



IAMF! Producers Hannah Achelles, Chris Jaeger and Leon Fernandes



IAMF!

It's a Mind Field!

Season 2: Final Report

IAMF! owes its existence to the invaluable support of the Mental Health Commission of NSW, for which we are profoundly grateful, as are our listeners. Our heartfelt gratitude extends to Tracy Tabvuma, whose guidance proved invaluable throughout the year, and to the Loneliness Project Governance Committee, particularly Pam Rutledge and Tim Heffernan. The project's success is also attributed to an exceptional team, including the dedicated efforts of Project Administrator Jeff Furolo, the exceptional skills of Audio Editor Lauchlan Hilder, and the incomparable dexterity of Marketing Coordinator Liz Herbert.

Above all, we extend our deepest gratitude and respect to our interviewees, whose generosity in sharing their lived experiences has contributed to reducing loneliness, fighting stigma, and making the world a better place.

Major achievements

IAMF! Season 2 aimed to spotlight individuals with lived or living experience as the primary authorities within the podcast, and it succeeded in that mission. Throughout the season, we encountered unexpected triumphs, particularly in areas that permeated personal struggles, like the enduring grief over Caz's passing and the privilege of being entrusted with raw, personal stories by strangers. The year posed significant challenges for both the production and management teams, with multiple hospital stays and disruptions to our daily operations. Yet, the unwavering support between team members underscored the potency of peer support. Notable milestones included our nomination for the Mental Health Matters Media Award on October 6th, the successful Showcase and launch on October 21st, and the commission by ABC Australia to produce the penultimate podcast for their *Earshot* season titled "Mars, Venus, and Max."

Challenges	Outcomes
Team well-being and grief responses	The past year was exceptionally challenging for the production and management teams in terms of well-being, leading to several hospital stays and considerable disturbances to everyday operations. These experiences were seen not just as past events but as ongoing realities, shaping the creation of episodes 3 through 5. With a combination of professional camaraderie, personal resilience, and clinical assistance, the team successfully achieved the objectives set for IAMF! Season 2 despite these hurdles.
Navigating discussion around Caz	The loss of Caroline 'Caz' Savaransky, a beloved producer from Season 1, to suicide in 2022 left us all deeply affected. The bonds we had formed with Caz were profound, and her absence left a void in our hearts. In navigating this loss, we leaned on each other and engaged in difficult conversations, sought professional guidance, and embraced self-care practices to process our collective sorrow. Our shared resilience and the strength of our connections have been a testament to our ability to persevere. We've grown particularly close to Caz's family, who have not only supported us but are also proud of the legacy Caz left in her podcast work.

	<p>In respectful consideration, we chose not to dedicate the opening episode to Caz as originally intended, to maintain the focus on the new season.</p> <p>However, with over twelve hours of heartfelt interviews with Caz’s family and others who were close to her, we are committed to creating a fitting tribute. To ensure we honour Caz’s memory with the care it deserves, Chris and Leon will be producing and editing this special episode on a voluntary basis, planning its release on the IAMF! platform later in 2024.</p>
Sourcing talent	<p>We acquired interviewees through diverse channels such as social networks, community organizations, and the Loneliness Project Governance Committee.</p> <p>The number of interviews we conducted exceeded the episodes we planned, as we encountered several extensive and emotionally charged conversations on delicate subjects like childhood abuse, suicide, and crisis mental health services. Given the sensitive nature of these topics, they necessitate careful editing prior to release. Time limitations prevented us from including these in the current schedule, but we are committed to respectfully handling these narratives. We have decided to undertake the editing process on our own time, volunteering our efforts to ensure these important stories are shared. These episodes will be released in 2024.</p>
Interviewee/panellist media guidance	<p>When engaging with individuals whose expertise is rooted in their lived experiences, we often encountered interviewees unaccustomed to or unsure about speaking in a media setting. We engaged in discussions with forty-five people across the spectrum, including workers from various agencies and prospective contributors. Prior to the formal interviews, we conducted preliminary sessions with thirty-five individuals. During this process, some chose not to proceed with a recorded interview, while others were assessed as not being the right fit for our interview format.</p>
Listenership	<p>Our marketing manager, Liz Herbert, has been overseeing our listenership, but we anticipate a broader impact once we begin broadcasting on the Community Radio Network in March 2024 and kick off our new social media campaign starting on February 19th. Additionally, as we retrospectively edit and release some of the standout interviews from Season 1, we expect to gain further momentum from March onward.</p>
Time pressure/stress	<p>Unexpected time constraints emerged due to a discrepancy in contract timelines. It came to light in December 2023 that there was a conflict between the conclusion dates in our funding and performance agreement, which listed two separate deadlines — January and April 2024 — and the April 2024 deadline stipulated in the producers' contracts. To reconcile these differences, we renegotiated the project completion date to February 14, 2024, with the understanding that the impact evaluation, including listenership statistics and social media metrics, would be compiled, and reported by June 30, 2024.</p>

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Phase	Activity	Deliverable	Timeframe	Progress
Planning and development	Development and approval of pilot project proposal and Grant Agreement	Development and approval of pilot project proposal and Grant Agreement	January 2023	Achieved
	Recruit and contract full operations team and marketing coordinator	Recruitment processes and contracts signed off for respective roles	January 2023	Achieved
	Establish Advisory Group	Advisory Group established	January 2023	Achieved
	Strategic planning	Two full-day strategic planning/team building event to be held with producers, including training needs assessment	January 2023	On February 24 th 2023, we conducted a comprehensive strategic planning session. Each producer shared a podcast that resonated with us in terms of its style, structure, or content. Subsequently, we distilled our collective likes and dislikes, formulating our own set of "Guiding Principles," (Figure 1) which then became the cornerstone of our approach. These principles were then incorporated into a flexible episode plan, detailed below.
	Develop data collection and evaluation tools	Full evaluation strategy developed by IAMF! Team and ratified by MHCNSW	January 2023	Pre-and-post season surveys were conducted to assess producers' self-perceptions of skills and well-being requirements.

				Other evaluation tools are website analytics, listenership analytics (via Siteground), social media engagement and growth of followers to Instagram and Facebook.
	Develop production schedule	Thorough timeline, responsibilities and production schedule produced	February 2023	Achieved
	Marketing strategy developed	Marketing strategy developed	February 2023	Achieved
Implementation	Record interviews and panels, and edit episodes	Full podcast episodes produced monthly	Monthly launching on podcast platforms commencing April 2023	Hannah has guided Chris and me in leading pre-interviews to identify the most fitting talent. In the previous season, time constraints led to a less rigorous process, resulting in interviews with individuals who may not have been the best match. As a result, pre-interviewing is now mandatory to secure the most suitable interviewees. This approach necessitated additional preparation time. Furthermore, we explored the use of narrative arcs and ways to enhance our interviews. Resulting episodes are available on our website and listed below.
	Marketing	Marketing strategies implemented	Monthly	Achieved. A new social media strategy is commencing on the 19 th February 2024, along with the standout interviews from Season 1
	Website, including videography	Website updated and live	March 2023	Completed

Evaluation	Undertake evaluation and data collection activities throughout course of the season	Evaluation surveys/ activities completed and analysed	April 2024	Producers conducted pre- and post-season surveys, as detailed below. Our mid-season survey and production audit, initially planned for December 2023, were cancelled due to revised timelines.
	Develop and finalise evaluation report	Evaluation report and presentation	April 2024	Final report submitted February 2024 due to adjusted deadline. Impact evaluation (listener analytics, listenership feedback) due June 2024.

Measures of success		
Outcome	Measure	Results
Production of thirteen podcast episodes between 26 and 35 minutes long	Thirteen podcast episodes produced to broadcast standard and available on all major platforms, such as Spotify, Apple Podcasts by January 2024	Thirteen episodes produced and online by 15 th February 2024.
Formatting same thirteen podcast episodes for broadcast on community radio networks	Thirteen episodes formatted (to 27 minutes and 50 seconds) and broadcast on the community radio network from 2024 weekly as a full season	Six episodes need to be trimmed down to exactly 27:50, and we intend to commence broadcasting alongside our second social media boost from March 2024.
Increased skills of producers in arranging, conducting, and editing effective audio interviews	<p>Skills audit to be conducted with producers to assess opportunities for further training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three producers further trained by the end of the project (for example, in advanced audio editing, project management) • Eight participants trained in media and broadcast by the Community Media Training Organisation (CMTO) by the end of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The skill audit conducted before and after the Season revealed varied trends among producers in their technical prowess. While some reported enhancements in their interview methods, audio editing, and storytelling skills, others perceived a downturn in these areas. This is further elaborated up on in figure 1 below. • The Community Media Training Organisation has changed its model to being online and self-paced since the pandemic. Thus far, nine people with lived experience have enrolled in the Station Induction Essentials course.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon received unanticipated extensive training from the ABC to successfully produce his commission for <i>Earshot</i>
Increased uptake of material produced in broadcast and on-line formats	Increase in listenership of 30% measured through broadcast, website, social media, and podcast analytics,	Our listenership has almost tripled since season 1. Audience engagement via Facebook has increased 400%, and Instagram by 30%. See table below.
Established online presence for and by people with lived experience to connect with each other and the broader community, and build a positive identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and maintain a dedicated website • Significantly increased resourcing for social media development and management including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok. • Opportunity for any Australian who accesses these platforms to comment about the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website updated and functioning • Social media marketing achieved, though we didn't utilise TikTok as none of us had expertise. Second boost in social media marketing to commence on the 19th February 2024 to complement community radio network uptake • Regularly, people have been people giving feedback via our online platforms
Increased skills and confidence of people with lived experience of mental health issues to develop self-efficacy and a sense of pride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre- and post-project evaluations of the production team measuring skills, confidence, self-efficacy, and pride. • Post-broadcast online listenership survey to measure same. • 55 people with lived experience engaged directly in production and/or as segment guests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production team evaluations outlined below • Listenership survey to be conducted in May 2024 • We engaged with 45 people from a variety of organisation and social networks, and interviewed a further 12

Budget

One-off costs

Item	Details	Hours	Hourly rate	Total
Strategic planning day	8 hours (Two producers + One exec producer)	8 (x3)	\$65 (x2) \$70 (x1)	\$1,600
	Catering for strategic planning			\$150
Reporting and evaluation	35 hours (Leon)	35	\$70	\$2,450
Training	In-kind (provided by CBAA)			N/A
Studio costs	In-kind (provided by Jeff Furolo, Leon & University of Sydney)			N/A
Website update	Liz to update website	15	\$60	\$900
Videography and photography	Visual resources to be produced for website, advertising, and social media tiles			\$1,500
Hosting (Buzzsprout)		N/A	N/A	\$290
TOTAL				\$6,860

Per episode (thirteen episodes in total)

Item	Who?	Details	Hours per episode	Hourly rate	Total per episode	Total for 13 episodes
Project administration	Jeff Furolo		12	\$65	\$780	\$10,140
Executive producer/presenter	Leon Fernandes	Each producer will take the	20	\$70	\$1,260	\$16,380
Lead Producer/presenter	Chris Jaeger		15	\$65	\$975	\$12,675

Lead Producer/presenter	Hannah Achelles	lead on four episodes, and collectively produce the first episode of the season. This includes research, talent sourcing, interviewing, recording and facilitating the panel discussion.	15	\$65	\$975	\$12,675
Interviewee payments		Up to 4 interviewees per episode	Flat rate \$100		\$400	\$5,200
Marketing/website	Liz Herbert		10	\$65	\$650	\$8,450
Audio editing	Lachie Hilder		8	\$50	\$400	\$5,200
Episodes TOTAL					\$5,440	\$70,720
TOTAL for whole project					\$77,580	

 **IAMF!**
It's a Mind Field!
Season 2: Guiding Principles

- Show, don't tell
- The whole human comes before their diagnosis/mental health experience
- "Slow burn" – people's stories unfold
- We will always have an element of surprise
- Our interviewees' experiences bring comfort through relatability, and they bring allies into the fold
- We balance humour and gravitas
- We balance our audioscape: the interviewees story does not need to be interrupted by our narration wherever possible
- We don't fear silence
- Our episodes are 20- 40 minutes long
- We are advocating for the listener
- We've got our interviewees' backs – support, don't interrogate
- It's OK if things don't end well – mental health stories aren't always tied in neat ribbons
- Sitting with discomfort is a skill we nurture in ourselves and model for our listeners
- Mistakes, bloopers, and self-doubt are all human and therefore valuable
- We thank our guests and acknowledge their strengths, skills, and generosity
- Our trigger warnings assume that our listeners are strong and capable
- We don't do trigger warnings for swear words
- The voice of lived experience is primary – the voices of others exist to support/illuminate that lived experience
- We find aspects of relatability in every guest's story, so the messages become universal

IAMF! Season 2 Guiding Principles

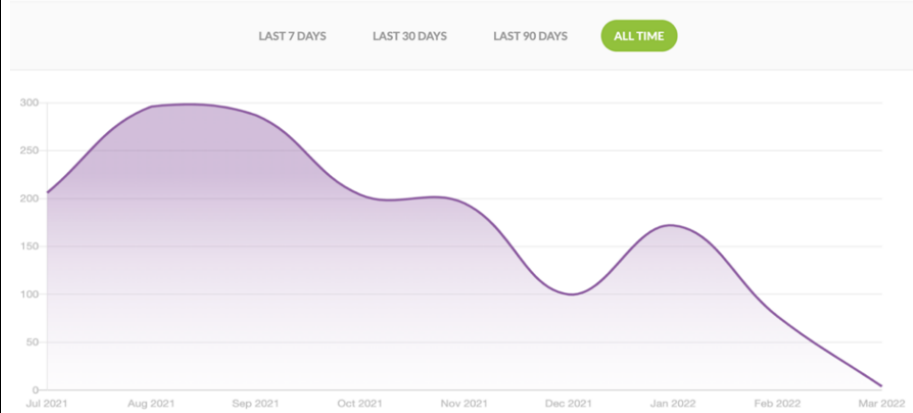
BROADCAST DATA

As at March 2022 (end of Season 1)

1,541 downloads since published.

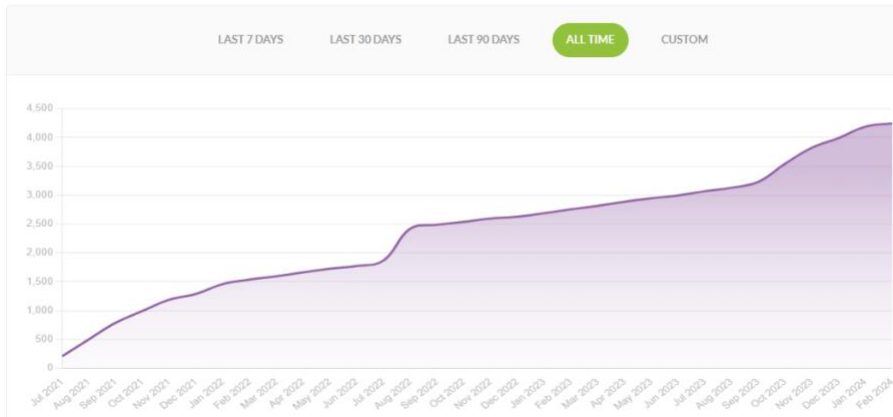


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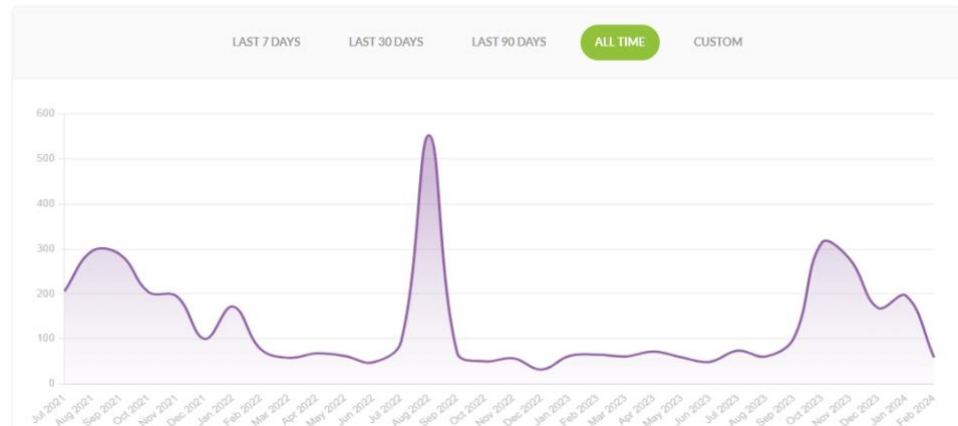


As at 15 February 2024

4,248 downloads since published.



4,248 downloads since published.



Social Media

Facebook Season 1 = 164 followers. Season 2 = 432 followers
Instagram Season 1 = 86 followers. Season 2 = 103 followers.

Reach breakdown

Total
8,014 ↑ 400.6K%

Performance

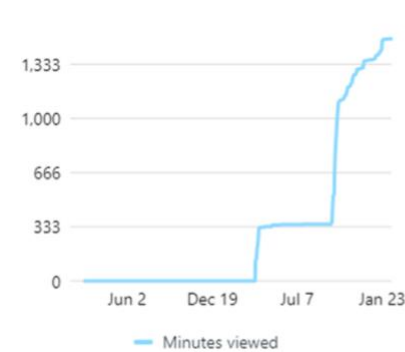
Daily Cumulative ⓘ

Content interactions ⓘ
461 ↑ 100%

Followers ⓘ
Lifetime
432

Link clicks ⓘ
74 ↑ 100%

Minutes viewed ⓘ
1.5K ↑ 100%



Minutes viewed breakdown

Total
1,490 ↑ 100%

Cumulative reach (Facebook)

EPISODES				
Episode	Title	Interviewer	Interviewee/s	Notes
1	Hearing voices	Leon	Ruah Grace (peer worker)	Ruah was a colleague of Leons, and a universally loved figure in the mental health peer sector, revered for her wisdom and warmth. In this episode, she shared her lifelong journey with hearing voices. Ruah passed away suddenly after a brief illness a few days after the interview was conducted. With deep affection, this episode was dedicated to Ruah, her partner, family, and friends.
2	Suicide and bereavement	Leon	Gab Jane	This episode involved a lot of big feelings. We explored the stories of two individuals who have grappled with the loss of loved ones to suicide. The subject matter delved into profound emotions, navigating difficult terrain where words often fail. Jane shared candidly about the ongoing struggle to comprehend her husband Jez's suicide, demonstrating remarkable honesty and empathy. Gab recounted her own experience of losing her beloved brother to suicide at the tender age of 14, later enduring the devastating loss of her father to the same tragic fate.
3	Loneliness	Leon	Chris Jaeger (producer) Dr Michelle Lim	Loneliness remains a silent epidemic, affecting a staggering one in three individuals, with profound effects on mental and physical well-being. This episode was a collaborative effort with Ending Loneliness Together, spearheaded by Dr. Michelle Lim. In it Chris offered his own personal perspective on loneliness, exploring the impacts of friendship, romantic relationships, and loss. Leon also interviewed from Dr. Michelle Lim, the Chair of Ending Loneliness Together, who brought her expertise to the forefront. In a fun and enlightening discussion she provided a scientific outlook and shared her mission to heighten awareness and catalyse meaningful efforts to combat loneliness. (https://endingloneliness.com.au/)
4	Psychiatric Harm	Chris Leon	Leon Dr Sophie Isobel	This was a tough but important episode to produce. Leon used his recent living experience to describe the iatrogenic harm that he had experienced within an inpatient unit within the mental health system, interviewed by Chris. This was supported by Dr Sophie Isobel, a mental health clinician and researcher who specialises in trauma-informed practice.

5	Big Feelings Part 1	Chris	Hannah Achelles	Navigating intense emotions is often a complex and enduring journey of self-discovery. In this episode, Hannah discussed how she learned to traverse these profound feelings in an interview with Chris. She delved into the strategies she employs to acknowledge and befriend her emotions, preventing them from overwhelming her and descending into depression.
6	Big Feelings Part 2	Chris	Natalie Toal	For this episode, Chris introduced Natalie Toal, an advocate for Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) in managing intense emotions. Natalie provided an in-depth look into the therapy and highlights its advantages. Drawing from her personal experience, she shared how she relies on DBT and, as a peer worker in mental health, assists others grappling with overwhelming feelings. Chris and Natalie also went into the challenges of stigma encountered by individuals coping with intense emotions and those diagnosed with borderline personality disorders.
7	Psychologists Need Therapy Too!	Leon	Meg (Clinical Psychologist)	This episode required careful consideration and a significant amount of time to navigate. In conversation, Leon interviewed Meg, his own clinical psychologist, who discussed how stigma and shame hindered members of her profession from openly addressing and seeking treatment for their mental health challenges. Meg's insights are informed by her own journey through mental health trauma and the challenges she faced when communicating her experiences to colleagues.
8	Queer, Young and Muslim	Chris	Mohammad Awad	Mohammad Awad, an artist, writer, and poet, shared his experience as a Muslim member of the LGBTQ+ community with Chris. In his discussion, he shed light on the mental health implications of being marginalised, emphasising the need for nurturance and the establishment of safe spaces where young Muslims can access culturally sensitive support.
9	War on Emotional Suppression	Hannah	Max Simensen	Hannah interviewed Max, who spoke about his opposition to emotional suppression and highlighted how individuals with mental health concerns often feel compelled to portray distress in order to receive necessary treatment. In the past two years, Max oversaw the implementation of NSW's inaugural operational SafeHaven, a drop-in service that provides an alternative to Emergency Departments for individuals experiencing suicidal distress.

10 11	Paramedics – Trauma on the Frontline Part 1	Chris	Jason Kirkalby	This interview was long, but the content was too valuable to cut into one episode, so we made two. In them episode, Chris engaged in a conversation with paramedic Jason Kirkalby, who candidly shared his experiences of revealing mental health challenges within a workplace culture that occasionally perpetuates feelings of shame. Jason explored the emotional toll of frontline work in paramedicine and the subsequent impact on mental well-being.
	Paramedics Trauma on the Frontline – Part 2			
12	Shattered Dreams: Miscarriage Heartbreak	Chris	Jess	In a gutsy conversation, Chris Jaeger discussed the topic of miscarriage with his cousin Jess, who shared a moving account of her experience with pregnancy loss. Miscarriage often inflicts profound emotional wounds, leading to a complex array of mental health challenges. Grief, guilt, and overwhelming sadness can engulf individuals and couples, triggering feelings of inadequacy and despair. Anxiety and depression may emerge, persisting long after the physical pain subsides. The loss of a hoped-for future can leave a profound sense of emptiness and longing. However, within the darkness, resilience prevails.
13	Sage Chronicles: The Wisdom of Elders	Leon	Greg Liddle	This conversation was transformative for Leon. His neighbour Greg shared his story of his struggles as a gay man seeking acceptance decades ago. Unlike the more accepting experiences commonly seen today, the past era of coming out was often marred by significant trauma and societal ostracism. The weight of societal stigma and the apprehension of facing persecution loomed over those who sought to live authentically. Many experienced disconnection from loved ones, discrimination in their workplaces, and even physical violence.
Further episodes				
14	Veterans	Hannah	Annaleise Easlea	Annaleise proved difficult to pin down, and has postponed several times as she's currently in Sri Lanka. She's being interviewed on the 20 th February. She's an author, ex-veteran, and advocate for the lived experience of PTSD, suicidality and mental distress amongst veteran.
15	Caz	Chris Leon Hannah	Caz's mother, father, brother and six of her close friends	Interviews with Caz's family and close friends have been recorded. As previously described, we are taking our time with this special episode and producing it voluntarily as a labour of love.

16	Childhood Trauma	Leon	Rose	Rose, a close friend of Leon's, has a wealth of lived experiences, particularly in the realm of childhood abuse. During an interview in November 2023 that extended over two hours, she offered particularly raw insights into sensitive topics. Leon is carefully editing the conversation to ensure the episode is safe for both listeners and for Rose, again as a labour of love.
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Summary of producer's pre-and-post Season surveys

Between March 2023 and February 2024, producers' self-assessments revealed a mixed trend in technical abilities, with some noting improvements in interviewing techniques, audio editing, and narrative crafting, while others observed a decline. In contrast, all indicated a heightened confidence in using their own voice effectively. A slight dip was recorded in their self-rated proficiency at leading discussions. However, there were unanimously positive strides in community engagement and networking capabilities.

In our discussions, it became evident that the most significant drop in self-perceived proficiency came from Leon. His stint at the ABC this year exposed him to a more advanced skill set and operational standards, providing him with a clearer perspective on areas for professional improvement.

What grade would you give yourself for the following podcasting skills?

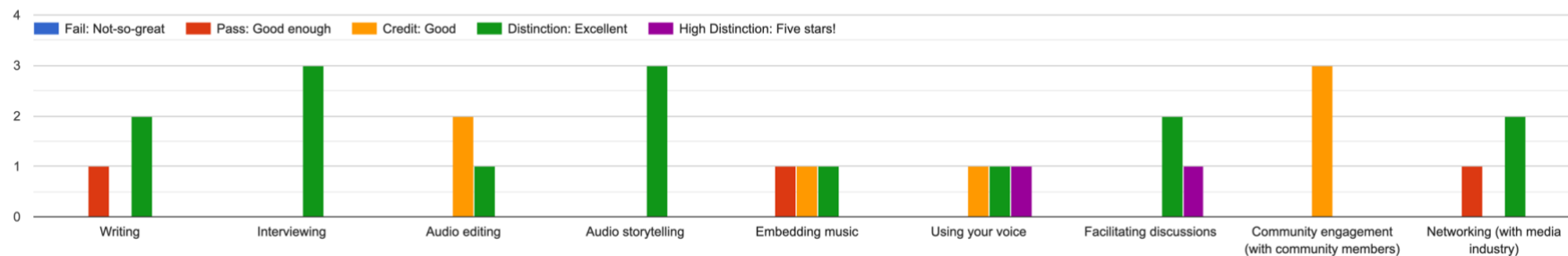


Figure 1: March 2023 skill audit

What grade would you give yourself for the following podcasting skills?

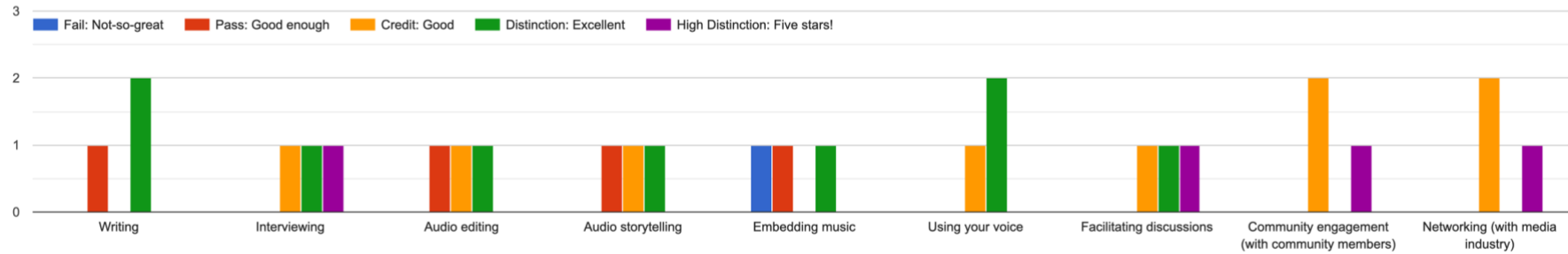


Figure 2: February 2024 skill self-assessment

Qualitatively, the producers observed enhancements in unexpected areas alongside successfully meeting their predetermined objectives:

March 2023	February 2024
<p>What other skills do you have or is there anything would you like to get better at?</p> <p>3 responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'd love to improve on simply making great stories, unlike formulaic ones. I'd like to get more consistently confident with audio editing and also get better at networking with the media industry to drive listenership. Learning to speak sensitively about topics like suicide 	<p>What skills (if any) did you gain or improve upon from producing IAMF! season 2?</p> <p>3 responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My interview skills grew from doing interviews in a different format and also working with Hannah and Leon who have excellent interview skills Mostly, negotiation and leadership. I learnt about the difference between leadership and management. I also learnt about narrative development and editing shortcuts. a deeper understanding of the myriad of lived experiences with mental health that exist

Figure 3: Pre-and post-Season expectations

Personal and well-being issues

Prioritising well-being stands at the forefront for everyone at IAMF! — from producers to colleagues, and interviewees. This year presented particular challenges for Leon, as detailed. The solidarity and support that producers extended to one another were pivotal throughout the project, especially in navigating stressors linked to mental health and adjusting to the revised deadlines, as previously mentioned.

March 2023	February 2024
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<p>What sorts of things stress you out?</p> <p>3 responses</p> <p>Pressures, dealing with others' anxieties, immovable deadlines</p> <p>Tight deadlines, inflexibility,</p> <p>Concern that I may have offended someone</p>	<p>What were your main challenges for you in producing IAMF! season 2?</p> <p>3 responses</p> <p>Mental health, navigating grief, timelines</p> <p>Difficult to answer: most of my year was spent navigating and grieving the loss of my father, two hospitalisations, recovering from psychiatric harm, and mounting a major complaint and grievance procedure with the associated public inpatient unit. Well-being and surviving became my sole priority for 2023: the most difficult year of my life. I discontinued working in most of my jobs except for this. We didn't have a sufficient contingency plan to manage this, as I didn't anticipate how disruptive 2024 would be. Additionally, the misalignment of our contracts with our funding agreement was a cause of major stress for me, as it was only discovered in December 2023.</p> <p>time management</p>
<p>What would help you blossom this season?</p> <p>3 responses</p> <p>A supportive auspicing organisation, being more friends than colleagues.</p> <p>A strong and supportive team that mentors and supports each other and leans on each of our strengths</p> <p>Support</p>	<p>What were your main supports in producing IAMF! season 2?</p> <p>3 responses</p> <p>Leon Fernandes, Hannah Achelles, close friends</p> <p>Co-producers, Jeff and personal clinical support</p> <p>Leon and Chris! fabulous people :)</p>

Figure 4: Personal support and stressors of producers