What an amazing, life-changing, powerful process! A great opportunity for me to better appreciate the subjective experiences of individuals who have experienced mental illness.”

– Audience member

Your Support Changes Lives
Mental health issues impact all of us, so we want to have stories that all kinds of people can relate to. Erasing the Distance continues to grow its repertoire of true stories that explore various mental health issues and feature people of different ages, cultural backgrounds, racial groups, and perspectives. We now have 150+ stories.

Stories collected by Erasing the Distance are being staged around the country, from Chicago, IL to Sacramento, CA. We are also in residence at two local colleges, where students are learning how to collect stories, shape them, and bring them to the stage. The verbatim text from interviews with real people who have experienced mental health issues is the foundation of our efforts to disarm stigma.

To start a conversation about bringing Erasing the Distance to your community, email Custom Programs Manager Jana Ross at jana@erasingthedistance.org.

A Festival of New Work
We’ve already launched FY2018 with a bang... SPARKfest! We were actively developing this festival of new work throughout spring and summer.

SPARKfest 2017 included three world premieres. In Walk A Mile, a woman uncovered her family stories involving depression and post-traumatic stress disorder; Breathe With Me explored the quiet and complex emotional world of the end-of-life caregiver; and The Lies We Tell was the story of one man’s struggle with addiction.

“By implementing a festival format, Erasing the Distance artists are able to explore topics that resonate with their own communities. We are growing our work to cultivate more conversations with our audiences,” says Artistic Director Amy Sarno.

The festival continues Erasing the Distance’s mission to use the power of performance to disarm stigma, spark dialogue, educate, and promote healing surrounding issues of mental health.

Annual Newsletter: Honoring Our Past and Creating New Beginnings
2016 - 2017

Get Connected:
Visit Our Website:

www.erasingthedistance.org

Save the Dates:
The Holidays Unwrapped
December 11-20, 2017
The Edge Theater, Chicago
A music-filled performance that braids together the real stories of nine people, The Holidays Unwrapped is a humorous look at how to manage stress throughout the holiday season.

The Criminal Justice Project
March and April 2018
Drawn from interviews on all sides of the Chicago justice system, The Criminal Justice Project explores the humanity behind the headlines.

IGNITE 2018
April 22, 2018
Irish American Heritage Center, Chicago
Join us for Erasing the Distance’s Annual Benefit.
You Made Our PopUp Series Pop!

The 2016 PopUp Series: Unexpected Performances in Unexpected Places was a collection of 4 world premieres, each produced by a different Erasing the Distance artistic company member. These short-run performances took place quarterly in different Chicago neighborhoods in unique venues.

Amygdala Rest
February 2016
Shaped for the stage and produced by: Nikki Zaleski* | Directed by: Kira Silverstein

The Forgiveness Project
May 2016
This work shined a light on unexpected emotional facets of forgiveness, or the choice not to forgive.
Shaped for the stage and produced by: Jana Ross* | Directed by: Heather Bodie*

Through My Daughter’s Eyes
August 2016
Coupled with the use of Butoh (a Japanese dance theatre art) and music from ancient tribal instruments, this performance followed the true story of one woman exploring the threads of addiction as they weave through past and present of her life.
Shaped for the stage and produced by: Wannapa Pimtong-Eubanks* | Directed by: Heather Bodie*

I’ve Never Told This To Anyone
November 2016
This show explored the stories of three men; what shaped them, what they conceal, and what they’re scared to say out loud.
Shaped for the stage and produced by: Jared Fernley* | Directed by: Stacy Stoltz

*ETD Company Member
+member of Actors’ Equity

Artistic Director Emeritus

Brighid O’Shaughnessy has been a consultant and resource throughout this time of transition. Sharing her skill and experience through a methodology training, Brighid gave us the institutional knowledge we needed to advance the mission of Erasing the Distance.

As we move forward, we hope Brighid will visit often. Her passion and joy light up every space she enters. We are working hard to make her proud of the organization she built.

Thank You!

What an exciting first year I’ve had at Erasing the Distance. Thank you for welcoming me. It has been a joy to get to know board members, staff, clinicians, and company members while working to bring important, under-represented stories about mental health to the stage.
As I’ve learned about Erasing the Distance’s roots, I’m grateful I had the opportunity to go through methodology training with Artistic Director Emeritus Brighid O’Shaughnessy. She helped me to really learn the origins and processes of Erasing the Distance. Thank you for building it.

I’ve learned a lot of hard lessons while working to bring these stories to the stage, but every space she enters. Her passion and joy light up every space she enters. We truly make a difference in peoples’ lives!

A New Custom Program For Your Workplace

With absenteeism and lack of productivity directly linked to untreated mental health issues, the stigma around mental illness significantly impacts the bottom line of corporate America. But what are we doing to address it?

Associate Artistic Director Heather Bodie created My Other Full-Time Job, which opened in June, 2017, at Stage 773. It shared the stories of four people’s struggles to manage their mental health in conjunction with their work.

Interested in bringing My Other Full-Time Job to your workplace? Contact Heather Bodie at heather@erasingthedistance.org.

“Graceful and captivating, My Other Full-Time Job will likely impact those of us who experienced it for a lifetime.”
– Audience member

Your Support Is Needed

Erasing the Distance aims to double the number of people we impact through our custom programs, public productions, and residencies in Fiscal Year 2018 (7/1/17 – 6/30/18). We’re also significantly expanding our community partnerships and establishing new relationships with several mental health organizations. In order to meet these strategic goals we must increase our revenue by 25%.

Your financial support is needed now more than ever. Consider making a stretch gift this year as you plan your year-end gifts and help us reach our next immediate goal of raising $20,000 by December 31.

• Give a gift online for #GivingTuesday, November 28.
• Make a meaningful year-end gift during our annual fall fundraising appeal by mailing a check to Erasing the Distance or donating online at erasingthedistance.org.
• Contact Executive Director Diana Clegg to sponsor a production or event, diana@erasingthedistance.org.

Your contributions truly make a difference in peoples’ lives!

“Graceful and captivating, My Other Full-Time Job will likely impact those of us who experienced it for a lifetime.”
– Audience member

“What an impactful way to stimulate conversation around topics and issues we all face in some form. It shows people struggling yet finding their way out. Very beautiful and positive – and real.”
– Audience member

Your contributions truly make a difference in peoples’ lives!

“Graceful and captivating, My Other Full-Time Job will likely impact those of us who experienced it for a lifetime.”
– Audience member

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