support and nurtures wellbeing?
    - Who builds systems or conditions for care to thrive?
    - Who envisions and leads transformative care solutions?
- Understand how these roles contribute to the broader web of care.

Recognize barriers and opportunities

- Analyze what limits access to care in different contexts and identify opportunities for improvement:
    - Barriers could include systemic inequities, cultural stigmas, or resource scarcity.
    - Opportunities might involve leveraging technology, fostering collaboration, or scaling successful practices.
- Focus on the unique challenges and strengths present at each level of care (e.g., personal, community, planetary).

Co-design care practices

- Work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to explore innovative approaches to care. Consider how different types of care can complement one another:
    - Create family programs that integrate environmental education.
    - Develop community initiatives that address both social and ecological health.
    - Promote policies that align personal well-being with planetary sustainability.
- Incorporate feedback and lived experiences into the design process to ensure inclusivity and relevance.

Promote holistic care solutions

- Advocate for care strategies that address interconnected needs across multiple levels:
    - Integrate mental health support with workplace initiatives to strengthen both personal and community well-being.

- Encourage cultural and creative practices that promote biodiversity awareness alongside social cohesion.
- Foster global movements that link human rights, social justice, and environmental conservation.

Reflect and iterate

- Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of care practices and make adjustments as needed.
- Foster ongoing dialogue about care dynamics to continuously deepen understanding and engagement across levels.
- Celebrate successes and amplify the voices of those leading care-centered innovations.

By approaching care as a multi-dimensional and interconnected system, the Care Well framework helps expand awareness of what care entails and how it can be effectively provided at every scale, from the personal to the planetary.

Examples in arts and culture

1. Public art

A collaborative network of artists, cultural workers, and community organizers comes together to create a public arts initiative focused on promoting mental health and resilience in underserved communities. By using the Care Well framework, the team identifies their care personalities and designs a multifaceted program addressing immediate and long-term needs.

- **Careseekers**
  Members who have experienced mental health challenges share their stories and insights, helping the group understand the critical needs and vulnerabilities faced by the target community. Their perspective ensures the initiative addresses real and urgent concerns authentically.
- **Caretakers**
  Individuals in administrative and organizational roles ensure resources are allocated effectively and that the initiative is inclusive and accessible. They advocate for the project within their networks, safeguarding its longevity amidst funding and logistical challenges.
- **Caregivers**
  Artists and facilitators create workshops and programs tailored to individuals, emphasizing emotional wellbeing and personal connection. These activities provide immediate care and support to participants through personalized artistic engagement.
- **Caremakers**
  Program designers and leaders develop the overarching structure of the initiative, integrating community feedback into a sustainable model. They design scalable solutions, such as toolkits for other communities to replicate the program, ensuring its broader impact.

- **Careshapers**
  Visionaries in the group craft a long-term strategy for addressing systemic mental health disparities. They propose policy changes and build partnerships with healthcare providers and cultural organizations, amplifying the initiative's impact and sustainability.

2. Youth

A young artist, recently out of school, is navigating the complexities of balancing personal, family, and community responsibilities while building a creative career. They are a caregiver for chronically ill family members and volunteer in a mutual aid network that connects careseekers and caregivers. They aspire to use their creative practice to help care for other chronically ill and disabled individuals, eventually founding a community organization that challenges societal norms and fosters a more caring society. However, they face challenges in finding the support they need to realize their vision.

- **Careseekers**
  The artist is a careseeker when it comes to their career aspirations and personal wellbeing. They require mentorship, funding, and emotional support to build their confidence and capacity to lead. Their need for care includes guidance on navigating the art world, learning how to establish an organization, and balancing their multiple roles.
- **Caretakers**
  In their family life, the artist acts as a caretaker, safeguarding the health and wellbeing of chronically ill relatives. They do so by working to ensure their family has access to the caregiving resources and support they need, often putting their own needs on hold. Through their involvement in the mutual aid network, they also help create connections between individuals in need and those capable of providing assistance, building trust and solidarity through their actions. These roles shape their perspectives on the gaps in systemic care and motivates their broader aspirations.
- **Caregivers**
  The artist is also a caregiver, providing daily care themselves to their family members. Through their involvement in the mutual aid network, the artist is also volunteering thier time to provide care to others in the community, offering empathy and practical support to careseekers in their community.
- **Caremakers**
  Their creative practice is a form of caremaking, where they explore ways to use art as a tool for healing and empowerment. While they require care to get there, they experiment with project ideas that can help amplify the voices of disabled individuals, design workshop proposals for creative expression, and dream of scalable initiatives that foster community resilience.
- **Careshapers**
  The artist's long-term vision is to establish a community organization that challenges ableism and systemic inequities, fostering a culture of care. They envision this organization as a space where disabled individuals and their allies co-create solutions, share stories, and advocate for systemic change. However, they recognize that they need mentorship, resources, and collaborative partnerships to bring this vision to life.